BRAHMS'S KREISLERIANA: JOHANNES BRAHMS'S IDENTIFICATION WITH JOHANNES KREISLER

by

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Johannes Brahms's identification with E. T. A. Hoffmann's fictional character, Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler. It seeks to develop a more representative understanding of the phenomenon than that which existed previously. **Chapter 1** surveys existing scholarly examinations of Brahms's Kreisler identification and notes the inadequate way in which knowledge of the phenomenon has manifested itself in the general literature on Brahms. It also clarifies terminology relating to Gérard Genette's theory of the *paratext*, which is later used to clarify the function of Brahms's references to Kreisler. **Chapter 2** sets out the available documentary evidence for the Kreisler identification. This includes evidence which was not available to, or overlooked in, previous investigations of the subject. It also postulates the existence of Kreisler signatures on the lost manuscripts of Brahms's Lieder, Op. 7, and Ballades, Op. 10. **Chapter 3** examines the fictional Johannes Kreisler as he exists in the works of Hoffmann. **Chapter 4** scrutinises the precise ways in which Brahms referred to himself as "Kreisler." It demonstrates that the name was not a pseudonym and that careless reference to it as such has obscured a proper understanding of the phenomenon. **Chapter 5** contemplates the origin of the identification. It first lays out grounds for Brahms's Kreisler identification and subsequently looks to Brahms's biography for clues as to what might have precipitated the explicit manifestation of the identification in the form of an alter ego. **Chapter 6** examines the end of Brahms's explicit reference to himself as Kreisler and the significance of this in terms of the evolution of Brahms's identification with the fictional kapellmeister. **Chapter 7** considers scholarly hypotheses

of Kreislerian elements and/or programmes in Brahms's music and evaluates these as speculative. **Chapter 8** explores the many uncanny biographical correspondences between Brahms and the fictional Kreisler, which manifested themselves only after Brahms took the character as his alter ego. **Chapter 9** re-evaluates Brahms's Kreisler identification based on the foregoing discussion and explores the consequences of such a re-evaluation for the Brahms-*Bild*. **Chapter 10** summarises the findings of this study. *Johannes Kreisler junior* was Brahms's doppelgänger. Johannes Brahms and Johannes Kreisler junior constitute analogous manifestations of a single identity, rather than opposing identities which are expressed in alternation. Brahms's Kreisler identification has not been convincingly demonstrated to have shaped Brahms's musical style or compositional output.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

On matters of style I referred to *The Chicago Manual of Style*[1] and to Kate Turabian's standard *Manual for Writers*.[2] Accordingly, block quotations are further indented to mark new paragraphs in the original source. The word *kapellmeister* normally occurs in roman type and in lowercase style, except when it occurs as a title: "the music of the kapellmeister Kreisler" but "the music of Kapellmeister Kreisler."[3] Similarly, the words *doppelgänger* and *leitmotif* appear in lowercase style and are normally not italicised. Italics are, however, used for references to words as words, hence "the word *kapellmeister* . . ."[4] Treatment of the name *Kreisler* should be clarified. References to the name as a name are italicised, hence "the name *Kreisler* . . ." References to specific instances of the name as it appears on letters or manuscripts are treated as quotations and therefore appear in double quotation marks. Where both italics and quotation marks might be applicable, quotation marks take precedence. General references to Hoffmann's fictional Kreisler or Brahms's alter ego Kreisler are set in roman type. Idiosyncratic use of words is marked by single quotation marks, with any ensuing punctuation outside of the quotation marks, e.g. 'kapellmeisterly'. The journal *19th-Century Music* is referred to in the hyphenated form, in line with current scholarly practice and with the journal's own citations of itself. This must be noted because the title continues to appear on its cover as *19th Century Music*. Differences between bibliographical citation styles for books, component parts of books, journal articles, and articles in an encyclopaedia follow the

[1] *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
[2] Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[3] *Chicago Manual*, 170, 189.
[4] Ibid.,172.

aforementioned manuals and are consistently observed for each type. Most notably, the page numbers of journal articles are given at the end of an entry, introduced by a colon; while the page numbers of articles excerpted from a book are given before the details of publication and are introduced by a comma. In accordance with common practice in contemporary Brahms scholarship, German quotations have not been translated.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The burgeoning field of interdisciplinary study has fostered the serious examination of the interactions between music and literature.[1] Literary references in the music of Johannes Brahms have been increasingly subject to scholarly investigation.[2] Such references generally indicate some sort of programmatic intention or origin. One particular literary reference, however, cannot sufficiently be explained by programmatic intent. The manuscripts of a number of Brahms's early works are signed with some version of the name *Johannes Kreisler junior* or *der junge Kreisler*.[3] This constitutes an obvious reference to Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann's fictional character, Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler. Kreisler is a recurring figure in Hoffmann's literary output and can be gleaned most notably in his collection of essays entitled *Kreisleriana*[4]

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[1] See for instance Steven Paul Scher, "Literature and Music" in *Interrelations of Literature*, ed. Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Joseph Gibaldi (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1982), 225-250; Steven P. Scher, ed., *Literatur und Musik: ein Handbuch zur Theorie und Praxis eines komparatistischen Grenzgebietes* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1984); and Jean-Pierre Barricelli, *Melopoiesis: Approaches to the Study of Literature and Music* (New York: New York University Press, 1988).

[2] See for instance Dillon Parmer, "Brahms and the Poetic Motto: A Hermeneutic Aid?" *The Journal of Musicology* 15/iii (Summer 1997): 353-389; George S. Bozarth, "Brahms's *Lieder Ohne Worte*: The 'Poetic' Andantes of the Piano Sonatas," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George S. Bozarth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 345-378; Constantin Floros, "Studien zu Brahms' Klaviermusik," *Brahms-Studien* 4 (1983): 47-58; and Ludwig Finscher, "Brahms's early Songs: Poetry versus Music," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George S. Bozarth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 331-344.

[3] Refer to pp. 12-14 below for full documentation.

[4] The collection can be found in English translation: *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: "Kreisleriana," "The Poet and the Composer," Music Criticism*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 79-165. The *Kreisleriana* was originally published as part of Hoffmann's *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier*, reproduced in E. T. A. Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann: Sämtliche Werke in drei Bänden* (3 vol.), ed. Rainer Schönhaar and Alexander Heine (Essen: Phaidon, 1988), 3:7-149. The *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier* are hereafter referred to as the *Phantasiestücke*. Some sources give *Phantasiestücke* as *Fantasiestücke*; some give *Callots* as *Callot's*.

and in his unfinished novel *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern.*[5]

The Kreisler references are remarkable in that they are not limited to Brahms's musical works. Brahms also used the name in signing letters and as a mark of ownership.[6] A reference to Kreisler can even be gleaned in the title Brahms gave to his collection of literary quotations, *Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers.*[7] That the young Brahms took Hoffmann's fictional character as his alter ego has been the subject of critical inquiry since the early 1980s. Constantin Floros was the first to present a serious consideration of Brahms's Kreisler identification.[8] Floros sets out the documentary evidence for the identification, suggests the origin of the identification to lie particularly in Brahms's reception of Hoffmann's "Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief"[9] and demonstrates the influence of the Kreisler complex on Schumann's article "Neue Bahnen."[10] He also presents a discussion of the Kreisler identification as manifested in Brahms's Variations, Op. 9.

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[5] Hoffmann, *Sämtliche Werke*, 2:9-392. Hereafter referred to as *Kater Murr*. Of the three volumes envisaged by Hoffmann, only volumes one and two were completed by the time of his death in 1822. They were originally published separately and are dated 1820 and 1822 respectively. All further citations of the novel refer to the following English translation: E. T. A. Hoffmann, *The Life and Opinion of the Tomcat Murr*, trans. and annotated by Anthea Bell, with an introduction by Jeremy Adler (London: Penguin Books, 1999).

[6] Refer to pp. 9-12 below for full documentation.

[7] Hereafter also referred to as the *Schatzkästlein*. For documentation of the four small notebooks in which this collection was originally recorded, see George S. Bozarth, "Brahms's Lieder Inventory of 1859-60 and other Documents of his Life and Work," *Fontes Artis Musicae* 30 (1983): 108. The collection was published as *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein. Aussprüche von Dichtern, Philosophen und Künstlern*, ed. Carl Krebs (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1909).

[8] Constantin Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner: Studien zur musikalischen Exegetik* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1980), 84-143.

[9] Hereafter referred to as "Lehrbrief." The "Lehrbrief" appeared in the second part of E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana*. It is available in English as "Johannes Kreisler's Certificate of Apprenticeship" in Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 159-165 or E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Johannes Kreisler's Certificate of Apprenticeship," trans. Max Knight, *19th-Century Music* 5/iii (Spring 1982): 189-192.

[10] Robert Schumann, "Neue Bahnen," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 20 (28 October 1853): 185-186; quoted in *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker von Robert Schumann* (3 vols.), ed. Heinrich Simon (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam jun., 1888), 3:175-177.

Shortly after the publication of Floros's work, Siegfried Kross's article "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann" appeared.[11] Kross's is the first extensive study of the phenomenon to appear in English. His considerations of the fictional Johannes Kreisler extend beyond the character's appearance in the "Lehrbrief," to which Floros's considerations seem limited. Kross notes a possible additional, oblique Kreisler reference in the *Benedictus* quotation in the autograph of the Adagio of Brahms's Piano Concerto in D minor, Op. 15.[12] His article is, however, based on documentary evidence less than that which is currently available and this renders his understanding of the phenomenon obsolete. He was not aware of Brahms ever signing himself "Kreisler" in the correspondence and consequently concludes that the identification "applied only to Brahms's artistic and poetic existence."[13] Letters in which Brahms signed himself "Kreisler" have come to light, as have other explicit manifestations of the identification which negate Kross's conclusion.[14]

Since the initial expositions of Floros and Kross, several scholars have sought traces of the Kreisler phenomenon in the fabric of Brahms's music. George S. Bozarth has interpreted the contrasting opening themes of Brahms's Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 5, to be a manifestation of the Brahms-Kreisler duality. This conception guides his reading

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[11] Siegfried Kross, "Brahms and E. T.A. Hoffmann," *19th-Century Music* 5/iii (Spring 1982): 193-200. The content of this article appears in a revised form in Siegfried Kross, "Brahms' künstlerische Identität," in *Brahms-Kongress Wien 1983*, ed. Susanne Antonicek and Otto Biba (Tutzing: Schneider, 1988), 325-349. The section concerning the Kreisler identification can be found on pp. 327-332.

[12] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 200. The opening phrase of the Adagio is underlayed with the text "Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini!" which is written between the staves of the piano part. Refer to pp. 64-66 below for a detailed discussion.

[13] Ibid., 194.

[14] See pp. 9-10 below for full documentation.

of the entire work.[15] Bozarth has subsequently proposed a Kreislerian programme for Brahms's Piano Concerto, Op. 15.[16] More recently, Antonio Baldassare has undertaken a comparative analysis of the 1854 and 1889 versions of Brahms's Piano Trio in B major, Op. 8, in order to elucidate the effects of the Kreisler identification as manifested in the earlier version, the autograph of which bears the signature "Kreisler jun."[17] Each of these studies is problematic in its own way and it will be demonstrated that no objective conclusion regarding the presence of Kreisler in Brahms's music can be drawn from any of them.

Brahms's Kreisler identification foregrounds the composer's literary preoccupations, which were evident from an early age. Karl Geiringer notes that "as a schoolboy Brahms always used his pocket-money for a subscription to the circulating library; and when, as a youth, he played dance-music in little pubs and pothouses, he would set a book before him on the music-rack, eagerly reading while his fingers mechanically performed the long-familiar tunes."[18] He goes on to cite the considerable use Brahms made of the private libraries of teachers and friends, as well as his frequenting of public libraries in his later years.[19] Brahms's literary interests are to be gleaned not only from his own

[15] Bozarth, "Brahms's *Lieder Ohne Worte*," 368-378.
[16] George S. Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto op. 15: Genesis and Meaning," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Konzerts: Festschrift Siegfried Kross zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Reinmar Emans and Matthias Wendt (Bonn: G. Schröder, 1990), 211-247.
[17] Antonio Baldassare, "Johannes Brahms and Johannes Kreisler: Creativity and Aesthetics of the Young Brahms illustrated by the *Piano Trio in B-major* Opus 8," *Acta musicologica* 72/ii (2000): 145-167. For documentation of the Kreisler signature, see Margit L. McCorkle, ed., *Johannes Brahms: thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis* (München: Henle, 1984), 24. Hereafter referred to as *Werkverzeichnis*.
[18] Karl Geiringer, "Brahms as a Reader and Collector," *The Musical Quarterly* 19/ii (April 1933): 158.
[19] Ibid., 158-159.

extensive library,[20] but especially in his collection *Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers*, in which we find a record of Brahms *Bildung* as reflected by the literature with which he came into contact. Both his library and the *Schatzkästlein* demonstrate Brahms's immersion in the literature of the German Romantics – Ludwig Tieck, Jean Paul, Novalis and E. T. A. Hoffmann, to name but a few. The German Romantic writers and poets glorified music as the most Romantic of all the arts.[21] It was in the writings of the exponents of literary Romanticism that musical Romanticism has its roots. Brahms's literary inclination provided the substance of his inner world and his intimate familiarity with the proponents of the early German Romantic aesthetic proved formative with regard his own aesthetic ideals.

Brahms's opposition of his own identity with that of an alter ego seems – at least externally – to express a certain duality. Scholars seeking to demonstrate the presence of Kreisler in Brahms's music have made reference to certain dualities evident in Brahms's early compositional output. Any contemplation of such oppositions must take into account that 'doubleness' and duality formed part of the German Romantics' basic creative vocabulary.[22] Duality of identity was exhibited by E. T. A. Hoffmann himself, who took his fictional Kreisler as his own alter ego. The concept of the doppelgänger was established by the early German Romantic novelist Jean Paul. Duality was a distinct preoccupation: the duality between one's inner world and outer reality, the duality

[20] See in this regard Kurt Hofmann, *Die Bibliothek von Johannes Brahms. Bücher- und Musikalienverzeichnis* (Hamburg: Karl Dieter Wagner, 1974).
[21] Murray R. Schafer, *E. T. A. Hoffmann and Music* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 8.
[22] See for instance *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Romantik und romantisch," by Martin Wehnert, 486.

between artist and non-artist; the duality between everyday consciousness and transcendence.

As a result of the growing awareness of Brahms's youthful identification with the kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, it has become fashionable in the general literature on Brahms to make sweeping references to the "young Kreisler." Malcolm MacDonald has contributed the Brahms volume to *The Master Musicians* series; he entitles the first chapter of the book "Young Kreisler."[23] In Jan Swafford's new biography of Brahms, the author shows a predilection for closing paragraphs which contextualise events from the perspective of the "young Kreisler."[24] Even more recently, Heinz Gärtner has rewritten Brahms's biography with the agenda of foregrounding the Kreisler phenomenon.[25] Swafford, in his admirable biography, incorporates the Brahms-Kreisler duality with sensitivity, whereas Gärtner (in what on the dust-jacket is advertised as a "spannendes Psychogramm") forces the issue, imposing an often superficial, sometimes unjustified continuity on his narrative. While the increase in general references to Brahms's alter ego does promote a more representative perception of the young composer, it does not add much substance to our understanding of the issue at hand.

Awareness of the references to Kreisler that appear on Brahms's early manuscripts naturally colours one's perception of the musical texts. Gérard Genette refers to the

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[23] Malcolm MacDonald, *Brahms* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1990), 3. MacDonald's consistent misspelling of German names must be noted. See for example his references to the "tomcat Mürr [*sic*]" and to "Winsen an der Lühe [*sic*]" (MacDonald, p. 9).
[24] Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1997; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 122, 127, 155, 165 (among others).
[25] Heinz Gärtner, *Johannes Brahms: Biographie eines Doppellebens* (München: Langen Müller, 2003).

complex of information which surrounds a text as the *paratext*.[26] Recourse will be made to Genette's theory of the paratext in order to clarify the function of the Kreisler signatures in the relevant manuscripts. Some of his terminology should be clarified. The *peritext* refers to information around the text or within the same volume as the text, such as titles or prefaces. The *epitext* refers to information located outside of the text and refers to distanced elements, such as media coverage or private communications. The paratext of a given text is a combination of its peritext and its epitext.[27]

Finally, a note should be made of limitations to the present study. Many of the autographs of Brahms's works have been lost.[28] The unavailability of the manuscripts of the Lieder, Op. 7, and the Ballades, Op.10, in particular, hinders an assessment of the continuity of Brahms's Kreisler identification as exhibited in Brahms's compositions. That Brahms took care to destroy almost all the youthful works that he did not allow to be published, renders impossible a stylistic comparison between the works marked with the signature of his alter ego and works dating from before this practice.[29] Brahms's wilful destruction of much of the correspondence has certainly deprived us of many enlightening references to his alter ego, as have the significant deletions of editors in the available editions of the surviving correspondence.[30] This situation has been further exacerbated by the local unavailability of much of the published Brahms

[26] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.
[27] Ibid., 5.
[28] See Donald M. McCorkle, "Five Fundamental Obstacles in Brahms Source Research," *Acta musicologica* 48/ii (July-December 1976): 270.
[29] The productivity of such a route of investigation, as well as the availability of the early Scherzo, Op. 4, to this end, are discussed on pp. 74-75 below.
[30] Donald M. McCorkle, 260.

correspondence.[31] As a result, I have had to rely largely on the documentation of scholars who have had access to the relevant sources when contemplating the Kreisler references in the correspondence.

[31] The absence especially of a complete edition of the *Brahms Briefwechsel* issued by the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft is a considerable handicap to Brahms scholarship in South Africa. (*Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel*, 16 vols. [Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1907-1922]; it also exists in reprint [Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974].) Certain volumes were, however, available to me and will be documented below as I refer to them.

CHAPTER 2

JOHANNES BRAHMS AS "KREISLER": DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Primary evidence for Brahms's identification with Kreisler exists in a variety of sources. In the correspondence of the Brahms circle chiefly from 1853 until 1855 he variously refers to himself, is addressed, and is referred to in the third person as "Kreisler."[1] Brahms's first reference to his alter ego in the correspondence occurs in a letter to Joseph Joachim of 29 June 1853, in which Brahms can still be seen to be recovering from his disagreeable experience touring with Reményi:

> Did I not bear the name *Kreisler*, I would now have the weightiest of reasons to lose courage, to curse my love of art and my enthusiasm, and to withdraw as a hermit (scribe?) into the solitude (of an office) and lose myself in silent contemplation (of the documents to be copied).
>
> Yes, dear fellow, such weighty reasons that my forced good humour is already giving out, and I must relate to you the bitter truth as sombrely as I perceive it.[2]

Brahms signed the letter: "I remain / Your faithful / Jos Brahms / Kreisler jun."[3] In a letter to Clara Schumann of 15 August 1854, Brahms's reference to his alter ego again indicates an unsettled emotional state:

> In Heilbronn I had to surmount great conflicts; I wanted to get to Ulm and beyond quickly, and wanted to turn back.

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[1] One much later reference in the third person, dating from 1885, is noted on pp. 11-11 below.

[2] *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters*, selected and annotated by Styra Avins, trans. Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12. Hereafter referred to as *Life and Letters*. This passage is quoted in the original German by Floros from a version of the correspondence not available to me (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 86). Floros appears nowhere to have given full details of the source he describes as "*Brahms-Briefwechsel* V." It is clear from pp. 74-75 that Floros's "*Brahms-Briefwechsel* V" and "*Brahms-Briefwechsel* VI" comprise the Brahms-Joachim correspondence – as they do in vols. 5 and 6 of the *Brahms Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908). Floros's earlier references to the *Briefwechsel* clearly indicate the original edition of the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft as his source (p. 21, n. 7) and his references to "*Briefwechsel* IV" match that edition. His references to letters in "*Briefwechsel* V" and "*Briefwechsel* VI," however, do not match the original edition. The letter of 29 June 1853 quoted by Floros from his source is absent from the edition of the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft.

[3] *Life and Letters*, 13.

> I often quarrel with myself, that is, Kreisler and Brahms quarrel with one another.
>
> But usually each has his decided opinion and fights it out. This time, however, both were quite confused, neither knew what he wanted, it was most comical to observe it. Anyway, tears almost came to my eyes.[4]

A better-humoured reference to his alter ego can be gleaned in a letter addressed to his publisher Bartholf Senff (dated 8 January 1854), which shows a rambunctious Brahms using a French version of the name: "Jean de Krösel le jeune."[5] This letter is in turn undersigned by Julius Otto Grimm, who with Italian flavour refers to Brahms as "Giovanni Brahmino-Kröselino juniore."[6] In a letter of 19 June 1854, Brahms requests Joachim's comments on a set of pieces which he considered publishing under the title "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers. Herausgegeben vom jungen Kreisler."[7] A number of letters of Brahms to Clara Schumann also show Brahms referring to himself as "Kreisler" or alluding to his alter ego, specifically those of 21 August 1854[8], 14 March 1855[9] and 26 June 1855[10].

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[4] Ibid., 51. This passage is quoted in the original German by Floros (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 87).
[5] This alludes to Prince Irenäus's practice of referring to Kreisler as "Monsieur de Krösel" in Hoffmann's *Kater Murr*. See for instance Hoffmann, trans. Bell, 121.
[6] *Life and Letters*, 35.
[7] Johannes Brahms, *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Joseph Joachim* (2 vols.), ed. Andreas Moser, vol. 5 and 6 of *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908), 1:43. Hereafter referred to as *Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*. A translation of the letter can be found in *Life and Letters*, 46-48.
[8] In this letter Brahms suggests that Clara Schumann should get properly acquainted with "Kreisler *senior*" in works such as Hoffmann's *Kater Murr* (*Life and Letters*, 58). The relevant passage is quoted in the original German by Floros (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 89). Floros's gives his source as *Briefwechsel Clara Schumann – Johannes Brahms*, ed. Berthold Litzmann (Leipzig, 1927). The relevant passage has been deleted in the English version of Litzmann's work (Johannes Brahms, *The Letters of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms 1853-1896* [2 vols.], ed. Berthold Litzmann [New York: Longmans, Green and Co.,1927; reprint, New York: Vienna House, 1973], 1:11).
[9] The relevant passage is quoted in Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 88. Again, the relevant passage has been deleted from the English version of the Litzmann edition (Brahms, ed. Litzmann, 1:33-34).
[10] The relevant passage is quoted in Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 88. The relevant passage has again been deleted from the English version of the Litzmann edition (Brahms, ed. Litzmann, 1:41).

