THE SYMBOLISM OF EVIL

IN

BERLIOZ'S *SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE*

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ABSTRACT

Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* contains a musical representation of evil that is rooted in a long history of the concept of evil in Western culture. This concept has varied with time and ideological change, giving rise to a rich and complex symbolism of evil which would have influenced Berlioz in his compositional choices and can still inform our own interpretations of the symphony. It is the perpetuation of past symbolisms of evil that makes this possible.

This thesis contextualises the *Symphonie fantastique* in relation to the Western cultural symbolism of evil, exploring a number of areas of this symbolism, tracing the history in which they are founded, and identifying how they manifest themselves in the symphony and might influence an interpretation of the work.

The symbolisms of deviation and disorder are reflected in the deviation from musical rules, the use of chaotic music, and the musical intimation of bodily disorder. The body itself, in its correlation with sex and juxtaposition with "civilised reason," provides a symbolism of evil which can be read in the corporeal nature of the music, particularly its reliance on dance rhythms. The body is also implicated in the symbolism of malconformation in which the ugliness associated with evil and the grotesque can be identified in many aspects of the music. The symbolism of triviality in this symphony is problematic in relation to the otherness associated with evil, particularly the feminine other.

Not only does the symphony reflect these symbolisms of evil, it also contributes to their perpetuation, assisting in their establishment as a seemingly natural corollary of evil. That the symbolism might not correlate with our current concept of evil makes it important that we recognise the context of the symbols, the morality that they reflect and the vilifications they naturalize.

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INTRODUCTION

Hector Berlioz wrote the *Symphonie Fantastique* in 1830 as a program symphony. Berlioz wrote multiple versions of the program for the *Symphonie Fantastique*, although it remained essentially the same. The version published with the score in 1845 reads as follows:

PART ONE
REVERIES – PASSIONS

> The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted with that moral disease that a well-known writer calls the *vague des passions*, sees for the first time a woman who resembles all the charms of the ideal being he has imagined in his dreams, and he falls desperately in love with her. Through an odd whim, whenever the beloved image appears before the mind's eye of the artist it is linked with a musical thought whose character, passionate but at the same time noble and shy, he finds similar to the one he attributes to his beloved.
>
> This melodic image and the model it reflects pursue him incessantly like a double *idée fixe*. That is the reason for the constant appearance, in every movement of the symphony, of the melody that begins the first Allegro. The passage from this state of melancholy reverie, interrupted by a few fits of groundless joy, to one of frenzied passion, with its movements of fury, of jealousy, its return of tenderness, its tears, its religious consolations – this is the subject of the first movement.

PART TWO
A BALL

> The artist finds himself in the most varied situations – in the midst of *the tumult of a party*, in the peaceful contemplation of the beauties of nature; but everywhere, in town, in the country, the beloved image appears before him and disturbs his peace of mind.

PART THREE
SCENE IN THE COUNTRY

> Finding himself one evening in the country, he hears in the distance two shepherds piping a *ranz des vaches* in dialogue. This pastoral duet, the scenery, the quiet rustling of the trees gently brushed by the wind, the hopes he has recently found some reason to entertain – all concur in affording his heart an unaccustomed calm, and in giving a more cheerful colour to his ideas. He reflects upon his isolation; he hopes that his

loneliness will soon be over. – But what if she were deceiving him! – This mingling of hope and fear, these ideas of happiness disturbed by black presentiments, form the subject of the Adagio. At the end, one of the shepherds again takes up the *ranz des vaches*; the other no longer replies. – Distant sound of thunder – loneliness – silence.

PART FOUR
MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD

Convinced that his love is unappreciated, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose of the narcotic, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a sleep accompanied by the most horrible visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned and led to the scaffold, and that he witnesses *his own execution.* The procession moves forward to the sounds of a march that is now sombre and fierce, now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled noise of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamour. At the end of the march the first four measures of the *idée fixe* reappear, like a last thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

PART FIVE
DREAM OF A WITCHES' SABBATH

He sees himself at the Sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, come together for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque: it is she, coming to join the Sabbath. – A roar of joy at her arrival. – She takes part in the devilish orgy. – Funeral Knell, burlesque parody of the *Dies irae, Sabbath round-dance.* The Sabbath round dance and the *Dies irae* combined.[1]

This narrative can be read as a progressive descent into evil. Signs of trouble disturb the "reverie" of the first movement, leading to a state of "frenzied passion, with its movements of fury, of jealousy." At the ball, the artist's peace of mind is disturbed, and in Part Three his newfound happiness is disturbed by "black presentiments." The dreams induced by his suicide attempt then lead through his own execution to the final stage of this work's trajectory toward evil. D. Kern Holoman states that "the fifth movement... is in many ways the focal point of the *Fantastique.*"[2] It is this movement that I will analyse in detail. I will also look at the work as a whole, especially with regard to the treatment

[1] Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony,* ed. Edward T. Cone (New York: Norton, 1971), pp. 23-25.
[2] D. Kern Holoman, *Berlioz* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 107.

of the *idée fixe* and the overall trajectory of the work, but it is clearly in the finale that the demonic truly enters the picture and in which Berlioz paints the clearest image of evil.

The concept of evil – what evil is and what is evil – is not static and homogenous but varies according to opinion, perspective, religion, culture, era and other factors. Seen not as an eternal truth or an external force in the world, one might in fact question the very existence of evil. It might indeed be said that evil itself does not exist until we deem it so. Moral evaluation, however, is a necessary corollary of human society. In the formation of community the interests of the individual must become subordinate to the interests of the group. "This replacement of the power of the individual by the power of a community constitutes the decisive step of civilisation. The essence of it lies in the fact that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction."[3] These restrictions – what Freud called the collective superego and Jung the collective shadow – define the shape of evil in any given society. They are not fixed, however, and will vary according to the prevailing societal ideology, in accordance with what seemingly constitutes the best interests of a group. Evil, therefore, does exist, but as a cultural construct, a fluid concept open to debate and modification. I will, then, use the word evil not with any fixed definition but to denote the *concept* of evil with its concomitant mutability.

But how might one hear evil in Berlioz's music? Why are certain musical codes used to signify evil and why does their use seem so natural? What are the cultural and ideological foundations or assumptions that underlie these associations? How can this music serve to perpetuate the symbolism of evil?

These are some of the questions that I will attempt to address in relation to Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. They are inherently thorny questions as are any enquiries involving representation and meaning in music. Music is a slippery, polysemous art form with no fixed meanings written into an autonomous "music itself."[4] Any meaning we might find in music is grounded in our own cultural experiences, which unavoidably inflect the ways in which we interpret and make sense of the sounds. Music can mean in different ways to different people but it can also be polysemous for the individual. A particular musical feature will not always and everywhere mean one and the same thing. One might, for instance, associate dissonance with evil, but obviously it does not always signify evil.

Considering the problem from a different perspective, it is clear that certain musical features do seem aptly to depict evil. When composers construct "evil" music, or if one is asked to think what this music might sound like, certain features do tend to recur, functioning, as it were, as musical codes for evil (for example dissonance or the

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[3] Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1957), 21:95.

[4] For the cultural theory of music and arguments against the concept of 'autonomy' in music see Liz Garnett, "Musical Meaning Revisited: Thoughts on an 'Epic' Critical Musicology," *Critical Musicology Journal*, (May 14, 1998), http://www.leeds.ac.uk/music/Info/CMJ/Articles/1998/01/01.html; Lawrence Kramer, "The Musicology of the Future," *Repercussions*, Vol.1, No. 1, (Spring 1992), pp. 5-18; Gary Tomlinson, "Musical Pasts and Postmodern Musicologies: A Response to Lawrence Kramer," *Current Musicology*, No. 53, (1993), pp. 18-24.

diminished seventh chord). There does seem to exist a kind of musical language of evil. So even if these techniques or codes have no fixed meaning, neither are they used arbitrarily. If these codes seem able to function so naturally as symbols of evil it is due to their relation to the wider cultural symbolism that has become associated with the Western concept of evil.

When one versed in western culture and history merely hears the word evil, a whole host of associations come unavoidably and unbidden to mind, whether we are entirely conscious of them or not. Throughout its long history in Western civilization, the varying concept of evil has amassed a large bank of associations that now form part of the Western cultural consciousness of evil.

This accumulated symbolism might be thought of in terms of Paul Ricoeur's theory of symbolic transposition. In *The Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur discusses the ancient consciousness of defilement stating that, although the concept no longer forms part of our notion of evil, it gave birth to a symbolism which "has not simply been left behind but has been retained, and which perhaps conceals something that cannot be left behind, by which it survives through a thousand mutations."[5] Although the Western concept of evil varies over time, its various manifestations bring associated symbolisms that in this way outlive the concept itself.

Pierre Bourdieu has also explored this promulgation of symbolism and ideology. His theory of "habitus" similarly suggests how cultural constructs such as the symbolism of evil can be upheld and passed on through time. According to his *Theory of Practice*, "in short, the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history."[6] Habitus results in the reproduction of social structures such as the symbolism of evil, whilst concomitantly naturalising those very structures. "When habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water'... it takes the world about itself for granted."[7] Habitus produces a symbolism of evil which appears as the natural corollary of evil itself, just as that concept of evil also becomes naturalized.

These apparently natural symbolisms embedded in the individual and collective consciousness of both composer and listener inevitably play a role in the composition and interpretation of any music intended or known to represent evil. It is quite possible that upon hearing Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* a listener might not identify any such symbolism, or even recognize an expression of evil in the music. If the evil context is known, however, the "natural" associations are unavoidably made and can then influence an interpretation of the music. The symphony is, therefore, an ideal candidate for this analysis: as a texted work, one can be reasonably sure where the music is intended to represent evil.

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[5] Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 26.

[6] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 82.

[7] Pierre Bourdieu and Löic J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), p. 127.

It is through their reproduction that cultural constructs are perpetuated and further naturalized. The representation of evil in art, therefore, plays a major role in the construction of that which it is representing. As such, it is important that we examine how evil is represented and the symbolism that is being drawn upon and propagated. This awareness is particularly important in the context of evil, as an association with evil can clearly be very damaging. The symbolism of evil has accumulated many elements that effectively demonize particular phenomena, including the others of religion, race, class, gender and more. These are associations that we clearly would not wish to perpetuate and we must therefore be aware of the ideology and cultural history of evil that is being reinforced.

It is my intention to explore Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* in relation to the cultural symbolism of evil; to identify the symbolisms that might have influenced Berlioz's compositional choices and also those which might inform an interpretation of the work and therefore be potentially reinforced and perpetuated. This approach will reflect the kind of contextualization advocated by Gary Tomlinson, that he hopes will "resolutely historicize musical utterance, exploding it outwards through an imaginative building of contexts out of as wealthy a concatenation of past traces as the historian can manage."[8] He bases this approach on the model of Foucauldian archaeology/genealogy.

In Chapter 1 I will briefly explore the climate of evil in Berlioz's own time; what formed the concept of evil at that time and what were the attitudes toward evil and its representation. The Romantic preoccupation with evil imagery and the grotesque will also be discussed. The symbolisms of deviation and disorder will then be taken up in Chapter 2, where I will explore the ways in which they have come to be associated with evil and how it is possible to see them at work musically in the *Symphonie Fantastique*. Chapter 3 will perform a similar task in relation to issues of the body and malconformation. In Chapter 4 the symbolism of triviality will lead to the important issues of the other and gender representation in the context of evil and the symphony.

[8] Gary Tomlinson, "Musical Pasts and Postmodern Musicologies: A Response to Lawrence Kramer," *Current Musicology,* No. 53, (1993). p. 22.

CHAPTER 1

EVIL IN BERLIOZ'S WORLD

In looking at the *Symphonie Fantastique*, it is not only important to contextualise the symbolism of evil within Western culture and history, but also to explore the context within which the piece was written. What formed the concept of evil in France around 1830? What might Berlioz's own view of evil have consisted of?

The time in which the symphony was written certainly falls within a crucial period in the history of evil. It was a time of great turmoil and change in which traditional religious ideology was struggling to survive against the new scientific explanation of the world. This tension can be seen embodied in the differing beliefs of Berlioz's parents. "His mother was a believer, his father an eighteenth-century 'encyclopaedist'; that is to say a man of advanced ideas, for whom religion had a much attenuated meaning."[9] His father, whilst sceptical of all things supernatural, was not an atheist but a deist, believing that a creator had laid down the laws of nature that science observed. Berlioz himself was reared in the Holy Apostolic Roman Catholic Church but, due to the influence of both of his parents, was acutely aware of the issues of his time and the problems inherent in both sides of this ideological conflict.

The scientific and philosophical developments of the Enlightenment that so influenced Berlioz's father are of great importance to the climate of evil in Berlioz's time. The longstanding ideology of established religion began to falter for a number of reasons. The French revolution severely weakened Christendom and Napoleon abandoned the Holy Roman Empire, officially severing the ties between church and state. Increasing urbanisation meant that as people moved from the countryside with its more traditional, authoritarian values, they abandoned their old habits and beliefs, turning to new ideas to explain their poor living conditions.[10] Of great importance was the rise of the sciences, empiricism and materialism, and the frequently contradictory new light that these movements shone on previously unquestionable religious explanations of the world.

The scepticism of the enlightenment theorists increased and, although their views were diverse, they were virtually united in their opposition to Christianity.[11] Leader of these philosophes for most of the eighteenth century was Voltaire, whose ideas opened the way for greater and greater alienation from religious ideology and belief, eventually resulting in atheism and moral relativism. Like Berlioz's father, Voltaire was a deist, arguing that the order of nature was evidence of God's existence, but beyond His existence we can know nothing about Him. "Voltaire was tempted to say that since we know nothing about the existence of God, we know nothing about absolute good and evil, and the problem of evil does not exist."[12] Like many others, however, he shied away

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[9] Jaques Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1951), p. 11.

[10] Peter Stanford, *The Devil: A Biography* (London: Heinemann, 1996), p. 200.

[11] Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 134.

[12] Ibid

from this conclusion, insisting that morality is dictated by the laws of nature, which can be discerned through reason. Later philosophes discarded even this idea, however, and "before the end of the century, the lack of objective standards became the most troublesome problem for the Enlightenment and led, in the Marquis de Sade, to the realisation of Voltaire's worst fears."[13] Sade took atheistic relativism to its logical conclusion denying the existence of all values and morals and in his stories, revelling freely in what most would have deemed evil.

Clearly this extreme turmoil in the very concept of morality had a profound effect on the symbolism of evil. The scepticism and atheism of the Enlightenment meant that the symbolism of evil became detached from the religious belief in which much of it was grounded. The symbolism was perpetuated but it gained a newfound freedom and its meanings began to shift.

The transgressive nature of evil meant that its symbolism could be adopted for the Revolution. The Church stood against the Revolution and the revolutionaries attacked Christianity, adopting the essentially Christian symbolism of evil and imbuing it with new meaning. Satan, who rebelled against the tyranny of God, became a symbol of individualist rebellion against the old regime and "a martyr of simple minded honesty."[14] Satan also came to be associated with progress and investigation, the thirst for knowledge reflecting the Genesis story. This association is evident in Goethe's telling of the *Faust* legend. *Faust* became an important and highly influential work in the Romantic era and Faust himself "seemed to embody the will of the moment... he stood for genius in all its greatness and misery."[15] Berlioz was himself greatly influenced by *Faust* and composed music inspired by the story. Jaques Barzun suggests that an initial motivation for the *Symphonie Fantastique* was to write a descriptive symphony on *Faust* and that the final movement of the work in particular was influenced by Goethe's story.[16]

Clearly the symbolism of evil had shifted by Berlioz's era so that it could represent what were now seen as desirable, attractive qualities. It was also used to satisfy the Romantic predilection for exploring the depths and extremes of human nature, much in the tradition of the Marquis de Sade. To fill the void left by the rational, scientific philosophes, Romanticism emphasised the aesthetic and the emotional. "The search for the emotionally and psychologically stimulating encouraged a taste for the miraculous, the supernatural, the weird, and the grotesque."[17] The important Romantic concept of the sublime could be achieved through the symbolism of evil since terror and suffering "were thought to tap the most profound and powerful human emotions and call forth the highest manifestations of the human spirit."[18]

A decline in religious belief and the new emotionalism and aestheticism of the Romantics led to a new form of religion that seemed free of all contradictions – the

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[13] Ibid., p. 137.

[14] Paul Carus, *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, c1974), p. 415.

[15] Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, p. 87.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles*, p. 173.

[18] Ibid., p. 174.

religion of art. "Art was the highest conceivable expression of Man [sic]. Art was the infallible critic of life and society... Art was spirit and therefore immortal."[19] Art had a duty to deal with the most important of issues including the tension between good and evil in the human heart. This view of the importance of art can clearly be seen in *Lelio*, Berlioz's sequel to the *Symphonie Fantastique*. The artist is drawn out of his opium-induced dream and overcomes his unrequited love by dedicating himself to his art – "*music*, his one true mistress."[20]

The new and differing uses of the symbolism of evil led to a complex and contradictory relationship with evil in art. Not only were symbols of evil now employed in various more positive or glamorous fashions but they also continued to be used in more traditional ways. Although few people were prepared to profess moral relativism and to deny the existence of evil, the religious superstitions that lie behind much of its symbolism had fallen out of vogue, and were seen by "modern" thinkers as outdated and untenable. These symbols, therefore, came to function as just that – symbols, detached from a relation to any true concept of evil or morality, used to demonise and to suggest evil, but without any foundation in belief.

This view of the religious symbolism of evil as out of date superstition also led to its use in parodical contexts. The symbols were trivialised and used in comedic fashion, often playing on their traditional meanings to make fun of the old ways and those who continued to place faith in such superstitions. A good example of this ironic approach is the literary work of Berlioz's friend Théophile Gautier.[21]

In this shifting and often incoherent usage of evil symbolism in Romanticism, Jeffrey Burton Russell identifies four basic roles for the figure of Satan, which might also be applied to the wider symbolism of evil: "(1) In some works he continued to play his traditional role. (2) Some used him as a symbol of human evil and corruption. (3) Some used him ironically or satirically to mock Christianity or to parody human folly. (4) Some used him as a positive symbol of rebellion against corrupt authority."[22]

He then suggests four ways in which the demonic can appear in art: "The first is a popular misreading of the artist's intention, as when an audience misunderstands the composer's use of musical dissonance as demonic. The second is a deliberate portrayal of the demonic... but with the intent of condemning the evil. The third is the actual exultation of evil... The fourth, characteristic of the Romantics, is the deliberate shift of demonic symbols away from evil toward good."[23]

These categories are useful in positioning Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. The work does not fall neatly into one category but displays a number of functions of evil popular at the time. Berlioz does not take the common Romantic approach of shifting his demonic symbolism toward the positive, but uses the imagery as symbolic of evil in his demonisation of the beloved in the "Witches' Sabbath" whilst also using parody and

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[19] Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, p. 13.

[20] Michael Ayrton, *Berlioz - A Singular Obsession* (London: BBC, 1969), p. 27.

[21] Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History.* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p.233.

[22] Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles*, p. 157.

[23] Ibid., p. 175.

trivialising traditional religious symbols such as the *Dies irae*. His is a deliberate portrayal of evil that condemns the actions of the beloved who will not comply with Berlioz's Romantic ideas of love.

We must also not forget that, whilst Berlioz clearly had a vision he wished to convey in true individualistic, Romantic style, he would also have been keen for his work to be a public success and the artistic fashions of his time would not have been lost on him. The new versatility of the symbolism of evil and the relevance of the subject to the Romantic aesthetic led to a fashion for all things demonic. This vogue was particularly evident in literary circles with which Berlioz was in close contact. Mario Praz, in *The Romantic Agony*, traces this predilection and sees it as the continuing influence of the Marquis de Sade working its way into "high" artistic arenas. He uses Berlioz, in fact, as an example of this migration to the high:

> "What is to be said when one sees a Berlioz giving such great prominence in his operas to macabre, obscene, and ferocious subjects, in *Harold en Italie* combining debauch with blasphemy and slaughter (*Orgie des brigands*), in the *Franc-Juges* translating into music the feeling of terror aroused by the ferocity of the secret tribunal (*Overture*), and, in the *Symphonie fantastique*, going from a *Marche au supplice* to the Black Mass of the *Songe d'une nuit du sabbat*?"[24]

He notes the great influence of the English "tales of terror" which "were at once translated and had widespread popularity in France... finally penetrat[ing] into the higher spheres of literature, thanks to Byron and Scott who were brought up on them."[25]

It is these tales that had such an influence on Berlioz. "He read Scott, Byron and Cooper and based compositions on them."[26] Berlioz himself cited Byron as one of the poets who influenced him most.[27] "One of the most demonic Gothic novels was Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), which had enormous influence on English, French, and German literature,"[28] as well as on Berlioz who used it as the basis for his composition *La Nonne sanglante*. Some other important figures of the literary demonic who influenced Berlioz were Victor Hugo, Théophile Gautier and Alfred de Vigny. Berlioz often quoted Hugo in his memoirs, set a number of Hugo's poems to music and the finale of the *Symphonie Fantastique* "was partly inspired by his Goethean ballad 'Ronde du Sabbat' and his novel *Le dernier jour d'un condamné*."[29] Gautier was "perhaps the most distinguished literary figure, with De Vigny, among those Berlioz knew well."[30]

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[24] Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson. 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 139-140.

