# The "I" of the Other: Opera and gender in Vienna 1900-1918

by

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### For Giles, Adam and Theo

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### **Abstract**

The extraordinary richness of musical life in early twentieth-century Vienna coincided with an increasingly confident movement for the emancipation of Women. While these two areas have attracted considerable academic attention as separate phenomena, this thesis is the first to consider, in detail, connections between the two. In particular, it investigates the way that opera contributed to the discourse on gender in early twentieth-century Viennese culture.

After a brief discussion of the existing literature on gender and opera, and of the methodology adopted, the thesis examines the discourse on gender in Vienna at this time, drawing on writings by a variety of authors. These represent a spectrum of attitudes to the women's movement, from those actively involved in it to those who strongly opposed it.

The analysis identifies three main themes in the gender discourse: the way that power shapes relationships; the nature of gender difference; and the experience of autonomy, which is central to a person's sense of self. These are then used as a starting point in the investigation of the operatic life of the period.

Three operas are used as case studies: Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge*, Strauss's *Salome* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. Detailed analysis of each libretto and score reveals how these operas reflect and contribute to the contemporary discourse on gender. It becomes clear that opera provides a particularly powerful way to explore a character's autonomy, through an expression of her internal life as she develops and changes.

Finally, the way that ideas about gender appeared in operatic performance is discussed, through an analysis of the life, work and writings of the singer Marie Gutheil-Schoder. Her descriptions of her preparation of a role demonstrate a preoccupation with the internal life of the character, which is absolutely consistent with the themes developed in the rest of the thesis.

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In Austria I was enormously lucky to have the help of Kordula Knaus, who spent many hours helping me to decipher the more illegible parts of Marie Gutheil-Schoder's letters. Her kindness and generosity with her time and effort were outstanding. Rosemary Hilmar at the Austrian National Library gave me invaluable help in starting my research in Vienna, while at the Schoenberg Centre Therese Muxeneder went to a great deal of trouble to ensure that I had everything I needed. Further help came from Clemens Höslinger, who very kindly pointed me in the direction of the records kept at the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, while Otto Hagedorn in Cologne was extremely helpful with information about sources for *Der Traumgörge*, as well as very kindly organising for me to have access to the new edition of the full score. Finally, I should mention the on-line German dictionary dict.cc, which proved invaluable when I was translating the German language references and sources for the thesis.

In putting together the performance that forms the other part of this presentation, I owe an enormous amount to Ann Hodges, who devised the performance with me. I also want to thank Biba Lille-West and Mandy

Demetriou who helped me revive it in England. Annette Saunders provided the perfect accompaniment for the performance, and was very generous with her time in preparing it. Rob Hemus at the Drama Studio in Sheffield was also very generous with his time and skill in advising on lighting. More thanks are also due to Nicola Dibben, who ran the lights and the projector.

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### List of Abbreviations

HHSA	Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna
HS	Handschriftsammlung (Manuscript collection)
	Austrian National Library, Vienna
SB	Wiener Stadtbibliothek, Vienna
SC	Schoenberg Centre, Vienna
TS	Theatersammlung (Theatre collection)
	Austrian National Library, Vienna

# **Chapter One: Introduction**

The subject of this thesis is the coincidence of two revolutions that occurred in Europe around the turn of the twentieth century. On the one hand, all across the continent an increasingly vocal Women's movement was developing, which questioned the established patriarchal order and demanded a better deal for women. On the other hand, in Vienna specifically, there was an enormously fertile and exciting period in music, in which not only were composers experimenting with ever more radical uses of harmony, but also Mahler's meticulously prepared and musically and dramatically radical opera productions were the talk of the town<sup>1</sup>.

The question that this thesis sets out to answer is the following: what is the relationship between these two revolutions? Or, more specifically: given an understanding of the Women's movement, and the discourse on gender that surrounded it, can any light be shed on the opera of the period? And, conversely, what is the connection between the discourse on gender as represented in opera, and the broader discourse, of which it forms a part?

There is a large amount of published research on Vienna at this period<sup>2</sup>. The outstanding quality of its visual art, music and literature, and the enormous influence that these had on the art of the rest of the twentieth century, as well as the importance of other, non-artistic work (such as that by Freud and Wittgenstein), all contribute to the fascination that this time and place inspire. More specifically, contemporary research on music in early twentieth-century Vienna includes a considerable interest in gender and its representation: operas like Salome, Elektra and Erwartung have attracted their share of critical

the flood has not abated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For example, the new production of *Fidelio* at the Vienna Opera in October 1904, with sets by Roller and the *Leonore* No 3 overture inserted into the second act, inspired both delight and fury. See Henry-Louis de La Grange, Gustav Mahler vol. 3 Vienna: Triumph and Disillusion (1904-1907) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 10-14.

Hilda Spiel, Vienna's Golden Autumn 1866-1938 (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), p. 6 describes it as 'a flood of commentaries', and in the 20 years since her book was published

attention from writers such as Susan McClary, Carolyn Abbate and Lawrence Kramer, who put questions of gender at the centre of their work. However, this thesis is, to my knowledge, the first to make use of a detailed knowledge of the Viennese debate on Women's rights and roles, and on the nature of gender, which was contemporary with these works of art. In particular, the polemical and imaginative writing which informed the thinking of the Women's movement, has not yet become part of mainstream academic knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

My reason for choosing this approach has three aspects. Firstly, as a feminist, I am interested in developing women's history beyond tales of oppression and injustice (though there are plenty of those). It seems to me important to point out the courage and creativity that went into the Women's movement, and which helped to create the considerably fairer world that we (at least in the West) live in today. The energy and excitement of Vienna's artistic life were intimately bound up with the new ideas that the artists at its centre were attempting to express. And some of those new ideas were unquestionably what we would now describe as feminist.

Secondly, as a musicologist, I feel that the enormously exciting approach to music which is described as "New" or "Critical" musicology, is most valuable when it is predicated on a historical approach which is as specific, and as meticulous, as possible. The complexity of cultural life and of the history of discourse is such that there is always the danger that in selecting a particular theme, one distorts and misrepresents the historical situation. I hope, though, that by focusing on a well-defined discourse, and a comparatively narrow area geographically and temporally, I have been able to be correspondingly detailed and precise in my description of the discourse.

Finally, as a performer, I hope to develop new ways of approaching the repertoire that I perform. In particular, I was interested to see how an understanding of this discourse could contribute to the creation of a musical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> At the opening of her study of the Viennese Women's movement, Harriet Anderson says: "Oh, were there any feminists in fin-de-siècle Vienna?" is a response I often met with when I mentioned the subject of my research', Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in fin-de-siècle Vienna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. ix.

performance, and conversely, how the insights that performing offers might enrich the research and thinking that lie behind this thesis.

Chapter Two describes the research methodology I have adopted, in the context of the academic discourse which I am inspired by and reacting to. Work of this kind is littered with philosophical and methodological traps, and so the chapter also includes an outline of my philosophical and musicological position on various crucial issues. Chapter Three looks in detail at the non-musical discourse on gender in Vienna at this time, putting the rest of the thesis into context, and drawing out of the works discussed a number of themes and patterns which appear to be important to the literary discourse. Chapters Four, Five and Six are case studies of three operas from the period: Der Traumgörge by Alexander Zemlinsky, Salome by Richard Strauss and Erwartung by Arnold Schoenberg. In each case study I have been guided in my analysis of the libretto and the score by the patterns and themes that I have observed in the non-musical discourse, and in the other case studies as they developed. Chapter Seven is a description of the work of Marie Gutheil-Schoder, one of the leading singers of the period, in which I examine the way that the score and libretto became a performed opera, focusing on aspects of the performance which shed further light on the themes in the discourse that I have identified.

In the introduction to Musicology and Difference, Ruth Solie comments that

There is a kind of circularity between ideology and representation, in which each creates and reinforces the other. [...R]epresentation is not a one-way-street. Not only can we not assume a particular reality pre-existing its representation, but we cannot even assume a simple or direct transmission of ideology. Rather, we face a delicately complex situation in which works of art may also challenge, mock or subvert reigning values. Interpretation becomes an ambiguous and difficult, but richly meaningful, activity.

This thesis aims to express the way the discourse on gender in Vienna at the turn of the century was both expressed and enriched by its manifestation in opera. In the process, I hope also to develop some ideas about gender and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ruth A. Solie, 'Introduction: On Difference', in Ruth A. Solie (ed.) *Musicology and Difference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.13.

human society, as well as some thoughts on the nature of the musicological project.

# Chapter Two: Understanding Opera in Context

#### Introduction

My aim in this thesis is to develop an understanding of the part played by opera in the discourse on gender that was current in Vienna in the period 1900-1918. In discussing opera in this way, I am using the word "discourse" to mean the way that a subject is represented, not only in written texts, but in cultural products of all kinds. My aim is not only to illuminate some aspects of Vienna's operatic life at this time, by relating it to the discourse on gender in other media, but also to enrich understanding of the discourse on gender as a whole by investigating its manifestation in opera. The formidable body of literature that exists already on the artistic life of Vienna at this period is evidence of the abiding interest in this particular time and place. In using Vienna as an example my research also underlines two more general points: that a consideration of the wider artistic context is valuable in understanding a piece of music and, conversely, that a society's music is part of its discourses.

In this chapter, I consider the current state of writing on gender and opera, emphasising those aspects which have a bearing on the approach I have chosen in this thesis. I then outline briefly the research methodology that I have adopted, going on to explore some of the implications of my methodology, and the questions that it raises.

### Opera and Gender - an overview

The idea that the links between a particular society and the music that it produces are traceable in that music, is not a new one. The writings of T.W. Adorno, and after him Carl Dahlhaus, emphasise that music is capable of 'present[ing] social problems through its own material and according to its

own formal laws'.¹ However much of the writing on music in the first threequarters of the twentieth-century avoided the challenge of showing how the detail of the music might be related to 'social problems' (or, more broadly, to society and its workings). It was not until the late 1980s, that a number of musicologists began to work in this area and, in particular, to extend feminist ideas that had been developed in disciplines such as literature and film theory, to create a discussion about gender in music.

It is not surprising that studies of opera have been at the forefront of this "new" musicology (though it is no longer so very new). Opera is not only a musical genre that is unequivocally representational, but it is also one which has gender at the heart of many of the stories it tells.<sup>2</sup> Two principal texts define the starting point for this way of looking at music: Catherine Clément's *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*<sup>3</sup> and Susan McClary's collection of essays *Feminine Endings*.<sup>4</sup> Clément focuses on the 'darkly misogynistic aspects' of nineteenth-century opera plots, and sees in the music a way of lulling the audience's suspicions of those plots, but does not, in general, discuss the details of the music.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, in *Feminine Endings*, McClary engages very consciously with the detail of the music which she discusses (both operatic and textless), attempting to show that its construction relates to the conventions and assumptions that informed the discourse on gender when the music was first created.

<sup>1</sup> T.W. Adorno, 'On the social situation of music' (1932) in *Essays on Music* trans. Susan Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 393.

p.4.

Catherine Clément, Opera, or the Undoing of Women, trans. Betsy Wing (London: Virago, 1989).

5 Smart 'Introduction' in Smart, Siren Songs, p.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 'it is no accident that feminist criticism of music began with opera, where gender relationships and sexual conflict are usually at center stage, and where the very presence of words provides a quick riposte to those skeptics who wonder how music can have anything to do with gender.' Mary Ann Smart, 'Introduction' in Mary Ann Smart (ed.) Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.4.

Susan McClary, Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

<sup>6&#</sup>x27;The music makes one forget the plot, but the plot sets traps for the imaginary. The plot works quietly, plainly visible to all, but outside the code of pleasure of the opera. It is totally dull [...] it is familiar and forgettable. But beyond the romantic ideology, lines are being woven, tying up characters and leading them to death for transgression – for transgression of familial rules, political rules, the things at stake in sexual and authoritarian power. That is what it is all about.' Clément, *Undoing*, p.10.

Since the publication of *Feminine Endings*, much writing on opera has embraced the opportunity to examine it in its social context, producing a multiplicity of approaches, which have taken the discourse in many different directions. My approach in this study has been influenced by a number of these concerns, which I have summarized here in terms of four strands: investigations of female characters, the part played by the singing voice in the representation of those characters, the importance more generally of the performer (which has various ramifications), and, finally, the relationship between music and subjectivity.

Firstly, and perhaps most centrally, there is the preoccupation with female characters. Clément's work has inspired a large body of literature which attempts to understand the way that ideas of gender are represented through the words, music and action of opera's female characters. Salome is one of the characters who has been most discussed, and a sketch of some of the approaches to the character and the opera will give an idea of the diversity of approaches. Both McClary<sup>7</sup> and Lawrence Kramer<sup>8</sup> focus on the fear of feminine sexuality which they see expressed in the opera, while Carolyn Abbate points to a liberating and radical approach to points-of-view. Sander Gilman sees Salome as 'perverted because she serves as the audience's focus for a set of representations of difference, all of which are understood as perverted', 10 while the Hutcheons 11 investigate the opera, and particularly Salome's dancing, in the context of contemporary interest in hysteria and the body of the hysteric. A recent article by Davinia Caddy<sup>12</sup> continues this investigation of the dance, discussing the way that Salome's 'Dance of the Seven Veils' made its way into popular culture before the First World War.

<sup>7</sup> McClary, Feminine Endings, pp. 99-101.

<sup>9</sup> Carolyn Abbate, 'Opera, or the Envoicing of Women' in Solie, Musicology and Difference,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Lawrence Kramer, 'Culture and Musical Hermeneutics: the Salome complex' Cambridge Opera Journal 2 3 (1990), 269-94.

pp. 225-258.

Sander L. Gilman, 'Strauss and the Pervert', in Arthur Groos and Roger Parker (eds), Reading Opera (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 317. The 'perversions' he discusses are principally Jewishness and homosexuality.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Linda and Michael Hutcheon, 'Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*' in Smart, *Siren Songs*, pp. 204-221.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Davinia Caddy, 'Variations on the Dance of the Seven Veils' Cambridge Opera Journal 17 1 (2005), 35-58.

The second important strand in the feminist reappraisal of opera has been to emphasise the importance of the physical reality of the performer: the voice and the body. A number of authors discuss the idea that the voice of the female singer gives her power, that there is in her voice 'something irresistibly admirable and troubling, something that commands our admiration and attention'. 13 In particular, this has led to an interest in the way that the "equality" of men's and women's voices<sup>14</sup> means that the voice of the opera diva can 'serve both as a mode of and a metaphor for female empowerment in a culture that traditionally placed women on the side of silence.'15 Carolyn Abbate's approach to Salome, meanwhile, emphasises the importance of the voice of the (female) singer, which runs counter to the tradition (summed up in the title of Edward T. Cone's book The Composer's Voice)16 that music is heard primarily as the voice of the (generally male) composer. Abbate discusses the possibility that the singer's voice makes 'a sound-text [in which] the women's singing voices themselves have an explicitly authorial force'17 that 'speaks through a musical work written by a male composer'.18

Discussions of the voice in this context, however, often take the form of a celebration of the non-rational and the anti-mimetic 'the ear that thrills to the isolated laugh or cry'19 which echo Barthes' approach,20 and his linking of the voice and the body. Michelle Duncan's interest in the voice as an expression of the bodily<sup>21</sup> is part of this strand, while McClary's approach is to see vocal extremes such as 'repetitive, ornamental or chromatic excess' as an expression of the tension between the rational, normative, patriarchal 'frame' and the

<sup>13</sup> Ralph P. Locke, 'What Are These Women Doing in Opera' in En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (eds.) (New York, Columbia

University Press, 1995) p. 65

14 'Women can sing as loudly as men, their voices embrace as large a range as those of men and they have the advantage of commanding heights where they can emit sounds of unparalled incisiveness'. Susan J. Leonardi and Rebecca A. Pope, The Diva's Mouth: Body Voice and Prima Donna politics (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1996), p. 16

quoting Paul Robinson (1989).

15 Leonardi and Pope, Diva's Mouth, p. 74.

16 Edward T. Cone, The Composer's Voice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> Abbate, 'Envoicing' p.228.

18 Abbate, 'Envoicing' p.229.

19 Smart 'Introduction', p.5

20 Roland Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice' in The Responsibility of Forms trans. Richard

Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press 1991), pp. 267-277.

<sup>21</sup> Michelle Duncan, 'The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity' Cambridge Opera Journal 16 3 (2004), 283-306.

woman whose 'exuberant singing leaves the mundane world of social convention behind'.<sup>22</sup> In 'Body and Voice in Melodrama and Opera' Peter Brooks makes the link between the two genres in terms of what he calls 'the spectacularization of both body and voice', citing the spectacular scenery, costumes and voices displayed in major opera houses.<sup>23</sup> The Hutcheons' and Caddy's articles on Salome (cited above), similarly acknowledge the importance of the body of the performer through their discussions of Salome's dancing.24

The discussion of the singer's body is linked to the third important strand in the discussion of music in its social context: the emphasis on the performer and on music as performance rather than score. This emphasis stems from an overtly feminist interest in performers, because so many of them are women, but also from ethno-musicological research on the one hand, and research into performance practice on the other.

Feminist interest in performers starts with the realisation that the answer to one of the questions which Suzanne Cusick poses as central to the feminist's musicological project: 'Where are the women, in music, in music's history[?]',25 is very often that the women are performing. This means that not only are the lives of female musicians interesting as part of women's history and the history of music, but also that in looking at music from a feminist perspective, the creative input of performers becomes very important, since this is the area in which so many female musicians' creativity was expressed.

While the lives of famous singers are often well-documented in biographies and autobiographies, it is only comparatively recently that works such as Rupert Christiansen's Prima Donna have directed attention specifically to the personal and professional issues that have arisen for female singers, as successful and talented women in the public and male-dominated world of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> McClary, Feminine Endings, p.92. Note that one of the 'madwomen' that McClary discusses

is the Woman in Erwartung.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Brooks, 'Body and Voice in Melodrama and Opera' in Smart, Siren Songs, p.122.

<sup>24</sup> Hutcheons, 'Staging' and Caddy, 'Variations'.

<sup>25</sup> Suzanne G. Cusick, 'Gender, Musicology and Feminism' in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds), Rethinking Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999), p. 482.

opera. 26 Written more recently, Susan Rutherford's The Prima Donna and Opera focuses on opera as 'a forum for traversing gender confines in a complex interplay of corroborative and transgressive acts', in which, 'for the artist of the period – and also arguably for the female audience – opera [...] was a metier for female labour, a focus for female spectatorship, a sphere for female aspiration'. 27 Writers have been also been interested to show how performers were involved in the creation of the music they sang, research which includes both female and male singers.28 However, there is very little published on the creation of a performed role that starts from the perspective of the singer her- or himself.29 Instead, singers in their autobiographical works tend to focus on the people they have worked with, the ups and downs of their careers, or the vocal and dramatic challenges and disasters they have experienced.<sup>30</sup> Where singers discuss issues of interpretation, it tends to be in a didactic context, which gives less clue to their working methods than might be supposed.31 As a result, an account of the singer's input into the creation of an opera from the singer's point of view has, so far, been lacking.

Meanwhile, the non-feminist (or not-necessarily feminist) discipline of ethnomusicology has demonstrated the value of seeing music as a social activity, and the study of music as including the study of performances and

and Clément, but only to dismiss it. (p.2 and p.314).

Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera*, 1815-1930 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 18 (both quotations). Rutherford's book investigates the experience of female singers as they negotiated the expectations for female behaviour in the society around them.

(2007), 1-19.

While Rutherford *Prima Donna* pp. 259-274 analyses the way that various performers represented a range of female characters, she does not engage in detail with the singers' creative process.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Rupert Christiansen, *Prima Donna*: A History (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Pimlico, 1995). It is interesting that Christiansen comments that 'feminist writers have shown no interest in prima donnas, despite massive and justified attention paid to their sister painters, writers and scientists.' (p.2). While this may have been true when the book was first published in 1986, is certainly no longer the case. Christiansen does refer briefly to the work of McClary and Clément, but only to dismiss it. (p.2 and p.314).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Recent essays include Susan Rutherford on Giuditta Pasta ("La cantatrice delle passioni": Giuditta Pasta and the idea of operatic performance', Cambridge Opera Journal 19 2 (2007), 107-138) and Karen Henson on the relationship between Verdi and the baritone Victor Maurel ('Verdi, Victor Maurel, and fin-de-siecle operatic performance' Cambridge Opera Journal, 19 1 (2007), 1-19.

creative process.

This is the case, for example, with the autobiographies of Marie Gutheil-Schoder's contemporaries such as Maria Jeritza, Sunlight and Song: a singer's life trans. F.H. Martens (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1924) and Lotte Lehman, On Wings of Song, (London: Kegan, Paul & Co., 1938).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> For example Lilli Lehmann, *How to sing* trans. Richard Aldrich (rev. and supplemented edn of 1924 trans. Clara Willenbücher) (New York: Dover, 1993) or Lotte Lehmann, *More than singing: the interpretation of songs* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1945).

audiences as well as scores (which are of course often not part of the non-Western musical traditions that are the core of the ethnomusicological project). Recent writings on performances and audiences trace the relationship between opera and the rest of society in multiple ways including discussions of the practical issues involved in mounting an opera,32 the way that a particular discourse is reflected in operatic staging<sup>33</sup> or, closer to the concerns of this thesis, the relationship between the discourse on gender and particular stagings of Mozart's operas.34 This approach has been particularly inspired by the understanding that, as McClary puts it

not even the greatest symphony can determine how it will be assessed or the kind of impact it will have on the world: its post-compositional life and (in some crucial sense) its meanings, depend on the kinds of responses circulated about it in publicity blurbs, newspaper reviews, programme guides and

As a result, there has also been an increasing interest in the analysis of reception. This may be explicitly concerned with difference and gender, such as Mitchell Morris's examination of the viewpoint of the Opera Queen<sup>36</sup> or Judith Tick's examination of Charles Ives's gender ideology,<sup>37</sup> but can also express a less overtly political interest in the way that music was heard at the time it was written.38

An initially practical interest in performance practice and historically-aware performance has also provided the impetus for research into music as performance. Modern performers' interest in enriching their performances by a knowledge of the technical and stylistic approaches that were current when the music was new, has informed an academic awareness of the importance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> David J. Levin, 'Opera out of performance: Verdi's Macbeth at San Francisco Opera' Cambridge Opera Journal 16 3 (2004), 249-267.

<sup>33</sup> Cormac Newark discusses the discourse on Italian unity in stagings of Guillaume Tell in 1840 and Don Carlos in 1867. Cormac Newark "In Italy we don't have the means for illusion"; Grand opéra in nineteenth-century Bologna' Cambridge Opera Journal 19 3 (2007),

<sup>34</sup> Wye Jamison Allanbrook, Mary Hunter and Gretchen A. Wheelock 'Staging Mozart's Women' in Smart, Siren Songs, pp. 47-66.

women in Smart, Siren Songs, pp. 47-00.

35 Susan McClary, 'Of Patriarchs... and Matriarchs, too' Musical Times, 135 1816 (1994), p. 368.

36 Mitchell Morris, 'Reading as an Opera Queen' in Smart, Siren Songs, pp 184-200.

37 Judith Tick, 'Charles Ives and Gender Ideology' in Smart, Siren Songs, pp. 83-106.

38 For example Roger Parker's discussion of the writings of Abramo Basevi in Roger Parker, Leonora's Last Act: Essays in Verdian Discourse (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1997), pp. 45-60.

of the performer's input into the music that is heard, which is not only central to the philosophical approach of writers like Lydia Goehr, <sup>39</sup> but has also inspired studies of specific performer's contributions such as Susan Rutherford's study of Giuditta Pasta, or Suzanne Aspden's of Cuzzoni and Bordoni.40

In her article on Giuditta Pasta, Rutherford writes 'I am hoping that one day acknowledgment of singer's corporeality will be similarly matched by that of their mentality.'41 This interest in the point of view of the performer is part of an interest in subjectivity which is of considerable importance both to this thesis, and to current musicological thought, and forms the fourth and final strand in this summary. Kramer suggests that

music dramatizes or enacts the scenarios of subjectivity from "inside" the listener or performer. The latter does not so much identify with a distinct imaginary subject as discover a radical potentiality within his or her normal (i.e. familiar, everyday) subjectivity as that subjectivity is permeated by the music.42

This focus on the experiencing "I", which emphasises the importance of the audience's interpretation in creating the meaning of the artwork, is central to the post-modern approach. It is also connected to the questioning of canons, which is important to the feminist musicological project (and to the development of ideas of difference in many disciplines).<sup>43</sup> In addition, it is clearly important in the investigation of historical context and its connection to the music of a particular period. In Leonora's Last Act, Parker discusses the writings of Abramo Basevi whose Studie sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi is contemporary with Verdi's middle period. He comments on the 'potentially

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Lydia Goehr, The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An essay in the philosophy of music

<sup>(</sup>Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992).

Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992).

Susan Rutherford, 'La cantatrice' and Suzanne Aspden, 'The "rival queans" and the play of identity in Handel's Admeto' Cambridge Opera Journal 18 3 (2006), 301-331.

Rutherford, 'La cantatrice', p.109

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Lawrence Kramer, Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge (Berkeley, University of California Press 1995), p.7. While Kramer's point may be true about music in general, I would argue that in the case of opera, there is definitely the opportunity to 'identify with a distinct imaginary subject'.

<sup>43 &#</sup>x27;But just as feminist scholarship in other disciplines has gone beyond locating women in history to raise more fundamental questions, so feminist-based musicology has brought new perspectives to the study of the standard repertory. For the addition of women (or any other formerly marginalised group) to a canon immediately calls attention to the fact of the canon's constructedness, its dependence on changing social values.' McClary, 'Of Patriarchs...', p. 366.

huge aesthetic distance between our musical world and Basevi'44 and the 'shock' of finding that Basevi's approach is so different from that which is familiar to the modern reader.

This problem is, of course, also an opportunity. As Michael Steinberg points out, the power that music has to make links to the hearer's subjective experience, and the relationship between music and the cultural context in which it was created and heard, means that it constitutes a 'key genre in the history of cultural and aesthetic form, and equally [...] a significant existential component in the history of cultural life'45. And yet, as he says, '[t]he case for music as a dimension of history [...] still seems to require special pleading. 46. I hope that this thesis will persuade the reader that no further special pleading is necessary.

### Research Methodology

The basis for my research methodology is the idea that the way that the people involved in opera (which includes the writers of words and music, all those involved in the performance and also the members of the audience) developed representations of gender, was intimately linked with the discourse on gender in other media. Before investigating the representation of gender in opera, I therefore focus first on the discourse as it appears in the texts of the period, including political, philosophical, medical and literary writings. The core of the research is the period 1900-1918, the final years of the Habsburg Empire before the founding of the Austrian Republic. However it is, of course, impossible, and would not even be desirable to limit the texts considered to this core period or strictly to Vienna. Not only is a discourse informed by the past as well as the present, but an author looking back to a particular time may offer a view of great clarity, as for example in the vivid descriptions in Stefan Zweig's memoir The World of Yesterday, 47 which was written in the 1940s. In addition to this, Viennese culture did not exist in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Parker, Leonora's Last Act, p. 60 <sup>45</sup> Michael P. Steinberg, Listening to Reason: Culture, Subjectivity and Nineteenth-Century Music (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p.1.

Steinberg, Listening, p. 1
 Stefan Zweig, The World of Yesterday (first published 1943) (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).

isolation: as the capital of the Habsburg Empire, it was a melting pot of cultures, with close personal and artistic links with the rest of the German-speaking world, and (to a lesser extent) to other parts of Europe and to North America.

My choice of the texts that I discuss in this thesis is influenced by a desire to understand the discourse on gender through as wide a variety of viewpoints as possible. In particular, it includes the writings and ideas of those involved in the women's movement, and those whose attitude to gender was seen as progressive as well as those (perhaps better known) writers whose attitude was more conservative. I see this as a way to redress the balance in the existing published literature, which has, until recently, largely ignored progressive views of women in the discussion of Viennese "modernity".48 I also examine the discourse on gender in the works of a variety of other writers, including, those who were very widely read, such as Karl Kraus, those like Arthur Schnitzler who were influential in the avant-garde, and controversial but important figures such as Otto Weininger and Sigmund Freud. In forming an overview of the various strands in the discourse, my emphasis is on shared themes and patterns, including those that were shared by writers who were not, at least apparently, in sympathy. I hope thereby to show that there are patterns in the underlying preoccupations, which transcend immediate differences of opinion.

The themes and patterns that emerge from my work on the discourse in written texts then form the starting point for an investigation into the discourse in opera. This has two parts: first, an analysis of three operas as case studies and second, an investigation into the life and work of a prominent female singer of the period.

From the very large numbers of operas presented in Vienna between 1900 and 1918<sup>49</sup> I have chosen three operas as case studies: *Der Traumgörge* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> William M. Johnston's *The Austrian Mind*: An Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) is an exception in including Rosa Mayreder among his 'critics of aestheticism'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Between 1900 and 1918, recently written operas presented at the Vienna Opera included Richard Strauss: Feuersnot (in 1902), Elektra (1909), Der Rosenkavalier (1911), Ariadne auf Naxos

(Alexander Zemlinsky), Salome (Richard Strauss) and Erwartung (Arnold Schoenberg). The choice of operas by different composers is consistent with my interest in identifying a discourse which transcends personal opinions and preoccupations. These particular operas were chosen because they were written very close together in time (between 1904 and 1909) and because of the richness and interest in their portrayal of the central female character. Two of the composers were Viennese (Schoenberg and Zemlinsky), while Strauss had strong links with Vienna<sup>50</sup>.

My approach to analysing the operas developed out of the differing structures and styles of both libretti and music. In each case, I spent some time considering the nature of the libretto, drawing out patterns of imagery, and patterns of growth and change in the characters, as well as considering the libretto's overall structure. I also considered some of the patterns in the music, such as harmonic structures, instrumentation and recurring patterns of motif or musical gesture. This then lead me into an investigation of the relationship between libretto and music, focusing on motivic, gestural and textural ways that the music relates to the text and the dramatic situation. Throughout my analysis, I tried to integrate the discourse on gender that I had observed in the writings of the period with my gradually developing sense of the discourse as expressed in the operas.

To complement this work on operatic texts, by investigating how the discourse on gender was developed in performance, I then discuss the life and work of the singer Marie Gutheil-Schoder. One of the foremost singers at the Vienna Opera at this period, Gutheil-Schoder sang both the standard

(version with prologue) (1916), Salome (1918); Zemlinsky: Es war einmal...(1900), Eine florentenisches Tragödie (1917); Pfitzner: Die Rose vom Liebesgarten (1905), Die arme Heinrich (1915), Palestrina (1916); Schreker: Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin (1913); Korngold Violanta (1916), Der Ring des Polykrates (1916). (Vienna Opera posters). Opera and operetta were also presented at the Volksoper, and operetta at the Carltheater and the Theater an der Wien (See Anthony Beaumont, Zemlinsky (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 135-136, pp. 78-79, pp. 129-130 respectively) Visiting companies sometimes presented opera at other theatres, most notably the Breslau State Opera's Viennese première of Salome at the Deutsches Theater in 1907 (See La Grange, Mahler vol. 3, p. 656).

50 Schoenberg and Zemlinsky were both born in Vienna, and were resident in the city while the operas were being written. Strauss did not move to Vienna until 1919, when he became joint director of the Staatsoper (as the Vienna Opera was called after the foundation of the Austrian Republic in 1918), but had many friends and contacts in the town at this period, including Gustav and Alma Mahler, and Marie Gutheil-Schoder, whose career he had been

partly responsible for launching (as discussed in Chapter 7).

repertoire of the day and much of the new repertoire. She premièred *Erwartung*, and sang numerous Salomes, as well as the Viennese premières of *Der Rosenkavalier* (as Octavian) and Zemlinsky's *Eine Florentenisches Tragödie* (as Bianca). My emphasis is on understanding the way that the roles that she played were developed in her preparation for performance, and hence on the relationship between the discourse on gender as it appears in scores and libretti and how it appeared in the creation of a performance. In discussing this I emphasise Gutheil-Schoder's own writings about her work, both in letters and in printed articles, although I also discuss contemporary reviews and opinions of her work.

By grounding my musicological thoughts in the political and cultural history of gender representation, I aim to make them relevant to a description of Viennese thought and culture at this time. This is a different approach to that which some writers in critical musicology have adopted, where texts taken from a wide variety of times and places are used as part of an analysis. <sup>51</sup> While this approach can offer interesting insights, it makes it harder for the analyst to discuss the contribution of the opera to the contemporary discourse.

This brief outline of my methodology provides a starting point for considering the path I have taken through the available texts. In the next section I shall consider some of the issues that arise from the choices I have made. In discussing them, I explain my research methodology in more detail, as well as clarifying my position in the discourse.

### **Underlying Issues**

In developing a research methodology, it has been necessary to take a position on a number of issues, both philosophical and musicological. Research of this kind is fraught with methodological and philosophical questions and difficulties, and although I believe that my approach is a reasonable one, I have no desire to claim that it is the only possible one (indeed it will become clear how much my work is indebted to other writers

<sup>51</sup> For example Abbate's use of Patrick Conrad's film Mascara (1978) in 'Envoicing'.

with other approaches). Rather my choices have been informed by a certain pragmatism, which is of two different kinds. Firstly, I have tried to adopt a position that is well-defined and well-grounded, both philosophically and methodologically, so that the analysis of musical and historical detail rests on reasonably firm foundations. Secondly, I have chosen, in general, to look at those aspects of the material which might be of interest to a performer (by which term I include all those involved with the performance, including directors and coaches, as well as the singers, conductors and instrumentalists who actually perform), drawing on my own experience of the sort of questions that arise when preparing a role for performance.

In the discussion that follows, I have divided the philosophical and methodological issues that arose during my research into three areas. Firstly, I consider questions about music and meaning: in what sense music can be said to have meaning, and how that meaning arises. Secondly, I look at the relationship between opera and narrative, and investigate the application of narratological ideas to opera. Thirdly, I consider some issues that arise because opera is a performing art, that must be understood through a variety of 'traces', 52 such as the libretto and score, performances, and so on.

### Music and meaning

If musical works are to be considered as forming part of a discourse, it is helpful to clarify the ways that music can mean, and hence can contribute to a view or representation of the world (which is the meaning of "discourse" that I have adopted). In this section, I consider firstly referential or mimetic meaning (the idea that music may point at something in the world external to it)53 and, secondly, emotional meaning (including the expression of emotion

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> A trace, as Nattiez defines it, is the 'neutral level' of a symbolic phenomenon (in this case, an opera or part of one), which is 'embodied physically and materially in the form of *trace* accessible to the five senses'. He distingishes this from the poietic dimension, which arises because the phenomenon 'results from a *process of creation* that may be described or reconstituted' and the esthesic dimension, which arises as meanings are assigned, or constructed, by the 'receiver', who experiences the phenomenon. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.11-12 (italics in original).

<sup>53</sup> Which is, for example, Adorno's preoccupation. See footnote 1.

in music, and its power to move us).54 Following this, a discussion of the application of metaphor theory<sup>55</sup> to music provides a way of understanding how these two kinds of meaning, and also intra-musical meaning (the internal patterning of a particular piece, and its relationship to other pieces),<sup>56</sup> might be constructed by the listener in response to a piece of music. Finally, these ideas are extended to show how the other media in a multi-media artform such as opera might contribute to the meaning that is constructed.

It is clear that music does not refer to the world external to it in the same way that words do. There is no musical equivalent to pointing to an object and saying the word that "means" that object ("door" "pencil" "teacher"). But as Robert Hatten points out, the way that words express meaning is not as unequivocal as it seems at first:

the organisation of an individual's semantic space is viewed by the semiotician Umberto Eco as being more like an encyclopedia than a dictionary - with rich entries and cross-references rather than narrow definitions for each concept and those more like a network than a strictly logical hierarchy.57

Hatten therefore rejects the idea that for music to refer it must be possible to 'approach musical meaning in terms of a lexicon of sound terms'58 since the work of writers like Eco mean that 'objectivist referentiality is under attack even for language'. He concludes that 'theories of music need not be held accountable for failing an already discredited standard of referentiality'.59 Eco's idea of a 'semantic space' suggests that the meaning of a text is a result of the interaction between the text and the recipient's experience of the use of the language. This implies that the reader or audience is part of the construction of meaning, since the nature of the 'entries and cross-references' is personal to each recipient of the text.

<sup>54</sup> As discussed, for example in Peter Kivy, The Corded Shell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980)

That is, the extension of the concept of metaphor to theories of cognition, as developed for example in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors we live by (Chicago: University of

Chicago Press, 1980). See footnote 75.

The idea that this type of meaning was the *only* possible one is often (though probably wrongly) attributed to Hanslick. See Nicholas Cook, *Music, Performance, Meaning* (Aldershot:

Ashgate, 2007), p. 217.

The Semiotic Theory and Analysis of Music (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyer, 1995), p. 373.

Hatten, 'Metaphor', p. 373.

Hatten, 'Metaphor', p. 374 (both quotations).

Taking this approach to meaning carries the risk of a descent into extreme relativism, where any interpretation of a work is as good as any other. However, in writing this thesis, I hope to avoid this problem (to some extent at least) by focusing on the way that meaning of a text is constrained, in the sense that some interpretations are more satisfactory than others. As James Johnson argues, the oboe's dotted note pattern in Haydn's Symphony No. 38 'La Poule'

is the image of a hen to some, the expression of merriment to others, and an essential thread in a web of indescribable content to others. But it would be hard to argue credibly that it is a funeral dirge, or paints the storming of the Bastille, or promotes slavery.<sup>60</sup>

I consider that the reason for this constraint is that the work is created by a person for other people, and there is some considerable sharing of experience between creator and audience: at the very least they share the experience of being human and generally they share much more. This sharing of terms of reference helps to explain how "constructivist" ideas like those expressed by Eco, can be consistent with common experience, which finds that communication *is* possible between people, though it may well be flawed or partial.

This grounding of communication in shared experience also means that the signs which communicate need not be wholly arbitrary, but rather there exists a 'motivation' in musical language (to use Robert Hatten's term) which operates 'as a kind of gravitational pull, stopping the conventional aspects of (musical) language from drifting too far from their moorings in culture and biology.'61

The experiences that are shared by the creator and the recipient of a work are crucial, then, to the communication between them, constraining the meanings that can be constructed and informing the choices of meaning, through both

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> James H. Johnson, Listening in Paris: a Cultural History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p.2.

<sup>61</sup> Spitzer Metaphor and Musical Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p.14, citing Robert S. Hatten Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

cultural conventions and their underlying 'motivation'. However, by using notation, Western Classical music makes it possible for a piece of music to be performed in a very different cultural setting from the one in which it was written. In reconstructing one particular part of the culture in which my operatic case studies were written (that is, the discourse on gender) I hope to find meanings that, while they may not be obvious to a modern recipient, were available to the contemporary audience, because this audience shared the culture of the opera's creators to a greater extent than we can now.

An approach to this is suggested by the writings of Hans Robert Jauss,<sup>62</sup> who discusses the idea that the meanings that are available to the recipient of an art-work can be thought of in terms of a 'horizon of expectation', which refers (though he does not define it explicitly) to 'the mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text'.<sup>63</sup> His use of the word "horizon" [Horizont] is consistent with his teacher Gadamer's:

"Horizon" [...] describes our situatedness in the world, but it should not be thought of in terms of a fixed or closed standpoint; but rather, it is 'something into which we move and which moves with us'. It may also be defined with reference to the prejudices we bring with us at any given time, since these represent a "horizon" over which we cannot see. The act of understanding is then described [...] as a fusion of one's own horizon with the historical horizon [Horizontverschmelzung].

In this thesis I have tried to achieve this 'fusing of horizons' by analysing some of the ideas that might have informed the point-of-view of the opera's creators and recipients. This idea of point-of-view, or subjectivity, which may be described (borrowing a definition from Michael Steinberg) as 'the subject in motion, in experience and analysis of itself and the world', 65 turns out to be central to my thesis in another way, in that as my research progressed it became clear that questions of subjectivity were an important part of the discourse in gender. 66

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> See for example, Hans Robert Jauss, *Towards an aesthetic of reception* trans. Timothy Bahti (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), pp. 22-32.

Robert C. Holub, Reception Theory: A critical introduction (London: Methuen, 1984), p.59.
 Holub, Reception, p. 42 quoting Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1975), p. 271.
 Steinberg, Listening, p.5.

<sup>66</sup> In discussing the subjective, a fine balance must be kept between, on the one hand, an awareness of a shared 'horizon of expectation', which results from the culture in which a

The response of the audience to music, is, of course an emotional as well as an intellectual one. In his book *The Corded Shell*, Peter Kivy suggests that the expression of emotion in music is the result of a 'patchwork of features' which range from those that are relatively iconic, in that they share contours with the emotion they express 'for example the "weeping" figure of grief or the falling line of "Lasciatemi morire"', to those such as the minor mode which (at least nowadays) represents emotion 'by custom or convention merely'.<sup>67</sup>

This approach is helpful in making more specific the ways in which shared culture may make possible the construction of meaning. Where I part company with Kivy, however, is over the issue of the nature of the emotions that may arise in the recipient of the music. Kivy is scornful of what he describes as the 'arousal theory' of emotion in music.

The theory, in whatever form it appears, that musical expressiveness arises in emotive arousal, is not a tenable one; and the serious objections to it are not by any means new. To begin with, there is the obvious objection that the most unpleasant emotions imaginable are perceived in music; and if that meant our feeling those emotions, it would be utterly inexplicable why anyone should willfully submit himself to the music. *Tristan und Isolde* is full of music expressive of deep anguish. None, I would think, except the masochists among us, would listen to such music if it were indeed anguish-producing. Nor, if one considers the range of emotions that *Tristan* is expressive of, would it be thought possible that the concert-goer could, unless he or she were some kind of super-charged mannic-depressive [sic], experience them in five hours.<sup>68</sup>

In proposing an alternative way to understand music's emotional expressiveness, Kivy quotes the eighteenth-century writer Reid who gives the example of "a mother who 'understood that, the first time her son cry'd, he was in pain'. Kivy points out that the mother

subject lives, and which partly determines the subject's view, and on the other, an awareness of the autonomy and particularity of the individual, which means that each person's conception of, and contribution to a discourse will be different, and uniquely their own. This is why I have often favoured the term 'point of view', which I take to be roughly synonymous with 'subjectivity', since it encompasses both the point where the viewer stands (and hence the position of their horizon) and the autonomous act of viewing. It also avoids the grammatical and political overtones attached to the word subject, which I take to be another advantage. My intention is not, however, to privilege the visual over the aural, but rather to use the idea of "seeing" in the sense of "grasping" or "understanding", which can be a response to something seen, but can (and often is) the result of an aural experience.

67 Kivy, Shell, p. 83 (both quotations).

68 Kivy, Shell, pp. 22-23.

did not feel pain, she understood that her son was in pain. The pain was produced not in the sense that she was made to feel pain, but in the sense that the concept of pain was communicated to her in the form of the knowledge that her son was in pain.69

This seems to me an inadequate description of a listener's response to music, just as the idea that a mother hearing her son cry merely "understands" that the child is in pain is inadequate. My experience is that the mother (or anyone else who cares for or about the child) will feel pain on hearing the child cry, not just an abstract "understanding" of pain. Clearly, she does not feel the same pain that the child feels: she has not actually experienced the stubbed toe or the missed treat. Her pain may be milder than the child's and it may be complicated by other emotions (guilt, impatience or a desire to heal the hurt, for example), but it is an emotional response, not an intellectual one. Similarly the audience member watching Tristan und Isolde need not go through the emotions that the characters go through in order to be "moved" by the performance. But their involvement in the performance is an emotional one, and the emotions are a response to the emotions expressed in the music and the drama of the piece.

The quotation from Reid becomes more helpful if the idea of "understanding" another's pain can include some kind of emotional response which resembles, though it is not identical to, the emotions expressed. In this thesis, I have used the word "empathy" to describe this sort of emotional alignment. In using this term, I intend it to be clear that I am not claiming that the expression of emotion in music arouses the identical emotion in the listener (especially since the question of what would constitute "identity" is highly problematic), but that I do believe that the listener's response bears some resemblance to the emotion expressed, even if other emotions are also present. 70 And like the mother's response to her child, the listener's emotional

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Kivy, Shell, p.25 (both quotations). First quotation cites Thomas Reid, Lectures on the Fine Arts (1774), Peter Kivy (ed.) (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1973), p.49.
<sup>70</sup> Roger Scruton, arguing that music does not 'evoke' emotions (by which he means something similar to Kivy's 'arousal') writes: 'Sympathy has a logic of its own, and does not imitate its subject' (Roger Scruton, The Aesthetics of Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). My use of the word 'empathy' specifically excludes 'imitation', and I have chosen it in preference to the word 'sympathy' because of the multiple and ambiguous meanings that the latter word can have latter word can have.

response to the music will be modulated by other emotions, which result from the context in which it is heard. This context includes the other ideas and emotions expressed in the rest of the piece, but also the situation of the listener: the complex network of ideas and associations which they bring to the construction of meaning.

This idea of empathy is not intended as a comprehensive theory to explain why music moves us. However, I do believe that one of the ways that music can mean is to give the listener the opportunity to feel a particular range of emotions, in response to or aligned with the emotions expressed in the music. In a dramatic context, such as opera this then makes it possible to "understand", in the emotional sense, the feelings and motivations of a character. Something similar is expressed by Jauss in his book Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics. 71 Jauss lays out a taxonomy of what he calls 'identification with the hero', which suggests the range of emotions that the audience can feel in response to the hero's experiences in a story (the gender assumption is Jauss's). These range from admiration and emulation via pity and cathartic release to alienation. 72 Jauss's concept of 'identification', particularly in those forms he calls 'sympathetic' and 'cathartic' identification, has a good deal in common with the emotional involvement that I am calling 'empathy', and makes explicit an important part of that idea: that the aesthetic response has the potential to show the responder the world from another person's point of view.<sup>73</sup>

One of the most interesting developments in recent thinking about music has arisen from application of theories of cognition to musicology. In Conceptualizing Music, Lawrence Zbikowski suggests that

understanding of music draws on the same cognitive processes that humans use to organize their understanding as a whole. Confronted with musical sound, these processes create musical concepts, the things that [enable the listener] to gain a grasp of the music. The act of conceptualizing music is the beginning of a whole chain of cognitive events that allow us to theorize about

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics* trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).
<sup>72</sup> Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, p.159.
<sup>73</sup> Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience* pp. 172-181.

music and to analyze the things that populate our aural past, present and future 74

Musicological understanding of this process of conceptualisation has been enriched by the comparatively recent extension of the concept of metaphor from literary or rhetorical theory to theories of cognition, <sup>75</sup> as a means of understanding 'the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another'. <sup>76</sup> In *Metaphor and Musical Thought*, Michael Spitzer discusses the human ability to 'see as' or 'hear as', allowing musical structure to be related to other kinds of structure:

To comprehend the phrase as an image, an utterance, or an organism is to allow one's hearing of a musical structure to be shaped by a knowledge of different spheres of human activity: representation, language, life. This can happen because a concept such as "language" is not a monolithic entity, but a system of relationships. Since it is highly structured itself, it will impose this structure upon the domain onto which it is projected.<sup>77</sup>

The idea of 'hearing as' is a powerful way of explaining how music can seem to relate to objects outside itself (such as objects in the world or human emotions), without suggesting that it "refers" in the same way that words or representational visual art can. Spitzer goes on to discuss the idea that even conventional musical analysis (such as the methods of Schenker or Meyer) can be seen as ways of 'hearing as', based on different underlying assumptions about musical structure. The internal structure of music, and its relationship to other pieces of music, (which I termed 'intra-musical meaning' above) can therefore also be seen in terms of musical conceptualisation and 'hearing as'.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Lawrence M. Zbikowski, Conceptualizing Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) contains a number of valuable papers, dating originally from the 1970s, which outline this approach.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> George Lakoff 'The contemporary theory of metaphor' in Ortony, Metaphor and Thought, p. 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Spitzer, Metaphor, p. 12.

Hatten, 'Metaphor' pp. 374-377 points out that some ways of applying metaphor theory to music are more appropriate than others. To engage with this issue is beyond the scope of this thesis, but his caveats are clearly important.

In *Analysing Musical Multimedia*,<sup>79</sup> Nicholas Cook extends the use of metaphor theory to multi-media forms, of which of course opera is one. Cook points out that metaphors are based on an 'enabling similarity'<sup>80</sup> between two concepts which will make mappings between them possible. He points out, however, that because the two concepts *are* different, there will also be aspects that are in conflict. He suggests that in a similar way, the ideas expressed by the different media in a multi-media art-form can at any given moment be congruent or conflicting, and that the overall meaning that is available to the audience member will be the complex result of this interaction between media.

In writing on opera, I take this as an encouragement to look at the text and music and, in principle, also the acting, staging and stage design, not only as being integral parts of the operatic experience, but also as being potentially in conflict, with meaning arising from their interaction. In looking at each opera's score and libretto, I therefore consider the structure and content of each in its own right, as well as the potential for congruence or conflict with the other medium. In focusing on score and libretto, I chose not to extend my research to contemporary set and costume design, or how the operas were staged, though this area is a potentially fascinating one for future research.

### Opera as narrative

Central to the way that I analysed the operas that were my case-studies was a desire to take the libretto seriously. That is, to investigate the libretto's contribution to the representation of gender in the operas in terms of its structure and content, as well as its interaction with the musical ideas that are expressed. My analysis involved applying a number of ideas from literary theory, in particular ideas on narrativity and the representation of consciousness. I also found that in looking closely at the libretto I was able to understand the structure and content of the music in a way that was new, and bore on the discourse on gender in a number of very interesting ways. My exploration of the libretti was informed particularly by two books of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). <sup>80</sup> Cook, *Multimedia* the term is defined on p. 70.

literary theory: Dorritt Cohn's Transparent Minds<sup>81</sup> and Mieke Bal's Narratology. 82 Cohn focuses particularly on novelistic techniques for describing the internal workings of the mind, while Bal covers a much broader area, recognising narrative possibilities in the visual arts as well as written text, and offering a theory that aims to cover narrative techniques of all kinds.

Bal defines three levels in a narrative text, which she terms 'text', 'story' and 'fabula'. She offers the following definitions:

a narrative text is a text in which an agent relates ("tells") a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof. A story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner. A fabula is a series of logically or chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors.83

While there is considerable controversy over whether it is appropriate to see textless music as narrative,84 it seems to me to be reasonable to suggest that an opera "tells a story", and therefore can be seen as a narrative in Bal's sense, given two extra conditions.

Firstly, as always with the performing arts, there is potential for confusion over what constitutes the "text", since (as discussed below) both the score and libretto and the performance of the work are best considered as traces rather than definitive texts. Since in this thesis the traces of the music that I am considering are the scores and libretti of my case studies, I shall consider these as my "text", but without wishing to imply that the performance is not also a valid trace. The chapter on the work of Marie Gutheil-Schoder, which focuses on the creation of a performance in response to a score, redresses this balance to some extent.

real people who act in a play.

84 See Byron Almén, 'Narrative Archetypes, a critique, theory, and method of narrative analysis' Journal of Music Theory 47 1, (2003) 1-39, for a useful summary of thinking in this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Dorritt Cohn, Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction

<sup>(</sup>Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

<sup>82</sup> Mieke Bal, Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, trans. Christine Van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

<sup>83</sup> Bal, Narratology p.5. Italics in original. Bal uses the word 'actor' to describe the agents whose actions drive the story, and makes a distinction between actors and characters. I have not chosen to adopt this usage, and use 'character' throughout, to avoid confusion with the

Secondly, there is the question of the identity of the 'agent who relates', Bal defines this in the following way.

A narrative text is a story that is "told" in a certain medium; that is, it is converted into signs. As was evident from the definition of a narrative text [quoted above], these signs are produced by an agent who relates, who "utters" the signs. This agent cannot be identified with the writer, painter or filmmaker. Rather, the writer withdraws and calls upon a fictitious spokesperson, an agent technically known as the narrator. But the narrator does not narrate continually. Whenever direct speech occurs in the text, it is as if the narrator temporarily transfers this function to one of the actors. When describing the text layer, it is thus important to ascertain *who* is doing the narrating 85 narrating.

Similarly, in an opera the agent who relates cannot be identified with the composer (or the librettist). As in any dramatic form, the story is chiefly told in the words of the characters and the dramatic action. But opera also includes another contributor to the telling of the story: the voice of the orchestra. The idea of the orchestral voice acting as narrator is appealing, because the orchestra is both part of the action, in that its music underpins and is musically related to the characters' utterances, and yet it is distanced from the action, because it does not in general represent the voice of any particular character in the drama. The orchestral voice, like a narrator, is therefore in a position to set the scene (for example in a prelude such as the overture to Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier), to illustrate the character's mood by playing music whose emotional character is congruent, or conflicting, with the character's words (some examples of this will be found in my chapter on Salome), or even, especially through the use of leitmotiv, to comment on an aspect of the story of which the characters are not yet aware.86 Of course the orchestral voice cannot describe a sequence of events in order to "tell a story", as a narrator can in words, but, as will be seen, there is considerable scope for the orchestral voice to take part in the telling of the story, along with the voices of the singers, and the dramatic action.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Bal, Narratology p.8. Italics in original.
 <sup>86</sup> For example, Barry Millington's commentary on Die Walküre mentions 'The sounding of the Valhalla motif by horns and basses, announcing the real identity of the stranger at the wedding [Wotan], [which] is one of the classic uses of leitmotif to comment on the action.' Barry Millington, 'An Introduction to the Music of The Valkyrie'in ENO Opera Guide: The Valkyrie - Die Walküre (London: Calder Publications, 1983), p. 20.

The contribution of the orchestral voice makes it possible for an opera, like a narrative text, to give a sense of the internal workings of a character's mind, and to thus to show the story from a particular character's point of view. This is the technique that Bal describes as 'focalisation', defining it as 'the relationship between [...] the agent that sees, and that which is seen'. The focaliser that is 'the point from which the elements [of the story] are viewed' can be a character in the story, or can be an external narrator. Bal points out that if the story is focalised through a particular character,

that character will have an advantage over the other characters. The reader watches through the character's eyes, and will, in principle, be inclined to accept the vision presented by that character.<sup>87</sup>

In Transparent Minds, Dorritt Cohn attributes the 'the special life-likeness of narrative fiction' to the way that it can represent 'how another mind thinks, how another body feels'.88 Opera is not an art-form that could reasonably be described as "life-like", but the idea of "empathy" which I discussed above, is a way to understand how music might make it possible for the listener to experience the emotions of another. This is not confined to the music that the orchestra plays, of course, since the vocal lines will also express important ideas about the character's experience. But the idea of the orchestral voice narrating is a particularly powerful one, because the orchestral voice is not directly involved in the dramatic action, and therefore, like an external narrator, has the scope to focalise more than one point of view.

Despite the existing discourse on ways to apply ideas of narrativity to music, 89 the idea of the orchestral voice acting as narrator has not often been discussed. An exception is Carolyn Abbate's Unsung Voices, where she discusses Wagner's use of leitmotifs in Die Walküre, which makes it possible for the orchestra to "refer" to the future, and so to act as a narrator. 90

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Bal Narratology p.146. All three quotations. I have anglicised Bal's spelling: 'focalised' for

<sup>Bal Narratology p.146. All three quotations. I have anglicised Bal's spelling: 'focalised' for 'focalized' and so on, to remain consistent with the rest of this thesis.
Cohn Transparent Minds, pp. 5-6 (both quotes). Cohn sees it as paradoxical that this life-likeness arises from this intimate knowledge of another person's thoughts and feelings, which is 'what writers and readers know least in life'.
As discussed, for example by Lawrence Kramer in Music as Cultural Practice 1800-1900 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp.183-213.
The music that it speaks is a commentary. The voice of the orchestra is sometime assumed to be the "voice of the composer". But the orchestra's voice is, rather, the voice of a narrator.'</sup> 

Although the overlap between the "telling" that can be done by a narrator in a narrative text and that which is done by the voice of the orchestra is not perfect, the idea is a useful and powerful one in the context of the case studies in this thesis. In particular it seems to me valuable to realise that the voice of the orchestra need not necessarily be identical to the composer, so that, for example, a male composer need not write a "male" subject position for the orchestra, any more than a female novelist is incapable of describing a male character's point of view. In addition, as Cohn points out, an external narrator has the opportunity to slip in and out of the characters' heads, presenting first one character's viewpoint and then another, while also retaining the ability to stand outside the characters' consciousness. When standing outside, the narrator can judge or criticise the characters' behaviour, or comment on states of mind which the character cannot put into words. 91 In each case study, I investigate the ways in which the orchestral voice expresses the inner life of the characters, and the scope that exists for encouraging or discouraging empathy.

