

# Recurring Hauntings and Trauma in Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony

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*Schubert's interest in Gothicism is explored in numerous songs written between the 1810s and early 1820s and, in recent years, has served as an aesthetic agenda that some scholars have applied to his instrumental music. One notable exception is the 'Unfinished' Symphony (D. 759, 1822), a work whose thematic presentation and form have been frequently related to states of terror and horror, but rarely correlated further to Gothicism and never consistently so across the two completed movements. In light of this relative neglect, this article offers a Gothic reading of the symphony, finding correspondence with Gothic signifiers of ghostly hauntings and the 'problem of closure', and draws upon relevant literary criticism and psychoanalytic theory. As I show, the concept of psychoanalytic trauma – a concept widely deployed in current literary criticism to scrutinize repetitive patterns such as hauntings and circular temporality in Gothic literature – is especially instructive in terms of helping construct a richer understanding of the symphony.*

## Introduction: Ghostly Hauntings and Gothicism

The past is never dead. It's not even past.<sup>1</sup>

Franz Schubert's interest in presenting terror and horror in music is well-known. This is demonstrated not only in his early *Schauerballaden*, lieder of classical mythological subjects, and other vocal and operatic works that contain scenes of sudden fantastical disturbance,<sup>2</sup> but, as commentators regularly emphasize, also in a number of instrumental works. Of these, the 'Unfinished' Symphony (D. 759, 1822) has received much attention for its perceived display of musical terror and horror. This is said by many to be palpable right in the symphony's opening phrase (Ex. 1, bars 1–8), whose *ombra* character as well as ill-defined, liminal metrical and tonal features immediately evoke an ominous and mysterious

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<sup>1</sup> William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*, Act I (New York: Vintage, 2011): 73.

<sup>2</sup> These settings include, for example, 'Leichenfantasie' (D. 7, 1811), 'Der Vatermörderer' (D. 10, 1811), 'Der Taucher' (D. 77, 1815), 'Minona oder die Kunde der Dogge' (D. 152, 1815), 'Die Nonne' (D. 208, 1815), 'Der Liedler' (D. 209, 1815), 'Erlkönig' (D. 328, 1815), 'Der Tod und das Mädchen', (D. 531, 1817), *Fierrabras* (D. 796, 1823), and a few Heine lieder in *Schwanengesang* (D. 957, 1828).

Allegro moderato.

Ex. 1 Schubert, 'Unfinished' Symphony, D. 759, mvt. i, bars 1–8

atmosphere.<sup>3</sup> Still more pronounced is the way this phrase and motivic materials related to its return – almost inescapably – throughout the symphony's first movement, sometimes even sounding menacingly at a loud volume, in *tutti* orchestration, and with shuddering *tremolo*. For Xavier Hascher, this opening phrase, or 'the "O" theme' as he calls it, is 'obsessive' and it repetitively begets some intense 'moments of crisis', while Charles Fisk notes that 'the tragic first movement ... never break[s] the hold of its haunting and melancholy opening phrase'.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding the extensive reception surrounding the symphony's representation of terror and horror, surprisingly this work has rarely been correlated further to the Gothic, or so-called 'dark-Romantic', aesthetic with which it shares unmistakable stylistic resemblances.<sup>5</sup> The Gothic in the late-eighteenth

<sup>3</sup> Peter Gülke describes this phrase as 'an oracular, whispering unison'; Michael Spitzer says that it 'ticks every box for distant threat and mystery'; while for Davies, it 'impart[s] a mysterious tone to the movement'. Peter Gülke, *Schubert und seine Zeit* (Regensburg: Laaber, 1991): 197; Michael Spitzer, 'Mapping the Human Heart: A Holistic Analysis of Fear in Schubert', *Music Analysis* 29/1 (2010): 149–213, here 164; Joe Davies, 'Interpreting the Expressive Worlds of Schubert's Late Instrumental Works' (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2019): 105. On liminal features in particular, see David Schroeder, 'Polarity in Schubert's Unfinished Symphony', *Canadian University Music Review* 1 (1980): 22–34 (esp. pp. 27–8); Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 3, *The Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 109; Richard Kurth, 'On the Subject of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony: Was bedeutet die Bewegung?', *19th-Century Music* 23/1 (1999): 3–32; and Spitzer, 'Mapping the Human Heart: A Holistic Analysis of Fear in Schubert', 165.

<sup>4</sup> Xavier Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations in the First Movement of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony', in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 128–43, here 132 and 137; Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001): 85.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Gothic' discussed in this article (including the secondary sources cited) refers to that dating from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, especially the English Gothic and its German counterpart of *Schauerphantastik* – the two are closely associated and share many cross-influences and borrowings; see Andrew Philip Seeger, 'Crosscurrents between the English Gothic Novel and the German Schauerroman' (PhD diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2004) and Barry Murnane, 'Haunting (Literary) History: An Introduction to German Gothic', in *Popular Revenants The German Gothic and Its International Reception, 1800–2000*, ed. Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane (Rochester: Camden House, 2012): 10–43.

<i>Ombra topics</i>	particularly the gestures of <i>tremolos</i> , dissonance and chromaticism, surprise harmonic progressions, strong contrast of dynamics, etc.
<i>Formal irregularities</i>	transgression or disruption of conventional formal paradigms
<i>Repetition</i>	include cyclic recall of earlier themes
<i>Allusion to 'archaic' styles</i>	lament bass, fugal styles, French overture

Fig. 1 'Gothic' musical traits in Schubert's works

and early-nineteenth centuries, as Marjorie Hirsch perceives, is characterized by 'the arousal of extreme emotions', 'disequilibrium and irregularity', 'rapid, frenzied movement', 'excess and exaggeration', 'interruption, fragmentation, disjointedness', and 'a sense of having been conceived in the heat of the moment'.<sup>6</sup> Recent studies have also explored the way in which such generic Gothic characteristics are expressed musically in Schubert's 'late' instrumental works through a combination of the *ombra* topic, formal irregularities, repetitions, and allusion to 'archaic' styles (Fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> Certainly, many of these stylized Gothic characteristics and musical traits correspond well to the musical terror and horror commentators have noted in the symphony's first movement. In line with this correspondence, moreover, the opening phrase or 'the "O" theme' (to borrow Hascher's phrase), given its *ombra* and recursive features, may even bring to mind a familiar Gothic trope – that is, *ghostly hauntings*.<sup>8</sup> In Gothic texts, for example, the ghostly figures, as though a past that resists passing, always obsessively repeat the same actions and haunt the same locations, exemplifying a looping, or 'anti-clockwise',<sup>9</sup> temporality critics identify as quintessential to this genre.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Marjorie Hirsch, 'Schubert's Reconciliation of Gothic and Classical Influence', in *Schubert's Late Music: History, Theory, Style*, ed. Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016):149–70, here 163.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Hirsch, 'Schubert's Reconciliation of Gothic and Classical Influence', and Davies, 'Interpreting the Expressive Worlds of Schubert's Late Instrumental Works'.

<sup>8</sup> Clive McClelland discusses extensively the way musical gestures of the *ombra* are conventionally used in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century stage works to evoke the category of the ghostly; see this author's 'Ombra and Tempesta', in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014): 279–300. A *locus classicus* of Schubert's use of similar gestures to depict a ghostly presence can be found in the last stanza of 'Der Wanderer' (D. 489, 1816) where the lyrics refer to the 'Geisterhauch'.

<sup>9</sup> Christine Berthín, *Gothic Hauntings. Melancholy Crypts and Textual Ghost* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 58–88, here 67–8.

<sup>10</sup> This familiar image of Gothic ghostly hauntings is exposed, for instance, in the Bleeding Nun of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), the Beggarwoman of Heinrich von Kleist's *Das Bettelweib von Locarno* (1810), and the White Lady of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Eine Spukgeschichte* (1819).