[25] Ibid., p. 122.

[26] Hugh MacDonald, *Berlioz* (London: Dent, 1982), p. 71.

[27] David Cairns, ed. *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz* (London: Everyman, 2002), p. 587.

[28] Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles*, p. 177.

[29] Cairns, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, p. 602.

[30] Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 45.

For all of these authors, and for Berlioz, the symbolism of the grotesque was an important source of inspiration in its proximity to the symbolism of evil and also in its relationship with the sublime. Julian Rushton comments on "Berlioz's fashionable preoccupation with the grotesque."[31] He says that the Romantics connected the grotesque with the sublime in that "the grotesque is the terrible beauty of the distorted and ugly, and reveals emotions which adhere to experience of the sublime."[32] This connection can be seen in relation to the *Symphonie Fantastique* in a review from *Le Temps* in 1830:

> In the 5th part the dream continues: he is transported to a witches' Sabbath, to the middle of a crowd of hideous shades, hags and monsters; they scream, they sing, they cackle, they grind their teeth, and the musical idea returns again – but now debased and vulgarized, transformed into a trivial, grotesque, ignoble jig. (This is a sublime idea).

The grotesque formed such an important part of the concept of evil in Berlioz's time and plays such an important role in the symbolism of the *Symphonie fantastique* that an understanding of its essence is of great importance.

In the preface to the anthology *The Grotesque in Art and Literature: Theological Reflections*, two definitions of the grotesque are cited, the first from James Luther Adams:

> The authentically grotesque is something that deviates from the normal in a monstrous way...Beginning as the name of a fantastic style of phantasmagoric exuberance, it developed into a depiction of the absurd, the ridiculous, the distorted, the monstrous. It is a mirror of aberration. In order to present aberration the artist of the grotesque...depicts a world where "natural physical wholes" are disintegrated and "the parts" are monstrously redistributed. He aims to project the full horror of disorder, the terrible and the terrifying, even the bestial, elements in human experience.[33]

And the second from Robert Doty:

> The grotesque is a form of art, with certain common characteristics. First, the rejection of reason, its benefits, protection and institutions. Second, immersion in the subconscious and its offspring, such as fear, passion and perversity, which often elicits a strong interest in sex and violence and not infrequently a commingling of the two. Third, a clash of elements, an obsession with opposites which force the co-existence of the beautiful with the repulsive, the sublime with the gross, humour with horror, the organic with the mechanical. Fourth, emphasis on ridicule, surprise and virulence,

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[31] Ibid., p. 133.

[32] Ibid.

[33] James Luther Adams, "The Grotesque and Our Future," in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature: Theological Reflections*, ed. James Luther Adams and Wilson Yates (Michigan: Eerdmens, 1997), p. xiv.

> through caricature, the deformation and distortion of salient characteristics. The grotesque threatens the foundations of existence through the subversion of order and the treacherous reversal of the familiar and hostile. Its value and vitality stem from the aberrations of human relationships and acts and therefore from foibles, weakness and irresistible attractions.[34]

These definitions illustrate the strength of the complicity between the symbolism of the grotesque and that of evil. The grotesque has not only been theorized in terms of its negative, fearful aspects, however, but has been recognised as a powerful space for change and regeneration.

One aspect of the grotesque that seems to be generally agreed upon is that it represents a world in opposition to the dominant culture. Two early and important theorists of the grotesque are Wolfgang Kayser and Mikhail Bakhtin, whose works have had a profound influence on later theorists. Kayser says that the grotesque contradicts "the very laws which rule over our familiar world."[35] The first of four basic premises central to his theory is that "the grotesque is the estranged world."[36] Bakhtin, in his discussion of the carnival-grotesque says that carnival "celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions."[37] It is easy to see how this premise would have appealed to the French revolutionary climate of Berlioz's time.

The grotesque represents a "world inside out"[38] or what Ewa Kuryluk, another theorist of the grotesque, calls an "anti-world."[39] As such, the grotesque depicts all that is repressed by a given society and in so doing creates a strong link with evil. We might describe the grotesque as the depiction of the "collective shadow" in the Jungian sense. Jung proposed that the psyche of each human being is comprised of two opposing parts, the conscious personality and the unconscious "shadow". The shadow is the other in the psyche and "represents all those personal characteristics that the conscious personality does not wish to acknowledge".[40] Jung discriminates the "personal shadow" from the "collective shadow" – that which is suppressed and deemed evil by the dominant collective morality of society. A person described by the collective morality as "good" will therefore possess a shadow that "will be in large measure identical to what is collectively judged to be 'evil,'"[41] as s/he will suppress those same personality traits as

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[34] Robert Doty, *Human Concern/Personal Torment: The Grotesque in American* Art (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1969), quoted in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, ed. Adams and Yates, p. xv.

[35] Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, trans. Ulrich Weisstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), quoted in Wilson Yates, "An Introduction to the Grotesque," in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, ed. Adams and Yates, p. 15.

[36] Yates, "An Introduction to the Grotesque," p. 17.

[37] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT, 1968), p. 10.

[38] Ibid., p. 11.

[39] Yates, "An Introduction to the Grotesque," p. 37.

[40] Liliane Frey-Rohn , "The Psychological View," in *Evil*, ed. The Curatorium of the C. G. Jung Institute, Zürich (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 170.

[41] Ibid.

those of the collective shadow. In its representation of all that a culture suppresses, the grotesque is a manifestation of this collective shadow.

Although Kayser and Bakhtin agree on the transvaluational quality of the grotesque, they differ in their opinion as to its value. Kayser has a more negative view of the grotesque. He creates a more explicit link with evil in stating that "the creation of the grotesque is an attempt to invoke and subdue the demonic aspects of the world."[42] There is a positive aspect to the grotesque but for the most part it is "the experience of that which is negative, strange and sinister. The positive aspect of the experience, insofar as it exists, is that one can, by invoking 'it,' take it in, subdue, and answer it."[43] In other terms the grotesque is an art form that might assist in the recognition and assimilation of the shadow that Jung calls for as an important step on the way to a healthy psyche.

For Bakhtin, however, the grotesque is a much more positive force, particularly the carnivalesque grotesquery of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Bakhtin criticises pessimistic notions of the grotesque, such as Kayser's. He sees them as "gross modernizations,"[44] which view the grotesque with Romantic eyes rather than realising the positive nature of the medieval grotesque. For Bakhtin, the grotesque serves to "liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted. This carnival spirit offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things."[45] At the centre of the carnivalesque is the possibility of change and renewal and its symbols are filled "with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities."[46] Of great importance to this symbolism is the festive laughter of folk humour, brought about by "continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings."[47] Bakhtin insists that "folk humour denies, but it revives and renews at the same time."[48]

For Bakhtin this renewal was the essence of the Renaissance grotesque. He says, however, that in its Romantic incarnation this quality was lost. "Pre-Romanticism and Romanticism witnessed a revival of the grotesque genre but with a radically transformed meaning. It became the expression of a subjective, individualistic world outlook very different from the carnival folk concept of previous ages."[49] He does, however, identify a continuing carnivalesque kernel in that the Romantic grotesque "was a reaction against the elements of classicism which characterized the self-importance of the Enlightenment. It was a reaction against the cold rationalism, against official, formalistic, and logical

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[42] Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, quoted in Yates, "An Introduction to the Grotesque," p. 17.

[43] Yates, "An Introduction to the Grotesque," p. 19.

[44] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p.12.

[45] Ibid., p. 34.

[46] Ibid., p. 11.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p. 36.

authoritarianism,"[50] and in this spirit of overturning the status quo it retained some ties with the carnivalesque.

It may well be that, in conjunction with the quest for the sublime, Berlioz' attraction to the grotesque and images of evil was in part due to the space they provide for overturning established rules and exploring new, previously forbidden territories. Musically this is just what Berlioz did, gaining him a bad name among some of his contemporaries.

In 1805 the aesthetician Christian Friedrich Michaelis described how music can arouse sublime emotions

> by the use of unconventional, surprising, powerfully startling, or striking harmonic progressions or rhythmic patterns. Supposing, let us say, the established tonality suddenly veers in an unexpected direction, supposing a chord is resolved in a quite unconventional manner, supposing the longed-for calm is delayed by a series of stormy passages, then astonishment and awe result and in this mood the spirit is profoundly moved and sublime ideas are stimulated or sustained.[51]

These words describe quite aptly the kind of music that Berlioz wrote in his depictions of evil and the grotesque. Whether the subject matter inspired the style or was chosen specifically as a vehicle for this kind of experimentation, it is clear that a link is made associating an unpredictable and unconventional music with evil and the grotesque. This link, so naturally made, is very clear in the music of the *Symphonie Fantastique* and can be examined in light of the symbolisms of deviation and disorder which form an important part of the symbolism of evil in Western culture.

[50] Ibid., p. 37.
[51] Quoted in Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 139.

CHAPTER 2

DEVIATION AND DISORDER

THE SYMBOLISM OF DEVIATION

Deviation is a symbolism shared by both the grotesque and evil. Deviation from the norm is inherent in the "antiworlds" of the grotesque. Essential to the concept of evil is transgression – deviation from a set of rules whether they be legal, religious, "laws of nature", aesthetic, unspoken, taboo. Adherence to the rules gains the imagery of the path or journey – the "path of righteousness", the "straight and narrow." Transgression, therefore, becomes a straying from the path or transforms it from a straight path into a convoluted, confusing, chaotic one.

The presence of this symbolism of the straight paths of order and goodness, and its continual influence on the way we think, can be seen in our use of language. A *straightforward* person will *put you straight* if you have been *led astray.* We are told that Jesus is the *way,* the truth, and the life. In terms of order, a chaotic mess must be *straightened up,* confusion *straightened out.* Life itself is often seen as a journey in which one can be *on the right track* or *led* into temptation. A *straight* person is one who is obedient and compliant or conforms to the norm of heterosexuality.

The symbol of deviation has pervaded the history of evil in Western culture. In a religious context, it is under the consciousness of sin, with its reliance on the image of a covenant broken and a distancing from God that the image of deviation arises. The Hebrew bible has no single word for sin but only a bundle of abstract expressions, some of which illustrate the symbolism in question.[52] The first and most common is *chattat,* which means shooting past or missing the target – sin as a failure. Inherent in this image is the image of the path toward a target, deviation from this path being the reason for shooting past. This image is clearer, however, in the second word, *avon.* "The basic meaning of the word includes the concepts of deviation, reversal, confusion, bending, turning and offense."[53] In *The Symbolism of Evil,* Paul Ricoeur says that the symbolism of the "way" or "road" is almost universal but for the Greeks it "did not produce as distinctly as among the Hebrews the symbol of a circuitous, curving, torturous way."[54] The concept of a covenant with God, and sin as a distancing from Him also provide the image of pardon as "return". This symbol relates to that of the "way" in that "just as sin is a 'crooked way,' the return is a turning from the evil way."[55]

The influence of this symbolism can also be seen throughout the teachings of Christianity. The New Testament builds on and develops the earlier images of the path to

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[52] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil,* p. 73.

[53] Hans Schwarz, *Evil: A Historical and Theological perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 44-46.

[54] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil,* p. 72.

[55] Ibid., p. 80.

God and the journey through life. Theologians adopted the symbolism into their own work. Writing about 500 AD, the theologian and monk Dionysius described evil as "a lack, a deficiency, a weakness, a disproportion, an *error*, *purposeless*, unlovely, lifeless, unwise, unreasonable, imperfect, unreal, causeless, *indeterminate*, sterile, inert, powerless, *disordered*, incongruous, *indefinite*, dark, unsubstantial."[56] (my emphasis)

St. Augustine's theology also relies heavily on these images. The image of the journey or road to perfection is common. On this road "the important thing is that we keep our destination in view, that we should run straight for the goal of perfection, and not turn aside from that line...The wicked man [sic] is the man who turns aside (*declinat, discedit*), for that is the mark of evil."[57] The good path to perfection and God is straight but the path of sin becomes twisted. "The curve in things which is initiated by a divergence from the straight becomes a twist and then a kink and then a knot, and finally a hopeless tangle, as it moves further and further away from the straightness of the good," indeed the knot or entanglement Augustine saw as a particularly apt image of evil.[58]

These images were not new when Augustine used them, and they have certainly continued to influence Christian thought and language about the nature of evil up to the present day.

MUSICAL DEVIATION

I have said that the symbolism of deviation is inherent in the breaking of rules. In his analysis of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, Robert Schumann noted harmonies that were "faulty, at least forbidden by the old rules,"[59] and Julian Rushton in his recent analysis notes the original use of complete parallel triads and more general "deformations of normative procedures, without recourse to *Formenlehre*."[60] I will discuss this kind of literal deviation from musical rules in more detail, however, when I explore the symbolism of malconformation to the rules of beauty. More important here is how the symbolism of deviation may be reflected in the structure and the effect of the music and might also influence our interpretation of it.

In describing the *Symphonie Fantastique* Richard Wagner said that "nowhere is beauty of form to be encountered, nowhere that majestic stream to whose calm, assured flow we would entrust ourselves in confident expectation."[61] It is this "confident expectation" that forms such an important part of musical meaning. Through musical education, whether formal or by continual exposure to music, the ear becomes accustomed to the patterns generated by a particular musical system. In the West, the

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[56] Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 109.

[57] G.R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 160.

[58] Ibid., p. 4.

[59] Robert Schumann, quoted in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, ed. Edward T. Cone (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 235.

[60] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 251.

[61] Wagner in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 286.

diatonic system of musical construction has dominated for hundreds of years. An understanding of the rules of this system, whether conscious or not, means that the ear inevitably forms expectations based upon those rules. We constantly have a feeling for the general route, or numerous possible routes, along which the music is likely to travel next.

Predicting the "route" that the music might "travel" illustrates the idea that music actually moves and has directionality. The concept of musical movement may stem partly from the movement in time involved in the performance of a piece of music. Also involved, however, at least in Western diatonic music, is its goal-directed nature. The harmonic hierarchy of diatonicism lends music teleology, giving the impression of movement away from an origin and toward a goal. These features encourage our perception of music as following a path.

Mark Johnson has proposed a theory of embodied meaning that Robert Walser has shown can be very useful in exploring meaning in music.[62] Johnson suggests that it is through our bodily experiences that we understand and make sense of the world. "We make use of patterns that obtain in our physical experience to organize our more abstract understanding." These patterns he calls image schemata. It is these schemata that form the basis of metaphor as "we project patterns from one domain of experience in order to structure another domain of a different kind."[63]

In "The Body in the Music," Walser adopts this theory and suggests that music is no different; that musical meaning is structured through the metaphorical projection of embodied image schemata. Using Johnson's model, we can metaphorically transpose our physical experience of movement along a path from origin to goal onto the more abstract experience of music. Our ability to develop formal, harmonic, rhythmic and melodic expectations of music enables us to experience it through a path schema in all these elements. Viewing music as a metaphorical path clearly opens the way for metaphorical deviation.

Deviation from musical rules forms an important part of any music, not just that which represents evil. The extent of these deviations and the way that they are used in the *Symphonie Fantastique*, however, suggest that they are being utilised symbolically, especially in the blatant representation of evil in the finale.

Much has been said about the form of the *Symphonie Fantastique* and about Berlioz' apparent problems with form and structural unity in his compositions. Paul Banks, however, says that *Fantastique* has a "deliberately discontinuous structure."[64] The "Dream of the Witches' Sabbath" is no exception. Both Edward T. Cone and D. Kern Holoman attempt to describe the structure as what Holoman calls "a sectional, semi-sonata form."[65] Both acknowledge the ambiguity of the structure, however, and comment on the problems of identifying and labelling the sections and themes of the form.

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[62] Robert Walser, "The Body in the Music: Epistemology and Musical Semantics," *College Music Symposium* 31 (1991), pp. 117-126.

[63] Mark Johnson, The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), xiv-xv.

[64] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 251.

[65] Holoman, *Berlioz*, p. 107.

Rushton says that although "space is devoted to exposition, development, and recapitulation...this is no sonata form."[66] Maintaining that, if related to any traditional formal archetypes it would be the poorly defined fantasia and fugue, he cites Wolfgang Dömling's suggestion that its unity "clearly does not derive from standard categories of formal and thematic integration."[67] Rushton goes on to provide a very helpful table summarising the form of the "Witches' Sabbath" that I have reproduced as Table 1 in Appendix 1. Holoman designates the *Dies irae* as the first theme of his sonata form and the "round dance" the second, a combination of the two then forming the recapitulation. As Cone notes, however, "the *Dies irae* is still a part of the introduction: it is still in C minor; although notated in the tempo and meter of the main movement (Allegro, 6/8), it has not achieved the eighth-note motion that will be typical; and it ends with a more complete build up of the dominant than any that precedes it."[68] As seen in Table 1, Rushton avoids this problem by positing two "exposition spaces." As he notes: "Tracing the music against the programme reveals musical patterns resulting from twofold statements of ideas."[69]

The effect of these double statements, and the ambiguity in thematic hierarchy and introduction length, is to engender a feeling that the music is constantly restarting. Just as a main theme is established, it either stops and then restarts or another of seemingly equal importance replaces it. This formal ambiguity leads to recognisable deviations from the large-scale path that one might typically expect.

A harmonic effect that Berlioz makes significant use of in this movement is the diminished 7th chord. The use of this chord with its peculiar characteristics and effect can also be read in light of the symbolism of deviation. The diminished 7th has, in fact, gained a particular complicity with representations of evil throughout the history of Western music. It probably constitutes one of the most recognisable and commonly known musical codes for evil. We rarely think about why this might be so, however, and we fail to consider the symbols of evil upon which this interpretation of the chord might draw.

The diminished 7th chord is constructed of two interlocking tritones. This is itself important for an interpretation of the chord, as the tritone also has its own traditional associations with evil. I will discuss the tritone in more detail when exploring the symbolism of malconformation. What is important for the symbolism of deviation in relation to the musical path is that the structure of the diminished 7th splits the octave into four equal parts, each note being evenly spaced from the next. This structural peculiarity is important because it undermines the fundamental hierarchical system of diatonic music and the relative importance among its notes. The symmetry of the diminished 7th chord means that each of its notes is potentially equally important. In relation to the path of music this can have the effect of undermining both a clear tonality and also a clear directionality. The diminished 7th can, according to the rules, be resolved in many different ways. The chord clearly has the potential effect of hindering our ability to

[66] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 254.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Edward T. Cone in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 272.
[69] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 254.

predict the trajectory of the music and to form expectations of where it will go. This certainly does not mean that the diminished 7th always and only represents evil, but its unpredictable nature in relation to our shared experience of the path schema allows a metaphorical invocation of the symbolism of deviation that, in the context of this work, can bring forth all its associations with evil.

One passage of Berlioz's "Dream of a Witches' Sabbath" that uses diminished 7th chords to great effect is the opening, which Rushton designates the "introduction space." According to Berlioz's program this space consists of "strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer." Holoman speaks of "the ghostly beginning of the last movement, with the eight-part *divisi* strings articulating a dramatic sonority, the whole concept as splendid as the curtain rising on an eerie stage lit in green and purple."[70] This eerie nature results in part from the fact that the introduction space is constructed almost entirely of diminished 7th chords.

The *divisi* strings play a diminished 7th (C#, E, G, A#) tremolo and pianissimo to begin the movement and instantly set its mood. The same chord is then outlined by the groan of the cellos and basses, which carry it into bar 2. Bar 3 sounds the same chord a little louder in the woodwind, and also in repeated fragments in the strings. This leads into bar 4 where the diminished 7th descends chromatically by parallel motion, possibly intimating the laughter that Berlioz identifies. The chord then rumbles in the cellos and basses to be taken up by more laughter in the wind in bar 6. Bar 7 also contains a diminished 7th, sustained beneath the unison statement of a distant cry in the upper wind, answered in 9 by a solo horn. Bar 11 then leads back up to a transposed and slightly varied repetition of this opening material, which is cut a little short by a movement to C major for the entrance of the *idée fixe*.

The effect of constructing this entire section out of continual diminished 7th chords is to encourage a great deal of uncertainty in the listener and to negate the possibility of expectation or the suggestion of a path for the music. The destruction of a clear path in the music is a deviation that can then be related metaphorically to the deviation from the straight and narrow, the road to God and the path of righteousness that are culturally associated with Western evil. Our intimate, if predominantly subconscious understanding of this symbolism may well influence our interpretation of the diminished 7th chord in this context whilst concomitantly providing one possible reason for its traditional association with evil and also for Berlioz's choice to use the chord so prolifically in this music.

