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Gender and Compositional Choice: Four Songs on a Poem of Heinrich Heine by Female and Male Composers

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ABSTRACT

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As an accepted genre of female composition, song lies in a unique position among musical genres. This allows it to stand largely outside the area of Claude Steele’s notion of “stereotype threat,” and being absent such weighty pressures, it could then furnish an arena in which female composers can do their best work. As a genre that combines the arts of music and poetry, song is based upon a given set of symbols that provide the composer with inspiration. The study of these symbols and their possible metaphorical meanings can offer a guide to that inspiration. By studying two settings by male composers and two settings of female composers, we can compare their individual and gendered approach to those symbols for elements of a masculine or feminine style.

Heinrich Heine’s 23rd poem in Die Heimkehr, analyzed thoroughly in Chapter 2, is the focal text in this study. In Chapters 3 through 6 each of the settings is examined at length using both a standard formal analysis and the “Grundgestalt” concept of Schoenberg. The settings examined are “Ihr Bild” by Franz Schubert, “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” and “Ihr Bildniss” (two versions of the same work) by Clara Schumann, “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” by Hugo Wolf, and a setting of the same name by Ingeborg von Bronsart. Each discussion focuses on the individual reactions to the specific symbols identified in Chapter 2, as well as the global
approach to some well-known literary aspects of paternalistic literary culture of the time. The thesis concludes with a summary of the similarities and differences in the preceding four examinations. Chapter 7 also draws conclusions based on those contrasts, which yields an evaluation of gendered reactions and the possibility of a feminine style in the nineteenth century.
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Dedicated to my children Anlyn and Trey.
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Chapter 1- Song: a Search for a Feminine Style in the Nineteenth Century

This study examines four songs on the same text of Heine: Schubert’s "Ihr Bild" (1828), Clara Schumann’s “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” (1840), and the settings of the same name by Hugo Wolf (1878) and Ingeborg von Bronsart (1872). As one of the accepted media for women’s creative expression, song presents several interesting issues in relationship to the stereotyping of women in the nineteenth century. Song is a mixed art form. It combines two different art forms, both of which use imagery in non-specific ways to convey meaning. The union of music and poetry then becomes something unique, neither absolute poetics nor absolute music; the fusion of the two creates a separate artistic entity. The addition of poetry to music adds another level of complexity in the understanding of the piece. Interpretation is critical since the interpreter (composer) is creating the "song" and not the poet. As will be discussed in much more detail in Chapter 2, the role of the composer as the interpreter of the poem defines the musical language that will be used in transforming the poem from literary expression into musical utterance.

The poem itself may hold significant problems for the female composer. In the nineteenth century most poets were male. Men were steeped in the profound social construct of the “domestic” woman. The same social construct that served to subjugate women also served to elevate and provide status to men. The concept of the “domestic” role of women in the nineteenth century had a profound role in the
way males were defined and the social status they could attain. As I will discuss later, the proper “domestic” woman became a sought after “prize” for the nineteenth-century male. There are several possible ramifications of the musical settings by female composers of these “gendered” images created by the paternalistic literary field. The weight of the heavy social stereotype on the female composer may cause her reactions to the imagery of a male poet to become so infused with her social context that the understanding of those reactions are crucial to having a genuine understanding of the piece.

By examining four song settings on the Heine text “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” and highlighting the imagery in the text, I will show how the images the composer does or does not set, and how they do so, make clear the composers’ reading of the poem. The musical selections include settings by two male and two female composers. This will not only clarify the differences between individual composers, but might reveal some evidence of a gendered reading of those images. If there are gendered reactions to the images of the poem, then it might provide some clue to the existence and understanding of a “feminine” style within nineteenth-century music.

“Stereotype Threat”

One of the central questions involved in women’s studies in the emerging public life of women in the nineteenth century is the impact of the powerful social construct of the “domestic.” The relative situation of the genders in the nineteenth century created an almost impossible barrier for women to escape the “domestic” and the heavy shadow of inferiority created by such a dynamic stereotype. It is
important to analyze the impact of this “domestic” construct on the musical world of the nineteenth century--more specifically, how this construct relates to song as a genre, to its compositional style, and to the various aspects of analysis and performance. Some of the modern research on stereotypes and their effects will illustrate how the “domestic” stereotype affected the development of the burgeoning field of women’s music in the nineteenth century. The appearance of acceptable women’s genres created an avenue of musical expression that was relatively free of the stereotype and thus provided compositional opportunities in which women could operate with lessened fear of “identity threat.”

In his book Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What we can do, Claude Steele argues that, “I believe stereotype threat is a standard predicament of life. It springs from our human powers of intersubjectivity—the fact that as members of society we have a pretty good idea of what other members of our society think about lots of things, including the major groups and identities in society.” In his book he outlines his concept called “stereotype threat” and how it can alter the identity of those being stereotyped. The theory suggests that everyone experiences parts of their identity that are affected by one stereotype or another. These stereotypes will significantly affect our performance even if we do not believe in them or strive against them. In one test of stereotype, relevant to gender stereotypes, Steele tested a group of highly motivated math achievers from both sexes and administered a sophisticated and complicated math exam. In the first group, the women were told that the test was examining gendered intelligence. This put them under the “stereotype threat” of women performing badly on high level
math exams. The women scored poorly as compared to their male counterpoints. A second group, with similar qualifications was tested, and this time the women were told that the test had no bearing on gendered intelligence. The results of this exam were that the women performed as well as their male counterparts. In numerous studies this phenomenon surfaced with many different ethnic groups and under many different versions of stereotype. Consistently, those who were the most motivated and skilled suffered the most under a “stereotype threat,” while the unmotivated or under-prepared showed little difference in performance. Steele argues that it is the fear of fulfilling the stereotype and thus reinforcing the very stereotype that one is trying to avoid that causes an “over-efforting” and frustration. Steele proposes that this frustration and “over-efforting” caused by constantly operating under “stereotype threat” will lead to long-term problems in well-being. People under this kind of pressure tend to find places in which the risk of “stereotype threat” is lessened or nullified; they join peer groups in which they don’t have to prove themselves, or they simply avoid the stereotype altogether. If, as Steele argues, “Stereotype threat, then, is a general phenomenon,” it has profound implications for the study of women in music in the nineteenth century.

The “Angel in the House”

Stereotypes in the nineteenth century dealing with the dynamic of the sexes were profoundly universal, rigid, and deeply rooted in society. The power and depth of this “social construct” can be seen in many aspects of nineteenth-century life. Women in many parts of Europe were viewed as property. They were not allowed to participate in legal proceedings such as filing for divorce. They were not
allowed to vote. Women were not only stereotyped as belonging to the “domestic,” but they were systematically marginalized. The insidious stereotype of the “domestic” touched every aspect of the feminine existence. Women were expected to manage the family estate while not being permitted money of their own. The power of these stereotypes can be seen in every aspect of art as women attempted to exit the “domestic” and enter the “public” world of the arts. This poem by Anne Finch, written in 1713, describes the all-encompassing nature of the feminine position in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe.

They tell us we mistake our sex and way
Good breeding, fashion, dancing, dressing play
Are the accomplishments we shou’d desire:
To write, or read, or think, or to enquire
Wou’d cloud our beauty and exaust our time,
And interrupt the conquest of our prime,
Whilst the dull manage, of a servile house
Is held by some, our outmost art and use.¹¹

She also specifically applies the weight of this domestic social construct to her desire to express art through the written word when she writes:

Alas, A woman that attempts the pen
Such an intruder on the rights of men
Such a presumptuous Creature is esteem’d
The fault can by no virtue be redeem’d.¹²

Here, in verse, she clearly points out the stereotype: the act of artistic creation is one of the many “rights” of men, and women have no place in such a masculine territory. In these excerpts from Ann Finch it is quite obvious that the literary world suffered from the overwhelming burden of the pervasive domestic social construct and the “masculine right” of creation. It is important to understand the ways in which the domestic social construct affected the use of imagery in poetry to facilitate a proper
understanding of how poetic images were perceived by both masculine and feminine readers.

The image of the proper nineteenth-century woman was reified in the poem “The Angel in the House,” written in 1854, in which the poet Coventry Patmore portrays his wife as the ideal woman. She is selfless and devoted to her household duties and the children; her beauty is matched only by her humility and submissiveness to her husband. The image of “the Angel in the House” became synonymous with the image of the ideal woman. It became such a pervasive image that Virginia Woolf declared that the image must be “killed” before women can assume the pen. The pursuit of “The Angel in the House” became not only an image of what woman should be, but the ideal prize for the nineteenth-century male. As Stéphane Michaud remarks, “The women in these representations are imaginary. For the nineteenth century, woman was an idol.” Michaud further states that these “imaginary” women “became a prize and an instrument in a struggle for power.” An “Angel in the House” was capable of in some way endowing her husband with power and “by her gentleness (he is) made great.”

The idea of women somehow endowing their mates with masculine power also has a mirror image. If women can endow their mates with powers to make them “great,” they can also withhold that power or become a force to steal a man’s creative power. Gilbert and Gubar argue that this mirror image of the “angel” is the “monster,” and that these are the two pervasive literary images that paternalistic literary society has created for women. This imagery can clearly be seen in many examples of nineteenth-century poetry. In Wilhelm Müller’s Die Winterreise, set to
music by Schubert, we can see this mirror image. The first stanza of the first poem shows the power of the “angel” image and its converse:

As a stranger I came here
As a stranger I go hence
May was kind to me
With many bouquets of flowers
The maiden spoke of love
The mother even of marriage
Now the world is bleak
The road is deep in snow

It is evident from the first line of the poem that the poet begins without a sense of identity, a stranger in the world. His identity rests with the “maiden” who speaks of love. When she has “made him great,” all is well in the world. The poet believed he had found his “angel in the house” and with her a sense of power, belonging, identity and creative force. Yet, something goes wrong, and the “maiden who spoke of love” has turned into the “monster” and withheld her promise as his “Angel in the House” and thus stolen his identity and creative force. Without her the world has become “bleak” and in it he has no more place. The poet is then forced to leave as he entered, without identity. Worse than leaving as he arrived, he leaves with the memory of having had identity and having lost it because of the “maiden.” To find his identity again as a poet he must travel a desolate journey to recover his creative force.

Although Gilbert and Gubar’s argument focuses on the issues facing women writers, the argument holds true for female composers as well. They must deal with the male-generated images of women as either “The Angel in the House” or the “monster” in the house.
The influence of the “domestic” on female composers

Women in the field of music were not immune to the domestic stereotype. In a letter written to Fanny Mendelssohn by her father, the stereotype and its implication are all too clear. “You must become more steady and collected, and prepare more earnestly and eagerly for your real calling, the only calling of a young woman—I mean the state of a housewife. .... the weighty duties of a woman.”21 Not only is it clear in this letter that her calling is not music as it is for her brother, but that she must forever live in the framework of the “domestic.” Robert Schumann reinforces this idea when he comments on his wife’s role as composer:

Clara has written a number of small pieces that show a musical and tender invention that she has never attained before. But to have children and a husband who is always living in the realms of imagination do not go together with composing. She cannot work at it regularly and I am often disturbed to think how many profound ideas are lost because she cannot work them out. But Clara herself knows that her main occupation is as a mother and I believe she is happy in the circumstances and would not want them changed.22

Even though Robert sees his wife’s burgeoning talent as a composer, he cannot bring himself to see her outside the domestic arena. It is apparent that, as a composer, he understands the elusiveness of such creativity, but in his wife, the domestic social construct is stronger than his will to foster the career of another composer, as he did for Brahms. He even goes so far as to see in her a desire to fit the construct, as if the desire to create cannot possibly call her to live in “realms of the imagination.”