The surviving correspondence shows a number of instances of Brahms being addressed as "Kreisler." The three letters from J. O. Grimm exhibit such a manner of address. They date from 21 December 1853, 16 August 1854 and late October 1854.[11] Joseph Joachim addressed Brahms as "Kreisler" in a letter of April 1854.[12] A letter of Joachim to Brahms of late March 1854, shows Joachim addressing Brahms as "Krösus."[13] This distortion of the name *Kreisler* echoes similar distortions of the name by Brahms and Grimm.[14] One such distortion can be seen in a letter of Grimm to Joachim of 9 April 1854 in which he refers to Brahms (in the third person) as "Krössel."[15] The letter shows Grimm referring to Brahms almost throughout as "Kreisler." Another letter of Grimm to Joachim dating from July 1854 again shows Grimm making reference to Brahms by the name of his alter ego.[16] At least one further letter of Grimm to Joachim shows him referring to Brahms in the third person as "Kreisler": that of 10 November 1854.[17] In addition, Gärtner has noted a much later instance of Grimm referring to Brahms in the third person as "Kreisler" – in a letter to Clara Schumann of 19 April 1885.[18]

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[11] Johannes Brahms, *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit J. O. Grimm*, ed. Richard Barth, vol. 4 of *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908), 1-5. Hereafter referred to as *Briefwechsel J. O. Grimm – Brahms*.

[12] *Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*, 1:36.

[13] Ibid., 1:28. This reference is not noted by Floros in his inventory of Kreisler references in the correspondence (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 86-9).

[14] See for instance Brahms's letter to Senff of 8 January 1854, in which he signs himself "Krösel" (see p. 10, n. 6 above).

[15] *Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*, 1:26-8. This edition of the *Briefwechsel* gives the date of the letter as 9 March 1854. Avins, in an annotation of her translation of this letter, shows that date to be incorrect (*Life and Letters*, 41 n. 19). Floros's noting of this letter gives the date as originally cited in the *Briefwechsel* (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 86).

[16] *Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*, 1:48-49.

[17] Ibid., 70-71. Floros's noting of only two such letters must be amended (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 86). Siegfried Kross's assertion that this letter is the last in the correspondence of the Brahms circle to exhibit the name *Kreisler* must also be amended (Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 194). See the abovementioned letters of Brahms to Clara Schumann of March 1855 and June 1855; and the letter of Grimm to Clara Schumann of April 1885 (see pp. 11-11 immediately below).

[18] Gärtner, 66. Gärtner does not note the source of this letter. This is another reference to Brahms's alter ego not noted by Floros in his inventory of Kreisler references in the correspondence (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 86-89).

In the early 1850s Brahms began to compile a collection of quotations from his favourite poets, philosophers, writers and musicians, which he entitled *Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers*.[19] He signed the name "Johannes Kreisler jun." to the satirical 1860 "Avertimento" of the *Hamburger Frauenchor*,[20] and even used the name as a mark of possession – signing "Johs. Kreisler jun." to his copy of E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Phantasiestücke in Callot's Manier*, to the proof sheets of the first edition of Schumann's *Genoveva* (which Brahms apparently received as a gift from Clara Schumann), to his two volumes of Ferdinand Freiligrath's *Neuere politische und soziale Gedichte*, and to his copy of Christian Friedrich Scherenberg's *Leuthen*.[21]

Evidence of Brahms's identification with the fictional kapellmeister can also be found in the Kreisler signatures which appear on numerous autographs of Brahms's early works. The list of relevant manuscripts noted in the early studies of Siegfried Kross[22] and Constantin Floros[23] is now augmentable thanks to the discovery of further manuscripts, details of which have been made accessible in Margit L. McCorkle's monumental

[19] See p. 2 , n. 7 above.
[20] Bozarth, "Brahms's Lieder Inventory," 115. The title "Avertimento" appears to be a misspelling of the Italian *avvertimento* (notice, advertisement).
[21] With regard the volumes by Hoffmann, Freiligrath and Scherenberg see Kurt Hofmann, *Die Bibliothek von Johannes Brahms*, 31-32, 54, 100. I give the title of Brahms's volume of the *Phantasiestücke* as it is documented by Hofmann. It should be noted that Hofmann describes the signature in Scherenberg's book as "Johs. Kreißler jun." With regard the Schumann proof sheets see "Comment & Chronicle," *19th-Century Music* 6/ii (Fall 1982): 182-183.
[22] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 193, 200.
[23] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 85-86.

catalogue of Brahms's works.[24] The salient autographs follow in order of opus number; works without opus numbers are given subsequently.

The end of the autograph of the Piano Sonata no. 1 in C Major, Op. 1, is signed: "Fine / Joh. Kreisler jun."[25] The end of the autograph of the Piano Sonata no. 2 in F# Minor, Op. 2, is signed: "Kreisler jun. / im November 52."[26] The dedication on the first page of the autograph of the Six Songs, Op. 3, reads: "Seinem lieben Julius zur freundlichen / Erinnerung. / Der junge Kreisler."[27] The end of the autograph of the Piano Sonata no. 3 in F Minor, Op. 5, is signed: "Kreisler jun."[28] The title page of the autograph of the Six Songs, Op. 6, contains the dedication: "Meinem lieben Julius / zur Erinnerung / an / Kreisler / jun."[29] The end of the autograph of the first version of the Piano Trio in B Major, Op. 8, is inscribed: "Hannover. / Januar 54. / Kreisler / jun."[30] The autograph of the Variations on a Theme by Schumann, Op. 9, presents a special case of Brahms's Kreisler signatures: the double bar-lines at the end of variations 5, 6, 9, 12 and 13 are drawn down into the initials "Kr."[31] Autographs of works without opus numbers bearing the mark of Brahms's alter ego include the earliest documentary evidence of the

[24] *Werkverzeichnis*. Kross fails to note the Kreisler signature in the autograph of Op. 2, which is detailed by Floros in his earlier publication.
[25] *Werkverzeichnis*, 2. The manuscript is currently in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.
[26] Ibid., 5. The location of this manuscript is unknown; it is available via reproduction in the catalogue of the Meininger Brahms Exhibition (7-11 October 1899) no.134 and the Liepmannssohn auction catalogue no.38 (May 1909), lot 469.
[27] Ibid., 9. (Autograph [e]) The manuscript is currently in the Library of Congress, Washington.
[28] Ibid., 15. The manuscript is currently to be found in the Hamburger Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek.
[29] Ibid., 18. The manuscript is currently located in a private collection in the U.S.A. The first page of the first song is reproduced by Stargardt in catalogue no. 626 (June 1982), 197.
[30] Ibid., 24. The manuscript is currently located in a private collection in Switzerland. McCorkle again refers the reader to auction and exhibition catalogues: Parke-Bernet, catalogue no.1496 (February 1954) no.36; Broude Brothers, New York (Albrecht no.403); and the catalogue of the 1975 exhibition *Musikhandschriften in Basel*, no.102.
[31] Ibid., 28. My numbering takes into account the addition of the two later variations which became variations 10 and 11.

phenomenon: the manuscript of his arrangement of Carl Maria von Weber's Rondo from his Piano Sonata, Op. 24. The head title is signed: "März 1852 / Johs. Kreisler / jun."[32] The end of autograph of the Scherzo in C Minor, WoO 2, for violin and piano is signed: "Johs. Kreisler / jr."[33] Lastly, a sketch for Brahms's 51 Exercises for Piano, WoO 6, is entitled "Fantasiestücke in Callot's kühnster Manier"[34] – an obvious reference to E. T. A. Hoffmann's literary collection *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier*,[35] in which the kapellmeister Kreisler features prominently.[36]

The Kreisler signatures on the manuscripts of Op. 3 and Op. 6 are among those not noted by earlier accounts of the subject by Kross and Floros, and curiously even Dillon Parmer omits them from his discussion, while referring to McCorkle's *Werkverzeichnis* for the examples he does cite.[37] This seems to be the perpetuation of an early bias based on evidence less than that which is available at present – namely that "der Kreisler-Name hauptsächlich in Manuskripten mehrerer Klavierwerke erscheint."[38]

With the exception of the earlier Op. 7, no. 6 (which dates from May 1851), all the songs which make up Opp. 3, 6 and 7 were composed between April 1852 and July 1853; the latest song of the Op. 7 set (no. 3) dates from March 1853 and the songs which would

[32] Ibid., 617.
[33] Ibid., 506. This work constitutes the third movement of the *F. A. E. Sonata* – a collaboration between Brahms, Robert Schumann and Albert Dietrich for Joseph Joachim.
[34] Ibid., 519.
[35] Hoffmann, *Sämtliche Werke*, 3:7-149.
[36] Floros points out that the ironic title in fact alludes more specifically to the closing of Jean Paul's foreword to Hoffmann's work (Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 85-86). In assessing the prominence of the Kreisler figure in the *Phantasiestücke* it is important to note that the collection, as it was originally published in 1814-15, included Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* (Schafer, 114).
[37] Dillon Parmer, "Brahms the Programmatic? A Critical Assessment" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1995), 182-183. Baldassare makes more thorough use of McCorkle's resource, listing all relevant works in footnote 16, but omitting variation 9 from Op. 9 (Baldassare, 147-148).
[38] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 85.

complete Opp. 3 and 6 were written in July that year.[39] Unfortunately the autograph of the Six Songs, Op. 7, has been lost, but considering the chronological proximity of the three early sets of songs, and the fact that the autographs of both Op. 3 and Op. 6 bear the name of Kreisler, it seems more than probable that, should a manuscript of the complete Op. 7 be found, it would be similarly inscribed.[40]

Another autograph which has been lost is that of the Ballades Op. 10.[41] The origin of the Ballades has been investigated by William Horne, who has convincingly proposed that the third and fourth of the set were originally part of the four character pieces which Brahms intended to publish as Part I of a collection entitled "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers. Herausgegeben vom jungen Kreisler."[42] (The remaining two from the original set would then have been replaced by Op. 10, no. 1 and 2 for publication.)[43] Thus at least two of the four pieces in Op. 10 derive from works which were to be issued under the "editorship" of *der junge Kreisler*. Had Brahms not been discouraged from this idiosyncratic title,[44] it is uncertain whether the *Kreisler* appellation would have found its way into print or remained for the sole benefit of Brahms himself and the few initiates of

[39] *Werkverzeichnis*, 801.
[40] According to Brahms's practice, only the autographs of complete works were signed with some configuration of the name *Johannes Kreisler*. Existing autographs of individual songs from the Op. 3 group do not bear any indication of Brahms's alter ego (*Werkverzeichnis*, 8-9). The initialling of variations in Op. 9 (with *Kr.*) is exceptional, as is the Scherzo composed for the F. A. E. Sonata (which does however constitute Brahms's complete contribution to the work). That the early arrangement of the Rondo by Weber was signed "Johs. Kreisler / jun." suggests that on 8 March 1852 Brahms had no intention of supplementing this study and presenting a collection for publication. This is supported by the fact that the next of the Five Studies for Piano to be written (the arrangement of Chopin's Op. 25 no. 2) was not composed before the Autumn of 1862. The two studies were offered for publication only in 1869; the remaining studies have been tentatively dated to the Spring of 1877 (*Werkverzeichnis*, 615-616).
[41] *Werkverzeichnis*, 30. See also Donald M. McCorkle, 270.
[42] This proposed collection will hereafter also be referred to as the "Blätter."
[43] William Horne, "Brahms's Op. 10 Ballades and his *Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers*," *Journal of Musicology* 15/i (Winter 1997): 98-115.
[44] Notably by Joachim (Horne, "Brahms's Op. 10 Ballades," 100).

his inner circle who would see the autograph. Nevertheless, the name of his alter ego is inextricably tied up with the proposed collection of pieces from which the Op. 10 Ballades at least partially originate. Part II of the "Blätter" envisioned by Brahms was to comprise the Schumann Variations, Op. 9.[45] This contributes an additional feature to the Kreisler-complex exemplified in this work, but more importantly provides the further evidence of a work which Brahms considered for publication as part of the "Blätter" and in which we find the traces of his alter ego in the initials "Kr.," which follow no less than five variations in the autograph.[46] The contemporaneity of the Ballades, Op. 10 (Summer 1854), and the Variations, Op. 9 (June 1854, without variations 10 and 11), only serves to strengthen my conviction that, as with the Lieder, Op. 7, the autograph was signed with some version of the name *Kreisler*.[47]

This, then, would mean that, with the exception of the Scherzo Op. 4 (an early work which pre-dates Brahms's practice of Kreisler signatures), Opp. 1 through 10 all bear the mark of Brahms's alter ego. Considering the given documentation, this scenario seems more than probable. Indeed, it provides for a more consistent picture of Brahms's Kreisler period, for which the noted autographic evidence has been previously discontinuous.

[45] Ibid., 98; *Werkverzeichnis*, 660.
[46] *Werkverzeichnis*, 28.
[47] Ibid., 801.

CHAPTER 3

E. T. A. HOFFMANN'S KAPELLMEISTER KREISLER

Brahms's numerous Kreisler signatures constitute a reference not to a single literary work, but rather to a complex fictional character which recurs as a leitmotif in the writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann. Getting a firm grasp of Hoffmann's Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler proves to be a challenging task and while the character's elusiveness is arguably an admirable achievement from the standpoint of literary criticism, it frustrates any attempt to elucidate Brahms's identification with the literary figure. Kreisler, the archetypal "mad musician *par excellence*,"[1] lends his name to Hoffmann's literary collection of two groups of papers on music, entitled *Kreisleriana*,[2] and is the true hero of the novel *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentarischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern*.[3] The representation of the Kreisler character in these two sources, however, is far from consistent.[4] In addition, the character appears in the tale *Nachricht von den neuesten Schicksalen des Hundes Berganza*[5] and in the fragment "Der Freund,"[6] which refers to a musician with the initials

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[1] Kreisler signs himself thus in the *Kreisleriana* (Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 131).
[2] Ibid., 79-168.
[3] See p. 2, n. 5 above for full documentation. The idiosyncratic title points to the remarkable structure of the novel. The autobiography of the tomcat Murr alternates with sections of an unpublished biography of the kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler. Hoffmann's preface to the novel clarifies that Murr, in the writing of his autobiography, used the pages of the Kreisler manuscript as blotting paper and that, as a result, parts of the Kreisler biography were accidentally printed amidst the pages of Murr's work. The Murr sections follow on from one another to form a continuous whole. Continuity between the Kreisler parts is broken; they begin and break off mid-sentence.
[4] Patrick Thewalt, *Die Leiden der Kapellmeister: zur Umwertung von Musik und Künstlertum bei W. H. Wackenroder und E. T. A. Hoffmann* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), 80, 87. This inconsistency refers not to Kreisler's artistic conception, but to the actualization of that conception and to his personal experience.
[5] *E. T. A. Hoffmann: Sämtliche Werke*, 3:29-87.

"J.K." With the numerous expositions featuring the Kreisler figure, the character gains a certain independence. They enforce the illusion that Kreisler has a life of his own – parallel to that of the reader – and this illusion would have strengthened any preliminary sense of identification with the fictional musician.

R. Murray Schafer points out that "Hoffmann developed the impressive figure of Johannes Kreisler, the mad Kapellmeister, so brilliantly that when Oswald Spengler was later searching out the archetypal characters of history, he put Kreisler in a class with Faust and Don Juan as figures who dominate whole epochs of artistic thought."[7] This evaluation makes conceivable the idea that the Kreisler figure would pervade the consciousness of a young Romantic musician and composer of Brahms's generation. More notable, however, is Schafer's phrase "the mad Kapellmeister," by which he – in line with a distinct tradition – dismissively summarises the character of Johannes Kreisler.[8] This trend is partially explained by Albert Rothenberg in his study of creativity and madness:

> Popular and literary allusions to aberrations in creative people tend to lump all under *madness,* or a similar pejorative designation, and even philosophical treatises on creativity treat madness as a unitary force or factor. Furthermore, even when not used pejoratively, the word *madness* conjures up an image of a certain type of passion often associated with creativity.[9]

Hoffmann plays on this stereotype. Peter J. Graves notes:

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[6] For details of this fragment and a discussion of its authenticity and place in Hoffmann's Kreisler literature, see Peter J. Graves, "E. T. A. Hoffmann's Johannes Kreisler: 'Verrückter Musikus?'" *Modern Language Quarterly* 30 (1969): 231, n. 6.

[7] Schafer, 26. He cites Spengler again on p. 119, quoting from his *Untergang des Abendlandes*: "There used to be, especially in eighteenth-century Germany, a real musical culture which pervaded all life; and it was typified by Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler..."

[8] See also Barth's editorial annotation in *Briefwechsel J. O. Grimm – Brahms*, p. 1, n. 1.

[9] Albert Rothenberg, *Creativity & Madness – New Findings and Old Stereotypes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 13.

> Although the novel [*Kater Murr*] contains several references to possible madness, *there is not one single objective, categorical statement that Kreisler is mad* [italics added]. To the very last, every mention of it is toned down or subjectivized.[10]

Jeremy Adler, in his introduction to an English translation of *Kater Murr,* finds a balance between describing the kapellmeister's volatility and his precarious situation in society when he refers to Kreisler as "the neurasthenic, anguished genius, unable to find a niche in society or to satisfy his desires; an artist whose wildly pendular moods swing between radical extremes, from the plainly ridiculous to the loftily sublime."[11]

Siegfried Kross has taken up the misrepresentation of Kreisler in the Brahms literature, insisting that the kapellmeister appears to be mad "nur . . . aus der Perspektive der dekadenten Hofgesellschaft eines Duodezfürstentums, . . . während dieser Zustand des Wahnsinns eigentlich als Bewußtwerden des Spannungszustands zwischen innerer künstlerischer und äußerer Realität dargestellt wird."[12] Rothenberg observes that "society and creative people are often antagonistic toward each other." He suggests that this antagonism partially explains why "a mythic image has arisen of the highly eccentric, if not deeply disturbed, 'mad creator.'"[13] It is this antagonism which is the true subject of Hoffmann's *Kater Murr,* and any suggestion of Kreisler's psychological instability stems from an attempt by the author to characterise the tension between artist and society.[14]

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[10] Graves, 230.
[11] Jeremy Adler, introduction to E. T. A. Hoffmann, trans. Anthea Bell, xxiii.
[12] Kross, "Brahms' künstlerische Identität," 329.
[13] Rothenberg, 158.
[14] In this regard, see also Brigitte Feldges and Ulrich Stadler, *E. T. A. Hofmann. Epoche – Werk – Wirkung* (München: C. H. Beck, 1986), 226-227 and Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 198. This interpretation bides well for Brahms's identification with Kreisler. Brahms appears not to have been afflicted by any psychological anomalies (Rothenberg, 158). The identification would surely have been weakened had he perceived Kreisler as characterized by significant psychological instability.

Hoffmann's opposition of Kreisler with the courtly world presents a social situation that was prevalent at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[15] Hoffmann's satirizing of courtly society, though, stems not primarily from the social situation in which the artist found himself, but from a desire to juxtapose artistic idealism with everyday reality. It must be stressed that the main focus of *Kater Murr* is not the discrepancy between Kreisler and court in terms of social class, but rather the rift between artist and non-artist.[16] Indeed, the peripheral position of the artist in society seems to be beyond distinctions of class[17] – the artist not belonging to aristocracy or bourgeoisie.[18] "The fact that this world [in which Kreisler is contextualized] is in the form of a feudal court is incidental. . . . [Hoffmann's] barbs are directed against an attitude, not an institution."[19] This is corroborated by Hoffmann's opposition of Kreisler with the bourgeoisie in the *Phantasiestücke.* The crucial factor is that both bourgeoisie and aristocracy valued art only as "modische Spielerei und harmlosen Zeitvertrieb."[20]

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[15] Thewalt, 95.

[16] Peter Faesi refers to Hoffmann's formula "Ihr guten Leuten und schlechten Musikanten" as exemplifying this opposition. The phrase asserts that mankind can be divided into two groups: "die guten Leuten," who are bad musicians or no musicians at all, and true musicians (Peter Faesi, *Künstler und Gesellschaft bei E. T. A. Hoffmann* [Basel: n. p., 1975], 103).

[17] Kreisler is exceptional in that he manages to remain amidst the upper echelons of society without respecting their code of etiquette.

[18] The pejorative overtones of the English term *bourgeoisie* are troublesome here as they are absent from the German *Bürgertum* to which I presently refer. A discussion of the German term can be found in Tibor Kneif, "Brahms – ein bürgerlicher Künstler," in *Johannes Brahms: Leben und Werk*, ed. Christiane Jacobsen (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1983), 9-13. As a solution to the excessive generality of German *Bürger*, Kneif borrows from French and distinguishes between *Citoyen* and *Bourgeois* (p. 10).

[19] Graves, 225. Faesi similarly notes that "Hoffmanns Erzählungen [dürfen] nicht als Sozialkritik verstanden werden; die gesellschaftliche Seite der Künstlerproblematik steht für ihn nicht im Vordergrund" (Faesi, 122).

[20] Faesi, 137.

The biography of Kapellmeister Kreisler is something of a mystery. The introduction to part one of the *Kreisleriana* reads:

> Where is he from? Nobody knows. Who were his parents? It is not known. Whose pupil is he? A good teacher's, for he plays excellently, and since he is intelligent and cultivated one can certainly tolerate him, and even permit him to teach music. And he really and truly was a Kapellmeister. So say the diplomatic officials to whom on one occasion, when in a good mood, he produced a document issued by the director of the Court Theatre at ***.[21]

He maintains the interest of the court through his "musical abilities, his witty conversation, and his moody states of elation and depression."[22] But for their entertainment they must tolerate Kreisler's refusal to behave in accordance with social expectation. Indeed, at times, Kreisler's attitude to his courtly company can only be described as one of disdain.

An important facet of Kreisler's character is the value of *Künstlerliebe* – "the artist's love which involves rejecting carnality and devoting oneself to an inaccessible ideal."[23] The chief components of artistic experience, as expounded by Kreisler, are love and longing.[24] The concept of *Künstlerliebe* combines the two: the "artist's love" which Kreisler has for Julia is not a love which strives for earthly fulfilment; rather it seeks in its object the embodiment of an inner ideal.[25] In fact, "Kreisler feels it would be a betrayal of his art if he were ever to possess the one he loves."[26] So long as the artist does not possess his beloved, his love and longing is experienced as a font of creative inspiration.

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[21] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 79.
[22] Schafer, 117.
[23] Adler, xiii.
[24] Ibid., xxviii.
[25] Feldges and Stadler, 235.
[26] Graves, 227.