An enthusiast of Gothic horror,<sup>11</sup> Schubert was well acquainted with the theme of ghostly hauntings. Composed seven years prior to the 'Unfinished' Symphony, his setting of Ludwig Hölty's 'Die Nonne' (D. 208, 1815) offers an early example of responding to literary explorations of 'anti-clockwise' temporality and the supernatural. Hölty's ballad narrates the story of a nun who, heartbroken by the betrayal of her beloved knight, revenged herself by hiring assassins to murder him. She thereafter dragged his corpse out from the vault within the church where he was buried, tore out his heart and stamped on it so forcefully that the sound reverberated throughout the whole church. The ballad's closing stanzas relate that since her own death, the nun's ghost has been haunting that very same church, and every midnight repeating the same heart-breaking (both literally and figuratively) act:

Ihr Geist soll, wie die Sagen gehn,  
 In dieser Kirche weilen,  
 Und, bis im Dorf die Hahnen krähn,  
 Bald wimmern und bald heulen.  
 Sobald der Seiger zwölfe schlägt,  
 Rauscht sie, an Grabsteinwänden,  
 Aus einer Gruft empor, und trägt  
 Ein blutend Herz in Händen.  
 Die tiefen hohlen Augen sprühn  
 Ein düsterrothes Feuer,  
 Und glühn, wie Schwefelflammen glühn,  
 Durch ihren weißen Schleyer.  
 Sie gafft auf das zerrißne Herz,  
 Mit wilder Rachgeberde,  
 Und hebt es dreymal himmelwärts,  
 Und wirft es auf die Erde;  
 Und rollt die Augen voller Wuth,  
 Die eine Hölle blicken,  
 Und schüttelt aus dem Schleyer Blut,  
 Und stampft das Herz in Stücken.  
 Ein dunkler Todtenflimmer macht  
 Indefß die Fenster helle.  
 Der Wächter, der das Dorf bewacht,  
 Sah's oft in der Kapelle.

Her ghost, as the legend goes,  
 Dwells in this church,  
 And, until the cocks crow in the village  
 Soon wailing and soon howling  
 As soon as the clock-hand hits twelve  
 She rushes, along the tombstone walls,  
 Up from a crypt, and carries  
 A bleeding heart in her hands.  
 Her deep, hollow eyes spark  
 A grim-red fire,  
 And glow, like sulphurous flames glow,  
 Through her white veil.  
 She gazes at the torn heart,  
 With a wild revengeful expression,  
 And lifts it three times skywards,  
 And throws it to the ground;  
 And she rolls her eyes full of rage,  
 Looks at hell,  
 And shakes blood out of her veil,  
 And stamps the heart into pieces.  
 A dark flicker of death meanwhile makes  
 the windows bright.  
 The watchman who guards the village  
 Saw it often in the chapel.<sup>12</sup>

In Schubert's setting, the recursive hauntings of these stanzas are underlined by a switch to a strophic structure (see the 'Mässig, mit Grauen' section in Ex. 2) from what was before through-composed (bars 1–155). In Schubert's song, as in Hölty's ballad, the 'anti-clockwise' temporality is further dramatized through the lack of a definite, final resolution, which insinuates a possible continuation of hauntings beyond the ostensible 'end' of the work – this is referred to in literary criticism as the 'problem of closure', a phenomenon not uncommon in Gothic texts.<sup>13</sup> In the 'Mässig, mit Grauen' section of the song, for instance, in representations of the steadfast fixation of the nun's ghost, the pounding chords that return in

<sup>11</sup> On Schubert and Gothicism, see n. 7.

<sup>12</sup> The translation is my own.

<sup>13</sup> See my discussion below in the section titled 'Unfinished Hauntings and the Second Movement'.

149 **Mässig, mit Grauen**

**violent stamping**

Ihr Geist soll, wie die Sa - gen gehn, in  
Die tie - fen, hoh - len Au - gen sprühn ein  
Und rollt die Au - gen vol - ler Wuth, die

158

die - ser Kir - che wei - len, und, bis im Dorf die Häh - ne krähn, bald wimmern — und bald  
dü - ster - ro - thes Feu - er, und glühn, wie Schwefel — flammen glühn, durch ih - ren wei - ssen  
ei - ne Höl - le bli - cken, und schüt - tel aus dem Schleier — Blut, und stampft das Herz — in

163

heu - len. So - bald der Ham - mer zwöl - fe schlägt, rauscht sie an Grab - stein - wän - den aus  
Schlei - er. Sie gafft auf das zer - riss - ne Herz mit wil - der Rach - ge - ber - de und  
Stü - cken. Ein blei - cher To - dten - flim - mer macht in - dess die Fen - ster hel - le. Der

168

ei - ner Gruft em - por, — und trägt win blu - tend Herz in  
hebt es drei - mal him - — und wirft es auf die Ka -  
Wäch - ter, der das Dorf be - wacht sah's oft in der Ka -

171 **violent stamping (recall)** [1.2.] | 3.

Händen.  
Er - de.  
pel - le.

**violent stamping (recall)**

PAC

Ex. 2 Schubert, 'Die Nonne', D. 208, bars 149ff.

the penultimate vocal phrase's accompaniment (bars 168–169) – a recall of the original scene of violent stamping in bars 149–154 – eventually even overspill into the postlude following the final PAC (bar 171) of each verse. The way a dramatically charged gesture lingers on 'after the end' (in the post-cadential space), together with the continual weakening of the tonic arrival by the accented dissonance in these closing bars, suggest a never-ending sense of haunting.

In this article, I apply the 'anti-clockwise' temporality characteristic of Gothic ghost stories to the 'Unfinished' Symphony, to disclose its musical horror and terror in a new light. My discussion explores the possibility to interpret the symphony as 'isomorphic' to subjective states,<sup>14</sup> understanding the work in terms of a virtual musical protagonist around whom the haunting story unfolds. While the capacity of an artwork to provoke suspense from analogy to a ghostly haunting invites – or commands – particular interpretative attention, more specific exploration will evoke the psychological concept of trauma. This human dimension to a supernatural tale is a staple of literary critiques of ghosts and hauntings. Applying such connection to 'Die Nonne', for example, suggests the obsessional repetitive behaviour of the nun's ghost as indicative of what psychoanalysts diagnose, from traumatized subjects, as an unconscious compulsion to relive a disturbance. More specifically, from the perspective of psychology in literature, this ghostly reoccurrence might also be recognized as symbolizing the traumatic past *per se*, especially in light of Cathy Caruth's perceptive conceptualization of trauma as conditioned upon an unrepresentable, absent-present experience that 'returns to haunt the survivor later on'.<sup>15</sup> This psychoanalytic literary paradigm of ghostly hauntings serves as a conduit for this article's focused examination of the highly loaded first movement of the 'Unfinished' Symphony. But this article also explores beyond the symphony's first movement to discuss what a Gothic-traumatic reading might reveal about the second movement and, furthermore, the symphony's contestable 'unfinished' status.

### Recurring Hauntings: The 'O' Theme

The 'O' theme that is pertinent to many discussions of the symphony's horror and terror forms the first focus of my exploration. Hascher notes that 'the symphony seems to start *ex nihilo* without our being able to say whether there is any link between the opening bass-line theme and [the] new beginning' from bar 9.<sup>16</sup> A closer look reveals that within the first eight bars there is some suggestion of an introduction (the slow rhythm and, especially, the long-held  $\hat{5}$  in the phrase ending (bars 6–8), which echoes the dominant-function tonal goal of conventional introductions),<sup>17</sup> but also a departure from normative formal models, one entails a different type of large-scale agenda. Despite its unmistakable introduction-like features, the opening phrase is included in the expositional repeat; indeed,

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<sup>14</sup> On 'isomorphism' between music and subjectivity, see Laird Addis, *Of Mind and Music* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999): 69. Benedict Taylor provides an excellent discussion of this perspective in *The Melody of Time: Music and Temporality in the Romantic Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 65–8. On the notion of virtual protagonist in music interpretation, see, for instance, Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): chap. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996): 4.