The use of diminished 7th harmony is not the only technique that undermines the perception of a path in this music. Expectation in music can be induced not only through harmonic directionality but also rhythmic trajectory and regularity. Holoman notes the "ambiguities of implied meter (3/2? 6/8? 12/8?) at the opening of the fifth movement"[71] and indeed this rhythmic incertitude augments the sense of deviation or pathlessness induced by the diminished 7th chords.

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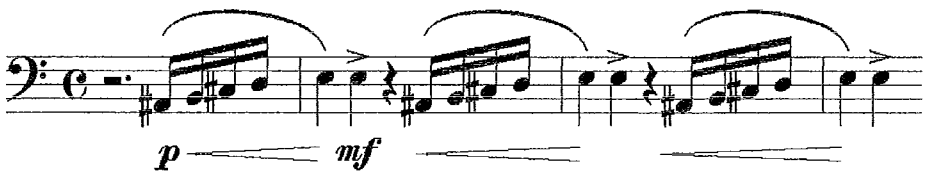
[70] Holoman, *Berlioz*, p. 102.
[71] Ibid., p. 105.

A number of features contribute to the ambiguity of meter in the music of the introduction space, and lead to its rhythmic uncertainty and lack of a regular, predictable rhythmic path. Most important of these is that the music never obtains any kind of constant, regular pulse. It consists of sustained chords of varying lengths amid assorted fragments of music that differ from each other in the way that they fall into or cut across the pulse suggested by the time signature. The first bit of rhythmic movement in the "Sabbath," which would normally serve to instil some sense of rhythm and meter into the listener, is the small figure in the cellos and basses of bar 1. In this case, however, the figure effectively obscures the pulse of the music, making it difficult to identify where the strong beats lie. The figure does, in fact, start on the beat and its last note also falls directly on the beat but its construction means it can be heard in another way. The run up to the E is a sextuplet which already goes against the simple time, but it is also missing its sixth note, and its last note is itself the E that it points to. The combination of these features means that it is quite possible to hear the run as an upbeat, in more traditional semiquavers, to the first E on the beat and the second off.

Example 1.



When bar three arrives, this perception is thrown off by the string figures which all fall on the true quaver beats. But as soon as we become attuned to this rhythmic pattern, the sextuplet parallel diminished sevenths of bar 4 again throw this perception off, creating a sense of 12/8. The pizzicato figure in bar 5 actually begins on the second beat of the bar but sounds as though it ought to be on the stronger first beat. Bar 6 emphasises the true meter again with wind guffaws on the beat, but again this lasts only for one bar. The distant cry in bar 7 once again does not begin on the first beat of the bar but the second. Its triplets, the first of which is made irregular, undermine the pulse, as does its echo, which is followed by one more bar of regular rhythm leading to the repeat.

Another technique that Berlioz employs periodically to undermine a rhythmic path is the use of syncopation. A clear example of this occurs at bar 78. At this point we have had the pleasure of 32 bars of steady, clearly felt 6/8 meter and regular, dance-style rhythms. The rhythmic path of this music is obvious and straightforward, but at bar 78 the music deviates from this path with a "tumble of syncopations that manages to wrench the meter, for a bar, into 4/4."[72] The effect is the complete destruction of the rhythmic path that has become so comfortable, creating confusion as to the rhythmic future of the music.

The symbolism of deviation can be identified not only in structural, harmonic and rhythmic elements of the music but also in the area of melody. Melodic conventions

[72] Ibid., p. 107.

relating to phrasing, internal structure, contour and range enable the prediction of expected melodic progression. Disturbances in these conventions can again be read as deviation from the natural path or the "straight and narrow" of the music.

The "Witches' Sabbath" contains relatively little of what might traditionally be considered melody in the strictest sense. Much of the movement is constructed of melodic fragments such as those identified in the introduction space. There are in fact three more substantial melodies in the movement, only one of which has a regular phrase structure. This more traditional melody is the theme of the "Ronde du Sabbat" or "Witches' round dance," which is first heard in its entirety at bar 241. It is a regular eight bar phrase in the nature of the dance that it represents. The *Dies irae* beginning at bar 127 is, however, far from regular in its phrasing. It appears in three sections, each of which is repeated twice in successive diminution. In the first section the phrasing is 20 bars, 11 bars, 6 bars. The second section is 13, 7, 5. The third section has the same phrasing as the first. The progression of this *Dies irae* melody is indeed quite difficult to predict.

The melody that is most interesting and certainly more dramatically important in the context of the entire symphony and its narrative is the *idée fixe*. This melody is slightly unusual and unpredictable at its first appearance in I: 72 (see example 2).

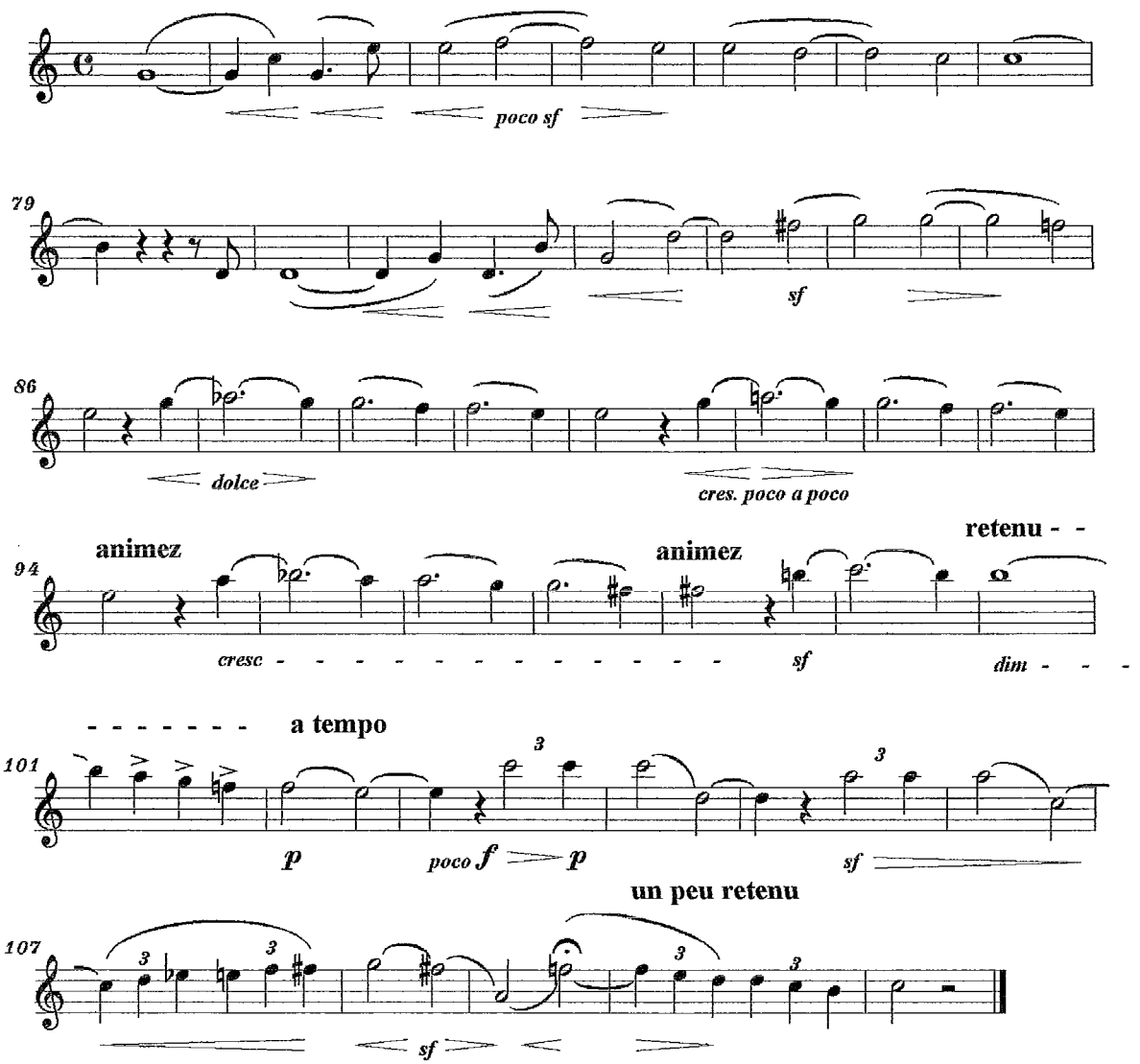
The multiple tied notes, many across the bar, lend it a rhythmic ambiguity. The protracted, meandering melody is an atypical 40 bars in length with what Holoman describes as a "spun-out, overweight consequent."[73] Its internal phrasing is irregular and difficult to follow and the final rising sequence continues into a rather unexpected fourth repetition.

In the "Dream of a Witches' Sabbath," the irregularity of the *idée fixe* is exaggerated yet further. The first complete statement of the melody in this movement begins at bar 40 (see example 3).

The rhythmic and phrase structure may be slightly more straightforward here, again due to its transformation into a dance, but ambiguity returns once we reach the rising sequence. Whereas in the original version the repeating pattern fell on beat one of the bar, in this variation it falls on beat two, causing it to feel like beat one (bar 48). Confusion ensues when the sequence ends with beats to spare. The melodic contour is also different as the melody just keeps getting higher and higher. In the original, the melody moved down to a low D for its second phrase. Here the clarinet takes a step up (bar 44) and so the rest of the melody continues upward, moving into the piccolo when the clarinet is forced to move down an octave (bar 46). This is clearly a deviation from the path we would normally expect a melody to traverse, and it heightens the effect of the over zealous rising sequence. The overweight consequent also becomes yet larger as the final phrase is repeated.

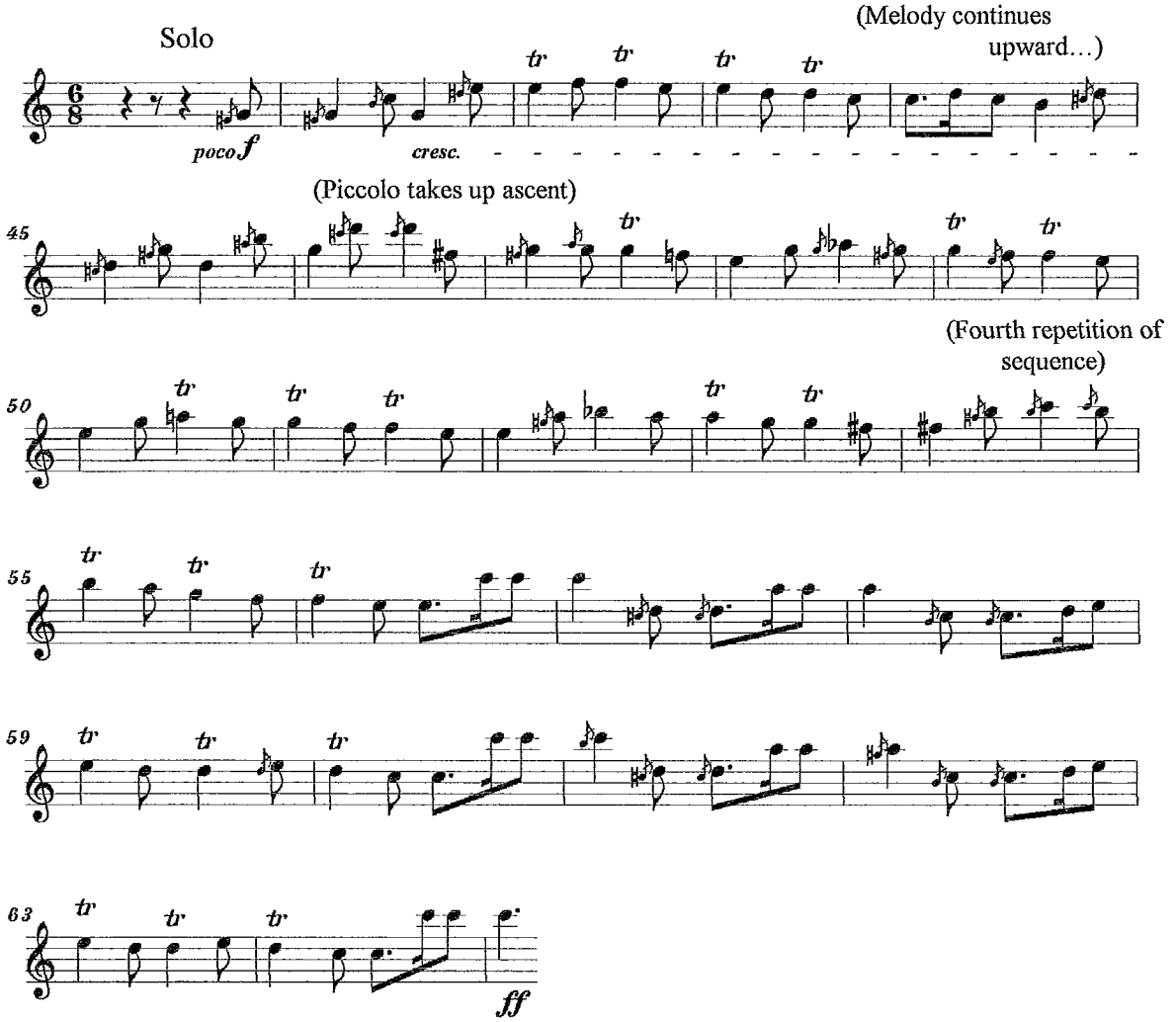
[73] Ibid., p. 103.

Example 2 *Idée fixe* movement I



Example 3 *Idée fixe* movement V

Clarinet I in Eb



DISORDER AND EVIL

The symbolism of deviation is closely related to another area of evil symbolism – that of chaos or disorder. Deviation, particularly in music, can lead to an unpredictability and sense of a lack of control that can assist in an intimation of disorder. The image of the convoluted, circuitous path is also closely linked with the symbolism of chaos and disorderly movement.

We have seen the importance of deviation from a set of rules as a symbol of evil, but what is the intention of rules? Freud states that the establishment of communal law "constitutes the decisive step of civilisation."[74] Rules are seen as necessary to maintain order, to avoid the chaos of individual free will by imposing a standard of normative behaviour and relative ideological agreement. In theorizing the symbolism of evil, Ricoeur suggests "perhaps there is no taboo in which there does not dwell some reverence, some veneration of order."[75]

The link between evil and chaos has certainly been perpetuated through Christianity. Dionysius' description of evil included the words "error," "purposeless," "indeterminate," "disordered," "incongruous" and "indefinite."[76] His proposed structure of the cosmos also suggests path/deviation and order/disorder. In Jeffrey Burton Russell's words:

> [It] reminds us of the intensity of our longing for harmony, as if we were being drawn up toward a unity that somehow forever escapes our grasp. Dionysius' cosmos is a holy order, unchangeable, absolute. No disorderly thing can exist in it. Harmony is the concord of all creatures with this cosmos, whose unity is progressively realized as all creatures are drawn gradually to God.[77]

St. Augustine's Neoplatonist outlook influenced his thought so that in his view, "what departs from unity departs from perfection."[78] Evil is a disruption of the natural order, a happening that ought not to be.[79] Sin is a break with the unity of God and "by the turning-away of the soul... man's [sic] soul is set in chaotic motion, made subject to perturbation; we may reasonably conclude that disorderly movement is an attribute of evil."[80]

Outside of official religion, the folk Devil became associated with the pagan god Pan who gave his name to the word "panic" – chaotic human emotion. The essence of

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[74] Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1957), 21:95.
[75] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 43.
[76] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 109.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Evans, *Augustine on Evil*, p. 63.
[79] Ibid., p. 95.
[80] Ibid., p. 94.

transgression and transvaluation central to the carnival laughter of the Grotesque creates a close link with evil that results in a great deal of shared symbolism, including that of chaos. As Margret Miles notes in relation to the grotesque in art: "for medieval people, hell was grotesque, as all human integrity, physical and social, was overwhelmed by chaos."[81]

Chaos is a prerequisite for creation in that it is the undifferentiated state that must be formed into being, and this is where it finds its complicity with fertility.[82] These related elements – fertility, sex, chaos and evil – in association with pagan fertility rites create a link between evil and orgy, "a symbol of the terrifying formlessness of chaos."[83] Orgy has continued to be a powerful symbol of evil in its association with sex and the body, issues that I will explore further in Chapter 3.

With a decline in religious belief and the rise of a scientific age, psychoanalysis turned to the human mind as the source of evil. Freud identified evil with an aggression instinct within the psyche that is usually suppressed by societal pressure. The symbolism of disorder continues as the chaos of instinct must be ordered and kept under control through reason, law and civilisation. Although the *Symphonie fantastique* predates Freud's theories of instinct and the unconscious mind so that they could have had no bearing on his compositional choices, they are an extremely important modern extension of the symbolism of chaos and evil and, as a crucial part of our concept of evil today, they might certainly influence any current interpretation of the music and its symbolism.

DISORDER IN THE SYMPHONY

The finale of the *Symphonie Fantastique* seems to be constructed of relatively calm but disordered sections juxtaposed with more energetic, chaotic passages. This contrast not only provides the work with variation and structural coherence but also has the effect of intensifying the frenzied sensation of the more vigorous passages. In discussing deviation I have already examined many of the musical techniques that can be seen to contribute to the feeling of disorder and unease in the calmer passages. In the introduction space, for example, we might also read disorder in the ambiguity in meter and rhythm, the imbalance in phrasing and internal structure of melody, the fragmentation, and the use of diminished 7^{th} chords whose anti-hierarchical symmetry constitutes "a chaos that is potential in democracy and actual in anarchy."[84]

The passage containing the initial statement of the *Dies irae*, whilst far from chaotic, possesses a subtler form of disorder brought about by irrational phrase lengths and particularly the relationship between the phrases of the *Dies irae* and those of the accompanying funeral knell. In this passage "parallel but dissociated systems obtain.

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[81] Margaret Miles, "Carnal Abominations: The Female Body as Grotesque" in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, ed. Adams and Yates, p. 88.

[82] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 11.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Private communication from Dr William Renwick: Dept. of Music, McMaster University.

Each bell statement lasts eight bars, but intervening rests make the entries irregular, forming expanding and contracting units."[85]

There are also passages of more extreme chaos. The first of these is the "roar of joy at her arrival" (bb. 29-39) that interrupts the distant, quiet first appearance of the *idée fixe* with "much scattering about in E flat, moving to the dominant."[86] The roar jumps into common time from 6/8 with a brash, fortissimo, unison E flat. The full orchestra then bursts apart into a number of different sections playing fast moving, contradictory music with patterns that cross the bar line and contradict the meter, play triplets against straight 4/4 rhythms, and introduce syncopation, all intensifying the confusion of the outburst.

The meter returns to 6/8 for the *idée fixe* in earnest, which creates its own chaos. The clarinet melody receives an injection of disorder through excessive ornamentation and trills. A continual, driving momentum is provided by the rhythm of the oboe accompaniment and its relatively static, drone-like quality. This impression of disorder is intensified with the entry of rapid bassoon figures at bar 47. The over-extended and constantly rising nature of the melody creates a building tension that is intensified by the periodic addition of layers of texture (the piccolo and bassoon, the strings in three stages, and the horns). Tension is an important element of chaotic evocation that I shall discuss further. Increasing the tension helps to create an impression of escaping control which, in this case, ultimately gives way at bar 65 as the strings and high wind take up a whirling figure that is repeated an uncomfortable nine times, ending on a weak beat. Stabbing staccatos in chromatic parallel motion then lead to four screaming skirls as the flute, piccolo and strings seem to hurl themselves into the air (bars 76-7). This frenzy calms with the descending syncopations that drag the meter into common time for one bar and also create their own sense of chaos in their rhythmic anarchy against the beat.

A particularly chaotic passage, starting at 364, takes us careering toward what might be considered the denouement of the movement – the "*grandes réunion des thèmes*" in which the "round dance" and *Dies irae* appear together. A chromatic version of the "round dance" theme begins a fugal exposition in the strings. The parts come together at 385 and are joined by the wind for the syncopated motif of the melody. A stretto passage of increasing intensity then explodes into the cacophony which ensues at bar 395. Half the orchestra plays blasting, syncopated, major-minor 7^{th} chords for four bars until the other half enters with simultaneous juxtaposing diminished 7^{th} chords on the beat. These vicious overlapping chords commence with a short yet biting semitonal clash of B natural and C.[87] At this point the impression of chaos reaches a point of fearfully powerful, uncontrolled frenzy.

The intensity decreases slightly but chaos still reigns as the round-dance fugue, after three false starts, attempts an emphatic reprise but "the answer collides with the *Dies irae* and the resulting bitonal combination quickly self destructs."[88] At bar 422 the strings seem to lose control and the "round-dance" gives way to unison whirling semiquavers in

[85] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 256.
[86] Holoman, *Berlioz*, p. 107.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 256.

the upper strings and wind. The contour of this whirling motion also increases the chaos as the length and frequency of its undulation vary.