In Rossini’s opera Il Barbiere di Sivilgia the young Rosina, in training for her domestic pursuits, is seen taking a singing lesson. Most composers of the nineteenth century had piano pupils, many of them female. The pursuit of playing instruments
and singing in the household became part of the social construct itself. In doing so, certain instruments were “feminized,” which meant women were allowed to play them with no social stigma attached. The instruments that became associated with women were harmonic instruments that could be played alone or without accompaniment in a small, intimate gathering. The guitar, lute, piano, harpsichord, and harp were the primary non-vocal instruments that women were allowed to play.\textsuperscript{23} And, as with Rosina in Rossini’s opera, women were always encouraged to sing as part of their domestic duties.

As the genre of opera moved into the eighteenth century and beyond, the role of the Prima Donna became much more pronounced. The role of the castrato diminished in large part due to the association of their sound with the excess of the Baroque, whose music was giving way to the new “galant” style. The public slowly began to accept virtuoso female performers in their stead. In the nineteenth century, there came a point in which the opera diva was considered to rank above even their male peers. Singers such as Wilhemine Schröder-Devrient, Jenny Lind, Maria Malibran, and Pauline Viardot-Garcia were the toast of European society. As early as Nannerl Mozart, the trend of the female as virtuoso transcended the popular genre of opera and appeared with gifted young women and the keyboard instrument. This reached a zenith in the nineteenth century with the careers of such piano virtuosos as Clara Schumann, Marie Pleyel, and Cécile Chaminade.

The same social celebration of women artists did not pertain to instruments other than those that are part of the domestic construct. By juxtaposing the traits of domestic music making with the public concert virtuosity of these women, the
nineteenth-century public enjoyed a voyeuristic view of the ultimate level of domestic music making. By accepting these virtuoso roles for women, the dominant masculine society created a public role for women that was far less tainted by “stereotype threat” than that of “creation.”

It was in this environment that Clara Schumann achieved the fame that was equal to that of the leading male virtuosos of the time. Nancy Reich notes that she was “Acknowledged as the peer of Franz Liszt, Thalberg, and Anton Rubinstein." Although, as a player, Clara Schumann was favorably compared to the leading artists of her day, she was still highly anxious about the act of composition and intruding on the masculine arena of “creation.”

As seen in the previous Anne Finch quotes, the male construct of “creation” as a right of men was well known to women in the nineteenth century. In spite of these restrictions, there were several smaller genres, such as song and character piano pieces, that women were allowed to compose. These genres, as we have already seen, are tied to the domestic through the instruments on which women were urged to play as part of their domestic duties. They are also tied to the instruments on which they had achieved great success in the public sphere. The musical acts of song singing, or playing a small piano piece, or accompanying, were all appropriate to the domestic setting. These activities allowed women to participate in music in either small intimate domestic settings or in solitude. It also appears that the dominant male side of the musical world viewed song as an acceptable field of output for woman’s creativity. It has already been noted that Robert Schumann saw Clara’s role to be that of a mother, a hausfrau, and even a concert pianist, but not
that of a composer. However, in a letter of March 1840 he writes, “Clärchen, do you
perhaps have something for my supplement...Do compose a song! Once you begin,
you cannot leave it. It is far too seductive.”26 Later in the same year he also writes,
“Write to me again of what you see and hear and compose. Try to compose a song;
you’ll see how well it will turn out.”27 It is clear that although he does not think that
the duties of her life in the social construct of the domestic will allow her to be a full-
time composer, he does believe that the composition of song is perfectly in step with
her duties. Robert accepts the genre as a natural outgrowth of her abilities and
“main occupation.” Perhaps the scale of the work is the issue.28 Songs are typically
a much shorter genre and, as previously mentioned, they would allow her to work in
solitude. Even given this request by Robert, it is clear that the reticence to cross
over into the masculine arena of composition, particularly given Robert’s
occupation, was clearly on her mind. As Clara wrote in 1840 in her marriage diary:

I finally succeeded in completing three [songs], which I will present to him at
Christmas. If they are really of little value, merely a very weak attempt, I am
counting on Robert’s forbearance and [hope] that he will understand that it
was done with the best will in the world in order to fulfill this wish of his—
just as I fulfill all his wishes.29

Robert also had several of Clara’s songs published along with his own in Opus No.
37/12.30 It is clear that in terms of creation, song held a less restrictive place in the
hierarchy of forms and genres for Robert Schumann.

This can also be clearly seen in the life of Fanny Mendelssohn. On June 24,
1837, when Fanny wished to publish her works, with the permission of her
husband, she sought her brother’s approval through her mother. Felix’s response
was, “I cannot persuade her to publish anything.”31 He also added that to be an
“author” was not proper and might interfere with her role within the domestic construct. However, much earlier in his career he had in fact published several of Fannie’s songs in his Opus 8 and 9, and he later recanted his advice from the 1837 quote when her works were well received. After many years of struggling with her familial advice to refrain from an act of publishing and the unseemly “public” business of professional music creation, she responds in the following statement in a letter to her brother dated July 9, 1846.

For forty years I’ve been afraid of my brother, as I was at fourteen of father, or rather afraid is not the right word, but rather desirous during my entire life to please you and everyone whom I love, and if I know in advance that it will not be the case, I therefore feel rather uncomfortable. In a word, I am beginning to publish. I have Herr Bock’s esteemed offer for my Lieder, I’ve finally turned a receptive ear to his favorable terms .... I hope I won't disgrace you through my publishing, as I’m no femme libre .... Hopefully you will in no way be bothered by it, as I have proceeded, as you see, completely independently, in order to spare you any unpleasant moment. If the venture succeeds, that is if the compositions please [people], then I know that it will be a great stimulus to me, something I always required in order to publish anything.

Several issues are clear in this excerpt. First, it is readily apparent that Fanny had always been searching for her brother to help alleviate part of the “stereotype threat” onus of being a woman composer. For “forty years” she suffered under an immense burden of the social and familial stereotype of inferiority and the “domestic.” It is also noteworthy that the reason she is overcoming this burdensome stereotype is not simply because the offer to publish songs exists, but because she yearns to know that her “compositions please” not only Felix, but the public as well. The essential need to convey one’s thought, ideas, and emotions to an audience, which is fundamental to the creation of art, is clearly present in the mindset of Fanny Mendelssohn. To bring her art to the “public” despite familial
disapproval also proves her intense motivation. Another insight here is that a publisher is seeking the songs of a female composer.\textsuperscript{35} One inference to be drawn from this is that song carries with it less of a social stereotype for women than other genres.

\textbf{“Stereotype threat” and female composers}

Song is a genre to which many women composers were drawn. The genre comprised a large portion of the output of female composers during the nineteenth century. Fanny Mendelssohn's output of over 250 songs forms a large part of her oeuvre.\textsuperscript{36} These, combined with the other accepted genre of small piano works, make up an overwhelming portion of her output. In the works of Josephine Lange, there are over 160 songs with only 15 other works, mostly small character pieces for the piano. Her only attempt at a larger-scale “masculine” genre is one Sonata, first movement only.\textsuperscript{37} Clara Schumann wrote 24 songs in addition to her 35 pieces for solo piano.\textsuperscript{38} Clara also seemed to avoid the larger forms that seem to be a natural byproduct of such a varied virtuoso career. In fact, she only wrote two pieces for piano and orchestra: her early, fine Piano Concerto (1837) and a Piano Concerto movement in F (1847).\textsuperscript{39} Her Piano Sonata in G of (1841) and the Piano Trio in g (1847) were her only attempts at a full four-movement sonata cycle.\textsuperscript{40}

It seems that women composers felt the lessened “stereotype threat” involved in composing song -- a genre that had been labeled as acceptable for women. In this lowered threat environment, women proved to be prolific in their output of songs. Songs provided women an avenue of expression in which their choices had less opportunity to be understood in a way that reinforces the stereotype of women as
in inferior composers to men. Perhaps, then, song leaves a woman free to achieve some of her best work and to express her true reactions to her societal pressures without fear of reproach or confirming the “masculine” right of creation. Without the fear of confirming the stereotype of the “female composer,” she might be free to express her finest work. A similar case can also be made for the other acceptable female genres, but in instrumental genres it is often difficult to parse out musical symbols to chart a composer’s reaction to his/her cultural environment. Since, in the case of instrumental works, each composer is reacting to an individual impetus, there is no way of knowing the meaning of the particular set of images, symbols, or social situations that provided the inspiration. Each composer who sets a poem is reacting to a given set of symbols within that poem. The symbols of the poem then provide a sort of outline of ideas from which the composer draws inspiration. These symbols will of course cause a personal response. But within the heavy social constructs, which have already been discussed, it is likely that the reactions to these symbols will have a similar impact on people sharing such imposing cultural references.

**Song**

Song is an art form which combines a minimum of two art forms, each of which can form a distinct self-sustaining, complete work of art: literary art, either prose or poetry, and music. Should one analyze the music or the poetry, each in its own terms, or does the combination of the two somehow alter the way either is seen independently? Throughout the history of music, the debate has raged about which of the components should be primary. As Lawrence Kramer puts it, “In the
beginning was the song." He means that at the very beginning of the genre, songster and poet resided in the same person. The Greek legend of Orpheus and the Hebrew legend of David speak to figures who are not just poets but also the singers and players. As song developed there continued to be a struggle for primacy between words and music. As the nineteenth century arrived, composers of leider began “facing a newly arisen problem--how to set to music a pre-existing poetic text not specifically written for this purpose.” Edward T. Cone notes that Goethe felt that the composer Zelter captured his poems so that they were “identical” to his poems. The poet added, “With other composers, I must first observe how they have conceived my song, and what they have made of it.” These other composers most likely include Schubert, whom today we hold in much higher esteem than Zelter. It is clear that Goethe was somewhat troubled with his art being transformed by someone’s setting. Goethe felt that many settings changed his work into something unique to the composer.

Susanne Langer argues that in becoming a song the poem is subsumed and the “words enter into music... no longer prose or poetry, they are elements of music... they give up their literary status and take on purely musical forms.” She further argues that “in the process of composition, individual words, images, and actions merely present opportunities for the development of the composer’s ideas.” Langer even goes so far as to state that the poem is “annihilated” in the process of becoming musical utterance. Langer is making the point that what is important in the song is the composer’s understanding of the imagery of the poem and not the intent of the poet. Kramer echoes the same sentiment: “A song, we might say, does
not use a reading; it is a reading, in the critical and performative sense of the term: an activity of interpretation that works through a text without being bound by authorial intentions.” As a composer approaches a poem, they bring with them their own entire social construct, their understanding of his or her place in the world and those around them. A composer then chooses to compose or not to compose based on his or her interpretation of the work. Song provides the composer a structure in which to work out his or her understanding of the imagery of the poem in relation to how he or she sees her or his own interaction with the world.