<sup>16</sup> Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations', 133.

<sup>17</sup> For general features of sonata-form introductions, see William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 203–7 and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006): 293–306.

this return seems to be a deliberate attempt to counter the non-appearance that is typically consigned to thematic introductions.<sup>18</sup> The decision to return to this phrase, which initially conveys the impression of an introduction, after the first-time bar cannot be understood as merely a formal repeat, however, but as indicative of something that *resists passing*. The 'O' phrase, to borrow the descriptors of Hascher and Fisk, is 'obsessive' and 'haunting',<sup>19</sup> and as I hear it, it embodies an 'anti-clockwise' temporality, not dissimilar to that of a ghostly haunting.

The 'O' theme creeps in again after the second expositional ending to launch the development section (Ex. 3, bar 114). Cast in the subdominant key (E minor), the theme departs from its previous ending (on a long-held  $\hat{5}$ ) to descend instead by step to  $\text{C}\sharp$ , which is then sustained for seven bars (bars 122–128). For Fisk, this juncture marks that the development section has entered a distinct 'realm' or aesthetic level: 'in its depth and near-stillness, and in the arrest of its motion on C, the unstable sixth degree, this passage evokes a descent into a mysterious, threatening realm – or, perhaps, a venturing forth to an outer limit'.<sup>20</sup> To apply a dualism widely regarded to be crucial to Schubert's music, this shift in aesthetic levels might be seen as one across a waking state and dream – that is, nightmare.<sup>21</sup> In particular, the static, motion-arresting flat-submediant sonority underscoring this shift is both sonically and aesthetically closely comparable to Schubert's trademark use of the flat-submediant harmony, which numerous scholars elsewhere have associated with dreams and altered states of consciousness.<sup>22</sup> If the development section is to be heard as a musical nightmare, as we shall see, this nightmare is determined by the haunting of 'O'.

<sup>18</sup> As Hepokoski and Darcy point out, the introduction in sonata forms 'is normally not involved either in the expositional repeat (often the repeat sign is placed after the introduction, before the P-theme) or in the launching of the recapitulatory rotation'; see *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 293. To my knowledge, the first movement of Beethoven's piano sonata 'Pathétique' (Op. 13, 1798) is one of the first well-known examples where an introduction returns in an exposition, albeit partially and in different keys. Formal returns of an introduction, in whatever guise, however, remain uncommon up to at least the end of the 1820s.

<sup>19</sup> See n. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 99.

<sup>21</sup> The literature on the embodiment of this duality in Schubert's instrumental music is extensive: see, for instance, Susan Wollenberg, 'Schubert and the Dream', *Studi Musicali* 9/1 (1980): 135–50; Susan McClary, 'Pitches, Expression, Ideology: An Exercise in Mediation', *Enclitic* 7 (1983): 76–86; William Kinderman, 'Schubert's Tragic Perspective', in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986): 65–83; Fisk, *Returning Cycles*; Brian Black, 'Remembering a Dream: The Tragedy of Romantic Memory in the Modulatory Processes of Schubert's Sonata Forms', *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 25 (2005): 202–28; and Benedict Taylor, 'Schubert and the Construction of Memory: The String Quartet in A Minor, D.804 (Rosamunde)', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139/1 (2014): 41–88.

<sup>22</sup> See J.H. Thomas, 'A Subconscious Metaphor?', *Music Review* 43 (1982): 225–35; McClary, 'Pitches, Expression, Ideology'; Thomas Keith Nelson, 'The Fantasy of Absolute Music' (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1998): chaps 3–4; Christopher Wintle, 'Franz Schubert, *Ihr Bild* (1828): A Response to Schenker's Essay in *Der Tonwille*, Vol. 1', *Music Analysis* 19/1 (2000): 10–28; Black, 'Remembering a Dream'; and, more recently, David Bretherton, 'The Musico-Poetics of the Flat Submediant in Schubert's Songs', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 144/2 (2019): 239–86.





156

*p* *ff*

8<sup>va</sup>

D minor: V (cadential progression interrupted by x)

166

*p* *ff* *f* *f*

return of O

back to E minor:

176

*ff* *ff*

P-based

ascending-5ths sequence

181

*ff* *f* *f*

ii

descending-5ths sequence

Ex. 3 Continued.

186

*f* *f*

v i

194

*ffz* *sf* *pp* *cresc.* *ff* *sf*

*ffz* *sf* *pp* *cresc.* *ff* *sf*

D major: 1°

204

*ff* *sf*

*ff* *sf*

*p* *p*

B minor: v

211

*decresc.* *pp* *pp*

*decresc.* *pp* *pp*

i

Ex. 3 Continued.

Right from the development section's opening (bars 122–133), the *tremolando* bassline immediately delivers a sense of fear and shudder.<sup>23</sup> Here, moreover, the head motif of 'O' ('motif *x*') joins with a descending-semitone appoggiatura ('motif *y*', a two-note truncation of the original *y* in 'O' that now falls semitonally) to form a four-bar unit (Ex. 4b) which, as though some alienating ghostly whisper, sounds softly but incessantly between the violins, dovetailing with the violas and bassoons. This haunting music soon intensifies as *x* – now inverted and encompassing G–F♯–E in the high register – relentlessly blares against the F♯ bassline and the *sforzando* syncopations in the inner voices to declaim a dominant ninth harmony (bars 134–145). This passage, lasting over a total span of 12 bars, leads forcefully to the first climactic moment of the development section (bar 146) and, thereafter, ushers in the next episode of the nightmare.

In the new episode, a *tremolando* arpeggio featuring the rhythm of *x* (Ex. 4c), after its first appearance in C♯ minor (bars 146–150), returns twice in diminished harmonies to quash an expected cadence that a secondary group-based unit<sup>24</sup> twice sets up (bars 154–158 and 160–165). As the secondary group-based unit eventually arrives at E minor (bar 170), furthermore, any sense of cadential resolution is shattered by its elision with the *fortissimo* and *tutti* reprise of the entire 'O' theme (bars 170–176), which culminates with the development section's second climax.<sup>25</sup> The constant threatening returns of 'O'-based music, together with the vividness of bold harmonic progressions, cadential evasions, and intense shudder (*tremolos*) typically associated with the *ombra*, stimulate a heightened sense of Gothic horror and hauntings throughout this episode.

As the second climax unfolds, the hauntings of 'O' continue through two contrasting passages featuring respectively an extended motif *x* and motif *y* (Ex. 4d), both played canonically between the low and high registers and in loud volume throughout (bars 176–183 and 184–194). In addition, the way this episode is brought back to E minor – the key with which the development section starts – which it leaves (bars 176–183) and once again circles back to (bars 184–194), highlights a particular sense of stasis and confinement. In contrast with a *Bildungsroman* trajectory, in which a return to the origin often indicates the attainment of a higher existential level,<sup>26</sup> the fact that the development section is still infused with 'O' would also imply a continued haunting and lack of

<sup>23</sup> Similar readings of *tremolo* in Schubert's music are suggested in Patrick McCreless, 'Probing the Limits: Musical Structure and Musical Rhetoric in Schubert's String Quartet in G Major, D. 887', *Music Theory and Analysis* 2 (2015): 1–36; Hirsch, 'Schubert's Reconciliation of Gothic and Classical Influence', 149–70; and Jonathan Guez, 'The "Mono-Operational" Recapitulation in Movements by Beethoven and Schubert', *Music Theory Spectrum* 40/2 (2018): 227–47, here 238.