## Opera in performance

There is another way in which the inner life of the characters in an opera can be expressed, and that is through the musical and dramatic interpretation that is brought to the role by the performer. The discourse that I am examining was created not only through the musical and verbal material in the operas but also through the way that they were performed. Of course, it is impossible really to know what performances of these operas were like. Audio-visual records are entirely lacking, and the rare sound recordings that exist give meagre evidence of style and interpretation. Even if records were available, it would be impossible for a modern viewer to see the opera with the eyes of the audience member of a hundred years ago. Contemporary reviews are, of course, another possible source of evidence for the nature of performances, and I have considered these to some extent, though for the reasons explained below, they are not central to my analysis of the discourse in this thesis.

Carolyn Abbate, Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the nineteenth century (Princeton: Princeon University Press, 1991), p.169.

91 Cohn, Transparent Minds, p. 29.

There exists a continuing controversy in musicology between those who see the score as the primary trace of a piece of music, and the performance as "merely" an instance, and those like Stan Godlovitch who take the position that the performance is the music, while the score is a (rather incomplete) set of instructions for performance. As a performer myself, I feel strongly that performance is a creative act, not merely a mechanical process of reproduction, and I am struck by how often musicologists fail to take account of the performer. 93 My approach, therefore, has been always to keep in mind that music is a performing art, but also to respect the score and libretto as the essential starting point for an opera in the Western Classical tradition. When writing on the history of a performing art, it has to be recognised that whatever traces of the performance are available (score, libretto, reviews, performer's or composer's reminiscences, recordings and so on) are always only partial. But the analysis of a discourse is, anyway, a process of fitting together partial traces, like the pieces of an incomplete jigsaw (one which is also missing the picture on the box). One hopes at least to create the limited understanding of the informed outsider, which

can yield only crude generalizations that would strike insiders as "simplistic and tactless". Nevertheless, our very detachment gives us a perspective from which we can make comparisons and detect patterns invisible to insiders. 94

The case studies that I have chosen illustrate this "jigsaw" aspect very clearly. The core of my research, Vienna 1900-1918, encompasses the writing of all three operas (which were composed between 1904 and 1909) and the height of Marie Gutheil-Schoder's career. But to go further immediately requires straying outside this time and place. Two of the operas were written (both music and words) in Vienna by Viennese artists, one (Salome) was not. Salome was first performed in Vienna in 1907 by the Breslau State Opera (Mahler's application to the Imperial censor for permission to perform it at the Vienna

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Stan Godlovitch, *Musical Performance: A philosophical study* (London: Routledge, 1998).
<sup>93</sup> For example, Hanslick's comment (see Cook *Meaning* p. 231) on the surprising fact that the aria 'Che faro senza Eurydice' expresses Orfeo's grief at the loss of his wife, despite the fact that the tune is not, on its own, a particularly sad one, fails to take into account that the impression that the music makes will be very much influenced by the performer, whose interpretation will be a response to the music, the words and the dramatic situation. <sup>94</sup>Spitzer, *Metaphor*, p.45. <sup>95</sup> At the Deutsches Theater. See La Grange, *Mahler* vol. 3 p. 656.

Opera having been refused).96 Although many in Vienna would have had to wait to see Salome until it was staged at the Vienna Opera in 1918, earlier performances were widely reviewed,97 and the score was available for study.98 Der Traumgörge, however, was not performed until 1980, though rehearsals of the work at the Vienna Opera in 1907 meant that many of the singers at the opera house would have known (and indeed memorised parts of) the score. Similarly the score of Schoenberg's Erwartung was sent to a number of possible conductors and singers (including Marie Gutheil-Schoder) between its completion in 1909 and its first performance in 1924.99 The works were therefore in some sense part of the discourse well before they were actually performed and in particular formed part of the world-view of professional musicians.

Recently writers such as Carolyn Abbate have questioned the value of detailed analyses of music, such as those offered in this thesis, suggesting that

it is in the irreversible experience of playing, singing or listening that any meanings summoned by music come into being. Retreating to the work displaces that experience, and dissecting the work's technical features or saying what it represents reflect the wish *not* to be transported by the state that the performance has engendered in us. 100

While I have found Abbate's work fascinating and inspiring, and I applaud her emphasis on performance and the performer, I do not believe that 'dissecting the work's technical features or saying what it represents' represents a 'retreat', whether the score or the performance is the trace under consideration. Although, as Abbate points out later in the same article, to think about questions like this while performing is almost impossible, 101 the

<sup>96</sup> La Grange, Mahler vol. 3 p.396-397. <sup>97</sup> See, for example, La Grange, Mahler vol.3 pp 656-657.

Italics in original.

101 See Abbate, 'Drastic', p. 511.

<sup>98</sup> The full score was available from 1905.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> For example, in 1910, Schoenberg was in negotation with Artur Bodansky for a first performance in Mannheim (Letter to Artur Bodansky 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 1910 *Arnold Schoenberg Letters* Erwin Stein (ed.) trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London Faber & Faber, 1964), p. 24). Initially Martha Winternitz-Dorda was engaged (H.H. Stuckenschmidt, *Arnold Schoenberg* trans. Humphrey Searle (London: Calder, 1977), p.130), but in 1913 Schoenberg suggested the role to Marie Gutheil-Schoder (Letter to Gutheil-Schoder 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1913, Schoenberg *Letters* p.40). Rainer Simons at the Volksoper was also interested in mounting the first performance in 1910 (Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg*, p. 130).

100 Carolyn Abbate, "Music: Drastic or Gnostic" *Critical Inquiry* Spring 30 3 (2004), 505-506.

Italies in original

work of the performer is not just performance. As my study of the work of Marie Gutheil-Schoder underlines, an opera as performed is the result of a complex and creative process, involving the input of a large number of people, who spend considerable time and thought on creating the final performance. In this process there is space for thinking deeply about possible meanings, as well as the opportunity for the performer's own subjectivity to be expressed, although during the actual performance the performer's awareness may, and often must, be focused elsewhere.

In this thesis I have focused on the nature of the performance from the point of view of the performer. This was made possible by discovering the writings of Marie Gutheil-Schoder, whose intelligent and articulate approach to her work makes possible some fascinating insights into way she prepared and performed the roles that she played. Her article *Rolle und Gestaltung*<sup>102</sup> (*Roles and their development*), a detailed description of the singer's approach to the roles that she played, is particularly illuminating, especially since, as discussed above, singers have rarely gone into print with this sort of analysis of their work.

My experience as a performer is that ways to approach a piece of music, or to embody an operatic role, are passed from singer (or coach, director or conductor) to singer in a way that is almost entirely aural. This process of training, preparation and rehearsal is central to the way that Western Classical music is performed, and yet it is hardly discussed by musicologists. In including Marie Gutheil-Schoder and her writings in this thesis, I therefore hope to be part of the process that Susan Rutherford describes as:

The rediscovery of [...] mind, soul and body as the engine of the singer's creativity, in which each element engages equally and productively. 103

This is in contrast to much writing on voice which sees it as almost disembodied and also as divested of the intentionality and subjectivity of the singer her or himself.<sup>104</sup>

Marie Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle und Gestaltung' in Erlebtes und Erstrebtes, Rolle und Gestaltung Veroffentlich des Verlags des Museumsfreunde Wien (Vienna: Rudolf Krey, 1937).
 Rutherford, 'La cantatrice', 109.

In including this material, I have inevitably had to leave other possible sources of information out. In particular, two forms of scholarly research, which inform the work of distinguished writers such as Roger Parker and Joseph Kerman, are conspicuous by their rarity in this thesis. The first is a detailed analysis of the composition or publication history of the scores of the operas that I am considering. In the case of *Salome* and *Erwartung* I have simply used the standard, currently available score, which in both cases is copyrighted in the year of the first performance. The situation with *Der Traumgörge* is more complicated, and I have therefore briefly considered the opera's publication history before starting my analysis.

The second difference is that although I have considered reviews to some extent, I have used them more as evidence for the contemporary discourse than I have as descriptions of contemporary performances. This may reflect a performer's suspicion of critics (whose response to a performance can seem very distant from one's own experience, whether as performer or audience member). It is certainly also a result of the fact that there were no performances of two of the operas in my core time period. But most of all, it reflects the emphasis in the thesis on the discourse on gender in opera as the result of a complex interaction between texts, performers and audiences. While the critic's viewpoint is clearly part of this interaction, I am wary of giving it too much emphasis, especially given its often controversial or would-be-normative viewpoint. My focus is therefore not so much on *Rezeption* as on *Wirkung*, terms which are rather inadequately translated into English as "reception" and "effect". A study of *Rezeption* would be a study of responses by writers to a piece and/or a performance. My interest in

Critics may also have other agendas. La Grange points out the influence of anti-Semitism on reviews of Gutheil-Schoder's work, for example. See Henry-Louis de La Grange, Gustav Mahler vol. 2 Vienna: the years of challenge (1897-1904) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 252 (footnote 44).

p. 252 (footnote 44).

106 There is a useful discussion of these terms, and related issues, in Mark Everist 'Reception Theory, Canonic Discourses and Musical Value' in Mark Everist and Nicholas Cook (eds), Rethinking Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 378-402.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> For example Fred Moten, 'The phonographic mis-en-scène' Cambridge Opera Journal, 16 3 (2004), 269-281, which emphasises the blackness of the singer's body (Jessye Norman in Erwartung) but hardly engages with the singer's interpretation at all, and Abbate, 'Envoicing' with its emphasis on lip-synching which divides the performer's mind and body from the voice.

Wirkung involves an interest in the action or workings of a piece, as well as its "effect" (the German word is cognate with Werk (work) and wirken (to function)). In investigating the score, libretto and performer's approaches, I hope to understand how the operas worked, in the sense of the opportunities given to the audience to see the world in a particular way or, in Gadamer's terms, the provision of a possible new horizon 'into which [they might] move, and which moves with [them]. 107

This opportunity may, of course, be accepted or rejected by the audience, but I believe that part of the creative act is an awareness of the possible responses of the recipient. As the novelist Emma Darwin<sup>108</sup> describes it:

But although in the process of storytelling the teller/writer is distinct from the audience/reader, all writers were readers first, and part of the process of becoming a writer is integrating one's readerly responses into one's writerly practice to the point where they constantly inform each other. It is a kind of call-and-response system, a feedback loop, that operates so smoothly that one is hardly aware that it involves two different processes. [...] [O]ur need to communicate to readers cannot [...] be denied and to that degree the response of the reader - internalised, and then external – is fundamental to the creative process. <sup>109</sup>

In music this 'call-and-response' system is complicated, but also perhaps woven even more tightly into the creative process, by the fact that performers act as recipients of the score and libretto, but as co-creators of the performance. As well as their role in creating the performance, the input of the performers into the compositional process can also be considerable. Even where a role was not written for a particular performer, a knowledge of the available singers' abilities, interests and approaches to performance is bound to influence the parts that are written for them. For example, in a letter to Hofmannsthal, Richard Strauss says that the part of the Composer in the prologue to *Ariadne auf Naxos* would be rejected by a leading tenor or baritone, because it is too small. He argues that it should be composed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> See footnote 64 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Emma Darwin is the author of the recent novels *The Mathematics of Love* (London: Headline Review, 2006) and *A Secret Alchemy* (London: Headline Review, 2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Emma Darwin, private communication.

<sup>110 &#</sup>x27;It must be appreciated that the prima donna has a central and creative role in the development of opera – Norma and Anna Bolena, for instance, are as much an expression of Pasta's genius as they are of Bellini's and Donizetti's; the capabilities of Schröder-Devrient, Stolz and Jeritza were vitally inspiring at various times to Wagner, Verdi and Richard Strauss' Christiansen, *Prima Donna*, p.3.

instead as a trouser role for a female singer, like 'my Rofrano', (Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*) because 'an intelligent [female] singer is available anywhere', who would be happy to take on a role of this kind.<sup>111</sup>

The reader that Emma Darwin describes overlaps with Iser's concept of the 'implied reader' which 'incorporates both the prestructuring of potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process'. Iser has been criticised for his reluctance to deal with real readers since 'in bracketing [out] the real reader and any predispositions, [...] Iser often comes dangerously close to defining his "construct" in purely literary terms.' My hope is that by developing a sense of the discourse (and therefore of the audience's 'horizon of expectation') in literary and political as well as musical and dramatic terms, I have avoided this pitfall. This can also be seen as a way to avoid the problem which Stephen Miles identifies when he suggests that critical musicology tends to 'posit a relationship between music and society, yet develop only the former in detail.'

Stephen Miles focuses on the 'problem of mediation', defining mediation as the 'concrete links between music and society'. 114 To some extent this thesis simply assumes that these links exist, without analysing in detail how they arise. Various things about my subject matter make this, I hope, reasonable. Firstly, as an art-form that involves words, stage action and design, as well as music, opera has clear links to the other arts and to the socio-political issues that inform them. I have chosen to focus on the artistic and polemical discourse, which has, perhaps, more unequivocal links to opera than the more sociological issues of money, power and class (though this is not in any way to deny the importance of these questions). Secondly, the close-knit nature of Viennese society at this period (as discussed in Chapter Three) makes the idea of an interdependent discourse particularly plausible, and the

il4 Miles, 'Critical Musicology', p.723.

Letter from Richard Strauss to Hugo von Hoffmansthal 16<sup>th</sup> April 1916 in *The Correspondence between Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hoffmansthal*, Franz and Alice Strauss, with Willy Schuh (eds) trans. Hans Hammelmann and Ewald Osers (London: Collins, 1952), p. 243 (both quotations). He goes on to give examples of the kind of singers he is thinking of 'Artôt in Berlin, Sanden in Leipzig, [Gutheil-]Schoder in Vienna, Krüger in Munich, and a score of others'.

<sup>112</sup> Holub, Reception, p. 85 (both quotations).

<sup>113</sup> Stephen Miles, 'Critical Musicology and the problem of mediation' *Notes*, 2nd ser., 53 3 (1997), p.728.

importance of the contribution of opera to the discourse is most convincing in a town where opera was so central to cultural life.

#### Conclusion

In writing on gender, I see myself as part of the feminist approach to musicology, which Susan Cusick describes as asking

two seemingly innocent questions about music:: 1) where are the women in music, in music's history [?] and 2) what are the representations of women in music, in the music we love and continually re-canonize in our performances, our teaching, our speaking and writing about music [?]<sup>115</sup>

My work on Marie Gutheil-Schoder, is of course part of the response to the first question. As a feminist, one of the refreshing things about working on a successful female opera singer is to see the still highly patriarchal world of the early twentieth-century through the eyes of a woman whose artistic success has given her significant social and financial confidence and independence. But it is also valuable to be aware of women who were not musicians, but who were none the less part of the discourse on gender, and hence had the potential to influence the operatic representation of gender, for example the poet Marie Pappenheim (who wrote the libretto for *Erwartung*), the philosopher Rosa Mayreder, and the educationist Eugenie Schwarzwald.

Answering the second question is central to aims of this thesis. While the existing literature contains many discussions of representations of women in opera, by considering a comparatively narrowly defined time and place, I hope to be able to do justice to the complexity of the discourse, and also to make it possible to consider the operas as part of the discourse, and the discourse as integral to the meanings of the operas.

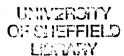
<sup>115</sup> Cusick 'Gender', p. 482.

# Chapter Three: "Die Frauenfrage" – the gender discourse in early twentieth-century Vienna

#### Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century, all across Europe, an increasingly vocal Women's movement was questioning the institutions and assumptions that deprived women of personal, political and economic power. For those in the Women's movement in Vienna, the idea of the new and better world that could be created as a result of the participation of women in public life was an exciting and inspiring one, while for many others, demands for women's emancipation inspired fear and distrust. The result of these differences of opinion was a wide-ranging discussion about the form that women's emancipation might take, and the underlying issues that it raised: this was *Die Frauenfrage* (the Woman Question).

In this chapter, I examine this discourse on gender in written texts, and discuss the patterns that seem to shape it. The understanding of the discourse that this provides will then form the basis for the case studies that make up the rest of this thesis. My discussion is framed in terms of three issues which emerge from the debate: issues of power, gender and autonomy. While these strands are closely woven together, in this chapter I focus on three areas in the discourse which help to distinguish them. The first section (Women's rights, Women's roles) focuses on power: women's right to an education, employment and the vote, and the debate on the roles that women play in society. The second section (Gender and Dichotomy) looks at the debate over whether the existing differences between the sexes were inevitable, and whether they were desirable. This leads into a discussion of the way that the dichotomy between the sexes could be linked to other dichotomies. Finally, in the third section (Women's Autonomy: the "I" of the Other), I discuss issues of autonomy: those surrounding the idea that women have a point of view, a self that chooses and acts.



In examining a discourse in this way, choosing sources is a very important, but not always easy, task. The Austrian Women's movement has not been widely documented, and here I make considerable use of the (to my knowledge) only significant English-language study: Harriet Anderson's Utopian Feminism: Women's movements in fin-de-siècle Vienna, as well as the writings of influential members of the movement, and modern descriptions of women's experience at this time. By contrast, in examining the literary discourse, there are an almost infinite number of possible sources. In choosing the writers for this study, I have been influenced by the fact that Vienna in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was exceptional not only in the quality and innovativeness of the art produced, but also in the way that creative people were bound together by bonds of friendship and collaboration within and across disciplines.2 These connections included many links with the principal figures in the women's movement, as will be seen. The writers considered in this chapter were chosen for their connectedness in this web of relationships, but also in order to cover as wide a range of views as possible

Among the literary sources, perhaps the most clearly influential figure was Karl Kraus (1874-1936), who published the satirical magazine Die Fackel between 1899 and 1936. This was an enormously popular publication: the first issue sold almost 30,000 copies.3 In the early years, Kraus published a wide variety of writers, including Wedekind, Altenberg, Strindberg, Loos, Chekhov and Wilde, though as time went on he increasingly wrote the magazine himself, and after 1911, entirely. 5 Schoenberg and his pupils were particularly inspired by Kraus's approach to language. I have also considered some of the early work of another celebrated figure, Sigmund Freud, who knew both Kraus and the playwright and novelist Arthur

<sup>1</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Edward Timms, Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) p. 8. Eyewitness accounts are also given in Joan Allen Smith, Schoenberg and His Circle (New York: Schirmer, 1986).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Timms, Kraus, p. 6.
<sup>4</sup> Wilma Abeles Iggers, Karl Kraus: a Viennese Critic of the twentieth century (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Iggers, Kraus, p. 2.
<sup>6</sup> Julian Johnson, 'The Reception of Karl Kraus by Schönberg and his school' in Gilbert J. Carr and Edward Timms (eds), Karl Kraus und Die Fackel: Aufsätze zur Rezeptionsgeschichte (München: Iudicium, c.2001), especially pp 100-101.

Schnitzler (1862-1931). The architect Adolf Loos (1870 -1933) makes a brief appearance, as does the poet Peter Altenberg (1859-1919). The autobiography of Stefan Zweig (1881-1942),<sup>7</sup> although written in the 1940s, gives a fascinating insight into the day-to-day life of the period.

There were important links between these central artistic figures and the progressive women who made up the Women's Movement. Perhaps most influential was Eugenie Schwarzwald (1872-1940), founder and headmistress of one of the early secondary schools for girls, who was notable for having gained a doctorate at the University of Zurich at a time when Austrian universities were still effectively closed to women.8 Schwarzwald and her husband welcomed many of Vienna's most creative artists to their house. These included the composers Schoenberg, Berg and Egon Wellesz (1880-1950), and writers such as Karl Kraus, Rainer Maria Rilke and Robert Musil (1880-1942), as well as Adolf Loos, who designed a number of buildings for Schwarzwald, and the interior of the Wiener Frauenclub (Vienna Women's Club) in 1900.<sup>10</sup> Schwarzwald also supported a number of experimental artists: Kokoschka was employed teaching art at the school, 11 and Schoenberg was given the use of a classroom to teach music theory, joined by the composers Alexander Zemlinsky and Elsa Bienenfeld (1877-1942),12 who later became an influential music critic. 13 Marie Lang (1858-1934), editor of the women's paper Dokumente der Frauen also had links with the artists of the Secession, including Klimt, Loos and Alfred Roller (1864-1935) as well as Gustav Mahler, Hugo Wolf and the novelist Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937).14

<sup>7</sup> Zweig, Yesterday.

<sup>8</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p. 104.

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p. 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Patricia Steines, and Dorit Weinstein 'Lea, Sara, Rebecca Lebensbilder jüdischer Frauen aus den letzten 400 Jahren' in Eva Geber, Sonja Rotter and Marietta Schneider (eds), Die Frauen Wiens: Ein Stadtbuch for Fanny, Frances und Francesca (Vienna: AUF Der Apfel, 1992), p. 319.

Niens: Ein Staatouch for Fanny, Frances und Francesca (Vienna: AUF Der Aprel, 1992), p. 319.

10 Anderson, Utopian Feminism, pp. 113-114.

11 Frank Whitford, Oskar Kokoschka: A Life (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicholson 1986), p. 81.

12 Egon Wellesz, Arnold Schoenberg (London: Galliard, 1971) pp.18-19.

13 A brief biography of Elsa Bienenfeld is given in Karen Painter (ed.), Mahler and his World (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2002), pp. 273-274, which also reprints and discusses a number of her reviews and musical writings.

Two writers from this period are particularly important, because their books deal explicitly with issues of gender and society. The brilliant but unstable Otto Weininger (1880-1903), whose book *Geschlecht und Charakter*<sup>15</sup> represents the most misogynistic end of the spectrum, was highly successful and widely read. 16 Karl Kraus, Schoenberg, Wittgenstein and Loos were among his admirers. 17 By contrast, Rosa Mayreder (1858-1938) was a leading voice in the Austrian women's movement. She published two major books of philosophical writing: Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit and Geschlecht und Kultur, 18 as well as novels, short stories and poetry. A co-founder of Dokumente der Frauen, she also wrote the libretto for Hugo Wolf's only opera Das Corrigedor. 19 While Mayreder's work was probably not as widely read as Kraus or even Weininger, the role of the Women's Movement in asking the Woman Question was an important inspiration or goad for both reformers and reactionaries. Weininger, for example, explicitly frames his book as an attempt to 'deal with questions of the Emancipation of Women and the controversy as to the Woman question'.20

As is not unusual, the names and works of women writers of the period (with the possible exception of Mayreder) are not generally well known, although some of them wrote books which were best-sellers at the time. In describing some of the work of Maria Janitschek (1859-1927), Elsa Asenijeff (1867-1941), Elsa Kotanyí-Jerusalem (1877-1942) and 'Vera'21 (whose book Eine für viele: Aus der Tagebuch eines Mädchens [One for Many: from a girl's diary] was an extremely successful, even notorious work in its day),<sup>22</sup> I have tried to redress this balance a little.

15 Otto Weininger, Geschlecht und Charakter (Wien: Braumüller, 1903), translated as Sex and Character (London: Heinemann, 1906) (translator's name not given).

16 See Jacques Le Rider, Le Cas Otto Weininger: Racines de l'antiféminisme et de l'antisémitisme (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982), pp. 142-143.

17 See Timms, Kraus, p. 69 and Le Rider, Weininger, p. 139.

18 Rosa Mayreder, Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit first published 1905 (in this thesis I refer to the

Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character p. 2.

became an instant success. There were twelve editions within a year of its publication alone.

English version A Survey of the Woman Problem trans. Herman Scheffauer (London: Heinemann, 1913)) and Geschlecht und Kultur (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1923).

19 She was also the only female member of the Vienna Club of Watercolour Artists. See

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> 'Vera 'is a pseudonym for Betty Kriss, an author about whom almost nothing is known. See Agatha Schwartz, 'The Crisis of the Female Self in Fin-de-Siècle Austrian Women Writer's Narratives' Modern Austrian Literature 40 3 (2007), p. 16.
<sup>22</sup> 'Although some critics later dismissed its literary value, this little book [Eine für viele]

# Women's rights, Women's roles

## Women's rights

The Woman Question in its most practical and political form, was a question about women's rights. The right to education, employment and the vote were at the centre of the reforms sought by progressive women (the term feminist was not generally used).<sup>23</sup> And when in 1918, at the foundation of the Austrian Republic in 1918, the newly written Constitution established the equality of women before the law, and gave them the vote, for many who had campaigned on women's issues before the war, this was a complete vindication.24

The origins of the Austrian Women's Movement lay in an economic crisis in the 1860s, which led to a sudden increase in the number of women needing paid work. Marriage was no longer a guarantee of financial security, and an education that was intended to help a girl to get husband and keep him, suddenly seemed woefully inadequate.

...who guarantees every girl a household and husband and home for all her days!? ... I suddenly clearly saw that women, too, must be self-supporting. What use is an education which leaves us in the lurch when we need it!25

The history of the Women's Movement in the intervening half-century is one of gradually increasing opportunities in education and employment, and an increasing confidence and ambition in the views expressed by those involved. For example, the link between education and employment meant that early initiatives focused on practical skills: sewing, cookery, hairdressing and so on, 26 but during the 1870s and 1880s educational aims gradually became more ambitious, with girls' schools opening that could teach to the standard

Moreover, it provoked a lively debate in Viennese literary life, referred to as the "Vera-

<sup>26</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.26

Skandal". Schwartz, Crisis, p.3.

23 The term "progressive" (fortschrittlich) was used by those in the Women's Movement to describe themselves. The words Feminist (for a man who supported women's emancipation) was in general a term of abuse and Feministin (for a woman) was not widely used until after 1914. See Anderson, Utopian Feminism, pp.9-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Marianne Hainisch, a leading figure in the League of Women's Associations (Bund der Frauenverein) called it 'our greatest achievement'. Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p. 119. <sup>25</sup> Marianne Hainisch quoted in Anderson, Utopian Feminism, pp. 25-26.

required to get into university. In 1900 the medical faculty at the University of Vienna was opened to women,<sup>27</sup> though women doctors remained rare, and their presence controversial.<sup>28</sup> The faculty of law, however, whose graduates were entitled to enter the civil service, did not open its doors to women until after the First World War. Meanwhile, as education gradually became more accessible, increasing numbers of women were qualified to teach. By 1896, 43% of elementary teachers in Vienna were women, though they, too were subject to discrimination.29

The campaign for the vote, education and employment gradually became more organised under various banners, including the the Allgemeiner Österreichischer Frauenverein [General Austrian Women's Association] (AÖF) and the Bund Österreichischer Frauenverein [League of Austrian Women's Associations, an umbrella organisation for the various Austrian Women's Associations that already existed. By 1914 the League had around 40,000 members, 30 while the more radical AÖF, with only 200-300 members, 31 was influential as a result of its publications Dokumente der Frauen and (after 1902) Neues Frauenleben, and the writings of some important central figures, including Rosa Mayreder.

The right for women to vote was central to the aims of the AÖF, and the organisation presented a number of petitions on the subject to the Reichsrat, which was the only political forum available in Imperial Austria-Hungary. Although the law remained unchanged, attitudes to women's suffrage did gradually change through the 1890s and 1900s. According to Anderson, this can be seen from the difference between the AÖF petitions of 1896 and 1907.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>James C. Albisetti, 'Female education in German-speaking Austria, Germany and <sup>27</sup>James C. Albisetti, 'Female education in German-speaking Austria, Germany and Switzerland 1866-1914" in David Good, Margarete Grandner and Mary Jo Maynes (eds), Austrian Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Providence RI: Bergahn Books, 1996), pp. 50-52. <sup>28</sup> In her autobiography Berta Szeps-Zuckerkandl describes the protests that arose when her husband (who was professor of Anatomy at Vienna University) asked his assistant, a qualified woman doctor, to take round the lecture hall 'specimens of [...] organs which were not usually mentioned in gatherings of both sexes'. Prof. Zuckerkandl responded to the protests by having the noisy students thrown out. Berta Szeps(-Zuckerkandl), My Life and History trans. John Summerfield (London: Cassell, 1938). <sup>29</sup> Albisetti, 'Female education', p. 41 Women teachers were required to resign if they married, but Austria was unusual in that from the 1870s women teachers working in

married, but Austria was unusual in that from the 1870s women teachers working in elementary schools were paid the same as their male counterparts. Albisetti 'Female Education', p. 42.

Manderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.92

Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p. 42

The 1896 petition had an 'apologetic, explanatory tone' and seemed to be consumed by 'the fear of appearing ridiculous' But by 1907:

The call for women's suffrage was no longer the prerogative of a handful of eccentric radicals, but had become an accepted topic for discussion in the political establishment.32

Support for women's emancipation did not only come from women. A number of men also provided support both in what they wrote, and with financial and practical help. In particular, since it was impossible for a woman to present a petition to the Reichsrat, women's organisations were dependent on the goodwill of a number of left-liberal politicians who were prepared to bring women's petitions to the Assembly.<sup>33</sup>

The forces of reaction, of course, had their spokespeople and their Associations, too. The attitude of the Catholic church, a very powerful political and social force in Austria, was in general conventional and antiemancipatory. Groups such as the Christlicher Wiener Frauenbund (the Viennese Christian Women's League), which claimed a membership of 14,000, encouraged women to accept the status quo as part of Christian belief.34 But the discourse cannot be divided in any simple way into the progressive and the reactionary. As will be seen, even those at the forefront of the Women's movement espoused views that would not now be considered feminist, and, conversely, there were writers who were strongly opposed to Women's suffrage and employment, who nonetheless questioned the status quo in other areas.

The importance of the Women's movement in keeping the Woman Question in people's minds is clear from the way that so many contemporary writings engage, implicitly or explicitly, with the discourse. Clearly, the interconnectedness of Viennese artistic society meant that even those who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> All three quotations from Anderson, *Utopian Feminism* p.84. Anderson also describes how in a survey of eminent men and women (including the authors Frank Wedekind and Ricarda Huch and the physicist Ernst Mach) by the AÖF's official journal *Neues Frauenleben* in 1913, all but one of those asked recognised the principle of women's right to vote (p.84).

33 See Anderson, *Utopian Feminism* for example p. 80 and p. 83.

34 See Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.42, which describes this group as 'rabidly anti-Semitic

and anti-emancipatory'.

were opposed (in one way or another) to the idea of women's emancipation were exposed to the ideas of the women's movement, so that the different ideas about the Women Question form a rich and complex mix, all mutually influential, and all to some extent responding to the other ideas expressed.

#### Women's roles: marriage and other professions

The economically dependent position of most European women at the turn of the twentieth-century has been well documented, and I will not rehearse it in detail here.<sup>35</sup> For most women, denied much education and barred from most professions, marriage was the only way of supporting themselves. Those women who did work were generally paid less than men, and in many cases prevented from working after marriage. The demands of housekeeping and child-care, in any case, made it difficult for those who would have liked to continue in a profession,<sup>36</sup> although some women did manage to do so.

The question of women's right to an education and employment can be seen, in two senses, as one of women's power. Not just their power in the sense of their rights, the permission in law for them to act in certain ways, but also, their power in the sense of what they were capable of achieving. Weininger saw equality for women as impossible, because of their nature: 'the greatest, the only enemy of women's emancipation is woman herself'. 'Traus emphasised the physiological differences in his aphorism: 'Female lawyers?' Learned lawyers with wombs? Bloody amateurism!'. 'He found the idea that women should have access to male preserves intolerable:

<sup>35</sup> For example, see Marcelline J. Hutton, Russian and West European Women 1860-1939: Dreams, Struggles and Nightmares (Lanham MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> At the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society's discussions on 'The Natural Position of Women' in 1906, Freud gave this as a reason for dismissing the Women's Movement: 'A woman cannot earn a living and raise children at the same time. Women as a group profit nothing by the modern feminist [sic] movement; at best a few individuals profit' Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester, Freud's Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin 2000), p.3 quoting the minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. (The use of the word 'feminist' is, I assume, an anachronism on the part of the translator).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p. 75.
<sup>38</sup> Weiblich Juristen? Juris uterusque doctor? Blutiger Dilettantismus!' Kraus, Die Fackel quoted in in Brigid Mary Ursula McKittrick, 'Women - The Borderline Case: Karl Kraus and the role of women in turn of the century Vienna' (PhD dissertation, University of Exeter, 1987) p.239. Unless another translator's name is given, translations are CFD. Where I have written a translation myself, I have added the original in a footnote.

I would not survive the illness that I would succumb to on the day that I went to vote and saw the sprightly progress of my lady-friend to the ballot-box.39

Others stressed the importance of the job that women were already doing:

In order to do justice to the tasks that creation presents her, woman has only to preserve what is feminine about her at all times, that is, to be the seat of the sublime, the source of mildness and the focus of decency and morality. 40

They also expressed fear about the effect on society if the roles available to women changed significantly. Women's emancipation was seen as a threat above all to the family, turning women into 'bad childbearers, bad mothers and dissatisfied and hysterical hermaphrodites'. 41 And if the stable family was the basis for a stable state, then women's emancipation threatened the whole of society.

[I]t must and will come again: the time when men find their peace and refuge at the bosom of their women, when children learn the most important alphabet at their mother's knee, the alphabet of the heart and of love, when the sanctity of the family, the basis of a great and happy state, is cultivated and maintained.42

Writing to Schnitzler, Olga Waissnix pointed out the narrowness of the options open to women, however:

Marriage is prescribed to us as the only profession which can bring us happiness; if we don't find it tant pis, then we are told to calmly renounce it and bear it! - But do you know that that demands a heroism of which not one single man in a thousand would be capable!43

This idea of marriage as a profession, which makes it explicit that it was a financial as well as an emotional contract, is visible from the lonely hearts columns in the press of that time. Both Dokumente der Frauen<sup>44</sup> and Die Fackel<sup>45</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> 'Ich würde den Tag nicht überleben, an dem ich krank werden, weil ich wählen gehen soll und meine Freundin rüstig zur Urne schreitet.' ("Rüstig"[sprightly] is patronising but also implies an air of triumph) Kraus, Die Fackel quoted in McKittrick, The Borderline Case, p.241.

Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.9 quoting Franz von Grabscheit (1894).

Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.3 citing Lanz von Liebenfels (1909).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.7, quoting Rhoda Bauer (1894).
<sup>43</sup> 'Die Ehe ist uns als einzige Laufbahn vorgeschrieben, unser Glück zu finden; finden wir's nicht, tant pis, ruhig entsagen und ertragen heißt's dann! – Wissen Sie aber, daß das ein Heldentum erfordert, dessen unter 1000 Männer kein einziger fähig ware!' Olga Waissnix in Arthur Schnitzler and Olga Waissnix, Liebe, die Starb vor de Zeit Therese Nickl and Heinrich Schnitzler (eds) (Vienna: Molden, 1970), p.205. 44 Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p. 68.

quote these as evidence for the prevalence of marriages of convenience. Fritz Winter, writing in *Dokumente der Frauen*, condemns

our world of buying and selling which has finally reduced people themselves to objects to be bought, to products, and which forces them to place their own humanity on the market and give it to the person who offers most.46

Kraus is highly critical of the hypocrisy that pretended that marriage as a profession was any different from prostitution, considering that 'Whether a woman gives away her body, or rents it out for an hour or a year, whether she sells herself within matrimony or without, isn't the government's business'. 47 This attitude to marriage is similar to that of Irma von Troll-Borostyáni (1847-1912), whose book Die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter und der Reform der Jugenderziehung [The Equality of the Sexes and the Reform of the Education of Youth] 'became one of the classics of the German-speaking Women's Movement'. 48 She considers that women's sexual drive was as strong as men's and that it is deeply unjust that they should be condemned for expressing their sexuality in situations where a man would not be. She describes a loveless marriage as no different from prostitution and was scornful of those who 'trained' their daughters for a husband, since it was not very different from putting them to work in a brothel.49

Alfred Loos sees women's sexual appeal as their only form of power: suggesting that women's fashions were the result of women's desire to 'hold on to her place by the side of the big strong man'. Her only way of achieving this is to attract him sexually:

The awakening of love is at present the sole weapon that the woman possesses in the battle of the sexes. But love is the daughter of lust. The woman's hope is to arouse the lust and desire of the man...Thus the woman is forced to appeal to the man's sensuality through her clothing[...].<sup>50</sup>

46 Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.69 quoting Fritz Winter.

Anderson, Utopian Feminism p. 151..

<sup>45</sup> See Timms, Kraus, p.137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> 'Ob eine Frau ihren Leib verschenkt, oder für Stünden für Jahre vermietet, sich ehelich oder ausserehelich verkauft, geht den Staat nichts an'. Karl Kraus, Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität (First published 1908) 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Vienna: Verlag 'Die Fackel', 1923), p. 285.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Irma von Troll-Borostyáni quoted in Karin J. Jušek, 'The Limits of Female Desire' in Good et al. Austrian Women, p. 26.
50 Alfred Loos, 'Ladies Fashions' (first published in Neue Freie Presse 21st August 1898,

reprinted in Dokumente der Frau 1902). In Spoken into the Void: Collected Essays 1897-1900 trans.

Rosa Mayreder focuses less on the practical aspects of marriage, and more on its emotional significance. She is sympathetic to society's demand for women's sexual fidelity, seeing it as understandable, given the insecurity that a man feels if he cannot be sure of the paternity of "his" children. 51 She urges the benefits of a new sexual morality, based on love rather than economic or religious motives, since love between the parents means that the father could be sure of his wife's fidelity, and therefore of his paternity, without the need to confine and limit women's lives. Ultimately she hopes that children born in and out of wedlock would be equally accepted, and that censure of illegitimacy, which she describes as 'perhaps the most disgraceful fact in human history' 52 would be at an end.

Mayreder is reacting against the assumption that ignorance and fear were the best way to ensure fidelity. Zweig describes how the desire to protect the innocence of unmarried girls led to them being brought up entirely ignorant of anything connected with sex:

A young girl of good family was not allowed to have any idea of how the male body was formed, or to know how children came to enter the world, for the angel was to enter matrimony not only physically untouched, but completely "pure" spiritually as well. "Good breeding" for a young girl of that time, was identical with ignorance of life[...]<sup>53</sup>

Writing in the 1940s, Zweig is clear that the emancipation of women and the greater openness that became increasingly possible as the 20th century went on, were in his view, good, right and healthy. But nonetheless, Zweig admits that he feels that something was lost as women became emancipated:

These unfledged creatures sensed that beside their own world there was another of which they knew nothing, and were not permitted to know anything, and this made them curious, dreaming, yearning, and covered them with an alluring confusion.54

Jane O. Newman and John H. Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1982), p. 99 (both quotations). Note the gendering of love as feminine. 51 Mayreder, *Geschlecht*, p. 103.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.175 quoting Rosa Mayreder.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.78.
<sup>54</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.78.

The sheltered and powerless upbringing of middle- and upper-class girls contrasted with the ready availability of sex for money. Zweig describes how in Vienna at this period

the sidewalks were so sprinkled with women for sale, that it was more difficult to avoid than to find them... At that time, female wares were offered for sale at every hour and at every price, and it cost a man as little time and trouble to purchase a women for a quarter of an hour, an hour or a night as it did to buy a packet of cigarettes or a newspaper.55

Kraus sees prostitution as a natural and acceptable expression of women's free-flowing sexuality, and stresses that attempts to regulate it are incapable of success and themselves the main cause of misery and venereal disease<sup>56</sup>. This is part of his general approach, which rejects conventional sexual morality, and particularly the intervention of the state in sexual matters. He is critical of attempts to control sexual behaviour legally, urging that the law should be limited to preventing sexual behaviour which was obviously damaging (such as the sexual abuse of children), and should not interfere with those who were simply 'making opportunities for willing adults'.57 Although Kraus considers women to be 'the most frequent victims of the injustice of this male-dominated world',58 he has a rather romanticised view of the role of the prostitute, choosing to characterise the prostitute and pimp as heroic adversaries of bourgeois society, and the relationship between them as a Naturgewalt (a force of nature).59

Like Kraus, Weininger sees prostitution as an inevitable consequence of women's sexuality, though his idea that women are 'nothing more than sexual' is much more pejorative. He describes the prostitute and the mother as opposite ends of the spectrum of female natures, and emphasises that all women have both tendencies. He claims that many prostitutes have deliberately chosen their profession although others were open to them, 60 and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.83.
<sup>56</sup> See Iggers, Kraus, p.165.
<sup>57</sup> Iggers, Kraus, p.156.
<sup>58</sup> Iggers, Kraus, p. 158.
<sup>59</sup> See Timms, Kraus, p.86.
<sup>60</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, pp.216-217.

that 'Prostitution is not a result of social conditions, but of some cause deep in the nature of women.'61

Rosa Mayreder, however, writing on behalf of the AÖF, emphasised the idea that the roots of prostitution lay in women's economic insecurity, and that 'the economic and social emancipation of the female' was necessary to change the existing situation<sup>62</sup>. The AÖF aligned itself officially with the Abolition movement, which condemned the official approach to prostitution, such as the registering of prostitutes, forcible inspection for venereal disease, and the existence of state-registered brothels. Mayreder is sceptical of the belief that 'a reawakening of religious feeling'63 would make any difference, but does suggest that the eventual abolition of prostitution could be brought about by changes in attitudes and behaviour. Ultimately, she explained that prostitution was unacceptable because prostitutes were 'reduced to the status of mere things'.64

Women who had thoughts to express on the subject were 'aware that it was breaking with conventions of women's silence and ignorance of the subject'65 to do so. But Auguste Fickert (1855-1910), another leading member of the AÖF, declared that

[o]ur ignorance, our tolerance with respect to this terrible phenomenon, is tantamount to complicity for all the social evils arising therefrom [...] We must no longer allow our criminal silence to sanction a social structure that dismisses prostitution with a shrug of the shoulders as a necessary evil.66

Zweig describes the prostitution industry in the Vienna of his youth in the same terms: as a social evil, the result of an wrongly-organised society, describing it as 'a dark underground vault over which rose the gorgeous structure of middle-class society with its faultless, radiant façade'67 and

<sup>61</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character p.217.

<sup>62 &#</sup>x27;a realistic and comprehensive fight against prostitution must be based above all on a reorganization of economic life, but [...] new moral influences [which] are capable of changing the behaviourally relevant moral views of individuals must also come forth' Jušek. 'Limits', p. 23 quoting Mayreder.

<sup>63</sup> Jušek, 'Limits', p. 23 quoting Mayreder (1897). Jušek, 'Limits', p. 24 quoting Mayreder (1897).
 Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Jušek, 'Limits,' p.22 quoting Fickert (1897). <sup>67</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.83.

emphasises how in middle class society, the gap between men's sexual maturity and the age at which they were expected to marry (in their midtwenties) left a long period when all sex was inevitably illicit,68 although not all illicit relationships were, strictly speaking, prostitution.

A very few, fortunate young men achieved the literary ideal of love for the times...an affair with a married woman. The others helped themselves for the most part with shop-girls and waitresses.69

These shop-girls and waitresses appear in Schnitzler's work as the süsses Mädel, the sweet young girl of humble origins in a relationship with a "young gentleman". In Liebelei [Flirtations],70 he contrasts Mitzi, who is in her relationship for a good time, and accepts its transience, with Christine, who is genuinely in love with her "young gentleman" and is devastated when he is killed in a duel. Schnitzler underlines the emotional injustice inherent in the social inequality of the relationship. Christine has no status that corresponds to her emotional involvement, and is not even given the chance to go to her lover's funeral.

Zweig is critical of this type of relationship from a more pragmatic point of view, but also emphasises its inevitable inequality:

Badly dressed, tired after a twelve-hour day of poorly paid work, unkempt (a bathroom was in those days still only a privilege of the rich), and brought up in narrow circumstances, these poor creatures were so much below the standing of their lovers that these in turn were mostly ashamed of being seen openly with them.<sup>71</sup>

He is keen to prevent too romantic a view of the demi-monde, pointing to the dangers of venereal disease and the unpleasantness and unreliability of the "cures" available. In addition to this, the ambivalence and ambiguity of society's and the law's attitude to illicit sex led both sides of the bargain into the twilight zone of the semi-legal, rather as drug use does today.<sup>72</sup> He

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.81-82.
 <sup>69</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.82.
 <sup>70</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, 'Flirtations' trans. Arthur S. Wensinger and Clinton J. Atkinson in *Plays and Stories* Egon Schwarz (ed.) (New York: Continuum, 1982), pp. 1-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.82.
<sup>72</sup> I cannot recall a single comrade of my youth who did not come to me with pale and troubled mien, one because he was ill or feared illness, another because he was being blackmailed because of an abortion, a third because he lacked the money to be cured without

describes the atmosphere of the fin-de-siècle as 'sticky, perfumed, sultry, unhealthy'.73 'We should not permit ourselves to be misled by sentimental novels or stories of that epoch' he concludes. 'It was a bad time for youth'.74

This feeling that turn-of-the century attitudes to women were unhealthy as well as unjust can also be seen in Zweig's description of the way that a lady was expected to dress:

The middle of her body laced into a wasp's shape with a corset of stiff whalebone, blown like a huge bell from the waist down, the neck closed in up to the chin, legs shrouded to the toes, the hair towering aloft with countless curls, locks and braid under a majestically swaying monstrosity of a hat, the hands encased in gloves, even on the warmest summer day, ... the "lady", in spite of the jewellery with which she was bespangled, in spite of the perfume which surrounded her, the costly laces, the ruchings and other adornments, was a unhappy, pitifully helpless person. 75

Clearly, women's dress (at least in the middle- and upper-classes) played a significant role in making women dependent and powerless. Small wonder that one of the causes espoused by progressive thinkers was dress reform: 'a protest against the tyrannies of fashion, and an assertion of women's determination to be natural, healthy and individual'. Designed for 'the new lifestyle of the independent working woman who dressed and undressed without a maid, and jumped on and off trams',76 reform dress made an emancipated lifestyle possible but was also a symbol of emancipation, and of the desire to work with nature and the body, rather than being in conflict with them.

## Gender and dichotomy

Blurring Gender Boundaries

The issue of women's dress was not just about women's physical restriction, however, it was also about whether women should enhance their feminine

knowledge of his family, a fourth because he did not know how to pay hush money to a waitress who claimed to have had a child by him, the fifth because his wallet had been stolen and he did not dare to go to the police' Zweig, Yesterday p.88-89.

73 Zweig, Yesterday, p.71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p.87. <sup>75</sup> Zweig, Yesterday, p. 71-72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.110 (both quotes).

charms by emphasising their physical differences from men. A padded bosom, a corseted waist or a bustle all serve to exaggerate the female shape, and point out, as it were, that men and women differ. As the aphorist put it: 'A woman is not a man, that is what makes them so charming.'77

The possibility that women's emancipation would blur the boundaries between men and women is an important underlying theme in the discourse. New technologies such as the bicycle encouraged physical strength and mental independence in women, which contributed to this blurring. 78 The image of the emancipated women as a lesbian or a virago who 'took pleasure in masculine habits, smoked, rode astride, cut their hair short, liked to travel dressed like men and lowered their voice to a bass'79 was an easy target for anti-feminist attacks, and progressive women like Marianne Hainisch (1839-1936) were keen to make clear that they were not trying to ape men or endanger women's femininity: 'Woman was on no account to be considered to be the same as man: equal but different was the motto. The "eternal feminine" would not vanish'.80

But perhaps what worried conservatives more than the potential loss of femininity in women, was what was perceived as the feminisation of culture, commonly characterised as a cultural degeneration. Weininger suggests that the current fashions reflected the high proportion in his society of 'intermediate individuals', who are an equal mixture of masculine and feminine. This fashion

may be associated with the 'secessionist taste' which idealised tall, lanky women with flat chests and narrow hips. The enormous recent increase in a kind of dandified homosexuality may be due to the increasing effeminacy of the age, and the peculiarities of the Pre-Raphaelite movement may have a similar explanation.81

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> McKittrick, The Borderline Case p.237 quoting Egon Friedell Steinbruch (1922).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> 'Mayreder contended that the bicycle, in use since 1890, had done more for women's emancipation and for comradeship between the sexes, than had the entire feminist movement'. Johnston Austrian Mind, p.157.

Panderson, Utopian Feminism, p.9 citing Hermann Bahr (1912).

<sup>80</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.15.

<sup>81</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.73. Weininger's hope for the future lies in a belief that the end of women question will be solved when the sexes can no longer be distinguished.'So long as there are two sexes there will always be a woman question, just as there will be the problem of mankind [...] death will last so long as women bring forth, and the truth will not

Other writers saw the women's movement as a direct cause of this worrying change. 'It seems to us', wrote the critic and dramatist Rudolf Lothar (1865-1943) in 1891

as if the striving of women for power, the competition of woman with man shows itself in this feminine oversensitivity in looking, enjoying, thinking and feeling and is communicated to man and conquers him. 82

Kraus saw himself as a lone masculine voice beleaguered by the femininity and hysteria of writers like Hofmannsthal, whose 'lack of ethical responsibility, determination and personality' as well as his 'passivity' made him a 'pseudoartist'83. But more moderate voices, such as the Ludo Hartmann (1865-1924), who taught history at the University of Vienna, thought that this "feminisation" was a necessary re-balancing of a culture that had become too masculine.84

Freud's position on this question is particularly interesting. Although (as described above) he rejected the idea of women having equal access to employment, he saw the rigid division of the roles of the sexes as a repressive tendency. He suggests that a visitor from another planet would be fascinated by

the existence of two sexes among human beings, who, though so much alike in other respects, yet mark the difference between them with such obvious external signs. 85

He believed that children's theories about sexuality pointed to a rich and diverse sexual nature that is restricted and limited as they grow up. This impoverished sexuality then gave rise to an impoverishing idea of the division between the sexes: 'starkly dualistic' and unnecessarily restrictive. 86

prevail until the two become one, until from man and woman a third self, neither man nor woman, is evolved.' Weininger, Sex and Character, p. 345.

<sup>82</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.2.

<sup>83</sup> McKittrick, The Borderline Case p.452. In both Weininger and Kraus there are links made between effeminacy and Jewishness, which are important to the discourse, but lie outside the scope of this essay. 84 McKittrick, The Borderline Case, p.438.

<sup>85</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'On The Sexual Theories of Children' (1908) The Standard Edition of the

Complete Works of Sigmund Freud 9 (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), p. 211-212.

6 '[the] starkly dualistic [theory that] they subsequently construct; that concerning the essential nature of men and women [...] They imagine for themselves the sexual division of

#### Aligning Dichotomies

The fear that is expressed by many writers at the blurring of gender boundaries, however, is indicative of the importance that these boundaries assumed. An important pattern in the discourse on gender is the use of dichotomy: where gender is aligned with a wide variety of qualities, and particularly those that fall easily into pairs (active and passive, mind and body, public and private, and so on). Ruth Solie describes this as a common result of ideas of difference:

In general, difference in an encompassing sense has been at the centre of one arena of linguistic thought ever since structuralism proposed the notion that difference creates meaning. From this emerges the proposition that Western thought has been dominated by series of tightly interconnected binary dualisms: good/evil, male/female, culture/nature, reason/emotion self/other and so forth.[...] These linked pairings create long chains of associations, virtuosic in their ready applicability, that exercise a strong and virtually subliminal influence on the ways we position and interpret groups of people, the behaviour and their works.<sup>87</sup>

For example, Edward Timms describes the following list of dichotomies as underlying the work of Karl Kraus

Male Female
Mind Body

Spirit Sensuality

Culture Nature

Day Night

Air Water

Constraint Flow
City Garden
Goal Origin<sup>88</sup>

labour as their new adult version of the sexual theory of childhood.'Appignanesi and Forrester, Freud's Women p.407 citing Freud On the Sexual Theories of Children.

87 Solie, 'Introduction' p. 11. It is important to point out, however, that while the formation of dichotomies seems to be common to most cultures, the way that the different concepts are aligned is not always shared. See for example Chris McManus, Right Hand, Left Hand (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002) p. 27.

88 See Timms, Kraus, p.92.

Dichotomy is basic to the writings of Otto Weininger. He proposes that human maleness and femaleness are dependent on the presence in the body of male and female "substances" which he calls M and W. He suggests that everybody has some of each of these, and that a person is deemed female or male according to which of them predominates. The substances are also complementary in that 'an individual [possesses] just as much femaleness as he lacks in maleness'89 Weininger explains homosexuality as the result of roughly equal amounts of M and W in a person's makeup. He explains the Women's movement as the result of a few 'mannish' women (with an abnormally high proportion of M) leading the others astray.90

This theory enables him to set up a theory of gender which, as the book goes on, is expressed increasingly in terms of opposites: whatever men have, women lack. At the start of Geschlecht und Charakter, Weininger rejects the 'dogma that is widely and authoritatively maintained, that all women are alike, that no individuals exist among women',91 but as the book goes on he increasingly equates the tendencies of W with the character of 'Woman', so that his initial idea that everybody has some of the characteristics of each sex, as well his statement that women are not all alike, become increasingly obscured. Weininger's work is remarkable for the intensity of its misogyny and the dichotomies he proposes are invariably to the detriment of women, as his summing up in the final chapter makes explicit

It is thus that the duality of man and woman has gradually developed into complete dualism, to the dualism of higher and lower lives, of subject and object, form and matter, something and nothing. 92

By contrast, in Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit (published two years later), Rosa Mayreder develops a philosophy of gender which seeks to modify and question these essentialist dichotomies.

The contradictory ideas concerning "woman" that have [...] been launched into the world - for various reasons "man" has to a great extent been spared such ticketing - are so drastic in their effects because they pretend to have an

<sup>89</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.29.

Weininger, Sex and Character, p.70-71.
Weininger, Sex and Character, p.58.
Weininger, Sex and Character, p.297.

objective value by virtue of wide generalisation. From the literature on the theme of "woman" one obtains the odd impression that the character of one half of mankind is strangely unknown, impenetrable and enigmatic. Human beings who take part everywhere in the actualities of life, and whose natural qualities are similar to those of the male, are treated as fabulous animals, as proper subjects for myths and legends.<sup>93</sup>

She goes on to point out the contradictory nature of what is written about women, suggesting that 'conceptions of the feminine are so wavering and indefinite that there is no common agreement as to what fundamental qualities are meant by that word', <sup>94</sup> and gives many examples, here summarised by a contemporary reviewer:

There is Lotze saying that the "female hates analysis" and therefore cannot distinguish true from false. There is Lafitte saying that "the female prefers analysis". There is Kingsley calling her " the only true missionary of civilisation" and Pope calling her a rake at heart; Havelock Ellis saying that she cannot work under pressure and Von Horn saying that in the fulfilling of heavy requirements she puts a man to shame; M. de Lambert that she plays with love, Krafft-Ebing that her heart is towards monogamy; ... Lombroso that there is "a half-criminaloid being even in the normal woman"; Bachofen that "Law is innate in women". 95

Instead, she proposes a series of syntheses, which she sees as the basis for a better future for mankind. In creating these syntheses, as will be seen, Mayreder accepts some of the dichotomies which were current at the time, but interprets them in her own way and, in particular, refuses to line them up in a simplistic way with the dichotomy between male and female.

To investigate and clarify the dichotomies that informed the discourse on gender in writings of this period, I have divided them into three broad categories. The first category is 'Geist and Geschlecht': the division between Geist (which translates as spirit, mind or intellect) and Geschlecht (sex or sexuality) respectively, and the association of this division with differences between men and women. The second, which I have called 'Women as Fluid and Fertile' concerns the association of women with flow, indefiniteness and fertility, while men are associated with division, definition, and rationality. The third category, 'Women as Mirrors', is the idea that the female is the

<sup>93</sup> Mayreder, Survey, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Mayreder, Survey, p. 2 <sup>95</sup> Review of Mayreder, Survey in North American Review 198 (1913), cited in Johnston, Austrian Mind, p.158.

mirror of or complement to the male, the object in the sentence where he is the subject, the passive to his active. It is in the nature of a complex discourse that these ideas are used in ways that overlap, but these slightly artificial categorisations provide a framework, which should be helpful in understanding the various viewpoints.

