

Introduction: Schubert's late style and current musical scholarship

LORRAINE BYRNE BODLEY

The theme of lateness

When discussing Schubert's 'late' works it is worth remembering that we are referring to a composer in his late twenties. Why then, do we ascribe the classification 'late'? And in what sense do we mean 'late'? Is there not, in all Schubert's 'late music', simply an experienced composer's calm and confident grasp of the tools of his trade? Or did Schubert's knowledge that he was dying propel an early flowering of a 'late' style? If so, then how can we define this style as distinct from maturity? While Schubert scholars generally agree that the composer's style changed, there is a distinct division in how we approach such questions, the contentious issue being whether it is even viable to speak of late style in a composer who died so young. Behind this debate lies the biblical belief in the timeliness of human life, where 'lateness' is perceived as the final phase. But is 'lateness' always an indication of lateness in life, or can it emerge through a recognition that the end is near?

In attempting to answer this question it is important to problematize the ways in which biology and psychology are often co-opted to explain the imprint composers left on their art. Goethe is often recognized as the progenitor of *Alterstil* (old-age style) as a positive phenomenon that involved a gradual withdrawal from appearances and a consequent approach to the infinite and mystical.¹ From him we derive the attributes of *non-finito*, subjectivity and the blending of formal with expressive elements that are still widely accepted as markers of late style, as is the perception that old age can lead to transcendence. Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge* and Richard Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder* are musical testaments of

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens. Münchner Ausgabe*, 20 vols., ed. Karl Richter in collaboration with Herbert G. Göpfert, Norbert Miller and Gerhard Sauder (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1990), vol. 17, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre. Maximen und Reflexionen*, ed. Gonthier-Louis Fink, Gerhart Baumann and Johannes John (hereafter referred to as *MA*), 943. 'Gradual withdrawal from appearances' translates the German 'Stufenweise Zurücktreten aus der Erscheinung'. Cf. Herbert von Einem, *Beiträge zu Goethes Kunstauffassung* (Hamburg: Von Schröder, 1956), 166–7.

this belief and the notion that elderly artists become wiser, more reflective, reducing their art to essentials. But old-age styles are also paradoxical and every artist's experience of age is different. Although he lived to the age of eighty-nine, Michaelangelo enrolled himself in old age from the age of forty-two² and Beethoven's late style is usually understood to begin around the age of forty-five. Even with these exceptions we are immediately brought back to the question of chronology: by the age of forty, we have lived half our life, which alters our experience of time. What happens if we become conscious of our mortality at an earlier age?

In order to answer some of these questions, we must examine the mental landscapes that preconditioned the music of Schubert's final years and consider the biographical circumstances encouraging perceptions of lateness, especially Schubert's final illness. The chronology of Schubert's contracting syphilis is uncertain. The first mention of illness is in a letter to Ignaz von Mosel, on 28 February 1823, where Schubert writes: 'Apologies that once again I implore you by writing, but the circumstances of my health still do not permit me to leave the house.'³ Although Schubert's illness can be dated with certainty from 1823, it is likely that he was aware of having contracted syphilis by late 1822: his letter to Spaun on 7 December 1822 was written from his family home in Rossau, to which he had suddenly returned. If Hölzel and Schober are correct in their recollection that Schubert composed *Die schöne Müllerin* in hospital, it is most likely that he was hospitalized and treated with a mercury salve in October 1823. Although he himself confirms his recovery on 30 November 1823,⁴ between February and May 1824 he had relapsed.⁵ The nature of Schubert's illness was understandably covered up in correspondence, yet it is possible to trace very direct references in letters exchanged among his circle of friends, through which a clearer picture of what he endured

² *Il carteggio di Michelangelo*, ed. Barocchi and Ristori, II, 384 (n. DLXXXVI: 'I am old and unwell'); III, 166 (n. DCCXIII: 'as I am an old man, I have no hope of being able to execute anything else'); and III, 173 (n. DCCXIX: 'I am an old man').

³ Otto Erich Deutsch (ed.), *Schubert. Die Dokumente seines Lebens*, rev. edn (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), 186. English translation by Eric Blom, *Franz Schubert: A Documentary Biography* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1946), 271. 'Verzeihen, daß ich schon wieder mit einem Schreiben lästig fallen muß, da meine Gesundheitsumstände mir noch immer nicht erlauben, außer Haus zu gehen.'