<sup>24</sup> This reading of the syncopated figure in the 'Unfinished' Symphony as 'secondary group-based' rather than any commonplace accompaniment pattern resonates with Hascher's claim that 'in Schubert's mature works, an accompaniment always relates to the overall fabric of a piece'. In specific terms of the syncopated figure in this symphony, he explains that 'the accompaniment to the second theme is a conventional syncopated orchestral formula, which nonetheless has thematic importance within the symphony'; Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations', 132.

<sup>25</sup> On evaded cadences, see Caplin, *Classical Form*, 101–6.

<sup>26</sup> On the notion of the 'spiral' in Romanticism, see M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971): 159, and Marshall Brown, *The Shape of German Romanticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979).

## a) the 'O' theme

1

## b)

112

## c)

146

S-based

## d)

176

## 188

## e)

202

208

Hrn.

Ex. 4 Schubert, 'Unfinished' Symphony, motivic derivation of the development section

transcendence. The contorted returns of thematic materials analysed so far in the development section conform to archetypal Gothic plots, where paths and stairs to escape always twist back on themselves, trapping the protagonist in the endless repetition of the same horror.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See also Eugenia C. DeLamotte's perceptive discussion of this circularity or what she calls 'the double terror of boundedness and boundlessness' of the Gothic genres in *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990): 94–6.

The nightmarish atmosphere, pervasive in the development section, is suddenly broken through with a *fortissimo* fanfare eruption in D major (bar 202), the relative major that is never truly attained in the exposition. Such 'triumph is illusory', however (as Fisk points out),<sup>28</sup> since there is no modulation established and only a slip from E minor to D major, both in first inversion, by way of preparation. The fanfare topic is also twice undercut by a whispering F♯-major harmony (bars 205 and 209), with the latter elongated to form dominant preparation for the recapitulation, where the primary group and B minor tonic return, and a darkened realm once again takes hold. In reflecting on the journey of the development section to draw extensively on motifs *x* and *y* from the 'O' theme, its final gesture of dominant prolongation (bars 209–217) cast around the same  $\hat{5}$  that informed the original end of 'O' ('motif *z*', bars 6–8) can be seen as indicative of another musical haunting (Ex. 4e). The similar way in which both the F♯ harmony here and the prolonged F♯ in the opening phrase act as a long-held dominant that then resolves to the accompaniment of the primary group also lends corroboration to this correspondence (compare bars 208–218 with 6–9).

The haunting of the first movement with 'O', however, does not end with leaving the development section behind and its nightmarish vision. Like a *déjà vu*, in uncanny resemblance to its earlier returns following the first and second expositional endings, the all-too-familiar 'O' theme reappears (bars 328ff.), precisely after the primary, secondary and closing groups are retraced in the recapitulation. The theme's continuation to form the coda suggests a more sustained vision of a nightmare, one that not only resembles the expressive intensification of the development section, but also, just like that section, concentrates on little else other than what is derived from 'O'. While a recursive, anti-clockwise quality is never described as such by Hascher, he notes that the continuous return of 'O' does not suggest any 'logical continuity and 'formal teleology'. In particular, 'we realize that instead of advancing, as we thought, we are in fact in the same place. The "O" theme, we have seen, does not progress. It is obsessive, and all elements emerging from it are devoid of a sense of "becoming"'.<sup>29</sup> Taken further, the 'O' theme and other 'O'-based materials, which jettison 'progress' and 'becoming' in favour of repetition and once and again arouse heightened musical tension, are also structurally and expressively analogous to the ghostly hauntings of Gothic texts.

So far, while I have focused on the multiple dysphoric and haunting returns of 'O', the movement's 'anti-clockwise' structure can still be illuminated through comparing Schubert's individual treatment of sonata form with archetypal models, and, in doing so, can further sustain a Gothic reading. As pointed out by Hepokoski and Darcy, between the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was common for composers to write sonata-form development sections with reference to the thematic ordering of the exposition, what the two theorists call 'rotational principle':

P is usually elaborated upon first, and the music may then move forward – though often the cycle may not proceed any further at all – perhaps to TR and thence to a selection from the exposition's part 2: either C-material alone (the most common choice) or something from S preceding the possibility of C-material.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 100.

<sup>29</sup> Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations', 141–2.

<sup>30</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 206.

Following Hepokoski and Darcy, any sonata-form movements in which a rotational development section is featured would be at least 'tri-rotational' in formal layout, with the exposition and recapitulation constituting two outer rotations and the development section enacting one or more inner rotation(s). For them, therefore, even the formal processes of the archetypal classical sonata form may already be considered cyclical. As we know, however, most rotational development sections only offer partial return of themes as presented in expositional and recapitulatory rotations. As a result, they might sound seem to be causing a breach with, rather than sustaining, the cycles of the outer sections.

In the development section of the first movement of Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony, while primary- and secondary-group derivatives make an appearance, they cast a shadow on what is absent: a fuller representation of the themes from these groups (Ex. 3, bars 150–184). The formal procedure here, as I have shown, instead foregrounds thematic-motivic materials drawn from the introductory 'O' that precedes the primary group. Thus rather than producing inner rotations, the development section can be more readily understood as featuring a non-rotational procedure, one based on 'O'.<sup>31</sup> With the outer sections, Schubert provides an example of Hepokoski and Darcy's Type 3 sonata, whereby there is a double-rotation of two grand cycles: 'introduction or P<sup>0</sup> + exposition' and 'the development + recapitulation'.<sup>32</sup> Importantly, this meta-structure softens any sense of the development section breaking off from the exposition and recapitulation in not following their rotations exactly, and its commitment to using 'O' throughout helps to elevate the opening phrase to a level of formal significance. In this reading, Schubert's sonata form can be seen as containing two cycles (the opening phrase-exposition complex and the development section-recapitulation complex) that feature not only the same rotational principle ('O', P, TR, S, C) but also a strong level of parallelism between the exposition and recapitulation, where thematic material and their ordering are practically identical. Taking the repetition of the opening phrase ('O')-exposition (P, TR, S, C) complex prompted by the first-time bar repeat, and retaining this thematic ordering across the development-recapitulation, provides three appearances of essentially the same rotation (Fig. 2). Containing the movement within this cyclical structure brings further attention, albeit on a grander scale, to a sense of 'anti-clockwise' quality.

In keeping with the rotational pattern so far in the movement, the coda starts with the 'O' theme (Fig. 2). This repetition and placement give further emphasis to a sense of fixedness, to the constant looping of the same events or cycle of events. From a hermeneutical standpoint, this movement could be comprehended as featuring an indefinite looping process that begins with and is always re-directed to 'O'. This structural circularity is emphasized even more strongly in Schubert's original piano sketch for the symphony, in which the use of a much briefer coda, whereby the reprise of 'O' immediately leads to an assertive ending (Ex. 5), also promotes a greater affinity between the movement's beginning and ending. However, in the final version of the symphony, with the coda treating the 'O' theme in similar fashion as the development section, there is opportunity to claim a return to the haunted nightmare as embodied in that section. Drawing on the notion of musical subjectivity, the first movement of the symphony could

<sup>31</sup> A similar reading is suggested by Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations', 139, who hears 'the whole of the development section ... as a huge central crisis'.

<sup>32</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 221.

Intro. (?)	Exposition	Development	Recapitulation	Coda
: O	P – TR – S – C :	O-based	P – TR – S – C	O-based
Cycles 1 & 2 (expositional repeat)		Cycle 3		beginning of Cycle 4?