#### Geist and Geschlecht

In 1861 Johann Bachofen (1815-1887) published Das Mutterecht in which he argues that the ancient Mediterranean civilisations were originally governed by natural female wisdom. As time went on, and men came to dominate, he suggests that the 'sensuousness and fecundity of women' became subordinated to the 'male principles of intellect and aggressive energy'. 96 The idea that sexuality is female and that the female is essentially sexual is an extremely important one at this period. Even the sexuality of men is sometimes described in these terms, as in the description of the lecherous Baron von Sternfeldt in Stefan Zweig's The Burning Secret:

Having many a feminine attribute in his nature, he responded to the presence of an attractive woman as a woman responds to the presence of a man. Sensuous pleasure stretched his energies to the full. The hunter scented the game.97

For Weininger 'the female principle is [...], nothing more than sexuality'.98 Women are 'all sexual' and naturally unchaste. 99 He is altogether suspicious of sexual matters, stating that 'every form of fecundity is loathsome' 100 and advocating sexual abstinence for both sexes. 101 Karl Kraus, by contrast, is notable for his positive attitude to female sexuality, 102 and condemns conventional morality which has 'reversed the relationship between the sexes, constricting the habitual sexuality of the female and allowing the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> See Timms, *Kraus*, p. 82-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Stefan Zweig, 'The Burning Secret' from Kaleidoscope: 13 stories and novelettes by Stefan Zweig trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (London: Cassell and Co 1934), p.7.

<sup>98</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.90. 99 Weininger, Sex and Character, p. 89.

<sup>100</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p 346. 101 Weininger, Sex and Character, p 345.

<sup>102</sup> Kraus describes women's sensuality as 'the primal spring at which men's minds find renewal' see footnote 146 below.

functional sexuality of men to run wildly to seed'. Similarly, in his 1928 essay on Casanova, Zweig celebrates the release of a woman's sexuality as the release of her self:

Every woman who gives herself to him [Casanova] becomes more fully a woman, because she has grown more fully conscious, more pleasure-loving, freer from restraints. 104

Although he does not necessarily expect women to seek out that release, rather they must be persuaded:

The glowing ardours of the moment of surrender [which] Casanova, delicate master of the erotic art, persuades them to recognise as the true meaning, the holiest duty of their feminine nature.<sup>105</sup>

The idea of sexuality as 'surrender', however, was foreign to Sigmund Freud's world view. He saw the libido as active and therefore essentially masculine, and makes the link between the dichotomies active/passive and male /female, an alignment which is often expressed in the discourse.

The male child's external genital erotogenic zone consists of the penis... and the female's consists of her clitoris: the two organs have in common their autoerotic or "active masturbatory pleasure seeking functions. This claim to functional similarity [...] led Freud to another claim [...]: because female childhood sexuality is "active" it is "of a wholly masculine character" [and] the clitoris is "a piece of masculine sexuality.<sup>106</sup>

Freud believed that women were 'less endowed with libido by nature or constitutionally...possessing a weaker sexual instinct'. In this he follows Krafft-Ebing (1840-1902), whose classic text *Psychopathia Sexualis* echoes the active/passive dichotomy. Krafft-Ebing states:

Woman, however, if physically and mentally normal, and properly educated, has but little sensual desire [...]. Woman is wooed for her favour. She remains

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Timms, *Kraus*, p. 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Stefan Zweig, Časanova: A study in self-portraiture (first published 1929) trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (London: Pushkin Press, 2001), p. 98.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Zweig, Casanova, p.96.
 <sup>106</sup> Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (ed. and introduction), Freud on Women: A reader (London: Hogarth Press, 1990) p. 19 quoting Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905).
 <sup>107</sup> Young-Bruehl, Freud on Women, p.21.

passive. Her sexual organisation demands it, and the dictates of good breeding come to her aid. 108

Although those who gender sexuality female and those who gender it male, may appear to have irreconcilable positions, it is interesting to note how often sexuality is gendered independently from the person involved. Rosa Mayreder (although she echoes the active/passive dichotomy), is an exception in rejecting the idea that *Geschlecht* is gendered in itself, and arguing that its nature is dependent on whether the person expressing it is male or female. She suggests that the 'individuals [...] will differ according to their sex most strongly in those peculiarities which are immediately concerned with the problem of propagation', which she terms the 'teleological differentiation of sex'. This means that

[...] this teleological function differentiation in man would thus be found in all those qualities which favour sexual conquest – in the aggressive temperament which pre-disposes him to a warlike, enterprising and violent existence, and in the case of the woman, in the weak-willed, patient, unenterprising nature which favours passivity and makes her fitter for the conception, bearing and rearing of offspring.<sup>109</sup>

The rest of a person's character, however, is not sexual but individual, and is determined by

Qualities which looked at individually and alone, might appertain to one sex as to the other, [and which] create in their combinations the individualised personality. 110

This individuality is on a higher evolutionary level than *Geschlecht*, and the evolution of the human species involves a gradual increase in its importance compared to *Geschlecht*. She suggests that

At the stage of development of modern people, individual differentiation has reached such a high degree that it is no longer possible to make statements about the psychology of individuals that are based on their physiological characteristics.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia sexualis: A medico-forensic study* (from12<sup>th</sup> German edition), trans. Franklin S. Klaf (London: Staples Press 1965), pp. 8-9.

<sup>109</sup> Mayreder, Survey, p.26. 110 Mayreder, Survey, p.16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism p.166, quoting Mayreder 'Die Kultur der Geschlechter' (1910).

In other words, assumptions made about a person's character or behaviour based on their physical sex will be unfounded.

Mayreder does not reject Geschlecht altogether, but condemns the idea that it is all-important in either sex:

The maternal instincts of the female and the warlike instincts of the male furnish a soil in which, under certain circumstances, thrive the most wonderful and uplifting qualities of the individual. But these qualities are not in themselves the measure for the degree of worth, nor for the limitations imposed upon the development of the individual.<sup>112</sup>

The aim then, is not to deny the sexual side of human nature, but to form a synthesis between Geist and Geschlecht which allows the personality to flourish, to the benefit of the individual and of society. Mayreder rejects the idea that the extremes of the "real man" and the "real woman" are ideals to be hoped for. Her ideal is rather the person, male or female, who transcends the limitations of their sex, and who has 'an outlook over the barriers of sex, a power of sweeping away the bonds entailed by sexuality, enabling them to reach a mental sphere common to both sexes of the human species'. 113

Mayreder's work is surprising to the modern reader, because, while wholeheartedly supporting and campaigning for the emancipation and selfrealisation of women, her emphasis on femininity as essentially passive would not now be considered feminist.114 This is a particularly clear example of the way that the writers and texts I am considering cannot simply be divided into the feminist and the reactionary, but are part of a much more complex discourse.

As has been seen, those who see sexuality as essentially female are inclined to believe that femininity is essentially sexual. Although this is not necessarily considered (for example by Kraus) to be to women's detriment, it is part of an attitude which limits the ways that women are seen, or see themselves, to a narrow band of concepts and metaphors. One result of this is that when

<sup>Mayreder, Survey, p.40.
Mayreder, Survey, p.266.
To use the term "feminist" of Mayreder is, in any case, anachronistic. See footnote 23.</sup> 

women are criticised, it is overwhelmingly in biological or sexual terms, whether or not the situation is in any way a sexual one.

In all the Christian Social papers ... the women who had participated in the agitation for Dr Adler [candidate for the rival Social Democrat party] were insulted in the most lewd manner and called - prostitutes, whores etc. 115

complained the women's paper Dokumente der Frauen. In the same vein, the cultural critic Karl Hauer (1875-1919), suggested that the women's movement was a conspiracy by unattractive women to improve their chances in the marriage market:

Let no one believe that the so-called women's rights movement, because it talks about women's right to self-determination, is anything more than organised sexual envy. As the sexual satisfaction of woman in democratic capitalist cultures is tied to a repulsive bargain for social and financial advantages, the women's rights movement tries to make these advantages for the inferior type of woman as lucrative as possible. 116

And it is a common assumption that emancipated women and campaigners for women's rights are probably lesbian. Weininger claims that highly gifted women are invariably mannish - lesbian, attracted to effeminate men or have male physical characteristics. For example, he says: 'George Eliot had a broad massive forehead. Her movements, like her expression, were quick and decided and she lacked all womanly grace'117. By ascribing George Eliot's quickness and decision to her 'mannish' nature, Weininger's example of an able woman denies the possibility of women having ability.

The dichotomy between Geist and Geschlecht is made explicit in the obituary that the poet Peter Altenberg wrote of Annie Kalmar, the actress. 118 He writes of 'the aesthetic genius of women which is comparable with the intellectual genius of men'. 119 Similarly Kraus' view was that 'Woman's free sensuality is the full value with which nature compensated her when it gave imagination

<sup>115</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism p.1 quoting 'Pöbel' in Dokumente der Frauen

<sup>116</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.3 quoting Karl Hauer in Die Fackel (1906)

Weininger, Sex and Character, p.67.

118 Annie Kalmar, who counted Kraus among her lovers and admirers, died tragically of TB

in 1901.

119 'der Geistigen Genialität des Mannes, die ästhetiche Genialität der Frau volkommen gleichzustellen' quoted and trans. in Timms, Kraus, p. 69.

to men'. 120 and that men are the embodiment of Geist: they 'live through the mind and the imagination'.121

Weininger's list of mental qualities lacking in women include: 'Personality and individuality, (intelligible) ego and soul, will and (intelligible) character'. He goes on 'all these are expressions of the same actuality, an actuality the male of mankind attains and the female lacks'. 122 The lack of Geist in W is thus not just a lack of intellect, but of all other desirable mental qualities, including the individual soul and any moral or logical capability:

All metaphysical, all transcendental existence is logical and moral existence; woman is non-logical and non-moral. [...] Women does not sin, for she herself is the sin which is a possibility in man. 123

For Kraus, similarly, morality and logic go hand in hand as aspects of Geist. He believed that it was inappropriate to apply 'masculine' standards of morality to women. In his collection of essays Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität, he discusses

a court case concerned with a woman who, instigated by her lover, burned down a house. Kraus did not consider her guilty, for she certainly could not have been expected to refuse her lover's request. 124

and his admiration for the amoral Lulu, the chief protagonist in Erdgeist and Das Büchse die Pandora<sup>125</sup> by Frank Wedekind (1864-1918) is another example of his belief that men and women should be judged by different moral standards.

The idea that Women were incapable of logic moves easily into a focus on inexplicable behaviour and hysteria. Kraus believed that Women had significance and personality, and avoided hysteria only when they focussed

<sup>120 &#</sup>x27;Aber die freie Sinnlichkeit des Weibs ist der volle Wert, durch den es die Natur enschädigt hat, als sie dem Mann die Phantasie gab.' Die Fackel quoted and trans. Iggers ,Kraus, p.158-159.

121 Iggers, Kraus, p.158.

Weininger, Sex and Character, p.188 (both quotes).

<sup>123</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.297.
124 Iggers, Kraus, p.160.
125 Timms, Kraus, p. 82.

wholly on the sensual. 126 Similarly Freud's first biographer Fritz Wittels (1880-1950) emphasised that women who denied their sexual nature were vulnerable to neurosis. He published a long article in *Die Fackel* on woman assassins 'Die Vitrioleusen', where he suggests that the assassin's neurosis led her to reject all forms of sexuality and commit murder instead. He describes the Biblical case of Judith, who murdered Holofernes, as a woman substituting biting for kissing:

Judith said to the elder of the city "I want to do something unholy, but I cannot say any more [about it]". In this classic case it is obvious why she was silent. She is capable of carrying out the deed, but womanly shame prevents her from speaking of it... Kissing, biting are so alike, that one can take one for the

Hysteria and neurosis were, of course, Freud's professional concern. He saw psychoneuroses as the result, however, not of the conflict of sexuality with intellect, but rather of sexuality with the demands of 'civilised' society.

The cure for nervous illnesses arising from marriage would be marital unfaithfulness. But the more strictly a woman has been brought up and the more sternly she has submitted to the demands of civilisation, the more she is afraid of taking this way out; and in the conflict between her desires and her sense of duty, she once more seeks refuge in a neurosis. Nothing protects her virtue as securely as an illness. 128

Rather than putting reason and sexuality on opposite sides, he saw the repression of a woman's sexuality as resulting also in the repression (as it were) of her intellect:

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Iggers, Kraus, p.159.
 <sup>127</sup> 'Judith sagt zu Aeltesten der Stadt: ich will etwas Ungeheures tun, aber mehr kann ich nicht sagen. In diesen klassichen Falle ist offenbar, warum sie schweigt. Sie ist umstande, die Tat auszuführen, aber weibliche Scham hindert sie davon zu sprechen...Küsse, bisse, das reimt sich: Drum kann man eines für das andere nehmen.'[Italics in original] Fritz Wittels, Die Fackel quoted in McKittrick, The Borderline Case p. 250. The similarity of the words for kissing and biting in German (küssen and bissen) is part of Wittels' rhetoric.

128 Sigmund Freud "Civilised" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness' (1908) The

Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud 9 (London: Hogarth Press 1959), p.195. Earlier in the same article he points out that the main reason for unsatisfactory sexual relationships within marriage is the risk of conceiving more children than the couple want: 'For all the devices hitherto invented for preventing conception impair sexual enjoyment [...] Fear of the consequences of sexual intercourse first bring the married couples physical affection to an end; and then as a remoter result, it usually puts a stop to the mental sympathy between them.' Freud, 'Civilised', p.194

Their upbringing forbids their concerning themselves intellectually with sexual problems though they nonetheless feel extremely curious about them, and frightens them by condemning such curiosity as unwomanly and the sign of a sinful disposition. In this way they are scared away from any form of thinking and knowledge loses its value for them. I do not believe that women's "physiological feeble-mindedness" is to be explained by a biological opposition between intellectual work and sexual activity... I think that the undoubted intellectual inferiority of many women can be traced back to the inhibition of thought necessitated by sexual suppression. 129

Although Freud had no time for ideas of sexual equality, stating that 'Equality of the sexes is impossible, because of the different roles in the process of reproduction', he was very much in favour of liberalising divorce laws and 'the granting of a greater measure of sexual freedom'. He insisted that women were allowed to be members of the Psychoanalytic Society and counted among his friends and followers a number of notable progressive women, including the author Lou Andreas-Salomé and the philosopher of feminism, Grete Meisel-Hess. 130

Part of the debate is over whether "morality" and "health" are ensured by maintaining the status quo, or whether there is some healthier and more moral way that society could be. Like Freud and Zweig, von Troll-Borostyáni, sees the existing conventions as unhealthy, and particularly emphasises the damage done to women as result of sex without love, which she believed included 'anaemia and weak nerves, weakness of mind and body, absence of high-mindedness and idealism, joyless addiction to pleasure.'131 Meisel-Hess (1879-1922) prescribes a return to a more "natural" way of living, characterising her society as suffering a 'severe sexual crisis', with sexual neuroses and the spread of venereal disease as the symptoms:

The greater part of civilised humanity suffers from this severe trauma, from this laborious suppression of the emotional state [...]. Sexual psychosis is thus also the most widespread pathological consequence of our sexual misery. 132

<sup>129</sup> Freud, 'Civilised', p. 198-199
130 Appignanesi and Forrester, Freud's Women p.3 (both quotations). This page also mentions Freud's friendship with Lou Andreas-Salome. Grete Meisel-Hess refers to Freud's work in her writings see Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p. 147.

131 Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.157 (both quotes).

132 Anderson, *Utopian Feminism* p.181-18, quoting Meisel-Hess (1909).

The idea that women's emancipation would lead to a society that was not only healthier but also more moral, is central to the writings of many of those in the women's movement. Auguste Fickert saw the emancipation of women as part of a broader movement to improve society. 'Our final goal' she writes 'is therefore not the acknowledgement of rights, but the elevation of the intellectual and moral level, the development of the personality'133. Similarly, the writer Hermann Bahr (1863-1934) explained men's support for the women's movement like this:

It is not so much out of liking for women that these men demand female suffrage as out of sympathy for men's politics, not for women's sake, but for the sake of politics, because they hope that with women a new moral element will force its way into politics, an element which it [politics] needs in order to be up to the great tasks of the times. 134

Without actually gendering the 'new moral element' female, Bahr certainly sees it as something that women can carry with them. The traditional emphasis in views like this is that women's moral contribution stems from their virtues of 'self-sacrifice, love and devotion', that a woman is 'priestess in the temple of ideals tirelessly nourishing the fire at the altar of the Good, the True and the Beautiful'135. But an important feature of the Austrian women's movement was the belief that it was women's emancipation that would change society for the better. This was linked to the support that many politically active women gave to other reforming causes such as the Social Democratic Party,<sup>136</sup> the temperance movement<sup>137</sup> and pacifism. Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914), whose pacifist novel Die Waffen nieder! [Lay down your Arms!] was a bestseller, and who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905, 138 saw the eradication of war as women's special task:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism* p.13, quoting Allgemeine Österreichischer Frauenverein

Jahresbericht (1895).

134 Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.18 quoting Hermann Bahr (1912).
135 Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.13 citing Ella Hruschka (1892).

<sup>136</sup> See Anderson, Utopian Feminism p.86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Eugenie Schwarzwald was a supporter. See Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p. 109 citing Paul

Stefan (1922).

138 Bertha von Suttner, *Die Waffen nieder* (Dresden: Pierson, 1891). First published in 1889. By 1905, when Suttner was awarded the Nobel Prize, there had been 37 impressions and editions, see Beatrix Kempf, Suffragette for Peace, the life of Bertha von Sutiner trans. R.W.Last (London: Wolff, 1972).

Modern women do not shake at the institution of war because they are daughters, wives and mothers, but rather because they have become the rational half of humanity, which is becoming more rational and see that war represents an obstacle to cultural development.<sup>139</sup>

And it is noticeable that she chooses to characterise women's opposition to warfare as 'rational'. Fickert chooses instead to focus on the physiological differences between men and women. She emphasises that women will want to improve society, to make it moral and fair, because they suffer most from its lack of morality:

We women have a great ethical mission to fulfil, not because we are by nature better, more moral than men, but because brute strength is denied us and making human society more moral is in our most personal interests.<sup>140</sup>

Rosa Mayreder as we have seen, explicitly defines Geist as outside gender. The tasks of a "higher humanity" will be achieved when masculine and feminine intellectual qualities are combined. The mind of the creative genius, who can undertake these tasks, is androgynous.

Genius is not to be understood as an augmentation of the specifically male nature, but as an expansion beyond the limitations of individual sex differentiation.141

In writing this, Mayreder is specifically rejecting Weininger's idea that 'genius is simply intensified, perfectly developed, universally conscious maleness',142 suggesting instead that a genius will show less sexual differentiation that most people. 143

Seeing genius and creativity as gendered masculine, many contemporary writers excluded women from creativity. Emil Horst, for example 'maintained that the male genius possesses something he calls "psychoplasma", an active force which enables him to create; the more active the psychoplasma, the greater the genius. This psychoplasma is necessary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.111-112 quoting Bertha von Suttner.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.11 quoting Allgemeine Österreichischer Frauenverein

Jahresbericht (1893).

141 Mayreder, Survey, p.256.

142 Weininger, Sex and Character, p.189.

143 Mayreder, Survey pp. 254-257. Most of the examples of genius in this section are men. The essay in which Mayreder explored the nature of female genius remained unpublished (see Anderson, Utopian Feminism p.169).

both to create art works and to father children'.<sup>144</sup> Hauer, writing in *Die Fackel*, is even more explicit in excluding women from the position of creator:

Women can only support culture as material for the masculine desire for creation, as a living work of art, or as an effective tonic to multiply masculine energy.<sup>145</sup>

While Kraus believes that women can inspire creators, but cannot actually create:

For nature has endowed women with sensuality as the primal spring at which men's minds find renewal. 146

Educational reformers like Eugenie Schwarzwald, by contrast, saw the fostering of female creativity as essential to her mission. In the girls' school that Schwarzwald ran in Vienna, she strove for a "creative education"[...] the release of the creative artist in every child'. 147

#### Women as Fluid and Fertile

Kraus's image of the 'primal spring' is part of a strand in the discourse which expresses femininity as fluid and connected while masculinity is rectilinear and divided. For Weininger women's thought is (and in some sense women themselves are) like water, fluid, and without clear boundaries:

A woman's thought is a sliding and a gliding through subjects, a superficial tasting of things that a man, who studies the depths, would hardly notice; it is an extravagant and dainty method of skimming which has no grasp of accuracy. A woman's thought is superficial [...]. 148

While Kraus sees the restriction of women's sexuality as a rejection of the fertile forces of nature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Claire Taylor-Jay, "I am blessed with the fruit": Ideas of Creativity and Gender in Early twentieth-century Germany' Paper presented at Third Biennial International Conference on Twentieth-Century Music, Nottingham, June 2003, p.2 citing Emil Horst (1913). Claire Taylor-Jay goes on to investigate the way that creativity is seen either as male or as female depending on whether the artist is seen as 'creating' or 'receiving' the work of art.
<sup>145</sup> 'Kulturfördernd ist das Weib nur als Material Schopfungslust, als lebendiges Kunstwerk, oder als wirksamtes Tonikum, als Multiplikator männlicher Energien.' McKittrick, *The* 

Borderline Case, p. 247 quoting Hauer in Die Fackel

146 'Denn die Natur hat dem Weib die Sinnlichkeit als der Urquell verliehen, and dem sich der Geist des Mannes Eneurung hole'. Kraus 'der Prozess Riehl' in Die Fackel quoted and

translated in Timms, Kraus, pp. 84-85. <sup>147</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.106.

Man has canalised the torrent of womanly sexuality. Now it no longer floods the land. But it doesn't make it fruitful, either. 149

This emphasis on fertility is, potentially, a way of emphasising women's role in child-bearing, which was central to some writers' view of die Frauenfrage. Strindberg, for example, rejected the idea that his work attacked women's emancipation, and pointed to his respect for women as mothers:

I have only attacked women's attempts to emancipate herself from childbearing, not her emancipation from the cradle or the kitchen[...]. Woman does not need me to defend her. She is the mother, and therefore the Queen of all the World. 150

In a more general way, Rosa Mayreder makes links between women's role as child-bearers and their contribution to society, describing it in terms of feminine 'culture', which emphasises receptivity, gradual gestation, and wholeness, in contrast to masculine 'civilisation', which is based on superfluous productivity, militarism and aggression, and knowledge divided into separate specialisms. 151

The importance of mothers was central to the work of the women's movement. The Austrian League for the Protection of Mothers (the Österreichische Bund für Mutterschutz), founded in 1907, campaigned for paid maternity leave, the provision of free midwives and breast-feeding breaks for female factory workers. Their petition to Parliament was unsuccessful. 152 For Marianne Hainisch, meanwhile, the position of mothers who had no legal right to guardianship of their children, was one of the most flagrant of the injustices that she hoped to change:

The most disgraceful injustice is done us at the side of our beloved spouse, at our own hearth. We, who know no bounds to our devotion to our child[...]we

<sup>149</sup> Der Mann hat den Wildstrom weiblicher Sinnlichkeit kanalisiert. Nun überschwemmt er nicht mehr das Land. Aber er befruchtet es auch nicht mehr.' Kraus in Die Fackel quoted and trans. Timms, Kraus, p. 82.

<sup>150</sup> McKittrick, *The Borderline Case*, p. 245 quoting August Strindberg in *Die Fackel*.
151 Mayreder, *Geschlecht*, pp. 6-10.

<sup>152</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.112.

who cease to wish, to strive for ourselves, and live only in our child, we have no rights to our child.153

However, as we have seen, Kraus' idea of women focused on their sexuality rather than on child-bearing, and in his writings 'The cult of Motherhood, propagated by the Swedish feminist Ellen Key is dismissed as sentimental twaddle'. 154 Kraus' ideal woman is an "Erdgeist" like Wedekind's Lulu in his play of that name - a spirit of the earth, nature untamed, the naturally polygamous femme fatale, who, conveniently, never gets pregnant.

Weininger, like Kraus, does not consider motherhood as an important role for women. He is suspicious of women's influence on children and considers that for society's good 'The education of mankind must be taken out of the hands of the mother'. 155 For Weininger, the nurturing role is inevitable (and therefore not praiseworthy) in women, because they are not really individuals at all, since they are not divided off from their society (an idea which echoes his concept of feminine fluidity):

The woman gives up no solitude when she nurses the sick, as she would have to do were she to deserve moral credit for her action; a woman is never in a condition of solitude, and knows neither the love of it nor the fear of it. The woman is always living in a condition of fusion with all the human beings she knows, even when she is alone. 156

In The Burning Secret, Zweig specifically sets the female protagonist's sexuality in conflict with her maternal role. Frau Blumental has narrowly escaped an extra-marital affair, as a result of an interruption by her young son Edgar. He has then lied to save her reputation, and the novella ends:

Not until many years later did Edgar understand [that] henceforward Mummy would devote all her energies, all her love to him; that she had said farewell to the pleasures of the flesh. She was grateful to her child for saving her from a futile and unworthy liaison; and in a bitter-sweet compunction she pledged herself to the boy's service. 157

<sup>153</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p. 15 quoting Marianne Hainisch (1892). It is interesting that the idea that the strain of childbearing is part of the oppression of women, as discussed by feminists in Britain such as Mona Caird (for example in 'Marriage' Westminster Review 1888, 191-192) seems not to have contributed to the discourse in Austria at this time.

<sup>154</sup> Timms, Kraus, p. 68

<sup>155</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.348.
156 Weininger, Sex and Character, p.198.
157 Zweig, The Burning Secret, p.73.

It is noticeable how even Zweig and Arthur Schnitzler, who are highly sympathetic to women's position, and condemn the narrowness of many women's lives, nonetheless largely think of women in terms of the men who surround them. Frau Blumental's choice is made between her son and her lover – other options do not seem to be open to her.

Freud's view of motherhood was much more specifically sexual. Although he did not fully develop his theory of the Oedipus complex until the 1920s, it seems clear that, in the period we are considering, he saw the relationship between mother and child as a sexual one:

Freud had nothing interesting to say about the caring, nurturing and nursing functions of the mother. What he pointed to, quite aware of its 'sacrilegious' implications was the 'unending source of sexual excitation and satisfaction' the mother's care afforded [the child], especially 'since the person in charge of him, who after all is, as a rule, his mother, herself regards him with feelings that are derived from her own sexual life: she kisses him, rocks him, and quite clearly treats him as a substitute for a complete sexual object'. The nursing couple...is, for Freud, the original template, the prototype of all later sexual satisfaction. <sup>158</sup>

For Freud, the relationship between mother and child was often the primary compensation that a woman could expect for an unsatisfactory marital sex life.<sup>159</sup> In this he partly echoes the conventional view of motherhood as a woman's highest calling, which is expressed by Strindberg (above). But his emphasis on the mother's personal and sexual response to the baby is unusual not only in its 'sacrilegious' view of motherhood, but also in his awareness of a woman's sexuality as part of her self, of how (as it were) she feels on the inside. Although, as has been seen, Freud was not a believer in sexual equality, it can be argued that as a therapist his approach to women was unconventional in its respect for their autonomy:

The interpreting Freud [...] listened acutely to his female patients and heard - beyond the tics, paralyses and phobias, losses of voice – what they said, however disruptive this content might have been to current opinion. It was this thoroughly unconventional Freud who dignified women's intimate, secret confessions into a public, sexual discourse – a discourse which for the first time gives non-judgemental voice to women's sexual feelings [...]. 160

Appignanesi and Forrester, Freud's Women, p.4 quoting Freud Three Essays (1905).
 See Appignanesi and Forrester, Freud's Women, p.405.

<sup>160</sup> Appignanesi and Forrester, Freud's Women p.4

Both as a psychoanalyst and as a writer, Freud contributed to the idea that a woman had a point of view of her own, that her sexuality was part of her selfhood, rather than simply a reflection of the desires and needs of the men in her life.

#### Women as Mirrors

The tendency to define women mainly in terms of their relationship to men, is by no means limited to misogynists like Weininger, however. Progressive women like Marianne Hainisch, a leading member of the League of Austrian Women's Associations, emphasised that achieving equal rights would not prevent women from fulfilling their devoted, nurturing role:

Nature sees to it that the eternal feminine does not disappear...[Love] will remain for ever, it will make devotion, self-sacrifice, humility, the highest bliss for woman for ever and ever.<sup>161</sup>

As we have seen, even Rosa Mayreder considered women's character to include a part with a 'weak-willed, patient, un-enterprising nature which favours passivity'. Critics of the Women's movement saw the subordination of the woman to the man as inevitable and right:

The woman who loves wishes to do nothing but - subordinate herself, be able to subordinate herself, and how gladly she does so!<sup>163</sup>

This devotion and subordination is connected to the idea that femininity is inherently passive, which Weininger credits to Aristotle, who 'held that in procreation the male principle was the formative, active agent, the "logos", whilst the female was the passive material'. This passive, formless matter is, in Weininger's view, waiting for one thing: sex with a man.

The supremest moment in a woman's life, when her original nature, her natural desire manifests itself, is that in which her own sexual union takes place... it is the greatest joy of passivity, stronger even than the contented joy

164 Weininger, Sex and Character, p.187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.15 quoting Marianne Hainisch, Die Brotfrage der Frau (1875).
<sup>162</sup> See footnote 109 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.7 quoting Sidonie von Grünwald-Zerkowitz (1902).

of the hypnotised person, the desire of matter that has just been formed and wishes to keep that form for ever.165

The soft and malleable matter of the woman's body receives the impression of the man's and is 'formed' and hardened into something meaningful, like a sealing wax under a seal. The man gives the woman meaning, he is her purpose in life, her only purpose, since ultimately 'women have a function and meaning in the universe as the opposite of man'. 166 This idea is echoed in Vera's Eine für viele, where the female protagonist expresses her fear of losing her self in her marriage, when she writes to her fiancé: 'You want to melt my personality with your fervour, and mould my character into your form', 167 and something similar informs Kraus's aphorism 'A woman should have just as much intellect as a mirror has body'168.

Underlying this set of dichotomies is the idea of femininity as a lack. Freud, most famously, characterised this as the female's envy of the penis. Central to the views on childhood development that he formulated in this period, was the idea that girls felt cheated by their lack of a penis, while boys were terrified of losing theirs. 169 Kraus also saw the lack as part of women's biology, citing women's menstruation:

Must we fill the gap that the Creator has left in women? Because every month they are reminded of their defectiveness, must we bleed to death?<sup>170</sup>

Similarly Weininger's theory of gender assumes that:

There may be conceived for every cell all conditions from complete masculinity through all stages of diminished masculinity to its complete absence, and the consequent presence of complete femininity.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.296.

<sup>166</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.297.
167 Schwartz 'Crisis', p. 5 quoting Vera, Eine für viele.
168 This aphorism was quoted by the Times Literary Supplement, with some disdain 'The section on 'Women and Morals' is the most objectionable. Nations are said to be most accurately judged by their laws and institutions in relation to women. If we apply this to writers what are we to think of one who declares that "A woman should have just as much intellect as a mirror has body"?' Interestingly, Kraus chose to quote this in *Die Fackel*. See McKitrick, *The Borderline Case*, p.240.

<sup>169</sup> Young-Bruehl, Freud on Women, p.29.

<sup>170 &#</sup>x27;Müssen wir die Lücken ausfüllen, die der Schöpfer an den Weibern gelassen hat? Weil sie in jeden Monat an ihre Unvollstandigkeit gemahnt werden, müssen wir verbluten? Kraus in Die Fackel quoted in McKittrick The Borderline Case, p. 236.

<sup>171</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.13.

By the end of *Geschlecht und Charakter*, Weininger has wound himself up to such a pitch of misogyny, that he is unwilling to allow women to be anything more than nothing, not even a negation:

She is not the negation, she is, rather, nothing. She is neither the affirmation nor the denial. A man has in himself the possibility of being the absolute something or the absolute nothing, and therefore his actions are directed towards one or the other...The abstract male is the image of God, the absolute something; the female and the female in the male, is the symbol of nothing; that is the significance of woman in the universe, and in this way male and female complete and condition one another.<sup>172</sup>

# Women's autonomy: The "I" of the Other

The question of women's autonomy underlies many of the issues of power and gender that are described here. Autonomy includes those practical things for which the women's movement campaigned: access to education and employment, enfranchisement and human rights both inside the family and out in the world. Going deeper, however, it implies that women are not constrained in their choices legally, socially or financially, simply because they are women. And on the deepest level autonomy is about having a point of view, a sense of self, a will to choose and act. And so the discourse on the nature of gender partakes of much broader philosophical questions about what it means to be human, about free will and about consciousness: the sense of oneself as an "I".

One of the things that children learn as they grow up is that other people are thinking, feeling beings too. The toddler who hits another is taught to recognise that she has hurt the other, and that the other's hurt is like her own would be. As adults, we know this in principle, but all too often forget it. This is particularly easy if the other person belongs to a different social group from us. The differences in culture, and hence in the other person's behaviour and responses make it easier to forget that they are the subject of their own sentence, that they have a viewpoint, a thinking, feeling "I".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.297.

This may seem obvious, but it is of the essence in the debate examined here. Dichotomies of the kind that were woven in to the discourse tend inevitably to divide the world not only into "good" and "bad", "male" and "female" but also into "insiders" and "outsiders" or "us" and "them", where "they" are seen as objects, and not subjects. Weininger's sums this view up succinctly when he says: 'The absolute female has no "I"'. The Others are seen only in terms of their relationship to "us", with no appreciation of their own point of view. Lulu, Kraus's ideal woman is called a different name by each of her lovers, and says

I've never in the world wanted to be anything but what I've been taken for, and no-one has ever taken me for anything but what I am. 174

Although she is the protagonist, the *Erdgeist* of the title, the play denies her, in some sense at least, her self-hood, her autonomy divorced from her position as object of male fantasy and desire. She is not a person, she is a projection, because there is nothing more to her than what she is taken for.

Mayreder considered that women, too, tended to see men as the subject of the sentence. In an unpublished essay written in 1918, she suggests that the ability to perceive oneself as the subject is essential to creativity, and that for most women this is impossible, since they will inevitably see themselves as men do. Only when the female personality is mixed with a masculine strain, she continues,

by which she gains the ability to experience herself as subject, and no longer as object, only then does she gain in a higher sense the suitability for communication, for aesthetic shaping. 175

This idea of being the subject, of being autonomous, comes from the sense that we have free will, that we choose and act. The campaign for women's rights such as the right to education, to employment, to the vote and to equality before the law, were seen by progressive writers as part of a more general right of women to grow and develop in their own way:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> Frank Wedekind, 'Earth-spirit' in *The Lulu Plays* trans. Stephen Spender (London: Calder, 1972), p. 101.

<sup>175</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.169 citing Rosa Mayreder 'Weiblichkeit und Genialität (1918) (unpublished MS).

[It is] the duty of women not to rest until they have attained both the development and unfolding of their natural abilities, and also the rights which correspond to their true nature.<sup>176</sup>

An idea which Schnitzler echoed when he described the problem as 'Our mistake: we force women into roles in which they cannot develop'. 177

In contrast to this, contemporary interest in the subconscious and the irrational, including the work of Freud, was in part an exploration of the limits to free will, of the extent to which our choices and actions are not under conscious control, of the fact that we behave irrationally. As has been seen, part of the Geist/Geschlecht dichotomy was the tendency to characterise women's thought and behaviour as irrational. Weininger even states that 'modern psychology is essentially womanish', 178 because of its emphasis on the irrational, and aligns consciousness with creativity as well as gender:

Woman, in short, has an unconscious life, man a conscious life, and the genius the most conscious life. 179

Weininger also points to the rarity of women expressing their point of view, as evidence for their inability to have a conscious, creative life. 180 But women's points of view were at this time increasingly being expressed, 181 in fictional works, such as the novels of Lou Andreas-Salomé and Rosa Mayreder and in autobiographies as well as newspapers like Dokumente der Frauen and philosophical and political works. Anthologies such as Julia Virginia's Frauenlyrik unserer Zeit [Women's poetry of our time] (1907) also made women's writing more widely available. 182 Novels were often a means of examining issues that concerned women, so, for example, such as Else

Anderson, Utopian Feminism, p.15 quoting Marianne Hainisch (1896).
 'Unser Fehler, wir treiben die Weiber in Rollen hinein, denen sie nicht gewachsen sind' McKittrick, The Borderline Case, p. 123 quoting Arthur Schnitzler.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.208. <sup>179</sup> Weininger, Sex and Character, p.113.

Weininger, Sex and Character, p.113.

Weininger, Sex and Character, pp.86-87.

It 'By the turn of the nineteenth century, the number of women writing and publishing in German was astonishing'. Chris Weedon, 'The struggle for emancipation: German Women writers of the Jahrhundertwende' in Jo Catling (ed.), A History of Women's writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.111.

It Sabine Werner-Birkenbach, 'Trends in writing by Women, 1910-1933' trans. Anthony Vivis

in Catling, History of Women's Writing, p. 130.

Kotanyí-Jerusalem's investigation of prostitution in her novel Der Heilige Skarabäus. 183 set in a brothel, or Bertha von Suttner's pacifist novel Die Waffen nieder! [Lay down your Arms!], discussed above. 184 Meanwhile more explicitly polemical works included the philosophical works of Irma von Troll-Borostyáni, Grete Meisel-Hess and Rosa Mayreder. While critics tended to patronise women's writing, and a number of women hid their identity under pseudonyms, 185 these publications gave women's thoughts and opinions a wider audience, and made them part of the broader intellectual discourse of the time.

In the first issue of the Dokumente, its editor expressed the importance of describing women's lives as they really were:

[W]omen had grown tired of being coddled and duped by the fairy-tales about life propounded by the 'Frauenliteratur'... Now they wanted to know about real life: the actual conditions of women of all walks of life, whether leisured or working, and so the journal aimed to provide 'independent, objective, rigorous facts tied to pieces of evidence - documents of the real state of life' 186

The author Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach expressed the way that men tended to forget about the existence of women in an aphorism:

When a woman says everyone she means everybody, when a man says everyone he means every man. 187

There were men, though, who were interested in what women thought and experienced. In Fräulein Else, 188 Schnitzler writes a complete novella as the stream of consciousness through a woman's mind. In Liebelei [Flirtations] he writes movingly in the voice of Christine, whose beloved has taken her love

<sup>183</sup> Else (Kotanyi-) Jerusalem, Die heilige Skarabäus (First published 1909) (Berlin: Fischer,

<sup>184</sup> See footnote 138.

<sup>185</sup> For example, Bertha von Suttner, Maria Janitschek and Lou Andreas-Salomé all published at least some of their writings under male, or gender-neutral names. See Michelle Stott and Joseph O. Baker (eds), Im Nonnengarten: An anthology of German women's writing 1850-1907 (Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press, 1997), pp. 45, 193 and 257 respectively.

1866 "unabhängige sachliche streng an Thatsachen gebundene Belege – Dokumente über die wirkliche Zustande des Lebens" McKittrick, The Borderline Case, p.125 quoting Dokumente der

Frau.

187 "Wenn ein Frau sagt 'Jeder', meint sie: 'Jedermann'. Wenn ein Mann sagt 'Jeder' meint er 'jeder Mann'." McKittrick, The Borderline Case, p. 244 quoting Ebner-Eschenbach.

188 Arthur Schnitzler, Fräulein Else (First published 1924) (London: Pushkin Press, 1998).

for granted, treating her as a pleasant amusement, and has then been killed in a duel over another woman.

Love! – Him! – I was nothing but a way to pass the time – and he died for someone else! – and I – I worshipped him! Didn't he know that – that I would have died for him, that he was my God and my salvation – didn't he notice that at all? And he could leave me, with a smile, leave this room and let himself be shot down for somebody else. 189

In her essay 'The Crisis of the Female Self in Fin-de-Siècle Women Writer's Narratives', <sup>190</sup> Agatha Schwartz suggests that issues of autonomy are investigated by a number of writers in Vienna at this period through descriptions of the fragility of the sense of self. Following Gotthart Wundberg, <sup>191</sup> who points out a number of male authors whose work investigates a 'dissociation of the personality', 'consciousness of fragmentation in the world', and 'relativity of values', <sup>192</sup> Schwartz discusses narratives by women 'in which we can also observe a destruction of the concept of the unified subject'. The narratives she describes are all in the form of fictional diaries, which allow the authors to speak in the voice of their female protagonists, both in describing events and in reflecting upon them. She describes how in each case, the protagonists 'struggle with the roles imposed upon them, roles that are directly concerned with their femaleness' and suggests that

Their gradual fragmentation is a result of patriarchal constrictions imposed upon female creativity, sexuality and desire, and/or of male sexual violence. 193

In Vera's Eine für viele: Aus dem Tagebuche eines Mädchens [One for Many: from a girl's diary] (1902)<sup>194</sup> the protagonist describes how she 'rattles her chains without the strength to break them'.<sup>195</sup> Caught between the social expectation that she will marry her fiancé Georg, and her awareness that the relationship

<sup>189</sup> Schnitzler, 'Flirtations', p.50.

<sup>190</sup> Schwartz, 'Crisis'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> Gotthart Wundberg 'Österreichische Literatur und allgemeiner zeitgenössischer Monismus um die Jahrhundertwende' in Peter Berner, Emil Brix and Wolfgang Mantl (eds) Wien um 1900: Aufbruch in die Moderne (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte un Politik, 1986), pp. 104-111.

<sup>192</sup> Wundberg, Monismus, p. 104.

<sup>193</sup> Schwartz, 'Crisis,' p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> Cited in Schwartz, 'Crisis" pp.3-6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> 'Ich rassle mit den Ketten, ohne die Kraft zu verbrechen' Schwartz, 'Crisis' p. 4 quoting Vera, Eine für viele.

will not bring her happiness or fulfilment, she ultimately kills herself. Her reluctance to marry Georg stems from a sense that he does not recognise her as autonomous, the subject of her own life.

[...] If two souls are not combined with each other wholly, freely and independently, understanding, comprehending, and fulfilling each other, so that they are in contact in all their many-sidedness, then the individual's natural propensity for happiness can never be achieved. 196

Meanwhile, in Asenijeff's *Tagebuchblätter einer Emanzipierten* (1902)<sup>197</sup> [Leaves from the diary of an Emancipated Woman], Irene (the emancipated woman of the title) identifies the damage done by the inability of society to see things from the woman's point of view

We are only stunted like this by men's thinking because we are all used to seeing through their eyes. 198

And yet it is part of the complexity of the discourse that even when writers are expressing women's points of view and underlining their autonomy, it is still through their relationship with men that this viewpoint is largely expressed. In Maria Janitschek's Königin Judith, 199 the heroine Judith is notable for her self-sufficiency. Her parents are dead (she lives with an elderly relative), she works alone in the fields, and goes only occasionally into the town. The point of the story, however, is her encounter with a lecherous prince, who abducts and tries to rape her, and a significant proportion of the story is told from his point of view. Similarly, while Eine für viele is told entirely from the point of view of the female protagonist, the extracts from Vera's fictional diary are preceded by a letter from Vera to her fiancé, explaining her reasons for choosing suicide over marriage. This "frames" the diary, as if to explain why a woman's diary might be interesting to a man (or, perhaps, to anyone). It is clear that many authors were not confident that the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> 'Wenn nicht zwei Seelen sich als Ganzes, Freies, Selbständiges zu einander gesellen, sich verstehen, erfassen, sich erfüllen, sich im vollen Ausmass ihrer Vielseitigkeiten berühren, dann kann auch eine Neigung das höchste Glück einer Einigkeit nicht schaffen Schwartz, 'Crisis', p. 5 quoting Vera, Eine für viele.

<sup>197</sup> See Schwartz, 'Crisis', pp. 10-14.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Wir sind nur so verkrüppelt durch männliches Denken, dass wir alles aus seiner Optik zu schauen gewohnt wurden.' Schwartz, 'Crisis' p. 11 quoting Asenijeff, Tagebuchblätter.

199 Maria Janitschek, 'Königin Judith' in Stott and Baker, Im Nonnengarten, pp.194-207.

women's point of view would seem important to their readers, unless their relevance to men was made clear.

Both Weininger and Kraus state explicitly that they oppose the oppression of women,<sup>200</sup> and yet to deny a group of people their autonomy is inevitably to oppress them. In Zwei Fremde, Altenberg's character Anita expresses the damage that is done to women who, because of men's needs, are denied the chance to grow and develop:

What are we?! Firewood Man sets light to us, we burn, warm -But equally we are something, that Nobody knows - Trees!...

We are something growing in the inner world, in a wood, where no man goes and all is quiet. Don't chop down the firewood! 201

The discourse surrounding the Woman Question can be seen as a debate over whether the dichotomy between male and female must inevitably lead to a society and a culture that is divided in two, with one half legally, economically and in terms of self-expression dominant over the other; or whether it is possible to find a way to unite the two halves of the dichotomy to create a society which is not just fairer but is also one in which everybody, whatever their gender, is able to grow and develop, to the benefit of all.

These ideas form part of the horizon of expectation which provided the context for artistic life in Vienna at this time. In the next three chapters, I investigate how the different aspects of the discourse on gender inform three operas. Issues of power, gender and autonomy can be seen to underlie many of the structures in both the music and the libretti, despite their differences in style, structure and subject matter.

Kraus particularly condemned the oppressiveness of the prevailing sexual morality, see Timms, Kraus, p. 67-68. Weininger sees the oppression of women as unacceptable because men are morally damaged by it. Weininger, Sex and Character, p.343.

Was sind Wir?! Brennholz/Man entzündet Uns, Wir brennen, wärmen - / Aber eigentlich sind Wir Etwas, was Niemand weiss - Bäume! (...) Etwas in die Welt hinein Wachsendes

sind Wir, in einem Walde, wo kein Mann geht und Alles still ist. Nicht zerhacktes
Brennholz!' Altenberg, 'Zwei Fremde' quoted in Josephine N. M. Simpson, Peter Altenberg: A
neglected writer of the Viennese Jahrhundertwende (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1987), p.71.

# Chapter Four: Görge grows up - resolving dichotomies in Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge*

#### Introduction

Alexander Zemlinsky's opera *Der Traumgörge* should have been the work that established his reputation. He was already a successful conductor and composition teacher, and had recently premièred his orchestral fantasy *Die Seejungfrau* to considerable acclaim.¹ Mahler had accepted *Der Traumgörge* for the Hofoper, and Zemlinsky must have had high hopes for the première, scheduled for 4th October 1907.² But it was not to be. Mahler left the Hofoper days before the scheduled première, and the production was cancelled. The opera was not performed until the 1980s,³ when the world in which it was written had long since disappeared.

Viewing the opera in its early twentieth-century context, it is striking how clearly some aspects of the discourse described in the previous chapter are reflected in it. In particular, both the words and the music of the opera express dichotomies that relate closely to those that I have identified in the literary discourse. This chapter begins with a description of the opera's genesis, and moves on to discuss the various versions of the opera that exist. Zemlinsky's music is comparatively unknown, and there is relatively little discussion of it in the literature, I have therefore next given a brief discussion of Zemlinsky's motivic technique as seen in *Der Traumgörge*. This serves to put into context the more detailed analysis of the discourse on gender as it is seen in the opera, which follows. In analysing the opera, and in particular the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p. 134-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p.155. The Opera house in Vienna was known as the Hofoper [court opera] until 1918, but was renamed the Staatsoper [state opera] at the founding of the Austrian Republic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The first performance of *Der Traumgörge* took place in Nuremberg on 11th October 1980. Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, p. 159.

way that the various dichotomies are expressed, it becomes clear that, just as in the literary discourse, issues of power, gender and autonomy are central to the way that the story is told. In conclusion, the chapter discusses the way that the treatment of these dichotomies changes as the opera unfolds, and draws some conclusions about the overall attitude to this way of thinking that the opera embodies.

# Synopsis4

#### Act One

The opera opens (Sc 1) with Görge and his fiancée Grete. Görge tells Grete a sinister story about his cat. Grete is made uneasy by the story, and complains that Görge's books of tales should all be burned. Görge rejects this: his books are his most precious possessions. 'The old tales must come alive!' he exclaims. Grete reminds Görge that they are to be betrothed that day, but he answers absently. (Sc 2) The miller and the pastor discuss the forth-coming marriage, which the miller (Grete's father) has arranged to keep control of the mill that is Görge's inheritance. (Sc 3) Alone, Grete prepares for her betrothal, and wishes that Görge were more like other suitors. (Sc 4) To the delight of the villagers, Hans, Grete's former sweetheart returns from the army. (Sc 5) Hans is angry at the betrothal between Görge and Grete. With Grete's encouragement, he coaxes Görge into explaining his absence of mind. He says that he has had the most wonderful dream, in which he was visited by a beautiful Princess. The villagers are amazed by his rapt demeanour, but Hans and Grete are scornful and disbelieving of the story. (Sc 6) Görge goes down to the millstream, where he remembers how his mother used to tell him stories. He hears dream voices threatening to destroy his books as he drifts into sleep. (Sc 7) As he sleeps the Dream Princess appears to him once again, and urges him to go out and discover the wonderful World. He wakes and remembers with difficulty that he is about to be betrothed. (Sc 8) At the church door the miller and pastor tell him that marriage will be an end to his dreaming. The villagers go into the church, but Görge decides to leave then and there, to discover the world and seek the Dream Princess.

#### Act Two

Outside an inn, in another village, a year later. (Sc 1) Kaspar expresses anger at the power of the landlords and proposes an uprising. Görge is the man they need to bring in recruits, he suggests. The villagers are doubtful. (Sc 2) Züngl sings a song,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Synopses of operas in this thesis are all CFD.

while Mathes tries to flirt with Marei. (Sc 3) Marei admits that she is attracted to Görge, but she is told that he has eyes only for Gertraud. (Sc 4) The innkeeper's wife is heard shouting. The innkeeper has offered Gertraud work for the Whitsun holiday, and his wife suspects that his interest in Gertraud is sexual. Gertraud responds angrily, and rejects the innkeeper's advances. (Sc 5) Left alone, Gertraud expresses her anger and unhappiness, and describes how she is ostracised by the villagers. Her mood lightens as she thinks about how she has recently felt an inexplicable happiness and hope for the future.

(Sc 6) Görge enters, somewhat aged and unkempt, and is sympathetic to her plight. He is scornful of the villagers but also angry at his own descent into dereliction and drunkenness. Gertraud tries to soothe and comfort him. As he becomes calmer, she urges him to join the struggle that Kaspar is launching. He rejects the idea that he could be of any use. (Sc 7) Kaspar enters and urges Görge to join the struggle. Görge is excited and exultant at the chance to prove himself. But Kaspar and the villagers insist that he must give up Gertraud if he is to join them. Gertraud is determined not to stand in his way. (Sc 8) Görge rejects the villagers' plans and decides to stay with Gertraud. (Sc 9) He finds Gertraud dressed in white, wearing a wreath, and realises that she is contemplating suicide. Gertraud admits that she loves him, and Görge is horrified to realise that he has been blind to her feelings. As the Whitsun fires start to burn around them, Görge asks her to be his wife and to return to his home with him, where he will reclaim his inheritance. (Sc 10) Marei enters and accuses Gertraud of bewitching Görge. The mob set Gertraud's house on fire, but Görge prevents them from attacking her, and the two of them leave together.

## **Epilogue**

Back in Görge's home village, a year later. (Sc 1) Görge and Gertraud enjoy the peace of the evening, and read one of Görge's books together. (Sc 2) A deputation of villagers, led by Hans and Grete, appear in order to thank them for all they have done for the village in the past year. (Sc 3) Alone again, Görge and Gertraud discuss Görge's love of the old tales. He says that he has found them alive again in his love for Gertraud. As the moon rises, Görge sees Gertraud as the Dream Princess, with roses in her hands.

# Background

## Genesis and literary sources

Der Traumgörge's librettist, Leo Feld (1869-1924)<sup>5</sup> was a member of the same circle as Zemlinsky: the set that met at the Café Griensteidl. Feld (whose name was originally Leo Hirschfeld) was close in age to Zemlinsky, and in the 1890s had been a promising young protégé of Hermann Bahr, just as Hofmannsthal was.<sup>6</sup> There is no record of when the two men first agreed to work together on an opera, but in a letter to Schoenberg in 1902, Zemlinsky describes his latest project: an opera based on Heine's cycle of three poems Der arme Peter:

I am going on now with a new idea for an opera, I think this will turn out to be something. I only have the idea for the character and an idea, not much more, and no idea of the plot. Briefly, it is "Poor Peter", i.e the ideal young visionary and dreamer (I don't yet know in what setting) who longs for love but lives a short and unloved life. Not only is he unloved by women, but is misunderstood by others, and he lives for his dreams because he is so different from the people around him. He lacks both friends and lovers, and at first he is scorned, and then feared and mistrusted. Only his mother, perhaps, still believes in him, and believes that he can conquer Life, but she dies, still believing and there is nothing he can do. And then he dies too.

That's roughly the basic idea: I don't yet know much more. I think there is a great deal of Tragedy in it. To this add "Grete" the lover who leaves him, and Hans his friend, who Grete loves, all this comes from the three little poems by Heine that are called "Poor Peter". 7

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Alfred Clayton, 'The Operas of Alexander Zemlinsky' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge 1982), p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> Horst Weber, 'Über Zemlinskys Oper Der Traumgörge' in Musik-Konzept 74 (1991), 111.
7 'Ich gehe jetzt wieder mit einer neuen Idee zu einer Oper herum: ich glaube das wird was. Ich habe nur die Idee respet. die Figur nur Idee, nicht viel mehr, also keine eigentliche Handlung noch. In Kürze: "Der arme Peter" d.i. der Mann der ideale junge Schwärmer oder Träumer (ich weiss noch nicht aus welchem Milieu) der voll Sehnsucht nach Liebe ungeliebt ein kurzes Leben lebt. Aber nicht nur bei den Frauen, auch sonst lebt er unverstanden seinem Träumen, weil er so ganze anders als alle seine Mitmenschen. Freund, Geliebte, alles fällt von ihm ab erst spottend, dann vielleicht in Furcht u. Misstrauen. Nur die Mutter vielleicht glaubt immer noch an ihn, sie hofft, das er das Leben bezwingen wird, aber sie stirbt, wiewohl glaubend, an seiner Kraftlosigkeit. Ebenso er selbst.

Das so beiläufig die Grundidee: ich wiess noch nicht viel mehr. Ich glaube es liegt riesig viel wahre Tragik darin. Dazu "Grete" die abgefallene Liebe, u. Hans der Freund, den Grete dann liebt, also was aus den 3 kleinen Gedichte von Heine "Der arme Peter" zu nehmen ist.' Alexander Zemlinsky to Arnold Schoenberg in Briefwechsel mit Arnold Schönberg, Anton Webern, Alban Berg und Franz Schreker, Horst Weber (ed.) (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, c1995), p. 30-31.

Feld then suggested<sup>8</sup> using a second literary source *Vom unsichtbaren* Königreiche (The Invisible Kingdom) by Richard Volkmann,9 which tells the story of Jörg, described as "the Dreamer" by the people of the nearby village, who laugh at him for sitting and gazing at the trees and the stars, because they haven't noticed how beautiful their valley is. 10 Like Peter, Jörg is an outsider, misunderstood by the people around him. Unlike Der arme Peter, which ends in Peter's lonely death, Volkmann's tale has a happy ending. Jörg finds his dream Princess and they settle down together in their invisible kingdom, which their scornful neighbours cannot see, but 'then, they were very ordinary people'.11 The libretto of Act One, which contains elements of both literary sources, seems to have been completed around the end of 1903, and it took Zemlinsky most of 1904 to set it to music.

While Zemlinsky was still composing Act One, he and Feld began to develop their ideas for Act Two. 12 They decided to draw on yet another literary source, Sudermann's Der Katzensteg, 13 a novel which had been a favourite with Alma Schindler-Mahler, 14 Zemlinsky's ex-pupil, beloved and friend, with whom he had recently resumed contact, after her marriage to Mahler in 1902.15 Set in the Napoleonic wars, Der Katzensteg is the story of two outcasts, Boleslav von Schranden, who is ostracized because his father has betrayed the Prussian army to the French, and his dead father's mistress Regine, who is rejected by the village, not only because of her status as a fallen woman, but

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p.140. <sup>9</sup> Richard Leander, (Richard Volkmann's pseudonym) 'Vom unsichtbaren Königreich' in Träumereien an französiche Kaminen (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1877), pp. 12-29. English version: The Rusty Knight and other tales from Germany retold by Susan Flatauer (London: F. Muller Ltd., 1974) pp. 7-20.

<sup>10 &#</sup>x27;Es war ein wunderbares Thal! - Aber alles Das sah und hörte blos der Traumjörge. Die Leute, welche in Dorf wohten, ahnten gar nichts davon' [It was a wonderful valley! But only Jörg the Dreamer saw and heard it all. The people who lived in the village never realised it] Leander 'Königreich', p.14.