As previously mentioned, men and women had far different roles in the nineteenth century, and the world had much different expectations for them. Given the pressure of such oppressive gendered stereotypes, the reaction of men and women to a given set of symbols should display significant levels of variance. The unique way in which the composer chooses to “annihilate the song” and reconstruct it around his or her image will illuminate how the composer sees himself or herself in relationship to the imagery in the song. Equally important to the images the composer chooses to set are those images that don’t fit with the composer’s reading. In other words, each composer will disregard that part of the poem that does not follow his or her reading. These re-imaginings of the poem should also prove highly enlightening. Each composer will react to these images with an individual identity which carries with it the burden of the stereotypes that apply to the various aspects of his or her identity--male, female, homosexual, etc.
As I will show in the body of this study, analyzing these differences provides clues to the way males and females react to given images and how that reaction works its way into the creation of music. These gender-related reactions are not based on gendered qualities in music itself--musical sounds do not have innate gendered characteristics--but ultimately stem from ideology about male and female qualities that were placed on the music. Thus arose so-called feminine and masculine styles in music. I hope to further the understanding of the way women used musical imagery in general and how that relates to a feminine style in the nineteenth century.

1 Claude M. Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi: how stereotypes affect us and what we can do* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 5
2 Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi*, 5.
3 Ibid., 5.
4 Ibid., 5.
5 Ibid., 14-15.
6 Ibid., 40.
7 Ibid., 104.
8 Ibid., 127.
9 Ibid., 209.
11 Ibid., 8.
12 Ibid., 3.
15 Ibid., 123.
16 Ibid., 123
18 Ibid., 3-44.
20 Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, 3-44.
24 Reich, Clara Schumann, 96.
25 Ibid., 216.
26 Ibid., 219.
27 Ibid., 219.
29 Reich, Schumann, 219.
30 Ibid., 217.
32 Ibid., 572.
33 Ibid., 572.
34 Ibid., 573.
35 Citron, Gender, 80-120.
36 Citron, “The Leider”, 573.
37 Harold Krebs and Sharon Krebs, Josephine Lang Her Life and her Songs (New York, Oxford University Press, 2007), 295-298.
39 Ibid.
40 Reich, Clara Schumann, 231.
43 Ibid., 3.
44 Ibid., 3.
45 Susanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1953), 150.
46 Ibid., 159.
48 Kramer, Music and Poetry, 127.
49 Langer, Feeling, 153.
Chapter 2: Heine’s Poem #23 from *Die Heimkehr*

In order to discover a composer’s reaction to the symbolism of a poem, the poem and its symbolism must be parsed. The normal reading of a poem is an attempt for the reader to discover his or her own meaning in the symbols of the poetry. However, searching for those elements that might lead a composer to devote time and creative thought to rendering a new expression of art requires a more expansive view. The search for meaning in poetry is no different from the search for meaning in music. There has been much written on the matter and few experts agree. Here, the search is not for a single meaning, but for a myriad of possibilities in meaning that speak to different composers and provide inspiration. As Susanne Langer points out, most of the conversation about poetic meaning centers around three aspects: “What does the poet have to say?,” “How does the poet say it?,” and “How does the poet want us to feel.”¹

The first of these questions is purely discursive. What are the facts that the poet conveys? This seems to be of little use in the analysis of poetry, as facts in a poem rarely represent what they are. The use of metaphorical language often deceives in the use of fact. If there were a direct way to say what the poet intends, simply doing so should suffice. The second question is much more important. The way the poet says what he or she has to say seems to be more to the point. The use of metaphor, imagery, sound, rhythm, and rhyme all play a part in creating an environment in which the discursive aspects of language become less conspicuous and the infinite possibilities of imagination take root. The third question seems to be a natural outgrowth of the second. The metaphorical nature of language itself
makes possible the manipulation of emotion through the use of word alone. Words do not just represent objects; they come to embody them.² The word “Tiger,” for instance, does not just refer to an animal in the cage at the Zoo or in the jungles of India. The word embodies the animal’s ferocity, power, hunting prowess, and its ability to kill. Words carry their social context with them, as well as their multiple meanings and the stereotypes they embody. They not only have meaning in their connotative sense, but in the sound of the word itself. When used in combination by a great master of the written word, they can be used to create entire worlds of imagination in which a reader can live.³ Langer believes that the poet’s creation of a “virtual event” in which the reader is invited to experience their own “virtual history” is central to understanding the shared effect that a poem can have on multiple individuals. ⁴ The poet uses words to create images out of the metaphorical semblance of language that allow the reader to enter a space of imagination in which the personal historical event can become a remembered event. In memory, unlike in reality, symbols are able to interact simultaneously with events and meanings past and present and become an all-consuming metaphorical experience.

It is this experience that Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco refers to as the “expressive core” of the poem.⁵ This is the essence of the poem that is “capable of awakening a ‘resonance’ in the composer’s soul.”⁶ Finding the “expressive core” of the poem merely provides a tool for discovering that element which has spoken to the “virtual memory” of the composer. How the composer chooses to react to that “core” in their setting of the poetry is a question for musical analysis.
#23, “Ihr Bild” or “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

Heinrich Heine has presented many composers with a multitude of poems that have touched “the composers soul.” Both Langer and Castelnuovo-Tedesco praise Heine as a poet whose works provide a particularly rich ground for composition. Langer believes his poems have a more casual form in which “the ideas... are not fully exploited,” and all of the “potentialities are still there,” and Castelnuovo-Tedesco hails the unexploited “ironic and mordant side” of his writing style.7 Heine is most famous for having the ability to display irony and gall in the most banal of subject matter. This feature is perhaps his most well known trait. One of the most effective tools in his poetic arsenal is the “Stimmungsbrechung,” which will be discussed at length later in the chapter.

23.8

Ich Stand in dunkeln Träumen       I stood in dark dreams
Und starrte ihr Bildnis an,        And stared at her portrait,
Und das Geliebte Antlitz           And the beloved countenance
Heimlich zu leben began.           Secretly began to come to life.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich           On her lips she wore
Ein Lächeln wunderbar.            A wonderful smile,
Und wie von Wehmutstränen         And as if from sorrow’s tears
Ergänzte ihr Augenpaar.           Gleamed her eyes.

Auch meine Tränen flossen         Also my tears flowed
Mir von den Wangen herab-         Down from my cheeks-
Und ach, ich kann es nicht glauben, And ah, I cannot believe it,
Daß ich dich verloren hab!9        That I have lost you!

The twenty-third poem in Heine’s Die Heimkehr (1824) has provided a rich ground for many composers, beginning as early as 1828 with “Ihr Bild” by Schubert.
In this poem we have both of the aspects identified by Langer and Castelnuovo-Tedesco. The form is deceptively simple in its appearance. The poem’s ideas are covered by only three short stanzas and leave plenty of room for imaginary interaction. There are wonderfully contradictory images, such as the phrase “Lächeln wunderbar” juxtaposed with “Wehmutstränen.” These elements enable Heine to create an environment in which he is able to manipulate the reader into his surprise ending.

The poem begins with a powerful image that instantly separates the reader from discursive reality. The image of “stand in dunkeln Träumen” is not one of reality, but one that speaks to our imagination. Instantly the poet has broken the spell of reality and transported us to a place of “virtual reality.”10 The cadence and the introduction of the rhyme scheme further draw the reader into Heine’s “virtual” creation. In poetry, unlike music, the art does not take place in linear time. When reading a poem the reader has the luxury of analyzing each symbol with the ability to refer to the previous symbol without fear of missing the next. In a song, however, the symbols play out in a much more linear way, and if a listener takes the time to re-imagine the past symbols in order to provide context to the present symbol the listener risks missing the next. When reading poetry the reader is able to combine the images both forward and backward as they are encountered. In the second line of the poem Heine combines the image of being stationary in dark dreams with staring at her portrait. This is the first encounter with the person responsible for the poet’s “dark dreams” from the first line. Even though the poet remains the only speaker, the poem presents a new character. In the second line of the poem the
reader is already presented with a multitude of questions. What has happened to create these dark dreams? Who is in the portrait? What does this person mean to the speaker? These questions serve to draw the reader further into Heine’s shared “virtual history.”

Heine answers these questions at his own pace, spinning the reader through his imagery in a deceptive way while leading to his ironic twist. The answer comes in the form of an adjective—not a noun, as we would expect. In this line we see the metaphorical nature of language itself being manipulated by Heine. With the simple addition of the word “geliebte” to what we already know, that the portrait features her face, the reader is thrust into a romantic relationship. This is not a current relationship, but one in which the reader can join the poet in his own “virtual history” unencumbered by personal facts, expectations, or the constraints of time and space. When referring to a face as beloved, he is not merely referring to their image, but to the entire person; their whole being is consumed and displayed in that image.

“Heimlich zu leben began” completely changes the course of the narrative. The image of the person, endued with all the powers of “beloved,” secretly comes to life. The use of the word “Heimlich” begins the line on a much more intimate note. Something private has occurred between the poet and the beloved only. The simple act of reading about the event creates for the reader an atmosphere of intrusion on an intimate moment between lovers. This picture is much more than a portrait springing to life; it symbolizes an intimate part of a dark and private affair, which has left the poet in a world of inaction. In retrospect, the reader realizes that the
poet is depicted in stillness and even paralysis. It is only when the reader realizes that the portrait has come to life that the inaction of the poet is apparent. This contrast between the activity of an inanimate object, "Bildnis," and the inactivity of the poet in "stand’ and “starrte” only becomes clear at the end of the first stanza. While completing the “simple” rhyme scheme and rhythm, Heine has created a rich imaginary landscape that invites the reader into his “virtual memory.”

As the second strophe continues the poet watches as the portrait of his beloved comes to life. In keeping with the first strophe’s contrast between the action of the portrait and the poet’s inaction, the second strophe features a wonderful contradiction between “Lächeln wunderbar” and “Wehmutstränen.” The reader is forced to deal with these two seemingly contradictory images. In the first line of the second strophe, the poet describes his beloved’s “Lippen” --a highly charged erotic image that holds intimate connotations in the relationship being presented to the reader. The description of the “wonderful smile” that she wears on her lips combined with the aforementioned folksy rhythm and rhyme scheme leads the reader to expect a pleasant memory that would cause her to wear a smile. The image of a smile, along with all of its metaphorical meanings, prepares the reader for a happy image in this “virtual history.” Although the poet has prepared the reader for “dark dreams,” the use of the word smile carries with it all the power of every smile that the reader has experienced. The poet manipulates the reader by juxtaposing that overwhelmingly positive image with “Wehmutstränen.” The reader is forced to deal with these contradictory images. The world of imaginary possibilities once again opens for the reader. The poetic device in the next line
reveals that the “sorrow’s tears” do not flow from the portrait, but from the poet’s interpretation of the gleam in the beloved’s eyes. In this powerful stanza, the poet evokes the overwhelming power of two primal opposites and passionate human images. The combination of these base human emotions challenges the reader to experience their own “virtual history” with both joyful reminiscence and profound sorrow. The reader is thrown into a “virtual event” in which they are invited to remember all of a relationship--the sorrow as well as the joy.

In the concluding strophe the reader at last begins to see the scope and reality of these “dark dreams.” The narrative returns to the poet at the beginning of the final strophe. The poet reveals that he himself is also crying. It is as if the poet is seeing himself in a mirror and notices that his image is crying before he realizes that the tears are actually flowing down his own cheeks. The tears in the portrait that the poet sees in her “gleaming” eyes are not actually hers, but his. The use of reflexive verbs for the portrait wearing a smile and the poet’s tears running down his cheeks further establishes this relationship. She is smiling and he is crying. The “tears” in her eyes are merely a reflection of his obvious sorrow. It is only in the context of this strophe that the phrase “Und wie” from the second stophe is seen in its true light. At the end of the second line Heine uses an unusual form of punctuation to highlight his twist.