O: *Opening phrase*

P: *Primary group*

TR: *Transition*

S: *Secondary group*

C: *Closing group*

Fig. 2 A cyclical reading of the formal structure of the first movement of the 'Unfinished' Symphony



Ex. 5 A reproduction of Schubert's original sketch for the 'Unfinished' Symphony, mvnt i, coda

be heard as representing a virtual protagonist who is constantly haunted by the same ghostly presence in nightmares – that is, recurring nightmares.<sup>33</sup>

The process of recurring nightmares suggested for the first movement of the 'Unfinished' Symphony elicits further connection with psychoanalytic conditions, specifically 'traumatic neuroses' identified by Freud, in which dreams have the

<sup>33</sup> I am reminded of the Bleeding Nun from Lewis's *The Monk*, a ghostly figure that repeatedly haunts the character Raymond in his nightmares. See also Alexandra Maria Reuber's insightful psychoanalytic investigation of Raymond's recurring nightmares in 'Haunted by the Uncanny: Development of a Genre from the Late Eighteenth to the Late Nineteenth Century' (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2004): 87–91.

peculiarity of 'repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his [sic] accident'.<sup>34</sup> These experiences, which marked for Freud 'the only genuine exceptions' to his grand theory of dreams as wish-fulfilment advanced in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899),<sup>35</sup> offer an important interpretative lens for further contextualizing hauntings and recurring nightmares in this movement. Indeed, the repetitive pattern across this movement, not dissimilar to one in traditional Gothic stories or 'Die Nonne', might be construed as symptomatic of an originary traumatic occurrence – a process vividly re-enacted in the movement's secondary group.

### Reliving the Trauma in P, TR, S, and C Groups

In preparing for the secondary group, Schubert instantly arrests the preceding momentum of the primary group with a brief transition that sounds like the gesture of a horn call (Ex. 6, bars 38–42) – a common symbol of distance and halcyon memory in German Romanticism.<sup>36</sup> As if called into existence as an idyllic memory from this gesture,<sup>37</sup> the secondary group enters (bars 42ff.) *pianissimo* in a straightforward texture of melody–accompaniment in the flat-submediant key (G major), the 'inward' key *par excellence*.<sup>38</sup> Yet just as in Schubert's songs, where pleasant dreams and memories are liable to be shattered,<sup>39</sup> it soon becomes clear that what is 'remembered' in the secondary group is later to be crudely destroyed. For Susan McClary, this offers a retrospective understanding of the secondary group as a 'vulnerable lyrical subject, which is doomed to be quashed'.<sup>40</sup>

Such annihilation is initiated through cadential evasion and breakdown of phrase: following the elided PAC (Ex. 6, bar 53) brought by the lyrical theme's

<sup>34</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1953–74): vol. 18: 13.

<sup>35</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Remarks on the Theory and Practice of Dream-Interpretation', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1953–74): vol. 19: 118.

<sup>36</sup> Susan Youens, for instance, notes that 'the Hörnerklang, or the sound of distant horn calls summoning the protagonist away from where he is ... into the recesses of memory, is a quintessentially Romantic image'; *Retracing a Winter's Journey: Schubert's Winterreise* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991): 151–69. The association between the gesture of a horn call and halcyon memories is most tellingly revealed in Schubert's 'Der Lindenbaum' from *Winterreise* (D. 911, 1827). For more in-depth discussion on this association, see Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (London: Harper Collins, 1996): 116–24.

<sup>37</sup> Fisk offers a similar reading of horn call and memories in *Returning Cycles*, 92.

<sup>38</sup> On 'inwardness' in Schubert's music, see Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 3: 61–118; Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 133–58; and Bretherton, 'The Musico-Poetics of the Flat Submediant in Schubert's Songs'.

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, 'Frühlingstraum' and 'Im Dorfe' from *Winterreise*, and 'Kriegers Ahnung' from *Schwanengesang*.

<sup>40</sup> Susan McClary, 'Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music', in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994): 205–33, here 225.



first statement,<sup>41</sup> this theme's restatement raises the expectations of a 'one more time' PAC,<sup>42</sup> only for a bar of silence to intervene suddenly (bar 62), 'as if in the face of a horror'.<sup>43</sup> Without any anticipation, three chords explode throughout most of the orchestra with *sforzando* and *tremolando* articulation, violently blaring out C minor (bars 63–64), G minor (bars 65–66), and E flat major (bars 67–68), followed by an augmented sixth harmony (bars 68–70) and a culmination on a diminished seventh (bar 71).<sup>44</sup> As if responding to this shocking series of events, the previously unassuming secondary theme returns with an agitated character (bars 71–93), torn between the high and low registers to encapsulate 'the "victimized" remainder of a multimodular S that, with much strain, pieces together the shards of a shattered S<sup>1</sup> to secure the EEC in bar 93'.<sup>45</sup> Following the immediate subsidence from the diminished seventh peak (bars 71–72), Glenn Stanley applies the metaphor of 'a shocked person's response to a terrible human action or natural event', suggesting that 'one can ... imagine an individual who, through overwhelming horror and fear, can no longer speak and is reduced to the most primitive, perhaps even non-verbal articulations, an inchoate moaning'.<sup>46</sup>

To return to the chordal explosions preceding the 'aftermath', these moments (Ex. 6, bars 63–71) elicit highly descriptive responses from different scholars, including Stanley, who finds here 'a completely unforeseen intrusion ... a catastrophe'.<sup>47</sup> Regarding this music, also, Hepokoski and Darcy state that the way it starts 'could not be more negative in its implications'; for Hascher, it denotes a 'moment of crisis' and 'can be described as hysterical in nature'; while for Davies, its 'sonic force and expansiveness, in conjunction with its sudden entrance, serve to overwhelm the senses, defying logical explanation'.<sup>48</sup> To my ear, it is not just that the extreme musical force here (minor harmony, loud dynamics, shuddering *tremolos*)

<sup>41</sup> Caplin argues that normally, a gesture like this, given its 'being-in-the-middle' function within sequential repetitions, should not be understood as articulating a PAC. However, he explains with regard to this music in question, 'here it seems to do just that, namely to bring a semblance of closure to the theme. In other words, we can hear the harmonies in mm. 49–52 as not only sequential ... but also as cadential, with V7 of II representing a chromatic alteration of VI, a substitute for the initial cadential tonic'; William E. Caplin, 'Beyond the Classical Cadence: Thematic Closure in Early Romantic Music', *Music Theory Spectrum* 40/1 (2018): 1–26, here 12).

<sup>42</sup> See Caplin's discussion of the 'one more time' technique in *Classical Form*, 103.

<sup>43</sup> Gülke, *Schubert und seine Zeit*, 198. Cited and translated in Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 94. In Hepokoski and Darcy's reading, this pause significantly evades the EEC at which the restatement of the secondary theme is supposed to terminate (*Elements of Sonata Theory*, 183). Steven Vande Moortele, on the other hand, contends in a more recent study that the secondary theme in fact features 'the sentence of the loop type', explaining from a Caplinian standpoint that because 'cadences within loops are "incapable of serving as structural goals" ... there is no evaded EEC at m. 62 either'; Steven Vande Moortele 'The Subordinate Theme in the First Movement of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony', *Music Theory & Analysis* 6/2 (2019): 223–29, here 224.

<sup>44</sup> See also the corresponding music in the recapitulation, bars 280–289.

<sup>45</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 183.

<sup>46</sup> Glenn Stanley, 'Schubert Hearing Don Giovanni: Mozartian Death Music in the "Unfinished" Symphony', in *Schubert's Late Music: History, Theory, Style*, 193–218, here 194.

<sup>47</sup> Stanley, 'Schubert Hearing Don Giovanni', 194.