<sup>11 &#</sup>x27;denn das waren nur ganz gewöhnliche Leute' Leander 'Konigreich', p. 29.

12 Zemlinsky finished the music for Act One in October 1904, and he and Feld started to think about Act Two in the summer of 1904. Both Beaumont and Clayton quote Rudolf Stefan Hoffman, who felt that Acts One and Two were insufficiently connected, and that this was a result of the way that the libretto was written. (See Beaumont Zemlinsky, p. 141, and Clayton

Operas', p. 156).

13 Herman Sudermann, Der Katzensteg (Berlin: S. & P. Lehman 1892). English version: Regine trans. Hettie E. Miller (Chicago: E.A. Weeks & Co.,1894).

14 Alma Mahler-Werfel, Diaries 1898-1902 Selected and trans. Anthony Beaumont (Ithaca NY:

Cornell University Press, 1999), p.145.

15 Alma and Zemlinsky seem to have resumed their friendship in the spring of 1904.

<sup>(</sup>Beaumont, Zemlinsky p. 131 and footnotes).

because it was she who actually led the French army over 'the Cat's Bridge' ('der Katzensteg') to attack the Prussians. Thrown into Regine's company by circumstances, Boleslav is initially very hostile to her, but his attitude gradually mellows. Her loyalty to him as the young master is absolute, and he finally rejects his conventional and virginal fiancée and admits his love for Regine.

Feld and Zemlinsky drew from *Der Katzensteg* the idea of two outcasts who are thrown together, as well as some of the political and social details of the story, but made some significant changes. Firstly Gertraud is not a "fallen woman": the villagers' suspicion of her stems merely from father's political position (he had backed the losing side in a recent battle) and the fact that she lives alone and does not court acceptance. Secondly, the opera's happy ending diverges from Sudermann's story, since at the end of *Der Katzensteg* both Regine and Boleslav are killed.

Zemlinsky completed the opera in October 1906 and it was scheduled for a première at the Hofoper on 4th October 1907. Disastrously for Zemlinsky, Mahler's quarrels with his employers came to a head that year, and his contract was officially terminated on 2nd October 1907. Rehearsals for *Der Traumgörge* continued, however until the end of the year, but once Mahler's successor Weingartner took up his post on 1st January 1908, there were no further rehearsals. In the event, the opera was not premièred until 1980, long after the composer's death. The work has been performed a number of times since then, but has not become part of the standard repertoire. A recording was made by EMI in 1999 with James Conlon and the Gürzenich-Orchester Kölner Philharmoniker.

16 Beaumont, Zemlinsky p. 155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> This infomation comes from the rehearsal schedules of the Hofoper, which are held in the Haus- Hof und Staatsarchiv in Vienna. I am grateful to Clemens Höslinger for drawing the archive to my attention. Although Beaumont states that the première was scheduled for 4th October 1907, the rehearsals peak in frequency around 4th November 1907. As this normally occurred just before the opening night, it suggests that the première was postponed before being cancelled.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> For example, a production was in repertoire at the Deutsche Oper Berlin in 2007/2008.
 <sup>19</sup> Der Traumgörge Zemlinsky/James Conlon/David Kuebler/Gürzenich-Orchester Kölner Philharmoniker, 2001 CD EMI Classics (5 57087 2).

#### **Texts**

The unlucky performance history of *Der Traumgörge*, and the fact that the opera was never performed, nor was the full score published, in the composer's lifetime, have contributed to some confusing variations between the existing versions of the opera. Many of the sources have numerous copying errors, and there are differences between each version, which are different again from the EMI recording. While this makes difficulties for the scholar, it is a salutary reminder of the benefits of seeing musical texts as traces of the music, which can vary from each other, and from the piece as performed, so that although some of the texts may be more satisfactory than others, there can be no definitive version.

## Texts<sup>20</sup> of the opera include:

- (1) Zemlinsky's original manuscript score, held at the Library of Congress
- (2) A vocal score published by Karczag and Wallner in 1906, which Zemlinsky corrected. This appears to exist in two versions.<sup>21</sup>
- (3) A copyist's copy of the score (some of which appears to be in Schoenberg's hand) and copyist's copies of some of the orchestral parts.<sup>22</sup>
- (4) A vocal score published by Ricordi in 1990.<sup>23</sup>
- (5) A full score, edited by Anthony Beaumont, published in 2003<sup>24</sup>.

In this chapter, I shall use the full score as my primary text. Unfortunately the full score lacks bar numbers in Act II and the Nachspiel, and the vocal score

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> I am hugely grateful to Dr Otto Hagedorn, who prepared the score for the 1999 recording, for his help in obtaining the orchestral score, and his advice on the various sources.

21 See Clayton, 'Operas', p.144.

22 Otto Hagedorn (private communication).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Alexander Zemlinsky and Leo Feld, Der Traumgörge Vocal Score (Milan: G. Ricordi & Co.,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Alexander Zemlinsky and Leo Feld, Der Traumgörge Full Score Anthony Beaumont (ed.) (Munich: G. Ricordi & Co., 2003). References to the opera are given to the full score as follows: Act number (I, II or III for Nachspiel), rehearsal number, bar number. (for example II 1.2 refers to Act II, 2 bars after rehearsal number 1). This is followed by the relevant page number in the vocal score.

(which is the version that is most readily available) lacks both rehearsal numbers and bar numbers throughout. In addition, the division of scenes is not identical in the two versions. References to the opera will therefore include a page number in the vocal score, to make identifying excerpts and quotations a little easier.

## Zemlinsky's motivic technique

Before looking at the discourse on gender in *Der Traumgörge*, it is helpful to understand in a more general way, the nature of Zemlinsky's motivic technique as it is seen in the opera. Musical life in Vienna at this time was often described in terms of a conflict between the styles of Brahms and Wagner, and Zemlinsky's use of motifs can be seen in terms of his admiration for both these composers. Like Wagner, Zemlinsky uses motifs that have semantic meaning, in the sense that they are strongly linked to particular ideas or situations. For example, motif VII is associated with the Princess in Görge's dream, the downward octave leap matching the words 'sie neigt sich zu mir' [she bent towards me], the first time that the motif is heard.



As Clayton points out, however,<sup>27</sup> there is also something of Brahms in Zemlinsky's use of variation technique. The motifs are treated as a source of purely musical material, which can be cut, lengthened, varied and layered with other material. The result is a shifting pattern of sound and meaning, where each use of a motif can be heard to have both a dramatic and a musical significance.

The way that a motif is varied can often be related very precisely to the dramatic context in which it is used. For example motif I, which is heard at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> See, for example Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p.38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Traumgörge I 73.3 – 73.4 (V.S. p. 51) (voice). In this chapter and Chapter Five, each motif is shown in the text the first time it is referred to. There is a complete list of the motifs that I have identified, in numerical order, in the appendix. The numberings are mine.

<sup>27</sup> Clayton, 'Operas', p.18.

the very beginning of the prelude to Act One, appears in various forms in the first scene, mirroring the shift of Görge's feelings, the first half consonantly (Ex. 1a) <sup>28</sup>, where Görge smiles at the idea of himself and his books being left alone, then more dissonantly (Ex. 1b) <sup>29</sup> with the motif made more chromatic with a semi-tone at the opening and a minor-sixth leap, as he fears that the tales may be pointless, despite his love of them.

#### Motif I 30



The subtlety in the way that Zemlinsky varies his motifs to suit his dramatic purpose means that it is generally unsatisfactory to try and give the motifs names, since their meaning is not fixed, but develops with each use. Just as a word in a spoken language can have a variety of meanings depending on its context, so Zemlinsky's motifs have nuances and implications which defy simple translation. As Horst Weber puts it:

Zemlinsky's principle of variation [is] that each leitmotif is appropriate to its respective situation and yet that it also develops separately, [creating] an increasingly dense network of structural relationships, and also a certain multiplicity of meanings for the leitmotif, that cannot be expressed in a single connotation.<sup>31</sup>

The way that Zemlinsky varies his motifs also means that it is not always clear whether a particular musical cell is a variant or a new motif. Indeed, many of the motifs can be seen to be derived from other motifs, as a number of commentators have pointed out.<sup>32</sup> In this thesis, however, I have focused almost entirely on the way that the motifs are varied while retaining their

Traumgörge I 14.15-14.16 (V.S. p.10). All musical examples are given in the appendices.
 Traumgörge I 16.4-16.7 (V.S. p. 12). The first half of the motif is heard twice in two different

variants.
Traumgörge I 0.3-0.6 (V.S. p.3) (horns)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> '[...] Zemlinskys Variationsprinzip, das sowohl jedes einzelne Leitmotiv der jeweiligen Situation anpaßt als auch die Leitmotiv auseinander entwickelt, zu einem verdichteten Netz struktureller Beziehungen, aber auch zu einer gewissen Mehrdeutigkeit der Leitmotive, die nicht durch eindeutige Konnotation bestimmt sind" Weber, 'Über *Der Traumgörge*', p. 116. <sup>32</sup> For example see Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, p. 149 and Christoph Becher, *Die Variantentechnik am Beispeil Alexander Zemlinsky*, Wiener Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte, 2 (Vienna: Böhlau 1999), p. 139.

identity, since this proves to be particularly illuminating in understanding the interaction between the music and the drama. One example of a motif which is clearly derived from another is worth mentioning, though, since it occupies an important position in the motivic structure of the opera, and will also serve to illustrate the richness of Zemlinsky's motivic language, and its flexibility in expressing the twists and turns in the opera's emotional journey.

The prelude to Act One includes motif II played by the horn, against a background of held notes (violins on high Bb and the lower strings playing Eb) (Ex. 2).33

#### Motif II 34



The effect is a very consonant outlining of Eb major, with the chromatically flattened D and C quickly resolving back into Eb. The pedal notes create a feeling of stasis, that the motif moves against. This motif is later sung by Görge, when he first describes his vision of the Dream Princess (70.5-70.8 Vocal score p. 50). In Act 2 a variant of this motif appears, wholly different in mood and character, to the point where it can be heard as a new motif (motif XI), at the moment where the villagers are discussing Gertraud's reputation as a witch and arsonist.

#### Motif XI35



The compass of the original motif is reduced to a dissonant minor 9th with a tritone between the two top notes. The descending triplets are faster and have

Traumgörge I 2.1-2.4 (V.S. p 3).
 Traumgörge I 2.1-2.4 (V.S. p 3) (horns).
 Traumgörge II 22.10 – 22.11 (V.S. p.102) (bassoons).

been squashed into a scale of semitones. The result is that the motif no longer has an easily recognisable tonality, nor does it form a complete phrase.

Anthony Beaumont (who related both motifs to those in earlier works by Zemlinsky) discusses this in terms of the way that "Görge's joy turns to disillusionment" in Act II.36 The chromaticism and dissonance in motif XI and its lack of direction certainly reflect the darker mood of Act 2 and Görge and Gertraud's anger and despair. However, the seeds of that disillusionment are sown musically as well as dramatically, by dissonant versions of motif II that appear in Act I. For example in Act I sc v the motif is played by the flute in Eb, then moves briefly into A, before returning to Eb (Ex. 3).37 This coincides with Grete's urging Görge to tell of his dream, and gives a clue to the incomprehension with which it will be greeted: Grete is literally out-oftune with her fiancé. Zemlinsky thereby presages Görge's and Gertraud's unhappy experiences as outsiders in the Act Two village by moments in Act One which are linked to it musically as well as dramatically.

This example also illustrates another important feature of the opera: the way that Zemlinsky layers motifs. A faster variant of motif I can be heard in the cellos underlying the variant of motif II (Ex. 3 beginning at 63.2). This technique occurs both in the form of canons of a single motif<sup>38</sup> and in places where several motifs are played simultaneously, (for example in Ex. 12 below). As Beaumont describes it

...asynchronous lines of polyphony, richly spiced with auxiliary and passing notes, meet in a harmony that hovers perpetually on the fringe of unfamiliarity, and move with a harmonic rhythm so rapid that even familiar chords often pass unrecognised. Neither melody nor bass line determine the direction of harmonic flow; no ground plan controls the tonal structure. Yet nothing is left to chance: melody, harmony, dynamic, tempo, texture, timbre and register all follow a minutely charted seismic curve, which rises or falls in unison with the drama, line for line, scene for scene. It is a highly sophisticated art.39

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<sup>36</sup> Beaumont, Zemlinsky p. 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Grete: 'Sag was dir dein Herz beschwert' [Say what it is that weighs your heart down] Traumgörge I 63.1-63.4 (V.S.p.46). Translations of the libretto are all CFD, though I have consulted the translation of the libretto by Clive Williams in the liner note to Der Traumgörge CD EMI Classics.

38 For example II 57.12 – 58-8 (V.S. p119).

39 Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p. 150.

## Analysis

The richness and flexibility of Zemlinsky's motivic technique make it possible to express ideas of considerable complexity through music. In this chapter I highlight the way that dichotomies, which are related to those I identified in the previous chapter, are expressed through the opera's music as well as through its text and dramatic action. In each case the opera first of all sets up the dichotomy, and then questions it, showing that the two sides can in some way be reconciled. In analysing the opera in this way, it becomes clear that these dichotomies relate closely to the central issues which I have identified as underlying the literary discourse: power, gender and autonomy. The idea of autonomy can then be developed further by considering the central characters as subjects in the narratological sense, that is, as those whose growth and development provide the underlying story-line or fabula. And so, in the conclusion to this chapter, I suggest that both the words and the music of the opera describe a journey from naiveté and egotism to unselfish maturity, which mirrors the transcending of simple-minded dichotomies.

## Insiders and Outsiders (Power)

A focus on the outsider is the one thing that the three literary sources for *Der Traumgörge* have in common, and this idea is also central to the opera. Both Görge and Gertraud are initially outsiders, rejected by the community they live in, and as a result without any power or respect from their society. Görge's dreams and ambitions are thwarted by the incomprehension of the world, while Gertraud, for all her anger, is powerless to change her unpleasant situation.

The dichotomy between insiders and outsiders is set up clearly for both Görge and Gertraud. Görge is laughed at by the older people in the village and when he tries to explain his dreams he is mocked. In keeping with the generally darker mood of Act II, Gertraud is not just laughed at but feared and avoided by the villagers, who accuse her of arson and witchcraft, and finally burn her house and threaten to attack her physically. But the

insider/outsider dichotomy is blurred by the sympathy between Görge and Gertraud, which reduces their alienation, and by the way that the opera concentrates on their point of view (the inside of the outsiders, as it were). And, in contrast to all of the source texts, the dichotomy is finally resolved by the Görge and Gertraud's acceptance by the insiders in Görge's village.

Görge and Gertraud's status as outsiders is marked musically by motif VI: for example, a form of it is heard as Görge refuses to tell the incomprehending Hans what the Princess said to him (Ex. 4.). 40

#### Motif VI 41



It also appears when Görge and Gertraud are off-stage, but are being discussed by other characters such as in Act I Sciii, when Grete is complaining that Görge is not the sort of sweetheart she had hoped for 2, and then again in Act II Sc i, where Kaspar suggests Görge as the spokesman for the revolution, to the villagers' surprise.43

There are also moments, as has been seen, when layering or varying of motifs emphasises that the opera's outsiders are at odds with their company, such as the example from Act I sc v above, where the use of motifs articulates the incompatibility between Görge and Grete. A contrast of both mood and motif is heard in Act II Sc viii, where Marei interrupts the scene between Görge and Gertraud. A form of motif X, associated with her, is heard shrilly in the

Görge: "Wir wollen schweigen" [We would be silent] Traumgörge I 78.1-78.2 (V.S. p 55)
 Traumgörge I 33.15-34 (V.S. p.25) (1<sup>st</sup> Violins).
 Traumgörge I 33.15-34.1 (V.S. p.25).
 Traumgörge II 10.1-10.2 (V.S. p.92). Becher who discusses this motif, is baffled by its presence in Act II sc 3 when Gertraud is discussed, since he associates it with Görge. And in fact, it also appears in Act II sc v, when Gertraud is alone. But if the motif is seen as linked to the idea of the outsider, and is therefore applicable to both characters, then the problem is resolved. (Becher, Variantentechnik, p.133).

piccolos, while the held note in the double basses continues the calm mood of the love scene, to which Marei is so completely irrelevant (Ex. 5).44

#### Motif X45



In addition to this, Görge's relationship with the world around him is represented in a rather complex way by two linked motifs, V and VIII. Motif V is first heard at the opening of Act I Sc ii, where it is played heavily in the lower strings, and sets the scene for the discussion of Görge and his betrothal by the "elders" in the village: the Miller and the Pastor. It therefore seems to relate to the world of Görge's village, the world he is outside and at odds with. In an entirely different context, motif VIII appears as the Princess sings of the wonderful world that Görge must go out and explore. But as Görge's dream dissipates and he returns reluctantly to the world around him, two variants of VIII are heard which bring it closer to V. The first variant (in the violins, oboes and clarinets) smoothes out VIII's characteristic triplet, and the second (in the violas) changes the dotted upward triad into a scale, while the downward leap and the semiquaver in the upward gesture, which appear in both motifs, are retained (Ex. 6).46





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>Traumgörge II 121.8-121.13 (V.S. p.154). <sup>45</sup> Traumgörge II 15.7 – 15.9 (V.S. p. 98) (1<sup>st</sup> violins) <sup>46</sup> Traumgörge I 118.4-119.20 V.S. p.78).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Traumgörge I 25.8-25.11 (V.S p.19) (bassoons, cellos, double basses).

#### Motif VIII<sup>48</sup>



In the context of the scene, this can be heard as part of the change from Görge's dream world to the "real' world of the village. But it also seems possible to relate it to the story's resolution, with Görge finding the 'World' that he longs for, back at home in his village. By embracing "the World", including his home village, Görge overcomes the division between insiders and outsiders and is accepted as belonging, without relinquishing the things that make him different. The division between insiders and outsiders is thereby shown to be unnecessary, and the overcoming of that division both possible and desirable.

At the end of the opera, then, Görge and Gertraud have found a situation where their abilities are valued and, as a result of their acceptance by the villagers, they are able in a small way to make the world a better place. This is interestingly parallel to the contemporary idea that the women's movement had the potential to improve society through the work of the weak and vulnerable outsider:

We women have a great ethical mission to fulfil, not because we are by nature better, more moral than men, but because brute strength is denied us and making human society more moral is in our most personal interests.49

In Chapter Three I discussed the way that women could often be seen as the Other: inevitably outside the boundaries between the familiar and the strange, between "us" and "them". By making Görge an outsider for much of the opera, Der Traumgörge refuses to line up the dichotomy between male and female with that between insiders and outsiders. And the opera's ending can be seen as a validation of outsiders' contribution to the society they live in.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Traumgörge I 108.6-108.7 (V.S. p.73) (violins).
 <sup>49</sup> Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p.11 see Chapter Three, footnote 140.

## Male and Female (Gender)

The division between male and female is often aligned at this period to other dichotomies (active/ passive, mind/body and so on), as has been seen. In *Der Traumgörge*, the traditional alignment of dichotomies is clearly seen in the characters of Hans and Grete. The character Hans is everything masculine that Görge is not. Active, confident, an ex-soldier and a leader of the boy's pranks in the village, he represents not only the insider but also the "manly man", the normal sweetheart that Grete wishes for:

Jetzt such ich mir einen Liebsten dazu! Ja, einen Liebsten, der tanzen kann! Nicht einen verschlafenen Büchermann!<sup>50</sup>

[Now, I'm looking for a sweetheart, Yes, a sweetheart who can dance Not some bookworm who's half asleep!]

Hans' position as a leader is marked out by the "call and response" form that his interaction with the younger villagers takes:

Hans: Die schönsten Lieder zum Tanz und zum Wein, wer singt die? Burschen und Mädchen: "Wer singt die?" Naturlich nur der Hans allein.

H: Die schönsten Burschen landaus und landein Wie prügelt sie? B&M: "Wer prugelt sie?" Der Hans, der Hans und immer nur Hans. <sup>51</sup>

[H: The best songs for drinking and dancing who sings them?
Lads and Lasses: "Who sings them?"
Hans of course, and only Hans

H: The finest lads throughout the land Who thrashes them?
L&L:"Who thrashes them?"
Hans, Hans and only Hans.]

In the same way, Grete is portrayed as the "truly feminine" young girl: passive in her obedience to her father (who has arranged the marriage with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Traumgörge I 35.4-35.9 (V.S. p.26).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Traumgörge I 52.5 - 53.4 (V.S. pp. 37-39).

Görge), easily frightened by Görge's creepy stories, and longing for dancing and new clothes.

The alignment of dichotomies is different in the central characters. Görge is initially a passive character,<sup>52</sup> who feels that his inner life is threatened by the active masculinity of Hans, when Hans bullies him into telling of his dream, and then laughs at him for it. Indeed his love of stories is clearly gendered feminine: it is his mother whom he remembers telling him the old tales, and Hans and his father whom he fears will tear his books up. 53 But the dreams and tales are central to Görge's self and his mother is, according to Zemlinsky's original idea, the only one who believes in him.54 In Act II Görge is offered an active, "masculine "role in the revolution that Kaspar is planning, but is disgusted by the 'morden und sengen' [murdering and fireraising]<sup>55</sup> that is proposed. Conversely, Gertraud is portrayed as an active character, who reacts to the villager's treatment of her with forthright anger: 'Jetzt ist es genug! /Sonst schlag ich zu' [That's enough! / Or I'll hit you].56

The dichotomy between male and female is questioned, and finally resolved, by the opera's focus on Görge and Gertraud, in whom the dichotomies are not lined up in the traditional way, and also by the way that the two characters change and grow through the opera, which makes it clear that the stereotypes are neither fixed nor inevitable. Görge ultimately finds the strength and courage to stand up to the mob, and is able to find acceptance without abandoning his "feminine" love of stories, and so the dichotomy between "masculine" action and "feminine" storytelling is resolved by showing that Görge is capable of both. Gertraud's anger mellows as a result of her relationship with Görge, and in the Nachspiel she is portrayed as using

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Wildner-Partsch describes Görge as a 'passive hero' who is driven into acting rather than choosing to act. She sees this as characteristic of many of Zemlinsky's operatic works. Angelika Wildner-Partsch, 'Die Opern Alexander Zemlinskys. Betrachtung anhand und representativer Werke' in *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 33 (Tützing: Hans Schneider 1982),

Traumgörge I 99.1-101.11 (V.S. pp.65-67). The gendering of tales and their tellers as feminine is explored by Marina Warner in From the Beast to the Blonde (London: Vintage, 1995) The English term "fairy-tales" implies this gendering, which is one reason that I have avoided it in this chapter, since the German word "Märchen" is not gendered like this.

<sup>54</sup> See Zemlinsky's initial thoughts on the character of Görge in his letter to Schoenberg (footnote 7 above).

Traumgörge II 98.9 (V.S. p.141).

Traumgörge II 27.3 - 27.7 (V.S.p.105).

her energy to help the poor and needy in the village, rather than in fighting public opinion.

The opera's ending shows both Görge and Gertraud at peace, having found a partner who accepts them and loves them as they are. Görge is happy to share his books with Gertraud, who is happy to read them with him, and their discussion of Görge's feelings about the old tales is peaceful and loving (to the detriment, perhaps, of its dramatic interest). By contrast Hans and Grete, the "manly man" and "womanly woman" bicker over their roles in the relationship:

Grete: Tu nicht immer so groß, du machst mich ganz wirr! Hans: Du kümmre dich nur um die Küchen geschirr. Ich bin doch der Mann. Gr: Fängst du wieder an zu Haus und hier?...Ich red' ja nichts mehr.<sup>57</sup>

[Gr: Don't throw your weight around, you're just confusing me! H: You just take care of the cooking pots. I'm the man. Gr: Are you starting that again, first at home and now here?... I'll say nothing more]

The portrayal of the three main female characters in the opera shows how another dichotomy may be resolved. Grete and Marei represent a classic virgin/whore pair. Grete is the innocent, girlish sweetheart who is finally united with Hans, the "manly man", while Marei is the Temptress, who flirts with anything in trousers. In *Der Katzensteg*, the contrast between Boleslav's late father's mistress Regine (who is, to some extent, the model for Gertraud), and his fiancée Hélène is drawn very much according to this dichotomy. Regine says:

That I am sitting here with you, and drinking wine, and am treated like a human being, is just as in the Kingdom of Heaven. Do you believe I shall ever get there? I do not think so; I am too bad a woman. Indeed I am afraid of it. I think in purgatory it will be much livelier. I belong there. The pastor used to say that I was a little devil, and I never worried about it. Why should I? I was the devil and Hélène was the angel. Did not Hélène look like a dear little angel, eh? So white and pink and her eyes so blue, and her hands clasped. And pretty ribbons she wore around[...]her neck[...] and [she] always smelt of rose soap. 58

58 Sudermann, Regine p. 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Traumgörge III 9.7- 10.4 (V.S. p.185).

So familiar is this contrast, that Weber assumes that since Marei is the Temptress, Gertraud must be 'the pure one'. 59 But she is neither type. When she is first described it is as a witch and an arsonist, and at her first entrance she seems to be an angry virago, and potentially also another "whore" since both the innkeeper and his wife assume that if she works at the inn she will be sexually available to the innkeeper. But in her monologue she describes how she feels herself changing 'und doch ich kenn mich nicht mehr' [and yet I no longer know myself]<sup>60</sup> as she finds the capacity for joy and hope inside herself. And at the end of the opera she is accepted with love and gratitude by the people of the village. Grete says:

Und uns'rer Frau, der wollen wir danken, da hier steht mancher der reden kann, wie sie im Stillen nur Holdes getan! Wie war sie zu Gast bei Armen und Kranken.

[And our mistress, we want to thank her, as so many people here can tell, how she quietly does good in the homes of the poor and the sick.]<sup>61</sup>

And so in the case of the virgin/whore dichotomy, a dichotomy is once again questioned by the existence of a character who fails to conform to the stereotype, and a new synthesis is found as a result of the character being allowed to grow and change.

Musically the turning point for Gertraud happens during her soliloquy (Act II Sc v). This scene, which shows Gertraud's transformation from angry loner to someone with hope, also sees the transformation of motif XI (played at 37.2 by the violas tremolo at the bridge and the cor anglais), with its dissonances and obsessive chromatic triplets, into variants of motif II at 37.5 (in the flutes and solo violin) (Ex. 7a) 62 and at 38.11 (in the bass clarinet) (Ex. 7b), referring back to the use of motif II as part of the happier mood of Act One.63

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> 'die Reine' Weber 'Über DerTraumgörge', p.113.
 <sup>60</sup> Traumgörge II 39.1-39.3 (V.S. p.111).
 <sup>61</sup> Traumgörge III 17.7 – 18.6 (V.S. p.190)
 <sup>62</sup> Traumgörge II 37.2 – 37.8 (V.S. p. 110).

<sup>63</sup> Traumgörge II 38.11-38.13 (V.S. pp.111).

Although this attitude to gender is in some ways refreshingly modern, the libretto has its less progressive aspects. Gertraud's transformation from virago to general benefactress is accompanied by her becoming gradually more silent, in public at least. In particular she is entirely silent at the end of Act II, leaving Görge to confront the mob on her behalf. In scene ii of the Nachspiel (the only "public" scene, with characters other than the two central ones) she says almost nothing, and in scene iii Görge describes her as 'du stille Frau' [you, the quiet woman].64 As so often with the gender discourse during this period, progressive and conservative elements exist side-by-side.

Finally, there are interesting parallels in the way that Görge and Gertraud are portrayed, which point to a way of transcending dichotomies. As has been discussed, both Görge and Gertraud are initially outsiders and outcasts, but are able to find acceptance and happiness as a result of their encounter with each other. Their parallel situations are signalled in their first scene together, when Görge describes them as a pair, together on one side of a dark/light dichotomy:

Und morgen werden Männlein und Weiblein sich putzen, Gottes Lämmlein werden fromm den Sabbath nutzen schneeweiss im Gebet sich baden wir nur bleiben wie die Raben wir sind nicht zum Fest Geladen.65

[And tomorrow the little men and little women will clean themselves and God's little lambs will make use of the Sabbath to bathe in prayer till they're snow-white Only we will stay, like ravens, we're not invited to the feast.]

Gertraud underlines both Görge's pairing and their shared outsider status, responding: 'Uns? Sag doch, was sie dir gethan' [Us? Tell me, what did they do to you?]. 66

This parallelism between Görge and Gertraud is also seen musically. It is noticeable that the two female "types", Grete and Marei, have recognisable motifs (Motifs III and X respectively), whereas Gertraud, like Görge, cannot

Traumgörge III 34.4-34.5 (V.S. p 201).
 Traumgörge II 46.6-48.7 (V.S. pp. 115-116).

be summed up in a single musical idea. Instead, as well as a number of motifs that are linked to Gertraud alone (for example motif XII and motif XIII both of which first appear in her soliloquy scene), the "outsider" motif (VI) is used for both characters, as discussed above. This musical linking between the two characters makes it possible to see their union as a consequence of their similarities rather than their differences.

#### Motif III 67



#### Motif XII 68



#### Motif XIII 69



Before leaving this consideration of gender, it is worth looking briefly at the idea (which both Clayton and Beaumont discuss) that the story of Der Traumgörge is essentially Oedipal, and that Gertraud serves in some way as a substitute for Görge's dead mother. 70 Zemlinsky's original conception of the plot for Act One, discussed above, makes it clear that Görge's feeling for his mother is an important part of his character, 71 and there is undoubtedly something maternal in the way that Gertraud soothes him:

Lass die schmerzenden Gedanken, komm, wie einem Fieberkranken kühl ich dir die Schlafen weich und linde.

<sup>71</sup> See footnote 7 above.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Traumgörge I 2.5 (piccolos) (V.S. p. 4).
 <sup>68</sup> Traumgörge II 38.12-38.14 (oboes) (V.S. p.111).
 <sup>69</sup> Traumgörge II 41.7-41.8 (voice) (V.S p.113).
 <sup>70</sup> Clayton, 'Operas', pp. 159-161; Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p. 143.

Sieh' dort unter den Rosensträuchen will ich die ängstlichen Träumen dir scheuchen. Komm, wie eine verirrten Kinde!

[Leave these painful thoughts behind, come, like one who is sick with fever I will cool you in a soft, sweet sleep. See now, under the roses I want to dispel your anxious dreams. Come, like a child that has lost its way!].72

Several things, however, make this idea less tenable as a key to the opera. There seems to be no particular evidence that Zemlinsky or Feld knew of Freud's work, and their connection with Freud is even more tenuous than that of Marie Pappenheim<sup>73</sup> (as discussed in Chapter Six). In addition to this, in the scene where Görge remembers and dreams of his mother, the voice of the storyteller is a mezzo-soprano, in contrast to both the Princess and Gertraud, who are sopranos, so that the mother's voice is clearly differentiated from that of the other two women.

In Act Two Görge's love for Gertraud is expressed in terms which certainly refer to the maternal, but the emphasis is more on the idea of the "eternal feminine" than a specific reference to Görge's own mother:

Verzieh'! Vergib! Ich bin so arm, versengt, verdorrt, nur toter Worte Hülle! Doch du kannst geben! aus der ew'gen Fülle, die Gott in alles Muttertum gesenkt. Du gibst mein Leben mir aus deine Schmerzen, so nenn' dich Mutter, Schwester, Weib! Nimm hin den armen, ruhelosen Leib und gib die Seele ihm aus deinem Herzen!74

[Pardon, forgive, I am so poor, scorched and withered only an empty shell of words. But you can give! from the eternal plenty, that God has granted to all motherhood. You give me my life from your pain and so I'll call you mother, sister, wife! Take this poor restless body and give it a soul from your heart.]

<sup>74</sup> Traumgörge II 117.8-120.1 (V.S p.155)

 $<sup>^{72}</sup>$  Traumgörge II 66.7-68.5 7 (V.S. p123-124).  $^{73}$  Clayton says: 'Although there is no direct evidence linking either Zemlinsky or Feld with [the Interpretation of Dreams] it would be very strange indeed if they had not heard about it in 1904 [five years after it was first published].' Clayton, 'Operas', p.159.

This conception of the feminine does not relate strongly to Freudian ideas and is also very much in opposition to the misogynistic ideas of Weininger or Kraus. Görge description of his rationality as 'empty words' and the idea that his body can be filled by a feminine soul recalls, rather, ideas from the contemporary women's movement of women's moral leadership, and, perhaps even more, Goethe's conception of the feminine as a source of inspiration: 'das Ewigweibliche/ zieht uns hinan' [eternal Womanhood/ leads us above].75

Dreams, reality and the workings of the mind (Autonomy)

This idealisation of Gertraud as the Dream Princess (though potentially irritating to a modern feminist) is made less stereotyping, perhaps, because she is also portrayed earlier in the opera as an angry, lonely human being. This is part of a larger preoccupation with the dichotomy between dreams and reality, which is a clear feature of Der Traumgörge, and serves as a way to explore issues of autonomy and point-of-view. To understand how these ideas are developed in the opera, it is helpful first to distinguish the different ways that dreams are represented in the opera.

Firstly, dreams are seen as representations of the impossible, wholly separated from reality. This is the villager's attitude to Görge's dreams and tales: they are unreal and therefore childish and pointless. The Miller says about Görge's betrothal:

Jetzt hat ein Ende all der Schnick und Schnack, das traumgedusel Märchenschabernack.

[This is the end of all your chatter, your dream-fuddled nonsense about the old tales.]76

This attitude to dreams sets up the dichotomy, since it treats dreams and reality as wholly and inevitably different.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust: Der Tragödie erster und zweiter Teil (Munich: Deutsche Taschenbuch, 1975) p.351. (Translation Faust / Part Two trans. Philip Wayne (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics 1959), p.288.
<sup>76</sup> Traumgörge I 124.6-124.10 (V.S. p.81).

Secondly, dreams are used to signify hopes and ambitions, which may or may not be comprehensible by others. Görge's status as an outsider stems from the fact that no-one in the village can see his point-of-view (except for the original mill-owner, and his mother, who are both dead), and Hans and Grete agree that Görge's dream is incomprehensible:

Grete:... verstehst du was von dem allen? Hans: Kein Sterbenswörtel, mir war auch im Schlaf so was nie eingefallen.77

[Gr: Do you understand any of this? Hans: Not a damned word, even in my sleep I couldn't have imagined this.]

This aspect of dreams is important in *Vom unsichtbare Konigreich*, where the villagers' inability to see the invisible kingdom is what separates them from Jörg and his princess.

It is interesting in this context to notice that the Dream Princess is not really treated as a supernatural figure. There is no suggestion, for example, that Görge's failure to fulfill his dreams out in the world means that the Dream Princess is somehow ill-intentioned or a temptress, or even just wrong. She is not, in this sense, a "real" person with intentions. Instead, she is treated much more like a personification of Görge's hopes. As Weber puts it, she is 'psychologised as a day-dream'.78

Thirdly, there is the idea of dreams as the key to a better world, or a hidden reality.<sup>79</sup> This is central to *Vom unsichtbaren Konigreich* where Jörg's ability to see the princess in his wife, and his home as a kingdom, creates his personal "happy ever after". Similarly Görge's story of Murr the cat, which opens the opera, is a tale of the hidden power in the ordinary domestic cat, which is only revealed to those in the know. Clearly, too, Görge's longing for the stories he loves to be true - 'Lebendig mußen die Marchen werden!' 80 [the

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Traumgörge I 76.1-76.6 (V.S. p.53).
 <sup>78</sup> 'als Tagträume psychologisiert' Weber, 'Über Der Traumgörge', p. 113.
 <sup>79</sup> Weber states that 'Görge's vision is not that of another "higher' reality' [Die Visionen Görges werden in andere, "höhere" Realität], but I would question this. Weber, 'Über Der Traumgörge', p.113.
Traumgörge I 18.6-18.8 (V.S p.13).

old tales must come alive!] - is an expression of the idea that dreams and tales express a hidden, better reality.

Görge's despair in Act II stems from his failure either to find the Dream Princess, that is, someone who can see his point-of-view (dreams in the second sense) or to find the reality to which his dreams are a key (seeing dreams in the third way). Instead, out in "the World", his dreams seem to be just as impossible and cut off from reality as they were at home (dreams in the first sense). The tales have not come alive, and he has become disillusioned about people:

Träume, Märchen, luft'ger Wahn! Menschen klein und misgeschaffen, schachern, kriechen, listen, raffen, feig und kalt und halb und lahm das ist Gottes lumpenkram! 81

[Dreams, tales, airy delusions Little, misshapen people haggling, grovelling, money-grubbing, cowardly, cold and small and lame this is God's ragged crew!]

The chance that Kaspar offers him to be a leader in the revolution is a sham, and the beauty and excitement that the Dream Princess promised him have eluded him. The dream/reality dichotomy seems to be inevitable.

However, the relationship between Görge and Gertraud provides an opportunity for the dichotomy to be resolved. Their relationship is portrayed as based on mutual understanding and acceptance. Görge turns to Gertraud after a bout of misery and self-denigration:

Gertraud! Sie wird mich verstehen! Gertraud! Hör mich - ich müss dich seh'n.82

[Gertraud! - she will understand me Gertraud! Listen - I must see you.]

Similarly, Gertraud explains how Görge's care and respect for her has made her love him:

Traumgörge II 63.3-65.1 (V.S. pp.121-122).
 Traumgörge II 104.6-105.2 (V.S p.144).

Du hast mich gnädig aufgenommen, du has mich geduldet, du has mich gepflegt, du hast mir ein Glück in die Seele gelegt, 83

[You have accepted me with kindness, you have put up with me, you have cared for me, you have put happiness into my soul,]

The characters' mutual sympathy starts to blur the boundary between dream and reality by showing that dreams, in the second sense of personal hopes and ambitions, can be shared, and are not doomed forever to be locked in the head of the dreamer. The portrayal of this sympathy is central to the Nachspiel, where, in addition, the idea of dreams as a better reality is brought to fruition by Görge and Gertraud's good works in the village, which have made them accepted and popular, but also, in an un-heroic way, made the world a better place. Weber relates this to the reforming aspect of Jugendstil, and it also, as described earlier, has links to the Utopian aspects of the women's movement. Weber also points out that *Der Traümgörge* takes a new approach to an old tradition:

Zemlinsky's opera stands in a long tradition of works which problematise the relationship between the objective world and the subjective counterworld, for example Wagner's *Tannhäuser* [...] or the worlds of day and night in *Tristan und Isolde*. But Zemlinsky's is the first work, in which not only the fictional reality, but also the simulacrum itself, the dreams, are thematised. In the Nachspiel, not only are the dream and the reality reconciled, but they also form the basis for a new way of living.<sup>85</sup>

The final tableau, where Gertraud becomes merged with the Dream Princess can then be seen not only as the happy ending to Görge's quest for the Princess, but also a symbol of the possibility of dreams becoming reality, so that the dichotomy between them disappears.

<sup>84</sup> 'vom lebenreformischen Impetus des Jugendstil [...] das als neues Lebensmodell vorgestellt wird' [from the reforming impetus in Jugendstil, that set forth a new way of living] Weber, 'Über Der Traumgörge', p. 114.

<sup>83</sup> Traumgörge II 108.7-109.3 (V.S. pp.146-147).

<sup>85 &#</sup>x27;Zemlinskys Oper steht in einer langen Tradition von Werken, die das Verhältnis von objektiver Welt und subjektiver Gegenwelt problematisiert - es sie nur erinnert an Wagners Tannhäuser [...] oder an die Welten des Tags und der Nacht in Tristan und Isolde. Aber Zemlinskys Oper is das erste Werk, in dem nicht nur fiktive Realität, sondern des Fingieren selbst, das Träumen, thematisiert wird. Im Nachspiel sind für Görge nicht nur Traum und Wirklichkeit versöhnt, sondern es wird auch ein neues Lebenmodell entworfen' Weber, 'Über Der Traumgörge', p. 114.

The exact nature of the reconciliation of dreams and reality is, however, more complex than simply "they all lived happily ever after". Beaumont and Clayton both point out that Leo Feld set a quotation from Goethe's Faust at the head of the score: 'Dem Tuchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm' [the World is not silent to the capable].<sup>86</sup>

The passage from which it is taken describes how Faust has traveled the world in search of his dreams and desires, but has come to realize that everything he needs can be found at home:

Tor, wer dorthin die Augen blinzelnd richtet, Sich über Wolken seines gleichen dichtet! Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um: Dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm! Was braucht er in die Ewigkeit zu schweifen? Was er erkennt, läßt sich ergreifen. Er wandle so den Erdentag entlang; Wenn Geister spuken, geh er seinen Gang, Im Weiterschreiten find er Qual und Glück, Er, unbefreidigt jeden Augenblick!<sup>87</sup>

[Fool, fool is he who blinks at clouds on high Inventing his own image in the sky.

Let him look round, feet planted firm on earth: This world will not be mute to him of worth! Why haunt eternity with dim surmise? Things he perceives are his to realize.

So he may wander through his earthly day If spirits gibber, let him go his way; In forward-striving pain and bliss abide, He finds them who is never satisfied]<sup>88</sup>

Anthony Beaumont's interpretation focuses on the word "unbefreidigt' (dissatisfied, unfulfilled) in the last line. This is certainly an aspect of the feelings about dreams that are expressed in the Nachspiel. There is regret in Görge's relinquishment of his dreams:

Sie lebten ja nie, die so heiß ich gesucht, es lebten nur Leiden und Wonnen und trunk'ner Stunden gold'ne Frucht

88 Goethe trans. Wayne, Faust, p.265.

<sup>86</sup> Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p. 144, Clayton 'Operas', p. 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Goethe, Faust, p.331-332.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Beaumont assumes that the last line is the key to the meaning of the passage 'It was symptomatic of Feld's intellectualism that he chose to omit the operative word - unfulfilled (unbefreudigt) - in the last line' Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p. 144.

haben Sänger zu Märchen gesponnen!

[They were never alive, the tales that I sought so ardently, Only suffering and joy are alive, And the golden fruits of drunken hours That singers spun into tales.]90

but the opera also expresses the idea that the real world has a great deal to offer, that dreams can come true in the ordinary world. As Görge says of the old tales:

Und doch sie leben noch allerwärts, noch ist ihr Reich nicht verloren, denn jedes selig Menschenherz hat sich selber den Märchen geboren

[And yet they do live in another way their kingdom is not yet lost, for every blessed human heart gives birth to its own tale]91

Like the quotation from Faust, the opera expresses the importance of valuing the ordinary world, but recognizes the value of hopes and dreams in encouraging 'forward-striving', though it brings both joy and pain.

Musically, the exploration of the dream/reality dichotomy can be seen in the use of motifs II and VII. Motif II, which is strongly associated with Görge's vision of the Dream Princess, appears "disguised" in Act II as the much more angular motif XI where it is associated with Gertraud, who is first seen "disguised" by her anger and alienation. But, as has been seen, in Gertraud's soliloguy, XI is varied until it almost becomes II, as Gertraud starts to feel herself changing (Ex. 7a and 7b). At this point, a version of motif VII, which is also linked closely to the Dream Princess, appears as Gertraud expresses her new-found happiness (Ex. 8). 92 Its appearance again in the final scene (Ex. 9) 93 coincides with the moment that Görge's dream fuses with reality. The dichotomy between the dreams of Act One and the realities of Act Two is thus shown musically as capable of resolution.

Der Traumgörge V.S. p. 198.
 Traumgörge III 32.5-32.14 (V.S. pp.199-200).
 Traumgörge II 41.3-41.4 (V.S. p. 112).
 Traumgörge III 44.3-44.4 (V.S. p.207).

In Chapter Two, I discussed the idea of focalisation: the narrative technique whereby a story or part of a story is told from a particular character's point of view. Although Görge is at the centre of Der Traumgörge, and most of the story is focalised by him, Gertraud's soliloquoy scene (Act II sc v)94 gives the audience the opportunity to see her (as it were) from the inside. The scene focuses on Gertraud's emotions as her mood passes from furious to thoughtful, and then to hopeful, as at the end of the scene she expresses the inexplicable joy and belief in a better future that she has recently felt. Although it becomes clear later in the Act that her renewed hope is a result of her friendship with Görge, his name is not mentioned in the scene. The focus is therefore very clearly on Gertraud, and the significance of her own feelings to herself.95 Gertraud's story is, as a result, very clearly focalised through her, and her importance as an autonomous subject is emphasised, rather than her being portrayed simply as the object of Görge's affections.

This is part of the way that the opera explores autonomy in terms of the inner workings of the mind, and its relationship to the world outside. Zemlinsky made an awareness of the inner life of a character's mind a conscious part of his compositional technique. In a letter to Alma Schindler, he urged her to 'distinguish as precisely as possible between the inner motives of human actions' in choosing and using motifs. The complexity and subtlety of Zemlinsky's motivic technique certainly make it extremely suitable for expressing the character's inner life, both in the use of motivic variants to express the nuances of an individuals' feelings, and also in the use of layering, which makes it possible for the orchestral voice to act as narrator, revealing the character's unspoken thought<sup>97</sup> and focalising the telling of the story so that it is seen from that character's point of view. For example, as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup>Traumgörge II 33.13-43.6 (V.S pp. 108-113). <sup>95</sup> By contrast, Grete's solo scene (Act I sc iii) focuses on Görge and on the kind of lover that

she would like to have instead of him.

\*\* Clayton, 'Operas' p.12-13 quoting a letter from Zemlinsky to Alma Mahler (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia).

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia).

The Becher, Variantentechnik, p. 132 refers to this idea as "authorial narration" [auktorialen Erzählers], quoting Angelika [Wildner-]Partsch 'Zemlinsky's orchestra [is able], through the rich motivic-thematic working-through, to fulfil an essential function: that is, to give a musical presence to those thoughts which are not expressed in words' ['wurde das Zemlinsky'sche Orchester erst möglich, hat doch der Orchesterpart in seiner reichlichen motivisch-thematischen Durcharbeitung eine wesentliche Funktion zu erfüllen, nämlich die musikalische Präsenz von Gedanken, die nicht ausgesprochen werden, darzustellen.'].

Görge emerges from his vision in Act I Sc vii, the clock strikes twelve, and he remembers that there is something important that he is supposed to be doing:

Um zwölf sollt ich...was sollt ich nur? Still - still wach sein jetzt ich muß, ich will. 98

[At twelve I should... what should I do? Wait, wait, I must wake up, I must, shall.]

As he racks his brains to remember, the flute plays motif IX (first sung by the Princess earlier in the scene), and the oboe motif VII (also associated with the Princess) (Ex. 10) 99 giving a sense of the memories of the princess and his dream which are preventing him from remembering his betrothal.

## Motif IX 100



The layering of several musical ideas also make it possible to represent one character's thoughts while another is speaking, as for example when Marei interrupts Görge and Gertraud's love scene at the end of Act II sc. viii (Ex. 5 above). Finally, the same technique of layering can be heard as representing the multiple layers of feeling and experience that make up a character's point of view. In Act II sc vi, as Görge tells Gertraud about his naive hopes and dreams, he sings motif IX, which is associated with his dream, along with the oboe. Meanwhile the first violins and clarinet play a variant of motif IV, a reminder of his determination that the old tales should come alive. At the same time, the second violins play a variant of motif VIII, a reference to its first appearance, which occurs as the Dream Princess exhorts him to discover the World (Ex. 11).101

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Traumgörge I 119.4-120.5 (V.S. pp.78 - 79).
 <sup>99</sup> Traumgörge I 120.7-121.4 (V.S.p.79).
 <sup>100</sup> Traumgörge I 105.4-105.8 (voice) (V.S. p. 70).
 <sup>101</sup> Traumgörge II 59.1-59.4 (V.S. p.120).

## Motif IV<sup>102</sup>



Gertraud's inner life and development is, similarly, seen through the use of orchestral motifs. For example, as she soothes and comforts Görge in Act II sc vi, the violas play motif XII, which is an important feature of the joyful ending to her soliloquy, so that her inner joy is heard in the orchestra although she has not yet expressed it to Görge. But at the same time, the clarinets play motif II, which relates both to her happiness and to Görge's vision of the Dream Princess. Her awareness of that happiness can be seen as surfacing at b. 66.14, where she sings motif XIII (which is also first heard in the joyful part of her soliloquy) and motif II a few bars later (Ex. 12). 103

Like the "omniscient" narrator in a novel, the orchestra can refer to things that the characters cannot "know", as well as expressing unspoken thoughts. So, for example, the use of motif VII (which is linked to the Dream Princess) in Gertraud's soliloquy (Act II sc v, see Ex. 8) expresses the connection between Gertraud and the Princess, which is as yet unknown to the characters concerned. The boundary between the inner and the outer world is therefore blurred by the way that the orchestra can shift from one to the other. Once again the dichotomy between the two worlds is found to be illusory.

# The Journey (More on Autonomy)

Der Traumgörge has been accused of a lack of coherence, especially in the second act, 104 and of lacking homogeneity between Acts I and II. 105 It is certainly true that the plethora of minor characters at the opening of each of the first two acts make it difficult at times to see where the drama is heading. By considering the opera at the most fundamental level, however, it becomes

 $<sup>^{102}</sup>$  Traumgörge I 18.6-18.8 (V.S. p.13) (voice).  $^{103}$  Traumgörge II 66.7-66.21 (V.S. p.123).  $^{104}$  'While the structure of Act I is clearly defined, that of Act II is nebulous' Beaumont,

Zemlinsky, p. 143.

105 'Rudolf Stefan Hoffman expressed his concern at the resulting lack of homogeneity[between Acts I and II]' Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p.143.

clear that the underlying plot and the development of the central characters are expressed in a coherent fashion. Most interesting, for the purposes of this thesis, is the way that both Görge and Gertraud are portrayed as autonomous people, with aims and ambitions, a will to choose and act, as a comparison with Bal's theory of narrative makes clear.

In *Narratology*, Bal suggests that at the most basic level (the fabula), each event that makes up a narrative can be seen as part of a narrative cycle: a series of potential improvements or deteriorations in the situation of the central character(s), which may or may not be fulfilled. These can be summarized as:

The improvement to be achieved → process of improvement/no process of improvement → improvement achieved/no improvement achieved.

Or:

The foreseen deterioration → process of deterioration/no deterioration → resulting deterioration/deterioration avoided. 106

So, for example, Görge's attempts to make improvements initially lead only to deteriorations: he leaves his village in search of the wider world, and finds himself an outcast and a misfit. He tries to make the world a better place by joining the revolutionaries, and finds that in joining them he must give up his friendship with Gertraud. The turning point comes when he discovers that Gertraud loves him, which gives him the courage to stand up to the mob in her support, and then to go home and claim his inheritance. This time his attempted improvement bears fruit, and he achieves a happy ending and the respect of the villagers.

Görge's actions and experiences create a clear narrative cycle, and his aims and their frustration or fulfillment form the main thrust of the story. In Bal's terminology, Görge is the 'subject' of the fabula, while the improvements that he attempts (a new life in the wider world, the changing of the social order

<sup>106</sup> Taken from Bal, Narratology, p. 192.

and so on) are the 'objects'. 107 Described in these terms, the action of the opera no longer seems so incoherent.

But although, as might be expected from the title of the opera, Görge is the primary subject of the opera's fabula, and his experiences are the mainspring of the story, Gertraud also goes through a narrative cycle. Like Görge her initial attempts at improvements result in deteriorations: her attempt to accept work at the inn result in unwelcome sexual attention from the innkeeper and insults from his wife, while her affection and support for Görge lead to further trouble with the villagers. Even her suicide attempt is thwarted. But it is ultimately her love for Görge, once she is prepared to admit it to him, which brings about the turning point in the plot, and the achievement of the happy ending. In opening herself up to Görge, Gertraud makes it possible to find happiness for herself.

According to Bal 'When an actor has his or her own program, his or her own aims, and acts to achieve this aim, s/he is an autonomous subject'. 108 In these terms, Gertraud is clearly a 'subject' in the opera, rather than simply the object of Görge's affection, 109 and the relationship between her and Görge can be understood as the result of the actions of both of them.

In his book The Seven Basic Plots, Christopher Booker suggests that (at least in the stories that he sees as archetypal), the outward plot of a story is essentially a mirror of the inward development of the central character from a state of incompleteness, immaturity or egoism, into a state of completeness, capable of engaging fully with the world. 110 Der Traumgörge certainly fulfills this prescription, and is striking in that both hero and heroine are portrayed

<sup>110</sup>Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 311. I have found Booker's ideas helpful is dealing with the shapes of plots, though I would not choose to adopt his ideas wholesale, and in particular have reservations about the way he approaches

gender.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Bal, Narratology, p.197.
 <sup>108</sup> Bal, Narratology, p. 203.
 <sup>109</sup> In Bal's terms, Gertraud is the 'second subject', though perhaps an unusual one. In discussing the second subject, Bal focuses on the case where the second subject 'does not come into opposition with the program of the first subject, but is entirely independent of it' or where the second subject gives 'incidental aid or opposition to the achievement to the first subject's aim' (Bal, Narratology, p. 203). This suggests that the fabula of Der Traumgörge is somewhat unusual in having two subjects whose aims start separately and (as it were) fall

as making this journey. Both Görge and Gertraud start from a position of loneliness and introspection, which prevents them from engaging successfully with the world. The opera shows how they grow and develop as a result of their relationship, and finally become valuable and respected members of society. In the context of this thesis, it is particularly interesting to notice that their maturity, and ultimate happiness stem from their sympathy with a fellow-outsider and willingness to understand his or her point-of-view. So Görge's love for Gertraud drives him out of his lonely egocentricity and gives him the courage to stand up to the mob that is threatening to lynch her as a witch. He sings: 'Ihr kenn mich nicht! Der Träumer ist erwacht!' [You don't know me! The dreamer is awake!].<sup>111</sup>

In this context, the references to motherhood in Acts I and II can be seen not only as an aspect of the feminine, but also as part of a broader preoccupation with childhood and growing up. In Act II, both Gertraud and Görge refer to their previous preoccupations as childish. Gertraud, when contemplating suicide, says:

denn alles, was uns droht, ist wie ein Spiel mit Kinderdingen, Fühlt man erst eins: das Leben und den Tod. 112

[then all that lies ahead is like a game with childish things, when once you have felt life and death.]

while Görge dismisses his dreams and stories as 'Kindegefasel' 113 [childish nonsense]. In contrast, the Nachspiel shows that Görge's and Gertraud's acceptance in the village comes through adult qualities of leadership and care for the vulnerable: Görge has rebuilt the village school and organised the villagers to deepen the mill-stream, while Gertraud has helped the poor and the sick.114 In addition to this, according to Beaumont: 'In the original version

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Traumgörge II 150.4-150.8 (V.S. p.178).
 <sup>112</sup> Traumgörge II 107.2-107.10 V.S. p.146).
 <sup>113</sup> Traumgörge II 75.7 (V.S. p.128).
 <sup>114</sup> Traumgörge III 14.2-18.6 (V.S pp.188 – 190).

of the epilogue [Gertraud] was already the mother of Görge's child', which would have underlined the couple's role as adults and parents.<sup>115</sup>

In response to the villagers' praise, Görge emphasizes that the village has learned to work together:

wir trugen allen die Mühen gleich! Die haben zu guten Genossen uns fest zusammen geschlossen<sup>116</sup>

[We have all made the same effort It has bound us together as comrades].

In Booker's terms the opera therefore represents the 'cosmic happy ending', where the hero and heroine's personal resolution is mirrored by the resolution of disharmony in the world around them.<sup>117</sup>

The way that the dichotomies of power and gender are resolved as the opera progresses can now be seen as part of this larger structure. The various dichotomies are seen most strongly in the early parts of the opera, coinciding with the character's immaturity, but as the opera goes on the dichotomies are questioned or undermined until, as the central characters move towards the resolution of the story, the dichotomies are shown to be unnecessary and the two sides move towards a point of synthesis where the boundary between them disappears.