With a simple addition of a dash, instead of the comma that the reader expects, Heine marks the final two lines of poetry as critical. This is a Heine technique now called “Stimmungsbrechung,” literally meaning breaking the tone. This device marks a demarcation from the deceptive set-up to the ironic or bitter
twist previously mentioned. In this case, the poet has already been setting the stage for a twist that will make this entire “virtual event” clear. With a powerful and guttural cry, the poet declares that he cannot believe that he has lost his beloved. But he does so in a way that fundamentally alters the flow of the narrative. No longer is the beloved referred to in the third person “ihr,” but the poet has switched to the second person “dich.” For the first time, the poet is moved to react, not to the portrait, but to the actual “beloved” personified in the portrait. This switch intensifies the relationship from mere memory to a point bordering on reality for the poet. The imagery becomes an imaginative event of not just any relationship, but one that ends in painful loss: a loss deeply felt by the poet and thus related to the reader. The contrasting images become clearer once the reader is finally able to analyze the entirety of the poem. The reader is faced not only with the poet’s inaction, his emotional disconnectedness, but also his deep scars from this relationship. The switch from third person to second person in the final section highlights the poet’s inability to place himself in time and space. The “virtual history” of the poem somehow becomes more real and immediate. He is no longer speaking of her, but actually addressing the beloved as “you,” which grants the now living portrait a more authentic presence. The poet introduces a new level of reality into the environment and brings the reader to a new level of intensity.

In this poem, Heine provides a rich variety of images from which a composer might be able to divine Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s “expressive core.” As discussed in Chapter 1, it is not necessary to discover the poet’s intention behind the poem because the composer discovers for himself or herself the foundation for the new
musical art form that will be created by the assimilation of the poem into the song. One possible interpretation of the poem arises out of the specifically gendered images that the poet creates in the rendering of this poem. By invoking the image of the beloved and the ritual of courtship, Heine has called into question the role of male and female in the erotic relationship of the nineteenth century. As discussed in Chapter 1, there are strong stereotypes that govern the relationships between the sexes in the nineteenth century and the expectations for each sex were vastly different. In this poem, the reader can readily discern the “angel”/“monster” in the house scenario. The angel/monster interpretation is not the only possible interpretation, but it certainly corresponds with the attitudes of the male-dominated nineteenth-century literary field. This in turn might have serious implications for the differences in compositional choices by male and female composers.

Heine, clearly, is inviting the reader to experience a romantic relationship gone horribly and tragically wrong, at least for the poet. This poem sets up a clear dichotomy between the sexes. The poetic image of the male lover standing and staring at the portrait of his former lover recalls the image of the “angel in the house.” The lack of verbs of motion for the poet give the reader the image of the male frozen by the beautiful image of the woman—the woman that has the power to steal a male’s vitality by merely being seen. This is a very ancient image, as seen in the myth of Medusa who turns her masculine onlookers to stone. This imagery taps into the deep realms of metaphorical language by adopting the image of women stealing the vitality of men through their mere presence. Heine borrows Goethe’s
idea that the essence of the masculine is movement\textsuperscript{13} and then upends it by
portraying the male as motionless. The female character, a seemingly motionless
portrait, is granted by the poet that most masculine of traits—movement. The
female figure goes beyond normal movement and springs to life, even resurrection.
The figure of the beloved holds the poet in her sway. He stands transfixed, having
suffered a loss so severe that Heine paints him as having lost his masculine identity.
He is not even capable of grasping the tears streaming down his cheeks, until he first
sees his reflection in the gleaming eyes of the portrait.

In other poems of the collection Heine has used the image of tears to
represent masculine virility in erotic relationships.\textsuperscript{14} In “Aus meine Tränen
spriessen,” out of the tears of the poet come many bouquets of flowers. In “Wenn
ich in deine Augen seh” the poet must “weep bitterly” after his beloved confesses, “I
love you.” This erotic reading of the image of tears could invest the poet’s tears in
“Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” with a new metaphorical meaning. It is possible
that the poet sees the lost investment of his masculine virility in this past
relationship and is struggling to regain his masculine identity with the loss of the
“prize” that he once pictured as his future “angel in the house.”

It is interesting that Goethe uses the same image of gleaming or shining in a
passage from the novel \textit{Wilhelm Meister} (1795) in a description of a woman that fits
very nicely into the “Angel in the House” imagery.\textsuperscript{15} He describes her as a character
that does not possess her own path, but for those that do possess a path, she
“shines” a light like a “motionless lighthouse” providing hospitality, humility,
understanding, and service for those who “do have a story.”\textsuperscript{16} For Goethe, the role of
the woman in literature is that of contemplation and quiet reflection, the opposite of movement. In Heine’s 23rd poem in *Die Heimkehr* we see a completely new twist on the imagery of Goethe. Heine uses this image to create a mirror that enables the reader to see the poet’s inability to recognize his own emotional state. It is as if the image of the beloved has captured him and rendered him a mere shell of his masculine identity.17

The individual symbols identified in this chapter will play a large role in the identification of the “expressive core” of the songs to be discussed in the next four chapters. The subsequent chapters will focus extensively on the musical settings of the specific symbols and their overall effect on the “expressive core.”

3 Langer, *Feeling*, 211.
4 Ibid., 217.
6 Ibid., 106.
8 It is interesting to note that Heine did not title his poems in *Die Heimkehr* but instead numbered them sequentially. Each of the composers that will be studied chose the title of their song. In at least one case the decision will provide some interesting insight into the song.
9 Heinrich Heine, *Die Heimkehr*, in *Buch der Lieder*, (Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1956), 129. The included English translation shares none of Heine’s poetic genius. The purpose of the translation is for quick reference and is intended as a word-for-word and not a poetic transcription into English. I have not attempted to imitate the deceptive folk-poetry rhythm used by Heine or his similarly deceptive rhyme scheme. The word “Heimlich” has been translated as “mysteriously” in many sources. I have chosen the word “secretly.” While both words share the same root “heim,” I believe the word “secretly” best encompasses the intimate nature of the relationship portrayed in the poem. The connection to the possible translation of “mysteriously” could still have important meaning in the many possible readings of the poem.
12 This comment does not refer only to the 23rd poem in Heine’s *Die Heimkehr* but also to the rest of the poems in the collection and many poems from the remainder of *Buch der Lieder*. This idea is also a well know and discussed aspect of Heine’s work as a whole among Heine Scholars. See note 9 above.
16 Ibid., 22.
Chapter 3: Schubert’s “Ihr Bild” (1828)

Schubert’s final year (1828) produced several of his finest works. Some of the chief among them were his responses to a new found inspiration: the poetry of Heinrich Heine. The reactions to Heine’s poetry resulted in unique musical settings in Schubert’s œuvre of song. All of Schubert’s Heine songs come from the collection *Die Heimkehr*. These works went on to be published posthumously in his collection/song-cycle *Schwanengesang*. The six songs Schubert chose from the eighty-eight poems of *Die Heimkehr* are among the first Heine pieces to be set to music and are surely the first to be set by a true master. It is interesting that Heine did not title any of the poems in *Die Heimkehr*; all of the titles of the songs were created by the composer. The twenty-third song in Heine’s *Die Heimkehr* became the subject for Schubert’s “Ihr Bild.” The symbolism discussed in Chapter 2 will be the basis for a search for the “expressive core”¹ made clear by Schubert’s compositional choices. His personal decision in how to set these symbols is a matter for musical analysis.

First, it must be said that musical analysis can yield many different results. The same music may be interpreted to have various meanings, even to the same person, depending on situation, time, and environment. In the same way that poetic images can hold more than one meaning, musical gesture can also be assigned multiple meanings. My analytical approach will be similar to that applied to the poetry. The main issue is the identification of a musical gesture, its connection with a given symbol in the poem, and the compound effect of the symbols and gestures. The cumulative effect of those combinations will lead to an overall interpretation of
the work and will highlight the composer’s choice of the “expressive core” found in
the poetry. The result of this analysis will not be the only possible reading of the
piece, but it will reveal choices that express some of the ideas that have been
discussed in the previous chapters.

Before consideration of these choices, it seems prudent to examine the
methodology being used for the musical analysis. I focus the analysis of all the
pieces in this study with the same two methods. The first is the conventional
method of identifying melody, rhythm, tonal function with Roman numerals, and the
standard approach to formal analysis. The second is the “Grundgestalt” theory
attributed to the discussions, teachings, and ideas of Arnold Schoenberg. I use this
method for several reasons I believe particularly applicable to this study. First is the
principle that “Grundgestalt” refers to the “Basic Idea” of a piece. The concept of
“basic idea” seems to embrace a very similar idea to that of the “expressive core.”
The concept behind “Grundgestalt” analysis is the identification of the very basic
elements that create the “idea” of the piece—the essence that becomes played out
not only in the motivic detail of the piece, but in harmonic function. It also provides
the overall cohesive function of the piece.² If the “idea” can be revealed, that should
yield insight into the composer’s concept of the “expressive core.” The second idea
behind the selection of “Grundgestalt” analysis is the concept of music as the organic
growth of a singular idea. The idea of thought and art as an organic concept goes
hand in hand with the romantic view of the male as creator and genius. To adapt an
ideological construct discussed in Marcia Citron’s *Gender and the Musical Canon*:
while women’s participation in organic growth it might be seen through the labor of
childbirth, men’s participation in organic growth has been theorized as the toil of taking germs of intellectual concepts and turning them into great works of art and science. I intend to demonstrate, through the use of the “Grundgestalt” technique, that despite the stereotype of female inferiority, each composer can be seen to approach their ideas in a similar way.

Because of the unique placement of Schubert’s “Ihr Bild” in his overall output, his setting of this poem has been the subject of much scholarship. Schubert’s Lied is one of the few songs to draw singular treatment by the theorist Heinrich Schenker. The analysis by Schenker features some interesting diversions from his usual analytical process. The work has also received significant attention from Jack Stein, Susan Youens, and Christopher Wintle, among others. Although the chapter will make brief mention of these sources, the majority of the chapter will be focused almost exclusively on the analysis performed specifically for this study.

**Form and Harmony**

The form of Schubert’s song is as simple as that of Heine’s poem. The ternary form matches Heine’s three strophes exactly. The simplicity of the two-bar phrase structure can easily be seen as a musical equivalent of the folksy rhyme scheme of the poetry. Jack Stein finds the poem’s simplicity a perfect backdrop for Heine’s depth of emotion and ironic twist of self-image after the “Stimmungsbrechung.” Yet it is Schubert’s adaptation of these simple qualities that Stein dismisses as a complete misreading of the poetry. Stein assumes that “the form alone shows this.” At the same time he argues, “the simplicity of structure (of the Heine) contributes to the anything-but-naive effect.” What the form does show is not what Stein believes
to be the naïve reading of a literary amateur, but instead a composer at the top of his
craft reacting to new and interesting images in a similar way to the poet. When
Stein stopped at the surface of the structure he was, like many readers of the Heine,
misled by the simplicity of the surface of the form. The interpretation of Heine
requires moving beyond the discursive surface to understand the depth of imagery
used in the poem. Schubert also demands much closer examination.