In concluding a discussion of *Künstlerliebe*, Feldges and Stadler note that "Kreisler vermag die musikalische Seligkeit nicht mit dem gewöhnlichen Leben in Einklang zu bringen; sein Musikenthusiasmus macht ihn notwendig zum Zerrissenen und Gefährdeten in der Welt."[27] The predicament of *Künstlerliebe,* then, can ultimately be ascribed to the same source as Kreisler's social dysfunction: he is an artist and as such cannot reconcile himself with everyday reality – be that reality societal, romantic or otherwise.[28]

Kreisler's musical aestheticism is characterized most notably by a profusion of contrapuntal procedures and by *Phantasie* – bizarre or eccentric improvisation.[29] Though not a generally representative characteristic of Romantic music, counterpoint recurs like a leitmotif through the *Kreisleriana*:

> . . . its rôle in the education of the 'apprentice' is confirmed in the fable of Chrysostomus. . . . Kreisler . . . extemporised for hours 'with elegantly contrapuntal devices'; [and] counterpoint's rôle in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is stated fully.[30]
>
> For Hoffmann, it is only through imaginative improvisation following contrapuntal rules that a structure based on a limited amount of thematically worked music can be fathomed and developed.[31]

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[27] Feldges and Stadler, 236.
[28] Cf. Thewalt, 85. Thewalt's understanding is that the concept of *Wahnsinn* is directly dependent on the problem of *Künstlerliebe* (rather than analogous to it).
[29] See in this regard Stephan Münch, "*Fantasiestücke in Kreislers Manier.* Robert Schumanns *Kreisleriana* op. 16 und die Musikanschauung E. T. A. Hoffmanns," *Die Musikforschung* 45/3 (1992): 260-261.
[30] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 37. The reference to Kreisler's extemporization is to be found in the introduction to part one of the *Kreisleriana* (p. 80). The discussion of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is to be found in the essay "Beethoven's Instrumental Music" (p. 96-103). Charlton goes on to clarify that "the Romantic significance of counterpoint is its poetic similarity to the intertwining, mysterious curvilinear forms found in nature . . ." Interestingly, musical counterpoint seems in this way analogous to the arabesque characteristic of Hoffmann's narrative structures in *Kater Murr.* See for instance Erwin Rotermund, "Musikalische und dichterische *Arabeske* bei E. T. A. Hoffmann," in *Literatur und Musik: ein Handbuch zur Theorie und Praxis eines komparatistischen Grenzgebietes*, ed. Steven P. Scher (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1984), 278-299.
[31] Baldassare, 163.

This aesthetic is manifested in the fictional music of the kapellmeister Kreisler.

Legend has it that Hoffmann modelled the Kreisler figure on the Thuringian pianist, conductor and composer Ludwig Böhner (1787-1860). The young Böhner was hailed as the "Thuringian Mozart," but a complete nervous breakdown in 1819 brought his artistic career to an end.[32] If any composer can be said to have been overcome by *Wahnsinn*, it must be Böhner. But scholarly investigation has shown that Böhner was not a model for Kreisler.[33]

That the Kreisler figure is semi-autobiographical is well-known.[34] Numerous correspondences between Kreisler and his creator attest to the fact that Hoffmann conceived his kapellmeister as an alter ego of his very own. The character is indeed so thoroughly synchronous with its creator that, in order to arrive at a complete understanding of Hoffmann's musical philosophy, "we must turn to this fascinating and enigmatic figure, registering how he thought, dreamed, and behaved, and how society reacted towards him."[35] Such correspondences in musical aesthetic are made explicit by Hoffmann's issuing of musical reviews under the alias of his kapellmeister.[36] Kreisler naturally mirrors Hoffmann's own musical activities – not least his five years as kapellmeister and theatrical producer in Bamberg – and we find excerpts of the author's

[32] *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Böhner, (Johann) Ludwig [Louis]," by George Grover and Stephan D. Lindeman, <http://www.grovemusic.com> [accessed 23 November 2004].
[33] Axel Beer, "Johann Ludwig Böhner: E. T. A. Hoffmann's Kapellmeister Kreisler?" in *Festschrift Christof-Hellmut Mahling zum 65. Geburtstag* (2 vols.), ed. Axel Beer, Kristina Pfarr and Wolfgang Ruf (Tutzing: Schneider, 1997), 1:113-122. The article on Böhner in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2nd ed.) is authored by Beer and naturally corrects the myth, but *Grove Music Online* [accessed 23 November 2004] still maintains the notion that Kreisler was modelled on Böhner.
[34] Feldges and Stadler, 220-221.
[35] Schafer, 113.
[36] Kross, "Brahms' künstlerische Identität," 328.

compositions scattered among the Kreisler tales as examples of the fictional character's work.

Biographical parallels are to be gleaned in thinly veiled allusions to characters out of Hoffmann's own life. Notable are the references to the uncle who was his childhood guardian and to his favourite aunt, Sophie – both presented as part of Kreisler's memories of youth in *Kater Murr.* Hoffmann's experience with his music pupil, Julia Mark, with whom he fell deeply and impossibly in love, finds dual representation in the novel: on an emotional level in Kreisler's relationship with Julia Benzon; on a social level in his relationship with Princess Hedwiga. It has also been noted that Hoffmann's experience in the legal profession finds expression in parts of the *Murr* fragments of the novel. In fact, the figure of Murr himself derives as much from purely literary precursors as from Hoffmann's own tom-cat called *Murr*.[37] The episode in *Kater Murr* in which Kreisler loses his job also recalls Hoffmann's own biography – namely the case of Hoffmann's dismissal from his post in Warsaw in 1806 for refusing Napoleon his oath of allegiance.[38]

On Hoffmann's use of the Kreisler figure as an alter ego Feldges and Stadler note: "Hoffmann liebte es, sich bisweilen hinter der geschaffenen Figur zu verstecken. Er mystifiziert sich selbst als Kreisler . . ."[39] Yet they point out that Kreisler is the manifestation of only one side of Hoffmann's being – that Hoffmann's "bürgerlich-rationale Tendenz" and "überlegener Kunstverstand" do not find representation in the fictional character. As such, one cannot propose that Kreisler is a complete and balanced

[37] Feldges and Stadler, 220-221.
[38] Adler, xiv.
[39] Feldges and Stadler, 221.

portrait of Hoffmann, but in light of the correspondences that have been delineated, Faesi's view that Hoffmann's *Künstlerfiguren* arise out of a literary trend rather than out of autobiographical or artistic considerations, must be moderated.[40]

[40] Faesi, 50. Literary fashion was indeed seminal to the birth of the Kreisler figure, but the degree of identification exhibited by Hoffmann with the kapellmeister precludes any denial of significant autobiographical considerations.

CHAPTER 4

ASSESSING THE ORIGINAL FUNCTION OF BRAHMS'S KREISLER REFERENCES

As has been noted, the earliest known instance of Brahms's referring to himself as Johannes Kreisler is on 8 March 1852 in the autograph of his arrangement of a Rondo by Weber.[1] The very last instance is his signing of the document entitled "Avertimento" and dated 30 April 1860.[2] Between 8 March 1852 and 30 April 1860, then, Brahms signed himself as Kreisler on a number of musical autographs, as a mark of ownership in books or on manuscripts, and even signed the name to letters. However, these signatures are almost always backed up by some form of Brahms's own name. For example, the end of the Piano Sonata, Op. 1, is signed "Joh. Kreisler jun.," but the double bar-lines at the end of the first, second and fourth movements are drawn out into a "B."[3] A letter to Joachim of 29 June 1853 in which Brahms uses the name of his alter ego is signed "I remain / Your faithful / Jos Brahms / Kreisler jun."[4] The Variations, Op. 9, constitute a special case in which individual variations are variously initialled "Kr[eisler]" or "B[rahms]."[5] The only cases in which Brahms uses the name of his alter ego untempered by

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[1] *Werkverzeichnis*, 617. It is unfortunate that the beginning of Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* bears no date and therefore cannot assist in refining the chronology of the identification. Kross notes that Hamburg is given as the place of origin, but also that this doesn't help matters as Brahms often returned to Hamburg (Kross, *Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann*, 194).

[2] For a full reproduction of this document see Gärtner, 227-230.

[3] *Werkverzeichnis*, 2.

[4] *Life and Letters*, 13.

[5] The alternation of these initials seems to reflect a conscious imitation of Robert Schumann's practice of initialling some individual movements (as in his *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6) with *E*[usebius] or *Fl*[orestan] (or both). This appears all the more plausible when contemplating the profoundly dedicatory nature of Brahms's Op. 9, which is built out of associations between Brahms and both Robert and Clara Schumann. See for instance Oliver Neighbour, "Brahms and Schumann: Two Opus Nines and Beyond," *19th-Century Music* 7/iii (April 1984): 266-270. Nevertheless, Brahms is once again seen to be mediating his Kreisler signatures with his own.

acknowledgement of his own name are the few books in his private collection which he signed "Johs. Kreisler jun." and in two of the small notebooks he entitled with the possessive appellation *Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers.*[6]

Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* constitutes a particularly interesting manifestation of the Kreisler identification. The title shows Brahms aligning himself both to the fictional kapellmeister and to Hoffmann himself. In it we find maxims or short excerpts which Brahms quoted from his favourite poets and writers. It has been suggested that the *Schatzkästlein*'s relative lack of excerpts from the works of Hoffmann – there are only two in the entire collection – can be explained by the fact that Brahms was so intimately acquainted with Hoffmann's works that there was no need to record any relevant passages.[7] The collection is a veritable record of Brahms's *Bildung*, presenting the reader with a personally selected spectrum of maxims on life and art. It is noteworthy that in the *Schatzkästlein*, in which he aligns himself so directly to Hoffmann and his aesthetic, Brahms chose to record words of wisdom relating both to his personal philosophy and his philosophical stance with regard to his craft. That the collection is a mirror of Brahms's personal and musical philosophies shows the composer's identification with Kreisler to

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[6] With regard to the manuscripts of the *Schatzkästlein*, I refer to notebooks E. 1 and 2 of the four documented in Bozarth, "Brahms's Lieder Inventory," 108. The notebook E. 2 is entitled *II. Des Jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*.

[7] Gärtner, 73. Passages in Hoffmann's works which especially appealed to Brahms can be seen to have been underlined in his personal copies of the relevant works (Hofmann, *Die Bibliothek von Johannes Brahms*, 54). Also to be considered when contemplating the *Schatzkästlein* is Carl Krebs's role in editing the version that we currently have at our disposal. It has been noted that the editing was hardly ideal from a scholarly stand-point and that deletions (at least of duplications) were made without comment (Virginia Hancock, review of *The Brahms Notebooks: The Little Treasure Chest of the Young Kreisler. Quotations from Poets, Philosophers, and Artists Gathered by Johannes Brahms*, ed. Carl Krebs, trans. Agnes Eisenberger, *Music and Letters* 86/i [2005]: 149).

have been all-encompassing in that it extended to both professional and personal arenas of his existence.

Scholarly reference to the phenomenon of Brahms's signing himself as Kreisler has been inconsistent and, indeed, inaccurate. Most refer to it as a pseudonym.[8] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines pseudonym as "a false or fictitious name, *esp.* one assumed by an author."[9] What the quotations listed in the *OED* consistently make clear, is that this false or fictitious name is meant to conceal the true identity of the person using the pseudonym. The definition of the *Heinemann English Dictionary* incorporates this nuance: "a name assumed by an author to protect his anonymity."[10] In his use of the name *Kreisler*, Brahms cannot be seen to be protecting his true identity. In texts created by himself he consistently tempers the imaginary author with straightforward references to his own identity. In addition, as far as the relevant musical works are concerned, the Kreisler signatures are only to be found on autograph manuscripts – they never find their way into print. Thus Brahms did not intend for Kreisler to be presented to the general public as the author of his compositions. Rather this paratextual complex manifested in the relevant autographs was intended for the private appreciation of an inner circle of initiates – of close friends who could meaningfully contextualize the additional information.[11]

[8] See for instance Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 193; *Werkverzeichnis*, 2; and Baldassare, 145. Bozarth refers to it as a *nom de plume* in George S. Bozarth, "Paths Not Taken: The 'Lost' Works of Johannes Brahms," *The Music Review* 50/iii-iv (August-November 1989): 191.
[9] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed., s.v. "pseudonym," <http://dictionary.oed.com> [accessed 19 September 2005].
[10] *Heinemann English Dictionary* (1979), s.v. "pseudonym."
[11] By those close to him, Brahms's Kreisler identification was so strongly felt as to make possible the remarkable letter written by J. O. Grimm to Joseph Joachim on 9 April 1854, in which Brahms is referred

For a proper appraisal of the Kreisler signatures and of Brahms's Kreisler identification it is crucial to recognize that these signatures were intended for a limited audience only – if for an audience at all. The private nature of the Kreisler signatures is to be gleaned in cases where there are multiple extant autographs of a work. The autographs of the Lieder, Op. 3, listed as (a), (b) and (d) in McCorkle's *Werkverzeichnis* bear various dedications, but no reference to the kapellmeister; only the dedication to Brahms's close friend Julius Otto Grimm on the autograph labelled (e) in McCorkle's catalogue is graced by the name *Kreisler*.[12]

As noted above, Brahms only used the name of his alter ego without backing it up with some form of his own name when inscribing a mark of ownership in a small number of books in his private collection and when entitling two of the private notebooks of his *Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers* (the title of which is obviously possessive). The psychological significance of signing the name *Kreisler* as a mark of ownership cannot be underestimated. This use of the signature is unquestionably private – the most private of all instances where Brahms used the name. That the signature appears unmoderated only in this forum, in which no immediate audience could be contemplated, demonstrates unequivocally that we are dealing here not with a pseudonym, but with its opposite. Kreisler was not a façade from behind which Brahms addressed himself to his public; it

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to in the third person as "Kreisler" more consistently than he is referred to by his real name (refer to p. 11 above).

[12] *Werkverzeichnis*, 8-9. Compare also the formal title and dedication on the autograph of the Lieder, Op. 6, with the later dedication (signed "Kreisler jun.") to Grimm who ostensibly received the manuscript in December 1853 (*Werkverzeichnis*, 18).

was an intimate part of himself which he, on occasion, shared with those closest to him and which was present even when an audience was not.[13]

From the letter that Brahms wrote to Joachim on 19 June 1854 we know that Brahms considered publishing a collection of piano pieces under the title "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers. Herausgegeben vom jungen Kreisler."[14] Brahms added: "The things should bear the anonymous title not so as to license them to be worse than my earlier ones, but for the sake of a joke and because they are occasional pieces." Joachim, in his reply of 27 June 1854, categorically opposes the title.[15] Ultimately the pieces under the proposed title were published individually, in smaller groups under more generic titles, or not at all.[16] But one wonders if it was Joachim's disapproval which prevented the publication of the collection under the originally envisaged title. This would have constituted the first occasion on which Brahms would exhibit the name *Kreisler* in a publication of his work. The ironic anonymity of the title does not preclude the possibility (probability?) of Brahms's own name appearing in the publication proper.[17] And whether or not Brahms's name would have appeared in conjunction with the Kreisler reference, the proposed title by no means attributes the "young Kreisler" with

[13] Cf. the young Brahms's use of the pseudonym G. W. Marks, under which he wrote popular arrangements for the Hamburg publisher August Cranz. (See in this regard Kross, "Brahms' künstlerische Identität," 327.) The young composer is also known to have used the pseudonym Karl Würth when presenting works to which he did not want to commit his name as a composer. (See for instance *Werkverzeichnis*, 658.) These aliases have no additional referents – real or fictional – and were presented to the public as the veritable composers of the relevant works. Brahms made use of these pseudonyms to avoid attaching his identity to works which he considered of dubious artistic quality.

[14] See p. 10, n. 7 above.

[15] *Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*, 1:47-48. See also p. 34 and pp. 56-57 below.

[16] Horne, "Brahms's Op. 10 Ballades," 98-115. A translation of the relevant segment of Joachim's reply is given on p. 100.

[17] Note Brahms's insistence that the pieces were not to be of substandard quality.

authorship of the music – merely with editorship.[18] With the title, Brahms may have been attempting to impart to the pages which followed a feel similar to that imparted to the biography of the *Makulaturblätter* interpolated within Hoffmann's *Kater Murr*: to lend a more spontaneous feel to the collection; to sustain the audience's disbelief by drawing its attention to the existence of the pieces prior to their present form of publication; and to deny the part of the author in the work's publication.[19] Nevertheless, Brahms refrained from sharing his alter ego with the general public, saving the Kreislerian overtones of the pieces for a select few.

Martin Geck concedes that Brahms's use of the Kreisler signature on autographs of his musical works encompasses the "Ausdruck letzten Bedenkens vor dem Heraustreten in das Licht der Öffentlichkeit," while going on to acknowledge a further root of the phenomenon in Brahms's profound relationship with literary Romanticism.[20] But to consider the signatures to be the "ultimate expression of Brahms' reluctance to emerge into public view"[21] cannot be legitimate if, as we have shown, Brahms never intended to use the name *Kreisler* as a pseudonym. Even Baldassare, who presents an incomparably more thorough exposition on the topic, begins by acknowledging the validity of Geck's

[18] Avins, in cooperation with Josef Eisinger, translates *herausgegeben* as "published" rather than "edited" (*Life and Letters*, 47).
[19] Cf. Ronald Taylor, "Music and Mystery: Thoughts on the Unity of the Work of E. T. A. Hoffmann," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 75 (1976): 486. Brahms may have been motivated to distance himself from the collection in the eye of the public because he considered it to be made up of "occasional pieces." Returning to Genette's paratextual theory, the idiomatic title would have constituted an implied pre-text: "the paratextual function of the pre-text consists of offering a more or less organized tour of the 'workshop,' uncovering the ways and means by which a text has become what it is . . ." (Genette, 401).
[20] Martin Geck, *Von Beethoven bis Mahler: die Musik des deutschen Idealismus* (Stuttgart: Metler, 1993), 154. Baldassare quotes this fragment in the opening of his article, but supplied the wrong page number (Baldassare, 145, n. 1).
[21] As translated by Baldassare (p. 145).

assumption. This fundamental misconception must be amended in order to effectively penetrate and convincingly interpret Brahms's Kreisler identification.

CHAPTER 5

THE ORIGIN OF BRAHMS'S KREISLER IDENTIFICATION

What exactly caused Brahms to identify with a fictional character so strongly as to take this character as his alter ego? The origin of Brahms's Kreisler identification is possibly the most mysterious aspect of the phenomenon. In a sense, everything following the initial impulse is secondary, but it remains the thing about which the least can be said with any degree of certainty. Hypotheses can quickly turn into unqualified retrospective psychologising when contemplating emotional or intellectual points of identification. There is necessarily a lack of proof. However, since the process of identification under discussion is an undeniably personal occurrence, possible undocumentable motivations for Brahms's identification must be discussed.

Contemplation of the subject of the phenomenon bides the question of why Brahms would have been prone to an identification of such intensity at all. There is the cliché that Brahms sought in the world of literature and its inhabitants an escape from the coarse, vulgar reality with which he was confronted in Hamburg's *Animierlokalen* where he was forced to take work as a young teenager. Swafford recounts that once Brahms had learned the required repertoire, "[he] would place on the piano rack a novel or a volume of poetry and read the night away as he played . . ."[1] These environments were

[1] Swafford, 28-29. See also p. 4 above. A reference to this can also be found in MacDonald, 9. It should be noted that p. 9 of MacDonald's work also shows him confusing Murr's master, Abraham, with Kreisler and thus attributing the authorship of the pages of the Kreisler biography in *Kater Murr* to Kreisler himself (MacDonald, p. 9).

anything but sympathetic to the plight of an artist striving for *das wahre Künstlertum.*[2] He recounted the trauma of his experiences in those seedy dives many years later.[3]

Tension in the Brahms household is another factor which would have pushed Brahms further towards an escape of some kind. The considerable age difference between his parents is often cited as the cause of this tension.[4] Kross interestingly suggests that considerable friction could be attributed to the conflict between the father's guild-oriented mentality and the son's artistic strivings.[5] This notion would make Johannes Kreisler a logical object of Brahms's escapist preoccupations.

It is also noteworthy that there was a distinct fashion for such mystifications of identity in Brahms's time. This can be gleaned from Joachim's response to the title of Brahms's proposed "Blätter":

> In Hoffmann's and Jean Paul's time such mystifications were new, because [they were] the product of a true, brilliant bravado which liked to outwit the old school in all possible ways – nowadays similarities to this form are so much degraded through the meaningless use which almost every young little poet . . . has made of it, that you may not encourage it through your example.[6]

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[2] I borrow the idiomatic German expression from Faesi's sub-heading "Defizitäre Konzeption oder wahres Künstlertum?" (Faesi, 116). See also Faesi, 121.

[3] For a discussion of Brahms's experiences in the *Animierlokalen*, see Boman Desai, "The Boy Brahms," *19th-Century Music* 27/ii (Fall 2003): 132-136. Desai confirms the authenticity of this aspect of the Brahms biography which previously has been brought into question, most notably by Styra Avins in "The Young Brahms: Biographical Data Reexamined," *19th-Century Music* 24/iii (Spring 2001): 276-289. For an account of the far-reaching effect of these early experiences, see Swafford, 28-30. Thomas Boyer also gives a worthy contextualisation in his "Brahms as Count Peter of Provence: A Psychosexual Interpretation of the *Magelone* Poetry," *The Musical Quarterly* 66/ii (April 1980): 265-266.

[4] See for instance *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Brahms, Johannes," by George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, <http://www.grovemusic.com> [accessed 6 April 2006].

[5] Kross, "Brahms' künstlerische Identität," 330.

[6] Translation by William Horne in Horne, "Brahms's Op. 10 Ballades," 100. See p. 30, n. 15 above for citation of a version in the original German.

The "mystifications" of identity of "every little young poet" may certainly have been largely superficial, but the trend existed. This certainly makes conceivable the explicitness with which Brahms's impulses in this context were realised.

Given Brahms's susceptibility to such mystifications of identity, it remains to be considered why he identified with the character of Kreisler in particular. Slightly firmer assertions can be made when contemplating points of identification as exhibited by the object of the phenomenon because the character's existence can be traced in black and white. Kreisler's mysterious origins would certainly have facilitated a possible identification with the character.[7] The absence of a known history would have freed up the process immeasurably, as the young Brahms would have been oblivious to definite details such as Kreisler's parentage, home town or teacher, which would have constrained his personal affinity with the fictional kapellmeister. In the novel *Kater Murr* we encounter a fragmentary narrative style, by which the printed sections of the Kreisler biography (which are interspersed among the Murr autobiography) each begin in a completely new part of the story.[8] The reader never knows what has been lost. Noting this, Feldges and Stadler comment that this narrative device "trägt unmittelbar zu der Atmosphäre des Geheimnisses bei, in der sich Kreislers Leben abspielt."[9] The recurrences of the Kreisler character throughout the writings of Hoffmann echo these seemingly spontaneous reappearances of the kapellmeister's biography in *Kater Murr* and reinforce this atmosphere of secrecy.

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[7] Refer to the quotation from the introduction to Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* on p. 21 above.
[8] Refer to p. 17, n. 3.
[9] Feldges and Stadler, 227.