Musically, the idea of maturity as a synthesis of apparent opposites is seen most clearly by comparing the preludes to the three parts of the opera (Acts I and II and the Epilogue). The prelude to Act I (Ex. 13) <sup>118</sup> is very still and calm with motifs played by a single instrument over held chords. The effect is of beauty and clarity, but the held notes (particularly the high Bb in the violins, which is held throughout) create a sense of stasis, which relates to the

were evidently made at the last minute'. The version with the child is retained in the vocal score (Milan: G. Ricordi & Co., 1990), p.193, but the full score (Beaumont (ed.) (Munich: G. Ricordi & Co., 2003)) uses the version without the child. This is also the version performed in the EMI recording (2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup>Traumgörge III 14.8-15.3 (V.S. p.188).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Booker, *Plots*, p.272.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Traumgörge I 0.1-2.4 (V.S. p.3).

stillness of the visionary, and perhaps to Görge's passivity. The general consonance and lack of competing ideas also contribute to a sense of simplicity, even naiveté. By contrast, the prelude to Act II alternates between fortissimo ascending semiquavers in the lower strings, dissonant chords in wind and strings, and the strumming of a guitar. In the wind chord a C minor triad in the bass clashes with an A minor 7th chord in the treble, and the dissonance is unresolved (Ex. 14) <sup>119</sup>. There is no obvious motivic connection with Act I. The scene is very clearly set for the anger, jealousy and violence of the Act II village, a very different place from the setting for Act I.

The prelude to the Epilogue is considerably longer than the other two preludes. The mood is calm, just as it is in the Act I prelude, but the counterpointing of musical ideas and rapid harmonic movement make it much less straightforward. The use of motifs from Acts I and II relate the Nachspiel to the rest of the opera. A variant of motif V (in the cellos and basses, then in the violas, at the opening) refers to the return to the Act I village, while a variant of motif XIV (in the celli and basses at 1.1), which Clayton describes as 'symbolising the love between Görge and Gertraud', 120 confirms the importance of the bond between them. A new motif appears in the violins at 0.8 (motif XV), making it clear that the story has moved on (Ex. 15). 121 As the prelude continues, yet another new motif, motif XVI (which is, however related to motif VIII by its upward turn and downward seventh leap) appears in violins, celli and upper wind at 1.12; this is layered with motif XIV in the horns and violas. Meanwhile a strong G major chord at 1.12 moves on through G minor, F major, E major, and A minor in the space of 5 bars. (Ex 16.). 122 Görge's return to the Act I village is therefore clearly differentiated from the dreaming passivity of the prelude to Act I, and the more complex and dissonant music relates to the maturity both he and Gertraud have gained from the experiences of Act II.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> *Traumgörge* II 0.1-1.2 (V.S. p. 86). Note that in the vocal score (and hence in Ex. 14) the string semi-quavers are rendered in the piano reduction by quavers an octave apart, at a semi-quaver interval.

<sup>120</sup> Clayton, 'Operas', p.183. 121 Traumgörge III 0.1 – 1.3 (V.S. p.180). 122 Traumgörge III 1.12 – 2.3 (V.S. p. 180).





## Motif XV124



#### Motif XVI 125



The opera closes with a duet between Görge and Gertraud, where they sing "Lass uns träumen, träumen und spielen" [Let us dream, dream and play]. 126 The text seems to imply a return to the dreaming naiveté of the first Act, but Zemlinsky's setting once again makes the world of the Nachspiel more experienced and complex. The section starts with XVII played on the oboe in Bb. This is the motif which Görge has sung earlier, when praising Gertraud to the deputation of villagers. Gertraud now sings it, but in a form which is varied harmonically, so that it doesn't rest in A major, but moves towards Ab. Görge then picks it up in B and moves into XIV, before the oboe plays XVII once again in Bb shifting immediately towards B minor (Ex 17).<sup>127</sup>

#### Motif XVII<sup>128</sup>



This shifting harmony is not dissonant in the way that (for example) the prelude to Act II is, but neither is it consonant in the naive manner of the Act

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Traumgörge II 122.7-122.8 (violins) (V.S p.155).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Traumgörge III 0.8-0.10 (V.S. p.180) (1<sup>st</sup> violins).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Traumgörge III 1.12-1.13 (V.S. p.180) (flutes, violins).
<sup>126</sup> Traumgörge III 50.4-51-2 (V.S. pp. 209-210).
<sup>127</sup> Traumgörge III 49.7-51.2 (V.S. pp.209-210)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Traumgörge III 20.2-20.4 (voice) (V.S. p.191)

I prelude. Zemlinsky represents the central characters' maturity with music that is beautiful without being naïve. The rocking rhythm of motif XVII refers to their contentment, but the harmonic complexity expresses the adult who has not left the past behind, but rather has integrated and come to terms with it, and can use the experience to enrich the future.

# Chapter Five: Power, gender and autonomy in Strauss' Salome

#### Introduction

Richard Strauss' opera *Salome* is based on Oscar Wilde's play *Salomé*, which was originally written in French, and then translated into English. The play was premièred in French in Paris in 1896, and in German in 1901. Strauss saw a performance in Berlin, and set to work soon after to make an opera from Hedwig Lachmann's translation.<sup>1</sup> Hedwig Lachmann's version seems to have been made from both the English and the French versions of Wilde's play<sup>2</sup>. In choosing it from among the possible translations, Strauss said that he could not have written the opera without this translation<sup>3</sup>. The opera was completed in 1905 and was premièred at the Dresden Hofoper with Marie Wittich in the title role and conducted by Ernest von Schuch.

In the previous chapter I discussed how dichotomies that are familiar from the literary discourse were both expressed and questioned by their portrayal in *Der Traumgörge*. In Richard Strauss's opera, it is striking how the underlying themes are not these familiar dichotomies, but another set of preoccupations (one might almost call them obsessions), which nonetheless contribute to the debate on power, gender and autonomy that has already been seen in the literary discourse at this period.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the opera's reception by audiences, critics and academics, which illustrates the controversy and strong feeling that the opera, and the issues it raises, have aroused for over a century. The chapter goes on to identify three themes that particularly contribute to the discourse on gender as expressed in the opera: Seeing and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Richard Strauss, 'Reminiscences of the first Performances of my Operas (1942) in *Recollections and Reflections* Willi Schuh (ed.) trans. L.J. Lawrence (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1953), p. 150.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Norma Chapple, 'Re-(en)visioning Salome: The Salomes of Hedwig Lachmann, Marcus Behmer, and Richard Strauss' (MA Thesis, University of Waterloo, Ontario, 2006) pp. 48-49. <sup>3</sup> 'daß er ohne diese Übertragung seine 'Salome' wohl nicht vollendet hätte' Chapple 'Re-envisioning', p.20.

not Seeing; Hearing and not Hearing; Obsession and Insanity. Through these themes, the opera investigates the same issues that arise in the analysis of the literary discourse: those of power, gender and autonomy. In particular the chapter discusses how by using shifting points of view the opera questions conventions of autonomy and subject position.

## The Critical Reception of Salome

From the point of view of the audience, the opera was an immediate success,<sup>4</sup> but its critical reception is full of conflicts and paradoxes. As early as 1907, Julius Korngold, writing after the Viennese première by the Breslau State Theatre, caricatured the contradictory responses by the press:

Listen: "Salome is the defeat of Wagner and his impotent distortion, a step forward for art and its dismal decay, new musical-dramatic territory and a monument to a sick era, a triumph of the power of modern musical form and its declaration of bankruptcy, a creative deed and a mere triumph of tonal technique, a revelation and a commercial gimmick, an inspiration and a calculation, a precious fruit and a running sore." True the inner value of this work does not seem to have been entirely settled.<sup>5</sup>

Strauss's own description of rehearsals for the opera gives a sense that he was aware of, and indeed enjoyed, the contradictory nature of the opera.

During the casting rehearsals Frau Wittich, entrusted the part of the sixteen-year-old princess with the voice of Isolde (one just does not write a thing like that, Herr Strauss, either one or the other), because of the strenuous nature of the part and the strength of the orchestra, went on strike, with the indignant protest to be expected from the wife of a Saxon Burgomaster: 'I won't do it, I'm a decent woman', thereby reducing the producer Wirk, who was all for 'perversity and outrage' to desperation. And yet Frau Wittich, although of course her figure was quite unsuitable for the part, was quite right (if in a different sense): the capers cut in later performances by exotic variety stars indulging in snake-like movements and waving Jochanaan's head around in the air went beyond all bounds of decency and good taste. Anyone who has been in the east and has observed the decorum with which the women there behave, will appreciate that Salome, being a chaste virgin and an oriental princess, must be played with the simplest and most restrained of gestures,

<sup>4</sup> There were thirty-eight curtain-calls for the première and the opera was produced fifty times in the first two years. See Hutcheons, 'Staging' p. 205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Julius Korngold, 'Richard Strauss's Salome: A Conversation' (1907), quoted in 'Richard Strauss and the Viennese Critics (1896-1924): Reviews by Robert Hirschfeld, Guido Adler, Max Kalbeck, Julius Korngold and Karl Kraus' Leon Botstein (ed.), trans. Susan Gillespie in Bryan Gilliam (ed.), Richard Strauss and his world (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p.342.

unless her defeat by the miracle of a great world is to excite only disgust and terror instead of sympathy.6

The "perversity and outrage" of the story, certainly generated a good deal of disapproval, both in the opera's early years, and subsequently. Mahler's failure to persuade the Imperial censor to allow him to perform the opera in Vienna is well known,<sup>7</sup> and many contemporary critics were uneasy with the subject matter and its treatment. Romain Rolland, for example, writing to Strauss, sees the subject matter as not just unpleasant, but actually unhealthy:

[...] there is an undeniable dramatic power in Wilde's poem; but it has a nauseous, sickly atmosphere about it: it exudes vice and literature. This isn't a question of middle-class morality, it's a question of health.8

And contemporary critics echoed both the acknowledgement of the power of the piece, and the distaste, that Rolland expresses:

Certainly the poem is not lacking in more strongly artistic qualities; but the scene in which Salome kisses the severed head of John is for me the most nauseating that has been brought to the stage so far.9

Marie Wittich's complaint that the opera (or some aspects of it) are incompatible with "decency" is echoed and amplified by the contemporary critic, Adam Röder, who sees the opera's "unhealthiness" as a direct result of Wilde's homosexuality:

[...]if sadists, masochists, lesbians and homosexuals come and presume to tell us that their crazy world of spirit and feeling is to be interpreted as manifestations of art, then steps must be taken in the interests of health. Art has no interest in sanctifying bestialities which arise from sexual perversity. 10

This distaste for the story and the character of Salome extends even to modern writers like Susan McClary, whose work on opera generally reframes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Richard Strauss, 'Reminiscences', p.150-151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See, for example, La Grange, *Mahler* vol 3 pp.247-253.

<sup>8</sup> '[...]il y a dans le poème de Wilde une puissance dramatique incontestable; mais l'atmosphère en est écoeurante et fade: cela sue le vice et la literature. Ce n'est pas là une question de morale bourgeoise, c'est une question de santé.' Romain Rolland to Richard Strauss 14<sup>th</sup> May 1907 in Richard Strauss et Romain Rolland Correspondances, Fragments de Journal (Paris: Albin Michel 1951) p. 87 (translation given here is by John Williamson).

Berliner Tageblatt und Handels-Zeitung 11 December 1905. quoted in translation by John Williamson, 'Critical Reception' in Derek Puffett (ed.), Richard Strauss: Salome (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 132.

Adam Röde,r Salome (1907) quoted in translation in Williamson, 'Critical Reception' p.133.

the female characters in a way that makes them more sympathetic. Her description of Salome focuses on her 'perverse, overripe sexuality' which has 'contaminated' the other characters:

The tonal fabric festers with chromatic slippage - the half-step between major and minor mediants flickers as an erotic fetish; occasionally a line coalesces into a moment of tonic desire, only to sink back into the flood of diffuse perversity. Jokanaan tries bravely to assert untainted C-major stability in several of his pronouncements, but even his music is driven to frenzy by his environment. <sup>11</sup>

Clearly, the opera's portrayal of otherness – through characters who are Jewish, female, insane (or all three), <sup>12</sup> is not one which makes these characteristics immediately appealing. And yet the emphasis on unhealthiness and perversity express a fear that the "not-normal" can somehow infect or "contaminate" the "normal", because despite its threatening Otherness, it is somehow attractive. Lawrence Kramer's description of Salome as 'Everybody's favourite *fin-de-siècle* dragon lady', <sup>13</sup> sums this up neatly.

Conversely, Strauss's reflection on the role of Salome, as quoted above, expresses a hope that the attraction will outweigh the fear. He emphasises the 'decorum' and the simplicity that he had in mind for Salome and points out that in breaching the 'bounds of decency and good taste', there is a risk that the character will 'excite only disgust and terror instead of sympathy', which implies that he hoped that the character would in fact inspire sympathy.

Contemporary writers tended to see any sympathy that might be felt for Salome as a direct result of her musical portrayal. The poet Otto Julius Beirbaum praised the setting of the words for 'making beauty from its sickness' and Hedwig Lachmann herself praised Strauss for his success in

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in translation in Williamson 'Critical Reception', p.134.

<sup>11</sup> Susan McClary Feminine Endings, p.100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Salome (both play and opera) have often been discussed in terms of their generally negative representations of Judaism. See for example Gilman, 'Strauss and the Pervert'. However, in 'Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt and the "Modern Jewess" German Quarterly 66 2 (1993), Sander Gilman argues that 'in Strauss's [...] reading of Oscar Wilde's drama, what dominates the representation of the women is their femininity', rather than their Jewishness (p.5). <sup>4</sup> <sup>13</sup> Kramer 'Culture', p. 271.

clothing the 'unyielding material' of the play in music, and commented on the 'marvellously moving' ending. 15 This idea of the redemption of the play by Strauss's music is summed up by Hermann Starcke:

...we no longer see in Salome the inhuman woman, the beast in a beautiful body, as in Wilde's play; rather in her musical glorification she seems to be brought humanly nearer to us as a superhuman figure transfigured in the madness of love's passion; she behaves like this under the force of a higher power, as though she could not choose to do otherwise.16

This view finds a more modern expression in Carolyn Abbate's 'Opera, or the Envoicing of Women', where she suggests that it is the music that 'envoices' Salome and 'disrupts male authority' so that the audience are given the opportunity to see the story from her point of view. 17 This sympathy for Salome's position is expressed perhaps most strongly by Craig Ayrey:

Salome demands to be known for herself [...] and it is this which precipitates her response to a situation where her desires are frustrated. As Princess of Judaea she has rights, as a woman she has desires, and as a person she is at least due the respect of these being recognised. Because Jochanaan will not accept these aspects of her being, she takes the only course open to her, and demands his head[...].18

The controversy over the opera extends to assessments of Strauss's music. The opera's success at the box-office did not prevent critics from complaining (indeed it may have encouraged their complaints) that despite the technical brilliance of the orchestration the themes were unoriginal,19 and that the music suffered from 'perpetual dazzle'20 and a 'cacophonous element'21 in the harmony. The opera continues to exert a considerable fascination on musicologists, however, attempting (as John Williamson puts it) 'to reconcile

<sup>17</sup> Abbate 'Envoicing', p.258.

Opernschaffen.

<sup>15 &#</sup>x27;Sie haben ein Wunderwerk volbracht, indem Sie dieses ganz in sich geschlossene Drama, das gewiß ein sprödes Material war, in Töne kleideten [...] und herrlich von erschutternder Wirkung ist der Schluß.' Hedwig Lachmann to Richard Strauss Letter of 6th Dec 1906 in Der Strom der Töne trug mich fort: Die Welt um Richard Strauss in Briefen Franz Grasberger (ed.)

<sup>(</sup>Tutzing: Schneider 1967) p. 174.

16 Hermann Starcke (1905), quoted in translation in Williamson, 'Critical Reception' p.135.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Craig Ayrey, 'Salome's final monologue' in Puffet, Salome, p.111.
 <sup>19</sup> See Williamson, 'Critical Reception', p. 136 citing Julius Korngold, Deutches Opernschaffen

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Williamson, 'Critical Reception', p. 137 quoting in translation Fauré, *Opinions Musicales*. <sup>21</sup> Williamson, 'Critical Reception', p. 136 quoting in translation Korngold, Deutches

the restless, innovative and often brutal technical triumph of the music with the aesthetic roots of the subject'.<sup>22</sup>

# Synopsis<sup>23</sup>

The court of the Tetrarch Herod. It is night. The Captain of Herod's guard, Narraboth watches Salome at Herod's banquet (off-stage) and rhapsodises over her beauty. A noise is heard from the banquet. The page begs Narraboth not to look at Salome so much, since it could be dangerous. The voice of Jochanaan is heard prophesying from the cistern where he is imprisoned. The soldiers discuss him, saying that he is a holy man, although his words are incomprehensible.

Salome enters. She is distressed by the way that her stepfather Herod has been looking at her, and by the manners of his various guests. Hearing the voice of Jochanaan, she becomes intrigued by him, having heard that he has said 'terrible things' about her mother, and begs Narraboth to let her see him. Narraboth is reluctant to allow this, as it is against Herod's orders, but she finally persuades him.

Jochanaan is brought in. He continues to prophesy, and Salome identifies her mother Herodias as the subject of some of his words. She becomes fascinated by his appearance and his voice and draws closer to him. He is horrified and tells her to cover her face and not to speak to him. Salome veers between rhapsodic and repelled language about his body, finally concentrating her will on the desire to kiss Jochanaan's mouth. Narraboth is made increasingly unhappy by Salome's words and actions, and finally kills himself, falling between Jochanaan and Salome, who ignore him. Jochanaan curses Salome, and returns to the cistern.

Herod enters with his wife Herodias (Salome's mother). He is searching for Salome, while Herodias complains that he is always looking at Salome. Herod orders that the body of Narraboth be removed. He asks Salome to eat, drink and sit with him, but she refuses. The voice of Jochanaan is heard, and the five Jews argue with Herod about the theological implications of Jochanaan's prophesying. Two Nazarenes tell Herod about the Messiah who is the subject of Jochanaan's prophesies. Herod is angry that Jochanaan will not be silent.

Herod asks Salome to dance for him. She initially refuses, but when Herod swears that he will reward her with whatever she desires, she agrees to dance. She dances

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Williamson, 'Critical Reception' p.144. <sup>23</sup> Synopsis CFD.

the dance of the Seven Veils. Herod is overwhelmed and asks what her reward should be. She asks for Jochanaan's head on a silver platter. Herod is horrified, and begs her to accept some other gift, but she is adamant. Finally Herod agrees.

Salome leans over the cistern to wait for the execution. She hears a thud and believes that the executioner has failed. Jochanaan's head appears on a silver platter. She seizes it, and rejoices that she can now kiss Jochanaan's mouth. She remembers the beauty of Jochanaan's body and regrets that he would not look at her. She begs him to look at her now. Herod is horrified, but Herodias is glad of Salome's deed. Herod orders the lights to be put out, and in the darkness, Salome kisses Jochanaan's head. The taste of the kiss is bitter to her. Herod screams that she should be killed, and the soldiers rush forward to crush her with their shields.

# Analysis

Seeing and not seeing

The libretto of Salome is remarkable for its repeated references to seeing and looking. Images of eyes, mirrors, veils and light are woven into the text throughout, and discussion of who looks at whom forms an important part of the way that the power relationships between the characters are constructed.

The opening scenes of the opera show a chain of characters looking. Even before Salome enters, Narraboth is looking at her: his first line (and the first line of the opera) is 'Wie schön ist die Prinzessin Salome heut' Nacht'<sup>24</sup> [How beautiful the Princess Salome is tonight]. For much of the scene, the Page, Narraboth, Salome and Jochanaan form a chain of looking and not looking, each one looking at the next, and ignoring or resisting the gaze of the one who looks. The exception is Salome, who persuades Narraboth to let her see Jochanaan, by encouraging Narraboth to look at her

Sieh mich an, Narraboth, sieh mich an. Ah, wie gut du weisst, dass du tun wirst, um was ich dich bitte"<sup>25</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Richard Strauss, *Salome* (London: Boosey and Hawkes 1905) (0.4-0.8). All references to the score are given as 'Salome rehearsal number. bar number'. (So, for example 1.12 refers to 12 bars after figure 1). All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated, though in preparing them I have consulted the English text in Oscar Wilde *The Complete Plays* (London: Methuen, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Salome 53.3-53.9.

[Look at me, Narraboth, look at me. Oh, you know well that you will do this thing I ask of you]

The entrance of Herod and Herodias then starts a new chain. Herodias looks at Herod and tells him not to look at Salome. Herod ignores her and keeps looking at Salome. Salome tries to ignore him. She cannot wholly avoid Herod's gaze, but is sullen, and refuses his suggestions of eating, drinking or sitting together. When he asks her to dance for him, which will mean that he can watch her freely, she initially refuses this as well, only changing her mind when he offers to reward her.

By agreeing to dance for Herod, Salome once again breaks the chain of looking. Just as she did with Narraboth, instead of avoiding Herod's gaze, she turns round and courts it. And just as her invitation to Narraboth to look at her is what persuades him to send for Jochanaan, so dancing for Herod gets her her own way in a much more extreme demand: that he should give her Jochanaan's head. Herod tries hard to avoid his promise to give Salome what she wants, offering her a string of gifts, many of which are connected with seeing.<sup>27</sup> Herod feels that Salome's power over him is because he has been looking at her:

Das sagst du nur, um mich zu quälen, weil ich dich so angeschaut habe. Deine Schönheit hat mich verwirrt.<sup>28</sup>

[You only say that to frighten me, because I have looked at you. Your beauty has bewildered me.]

Salome's extraordinary scene with Jochanaan's head is watched throughout by Herod and Herodias (there are no private moments in this opera). Salome is oblivious to their gaze, and interacts only with Jochanaan's head. She orders him to look at her, and suggests that he is afraid of her power:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Salome 172.4- 186.4.

Abbate, 'Envoicing' p. 238 mentions some of these gifts, which include jewels that Salome's mother has never seen; topazes like animals' eyes; a crystal that women are forbidden to look at; turquoises that when worn on the forehead (as if they were eyes) let the wearer see unreal things, and (finally) the veil of the temple. The importance of gender in some of these gifts is also striking. Salome 286.3-297.10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Salome 272.1-273.1.

Öffne doch die Augen, erheben deine Lider, Jochanaan! Warum siehst du mich nicht an? Hast du angst vor mir, Jochanaan, daß du mich nicht ansehen willst?<sup>29</sup>

[Open your eyes, then, Jochanaan, lift your lids! Why won't you look at me? Are you afraid of me, Jochanaan, that you will not look at me?]

and laments that he would not look at her while he was alive, which prevented her having power over him:

Warum hast du mich nicht angesehen, Jochanaan? Du legtest über deine Augen die Blinde eines, der seinen Gott schauen wollte. Wohl! Du hast deinen Gott gesehen, Jochanaan, aber mich, mich, hast du nie gesehn. Hättest du mich gesehen, du hättest mich geleibt.<sup>30</sup>

[Why would you not look at me, Jochanaan? You covered your eyes with the cover of one who would see his God. Well! You have seen your God, but me, me you have not seen. If you had seen me, you would have loved me]

Finally, Herod cannot bear to look at Salome any more. He orders the servants to put out all the lights<sup>31</sup> and Salome is killed at his orders, crushed and hidden from sight under a mass of shields.

These patterns of seeing and not seeing between the characters are an important manifestation of the patterns of power. Initially the power is in the hands (or in the eyes, perhaps) of those who look: Narraboth, Salome and Herod choose to look at the object of their desires, and those who look at them (the Page, Narraboth and Herodias) are powerless to stop them. In each case the powerlessness of the looked-upon is underlined by repeated, futile begging: 'don't look, don't look'. Salome's statement that Jochanaan's eyes are 'the most terrible thing about him'<sup>32</sup> also suggests the power of the one looking. Meanwhile, Herod's power as Tetrarch is seen in his restriction of the right to look. He incarcerates Jochanaan in the cistern and forbids anyone

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Salome 324.5-325.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Salome 340.2 - 343.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> 'Manassah, Issachar, Ozias, löscht die Fackeln aus. Verbergt den Mond, verbergt die Sterne!' [Mannasah, Issachar, Ozias, put out the torches. Hide the moon, hide the stars!]. *Salome* 353.3-354.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> 'Seine Augen sind von allem das Schrecklichste' Salome 76.6-76.9.

to see him.33 Later, when Narraboth's body is lying on stage, Herod orders it disposed-of so that he need not look at it:

Wer ist dieser Tote? Ich will ihn nicht sehn [...] Ich erliess keinen Befehl, dass er getötet werde. Das schient mir seltsam. Der junge Syrier, er war sehr schön. Ich erinnre mich, ich sah seine schmachtenden Augen wenn er Salome ansah...Fort mit ihm34

[Who is this, dead? I don't want to see him.... I gave no order that he should be killed. This seems strange to me. The young Syrian, who was so beautiful, I remember I saw his yearning eyes when he looked at Salome... Away with him.]

Conventionally, feminist writers have taken the view that those in power will choose to be the seer rather than the seen. This is central to Lawrence Kramer's approach to Salome in 'Culture and Musical Hermeneutics: The Salome complex'. Kramer quotes 'the traditional privilege of men to scrutinise women's bodies', 35 and refers to the male gaze 'penetrating' the woman's body, with the implication of seeing through, pinning down and also of sexual penetration. For Kramer, the (male) seer has power over the seen object because the image that he gazes on is 'a means of satisfying sexual desire', and his gaze renders the female body an 'object to be held in position, term of subservience, submission'.36

But this is not the whole story. The opera takes place by moonlight, which makes the seer's power to see, and to interpret what they see, uncertain and unreliable. This undermining of the power of the seer over the seen is then joined by an awareness of the power of the seen. Linda and Michael Hutcheon suggest that, although

the gaze has often been gendered male, leaving women as the objects of the gaze - either as exhibitionists or as the passively displayed [...] Salome the character and Salome the opera turn this now widely accepted view utterly on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Narraboth: 'Der Tetrarch hat es ausdrücklich verboten, dass irgendwer den Dekkel zu diesem Brunnen aufhebe.' [The Tetrarch has expressly forbidden anyone to lift the cover of the cistern] Salome 51.6 - 52.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Salome 161.6 – 164.1. (this, incidentally, gives a clue to another link in the chains of looking).
<sup>35</sup> Kramer, 'Culture', p. 272.
<sup>36</sup> Kramer, 'Culture', p.273 (both quotes).

its head. Here to be the object of the gaze is to have great power, as if "to-belooked-at-ness" conveys mastery and control.  $^{37}$ 

Salome's decision to allow herself to be looked at, to make use of her desirability, shows the power of the looked-upon over the looker. Herod's order that no-one shall see Jochanann shows not only Herod's power as Tetrarch, but also his awareness of the power of the looked-upon. And, similarly, Jochanaan's refusal to look at Salome, and his insistence that she should veil herself are an expression of his fear of her power over him if he looks at her.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, in a strange way, Jochanaan is at his most powerful when he no longer resists the gaze: Salome's obsessive fascination with his severed head brings about her death, and so his curse is fulfilled. In demanding Jochanaan's head, Salome seems to have ultimate power over him, and yet once he is dead her power over him is finished, because she can no longer be the object of his gaze.

The opera also avoids the idea that looking is gendered. Who looks and who is looking is not dependent on gender: men look at women who are looking at men; women look at men who are looking at women; men look at other men. Parallels arise between characters of different sexes, like the parallel between the language that Salome uses to describe Herod: 'Warum sieht mich der Tetrarch fortwährend so an mit seinem Maulwurfsaugen unter den zuckenden Lidern?'<sup>39</sup> [why does the Tetrarch look at me all the time, with his mole's eyes under their quivering lids], and that which Jochanaan uses to describe Salome: 'Warum sieht sir mich so an mit ihren Goldaugen unter den gliessenden Lidern?'<sup>40</sup> [why does she look at me with her golden eyes under their glistening lids].

Meanwhile, the way that the story is focalised relates to the issue of autonomy. When Salome first sees Jochanaan, she does not talk to him, she

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Hutcheons, 'Staging' p.218. The article points out the evidence for a medicalised and gendered approach to madness, which nonetheless leaves room for Salome to have power over those who gaze at her.

over those who gaze at her.

38 'Ich will dich nicht ansehen' [I will not look at you] Salome 139.1-139.2. 'bedekke dein Geschicht mit einem Schleier [cover your face with a veil] Salome 88.1-88.3.

39 Salome 22.4-22.8.

<sup>40</sup> Salome 81.1-82.1.

talks *about* him.<sup>41</sup> While Salome is keenly aware of Jochanaan as the object of her gaze, she seems to have little sense of him as an autonomous agent. Only when Jochanaan asks who she is does she begin to address him as a person, and even then, as will be seen later, she focuses on the sound of his voice rather than the meaning of his words. And when she appears to be speaking to Jochanaan directly, the lyrical beauty and (at other moments) vivid horror of her descriptions of him make him an object to be looked at,<sup>42</sup> so that the audience are given an idea of what it is like to be Salome looking at Jochanaan. But Jochanaan tries to avoid looking at Salome, repeatedly telling her to leave him, and referring to her in the most general terms,<sup>43</sup> and so the audience has no parallel sense of Jochanaan's point of view.

## Hearing and not hearing

There is a pattern of hearing and not hearing in the opera which parallels and augments the ideas in the previous section, and further develops these ideas of power, gender and autonomy. Whether the characters listen to, hear or understand each other reinforces the chains of looking and not looking that I described in the previous section, and the resulting power relationships. For example, the chain of looking that involves Salome, Herod and Herodias, is reinforced musically between 242.7 and 243 (Ex. 1), where Herod's question and Salome's response cut straight across Herodias' vocal line.

Salome, indeed, never seems to listen to her mother at all.<sup>44</sup> She does hear and respond to Herod, but often without really engaging with what he says. For example, after his elaborate description of the peacocks that he offers her instead of Jochanaan's head, she says merely 'Gibt mir den Kopf des

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> 'Er ist schrecklich, er ist wirklich schrecklich [...] Sein Augen sind von allem die Schrecklichste [...] Glaubt ihr, daß er noch einmal sprechen wird' [He is horrible . He is really horrible. His eyes are the most horrible of all. Do you think he will speak again?]. Salome 76.1-76.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> For example 'Dein Haar ist wie Weintrauben, wie Büchsel schwarzer Trauben an den Weinstöcken Edoms' [Your hair is bunches of grapes, like clusters of black grapes on the vines of Edom] Salome (101.10-103.6), and, by contrast 'Dein Haar ist grässlich [...] Es start von Staub und Unrat [...] Es ist wie ein Schlangenknotten gewikkelt um deinen Hals' [Your hair is hideous...It is caked in dust and filth... It is like a knot of snakes coiled round your neck] Salome 110.4-112.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> For example 'Zurück Tochter Babylons! Durch das Weib kam das Unheil in die Welt.' [Back, daughter of Babylon, through women evil came into the world.] Salome 96.1-97.1. <sup>44</sup> Later, she says 'Ich achte nicht auf die Stimme die meine Mutter' [I do not heed my mother's voice] Salome 255.5-255.7.

Jochanaan' [Give me Jochanaan's head]. It is left to Herodias to jeer at him for what he has actually said 'du bist lächerlich mit deiner Pfauen' [You're ridiculous with your peacocks]. Herod, conversely tries several time to get Salome's attention with lines such as 'Du horst nicht zu! Lass mich zu dir reden, Salome!' [You are not listening! Let me speak to you, Salome!] and 'Hör was ich sagen!' [Hear what I'm saying!], while he tries to silence Herodias: 'Still, Weibe, zu dir spreche ich nicht' [Silence, Woman, I'm not talking to you].

In general those looked at ignore the voice of those looking, just as they ignore their gaze. The exception, as before, is Salome, who notices what is said to her when (and only when) it suits her larger purpose. For example, when there is something she wants from Narraboth, there is dialogue between them (something which is surprisingly rare in this opera), with each character singing in turn without interruptions or long pauses. But as she is drawn into her fascination with Jochanaan, she ceases to address Narraboth, interrupting his pleading and even ignoring his death at her feet, in her obsession.

The opera is remarkable for the number of times that characters "interrupt" one another: that is, when a character starts to sing before another has finished, and rather than joining in with the music of the first character, there is an abrupt change in key, dynamic or orchestration. The implication is generally that the first character, and his or her words, have no power or influence over the second. Jochanaan's power is expressed in the way that his voice repeatedly "interrupts" the characters on stage in the opening scenes, for example in Ex.2<sup>51</sup> at 11.2 where the abrupt change of key and orchestral colour (from woodwind to horns and lower strings), and the fact that he starts before the page has finished, makes the off-stage voice something of a shock. That Jochanaan is oblivious to what is happening on-stage is scarcely

<sup>45</sup> Salome 279.1-279.3.

<sup>46</sup> Salome 279.7 - 280.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> These two quotations *Salome* 271.1 – 271.2 and 267.12 – 267.13.

<sup>48</sup> Salome 262.1- 262.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Salome between 49 and 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Salome 86.2 – 86.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Salome 10.10-12.1.

surprising – he can hardly be said to be interrupting the Page when he is hidden out of sight in the cistern. But the effect is to underline Jochanaan's separation from the ordinary world. His single-minded concentration on his God and his prophecies<sup>52</sup> make him Other. Herodias tells Herod repeatedly to silence Jochanaan, but he ignores her when he can,<sup>53</sup> and avoids taking action, just as he later tries to avoid executing Jochanaan in fulfilment of his promise to Salome. Although Herod denies strenuously that he is afraid of Jochanaan, his unwillingness to hand Jochanaan over, either to the Jews, or to his own executioner, makes it clear that he feels Jochanaan's power.

The audience, too, are likely to get an impression of power. Jochanaan's voice is a confident, powerful sound in performance and the music that he sings is by turns threatening and comforting, with strong cadences and predictable phrase structures.<sup>54</sup> The fact that he can be heard clearly from off-stage gives a sense, too, of a strong voice and body. But his power is an equivocal thing. Salome's objectification of him reduces him to an object to be a looked at, and his elaborate, Wildean text makes him hard to understand, not only for the characters on stage (for example, the two Soldiers, who agree that it is impossible to understand what he is talking about),55 but also for the audience.

This points to something important about the nature of power in opera. It is not just the power that the characters have over each other that is at stake, it is also the power that they have over, or in the eyes and ears of, the audience, and these may or may not coincide. The characters on stage are all lookedupon and listened-to by the audience, who are themselves implicated in the patterns of power and powerlessness that the opera sets up.

Salome, as has been seen, is more interested in Jochanaan's appearance, and the sound of his voice rather than his words, even when he is abusing her as the daughter of a whore.

<sup>52</sup> Salome 34.9 – 35.9. <sup>53</sup> For example at 223.5. <sup>54</sup> Salome 11.3 – 14.5.

<sup>55 &#</sup>x27;Unmöglich ist zu versteh'n was er sagt' [It is impossible to understand what he says] Salome 18.4.

J: Zurück Tochter Babylons. Komm der Erwählten des Herrn nicht nahe! Deine Mutter hat die Erde erfüllt mit dem Wein ihre Lüste, und das Unmass ihre Sünden schreit zum Gott

S: Sprich mehr, Jochanaan, deine Stimme ist wie Musik in meinen Ohren. 56

[J: Back, daughter of Babylon. Do not come near to the chosen of the Lord. Your mother has filled the earth with the wine of her desires and the weight of her sins cries out to God. S: Speak again, Jochanaan, your voice is like music in my ears.]

Her exclamation of Jochanaan's name (at 90.2 in Ex. 3)<sup>57</sup> is a perfect example of oblivious "interrupting". And although her elaborate praise of his body, hair and mouth changes to disgust when he rejects her, she does not respond to the meaning of his words at all, only to the fact that they are a rejection.<sup>58</sup>

After Jochanaan's execution has been ordered, Salome peers down into the cistern and is puzzled and alarmed by the silence. 'Es ist kein Laut zu vernehmen. Ich höre nichts. Warum schreit er nicht, der Mann?'59 [There is no sound to be heard. I can hear nothing. Why does the man not cry out?]. The implication is perhaps that she is disappointed at not hearing her revenge achieved, or alternatively that she is baffled by Jochanaan, who has been so vocal and confident up to now, suddenly falling silent. While his death means the silencing of his powerful and confident voice, the silence at the same time renders Salome, and the audience, powerless to understand what is happening in the cistern. And so, in a way, Jochanaan has more power over those who listen, once his voice has been silenced.

The moment when Salome looks into the cistern is one of several times in the opera when crucial events occur off-stage. Events which are heard but not seen include the opening banquet off-stage, much of Jochanaan's part, sung from off-stage, the unseen execution and Salome's all-important kiss, shrouded in darkness. In situations like these, the audience have two ways to follow the story. The first is that several of the off-stage scenes are described

<sup>56</sup> Salome 83.7 - 86.1. Salome's brief interest in the Son of Man also focuses on his looks 'Wer ist er, des Menschen Sohn? Ist er so schön wie du, Jochanaan?' [Who is he, the Son of Man? Is he as beautiful as you, Jochanaan?] Salome 90.1-90.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> For example *Salome* 109.1-112.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Salome 305.1-305.6.

by the characters (for example Narraboth's description of Salome, or Salome's of the banquet), so that the story is briefly focalised through that character. The second is that the orchestral voice may act as narrator, depicting the scene musically. This use of the orchestral voice is most striking when what is depicted by the "narrator" is not a mood or a scene-setting, but is a particular character's viewpoint.

Two examples of this use of the orchestral voice stand out. The first is the rapid chromatic string writing which is associated with Herod. After the discovery of Narraboth's body, the strings start to play chromatic scales continuously, and Herod complains of a cold wind (Ex. 4).60 The way that the passage is constructed makes it seem as if the string lines are causing Herod's words. When the audience hears the chromatic scales, Herod complains of the wind, and as they disappear, he doubts what he has heard ('Weht nicht ein Wind?' [Wasn't there a wind blowing?]). Herodias cannot hear or feel a wind, and when she is singing the string scales are silent (164.8) or petering out (166.7).61

In this passage, the orchestral music does more than illustrate Herod's words, it seems to show the audience what is in Herod's head, so that the story is focalised through him. When Herod is speaking (that is, singing) about the wind, the sounds in the orchestral voice seem to depict the wind, focalising the story through Herod, so that the audience hears the wind that Herod hears. When Herod no longer hears the wind, the orchestra is silent (166.8). But when Herodias speaks, the orchestral voice focalises the story through her, and no wind is heard. Instead of a reliable, omniscient narrator, the orchestral voice shows the audience first what one character hears, and then another. Is the wind real or imaginary? That depends upon your point of view.

A second example of this type of focalisation occurs at the moment of Jochanaan's death (Ex. 5).62 The stage directions imply that his execution takes

 $<sup>^{60}</sup>$  Salome 164.1-167.1.  $^{61}$  The same pattern repeats between 168 and 170.  $^{62}$  Salome 306.10-307.1

place in the cistern, and that it is therefore invisible both to the audience and to the characters on stage. The audience sees Salome, peering into the cistern, and expressing frustration and bafflement at being able to hear nothing. 'Es ist kein Laut zu vernehmen. Ich höre nichts' [There is no sound to hear. I hear nothing]. Just as she says 'Est ist eine schreckliche stille'<sup>63</sup> [It is a terrible silence] (at 306.15) there is a sforzando in the lower strings. Salome's response - a Gb 'Ah' - expresses her startled response (and perhaps the audience will be startled, too). But it is not a cry of triumph: she interprets the sound as the executioner's sword falling to the ground. When the head finally appears from the cistern, it becomes clear that Jochanaan has indeed been executed: her fear that the executioner has failed is unfounded. What, then, are the audience to make of the sforzando?64 Is it a depiction of success or failure in the attempt to behead Jochanaan? Like Salome, the audience cannot be sure until the head actually appears. The story has been focalised through Salome, so that the audience are likely (at least the first time they experience the opera) to understand the action as she does. If Salome has been deluded, so have the audience.

## Obsession and Insanity

The plot of Salome is dominated by obsessions: Narraboth and Herod's obsession with Salome, Salome's with Jochanaan and, perhaps, Jochanaan's with God. The insane and obsessive way that the characters behave makes them all in some sense Other, and is also another way in which the opera engages with issues of power, gender and autonomy. Particularly striking is the way that these obsessions are expressed in terms of eating, drinking and possessing.

Herod, whose status as Tetrarch puts him at the top of the conventional hierarchy, is noticeable for his strange behaviour and rapid changes of mind and mood. Several times in the opera he loses track of what is going on.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> These three quotations all *Salome* (305.1-306.15).
<sup>64</sup> Abbate suggests that Strauss 'rejects the notion of operatic music as an objectifying gaze' (italics in original) and 'refuses to compose the unseen reality of what's happening in the cistern or in the hearts of the characters' Abbate, 'Envoicing' pp.247-248. While the sforzando in the cellos and basses seems to me to be clearly intended as an indication of either the fall of the sword or the fall of the head (or both), this does not, as I see it, necessarily makes the orchestra's role that of the male authorial voice, as Abbate suggests.

When his initial pursuit of Salome (offering her fruit, wine and a place on the throne) fails, for example, he is bewildered: 'Bringt mir...was wunsche ich den? Ich habe es vergessen. Ah! Ah! Ich erinnere mich'. [Bring me... What was it I wanted? I've forgotten. Ah! Ah! I remember.]. He is then distracted again by Jochanaan's voice and Herodias' complaints about it.65 His strong and almost superstitious reaction to Narraboth's body ('Ach ich bin ausgeglitten. Ich bin in Blut getreten, das ist ein böses Zeichen. 66 [Ah, I have slipped, I have trodden in blood, that is an evil omen.]), and his horror at the idea of the dead coming to life, point to a guilty conscience and a lack of control over his thoughts.67

Herod's wind, which the audience also hear (as discussed above),68 is heard again immediately after he has sworn to give Salome whatever she desires. Herod feels cold and hears the wind, but cannot see its cause. 69 Then, almost immediately, he changes his mind and complains of the heat.<sup>70</sup> As well as these abrupt changes of mind, Herod seems sometimes to be unaware of what is happening around him. For example, after he has conceded defeat and ordered Jochanaan's death, the libretto runs as follows.

H: Man soll ihr geben, was sie verlangt! Sie ist in Wahrheit ihre Mutter kind.

(Herodias zieht dem Tetrarchen den Todesring vom Finger ind gibt ihn dem ersten Soldaten. Der ihn auf der Stelle dem Henke überbringt.)

H: Wer hat meinem Ring genommen? Ich hatte einen Ring and meiner rechten Hand. Wer hat meinem Wein getrunken? Es war Wein in meinem Becher. Es war mit Wein gefüllt. Es hat ihn jemand ausgetrunken. Oh! Gewiss wird Unheil über einen kommen.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Salome 302.3-303.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Salome 183.6 – 186.4. <sup>66</sup> Salome 160.2 – 160.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> When told that the Messiah can raise the dead, Herod responds 'Wie, er erweckt die Toten [...] ich verbiet ihn, das zu tun' [What, he raises the dead... I forbid him to do that] Salome (211.11-212.6). Wilde's play makes it clear that Herod has murdered his brother and married his brother's wife (Herodias).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Salome 233.3 **–** 235.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> 'Warum höre ich in der Luft dieses Rauschen von Flügeln? Ah! Es ist doch so, als ob ein ungeheure, schwarzer Vogel über der Terasse schwebte? Warum kann ich nicht seh'n, dieser Vogel?' [Why do I hear the rush of wings in the air. Ah! It is as if a monstrous black bird was hovering over the terrace. Why can't I see this bird?] Salome 233.5 – 235.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> 'Aber nein, er ist nicht kalt, er ist heiß. Geißt mir Wasser über die Hände, gebt mir Schnee zu essen, macht mir den Mantel los.'[But no, it is not cold, it is hot. Pour water over my hands, give me snow to eat, loosen my robe Salome 236.3 - 238.1.

[H: She shall be given what she wants! She is indeed her mother's child. (Herodias takes the Death ring from the Tetrarch's finger and gives it to the First Soldier, who takes it to the executioner.) H: Who has taken my ring? I had a ring on my right hand. Who has drunk my wine? There was wine in my cup. It was full of wine. Someone has drunk it all. Oh! I know some disaster will befall somebody.]

Just as he did at his entrance, 72 Herod sings in hasty, broken, rising lines and the orchestra plays fragments of whole-tone scales. The impression is of a nervous rushing, which while appropriate to Herod's temperament: his fears, obsessions and strange changes of mind, is the very opposite of the behaviour that might be expected from a ruler (Ex. 6).73 The audience, who can share Herod's foreboding of disaster, are likely to find his bewilderment and forgetfulness more than a little strange.

Herod's obsession with Salome is not only a desire to look at her, he wants to consume her, eating the touch of her lips and teeth, and so in some sense to possess her.

Trink wein mit mir [...] Tauche deine kleine Lippen hinein [...] dann will ich die Becher leeren.74

[Drink wine with me...Dip your little lips into it...then I will empty the cup. ]

he says, and then again

Iß mit mir von diesen Früchten. Den Abdruck deiner kleinen, weißen Zähne auf einer Frucht seh' ich so gern. Beiss nur ein wenig ab, nur ein wenig von dieser Frucht, dann will ich essen, was übrig ist.75

[Eat this fruit with me. I love to see the mark of your little white teeth in a piece of fruit. Bite just a little, only a little of this fruit, then I will eat what is left over.]

Salome resists his requests, saying simply that she is not thirsty or hungry,76 and so refuses to be possessed by Herod or drawn in to his obsession.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> For example between 154.7 and 156

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Salome 301.7-303.4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Salome 172.4 – 174.6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Salome 176.5 – 179.4. <sup>76</sup> Salome 175.2-175.4 and 179.5-180.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> And yet Herod is not uniformly mad. He has moments of confidence and assurance, particularly when speaking to servants. And in the opening scene it is striking how the uneasy rushing of the strings and wind calm to longer notes in both voice and orchestra, each

Salome's journey through the opera is, of course, a gradual increase in her obsessive desire for Jochanaan. But it is also a process of growing up, a sexual awakening. And in depicting that journey, the opera explores the nature of power, gender and sexuality, in a remarkably subtle and complex way.

At the opening of the opera, Salome is seen through Narraboth's eyes, his use of images such as a white rose and a dove<sup>78</sup> portraying innocence and purity. At her entrance, the orchestral music becomes high and light: the lower instruments (such as bassoons and bass clarinet) dropping out of the scoring and the 1st Violins and oboes play a dancing melody in 34. (Ex. 7a).<sup>79</sup> Her description of the moon 'wie eine silberne Blume, kühl und keusch. Ja, wie die schönheit einer Jungfrau, die rein geblieben ist...'[Like a silver flower, cool and chaste. Yes like the beauty of a maiden, who has remained pure], accompanied by oboe, marked *zart* [sweet], and echoing clarinet, with static chords in the higher wind, and high, *tremolo* violins has something of the coolness and chastity she is describing (Ex. 7b).<sup>80</sup> The audience, knowing the Biblical story, will already know that Salome brings about Jochanaan's death (assuming they have identified him with John the Baptist), but so far, Salome's behaviour and music are consistent with the images of innocence and purity that Narraboth's descriptions of her imply.

As Salome persuades Narraboth to let her see Jochanaan, the orchestra continues to play the high light music that has so far been associated with her, but there is a suggestion of sinuous and exotic enchantment in the ornamented and chromatic writing for the flute (Ex. 8).<sup>81</sup> Like a hypnotist, she repeats, 'du wirst das für mich tun' [you will do this for me] and draws his gaze towards her: 'Sieh mich an, Narraboth, sieh mich an [look at me,

time he looks at Salome. Salome's presence seems in some strange way to calm him (for example at 155.4-156.2) This makes him very different from Narraboth, who sings faster and higher in the voice as Salome approaches, accompanied by rising string and wind scales, conveying a rising excitement. (for example at 20.1 - 20.4).

<sup>78 &#</sup>x27;Sie ist wie der Schatten einer weißen Rose in einem Spiegel' [She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror] (10.1-10.7) and 'Sie ist wie eine verirrte Taube' [She is like a straying dove] (20.3-20.7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Salome 20.1- 20.12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Salome 29.6-30.8

<sup>81</sup> Salome 49.1-49.12.

Narraboth, look at me].<sup>82</sup> Her power to persuade Narraboth is not the power of a dominant person – when she directly ordered him, he could refuse, citing the orders of Herod, the dominant person in the domestic and political hierarchy. Salome's power is, rather, the seductive, subversive power of sexual attraction.

At his entrance, Jochanaan continues to sing in the same powerful, confident way as he did off-stage, with the same allusive prophetic language, and the same consonant, tonal harmonies (Ex. 9)<sup>83</sup> (for example the strong I-V at 75.7-75.8). Salome's response is curiosity and then a fascinated horror. Motif I, the consonant B major triad that Salome sings at 76.1, accompanied by harp and reflecting motif I in the clarinets, belies her words 'Er ist schrecklich, er ist wirklich schrecklich' [He is horrible, he is truly horrible]. If she is feeling horror, it seems that she is also enjoying the feeling. As she describes how horrible Jochanaan is, she uses a lower range than she has previously. The orchestration, too, involves a wider range of pitches and colours (including low cello, double bass and bass tuba). If the high, light music that has been associated with Salome so far communicates something young and/or female, then the lower pitches imply the opposite.



Salome is attracted by Jochanaan's body, describing it as 'keusch' [chaste] and 'kuhl' [cool], just as she has previously described the moon. As Salome approaches Jochanaan, his confident, prophetic style gradually becomes more dissonant and uncomfortable, moving away from the clear statement of motif II in Db major that he begins with, while the celli play a wandering chromatic line that has no clear harmonic direction (Ex. 10).<sup>85</sup> This contrasts strongly with Salome's confident and consonant announcement of her identity at 83.1

<sup>82</sup> Salome 49.4 - 50.2 and 57.3-57.6.

<sup>83</sup> Salome 75.2-77.3

<sup>84</sup> Salome 75-.9-76.4 (clarinets).

<sup>85</sup> Salome 81.1-83.7.

'Ich bin Salome, die Tochter der Herodias Prinzessin von Judäa' [I am Salome, the daughter of Herodias, princess of Judea]. Her eulogy to his body uses motif III, which is associated with Salome, and particularly with her longing, for the rest of the opera (Ex. 11).<sup>86</sup>

## Motif II87



#### Motif III<sup>88</sup>



Each time Jochanaan rejects her, the orchestral music turns dissonant, mirroring the horror and disgust of her words. The contrast between her love-music and hate-music takes the audience on a roller-coaster of extreme emotion. Meanwhile Jochanaan expresses increasing fear and loathing of her, which reaches its peak when she asks to kiss him: he is reduced almost to speech (his line marked as a toneless whisper), and the orchestra is reduced almost to silence.

The battle of wills between Salome and Jochanaan reaches stalemate in the last part of the scene. She repeats her request 'Lass mich deinen Mund küssen' [let me kiss your mouth] again and again to the music of motif IV (Ex. 12)90, ignoring his call to repent, and his curses.

### Motif IV91



<sup>86</sup> Salome 93.1-93.4.

<sup>87</sup> Salome 65.10-65.14 (oboes).

<sup>88</sup> Salome 93.1- 93.4 (voice).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> For example, contrast the consonant F sharp major tonality at 95.4 with the muted trumpets at 98, which play a dissonant chord at odds with the F sharp in the lower strings. (98.1 – 98.3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Salome 122.10-123.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Salome 122.10-122.13 (violins).

The power of Jochanaan's prophetic certainty is matched by the power of Salome's obsession with his body. So far there has been no clear winner, but Salome has already changed significantly. In the following scene her rejections of Herod are without elaboration or the manipulative behaviour she used with Narraboth. She does not argue or beg, but simply makes a contract with Herod: she will dance for him if he will give her what she wants.

It is interesting, however, that after Salome has danced, her request for Jochanaan's head is set with the same high, light timbre (her line is marked süss – sweet) and orchestration that made her seem young and innocent at the beginning. (Ex. 13)<sup>93</sup> This refers back to opening of the opera, though it is an acting choice for the singer, whether to portray this "innocence" as genuine or manipulative. The trill which is heard in the clarinets at this point is heard throughout the scene (in a variety of wind instruments and pitches) when Salome sings, often "interrupting" Herod, in the sense that it starts before he has finished. The trill seems to convey something of the fear and excitement that characterise Salome's obsession, and also the irrelevance of Herod's elaborate words and offered gifts to her determination.

The Hutcheons suggest that Salome's youth and her virginity, as well as making her manipulative and highly sexual behaviour more shocking, relate closely to contemporary descriptions of women, both normal and deviant. They point out Cesare Lombroso's idea that 'women are big children: their evil tendencies are more numerous and varied than men's but they generally remain latent. When they are wakened and excited they produce results proportionately greater'. The opera's repeated references to the moon also take on a new dimension in relation to the idea that 'female criminal violence

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> The first one is also noticeably low in the voice Salome 175.2-175.4.

<sup>93</sup> Salome 249.6-249.9.

Hutcheons 'Staging', p.211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero, *The Female Offender* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895) p.151.

came to be related directly to menstruation' and that these in their turn were related to insanity.96

Other writers on the opera also focus on the madness of Salome's behaviour, and make links between this and the contemporary discourse on female insanity, hysteria and female sexuality. For example, Susan McClary describes the opera in terms of the relationship between madness and sexual excess:

Salome's insatiable sexual hunger finally demands not only the mutilation of John the Baptist, but also an autoerotic scene in which she manages to attain climax with the aid of his dismembered head.<sup>97</sup>

McClary sees the chromaticism of Strauss's harmonic language as sign that 'Salome's sexual presence has contaminated the entire court'98. But while Salome's descent into obsession and insanity is shocking, the idea that Salome is the only obsessive in the opera, and that all the sexual tension in the court stems from her seems to me unwarranted. As we have seen, the opening of the opera portrays Salome as a beautiful and innocent virgin, distressed by Herod's incestuous longings. Writing on Hedwig Lachmann's translation of Wilde's original play, Norma Chapple suggests that this is one of the ways in which Lachmann's translation shifts the emphasis of the play.

Whereas Wilde sees Salome as a perverse figure whose lust and desire are allconsuming, Lachmann's interpretation of Salome is as a figure who is pure in her sensuality; a Naturkind. Her sensuality is an extension of her own connection with her body and surroundings, rather than an artifice affected to ensnare men [...]. Lachmann's Salome is not a wanton woman revelling in her own perversity, but rather a woman who for the first time knows desire and is consumed by it and compelled into action.99

In addition, the fact that Salome ultimately dies does not necessarily mean that the opera gives supremacy in a conventional way to the rational and verbal male, as Kramer suggests. 100 The patriarchal headship of Herod is

Hutcheons, 'Staging', p. 211-212
 McClary, Feminine Endings, pp. 99-100.
 McClary, Feminine Endings, p.100.
 Chapple, 'Re-(en)-visioning Salome', p.53
 Kramer, 'Culture' cites the dominance of sight of Jochanaan's (male) head during Salome's monologue, which means that at its appearance 'the masculine order at once recaptures its power over the gaze' (p.275), and characterises the head as an 'all-powerful signifier of law,

undermined by his petulant and irrational behaviour, as well as his obsession with Salome, and Jochanaan - strong, male, prophetic and impervious to Salome's dangerous charms, is nonetheless incomprehensible.

As has been seen, it is not Jochanaan's words that fascinate Salome, it is the sound of his voice. This is exactly the opposite of the conventional misogynist view, for example as expressed by Weininger, who suggests that women expect rationality and decision in a man, although incapable of it themselves.

A woman always expects definite convictions in a man, and appropriates them; [...] She always expects a man to talk, and a man's speech is to her the sign of his manliness. It is true that women have the gift of speech, but she has not the art of talking; she converses (flirts) or chatters, but does not talk."101

Salome, meanwhile, for all her irrationality, is quite capable of making herself understood when she needs to, and her obsession is marked by an increasing straightforwardness in her demands. There is a mad logic to her behaviour. Even the ultimate madness of having Jochanaan killed is something that Wilde believed that we all share:

Yet each man kills the thing he loves, By each let this be heard, Some do it with a bitter look Some do it with a word The coward does it with a kiss The brave man with a sword! 102

Like Herod's, Salome's desire is the desire to possess. Her demand for Iochanaan's head is not just a desire for Jochanaan to die, it is that she should possess a part of him, which will be a precious thing on a silver salver. Herod recognises this, trying to dissuade her by pointing out that 'der Kopf des Mannes der vom Rumpf getrennt ist ein übler Anblick '103 [the head of a man

which links to the idea of eating and drinking.

culture, authority and potency' (p.277). Later in the article, however, he suggests that this

culture, authority and potency' (p.277). Later in the article, however, he suggests that this idea is to some extent subverted because Strauss grants 'Salome more power over the means of expression than he is able to control.', (p.293).