⁴ Schubert to Schober, 30 November 1823, Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 207; see also Doblhoff to Schober, 12 November 1823, *Dokumente*, 204; Johanna Lutz to Leopold Kupelwieser, 9 December 1823, *Dokumente*, 209; Schwind to Schober, 24 December 1823, *Dokumente*, 220; Doblhoff to Schober, 7 January 1824, *Dokumente*, 221.

⁵ Schwind to Schober, 13 February 1824, Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 221; Doblhauff to Schober, 2 April 1824, *Dokumente*, 237; Kupelwieser to Johanna Lutz, 8/12 May 1824, *Dokumente*, 238.

emerges. Primary sources show that he had only one symptom-free period from roughly July 1824 until the first half of 1826, before and after which he suffered constant headaches, a classic symptom of secondary syphilis. The despair the composer suffered during the period 1822 to July 1824 did not impair his creativity. The beginning of this period is heralded by the 'Unfinished' Symphony D. 759 and 'Wanderer' Fantasy D. 760. His return to piano composition was swiftly ensued by sets of piano miniatures as the *Moments Musicaux* (D. 780, Op. 94); Twelve Ecossaises D. 781; Waltzes (D. 779, Op. 50); Sixteen Deutsche and Two Ecossaise (D. 783, Op. 33) and Twelve Deutsche (D. 790, op. post. 171) as well as the A minor sonata (D. 784, Op. post. 143) and significant contributions to piano duet literature including the 'Grand Duo' Sonata in C D. 812 and Eight Variations on an original theme D. 813. He also continued to write music for the theatre – *Fierrabras* D. 796 and *Rosamunde* D. 797 – and composed numerous masterworks in the chamber music repertoire including the Octet in F D. 803, the A minor 'Rosamunde' Quartet D. 804 and D minor Quartet D. 810.

Apart from the symptom-free period from the summer of 1824 until the beginning of 1826, over the next three years Schubert's health, fortune and finances waned steadily; yet during this time he produced a cascading series of works demonstrating his idiosyncratic mastery of instrumental as well as vocal music. Even his songs inhabit a different sound world from earlier masterpieces; as Mayrhofer subtly appraises:

[*Die schöne Müllerin*] opens with a joyous song of roaming, the mill songs depict love in its awakening, its deceptions and hopes, its delights and sorrows... Not so with *Winterreise*, the very choice of which shows how much more serious the composer had become. He had been long and seriously ill, had gone through shattering experiences and life for him had shed its rosy colour; Winter had come for him.⁶

The darkening landscape of Schubert's final years was recognized by family and friends. After his death, Schwind wrote to Schober that Schubert was now 'done with his sorrows. The more I realize now what he was like,

⁶ Otto Erich Deutsch (ed.), *Schubert. Die Erinnerungen seiner Freunde* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1957, repr. 1983), 20, trans. Rosamond Ley and John Nowell as *Schubert: Memories by His Friends* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), 15. 'Beginnend mit einer freudigen Wanderweise, schildern die "Müllerlieder" die Liebe in ihrem Entstehen, mit ihren Täuschungen und Hoffnungen, mit ihren Wonnen und Schmerzen... Anders in der *Winterreise*, deren Wahl schon beweiset, wie der Tonsetzer ernster geworden. Er war lange und schwer krank gewesen, er hatte niederschlagende Erfahrungen gemacht, dem Leben war die Rosenfarbe abgestreift; für ihn war Winter eingetreten.'

the more I see what he has suffered.⁷ On the eve of Schubert's final year, Bauernfeld's occasional poem augured his friend's departure⁸ and Schubert uncharacteristically signed off a letter to Anselm Hüttenbrenner: 'I remain, your faithful friend until death – Frz. Schubert.'⁹ Despite these uncanny premonitions, his failing health and subsequent relocation to his brother's home on 1 September 1828, Schubert's death was, in the end, unexpected. Schubert himself never intended the move to be a permanent one – he left all his manuscripts behind at Schober's – but he must have been worried enough about the state of his health to pay heed to medical advice. On 6 October he set out on a three-day walking tour, a round trip of a hundred miles, with Ferdinand and some friends to visit Josef Haydn's grave in Eisenstadt, which does not suggest a man trying to escape death's maw, but one trying to regain strength. On 31 October he ate his final meal at his family's local tavern, Zum roten Kreuz, but found the fish repellent; on 3 November he attended a performance of Ferdinand's *Requiem* after which he went for a walk alone; on 4 November he took a counterpoint class with Simon Sechter; by 11 November he was bedridden and on 12 November he wrote his final letter to Schober, seeking escape in the novels of Fenimore Cooper.¹⁰ His final medical consultation took place on 16 November: Ernst Rinna von Sarenbach, who had been treating him for syphilis, was sick and was replaced by Josef von Vering and Johann Baptist Wisgrill, a classmate of Schubert's, who had published a book on *Syphilitische Therapie* in 1826. Of the friends that visited him Spaun found Schubert 'ill in bed, though his condition did not seem to me at all serious . . . I left him without any anxiety at all, and it came as a thunderbolt when I heard of his death.'¹¹ On 17 November Lachner and Bauernfeld visited Schubert who was:

very weak, but quiet and not without hope of recovery; he also expressed the lively wish to receive another new opera libretto. However, on the same day he became more violently delirious having been intermittently and feebly stricken before, and scarcely grew more lucid again; his illness had passed into a virulent attack of

⁷ Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 555; Blom, *Documentary Biography*, 829: 'seines Kammers los ist. Je mehr ich es jetzt einsehe, was er war, je mehr sehe ich ein, was er gelitten hat.'

⁸ Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 471–2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 479; Blom, *Documentary Biography*, 714: 'verbleibe ich Dein treuer Freund bis in den Tod – Frz. Schubert.'

¹⁰ Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 546.

¹¹ Deutsch, *Erinnerungen*, 162; Ley and Nowell, *Memoirs*, 139. 'Ich fand ihm krank im Bett, allein sein Zustand schien mit ganz unbedenklich. . . . Ich verließ ihn ganz unbesorgt und war wie vom Donner gerührt, als ich wenige Tage darauf seinen Tod vernahm.'

typhoid fever, and on [Wednesday] 19 November at 3 o'clock in the afternoon he passed away.¹²

On the eve of his death, delirious and disorientated, Schubert presaging his own burial called out to his brother, 'I implore you not to leave me here in this corner under the earth; do I deserve no place above the earth? . . . Beethoven does not lie here.'¹³ His final evocation, a plea for his place in music history, was taken by Ferdinand as a wish to be buried beside Beethoven, where he was laid to rest in a hermit's habit in Währing cemetery, as close as possible, just three graves away.

Given the pace of Schubert's work, it is unlikely that he died of tertiary syphilis or neurosyphilis, the onset of which is characteristically between seven and thirty years after infection. The record of Schubert's symptoms, however, relates directly to *Typhus abdominalis*, a bacterial infection (*Salmonella typhi*) which was extremely common in nineteenth-century Vienna and from which Schubert's mother had died. Contracted by the hands, or indirectly through water and milk, with an incubation time of one to three weeks, it typically develops in three stages over the course of three weeks, beginning with exhaustion, headaches, an inability to retain food and a very gradual increase in temperature reaching a high fever of 40 to 41° C, all of which matches surviving accounts of Schubert's final weeks. None the less, the sudden move to his brother's home, the phalanx of syphilis specialists who attended him and the medical bills paid after his death for the dressing of skin lesions suggest the presence of that fatal disease.

Thanatos as muse?

Did Schubert fear death during these years or was his grief a recognition of life's passing? Was the incredible prolificacy of these years propelled by

¹² Deutsch, *Erinnerungen*, 43; Ley and Nowell, *Memoirs*, 33. '[Z]war schwach, aber ruhig und nicht ohne Hoffnung der Wiedergenesung; auch äußerte er noch den lebhaften Wunsch, ein neues Opernbuch zu erhalten. Jedoch wurde noch am Abende dieses Tages das Delirieren, das ihn bisher nur zeitweise und schwach befallen hatte, heftiger und verließ ihn beinahe nicht mehr; die Krankheit war in ein bösesartiges Nervenfieber übergegangen: am [Mittwoch] 19. November um 3 Uhr nachmittages entschlummerte er.'