The ternary form that Schubert deploys matches the three-strophe form of
Heine’s poem exactly, but the alteration in tonal approach to the traditional two-key
ternary form helps to provide some of the same variation that Heine applied in the
poem. As discussed in Chapter 2, Heine’s first and last strophes switch focus
between the second and third lines. Schubert reacts to this alternation by means of
a modal shift from minor to major. In the song we have the poet represented by
minor and the “beloved” represented by a shift to the major mode. This same modal
shift occurs in both the first and the final strophe of the song. This shift of modality
works perfectly with the first strophe as the poet loses self-focus and begins to
surrender himself in his past relationship with the beloved. The difficulty appears
in applying this same tonal shift to the “Stimmungsbrechung” in the final strophe of
the Heine. In the middle strophe, which is entirely focused on the “beloved,”
Schubert moves to G♯ Major. The movement of a third is very typical of a
Schubertian modulation, but in this piece it plays an important part in Schubert’s
“basic idea,” which will be discussed at length later in the chapter.

The re-transition into the initial thematic material, which Schenker referred
to as the “staring” motif,⁸ also offers some evidence of Schubert’s understanding of
the emotional revelation to come in the text. [Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.5] In measures 23 and 24, when Schenker refers to the return of the “staring” motive, he glosses over the surface by reduction to the single element that he finds most interesting: the repeated and doubled B♭s from the beginning. What is missing in this analysis is that this time the stark octaves are harmonized and preceded by a melodic minor third. The first of the octaves of the “staring” motive is harmonized by one of the most dissonant sonorities in Schubert’s harmonic palette: the augmented sixth. The use of the augmented sixth chord as a pivot chord to return to B♭ minor not only resolves the chord in a unique fashion, but it serves to charge the return to the original theme with a new emotional depth. Something in the original motive has changed. The stark octaves of the beginning have now been imbued with a harmonic insecurity, which foreshadows a change in the emotional attitude of the recapitulation. The importance of the melodic minor third will be discussed later in the chapter.

The remaining music for the recapitulation of the original theme remains unchanged, which still leaves the question unanswered: how does Schubert deal with the “Stimmungsbrechung?” The answer is that Schubert, like Heine, chooses another method of highlighting the change other than altering the form. In Chapter 2, the fact that Heine changes the tone of the poem by moving from third to second person in the last lines of the poetry is noted as the change that highlights Heine’s twist. Schubert, on the other hand, uses a device that is unavailable to the poet, the postlude. Schubert is able to comment on the change of the “Stimmungsbrechung” by providing a final tonal twist after the poet finishes speaking. The music heard in
measures 13 and 14, which confirms the major mode with a strong cadence in B♭ major, is heard again in measures 34 through 36. This time the mode is switched from the major cadence heard in measure 34 and becomes minor in measure 36. With this twist, Schubert confirms the emotional reality of the “Stimmungsbrechung:” that the poet has not escaped the power of this former relationship by his final declaration, but is still trapped in the emotional prison in which he started. In this final twist, Schubert highlights this moment of self-irony that many attribute to Heine, the same self-irony that Stein accuses Schubert of treating with naiveté.

**Basic Idea (Grundgestalt)**

One of the most interesting facets of the basic idea (Grundgestalt) of this work is the initial motive in the accompaniment. This opening fascinated Schenker—the sounding of a single pitch in a slow tempo, held for a long duration but separated by a rest and doubled at the octave. Surely two single notes do not constitute a motive, nor an effective introduction. If the sounding of the B♭ provides a sense of key or the opening B♭ for the singer, the repeat of the pitch is not needed. For Schenker, the only solution to this dilemma was that this figure had to symbolize staring. For his distant disciple, Christopher Wintle, the notes become the “Augenpaar” themselves. The seemingly impossible idea of two pitches as a motive becomes a much deeper structural design in Wintle’s overall analysis of the background of the piece. The progression of Schenker’s original idea of staring into a basic structural element of the piece is a starting place to grasp the overall
structural implications of this opening motif. One of the basic shortcomings of Schenkerian analysis in dealing with the opening two bars of this piece is the reduction of the doubling into a single instance of the pitch class. The doubling, which Schenker removes in his analysis, forms an essential element in the piece as a whole and is seen in many of the most important structural pillars of the piece. This most important element of the Grundgestalt contains various aspects that highlight Schubert’s interpretation of the text. [Figure 3.1]

Figure 3.1 The doubling element of the Grundgestalt

The doubling not only reinforces the B♭, but provides tonal ambiguity by not revealing the modal context of the pitch. In this instance the modal ambiguity of the “Grundgestalt” goes hand in hand with the ambiguity of major and minor discussed at length later. The lack of completion of the harmonic context of a given pitch is an essential element of the “Grundgestalt.” This figure also highlights the profound doubling element of the piece as a whole. [Figure 3.4] In many subsequent lines of the piece, not only is the melody of the vocal line doubled, but many of the inner lines as well. Even when the piece moves to a more chordal approach the doubling feature remains prominent. [Figure 3.6] The remaining elements of the Grundgestalt are played out in the subsequent two measures and one beat. [Figure 3.2]
The second element of the Grundgestalt to appear in the score is the melodic minor third in m. 2. The minor third follows the word “stood” and highlights this important image of the text. This is followed immediately in m. 3 by a sequence of seconds, both minor and major, with the final melodic element coming in the descending tritone from the fourth to the fifth measure. The first note to be “borrowed” from outside the gamut of B♭ minor is the minor second that highlights “dreams,” which is another critical image discussed in Chapter 2. The tritone is a striking dissonance in this fairly simply constructed Grundgestalt. This particular melodic tritone is unique in that it is doubled in three octaves, thereby strengthening its importance. The interval also underscores the importance of the text it accompanies, “starrt” or stared. It is this interval that impelled Schenker to refer to the opening figure as “staring” and not choose one of the other highlighted verbs of inaction.¹² The two additional aspects that I have identified as being part of the basic idea are the rhythmic structures in the first two bars of the vocal line.

[Figure 3.3]
These, combined with the aforementioned introductory motif, comprise the elements of the Grundgestalt. A complete analysis of the song may be seen in Appendix A. Schubert takes these small devices and organically constructs his song to reveal his basic idea or “expressive core.”

The Grundgestalt begins its growth even before the previously identified melodic elements are revealed. The doubling that unfolds in the first measure accompanies the other Grundgestalt elements, reinforcing them as structurally important even while introducing them. As Schubert weaves the additional elements of the Grundgestalt into the fabric established by the original elements (the doubling), the depth of the “basic idea” is reinforced. This can also be seen in the palindromic nature of the first line. After the melodic third is introduced at the beginning of the third measure, the line immediately descends though a series of seconds. This is followed by an ascent of the same series of seconds in reverse in m. 4. After the descending tritone, the thematic material returns to the idea of the consecutive seconds followed by a minor third, this time descending. Schubert has presented and firmly established his basic idea in the first line through repetition, structure, and even some development in the first 6 measures of the song. Furthermore, Schubert establishes the feeling of stagnation through the rhythmic elements of the Grundgestalt as well as his choice of mode. The intonation of the first stark Bs inform the listener that motion has been halted.

As discussed in Chapter 2, a leading philosophy of the time was that movement was essential to the “masculine nature.” This has been seen in the remarks of Goethe in Chapter 2, but it is also evident in the application of this idea in
the theory of A.B. Marx [1844] the first theme in the Sonata form was “masculine,” in part because of the inherent motion of the theme. In this instance Heine has turned Goethe’s image on its ear, and so has Schubert. On the surface, this is revealed in the choice of rhythm for all of the poetic images of stillness. “Stood,” “dreams,” and “stared” are all set with longer rhythmic values than the remainder of the first line. Less obvious, and perhaps more insidious, is the choice of mode. The minor mode possesses less of its own harmonic motion than does that of the major key. The harmonic motion required to properly establish the key must be “borrowed” from the mode that contains its own sense of tonal identity: the major. It is clear by the end of this first line that the poet is speaking with a masculine voice, and Schubert chooses a minor mode voice for the poet. The need to borrow from the parallel major is further reinforced when Schubert raises the 7th scale degree at the beginning of m. 4 to provide a clear movement to the tonic, B♭. Schubert has “borrowed” the A♭ from the relative major and not shifted to the major when the A♭ returns in m. 5. [Figure 3.4] The figure in m. 5 is interesting by virtue of its presentation of the elements of the “basic idea” and the way it develops the rhythmic idea presented in the first two beats of m. 3. The double dotting, which is a rare device for Schubert outside of the Heine songs, functions here as sort of an augmentation or exaggeration of the original dotted figure. The combining of these elements of the Grundgestalt, along with the doubling, takes on further meaning when it is echoed in mm. 6-7 with the song’s first harmonic accompaniment. Also of significance at this point is the melodic presentation of the minor third at the beginning of m. 6, which then becomes the harmonic major third in the treble of the
piano on the fourth beat of m. 6. The arrival of the dominant is approached by the first instance of the descending minor third. This time the minor third signals the approach of the “borrowed” (major) dominant. In this measure Schubert gives the first hint at the mode change to come, even while simply prolonging the dominant.

Figure 3.4 mm. 1 through 8 of “Ihr Bild”

Schubert makes the switch to the major mode in mm. 9-10, which is confirmed by a clear cadence on the downbeat of m. 13 and reconfirmed in m. 14. The switch of mode coincides with Heine’s change of focus from the paralyzed poet to the “beloved” coming to life. The ultimate act of motion, resurrection, is accompanied by the mode possessing the most harmonic movement. The portrait, however, is of the feminine and not the masculine. In mm. 9-10 the presentation of the rising minor third of the Grundgestalt becomes even clearer. In the modal switch Schubert is posing a question to the listener. Does the ascending minor third in m. 3 signify reality or is it the descending minor third that heralds the arrival of major as seen in the last beats of m. 6 to m. 7 and m. 8 to m. 9? At the end of m. 9 the melodic third has been augmented to become a major third and Schubert confirms that reality has shifted for the poet. This is confirmed by the first authentic cadences, which are achieved in mm. 12 and 14. In m. 15, however, Schubert seems
to bring back a hint of the opening feeling by briefly returning to the stark doubling texture of the Grundgestalt. In fact, the only element missing is the minor third.

The return of the starkness is undermined by the immediate modulation to $G\flat$ major at the end of m. 16 and by the aforementioned $B\flat$ major cadence at m. 14. This textural change sets apart the music of “Um ihre Lippen zog sich,” particularly when heard immediately following the fully harmonized section in major at mm. 12-14 (this section will be discussed later in the chapter). At the same time, the brief feeling of minor surrounded by major sonorities is reinforced by the fact that $G\flat$ major lies in the gamut of $B\flat$ minor and not in that of the parallel major. While it is not unusual for Schubert to modulate to any key a chromatic third away, it is clear that he is playing with the third relationship and creating modal ambiguity by the alternation between major and minor. The minor third continues to be an absent piece of the Grundgestalt through the initial measures of the middle section of the ternary form. The first echoes of the original minor third occur in identical accompaniment figures in mm. 18 and 22. These motifs remind the listener of the double dotted figures from m. 5, which are repeated immediately in the next measure. In their original presentation they are not provided with a tonal context, but presented with the stark doubling of the basic idea. In the second section they appear both harmonically and melodically in a way which highlights the central modal question, major or minor? The sixteenth-note figures are stacked minor thirds representing $B\flat$ minor, which then moves in both melodic minor and major thirds yielding the tonic ($G\flat$ major) on the next beat.
In this moment, one can see in a microcosm the essence of Schubert’s response to the dilemma posed by Heine’s representation of the effect that the “beloved” has had upon the poet. The modal duality confirms the emotional duality of the speaker; is he truthfully represented by the natural harmonic movement of the major in his recollection of the “beloved,” or is he mired in the minor of his pre-dream state?