101 Weininger, Sex and Character, p. 195.

102 Oscar Wilde, The Ballad of Reading Gaol (London: Duckworth 1997), p.21. Jane Marcus compares Salome to Hedda Gabler, and suggests that 'Both women, condemned to spiritual death as sex objects and thwarted in artistic expression by their culture, kill the thing they love.' Jane Marcus, 'Salome: The Jewish Princess was a New Woman' in Art and anger: reading like a Woman (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992), p. 12.

103 Salome 267.3-267.11. Note that the word "übler" has a connotation of an unpleasant smell, which links to the idea of eating and drinking.

cut from the body is an ugly sight], and offering a string of alternative gifts (objects, not actions). And, in her "monologue", addressed to Jochanaan's head, Salome makes this more explicit. She rejoices that his head belongs to her<sup>104</sup> and thinks of kissing his mouth as eating: 'Wohl, ich werde ihn jetzt küssen! Ich will mit meinem Zähnen hineinbeißen, wie man ein reife Frucht beißen.' <sup>105</sup> [Well, I will kiss it now. I will bite into it with my teeth, as one bites into a ripe fruit].

Later she describes her obsession with Jochanaan even more explicitly in terms of eating and drinking:

Ich durste nach deiner Schönheit. Ich hunger nach deiner Leib. Nicht Wein nicht Apfel können mein Verlangen stillen. 106

[I am thirsty for your beauty, I am hungry for your body. Neither wine nor apples can assuage my desire.]

And after she has kissed the head, she describes her disappointment as a taste:

Ah! Ich habe deinen Mund geküßt, Jochanaan [...] es war ein bitterer Geschmack auf deinen Lippen. Hat es nach Blut geschmeckt? Nein! Doch es schmeckte vielleicht nach Liebe. Sie sagen, dass die Liebe bitter schmecke" 107

[Ah! I have kissed your mouth, Jochanaan... there was a bitter taste on your lips. Was it the taste of blood? No! But perhaps it was the taste of love. They say that love has a bitter taste]

These words also remind the audience of her inexperience. When she says 'Sie sagen, dass die Liebe bitter schmecke' [they say that love has a bitter taste], 108 it implies that her knowledge of sexual matters is still largely hearsay. And her first experience, her seizing of her desire, her great triumph over Jochanaan is found to be hollow. She sings *matt* (dully), slowly, still accompanied by motif I in flutes and oboes, and the trill which has been associated with her curiosity and her obsession, but interspersed with a

<sup>104 &#</sup>x27;Dein Kopf gehört mir' [your head belongs to me] Salome 330.2-330.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Salome 315.1-318.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Salome 344.1-345.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Salome 355.7 - 357.9.

<sup>108</sup> Salome 357.8357.9.

strange dissonant chord (Ex. 14)<sup>109</sup> The mysterious off-stage organ, together with the sound of the tamtam and the lack of harmonic definition of the chord focalise the story once again through Salome, making a wonderful aural picture of Salome's bafflement and incomprehension.

Yet as the scene continues there is resolution, too, particularly in the way that motif IV is modified, the initial third stretched to a fourth and the end of it turned to make a cadence (for example at 358.3-358.5 in the upper wind in Ex. 15)<sup>110</sup>. Salome's last bars are sung to this new version of the motif, while at 360.2 – 360.4 the horns play a version of motif V, which has been associated throughout with Jochanaan. The meeting of these motifs, the major key and the triumphant trumpets gives her last words a sense of resolution only partly undermined by the dissonance in the middle of bar 360.6, and as the music dies away, one could believe that this was the opera's ending. Herod's scream for her death is all the more shocking.

#### Motif V<sup>111</sup>



Herod's order to kill Salome implies some of the same bafflement and disappointment. He thought that in dancing for him, in allowing him to gaze at her, Salome was allowing him to have power over her, and in some sense to possess her. He finds that the power is in her hands, and she has become something he can no longer bear to look at, something *ungeheuer* – monstrous. Salome's and Herod's attempts to possess the object of their desires and obsession cannot be fulfilled, because one person can never really possess another. In their rage and disappointment, they have each 'killed the thing they loved'. Motif I, which started as a high call of youthful curiosity, becomes a threatening anapaest in the timpani and lower brass as the opera closes (Ex. 16).<sup>112</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Salome 354.8 - 355.7.

<sup>110</sup> Salome 359.1-361.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Salome 66.1-66.5 (horns).

<sup>112</sup> Salome 362.5 - end

# Power, gender and autonomy

The death of Jochanaan and of Salome restores the conventional hierarchy of power with men and rulers at the top, women and prisoners at the bottom. But the shifting of power between the characters during the opera has fatally undermined the idea that this structure is inevitable. Salome also rejects the conventional alignment of dichotomies. Characters are active or passive, sexual or sexless, powerful or powerless, but this does not relate to their gender or their position in the hierarchy. 113 By making all the characters in some way Other, the basic divide between "us" and "them is both acknowledged and rejected as a basis for the story. And the rejection of these conventions, makes it possible for Salome express her autonomy. Although Salome's desires are mad ones, and her determination not to submit proves disastrous to her, she believes that she can change the world around her, that she has the power to choose and act.

Abbate suggests that Salome's elaborate language in describing Jochanaan, amounts to a 'distressing' claim to the status of artist and author. 114 Jane Marcus, similarly, reads Wilde's play as 'a parable of the woman artist's struggle to break free of being the stereotype of sex object', 115 and suggests that she is 'reluctant to perform [her] ritual obeisance to [her] masters, but in the end chooses this degrading act rather than find no means at all of artistic expression.'116 Salome is not content to be merely a muse of inspiration: 'the primal spring at which men's minds find renewal' or 'an effective tonic to multiply masculine energy',117 she claims the right to be creative herself.

<sup>113</sup> The alignment of dichotomies is however, to some extent expressed through Strauss's choices of vocal pitch. The association of power with maleness and hence with a low voice makes it seem natural for the contrast between Jochanaan's confidence and Herod's uncertainty to be matched by casting Jochanaan as a baritone and Herod as a high tenor. The Page, whose obsession with Narraboth is presumably a homosexual one, is cast as a female alto. Salome's high, light music expands in range and its orchestration gains in weight as she starts to express her power and her sexuality, although whether the moments when she sings low in the voice are moments of maleness, or simply moments of maturity and power, is not altogether clear.

<sup>114</sup> Abbate, 'Envoicing', p. 237 115 Marcus, 'Salomé', p.10. 116 Marcus, 'Salomé', p.12

<sup>117</sup> See Chapter Three footnotes 145, 146.

Salome's overt sexuality and her destructive obsession with Jochanaan make the opera at first sight a clear example of misogynistic fear of the dämonisches Weib, the demonic threatening, destructive woman, the Woman whom Weininger condemns as 'the sin which is possible in men', 118 and this is the way that the opera has often been understood. 119 But this interpretation is an oversimplification, since it is not just Salome who shows an obsessive and destructive sexuality. The opera is remarkable for the number of different transgressive relationships it displays, whether incestuous, homosexual or cross-class. The only married couple, Herod and Herodias, bicker constantly, and Herodias is repeatedly accused by Jochanaan of adultery and promiscuity.

In addition to this, because Salome grows and changes as the opera progresses, she cannot fit neatly into any category, although the opera certainly refers to the various stereotypes of female sexuality: the sweet young virgin, the femme fatale, the dämonisches Weib and the virago. And by making her in some sense fit all of them, the opera questions the validity of the categories, and allows for the possibility that Salome, like any other person, is unique.

The complex and paradoxical approach that the opera takes to the characters' autonomy is epitomised by the repeated references to the moon. According to the first stage direction, the court is bathed in moonlight for the duration of the opera. Like the (other) characters in the story, the moon is both gazed upon and gazing, and it is also the light that makes gazing possible. All the main characters notice and describe the moon, but each description is different. The Hutcheons describe the moon as 'a sort of psychic screen upon which the characters project their desires and anxieties', 120 in other words, the descriptions of the moon give a particularly clear idea of each character's preoccupations.

<sup>See Chapter Three footnote 123.
See Hutcheons, 'Staging', p. 210.
Hutcheons, 'Staging', p.212.</sup> 

Page: Sieh' die Mondscheibe, wie sie seltsam aussieht. Wie eine Frau, die aufsteigt aus dem Grab. 121 [See the moon, how strange she looks. Like a woman rising from the tomb.]

Narraboth: Sie ist sehr seltsam. Wie eine kleine Prinzessin, deren Fußen weiße Tauben sind. Man könnte meinen, sie tanzt. [22] [She is very strange. Like a little princess, whose feet are white doves. You would think she was dancing.]

Salome: Wie gut ist's, in den Mond zu seh'n! Er ist wie eine silberne Blume, kühl und keusch. Ja, wie die Schönheit einer Jungfrau, die rein geblieben ist. 123 [How good it is to see the moon.! It is like a silver flower, cool and chaste. Yes, like the beauty of a maiden, who has remained pure]

Herod: Wie der Mond heute nacht aussieht! Ist es nicht ein seltsam Bild? Er sieht wie ein wahnwitziges Weib, das überall nach Buhlen sucht. Wie ein betrunkenes Weib, das durch Wolken taumelt. 124 [How the moon appears tonight! Isn't its appearance strange? It looks like a madwoman, looking everywhere for lovers. Like a drunken woman reeling through the clouds.]

Herodias: Nein, der Mond ist wie der Mond, das ist alles. 125 [No, the moon is just the moon, that is all.]

This interest in focalising the story through the different characters is, as has been seen, a particular feature of the opera. While any opera has the opportunity to encourage the audience to see through the characters' eyes, what is remarkable about Salome is the subtle, complex and in some case baffling way the opera weaves together different points-of-view. It is also striking for the type of character whose eyes we are encouraged to see through: Herod and Salome with their self-absorbed and ultimately murderous obsessions, their twisted sexuality, their outsider status as Jewish and either effeminate or female, are hardly representatives of a normative, patriarchal viewpoint.

For McClary, the way that an opera can make the listener empathise with an unsympathetic character (such as a madwoman), is part of its potential to make the audience thoroughly uncomfortable:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Salome (0.9 - 1.7). Note that the use of the word Mondscheibe, [the moon's disc], not only implies a full moon, but makes it possible in German to describe the Moon (which has a masculine gender - der Mond) as sie - she. Wilde uses she for the moon in each of these places.
<sup>122</sup> Salome 2.1-2.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Salome 29.6 - 30-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Salome 156.9 – 158.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Salome 158.7 – 158-9.

But the apparent power of music to make us as listeners privy to the thoughts of characters becomes problematic when that character is a madwoman, for the risk arises that what we hear may so influence us - so move the passions - that we will be seduced into unreason ourselves. [...] Most listeners do not know how to account for the effects music has on them, and thus they often understand those effects as manifestations of their own subjectivities, as their own inner truths.126

She suggests that 'a composer constructing a madwoman is compelled to ensure that the listener experiences and yet does not identify with the discourse of madness' 127 I would argue, however, that the disturbing power of Salome lies precisely in the refusal to tame or "frame" the points of view that are expressed, so that the audience is encouraged to identify with the characters as well as to share their experiences.

The role of the orchestral voice as narrator, forming the context in which the characters speak and act, and so helping to form the audience's perception of them, is central to this aspect of the opera. The narrative voice makes it possible to focalise the action through one character or another, and as has been seen, this has the effect that the audience member 'watches through the character's eyes, and will, in principle, be inclined to accept the vision presented by that character.'128 Conversely, if the character's point of view is never shown, he or she is at a disadvantage in the eyes of the audience.

For example, as Salome looks into the cistern, trying (and failing) to see the source of Jochanaan's voice, the story is focalised through Salome: with rapid downward scales in the wind and lower strings depicting the sensation of looking into a deep hole, or a sight of its mysterious darkness (Ex. 17). 129 By contrast, because he is off-stage and to some extent incomprehensible, Jochanaan's point-of-view is both literally and figuratively, inaccessible to us at this point. Even once he is on stage, Salome's discussion of him with Narraboth objectifies him, and encourages the audience to look (with her and Narraboth) at him, rather than imagining the view through his eyes. 130 His

<sup>126</sup> McClary, Feminine Endings, pp 85-86.

<sup>127</sup> McClary, Feminine Endings, p.86. 128 Bal, Narratology, p.146. 129 Salome 45.3 – 45.6.

<sup>130</sup> Her comments 'Glaubt ihr, daß er noch einmal sprechen' [do you think he will speak again?], Seine Augen sind von allem das Schrecklichste' [his eyes are the worst of all] are good examples of this objectification Salome 78.1-78.2 and 76.6 - 76.8.

anger at her gaze is expressed by a desire not to look at her, not to know -'wer ist dies Weib, das mich ansieht. Ich weiß nicht, wer sie ist. Ich will nicht wissen wer sie ist.'131 [Who is this woman who is looking at me. I do not know who she is. I do not want to know who she is.] He rejects the view which is in front of him (and in front of the audience) in favour of his prophetic visions, which the audience cannot see, and so, despite the vivid language in which his visions are expressed, the audience are not helped to see through his eyes.

As Salome's assault on Jochanaan becomes increasingly insistent, however, it is likely that the audience will lose sympathy for her. Her obsession is uncomfortable to watch, and her rapid swinging from attraction to repulsion<sup>132</sup> makes her hymns to Jochanaan's beauty excessive and implausible. It is important to distinguish, however, between sympathy (in the sense of liking or concern for someone) and empathy (in the sense of actually feeling another's feelings.) The emotional response to music that I have described as 'empathy' (see Chapter Two) means that at least in principle, it is possible for the audience to feel a character's feelings even if they do not find that character sympathetic, or their point of view a likeable or familiar one. Although clearly an individual audience member may chose to ignore this opportunity, what is striking about Salome is the number of opportunities it gives the audience to feel this "forced empathy".

For example, Herod is not an attractive character, and seems to be at least a little mad; his Jewishness, too, would have made him Other to many members of the audience at this period. Yet, as has been seen, when the orchestra depicts the wind that only he can hear, it gives the audience the opportunity to hear what he hears and, like him, to wonder if it is "real". This forces them to experience a little of the confusion that he feels, even if they feel no sympathy or liking for him.

The same "forced empathy" can occur when Salome looks into the cistern for the second time, as she waits for Jochanaan's execution. At this point the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> *Salome* 81.1 – 82.6. <sup>132</sup> See footnote 42 above.

double basses play a series of high Bbs, which, together with the drum-roll, create feeling of expectation.<sup>133</sup> The score describes the sound that should be achieved as 'like the stifled moaning and groaning of a woman in labour'. 134 The audience (not privy to the score's directions) might also take the sound as a sexual one. 135 In either case, and especially with the presence of the drum roll, there is a strong sense of expectation, of waiting for some climax which is to occur. Salome is expecting to hear Jochanaan cry out, and so is puzzled by the silence, and unsure how to interpret the thud she hears. The audience is likely to feel the same way. And when Jochanaan's head appears, with maximum melodrama, held on a silver salver by an enormous black arm, 136 the shock for the audience mirrors that for Salome.

The way that the story is focalised through first one character and then another, gives the audience the opportunity to share that character's point of view, and as a result to see the world, however briefly, through that character's eyes, denying them a comfortable position of omniscience. By expressing the character's point of view, their autonomy is acknowledged, and yet, the knowledge of these characters' points of view may not be welcome, since the inside of their heads may not be a comfortably place to be. Salome's excitement and expectation are monstrous, and her desire for Jochanaan's death is shocking. If the audience feel empathy for her, does that make them monstrous, too? Gary Schmigdall writes in terms of 'that crucial moment for the Decadent aesthetic, the moment when the ecstatic experience of forbidden pleasures transforms into revulsion', 137 and this sums up the fascination and discomfort that the audience may feel. They have been encouraged to see the world through Salome's eyes, and yet Salome's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Both Abbate and Kramer are intrigued by the significance of these Bbs, (Abbate, 'Envoicing', 248-253 and Kramer, 'Culture', 286). It is certainly interesting, given the relationship between pitch and gender, to notice that this is a bass instrument playing in the soprano register, but I am wary of over-emphasising their importance.

<sup>134</sup> 'dem unterdrückten Stöhnen und Ächzen eines Weibes änhelt' *Salome* note at 304.7.

<sup>135</sup> 'I should like to point out that the high B flat of the double bass during the killing of the Baptist does not represent cries of pain uttered by the victim, but sighs of anguish from the heart of an impatiently expectant Salome.' Strauss, 'Reminiscences' p. 151. Although clearly not all listeners interpreted the sound as he would have wished, Strauss' description of his intention is not inconsistent with my interpretation. intention is not inconsistent with my interpretation.

<sup>136</sup> Ein reisengrosser, schwarzer Arm, der Arm des Henkers, streckt sich aus die Cisterne heraus, auf einem silbernem Schild den Kopf des Jochanaan Haltend [A giant black arm, the arm of the executioner comes out of the cistern, holding Jochanaan's head on a silver shield]. Salome 313.8 Stage direction.

137 Gary Schmigdall, 'Imp of Perversity' Opera News 12 (1977), 13.

obsession with a gory body-part is hardly something that they can be glad to share. The blaring, dissonant chord at 360.6 (see Ex. 15), which has been described as "the quintessential of Decadence: here is ecstasy falling in upon itself, crumbling into the abyss..." sums up the dissonance between Salome's ecstasy and the horror of the situation. Like Herod, the audience may feel that her monstrousness is unwatchable, and want only to leave.

Yet at other times, the audience's desire to distance itself from the characters is aided by orchestral writing which, if it shows the inside of a character's head, does so in a caricatured, almost jeering way, that precludes sympathy. For example Herodias is often accompanied by a shriek of upward woodwind scales (Ex. 18)139 which shows her angry mood, but also, perhaps, encourages the audience to find it irritating.

The representation of the five Jews, who are portrayed as absurd and argumentative figures of fun, is more clearly mocking still. When Herod invites Salome to eat with him the orchestra writing, with its exaggerated waltz rhythm and salon-style violin writing, caricatures his desire in a way that precludes sympathy (or indeed empathy) (Ex. 19).140

In addition to this, there are times when the orchestral voice is clearly at odds with the characters. For example, when Herod is enthusing over Salome's dance the dissonant accompaniment with its menacing low horns is at odds with his words and vocal line (Ex. 20). 141 This foreshadowing of the disaster which is about to strike, of which Herod himself is unaware, gives the orchestral voice the power of an omniscient narrator, able to see a future in the story that the characters have not yet experienced. Moments like this encourage the audience to find the characters unsympathetic, and to resist seeing the word from their point-of-view.

In Salome, then, the audience are not only encouraged to question their assumptions about power relationships and the nature of gender and

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Gary Schmigdall, *Literature as Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1977), p. 283
 <sup>139</sup> Salome 180.4 - 181.3
 <sup>140</sup> Salome 177.1 - 177.6.
 <sup>141</sup> Salome 247.9 - 248.2.

sexuality. They are also encouraged, almost forced, to shift their empathy from character to character, and their position from identifying with the characters to sitting back and judging them. The effect is to remind the audience of the existence of the point of view of the Other, whose autonomy is so often ignored, and so to make it much more difficult for audience members to adopt a single, familiar subject-position.

Salome is not a comfortable opera, and yet it was hugely successful in Vienna,<sup>142</sup> as it was all over Europe. Paul Stauber's description of the first Viennese performance, where the thunderous applause drowned out the whistles of the opposition,<sup>143</sup> gives one a sense of the interest and excitement that the opera inspired, despite all the controversy. The themes and issues that I have identified suggest that the audience may have had more than simply a lascivious interest in Salome's strip-show and gory death. Their enthusiasm can be seen rather as a response to the chance that the opera offered to explore some of the issues that were preoccupying the society in which it was performed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Salome was performed between three and thirteen times every season between 1918 (the first performance at the Vienna Opera) and 1934. See Franz Hadamowsky, Das Wiener Hoftheater (Staatstheater), eine verzeichnis der aufgeführten und eingereichten Stücke mit bestandsnachweisen und aufführingsdaten, vol 2 Die Weiner Hofoper (Staatsoper) 1811-1974 (Wien: Brüder Hollinek, 1975), p.389.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> See La Grange, *Mahler* vol. 3 p.657 citing Paul Stauber's review of the Breslau State Opera performance in 1907.

# Chapter Six: Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and the expression of the mind

#### Introduction

The libretto for *Erwartung* was written by Marie Pappenheim, a medical student who was also a poet. Schoenberg met her socially in the summer of 1909, and asked her to write an opera libretto for him. She replied that the most she could do would be a monodrama. She sent the first draft to him a few weeks later and he made some amendments (perhaps in consultation with her) before setting the text in a remarkably short space of time. However the difficulty of the music, for both performers and listeners, meant that the piece was not performed until 1924. It was premiered in Prague under the aegis of the International Society for Contemporary Music, with Zemlinsky conducting and Marie Gutheil-Schoder singing the part of the Woman.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of this thesis, *Erwartung* is particularly interesting because it focuses on the experience of a single woman. Many of the issues that have informed the other two case-studies, such as the power relationships between characters, or the different representation of male and female characters, are of course irrelevant here, because there are no other characters. But, as has been seen, the interest in representing the mind that formed part of the discourse at this time included an interest in the mental experience of the Other. And it is this opportunity to understand and experience the workings of a woman's mind that makes *Erwartung* so striking.

<sup>2</sup> Beaumont, Zemlinsky, pp. 322-323.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> According to Stuckenschmidt, the short score was completed in seventeen days. Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg* p.71. Elizabeth Keathley, 'Revisioning Musical Modernism: Arnold Schoenberg, Marie Pappenheim and *Erwartung*'s New Woman' (PhD dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1999), pp. 133-168 analyses in some detail the conflicting evidence on *Erwartung*'s genesis.

At the time that he was composing *Erwartung*, Schoenberg had a particular interest in expressing the mind's interior through music. In August 1909 he wrote to Busoni:

It is impossible for a person to have only one feeling at a time. One has thousands simultaneously[...] and this variegation, this illogicality which our senses demonstrate in the way that they interact, which is set forth by some mounting rush of blood, by some reaction of the senses or the nerves, this I should like to have in my music.<sup>3</sup>

Schoenberg was not alone in his desire to represent the workings of the mind in all its fertile confusion. Both the desire to represent, and the interest in the mind's interior were important to the discourse of his time.

At the beginning of the twentieth-century, it seemed that representation in art was evolving beyond all limits: Richard Strauss would soon be able to differentiate teaspoons from tablespoons by purely orchestral means, and literary men would enact the most delicate tracery of electricity through the nerves, displaying the passage of ideas within the brain itself, thought anterior to speech, the Stream of Consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

But the representation of the mind in music is fraught with difficulty. This is a result not only of the uneasy relationship between music and representation, but also of the mysteriousness of the mind. Can the mind think successfully about itself? Does one mind work like another? What is realism in this context? Questions like these mean that even as the artist embraces the challenge of representation, there are issues to be resolved about its feasibility.

In this chapter I explore the idea that both the libretto and the music of *Erwartung* were attempts to express the workings of a mind. Drawing on the large body of existing work on the piece, but questioning the premises on which much of it is based, I investigate the different ways that composer and librettist represent the workings of a mind. I question the prevalent idea that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 'dem Menschen ist es unmöglich nur ein Gefühl gleichzeitig zu haben. Man hat tausend auf einmal [...] Und diese Buntheit, diese Unlogik, die die Associationen aufweisen, die irgend eine aufsteigende Blutwelle, irgend eine Sinnes- oder Nerven-Reaktion aufzeigt, möchte ich in meiner Musik haben.' Arnold Schoenberg to Busoni n.d. (August 1909) 'Briefwechsel zwischen Arnold Schoenberg und Ferrucio Busoni 1903-1919 ' in Beitrage zur Musikwissenschaft 3 Jutta Theurich (ed.) (Berlin: 1977), p. 171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Daniel Albright, Representation and the Imagination: Beckett, Kakfa, Nabokov, Schoenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 11.

the Woman's mind is represented as in some way abnormal, and instead propose a way of approaching the piece in terms of the meticulous representation of mental processes, and thereby highlight both the opportunities and the problems that this enterprise encounters.

# Synopsis<sup>5</sup>

#### Scene I

Countryside in moonlight, at the edge of a wood. A woman enters, dressed in white and wearing red roses and jewellery. She debates whether she should enter the wood, which she finds frightening. The moonlight reminds her of moonlit nights when her lover came to her. She is angry with herself for her fear of the wood, since she must enter it to look for her lover. She decides to sing so that he will hear her.

#### Scene II

The Woman has entered the wood, and it is very dark. She is frightened as her clothes and skin are touched and caught by branches. She hurries on to a place where the path is wider and clearer. As she becomes calmer, she remembers the silence in the garden, where she waited and longed for her lover. But this time he did not come. She hears noises in the wood, and her fear returns. Hurrying on, she sees something lying on the ground, and thinks for a moment that it is a body, before identifying it as a tree trunk.

#### Scene III

The Woman is still in the wood, but there are patches of moonlight visible on the path. She veers between fear at the sight of unknown lights and shadows, and impatience with herself for not immediately recognising the moon and the shadow of the branches. The shadows remind her of her assignations with her lover, and she thinks briefly that she has heard him calling. The wood around her becomes increasingly threatening, as she seems to see something crawling along and staring at her with yellow eyes. She cries out for help to her lover.

#### Scene IV

The Woman appears at the edge of the wood. Her dress is torn, her hair tangled and her skin scratched and bleeding. She still cannot find her lover, and is chilled by the deathly stillness of the road and the fields around her, and the distant town. She sits

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Synopsis CFD

down, exhausted at the edge of the wood. She sees something in the shadows, and feeling it, finds blood on her hands. It is her lover's body. Horrified, she hopes at first that it another illusion, created by the uncertain light of the moon, and that it will have disappeared next time she looks. She decides to continue her search. But looking again, she recognises that it must be a body, and that it is certainly her lover. She shouts for help, but there is no answer. She begs her lover not to be dead, and remembers her love for him and the intensity of their meetings. She tries to warm his cold hands with her body, and remembers their love. She recalls how she waited for him the previous evening. She cannot believe that he is dead, when she has been so aware of his presence near her as she searched the wood for him. She kisses the dead man, and feels that she will die beside him.

Looking at his eyes, she starts to wonder what he is looking at. She recalls his absences of mind when they were together, and times when he failed to visit her. Reluctantly she starts to wonder if he has been unfaithful to her. The idea is horrible to her and she nearly faints. She imagines that he is looking at the other woman, and becomes increasingly angry as she imagines them embracing. She feels that her own place has been usurped, and recalls how much she loved him. She asks her lover whether he really loved the other woman, and thinks how much happier she was not knowing of his infidelity. As morning comes, she faces life without him, a life without light, boundaries or colours. She remembers how they always met at night, and were parted by the coming of the morning. A thousand people could pass her by, but she would not see him. Everything seems dark around her as she seems to feel his kiss on her lips. Then she calls out 'Are you there? I've been looking...'

# Analysis

This analysis of Erwartung starts by examining the way that the libretto is constructed, drawing parallels between monodrama and other literary forms. It becomes clear that its structure is related to that of the autonomous monologue (or Stream of Consciousness), which was an important literary innovation around this time. Understanding the libretto in this way, I question the very prevalent assumption that the Woman's actions are in some way abnormal, or that her mind is disturbed. I then go on to examine the way that the structure of the libretto relates to Schoenberg's music, and how this in turn illuminates his compositional technique. Finally I consider how the words and the music together express the workings of the Woman's mind

and the implications that this has as part of the wider discourse on gender at the time.

## The nature of monodrama

A "monodrama" is a melodrama (that is, a theatre piece with actions and music) with a single protagonist. Other writers have discussed the link between Erwartung and traditional melodrama forms and I shall not rehearse their arguments here. But it is clear that by definition a drama with only one character on stage will tend to focus on the protagonist's actions, thoughts and feelings, with other characters appearing only in the context of the protagonist's relationship with them. In the libretto, Marie Pappenheim divides the page in half, with stage directions on one side and the text to be sung on the other. The text is divided into short phrases, generally separated by ellipses, resulting in a sung text which is remarkable for its division into very brief thoughts, and a description of the action which is strikingly detailed, tracing every change of expression in the character, as well as her bodily actions. As a way to understand Erwartung's unusual format, it is helpful to compare it to other literary forms which focus on the internal workings of the mind: lyric poetry, dramatic monologue, stage monologues and soliloquys, and autonomous monologue (also known as Stream of Consciousness).

Apart from the libretto for *Erwartung*, Marie Pappenheim's published output at this time consisted of a series of poems.<sup>8</sup> Many of these are in the "confessional" tradition of lyric poetry, where a particular event is described in such a way as to express the thoughts and emotions it evokes in the speaker, who is generally assumed to be the poet his or her self. For example in *Trennung*, cold hands and the sunset over a grey landscape are part of the way that the poet expresses her emotions at the parting:

pp. 64-66. Keathley, 'New Woman', p. 150-159 gives a detailed description of the form of the libretto in its various versions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Keathley, 'New Woman', pp. 280-292. Alan Lessem, Music and Text in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg: The Critical Years 1908-1922 (Ann Arbor MA: UMI Research Press 1979), pp. 64-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Published in *Die Fackel* on 3 April 1906 under the pseudonym Marie Heim (see Keathley, 'New Woman' p.73).

Kalt sind die Hände, Keiner weiß mehr ein Wort Nun will deine Hast zum Ende... Über dem grauen Gelände Gleitet die Sonne fort.9

[Your hands are cold, no-one knows another word. Now your haste wants to reach the end... Over the grey landscape the sun slips away]

By contrast, in the poetic form known as dramatic monologue the speaker is a character invented by the poet, rather than (as in lyric poetry) being assumed to be the poet him or her self. 10 Because the entire poem is written in the voice of the fictional character, dramatic monologues generally plunge the reader straight into the action, generally without a narrative frame beyond the title, leaving them to work out the background to the story told from clues within it. Dramatic monologues are also generally written as if directed to a silent listener, so that the character's expression of his or her thoughts is modified by the presence of the listener, rather than being a direct representation of the character's mental workings.

On stage, the monologue or soliloquy gives fictional characters the chance to show the audience the inside of their minds. They speak their thoughts and feelings aloud, because it is a play, and even if they are alone, by convention the audience accepts that this is normal behaviour. As in the dramatic monologue, there is scope for the speaker to be "unreliable", that is for the audience to be sceptical about the "truth" (within the context of the story told) of the speaker's words, since there is always the possibility that the character is deceiving the listener, or deceiving themselves.

In novels, the autonomous monologue was part of the repertoire of avantgarde writers of this period. 11 Autonomous monologue is striking among novelistic techniques because of the absence of a narrative frame, and for the

section in Ulysses, written between 1914 and 1921).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Marie Pappenheim quoted in Keathley, 'New Woman', p. 76. Translations are CFD.

<sup>10</sup> Examples in English include 'My Last Duchess' by Robert Browning who is particularly noted for this form. 'My Last Duchess' in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, A.Birrell (ed.) (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1896) vol.1 p.384. This edition groups the dramatic monologues (or "dramatic romances") together, and it is interesting to see the variety of minimal "frames" that Browning employs to put the monologues into context.

<sup>11</sup> Including the originator of the form Edouard Dujardin (*Les Lauriers sont coupés* 1886), Arthur Schnitzler (*Leutnant Gustl* 1901) and, most famously, James Joyce (the 'Penelope' section in *Ulusses*, written between 1914 and 1921).

fact that the protagonist's thought processes are often presented without any explanation of how they have been recorded. Just as in the case of dramatic monologue, the reader is left to work out the context of the thoughts and feelings expressed. For example, Schnitzler's 'Lieutnant Gustl' opens:

How much longer is this thing going to last? Let's see what time it is...perhaps I shouldn't look at my watch in a serious concert like this. But no one will see me. In that case I certainly won't be embarrassed... Only quarter to ten? ... I feel as though I'd been here for hours. I'm just not used to going to concerts...What's that they're playing? I'll have a look at the programme...Yes, that's what it is: an oratorio. Thought it was a mass. That sort of thing belongs in a church. Besides, the advantage that church has is that you can leave whenever you want to. - I wish I were sitting in the aisle! 12

The libretto for *Erwartung* partakes of some aspects of all these forms. As in lyric poetry, external experience and the internal workings of the mind are linked, and the surroundings are described as a way to express thoughts and emotions. As in a stage soliloquy, the character's thought is expressed out loud. As in dramatic or autonomous monologue, there is no explanatory narrative frame.

A closer look at the autonomous monologue form makes a number of features of *Erwartung's* libretto clearer. Some of the difficulties of the form arise because of the things that the protagonist *cannot* think, if their thoughts are to be plausible. Gustl does not need to explain to himself why he is sitting in a concert getting bored, but the reader will want to know. And so the author must introduce enough detail about the character's situation to satisfy the curiosity of the reader, while keeping what is thought as plausible as possible. Similarly, the Woman in *Erwartung* does not need to explain to herself how she got to the edge of a wood at night, and so the audience cannot be told explicitly how it happened. Instead, they must piece together clues such as 'Ich will fort, ich muß ihn finden' [I will go on, I must find him] and 'Aber warum versprach er mir heute zu kommen' [But why did he promise to come to me today?] to work out that she is looking for her lover, who has failed to appear as promised.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, 'Lieutnant Gustl' trans. Richard L. Simon (revised Caroline Wellbery) in *Plays and Stories* Egon Schwarz (ed.) (New York: Continuum, 2001), p. 251.

This constraint also means that the autonomous monologue form, at its most successful, generally lacks simple declarative sentences, using questions, exclamations and other more emotional forms in their place:

Problems arise when [the protagonists] describe their own bodily movements. [...]: 'I sit down'; 'I lean back against the bench'; 'I am wiping my fingers on my napkin'[...] It is the statement-quality of first person pronouns combined with present-action verbs that mars the mimesis of self-address. The jarring effect disappears as soon as declarative statements are replaced by questions, nominal sentences, pre-active intentions or post-active comments; 'What! I'm out on the street already? How did that happen?' (Gustl's exit from the theater) [...] Most frequent and most effective is the conveying of actions by imperatives or admonishments: 'Well, in we go,' 'Up you get' [...] The pervasiveness of emotive syntax is graphically apparent in the riot of ellipses, dashes, question and exclamation marks on a typical monologic page.<sup>13</sup>

The problem of conveying what the character is doing, which gives rise to the less successful examples that Cohn mentions in this quotation, is of course resolved in the monodrama form by the use of stage directions. But the generally emotive nature of the syntax is very much a feature of *Erwartung's* libretto, and is in keeping with the idea that the Woman's words express what is passing through her mind, rather than some more formal expression of thought or intention.

The final, and perhaps most interesting, aspect of autonomous monologue that is relevant here, is the free movement of the character's mind between present and past time. Compare 'Lieutnant Gustl', once again:

Wonder whether I ought to spend a two weeks vacation there this summer? I'll be bored to death there...If the... What was her name?...Funny I can't ever remember a name! Oh yes: Etelka!...Couldn't understand a word of German... nor was it necessary... I didn't need to say a thing! ...Yes, it ought to be alright, fourteen days of country air and fourteen nights with Etelka or someone else...<sup>14</sup>

The character's past experiences form part of the fabric of his or her thoughts. There is no implication that Gustl is deluding himself, or is unable to distinguish between his present self (at the concert) and his past (the relationship with Etelka), but they are both within his experience, and his mind moves easily between them.

<sup>14</sup> Schnitzler, 'Lieutnant Gustl', p.253.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Cohn, Transparent Minds, pp. 236-237 quoting Schnitzler, 'Lieutnant Gustl', p.258.

In the same way, in *Erwartung*, the Woman's thought moves between her present existence in the forest, and her past relationship with her lover, and the experience of being, and not being, with him. Like Lieutnant Gustl, the Woman's excursions into her past are generally triggered by a connection with her present, so for example, the brightness of the moon and the singing of the crickets remind her of other moonlit evenings, and her earlier response to the cricket's song:

Aber hier ist's wenigstens hell... der Mond war früher so hell... Oh noch immer die Grille, mit ihren Liebeslied... Nicht sprechen... es ist so süß bei dir... der Mond ist in der Dämmerung...<sup>15</sup>

[But here it is at least bright...the moon was so bright before...Oh the cricket is still singing its love song...Don't speak.... it is so lovely to be near you...the moon is dim]

Because of the lack of authorial frame, the autonomous monologue is potentially an extremely confusing form. In particular, the use of present tense to convey the character's thoughts about past time, while powerful in the way that it gives a sense of memories that are so vivid they seem to be happening in the present, can cause confusion in the reader who is struggling to make sense of the underlying sequence of events. A closer look at the passage quoted above shows how carefully it is constructed, however, with the excursion into memory clearly sign-posted (emphasis added): 'der Mond war früher so hell. Oh noch immer die Grille' [the moon was so bright before... Oh the cricket is still singing]. Once the past time of the memory has been established, the text drops into the present tense: 'Nicht sprechen...es ist so süß bei dir' [don't speak... it is so lovely to be near you]. And, making it still clearer that these thoughts are about past time, the Woman refers once again to the moon, and remembers it as dim, in contrast to its present brightness. This sign-posting is particularly noticeable in the earlier stages of the libretto,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Erwartung bb.15-22 Quotations and musical quotations are from the full score: Arnold Schoenberg and Marie Pappenheim, Erwartung, (Vienna: Universal Edition 1923). Translations CFD, with reference to translation by Gery Bramall, liner note to recording of Erwartung by Simon Rattle/ Phyllis Bryn-Julson/CBSO, CD EMI Classics (5 55212 2).

so that the audience is given plenty of opportunities to understand the monologic conventions that the author is using.

That Marie Pappenheim's libretto appealed to Schoenberg, is shown by his immediate acceptance of the first draft, and the speed with which he composed the music, 16 although he did make some changes to the libretto (some of which seem to have been in collaboration with Marie Pappenheim), mainly to shorten it, and to move the action on faster. 17 It has been suggested that the libretto's appeal was partly a result of his own, fairly recent experience of infidelity, betrayal and tragedy: his wife Mathilde's relationship with his friend the painter Gerstl, and Gerstl's suicide after Mathilde returned to her husband. 18 Perhaps Schoenberg was also responding to the form of the libretto: the idea of representing consciousness as directly as possible seems to have been central to his thought at this time. As Daniel Albright puts it:

I think no artist ever lived with a fiercer desire to abolish all that is mediating, obstructive, stale, merely 'musical', all that stands in the way of emotion itself; expression in Schoenberg's early works is wrought to a new intensity, new incisiveness, is given a clearer voice, a more fully articulated body. 19

This desire to abolish 'mediating' logic and express emotion directly, is part of the constellation of ideas that make up Expressionism. In his essay on Schoenberg's early songs, 20 Alan Lessem comments on Schoenberg's description of Expressionism in music:

This, and this alone is the origin of what is called Expressionism: a piece of music does not create its formal appearance out of the logic of its own material,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> In a letter to Busoni, he emphasises his part in conceiving the story. "Das Textbuch hat der Autor (eine Dame) auf meine Anregung hin so gefunden und gefaßt, wie ich es meine" [The

author (eline Danie) aut meme Antegring hin so gerunden und gerast, wie ich es meme [The author of the libretto (a woman), in response to my suggestion, has conceived and formulated it just as I intended.] Schoenberg-Busoni *Briefwechsel*, p.179.

<sup>17</sup> Keathley, 'New Woman', pp. 136-199 analyses the originals upon which the final libretto is based in order to identify the nature of the collaboration, and examines the evidence for Schoenberg's and Pappenheim's contributions to the final work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> For example in Carl E. Schorske, Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), pp. 354-355.

<sup>19</sup> Albright , Representation, p.16. <sup>20</sup> Alan Lessem, 'Sound and Sense: the Search for a Unified Expression in the Early Songs of Arnold Schoenberg' in Claus Reschke and Howard Pollack (eds), German Literature and Music: An aesthetic fusion 1890-1989 Houston Germanic Studies 8 (Munich: Fink, 1992), pp. 85 - 94.

but guided by the feeling for internal and external processes, and in bringing these to expression, it supports itself on their logic and builds upon that.

suggesting that Schoenberg's phrase 'internal and external processes' means 'both the inner life of the pysche and events in the external world that affect it.'22

This aim is absolutely consistent with the nature of Erwartung's libretto, which, like a piece of lyric poetry weaves together the Woman's psyche and her experience of the world almost inextricably. For example, in Scene 2 her memory of waiting for her lover is expressed through her description of the evening's expectant silence:

Es war so still hinter den Mauern des Gartens... Keine Sensen mehr, keine Rufen und Geh'n... und die Stadt in hellem Nebel so sehnsüchtig schaute ich hinüber... Und der Himmel so unermeßlich tief über dem Weg, den du immer zu mir gehst... noch durchsichtiger und ferner... die Abendfarben... Aber du bist nicht gekommen.23

[It was so peaceful behind the garden wall, no more scythes, no noise or bustle...and the town in the luminous mist, that I looked towards so longingly... And the sky was immeasurably deep over the path that you always take when you come to me, more translucent and distant still...the colours of the evening...but you did not come.]

Schoenberg's interest in expressing the internal world, rather than using conventional musical structures, links his writing to Expressionism in its literary form. In his essay on Expressionist music drama Siegfried Mauser compares Erwartung to the expressionist works of Strindberg, whom he describes as a point of reference for the Second Viennese School.<sup>24</sup> Strindberg wrote a number of plays in which he abandoned traditional dramatic forms and plots and concentrated on psychological processes. For example, one of his Expressionist dramas A Dream Play (Ett Drömspell), is based on 'the

<sup>23</sup>Erwartung bb. 50-70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, 'Analysis of four Orchestral Songs Opus 22' trans. Claudio Spies in Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (eds), Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 27. Italics are Schoenberg's. <sup>22</sup> Lessem, 'Sound and Sense', p.86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> 'Strindbergs Werk war zudem einer der literarischen Orientierungspunkte der Wiener Schule' [Strindberg's work was one of the literary points of reference for the [Second] Viennese School] Siegfried Mauser, 'Vom expressionistischen Einakter zur großen Opera: Das Musiktheater der Wiener Schule' in Siegfried Mauser (ed), Musiktheater im 20 Jahrhundert: Handbuch der musikalischen Gattungen 14 (Laaber: Laaber 2002), p.124.

disconnected but apparently logical form of a dream'.<sup>25</sup> By abandoning the traditional plot, with its emphasis on cause and effect, Strindberg was able to focus on the experience of a single mind.

one consciousness rules [the story]: the dreamer's; for him there are no secrets, no inconsistencies, no scruples and no laws. He does not judge or acquit, he merely relates.<sup>26</sup>

This emphasis on the internal workings of the mind explains the description (referred to by Mauser) of Expressionist drama as *Ich-Drama*. Mauser sees the aim of this type of drama to be the capture of the whole of human nature by showing the fate of an individual.<sup>27</sup> He also points out that this form of drama characteristically avoids giving personal names to the characters<sup>28</sup> (just as *Erwartung* does: the central character is simply the Woman), which enables the events of the drama to transcend the individual, so that although strongly personal, they are also universal.

Schoenberg's interest in representing the emotions directly also fits very well with this contemporary interest in representing thought without authorial mediation or imposed logic. As is well known, he saw texts as an ideal starting point for composers turning their backs on traditional musical forms.<sup>29</sup> Marie Pappenheim's libretto gave Schoenberg the opportunity to write music that expressed his ideas of the internal workings of the mind, and provided the structure that he needed, given his abandonment of traditional forms.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> August Strindberg, 'Explanatory Note' to 'A Dream Play' in A *Dream Play and Four Chamber Plays* trans. Walter Johnson (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), p. 19. <sup>26</sup> Strindberg, 'Dream Play', p. 19. <sup>27</sup> 'da ihr zentrales Thema in der Erfassung des Menschen aufgrund der "Wesenschau"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> 'da ihr zentrales Thema in der Erfassung des Menschen aufgrund der "Wesenschau" gesehen wird.' [the central theme is seen to be the capture of the whole of human nature] Mauser, 'Einakter', p.123.

<sup>28</sup> Mauser, 'Einakter', p. 124.

<sup>29</sup> 'Schreiben Sie doch ein paar Lieder wenigstens. Es ist gut, sich von Gedichten wieder in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> 'Schreiben Sie doch ein paar Lieder wenigstens. Es ist gut, sich von Gedichten wieder in die Musik einführen zu lassen! Aber dann einmal: für Orchester.'[Write a few Lieder at least. It is good to be guided back into the music by poems! But now: for Orchestra]. Schoenberg to Berg Letter of 13th February 1912 in Rosemary Hilmar (ed.), 'Alban Berg: Leben und Wirken in Wien bis zu seinen ersten Erfolgen als Komponist' Wiener Musikwissenschaft Beiträge 10 (Vienna: Böhlaus, 1978), p.93.

## Reception: the Woman's mental state

Before turning to a detailed consideration of the piece, I would like briefly to consider *Erwartung's* reception history, and in particular the links that have been made with Freud's work and theories, and the idea that the Woman's behaviour is in some way pathological. The reasoning behind the links that have been made start from three underlying ideas. The first is that Marie Pappenheim's approach to the workings of the human mind is informed by Freudian psychoanalysis. Adorno's comment that the Woman is 'consigned to the music in the very same way as a patient is to analysis'30 has perhaps encouraged this approach, together with a belief that Pappenheim could not have avoided acquaintance with Freud's ideas (an idea which is not at first sight unreasonable, given the interconnectedness of Viennese society).<sup>31</sup> Secondly, the dream-like structure of the libretto, and its lack of overt links between thoughts have encouraged commentators to see it as a Freudian case study: the recitation of a dream, or a series of free associations on the part of a patient undergoing psychoanalysis. Some have made links with particular cases, such as the case of 'Anna O', whose real name, Bertha Pappenheim, encourages the idea of a link with Erwartung's librettist.32 Finally, (whether or not a link is made explicitly with the women in Freud's case studies) the intense emotion and frequent excursions into memory, that are so striking in both libretto and score, have encouraged critics to write in terms of 'delusion' and 'hysteria'.33 The Woman is described as deeply troubled and out of touch with reality, even as perhaps the murderer of her lover.34

30 T.W. Adorno Philosophy of Modern Music trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Bloomster

<sup>(</sup>New York: Seabury Press, 1973), p.42.

To rexample Bryan Simms states that Pappenheim 'was aware of the emerging study of psychoanalysis'. Bryan R. Simms 'Whose Idea was Erwartung' in Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (eds) Constructive dissonance: Arnold Schoenberg and the transformations of twentieth-century culture (Berkeley: University of California Press 1997), p. 102.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Falck 'Marie Pappenheim, Schoenberg and the Studie über Hysterie' in Reschke and Pollack German Literature and Music suggests that Bertha and Marie Pappenheim 'were related, but the relationship was almost certainly distant one', p.132. The article outlines the parallels that he sees between Anna O's case history and the Woman. Alexander Carpenter suggests links with Freud's 1905 Case History of 'Dora' in 'Schoenberg's Erwartung and Freudian Case Histories: A Preliminary Investigation 'Discourses in Music 3 2 (Winter 2001-2002) http://discourses.ca/v3n2.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> For example in David Fanning 'Schoenberg's monodrama "Erwartung": Text, Structure and Musical Language' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1984) p. 60.
<sup>34</sup> Schorske Vienna, p.353-354, McClary Feminine Endings, p.104.

In her dissertation 'Revisioning Musical Modernism: Arnold Schoenberg, Marie Pappenheim and Erwartung's New Woman', Elizabeth Keathley examines the thinking behind these ideas in some detail, and aims to refute them point by point. In response to the supposed link between Freud's and Marie Pappenheim's thinking, she points out that:

Freud was not in 1909 the towering figure that he appears to be from our vantage point; psychoanalysis was not yet the cultural psychology of Western society, and terms such as "repression", "Oedipus complex" and "penis envy" were not yet part of the vernacular. One cannot assume [...] that acquaintance with psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic concepts implied adherence to them, or even that psychoanalytic thought was monolithic. The Vienna Psychoanalytic Society was plague by in-fighting long before (and long after) Alfred Adler's famous split with Freud in 1911.<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, she compares the libretto of Erwartung with the detail of the descriptions of the case of Anna O in Freud and Breuer's case study, and shows that Anna O's more striking symptoms are not seen in the Woman,36 with the possible exception of Anna O's hallucinations. However, as we have seen, many of those moments when the Woman describes scenes other than the one she is in, are clearly sign-posted as her memories. As for those which are not, Keathley suggests that

even the Woman's most unusual perceptions in the forest are misinterpretations rather than "hallucinations" - she does not imagine them from whole cloth, but rather misinterprets accurate perceptions of real events. Bulging yellow eyes, for example, are not really eyes but mushrooms (according to the mise-en-scène description), nonetheless, they are really something large and yellow. The woman's general apprehension about traversing the forest late at night [...] serves to exaggerate, but not to create, frightening images.<sup>37</sup>

Later in this chapter, I shall look again at the significance of these "misinterpretations" but it seems clear that where the Woman's words are at odds with her surroundings, she need not necessarily be seen as hallucinating or deluded.<sup>38</sup>As for the link between Bertha Pappenheim (the real Anna O)

Keathley, 'New Woman', p.214.
 For example Anna O's loss of speech, her hallucinations, partial paralysis, various disorders of vision and hearing, neuralgia, tremors and coughing. See Keathley, 'New Woman', pp.232 - 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Keathley, 'New Woman', p. 235. <sup>38</sup> The fragmentary nature of the Woman's speech has also been seen as evidence of her mental instability. Keathley touches briefly, but does not elaborate on, the idea that this is an attempt to show the inner workings of the mind: 'The Woman thinks out loud, as she must in a stage presentation, and where her speech is fragmented, it represents inchoate thoughts

and Erwartung's librettist, Keathley suggests that there is no reason to see this as more than a coincidence of surnames.39

But perhaps the most telling part of Keathley's argument comes in her discussion of the gradually changing reception of the piece. She analyses a large number of reviews of the performances of Erwartung that took place before the Second World War, and shows that, while some reviewers thought that Schoenberg was mad, none of them saw the Woman's behaviour as pathological, although she was for some a "visionary". 40 She suggests that

psychoanalytic references in readings of Erwartung began to proliferate after World War II. For at that time, neo-Freudian psychology experiences an immense surge of popularity. 41

I would also suggest that the post-war attitude to Freud has informed interpretation of Schoenberg's desire to show the workings of the mind. For example, Alexander Goehr's description of the expressionistic project makes the assumption that Freudian psychoanalysis is the way into understanding the human mind.

This way of writing resulted from a need to express new things. These long leaps, exaggerated rhythms and complex figurations are not a substitute matter of creating more conventional objects. These are, as Kandinsky named them, Gehirnakte (actions of the brain). They are explicitly related to the protocols of Freudian psychoanalytical experiment. Th. W. Adorno says they are not the artistic expression of emotions (sorrow, joy, anguish) in the Romantic manner, but the actual notations of symptoms of unconscious forces, shocks and traumata.42

In developing an understanding of the libretto and score of *Erwartung*, then, it seems to me that while a psychoanalytic reading of the piece is possible, there is nothing in the opera's genesis that makes it essential. In what follows, I adopt an alternative course by assuming that there is a comprehensible structure to the monologue, that Schoenberg's setting of the words is a response to both the form and the content of the monologue, and finally that

and fleeting mental impressions - quite normal mental processes which were increasingly recorded by modern writers concerned with realistic portraits of subjective existence. Rather that viewing the Woman's speech as defective or hysterical, perhaps we should be celebrating Pappenheim's literary modernism.' Keathley, 'New Woman', p. 233.

Weathley, 'New Woman', p.231 says that Marie Pappenheim's relations knew of no connection. This does not of course, mean that there was no connection, but it in the absence

of any other evidence the connection must be seen as tenuous at best.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Keathley, 'New Woman', p.253. <sup>41</sup> Keathley, 'New Woman', p. 254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Albright, Representation, p. 16 quoting Goehr.

the piece involves an exploration of the workings of the human mind, through the character of the Woman, whose experiences and emotions may be extreme, but can nonetheless be understood without seeing her behaviour as pathological. The intensity of the score can then be seen as an expression, not of the Woman's distance from "normal" behaviour, but as the expression of the swirl of thought and emotion in the human mind, which Schoenberg told Busoni he would like to have in his music.43

## Text, Music and their Relationship

Although Schoenberg's interest in using text as a source of musical structure at this period is well known, much of the existing analytical work on Erwartung, has focused primarily on looking for possible systems in the pitchstructures.44 As Malcolm MacDonald says, these attempts have generally been unsuccesful:

Attempts have been made to rationalise [Erwartung's] structure: by tracing the growth of motivic germs or recurring chords; by theorizing about the use of 'sets' of notes with dual melodic and harmonic properties; by graphing the course of the vocal line, and so on. All have failed. No 'explanation' explains more than a haphazard selection of details; none shows why or how the music proceeds from one point to the next, or why its emotional unity is so powerful. It is instructive, though to follow each suggested critical approach to the point where it collapses, if only the better to appreciate Schoenberg's truly torrential spontaneity.45

A more productive approach is suggested by David Fanning, who proposes an analysis which focuses on what he calls the text-texture relationship. He divides the text into 'Description', 'Expression' and 'Reminiscence', analysing these modes of expression further in terms of their emotional intensity, so that expression, for example, runs from exhaustion through lament and fear to anger. 46 He then defines a number of musical textures, including lyrical Haupstimme in a single instrument, held chords, chord progressions, polyphonic lines, ostinato, and so on. 47 The focus of his analysis is to show how these different moods are linked to the musical textures that he has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> See footnote 3 above.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Fanning, 'Erwartung', p.66. Fanning gives a useful summary of earlier analytical work, and the attempts that have been made to identify motivic cells on which the piece might be based. He concludes that apart from establishing a tendency to centre on D minor, these pitch-related analyses do not achieve much insight into the piece's large-scale structure.

Malcolm MacDonald, Schoenberg (London: Dent 1976), pp. 76-77.

<sup>46</sup> Fanning, 'Erwartung', p. 53. 47 Fanning, 'Erwartung', p. 55-64.

identified. Fanning's analysis is particularly persuasive where the prevailing mood in text and music is very clear. For example, he points out the frequent association of a lyrical *Hauptstimme* with a mood of nostalgia or longing in the text. Similarly, held chords are associated with a calm mood and a clear broad path. He also writes interestingly on the places where the mood of the text and the texture are ambiguous or transitional. However, he takes for granted that the Woman is 'deluded' and 'hysterical', and thereby misses a good deal of the logic in the structure of the text.

The kind of links between verbal and musical expression that Fanning explores are central to the annotations of the vocal score by Alban Berg, which have been deciphered by Siegfried Mauser. Although the precise dates of Berg's work on the score are not recorded, it seems likely that this annotation dates from January 1923 (shortly after the vocal score was published), when Berg wrote to Schoenberg that he was 'completely immersed in *Erwartung*'. In his annotations, Berg identified 'impressionistische Klänge' [impressionist sounds], which he marked in red, and 'expressionistische Themen' [expressionist themes], which he marked in blue. Though for lack of space I am unable to describe all the ideas that spring from Berg's markings, in the analysis that follows I shall be drawing on Berg's work, which is fascinating both in its perceptiveness about the details of the score, and, of course, as evidence of the contemporary reception of *Erwartung* by one of Schoenberg's own circle.

Seeing the text as Schoenberg's principal source for the structure of the work makes it apparent that the structure and content of the libretto can inform the music at all scales. On the large scale, the emotional journey that the Woman takes can be reflected in changes of mood and timbre in the music. On the smaller scale, sections of the libretto such as individual memories or experiences can be linked together or broken up by continuity or change in the flow of the music. And finally, at the smallest scale, that of words, there is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Siegfried Mauser, *Das Expressionistiche Musiktheater der Wiener Schule* Schriftenreihe der Hochschule für Musik 3 (Regensburg: Bosse, 1982). pp. 145-165 show the score of *Erwartung*, with Mauser's transcriptions of Berg's annotations. See Figs 1-5 in Appendix 3 of this thesis. <sup>49</sup> Alban Berg, Letter to Schoenberg 27<sup>th</sup> January 1923 in *The Berg-Schoenberg correspondence: Selected Letters* Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, Donald Harris (eds) (London: Macmillan, 1987).

considerable scope for mimetic representation of particular ideas or events, in the tradition of "word-painting".