¹³ Ferdinand Schubert to his father, 21 November 1828, 6 am, Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 550. 'Ich beschwöre Dich, mich . . . nicht da in diesem Winkel unter der Erde zu lassen; verdiene ich denn keinen Platz über der Erde? . . . hier liegt Beethoven nicht.'

recognition of the shortness of time left to him and (through this) a newfound understanding of himself? That Schubert's last years were rendered difficult by vicissitudes of ill health and financial difficulties undoubtedly deepened his understanding of the human condition and made him more responsive to familial intimacy with his father and Ferdinand, from whom we learn much about Schubert's experience of these years. His letter to Ferdinand on 16–18 July 1824 recognizes in this period in his life that 'of course that happy time is over when everything seemed to glow with a youthful halo. Instead there is dire confrontation with a wretched reality, which I try to brighten as much as possible with my creative gift and for which I thank the Lord'¹⁴ and in the same letter he acknowledges a newfound peace within himself while again making the connection between life and art:

We believe that happiness haunts that place where one has found happiness before, but in fact happiness is only found within ourselves . . . I think I am better able now to find happiness and peace within myself. A grand sonata and variations on a theme of my own, both for four hands, which I have already written, shall serve you as proof of this.¹⁵

The following year, in a letter to his father, Schubert reveals a peaceful acceptance of death as part of Nature's cycle, when he writes of his brother, Ferdinand:

He has been at death's door nine times as if Death was the worst thing a person could encounter. If, even once, he could look at these heavenly mountains and lakes, whose landscape threatens to crush or engulf us, he would not love human life so much, but realise that he should not consider it a great fortune, that the intangible power of the Earth constantly enthrusts to new life.¹⁶

¹⁴ 16 (or 17) July 1824, Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 250; Blom, *Documentary Biography*, 363. 'Freylich ist nicht mehr jene glückliche Zeit, in der uns jeder Gegenstand mit einer jugendlichen Glorie umgeben scheint, sondern jenes fatale Erkennen einer miserablen Wirklichkeit, die ich mir durch meine Phantasie (Gott sey's gedankt) so viel als möglich zu verschönern suche.'

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 'Man glaubt an dem Orte, wo man einst glücklicher war, hänge das Glück, indem es doch nur in uns selbst ist . . . doch bin ich jetzt mehr im Stande Glück u. Ruhe in mir selbst zu finden als damals. – Als Beweis dessen werden wir Dir eine große Sonate u. Variationen über ein selbst erfundenes Thema, beydes zu vier Hände, welche ich bereits componirt habe, dienen.' The two works are the 'Grand Duo' Sonata in C major for Piano Four Hands (D. 812, Op. post. 140) and the Variations in A^b major (D. 813, Op. 35).

¹⁶ 25 July 1825, Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 300. 'Er wird . . . 9 Mal sterben zu müssen geglaubt haben, als wenn das Sterben das Schlimmste wäre, was uns Menschen begegnen könnte. Könnte er nur einmal diese göttlichen Berge und Seen schauen, deren Anblick uns zu erdrücken oder zu

Here Schubert's letter reveals a more intimate relationship with death, an acceptance of death's inevitability, a theme which is reflected in his setting of 'Wandrer's Nachtlid' ('Über allen Gipfeln', D. 768, Op. 96, no. 3) with its suggestive pavane rhythm, one of Schubert's favourite musical symbols for death.¹⁷ Although the date of the Lied (before July 1824) is uncertain,¹⁸ its inception certainly coincides with Schubert's awareness of death as a very real aspect of his life¹⁹ and marks the beginning of a long period of remission.²⁰ The song's posthumous publication by H. A. Probst in Leipzig one month after Schubert's death adds symbolic significance. Goethe wrote the poem at the age of thirty-one, the same age at which Schubert died, in a moment of recognition of his own mortality. Despite a peaceful acceptance of death at its core, Goethe's poem portrays the mystic 'nothingness', which suggests how in each crisis, or moment of suffering, the abyss of nothingness is spanned and made visible for an instant. From his years of artistic and personal crisis²¹ Schubert knew

verschlingen droht, er würde das winzige [sic] Menschenleben nicht so sehr lieben, als daß er es nicht für ein großes Glück [sic] halten sollte, der unbegreiflichen Kraft der Erde zu neuem Leben wieder anvertraut zu werden.'

¹⁷ Cf. 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' (D. 531, Op. 7, no. 3)) and Mignon's 'Heiss mich nicht reden' (D. 726).