That Brahms shared with Kreisler his given name *Johannes*, is especially significant. Engrossed in Hoffmann's works, it must have seemed to the young composer that the Johannes to whom was being referred was he himself. Kross, quoting from *Kater Murr*, notes:

> Even Brahms's exchanging of his real family name for the name of Kreisler is anticipated by Hoffmann: "I will call you by the gentle name Johannes so that I may at least hope that behind the satyr's mask a gentle spirit is hidden after all. And then! I will never be convinced that the bizarre name Kreisler was not smuggled in and substituted for a quite different family name."[10]

The charter "Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief" must have felt as though it were addressed directly to Brahms, with numerous calls to "my dear Johannes."[11] The piece terminates curiously: ". . . and thus I sign my name – which is also yours: / Johannes Kreisler / *cidevant* Kapellmeister."[12] Max Knight observes that "the writer and his apprentice seem to conflate in this tale,"[13] and by this baffling circularity Hoffmann again avoids revealing any defining information about Kreisler's past.

The "Lehrbrief" presents a picture of a musician accomplished in the theoretical and practical foundations of music, but not yet a master of the art of composition. It is a picture of a musician ready "to start a real course of musical learning."[14] This is a fitting description of Brahms around the time that he first explicitly exhibited the Kreisler identification. He was an accomplished pianist and was well-versed in the theoretical prerequisites of his craft, but he was aware that he stood only at the beginning of the epic journey to the achievement of true artistry.

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[10] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 197.
[11] See p. 2, n. 9 for documentation of the "Lehrbrief."
[12] Hoffmann, transl. Knight, 192.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

The "Lehrbrief" seems to be the single most likely work to have precipitated the explicit manifestation of the identification. Floros considered it to be the key to deciphering the phenomenon.[15] In his close analysis of the text he finds three levels of narrative, each narrated by a different incarnation of Hoffmann/Kreisler. In addition to Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler the teacher and Johannes Kreisler the pupil, we encounter the "quiet, friendly youth, whom we call Chrysostomus."[16] In the novel *Kater Murr* it emerges that Chrysostomus is Kreisler's second name and that he was born "on the day of St John Chrysostom, that is, on the twenty-fourth of January in the year one thousand seven hundred and some years more . . ."[17] Floros thoroughly summarises the characteristics of Chrysostomus:

> Chrysostomus zeigt schon in den Kinderjahren eine starke Neigung zur Musik. Sein Vater, "selbst ein guter Musikus," erteilt ihm den ersten Musikunterricht und glaubt aus ihm "nicht allein einen wackern Spieler, sondern auch wohl einen Komponisten" zu bilden, weil Chrysostomus "so eifrig darüber her war, auf dem Klavier Melodien und Akkorde zu suchen, die bisweilen viel Ausdruck und Zusammenhang hatten." Später vernachlässigt Chrysostomus aus Enttäuschung "alles technische Studium der Musik." Denn es wird ihm klar, daß es ihm nicht gelingen will, den "herrlichen Gesang des Fräuleins," den er in seinem Inneren vernimmt, nachzusingen oder auf dem Klavier nachzuspielen. Sein Vater verzweifelt an seiner musikalischen Begabung und gibt den Unterricht ganz auf. Später, auf dem Lyzeum in der Stadt, erwacht Chrysostomus' Lust zur Musik auf andere Weise: "Die technische Fertigkeit mehrere Schüler trieb mich an, ihnen gleich zu werden." Die Musikdirektor des Lyzeums unterrichtet ihn im Generalbaß und in der Komposition. Nach dieser Ausbildung kehrt er in sein Dorf zurück und glaubt nun, "ein ganzer Musiker zu sein."[18]

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[15] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 90-98.
[16] Hoffmann, transl. Knight, 190.
[17] Hoffmann, transl. Bell, 67. The notes to this edition point out that the feast of St John Chrysostom is actually on 27 January, which is the birthday of Mozart. Hoffmann himself was born on 24 January (1776) and ostensibly brought forward the saint day in order to achieve a typically mystical conflation of his alter ego with his admired Mozart. See also p. 45 below.
[18] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 95.

He goes on to enumerate the correspondences between Brahms and this incarnation of Hoffmann's Kreisler complex, citing Brahms's youthful inclination towards music, the tuition he received from his father and the later studies with Eduard Marxsen. He goes on to find a further correspondence between the "stiller, freundlicher Jüngling" Chrysostomus and the *stiller*, *schweigsamer*, *scheuer* Brahms.[19] The return of Chrysostomus to his town of origin is another point with which Brahms's would have identified. That this was the young Brahms's desire is reflected by his disappointment that Hamburg did not acknowledge him for many years, only offering him a post as kapellmeister once it was too late.[20]

At present no documentation exists of Brahms's first encounter with the "Lehrbrief." His personal copy of Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* was acquired only in January 1854.[21] Brahms's annotations in the "Lehrbrief" demonstrate his proximity to the text. One can only tentatively infer that he was acquainted with the text prior to obtaining the aforementioned volume. The "Lehrbrief" from Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* nevertheless remains an attractive candidate in the search for the origin of the identification.

The figure of the fictional kapellmeister may be elusive, but what *is* defining of Kreisler is the fact that he is a musician. He is an artist in a literary landscape which foregrounds the discrepancy between the world of the artist and that of everyone else. Feldges and Stadler align the disparity of the world which Murr occupies and that occupied by

[19] Ibid., 96-97.
[20] Georg Knepler, "Brahms historische und ästhetische Bedeutung" in *Johannes Brahms oder die Relativierung der "absoluten" Musik*, ed. Hanns-Werner Heister (Hamburg: von Bockel, 1997), 39.
[21] Hofmann, *Die Bibliothek von Johannes Brahms*, 54.

Kreisler to the difference between false art, merely for entertainment, and true art.[22] Kreisler is a practitioner of true art and this would have been a point of identification for a passionate young composer who was serious about his craft. Kreisler constantly struggles for art in a world which values art merely as a pleasant diversion.

Brahms was familiar with this struggle. His early arrangements of popular tunes for the Hamburg publisher August Cranz show Brahms experiencing the rift between artist and society. He produced these arrangements as a way to improve his financial situation, but refrained from issuing them under his own name, publishing them rather under the pseudonym G. W. Marks. The irony that Brahms was easily able to get these arrangements – which were of negligible artistic worth – published, while having to battle for the furtherance of his legitimate compositions, would not have been lost on the young composer.[23] This irony is echoed in *Kater Murr* by the fact that Murr – "[ein] unechter Künstler voller Einbildungen und Prätentionen, . . . träger Philister und bürgerlicher Pedant, der sich nur als Gelehrter und Dichter auspielt" – has his novel published immediately, while the biography of Kreisler – "der wirkliche Künstler, mit Tiefe und echtem Kunstenthusiasmus" – is published (albeit in a distorted form) only through the barbarism of the cat and the oversight of the publisher.[24]

[22] Feldges and Stadler, 226. The original terms are *konventionelle Scheinkunst* as opposed to *ursprüngliche Kunst*.
[23] Note Brahms's youthful struggle to be recognised as a composer in his home town of Hamburg. His parents were sceptical of Brahms's aspiration to be, first and foremost, a composer (*Life and Letters*, 14). When in 1850 Schumann visited Hamburg, Brahms sent a package of his works to his hotel for his appraisal. Dishearteningly, the package was returned unopened (MacDonald, 11).
[24] Feldges and Stadler, 228-229. The authors go on to note that this deep irony is underlined by the fact that Hoffmann devotes sixty percent of the novel to the "accidentally" printed Kreisler biography.

Brahms was an exceptionally talented pianist and his teachers Otto Friedrich Willibald Cossel and Eduard Marxsen both wanted to make of Brahms a concert pianist. The young boy was saved by the intervention of these two pedagogues from being sent to America and paraded as a child prodigy. Nevertheless, Brahms's compositional pursuits were considered a distraction, especially by Cossel.[25] That composing was for Brahms the ultimate expression of *das wahre Künstlertum* is beyond doubt. He would have found echoes of the attempts to push him in the direction of performing in the attitudes of the court and the bourgeoisie in Hoffmann's tales: musicians were expected merely to entertain with sparkling virtuosity; originality of voice was not required and elicited bewilderment, if not disapproval.

Another point of identification for the young Brahms would have been the concept of *Künstlerliebe* promoted in the Kreisler literature and exemplified by the kapellmeister. The philosophical stance embodied by this concept must have appealed to a shy, romantically inexperienced adolescent utterly dedicated to his art, but with the incipient yearnings of all adolescents. It has been proposed that as a result of his early experience of prostitutes in the *Animierlokalen*, Brahms developed what Freud would call "degradation in erotic life."[26] By this term he denotes the loss of one's faculty to perceive as unified in one person the object of love and the object of sexual desire. Brahms can ultimately be seen to exhibit this through his life-long bachelorhood which was characterised by his unfulfilled relationships with prospective spouses (whom he

[25] MacDonald, 7.
[26] Swafford, 30.

loved and respected) and his noted predilection for prostitutes.[27] In the former he found the object of yearning which *Künstlerliebe* would have as the source of artistic inspiration; in the latter he found an outlet for his base physical passions.

The episodes in "Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler's Musical Sufferings" which refer to J. S. Bach's *Goldberg* Variations must have made a strong impact on Brahms.[28] Charlton explains, "Variation-sets were associated with mere entertainment-music, their vapidity ironically contrasted with the great peaks of J. S. Bach's 'Goldberg' Variations . . ."[29] Contrapuntal considerations were a priority for Brahms from a young age, fostered especially by Eduard Marxsen.[30] His later contrapuntal exchange with Joseph Joachim shows a continued dedication to and genuine appreciation for the old art.[31] Gärtner goes so far as to assert that in counterpoint Brahms saw the source of all music.[32] The glorification of Bach and of counterpoint in this tale from the *Kreisleriana* would have excited the young Brahms, affirming the gruelling training he had undergone in this discipline.

In the preface to the *Kreisleriana*, the agitation of Kreisler's compositional process is described:

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[27] Boyer, 266.
[28] "Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler's Musical Sufferings" is the first essay in the first part of Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana.* It can be found in Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 81-87.
[29] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 10.
[30] See Kalbeck's citation of a personal communication from Louise Langhans-Japha in Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms* (4 vols.), (Vienna: Wiener Verlag, 1904), 1:37.
[31] For a thorough account of the Brahms-Joachim counterpoint exchange, see David Brodbeck, "The Brahms-Joachim Counterpoint Exchange; or Robert, Clara, and 'the Best Harmony between Jos. and Joh.,'" *Brahms Studies* 1 (1994): 30-80, as detailed in Heather Platt, *Johannes Brahms: A Guide to Research* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 55 item 136. (The Brodbeck article is locally unavailable.)
[32] Gärtner, 36.

> So it was that his friends could not bring him to write down a single composition, or to leave it intact if he actually did write it down. Sometimes he would compose by night in the most agitated frame of mind. He would awaken his friend who lived next door in order to play to him, in a state of utmost rapture, everything he had scribbled down with incredible speed. He would weep tears of joy over the composition he had produced. He would proclaim himself the happiest of men. And yet, by the following day, the great work had been consigned to the fire.[33]

Brahms was notoriously self-critical and similarly destroyed dozens of early works.[34] Kreisler's destruction of his works would certainly have strengthened Brahms's conviction in his own *autos-da-fé*.

Thewalt explains that Kreisler cannot be viewed as a literary example of the free artist because the existence of free artists requires the environment of a free market absent from the world Kreisler occupies. "Er ist vorerst nichts anderes als ein 'entlaufener' Kapellmeister . . ."[35] But what may have appealed to the Romantic aspirations of the young Brahms – at a time when the position of the artist in society was in flux – is that Kreisler to a large degree realises the desire to flee his post. "[Er] ist in erste Linie Künstler für sich und für seinen Romantischen 'Auftrag'."[36] Brahms's similar sentiment towards official posts is demonstrated by his continued preference for short-term, free-lance style work.[37]

Kreisler's activities as kapellmeister at the secluded court of Sieghartsweiler in *Kater Murr* are strongly paralleled by Brahms's experiences with the Giesemann family in the

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[33] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 80.
[34] Bozarth, "Paths Not Taken," 184-185.
[35] Thewalt, 95.
[36] Ibid.
[37] In this regard, see Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms: "Frei aber einsam" – Ein Leben für eine poetische Musik* (Zürich and Hamburg: Arche, 1997), 29-31.

village of Winsen an der Luhe. On the request of Brahms's father, the fourteen-year old boy spent a few weeks' holiday at the Winsen home of Adolf Giesemann and his family in the Spring of 1847, returning again in 1848 and 1851. In exchange, he was allocated certain musical duties, including giving piano lessons to Adolf's daughter, Lischen, who was but a year younger than Brahms. Brahms was also elected conductor of the *Winsener Männersingverein*, for which he composed numerous items.[38] The correspondence of these 'kapellmeisterly' activities in the sheltered environment of Winsen with the duties of Kapellmeister Kreisler at the court in Sieghartsweiler, which is magically secluded from outside reality, would not have been lost on the young Brahms. In fact, his first stay at Winsen is noted to have been precipitated by utter exhaustion following Brahms's nocturnal (often night-long) sessions as bar-pianist in Hamburg.[39] Any escapist tendencies inherent to the young boy would have been intensified, making him especially receptive to any possible points of correspondence between the life of the fictional Kreisler and is own.

Kreisler's music is characterised most notably by *Phantasie* and by contrapuntal variation. Münch explains that by this *Phantasie* is meant "[das] aus dem Fantasieren hervorgegangene Gebilde."[40] We know little of Brahms's compositions from before the manifestation of the Kreisler identification as he ensured that these immature works of his youth did not survive to be scrutinised. A record does exist of a "Phantasie" for piano which Brahms played at a concert on 14 April 1849. The work apparently consisted

[38] Kurt Hofmann, "Marginalien zum Wirken des jungen Brahms," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 38/iv-v (April-May 1983): 235-237.
[39] MacDonald, 9.
[40] Münch, 260. He goes on to explain the philosophical overtones inherent in Kreisler's aesthetic of *Phantasie* (p. 260-261).

chiefly of variations on a folk-song. An impressive canon variation (which in any event dates from this early period) may have formed part of the "Phantasie."[41] Brahms's compositional aesthetic can be seen to coincide to a significant degree with that of Johannes Kreisler, even if this correspondence cannot be asserted to be a chief factor in his ultimate identification with Kreisler.[42]

The wide-spread myth that Johannes Kreisler was modelled on the today obscure figure of Johann Ludwig Böhner must be considered.[43] Whether or not Brahms was influenced by this misconception is unknown. Böhner's serious psychological deterioration echoes the superficial evaluation of Kapellmeister Kreisler as mad. It has been demonstrated, however, that this evaluation is entirely simplistic and would not have formed the basis for Brahms's identification.[44] It follows that if Brahms had indeed been aware of the myth, it would not have been significant in moulding his perception of Hoffmann's kapellmeister. Robert Schumann was convinced of the legend, but the influence of Schumann in the origin of Brahms's Kreisler identification must be discounted because the identification was already in evidence prior to their meeting.[45]

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[41] *Werkverzeichnis*, 660.

[42] Also typical of Kreisler's music is the sharp juxtaposition of contrasting moods. (See for instance Schafer, 118 or Münch, 257.) This seems more a palpable expression of his struggle as artist in society than a quality fundamental to his compositional aesthetic and Brahms cannot be seen to emulate this in his own compositions. Compare Schumann's musical impressions of the kapellmeister in his *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, in which such juxtapositions are an integral part of the musical discourse (Münch, 264). The element of fantasy *and* the juxtaposition of different characters are confirmed in an account of Brahms's own playing by Joachim, who described it as 'so zart, so phantasievoll, so frei, so feuerig' (Gärtner, 53).

[43] Refer to p. 23 above.

[44] Refer to p. 18-19 above.

[45] The first meeting of Brahms and the Schumann's took place on 30 September 1853; Brahms's Kreisler identification can be seen to be fully intact by the signing of his Rondo after Weber, Anh. 1a, no. 1 / II in March 1852. For documentation of Schumann's claim, see Baldassare, 153 n. 38.

Far more likely is the proposition that, via the character of the kapellmeister, Brahms identified with its creator, E. T. A. Hoffmann. Swafford perfectly describes the complex intertwining of identities evinced by Brahms's Kreisler identification:

> . . . the dreamy young artist refracted his identity between mirrors he called Brahms and Young Kreisler, . . . Kreisler became his Doppelgänger, shared with Hoffmann: an alter ego of an alter ego.[46]

In this way, the phenomenon of Brahms's references to Kreisler may be understood not merely as an identification with the fictional character, but as an identification with Hoffmann, who himself used the character as a foil for his personal commentary on music and society.[47]

E. T. A. Hoffmann was born Ernst Theodor *Wilhelm* Hoffmann. In 1805 he can first be seen to exchange his third name *Wilhelm* for *Amadeus* in homage to Mozart. He thereafter signed his name in the version we recognise today.[48] In *Kater Murr* Hoffmann can be seen to bring forward the date of the Feast of St Chrysostom (on which Mozart's birthday falls) in order to conflate the birthday of the great composer with his own and that of his alter ego.[49] Charlton notes that, because Mozart's birthday fell on the feast of St Chrysostom, his first two given names were Johannes Chrysostomus.[50] It would seem that Hoffmann originally worked backwards from the name *Chrysostomus* to arrive at the name *Kreisler* which, while echoing the shape of the saint's name, incorporates the wholly appropriate mystical connotations of the German *Kreis*, "circle."

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[46] Swafford, 43.
[47] See also Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 199.
[48] *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Hoffmann, Ernst Theodor Amadeus (Wilhelm)" by Werner Keil. It is an interesting coincidence that Hoffmann's second given name and his adopted third name are equivalent in meaning. This is sure to have added some mystical weight to this act of homage.
[49] See p. 37, n. 17 above.
[50] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 39-40. The reader should recall that Chrysostom is the name of one of the incarnations of Hoffmann's Kreisler.

The reverence for Mozart exhibited by Hoffmann in the choice of his very name and perpetuated in the forum of his writings by his alter ego, Kreisler, cannot be ignored when considering Brahms's perception of the Kreisler-Hoffmann complex. Imogen Fellinger in her exposition on Brahms's view of Mozart points out that Brahms's teacher Eduard Marxsen had studied music theory with Ignaz von Seyfried, who had been a piano pupil of Mozart and a composition student of Albrechtsberger, himself a pupil of Mozart. She continues by noting the "immediate tradition from Mozart . . . to Brahms" which was established through Marxsen.[51] Quoting from the Brahms-Joachim correspondence, she also observes that "Brahms considered one of the 'most powerful experiences' of his youth to be his acquaintance with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*."[52] Hoffmann's worship of Mozart, then, must have been a significant feature in the series of correspondences Brahms perceived between himself, Kreisler and Hoffmann.

Hoffmann is also inextricably linked with the figure of Ludwig van Beethoven. The fourth essay in the first part of the *Kreisleriana* is entitled "Beethovens Instrumentalmusik."[53] It combines material from Hoffmann's reviews of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and his Piano Trios, Op. 70. The essay, which Dahlhaus refers to as "one of the charters of romantic music esthetics," is responsible for raising Beethoven's status to that of a demigod.[54] Through his praise of Beethoven, Hoffmann propagated his

[51] Imogen Fellinger, "Brahms's view of Mozart" in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 41.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Available in English translation in Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 96-103.
[54] Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 42. See also Swafford, 42. I borrow Swafford's description of Beethoven as "demigod" (ibid.).

aesthetic of instrumental music as "the most romantic of all the arts."[55] That Brahms revered Beethoven is exemplified in his often quoted remark: "You have no idea how disheartening it is for one of us constantly to hear such a giant marching behind him."[56] If the fictional music of Kreisler cannot be seen to be a serious point of identification for Brahms, then Hoffmann's idolization of Beethoven certainly can. He found in Beethoven a model for his attempts to imbue Classical form with Romantic content and for the processes of motivic development and thematic unification so central to his own compositional method. The reception of Beethoven and his work has been coloured by Hoffmann's criticism since it appeared in print. For a composer of Brahms's generation this influence would have been felt quite palpably to be that of Hoffmann.

Thewalt notes that the two central aspects of Kreisler/Hoffmann's aesthetic are *Sehnsucht* and *Besonnenheit*.[57] *Sehnsucht* refers to the yearning for another state of being, which is a goal of truly Romantic music.[58] This is also a component of the concept of *Künstlerliebe* which has already been expounded upon.

[55] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 96. Charlton clarifies that what is referred to by Hoffmann is specifically "*instrumental* music, that which contains no reference outside itself" (Charlton's italics; p. 60). It is ironic that through the manifestation of Brahms's identification with Kreisler and Hoffmann in his manuscripts, his instrumental music does exhibit external references. Also, it seems Brahms was more prone to using poetic mottoes in his instrumental works during the period of his Kreisler identification.

[56] Raymond Knapp's translation of Max Kalbeck in the former's "Brahms and the Anxiety of Allusion" *Journal of Musicological Research* 18/i (1998): 2.

[57] Thewalt, 87.

[58] For a thorough discussion of *Sehnsucht*, see Thewalt, 87-91. For a discussion of the contradictory nature of Kreisler's aesthetic and a view that Hoffmann failed in his original apotheosis of art, see Thewalt, 157, n. 73. Grounds for both Hoffmann's preoccupation with the "Romantic apotheosis of music" and for Brahms's Kreisler identification can be seen in the Romantic era's "unprecedented self-consciousness" (Swafford, 39). Swafford goes on to note: "Obsessed by the past, the age obsessively attempted to define its own zeitgeist" (ibid.).

The value of *Besonnenheit* is given important status in the novel *Kater Murr*.[59] The essence of this quality, imperative for the true musician, lies in the proper handling of musical inspiration, which brings the composer into contact with a metaphysical realm. Kreisler, though, is acknowledged as having a deficiency in *Besonnenheit* himself:

> His friends maintained that in his formulation nature had tried a new recipe but that the experiment had gone wrong: to counteract his over-excitable spirit and his fatally inflammable imagination too little phlegm had been added, and thus that balance which is essential to the artist, if he is to survive in this world and compose the works it actually needs, especially in a higher sense, had been destroyed.[60]

It is this ideal of *Besonnenheit*, of balance in the processing of musical inspiration, for which he strives. For Kreisler, the concept of *Besonnenheit* found its ultimate proponent in the figure of Beethoven, in whose palpable shadow Brahms worked.[61] The figure of Brahms today conjures up an ideal of *Besonnenheit*, but at the time that his identification with Kreisler was taking hold he was still grappling with the difficulties of finding his compositional voice. The intensely self-critical young composer would surely have identified with Kreisler's struggle to perfect his craft. It is likely that Brahms, who was at the beginning of his development as a composer and whose training and its consequent noting of his deficiencies was still in very recent memory, would have felt Kreisler's "Unfähigheit [*sic*] zur formalen Objektivierung der Inspiration"[62] to be his own.