On the largest scale, Schoenberg follows the libretto's division into four scenes, which correspond to the Woman's entrances and exits, and also to the four settings in which the opera takes place: at the edge of the forest, in the depths of the forest, in a clearing, coming out of the forest. Schoenberg finishes each scene with a musical interlude, these vary in length, but all serve to connect the singer's exit to her re-entrance, and to create a change in mood from one scene to the other. The scenes are joined seamlessly by the music: there is no pause or silence to indicate where one scene ends and the next begins. As will become clear, this linking of the sections of the drama together is an important feature of *Erwartung*'s construction.

During the course of the half-hour that the piece takes to perform, the Woman is portrayed as passing through a number of emotional states ranging from intense fear, grief and anger at one end of the spectrum, to calm observation and reminiscence at the other. As the libretto moves from calm to agitation and back again, so too does the music. Writing in an atonal style, Schoenberg lacks some of the ways of creating harmonic tension and release which could be used to express emotional tension and release in a tonal style of composition. Instead, he uses a range of musical gestures, and effects of dynamic, tempo and timbre, which are congruent to the emotional structure of the libretto.

For example, at the end of Scene 3, the Woman sees something which crawls and creaks, and which seems to her to be something alive. She is terrified, and as her terror grows, the dynamic of both voice and orchestra increases (Ex. 1).<sup>50</sup> Fast repeating patterns in solo strings are gradually joined by brass and wind until the whole orchestra is playing *ff*. The texture thins for the more self-reflective text "Ich habe solche Angst" [I am so frightened] but builds again into the interlude that closes the scene, finally dissolving into Scene 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Erwartung bb. 105-124.

Various kinds of accumulation and dissolution are apparent in the first half of this extract (bb. 105-111). Most simply, as different instruments join the texture, their gradual increase in volume builds to a climax. In addition, the change in timbre from the cold harsh sound of solo strings playing near the bridge (am Steg) and muted brass to full strings playing normally and almost full brass and wind, gradually increases the richness of the sound (that is, the range of pitches and the complexity of the harmonics). Thirdly, the wind and brass start by playing intermittently and gradually play almost continuously. And finally the repetition of the rapid string figure (the solo 1st violin and the solo cello play it a total of seven times), and the way it is taken up by several wind instruments gradual increase its nervous intensity.

This last device is particularly important in the next section (bb. 112-124). The repeated semi-quavers in the strings form an ostinato which grows in intensity primarily through its repetition, although the crescendo, accelerando and thickening of texture also contribute to the effect. In addition, the prominent unison Haupstimme in piccolo, trumpet and Dclarinet, creates the high point of the accumulation between bars 116 and 119. As the scene ends the tension relaxes in a dissolution of the texture, as the piccolo, trumpet and D-clarinet drop out and the other instruments diminuendo and ritardando. The strings move back to playing by the bridge, and the calm mood that opens Sc 4 is introduced by quiet A-clarinet and solo, muted cello.

At the climactic moment in which the Woman recognises the body of her lover (Ex. 2),51 these devices of accumulation occur simultaneously. The gradual introduction of instruments, change in string texture, crescendo and accelerando join with the repetition of ostinato figures to build up to the fff climax at 154. But the horror of the moment is expressed most fully as Schoenberg adds three more bars with the brass playing "bells up" and the chaotic sound of the instruments playing at different tempi,<sup>52</sup> to create the even stronger climax at 157. This time there is no dissolution of the texture,

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Erwartung bb. 150-157.
 <sup>52</sup> Instruction in the score: NB: Jede Gruppe spielt die Figur so rasch wie möglich; eventuell schneller als der Takt. [Each group plays the figure as fast as possible, perhaps even faster than the tempo].

and therefore no release from tension, and so the general pause and quiet section that follow are not a release, but suggest a mood of forced calm.

The clearest example of dissolution, of course, is found at the end of the piece (Ex.3),<sup>53</sup> where 'in two last ghostly bars of contrary chromatic scales, the music dissolves, shivering, into nothingness'.54 Yet these bars also include some of the devices of accumulation: there is an increase in the range of pitches and timbres, which gives the ending a sense of climax as well as one of dissolution.

More subtle changes of mood and emotion in the libretto are also expressed by Schoenberg's setting. This can be seen in Scene 2 (Ex. 4),55 in which a number of the techniques that Schoenberg uses throughout the score can be identified. The scene can be divided into four sections, according to the mood expressed:

- I Ist das noch der Weg?... Hier ist es eben.
- Was? Las los!... Eingeklemmt?... Nein es ist was gekrochen. Und hier auch... Wer rührt mich an? Fort! Nur weiter, um Gottes willen...
- So der Weg ist breit...Es war so still hinter den Mauern des Gartens...Keine Šensen mehr, keine Rufen und Geh'n...und die Stadt in hellem Nebel so sehnsüchtig schaute ich hinüber...Und der Himmel so unermeßlich tief über dem Weg, den du immer zu mir gehst... noch durchsichtiger und ferner...die Abendfarben...Aber du bist nicht gekommen.
- Wer weint da? Ist hier jemand? Ist hier jemand? Nichts... aber das war doch... Jetzt rausch es oben...es schlagt von Ast zu Ast...Es kommt auf mich zu...Nicht her! laß mich... Herrgott hilf mir... Es war nichts...nur schnell, nur schnell...Oh, oh was ist das? Ein Körper...nein, Nur ein Stamm.
- [(I)Is this still the path? It is level here...(II) What's that?... Let go! Caught? No, something crawled...And here too...Who is touching me? Away! Keep going, for God's sake...(III) There, the path is broad... It was so peaceful behind the garden wall, no more scythes, no noise or bustle...and the town in the luminous mist, I looked out so longingly... And the sky was immeasurably deep over the path that you always take when you come to me, more translucent and distant still...the colours of the evening...but you did not come...(IV) Who is that crying? Is there somebody there? Is there somebody there? Nothing... but surely that was ... now it's rustling above me...moving from branch to branch...its coming closer to me... Don't come here...leave me

<sup>53</sup> Erwartung bb. 425-426.
54 MacDonald, Schoenberg, p.186.

<sup>55</sup> Erwartung bb. 38-89.

alone...Lord help me... It was nothing...quickly, quickly... Oh, what is that? A body... No, just a tree trunk.)

The two calm sections (I and III) are set with held chords and lyrical Hauptstimmen. The viola Haupstimme in section I, the text for which is more matter-of-fact, is marked ohne espress [without expression] trocken [dry], whereas the Haupstimme in section III, which heralds the Woman's reminiscence is marked sehr innig und ausdrucksvoll [very deeply felt and full of expression], later Hauptstimmen are marked molto espress, weich [soft] warm [warm], sanft [sweetly] and so on.

By contrast sections II and IV have short interjections by different instruments, with *col legno* and *sul ponticello* writing in the strings and flutter-tonguing in the wind. The writing in the voice and the wind is angular. A small-scale accumulation builds the tension in section IV between 75 and 80, which calms suddenly in the orchestra at 81, although the semi-demi-quavers and very short phrases in the voice at 81-82 continue the nervous mood, which is picked up by the orchestra in the following bars.

This alternation of calm and agitated mood is a characteristic of the libretto, which Schoenberg in general follows closely. What is striking, however, is the way that he has responded to the form of the libretto, with its short phrases followed by ellipses. Rather than setting each phrase of text as an unconnected thought, he binds them together, making clear the underlying connections between them. An example is in Section III (bb. 47-70) where the instrumental writing binds together a series of thoughts about the particular evening when the Woman waited for her lover and he did not come. Each rest in the vocal part, which gives time for the singer to breathe, and corresponds to the break between phrases of text, coincides with instrumental material, so that there is never a silence or a break in the music: oboe and flute at b.53 - 54, bass clarinet, violins and double bass at b.54, flute, horn and celli at b.61, trombones and horns at b.64 and so on.

Schoenberg's use of this technique is particularly interesting where there is a clear change in texture, corresponding to a change in mood. So, for example at b. 45, the soft expressive writing appropriate to section 3 starts half-way

through the bar in the Bb clarinet, overlapping with the end of the singer's agitated line. Similarly, at the end of the scene, the last words 'nur ein Stamm' overlap with the calmer music that bridges the two scenes. This device for linking sections that are noticeably different in texture and mood is a feature of the whole score. The effect of this is to make musically explicit the basic principle of the stream of consciousness: that one idea follows from another, and that different thoughts are connected, however random they appear to be at first sight. It also undermines the idea that this is a representation of madness, since the setting of the words serves to emphasise the connections between the woman's thoughts rather than focusing on the breaks between them.

Given that in general the music makes links between the Woman's different thoughts, it now becomes interesting to examine the places where a noticeable break is made between two thoughts. So, for example, the sudden change in texture at the opening of Section II (b. 40) happens at the moment that the Woman seems to feel something catching at her foot (the stage directions describe her bending down and gripping with her hands) before she cries out 'Was? laß los!' [What's that? Let go!]. Here the change in the Woman's mood is triggered by an external event, which (as it were) interrupts the flow of her thought, and the abrupt change in mood with ff horn entry makes this explicit. Similarly at b. 71 her thoughts about her lover are interrupted by a sound, and she breaks off to say 'Wer weint da? Ist hier jemand?' [Who is that crying? Is there somebody there?]. A soft glissando in the double bass is followed by a semiquaver silence, and then a chord in strings, trumpets and horns. The double bass glissando overlaps with her previous thought ('Aber du bist nicht gekommen' [But you did not come]) and so the effect is of a sound that calls her away from her sequence of memories and back to the present situation.

Similarly, because the score generally avoids silences between musical sections, where silences do occur they are particularly significant. When the Woman calls out 'Wer weint da? Ist hier jemand? Ist hier jemand?' (between bb. 71 and 74), the vocal line has a rest after each question, which corresponds

<sup>56</sup> See also, for example b.93 (bass clarinet) b.104 (clarinet, strings) b. 124 (trumpet, cello).

to a pause while she waits to see if anyone answers. The first two rests in the vocal part coincide with instrumental material (strings in b. 72, horn and trombone in b. 73), but the last rest is a general pause, so that the audience hears the same lack of sound that the Woman is hearing: 'Nichts' [Nothing].

More subtly, there are silences which correspond to a decision or realisation on the Woman's part. For example, towards the end of the piece, when the Woman is reacting to the idea that her dead lover has been unfaithful to her (Ex. 5),<sup>57</sup> she addresses him:

Hast sie umarmt...Ja? so zartlich und gierig...und ich wartete...Wo ist sie hingelaufen als du im Blut lagst? Ich will sie an den weißen Armen herschliefen...So...Für mich ist kein Platz da...Oh nicht einmal die Gnade, mit dir sterben zu dürfen.

[You embraced her...didn't you? so tenderly and greedily...and I waited ...where did she run to while you lay there in your own blood? I will drag her by her white arms...like this...There is no place for me...oh, not even the right to die with you...]<sup>58</sup>

The general pause at 348 is perhaps surprising, at first sight, since the angry, unhappy mood of the text remains the same. But the effect is not only to make 'Für mich ist kein platz da' [There is no place for me] very emphatic (an effect increased by the down-bows in the strings and the ff chords in the wind) but also to make the statement seem like the culmination of her thoughts. It is as if she realises that this is the worst thing of all - that there is no place for her with her lover because it has been taken by somebody else. The orchestra's silence corresponds to the moment of mental silence before an important idea comes to fruition.

Despite the complexity of the score, Schoenberg's use of the orchestral voice is very much integrated with the character's experience. This is consistent with the idea put forward by Alan Lessem in his essay on Schoenberg's early songs, where he suggests that Schoenberg sought to bind the voice and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Erwartung bb. 346 - 352.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> It is interesting to compare this to Christine's speech in Schnitzler's 'Flirtations', p.50 'he died for someone else! – and I – I worshipped him! Didn't he know that – that I would have died for him, that he was my God and my salvation – didn't he notice that at all? And he could leave me, with a smile, leave this room and let himself be shot down for somebody else...' (see Chapter Three footnote 189).

accompaniment together so that they jointly served to express the ideas within the text:

In Schoenberg's reconstrual of the traditional lied for the purpose of heightened expression, voice and piano not only become, as it were, 'personae' with complementary roles, but also take on overlapping and interacting functions by which expression and form become one.<sup>59</sup>

This is also linked with the idea of using a text as a way into music, that Schoenberg expressed to Berg.<sup>60</sup> Reinhold Brinkmann comments on this:

Schoenberg's advice meant more than finding a creative impetus through the intellectual content, the Gehalt of poetry. And it also meant more than using a text merely as a means of extending musical form. Poetry functions as a guide into the music. Underlying such thoughts is the concept of the fundamental affinity between musical and poetic composition - both in the general aspects of Gehalt, form and structure, and in the details of compositional strategies. <sup>61</sup>

In this context Berg's annotations are particularly interesting where they point out the different ways that Schoenberg uses the orchestra to express the Woman's mental experience. Berg understands the orchestra to be reflecting descriptive details in both the stage directions (marking 'hell' [light] and 'dunkel' [dark] in bb.1-2) and in the Woman's text, such as the solo viola line in b. 5, which he links to the words 'silbern' [silver] and 'schimmern' [shimmering] (See Fig. 1).<sup>62</sup> He also points out moments where he sees a correspondence between the Woman's emotional state and a gesture in the orchestra. For example in Sc. 2 he links the muted trumpets in b.70 to the stage direction 'traurig' [sad] and the strings tremolando am Steg [sul ponticello] to the word 'angstlich' [anxious] (Fig. 2). The Woman's own descriptions of her emotions are similarly linked to the orchestral writing, for example he links her word 'sehnsuchtig' [yearning] to the oboe Hauptstimme at bb. 57-58 (Fig. 3).

Berg annotates a number of places in the score where the orchestra makes sounds which correspond to what the Woman is hearing: for example in bb

<sup>62</sup> Figures appear in Appendix Three.

<sup>59</sup> Lessem, 'Sound and Sense', p.93.

<sup>60</sup> see footnote 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Reinhold Brinkmann, 'The Lyric as Paradigm: Poetry and the foundation of Arnold Schoenberg's music' in Reschke and Pollack German Literature and Music, p. 95.

75-76 he links the words 'rauscht' [rustles] and 'von Ast zu Ast' [from branch to branch] to the *tremolando am steg* runs in the lower strings, and flutter-tonguing in the flute and bassoon, even pointing out the breaks between the groups of notes (he marks them V), presumably because of the relationship with the rustling passing from branch to branch (Fig. 4). At b. 71 he links the 'klagend' [weeping] oboe to the Woman's question 'Wer weint da?' [who is that crying?] (Fig 2).

In both these cases (and there are many more), the orchestral sound happens before the singer's response, and so the impression is of cause and effect. That is, the orchestra takes the part of the external world, to which the Woman is responding, rather than that of an extension of her verbal description by musical means. The result is that the audience has the opportunity to hear what the Woman hears: to hear through her ears. Berg's annotations suggest that at least one member of the audience for *Erwartung* heard it like this.

Conversely, there are a number of places where the orchestra appears to respond to a vocal gesture. In b. 184 the Woman's question 'hörst du' [can you hear?] is followed by an orchestral version of her musical gesture: not an answer but an echo of her question (Ex. 6).<sup>63</sup>

At the end of scene 3 (See Ex. 1 bb. 112-113), the woman cries 'Liebste, mein liebste, hilf mir...' [Darling, my darling, help me...]. The downward gesture C-A-B for "Liebste" is repeated (transposed and slightly varied) for 'hilf mir' (A-F#-G) and then again, once again transposed and slightly varied in trumpet, piccolo and D-clarinet at b. 116-117 (G#-E#-E-C). Berg does not mark this explicitly, but over the instrumental lead he writes 'Schrecken der Wanderung' [fears of the journey], seeing the orchestral voice as expressing the Woman's emotions, or, more abstractly, as expressing the fearfulness of the journey. These examples are interesting because they can be heard either as what the Woman is hearing (the echo of her own voice, emphasizing that she is alone) or (as Berg does in the second case) as an expression of the

<sup>63</sup> Erwartung bb.184-185

emotions inspired by the journey: the fear that the Woman feels when her call goes unanswered.

Berg's marking 'Schrecken der Wanderung' is in blue, the colour he uses for 'expressionistic themes'. These generally correspond to motifs whose relationship to the text is less specifically representational, while most of the other examples I have given are his red markings for 'impressionistic sounds', which he sees as corresponding more closely to the text (a form of "word-painting"). In several places in the score he writes the word 'Frage' [question] in blue, for example in b. 4 he writes it above the vocal line, and circles the notes C#-B-C (Fig 1.). He then highlights this down-up gesture in various other places in the score, generally where the text has a question (for example at b.28) (Fig. 5). The gesture becomes connected to the Woman's questions by association, although it is not (to my ears, anyway) expressive of a question in the same way that the rustling of the branches (for example) is expressed in bb.75-76.

Occasionally, the orchestra has, as it were, an idea of its own. At b. 35, Berg writes 'Geschehen vom Orch. Übernommen' [events taken over by the orchestra] At b.31- 32 the voice has finished 'ich will singen, dann hört er mich' [I want to sing, so that he will hear me], and the orchestra continues with a number of lyrical *Hauptstimmen*, echoing the idea of singing, and continuing the quiet mood. But at b.35 the mood changes to something more threatening, with angular staccato in viola and tremolando in the solo 1st violin, before returning to the calm of the opening of Scene 2. (Ex.7).<sup>65</sup>

The effect of this interlude is partly to make the opening of Scene 2 calm by contrast, but it also reminds the audience of the threat of the wood as the Woman enters it or, to put it slightly differently, expresses the Woman's fear of the wood (which she does not articulate verbally) as she enters it. Schoenberg's interest in representing thought expands here beyond the text to try and express the multifarious workings of the mind, and to include those parts that do not think in words.

65 Erwartung bb. 31-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> In b. 29, a related up-down gesture is marked 'Frage' in brackets (Fig. 5).

Apart from the sheer complexity of the orchestral writing, perhaps the clearest indication of this ambition of Schoenberg's appears in the places where the orchestra relates to the Woman's thought at several levels at the same time. At bb.159-163 (Ex. 8), where the Woman is trying to work out calmly what she has seen: is it a body? a ghost? or just a trick of the moonlight?, <sup>66</sup> the bassoon plays a long, held A, reminiscent of the held chords that occur at other calm moments and emphasised by the *pp* A-B that precedes it. But the strings, clarinets and horns play interjections that are fragmented, just as the Woman's text is at this point, and the flute chords are articulated to create the rhythm of a beating heart. The effect is to show both the calmness that the Woman is forcing herself to feel and also her underlying fear.

One of the striking features of the libretto is the way that the Woman's attitude to her own memories changes through the piece. In the first half of the piece, her memories of her relationship with her lover are vivid and immediate enough that she can describe them in the present tense. This is particularly striking in the passages where she addresses the lover's dead body:

Nicht tot sein, ich liebe dich so... Unser Zimmer ist halbhell... Alles wartet... Die Blumen duftet so stark...<sup>67</sup>

[You cannot be dead, I love you so...Our room is in half-light...everything is ready...the scent of the flowers is so strong]

But once she has discovered (or decided) that he has been unfaithful, her memories are invariably cast in the past tense, and the tone is that described by Dorritt Cohn as 'dissonant self-narration', where the emotions of the firstperson narrator are at odds with those of his or her past self: 'a lucid narrator

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> "Das Mondlicht..nein dort...da ist der schreckliche Kopf...das Gespenst...[The moonlight... no, there... there is the terrible head...the spectre], *Erwartung* bb. 159-163. <sup>67</sup> *Erwartung* bb.204-212.

turning back on a past self steeped in ignorance, confusion and delusion', <sup>68</sup> for example in bb. 380-384 (Ex. 9):

Oh ich fluchte dir...
aber dein Mitleid machte mich glücklich
Ich glaubte, ich war im Glück

[Oh I cursed you...but your sympathy made me happy...I believed, and I was happy].<sup>69</sup>

The held chords in the wind contribute to the calm, elegiaic mood that is a feature of this passage and also characterises her early memories (for example at bb. 53-55 in Ex. 4) but instead of the characteristic lyrical *Hauptstimme*, angular gestures in the bass and Bb clarinets disturb the peace. Both her nostalgia for her lost love, and her knowledge of its shaky foundations seem to be present in the music. And so music's ability to express several ideas at once is put to good use, showing the layers of thought that are present in a mind thinking about itself.

This summary of the way that the text of *Erwartung* informs its music has necessarily been selective. For each example I have given, there are many more, each serving to nuance, heighten or extend the ideas in the libretto. These examples do, however, give a sense of the power of this approach, and how much better the music, and the work as a whole, can be understood once the libretto is taken seriously.

### The "I" of the Other

The monologic form of the libretto, and Schoenberg's expressed intention of representing the variety of thoughts in a thinking mind are of particular interest, in the context of this thesis, when the mind in question is that of a woman. Earlier in this thesis, I have discussed the idea that this period saw a new interest in the "I" of the Other: the autonomy and subject position of those on the other side of the division between "us" (male, gentile, bourgeios and so on) and "them" (female, Jewish, working class...). It is noticeable, however, that Schoenberg's writings on *Erwartung* do not discuss the

69 Erwartung bb.380-384.

<sup>68</sup> Cohn, Transparent Minds, p.145.

woman's gender, but focus instead on his interest in the workings of the mind, as for example in his comment that

In Erwartung the aim is to represent in slow motion everything that happens during a single second of maximum spiritual excitement.<sup>70</sup>

Indeed, Schoenberg specifically rejected a gendered reading of the piece by Paul Bekker as 'a music of womankind, of sounds representing erotic feelings'.

Not at all. It is, as I have often explained, the slow representation of things that go through the mind in a moment of great anxiety[...].<sup>71</sup>

So to what extent is it important to the piece that *Erwartung*'s protagonist is female? <sup>72</sup> I would suggest that the answer may lie in the idea of the universal application of individual experience, which I have discussed earlier, in the context of Expressionism. This is also important to the lyric tradition, since it relies on the idea that the poet and the reader have enough in common for the poet's feelings to seem relevant and comprehensible to the reader. Adorno sees this universality as defining a work of art:

[...] the meaning of a poem is not merely the expression of individual experiences and stirrings of emotion. Rather, these become artistic only when, precisely because of their defined aesthetic form, they participate in the generality of things [...] The generality of the lyric poem's content is [...] essentially social in nature. Only he [sic] understands what the poem says who perceives in its solitude the voice of humanity.<sup>73</sup>

The effect of Marie Pappenheim and Arnold Schoenberg's writing is, at least to some extent, to present a woman who is also an Everyman - a generic person, rather than "merely" an Everywoman - the generic woman.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps

<sup>71</sup> Simms, 'Whose Idea' p.104, quoting annotation by Schoenberg on Bekker's review in *Anbruch* (1924).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, 'New Music: My Music' (1930) in *Style and Idea* ed. Leo Stein (London: Faber& Faber, 1975), p.105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Elizabeth Keathley sees the libretto as consciously feminist, pointing out in particular, aspects of *Erwartung's* libretto 'which call into question the conventional gender expectations of its milieu, reflect concerns of contemporaneous feminist theory and literature and resonate with subsequent feminist fiction' p. 377. However she considers that Schoenberg failed to see, or chose to ignore, this aspect. See Keathley, 'New Woman' p.92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup>Theodor W. Adorno, 'Lyric Poetry and Society' trans. Bruce Mayo *Telos* 20 (1974), 56-57. <sup>74</sup>This idea recalls Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's comment that 'When a woman says everyone she means everybody, when a man says everyone he means every man' See Chapter Three footnote 187.

this is also the reason that some commentators have seen *Erwartung's* Woman as "not really" a woman at all.<sup>75</sup>

Erwartung's presentation of the workings of the Woman's mind reflects an interest in women's experience and autonomy that this thesis has identified as a recurring aspect of the discourse on gender. What is unusual is that, in Erwartung, the Woman's experience is presented without a frame or a justification. The assumption is simply made that the inner workings of her mind will be of interest, that the audience will be prepared to see the world from her point of view. It should perhaps not be surprising that of my three operatic case studies, it is the one with a libretto by a woman that takes this, in some ways, most radical point of view about the nature and importance of a woman's experience: that the "I" of the Other, as the subjective experience of one human being, is particular to her, but is nonetheless potentially relevant and of interest to all human beings including those who are not "Other". Ironically, the reception history of Erwartung, as described above, shows that this assumption was somewhat ahead of its time, in that the characterisation of the Woman as hysterical or a psychiatric case makes the assumption that her experience is only interesting if she is exceptional (and exceptionally troubled).

If the opera's ambition is to represent the workings of the human mind under circumstances of 'maximum spiritual excitement', it is interesting to ask how far it succeeds, and indeed how attainable this goal is under any circumstances. Albright suggests that:

[...] side by side with this impatient elaboration of images [in highly representational art], there arose an art that is skeptical of mimesis, that insists on the gulf between representation and the thing represented, that denies the referentiality of image and symbol. These two themes, mimesis and antimimesis, develop together, and often entwine in the work of a single artist, for illusion and disillusion constitute a single enchantment.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Albright, Representation, pp. 11-12.

<sup>75 &#</sup>x27;Salome and the anti-heroine of *Erwartung* are first and foremost male fantasies of [their own] transgression dressed up as women. Real women – mad or otherwise – do not enter the picture at all.' McClary, *Feminine Endings*, p.109-110.

His article goes on to discuss the frustration of realising that true mimesis of the mind's workings is impossible:

Art is frustrated that it cannot go beyond art, into the annihilation of sensuous intermediaries, into the direct insertion of electrodes, exencephaly.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps it is this paradox, and this frustration that led to Schoenberg's ambivalent attitude to realism. On the one hand, Schoenberg was insistent that the wood in *Erwartung* should be as realistic as possible, and that the Woman should be genuinely frightened of it. On the other hand, he also suggests that the piece could be interpreted as an anxiety dream:

'It is essential for the woman to be seen always in the forest, so that people realize that she is afraid of it!! For the whole drama can be understood as a nightmare. But for that very reason, it must be a real forest and not a "conventional" one, for one may loathe the latter but one cannot be afraid of it'78

This becomes less paradoxical when *Erwartung* is understood as a representation of the workings of the mind. Schoenberg's emphasis on the wood's reality can then be interpreted as part of his desire to make its threat and the Woman's fear visceral and emotionally believable, and in that sense 'real' rather than merely symbolic. On the other hand, the idea that it could be 'understood as a nightmare', shows a recognition that the workings of another's mind will always be mysterious, and that a realistically non-logical representation of the mind's interior slides easily into the unreality of a dream.

This may help to explain one of the most baffling moments in *Erwartung*, which comes at the very end. The Woman has found her lover's body, she has looked back at her relationship with him and identified the evidence that he was unfaithful. She has lamented for her loss of him, and asked how she can go on without him. And then she suddenly calls out 'Oh bist du da...Ich suchte...' [Oh, are you here... I was looking...] and the opera ends in an orchestral dissolution. How is the audience to interpret this? If the Woman's

<sup>77</sup> Albright, Representation, p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Arnold Schoenberg Letter 114 (14 April 1930) in Schoenberg, Letters, p. 139.

behaviour in the rest of the opera is seen as pathological, then this is simply one more delusion. But if, as I believe, the rest of the piece is best understood as showing a sane person's response to extreme circumstances, the ending becomes very mysterious.

The idea of the frustrating impossibility of true mimesis of the mind suggests an answer: perhaps this is an expression of the fact that you can never wholly represent the mind or understand its workings. Albright suggests that Schoenberg shows awareness of this:

Schoenberg remains obsessed by the art of interior verisimilitude, the art of the blast or short-circuit, direct connection of brain to brain, throughout his career; but except in *Erwartung*, there is typically some retreat from ambition or confession of failure whenever he attempts it.<sup>79</sup>

Erwartung certainly lacks the ironic self-undermining of Pierrot Lunaire or Die Glückliche Hand, as Albright goes on to point out. I would suggest, though, that the libretto's strange ending is another way to express this unknowability. The audience are encouraged to follow the workings of the Woman's mind through her physical and emotional journey, only to be offered something completely inconsistent with the rest of the story. Who is this new 'du' that the Woman seems to see? Is the lover alive after all, or is this yet another mistake (like the eyes that were mushrooms or the bodies that were trees), or is this a different person altogether? The libretto gives no clue, and the music dissolves into nothingness as the piece ends. We cannot be sure what the Woman is thinking. Half an hour of complex, crafted representation of the workings of the mind ends in an admission of failure.

Yet in seeing the ending like this, the rest of the piece is thrown into relief. The emphasis, both textual and musical on *questions*, highlighted by Berg, becomes significant: so much of what the Woman says involves trying to understand the significance of what she sees, hears and feels. The darkness of the wood and the tricky, confusing moonlight are at one level an explanation of her difficulties, but at another they are symbolic of the difficulty of really

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Albright Representation, pp.20-21.

being sure of what you think you see. And, the audience are drawn into the confusion, just as they are in *Salome* (see Chapter Five).

The precision with which the orchestra follows the text and stage directions mean that the audience hear and (in some sense) see and feel everything that the Woman experiences, both in the present action and in memory, whether or not she subsequently decides that it was "real". So, for example, when she calls out 'Wer weint da? Ist hier jemand?' (Ex. 4 bb. 71-74), and decides that it was nothing, the audience have, nonetheless had the chance to hear something: the *klagend* lead in the oboe. How is the audience to interpret this? Is it "real" in the world of the story, or is it part of the Woman's fearful imaginings? Similarly, towards the end of the piece, when the Woman is lamenting the death of her lover, she says that her lover was everywhere:

Überall lebtest du...
Eben noch im Wald...
Deine Stimme so nah an meinem Ohr, immer, immer warst du bei mir dein Hauch auf meine Wange deine Hand auf meinem Haar.<sup>80</sup>

[You were alive everywhere...Even now in the wood...Your voice so close to my ear, you were always, always with me, your breath on my cheek, your hand in my hair]

Is this just an expression of the intensity of her longing, or is it yet another reinterpretation of what she has seen and heard? Was her lover "really" there? But what can "really" mean in this context?

Though the character's mind has been shown to us in all its complexity and detail, its workings remain a mystery. The more that the audience are drawn into the Woman's thoughts and feelings, the more baffling it becomes. And this is not, as some interpreters have assumed, because she is a woman. It is because the 'illogicality which our senses demonstrate' (to use Schoenberg's words again) makes the human mind mysterious. The opera is full of questions, and many of them are answered only by a silence, or an echo of a questioning gesture.

<sup>80</sup> Erwartung bb.246-254.

### Chapter Seven: Marie Gutheil-Schoder - from score to performance

#### Introduction

In the last three chapters, I have examined the discourse on gender as it can be seen in the scores and libretti of three operas. As discussed in Chapter Two, however, the written or printed score is only the starting point for a performance. In opera, in particular, many other people and points of view are involved in building a performance out of the work of the librettist and composer, and many other forms of creativity are necessary to that process. How, then, did the operatic discourse on gender appear in performance? Although we can never know the answer to this question exactly, there is much to be learnt from the records that exist of the way that performers worked, and the way that others responded to them.

In this chapter, I concentrate on the work of one particular singer, Marie Gutheil-Schoder, who was a singer of the first rank at the Opera House in Vienna between 1900 and 1926, singing both new and established operatic repertoire. She also premièred and performed a number of Schoenberg's works. Using her writings, and the writings of others about her, as well as the records of the Vienna Opera, I approach the question of the discourse in performance from three angles: Firstly, what was the process that created a performance from a score? And what can be learnt about the characters Marie Gutheil-Schoder created from knowledge of this process? Secondly, how did her approach to the different types of character that she portrayed reflect the discourse I have been investigating? Thirdly, how did others in the operatic world respond to Gutheil-Schoder's work, and what was her influence on the work of others in that world?

Explicit descriptions by Gutheil-Schoder of her work on *Salome* and *Erwartung*, which would have been particularly interesting in the context of this thesis, unfortunately do not seem to exist. But her descriptions of her approach to other roles, and on the building of any role, gives considerable

insight into what her performances were like. Her writings make it clear that the issues of power, gender and autonomy, which I have identified in earlier chapters as important to the contemporary discourse on gender, played a significant role in her work, and that in preparing a role she tried to see the world through the character's eyes. From contemporary accounts of her work, it can be seen that this commitment to the autonomy of the character was one of the things that audiences most valued in her portrayals.

Marie Gutheil-Schoder was born Marie Schoder in Weimar in 1874, and made her debut at the opera house there in 1891. In 1899 she married Gustav Gutheil (1868-1914), Kapellmeister at the Weimar Opera and in 1900 they moved to Vienna, where Gutheil-Schoder was engaged at the Hofoper by its director, Gustav Mahler. She remained in Vienna for over thirty years, singing a huge range of repertoire both at the Opera and in guest appearances all over Europe. She also premièred Schoenberg's Second String Quartet and Erwartung, as well as being a leading exponent of his Pierrot Lunaire. In 1926 she officially retired from the Vienna Opera (now the Staatsoper), but continued to be employed there as a director and acting coach. Gutheil, by whom she had one son, died in 1914 and she later married the photographer Franz Setzer. She died in 1935.

Although she never wrote an autobiography, shortly before her death, Marie Gutheil-Schoder wrote two accounts of her life and work, which were originally presented as speeches, and were subsequently published as 'Erlebtes and Erstrebtes' [Lived and Learned] and 'Rolle und Gestaltung' [Roles and Their Development].<sup>2</sup> The latter is a comparatively unusual document, since (as is mentioned in Chapter Two) although a number of Gutheil-Schoder's contemporaries published book-length memoirs and autobiographies, they generally focus on people and places, and contain quite little about the rehearsal process, or the actual building of a role.<sup>3</sup>

Chapter Two footnotes 30 and 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Andrew Farkas, Opera and Concert singers: An annotated Bibliography of books and pamphlets (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), p.177.

<sup>2</sup> 'Erlebtes und Erstrebtes' (pp. 5-32) and 'Rolle und Gestaltung' (pp. 33-58) in Marie Gutheil-Schoder, Erlebtes und Erstrebtes; Rolle und Gestaltung Veröffentliches des Verlages des Museumfreunde Wien (Vienna: Rudolf Krey, 1937).

<sup>3</sup> For details of autobiographical material by singers contemporary with Gutheil-Schoder, see Chapter True featuretes 20 and 21

# Creating an autonomous character - from score to performance

The creation of a performed role from a libretto and score required many hours of work, and of course involved a whole range of people from pianists to designers to dressmakers, as well as the singers, the instrumentalists and the conductor who took part in the actual performance. The process that Marie Gutheil-Schoder went through in creating a role can be reconstructed from her own writings, combined with information about the rehearsal practices of her time, which is detailed in the records and rehearsal schedules of the Vienna Opera. In the context of this thesis, it is striking how Gutheil-Schoder's approach emphasises the autonomy of the character. That is, she aims to create the character as an integral and comprehensible whole, whose actions and emotions grow organically out of this underlying integrity. Once she understands the basic nature of the character, decisions about the details of the portrayal are made intuitively, and there is scope to modify these details in response to the rehearsal process, and the ideas of her collaborators.

When allotted a role that was new to her (or him), a singer would expect to spend some time working on her or his own and with an accompanist, to learn the notes and gain a technical command of the vocal demands of the role. Gutheil-Schoder often used her summer break from the opera house (which was closed from mid-June to mid-August) to learn new roles. For example in the summer of 1919 she was involved in learning 'a big new Strauss role', presumably in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (she sang Barak's Wife at the opera house that autumn). The aim would be to know the role well (though not necessarily from memory) before the first rehearsal.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The rehearsal schedules for the Vienna Opera, and many other records, are held at the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna (HHSA). I am very grateful to Clemens Höslinger for bringing this archive to my attention.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> For example, in her biographical account *Singing with Richard Strauss*, Lotte Lehmann describes her preliminary work on the role of the Dyer's Wife in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which meant finding a pianist to help her while on holiday in Gmunden, before going on to work on the role with Strauss himself, all of which occurred before the official rehearsals started at the opera house. Lotte Lehmann *Singing with Richard Strauss* trans. Ernst Pawel (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1964), p. 21-23.

Letter to Baron von Hartlieb 6th July 1919 (HS).
 Starting on 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 1919 (Vienna Opera posters) (TS).

Gutheil-Schoder says that she was capable of knowing the whole opera, and not just her part, at the first rehearsal, but she clearly regards this as exceptional.8

The records of the Vienna Opera give an outline of the procedure that was followed there in staging a new opera. For example, for the Viennese première of Zemlinsky's Eine Florentenisches Tragödie in 1917 (in which Gutheil-Schoder sang Bianca), rehearsals start six weeks before the opening night on the 27th April. Two casts of singers are rehearsed concurrently, which seems to have been standard. Initially each singer rehearses separately, with a total of 2 or 3 hours a day devoted to the opera for the first ten days. About two weeks before the opening night (and after a few days holiday for Easter), staging rehearsals with piano (Arrangienprobe mit Klavier) begin. The orchestra has two separate rehearsals before the Sitzprobe (the first rehearsal with cast and orchestra, but without staging) on the 18th April. Three rehearsals on stage with the orchestra follow, with the dress rehearsal (Hauptprobe) on the 25th April, leaving a rest day before opening night on the 27th.9

Reading the Hofoper records, it is striking how rehearsals for a première are interwoven with continuing work on other productions. For example, although the dress rehearsal is always two days before the opening night, so that the principal singers have a free day in which to rest, those singing small roles are expected to rehearse other operas meanwhile, even on the morning of the first performance. 10 Some rehearsals also take place after opening night, principally for the second cast. The solo singers at the Hofoper must have been very flexible to have moved so quickly from one opera to another like this, but it is nonetheless perhaps understandable that Gustav Mahler, as director of the opera, complained continually of sloppiness (schlamperei) and

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.51.
 <sup>9</sup> Vienna Opera rehearsal records 20<sup>th</sup> March - 27th April 1917 (HHSA)
 <sup>10</sup> For example, Vienna Opera rehearsal records for 14th October 1918 and the weeks following (HHSA) show that a number of the singers with small roles in *Salome* (which opened that night) were involved in rehearsals for *Tales of Hoffman* the same morning.

poor preparation, 11 given the heavy demands that this schedule must have made on the singers.

So it is all the more striking to see the thought and work that went into Gutheil-Schoder's preparation for a role. In a letter to her fellow-singer Anna von Mildenburg, Gutheil-Schoder describes how in going through a new opera, she tries to draw out a principal thread which is essential to the work, so that 'all the situations support this feature, whether in a hidden or an obvious way'. 12 In Rolle und Gestaltung, she also describes how she and her husband Gustav Gutheil would discuss a role, until she could find the heart of it, so that a clear picture of the character could crystallise.13

At this stage, the emphasis is on 'understanding' the character, which includes knowing the whole opera, so that you know how your part fits into the whole.<sup>14</sup> But the form that that understanding takes is emotional as well as intellectual. She describes this enthusiastically: 'It's a wonderful, marvellous feeling to have a new task. The channels of curiosity, interest and joy are opened. The new role seeps gradually into every pore, and begins to rule your life'. 15 This understanding comes from being absorbed in the role, rather than sitting back in judgement:

Above all, you must love a new work, and drive away any personal dislike. This is a precondition. If you have any internal resistance to the work or the role, it will prevent you from being convincing and interesting, or having an effect on the public.16

Once you have understood the words, she continues, the dramatic ideas follow. She describes these ideas as a series of questions about the

<sup>11</sup> La Grange, Mahler vol. 3, p. 4

<sup>12&#</sup>x27;Ich ziehe mir nämlich stets einen großen Faden durch eine Aufgabe, alle Situationen müssen diesen einen großen Charakter tragen ob versteckt oder offen,' Letter to Anna von Mildenburg n.d. (TS).

<sup>13</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle' p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle' p.34.

<sup>15</sup> 'Es ist ein wunderbares, herrliches Gefühl, vor einer neue Aufgabe zu stehen. Alle

Schleusen der Neugier, des Interesses, der Freude sind geöffnet, die neue Rolle sickert langsam in alle Poren und beginnt dort ihr Leben zu regnen. Gutheil-Schoder 'Rolle', p.34.

16 'Ein neues Werk soll man in ersten Linie unbedingt lieben, jede persönlich Abneigung muß unterdrückt werden. Das ist Vorbedingung. Denn wie kann ein Künstler überzeugend vermitteln, wie für eine Rolle Interesse beanspruchen, wenn er durch eine innere Abwehr gegen das Werk oder die Rolle den Weg zur Wirkung auf das Publikum absperrt.' Gutheil-Schoder, Rolle', p.35.

development of the character through the course of the opera, and the relationship between the different characters, questions which require instinct, logic and imagination to answer. 17 This preliminary work concentrates very much on the text, but Gutheil-Schoder is keen to point out that although this is where she starts, this does not mean that the music is unimportant in her perception of the role, but rather that understanding the character you are to play involves first understanding the text. She describes the relationship between words and music as follows:

The music heightens the sense of the words, and thus, in an obvious way, the expressive possibilities. This yields the value of a performance which is as it should be: born from the music. And the mysterious thing which drives us, so that unconsciouly we feel that the words and the music are bound together, is a sign of the gift of the musical performer. 18

In her writings about her work, Gutheil-Schoder says very little about the vocal and technical demands of the roles she sang. These demands were formidable, since she sang an enormously wide variety of roles including (to use modern terminology for the types of role): mezzo or zwischenfach roles like Octavian and the Composer in Ariadne, heavy dramatic soprano roles like Salome and Elektra, coloratura roles like Frau Fluth (in Nicolai's Die lustige Weibe von Windsor) and Blonde (in Die Entführung aus dem Serail) as well as Donna Elvira, Carmen, Despina, 19 and contemporary concert music such as Schoenberg's Second String Quartet, Erwartung and Pierrot Lunaire. She comments only on the 'tremendous vocal and dramatic versatility' needed to act and sing a main role, and thereby to embody the fundamental ideas of the piece,<sup>20</sup> once again focusing on the idea of presenting the character as a convincing and multi-faceted whole.

<sup>17</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> Die Musik erhöht den geistigen Gehalt des Wortes und somit die Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten in sinnfalliger Weise, ergibt den Wert einer Darstellung so wie sie sein soll: aus der Musik geboren. Und dieses geheimnisvolle Etwas nun, das uns treibt, ganz unbewußt das Wort

geboren. Und dieses geheimnisvolle Etwas nun, das uns treibt, ganz unbewußt das Wort durch die Musik verbunden zu erfühlen und zum Ausdruck zu bringen, ist ein Zeichen musikalischer Darstellungsbegabe.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.37

19 The breadth of Gutheil-Schoder's repertoire was commented on at the time, for example, in Therese Rie, (pseud - L. Andro), Marie Gutheil-Schoder Die Wiedergabe 2, 10 (Vienna: Wiener Literarische Anstalt, 1923), p. 9.

20 'In Wahrheit ist sie eben die Aufgabe, welche gewöhnlich den Grundgedanken des Bühnenwerkes verkörpert, die größte Verwandlungsfähigkeit benötigt und eine große, jedenfalls aber modulationsfähige Stimme braucht.' [In truth, in order to embody the the fundamental ideas of a work on stage, the performer needs the greatest versatility and a great, or at least a highly versatile, voice]. Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.40.

A complicated role must be as changeable (in terms of the technical use of the voice) as the character is. Simple changes in dynamic from piano to forte are not enough to express this kind of characteristic, many-sided role. The stages of emotion that bring the character to life, need the most flexible technique to identify the [appropriate] vocal timbres. Sweet head-tones, soft dark colours for sensuality, with sibilants breathed through the teeth, tones of great tension with the breath held. All of these and more are necessary, to make a role like this interesting, to express as one would wish the different movements of the character's soul.<sup>21</sup>

Her description of the use of vocal timbre makes it clear that she saw the *musical* expression of the nature of the character as central to what she was trying to achieve, and that the music was central to showing the 'movements of the character's soul'. In a letter to Schoenberg, she thanks him for his praise of her performance as Octavian which she said, made her 'feel that the effort and work that [she] put in are apparent to a precise musical ear.'<sup>22</sup>

The next stage of preparation, the piano rehearsals at the opera house, were the first opportunity for the director and/or conductor to influence the singer's interpretation. Gutheil-Schoder's writings focus particularly on her work with Mahler. Director at the Hofoper from 1897-1907, Mahler had an enormously important influence on every aspect of the work that was done there. <sup>23</sup> Gutheil-Schoder respected him hugely, and she describes working with him as central to her development as a performer. In particular, she comments on his emphasis on the dramatic and interpretative side of the preparation of a work and his meticulous attention to detail:

You should be learning the dramatic expression in the role along with the part, in the first musical rehearsal. [...] Mahler, the greatest of all teachers, masters

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> 'Eine komplizierte Gestaltung muß auch in stimmtechnischer Beziehung ebenso schillernd sein wie ihre übrige Characterisierung es verlangt. Mit dem einfachen dynamischen Wechsel von Piano und Forte als Ausdrusksmittel im Gesang ist dem Typ einer charakteristichen, vielseitigen Rolle nicht bezukommen. Die Stufenleiter der Gefühle des neu zu belebenden Wesens braucht Gesangtöne von höchst schillernder Technik, die man sich zurechtsuchen muß. Zarte Kopftöne, weich dunkle Farben für die Sinnlichkeit, zwischen den Zähnen gehauchte Zischlaute, atemgestaute Töne höchster Spannung. Alles doch und noch weit mehr ist nötig, um eine solche Rolle auch stimmlich interessant und entsprechend den verschiedenen Seelenregungen zum gewünschten Ausdruck zu bringen.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>'weil ich doch daraus ersehe daß meine Bemühungen und Studien dem feinen musikalischen Ohr merkbar sind'. Marie Gutheil-Schoder, Letter to Schoenberg 25th November 1911 (SC).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>See, for example, Andrea Seebohm (ed.), *Der Wiener Oper: 350 Jahre Glanz und Tradition* (Vienna: Überreuter, 1986), pp. 78-82.

and leaders, always worked in this way. In the first musical rehearsal, when we were all sitting round the piano, he would jump up and show us positions and gestures, a pause or tone of voice that we had to repeat and establish.<sup>24</sup>

But she nonetheless expected the majority of her acting choices and interpretative ideas to come from herself, without waiting for guidance or approval. Indeed she suggests that she was not an easy performer to direct, because of her strong conception of the character, and her willingness to argue with the director in defence of her ideas.<sup>25</sup>

Ultimately, she believed that her concept of the character, and the details of her performance came from her unconscious, rather than from her rational mind.

When I'm working on a big new role, I'm always enchanted by it, possessed by the new character, who takes over my whole mental life. I see the world wholly through her eyes as the spirit begins to work in me. It creates and discards, using instincts that are normally hidden and not open to conscious thought. Out of the riches of these hidden, unconscious drives, both good and bad, comes an archetype like Carmen, [...] Salome, Potiphar etc. You can't turn off your understanding in the creative process, but you cannot expect to use it exclusively: you need the support of the animal instincts to bring the character to life, a trance-like state that breathes with their unconscious drives.<sup>26</sup>

Her desire to see through the character's eyes is consistent with her emphasis on creating a character that is a convincing whole, but this passage also makes clear the importance of her intuitive responses to the character's situation and behaviour. This in turn shows the importance of the singer's

<sup>24 &#</sup>x27;...schon die dramatischen Ausdruck der Darstellung erlernt man zu gleicher Zeit mit der Partie in den ersten musikalischen Proben. [...] Mahler, dieser herrlichste aller Erzieher, Meister und Führer, bereits alles Dramatische an Ausdruck fertig probiert und durchgeführt haben wollte. Er ließ uns schon in diesen ersten musikalischen Proben in Probesaal, bei denen wir um das Klavier herumsaßen, oft aufstehen, zeigte uns Stellungen oder Gebärden für irgend eine Wirkung der Ruhe oder einer gewissen Stimmung, die wir gleich wiederholen und festlegen mußten.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.37-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 51-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Während solcher Zeit des Studiums einer neuen, großen Rolle was ich stets verzaubert, besessen von dem neuen Wesen, das sich meiner Gedankenwelt völlig bemachtigt hatte. Ich sah die Welt nur durch diesen neuen Charakter. Ein Dämon lebte in mir, begann zu arbeiten. Er formt und verwirrt, wühlt ganz verborgene Instinkte auf, die sich außerhalb dieser Arbeit gar nicht and Licht wagen würden, ja sich nicht einmal dem Bewußtsein offenbar haben und gerade aus diesen verborgenen unbewußten Schätzen, aud güten und bösen Treiben, kann eine Urgestalt, wie Carmen [...] Salome, Potiphar usw. entstehen. Den Verstand kann man bei der Schöpfung einer solchen Gestalt nicht ausschalten, aber sicher ist er nicht ausschließlich der notwendige Träger eines solch animalisch zu belebenden Wesens, das seiner Atem eher aus unbewußten Treibkräften, aus tranceartigen Zuständen erhält. Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.43.

own cultural context, which will shape her responses. And Gutheil-Schoder is aware of the very wide range of influences which fed these unconscious decisions: the text and music of course, but also the costume, the set, the interaction with the other performers. She sees it as part of her job to augment these influences with a knowledge of other art-forms, and of the period in which the opera is set.<sup>27</sup>

The stage performer should use every art form in their creation - colour and tone from painting, poses from sculpture, rhythm of movement from dance. I've had an enormous sense of love and interest in beautiful painting since I was young, and have sought out these things, gestures, costumes and bearing in them. And I think that, even if you aren't interested in these art-historical things for themselves, it's still important for a stage-artist to cultivate a knowledge of them.<sup>28</sup>

The character's costume was crucial to her development of the character's personality. She describes how when rehearsing Rosenkavalier, she wore Octavian's breeches almost from the first rehearsal.<sup>29</sup> The physical nature of the character was often made clear to her by the style of the costume, in conjunction with the music.

What I haven't got right in rehearsal I often understand the moment I see myself in the costume of the character, using a thought-through and stylish gesture, following the rhythm of the music.<sup>30</sup>

However, she sees the interaction between performer and designer very much as a negotiation, with each, if possible, being prepared to learn from the other.

First Heinrich Leffler and then Roller helped me with wonderful costumes, giving me not only what the costume looked like, but the whole style that it belonged to. Roller's pictures were sharply characterised, and gave me all sorts

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle' p.43

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> 'Der Bühnendarsteller soll aus allen Künsten schöpfen, als Malerei Farbe und Ton, aus Bildhauerei Plastik und schöne Pose, aus dem Tanz der Rhythmus der Bewegung. Ich habe mir von Jugend an mit ungeheuren Spürsinn aus Liebe und Interesse an schönen Bildern und Meisterwerken diese Dingen, Kostüme, Gesten, Gebärden, alle selber gesucht. Und ich finde auch, wenn man das Interesse und Auge für solche kunstgeschichtliche Dinge nicht von selbst besitzt, sollte man sich dazu erziehen, weil es zu wichtig ist für den Bühnenkünstler, den Blick dieses wissen an der Hand zu haben' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.44

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> 'Was bei allen Proben vielleicht nie recht gelingen wollte, was ich mir gedacht hatte, offenbarte mir der Anblick meines Ichs im Gewande der Rollenfigur, bewegt von wohldurchdachter stilvoller Gebärde, durch den Rhythmus der Musik'. Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.45

of suggestions and ideas for the character, occasionally completely changing my idea of the character. Other times, Roller would be converted to my idea of the nature of the character and the costume, through watching rehearsals. Roller was serious and clear-sighted enough that he was prepared to change his mind.<sup>31</sup>

And ultimately, for her it was the music that was the fundamental inspiration for her portrayal:

This musical rhythm which our bodies soak up, and which makes them move, the music of the role and of the whole work, is the connecting thread in learning a role. You must fully penetrate the music. It should speak to us as clearly as the words. It leads our gestures and swings our steps, answering the unexpressed questions of the soul and steering us past the rocks of uncertainty and around the inner confusions of the role.<sup>32</sup>

Once the rehearsals move from the rehearsal room onto the stage, she describes how 'you can now experience physically and spatially the role that has so far been confined within you, and and has only emerged vocally and imaginatively.' The set was yet another factor that influences her portrayal, and the interaction with the other singers also helps to shape and define the role. Gutheil-Schoder reiterates the importance of thorough rehearsal, to prevent mishap in the performance:

Awkward moments and situations that haven't been discussed and worked through sufficiently with colleagues can cause hopeless confusion and destroy the whole point of a performance.<sup>35</sup>

muß man völlig durchdringen. Sie sollte ebenso deutlich sprechen wie das Wort. Sie liet

35 'Heikle Moment und Stellungen, zu denen man die genau Aussprach und Durcharbeitung mit dem Gegenspieler außer Acht leiße könnten zu heillosen Verwirrungen führen und die ganze Höhe einer Leistung sturzen.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>[...] hatte ich zuerst an Heinrich Leffler und nach ihm an Hofrat Roller den wunderbarsten Helfer, dessen prachtvolle Kostümbilder mehr gaben als nur das Kostüm in seinem vollendeten Stil. Roller schuf in seiner Zeichnung zugleich eine scharfe Charakterisierung der Figur, die zu Anregungen und Ideen aller Art führte, zuweilen aber auch zu einem völligen Umsturz des ursprunglich gedachten Rollenbildes. Allerdings konnte es auch umgekehrt der Fall sein, indem sich Roller auf den Proben zu meiner Darstellung und Kostümauffassung bekehrte, die ich vorschlagen hatte. Rollers Bedeutung und Hellsichtigkeit was groß genug, sich an solchem Rückzug nicht zu stoßen.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.44.

<sup>32</sup> 'Dieser musikalischer Rhythmus, den unser Körper aufsaugt, der ihn bewegt, die Musik der Rolle, des Werkes überhaupt, ist nun naturlich der Leitfaden jeden Studiums. Die Musik

unsere Gebärden, sie beschwingt unseren Schritt. Sie antwortet uns auf die unausgesprochenen Fragen der Seele, und steuert uns an den Klippen der Unsicherheit vorbei und an den inneren Unverständlichkeit der Rolle'. Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.45. <sup>33</sup> 'nun körperlich und raümlich alles das durchlebt wird, was bis dahin noch innerlich verschlossen und nur stimmlich und geistig entstanden war.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.48. <sup>34</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle' p.48. It's interesting that, by implication, she does not expect to have much interaction with the other singers before the stage rehearsals. This is borne out by the Hofoper records, which show that most of the preliminary rehearsals involved only one singer at a time.

Although, in keeping with her belief in the importance of the performer's unconscious, she does acknowledge that moments of inspiration can strike during a performance and lead the performers into creating something new and unusual.<sup>36</sup>

The stage rehearsals were the first ones to involve the stage director (assuming that the director and the conductor were not, as in the case of Mahler, the same person). With the exception of Mahler, whom she clearly revered, Gutheil-Schoder is suspicious of directors. Interestingly, in *Rolle und Gestaltung*, she doesn't mention her own considerable experience as director, teacher and coach. Instead she emphasises the importance of the singer, at least those who are 'gifted and intelligent performers' being given 'the freest possible hand, and only being subject to the overall effect of an important interpretation'. She particularly respected Mahler for the way that he would work with the performer's concept of the role, using it as the basis for his shaping of a scene.