¹⁸ The date of this setting is uncertain. Richard Capell considered this setting to be 'the last song of the year 1822', *Schubert's Songs*, 3rd edn (New York: Collier Books, 1977), 182. John Reed reinforces this, suggesting that it belongs to the Goethe settings of December 1822: *The Schubert Song Companion* (Manchester University Press, 1985), 429. Otto Erich Deutsch and Trasybulos Georgiade both list the Lied as written in 1823: Otto Erich Deutsch, *Franz Schubert. Thematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke in chronologischer Folge* [Thematic Catalogue], (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1978), 353; Thrasybulos Georgiades, 'Schubert. Lyric as Musical Structure: Schubert's "Wandrer's Nachtlid" (Über allen Gipfeln D 768)', trans. Marie Louise Göllner in Walter Frisch (ed.), *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 86. Dürr lists it as being composed before 25 May 1824, in Walter Dürr, 'Poesie und Musik. Über Schuberts Beziehungen zu Goethe', in the programme booklet for Schubertiade Hohenems 1982, 8–32; reprinted (and corrected) in the programme booklet for Schubertiade Hohenems 1993, 10–48. The date here is taken from the revised edition of Deutsch which lists it before July 1824, *Franz Schubert. Thematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke in chronologischer Folge*, ed. Walter Dürr, Arnold Feil, Christa Landon *et al.* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag Studienausgabe, 1996).

¹⁹ Schwind to Schober, 13 February 1824, Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 220; Doblhauff to Schober, 2 April 1824, *Dokumente*, 237; Kupelwieser to Johanna Lutz, 8/12 May 1824, *Dokumente*, 238.

²⁰ Schubert's father to Franz, end of July 1824, Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 245; Ferdinand Schubert to Franz, 3 July 1824, *Dokumente*, 248; Schubert's father to Franz, 14 August 1824, *Dokumente*, 253; Ignaz Schubert to Franz, 14 August 1824, *Dokumente*, 254; Schwind to Schober, 20 August 1824, *Dokumente*, 256; Schubert to Schober, 21 September 1824, *Dokumente*, 258; Ottenwald to Joseph von Spaun, 19 July 1825, *Dokumente*, 295.

²¹ I am using 'Crisis' here to indicate a time of intense difficulty, suffering and self-questioning as evident in the numerous fragmentary works of 1818–1823 as explored in Werner Aderhold,

nothing could change without making contact with that region of absolute being. Even while questioning the dominant myth of a self-reflective art – for art can also be deceptive and mask the reality it seeks to hide, or express an inner reality that is very different from the one perceived by others – we can still acknowledge the direct parallel between Schubert's setting of 'Wandrer's Nachtlied' and the newfound peace directly expressed in his letters.

Without in any way reducing the essence of Schubert's final works to the notion of art as a document – that is to a reading of the music that stresses the composer's sense of his impending death – it is nevertheless clear that Schubert's life carried vital meanings to his art, as he himself acknowledged repeatedly in his letters. Central to this understanding was an awareness of his own mortality that unquestionably deepened Schubert's preoccupation with death, but did not instigate it. His first Lied, 'Hagers Klage' (D. 5, 30 March 1811) is an early example of this, as are his settings of Schiller's 'Leichenfantasie' (D. 7, 1811) and Pfeffel's 'Der Vatermörder' (D. 10, 26 December 1811), or the personification of Death in 'Erlkönig' (D. 328 (Op. 1), 1815) and 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' (D. 531 (Op. 7, no. 3), February 1817). Yet the expression of death in these early songs is very different from the existential anguish of the elegiac and grieving *Winterreise* (D. 911, 1827), where the journey becomes meta-musical and death is rendered less formidable and intimidating than it is for most people. Even if death is perceived here metaphorically as an inducement to a sense of fatalism (and lateness) – and human desire is depicted as a circuit that permits no significant escape as the Wanderer re-narrates and re-comprehends the remorseless chain of actions in which he is imprisoned – we are still closer to an existential confrontation with death which is not present in Schubert's early songs. The story of the Wanderer is an ancient myth, but in Schubert's treatment it becomes a myth of modernity. His cycle is about what it means to be a modern human being, about the point and value of human life in a post-Christian world. For someone so rigorously opposed to conventional social and religious identity as Schubert, for someone facing an early death, such questions are rendered even more poignant and the brutal depth of human suffering in *Winterreise* even more unsettling. That its dissonances were introduced

Walther Dürr und Walburga Litschauer, *Franz Schubert, Jahre der Krise 1818–1823* (Kassel, Basel, London: Barenreiter Verlag, 1985). I am also using 'CRISIS' as a medical concept to indicate a turning point through Schubert's contraction of syphilis.