Again there is a drop in intensity but the music here returns to a more fragmentary disorder. The whirling figures continue to rumble in the cellos under five bars of syncopation. Four bars of upward skirls in the strings are then followed by "the bone rattling of the upper strings *col legno,*"[89] each part playing the same rhythmic pattern but overlapping and out of sync with the others (bar 444). This effect continues through a "cackling augmentation"[90] of the "round dance" theme with excessive trills on every structural note. A seven bar fragment of disjointed, staccato woodwind movement leads to six bars of fortissimo tutti chords punctuated by trilling shrieks of diminished 7^{th} chords in the woodwind (bars 467-473). A crescendo builds from nothing to fortissimo tutti for a fractured cadence where the whole orchestra falls silent as the woodwind fling themselves into an orgiastic spasm (bar 479). The full orchestra returns for a five bar fragment, which climbs to an abbreviated reminder of the *Dies irae* and its diminution in stretto, whilst also setting the momentum that will drive the work incessantly and uncontrollably to its close.

This passage illustrates an array of techniques that might be seen as metaphors for the disorder of deviation as well as others that we might consider specifically evocative of chaos. But how is it that music, which is necessarily strictly ordered and always under a control enforced by its notation, can seem chaotic and disordered at all? The way that we experience order/disorder in an embodied sense may suggest an answer. One way, which is particularly relevant in relation to evil, is through the experience of emotional and bodily control. Johnson discusses this in terms of a balance schema metaphorically projected to inform our experience of psychological balance, which is usually considered to have both bodily and mental aspects. He states that "the *build-up* of emotions constitutes a *pressure* in the system, which has physiological and "mental" correlates."[91] We therefore experience psychological control (or suppression of chaos) through the model of a pressurized container, which inevitably also draws upon a schema of force.

Much of the music in the "Witches' Sabbath" reflects in a number of ways the shared experiences of imbalance, pressure and force by which Johnson suggests we understand control. Imbalance is manifest, for example, in the phrase structure of the movement and also in the structure of the *idée fixe* with its overweight consequent, now even more overweight than in previous movements. The *idée fixe* is also now unbalanced in its melodic contour as it continues inexorably upward. This technique not only creates a sense of imbalance but also provides the increase in pressure or tension that emotional control is seen to hold back and which threatens the maintenance of order. Not only does the upward motion mimic the rise in tension but higher notes do physically equal greater tension in vocal chords, embouchure, or string, and often greater force for their production. A genuine rising tension may also be experienced by the listener as a result of the unpredictable nature of the increasingly abnormal trajectory of the music.

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[89] Holoman, *Berlioz*, p. 109.
[90] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 256.
[91] Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, p. 88.

The technique is much used in this movement, occurring again in the fugue of the "round-dance" beginning at bar 241 and also most effectively in the chromatic fugal exposition starting at bar 364. Indeed it is suited to fugal exposition as the subject and counter subject make their entries at successively higher transpositions. Schumann said that Berlioz's fugue "is certainly not by Bach but is nevertheless clearly constructed according to the rules."[92] Rushton says that its strictness is surely ironical so that its "regularity exposes Berlioz's anti-academic agenda."[93] This is quite possible and represents one interpretation of the fugue. I would suggest, however, that the use of fugue in this movement is even more important in its effect. In this context that effect can be read under the symbolism of chaos in its relation to evil, through the experience of tension associated with bodily control. The strictness of fugue along with its increasing complexity can be seen as suggestive of the control required to retain order and can also provide an effective juxtaposition with the more disorderly passages. Although the sense of order is perfectly intact in the round-dance fugue, the growing tension of the music due to the rising register and increasing number of independent melodic lines combines with the use of staccato, semiquaver runs and trills in the countersubject, the use of tremolo, and the syncopated interjections to create the impression that the grip on this control is tenuous. The woodwind spasms of the episode (bars 269-288) might even suggest that it had failed. The chromatic fugal exposition beginning at bar 364 has the same effect as it builds inexorably, tension rising yet further as it gives way to stretto. Here, though, the tenuous grip is surely lost as the music explodes into the syncopated battle of the orchestra's two halves.

The building up of textural layers identified in these fugal passages is another important technique that can create the impression of increasing tension and also force. We also saw it used at the appearance of the *idée fixe*. I would suggest that this procedure relies less on the experience of tension through a balance schema, as in registral ascent, than of the accompanying experience of a force schema. "More" is equated with greater force. The greater the number of voices, the more the available force. In fact, big groups of instruments are often described as "large forces." The experience of pressure or tension associated with psychological and physical control relies on a schema of contained force. The greater the internal force, therefore, the higher the pressure and the closer the system comes to boiling over into chaos. The greater volume that accompanies such a textural build up is also indicative of increasing force. Volume is reliant on force, so that greater volumes require greater forces for their production.[94] This feature is used to great effect in the chromatic fugue (bar 364) where it is augmented with the addition of a long *crescendo poco a poco* building from *pp* solo cello to *ff* tutti.

This interpretation of volume through a force schema also allows an interpretation in terms of chaos – volume metaphorically becomes the uncontrollable chaotic force.

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[92] Schumann in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 241.

[93] Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 117.

[94] See Robert Walser, "The Body in the Music: Epistemology and Musical Semantics," *College Music Symposium* 31 (1991), pp. 117-126.

Again great volume does not always signify chaos. Through our shared bodily experience, however, it is likely to be interpreted as indicative of great force. The context of evil and its concomitant cultural symbolism then allows for the identification of this force with the concept of pressure, which we associate with chaos through our bodily experiences of control. In the "Witches' Sabbath" the moments that we might read as truly chaotic (boiling over rather than merely pressurized) are consistently of great volume (e.g. bars 29-39, 65-78, 395-403, coda). The extremes of dynamic that are such a feature of this movement, as well as providing the kind of inconsistency identifiable with chaos, also provide for spectacular inclines in tension through crescendo and serve to intensify the moments of greatest volume through contrast. This is particularly evident in the quick decrease in volume that frequently follows these climaxes, leaving a raw sense of the chaotic power of the outburst.

Robert Walser discusses the interpretation of music through a force schema in his discussion of distortion as used in heavy metal music. He identifies distortion with excessive power or force and says that "human screams and shouts are usually accompanied by vocal distortion, as the capacities of the vocal chords are exceeded."[95] I have already described a number of figures in the "Witches' Sabbath" as "screaming" or "shrieking," so how might these relate to a force schema and therefore, in this piece, chaos? Both the skirls at bars 76-77 and the diminished 7^{th} screams at bars 468-472 are in a high register, which itself suggests tension and force but also signifies that the instrument is reaching toward the limits of its capacities. Neither figure is distorted per se, but the first has its quick triplet upbeat and the diminished sevenths are performed tremolo in the wind. Although this is far from howling electric guitars, we might consider these significant distortions in the context of orchestral music such as this. It is these features that I would suggest provoke the metaphorical identification of the figures with screams, enabling them to act so effectively as indicators of uncontrolled force and chaos.

I have also commented on the rhythmic momentum of the music as an important factor in its interpretation as chaotic. This association can also be related to a force schema. Johnson identifies a number of force schemata including *compulsion*, which relies on our experience of being moved by external forces, or using force to move objects ourselves. Compulsion involves a force that "has a given magnitude, moves along a path, and has a direction."[96] This schema of practical experience might certainly be used in the structuring of our more abstract sense of rhythmic movement and momentum in music. The persistent, driving rhythms commented on in the more chaotic moments of the "Witches' Sabbath", especially towards the end, give the feeling of forward movement due to a force of great magnitude. As Johnson says: "When a crowd starts pushing, you are moved along a path you may not have chosen, by a force you seem unable to resist."[97] It is this inability to resist that can then be linked to a lack of control and the impression of chaos. We might also consider the incessant nature of the rhythmic

[95] Walser, "The Body in the Music," p. 123.
[96] Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, p. 45.
[97] Ibid.

momentum in these passages. Walser notes that "sustain of anything, in material terms, always requires effort."[98] Therefore a force schema might also structure our interpretation of the unflagging nature of the rhythmic drive. The force schemas of compulsion and sustain might also inform the interpretation of volume, register and texture.

I have shown how moments of rising tension and more overtly chaotic moments in the music might be interpreted as such through metaphors of force, either building pressure or bursting free, in relation to our bodily experience of control. These metaphors parallel our mental and physiological experiences of control or chaos and in so doing open the floodgates for all the cultural and historical associations of disorder and evil to inform our view of the music.

[98] Walser, "The Body in the Music," p. 123.

CHAPTER 3

THE BODY AND MALCONFORMATION

THE BODY AND EVIL

In discussing the symbolism of disorder I observed the strong link between our experience of chaos and the concept of bodily control. Indeed this aspect of disorder relies heavily on another important aspect of evil – the association of evil and the body. Throughout the various manifestations of the Western concept of evil there appears an ongoing complicity between the body, sex and evil. This complicity has built up a symbolism of evil and the body that greatly influences our concept of evil today.

Essential to the relationship of evil and the body is the concept of the mind (or soul)/body split in which "man [sic] understands himself as the *same* as his 'soul' and *'other'* than his 'body'"[99] This concept of a dual nature for humanity, material and spiritual, is thought to have originated around the sixth century B.C. in the Greek tradition of Orphism, from the myth of Dionysus and the Titans. The human race is born from the ashes of the evil Titans who have eaten the infant God Dionysus. As such, humans are composed of a dual nature, part earthly due to their Titanic ancestry and part heavenly thanks to the devoured Dionysus. This dualism takes the form of the material body in opposition to the spiritual, immortal, soul. The body therefore becomes associated with the evil nature of the Titans. [100]

Jeffrey Burton Russell in *The Prince of Darkness* suggests that this Orphic view then came into contact with the Mazdaist idea of the warfare between two spiritual principals of good and evil. The two were combined, "with matter and the body placed under the power of the evil spirit and soul under the jurisdiction of the good spirit. The new idea that the body was a product of cosmic evil spread widely and came to influence Jewish, Gnostic, and Christian beliefs."[101] Ricoeur agrees that "all of Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy presupposes Orphism and draws nourishment from its substance."[102]

Another concept, which influenced the Greek philosophy on which our culture is in large part founded, was that the body was the jail of the soul. The Orphic split led to a belief that "the soul atones for the faults for which it is punished, and that, for safekeeping... it has, round about it, the body in the likeness of a prison."[103] As such the body becomes "both an effect of evil and a new evil; the soul in prison becomes a secondary delinquent, continually subject to the hardening effect of the regime of the penitentiary."[104] The body is a punishment for evil, it is itself evil and it is also the cause of evil.

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[99] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 279.
[100] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 24.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 279.
[103] Ibid., p. 283.
[104] Ibid., p. 284.

Socrates described the soul as a "helpless prisoner, chained hand and foot in the body, compelled to view reality not directly but only through its prison bars."[105] Plato maintained this dualism, saying that "soul is utterly superior to body" and that only in death is the soul "liberated from the desires and evils of the body."[106]

Plato's ideas, and therefore the concept of Orphism, were perpetuated and solidified in the foundations of Western culture primarily due to their adoption into Christian theology through Neoplatonism. The Neoplatonists adopted Plato's theory of forms and his view of the cosmos, a view which explains the "scale of perfection" and the idea of the "heavenly ladder". At the top of the hierarchy, possessing ultimate being, perfection and goodness is "The One" from which all things emanate; moving down the chain away from that goodness, each emanation is less good; at the bottom is unformed matter, which is not only ontologically inferior but also, being farthest from the good, may be said to lack all goodness.[107] With the Orphic duality of the body, the soul as spirit is closer to the One, has more being and is more good than the body which, as matter, is less real and tends to evil. Thanks to Neoplatonism and its Christian adoption, "this pattern of a great chain of being dominated Western thought through Clement and Origen and Augustine and Aquinas down to Charles Darwin. Its hierarchical assumptions penetrated every aspect of thought from religion through law and politics to economics."[108]

The persistence of this model can be seen in the theories of René Descartes, who cemented body dualism into the tenets of modern philosophy to the extent that the entire orphic concept of the body/mind split came to be known as Cartesian dualism.[109] In Descartes' *Meditations* "man is viewed as a composite of two essentially distinct substances... [T]here are properties of mind and properties of body, and none of the properties of either can be the property of the other."[110] The influence of Plato is patent. Body dualism was carried forward into the philosophy of the modern world along with the morality that was traditionally mapped onto it. This concomitant morality had been perpetuated and strengthened largely due to the fact that Neoplatonist dualism had infused Christian ideology.

When a Neoplatonist view of the body was taken up into Christianity it had a profound effect on Religious practice and teaching, leading to a particularly complex and often contradictory love/hate relationship with the body. This relationship was partly due to a conflict between the message of the bible and the inherited Neoplatonist view but was also due to conflicting messages within the bible itself.

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[105] Anthony Synnott, *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 9.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 73.

[108] Ibid., p. 74.

[109] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 22.

[110] Stuart F. Spicker, ed., *The Philosophy of the Body: Rejections of Cartesian Dualism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p. 10.

Christ taught respect for the physical body but he also made clear that the body was subordinate to the soul: "If your hand or foot makes you lose faith, cut it off and throw it away."[111] St. Paul's teachings are also highly complex in regards to the body. In a letter to the Romans he describes his own inner conflict:

> My inner being delights in the law of God. But I see a different law at work in my body – a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to my death?[112]

Yet the body was also to be loved as a gift from God. "It is one of those complex aspects of Pauline teachings that the body should be bruised, but honoured; mastered, but hallowed; crucified, but glorified; it is an enemy, but also a temple and a member of Christ."[113]

What is important for the symbolism of evil and the body is that the body remained entwined with the concept of evil. However much Christian teaching taught the holiness of the body, the mixed messages of the Bible and an inability to let go of philosophies and symbolism of the past meant that they were again carried forward and assimilated into further constructions of evil.

For St. Augustine, reason was of great importance and he equated it with the soul. If one is to come near to God "it must be with the most God-like part of him [sic], that is, with his rational soul, for understanding is an intellectual activity, not an activity of the bodily senses."[114] Bodily passions are clearly seen as a primary cause of deviation to the path to evil and must be kept under control through reason in order to lead a good life.

Throughout history, ascetism, flagellation, martyrdom, virginity, celibacy and general self-denial and suffering illustrate the continuing belief in the inferiority and evil of the body in the Christian churches. Although attitudes and practices have undergone considerable change, this history is far from forgotten. Even today a certain amount of physical discomfort and suffering might be seen as fair penance, and fasting is still a common part of some religious practices. Catholics are still required at Baptism and Easter services to "renounce the devil, the world and the flesh."[115]

Sexual desire, with its intimate relationship with the body, has also been closely associated with evil in the history of Christianity. Lust is one of the deadly sins and, as a distinctly bodily passion, sexual desire is seen as notoriously difficult to control and so a sure path to evil. Sex panders to the pleasures of the body when what is important is the salvation of the soul.

Augustine summed up this attitude to sex, which has permeated the teaching of the Christian churches and is still at work today. The most important indicator of

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[111] Matthew 18: 8-9 quoted in Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 13.
[112] Romans 7: 21-4 quoted in Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 14.
[113] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 14.
[114] Evans, *Augustine on Evil*, p. 30.
[115] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 265.

absolute wrong is "lust, cupidity, desire – the exercise of the unbridled will for evil."[116] There are many different kinds of lust depending on the object of desire. Any kind of lust, however, undermines reason and "rules out moderation – and nowhere, in Augustine's experience, so uncontrollably as in the case of sexual desire... Sexual excitement takes possession of the body, and moves the whole man [sic] with a passion in which mental emotion is mingled with bodily appetite. No bounds restrain the will. It loses all sense of decency and order."[117] Later, Thomas Aquinas reflected the same view when he said that "in sexual intercourse the human being becomes similar to the beast."[118]

Some of the richest symbolism of evil that we have inherited comes not from philosophical or sacred sources but from the secular world, particularly from folk culture. Many of these folk symbols arose either through the influence and embellishment or transformation of official sacred teachings, or as a reaction to official views. This symbolism, much of which has its roots in the Middle Ages, has been perpetuated and embellished primarily through its use in artistic, literary, dramatic and, of course, musical traditions. It has, therefore, maintained prominence in the cultural consciousness of evil and continues to inflect the associations that we attach to our concept of evil.

The official theology and teaching of the Church, as it spread down from the elite to form a popular religion of the common people, was often distorted, and combined with legend and folklore. The combination of religious and folkloric symbolisms is also an important feature of the Grotesque. Both due to its carnivalesque aspects and its relationship to official theology, the folkloristic and popular religious symbolism of evil maintained and brought new facets to the association of the body and sex with evil. Multifarious stories and embellishments were concocted to elaborate on the story of evil and the Devil. Christianity's demonisation of all things pagan meant that many pagan symbols were assimilated into the popular Christian symbolism of evil and all pagan deities became associated with demons. Pan was particularly suited for assimilation into the Devil figure due to his sexuality and a link between fertility and death.[119] Fertility is not only indirectly associated with evil through its links with the earth, death and the underworld, sex and the body, but also its relation to chaos through orgy and the potentiality of unformed matter.

Of great import to the concept of evil is the symbolism associated with witchcraft, which focuses strongly on the body and sex. At a witches' "Sabbath" new witches worship the Devil by kissing his genitals or backside and at the end of the ceremony "the witches fall to an indiscriminate sexual orgy, sometimes having sex with the Devil himself."[120] Orgy plays an important part in the symbolism arising from the myths of satanic witchcraft. The fact that nearly all alleged witches were women hints at the conceptual complicity of evil, the body and sexuality with woman, an association which I will explore further in Chapter 4. The horrors of the witch-hunts left such an imprint on

[116] Evans, *Augustine on Evil*, p. 163.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 46.
[119] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 17.
[120] Ibid., p. 162.

Western culture that the symbolism of satanic witchcraft has inevitably left its mark on our consciousness of evil. The influence of this imagery is particularly evident in Berlioz's evocation of a Sabbath in the *Symphonie Fantastique.*

Also related to the sexual side of Satan is the concept of the Black Mass, which itself became the source of a panoply of diabolically sexual symbols. As an example, "in 1680 a number of priests were indicted for saying mass on the bodies of naked women at the center of a ring of black candles, of leading the congregation in sexual intercourse, of ritual copulation on the altar, of sacrificing animals, of murdering children and using their blood in the preparation of aphrodisiacs, of desecrating the Eucharist, of using the chalice to mix children's blood with sexual fluids, invoking the Devil, and of making written pact with him."[121] Clearly such accusations may well have been fabrication but whether true or not the images involved serve to perpetuate, strengthen and elaborate on the symbolism of evil, sex and the body. Berlioz's use of the *Dies irae* and church bells in his "Witches' Sabbath" might suggest an allusion to the imagery of the Black Mass.

With the Enlightenment came "the gradual extrusion of God from the centre of life out to an increasingly distant periphery from which he could slowly drift out of human consciousness."[122] This increasing atheism was greatly aided by the focus on empiricism and scientific knowledge, which came to replace religious explanations of the world.

Although after Berlioz's own time, many scientific "discoveries" have been of great importance to the conceptual and cultural relationship of evil and the body. These theories now occupy such a fundamental place in our cultural consciousness that they must be recognised as influential in any interpretation of evil subject matter. Darwin's evolutionary theory, in that it pertained to human origins, had profound and far-reaching effects, not least on concepts of the body. Evolution proved that humans are, in fact, animals – previously the Devil's domain and entirely lacking in reason. "The ancient dichotomies of mind/body, human/animal, superior/inferior, asserted from Plato to Descartes, were here not only denied, but in some senses reversed."[123] Darwin's theories of natural selection and survival of the fittest have also influenced concepts of evil and its association with the body in the form of instinct, often naturalizing or excusing behaviours previously considered evil. A Darwinian influence can be clearly identified in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche whose "transvaluation of values" and concept of the Über-mensch rely heavily on the idea of the survival of the fittest, suggesting that evil is that which hinders a species or animal on its natural progression toward greatness.[124] These theories in turn contributed to Hitler's philosophy, and so to what many would describe as the epitome of evil in human history.

The focus on instinct as the site of evil is, not surprisingly, present in many psychoanalytical explorations of the subject. Freud's theories, although contested since their publication, have had great influence and been largely assimilated into the

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[121] Ibid., p. 188.

[122] Ibid., p. 206.

[123] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 25.