Thewalt observes that the innovative feature of Kreisler's musical philosophy is the recasting of a Classical ideal of form in a Romantic context. He continues, "Die

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[59] An approximate translation of the term is 'prudence'. Though intended in a musical context, the religious overtones are decidedly present. For a thorough discussion of the concept, see Thewalt, 91-95.
[60] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 79.
[61] Thewalt, 92.
[62] Ibid., 93. "Unfähigheit" should read "Unfähigkeit."

Verbindung der musikhistorisch noch jungen klassischen Formidee mit einem romantischen Gehalt bezeichnet die eigentliche Neuartigkeit der von Kreisler vertretenen Musikauffassung."[63] Steven Paul Scher, in his contemplation of Hoffmann's self-conscious role in the shaping of music historicism, notes the tenet by which Hoffmann unites his sometimes contradictory ideologies: "present-day musicians must learn from the grand old masters but must also assimilate and make creative use of innovative contemporary practices."[64] Kreisler is in this way a concrete manifestation of Hoffmann's musical conception and, by extension, one of the original paradigms heralding the Romantic apotheosis of music.

That Brahms lived and worked in an era in the hold of Hoffmann's musical aesthetic is enough to explain an identification with Hoffmann's alter ego, an instrument by which he disseminated his ideology through an intertwining web of literature and criticism. The fusion of Romantic content with Classical form which typifies Kreisler's (Hoffmann's) artistic ideal seems, indeed, to have been one of the guiding principles of Brahms's craft – more so than for any other composer of the Romantic era.[65] During the course of Brahms's training under his teacher Eduard Marxsen, the values of Classical proportion, of thematic logic and of good counterpoint had been instilled in the young composer. Floros has commented on Brahms's ideal of detailed and diligent working-out of compositions, which stands in marked contrast to the nineteenth-century penchant for

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[63] Ibid., 92.
[64] Steven Paul Scher, "Temporality and Mediation: W.H. Wackenroder and E. T. A. Hoffmann as Literary Historicists of Music," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 75 (1976): 501-502.
[65] Beethoven and Schubert are here excluded from the period denoted by the "Romantic era" – considered rather as precursors. On Hoffmann's role in perpetuating the view of Beethoven as a definitively Romantic composer, see Scher, "Temporality and Mediation," 500.

composing 'by inspiration'.[66] Whether this ideal shared with Kreisler resonated more intensely with Brahms's innate temperament or with the training he received from Marxsen is a futile inquiry; he felt strongly enough aligned to the ideal to take the name of its progenitor as his own.

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Brahms's Scherzo, Op. 4, was composed in August 1851 and bears no trace of the Kreisler alter ego; the Rondo after Weber, Anh. 1a, no. 1 / II, dates from March 1852 and constitutes the first case in which the composer's Kreisler identification is exposed.[67] What happened in the life of Johannes Brahms between August 1851 and March 1852, or in the period directly prior to this, such that the identification crystallised during these transitionary months? Did he read a particular work by Hoffmann? Did he fall in love and, in so doing, feel a strong affinity to Johannes Kreisler and that character's struggle with *Künstlerliebe*? Or was the concrete manifestation of the identification the culmination of a gradual process by which the maturing Brahms found his ideals aligned with those of a familiar artistic figure? Unfortunately the available evidence does not provide us with a simple answer.

The considerable impact of E. T. A. Hoffmann and the figure of Johannes Kreisler on Robert Schumann has been well documented, as has Schumann's role in Brahms's

[66] Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms: "Frei aber einsam"*, 109. In this way Brahms exhibits the value of *Besonnenheit*, which would certainly have been an ever-present concern in his creative process.
[67] *Werkverzeichnis*, 12, 617, 801. It appears that no works were composed in the interim.

Bildung.[68] A number of Schumann's works refer directly to the works of Hoffmann. The *Nachtstücke*, Op. 23, the *Phantasiestücke*, Op. 12, and *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, all take their name from items in Hoffmann's literary *œuvre*.[69] Schumann's *Kreisleriana* quite obviously takes as its programme the kapellmeister who Brahms would later take as his alter ego. However Brahms's first meeting with the Schumanns and subsequent initiation into their circle post-dates the inception of the young composer's Kreisler identification and therefore could not have contributed towards its manifestation. As such, not even Brahms's relationship with Clara Schumann – which seems to be a paradigm of the *Künstlerliebe* exalted in Hoffmann's tales – can be considered a precipitating factor.

If a personal understanding of *Künstlerliebe* were indeed an influence in Brahms's adoption of the Kreisler alter ego, it would have to have been derived from his experience with Lischen Giesemann while holidaying with her family in Winsen an der Luhe. Any Romantic feelings that Brahms may have developed for Lischen would have brought to mind Kapellmeister Kreisler's passion for his pupil Julia, which in turn was based on Hoffmann's own passion for his pupil Juliane Mark.[70] Brahms first stayed with the Giesemann's in the Spring of 1847 and returned several times. The last of these retreats for the adolescent Brahms was in the Spring of 1851 – just one year before the first documented Kreisler signature was penned.

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[68] Schumann's identification with Johannes Kreisler is noted in *Grove Music Online*, s.v. "Schumann, Robert," by John Daverio and Eric Sams, <http://www.grovemusic.com> [accessed 6 April 2006]. With regard to Schumann's role in Brahms's artistic development, see Siegfried Kross, "Brahms und Schumann," *Brahms-Studien* 4 (1981): 7-44.

[69] Scholarly reference to the title of Schumann's Op. 12 alternates between the variants *Phantasiestücke* and *Fantasiestücke*.

[70] See Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 39 in this regard.

A documented biographical event that took place around the time of the first manifestation of the identification is Brahms's move to Lilienstraße Nr. 7.[71] Unfortunately this concrete fact cannot be seen to have any direct influence on the process.

One event which may have provided the final impetus for the identification was the conclusion of Brahms's studies with Eduard Marxsen. Marxsen "had still followed the artisan tradition of declaring his student free after he had completed his studies . . ."[72] Such a declaration would have been strongly reminiscent of "Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief."[73] The formal conclusion of Brahms's studies with Marxsen cannot be dated precisely. In all likelihood he would have completed his studies with Marxsen at some time between his eighteenth birthday (in May 1851) and his concert tour with Reményi (the tour began in April 1853; Brahms's collaboration with the violinist began with concerts in Hamburg in January 1853). This window corresponds to the period during which Brahms first signed the name *Kreisler* as his own. This co-incidence makes for a neat hypothesis regarding the final push towards an explicit identification.

In the search for the origin of Brahms's Kreisler identification it is important to remain aware that an identification of such strength would in all likelihood have evolved over an extended period and as the result of a complex web of similarities and coincidences. It is also noteworthy that there was a distinct fashion for such mystifications of identity in

[71] Kurt Hofmann and Renate Hofmann, *Johannes Brahms: Zeittafel zu Leben und Werk* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1983), 10. The move is dated "Frühjahr 1852."
[72] Finscher, 338. Finscher unfortunately does not provide references to substantiate this claim.
[73] See p. 36, n. 11 for details of the "Lehrbrief." Floros considered the work to be the key to understanding Brahms's identification (*Brahms und Bruckner*, 90-98).

Brahms's time.[74] Any attempt to attribute the phenomenon to a single factor would be simplistic and entirely speculative. From the existing evidence, though, one can conclude that Brahms's identification with Johannes Kreisler resulted chiefly from an artistic ethos shared by Brahms and Kreisler – the fictional character being an extension of his real creator, E. T. A. Hoffmann.[75] This, combined with the coincidence of Brahms's and Kreisler's given names and the indefiniteness Hoffmann manages to impart to Kreisler in terms of his history, lays sufficient grounds for understanding the depth of affinity Brahms felt for Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler.

[74] See for instance Joachim's response to the title of Brahms's proposed "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers" (quoted on p. 34 above). The "mystifications" of identity of "every little young poet" referred to by Joachim may certainly have been largely superficial, but the trend existed.
[75] Kross, "Brahms' künstlerische Identität," 329.

CHAPTER 6

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF JOHANNES KREISLER JUNIOR – END OF THE IDENTIFICATION?

E. T. A. Hoffmann's alter ego, Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, was a product of his artistic maturity. However, Brahms's use of Johannes Kreisler as an alter ego – which extends from his late teens into his twenties – constitutes part of his maturation process. The period during which Brahms explicitly exhibited the identification with the kapellmeister Kreisler can logically be deduced to be the period during which Brahms identified most strongly with the character. But does the waning of explicit references to Kreisler show a distancing from the fictional character? Do the ultimate cease in Brahms's Kreisler signatures and virtual disappearance of the name *Kreisler* from the correspondence of the Brahms circle indicate the dissolution of the identification? Though the following considerations must remain largely speculative, it is hoped that they will assist in developing a more representative understanding of the apparent end of Brahms's Kreisler identification.

In the Variations, Op. 9, of June 1854 we find the last traces of the name *Kreisler* to be found in Brahms's musical manuscripts. July 1854 is the last time Brahms can be seen to use the name of his alter ego as a mark of possession – both on his copy of the proof-sheets of Schumann's *Genoveva* and in the entitling of one of the notebooks of his *Schatzkästlein*.[1] Brahms's own references to Kreisler in the correspondence appear to

[1] I refer to item E. 4 in Bozarth, "Brahms's Lieder Inventory," 108.

cease after 26 June 1855 – the date of a letter to Clara Schumann.[2] After this Brahms's only explicit reference to his alter ego Johannes Kreisler is in the exceptional case of his signing of the humorous "Avertimento" of the *Hamburger Frauenchor* in April 1860.

At this point it is important to call attention to the distinction between Brahms's identification with Kreisler and his use of Kreisler as an alter ego. Brahms's use of Kreisler as an alter ego is merely an explicit manifestation of his identification with the fictional character, an identification which necessarily existed before it manifested itself as an alter ego. Further, it must be noted that the end of the manifestation of the identification as an alter ego does not necessarily presuppose the end of the identification.

The first hint of the dissociation of Brahms from his alter ego appears in the manuscript of the Variations, Op. 9, in which the double bar-line at the end of variations 4, 7, 8, 12 and 14 of the June 1854 version are drawn out into a "B" (for *Brahms*) and those at the end of variations 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11 are drawn out into the initials "Kr" (for *Kreisler*).[3] This manner of initialling different variations with either "B" or "Kr" was unprecedented in Brahms's use of the Kreisler alter ego. Brahms had a penchant for drawing out the double bar-line at the end of a movement into a "B"; but previous usage of the Kreisler identity entailed giving the full name of the kapellmeister, usually at the end of the manuscript or as part of the dedication. This usage of alternating initials seems unquestionably a conscious imitation of Schumann's practice of initialling the individual movements within certain piano cycles with the letters "Eus." (for *Eusebius*) or "Fl." (for

[2] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 88.
[3] See p. 26 above.

Florestan). This is corroborated by the many other Schumann references which pervade this work.[4] Nevertheless, by his own initialling Brahms creates a musical typology of *Brahms* and *Kreisler*, attributing the more lyrical variations to *Brahms* and the capricious, more virtuosic ones to *Kreisler*.

During the height of Brahms's identification with Kreisler it is evident that he felt himself and Kreisler to be one and the same person.[5] That the fracturing of the two identities in the Variations, Op. 9, must be seen chiefly as an act of homage to Schumann is supported by the fact that Brahms signed the name *Kreisler* as a mark of ownership to the proof-sheets of Schumann's *Genoveva* which he received as gift from Clara a month after penning the Variations. But the incipient dissociation that is hinted at in the Variations is confirmed two months later in Brahms's letter to Clara Schumann of 15 August 1854.[6] The dissociation of Brahms and Kreisler in this letter would have been understood by Clara in light of the typologies established in Op. 9. It is doubtful whether Brahms could have written of the battling of *Kreisler* and *Brahms* had it not been prepared in the manuscript of Op. 9. Floros explains the opposing temperaments embodied by the two manifestations of Brahms's personality: "*Brahms* ist still, scheu, diszipliniert, *Kreisler* dagegen impulsiv, erregbar, leidenschaftlich, unbeherrscht und unberechenbar."[7] It is difficult to pinpoint what precipitated the inner conflict referred to in Brahms's letter, but one possibility is Joachim's letter of 27 July 1854 in which he vehemently opposed

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[4] See in this regard Hermann Danuser, "Aspekte einer Hommage-Komposition: Zu Brahms' Schumann-Variationen op. 9," in *Brahms Analysen: Referat der Kieler Tagung 1983*, ed. Friedhelm Krummacher and Wolfram Steinbeck (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1984), 91-106.
[5] See in this regard Kross, "Brahms und Schumann," 35.
[6] Refer to pp. 9-10 above for the relevant excerpt from this letter.
[7] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 126.

Brahms's proposed title "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers. Herausgegeben vom jungen Kreisler."[8] He was scathing regarding the idea and disparaging of "almost every young little poet" who was in the habit of degrading the mystifications of Hoffmann and Jean Paul by their "meaningless use" of such devices. This strong communication from possibly Brahms's closest and most trusted friend must have made quite an impact on the young Brahms. That he might have been considered to degrade Hoffmann by publicly expressing his identification with his fictional kapellmeister, would have horrified Brahms.

Within weeks of Joachim's letter Brahms can be seen to be professing his admiration for E. T. A. Hoffmann in the correspondence. In a letter of 16 August 1854 to Amtsvogt Blume, Brahms makes reference to several works of Hoffmann, and adds of the author: "Unfortunately, he took leave of his body too soon."[9] On 21 August in a letter to Clara Schumann we again encounter Brahms's admiration for Hoffmann's characters. Significantly he adds: "With Kreisler Senior you must also get properly acquainted. (in *Kater Murr*, etc.)."[10] Brahms alludes to his own alter ego (Johannes Kreisler junior) by referring directly to its literary source. Not a week later, on 27 August 1854, Brahms writes to Clara Schumann of having replenished his library of books. Of the five authors he lists, he is sure to make mention of Hoffmann, whose volume of *Phantasiestücke* was among the newly acquired items.[11] He seems to be trying very hard to ensure that his

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[8] Refer to p. 34 above.
[9] *Life and Letters*, 54.
[10] Ibid., 58. Punctuation follows the source. Kalbeck's poetic reference to Robert Schumann as "Kreisler *senior*" should not be allowed to confuse Brahms's present reference to the fictional kapellmeister (Kalbeck, 1:106).
[11] *Life and Letters*, 60.

admiration for Hoffmann was recognised and that this admiration was understood as the source for his own mystification of identity. In these letters of August 1854 one can detect a distinct self-consciousness regarding his adoption of the alter ego, Johannes Kreisler junior.

A letter of 24 October 1854 to Clara Schumann reads:

> I see from your letter that Hoffmann had its effect, you have two 'selfs'. You had already written as much from Ostende. I thought I would send Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke*, because I found a second, better copy here in the house.[12]

Again we see Brahms trying to disseminate the works of Hoffmann amongst his circle. The line, "I see . . . that Hoffmann had its effect, you have two 'selfs'," is especially telling. It demonstrates Brahms's explicit realisation that he was not necessarily alone in being influenced so by Hoffmann. That others could be similarly hypnotised by Hoffmann's characters would have made his identification feel less unique and more like the mystifications of "almost every young little poet" – as Joachim had critically remarked.

From Brahms's letter of 25 November 1854 to Clara Schumann we see that Clara has finally conceded to use the familiar "Du" when addressing Brahms.[13] The developing intimacy of their relationship can be traced in the surviving letters.[14] Brahms's romantic aspirations are abundantly clear. It is left to consider whether the concurrent increase in Brahms's Clara-*Schwärmerei* and wane in his references to himself as Kreisler are

[12] Ibid., 68.
[13] Ibid., 69.
[14] See for instance Brahms's letter of 15 December 1854 to Clara and Avins's ensuing annotation in *Life and Letters*, 77-80.

merely coincidental. Brahms's desire for the fulfilment of his feelings for Clara are, indeed, contradictory to the ideal of *Künstlerliebe* embodied in the identity of the fictional kapellmeister. It could reasonably be inferred that the incompatibility of Brahms's pursuit of Clara with Johannes Kreisler's ideal of *Künstlerliebe* at least exacerbated the dissociation of the young man from his alter ego.

A reference to Kreisler is to be found in a letter of 14 March 1855 from Brahms to Clara Schumann:

> . . . wir müssen doch alles sehr vermeiden, was Ihn [Robert Schumann] krank heißt, so das Erbrechen der Briefe. . . . Es war auch recht unverschämt vom Kreisler.[15]

This mischievous reference to himself in the third person further demonstrates Brahms's increasing awareness of his alter ego Kreisler as an identity counter to his own.

In June 1855 Brahms appears to have made his last references to Kreisler in the correspondence. A letter of 24 June 1855 to Clara shows a distinct distancing from the fictional kapellmeister. Floros documents this reference: "So schreibt er . . ., daß er nicht 'den Kreislerischen Mut' habe, 'an Hof zu gehen.'"[16] Brahms's allusion to Kreisler as something outside of himself and as having qualities which he could not claim to have himself signals that, at this time, Brahms no longer felt Kreisler to be his alter ego. His letter to Clara two days later, in which the discussion of Clara's experience at the Court of Detmold continues, again shows the identification to have cooled from the intensity of the alter ego period:

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[15] Quoted in Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 88. The reference has been deleted from Litzmann's edition of the correspondence (Brahms, ed. Litzmann, 1:33-34).
[16] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 88.

> Hat denn Ihr Hof einige Ähnlichkeiten mit dem im Kater Murr?:
>
> Eine Julia ist da! Und das Reich ist wohl so niedlich, daß der Fürst von seinem Balkon aus die vier Wände sehen kann. Aber wir wollen vor allem die zwei Julien und Kreisler nicht weiter vergleichen, sonst kommen merkwürdige Unterschiede![17]

Rather than the earlier unqualified references to himself as Kreisler, Brahms now speaks of "Ähnlichkeiten" and names the literary source of such similarities. The last sentence of the quoted passage shows Brahms both alluding to his former use of Kreisler as an alter ego and dismissing its continuing validity. He cites "merkwürdige Unterschiede" as a reason to avoid further comparison of himself and Clara with the fictional Kreisler and Julia. These "peculiar differences" had obviously become too much a hindrance in Brahms's identification with the fictional kapellmeister for him to continue to use the character as his alter ego.

Only a single later explicit reference of Brahms to his one-time alter ego has been documented: that in the "Avertimento" of 1860. The document is signed "Johannes Kreisler jun. alias: Brahms" and dated "Montag den 30ten des Monats Aprili A.D. 1860."[18] This whimsical charter sets out the code of conduct for the *Hamburger Frauenchor* in a mock-legalese which parodies the highly ornate literary language of the eighteenth century. Most exceptional in this reference to Kreisler is the way Brahms mediates his and Kreisler's names with the term "alias." This sets the "Avertimento" apart from earlier documents in which Brahms signed the name *Kreisler* as if it were his own. In the earlier documents in which Brahms's alter ego is manifest, qualification or mediation between the name *Kreisler* and any traces of Brahms's own name is absent.

[17] Quoted in Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 88.
[18] Bozarth, "Brahms's Lieder Inventory," 115.

The humorous nature of the "Avertimento" and its chronologically remote position in terms of the other extant Kreisler references reinforce the impression of the document as an occasional piece, the content and character of which elicited an exceptional reference to Brahms's former alter ego, with whom he still felt an affinity.

Brahms's use of Kreisler as an alter ego, then, can be seen to end sometime prior to the above-mentioned letters to Clara Schumann of June 1855. The case of the "Avertimento" shows that Brahms's identification with Kreisler did not cease with the dissociation from his alter ego. That Brahms continued to make entries in his notebook entitled *Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreislers* until as late as June 1882 also negates a complete dissolution of the identification.[19] It seems that what must have begun as an identification and had developed into a full-blown alter ego had, by June 1855, settled back into a mere identification.[20] The question of what precipitated this cooling in Brahms's identification with Kreisler bides many unqualifiable possibilities. Did Brahms simply grow out of using the device? Did he get over the initial impetus towards escapism which surely contributed to his teenage refuge-seeking in the identity of a literary character? Or did Brahms realise that in order to attain artistic maturity it was necessary to abandon the irreconcilable contradictions of Kreisler's concept of the true artist, which "bietet keinen Ausweg aus dem Dilemma von ästhetischer Verabsolutierung und formaler Meisterschaft auf der einen und krasser soziale Realität auf der anderen

[19] Ibid., 108.
[20] This logic certainly bides well for an explanation of the many uncanny biographical correspondences which Brahms exhibits with Kreisler even after he ceased to use the kapellmeister as an alter ego.

Seite"?[21] Such questions must necessarily remain in the background of any scholarly consideration of the subject.

Baldassare points out that Brahms's ultimate foregoing of the Kreisler alter ego does not necessarily indicate a distancing from the values associated with the character.[22] On the contrary, it may be seen to indicate Brahms's final integration of Kreisler's aesthetic into his own personal world-view. More likely is Kross's assertion that "as Brahms became increasingly conscious of his own artistic genius, the shifting of romantic yearning to rational, conscious creation . . . must have made the identification with Kreisler dubious."[23] Whatever integration of Kreisler's values may or may not have occurred, the ultimate disappearance of explicit Kreisler references seems to say more about Brahms's personal growth than about any change in his perception of the fictional character. By the time the explicit Kreisler references begin to wane, Brahms can be seen to have reached a level of personal maturity by which he had consolidated his own values – aesthetic and otherwise – such that he had no further need for extraneous identities to support his own.

As noted on page 55 above, Brahms's adoption of Kreisler as an alter ego would naturally have been preceded by an identification with the character. Similarly, the impulse leading Brahms to give up his alter ego is to be sought in the period preceding the fact. If the first inklings if the dissociation are to be glimpsed in the Variations, Op. 9, then we must look to the period preceding their composition in June 1854 for possible

[21] Thewalt, 97.
[22] Baldassare, 151.
[23] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 199.

causes. Robert Schumann attempted suicide on 27 February 1854. This was a great shock to the Schumann circle, of which Brahms had become a member. Brahms's dissociation from his alter ego seems inextricably linked with the trauma of Robert Schumann's attempted suicide, illness and ultimate demise, which he experienced most palpably through his staunch support of Clara Schumann during this period of hardship.

The precise effect on Brahms of the tragedy which afflicted the Schumann household is hard to ascertain. It is possible that Brahms's proximity to and support of Clara Schumann during this period of crisis would have forced him to leave behind any pretensions (as Joachim might have referred to Brahms's Kreisler cult). Brahms may also have seen in Schumann's illness the ultimate outcome of such mystifications of identity and fear of a similar end may have destabilised his relationship with his alter ego.[24] Graves notes of the fictional Kreisler:

> [He] is playing a dangerous game, for there exists the permanent possibility that this pretense of madness will cease to be pretense and will instead become real. His feigned eccentricity gives him the opportunity to compose; should it ever degenerate into genuine madness, he would be unable to produce any creative work again.[25]

The echoes of Schumann's affliction are uncanny. Schumann's own Kreislerian preoccupations can be detected in several of his musical compositions, but even more notable in connection with Brahms is that Schumann's "Neue Bahnen" article of four months prior to his suicide attempt has been shown to be based on E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief."[26] By basing his seminally important article about the

[24] Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto," 237, n. 82.
[25] Graves, 232.
[26] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 107-111.

young Brahms on Hoffmann's essay, Schumann became inextricably entangled in the web of Brahms's Kreisler associations.