[Mahler] would willingly let one perform the scene the first time, as the scenery and set suggested. Then he would begin to correct. He didn't need a director's book or a piano reduction, he simply corrected from his mind, from what he saw. His influence on the development of the character was extraordinary. If a good idea pleased him, he gave it quiet support, then a small correction, a new idea would be gently woven in, but with a devilish tenacity, and suddenly the scene became something completely different. It was a joy to work with his understanding, which lay beneath these unconscious suggestions, and to achieve what he wanted and gain his approval.<sup>38</sup>

Though Mahler's work was precise, it was aimed at capturing the underlying point of a scene and the development of the character, rather than

<sup>37</sup> 'Einem geschickten, für Darstellung begabten intelligenter Sänger sollte man möglichste freie Hand lassen und nur in Momenten einer Gesamtwirkung ihm das dazu nötige Einfühlen abfordern.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> '[Mahler] ließ sich gern eine Szene zuerst vorspieln, wie man sie sich gedacht, wie sie ganz naturlich nach Dekoration und Aufbau ergab. Dann begann er zu korrigieren. Er benutzte nie ein Regiebuch oder einen Klavierauszug, völlig frei aus seinem Geist heraus korrigierte er das, was er gesehen. Seine Einwirkung auf die Gestaltung einer Rolle war unheimlich. Es gefiel ihm irgend eine Auffassung ganz gut, er ließ einen ruhig gewähren, dann kam eine kleine Korrektur, ein neuer Gedanke, der wurde eingeflochten leise, aber mit dämonischen Zähigkeit, und plötzlich was aus der Szene etwas Anderes geworden. Es war eine Freude, in seinem Sinne unter dieser unbewußten Suggestion zu arbeiten, das Ziel seines Wunsches und damit seine Zufriedenheit zu erreichen.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle' p.53.

concentrating on the arrangement of the singers on the stage or artificial gestures and effects:

[Mahler] didn't care about positions: right or left, upstage or downstage, but about grasping the essential ideas and keeping in harmony with the music. Hand gestures were rarely allowed, and then only when they vividly expressed the character's soul.<sup>39</sup>

Gutheil-Schoder comments on Mahler's willingness to adapt his idea of a character to the particular singer playing the role, describing the unusual, dreamy way that Selma Kurz played Cherubino. When asked about this, Mahler replied:

Yes, sentimentality and melancholy suit Kurz better than a stormy temperament, and it also brings a extraordinarily beautiful dark softness to her voice, that is equally charming in expression for an emotional boy, so I have changed the role a bit and have given Cherubino a new magic.<sup>40</sup>

She points out that the interaction between the singer's personality and the work means that the character will come to life in a different way with each interpreter. Once again, this means that the way the role is portrayed is the result of an interaction or negotiation, which may mean the singer finding a way to play that is very different from the way they are naturally, or may mean that the way the character is portrayed is not quite as the creators of the work imagined it, but is nonetheless lively and convincing.<sup>41</sup>

And so, finally, the day of the performance arrives. Gutheil-Schoder describes beautifully the strange state of heightened awareness that is necessary for a successful performance, and the way that she loses herself in the "I" of her character, which may be very different from the "I" of her everyday self.

41 Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.54

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>'Auf Stellungen, ob rechts oder links, vorn oder hintern, kam es ihm nie an, wohl aber auf geistiges Erfassen der Hauptsache und stete Harmonie mit der Musik. Handbewegungen waren nur ganz selten und nur dann erlaubt, wenn Sie das Seelische plastisch auszudrücken bestimmt waren.' Marie Gutheil-Schoder, 'Mahlers Opernregie' in Paul Stefan (ed.) Gustav Mahler: ein Bild seiner Persönlichkeit in Widmungen (Munich: Piper, 1910), p.36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> 'Ja, die Sentimentalität, Melancholie liegt der Kurz besser als das stürmische Temperament und auserdem bringt sie mir durch die seltene, schöne dunkle Weichheit der Stimme den schwärmerischen Knaben gleichwertig bestrickend zum Ausdruck, so haben wir eben die Rolle im Charakter ein bisserl umgestellt und dem Cherubin dadurch einen ganz neuen Zauber gegeben.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle' quoting Mahler, p. 55.

I have often thought about what a curious phase of experience begins, when you come on stage in a particular role. For example as Carmen, I turn myself into something completely outside my normal self. I become coquettish, cheeky, warm-blooded, desiring, really feeling like Carmen, wholly unscrupulous only in her devotion, as the role demands. And yet at the same time a intense seriousness exists around me: I hear the broken text of the prompter, which I perceive wholly coolly and rationally, I vaguely see the conductor's baton, I feel myself carried by the orchestra, restricted by the rhythm of the music and yet wholly free in my voice, in my words, which, although I have learnt them by heart, feel as sharp as if they were improvised, coming straight from my head and my heart. I see a couple of girls talking in the wings, or how the stage manager is blowing his nose back-stage, and innumerable empty things that could really confuse and distract, but, strangely, they don't. The effort of will, the subconscious development of my character, the feeling for it burns so strongly inside me, that I am really indifferent to the disruptiveness of the indifferent and the insensitive. I must also say that in my success in the tension of living as Carmen, I forceably push down the other "I" the observing "I", losing myself more and more in my Carmen, as the Act moves on and reaches its climax.42

#### Developing specific roles - power, gender and autonomy

Throughout her writing Gutheil-Schoder emphasises the importance of having the inner life of the character fully developed. From this will come the details that make the portrayal engaging and convincing, and make it possible for the audience to see right into the character's soul.

And so we see the newly created character in front of us. A wholly personal performance, and yet through the dedication to the spirit of the work the different parts become a whole character, a real person on the stage. She lures us into every cranny of her soul, into every phase of her feelings, she arouses

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> 'Ich habe oft darüber nachgedacht, welch merwürdige Phase des Erlebens doch beginnt, wenn man in einer Rolle, meinetwegen als Carmen, die Bühne betritt. Ich schalte mich selbst, mein Ich vollständig aus, bin kokett, keck, fühle heiß begehrlich, fühle wahrhaft als Carmen, ganz hemmunglos nur dem hingegeben, was die Rolle von mir fordert. Dabei lebt doch um mich herum eine grelle Nüchternheit: ich höre die angeschlagenen Textworte des Souffleurs, der mich ganz kühl und sachlich anguckt, ich sehe nebelhaft den Taktstock des Dirigenten, ich fühle mich vom Orchester getragen eingeengt in den Rhythmus der Musik, und doch ganz frei in meinem Gesang, in meinen Worten, die, obwohl ich sie auswendig gelernt habe, doch absolut jäh wie improvisiert aus meinem Hirn und Herzen hervorbrechen. Ich sehe in der Kulisse ein paar Mädel sich unterhalten, sehe, wie der Inspizient sich hinter der Szene die Nase putzt, und unzählige nüchterne Dinge, die mich eigentlich verwirren und zerstreuen müsten - aber merkwürdiger Weise tun es nicht. Die Anspannung meines Willens, das unbewußte innere Verwachsensein mit meiner Rolle, mein Gefühl für das in mir Glühende ist so stark, daß ich überall das eigentlich Störende gleichgültig, unempfindlich und, ich muß schon sagen, sieghaft in der Spannung meiner Carmen lebe, daß ich das andere Ich, mein eigenes beobachtendes Ich, gewaltsam niederdrücke, mich immer mehr und mehr in meine Carmen verliere, je weiter der Akt seinem Ende zugeht und die Steigerung errreicht." Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 55-56.

us with the human tragedy as it breaks out, and gives us the likeness of a true life of her time.<sup>43</sup>

This approach relates very closely to the idea of autonomy that has been developed in earlier chapters of this thesis. In particular, Gutheil-Schoder's emphasis on 'understanding' the character and 'seeing through her eyes', during the preparation of the role, makes clear that she approached the character as if it were a real person, whose actions have an emotional and/or practical logic. In addition to this, her emphasis on understanding the growing and changing of the character through the opera, and the way that her character interacts with others, corresponds very well to the idea of the subject's journey through a narrative that has been discussed above.

In discussing particular roles, Gutheil-Schoder expands on this idea of the character's autonomy, and also touches on issues that relate to the ideas of power and gender that I have identified in previous chapters. In 'Rolle und Gestaltung', she divides the roles that she has sung into three categories: small roles, lyric roles and large 'interesting' roles. She contends that even in the smallest role, interest can be found by developing a rounded character.

It's lovely to inject your imagination and your mental powers into a perhaps rather colourless character. To make it absorbing and attractive, with little traits of behaviour, with make-up, costume and gestures, so that your character can stand up to the main characters when they meet on stage. 44

She also points out that it was in a small role (Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*) that she was spotted by the impresario who pointed her out to Mahler, and thereby got her to Vienna. <sup>45</sup> Clearly her development of these minor characters rendered them noticeable. In creating a character who could 'stand up to' the main characters she shifted the balance of power in the scene, so

45 Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> 'So sehen wir denn die neugeschaffene Figur nun vor uns. Eine ganz persönliche Leistung und doch durch die Hingabe an den Geist des Werkes der entscheidene Teil eines Ganzen nimmt sich die Gestalt das Recht, als wirklicher Menschen auf der Bühne gewertet zu werden. Sie lockt uns in alle Falten ihrer Seele, in alle Phasen ihrer Empfindung. Sie erregt uns durch die Ausbrüche menschlicher Leidenschaft und gibt uns unter der Bühnengestalt ein Gleichnis des wirklichen Lebens ihrer Zeit.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 58.

<sup>44</sup> 'Wie reizvoll ist es da nun, seine Phantasie, seine geistige Kraft in diese vielleicht farblose Gestalt zu impfen! Sie durch kleine charakteristiche Züge, durch Maske, Kostüm und Gebärde fesselnd, anziehend zu gestalten und eventuell in den Szenen mit der Hauptfigur dieser Konkurrenz zu machen, ihr die Stirne der Persönlichkeit zu bieten!' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.39.

that although the story would not be focalised principally through one of these smaller roles, she gave the audience a sense of the character being a real person, rather than just a cipher in the story. In other words, she sees the character's power in the story, as a direct consequence of the expression of that character's autonomy.

Gutheil-Schoder's approach to lyric roles is particularly interesting in the context of the contemporary discourse on gender roles. Her idea of a lyric role is one which is 'limited to pretty looks and pretty singing'. <sup>46</sup> Often the 'softness and restraint' of a lyric character will be contrasted in the opera with another, stronger female character - she gives the example of Elsa (the lyric role) and Ortrud in *Lohengrin*. By implication, it is not lyric roles that are obviously interesting or appealing to her, compared to the less soft and restrained female roles. But once again she emphasises the importance of recognising that the character can have a 'rich inner life', <sup>48</sup> and that it can and should grow and develop through the opera:

You can make a lyric role tremendously interesting, lively and varied from within, by finding a logically consistent development in the soft lines of the character, and thereby giving it expressive colours of poetry and chastity that are always new.<sup>49</sup>

Nonetheless, she emphasises the character's subordination, writing that it 'loses its whole character and impact if it is seen as a first-singer role'<sup>50</sup>. The character should 'remain modest and passive even [...] where she takes an active part in the story' and 'the whole sweetness and greatness of her maidenly purity' means that ultimately her actions become the denoument of the opera and the main role is almost forgotten.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>\*&#</sup>x27;(sie) beschränkt sich auf schönes Aussehen und ebensolches Singen.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> 'Wenn diese Rolle als Gegensatz zur dramatischen Rolle gedacht ist, so ist Weichheit Zurückhaltung, mit einem Wort lyrische Durchführung geboten.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 39.

<sup>48</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p. 40

<sup>&</sup>quot;man kann diese Lyrik innerhalb eines Charakters doch ungemein Interessant, lebendig und wechselvoll gestalten, indem man bei folgerichtiger Einhaltung der weichen Linie der Figur immer neu Farben des Ausdruckes von Poesie und Keuschheit gibt.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.39.

<sup>\*\*</sup>O'Diese lyrisch Rolle also würde ihren ganzen Charakter und ihre Steigerung verlieren, wenn sie auch als Erste-Sängerinn-Rolle zu werten ist." Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.40.

51 'bis sich in der Schlußszene die ganze Süße ihrer Madchenhaftigkeit, Größe und Reinheit auftut die uns die größere, schimmernde Hauptrolle fast vergessen läßt.[...] Sie muß

There is a conflict, however, in her description of these roles, which is very illuminating. On the one hand, Gutheil-Schoder believes that she should find these characters admirable in their 'maidenly purity', echoing the contemporary idea that to be gentle and beautiful 'the seat of the sublime, the source of mildness and the focus of decency and morality' is a woman's only task. 52

On the other hand, her upholding of the beauty and purity of the "good girls" portrayed in lyric roles of the kind she discusses, in no way diminishes her enthusiasm for playing female characters who are dominant, demanding or trangressive. In an article in the Musikalische Kurier<sup>53</sup> she discusses her favourite roles, which include Carmen, Isolde, Salome, Elektra, Octavian and Katharina in Goetz's Die Widerspenstigen Zämung (The Taming of the Shrew). She is clearly comfortable with the appeal that these roles have for her, but she does recognise that a singer may have difficulty understanding and empathising with this kind of character. However, her discussion of these roles shows that she clearly considers this understanding and empathy to be an essential step in learning to portray characters like these.

The complexity of a new and interesting character can't be understood in a moment. Their irrational, perhaps unsympathetic behaviour in the opera, or at particular moments, requires a long-term empathy [Einfühlen], so that the understanding and the imagination can be stimulated more and more. The music is most responsible for the way the character is developed, and from its rhythms, themes and phrasing the character gains a style, which will inspire the instinct of the moment to give the portrayal a genuine expression of the character.54

bescheiden und passiv bleiben, damit sie eben am Schlusse, wo sie aktiv die Handlung eingreift, die Überraschung und Steigerung des Abends wird.' Gutheil-Schoder is discussing Frederike in Bittner's Der Musikant. Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle' p. 40

<sup>52</sup> Anderson Utopian Feminism, p.9, quoting Franz von Grabscheit (1894) (see Chapter Three footnote 40).

<sup>53</sup> Marie Gutheil-Schoder, 'Schattenrisse' Musikalische Kurier 2 19 (1920), 227.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Die Kompliziertheit dieser neuen interessanten Gestalt offenbart sich nicht in einem Augenblicke. Der sinnverwirrende, vielleicht unsympathische Charakter der Rolle oder manche Moment ihrer Psyche brauchen eine langes Einfühlen, wozu uns der Verstand, die Phantasie immer und immer wieder anregen muß. Den Hauptanteil für die Charakterisierung der Gestalt übernimmt die Musik, aus deren Rhythmik, Themen und Linienführung die Gestalt ihr eigentliches Gepräge erhält und wozu dann, wenn man begabt ist, im gegebenen Moment der Instinkt den eigentlich klärenden Ausdruck verlieht.' Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.40-41.

Gutheil-Schoder's enthusiasm for playing transgressive characters is striking. Hearing that *Salome* is planned for the 1918-1919 season in Vienna, she writes in great excitement:

I can't tell you how glad I am that I'll finally hear this work at the Opera and that I'll be singing the role in Vienna! You will be conducting, and you know well how happy I will be to work on it with you. I don't know if the date of the performance has been fixed, but do you think I should cut my holiday short? I was planning to return to Vienna on the 19th Sept, and had arranged things accordingly, but I'll willingly come back earlier, rather than miss any important rehearsals.<sup>55</sup>

Gutheil-Schoder clearly very much enjoyed the challenge of playing roles that trangressed contemporary rules of appropriate female behaviour, and was not deterred by the fact that the character might be very different from herself (as has been seen from her description of playing Carmen). She went to great pains to find the vocal characteristics that suited the nature of the characters that she played, and the predicaments that they find themselves in. For example, she writes vividly of her portrayal of Marta in Eugen d'Albert's *Tiefland*:

How hard I have worked at tone and technique until I found the right vocal expression for the story of Marta's life in Tiefland, to get it as I wanted it to be, and as seemed right for character given the monotone accompaniment of the orchestra. The hopeless atmosphere when this poor mistreated girl, in a completely dull and monotone voice, exposes her shameless unhappiness.<sup>56</sup>

She praises Mahler for his sympathy for another transgressive female character that she enjoyed playing,<sup>57</sup> Donna Elvira:

<sup>57</sup> In a letter to Anna von Mildenburg, she expresses her enthusiasm for the role: 'The allotting of Elvira has made me mad with joy [...]. I've always been really enthusiastic about this role, because I see and feel much more in her than is normally attempted. For [...] she

diese 'Rolle' in Wien zu singen! Sie werden es ja doch dirigieren und wissen welches Glück mir jede Arbeit mit Ihnen ist! Vielleicht ist noch gar nichts über den Zeitpunkt der Aufführung bestimmt oder glauben Sie daß ich meinen Nachurlaub verkürzgen sollte? Ich hatte mein Eintreffen in Wien für den 19. Sept bestimmt und dies bezüglich gebeten, will aber gern früher kommen um keine der wichtigen Proben zu versäumen.' Gutheil-Schoder to unnamed Kapellmeister (possibly Schalk, who conducted the first performance) 7th August 1918 (SB) Ultimately, Gutheil-Schoder did not sing in the Hofoper première but sang the role a number of times later in the season. (Vienna Opera records and posters, 1918).

'Wie viel habe ich z. B. tonlich und technisch gearbeitet, bis ich den richtigen stimmlichen Ausdruck in 'Tiefland' für die Erzählung von Marta's Leben fand, so wie ich es wünschte und wie es mir charakteristisch schien zu der monotonen Untermalung des Orchesters. Die trostlose Atmosphäre dieses armen, getreten Mädchens, das in ganz stumpfen, eintönig gehaltenem Gesang sein Unglück schamlos preisgibt". Gutheil-Schoder, 'Rolle', p.46-47. In Tiefland, Marta has been sold at a young age to Sebastiano, and has been his mistress for many years.

In a rehearsal he said what I had always thought: "Elvira should not be a half-sympathetic, half-laughable character, as she often appears. She is one of the noblest of them all, and her hate springs from her too-great love, as it does in a real woman." 58

This ability to sympathise with the unsympathetic is, indeed, at the heart of her admiration for Mahler:

In my opinion, Mahler's greatness as a director was best seen in Widerspenstigen [The Taming of the Shrew]. For him, Katharina wasn't a stubborn minx, but a very intelligent and emotional creature, surrounded by tedious relations, under a foolish father and mentally second-rate people, who eventually drive her to such fury, that she becomes an angry shrew.<sup>59</sup>

Though she does not pretend that these transgressive roles are easy to understand or to sing, the key to a good performance, for her, is to understand the inner life of the character, whether or not the character is not immediately sympathetic. And perhaps her enthusiasm for these transgressive roles lies in the challenge that understanding their inner lives presents to her.

# The response of others – Gutheil-Schoder and the world of opera

So far, I have focused on Gutheil-Schoder's work as she saw it herself. In looking at the way that others responded to it, it becomes clear that her commitment to the integrity of the character was understood and appreciated by those around her. This was despite the fact that her voice was not

<sup>38</sup> 'Auf der Probe Sprach er aus, was ich immer gedacht hatte: "Die Elvira darf nicht, wie es gewönlich gescheint, eine halb bemitleidenswert, halb lächerliche Figur sein. Sie ist eigentlich eine der Edelsten von allen und selbst ihr Haß entspringt nur ihrer übergroßen Liebe, wie das echt weiblich ist"'. Gutheil-Schoder, 'Opernregie', p.35

"Vielleicht das Größte hat Mahler als Regisseur nach meinem Empfinden in der

experiences an excess of both love and hate in the most wonderful range of passionate human expression" [Über die Zuerteilung der Elvira bin ich ganz närrisch vor Freude; [...]. Ich schwärme von jeher für diese 'Rolle' weil ich in ihr weit mehr erblicke und fühle als man gewöhnlich annimmt. Für [sie ist] [...] im Übermaaß von Liebe und Haß die in den herrlichsten Skalen menschlisch Leidenschaft Ausdruck finden müsste.] Letter to Anna von Mildenburg, 4th October 1905 (TS)

<sup>&</sup>quot;Vielleicht das Größte hat Mahler als Regisseur nach meinem Empfinden in der Widerspenstigen geleistet. Die Katharina war ihm keine eigensinnige Kröte, sondern ein sehr klüges, temperamentvolle Geschöpf, das in einer Umgebung von langweilig Verwandten, unter einem närrischen Vater und geistig untergeordneten Menschen schließlich zu solcher Raserei getrieben wird, daß es sich in die Widerspenstigkeit hineinwütet." Gutheil-Schoder, 'Opernregie', p.36. She also comments favourably on Mahler's sympathy for Petrucchio.

generally considered beautiful, a problem that may have been exacerbated by the demands that her approach, and the wide range of repertoire that she sang, made on her voice.

Gutheil-Schoder made her debut in Vienna in 1900 as Nedda in Pagliacci, and later in her week of guest appearances she also sang Carmen, with which she had a great success. The critics generally found her voice small and rather harsh, but were impressed (though sometimes shocked) by her acting, and her ability to 'switch from mirth to raging passion and from bitter contempt to total indifference'. 60 Mahler was very impressed, and engaged her permanently. He, too, recognised that her voice was not her greatest asset:

Gutheil-Schoder is another example of the enigma of personality, which is the sum of all that one is. With her mediocre voice and its even disagreeable middle register, she might appear totally insignificant. Yet each sound she utters has 'soul' [Seele], each gesture and attitude is a revelation of the character she's playing. She understands its very essence and brings out all its traits as only a creative genius can do.61

Therese Rie, writing in 1923 (when Gutheil-Schoder was still singing at the Opera), describes her voice as 'clear, brittle, harsh, floating with difficulty, as if it had been tamed and smoothed by her iron will'. 62 Clearly, it was not her voice, but her physical energy and commitment to the inner life of the character, that made her exceptional:

[There is] an extraordinary power in the soft and supple body, that is able to subject itself to every expression of the soul.<sup>63</sup>

and above all, her performances were remarkable in the way that everything she did had been thought through, so that it made sense of the role as a whole:

Green eine ungeheure Kraft steckte in diesem zarten, geschmiedigen und knabenhaften Körper, dem jedem seelische Ausdruck untertan gemacht werden konnte.' Rie, Gutheil-Schoder, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> La Grange , Mahler vol 2, quoting the critic Helm, p.252.
<sup>61</sup> La Grange, Mahler vol. 2, quoting Mahler, p. 253.
<sup>62</sup> 'ihr Sopran, hell, spröde, herb, floß nicht mühelos dahin, er muste erst von ihrer eisernen Energie gebändigt und geschmeidig gemacht werden' Rie, Gutheil-Schoder, p. 10.

Then there are no more dead patches, no empty moments, there is no note, word or rest for which she had not accounted to herself for the meaning, and this not only in her part, but in the whole opera.<sup>64</sup>

Mahler's high regard for Gutheil-Schoder led him to cast her in a very wide range of roles,65 not all of which seem to have suited her (this was, after all, when she was under 30, which by modern standards is extremely young to sing Eva in Die Meistersinger or Venus in Tannhaüser). She was, in any case initially viewed with suspicion by the Viennese public, since not only did she come from a small provincial opera house in Weimar, but she was seen as the replacement for Marie Renard, who had been much loved. 66 This combined with the hostility to Mahler in some of the press (compounded, La Grange suggests, by anti-semitism),<sup>67</sup> to give rise to some vitriolic reviews.

Max Graf, the Neues Wiener Journal music critic remembered seeing Mahler seated one day in the Imperial Café, a huge pile of newspapers on the table in front of him, distressed by the realization that not one Vienna critic had found anything to admire in [Gutheil-Schoder's] performance as Eva in Die Meistersinger.68

Although Gutheil-Schoder did also have successes, the turning point did not really come until 1906 when her Susanna (in Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro) 'scored one of the greatest triumphs of her entire career'. 69 Even those critics who had treated her most harshly were impressed, the 'usually caustic Liebstöckl', wrote:

[...] the gentleness and tenderness of her capricious voice is quite remarkable! She never loses the plot and the action for an instant. Her face and her entire being, and all the impulses of her heart lend colour and interest to her acting. Even when at rest, she is in motion within.70

The way that her vocal quality changed with the character's emotions, was particularly remarked on:

<sup>64 &#</sup>x27;Dann gibt es keine toten Punkt mehr, keine leere Stelle, dann ist keine Note, kein Wort und keine Pause, über deren Bedeutung sie nicht Rechenschaft von sich forderte, nicht nur in ihrer Partie, sondern in der ganzen Oper.' Rie, Gutheil-Schoder, p. 12.

<sup>65</sup> Later in Gutheil-Schoder's life, Rie comments that that there was almost no soprano role that she had not sung. Rie, Gutheil-Schoder p.9.

<sup>6</sup> Rie, Gutheil-Schoder p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> See Chapter Two, footnote 105.

<sup>68</sup> La Grange, Mahler vol. 2, p.254.
69 La Grange, Mahler vol. 3, p.334.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> La Grange, *Mahler* vol. 3, p. 334.

Richard Specht [...] noted that Gutheil-Schoder's voice which had been 'light, silvery and supple the whole evening' suddenly became 'hoarse and strained as she undressed the page for the fancy dress ball and touched his young, masculine body. Despite the ingenuousness of the acting, it suddenly became hot and self-conscious - a delightful moment'.<sup>71</sup>

Max Graf's description of Gutheil-Schoder's Carmen, similarly, points out the detailed precision of her portrayals, and also emphasises how she was prepared to sacrifice beauty for realism and dramatic impact. In his book on the Vienna Opera, he writes that 'with Gutheil-Schoder's Carmen, a new realism came to opera',72 describing her Carmen as 'something from the street, from the gutter, hard, brutal, and made gripping by a hundred ingenious details of acting' and contrasts it with the 'salon-gypsy' of her predecessor at the Hofoper, Marie Renard. 73 Once again, the character's power to gain the audience's attention and fire their imagination, comes from the expression of the character's inner life which makes it possible to create a realistic and convincing whole.

Gutheil-Schoder's relationship with those she worked with made her part of an operatic lineage - learning from those before her, teaching those who came after, as well as providing inspiration to her contemporaries. It is clear from the respect that she inspired in both critics and collaborators, that her underlying approach, as well as her performances, resonated with the preoccupations of the time. Her ability to create and sustain a character throughout the twists and turns of a plot must have informed Schoenberg's comment to her that the Woman in Erwartung was 'conceived as a Gutheilpart'. A Conversely, her memoir, Erlebtes and Erstrebtes makes it clear how important her experience of working with the greatest musicians of the day was to the success and creativity of her career. The most important influence

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> La Grange, Mahler vol. 3, p. 334.

<sup>72</sup> 'Mit der Carmen der Schoder kam der neue Naturalismus auf die Opernbühne' Max Graf,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> 'Mit der Carmen der Schoder kam der neue Naturalismus auf die Opernbühne' Max Grat, Der Wiener Oper (Wien: Humboldt 1955), p. 140.

<sup>73</sup> 'Sie war nicht mehr die schöne Salonzigeunerin, die auch noch die Renard gewesen ists, sondern kam von der Straße, aus der Gosse, war brutal, hard und fesselte mit hunderten geistreichen Spieldetails.' Graf, Wiener Oper, p. 141.

<sup>74</sup> '[Erwartung] is a monodrama with only one part, a real part, conceived as a Gutheil-part.' Arnold Schoenberg, Letter to Marie Gutheil-Schoder 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1913 in Letters This was written in 1913 when Schoenberg was trying to persuade Gutheil-Schoder to première the role of the Woman, an opportunity she refused because of difficult personal circumstances at the time (described in her letter to Schoenberg 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 1913) (SC).

was Mahler: her writings make clear how much she respected and valued him, and her words on his death sum this up:

For those who had the good fortune to be able to work with Gustav Mahler, who were able to devote every artistic sense to understanding him, a way was shown which was of inestimable worth, and which led them to the purest of artistic ideals.75

But she had mutually beneficial relationships with many of the other important figures of the day. Schoenberg listed her as one of the performers he had been most influenced by,76 and her 1924 performance of Pierrot Lunaire was generally considered to be 'the most brilliant performance from a public point of view'. 77 Zemlinsky (who was to conduct) chose her as the Woman for the première of Erwartung in 1924, although Schoenberg had also suggested his friend Marya Freund.<sup>78</sup>

She owed her first opportunities, though, to Richard Strauss. In Erlebtes und Erstrebtes, she recounts how, after a year at the Weimar Conservatoire she was told she could not continue her studies there, because she was insufficiently talented. A local teacher Frau Naumann-Gungl took her on as a pupil and it was through this teacher's friendship with Richard Strauss (then 25 and assistant conductor at the Weimar Opera) that Marie Schoder, aged 16, was engaged at the opera house in Weimar. Strauss seems to have taken her under his wing: involving her in all the new productions and coaching her in a wide variety of music. He gave her Wagner's writings to read and the following summer took her to Bayreuth to sing in the chorus,79 where she had the chance to hear the top singers of the day. Cosima Wagner, who encouraged the chorus to perform as individuals, and 'wanted each member of the chorus to have an individual character in the song competition scene in

<sup>75 &#</sup>x27;Wer das segensreiche Glück hatte, mit Gustav Mahler arbeiten zu können, mit allen

künstlerischen Sinnen sich ihm hinzugeben Werten, zu den reinsten Idealen in der Kunst führten.' Marie Gutheil-Schoder, 'Worte des Nachrufes für Gustav Mahler' Neue Freie Presse Abendblatt 19th May 1911, 5.

76 In Schoenberg's 'Notes for an Autobiography' he mentions Marie Gutheil-Schoder among the performers with whom his encounters were important. (probably written 1932, published 1944-45) Quoted in Joseph Auner (ed.), A Schoenberg Reader (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p.9.

<sup>75 5</sup>th January 1924 at the Berlin Singakademie. See Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg*, p. 217. 78 Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg*, p. 100. 79 Gutheil-Schoder 'Erlebtes p.7-9.

*Tannhäuser*′,<sup>80</sup> was probably influential in the approach to building a character that she later developed.

Back home in Weimar, she also got to know the composer Eugen d'Albert, and Felix von Weingartner (who later succeeded Mahler in Vienna), whose Lieder she often sang. Her first husband, Gustav Gutheil, a pupil of Richard Strauss and Kapellmeister at the Wiemar Opera, was another very important influence.

Our bond was not only a personal, but also an artistic relationship and a wonderful complement to my personality. My husband was an exacting critic of my work, a guardian of my gift, a restraint on my temperament, and my teacher and support in music. Under his direction I first sang the roles that I later became famous for in Vienna, such as Carmen, Nedda, Rose Friquet, Mignon.<sup>81</sup>

Gutheil-Schoder continued to benefit from coaching and teaching once her career was established. Particularly important to her was her work with the great singer Lilli Lehmann, which she described to Schoenberg as 'some of the most exciting work I have done in my life'. Lehmann worked her hard, expecting her to sing eight hours a day, and the work could be frustrating: 'During the lessons there were many tears, that were only dried by the knowledge of how much I was learning'. Sa

Gutheil-Schoder, who began as Strauss's protégée, became one of his most successful interpreters, singing Octavian at the Viennese première of *Der Rosenkavalier*, and innumerable Salomes and Elektras. Indeed in 1916, Strauss complains to Hofmannsthal,

In Munich they are doing Salome and Rosenkavalier on 10th and 12th August in honour of Mme Schoder. So I shall owe it to this Viennese singer alone if now and again a work of mine is allowed to be performed in my native city. It's a bit thick.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Gutheil-Schoder 'Erlebtes' p. 10

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> 'Unsere Verbindung was nicht nur in menschlicher, sondern in künstlerischer Beziehung eine wundervolle Ergänzung meines Ichs. Mein Mann, ein streng Kritiker meiner Arbeit, ein Hüter meiner Begabung, ein Zügler meines Temperaments was mir als echter Musiker Förderer und Lehrmeister. Unter seiner Führung sang ich zuerst viele meine später in Wein bekannten Rollen wie Carmen, Nedda, Rose Friquet, Mignon' Gutheil-Schoder 'Erlebtes' p. 13. Rose Friquet is in Louis-Aimé Maillart's Les Dragons de Villart.

<sup>82&#</sup>x27;das Studium dort gehört mit zu dem Aufregensten was ich noch im meinem Leben genoß!' Letter to Arnold Schoenberg 25th August 1911 (SC)

<sup>83 &#</sup>x27;Während des Unterrichtes gab es viele Tränen, die nur das Bewustsein eines großen Gewinnes trocknen konnte.' Gutheil-Schoder 'Erlebtes' p. 30.

<sup>84</sup> Richard Strauss to Hugo von Hofmannstahl, Strauss-Ĥofmannsthal Correspondence p.259

Strauss's good opinion of Gutheil-Schoder is shown a letter of 1915, where he praises her Elektra:

Through you I have "experienced" great sections of the role for the first time, particularly in the second half after the entry of Orest. The stillness of the conception, the wonderful vocal and technical mastery, the confidence with which it was carried out, the magnificence of the character's facial expressions and physical performance, in short the achievement of every kind, gives Elektra in your performance the mark of one of the greatest events of my life as a dramatic composer. A thousand, thousand thanks!'85

Sadly, their relationship was to sour in the autumn of 1916, when he replaced her with Lotte Lehmann as the Composer shortly before the première of the Vorspiel to *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Lehmann was embarrassed but, understandably, delighted.<sup>86</sup> Gutheil-Schoder, also understandably, was furious:

I find Strauss' action outrageous! One has now and then been aware of his unspeakable egoism, but it is new to me that he could be capable of associating himself with an inhumanity of this kind. Has this man no sense of the boundless brutality of exchanging me for a "more beautiful voice" four days before the performance? It was according to his expressed wish to see me in the opera, that I spent half of August and part of my autumn holiday studying the role, in order to master it. That this "great man" is so lacking in gratitude, that he can be allowed to prevail over me without any consideration, when I am an artist for whom he has had a certain respect, and to whom he has often expressed his "boundless" admiration! How much this shameless humiliation in rejecting me for the first performance, when he anyway knows how little recognition I have had from the Direction [of the Opera] - he has after all never seen me on stage [as the Composer], and if the other woman really does sing better, and have the more beautiful voice, Strauss still owes me some consideration. Any other man would understand and sympathise with my position.

If he really wants to do something for his work, he only needs to arrange that I should be released from performing the Composer, in which I have understandably lost all interest. It sticks in my throat whenever I think of it...<sup>87</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> 'Ganz große Partien der "Rolle", besonders in der zweiten Hälfte vom Eintritt des Orest ab habe ich durch Sie zum ersten Male "erlebt". Die Ruhe der Auffassung, die grandiose Wiedergabe der Figur in Mimik und plasticher Darstellung, kurz die Vollendung nach jeder Richtung hin, geben der Elektra in ihrer Darstellung den Stempel eines der größten Ereignisse iin meinem Leben als dramatischer Componist. Tausend, tausend Dank!' Richard Strauss to Marie Gutheil-Schoder 31st March 1916. Quoted by Gutheil-Schoder in 'Richard Strauß in Weimar' Die Theater und Musikwoche 1 29 (1919), 8.
<sup>86</sup> See Lehmann, Singing with Richard Strauss, pp. 3-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> 'Ich finde das Vorgehen von Strauß unerhört! Von seinem namenlosen Egoismus hat man sich ja schon des öftern überzeugen können, daß er aber mit diesem auch eine solche Unmenschlichkeit zu verbinden vermag, ist mir neu. Hat der Mann gar kein Gefühl welche grenzenlose Rohheit darin liegt, mich vier Tage vor der Aufführung gegen eine "schönere Stimme" einzutauschen, nachdem ich doch seinem ausdrücklichen Wunsche mich in der Rolle zu sehen das Opfer brachte, den halben August und einen Teil meines Herbsturlaubes

After this, Lehmann sang the premières of Die Frau ohne Schatten (as Barak's Wife) and Intermezzo (as Christine), while Gutheil-Schoder was demoted to the second cast for Viennese premières, singing Barak's wife after Lehmann, and Salome after Jeritza.88 She did, however sing Bianca in the Viennese première of Eine Florentenisches Tragödie (in a production that Zemlinsky apparently hated).89

Gutheil-Schoder's replacement by Lehmann illustrates one of the perennial conflicts in opera: the relative importance of acting ability, musicality and sheer beauty of voice. It is clear from contemporary reviews that Gutheil-Schoder's voice was never particularly beautiful, and the vocal demands of the roles she sang would have put considerable strain on it. But she was clearly a fine musician as well as a consummate actress. Strauss's choice of Lehmann was a preference for the more beautiful voice, although Lehmann admits herself that her musicianship was doubtful, and she often sang Strauss's difficult scores inaccurately.90

At the end of her career, Gutheil-Schoder worked to pass on her experience and insight to the next generation. Retiring from the opera house as a singer in 1926, she continued to work as a director at the Vienna Opera and as a coach. 91 As a director, she seems mostly to have undertaken comparatively small-scale and little-known works, such as a production of Purcell's Dido and

dran gab mich mit dem Studium der Rolle zu beschäftigen. Daß dieser "Große Mann" so jeder Erkennlichheit baar ist, gegen mich diese Rücksichtslosigkeit walten zu lassen, gegen eine Künstlerin für die er doch einen gewissen Respect empfinden müßte nachdem er ihr schon oft nur seine "grenzenlose" Bewunderung aussprach! Welche gerade zu schamlose Demütigung liegt darin mich gerade für die erste Aufführung zu verwerfen, nachdem er doch ohnehin weiß wie wenig Anerkennung ich von der Direction genieße - er hat mich noch gar nicht auf der Bühne gesehen und wenn wirklich die andre Dame dies oder jenes oder meinetwegen alles besser singt, die schönere Stimme hat, so ist doch gerade Strauß mir die Rücksicht schuldig, die jeder andere Mensch überzeugt in diesem Falle als einzig am Platz empfinden muß. Wenn er nun in Wahrheit etwas für sein Werk tun will, so soll er nur veranlassen daß ich von dem Componisten, für den ich nun begreiflicher Weise jedes Interesse verlor, befreit werde. Es schnürt mir die Kehle zu wenn ich nur daran denke...."

Letter to unknown Kapellmeister dated "Freitag" (SB) The première of the version of Ariadne with Vorspiel was on the 4th October 1916 (Vienna Opera posters).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Vienna Opera posters (TS).

<sup>89</sup> Beaumont, Zemlinsky, p. 248.
90 In Singing with Richard Strauss p. 15-16, Lehmann comments on Strauss' 'magnanimity' over the errors that she made, and describes his willingness to accept inaccuracies if the

overall effect was beautiful.

91 She also undertook the occasional guest performance of roles she knew well. For example, as Elektra in 1927. Letter to Alice Reuter 9th July 1927 (SB)

Aeneas in 1927, a real rarity at the time. In 1928, however, she directed Goetz's Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung, 92 a full length opera, whose central character Katharina had been one of her favourite (and most highly praised)93 roles.

In addition to this, her letters from this period mention a number of young singers that she is coaching in roles that she knew well. For the Paris première of Der Rosenkavalier, for example, she coached Germaine Lubin (1890-1979) in the role of Octavian, and her letters make clear her interest and commitment to the performance and her frustration at not being able to attend the first night.94 Hofmannsthal was very much impressed by the results of her coaching:

A great deal, a very great deal could be achieved with the help of Gutheil's coaching. It is astonishing what she made of Germaine Lubin, astonishing what she got out of that plump L. (in the part of Donna Anna).95

She also worked with younger singers on Schoenberg's Erwartung and Pierrot Lunaire. In a letter to Schoenberg, she writes of spending nearly three weeks working on *Erwartung* with an unnamed woman:

The woman is extremely musical and she came here well prepared, having learnt a lot of it already. She has a very active inner life and her way of expressing herself is very precise and clear, so it wasn't a big effort to prepare her from the point of view of acting. From the vocal point of view I hope she can endure the continual tension of both the nerves and the vocal chords, which is a matter of training.<sup>96</sup>

Marie Gutheil-Schoder died in October 1935. Her obituary in the Neue Freie Presse emphasised her versatility, the enormous range of roles and character-

Hadamowsky, Das Wiener Hoftheater, p.482.
 See La Grange, Mahler vol. 3, p. 492-493.
 Letters to Alice Reuter 8th and 20th February 1927 (SB).
 Hofmannsthal to Strauss 29th Oct 1927 Strauss-Hofmannsthal Correspondence, p. 453.
 Interestingly, in the same letter, Hofmannsthal says that the role of Salome 'requires no strains at all."

acting at all'.

\* 'Die Frau ist unheimlich musikalisch kann schon recht gut vorstudiert hier an und hat sehr viel und gut gelernt. Sie hat ein sehr reges Innenleben, ihre Ausdruchsfähigkeit daher sehr deutlich und klares bedurfte daher keiner allzugroßen Mühe sie auch darstellerisch zu formen. Stimmlich hoffe ich daß sie es aushält, denn die fortgesetzte Anspannung aller Nerven und der Kehle ist ja eine Angelegenheit des Trainings." Letter to Schoenberg 22nd Aug 1929 (SC). She also says how much she would like to stage the opera herself.

types that she played, and how her commitment to the inner life of each character made it possible for her to bring them to life.<sup>97</sup>

## Conclusion

Marie Gutheil-Schoder was part of the world of opera for forty years, influenced by, and influential on many others of the central figures of the day. Despite the critics' reservations about the quality of her voice, she was enormously respected and admired for her vocal and dramatic flexibility and the vividness of her portrayal of the characters she played. Her writings make clear that this stemmed from an absolute commitment to the creation of the inner life of the character. The score and libretto were the basis for the character she created, but during the rehearsal process the character's actions and emotions were developed as part of a person who could be seen as an autonomous whole. Although she was clearly aware of, and to some extent internalised the gender assumptions of the day, her work expressed a belief in the autonomy of the characters she created, which transcended the rules of "proper" female behaviour. In creating the character's inner life, Gutheil-Schoder was able to find sympathy for even the most transgressive characters' behaviour, giving the audience and her fellow artists the opportunity to empathise with their actions, even if they did not approve of them. The importance of the character's point of view can therefore be seen to be part not only of the Wirkung of the words, music and drama of operas, as recorded in the score, but also to both the Wirkung and the Rezeption of contemporary performances.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> 'Marie Gutheil-Schoder' (Obituary) Neue Freie Presse 4th Oct 1935.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

In writing this thesis, my aim was to understand the relationship between the discourse on gender in Viennese culture at the turn of the century and the operas that were part of that culture. I was interested in the way that the revolution in thinking about gender, that was triggered by the Women's movement, might be related to the revolution of innovation in the arts, that coexisted with it. My investigation of the non-musical discourse, which formed the starting place for my research, therefore drew together political, philosophical and literary texts which included the work both of prominent writers, and also writings by (usually less well-known) women, many of them supporters of the Women's movement, which have not often been discussed in the existing literature.

Analysis of the literary discourse showed how the contemporary concern with power, gender and autonomy was often expressed in terms of the alignment of gender dichotomies with others like *Geist* and *Geschlecht*, active and passive, subject and object. This last dichotomy became particularly important in the development of the idea of women's autonomy, which was most clearly visible in the writings of those influenced by the Women's movement, but could be seen to underlie the whole of the literary discourse on gender.

In using this material as a starting point for my analysis of the three operas and the life and work of Marie Gutheil-Schoder, which I used as case studies, it became clear that an understanding of the literary discourse on gender illuminated the operas, while, at the same time, seeing the operas in this way made the nature of the discourse clearer. In different ways, the operas I described reflect the contemporary concern with power, gender and autonomy, and in particular show a fascinating variety of approaches to the challenge of showing the "I" of the Other. Gutheil-Schoder's creative process focused on finding empathy with the characters she portrayed, perhaps particularly with characters that were not obviously sympathetic.

Zemlinsky's *Der Traumgörge* has perhaps the clearest relationship to the prevailing gender imagery of the period, with its emphasis on dichotomies linked to gender, including insider/outsider and active/passive, though the opera sets these dichotomies up only to question them. Zemlinsky's powerful and flexible use of variable motifs makes possible a subtle exploration of the growth and change in the central characters, as they develop beyond the limitations that the conventional dichotomies dictate.

Salome is striking for the representation of "Others" of many kinds: not only women, but also Jews and those whose obsessions lead them to insane behaviour. The patterns of imagery and symbolism that pervade the opera, (seeing and not seeing, hearing and not hearing and so on), are used to express the power relationships between the characters. While these patterns make use of the idea of dichotomy, the conventional and conventionally aligned dichotomies that inform the literary discourse, are rejected. The way that the opera switches focalisation from one character to another, and moves from empathy to mockery gives a fascinating insight into contemporary interest in subjective experience, and how that can be reflected in music and drama.

Erwartung expresses this same preoccupation in a way that is almost at the opposite extreme: the Woman's experience is represented with such detailed precision and so little explanatory frame or judgement, that it is perhaps not surprising that the opera has been widely misunderstood. By seeing the libretto of Erwartung as part of a tradition of autonomous monologue, however, it becomes clear that the extreme emotions expressed in both text and music are best understood as an expression of the intensity of mental experience in general, rather than the instability of a specific female mind. This understanding then makes it possible to analyse Schoenberg's compositional process in terms of the tight connection between dramatic and textual detail on the one hand, and musical structure, gesture and texture on the other.

The analytical methods used to investigate the operas were a response to their different compositional styles, in both the libretto and the music. In all three case studies, my desire to take the libretti seriously meant that I observed patterns in the text such as those of imagery and the way that the characters grew and changed through the course of the opera. A number of kinds of relationship between music and text then became apparent. These included places of congruence, where the music served to illustrate the text (as in the many examples noted by Berg in the score of Erwartung), or where gesture, texture or changes in texture are used to highlight dramatic situations. Strauss' and Zemlinsky's compositional styles also include the use of motifs in variable forms which nuance the dramatic situation, an opportunity which Zemlinsky makes use of in a particularly subtle and interesting way in Der Traumgörge. Finally, conflict between the music and the text can be used to achieve an ironic and distancing effect, as is seen particularly clearly in *Salome*. The idea of the orchestral voice acting as narrator proved to be a particularly fruitful one, in highlighting these different relationships between the libretto and the music.

My description of Gutheil-Schoder's life and work show how this preoccupation with the inner life informed the preparation and performance of her roles throughout the operatic repertoire. Her successes and failures show that her approach was both influential and highly valued but also unusual and not always successful, in the eyes of those around her. This gives an insight into the relationship between the discourse and the creative work of performers, which looking at the texts alone cannot. It is particularly interesting because of Gutheil-Schoder's own awareness of her creative process, which sets her writings apart from the majority of autobiographical and didactic writing by singers. My research into Gutheil-Schoder's work brings together manuscript and printed sources for the first time, and is (to my knowledge) the first significant piece of writing on her in English. It is also valuable in providing insight into performance from the performer's point of view, which is part of this thesis' focus on Wirkung – the effect or workings of the operas, rather than simply their reception - as I describe in the opening chapters.

The approach to opera that this thesis has adopted illustrates how considering opera in terms of the horizon of expectation of its contemporaries can enrich understanding of opera. From the musicological point of view, I have been struck by the way that immersing myself in the non-musical discourse enabled me to see and hear patterns in the libretto and score which often I had not seen discussed in the literature, and which created fascinating and compelling new readings. I have also been left with an enhanced appreciation and respect for the skill of the opera's creators, which is perhaps particularly striking in the case of the relatively obscure *Der Traumgörge*. The patterns that I observed did not in general mean that the music appeared to be specifically "gendered" (in the sense, for example of the "gendering" of themes as masculine or feminine that Susan McClary discusses). Rather, my investigation of gender issues lead to insights not only into their representation at this period, but also into a discourse on gender which forms part of a much wider discourse on the nature of human experience. And in general, it seems that this approach to opera makes it possible to link details of libretto and score to much larger issues and concepts.

Nonetheless, there are undoubtedly limitations to this type of research, and problems that it brings to light. Most obviously, there is the problem of attempting to understand a complex discourse from a limited number of sources. Not only is it ultimately impossible to be sure that one's choice of sources is representative, but writing on gender is always handicapped by the way that particular viewpoints have been privileged. Texts by men are in general much more widely known, commented on, translated and included in the literature than texts by women, and although I have tried to redress this balance by assembling all the information I can about women's political, philosophical and literary points of view, because of the difficulty in locating and gaining access to the material, there are still significant gaps.

The power of this way of looking at a discourse is also, in a sense, an inevitable limitation. Although extracting particular themes and pre-occupations from a range of material makes patterns in the discourse visible in a way which is fascinating and compelling, one can never be sure how far

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See, for example McClary, 'Of Patriarchs...' pp. 4-5.

those themes have been drawn out of the material, and how far they have been imposed upon it. While I have tried to ground my analysis by engaging with the discourse in as detailed and specific way as possible, the underlying uncertainty that what is seen is actually representative of the discourse, remains.

More specifically, limited research time in Vienna restricted my ability to seek out additional primary resources in this area, such as newspaper articles, reviews and comments on performances in letters and diaries, in order to get a better sense of individual audience member's response to the ideas which I have described as 'made available' to them. This would have enabled me to add to my investigation of performance in terms of *Wirkung* with a more detailed appreciation of *Rezeption*. My investigation of the nature of contemporary performance would also have gained from information about the staging and costumes that were used in Vienna at the time. Unfortunately, access to these collections was very limited at the time that I conducted this research.

Clearly, there is scope to extend this research in many directions. As works by women gradually become more visible as a result of research and publication, it becomes increasingly possible to balance the more familiar discourse in texts by men with an appreciation of women's contribution to the discourse, both in literary and in musical texts. Examining a broader range of written texts would make it possible to look at the differences in the discourse as expressed in non-fiction and polemic, compared with fictional and other literary treatments. Meanwhile, among musical texts, it would be particularly interesting to study an opera from the period written by a female composer, such as Irma von Halacsy's *Antinöos* (1908),² as well as further operas with libretti by women such as the opera *Das Corrigedor* (libretto by Rosa Mayreder, music by Hugo Wolf). This research could also form a useful starting point for an investigation of the discourse in 1920s Vienna, which would make it possible to see how the upheavals of the First World War, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Aaron I. Cohen, *International Dictionary of Women Composers* (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1981), p. 202 provides a brief summary of von Halacsy's life and works.

women's legal emancipation, related to the opera that was written at this time.

There is also a great deal more work that could be done in understanding the contribution that singers have made to opera in performance. Primary material of the kind that I gathered in my research on Marie Gutheil-Schoder certainly exists for other singers, and would give insight into the importance of singers 'mentality' as well as their 'corporeality' (to use Susan Rutherford's distinction),<sup>3</sup> although it is likely that singers vary considerably in the extent to which their creative process is conscious, and consciously recorded.

It would also be valuable to extend this research to investigate the links between the discourse that I have described, and that which is seen in visual art, which has its own rich variety of ways of representing. In particular, there has been fascinating work done on visual art from a feminist perspective, and this could inform this broader research in a way that would be extremely illuminating. The relationship between the work of visual artists of the period and the visual aspects of its opera would be a particular fascinating area of study. In addition to this, there is work to be done in understanding the links between different kinds of theatre at this time: text theatre, opera, melodrama and so on.

The value of this work far transcends "merely academic" interest (which is not to belittle the importance of academic interest). It has the power to enrich the performance and appreciation of music, to clarify the cultural and sociopolitical history that underlies the modern world and, ultimately, to aid understanding of the viewpoints that are part of the world we live in, as the rest of this conclusion aims to show.

The new and deeper understanding of the works, which I gained as a result of my research, was central to my preparation of the performance which forms the other part of my PhD submission. The performance was constructed in an attempt to express in an intuitive way (as opposed to the rational and linear structure which is natural to an academic thesis) the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See Chapter Two, footnote 41.

themes and patterns which I saw emerging in my research. I found that my knowledge of the discourse informed my interpretation of the music at all levels: not only in the choice of excerpts and the ways of staging them that I developed with the director, but in the details of the musical inflections: breathing, dynamics, tempo and timbre. This experience made it clear to me that the sort of historical awareness that this thesis aims to achieve can be enormously valuable to performers in developing compelling interpretations. It also showed the value of the performer's insight into the way that a piece of music works: many of the ideas expressed in this thesis first came into being during the process of developing my performance.

The understanding of the operas, which I gained from preparing the performance, shed light in its turn on the nature of the broader discourse. During the course of my research, I was struck by the fact that the patterns that I observed in the discourse were not merely patterns of symbolism and familiar dichotomies (though those certainly arose) but included fundamental ideas about the nature of society and of human experience. The repeated appearance of issues of power, gender and autonomy not only illuminated early twentieth-century Viennese culture, but also made it clear that these are issues that are fundamental to many of the questions about society and its workings that are debated today. Although I deliberately focused my research quite narrowly in time and space, the result is an understanding of underlying human questions that is much more generally applicable.

Discussing gender involves making divisions: saying that one thing is like another and different from a third:

When we identify one thing as like the others, we are not merely classifying the world, we are investing particular classifications with consequences and positioning ourselves in relation to those meanings. When we identify one thing as unlike the others, we are dividing the world; we use our language to exclude, to distinguish – to discriminate.

This exclusion and discrimination immediately has implications for the autonomy of the Other. By labelling a group of people as Other there is the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Solie, 'Introduction', p. 2 quoting Martha Minow (1990).

risk that their humanity is denied, and in many cases (such as for slaves and, in many societies, women), this has immediate consequences for their power to control their own lives. But by ignoring Otherness, there is a risk that the group's particular experience is ignored, its contribution to society wasted, and its members frustrated and alienated. As Solie puts it: 'What we need [...] are ways of understanding when different treatment stigmatizes and when similar treatment stigmatizes by disregarding difference.'5

The key to this, the work I have done implies, is to gain a better understanding of the point of view of the marginalised and silenced: The "I" of the Other. Marie Gutheil-Schoder's approach to her roles makes this particularly clear: her characters came to life because she tried to see through their eyes and think their thoughts, so that however alien their behaviour might seem initially, by the first performance she had created a whole and comprehensible personality. And by creating a character whose point of view was clear to her, she made that point of view available to her audiences. The respect and admiration that her work inspired in her contemporaries, seems to have been very much a result of this interest in, and talent for, creating convincing characters whose autonomy made empathy possible.

In *The Dignity of Difference*, Jonathan Sacks points out the fear that can be engendered by rapid changes in our world:

Bad things happen when the pace of change exceeds our ability to change, and events move faster than our understanding. It is then that we feel the loss of control over our lives. Anxiety creates fear, fear leads to anger, anger breeds violence, and violence [...] becomes a deadly reality.

It seems clear that both the fear and the excitement that are expressed in the discourse on gender in Vienna were inspired by a sense that, for better or worse, the world was changing. And the history of the decades that followed the period I have studied shows all too clearly the consequences of the fear of the Other that were expressed at that time. But if the discourse at this time has in it the beginnings of the violence and fear that characterised the mid-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Solie, 'Introduction' p.2.
<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference How to avoid the clash of civilisations* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 2.

twentieth century in Europe, it also gives a clue to the way forward and away from it. For, as Jonathan Sacks puts it:

The greatest single antidote to violence is conversation, speaking our fears, listening to the fears of others and in that sharing of vulnerabilities discovering a genesis of hope.7

And in that conversation, the arts and the humanities have an important, even vital, role to play.

The power of the arts to express human subjectivity in a way which goes beyond the intellect means that they can make available an understanding of other points of view which is intuitive and emotional as well as rational. If Jonathan Sacks is right, it is the emotional and intuitive grasp of other's humanity that ultimately makes the difference to how they are treated. This is not to say that an appreciation of the arts guarantees good behaviour, but simply that the arts give the opportunity to listen to the viewpoint of others.

At the same time, the more reflective and self-critical approach taken by academic writings such as this thesis, is also vital. By engaging with issues and discourses in an explicit way, critical and analytical writing creates a discussion which can be built upon, modified and refined. Despite the power and importance of post-modern doubts about the possibility or even desirability, of a search for truth, it seems to me clear that while Truth may never be unequivocally the *product* of a research project, the *process* that is adopted can be more or less honest in its truth-seeking. To use an idea of Roger Parker's, there is a 'spikiness' to things when looked at in detail (he is referring to music, but I think the point has more general application),8 which it is important to honour. I would never claim that the patterns I have identified were the only ones, or even the only important ones, in the works or the discourse that I have studied. But I do believe that an honest and meticulous process will yield ideas that are more enriching, and ultimately

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Sacks, The Dignity of Difference p. 2 (Italics in original)
<sup>8</sup> 'In my experience [...] when looked at closely, texts tend to become spiky; they present all kinds of anomalies that will resist too easy assimilation into this or that orthodoxy' Parker, Leonora's Last Act, p. 6.

more valuable to our understanding of the world, than one which is too quick to adopt a particular stance or ideology.

The importance of this lies in the use that is made by society of the information. Our view of others, whether others like ourselves or Others who are different, and our view of the past (which has its own Otherness) are central to the decisions that are made for the here-and-now, and the way that society is persuaded to acquiesce in those decisions. Ideologies of the past, of race and of gender are of course central to the repression in societies like Stalin's Russia, Nazi Germany or modern Iran. But that is not to say that ideologies are not important in other places or times, although the results may not be repressive in the same way. The value of conversation (in Jonathan Sacks' sense) is that it makes it more likely that ideologies are grounded in the humanity and value of the Other, rather than seeing Others as a threat or a distraction.

My research for this thesis began with a question: how does the discourse on gender in early twentieth-century Vienna relate to its opera? In working to answer that question, it has become clear that thinking about opera in this context can enrich understanding of the way that words and music, both notated and performed, do their work and have their effects. More generally, this research also shows that thinking about gender involves thinking about many other things about the nature of society and of human experience. There is much more work that could be done, and I hope that this thesis provides encouragement to those who might undertake similar work, as well as providing evidence of its value.