[124] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956).

consciousness of evil and its symbolism. They may, therefore, be more important due to their influence than their accuracy. As W.H. Auden said: "to us [Freud] is no more a person now but a whole climate of opinion under whom we conduct our different lives."[125] It is clear that "his theories... changed forever humanity's confidence in its mastery and control of the self."[126]

Freud and psychoanalysis moved evil away from the Devil and even the conscious choice of the will into the unconscious mind. Humans are motivated by unconscious, primal instincts which, "though inherently neither good nor bad, contain hidden within them the potential for evil."[127] For Freud, however, evil exists only as a cultural construction "the ideals and laws of a society [being] nothing other than a collective superego," keeping the ego (the part of the psyche directed towards the outside world) in check. [128] But Freud also describes a "death instinct" that, according to the superego, is considered evil. Eros is 'the instinct to preserve living substance and to join it into ever larger units,'[129] but the death instinct is in opposition to eros, seeking "to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primeval, inorganic state."[130] The death instinct is not entirely negative, however, as it works in conjunction with eros and the libido in the service of life. The death instinct "leads the eros to be in control of the objects of its pleasure and helps us to achieve control over nature."[131] Eros and the death instinct are not merely in opposition, therefore, but are also inextricably linked. We might consider the complicity of these two drives in relation to Darwin's survival of the fittest, where aggression, competition and dominance accompany sex and reproduction to ensure the propagation of species. Clearly in positioning evil in the unconscious mind, Freud's theories perpetuate the association of evil with the body and a lack of reason. In the link between the death instinct and eros, the link between evil and sex is also present.

If Freud's theories on evil have not penetrated and influenced the general consciousness in their detail, a more general, simplistic form of "pop psychology" certainly has. The very concept of the unconscious mind as the site of strong, barely controllable, animal instincts that drive our actions and can result in evil has taken over as a scientific incarnation of the "passions" of the body. In its distinction from the reasonable conscious mind, I would suggest that unconscious instinct is still conceived as more body than mind. These ideas now form such an important part of our concept of human behaviour, and therefore evil, that they can easily inform our interpretation of a depiction of evil such as Berlioz's, particularly in relation to the symbolism of the body and also chaos as bodily control.

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[125] Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth, ed., "Freud, Sigmund," *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p.272.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Schwarz, *Evil*, p. 17.

[128] Ibid., p. 20.

[129] Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, p. 118.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Schwarz, *Evil*, p. 19.

THE BODY IN THE MUSIC

In discussing intimations of chaos in the *Symphonie Fantastique* I explored the musical experience of tension and disorder in a way that linked it closely with the body. Johnson's model proposes that all understanding, musical or otherwise, is in fact inseparable from corporeal experience. I would suggest that the sheer intensity of these experiences contributes to an especially corporeal kind of music in the "Witches' Sabbath", one that encourages particular attention to bodily experience. This is greatly significant for an interpretation of this music in relation to evil due to the troubled relationship in Western culture between the body and morality that I have outlined. The corporeality of Berlioz's music is also instituted and emphasised through his abundant use of dance tunes and rhythms.

Dance and dance music have, throughout history, become embroiled in cultural issues and mores surrounding movement and bodily control. Partly as a result of the cultural history of the body and evil, society has traditionally instituted strict requirements or expectations as to bodily deportment, privileging controlled movement, or preferably repose, over any kind of irregular, seemingly uncontrolled, chaotic movement. Plato felt the need "to recommend strict state control over forms of dancing permitted to free Hellenic citizens."[132] There are also records of "outbursts of dancing mania that have periodically occurred in Europe and given concern to civic authority by the social disorder they arouse."[133] Christian morality also led to the condemnation of many forms of dance. The notion of the immorality of dance can be seen in our very recent past in the reactions provoked by Jazz and Rock 'n' Roll, and the radically new dances that came with them.

It is the aspect of control that is central to the historical distrust of dance. Dances considered more acceptable were ordered, "cerebral" dances following rules or patterns and highlighting bodily discipline. Perhaps the most enduring image of undisciplined dancing is that associated with Dionysus – so enduring that the word *Dionysian* signifies the irrational, ecstatic and frenzied. There are also various cultural associations of dance with possession, trance, hallucination and magic. These associations, built up over many years, are not easily dismissed.

There is clearly an association of dance with many of the symbolisms of evil that I have previously identified. Not only is lack of bodily control an important issue, however, but there is also an important link, through the body, with sexuality. This link between dance and sex can be traced throughout the history of Western culture, particularly in the images of the seductive dance (from the dance of the seven veils to contemporary "exotic" dancers), and the orgiastic dance (closely related to the sexual aspects of witchcraft and Satanism). Indeed, when accusations have been brought against a particular form of dancing, for example the waltz, tango or Rock 'n' Roll jive, the charges most often include licentiousness and sexual depravity.

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[132] Ingrid Brainard,"Dance," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Washington, DC: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 1980), Vol V. p. 179.

[133] Ibid.

There is also a link between dance and the shared imagery of the grotesque and evil in the historically recurrent *Totentanz* or "dance of death". Also known as the *danse macabre,* "St. John's" or "St. Vitus's" dance, its roots lie in the Middle Ages. The affliction made people "dance and leap, turn and twirl in an ever-increasing frenzy that could last for hours and days and was likely to end in complete exhaustion if not in death."[134] These effects have been linked to the neurological disease chorea but it is unclear how many cases were in fact the result of outbreaks of hysteria due to religious fervour, pagan traditions, superstition, a belief in the plague-fighting powers of dance, or ergot poisoning. The uncontrolled chaotic movements of chorea have also been historically tied with witchcraft and demonic possession.[135] Whatever the cause of this recurring dance mania, one outcome has been the artistic image of the dancing skeleton representing death. This historical alliance of dance music with death lends yet more symbolism to that of evil and the grotesque in relation to the body and its control.

There are also particular negative values traditionally allocated to dance music in Western culture. Historically dance music has been perceived as a lower art form lacking in integrity and worth. This judgement reflects the body/mind split that we have seen is essential to the symbolism of evil. Dance music has been seen as bodily music suitable only for mere entertainment as opposed to "truly artistic" music that engages the mind and inspires reasonable contemplation.

All of these associations can be seen at work in the use of dance music in the "Witches' Sabbath." The traditionally devalued status of dance music is drawn upon in order to degrade various passages in the movement. When the *idée fixe* appears it is, in Berlioz's own words, "no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial and grotesque." The *Dies irae* also receives similar treatment when, in each instance, the second of its diminutions is given a dotted dance rhythm. Finally the "Sabbath Round Dance" that constitutes a large portion of the movement and returns in conjunction with the *Dies irae* is itself, not surprisingly, constructed from a dance tune.

It is also possible to examine the use of dance music in the Symphony as a whole. In the composition of this work, Berlioz borrowed and reused material from other works. Julian Rushton identifies some of the known and possible sources of this recycling and in doing so distinguishes a pattern (see Appendix 2). "The pattern shows an increasing incidence of dance; it becomes intricately bound with parody, whose incidence also increases."[136] I would also suggest that the increasing incidence of dance could be seen as a reflection of the gradual descent into evil that the work represents. Rushton does read in this pattern that "song signifies grace, associated through the *idée fixe* with the ideal beloved [and] dance represents a threat," but he does not explore the symbolism of evil and the body identifiable in the use of dance music.

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[134] Ibid., p. 183.

[135] Michael S. Okun and Rahil Jummani, "From the Dancing Manias to Sydenham's Chorea," University of Florida History of Medicine Lecture Series. May 2000. http://www.medinfo.ufl.edu/other/histmed/okun2/index.html. 10 August 2003.

[136] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 266.

Although dance music is to some extent always likely to suggest or draw attention to the body and its traditionally devalued status, this will not always and everywhere call to mind associations with evil. The waltz of movement two, for example, does not intimate evil per se, although Rushton does still read it as threatening as "the beloved is glimpsed at the waltz, presumably with another partner."[137] In the finale, however, it is not only the programmatic context that incites the association but also the chaotic, frenetic nature of the music. It is the evocation of orgiastic, Dionysian dance, suggesting the body out of control and in a sexual frenzy, which encourages a closer association with evil rather than mere threat or devaluation. This combines with the imagery of dance and orgy that I have observed is closely associated with witchcraft, particularly in the celebration of the "sabbat," and with Satanism and the Black Mass, suggested in the music by its quasi-religious allusions.

I have already noted the presence of two differing approaches to chaos in this movement – the passages that suggest losing control through increasing tension, and those in which control seems to be lost entirely. While the tense, pressurised passages can be seen to play on an inner bodily experience of control, the more chaotic passages can often be related to actual bodily movement. The whirling figuration might certainly evoke the frenetic movements of the bodies taking part in Berlioz's "devilish orgy." The recurring woodwind skirls might be read as bodily spasms or flailing limbs. These distinctly physical gestures combine with the chaotic nature of the music to further degrade this dance into an orgy appropriate for a witches' Sabbath and also for the symbolism of evil.

One element of music that is often considered to be the most "bodily" is rhythm. I have already suggested, in accordance with many recent theorists (not only Walser but also Richard Middleton, David Lidov, Susan Fast and others[138]), that all music is experienced primarily through the body. Musical meaning is seen as pre-linguistic, structured through our bodily experience. Rhythm, however, might be considered the most *obviously* corporeal in the extent to which it engages the body. It is to rhythm that we actually move our bodies in dance. It is said that we "feel" a beat. Clearly rhythm has a particularly powerful propensity to draw attention to the body. It is often suggested that our experience of rhythm is structured through our bodily experience of a regular pulse.[139] What we could call a regularity schema might be rooted in the embodied, rhythmic experiences of walking, rocking etc. or in "the clocks which provide our inner sense of time, the rhythmic and circadian clocks of the body, heart, pulse, and breathing under the control of the central nervous system."[140] It is through our bodies that we come to understand the concept of pulse and rhythm.

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[137] Ibid.

[138] See Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990); David Lidov, "Mind and Body in Music," *Semiotica* 66-1/3 (1987), pp. 69-97; and Susan Fast, *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[139] See Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, pp. 226-227.

[140] Barbara R Barry, *Musical Time: The Sense of Order* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1990), p. 114.

One particular use of rhythm that is often considered especially corporeal or body-engaging is syncopation. This may well be due to its direct contradiction with this internal, regular pulse. In going against this regularity, syncopation can have the effect of "pulling" the body away from a steady beat. This pull can draw extra attention to corporeal experience and therefore the body itself.[141] The experience of syncopation as more "bodily" may, however, not be a universal understanding fundamental to the embodied structuring of rhythm as this interpretation would suggest. The regular pulse that syncopation pulls against is the dominant feature of Western classical music, instituted through convention. It could be that syncopation is only a bodily pull against the rhythmic regularity conventionally imposed in Western Classical musics rather than a universal, internal norm of regularity.

The fact remains, however, that in the West, syncopation has acquired complicity with the body. As such it has also gained sexual connotations and potential associations with immorality and evil. It was, in part, the syncopated nature of Jazz and Rock 'n' Roll that encouraged allegations of immorality. Due to the strong identification of syncopation with African-American pop music, its association with evil has highly problematic racial connotations.

Berlioz's frequent and bold use of syncopation in the "Witches' Sabbath" would have been a significant departure from convention. He regularly uses moments of syncopation overtly to contradict what are in other respects rhythmically regular passages. The effect can certainly be to draw extra attention to the body, which in this context can be read in terms of the symbolism of evil and the body. I have already discussed how syncopation in this piece can be interpreted through the symbolism of both deviation and disorder. At times these readings seem more appropriate than that of corporeal accentuation. The syncopation at bar 78, leading to the single bar of common time, is one such passage. Although the preceding bars emphatically pound out the regular rhythm against which the syncopations are felt, the lack of this rhythm for the three bars in which they actually sound, makes the syncopation sound more like a temporary time change. The effect is similar in the syncopated wind of bars 306-327 which, I would suggest, are less bodily engaging than confusing and disorderly.

An instance of syncopation that I experience as particularly bodily and would suggest is highly important in terms of the symbolism of the body and evil is that which occurs in the "round dance." Here the syncopation works against the strict regularity of the dance rhythms (which are already suggestive of the body) to create a powerfully felt rhythmic pull. The effect is foregrounded in its first four appearances as it is articulated initially by the brass (bb. 247, 254, 261) and later by brass and wind (b. 268). The corporeal experience of this syncopation lends to the passage a complicity with the body appropriate for the image of a Witches' orgy that the programme describes.

I have identified the close link between the body and sex in the symbolism of evil. This is also evident in the *Symphonie Fantastique*. Edward Cone notes that at the time

[141] See Susan Fast's discussion of the effect of syncopation in a Led Zeppelin riff in *In the Houses of the Holy*, p. 196.

the *Symphonie Fantastique* was written its programme was of a "sensational nature, with its suggestions of mingled sexuality and diabolism."[142] In the finale, this sexuality is strongly evident in the orgiastic nature of the dance music and the body that it references, drawing upon the cultural association of witchcraft and the Sabbath with sexual activity and deviancy. The treatment of the *idée fixe* might also be seen to increase its sexual nature or its promiscuity in accordance with the fate of the beloved in the narrative. Its transformation into a dance already begins this process, but in addition its chromatic ornamentation and trills lend the tune a playfully seductive quality that is culturally associated with "feminine" sexuality. Indeed, issues of sexuality and the body are closely related to issues of gender. I will explore these relationships in further detail in Chapter 4.

The allusion to sexual desire is not limited to the final movement, but permeates the entire symphony in the frustrated desire of the artist for his "ideal being." Julian Rushton reads this desire in the music of the first two movements. In the first movement a complete restatement of the *idée fixe* occurs at bar 232 where "the melody floats perilously over a pulsating accompaniment, creating an erotic tension that finds no release in the frantic scrambling passage that follows."[143] In the "Scène aux champs", a statement of the theme prompts a reaction in which "the rest of the orchestra, representing the artist, reacts with hostility... then to a passage of tonal indeterminacy, rising diminished sevenths implying frustrated eroticism" (bars 100-108).[144]

THE SYMBOLISM OF DEFILEMENT

An important area of evil symbolism in relation to both the body and sex is that of defilement. In *The Symbolism of Evil*, Paul Ricoeur, tracing the development of the Western "experience of fault," suggests that defilement is the earliest, archaic concept of evil and, although it is outdated, "dread of the impure and rites of purification are in the background of all our feelings and all our behaviour relating to fault."[145]

Defilement is defined as "an act that evolves an evil, an impurity, a fluid, a mysterious and harmful something that acts dynamically – that is to say magically"[146]. Here the body is brought into the picture. This concept of evil involves physical contact in order for the external something to act. Evil becomes impurity, a physical stain, and "the division between the pure and the impure ignores any distinction between the physical and the ethical."[147] Defilement also relates to the concept of possession as an external force that acts upon the body.

The body is also implicated through the importance of sexual behaviour in the concept of defilement. "The prohibitions against incest, sodomy, abortion, relations at

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[142] Edward T. Cone in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 18.
[143] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 259.
[144] Ibid., p. 263.
[145] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 25.
[146] Ibid., p. 25.
[147] Ibid., p. 27.

forbidden times – and sometimes places – are so fundamental that the inflation of the sexual is characteristic of the whole system of defilement, so that an indissoluble complicity between sexuality and defilement seems to have been formed from time immemorial."[148] The complicity of sex and defilement might be most clearly illustrated in the image of the opposite pole – the identity of purity and virginity. "Virginity and spotlessness are as closely bound together as sexuality and contamination".[149]

The body is not only implicated as the source of impurity and the site of its stain but also in the dread that accompanies it and the punishment it entails. According to Ricoeur, physical ills (in the world at large but also of the body) were seen as the result of defilement.[150]

Under the consciousness of defilement then, the body, through contact and contagion, is the source of impurity, the site of its stain and can also be the site of its vengeance. It is clear that this is a concept with which we can no longer fully relate. Defilement is an idea that we have outgrown and moved beyond. But Ricoeur suggests that this is not entirely true and that defilement is a concept that, due to the richness of its symbolism, cannot be merely forgotten but is instead retained and transformed.[151]

It is through language that the concept of defilement is instituted and its symbolism propagated. "Defilement enters into the universe of man [sic] through speech... it is determined and defined through speech; the opposition of the pure and the impure is spoken; and the words which express it institute the opposition... the impure is taught in the words that institute the taboo."[152] And the language of defilement perpetuates its symbolism when taken up and used in later conceptions of evil. Ricoeur cites an example from Isaiah: "Woe is me! I am undone. For I am a man of unclean lips ... and mine eyes have seen the king, Yahweh Sabaoth." And later: "Behold, this has touched thy lips, thy sin is taken away, thine iniquity is expiated."[153] Indeed, endless examples could be drawn from the Bible. This symbolism, however, also inflects the language of our own secular concept of evil. At a fairly trivial level we might respond to bad language with the commandment to "wash your mouth out." The intense complicity of defilement with sex can still be seen in our language regarding sexual behaviour and deviance – pornography is "dirty," a promiscuous woman is a "filthy" whore. Sexual perversion is consistently described with language rooted in the symbolism of defilement. But also in crimes of a more serious nature such as rape or murder, words such as filthy, sick, scum, etc. consistently appear. A recent event that brought the symbolism of defilement to the fore was the advent of AIDS. The disease came to be seen by many as essentially a punishment for the evil defilement of homosexual relations.

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[148] Ibid., p. 28.
[149] Ibid., p. 29.
[150] Ibid., p. 30.
[151] Ibid., p. 12.
[152] Ibid., p. 36.
[153] Isaiah (6:5, 7) quoted in Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 34.

DEFILEMENT IN THE SYMPHONY

As defilement still informs our concept of evil today, as it did in Berlioz's time, we might explore the *Symphonie Fantastique* in the light of this symbolism. The symbols of externality that arise from defilement, such as the stain, or possession, can feed into an interpretation of many aspects of the "Dream of a Witches' Sabbath." Any feature of the music that acts as a kind of stain on what would, according to traditional aesthetics, be considered a normative musical language might invoke this symbolism.

Historically, concordant music has gained an association with purity, being considered the most natural state of musical sound. The attitude toward the tritone clearly illustrates this trend. Although the tritone may not seem particularly discordant to contemporary ears it has certainly seemed so in the past. The interval has been known as *discordantia perfecta*, perfect discord and also *diabolus in musica*, the Devil in music, and was for a long time avoided if at all possible. "In the medieval period, one of the aesthetic objects of sacred music was the exclusion of dissonance, in particular the tritone" and this exclusion "may be seen as a cleansing or purification of the music."[154] It is possible to see the tritone, along with other moments of dissonance, as an addition to or stain upon what would otherwise be more concordant, "pure" music, as an external force of defilement.

The most striking dissonance in the "Witches' Sabbath" is the semitonal conflict in the overlapping chords of bar 399 that I have already pointed out and that Holoman describes as a "splendid clash." Other than this brief example the work contains little of such obviously dissonant music, certainly to contemporary ears. What are prevalent are diminished seventh chords and tritones.

Even if its dissonant qualities are no longer quite as effective to modern ears the tritone continues to be used as a musical symbol of evil. "Because it divides the octave into two equal parts, the tritone has also assumed the role of the tonally most ambiguous interval."[155] This instability can, in the context of evil, be interpreted in a similar way to the diminished seventh which, as I have noted, is itself constructed of two interlocking tritones and is also a common symbol of evil in music. Often the way that Berlioz treats a diminished seventh chord intensifies its element of dissonance, such as the tremolo strings of bars 1 and 2 or the wind shrieks of 468-472. If we view these elements in relation to a conceptual pure music it is possible to view them as impurities, degrading the music from an outside source.

In the 'Witches' Sabbath,' Berlioz says the *idée fixe* "has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque." The beloved, whom it represents, has fallen from grace; she is besmirched, defiled. When the *idée fixe* first appears, as if in the distance, it has very little accompaniment. When it

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[154] Private communication from Dr William Renwick: Dept. of Music, McMaster University.

[155] "Tritone", *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (Washington, DC: Grove's Dictionaries of Music, 1980), Vol.15, p. 486.

begins in earnest at bar 40, however, the simple oboe accompaniment makes brief but effective use of tritone intervals that could be seen as symbolic of this defilement and might also be experienced as such. The theme's newfound chromaticism could also suggest the symbolism of defilement. Chromaticism involves the use of notes that do not belong in the diatonic key presently employed and as such chromatic inflections might, in this context, be seen as external impurities. In the case of the *idée fixe* this effect is enhanced by the fact that the clarinet's chromatic inflections are *acciaccature*, added to the notes of the melody's original manifestation in an almost parasitical fashion. They also create a certain dissonant effect. There is much chromaticism throughout the finale but it is used to particular effect in the defilement of the round-dance subject, first at bar 355 and then in fugal exposition from bar 364. With the symbolism of defilement still forming an essential part of the Western concept of evil, it is quite possible that Berlioz employed these musical techniques, whether consciously or not, in part to defile the now evil *idée fixe* and also the movement in its entirety.