Formally, on the end of the second beat of m. 22, the B section of the ternary scheme ends and the modulation to the return of A is expected. Schenker refers to a return of the “staring” motive at this point in the score.\textsuperscript{14} Perhaps Schenker merely dismisses the augmented 6\textsuperscript{th} that harmonizes the first of the two B\textsubscript{b} as a pivot chord to return the song to B\textsubscript{b} minor, which it does. [Figure 3.5] Or perhaps it is due to his reduction of the inner voice leading to the bare structural elements. But whatever the cause, there are two elements of the Grundgestalt, which are essential in the return to the original thematic material. The first seems almost incidental, but in light of the previous insights takes on significant ramifications in the final stanza and its outcome. The sixteenth notes that precede both mm. 23 and 24 are both descending melodic minor thirds. The addition of these minor thirds to the “staring motif” provides clues as to the modal truth of the piece. If the “staring motif” were merely stark octaves, as in the opening, they would give the listener a powerful sense of key. In this context they can almost be dismissed as surface ornamentation, except for the profoundly significant role of the minor third in the piece so far. The augmented sixth chord that follows the first of the minor thirds is also deeply rooted in the Grundgestalt. The “Italian sixth” chord’s standard functional resolution is not
designed to return the key to B♭ minor, but instead to provide powerful upper and lower half-step motion to the dominant. This particular augmented sixth chord is used however as a unique sonority and not a means to lead to the dominant. Its relationship to the tritone, the interval that emphasized the word “starrte” in m. 5 does, however, suggest a reason for this unusual chord for a tonal pivot. [Figure 3.5]

Figure 3.5 mm.22 through 24 of “Ihr Bild”

In the motivic and harmonic device seen in at the end of m. 22 into m. 23, Schubert makes use of a descending minor third, the tritone, and also the third that has been the source of the song’s tonal ambiguity—the major third, the other interval in the Italian sixth. The ambiguity seems to be answered in the modality of the next harmony when the octave B♭ is now harmonized with a minor triad.

Schubert has reinforced the return to the original modality to accompany Heine’s return of focus on the poet himself and not the image of the “beloved.” Not only has the work modulated back to minor, but with these signals Schubert has also confirmed the truth of the poet’s own tears. Because of the difference in the way the recapitulation takes place and its stable proclamation of minor, the mood of the statement, “Auch meine Tränen flossen mir von den Wangen herab” (translation can be found in Chapter 2), seems much more forthright. This modal security carries
over into the poet’s declaration after the “Stimmungsbruchung.” [Figure 3.6] The affirmation that he himself is responsible for the loss of his beloved seems to provide the poet some sense of release from his bereavement. The major modality highlights the idea that the poet has once again regained the essence of movement that is so tied to his masculinity. This affirmation that all is right in the poet’s crisis of identity is further buttressed by the repeat of the music from mm. 12-14 that confirms the major through a strong cadential progression. This time Schubert alters the original presentation of the music to reveal a minor iv at the downbeat of m. 35 instead of the major IV in m. 13. This is significant, for the minor iv lies within the natural gamut of B♭ minor and is not borrowed from the relative major. The clue is fleeting, as it is followed immediately by a first-inversion major tonic chord. In the remainder of m. 35 Schubert strengthens the cadence presented in m. 13 by moving inexorably toward a cadence that confirms the tonic chord heard on beat 2. However, this expectation is thwarted when the composer cadences to B♭ minor in m. 36. [Figure 3.6]

Figure 3.6 mm. 30 through 36 of “Ihr Bild”
Monster in the House?

One of the possible readings of Schubert’s setting of this piece is the “monster in the house.” While it may not be the only reading it does fit within the overall structure that Schubert has created. Both the formal and the Grundgestalt analyses support that reading of the song. Formally, the shift of modality, combined with Heine’s shift of character in the strophes as discussed in Chapter 2, strongly suggest this scenario. Moreover, several elements of the analysis lead to this conclusion. First, there is the modal duality. Each utterance by the male protagonist is accompanied by the minor mode, which must borrow its sense of harmonic movement from the major. This gives the listener the impression that the inevitable movement toward cadence and therefore fulfillment is not present in the poet’s life. This idea is further bolstered by the major-mode accompaniment of the active nature of the beloved’s image. The beloved has stolen the essence of the poet’s masculinity and left the poet bereft of that most masculine trait: movement. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the fact that the poet’s verbs of inaction are associated with longer rhythmic values and accompanied by stark doubling only adds to the feeling of stagnation. Musically, Schubert, like Heine with the text, has inverted Goethe’s idea that the basic masculine trait is movement.

Schubert’s selection of the title can also be seen as an indication of the power of the beloved’s image on the poet. “Ihr Bild” is the object of the poet’s rapt attention. Schubert could have provided the first line of the poetry as the title to the song, but he instead focuses on the object of the poet’s “staring.” When he then sets the “diabolus in musica” to usher in the word “staring,” he highlights, with all the
metaphorical implications of that interval, the idea that the act of staring at her
image has profoundly affected the poet's self-image and the beloved's role as
"monster." In Schubert's presentation of Heine's poetry he utilizes the elements
identified in the Grundgestalt and modality to emphasize the idea that the beloved
has stolen the masculine essence of the speaker. The contrast in movement
between the beloved and the poet, emphasized in Chapter 2, is made even more
emphatic by Schubert's musical choices.

In contrast to Stein's reading of Schubert's naïveté, I see in Schubert's ending
a confirmation of Heine's twist and even an added touch of self-irony for the
speaker. When the poet finally declares that he understands that the loss of his
masculinity is the result of his own inaction, it seems as if he has regained his sense
of self with the return to the major mode. The confirmation seems to be assured
when the postlude repeats music that results in a strong cadence in the major at the
end of the first section. Schubert, however, provides one more twist in response to
the twists and turns of the Heine. On the final chord, the true nature of the poet's
fate is revealed through only the second fully harmonized and realized B♭ minor
chord of the piece. The poet remains mired in his loss at the hands of the beloved,
bereft of that most basic of romantic masculine traits: movement.

1 Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, "Music and Poetry: Problems of a Song-Writer", *The
2 For a further explanation of "Grundgestalt" theory see Patricia Carpenter,
"Grundgestalt" as Tonal Function" *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 5 (1983), 15-38; and
Michael J. Schiano, "Grundgestalt" *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1st
ed., s.v.
6 Ibid., 562.
7 Ibid., 562
8 Schenker, “‘Ihr Bild’”, 4.
9 Ibid., 4.
10 Ibid., 4.
12 Schenker, “‘Ihr Bild’”, 4.
14 Schenker, “‘Ihr Bild’”, 7.
Chapter 4: Clara Schumann’s “Ihr Bildnis”/“Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” (1840/1841)

Clara Schumann’s initial setting of the 23rd poem in Die Heimkehr by Heine was written in 1840 and presented as a Christmas gift to her new husband Robert. This is one of the pieces Clara refers to in her statement quoted in Chapter 1:

I finally succeeded in completing three (songs) which I will present to him at Christmas. If they are really of little value, merely a very weak attempt, I am counting on Robert’s forbearance and [hope] that he will understand that it was done with the best will in the world in order to fulfill this wish of his—just as I fulfill all his wishes.1

Clearly she is insecure not only about entering the “masculine” field of composition, but also about fulfilling her husband’s wishes. This might explain Clara’s choice to set Heine. Heine’s poetry provided tremendous inspiration for Robert in 1840. The poet was included in Myrten when the cycle was presented to Clara as a wedding gift. Heine was also the poet of the texts included in another of Schumann’s cycles from 1840, Dichterliebe. Another possible impetus is Clara’s meeting the poet on her 1839 tour of Paris.2 It is uncertain from which source Clara’s inclusion of a Heine text springs. Perhaps its use comes from her wish to fulfill her husband’s desires and his fascination with the poetry of Heine in 1840. Whatever her reason, it is clear that pleasing Robert played a large part in the production of this work.

One of the interesting aspects of Clara’s song is that it exists in two versions. The first version was presented to her husband on Christmas Day 1840, and the one chosen for publication was written out a year later.3 The first version was entitled “Ihr Bildnis” and the second merely the first line of the poem. The first version
remained in the Schumann archive at Zwickau until 1992, when it was finally published. For the most part there are only slight differences between the two settings, but, as Reich points out, “the earlier versions (of all three songs mentioned by Clara in her quote) are bolder harmonically and more unconventional.”

Some compelling circumstantial evidence makes the case for examining these two versions. First, there is the matter of publication. In a brief examination of Clara’s setting of this poem, Susan Youens ignores the previous setting and concentrates on the version chosen for publication. On the other side of the question, Reich states that, “The second versions (written out a year later) were chosen for publication (by Robert?),” intimating that perhaps Robert, for reasons of his own, selected the versions he felt more worthy of publication.

In Youens’ short analysis of “Ich Stand in dunkeln Träumen” she makes reference to Clara’s setting of “Loreley” by Heine, which she considers “one of the great songs of the century.” This Heine piece was unpublished during Clara’s lifetime and did not appear in print until 1993. Several of Youens’ assertions about why “Loreley” was not published could provide valuable insight into the two versions of “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen.” Youens suggests that there are several reasons why Clara did not publish her “Loreley.” The first is that since Robert had set Eichendorff’s version of the same name, her setting could be seen to be “competing” against his. Another possible reason was that “in its violence,” it could, in Youens’ words, be seen as a most “unwomanly creation” in the harshly stereotyped environment of the nineteenth century.
Given the confluence of these bit of circumstantial evidence, it would seem prudent to examine the differences in Clara’s setting of “Ihr Bildnis” and “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” to find evidence of the social stereotypes at play. 10 I will highlight the differences between the two versions, discussing possible reasons for those differences, but focus on the setting chosen for publication.

**Form and Harmony**

In the formal structure of the Schumann setting there is almost none of the folk-like nature of Heine's poetic structure, discussed in Chapter 2. The only strict repetition of material occurs in the prelude and postlude, which are almost identical. Schumann uses many melodic and rhythmic motifs, as well as harmonic ideas, which provide musical coherence for the song. The formal organization, in both versions, replaces the simple, almost folk-like structure of the poem's three stanzas with a much more linear reading seen in the through-composed form. This is exaggerated by the lyrical nature of the line in both the voice and piano. Except for the piano prelude and postlude the words are entirely set to new music. In this “durch-komponiert” setting the images flow from one line to the next, completely ignoring the arrangement of the lines of poetry.