<sup>48</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 183; Hascher, 'Narrative Dislocations', 138; Davies, 'Interpreting the Expressive Worlds of Schubert's Late Instrumental Works', 114.



called 'fright'. His diagnosis of this is particularly apt for Schubert's passage and gives a more focused interpretation from what other scholarship only marginally hints at: 'the state a person gets into when he [sic] has run into danger without being prepared for it; it emphasizes the factor of surprise'.<sup>49</sup> This condition, as Freud explained in his foundational text on psychoanalytic trauma, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), is the fundamental psychological cause of traumatic neuroses. In a nutshell, fright causes the raw, unprocessed stimuli of an accident to breach through the mind's 'protective shield' and strike it directly.<sup>50</sup>

Exploring Freud's diagnosis further from a cognitive perspective, Caruth perceptively argues that the state of fright in traumatic neuroses is in fact a disruption in temporal experience:

[Fright] is not simply, that is, the literal threatening of bodily life, but the fact that the threat is recognized as such by the mind *one moment too late*. The shock of the mind's relation to the threat of death is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the *missing* of this experience, the fact that, not being experienced *in time*, it has not yet been fully known.<sup>51</sup>

According to Caruth, this 'unclaimed experience' or lack in trauma, while lurking beneath consciousness in a state that eludes either representation or comprehension, nonetheless continuously demands a proper response from the subject, resulting in different types of traumatic repetitions, which tell 'the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available'.<sup>52</sup> As Caruth states, 'trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely *not* known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on'.<sup>53</sup> This Caruthian understanding of trauma as an absent–present experience that 'cries out' and 'returns to haunt the survivor later on' – a concept employed widely in literary criticism in discussions of ghosts and ghostly hauntings – also provides a fitting model for understanding the musical hauntings in the symphony.

Taking a closer look, analysis reveals certain motivic resemblances shared between these explosive chords that constitute the traumatic encounter and the 'O' theme that I have associated with ghostly hauntings. In the former music example, the underlying bass line (C–D–Eb) articulates a tone higher the same ascending stepwise motion as the head motif ('motif *x*') of the latter example (B–C#–D) (cf. Ex. 6, bars 63–68 and Ex. 4a, bars 1–2).<sup>54</sup> An even more revealing connection between later encounters of the two can be observed in the episode that follows right after the first climax of the development section. In this episode (Ex. 3, bars 146–170), the way the cadential expectations raised by the secondary group-based figure being repeatedly disrupted by the rhythm of *x* (bars 154–157 and 162–165) and motif *x* (the 'O'-reprise at bar 170) distinctly re-enacts, as though in a manner of compulsive repetition, the originary traumatic moment, where these explosive

<sup>49</sup> Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', 12.

<sup>50</sup> Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', 27.

<sup>51</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 62, original emphases.

<sup>52</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> See also Hascher's analysis of the motivic connection between the two in 'Narrative Dislocations', 138.

chords violently quash the cadential progression of the secondary group. Viewed from a psychoanalytic standpoint, it might be said that it is precisely the horror in these explosive chords – one that became clear to the consciousness only *one moment too late* – that suggests a return of a ghostly presence, as if haunting a virtual protagonist repeatedly in nightmares.

As Freud reported, ‘dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright’.<sup>55</sup> Due to the unassimilated nature of the traumatic event, in repetitions, the subject does not experience it as something in the past (like memories of non-traumatic events) but *relives* it as though the same event is encountered in the present over and over again. Elaborating upon Freud, Caruth elucidates that

If *fright* is the term by which Freud defines the traumatic effect of not having been prepared in time, then the trauma of the nightmare does not simply consist in the experience *within* the dream, but *in the experience of waking from it*. It is the experience of *waking into consciousness* that, peculiarly, is identified with the reliving of the trauma.<sup>56</sup>

According to Caruth, the trauma of traumatic nightmares is, therefore, constituted not simply by the nightmare *per se* but also by the moment of awakening, the very ‘enigma’ of ‘*having survived, precisely, without knowing it*’, thereby missing, once more, the chance for addressing the threat properly.<sup>57</sup> If the recurring nightmares of ghostly hauntings in this movement (the ‘O-based’ sections) represent the symbolic re-enactment of the traumatic encountering of threat, then, we might say, the fright of reliving of the trauma that concerns Caruth would always occur in the music that follows these nightmares: that is, the primary group.

The unsettling psychological state upon traumatic awakening is perceptible right from the first appearance of the primary group (bars 9–21), following the introductory ‘O’ (bars 1–8). The shivering semiquavers in the violins and *pizzicato* primus paeon (long–short–short–short) rhythm in the low strings directly strike Spitzer as resembling the ways the human conditions of ‘trembling’ and ‘pounding heartbeats’ are usually represented in modern film scores, projecting ‘a frightened response to the frightening introduction’.<sup>58</sup> In a similar light to my reading of nightmares and awakening, Spitzer hears the opening phrase as ‘an object of Fear, whilst the first group is the fearing subject’.<sup>59</sup>

The intensity of fright is, in addition, eloquently expressed in the way the tonal progress, as though within a Gothic loop – or as Spitzer puts it, ‘running on the spot’<sup>60</sup> – repeatedly points towards yet fails to secure the relative major. In bar 17, the restless, dreadful feeling is significantly subdued with the continuation of the primary theme there initiating a modulatory progression that ultimately leads to the bright tonality of D major through a briefly reassuring PAC (bar 20). However, as if being gripped by a sudden fear upon a flashback of the nightmare,

<sup>55</sup> Freud, ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’, 13. Cited in Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 64 (emphasis Caruth’s).

<sup>56</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 64.

<sup>57</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 64, emphasis original.

<sup>58</sup> Spitzer, ‘Mapping the Human Heart’, 168.

<sup>59</sup> Spitzer, ‘Mapping the Human Heart’, 167.

<sup>60</sup> Spitzer, ‘Mapping the Human Heart’, 167.

a dominant ninth chord of the tonic – the very same harmony that culminates with the first climax of the development section – erupts *sforzando* right after the arrival of this cadence, forcefully reinstating the dark realm of B minor. The rest of the primary group features two further instances where a musical process starting in D major is violently interrupted by a dominant harmony soon after (bars 28–29 and 35–38), the latter instance then contributing to an IAC in B minor (bar 38), emphatically to round off the primary group. The futility of breaking through a distressing minor mode is similarly emphasized in the recapitulation. While in the exposition the primary theme in its first statement (bars 13–20) at least attained a PAC in D major, in the recapitulation other potential junctures for establishing a relative major – bar 229 for B minor → D major and bar 238 for E minor → G major – are both abandoned, with F# minor eventually being forcibly established via a full cadence (bar 252). Hepokoski and Darcy remark that 'the desire to be emancipated from minor into major constitutes the basic narrative paradigm ... of minor-mode sonata form'.<sup>61</sup> In constantly failing to break free from the shackles of the minor mode, the primary group nonetheless represents vividly the devastating impact of being swamped by fright every time trauma is relived.

A comparable musical expression of traumatic fright can also be heard in the closing group (bars 104–110 and 322–328), following the secondary group that I read earlier as another re-enactment of the trauma. The closing group starts with a *tutti* outburst of an unharmonized B, which instantly shatters the PAC attained at the end of the secondary group (bars 104 and 303). This gesture, combined with the *pizzicato* descending line that follows (bars 105–110 and 323–328), convey the image of an intense shock and aftershock that also effectively set up the frightened psychological response of reliving the trauma.

Taking into account the projection of the circular temporal trajectory in the overall formal structure of this movement, it might be said that our virtual protagonist is imprisoned by his or her trauma, compulsively repeating the cycle of 1) *the 'O'-based sections*: being haunted in nightmares by the unaddressed trauma that takes the shape of a ghostly presence; 2) *the primary group*: overwhelmed by fright upon awakening; 3) *the transition and secondary group*: recalling the disturbing memory of the originary traumatic experience; and 4) *the closing group*: another frightened response to the reliving of the trauma. A model of this cyclic procedure is produced in [Figure 3](#) (see below). From the perspective of psychoanalysis, especially the Freudian tradition, the compulsion to repeat is not only a symptom of trauma but also a means for sufferers to build towards attaining a recovery: the goal of repetition is to work through the traumatic impact by retrospectively developing the preparedness for the originary traumatic event, in order to bring closure.<sup>62</sup> However, as we shall see in the next movement of Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony – where a literary Gothic agenda may again serve to illuminate – such closure may not always be possible.