Impurity is also conveyed through timbre. It is not only harmony that is often described in terms of purity but also sounds themselves, particularly musical sounds. A "dirty" sound is usually one that seems particularly harsh on the ear or is distorted in some way. This may well have some relation to the notions of force that Walser identifies with distortion. In his *Grande traité d'instrumentation* Berlioz discusses the instruments that he used in the *Symphonie Fantastique* for their dirty timbres. The manuscript of the symphony indicates that the second ophicleide part is to be taken by a serpent, an instrument already out of use in Berlioz's time, except in churches. He discourages its use but says that "one must allow an exception only for the use of the serpent in the Requiem to double the terrifying plainchant of the *Dies irae*. Then its cold and repulsive howling is doubtless appropriate."[156] Clearly an exception could also be made for the *Dies irae* in his symphony. The other instrument that Berlioz discusses is the Eb clarinet, which he employs for the defiled version of the *idée fixe*:

> The small Eb clarinet produces piercing sounds, which from high A on up can very easily sound coarse. In a recent symphony it has been used just so to parody a melody, to degrade it, to vulgarize it, if one may use such an expression. The dramatic sense of the work required this strange transformation.[157]

Clearly the timbre of these instruments is seen to sully the music that they play. As an element outside of the notes, we might read timbral "impurity" as another case of musical defilement.

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[156] Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 211.
[157] Edward T. Cone in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 221-2.

PERVERSION AND MALCONFORMATION

The evil symbolism of the body and defilement merges into that of ugliness as the physical nature of the stain blurs with the bodily deformations of grotesquery. An important element of the grotesque, this symbolism is illustrated by the adjectival transformation of the word to describe that which is "monstrous, unnatural – distorted and unnatural in shape or size; abnormal and hideous."[158] Indeed, in its common usage, the word grotesque has become synonymous with ugly. Disfigurement provides yet more symbolism that the grotesque and evil have in common. This relationship is mutually influential and the result of similar concepts and associations in each case.

Ricoeur suggests that under the symbol of defilement and the impure, wickedness is "the staining, the darkening, the *disfiguring* of an innocence."[159] (my emphasis). Plato's "scale of perfection," "ranging from the love of physical beauty, to a love of beautiful souls, up 'the heavenly ladder' to the love of beautiful thoughts and ideas to, finally, the love of God who is Absolute Beauty,"[160] effectively combines being and beauty with morality. The body is evil and utterly inferior to the soul, but a beautiful body is at least a step on the way to the beauty of God. This "heavenly ladder" established an explicit link between the good and the beautiful. In addition, the evil nature of unformed matter might also add to the symbolism if disfigurement were viewed as less "formed" or less perfectly formed, so being more material and ontologically inferior to the beautiful.

Aristotle also hailed beauty as "the gift of God." Due to the dualism of early Greek philosophy, because beauty is a gift, the implication is that ugliness is God's punishment.[161] "First proposed by Anaximander, the theory of dualism proposed that a conflict between the four opposite elements, hot and cold, wet and dry, was the driving natural force of the cosmos."[162] Later philosophers fleshed out the details but the essential idea remained. Binary dualism has, to a great extent, reigned in Western consciousness ever since. These binaries tend to blur with one another so that the opposite sides of each binary become associated. As such, inevitably one side of a binary would be seen as good and the other bad. True to Greek dualism, therefore, ugliness equates with evil.

Aristotle distinguished between the good and the beautiful. He did, however, propose that the face might indicate someone's character, a concept that seems inescapable well over two thousand years later.[163] Evil could be seen as an ugliness of character, an ugliness that shows through in the face. Today this concept not only persists in fiction, from fairy tales to Hollywood movies, but also in daily life in the assumptions we make about people based on their appearance. As Synnott states: "Aesthetic relations

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[158] "Overview for 'grotesque'," Princeton University WordNet. http://www.cogsci.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/webwn1.7.1?stage=1&word=grotesque. 10 August 2003.

[159] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 156.

[160] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 9.

[161] Ibid., p. 79.

[162] Ibid., p. 40.

[163] Ibid., pp. 80-81.

are perhaps as significant as class, gender or ethnic relations as determinants of life chances; and aesthetic stratification as powerful as class gender or ethnic stratification."[164]

The symbolism of perversion and disfigurement also pervaded the varying Christian concepts of evil. Tertulian, the first great Latin theologian, created a diabology in which "whatever God creates good, the Devil seeks to pervert, thus distorting God's beautiful creation."[165] Dionysius said that everything yearns to return to God and that "all things are moved by a longing for the Beautiful and the Good."[166] His description of evil contains the words "disproportion," "unlovely," "imperfect," "disordered," "incongruous," "indefinite."[167] Thomas Aquinas distinguished physical from spiritual beauty but he still believed that "the beautiful and the good are identical in reality."[168]

But what is beauty? The saying goes that it is in the eye of the beholder and indeed it is; an eye whose sight is significantly focused by the fashions of its day and the concept of beauty constructed by the dominant culture. That which does not conform to the rules of this ideal may be deemed ugly. It is this lack of conformity to the rules that led me to the use of the ugly synonym *malconformation* to describe this symbolism.

Bakhtin suggests that the Western rules of beauty in effect today are informed by a Renaissance aesthetic that is based on the literary and artistic canon of antiquity.[169] As I have observed, the Renaissance saw the rise of individualism and a concomitant privatization of the body. This phenomenon meant that "increasingly people distanced themselves from bodily functions and indeed from the body itself, both their own and other people's."[170] This ideology of the isolated body is reflected in the Renaissance "classic canons" of beauty identified by Bakhtin:

> The body was first of all a strictly completed, finished product. Furthermore, it was isolated, alone, fenced off from all other bodies. All signs of its unfinished character, of its growth and proliferation were eliminated; its protuberances and offshoots were removed, its convexities... smoothed out, its apertures closed. The ever unfinished nature of the body was hidden, kept secret.[171]

The carnivalesque transvaluation inherent in the Renaissance grotesque meant that its representation of the body was in direct contradiction to the dominant, classic canons. "Grotesque images preserve their peculiar nature, entirely different from ready-made, completed being. They remain ambivalent and contradictory; they are ugly, monstrous,

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[164] Ibid., p. 101.
[165] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 70.
[166] Ibid., p. 107.
[167] Ibid., p. 109.
[168] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 84.
[169] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, pp. 28-29.
[170] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 19.
[171] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p. 29.

hideous from the point of view of the 'classic' aesthetics, that is the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed."[172] This malconformation is, therefore, the breaking out of this contained view of the body, and so "the grotesque image ignores the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (sprouts, buds) and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths."[173] This leads to the stressing and highlighting of parts of the body that protrude into the outside world or are open to it, allowing it into or out of the body: "the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose. The body discloses its essence as a principle of growth which exceeds its own limits only in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking and defecation."[174] Bodily functions can also be ugly and grotesque.

According to Bakhtin, through carnival laughter and folk humour these images are seen in a regenerative light of renewal. They facilitate the experience of a new world which "provides us with the social structures and philosophical understandings for realizing participation rather than representation; dialogue rather than monologue; equality rather than hierarchy; the social self rather than the individualistic self; the full body in communion with the natural world rather than the body abstracted and privatized."[175] Whether we accept this rather utopian view or not, what is important for our purposes is the rich symbolism of malconformation provided by grotesque imagery, and its reciprocity with the concept of evil. Due to its transvaluational qualities, the grotesque is essentially synonymous with society's concept of evil and so their shared symbolisms of ugliness, the body and sex are mutually reinforcing.

MUSICAL MALCONFORMATION

In my discussion of the symbolism of deviation, I mentioned the concept of the musically beautiful and the rules that were instituted in order to assure this beauty. Obviously the concept of musical beauty, no more immutable than the concept of evil, has varied over time. The "rules" and strictures placed upon composition have therefore also altered. What is important here, however, is that such rules have existed and that we are able to experience music as either conforming to these rules or deviating from them.

I have noted a number of features in Berlioz's work that deviate from the rules of musical beauty predominant in his time. Clearly many of the deviations from formal, harmonic and rhythmic paths also constitute a deviation from these rules, and many of the impurities of dissonance, chromaticism and timbre also stretch them. It was partly this rule breaking that led many of Berlioz's contemporaries to criticize the *Symphonie Fantastique*, particularly the last movement, deeming it ugly and even questioning its status as music.

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[172] Ibid., p. 25.
[173] Ibid., p. 318.
[174] Ibid., p. 26.
[175] Yates, "An Introduction to the Grotesque," p. 21.

In his review of the work, François-Joseph Fétis says that the "Dream of the Witches' Sabbath" "is a saturnalia of noise and not of music."[176] He also insists that throughout the entire symphony Berlioz's melody is defective. "In short, the second phrase of a period is hardly ever an answer to the first. How can one achieve true melody like that?"[177] Fétis clearly disliked the symphony but even Schumann, who praised the work, says that the finale "rants and rages in excessive confusion; except for a few novel passages it is unlovely, shrill, and disagreeable."[178] The critic Eduard Hanslick came to a similar verdict in his review of a performance of the symphony in Prague. Although his review is mostly laudatory, he does say that the fifth movement "is the cry of anguish of an overwrought imagination; it presses hard against the limits of the aesthetical. In our concert the composer was judicious and sensitive enough to omit it."[179] Mendelssohn saw the work as "utter foolishness" and questioned the exaggerated orchestral means, which he thought Berlioz "used to express nothing but indifferent drivel, mere grunting, shouting, screaming back and forth."[180]

It seems that audiences at the time, whether supporters of the work or detractors, were mostly agreed upon the "ugly" nature of the "Witches' Sabbath," if not of the entire symphony. What many failed to note, however, was the intention of this malconformation with regard to the symbolism of evil and the grotesquery of the programme. In many cases this failure may well have been due to a formalist dismissal of the programme and the descriptive aspirations of the music. Attempting to read the work simply as "music," apart from the programme and its evil context, leads to one of two conclusions – that in breaking the rules of aesthetics, the music is defective and simply ugly or that it is groundbreaking and revolutionary.

From today's perspective, the elements of malconformation in Berlioz's music, which came to be seen as innovations, are no longer deviations from the rules of music. Since Berlioz's time, and some might say due in part to Berlioz's own work, the "acceptable" musical language has altered immensely so that Berlioz's malconformation might be in danger of being lost on modern ears. I believe, however, that we can still experience its effect. Even if a listener is not aware of the historical context of the work and would therefore not identify Berlioz's rule-breaking, I believe that this kind of symbolism has become such a part of Western musical language and repertoire that most listeners exposed to this tradition would still recognise its significance, particularly if the programmatic context of evil was known. Just as Ricoeur suggests cultural symbolism, once outgrown, is never entirely lost but retained and transposed, I would suggest the same is true of musical symbolism. Even if Berlioz's techniques would no longer be considered rule-breaking or even ugly by today's standards, their associations with evil through malconformation have created a musical symbolism that has been retained into the present. It can be identified throughout modernism and is particularly evident in

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[176] Fétis in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 220.

[177] Ibid., 219.

[178] Schumann in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 236.

[179] Geoffrey Payzant, *Eduard Hanslick and Ritter Berlioz in Prague A Documentary Narrative* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991), p. 64.

[180] Mendelssohn in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 282.

much current film music. I would suggest that it is partly through this symbolic retention that we are still able to experience malconformation in Berlioz's symphony.

It is, however, not only flaunting the rules of musical beauty that can be read as malconformation in the *Symphonie Fantastique*. The symbolism of malconformation in relation to the grotesque is most often manifest as deviation from the rules of *bodily* beauty. This draws upon the "classic canons" of beauty that Bakhtin identified as establishing the ideal of the completed, closed, smooth and isolated body. In this regard the symbolism of grotesque malconformation requires bodily protuberances and offshoots. This is a symbolism that can also be applied to a reading of Berlioz's music.

Turning once again to the *idée fixe* in the finale as an important site of grotesque treatment and demonic transformation, a number of its features might be read in terms of bodily malconformation. In his exploration of the grotesque in nineteenth century opera, Rodney Stenning Edgecombe says that bodily distortion "gives us an exaggerated sense of our deficiencies [and] its musical analogue is gouty motion."[181] This clumsiness, he suggests, is often "conveyed by a hesitant or wobbly melodic line."[182] His examples include the "lopsided, rhythmic deformity" of the jester in Verdi's *Rigoletto* and in Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* the music of Carabosse, which is "all gnarled, malicious *acciaccature*."[183] These are the very features that Berlioz uses to "degrade" his *idée fixe* with its chromatic ornamentation and its lopsided phrase structure. I would suggest, however, that these features can not only be interpreted as exaggerated deficiency and deformity but can be read specifically in the context of Bakhtin's notions of grotesque bodily malconformation.

The initial appearance of the *idée fixe* in the first movement becomes a normative idiom for the theme to which later appearances can be compared. The addition of the *acciaccature* and trills in the finale, then, might be seen as the melody breaking out of its normative confinement so that the chromatic ornamentation represents the "protuberances and offshoots" that entail a malconformation to the closed, isolated nature of the classically beautiful body. Similarly the further extension of the melody's consequent might be viewed in the same light – the tune leading beyond its limited space in a grotesque form of transgression. In addition, as I have previously noted, the *idée fixe* transgresses its registral bounds, continuing upward when the original theme made an octave descent. The "Sabbath Round Dance" subject undergoes similar treatment at bar 448 where it appears in what Rushton calls "cackling augmentation,"[184] with a trill on every downbeat note. This is followed by the disjointed, staccato passage at bar 460, the extreme disjuncture of which might also intimate the protrusions of transgressive malconformation.

It is not only the transgression of physical boundaries that Bakhtin identifies as an element of the grotesque body but also a focus on the body as unfinished, a highlighting

[181] R. S. Edgecombe, "The Musical Representation of the Grotesque in Nineteenth-Century Opera," *The Opera Quarterly* 16 (Winter 2000), p 44.
[182] Ibid., p. 46.
[183] Ibid., pp. 45-46.
[184] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 256.

of the body as process, the "swallowing up and generating principle."[185] I have already noted the feeling that the finale is constantly restarting, brought about by the double statement of ideas and the ambiguity in form, thematic hierarchy and introduction length. This experience might suggest the unfinished quality and sense of becoming that Bakhtin identifies. Although clearly music is always in a state of becoming as it unravels through time, this quality of constant restarting may well draw greater attention to the experience.

It is clear that the symbolism of grotesque malconformation, in close relation to the body and defilement, provides a multitude of associations that might inform an interpretation of many elements of the finale of the *Symphonie Fantastique* due to the close association of the grotesque with the Western cultural concept of evil.

[185] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, pp. 25-26.

CHAPTER 4

THE TRIVIAL AND THE OTHER

TRIVIAL EVIL

I have noted the close relationship and shared symbolism between the grotesque and the imagery of evil. The sense of humour and laughter inherent in the grotesque has therefore made its mark on evil and its own cultural associations. It is partly as a result of this that triviality has become a recurring theme in relation to evil. Triviality can also, however, play on the mind versus body duality that is so important in relation to the concept of evil. The trivial is, by definition, less worthy of attention, meaning less worthy of the mind. The less serious can be seen as less intellectual.

Burton Russell suggests that in the Middle Ages the Devil himself was often trivialised in order to disarm the terrifying power of evil emphasised by monastic preachers. "The more threatening Satan's power, the more comedy was needed to tame him and relieve the threat...Popular opinion oscillated between perceiving Satan as a lord of dark and terrible powers and perceiving him as a fool."[186] In folk stories involving the Devil he is often outwitted and duped by those he himself is trying to trick. This is another trivial image of the Devil, that of trickster. Perhaps this is an extension of the temptation central to Satan's biblical image – temptation becomes asinine trickery. Another reason for this trivial presentation of the Devil might be his assured impotency in the face of God. The Devil and evil itself are literally "nothing" and his plans will come to nothing. "We know that his doom is sure, that his twisting of justice will at last pass away into the night without a trace. The cosmic joke is always on the Devil."[187]

In official theology too, "Augustine believed that evil has the effect of obscuring the understanding and impeding the working of the mind. That is why heretics cannot argue correctly."[188] Those who are evil must therefore be fools. Stories abound in the history of Christianity of the lengths to which demons would go in an attempt to distract the pious from their religious contemplations. Not only would they provide the traditional temptations of evil but they would also make terrible noises and induce horrible visions. In these episodes "the demons descend from the horrible to the silly in order to distract the monk from contemplation. They dance, sing, whistle, fart, caper, and prance. Sometimes they stage comedies."[189]

I have already noted the important role that parody and satire played in many representations of evil in Romantic art. "Irony, parody and whimsy were the dominant treatments of the Devil throughout the nineteenth century."[190] The excesses of some of the popular Gothic tales lent them also to parodic treatment, which served to trivialize the

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[186] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 111.
[187] Ibid., p. 151.
[188] Evans, *Augustine on Evil*, p. 36.
[189] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 90.
[190] Ibid., 201.

Devil further. "Along with the spectres and ghouls with which he was associated, Satan became more then ever a comic figure."[191] It was largely through this Romantic treatment that triviality came to play such an important role in the symbolism of evil.

The recognition of humour in the trivial nature of Berlioz's evil "Witches' Sabbath" is evident in this review from an unknown journalist in *Le Temps*, 26 December, 1830:

> How everyone smiled at the laughter of the monsters in the witches' Sabbath, and how they all looked at one another in astonishment as they listened to this music that seemed so genuinely infernal, these cries, these moans, these outbursts of laughter and explosions of rage.

TRVIALITY IN THE MUSIC

As Bakhtin illustrates, the concept of inversion of the norm is central to the parodic nature of the folk humour and carnival laughter that is essential to grotesque symbolism. I have already identified the inversion of a number of musical norms in relation to deviation, defilement and malconformation that might also be seen as parodic or trivialising. Their very opposition to the norm might be seen as sufficient reason for their devalued position.

There are, however, a number of specific areas in the music in which trivialising parody plays an important role and individual features of the music might be interpreted as trivialising. But how might we experience triviality in music? It would again be possible to think in terms of image schemata, how we might structure our abstract understanding of triviality through corporeal experience. It seems that it is once again a force schema on which the experience relies, although here the relevant force is conceived in terms of weight. We speak of the "gravity" of a situation when assessing its seriousness and importance. Weight becomes synonymous with consequence while triviality is experienced as light and insubstantial.

This same schema of force/weight as import can be seen at work in musical terms. The most solemn of music is often slow and low, intimating the gravity of its importance. In describing the solemn, sacred music he heard in the Sistine chapel, Gounod said: "this severe, ascetic music, calm and horizontal as the line of the ocean, monotonous by virtue of its serenity, anti-sensuous, and yet so intense in its contemplativeness that it verges sometimes on ecstasy."[192] Clearly these features reflect the symbolism of order and also of "anti-sensuous" bodily control but the calm, horizontal nature of solemn music might also be related to the restrictive nature of a heavy weight. Agitated, disjunct music would be unlikely to suggest the same sense of gravity. In fact it is this livelier, more animated music that is often used to suggest the lightness or lack of weight that is associated with light-hearted triviality.

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[191] Ibid., 178.
[192] Quoted in Edgecombe, p. 50.

Berlioz described the new manifestation of the beloved's *idée fixe* in his finale as "trivial and grotesque." This triviality might be felt through a number of elements in the new treatment of the theme suggesting a lack of weight. The theme moves faster than its original manifestation and its note lengths are shorter, which might suggest smaller and therefore lighter. At this new speed its disjunct quality lends it a bouncing, jaunty feel that is only intensified by the ornamentation. The nature of the "bubbling" bassoon accompaniment might also signify such lightness, especially when placed in a low, and therefore "heavier" instrument. If a low register can intimate as sense of weight, then a high register might also signify lightness. The *idée fixe* continues capering upwards into the highest register of the already high Eb clarinet and is then taken up by the piccolo. Its conversion into a dance rhythm not only adds to the light, gambolling quality of the music (nobody dances under a heavy weight), but dance also brings its own associations with the instinctual body as opposed to the rational, serious mind and also preconceived notions of the triviality of dance music itself; its status as mere "light-hearted entertainment" rather than "serious art." Rushton also notes that the harmony of this parody, in the oboe and second clarinet, is most orthodox.[193] The accompaniment is also simple and static, acting almost as a pedal, repeatedly sounding the same notes. This might suggest the trivial through a conventional association of complexity with greater importance, and this kind of simplicity with the artistically and intellectually trivial.

This trivial transformation of the *idée fixe* can be seen as a parody of its previous manifestations and also of the previously "pure" song upon which it was based (see Appendix 2). As Rushton notes, here "parody stands for debasement"[194] and, I would add, transgression. It therefore gains direct association with evil in addition to that gained through the interrelational symbolism of evil and the grotesque.