The first two lines of the poem are seamlessly worked into a single lyrical line, which is also the case in the later version. It is clear that Schumann understood Heine's use of verbs of inaction for the poet and verbs of action and motion for the beloved. This is immediately clear in the setting of the word “stand.” Not only does it have the longest rhythmic figure thus far in the score, the dotted quarter note, but it is harmonically reinforced by the strongest cadence. What could be more
harmonically inactive than the tonic? The next verb of inaction for the poet is “starrte,” and here again the rhythmic choice is the dotted quarter. This time the composer highlights the poet’s inaction with a lovely retrograde progression that halts the harmonic motion of the song just as the poet finds himself halted by the image. [Figure 4.1] This is one of the first departures from the earlier version. In the second version this same retrograde appears in the piano introduction; in the original the IV6 chord is replaced with an extension of dominant function. [Figure 4.1a]

Figure 4.1a mm.1 through 5 of “Ich stand in dunklen Träumen”

![Ziemlich Langsam](image)

Figure 4.1b mm. 1through 6 of “Ihr Bildniss”

![Mit tiefster Wehmut](image)

The abandonment of Heine’s formal structure is also reinforced by Schumann’s harmonic choices. The second line, which is the first to allude to the beloved, begins on a bar-long tonic repetition. Immediately, the importance of
looking at the “beloved’s” image is revealed as the harmonic movement increases with secondary dominant harmonies, culminating in an augmented dominant seventh of Bb on the word “Antlitz,” or image. As she transitions to the dominant key of Bb from the end of the word “Antlitz” into “heimlich,” the actual confirmation of Bb comes on the second or unaccented syllable of “Antlitz” and not on the word “heimlich,” the high point of the melodic line. [Figure 4.2] In both settings, Schumann sets “heimlich” not on a tonic chord in the new key of Bb, but within the framework of a secondary dominant to the new supertonic of C. In this context, the image of the “beloved” springing to life maximizes its harmonic movement.

Figure 4.2 mm. 6 through 13 “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

Promptly after the cadence, which occurs on the second half of the third beat of m. 12 (the classical “feminine ending,” which is achieved by anticipating the beat instead of delaying the arrival of the tonic), Schumann proceeds to tonicize the sub-dominant of Bb or the original tonic of Eb. Although she re-establishes Bb through a weak cadence in m. 15, the emphasis on Eb continues through m. 17, when the song returns to Eb with a clear cadence. This return to the original tonic in the middle of the portrait’s act of “smiling” seems an unusual choice. In fact, the word “smile,” or
“Lächeln,” is highlighted with a setting similar to the verbs of inaction in the first line: the tonic harmony and dotted quarter-note rhythm. In contrast to the Schubert setting, Clara’s setting has not yet touched on the minor mode. Although specific words have been highlighted with a minor or diminished harmony, these sonorities have consistently functioned within the overall major tonality.

Beginning with the third line of Heine’s second strophe, the listener is confronted with the first hint of the minor mode. As the poetry turns to the eyes of the beloved, which are seemingly filled with tears, it seems as if this setting has finally come upon a melancholy moment as the harmonies hint at G minor. Clara avoids a full minor thought as the section cadences with a sudden change to A♭ in m. 24. Schumann uses this cadence in the sub-dominant to provide a pivot back to E♭, which she achieves through a string of sub-dominant chords that finally cadence in m. 27. This cadence happens to coincide with Heine’s “Stimmungsbrechung,” which leaves one wondering what exactly is occurring. At the very moment Heine twists his poem’s direction, Clara makes a point to not only cadence in the original tonic, but prepares it by tonicizing the sub-dominant and extending its function within mm. 24-27. The extended cadence is further rhythmically accentuated by providing the word “ach” with the same rhythmic figure that she used for the original image of “stand” - a dotted quarter-note. This time the vocal line is not only set harmonically in the tonic key, but actually sings the tonic note, which functions as the high point of the phrase. Youens writes regarding Schumann’s treatment of the “Stimmungsbrechung” that one “hardly knows what to think.”

Schumann also
changes the punctuation. Instead of Heine’s distinctive dash, Schumann uses a period in the first version and a comma in the second.

The conclusion of the vocal line is where the two versions show the most drastic difference. [Figures 4.3a and 4.3b] In both versions Clara moves through the line of the “Stimmungsbrechung” with a very clear and conventional move toward a cadence in Eb. In the version chosen for publication the cadence provides the perfect transition into an almost exact repetition of the prelude. Youens, for one, wonders what Schumann’s image of the poetry and Heine’s loss could possibly be. In her first version, however, the ending has quite a different impact. Instead of resolving to the tonic on the downbeat of m. 32, Schumann turns Eb into an E♭ in a secondary diminished-7th chord of the supertonic. This ending provides a more obvious twinge of sorrow at the loss of the “beloved,” particularly when the preceding cadence had been set up with such a standard approach.

Figure 4.3a mm. 27 through 37 of “Ich Stand in dunkeln Träumen”
Figure 4.3b  mm. 31 through 39 from “Ihr Bildniss”

This change, combined with the delayed cadential motion in mm. 32-34, portrays a deeper sense of loss than has been revealed elsewhere in the piece. One of the interesting features of the delayed cadence in the original version is the extended use of B♭ as a pedal. Between the 3rd beat of m. 31 and the first beat of m. 37, there is only a half of a beat (the second half of beat 2 in m. 35) that is not accompanied with a B♭. This reinforcement of B♭ not only reminds the listener of the cadential function of the dominant, but also that the only key other than E♭ to be confirmed as a tonal center was B♭. After the extended dominant progression a first inversion tonic chord accompanies the return to the material of the prelude in m. 35. The original version does present a unique change to the recapitulation of the prelude by flatting both melodic notes on the second beat of m. 37. Although the chord still retains its pre-dominant function, she changes the nature of the chord from minor to diminished, thereby adding another level of dissonance to the final cadence. Both versions of the piece have the postlude return to the tonic with a suspension in the
penultimate measure of a tonic bass. In the first version, Schumann voices a half-diminished seventh of vii over the tonic, while in the second version she suspends the preceding dominant seventh over the tonic. It seems, on face value, that the ending of the first version, with the conclusion of the vocal line avoiding the cadence and the extended section on the dominant delaying the resolution, is more directly related to the sharp sense of loss in Heine’s lyrics. Yet both versions are strikingly identical when it comes to the high point of the poet’s realization of his role in the loss and moment of self-irony. Some clues to the changes, and the reasons for them, might be discovered in close examination of the “Grundgestalt.” (The full harmonic analyses can be seen in Appendices B and C.)

**Basic Idea**

If the “Grundgestalt” is found in the first several measures of a piece, it is no surprise that the two versions of the piece share almost identical “basic ideas.” It can be argued that the two versions are different applications of the same idea and that the changes from one to the other might be explained by the ways in which that idea plays out in the overall structure of Schumann’s reading. The identification of the “basic idea” can be seen in Figures 4.4 through 4.7. The first melodic elements of the “Grundgestalt” are the two melodic gestures at the end of the first measure: the melodic half-step ascent in the left hand of G, A♭ A♯ [Figure 4.4] and in the bass lines the ascent of E♭, F, G. [Figure 4.5] These two organic melodic “cells” can be seen through the structure of both versions, helping to provide coherence to different sections of the musical and textual order of the piece.
Figure 4.4 The G, A♭, B♭ element of the Grundgestalt

I believe that the way in which Clara decides to use these elements of the Grundgestalt eventually leads towards the refining of her original work and the final version selected for publication.

Figure 4.5 The Bass Line element E♭, F, G of the Grundgestalt

By extending the E♭ F, G cell over the first three measures in the middle voice and providing the retrograde of the same figure in the bass, Clara arrives at a second inversion secondary diminished-seventh of the dominant [Figure 4.6], which resolves to the dominant and thereby highlights the importance of the dominant harmony in the overall structure of the piece.

Figure 4.6 The diminished sonority and second inversion element of the Grundgestalt

This happens to coincide with another element of the “Grundgestalt”: a melodic leap from B♭ to E♭, which further emphasizes the importance of those pitches and their keys in the structure of the whole. [Figure 4.7]
Figure 4.7 The B♭ to E♭ element of the Grundgestalt

What is missing in this construction of the “Grundgestalt” is the sub-dominant and its crucial role in the framework of both versions. In the version chosen for publication, Clara uses the same descending retrograde figure in the bass and avoids the figure in the left hand. This results in a first inversion of a sub-dominant chord from which she presents the descending figure in retrograde and ascends back to the dominant. Clara thus keeps the emphasis on the structural importance of the dominant, but also duplicates exactly the retrograde progression that is so crucial in the setting of the word “starrte” discussed earlier. This emphasis on the sub-dominant also foreshadows the future importance of the harmony heard in m. 24 in this version, as well as the same function in the previous version in m. 25.

In addition to these elements of the “Grundgestalt,” an important harmonic role also emerges in these first several measures. The function of the diminished sonority is critical to the overall harmonic layout. [Figure 4.6] Its importance could easily be missed in a quick read of the piece. The number and the importance of words and images that are set to this sonority are stunning. In the first version, “dunkeln,” “Träumen,” “Antlitz,” “heimlich,” “Augenpaar,” ”herab” (of “Wangen herab”), and most importantly the final word “hab!” are all set with a diminished
chord. Although the final “hab!” in the second version is set to a tonic sonority, Clara adds the word “Wehmutstränen” to the list and even elevates this idea when she inverts the diminished chord and sets “Antlitz” to an V\(^7\)/V. This serves to highlight the “beloved’s” image as the focus of the memory. The sonority heard here possesses the maximum amount of harmonic tension.

Another important harmonic function in the first several measures of the prelude is the second and third inversions of the seventh chord. These inversions seem to arise naturally out of the idea of keeping a pedal and moving stepwise within the inner voice. This is exactly how Clara presents the first measure in the prelude. [Figure 4.1] These sonorities appear in the first measure of the piece and recur at many critical structural moments. One of the most crucial is in m. 27, just before the final recapitulation of E\(\flat\). [Figure 4.3] Measure four provides a wonderful view of the “Grundgestalt” in a very compact setting. While its music sounds like an ornament in the cadential progression, most of the elements of the “basic idea” are realized. The bass line and the middle voice contain the aforementioned cells, this time rhythmically augmented. There is a pedal B\(\flat\) that accompanies the measure. The second and third beats feature chords in the second and third inversions, and the chord on the third beat is interesting because of its multiple functions. The chord’s sonority is diminished. It is also secondary dominant of the iii, G minor, which foreshadows an important key area to come, and also features the chord in third inversion (also a feature of the Grundgestalt). The most intriguing aspect of this chord is that it fulfills all of these functions and is spelled F\(\sharp\), B\(\flat\), A\(\flat\), F\(\natural\), E\(\flat\), or it contains the cell, re-spelled enharmonically, E\(\flat\), F\(\natural\), G\(\flat\). On first glance this chord
appears to be simply a voice-leading chord, but upon further study, one sees that it has extended ramifications for the structure of the piece. Another line that can be easily missed in this measure due to the ornamental figure is the descending line G, F, Eb. This motif can be traced back to the first measure, where it can be seen to descend to Eb in m. 3. The line then re-ascends to G on the downbeat of m. 4, only to transfer octaves and then descend once again after the quintuplet. Most of the differences between the two versions appear to be fine-tuning of Schumann’s original “Grundgestalt” and a result of the re-working of ideas and their subsequent roles as the pieces unfold.

If these two versions actually do share the same “basic idea,” how can such different endings be explained? Applying the “Grundgestalt,” one realizes that both versions can be traced to the musical ideas in the opening few measures. In the first version the “astonishing” unresolved vocal ending can be traced to a descending use of the initial ascending Eb, F, Gb, cell providing the final half-step motion to the Eb. The resulting third inversion diminished seventh of the super-tonic requires an extension of the cadential motion and does not provide an easy return to the music of the prelude because of the extra harmonic material needed to return to tonic. The inversion of the harmony, the sonority, the melodic arrival at the Eb, as well as the extended focus on the dominant, all fit very nicely into the original “basic idea.” In her second setting of the poem Schumann choses a G, F, Eb descending pattern, previously highlighted in the discussion of m. 4, which begins the pattern of descent
and ascent all over again with an almost exact replication of the prelude. Each of
these seemingly very different endings can be traced to the same “basic idea.”