### Unfinished Hauntings and the Second Movement

The literary critic J. Hillis Miller declares that 'no narrative can show either its beginning or its ending. It always begins and ends still *in medias res*, presupposing

<sup>61</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 311.

<sup>62</sup> Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', 29–30.

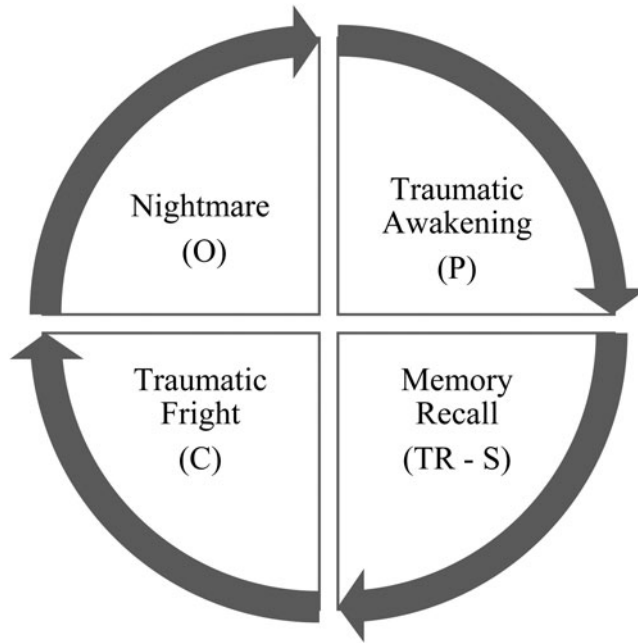


Fig. 3 Model of traumatic subjectivity in the first movement of the 'Unfinished' Symphony

as a future anterior some part of itself outside itself'.<sup>63</sup> This 'problem of closure', while applicable to narratives in different literary genres, is especially salient to Gothic literature. The intensity of recursive hauntings in the Gothic genres is often so strong that it becomes impossible to resolve them completely by the end.<sup>64</sup> Thus, instead of offering a definite closure, many Gothic narratives end in ways that draw attention to the difficulties of doing so. This is often the case with German ghost stories of the nineteenth century, of which, as Muriel Watkins Stiffler points out, 'a sense of incompleteness' or something left unaccounted for by the end, is a trademark feature.<sup>65</sup> Importantly, as Rebecca Martin argues, the problematic closure in Gothic literature, in conveying a sense of surplus anxiety, could potentially also imply that repetition may continue even beyond the ostensible ending of the text and that 'such spectacular scenes of suffering' carry on unabated (as in my analysis of 'Die Nonne').<sup>66</sup> The problem of closure in Gothic narratives, therefore, fundamentally calls into question Freud's therapeutic model for traumatic repetition, pointing instead to a darker truth that repetition

<sup>63</sup> J. Hillis Miller, 'The Problematic of Ending in Narrative', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 33/1 (1978): 3–7, here 4.

<sup>64</sup> See Michelle A Massé, 'Gothic Repetition: Husbands, Horrors, and Things That Go Bump in the Night', *Signs* 15/4 (1990): 679–709, here 689.

<sup>65</sup> Muriel Watkins Stiffler, 'The German Ghost Story as Genre' (PhD diss., The University of Iowa, 1991): 23. The works cited by Stiffler include Friedrich Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* (1789), Kleist's *Das Bettelweib von Locarno*, and Hoffmann's *Das Majorat* (1817).

<sup>66</sup> Rebecca Martin, 'The Spectacle of Suffering: Repetition and Closure in the Eighteenth-Century Gothic Novel' (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1994): 11.

itself gives no guarantee of restoration to a pre-traumatic stage. Sometimes, once traumatized, the subject can do nothing but undergo repetition that knows no definite end.<sup>67</sup>

One common way to formulate a problematic ending is through the process of subversion, whereby some later moment of contentment initially promises a resolution, or 'happy ending', is suddenly withheld by an insinuation that haunting or suffering might not have been really over.<sup>68</sup> Although not a Gothic narrative, Schubert's literary tale 'Mein Traum' (1822) written just three months prior to the 'Unfinished' Symphony presents a comparable subversive closure following a highly repetitive trajectory. In the first part of 'Mein Traum', the protagonist, having been in conflict with his father, undergoes a repetitious process of exile and homecoming. While familial tensions are mostly resolved in a heavenly scene in the second part of the tale, a sense of redemption is subverted, and a lingering feeling of residual conflict remains: 'I felt as though eternal bliss were compressed into a single moment. My father, too, I saw, reconciled and loving. He clasped me in his arms and wept. *But not so much as I.*'<sup>69</sup> This subversive ending, like one characteristic of Gothic literature, could imply to the reader the potential occurrence of an 'after-the-end' repetition. Regarding this ending in 'Mein Traum', Maynard Solomon simply argues that 'there can be no reasonable expectation that the fabulous reunion with which it closes is other than a temporary prelude to a renewed separation'.<sup>70</sup> A few commentators have noted certain programmatic correspondences between 'Mein Traum' and the 'Unfinished' Symphony, in particular relating the tale's final scene of redemption or reconciliation to the symphony's second movement.<sup>71</sup> As I shall show, although from a slightly different perspective, the Gothic stance taken in this article, by raising the possibility of exploring the second movement in light of a problematic closure following the repetitious first movement, may also prompt a link between the two.

Cast in ABA'B'A" form, the *Andante con moto* second movement opens in the bright key of E major with a small-ternary *pastorale*-like first group (A). The construction of this initial refrain, with *pianissimo* outer sections (bars 1–32 and 45–60) and the *forte* contrasting middle (bars 33–44), suggests a positive existential condition of, respectively, serenity and exuberant fanfare, sounding immediately comforting especially after the intense nightmarish loop of the first movement. Such reconciliation is soon subverted, however, by the recollection of traumatic passages of the first movement. With the elision of the concluding PAC of the

<sup>67</sup> Claudia Stumpf also draws together the problem of closure in Gothic literature and psychoanalytic trauma: 'The possibility of further reversals of fortune remains present even at the close of the novel. Repetition compulsion, including its uncanny forms, has not been fully mastered or worked through ... The marks of trauma in this text remain to (and perhaps beyond) the end of the book'; Claudia Stumpf, 'The Road of Excess: Writing Trauma in Sentimental and Gothic Texts 1745–1810' (PhD diss., Tufts University, 2015): 65–6.

<sup>68</sup> See Martin, 'The Spectacle of Suffering', chap. 4; and Christopher R. Clason, 'Narrative "Teasing": Withholding Closure in Hoffmann's "Elixiere Des Teufels"', *Colloquia Germanica* 42 (2009): 81–92.

<sup>69</sup> Schubert, 'Mein Traum', in *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, ed. Otto Erich, trans. Eric Blom (London, 1949): 226–8, emphasis mine.

<sup>70</sup> Maynard Solomon, 'Franz Schubert's "My Dream"', *American Imago* 38/2 (1981): 137–54, here 146.

<sup>71</sup> See Fisk's concise review of this reception in *Returning Cycles*, 111–13.

60

Second group (B)

Cl.  $x'$   $x'$  (seq.)