Brahms's protracted struggle with what became his Piano Concerto in D Minor, Op. 15, is closely linked to the Schumann tragedy. The work originated as a sonata for two pianos that was begun early in 1854, in the wake of Schumann's attempted suicide. Kalbeck, on a communication of Joachim, asserts that the opening of the concerto is a representation of Schumann's plunge into the Rhine.[27] In a letter of 30 December 1856 to Clara Schumann, Brahms says of his work on the concerto: "Auch male ich an einem sanften Porträt von Dir, das dann Adagio werden soll."[28] In the autograph, the opening melody of the Adagio is underlayed with the Latin inscription: "Bendictus qui venit in nomine Domini!"[29] Siegfried Kross sees in this inscription an oblique reference to Johannes Kreisler in Hoffmann's *Kater Murr*: "In *Kater Murr* this verse is written on the portal of the Abbey Kanzheim where Johannes Kreisler ultimately finds himself and achieves peace of mind."[30] Kross goes on to cite Brahms's struggle over the proper form of his Piano Concerto, Op. 15, and interprets the inscription at the opening of the Adagio as marking "Brahms's passage from the bizarre style of the Kreisler period to the secure

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[27] Noted in Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 144.
[28] Quoted in Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 144-145.
[29] For a facsimile of the autograph see Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 147. For a more recent summary of the plethora of existing interpretations of this inscription, see Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto," 211-247. John Daverio's noting of correspondences between the Adagio and Schumann's Requiem, Op. 148 adds a new dimension to the previous interpretations of the inscription (John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann and Brahms* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002], 188). He accounts for the various theories as to the referent of the inscription (none of which is entirely satisfactory on its own) when he notes the psychological complexity of Brahms's image of Clara Schumann: "His erotic yearning for Clara was . . . inextricably bound up with (and complicated by) a longing of an entirely different sort: a desire for a union, on a spiritual plane with *both* Schumanns" (p. 144). On p. 149 he presents his own unfussy understanding of the meaning of the inscription.
[30] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 200. The relevant passage of the novel can be found in Hoffmann, trans. Bell, 210.

knowledge of his own artistry."[31] George S. Bozarth thoroughly contextualises this assertion and integrates it with other theories regarding the meaning of the inscription, the Adagio and the concerto as a whole.[32] He supports Christopher Reynold's claim of a relationship between the opening melodic gesture of the Adagio and the moment in Beethoven's *Fidelio* when Leonora and Florestan are reunited, and includes this in his interpretation of the inscription:

> . . . by associating the *Benedictus* text that Kreisler saw inscribed over the portal of the monastery with the Clara/Leonora melody, Brahms/Kreisler portrayed his beloved Clara as the font of his serenity, the object of love and the source of inspiration of the *echten Musikanten*. Indeed, these are the very issues on which Kreisler's discussions with the Abbot Chrysostomus centered . . .[33]

He concludes:

> . . . the *Benedictus* text and melody, with their various associations, make clear, the portrait is not only of Clara Schumann, but of what she represented to the young artists around her.[34]

In light of the contextualisation of the quote from *Kater Murr* in a "portrait" of Clara (as Brahms referred to the Adagio in the correspondence), the inscription can be interpreted as an indication not only of Brahms's finding peace in the "secure knowledge of his own artistry,"[35] but also of his making peace with the value of *Künstlerliebe*. He seems finally to have resigned himself to renouncing the earthly fulfilment of love accessible to *die guten Leute*. This interpretation could conceivably imply that Brahms had come to terms with the unattainability of Clara Schumann as the object of his romantic aspirations. Though such interpretations must remain largely speculative, it remains that the complex

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[31] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 200.
[32] Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto," 211-247.
[33] Ibid., 234. For Reynolds's *Leonora* hypothesis, see Christopher Reynolds, "A Choral Symphony for Brahms?" *19th-Century Music* 9/i (Summer 1985): 5-7.
[34] Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto," 238.
[35] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 200.

web of meanings stemming from the oblique reference in the Adagio of Op. 15 to Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler provides an attractive denouement both for Brahms's experience of the Schumann tragedy and for the phenomenon of Brahms's alter ego. Through the inscription, the work appears to show Brahms making peace with the self-denial of earthly love, with his own artistic powers – in short, with the contradictions exhibited by his former alter ego. That the inscription is a quotation from the Ordinary of the Requiem Mass makes the Adagio a fitting epitaph for the alter ego Johannes Kreisler junior.

CHAPTER 7

MUSICAL REFLECTIONS OF KAPELLMEISTER KREISLER

The natural response of the musicologist to the increasing interest in Brahms's Kreisler identification is to seek in Brahms's music the influence of the character he took as his alter ego. Many references to Kreislerian moments in the works approximate the sweeping references to the "young Kreisler" in the general literature and do not convincingly relate such events specifically to the fictional kapellmeister. Some scholars have attempted to substantiate claims of Kreisler's presence in Brahms's early works by resorting to more thorough musical analysis. That Hoffmann's Kapellmeister Kreisler constitutes a distillation of early Romantic aesthetic ideology complicates any attempt meaningfully to disentangle the respective influences of early Romanticism and its manifestation in Johannes Kreisler. The noting of similarities in the aesthetics of Brahms and Kreisler therefore provides insufficient grounds to identify the fictional character in the music of the young composer. The noted tendency in contemporary research to seek out continuity and unity[1] manifests itself in a distinct need to find in Brahms's music the effects of a biographical phenomenon such as his Kreisler identification. But can Kreisler convincingly be shown to be an influence behind Brahms's compositional methods and processes? It remains to be considered whether the identification should be understood merely in general biographical terms.

[1] See for instance Kevin Korsyn, "Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology," *Music Analysis* 12/i (1993): 89-103.

It has been noted that Kreisler's music is characterized by a profusion of contrapuntal devices and by *Phantasie* – a type of free improvisation which is sustained by the variation of a minimum of thematic material.[2] It is easy to find such Kreislerian characteristics in the works of Brahms's alter ego period (though they are equally detectable in works beyond this period).[3] Indeed, the characteristics of Kreisler's own fictional music are so generally presented that, if one were so inclined, one could list every contrapuntal device and every unconventional harmonic turn in Brahms's music as a possible point of correspondence. In Hoffmann's Kreisler writings, he presents the reader with little more than a caricature of the kapellmeister's music. The fact that Brahms's early music can be seen to share some basic elements with the fictional music of Kreisler cannot conceivably justify an understanding that the composer took as his musical model the one-dimensional picture of Kreisler's musical endeavours as perceived in Hoffmann's writings.[4] Even in the event that one were to recognise in Brahms's music elements of Kreisler's musical aesthetic, it would be impossible, given the surviving documentation, firmly to ascertain whether Brahms derived these from the fictional Kreisler or whether they were already in existence and constituted a point of identification for the young composer.

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[2] See p. 22 above.

[3] For an account of canonic procedures in Brahms's *œuvre*, see Jürgen Wetschky, *Die Kanontechnik in der Instrumentalmusik von Johannes Brahms* (Regensburg: Bosse, 1967); on Brahms process's of thematic development, see Ann Besser Scott, "Thematic Transmutation in the Music of Brahms: A Matter of Musical Alchemy," *Journal of Musicological Research* 15 (1995): 177-206, and Walter Frisch, *Brahms and the Developing Variation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); for Brahms's contribution to the variation form, see Elaine R. Sisman, "Brahms and the Variation Canon," *19th-Century Music* 15/ii (Fall 1990): 132-153; and for a contemplation specifically of the early variation movements in the Piano Sonatas, Op. 1 and 2, see Bozarth, "Brahms's *Lieder ohne Worte*," 348-358.

[4] Faesi notes: "Während sich in Hoffmanns Erzählungen häufig Hinweise auf Wesen und Aufgabe der Kunst finden, wird die handwerkliche Seite des Schaffenprozesses, das 'mechanisches Geschäft' kaum je erwähnt. Seine Künstlerfiguren werden nie bei der Arbeit gezeigt" (Faesi, 79).

Max Kalbeck poetically referred to the early Piano Trio, Op. 8, as "ein musikalisches Reisetagebuch des jungen Kreisler."[5] While this contextualises Brahms's musical work with the contemporaneous phenomenon of his alter ego, it does nothing to elucidate any influence of the latter on the former. Jan Swafford, outlining the origins of Brahms's Piano Quartet, Op. 60, notes that the piece "was begun in 1853 as a quartet in Kapellmeister Kreisler's key of C# minor."[6] Brahms cannot be seen to have had any especial predilection for "Kreisler's key" outside of the early version of the Quartet. The link to Kreisler is at best tenuous and functions much like Kalbeck's contextualisation. William Horne suggests that the Ballade, Op. 10 no. 4 "was [perhaps] intended to reflect the enigmatic and schizophrenic quality said to belong to the music of the fictional Kreisler," and tentatively goes on to delineate a possible source for the Trio of the Ballade, Op. 10 no. 3, in a passage from Hoffmann's *Kater Murr*.[7] Horne however acknowledges his attempts to relate passages from Brahms's Ballades, Op. 10, to passages in Hoffmann's Kater Murr as purely speculative.

Michael Heinemann, in his contemplation of Brahms's organ music, perceives manifestations of Brahms's Kreisler identification and echoes of the role of the organ as gleaned in Hoffmann's writings.[8] He finds in Brahms's organ works the quality of "the transcendental" which is associated with the organ in the Kreisler literature. Heinemann

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[5] Kalbeck, 1:156.

[6] Swafford, 393. Swafford sets up this reference to C# minor as Kreisler's key on pp. 45-46: ". . . [Brahms] would start and abandon a piano quartet in C# minor, just as in a story Kapellmeister Kreisler starts and abandons a trio in that key. (Kreisler speaks of the trio in the context of a night on which 'I was given a different name.')" The transposition into C minor evident in the final version was motivated by Joachim's suggestion of a tonality more idiomatic for string instruments (*Life and Letters*, 147-148).

[7] Horne, "Brahms's Op. 10 Ballades," 112-114.

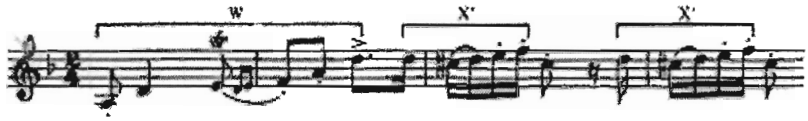
[8] Michael Heinemann, "...die andere Hälfte dazudenken – Zu Brahms' Orgelmusik," in *Johannes Brahms oder die Relativierung der "absoluten" Musik*, ed. Hanns-Werner Heister (Hamburg: von Bockel, 1997), 157-161.

examines chiefly the A-flat minor Fugue, WoO 8. He notes the intimate dedication "Ganz eigentlich für meine Clara" and suggests that the obscure tonality of the work arises from Hoffmann's synaesthetic key associations as established in the *Kreisleriana*.[9] The key of A-flat minor is aligned to 'unending desire, pain, effort to escape.'[10] Such considerations may, indeed, have occurred to Brahms during the composition of the A-flat Fugue, which originated as an occasional work in April 1856, shortly after Brahms ceased using Kreisler as an alter ego . Heinemann's grasp of the phenomenon of Brahms's alter ego is brought into doubt, however, when he refers to Brahms's Kreisler persona as an "der Außenwelt gezeigten Pendant."[11] Brahms's counterpart Kreisler was a distinctly private phenomenon which was never presented to the general public in conjunction with any composition.

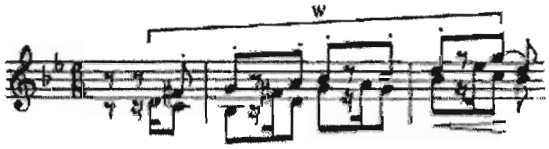
Christopher Reynolds has attempted to establish an allusion to Brahms's alter ego in the last movement of the Piano Concerto, Op. 15, by suggesting the construction of the rondo theme (ex. 1a below) to be based on the theme of the rondo finale of Schumann's *Kreisleriana* (ex. 1b below).[12]

[9] Ibid., 161.
[10] Schafer, 151. For an account of Brahms's definite perception of the unique quality of each tonality, see Christiane Jacobsen, *Die Verhältnis von Sprache und Musik in Liedern von Johannes Brahms*. (Hamburg, Karl Dieter Wagner, 1975), 37.
[11] Heinemann, 165.
[12] Reynolds, 15-16.

a. Brahms, Op. 15 III, bb.1-4.



b. Schumann, *Kreisleriana*, VIII, bb. 1-3.



Example 1

Reynolds then interprets the combination of the "Kreisler motive" with motives he associates with Clara and Robert Schumann, as based on the programme of Brahms's relationship to the Schumanns.[13] Such an hypothesis, while not demonstrating any stylistic influence of Kreisler on Brahms's music, implies that, in the Piano Concerto, Op. 15, the figure of Kreisler informed the way in which Brahms arrived at the precise motivic combinations seen in the work.

George S. Bozarth has noted that "Reynold's interpretation finds no basis in the history of the concerto."[14] Bozarth attempts to establish a more credible Kreislerian programme for the *Finale* of Op. 15. He introduces his argument:

> If we are to view the *Rondo Finale* in any terms "programmatic" – and it should be emphasized that, unlike with the *Maestoso* and the *Adagio*, there is no documentary evidence to support such an approach -- a productive route might be to journey further along the interpretative paths already laid out here for the first two movements.[15]

[13] Ibid., 20-21.
[14] Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto," 241.
[15] Ibid.

His route is indeed 'productive' – rather than 'deductive'. He detects the presence of Kreisler in the character of the opening theme, which is "thoroughly Kreislerian in its irreverent approach to serious matters"; in the "tonal and thematic 'slights of hand' that abound in this movement"; and in the "duality of personality [that] is expressed in the contrast of the *Rondo's* several themes and through their subsequent transformations."[16] Bozarth then notes of the final transformation of what he labels the A theme at bar 442:

> The militant mood of this version . . . is also not inconsistent with the vehement manner in which Johannes Kreisler, at the end of his fragmentary biography *Kater Murr*, defended himself against a vigorous attack on his role as composer by the imperious monk Cyprianus . . .[17]

Bozarth concludes this avenue of speculation:

> With his *standhaftem Gemüt* and *festem Sinn* in the face of adversity proven, the young Kreisler could then leave the Abbey Kanzheim and resume his activities in the wider world.[18]

His hermeneutic conjecture is not, however, sufficiently motivated by the musical evidence and the proposed references to Kreisler remain tenuous.

In an earlier study, Bozarth finds in the opening episodes of Brahms's Piano Sonata, Op. 5, a representation of "the dual nature of the Brahms-Kreisler personality,"[19] which informs his reading of the rest of the movement and the Sonata as a whole. He labels the upward surging motif of the first phrase (bb. 1-4) *x*; and the more stable, compressed form of the motif, on which the contrasting second phrase (bb. 7-11) is built, *y* (see ex. 2 below).

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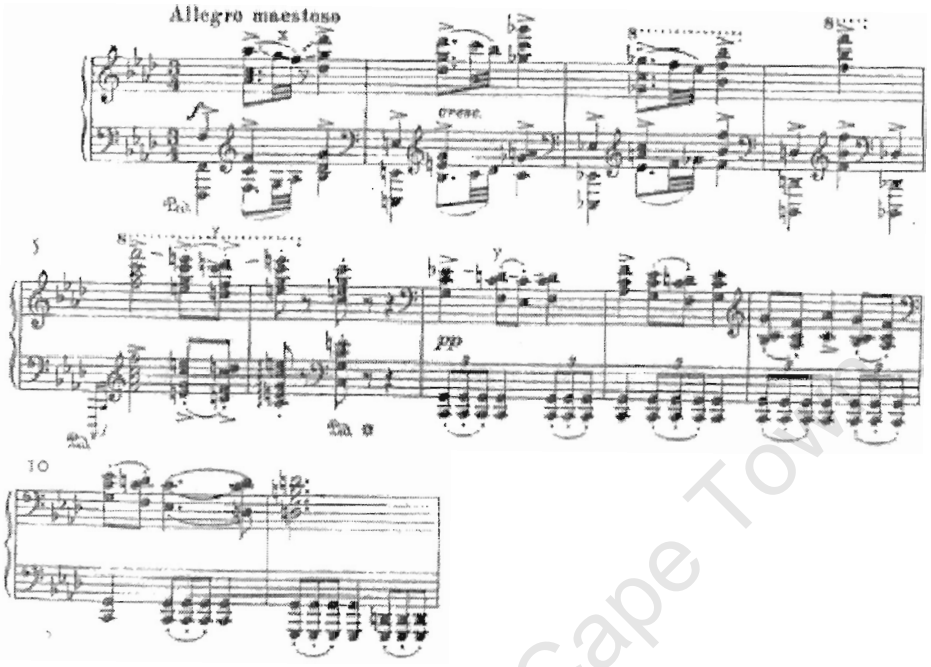
[16] Ibid., 242.
[17] Ibid., 245.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Bozarth, "Brahms's *Lieder ohne Worte*," 370.

Brahms, Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 5, I, bb. 1-11.



Example 2

He continues:

> The initial two phrases stand in stark contrast to each other, but close inspection reveals them actually as two strongly differentiated facets of the same 'character'.[20]

By using the word *character* in place of the word *motif*, Bozarth anthropomorphises the contrasting phrases in his eagerness to demonstrate in the work the manifestation of Brahms's fractured identities. The process of motivic transformation and unification is, however, a central feature of Brahms's compositional method and has its origins in the concrete example of Beethoven's musical output rather than in the articulation of a Kreislerian programme. While Bozarth's reading constitutes a highly attractive aid to the interpretation of Brahms's Sonata, Op. 5, it remains a poetic hypothesis.

[20] Bozarth, "Brahms's *Lieder ohne Worte*," 370.

Bozarth's and Reynold's attempts to identify supposed physical referents for Brahms's themes should be understood in light of Renate Ulm's assertion that "Brahms schrieb Programmusik ohne Program, in der die Motive zu Protagonisten werden."[21] The anthropomorphic understanding embodied in this view is natural to a human perception of musical discourse. It explains the ease with which such hypothetical referents are interpreted to be a guiding force behind the thematic oppositions, interactions and development which constitute the fabric of the works in question. However, it does not substantiate a programmatic intention on the part of the composer.

To deduce the palpable musical influence of Johannes Kreisler on Brahms, a comparison would ideally need to be drawn between Brahms's pre-identification compositions and the earliest works of the alter ego phase. There are a number of problems with this proposed line of inquiry. Firstly, almost all Brahms's pre-alter ego compositions have been destroyed. The Scherzo, Op. 4, which dates from August 1851 could be considered, but any such consideration must remain inconclusive as the identification which led to the manifestation of the Brahms's alter ego was already very likely under way at the time of the Scherzo's composition, a mere seven months before the first Kreisler signature.[22] Secondly, the period prior to Brahms's Kreisler identification and consequent adoption of the alter ego was one of adolescent growth and study. One could look to Kreisler for the origin of Brahms's predilection for contrapuntal devices, but could find much more

[21] Quoted in Hanns-Werner Heister, "Enthüllen und Zudecken. Zu Brahms' Semantisierungsverfahren," in *Johannes Brahms oder die Relativierung der "absoluten" Musik*, ed. Hanns-Werner Heister (Hamburg: von Bockel, 1997), 32.
[22] Jan Swafford recognises "Kreisler's voice" in the Scherzo Op. 4 (Swafford, 67).

credible sources for this in his education under Eduard Marxsen, in his documented fascination with the masters of the Renaissance and Baroque, and in the model provided by Beethoven's late works.[23]

In Antonio Baldassare's study of the Kreisler phenomenon, he attempts to demonstrate Kreisler's role in shaping the musical fabric of the young Brahms's compositions by comparing the early version of the Piano Trio, Op. 8 (which dates from Brahms's alter ego period), to the significantly later revised version of 1889.[24] Outlining his method, he writes:

> Special attention will be paid to the second subjects of the first version of the *Piano Trio* on the assumption that, above all, within these subjects the Kreisler allusions are accentuated musically, given that they are all eliminated – with the exception of the second movement – in the late version . . .[25]

But nowhere has Baldassare established reason to assert that the relevant second subjects derive specifically from Brahms's allusion to Kreisler. It is hardly sufficient to attribute these elements to Kreisler simply because they were subject to revision at a time when Brahms no longer used the kapellmeister as his alter ego. Baldassare summarises Brahms's explicit references to his alter ego and mentions Brahms's allusion to his alter ego in the proposed title "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers. Herausgegeben vom jungen Kreisler."[26] He then continues:

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[23] For a general account of the significance for Brahms of counterpoint and the music of the Renaissance and Baroque, see *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Brahms, Johannes," by Christian Martin Schmidt, 678-681.

[24] See p. 4, n. 17 above.

[25] Baldassare, 159. The second subject of the third movement comprises a quotation of Schubert's song "Am Meer" from his cycle *Schwanengesang* (1828); the second subject of the last movement comprises a quotation of Beethoven's "Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder" from his cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98 (Baldassare, 149).

[26] Ibid., 148-149.

> A similar form of withdrawal from the explicit to the implicit can be observed in the history of revision of the *Piano Trio* opus 8 where the allusions become more fully integrated into the organization of the composition.[27]

Baldassare goes on to mention the Schubert and Beethoven song quotations (the second subjects of the third and fourth movements respectively) which are evident in the original version of the Trio, but were replaced with new material in the 1889 version.[28] He thereby implies, without qualification, that these quotations constitute forms of allusion to Brahms's alter ego, Johannes Kreisler. Herein lies the fundamental flaw in his argument. In fact, Baldassare does not convincingly establish that any given element in Brahms's music derives specifically from the fictional Kreisler, rather than from another source.