Berlioz's treatment of the *Dies irae* (beginning at bar 127) provides another clear example of such parody. Here, however, the parody is gradual, so we can see the trivial and debased in direct contradistinction to the apparent religious solemnity of the chant in its initial appearances. Each of its sections first appears in a low register that is rather ominous but might still be experienced as indicative of solemnity. The *Dies irae* must first appear in its usual, sombre manner so that its subsequent parody will be recognised and be all the more effective. The bells, which are its only accompaniment, also add to this solemnity and in addition recall the religious nature of the chant in its normal usage. It is already clear, however, that all is not what it seems, due to the contradictory patterns in the phrasing of the parallel systems.[195] In each case this initial phrase is repeated with its note values halved and at a higher transposition, bringing the proposed experience of a lighter quality, which can be read as a decrease in solemnity and import. The chant is perhaps not yet trivial but certainly seems less sombre than its initial counterpart. The third rendering of each phrase, however, brings triviality to its zenith in this parody. Here, it is not only in a higher register with even shorter note lengths, but it is given a dance-like rhythm. The use of pizzicato also makes the notes smaller, bouncier and

[193] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 256.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid., p. 255.

therefore apparently lighter. This frivolity is then capped off by a fast and light scalar ascent into yet higher registers.

The use of pizzicato observed here is a trivialising tool that, along with staccato, recurs throughout this movement, for example bars 448-460 in the low strings or the staccato wind of 460-467. More importantly it is an essential feature of the "round dance" subject. Its appeal may well be due to its combination of simplicity and effectiveness. It is a feature that can easily be applied to any music and can immediately succeed in conveying the sense of lightness and buoyancy that structures our experience of the trivial. Berlioz himself says that laughter can be heard in the opening of the movement, and it is the descending pizzicato of bar 6 that both Rushton and Holoman identify as this laughter motif. This motif might be a direct relation to the laughter inherent in the grotesque, albeit the ironic, sarcastic laughter of Romantic grotesquery rather than the positive, regenerative, carnival laughter of the Renaissance grotesque as Bakhtin saw it.[196]

This sense of the trivial can also be seen in the light of exotic otherness that is all too often associated with evil and its representation. We have already seen how the symbolism of evil relies heavily on general notions of otherness. That which is evil is by definition other to a specific set of cultural expectations, rules, or norms. This can lead to a problematic blurring of the symbolisms traditionally associated with evil and with the racial other. The musical representation of racial otherness is already pregnant with its own problems of racist essentialism that a blurring with the symbolism of evil only intensifies. Edgecombe notes a similar blurring with the grotesque, observing the common trait of "scumbling the line between the grotesque and the exotic – it is one that almost all composers tended to blur when moving outside Europe."[197] In fact he says that "almost all the harmonic and melodic features associated with traditional representations of the grotesque figure in operatic accounts of distant places."[198] This shared symbolism creates an insoluble bond between exoticism and the grotesque and through association raises problematic issues regarding much of the related symbolism of evil, particularly that of the trivial and the primitive.

"Primitive barbarism" is a symbolism shared by the exotic and evil, rooted in the observation of an otherness that contradicts a Western concept of "cultured civilisation." According to this concept, "civilised" societies value intellect and rationality and are validated by a particular form of progress and achievement, namely mental. An association with evil comes also through this sense of uncivilised barbarism seen as deviation from the norms of "civilised" society, and as corporeal, irrational, instinct. "Great art" was seen as a pinnacle of cultured achievement (and often still is), so it is obvious how triviality in music might reflect the "barbarism" associated with otherness.

I would suggest, however, that it is the intimation of simplicity rather than the trivial as lightness that most strongly suggests such associations. In a number of passages a lack of musical sophistication (judged of course by contemporary conventions of

[196] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, pp. 37-38.
[197] Edgecombe, "The Musical Representation of the Grotesque," p. 47.
[198] Ibid.

Western music), combined with an aggression suggestive of uncontrolled instinct, play into the stereotypes of primitivism and barbarism that inform the representation of both evil and the other. As Fétis puts it "the 'Dream of the Witches' Sabbath', mingles the trivial, the grotesque, and the barbarous."[199]

A particularly common feature in the finale that is suggestive of simplicity is the use of parallel motion, or even unison. Examples include the unison E flat at bar 29, the passage leading up to the *Dies irae* from bar 72 and throughout the statements of the *Dies irae* itself. Cone also observes that at bar 408 "the texture... is homophonic; nay almost monophonic,"[200] but he explains this away as a wish not to distract us from the ensuing combination of themes. He does not recognise the intimations of primitivism, even though the extreme "barbarism" of the syncopated, warring diminished sevenths has only just given way. I have already mentioned the simplistic accompaniment to the *idée fixe*, although I would suggest that this is more likely to be read in relation to the feminine other that the theme represents and which I will discuss in more detail.

One other way that a sense of primitivism is often evoked in music is through the use of percussion. Most percussion instruments are not tuned and even those that are cannot approach the variety of nuance available to orchestral instruments from any other family. Percussion can therefore be thought to indicate simplicity and a lack, or inability, with regard to more complex, demanding music. The entirely mechanical striking of an object is seen to be the most basic, "primitive" way of producing sound. Cone notes that the final two movements are the only ones to employ full percussion. The abundant and prominent use of timpani and bass drum can easily be interpreted with regard to these notions of primitivism.

It is clear that the concepts of civility and barbarism rely heavily on the all-important mind/body split of Western ideology. As Susan McClary and Rob Walser observe, this may be seen in the records of European colonizers:

> To explorers, traders and missionaries accustomed to particular codes of physical propriety, the bodily gestures in African ritual often seemed clear evidence of savagery; the performances they observed appeared to confirm the absence of culture among these people whom the Europeans were all too ready to exploit.[201]

This association of the primitive other with the body means that the use of dance music in the "Dream if the Witches' Sabbath" might add to its interpretation as primitive. The additional suggestion of the body through the use of syncopation might have the same result.

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[199] Fétis in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 220.

[200] Edward T. Cone in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 275.

[201] Susan McClary and Robert Walser, "Theorizing the Body in African-American Music," *Black Music Research Journal* 14/1 (Spring 1994), p 75.

THE FEMININE OTHER

In the *Symphonie Fantastique* woman is portrayed as the dangerous and evil other. This demonising of women is a phenomenon with a long history as men in the patriarchal culture of the West have constructed women's identities for them in an attempt to keep them subordinate and under male control.

I have already observed the tendency toward duality in much of Greek philosophy. Aristotle summed up the dualism of Pythagoras and his school in the following table of binary oppositions: [202]

Limit	Unlimited
Odd	Even
One	Plurality
Right	Left
Male	Female
Resting	Moving
Straight	Curved
Light	Darkness
Good	Bad
Square	Oblong

This table clearly proposes that the two sexes are not just different but are, in fact, opposite. This view became institutionalized in Western culture and is very much in effect today. What is also important is that the binaries of the table become associated with one another, so that the sexes "are opposite not only in gender, but in all the other dimensions also."[203] So while male is on the side of good, female becomes associated with bad. Not only is there this direct link however but female also becomes linked with the other features of that column, many of which are closely related to symbols of evil that I have already explored. The left hand column (the "male" side of the table), in all of its features, clearly suggests order as it is constituted in Western society. If the male is associated with order then the "opposite" female becomes associated with the opposite of order – disorder and chaos.

Plato's philosophy, however, reveals already a contradiction and ambiguity in the figure of woman, which has persisted throughout history. He said that the masculine is "the majestic and whatever tends to valour" and the feminine "order and purity" – quite a contradiction to the chaos and associations with evil suggested by traditional Aristotelian

[202] Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), reproduced in Synnott, *The Body Social,* pp. 40-41.

[203] Synnott, *The Body Social,* p. 40.

dualism.[204] However, in *Timaeus* he posited woman as the reincarnation of an evil man. If this reincarnated woman herself lived an evil life then she would return as a brute. Effectively, therefore, woman is seen as part way between man and animal.

Aristotle's philosophy was much more strictly patriarchal. In agreement with the Pythagorean table he drew on, he saw the sexes as contrary and established a number of binary oppositions with regard to gender that have remained active in the realm of gender construction throughout history and into the present. "Men are stronger, women weaker; men courageous, women cautious; men acquire possessions outside, women preserve them inside the house; one sex is adapted for outdoor activities, the other for a sedentary life; and although both share in the procreation of children, women serve by nurturing, and men by educating them."[205] In the context of Western patriarchal hegemony, male perfection became the norm from which women, as the opposing sex, deviated in their deficiency.

It seems incredible that Aristotle's gender-philosophies might have persisted and been reflected in those of Arthur Schopenhauer over two thousand years later. It appears, however, that Aristotle merely set a ball rolling which snowballed so that in his essay "On Women" in 1870, Schopenhauer could insist that "women have 'no sense of justice,' they are 'defective in the powers of reasoning' crafty and cunning, and this 'gives rise to falsity, faithlessness, treachery, ingratitude, and so on.'"[206]

Somewhat paradoxically, it was largely the Christian church that kept alive the dualism of Aristotle and made possible the continuing misogyny of more recent times. The paradox lies in the fact that, according to the Bible, Jesus' example and his teachings went against the patriarchy of the time, rejecting the binary opposition of the sexes and the concomitant placement of value or deficiency. His attitudes toward women, his friendships with them, and his teaching of equality were quite revolutionary.[207] Unfortunately this facet of Jesus' teachings seems, to a certain extent, to have been overlooked or overpowered by the force of Western patriarchy so that much Christian thought and doctrine has been a breeding ground for patriarchy and misogyny.

This devaluing of women has, as in the realm of philosophy, led to a link in Judeo-Christian thought between woman and evil, a link which was strengthened by the Genesis story of creation. Eve was morally inferior because she was the one who gave in to the serpent and was the first to sin – she is the reason for the fall, the expulsion from Eden, and the origin of evil.[208] Dualism is also evident in the traditional opposition of Eve to the purity of Mary.

The complex and contradictory attitude toward women in Christian teaching can be clearly seen in the Biblical writings usually attributed to St Paul.[209] He teaches that "There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men,

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[204] Ibid., p. 41.
[205] Ibid., p. 43.
[206] Ibid., p. 51.
[207] Ibid., p. 44.
[208] Ibid., p. 39.
[209] Synnott (p. 44) notes that recent scholarship suggests that many or all of the passages in the Epistles in which Paul insists on the submission and silence of women may not be genuine.

between men and women; you are all one in Christ Jesus,"[210] but also that "a man has no need to cover his head, because he reflects the image and glory of God. But woman reflects the glory of man; for man was not created from woman, but woman from man."[211]

For my purposes I am interested in the side of this confusion that led to a continuing association of woman with evil. Unfortunately, this was perhaps the dominant perspective. It was certainly the most historically influential, strengthening, naturalizing, effectively consecrating patriarchal domination and excusing misogyny. Anthony Synnott provides a number of quotations from important and influential religious leaders and theologians which clearly illustrate the continuing Aristotelian, dualistic gender construction and effective demonization of women in Christian Religion:[212]

> Do you not know that you are Eve? God's sentence hangs still over all your sex and His punishment weighs down upon you. You are the devil's gateway; you are she who first violated the forbidden tree and broke the law of God.
>
> (Tertullian)

> Woman is less qualified [than man] for moral behaviour... Woman knows nothing of fidelity... Woman is a misbegotten man and has a faulty and defective nature in comparison with his... one must be on one's guard with every woman, as if she were a poisonous snake and the horned devil... Her feelings drive woman towards every evil, just as reason impels man toward all good.
>
> (Albert the Great)

> As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the male sex..., [but] as regards universal human nature, woman is not misbegotten, but is included in nature's intention as directed to the work of generation.
>
> (Thomas Aquinas)

If we return once more to Dionysius' verbose description of evil, we may identify many of his words in the picture painted above – "lack," "deficiency," "weakness," "error," "unwise," "unreasonable," "imperfect," "indeterminate," "indefinite." Clearly women are dangerously close to evil. There was even a "perennial open question as to whether women were human beings with souls."[213]

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[210] Galatians 3: 28 quoted in Synnott, *The Body Social*, pp. 44-45.
[211] I Corinthians 11: 3, 7-9 quoted in Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 44.
[212] Synnott, *The Body Social*, pp. 45-46.
[213] Miles, "Carnal Abominations," p. 103.

The quotations also illustrate what were constructed as the typical qualities and roles of a woman. She is impetuous, relying on her feelings rather than masculine reason so that she tends to evil and is a danger to men. She is imperfect but is a necessary evil due to her role in the propagation of human life. It is here that we see evidence of the love-hate relationship that has existed within the figure of woman in the male-dominated West. There exists a dichotomy, constructed by men, "in which the 'eternal feminine' is reduced to two variations on a female theme: the mother on the one hand, the sex object on the other."[214] There are "good" women who conform to the male constructions of female decorum and who know their "divinely ordained" place and function in the world. But there are also "bad" women who give in to their evil passions and lack of reason, posing a threat to men.

This clear association of one type of woman with sex and therefore evil played a large part in the persecution of women during the witch hunts that began in 1484 under Pope Innocent VIII. There is good reason why nearly all the victims of the hunts were women. Due to their perceived lack of reason and weakness to resist, women were considered particularly susceptible to the passions, especially that most powerful passion – lust. An explanation for the large numbers of female witches is provided in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, published in 1486 as a guide for finding witches. The reasons given are that women are feebler in mind and body, they are naturally quicker to waver in their faith and they are more carnal than men. "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable... Wherefore for the sake of fulfilling their lusts they consort even with devils."[215] This ties in with the sexual imagery that I have previously noted in relation to witchcraft and the orgiastic events at the 'sabbat' where, it was said, sometimes witches would have intercourse with the Devil himself.[216]

Once again the association of woman with evil and its concomitant symbolism was not limited to the purely theological arena but permeated all of Western society, both sacred and secular. It is not surprising then that much artistic and literary work reflects this construction of woman and gendering of evil.

Margaret Miles says that former theorists of grotesque art "have missed one of its crucial components; namely, the essential role of gender in creating the quality of grotesqueness."[217] The particular position in which woman has been cast in relation to the grotesque also provides yet more gender specific symbolism of evil and bolsters the apparent complicity between women and immorality.

In the realm of gender identity, patriarchal Western culture constructs a normative masculinity. Due to the transgressive, "antiworld" of grotesquery, woman, as "the creature closest to the male subject, but innately, disturbingly different, is ultimately more grotesque than are exotic monsters."[218] The perennial binary opposition of gender means

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[214] Virginia Mae Allen, *The Femme Fatale: A Study of the Early Development of the Concept in Mid-Nineteenth Century Poetry and Painting* (Boston University Graduate School, Ph.D., 1979), p. 17.

[215] Ibid., p. 47.

[216] Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness*, p. 162.

[217] Miles, "Carnal Abominations," p. 89 note 14.

[218] Ibid., p. 85.

that that which differs from the masculine norm is woman. As such, the debasement inherent in grotesque art is very often effected through the body of a woman.

Women's bodies "incorporate parts (like breasts, uterus and vagina) and processes (like menstruation and pregnancy)"[219] which, through their breaching of bodily boundaries, facilitate grotesque depiction and the labelling of woman herself as grotesque. Serious philosophical and theological debate took place to discuss the question of whether woman is a "monstrous creation."[220] In one of the most popular devotional manuals of the sixteenth century, Erasmus advised men that the best way to resist lust, that most powerful and evil of desires, is to picture the female body as grotesque: "How unworthy it is to touch the disgusting flesh of a whore... to handle loathsome filth."[221]

It is clear that the nature of the grotesque as malconformation brings complicity with the image of woman and her body. We must remember, however, that this image is not the "nature" of women and was not created by women for themselves but was constructed for them by men. It represents the anxieties, fears and fantasies of men in the face of the mystery and difference posed by women and their apparent threat to masculine order. To maintain this order, many men felt it necessary to control women and their public representation.[222] Just as the grotesque, through laughter, may serve to tame the fearful side of evil, it might also do the same for the evil of woman.

This need for male control is evident in the dual nature of the "eternal feminine" in which a woman can either conform and become a "proper" woman, or she can rebel and essentially veer toward evil. Virginia Mae Allen posits the "eternal feminine" as the original source of the imagery that led to the figure of the femme fatale – a figure of disorder and danger closely associated with evil and particularly popular in the romantic era.[223]

As we saw in the demonisation of women through the witch-hunts, the idea of this dangerous side of woman or the "eternal feminine" is inextricably linked with sex. A woman's identity hinges, or is made to hinge, essentially on her sexuality. According to patriarchal convention she must be either mother or whore, her sexuality controlled and focused on procreation, its proper and only function, or ruled by passion and insatiable lust, driving her to immorality and, worst of all, the corruption of men. A clear and practical example of this frame of mind can be seen in comments made about the practice of contraception in the closing years of the 19th century. It was believed to "degrade the finest moral instincts of both men and women, especially, of course, the latter; in them it cannot have any other effect than to bring about a bestial sensuality and indifference to all morality."[224] If not directed toward motherhood, sexuality in women can only lead to the other pole of the eternal feminine – the immoral whore.

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[219] Ibid., p. 96.
[220] Ibid., p. 102.
[221] Ibid., p. 106.
[222] Ibid., p. 112.
[223] Virginia Mae Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 17.
[224] J.A. Banks and Olive Banks, *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), quoted in Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 323.

It is this image and its cultural milieu that form the basis of the fin de siècle artistic figure of the femme fatale. This figure is beautifully summarised by Des Esseintes, the protagonist of J.K. Huysman's *A Rebours* as he describes Salome in Moreau's painting "The Apparition":

> No longer was she the dancing girl who extorts a cry of lust and concupiscence from an old man by the lascivious contortions of her body; who breaks the will, masters the mind of a king by the spectacle of her quivering bosoms, heaving belly and tossing thighs; she was now revealed in a sense as the symbolic incarnation of world-old vice, the goddess of immortal Hysteria, the Curse of Beauty supreme above all other beauties by the cataleptic spasm that stirs her flesh and steels her muscles, – a monstrous Beast of the Apocalypse, indifferent, irresponsible, insensible, poisoning... all who come near her, all who see her, all who touch her.[225]

The figure of the femme fatale "reveals" the inherent evil of woman. She becomes "an embodiment of lust and evil incarnate in a woman."[226] Her description as "goddess of immortal hysteria" and especially "monstrous Beast of the Apocalypse" suggest direct links with Satan himself, and her role as corrupting temptress parallels that traditionally attributed to the Devil.

This seductive, corrupting character of the femme fatale is possibly the defining element of the image. Webster's dictionary defines the femme fatale as "a seductive woman who lures men into dangerous or compromising situations."[227] She is not just sexual and evil but dangerous, destructive and fatal. "Woman's power is a dark force, dangerous to herself and her victims."[228] She poses a threat to the men that she tempts with her feminine sensuality, drawing them into disorder, irrationality and lustful immorality. As her sexuality was not pure and childbearing "she was construed as the woman who controlled her own sexuality, who seduced men and drained them of their 'vital powers,' in an exercise of eroticism that had no issue."[229] The femme fatale was evil in and of herself but also, and more importantly, in her evil and corrupting effects on men and their order.

This is another very important area of symbolism – she is, after all, the "goddess of immortal Hysteria". The femme fatale is seen as a deadly threat to order, or the threat posed by all women brought into fruition. Her lust is uncontrollable to any, including herself, and draws on the symbolisms of orgy and also possession as, "like the Salome of

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[225] J.K. Huysmans, *Against the Grain* (A Rebours), intro. by Havelock Ellis (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), quoted in Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, pp. 5-6.

[226] John Milner, *Symbolists and Decadents* (London and New York: Studio Vista/Dutton Pictureback, 1971), quoted in Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 6.

[227] "Femme fatale," Merriam Webster Dictionary. http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=femme+fatale. 10 August 2003.

[228] Martha Kingsbury, "The Femme Fatale and her Sisters," *Woman as Sex Object*, Art News Annual, Newsweek, New York, 1972, quoted in Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 8.

[229] Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 11.

Des Esseintes, she is propelled by a supreme inexorable drive completely outside herself,"[230] namely, evil. Not only this but the femme fatale poses a great threat to patriarchal order in her independence, in her refusal to conform to the expected norms of femininity constructed for her by the dominant male echelon, or to have her sexuality dominated and controlled by men.

It is also clear from Des Esseintes' helpful delineation that the femme fatale provides an ideal site for the continuing symbolism of defilement. She poisons all who come near, see or touch her. Her immorality is contagious, symbolically but also in a sense literally. "Every man [sic] is tempted by his own lust, which draws and entices him" (Jas. 1:14). Ricoeur discusses the schema of seduction in relation to defilement and the externality of evil. This schema "signifies that evil, although it is something that is brought about, is already there, enticing... [and] it is this being seduced that is signified in the externality of unclean contact."[231] The femme fatale *is* this seductive evil that contaminates symbolically under the consciousness of defilement. The contamination can also be seen as literal, however, in the sense that contact with the femme fatale inevitably leads a man into lust, immorality and disorder himself. Her evil contaminates him. She is his undoing.