*pp*

*pp*

C# minor:

72

*f* *p* *pp*

77

*dim.* *morendo*

*dim.* *ppp*

*pp* *ppp*

Ex. 7 Schubert, 'Unfinished' Symphony, mvt ii, bars 60–99

first group with a C#-minor arpeggio (Ex. 7, bars 60ff.), Schubert, as Fisk remarks, 'explicitly returns to [the] traumatic moment' of the first movement's development section (cf. Ex. 3, bars 146–150).<sup>72</sup> Through this arpeggiated line, the arrival of the second group (B) brings a more prolonged reminiscence of the traumatic music of the first movement. Not only does the syncopated accompaniment unmistakably recall that of the first-movement secondary group, but its thematic melody, in outlining the interval of an ascending minor third (bars 66–69), offers yet another variant of the haunting *x*. Even more pronounced is the way in which in bar 96, after C# minor is brightened up in the enharmonic major (bar 84), this '*x*-based' theme suddenly breaks in *fortissimo* with *tutti* orchestration to wrench the second group back to C# minor. This strikingly recalls the originary traumatic moment, as

<sup>72</sup> Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 86.



84 Ob. *pp*

*pp*

*pp*

Db major:

90 *f* *p* *pp* *ppp*

*f* *p* *pp* *ppp*

I ped. ( V I V I

95 *ff* *ff*

V) *x'* *x' (seq.)*

C# minor: i

Ex. 7 Continued.

represented in the chordal outburst within the first-movement secondary group (cf. Ex. 6, bars 63–71).

The dysphoric character of the C#-minor passage, which also returns in the recapitulation of the second group (B'), is twice dispelled by the returns of the assuaging refrain and the E-major tonic (A', bars 142ff. initially, and A'', bars 257ff.). Later in the last refrain (A''), however, the idyllic evocation of the section is twice threatened by reprises of the arpeggiated line (bars 280–286 and 290–296). Even though the arpeggiated line is, in each instance, instantly suppressed without bringing back more traumatic reminiscence, its late reappearance sullies what would be otherwise a 'happy' and untroubled ending. Thus in this movement, while the hauntings of the ghostly, *ombra*-inflected 'O' theme appear to be finally over, the fact that the traumatic music of the first movement still lurks – in the arpeggiated line as well as the second group – clearly suggests that the trauma of the musical

protagonist has not yet been properly resolved. Like the subversive ending in Gothic narratives and 'Mein Traum', this movement's closure, too, highlights a sense of surplus anxiety that leaves open the possibility for the listener to imagine the sinister loop of traumatic suffering to be restored after the symphony's first two movements.

Apart from the subversive ending of the second movement, perhaps what also appears to be apparently 'problematic' about the 'Unfinished' Symphony is that this work is *literally* left open-ended without providing a complete third movement (scherzo and trio) and a finale. And, significantly, unlike the various fragments and incomplete multi-movement instrumental works Schubert had left behind between 1818 and 1823 (the so-called 'years of crisis'),<sup>73</sup> he seemed confident enough in his vision of the symphony to leave it unfinished: indeed, it was the *only* incomplete work for which Schubert had sought a public performance, from no less than the highly reputable Styrian Music Society of Graz, whose honorary members included Beethoven and Salieri. Such plans have raised questions amongst musicologists to whether Schubert himself considered the two movements as providing a complete symphony.<sup>74</sup> For those, on the other hand, who seek to tease more out of the 'unfinished' status of the symphony, the problem of closure I have applied to the work may support and offer further perspectives. To integrate the lack of remaining movements with a Gothic agenda, those found in equivalent literary examples are relevant:

In contrast to a work ... that features the conscious attempt to close ... any number of gothics produce endings which foreground the difficulty of closing, call attention to the weakness of their use of clausal gestures, or display their incompleteness by setting up a structure, a manuscript, for example, or a correspondence, and then not closing it.<sup>75</sup>

Different from the widely held view that the two complete movements of the symphony produce a self-contained 'finished' form,<sup>76</sup> an alternative interpretation might claim the opposite: the work is deliberately meant to sound open-ended and 'unfinished' by the composer choosing not to complete anything beyond the two-movement structure. The latter reading, whereby full closure is not attained, therefore takes even further the already 'problematic' closure imposed by the traumatic reminiscences in the second movement: with the 'non-closure' of the symphony, the recurring pattern of suffering is indeed *unfinished*.

### Relieving the Trauma in the 'Great' Symphony

In this article, I have read the 'Unfinished' Symphony in light of the Gothic trope of ghostly hauntings. I have demonstrated that Schubert's peculiar musical expressions and treatment of sonata-form procedure in the first movement of the

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<sup>73</sup> On the 'years of crisis', see Walther Dürr und Walburga Litschauer, *Franz Schubert, Jahre der Krise 1818–1823 Arnold Feil zum 60. Geburtstag* (Kassel: Barenreiter, 1985).

<sup>74</sup> A concise discussion of the reception of the unfinished status of the 'Unfinished' Symphony is provided in Maynard Solomon, 'Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony', *19th-Century Music* 21/2 (1997): 111–33.

<sup>75</sup> Martin, 'The Spectacle of Suffering', 181.

<sup>76</sup> See n. 74.

symphony afford to the music a sinister looping mechanism, through which a series of haunted nightmares is represented. Furthermore, as I have endeavoured to show, interpretive approaches borrowed from Gothic literary theories and related psychoanalytic theories might also be utilized to illuminate this, so to speak, 'Gothic' symphony. If the musical nightmares, scrutinized through a psychoanalytic lens, are understood as symptomatic of trauma, then the 'problem of closure' provoked by the subversive ending of the second movement – and, arguably, by the open-ended, 'unfinished' status – insinuates to the listener that the trauma in this music might, in fact, never be properly resolved.

This outcome and sense of surplus anxiety the symphony enacts may entice a listener to explore beyond the work for resolution, a reflection of the desire engendered in readers of Gothic literature to plough through Gothic novels one after another in order to see conflicts being satisfactorily reconciled or 'getting it right' *the next time*.<sup>77</sup> To achieve potential closure, I shall briefly draw upon Schubert's next symphony, the 'Great' Symphony in C Major (D. 944, 1826).

The beginning of this work faintly recollects the ghostly opening phrase of the 'Unfinished' Symphony, with an eight-bar opening solo and unharmonized texture, slow pace, soft dynamics, and, particularly, stepwise ascending-third head motif. As this phrase is played by the horn (an established symbol for memory and distance), any connection between the two works becomes more intriguing. On closer inspection, however, contrast revealed is more telling: the opening phrase of the 'Great' Symphony not only starts more brightly with an ascending *major*-third (1–2–3̂) in the middle register, but also produces a less ambiguous and more substantial introduction, to signify a more positive connotation than that of the 'Unfinished' Symphony. Further difference from the ghostly opening phrase of the 'Unfinished' Symphony, whose ambivalent, haunting qualities demonstrate the applicability of a Gothic narrative or 'anti-bildungsroman',<sup>78</sup> revolves around the very different structural use of the opening phrase of the 'Great', not least as forming a full-blown introduction that returns heroically in the coda (bars 622ff.). John M. Gingerich accurately characterizes this work as a 'bildungsroman' in which 'the chief protagonist ... undergoes trials, adventures, and tribulations to emerge tempered, matured, and triumphant'.<sup>79</sup>

In final comparison, if the 'Unfinished' Symphony evokes the unending repetition of suffering indicative of Gothic literature, the 'Great' Symphony, as 'a true stream of strength and health',<sup>80</sup> presents an optimistic sequel to or counterpart of that story, in which traumatic conflicts may finally be relieved.

<sup>77</sup> See Rebecca Martin, "'I Should like to Spend My Whole Life in Reading It': Repetition and the Pleasure of the Gothic', *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 28 (1998): 75–90.

<sup>78</sup> This characterization of Gothic narratives as 'anti-bildungsroman' is borrowed from Berthin, *Gothic Hauntings*, 67.

<sup>79</sup> John M. Gingerich, *Schubert's Beethoven Project* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 232.

<sup>80</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1979): 125. Cited and translated in Gingerich, *Schubert's Beethoven Project*, 209.