The two versions of Brahms's Piano Trio, Op. 8, are highly attractive in that they present a version of a work from the alter ego period and another rooted firmly outside of that period. Had the version written during the Kreisler period been the revision, the multiple versions might have been more helpful in detecting musical manifestations of the fictional Kreisler, but the fact that the version written during the Kreisler period precedes the other version is problematic to this end. In Baldassare's attempt to elucidate the musical effects of the Kreisler identification 'from the other side' – chronologically speaking – lies another significant error. It has been shown that the dissociation of Brahms from his alter ego by no means indicates the complete dissolution of his identification with Kreisler or a distancing from the aesthetic values associated with the

[27] Ibid., 149.
[28] See p. 75, n. 25 above for details of these quotations.

character.[29] Therefore any comparison between works of Brahms's Kreisler period and works dating from after he ceased to use the alter ego cannot conclusively be used to demonstrate an opposition between a Kreislerian and a no-longer-Kreislerian musical aesthetic. Such a comparison would merely facilitate an understanding of Brahms's more mature – though not necessarily contradictory – aesthetic stance. In the conclusion to his paper, Baldassare claims:

> . . . the revisions [to Op. 8] were executed under new compositional and technical perspectives. The rejection of the second subjects [which characterises the revised version of the Trio], above all, had formal and not aesthetic reasons . . .[30]

But what are formal considerations if not aesthetic ones? Based in this contradiction, he continues:

> This is decisive for understanding Brahms styling himself as *Kreisler Jun.* in the early 1850s.[31]

Contradicting his own denial of aesthetic considerations earlier in the paragraph, Baldassare then asserts that the significance of the identification is that it shows "that Brahms implicitly viewed himself as a composer through the texts of E. T. A. Hoffmann and the character of *Kreisler* with his musical-aesthetic position."[32]

If Baldassare is, indeed, suggesting that a comparison of the two versions of Op. 8 indicates a change specifically between the aesthetics of Kreisler and those of the mature Brahms, then this must be rebuffed, as any changes in aesthetic values reflected in discrepancies between the 1854 and 1889 versions of the work may have arisen as much from thirty-five years of compositional development and consolidation as from any

[29] Baldassare acknowledges this himself (Baldassare, 151-152).
[30] Ibid., 166.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid, 166-167.

proposed distancing of Brahms from his one-time alter ego. A contemplation of the two versions of the Trio is enormously enlightening with regard to Brahms's compositional/aesthetic development; the elements of the early version that were revised cannot, however, convincingly be attributed to the influence of Brahms's alter ego.

Baldassare resorts to contemporary critics' reception of Brahms's Kreisler works to identify characteristics by which he could further entrench his analogising of the young Brahms and the fictional Kreisler. Referring to Adolf Schubring and Eduard Hanslick, Baldassare notes:

> The critics found fault with Brahms' *Piano Trio* in the quite noticeable moments which are characteristic of the musical aestheticism and poetics of Kreisler's creative process, that is "bizarre eccentricity" and the bias of musical expression towards "passion" as well as "disunity" in character and form, and whose correlates are "flabby counterpoint" and "over-weighted polyphony" regarding the compositional technique.[33]

Baldassare implies that the faults that critics found in the early version of Op. 8 are to be attributed to the manifestation of Brahms's identification with Johannes Kreisler. He asserts that a conscious calculation lies behind the "bizarre eccentricity":

> . . . a musical realization of poetic and aesthetic musical premises caused by, as much as mediated through, the examination of Hoffmann's literature on *Johannes Kreisler*, which – as explained – puts the individuality and subjectivity of the artist above every type of general objectived [*sic*] artistic rule.[34]

This would appear to be the result of an ideology prevalent in current research which would like to deny fault in the works of the great figures of music history. It would be far simpler and more conceivable to attribute the "eccentricity" to a combination of the

[33] Ibid., 162.
[34] Ibid., 162-163.

discrepancy between the aesthetics of Brahms and his reviewers, and to Brahms's compositional immaturity.[35]

Angelika Horstmann's study of the early reception of Brahms's Opp. 1 to 10 should be considered alongside Baldassare's citations of contemporary criticism.[36] Horstmann notes that Brahms was criticised for an inadequate mastery of form that led to structural chaos.[37] She later clarifies that this may have arisen from a misapprehension of Brahms's concept of form, which arose in response to innovative solutions to sonata-form gleaned already in Beethoven's late works.[38] It is interesting, though, that in a letter to his publisher describing the newly revised version of the Piano Trio, Op. 8, Brahms wrote: "Hopefully, it is no longer as chaotic as before."[39] The contrapuntal considerations mentioned by Baldassare are echoed in an anonymous review of 1854 which appeared in the *Niederrheinische Musikzeitung* and criticised Brahms's thematic development as reminiscent of a "contrapunktisches Uebungs-Exempel."[40] While Baldassare sees in the contemporary criticism a trust-worthy indication of what should be considered bizarre (and hence Kreislerian) in Brahms's music, Horstmann concludes that this criticism

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[35] That Brahms had not yet fully mastered the use of contrapuntal techniques in his music is supported by his later counterpoint exchange with Joachim, dating from the end of February 1856 onwards. (Refer to p. 41, n. 1 above in this regard.) In evaluating the gigues which resulted from Brahms's 1855 suite study, William Horne notes the primacy of contrapuntal malleability over considerations of harmonic rhythm or cadence (William Horne, "Through the Aperture: Brahms's Gigues WoO 4," *Musical Quarterly* 86/iii (Fall 2002): 531). He suggests the auto-didactic nature of the works as a possible explanation for the emphasis on elements associated with fugue (p. 541). In Brahms's later works we see a far smoother integration of contrapuntal technique, which would seem to indicate Brahms's compositional growth rather than a foregoing of the element of counterpoint so central to the music of Johannes Kreisler.

[36] Angelika Horstmann, "Die Rezeption der Werke op. 1 bis 10 von Johannes Brahms zwischen 1853 und 1860," in *Brahms und seine Zeit: Symposion Hamburg 1983*, ed. Constantin Floros, Hans Joachim Marx and Peter Petersen (Hamburg: Laaber-Verlag, 1984), 33-44.

[37] Horstmann, 36.

[38] Ibid., 40.

[39] Quoted in Baldassare, 147.

[40] Horstmann, 42.

"verdeutlicht den großen Einfluß, den die kulturpolitischen Strömungen der Zeit auf die Rezeption des noch unbekannten Komponisten und seines Schaffens hatten."[41]

Stephan Münch summarises the character of Kreisler's music as follows:

> Unabschließbarkeit, Offenheit und Skizzenhaftigkeit der musikalischen 'Produkte' Kreislers sind die notwendigen Folgen seiner Ästhetik, die das Durchleben des musikalischen Schaffensprozesses und das Erfahren des romantischen Wesens der Musik in der Begeisterung der Phantasie über den konkreten Audruck im Resultat ausgearbeiteter Werke stellt; "es ist romantisch, den konkreten Ausdruck als Verfall und Entstellung zu betrachten."[42]

The "Skizzenhaftigkeit" of Kreisler's music has been notably ignored by those seeking to find in Brahms's music the influence of Kreisler. Münch's description of Kreisler's music perfectly fits his agenda of elucidating Schumann's depiction of Kapellmeister Kreisler in his *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, but seems quite antithetical to Brahms's compositional aesthetic – even as evinced in the early works of his Kreisler period. It would seem that, while Schumann's affinity for Kreisler finds expression on the explicit musical level in musical portraits of the kapellmeister or evocations of his fictional music, Brahms's identification with the character had more profound workings. From a contemplation of the musical evidence, it appears that Brahms identified with Kreisler more on a personal or general aesthetic level than on a concretely musical one: his affinity for Kreisler was more the result of Hoffmann's acute portrait of the artist's marginal place in society and his glorification of music through Kreisler and the Kreisler texts than of any serious identification with Kreisler's superficially described musical characteristics.

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[41] Ibid., 43.
[42] Münch, 257. The quotation is from Mario Praz, *Liebe, Tod und Teufel. Die Schwarze Romantik* (refer to Münch, 257 for details).

Siegfried Kross notes that "the identification with Kreisler . . . lends all Brahms's early works a strongly literary tendency."[43] During Brahms's Kreisler period he exhibited a distinct predilection for attaching texts to instrumental works. This can be gleaned in the Andantes of the Piano Sonatas, Op. 1, 2 and 5;[44] in the motto *Rose und Heliotrop haben geduftet* with which Brahms entitled the manuscript dated 12 August 1854 containing two additional variations for the Op. 9 set;[45] and in the reference to the Scottish ballad "Edward" from Herder's *Stimmen der Völker* in the Ballade, Op. 10 no. 1.[46] Also indicative of this tendency is Brahms's initial desire to publish a collection of early works under the title "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers. Herausgegeben vom jungen Kreisler." After his dissociation from his alter ego, Brahms tended rather towards textless allusion.[47] It is ironic that the highly programmatic tendency of Brahms's music from the Kreisler period actually contradicts Hoffmann/Kreisler's ideal of instrumental music, i.e. instrumental music which does not refer to anything outside of itself.[48] It must also be pointed out that, unlike Schumann, Brahms can never be seen explicitly to take the kapellmeister Kreisler (or a work of E. T. A. Hoffmann) as the programme of a musical work.[49]

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[43] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 194.
[44] See in this regard George S. Bozarth, "Brahms's *Lieder ohne Worte*."
[45] *Werkverzeichnis*, 28.
[46] See in this regard Dillon Parmer, "Brahms and the Poetic Motto," 379-387.
[47] A notable exception is the Herder quotation which heads the Intermezzo, Op. 117 no. 1 (*Werkverzeichnis*, 468-469).
[48] For a thorough consideration of the programmatic in Brahms's works, see Dillon Parmer, "Brahms the Programmatic?"
[49] The allusion to Kreisler perceived by Kross in the inscription in the Adagio of Op. 15 (Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 200) would constitute a tentative programmatic element which, however has not been shown to manifest itself concretely in the musical discourse.

The only place Brahms could be seen explicitly to distinguish in his music between himself and his alter ego is in the manuscript of Op. 9, in which some variations are initialled "B[rahms]" and others "Kr[eisler]."[50] The dissociation of *Brahms* and *Kreisler* in this work constitutes a special case in which the two elements of Brahms's personality are explicitly 'typed'. This owes more to the occasional nature of the work and the allusion to Schumann's opposition of his alter egos, *Florestan* and *Eusebius*, than to any serious attempt by Brahms to attribute musical characteristics solely to his own alter ego.[51] According to the character typology established in the work, *Kreisler* is seen to be the proponent of extrovert, virtuosic music, while *Brahms* is attributed authorship of the introverted, more lyrical variations.[52] It is quite possible that this typology arose purely as a means to imitate the Florestan-Eusebius typology established by Schumann in some of his own piano works. That Brahms felt his alter ego to be an integral part of his personality has been established above. As such, Brahms's Kreisler persona was merely a device by which he mediated certain elements of his own personality and any musical element that hypothetically derives from his Kreisler persona must be understood to have its roots in Brahms himself. It would be preposterous to assert that the more extrovert elements of Brahms's music were solely attributable to his identification with Kreisler. It is noteworthy that, while Kreisler's fictional music is characterised by "elegantly contrapuntal devices,"[53] the many contrapuntal devices present in Op. 9 are to be found

[50] *Werkverzeichnis*, 28. See also p. 26 and p. 55 above.
[51] For a discussion of Brahms's Op. 9 as an act of homage to Schumann, see Charles Rosen, *Critical Entertainments: Music Old and New* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 186-191 . He concludes: "In a sense, the variations are a young composer's homage to the whole of Schumann's life" (p. 190). See also p. 26, n. 5 and p. 55 above.
[52] Danuser, 106.
[53] Hoffmann, ed. Charlton, 80.

chiefly in the *Brahms* variations.[54] This further negates the understanding that in Brahms's Op. 9 can be gleaned a serious objectification of his alter ego Kreisler.

Variation form lends itself to the succinct opposition of characters that is experienced in Brahms's Op. 9 and, as such, this opposition should not be unnecessarily overestimated. The duality in Op. 9 and in other works from Brahms's Kreisler period should not be attributed chiefly to the Brahms/Kreisler dichotomy. Rather, it should be understood as a manifestation of the duality pervasive in early Romantic aesthetics.[55] More than informing the creative aesthetic of contemporary composers and artists, this duality was part of the framework by which the Romantics understood themselves and the world in which they lived. The impetus for moments in Brahms's music which exhibit an opposition of the 'Brahmsian' and the 'Kreislerian' should be sought not in the fictional Kreisler, but rather in the early Romantic ideologies which establish such a duality as a basic tenet of artistic expression and of world view. This, then, would have been the force behind both Brahms's and Hoffmann's dualities. As such, the true significance of the Kreisler alter ego for Brahms should be viewed not merely in terms of a linear connection between Brahms and Hoffmann/Kreisler, but in terms of the effects of early Romantic aesthetic ideology. A representative understanding of the phenomenon must find a balance between considering Brahms's aesthetic and the fictional Kreisler as the result of the same ideological impetus on the one hand, and the evaluation of Brahms's aesthetic as derived from Kreisler on the other.

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[54] Danuser, 106.
[55] See pp. 5-6 above.

The elucidation of Brahms's identification with Kreisler assists in the understanding of the young composer's perception of and reaction to the aesthetic ideologies to which he was exposed and which were formative for him. That in the figure of Kreisler we find a crystallisation of the aesthetic ideologies of the era should not lead to the conclusion that, because Brahms can be seen to exhibit such values, he must have derived them from Kreisler. In reality the web of influences are not cleanly chartable. Brahms's aesthetic convictions were surely echoed by and found support in the literary figure which he took as his alter ego, but these convictions clearly derive from Brahms's musical heritage, his training and his experience of an early Romantic aesthetic ideology *per se*, rather than purely from the incarnation of such an ideology in the kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler. Considering the strength of Brahms's identification with Kreisler, one would expect to glean musico-aesthetic correspondences between the composer and the fictional character he took as his alter ego; the *influence* specifically of Brahms's identification with Kreisler on the musical fabric of his compositions has not convincingly been demonstrated.

An early account of Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* can be found in an anonymous article of April 1922 which appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Musik* and which is entitled "Innerer Betrachtung gewidmet."[56] The author notes a quotation from Lessing and goes on to show how Brahms can be seen to apply the values embodied in the quotation, using the example of Brahms's second symphony. All the quotations in Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* – and the ideological implications of these quotations – are bound to Brahms's alter ego Kreisler by the title of the collection. Kreisler junior was Brahms's reflection of himself and his ideals through literature. Perhaps it is in this light that the influence of Kreisler is

[56] "Innerer Betrachtung gewidmet," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 89/vii (April 1922): 164-165.

to be detected in Brahms's music: not in superficial correspondences to characteristics of the fictional Kreisler's music, but in the perpetuation of musical values derived by Brahms from his entire experience of literature.

CHAPTER 8

BIOGRAPHICAL CONSEQUENCES OF BRAHMS'S KREISLER IDENTIFICATION

If the phenomenon of Brahms's Kreisler identification appears to have been more a personal, ideological matter than a purely musical one, then it is necessary to look to his biography – rather than to his music – for the effects of the identification. As noted in the discussion of the influence of the identification on Brahms's music, it is often impossible to disentangle cause and effect. Whether any given correspondence with the kapellmeister constituted an initial point of identification for Brahms or was derived at least partially from the fictional character, cannot conclusively be ascertained. Many uncanny correspondences between Brahms and Kreisler continued to manifest themselves in Brahms's 'post-Kreisler' life and these should be mentioned even if the direct influence of Kreisler cannot be proved. The biographical influence of Brahms's Kreisler identification is also to be considered in connection with his reception by Robert Schumann.

After adopting the alter ego Johannes Kreisler junior, many similarities between Brahms and the fictional kapellmeister can be gleaned. A most obvious correspondence is the value of *Künstlerliebe* which Brahms seems to have exhibited – most notably in his relationship with Clara Schumann.[1] A letter of Brahms to Joachim of 19 June 1854 clarifies Brahms's understanding of love as something celestial – something distant and unattainable:

[1] For a discussion of Brahms's identification with the concept of *Künstlerliebe*, refer to pp. 40-41 above.

> I think I can't love a young girl at all any more, at least I have entirely forgotten them; after all, they merely promise the heaven which Clara shows us unlocked.[2]

His relationship with Clara Schumann began during his alter ego period, but even after Kreisler junior recedes from Brahms's biography, Brahms's love life appears to remain governed by the kapellmeister's ideals.[3] Avins notes that while "Brahms did fall in love again, several times, and throughout his life was always involved with a woman at one level of intensity or other, . . . [he] always retreats before it is too late."[4] Brahms appears to have been unable to reconcile the complementary aspects of spiritual love and sexual desire embodied in the traditional concept of romantic love. This fractured view of love would have found support in Kreisler's ideal of *Künstlerliebe*. It is impossible to say whether Brahms found in the ideal of *Künstlerliebe* one allied to that which he had already developed[5] or whether his ultimate feelings regarding women, love and marriage resulted from the Kreisler identification. In all likelihood, the concept of *Künstlerliebe* idealized in the Kreisler literature served to strengthen Brahms's already incipient notions of love and women.[6]

Jan Swafford notes of Brahms's *Schatzkästlein*:

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[2] *Life and Letters*, 48.
[3] Knepler notes: "Unter den Gründen, die Brahms unverheiratet bleiben ließen, dürfte einer ausschlaggebend gewesen sein: Er glaubte es seiner Kunst schuldig zu sein, von persönlichen Verpflichtungen frei zu bleiben" (Knepler, 39).
[4] *Life and Letters*, 763. See esp. n. 12 for Avins's noting of a correspondence between Brahms and Kreisler in this regard. See also Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto," 236-237.
[5] See Avins's suggestion that both Brahms's and his brother Fritz's continued bachelorhood stems from their parents difficult marriage (*Life and Letters*, 763).
[6] For a discussion of Brahms's ongoing struggle with the contradictions of *Künstlerliebe* and its manifestation in the Magelone Romanzen, Op. 33, see Boyer, "Brahms as Count Peter of Provence: A Psychosexual Interpretation of the *Magelone* Poetry."

> The title "Young Kreisler" also echoes one of the iconic books of that era [Romanticism], Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*, the story of a poet who kills himself over a frustrated passion for the betrothed of a friend.[7]

Brahms had not met the Schumanns before taking on his alter ego, Johannes Kreisler junior, but the Goethean overtones of Brahms's *Schatzkästlein*, as pointed out by Swafford, find uncanny realisation through his subsequent relationship with Clara and Robert Schumann. The mid-1850s was a period during which Brahms struggled with his burgeoning love for Clara, the wife of his friend and mentor. In a letter of 12 August 1875 to his publisher, Fritz Simrock, Brahms gives insight into his state of mind in 1856, from which time the original version of his Piano Quartet, Op. 60, dates.[8] He suggests a picture for the title-page of that work which would depict him in a blue frockcoat and yellow trousers, with a pistol pointing at his head. This is an obvious allusion to the "young Werther."[9]

Styra Avins summarises a number of the coincidences between the biographies of Brahms and the fictional Kreisler which all post-date Brahms's initial impetus towards the alter ego:

> . . . as [Brahms's] life went on, as he encountered the benign influence of the Schumann home and then the sympathy and interest of Clara Schumann (analogous to the *Rätin* Benson [*sic*] in Hoffmann's novel, an appealing and sympathetic widow in her mid-thirties); as he accepted a position as court musician in Detmold, a Duchy almost as tiny as the fictional Sieghartsweiler which Kapellmeister Kreisler inhabits; as he imagined himself in love with Julie Schumann and was distressed at her marriage to Count Radicati (the Rätin has a lovely, young, and musical daughter Julia, who is quite partial to Kreisler but who

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[7] Swafford, 36.
[8] *Life and Letters*, 483-484.
[9] This allusion can be find on numerous occasions in the correspondence. See for instance a letter of 1874 to Billroth, quoted in Swafford, 393.

> prepares to marry a nobleman), there must have been many moments when the relationship between himself and Hoffmann's hero seemed uncanny.[10]

Such correspondences would surely have made Brahms feel increasingly as if his life and destiny were entwined with the fictional Kreisler, but these coincidences could more likely be ascribed to the acuity of Hoffmann's portrait of the artist, his place in society and the eventualities of such circumstances.

Brahms's caustic irony and disregard for social etiquette have been widely attested. Constantin Floros notes that "nicht nur hielt er wenig auf Etikette, sondern er verletzte recht oft auch die gesellschaftlichen Umgangsformen. . . . In Gesellschaften gebärdete er sich oft als *enfant terrible*, beleidigte die Gäste, gab sich mitunter plump, derb und grob."[11] Such a manner of social conduct would have found its precedent in the attitude Kreisler presents to the court at Sieghartsweiler in *Kater Murr*. It has been noted that Kreisler is exceptional in managing to remain amid the upper echelons of feudal society without respecting their code of etiquette.[12] That in his fictional kapellmeister Hoffmann idealised this disdain for social courtesy in connection with an uncompromising artistic stance, might have laid the seeds for Brahms's later social coarseness.

The discrepancy between secular society and true art which is highlighted in Hoffmann's Kreisler literature may also have been responsible for Brahms's avoidance of long term attachments to institutional posts. Floros aligns Brahms's preference for a freelance

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[10] *Life and Letters*, 40. The Rätin's name is *Benzon*. Brahms draws an explicit comparison between the Court of Detmold with that in *Kater Murr* and Clara Schumann with the character of Julia in his letter to Clara Schumann of 26 June 1855. (For the relevant section of the letter, refer to p. 60 above.)
[11] Floros, *Johannes Brahms: "Frei aber einsam"*, 52.
[12] On p. 20, n. 17 above.

lifestyle to the commitment phobia he exhibits in his avoidance of marriage.[13] These can be interpreted as indicative of Brahms's incapability or unwillingness to fully integrate into everyday society.[14] He was first and foremost a musician – not one of "die guten Leute"[15] – and would have felt any such earthly commitments to be a betrayal of his art.[16]

Analogising and noting of correspondences cannot, however, substantiate categorical assertions regarding the biographical consequences of Brahms's Kreisler identification. The complex intermingling of cause and effect, influence and consequence, allows this line of inquiry to result only in a more intimate psychological portrait of a composer who tried as best he could to control what elements of his biography would endure.

Brahms's identification with Johannes Kreisler may have had more direct consequences on his interaction with and reception by Robert Schumann. In March 1850, Robert and Clara Schumann visited Hamburg. Brahms delivered a package of his compositions to their hotel for the perusal and evaluation of Robert, the acclaimed composer and music critic. The parcel was, however returned unopened.[17] The rejection Brahms felt at the hand of Robert Schumann discouraged his pursuit of Schumann's help. Several years later, Joachim was instrumental in convincing Brahms to reconsider approaching Schumann. His path to Schumann was nevertheless not a direct one.[18] In a letter to Joachim of October 1853, Brahms writes, "Erst seit meinem Wegsein aus Hamburg und

[13] Ibid., 29.
[14] See in this regard Kneif, 13.
[15] See p. 20, n. 16 above.
[16] See p. 87, n. 3 above.
[17] See p. 39, n. 23.
[18] Kross, "Brahms and Schumann," 12-14.

besonders während meines Aufenthaltes in Mehlem lernte ich Schumanns Werke kennen und verehren."[19] It is likely that Brahms's encountering of traces of his beloved Kreisler in works such as Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, *Nachtstücke*, Op. 23, or *Phantasiestücke*, Op. 12, would have made firm his resolve to approach the older composer once again.[20] He did this just after his stay in Mehlem, meeting Robert Schumann on 30 September 1853.