with a shudder is evident from Spaun's account of Schubert's performance of some of its songs. Yet the force of this cycle, and even the image of Schubert revising the proofs of Part II on his deathbed while falling in and out of consciousness, reflect the tenacity of Schubert's spirit and music's ability to transport him 'to a better world': a hymn of praise with which Schubert strongly identified, especially in his final years. The final works – the String Quintet in C major (D. 956, Op. post. 163); *Schwannengesang* (D. 957); the piano sonata trilogy (D. 958, D. 959 and D. 960); 'Tantum Ergo' in E♭ major (D. 962); 'Intende voci' (D. 963); 'Der Hirt auf dem Felsen' (D. 965) and 'Die Taubenpost' (D. 965 A) – mark the end of Schubert's life and his art and yet there is something in these last works that communicates a sense of his life as being unfinished. The final works suggest the triumph of artistic achievement over the degradation of death and disease, the permanent presence of death. Although in one sense he had entered the winter of his life – as in 'Der Musensohn' – in this season spring is found.

Schubert's late style moves between extremes but the power of his final works is fundamentally positive and the works are constitutive in that they give organized existence to his life. For Said, one of the prerogatives of late style is its 'power to render disenchantment and pleasure without resolving the contradiction between them. What holds them in tension, as equal forces straining in opposite directions, is the artist's mature subjectivity.'²² Schubert's late work voices this devotion to the truth of unreconciled relations, which Said recognized as one of the hallmarks of late style.²³ In 'Mein Traum' (written on 3 July 1822), Schubert's anti-conventional stance is that of opposition and he acknowledges the antithetical mode of his music and the conjunction of opposites which characterize all living things: 'whenever I attempted to sing of love, it turned to pain. And again, when I tried to sing of sorrow, it turned to love.'²⁴ He mulled over such Goethean oppositions in some scattered diary entries from March 1824; and a surprisingly large number of Schubert's letters and other writings echo the famous phrase from Klärchens Lied, 'Die Liebe' (D. 210, 1815),

²² Edward W. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), 148.

²³ *Ibid.*, xv; cf. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Alienated Masterpiece: the *Missa Solemnis*', in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002), 580.

²⁴ Schubert, 'Mein Traum', Deutsch, *Dokumente*, 158. 'Wollte ich Liebe singen, ward sie mir zum Schmerz. Und wollte ich wieder Schmerz nur singen, ward er mir zur Liebe.'

which Schubert set from Act III of Goethe's *Egmont*, a proverb often quoted by European intellectuals as characteristic of the Romantic soul:

Freudvoll	In joy
und leidvoll,	and in sorrow,
gedankenvoll sein;	be thoughtful;
Langen	Long
und bangen	and fearful
in schwebender Pein,	in suspended pain,
Himmelhoch jauchzend	Rejoicing to heaven
zum Tode betrübt,	grieving to death,
Glücklich allein	Blessed alone
ist die Seele, die liebt.	is the soul that loves. ²⁵

Yet part of Schubert's achievement is to render these extremes in forms and situations in a musical style of incredible inventiveness. Even where these antinomies are consummated in one work – the 'Unfinished' Symphony, the String Quintet in C major or a song like 'Frühlingstraum' from *Winterreise* – the works are never disunited or uncertain of their own meaning. Were these 'volcanic outbursts' an expression of enmity against death, an expression of Schubert divided and warring within himself, a form of protest against his fate?

Whatever psychological attributes are accrued to these endgames, Schubert's experience translated itself into a capacity for invention, creating aesthetic structure out of disorder. His music is for us an archetype for the emergence of a music whose intrinsic power resides in its resolute crafting against the negation and disorder that surrounded Schubert on all sides. His music is an indication of the composer's 'self-guiding artistic destiny'; it elaborates an alternative argument to the prevailing Beethovenian aesthetic and to the forces of illness and death, which at once dehumanize and liberate the human spirit. In Schubert's work one always feels this propulsive force driving him and the music he creates. His music is an assertion against the 'negation' of death or the senselessness that can threaten to consume us. It is this constructive element in the face of such challenges that animates debates about Schubert's late style. What grips us is his transcendence of struggle, a continual striving towards synthesis and the creative energy that endured and redoubled in the face of crisis and death. This tragic dimension is central to our understanding of Schubert, yet somehow it has got lost in the contentious debate as to whether Schubert's

²⁵ Goethe, *Egmont*, lines 25–34, *MA*, vol. 3.1, *Italien und Weimar* (1786–90), ed. Norbert Miller and Harmut Reinhardt, 286.