In her search to explain the rise of the popular femme fatale, Allen says that the Romantics "created a century-long climate in which the search for remote, exotic, novel images was natural if not mandatory."[232] It may well have been partly due to this tendency that the figure of the femme fatale became so popular at this time. As I have already discussed, from the male point of view, woman can be seen as the epitome of otherness. She is the creature "closest to the male subject, but innately, disturbingly different."[233] "Femininity" has also been constructed by men as consisting of all that is opposed to "masculinity," setting up women as entirely other to male identity. On the other hand, the femme fatale is also other than ordinary women – "good," "obedient" women. A further exoticizing frequently highlights this otherness so that the femme fatale is often orientalized or historicized. "Whatever the setting of the femme fatale, she reflects remoteness from ordinary experience, ordinary women."[234]

The positioning of the femme fatale as the other of masculinity, along with her identification as a variation on an ancient theme, has led to the proposition that she is a manifestation of a Jungian "archetype". Jung proposed the idea of a "collective unconscious" which consists of layers of the psyche that have arisen over the millennia through evolution and the shared experience of being human and are therefore universal. He identified recurring images in patients' dream's that he thought could not be attributed to personal experience and which he decided were universal, primordial images, or "archetypes." I find the concept of these rather mystical universals problematic and would certainly question their supposed universality. I would be more comfortable thinking of them as stereotypes rather than archetypes, constructed by years of cultural

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[230] Ibid., p. 8.
[231] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 155.
[232] Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 22.
[233] Miles, "Carnal Abominations," p. 85.
[234] Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 22.

force and reiteration – a cultural collective unconscious rather than a biological one. Either way, the idea is useful in relation to the femme fatale.

Jung identifies very few archetypes, which are general forms that can give birth to numerous definite manifestations of image (perhaps it is this generality that lends them the appearance of universality). For our purposes the "anima" is most important. Jung tells us that the anima constitutes the "feminine" element of the male psyche. Looked at as a stereotype, anima becomes a man's concept of "woman," instituted through contact with real women but also in large part through cultural representations and stereotypes of femininity. Anima is then projected onto real women.[235] Projection can be positive and lead to attraction but, in accordance with the dual nature of the stereotypical "eternal feminine," "in such projections, there may be hidden anxiety-producing contents which point to the immoral and evil."[236] The femme fatale might very well, therefore, be a manifestation of "that portion of the male artist's psyche that is feminine [or deemed feminine], unacknowledged, and threatening."[237]

Anima as the repressed other of the male psyche suggests that the demonisation of woman might be the result of "shadow projection." Shadow projection is the assignment of the traits of the shadow to a figure or group. Collective shadow projection results in a personification of evil through the projection of a society's very concept of evil onto a single figure. "Evil and the negative are always projected onto the other; the religious dissenter becomes the enemy who betrays the light of faith, and the person of another racial group becomes the primitive who endangers civilization."[238] And the promiscuous, seductive, disobedient woman is the enemy who betrays men and the primitive who endangers their reason and order. It may be that the femme fatale and the threatening dimensions of the anima (as one and the same) are a result of shadow projection.

It is clear that, for Jung, anima is not a cultural stereotype but is a universal, archetypal "truth." Anima, with all its essentialism, *is* the feminine. Jung continues to accept the traditional view of woman, sees no reason to question it, and through its appearance in his work institutionalises it further. The established male construction of femininity now becomes a psychological "fact." It is in this way that the sciences have served in their own way to perpetuate stereotypes of femininity, even to "prove" them, concomitantly verifying the association of woman with evil.

Gender dualism is also evident in the work of Jung's one-time teacher, Freud, whose view also illustrates the usual hierarchism. In his view women are essentially castrated males who suffer from penis envy. This clearly parallels the age-old concept that women are in effect deficient men, and therefore inferior. Freud also maintained that "women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions in the history of civilization," and also thought that they have "little sense of justice but are dominated by envy. Such are women: a "riddle," an "enigma" and a "problem," even to themselves – as men are not."[239] Many other scientific "explanations" of women's inferiority exist,

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[235] Frey-Rohn , "The Psychological View," p. 177.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Allen, *The Femme Fatale*, p. 319.
[238] Frey-Rohn , "The Psychological View," pp. 179-180.
[239] Synnott, *The Body Social*, p. 55.

ranging from the biological (such as the destabilizing connection between the brain and the womb) to the anthropological (relying on smaller brain size to prove intellectual inferiority).

Clearly these discussions of gender identity are distinctly lacking in scientific "objectivity." They reflect and assume the traditional, stereotypical constructions of gender and, under pretensions of objectivity, validate these stereotypes and bolster them with the weight of scientific "fact." In attempting to explain why women are the way they are, these scientific theories simultaneously create what women are in the cultural consciousness – they construct that which they profess to study and objectively observe. In this way science has served to perpetuate and legitimate the stereotypes of femininity that possess such strong associations with evil. "Sex difference was usually reduced to biological difference, and biological difference was made to account, not simply for female inferiority, but also for female evil."[240]

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE SYMPHONY

The *Symphonie Fantastique* is a depiction of a female figure constructed by a man who is a product of a long history of gender construction. An exploration of the work's symbolism of evil in relation to gender is of prime importance.

We have seen the role that the figure of "the beloved" plays in the programme of this work. On the surface the symphony purports to be about the Artist's life. It is essentially meant to reflect the psychology of the Artist as he progresses through the events of the narrative. In doing so, however, the piece also paints a picture of the woman around whom these events revolve and who is the apparent catalyst for the psychological states of the Artist. In effect, the "beloved" woman becomes the subject that the work is about. But it is not about a particular woman. Although the programme has been linked to Berlioz's infatuation with Harriet Smithson, and this is likely to have been the basis for Berlioz's conception of the work, it is not Smithson herself who is represented by the *idée fixe*. Indeed, it is no real woman that is represented. As Rushton comments: "the *idée fixe* does not represent the beloved, but the protagonist's perception of her."[241]

In observing the development of this perception throughout the narrative, it is clear that the Artist's (and by extension Berlioz's) concept of woman is congruent with the dominant cultural model of his time. The virgin/whore dichotomy is patent in Berlioz's representation of the beloved. In the first movement she is described as the "ideal being." This should perhaps read "ideal woman," as clearly the ideal being would be male! In an early rendering of the programme it is said that the character of the *idée fixe*, which the beloved shares, has "grace and nobility."[242] Later its description was altered to "passionate, but at the same time noble and shy." Writing as Florestan,

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[240] Miles, "Carnal Abominations," p. 102.
[241] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 84.
[242] Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 8.

Schumann describes his image of the beloved: "I imagine this feminine creature to be like the main theme of the whole symphony, pale, slender as a lily, veiled, quiet, almost cold."[243] These characteristics clearly reflect the image of the "ideal woman," the "virgin" side of the dichotomy, the well-behaved woman, obedient to cultural conventions and societal mores of "feminine" conduct. This is a male construction, a fantasy of female identity in which passion is tempered by nobility and reticence. When she resists domination and control, however, the artist's perception of the beloved loses this ideal dignity and reserve to be left only with unbridled passion as she is transformed into the whore. In the earlier programme Berlioz said that in the "Witches' Sabbath," "she is now only a prostitute, fit to take part in such an orgy."[244]

The representation of the beloved also reflects the attributes of irrationality and disorder that were traditionally allocated to women and were also associated with evil. Although these attributes are not found in the programme, they can be gleaned from an interpretation of the musical representation of the beloved in the *idée fixe*. I have previously noted the inherent ambiguity of this melody with its irregular nature. In its first appearance in movement one, intimations of "feminine" irrationality and impetuosity can be read in its meandering rhythmic uncertainty, combined with its rather unpredictable, disjunct melodic movement and unusual phrasing. Cone also notes "the deliberate ambiguity of the harmony."[245] In addition I have commented on the lack of balance, both formal due to the oversized consequent, and melodic due to the continually rising contour. The theme also fluctuates greatly in both tempo and dynamics. Johnson notes that we structure our notions of rationality and also emotional well being through a balance schema.[246] It would therefore be possible to read the imbalance and instability inherent in the *idée fixe* as indicative of the emotional and rational imbalance stereotypically associated with women.

These qualities are seen as the natural traits of "defective" women. Their concomitant association with evil, however, is related to the apparent danger that they pose to men, threatening the all-important patriarchal order and control. As long as these features are held at bay in the figure of a good, noble woman such as the beloved, they are not deemed a problem. It is when they begin to contaminate the rational control of a man that they are seen to cause trouble. All too often this contamination, suggestive of the defilement of evil, is the result of sexual attraction. The narrative of the *Symphonie Fantastique* does not break this mould.

Rushton comments on the "fantasia-like" design of the first movement and says that "the Allegro is best understood as the alternation of stability and flux."[247] He outlines unusual and unpredictable tonal patterns in the music and says that often "the music is equally manic in other parameters; dynamics range between ***ff*** and ***pp***, the scoring between full ensemble and a single line, and the rate of harmonic change is

[243] Schumann in Edward T. Cone in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 223.
[244] Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 9.
[245] Edward T. Cone in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 256.
[246] Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, p. 89.
[247] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 258.

equally consistent."[248] As a representation of the artist's psychological state, this battle between stability and flux might be seen as a conflict between "masculine" control and the contamination of "feminine" irrationality caused by the beloved and his "love" for her; the instability of the *idée fixe* "infecting" and "defiling" the rest of the music.

The music of the first movement is, however, relatively unpredictable and fluctuating even before the arrival of the beloved and the first appearance of the *idée fixe*. The programme provides a possible explanation for this. We are told that the young artist is "afflicted with that moral disease that a well-known writer calls the *vague des passions*." That writer is Chateaubriand and Cone explains his meaning:

> By "le vague des passions" he meant aimlessness of passion, emotional uncertainty – the state of mind in which one experiences passionate emotions of great intensity, yet without any definite object. It is especially characteristic of young people emerging from adolescence, aware of their great emotional potential yet vague as to its proper direction.[249]

This is a condition similar to the supposed emotionalism of "femininity." We have seen how the beloved is essentially the artist's perception of the ideal woman. This is what Jung would call the "anima." It would be possible to conceive of the beloved as the artist's anima – his "feminine side". The *vague des passions* might be considered the adolescent confrontation of the anima, the immature, emotional "feminine" side that must find "proper direction" and so be brought under "masculine" control. When the beloved continues to resist control, all hell breaks loose. A classic case of shadow projection puts all blame on the beloved and she becomes what has always been lurking in the inescapable duality of her conception. The suggestion seems to be that she has returned to what is essentially her natural state, dancing with the minions of evil.

Although the beloved is not a traditional representation of the *femme fatale* since she is initially a "proper" woman, her final incarnation draws nearer the mark. Traditionally *femmes fatales* entrap and destroy their "victims" through seduction. Although the beloved has not set out to destroy the artist, the result is the same, as are the means. She does not actively seduce the artist, but it is still his infatuation with her that is seen to be the cause of his downfall. I have already noted the sexual frustration that Rushton identifies in the music. In each movement the appearance of the *idée fixe* receives a treatment that suggests more and more desperation, violence and frustration (see II 120, III 89). This can be seen to reflect the artist's growing impatience to own and dominate the beloved. It also illustrates his changing conception of her as she descends from "ideal being" to prostitute-witch.

The artist's wish to dominate the beloved might lend itself to a Freudian reading in terms of the complicity of Eros with the death instinct. Freud suggests that sexual attraction is always accompanied by an element of aggression that is a product of the

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[248] Ibid., p. 259.
[249] Edward T. Cone in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 8.

death instinct. The death instinct must be turned outward as aggression, lest it destroy the self.[250] The artist attempts suicide, but in his dream we see that his true desire is the destruction of the beloved. This we might read as the ambivalence of the death instinct that accompanies the libidinous drives of Eros – should it be directed inward as self harm or outward as aggression?

As is so often the case, it is the woman who is seen as the cause of the artist's problems – as the catalyst to evil in the tradition of Eve. Here it is apparently her refusal to reciprocate his "love" that causes the downfall of the artist, his loss of control, and decline into disorganised, irrational emotionalism. "Convinced that his love is unappreciated, the artist poisons himself with opium." Schumann concurs with this reasoning and allocation of blame: "First love can well make a captain out of a coward, but 'a heroine does great harm to a hero,' as Jean Paul has put it."[251] It is in this sense of contamination of the man's intellect and reason that the continuing influence of defilement can be identified.

In his opium-induced dream, the artist doles out the fate of so many other "disobedient" women in music, and kills the beloved.[252] His subsequent death by execution, however, is still blamed on her. In an earlier manifestation of the programme we are told that she arrives at the "Witches' Sabbath" "to attend the funeral procession of her *victim*" (my emphasis).

The new image of the beloved in the finale calls for a radically new version of the *idée fixe*. We have seen the grotesque transformation that Berlioz provides, along with all its potential associations with symbolisms of the body and evil. We can also recall Margaret Miles' observation of the frequency with which grotesque imagery operates through the degradation of women, due to the construction of female otherness. Here, once again, a grotesque conversion to the comic and trivial occurs through the figure of woman, her body and her sexuality.

The new melody retains the features of its original manifestation that I associated with issues of gender representation and evil. This version, however, reflects the altered perception of the beloved – "mean, trivial and grotesque," "shrivelled... and besmirched,"[253] "dishonoured and ludicrous."[254] It is in the finale that her transformation into whore is complete. The options for a woman as conceived by the artist are, it seems, simple. If she won't be his own, perfect, obedient, possession then she must be an evil whore, fit for an orgy of sorcerers and devils.

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[250] Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, p. 119.

[251] Schumann in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 224.

[252] For an explanation of the fate of women in opera, see Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

[253] Schumann in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 238.

[254] Saint-Saëns in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony*, p. 294.

CONCLUSION

Clearly there are many important ways in which the history of evil in the West and the symbolism it has accrued can inform the way in which we experience and interpret Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. I have explored the rich cultural "baggage" that accompanies the concept of evil and which is unavoidably brought into play through our very knowledge of the work's "evil" context. The concept of evil and its concomitant symbolism in Berlioz's own time will have influenced his compositional choices. Continually perpetuated, in part by works such as this one, that symbolism continues to inform the concept of evil that we bring to the work. Our evil, however, has a longer history than Berlioz's and so provides an augmented symbolism drawing on more recent concepts of evil which, as we have seen, can also effect present day interpretations of the symphony.

The dialogic nature of symbolism, being read into the work whilst concomitantly being constructed by the work, results in the perpetuation of evil aspects that we might like to think we had left behind. Symbolic associations with evil in this way become naturalized and often go unquestioned.

Deviation is an area of symbolism that continues to inform our concept of evil, our ideology of morality, and is one that we might not see as particularly problematic. Problems do occur, however, when we normalize one particular ideology, morality, or way of life and demonise anyone or anything that deviates from our constructed norm. We may also feel comfortable with the symbolism of disorder but here we come into contact with issues surrounding the obsession with control and reason, the body/mind split, and notions of "civility" and "barbarism," which can be very problematic.

Sexual morality is an area that in the past fifty years has undergone radical change. The "sexual revolution" brought about more liberal attitudes toward sex, which have served to eradicate many of the associations between the body, sex and evil in contemporary morality. The influence of this association was clear in the *Symphonie Fantastique* and it is in part through the continuing influence of music such as this that such associations can, on some level, continue to exist. It must be said, however, that although demonising the body and sex, the work also served to provide a rare space for the representation of such issues. This representation of evil provided a space for the exploration of an other that was usually off limits, repressed and taboo; a space to break free from the norm and its restrictions in Bakhtin's carnivalesque fashion.

We like to think that today we have a culture of tolerance and would frown upon the demonisation of "deformed" or unattractive people but the ugly truth is that the symbolism of malconformation in the representation of evil, such as that employed and perpetuated in the *Symphonie Fantastique*, is very much still with us. I have mentioned how the symbolism of triviality can become the primitivism that has offensive racial connotations and we have seen how much of the symbolism of evil relates to issues of gender and the demonisation of women.

Berlioz's musical language of evil contains and perpetuates a symbolism of evil with many potentially damaging associations of which we would wish to be free. The

continual perpetuation of this symbolism and its apparent naturalization, however, make this seem impossible. The more the symbolism is reiterated, the more it is naturalized, and the more natural it seems the more it is reiterated. What is important, therefore, is not to merely accept this symbolism as natural but to be aware of the cultural issues and history that it reflects and in which it is embedded. A rich contextualisation of Berlioz's representation of evil in the *Symphonie Fantastique* has revealed a host of symbolisms rooted in the long history of evil which shed light on Berlioz's compositional choices, our own potential interpretation of the work and the concept and image of evil that it perpetuates. Musical depictions of evil today, particularly in the realm of film music, continue to employ similar musical codes for evil, reflecting the same symbolism evident in the *Symphonie Fantastique*. This kind of cultural contextualisation of the symbolism of evil provides an important and illuminating lens through which to examine any depiction of evil in music.

APPENDIX 1

Table 1 *Symphonie Fantastique,* "Songe d'une Nuit du Sabbat"[a] [255]

Bar		Phrase-lengths[b]	Criteria for segmentation
1	Introduction Space: *Larghetto*	11, 9	4/4: bar 12:transposed reprise of bar 1
21	*Allegro*	8	6/8: *Idée fixe* in C
29	*Allegro Assai*	11	4/4: uproar in E flat
40	Exposition space (1): *Allegro* [Hauptzeitmass]	25	6/8: *Idée fixe* in E flat
65		7, 6, 24	First transition: "Ronde" Fragments
102	[Parallel systems: bells binary; **"Dies irae"** (bar 127) ternary]	8, 11, 13, 12, 11: 8, 13, 16, 12, 10, 8[c] [25], 36, 24, 35	Bells (C and G) "Dies irae" (E flat / Cminor)
222		19	Second transition: "Ronde" Fragments (E flat, Eminor, V of C)
241	Eposition space (2): **"Ronde du Sabbat"**	7, 7, 7, 7	Fugal exposition in C [G][d]
269		10, 10	Episode A
291		7, 7	Middle entries in G C to E flat[e]
305	Development space	5, 5, 5, 11 [8+3][f]	Episode B
331		17	Distorted subject
348		7, 3, 6	"Dies irae" and chromatic subject fragments
364		4, 5, 6, 7	Chromatic fugal exposition
386		9, 8, 4	Stretto, syncopation, preparatory upbeats to:
407	Recapitulation space	7	Subject in C
414	**"Dies irae"** and **"Ronde du Sabbat"** ensemble	21[g]	Answer in G, but "Dies irae" In C/A minor
435	Secondary development	5, 4, 4[h]	A minor episode
448		12[i]	Subject augmented in A minor
460	Closing period	7, 13	Woodwind cadenza; tutti leading to fractured cadence
480		5, 11	Tutti (diminution), "Dies irae" with diminution, full cadence
496	Coda	16, 8, 4 + fermata	Reminiscence of *idée fixe*: implosion of E flat: cadences

[a] Bold and italic: Berlioz's own heading.
[b] Note the predominance of irrational phrase lengths, often two-bar units with expansion by an uneven number at the end.
[c] The last two bars overlap with the second transition; hence this totals 122 not 120
[d] Tonal answer: S, A, S, A.
[e] False entry in bar 289, G minor; A, S.
[f] In bar 327, the last of the 8, the accented second beat means that the 11 could be 7.5 bars plus 3.5: or 327-8 are metrically displaced, forming a 3/8 plus a 9/8 bar.
[g] Ends first beat of bar 436.
[h] Final bar includes upbeat to augmented fugue subject.
[i] Subject not completed, hence 12 rather than 14.

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[255] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 255.

APPENDIX 2

Table 2 Sources of *Symphonie Fantastique*[256]

Movement/Section	Known Sources	Possible Sources	Genre
I. *Rêveries, passions:* Largo (bars 2, 28). C minor	Romance (Florian: 'Je vais donc quitter pour jamais')		SONG
I.Allegro: *Idée fixe* (main theme), C major, G major	*Herminie* (Prix de Rome, 1828): No.1, G major, No.2, F major, recit. D major		SONG (Aria)
II. *Un bal*: Valse: main theme, A major	None	*Faust* or *Roméo et Juliette*	DANCE
II. *Idée fixe*, F major			SONG
III. 'Scène aux champs' Adagio (Ranz des vaches)	None		Pastorale
III. Adagio: main theme, Fmajor	*Messa solennelle* Gloria: 'Gratias agimus tibi', E major		SONG (sacred, thanksgiving)
III. *Idée fixe*, Bb major			SONG (with storm)
IV. 'Marche au supplice', G minor	*Les Francs-juges*, 'Marche des gardes', G minor		DANCE (March)
IV. *Idée fixe*, G major			SONG
V. 'Songe d'une nuit de Sabbat'	None	Faust	
V. *Idée fixe*, C then Eb major			SONG used as DANCE – 'ignoble, trivial et grotesque'
V. 'Dies Irae'	Gregorian		SONG (parody)
V.'Ronde du Sabbat' (Fugue, bar 241)	None	*Faust*	DANCE
V. 'Réunion des thèmes', bar 414			SONG and DANCE combined

[256] Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, p. 265.

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