Schumann's own fascination with Hoffmann's fictional kapellmeister has already been noted.[21] He would have been alerted to Brahms's Kreislerian preoccupations early in their acquaintance – if not by signatures on the manuscripts which Brahms provided, then through Brahms's own rapturous enthusiasm for the subject. Schumann would have perceived in Brahms's alter ego traces of his own aesthetic of 'poetic music'.[22] Brahms's Kreisler identification would have contributed significantly to Schumann's perception of the young composer, about whom he wrote the seminally important article "Neue Bahnen," published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* on 28 October 1853.

In Schumann's "Neue Bahnen" he prophesied Brahms as a messianic figure who would show the way forward for German music.[23] Constantin Floros claims of the article:

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[19] *Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*, 1:9. Avins's translation of "lernte . . . kennen und verehren" as "learn to know and honour" (*Life and Letters*, 21) is unidiomatic and problematic in its strong implication that Brahms was previously acquainted with Schumann's works, albeit more superficially. Kross translates the phrase more accurately as "come to know and revere" (Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 197, n. 15).

[20] The titles of these works all allude to titles of Hoffmann's works in which the Kapellmeister Kreisler features prominently.

[21] See p. 50 above.

[22] Floros, *Johannes Brahms: "Frei aber einsam"*, 146-147.

[23] Much commentary has arisen from the article. Kross, in his discussion of the document, goes so far as to assert that it has been over-interpreted (Kross, "Brahms and Schumann," 19). For a comprehensive

> Ich konnte ferner feststellen, daß Schumann bei der Abfassung des Textes eine Erzählung E. Th. A. Hoffmanns vor Augen hatte: das letzte *Phantasiestück* aus der zweiten Sammlung der *Kreisleriana*, die Schlüsselerzählung *Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief*. Zwischen den beiden Texten bestehen nähmlich sowohl in der Reihenfolge der Gedanken als auch in der Stilistik und selbst in der Wortwahl und Metaphorik höchst beachtliche Korrespondenzen. Sie helfen uns erkennen, daß Schumanns Artikel auch als "Lehrbrief" für Brahms konzipiert war, der sich in der Jugend als "junger Kreisler" verstand.[24]

The definitive effect of the Kreisler complex on Schumann's article – which has mediated Brahms reception ever since its publication – is one of the few tangible consequences of Brahms's Kreisler identification.

Schumann became inextricably tied up in Brahms's concept of Kreisler. It appears no coincidence that Schumann's protracted illness corresponds with the period of Brahms's dissociation from his alter ego. Schumann's suicide attempt on 27 February 1854 was deeply disturbing for Brahms and interrupted a period of great creative productivity. Avins notes that following the tragedy, "enough momentum was left to complete and publish two more works – the *Variations on a Theme of Schumann*, Op. 9, and the Ballades for Piano, op. 10. But after that there was silence for almost six years."[25] Brahms did not stop composing, but interestingly this transitional period sees an intense devotion to contrapuntal studies and the study of music of the Renaissance and Baroque masters. Schumann's illness and Brahms's incipient dissociation from his alter ego appear to have been reflected in Brahms's creative work by the onset of a serious quest

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discussion, see Constantin Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 99-114; and his later article "Brahms – der 'Messias' und 'Apostel.' Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte des Artikels 'Neue Bahnen,'" *Die Musikforschung* 36/i (1983): 24-29.

[24] Floros, "Brahms – der 'Messias' und 'Apostel'," 24. An explicit concurrent analysis of Schumann's "Neue Bahnen" and Hoffmann's "Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief" can be found in Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 107-111.

[25] *Life and Letters*, 37. Both the Variations, Op. 9, and the Ballades, Op. 10, were completed in the Summer of 1854. The Variations were published that later that year, but the Ballades were published only in 1856 (*Werkverzeichnis*, 27-30).

for technical mastery. After the publication of the Ballades, Op. 10, in 1856 (completed in Summer of 1854), Brahms did not publish another work until 1860. The lull in Brahms's output during this period is intimately linked to the fracturing of his relationship with his alter ego. It is noteworthy that the first works to be published after this lull were issued precisely in 1860 and thus coincide with Brahms's humorous reference to Kreisler as his "alias" in the "Avertimento" of the *Hamburger Frauenchor*.

CHAPTER 9

RE-EVALUATING BRAHMS'S *JOHANNES KREISLER JUNIOR*: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE BRAHMS-*BILD*

Brahms's identification with E. T. A. Hoffmann's Kapellmeister Kreisler has been shown to have been an important element of Brahms's own identity. The identification can be gleaned most palpably in the manifestation of Brahms's alter ego, Johannes Kreisler junior, which he adopted in his early adulthood. It remains to contemplate the significance of the identification and the alter ego phenomenon in terms of what these meant for Brahms and how they affect our perception of the composer and his artistic output.

Most obviously, the explicit expression of Brahms's Kreisler identification foregrounds the composer's literary preoccupations, which were evident from an early age. The direct influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann is explicit from Brahms's identification with Hoffmann's fictional creation, who was in fact the author's own alter ego. The concept of the doppelgänger derives from another favourite of Brahms: Jean Paul. Janice E. Patten explains Jean Paul's concept: "In his work there is an intrinsic duality in which an 'I' participates in life while another 'I' merely observes, both in a state of perpetual coexistence."[1] This is a fitting description of Brahms's alter ego: it was the 'I' with which he addressed himself to his circle of friends and to which he privately attributed the composition of his works during the alter ego period. It was not a contradictory persona. Kreisler junior was simply Brahms's doppelgänger – the 'I' which participated

[1] Janice E. Patten, "E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'The Sandman,'" in *The Literary Link*, site of Janice E. Patten, <http://the literarylink.com/hoffmann.html> [first published 2002; accessed 31 January 2005].

in life. Brahms's adoption of an alter ego, then, can be seen in light of a concept established in early German Romantic literature, which had as one its underlying tenets the duality of man's existence.[2]

The notions that, in the Romantic era, literature had a direct influence on music, or that there was a merging of the two art forms, has been described by John Daverio as "among the most prominent of Romanticism's self-*mis*representations." He continues:

> . . . the "literalization" of nineteenth-century music through figurative titles and poetic programs is probably little more than an external means of signaling the music's claims to artistic worth in an era that prized the written word over the transient and ineffable tone as a carrier of intellectual substance.[3]

The "literalization" of which Daverio speaks does not encompass the personal phenomenon of Brahms's alter ego, but the "claims to artistic worth" which he suggests as a motivation for it may have applied equally to Brahms's adoption of his doppelgänger. Brahms's association of himself with an iconic fictional character would certainly have lent his identity more gravitas – even if only in his own self-perception. The alter ego was, indeed, a feature of Brahms's early adulthood, dating from a time during which Brahms was yet to consolidate his personal and artistic identity. It can be speculated that partial motivation for Brahms's alter ego lies in the young composer's artistic insecurity – in the immaturity which the self-conscious and self-critical Brahms would no doubt have intuited. This theory finds support in the fact that Brahms's dissociation from his alter ego coincides with the end of his "Lehr- und Jugendzeit"[4] and

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[2] See pp. 5-6 above.
[3] John Daverio, *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (New York: Schirmer, 1993), 8.
[4] Floros, *Brahms und Bruckner*, 97.

the contemporaneous intensive technical consolidation he undertook in his contrapuntal exchange with Joachim and in his study of early music.[5]

Brahms made heavy use of poetic models in the early works of the Kreisler period.[6] Bozarth notes the "too direct and lasting a reliance" on these models to be indicative of these works' immaturity. He suggests that "the prolonged gestation of the first movement of the d minor Concerto may well have been due to the difficulty Brahms experienced in making [the] conversion to a more 'absolutist' approach in which the demands of the musical materials, albeit inspired by 'extra-musical' events, are given their full due."[7] That the period which culminated in the first movement of the Piano Concerto, Op. 15 is the transitional period during which Brahms's dissociation from his alter ego occurs, suggests that the dissociation brought a maturity characterised by the synthesis of literary influences on both personal and artistic fronts.

Based on the foregoing discussion, it has been established that Brahms's reference to himself as Kreisler does not constitute a reference to a distinct, possibly antithetical part of his personality. Rather, his identities of *Brahms* and *Kreisler* were "eine bis zur Austauschbarkeit der Namen getriebene literarische Identifikation."[8] Kross goes on to note of the Brahms-Kreisler *Bruderpaar*:

> Sie traten überhaupt erst auseinander in der Phase der Dissoziation nach der Identitätsfindung des jungen Brahms, aber auch dann blieben Identifizierung und

[5] See also Kross, "Brahms und Schumann," 34: "Je bewußter er sich seines eigenen Künstlertums wurde, desto weniger bedurfte er des Vehikels einer solchen literarisierenden Mystifikation; wobei noch Brahms und Kreisler als verschiedene Entwicklungsstufen ein und derselben Person erlebt wurde."
[6] See for instance Parmer, "Brahms and the Poetic Motto."
[7] Bozarth, "Brahms's First Piano Concerto op.15," 246.
[8] Kross, "Brahms und Schumann," 35.

> deren Überwindung Entwicklungsstufen ein und derselben Person, ohne je zum Gegensatz zu werden.[9]

As such, the identification and consequent alter ego provide an intimate window into Brahms's struggle for his own identity and into how he viewed himself.

The superficial descriptions of Kreisler's fictional music cannot be seen to have played a significant role in Brahms's identification with the character; Brahms's music has not convincingly been shown to demonstrate features derived specifically from the fictional kapellmeister. It also seems that the identification did not stem from concrete episodes in the fictional life of Johannes Kreisler. Rather, Brahms's identification with Kreisler resulted from "die allgemeine Aussagen über romantische Kunst, romantisches Künstlertum und ihre Funktion und Integration oder Desintegration in der Gesellschaft, die Hoffmann im Zusammenhang mit seiner Kreisler-Figur formulierte."[10] This foregrounds Brahms's perception of himself as disparate from everyday, secular (non-artistic) society. His view of himself as an 'outsider' has been well documented.[11]

Tibor Kneif may have pinpointed the distillation of Kreisler's struggle with the dichotomy of artist and non-artist when he notes Brahms's value of work as a kind of "secularised piety." He contextualises this aesthetic with Brahms's continuing bachelorhood, in what appears to be an uncanny expression of Kreisler's value of *Künstlerliebe*:

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Kross, "Brahms' künstlerische Identität," 329-330. That Brahms's identification with Kreisler is based on the character's context rather than on his actual narrated experience is echoed in Brahms's treatment of Eichendorff's texts in his early Lieder, Op. 3 and Op. 7. Ludwig Finscher concludes: "the quintessence of the Eichendorff songs seems to be that the young Brahms was concerned with the poems not so much as poems, but rather as emanations of a poetical world in which he was still trying to live" (Finscher, 344).
[11] See for instance *Life and Letters*, 397.

> . . . man [müßte] das oben dargelegte Motiv der Arbeit als einer säkularisierten Frömmigkeit aufgreifen und in Brahms' Verzicht auf Familienglück einen Zug nahezu mönchischer Askese erblicken, die bei ihm nicht 'ad majorum dei' sondern 'ad artis gloriam' diente.[12]

The psychological significance of Brahms's signing the name *Kreisler* as a mark of ownership enforces an understanding that, until his dissociation from his alter ego, Brahms *was* Kreisler and vice versa. The context of Brahms's Kreisler signatures is crucial for an evaluation of their significance for the composer. In one of the earliest serious considerations of the topic of Brahms's Kreisler identification, Siegfried Kross seems to have overlooked (or not had access to) letters which Brahms signed with the name *Kreisler* or in which he referred to himself as Kreisler. As such, he concludes:

> From the letters, which are after all communications between real persons, it becomes clear that this identification applied only to Brahms's artistic and poetic existence. Despite the extensive use of the name Kreisler to indicate the author of his compositions, Brahms seems never to have signed a letter with it.[13]

This conclusion clearly needs to be updated based on the currently available evidence. The Kreisler identification did not apply merely to Brahms's artistic existence; rather it seems to have had significant personal grounds. The interchangeability of the names *Brahms* and *Kreisler* in the personal interaction of the Brahms circle during the composer's alter ego period shows the identification to have been more than a purely artistic pretension. Indeed, it is difficult to distinguish between the artistic and the personal spheres of one so thoroughly immersed in his craft. It is precisely this dilemma which Kreisler represents.

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[12] Kneif, 13.
[13] Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," 194.

The response of the Brahms circle to his alter ego is instructive as to how the phenomenon should be understood. Judging from the correspondence, Julius Otto Grimm received the doppelgänger with the most enthusiasm. His letters reveal copious references to Brahms as "Kreisler."[14] Especially notable are the references of Grimm when writing of Brahms in the third person.[15] However, it must be noted that all the letters which show Grimm referring to Brahms in the third person were likely written in the presence of Brahms himself, who would have contributed significantly to the particular style and content of these letters.[16] Joachim was evidently more sceptical of the mystification, but can still be seen to have addressed Brahms as "Kreisler."[17] In addition, the majority of Grimm's letters which refer to Brahms in the third person as "Kreisler" were addressed to Joachim.[18] This demonstrates an advanced level of acceptance of *Brahms* and *Kreisler* as equivalent and proves that the alter ego did not relate merely to Brahms's artistic existence.

[14] For Grimm addressing Brahms as "Kreisler," see to his letters to Brahms of 21 December 1853, 16 August 1854, or late October 1854 (refer to p. 11 above).
[15] See his letters to Joachim of 9 April 1854, July 1854 and 10 November 1854, and his letter to Clara Schumann of 19 April 1885 (refer to pp. 11-11 above).
[16] In the letter of 9 April 1854, Grimm notes: "Br[ahms]–Kr[eisler]– is here just now . . ." (*Life and Letters*, 42). In the letter of July 1854, Grimm's opening paragraph makes explicit that his letter is but an introduction to Brahms's letter which continues from Grimm's own with no further salutation or indication of date, following Grimm's indication "Volti subito!" (*Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*, 48-49). In the letter of 10 November 1854, Grimm conveys numerous messages from Brahms. These are interspersed among the body of Grimm's letter and seem to reflect Brahms's intermittent interjection during the writing of the letter. "Unsrige" is clarified as referring to "Brahms und meine." In addition, Moser notes that the address on the envelope of this letter is in Brahms's hand (*Briefwechsel Joachim – Brahms*, 70-71). In Grimm's letter to Clara Schumann of 19 April 1885, the reference to Brahms as "Kreisler" occurs in a report of Grimm and Brahms's common living habits and frequent meetings (Gärtner, 66). With regard to this letter I must rely on Gärtner's excerpt and brief contextualisation. The physical presence or absence of Brahms during the writing of this letter cannot be ascertained from this source.
[17] See his letters to Brahms of 25(?) March 1854 and of April 1854 (refer to p. 11 above).
[18] The exception is the letter to Clara Schumann mentioned in Gärtner, 66. See p. 11, n. 18.

Brahms's doppelgänger was intended to be received only by a limited group of intimates. This should be taken into account when considering the Kreisler signatures found on some of Brahms's early manuscripts. Genette notes of such paratextual features: "The public and the reader are not unvaryingly and uniformly obligated: . . . many notes are addressed only to *certain* readers."[19] Applied to Brahms's Kreisler manuscripts, this foregrounds the difference between Brahms's intended audience for the Kreisler references and his intended audience for the printed score. The issue is further complicated when considering the different substantial status of the Kreisler signatures (verbal) and the main text as perceived in performance (musical). For those who would have seen the original manuscripts – Brahms's intimate friends and, to a necessary extent, his publisher – the Kreisler signatures would have constituted a peritextual device which would have been immediately understood in light of this audience's personal interaction with Brahms and experience of his doppelgänger.

With further reference to Genette's codification of the paratext, it is interesting to note the changing function of the Kreisler signatures on the manuscripts of Brahms's early works. It would appear that they originally functioned as a selectively directed peritext. By virtue of scholarly research and the consequent general awareness of the signatures, the function of these marks for the current audience of the relevant musical texts has become that of an epitext, the connotations of which are different from those of the original peritexts because of their distance from the main text and the distance of the

[19] Genette, 4.

current audience from the intended context of those peritexts.[20] The distance of the signatures and their original context from current contemplations of the relevant musical works has resulted in a distorted perception of the markings: many have sought in them the basis of a "secret program."[21] It has been demonstrated that the presence of the Kreisler signatures by no means indicates Brahms's programmatic concern with the character.[22] Awareness of the signatures should impact not on one's understanding of the given musical works *per se*, but rather on one's understanding of the man who composed these works.

To understand the signatures simply as a reference to Hoffmann's Kreisler literature would facilitate their categorisation as a typical paratextual device, the purpose of which is to moderate the main text in one way or another. But because Kreisler was Brahms's doppelgänger, rather than merely a pseudonym, the Kreisler signatures do not quite constitute a paratext according to Genette's notion of the concept. Genette emphasises that the "paratext is only an assistant, only an accessory to the text."[23] The meaning of the paratext is dependent on and inseparable from the meaning of the text itself.[24] During the alter ego period, Brahms felt the Kreisler signatures to be analogous to his own. The fact that they remained a private occurrence shows Brahms's concern for the proper

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[20] This change of function would not apply to one viewing the original manuscript or an edition which were to institute the Kreisler signatures, although a discrepancy would remain between the understanding of a contemporary audience and Brahms's intended audience for the signatures.

[21] I borrow the term from the title of Dillon Parmer, "Brahms, Song Quotation, and Secret Programs," *19th-Century Music* 19/ii (Fall 1995): 161-190. It also echoes Constantin Floros's title "Verschwiegene Programmusik" for chapter fifteen in Constantin Floros, *Musik als Botschaft* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989), 140.

[22] They do not constitute the "evidence of a kind of interpretive control on the part of the composer aimed at guiding the listeners" which Parmer asserts as the basis for identifying Brahms's programmatic intentions (Parmer, *Brahms the Programmatic?*, 27).

[23] Genette, 410.

[24] Ibid., 12.

understanding of such a sign – that it would not be misinterpreted. The Kreisler signatures on the early manuscripts must be understood as genuine marks of authorship, rather than peritexts aiming to guide the reception of the works.

It has been noted above that *Johannes Kreisler junior* cannot be considered a pseudonym. Nor is it a case of what Genette terms an "imagined author"[25] – which is, indeed, a form of pseudonymity. The careless reference to Kreisler as Brahms's pseudonym has had serious repercussions for the interpretation of the alter ego phenomenon. Genette notes that when one becomes aware of an author's pseudonym and patronymic and considers them together or in alternation, "inevitably, he distinguishes within his image or idea the figure of the author from the figure of the private man."[26] Brahms's presentation of the Kreisler signatures on his manuscripts was always accompanied by some form of his own name, if not his own physical presence and acknowledgement of the work as his own. As such, the perceived dichotomy resulting from the elucidation of a pseudonym would not have been felt by the intended audience of the Kreisler signatures. Instead, his Kreisler signatures would have led those initiates who saw them to infer attributes of the fictional character onto Brahms, with no distinction implied between Brahms the artist and Brahms the man. In the scholarly appraisal of Brahms's Kreisler signatures, the visual dichotomy of the opposing *Brahms* and *Kreisler* signatures has been interpreted as a dichotomy within Brahms, rather than as the dual expression of a single being. The evaluation of Kreisler junior as Brahms's doppelgänger supports the latter interpretation: the alter ego constitutes an extension of Brahms's own identity. It does not – as a

[25] Ibid., 47.
[26] Ibid., 50.

pseudonym would – point to the expression of two discreet elements embodied in the young Johannes Brahms.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Brahms's identification with the fictional Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler was the product of a young, introverted mind utterly engrossed in literature. The penchant of the early German Romantic writers for mystifications of identity laid the grounds for the explicit manifestation of Brahms's identification as an alter ego. The results of any attempt to elucidate the initial cause of the identification must remain largely speculative, but such contemplations are useful in that they lead to a more acute psychological portrait of an exceptionally reclusive composer.

A lack of care in referring to the alter ego phenomenon has led to scholarly interpretations which do not hold up to closer scrutiny. The function for Brahms of Johannes Kreisler junior was not that of a pseudonym; such an evaluation distorts the implications inherent in the phenomenon. It is more accurate to refer to the Kreisler junior as Brahms's alter ego. In light of the composer's noted immersion in the literature of early German Romanticism, it is possibly even more appropriate to speak of Kreisler junior as Brahms's doppelgänger. From the various contexts in which Brahms used the name it is clear that, especially during the alter ego period, he felt Kreisler to be an extension of his own identity. *Brahms* and *Kreisler* constitute analogous manifestations of a single identity, rather than opposing identities which take turn in expressing themselves through a single being.

The evolution of Brahms's relationship to his alter ego provides a quite private insight into the changing state of the composer's psyche and bides for a clearer idea of how Brahms viewed himself – both synchronically and diachronically. Brahms's dissociation from his alter ego does not necessarily indicate a distancing from the values associated with the fictional Kreisler and his creator, E. T. A. Hoffmann. Rather, it seems to be indicative of Brahms's incipient maturity – both personal and artistic. Indeed, the strength of Brahms's Kreisler identification seems to derive from the fact that, for the true artist, one's personal life and one's artistic life cannot be easily distinguished. Brahms's post-alter ego biography demonstrates his own inability to reconcile himself to a typical, *bürgerliche* existence.

The identification has not been convincingly demonstrated to have shaped Brahms's musical style or compositional output. Indeed, the idea that Brahms would have allowed the fictional stylistic traits of Kapellmeister Kreisler's music to shape his own compositional style is incongruous with the composer's well-known self-criticism and the continuity of his stylistic voice.[1] Brahms's identification appears to stem, rather, from an affinity with E. T. A. Hoffmann's concepts of art and the artist, as well as the author's portrayal of the predicament of the artist's position in society. That Hoffmann's fictional Kreisler constitutes a distillation of early German Romantic aesthetic ideology frustrates any attempt to pinpoint the influence of Hoffmann/Kreisler on Brahms's aesthetic considerations. It cannot be clarified whether characteristics of Brahms's aesthetic were derived from his general immersion in the ideologies of German Romanticism *per se*, or

[1] Swafford notes that "no composer ever had a more consistent and audible stylistic signature than Johannes Brahms, and he had it in some degree from the first works he allowed to survive" (Swafford, 45).

from Hoffmann's propagation of these ideologies via his literary creation, Johannes Kreisler.

There are many uncanny correspondences between the narrated experiences of the fictional Johannes Kreisler and the biography of Brahms after taking on Kreisler as an alter ego. It is impossible to determine to what extent such correspondences were precipitated by Brahms's youthful preoccupation with Hoffmann's kapellmeister. Most likely, Brahms found in the character of Johannes Kreisler support for his own incipient values. The web of influence and consequence is a complex one and any categorical assertion would show disregard for the intensely personal nature of the phenomenon.

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