Ultimately, the working out of a composer’s basic organic idea is up to the
composer. In this case, the basic elements of the changes in the pieces suggest that
Schumann is merely refining her own ideas and concepts, which she chose to lay out
from the beginning. Does this mean that the role of “stereotype” did not play a part
in her compositional choice? By no means. What I am asserting, based on analysis of
her “basic idea,” is that the choice of ending and musical changes in the two versions
does not appear to be the result of anyone’s ideas other than those of the composer.
The differences in the two settings seem to evolve out of an organic re-working of
the same material (the “Grundgestalt”), leading me to treat the final version as
Clara’s definitive reading of Heine’s poetry.

Angel in the House?

What is clear from the analysis of these two versions of the Heine poem is
that they represent a very different reading of the poem from that of Schubert. In
Clara’s final version there is none of the emptiness or voids that we saw in
Schubert’s realization—no horror and sense of ultimate loss at losing his “beloved.”
There is no commitment to the minor key in Clara’s setting, a crucial element in the
Schubert. In the Schumann, we have a version that seems to be focused on
reflection and a pain that has been long resolved. Although aroused by “Ihr Bildnis,”
the image no longer holds the poet in its sway. In this setting the composer provides
the listener glimpses into a relationship that has already been resolved in the poet’s
heart before he speaks. The prelude functions as a sort of synopsis of the distant
relationship and prepares us to join the poet on a journey where mere wisps of emotions remain. This is established in the song as she uses the diminished sonorities borrowed from closely related key areas to tonicize moments of importance in his memory. Never does the melancholy reach satisfaction through cadence as seen in mm. 20-23. Even the most important of events for the poet, it seems, have been subsumed in blissful memory. As the “portrait” springs to life, accompanied by the harmonic transition to B in m. 11, this miraculous moment does not even hold the poet in B♭ long enough for the image to move her lips into “a wonderful smile” in mm. 17-18, which has already moved back to E♭. By returning the listener to tonic so quickly, Schumann seems to hint that this event has already been subsumed into the poet’s normal state of being.

In Clara’s “expressive core,” none of the aspects of “monster in the house” are apparent. Schumann treats many of the images in the poem in a similar manner to Schubert. It is clear, however, that her interpretation of the poem does not cast the woman as the huntress of male virility. It is perfectly reasonable to understand Clara’s feeling about relationship and love “lost” in the year 1840. During the long turmoil of the legal case, which finally allowed Clara and Robert to get married, the fear of loss was incredibly real for both of them. It is quite possible that during this time she would have had to imagine her life without Robert and what impact that would have had on her. It is no wonder that she would hold the view that her loss would have been a permanent part of Robert’s life and that he would have held the memories both painful and joyous dear to his heart. Given the results of the bitter dispute and the celebration of their first Christmas together as husband and wife, it
seems fitting that this poem about “what might have been” should be a part of her artistic output.

In this way, Clara’s reading provides its own bit of irony to the end of the song, particularly in the published version. As the poet recites the final line of the poem, “And, ah, I cannot believe it, That I have lost you!” Schumann returns to the tonic key. This time there is no retrograde progression. The statement both verbally and musically leads in a clear and direct way toward the finality of cadence. The tonic harmony completely belies the poet’s statement. The listener knows full well that the poet believes he has lost her and seemingly fought to keep those glimpses of memory, both bitter and sweet, close to his heart. It is obvious that the poet has already become one with this memory of lost love before the song begins. In a desperate act of trying to stay the ravages of time on his memory, he attempts to recall his lost “beloved” through the use of “Ihr Bildnis.” It is clear that Clara’s “expressive core” is not the same as Schubert’s. Although some of the local features are set in a similar way, “stand” for instance, the global feeling of the song is quite different. It appears that the reaction to the overall metaphorical meaning of the poem has more impact than that of the local symbol.

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2 Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 66.
3 Ibid., 239.
4 Carol Kimball *Song: a guide to art song style and literature* (Milwaukee, Hal Leonard, 2005), 93.
5 Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 239.
8 Ibid., 241
9 Ibid., 241.
10 See Ibid., 241-259 for an excellent discussion of Clara’ Schumann’s “Loreley.”
11 This section is almost identical to the section mm. 8 through 14 of “Ihr Bildniss” the only difference is a rest after “Antlitz.” They are harmonically identical.
12 Ibid., 45.
13 Ibid., 45.
14 Kimball, Song, 93.
Chapter 5: Hugo Wolf’s “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

(1878)

Much like the year 1840 for Robert Schumann, love provided the inspiration for Hugo Wolf’s first prolific output of songs in 1878. He referred to the year (in a letter of 1888) as his “Lodi in Song.”¹ The songs of the Liederstrauß (a “cycle” on the poems of Heine) were composed at a frenzied pace between 18 May and 24 June, of which “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” was the third (May 26th).² This was also the year in which he began his tumultuous relationship with Vally Franck. Even at the age of eighteen the young Wolf was exhibiting the kind of single-minded fixation or devotion that Vally was incapable of returning. Vally’s friend Helene Gabillon recalled, “she could not imagine herself being faithful to any one admirer.”³ The poetry of Heine, with all its vitriol and venom about unrequited love, resonated with the young Wolf. Gabillon recalls that “when he was especially put out” with the “unsympathetic conduct” of Vally he would “sing Schumann’s ‘Ein Jungling liebt ein Mädchen’ (a Heine poem from Dichterliebe) with peculiar intensity and bitterness, hammering out the accompaniment until it sounded like a street-song, while with his rough, unmusical voice he gave unforgettable expression to the pain in his heart.”⁴ The suggested link of Wolf’s autobiographical connection to the poetry of Heine, provided in the previous quote, introduces an interesting avenue of interpretation to the song, “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen.”⁵

The inspiration of love was not the only connection between Wolf and the music of Robert Schumann during this period. In a similar fashion to the devouring
of poetic content from individual poets that would mark his later “mature style,”
Wolf was in the midst of ingesting the compositional styles of Schubert, Brahms, and
especially Schumann. In the settings of his early works, the influence of these song
composers can clearly be seen. In 1878, his unfinished setting of “Was soll ich
sagen?” (Chamisso) has a note on it that reads, ”Zu viel Schumannisch; deshalb nicht
vollendet.” (Too much like Schumann; therefore not completed.) The style seen in
these early works, while displaying some elements of Schubert and Brahms, mostly
reflects the influence of Schumann. Wolf clearly absorbs the use of the piano as an
expressive device separate and apart from the vocal line. While Wolf achieved some
success from his study of earlier composers such as Schumann, it is also clear in the
aforementioned note that he found it somewhat self-limiting. The influence of
Schumann as well as his devotion to the “new” works of Wagner, particularly their
use of leitmotif, chromatic harmonic movement, and most importantly, the drama of
the word, leads to his development of a new style of “song” - a style in which the
word is inexorably linked to the music. Through the piano, Wolf combines the styles
of Wagner and Schumann to provide a dramatic framework to give life to the poetic
art. In “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” we see an early example of these
characteristics.

Form and Harmony

Aside from the extended prelude and postludde, Wolf returns to the three-
part form that correlates with the form of the Heine poetry. Wolf utilizes a ternary
form similar to the form of the Schubert (as discussed in Chapter 3). Although the
three sections of the poem are clearly delineated, gone is the tonal structure with
which Schubert clarified the form. The first section of the Wolf setting begins in m. 8 in the tonic of $A_b$ and ends with a half cadence in m. 23. (See Appendix D) This coincides exactly with Wolf’s presentation of the first strophe of the Heine. One of the most interesting aspects of the opening of the first section is the brief passing $b$-diminished harmony that occurs on the 3rd beat of m. 8 and then again on the 4th beat of m. 10. This chord can be analyzed as the diminished vii of iii. [Figure 5.1] Figure 5.1 mm. 8 through 11 of “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

Although at this point it does not function as anything but a passing harmony, it will become structurally important later in the piece. It is also interesting that Schubert, C. Schumann, and Wolf set the word “stand” to the longest rhythm yet heard in the piece. Wolf sets this image of stillness to a rhythm accentuated in its length by a dotted figure. This stillness is further exaggerated by the use of tonic harmony, which is contrasted with the introduction of the passing diminished sonority previously discussed. As the strophe reaches its third line and begins to change focus to the “beloved,” Wolf reacts by providing more animated harmonic movement accented by melodic range and declamation. The “beloved countenance” is set to the highest pitches yet in the vocal line and is highlighted by the pianissimo
dynamic marking and then a crescendo to decrescendo on “countenance.”

Harmonically, this section (mm.18-20) is accompanied by a tonicization of the sub-dominant. An early act of brilliance by the young composer can be seen in the harmonic setting of the word “staring” in m. 13. Here Wolf sets the verb on the sub-dominant chord and the object of that verb in an extended tonicization of that harmony. [Figure 5.2] The setting of “secretly” is also very interesting, in that Wolf borrows from the minor and uses a diminished supertonic.

Figure 5.2 mm. 12 through 15 “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

The middle section, which corresponds to the second strophe of the Heine, begins in m. 24 with a cadence in A♭ minor. Wolf prepares the listener for this in m. 21 when he borrows the diminished super-tonic from the minor, as well as when he borrows the flatted mediant chord. This borrowing is reminiscent of the Schubert
setting in which the composer plays with the modality of a single tonic to
differentiate between the masculine and feminine characters. In the Wolf setting,
however, it is but a fleeting gesture as the composer quickly provides a strong
cadence back to A♭ major in m. 26. As Heine describes the “wonderful” smile, Wolf
strikingly moves to a brief tonicization of the supertonic in mm. 26-27 and passes
through the flatted mediant for “tears of sorrow.” Wolf finally arrives at the
tonicization of the dominant in m. 29, which he completes with a strong cadence on
the dominant at m. 31. This cadence appears to be very similar to the cadence that
ended the previous section in m. 23. Wolf extends the dominant function through
m. 32 to provide a clear cadence back to A♭ major in m. 33.

This setting once again recalls the Schubert setting. Gone, however, is the
minor of the Schubert, which seems so fitting for the description of the poet’s tears.
Wolf even sets the word “tears” on a tonic chord in root position. The use of tonic
here seems to be a strange choice for the poet’s “tears.” The word “flows” is
beautifully set with a series of diminished sonorities tonicizing the super-tonic. The
depiction of this word also provides the first rhythmic change from the first section
of the song. By augmenting the rhythm on the A♭ Wolf changes the harmonic plan
slightly, which results in a cadence on a tonic root position chord instead of the first
inversion chord in the first iteration of the theme. Again, as in the Schumann, at the
very moment of the “Stimmungsbrechung” Wolf provides a clear cadence to the
tonic. Unlike the Schumann, Wolf immediately moves away from the tonic to briefly
highlight the text, “Ich kann’s nicht glauben” (I cannot believe it), with a tonicization
of the sub-dominant. This emphasis on the sub-dominant reminds the listener of
the “beloved countenance” from mm. 18-20. Instantly the listener is transported from the “beloved countenance” into a section highlighting the super-tonic, the tonality associated with the “wonderful smile” in the middle section of the song. At the fourth beat of m. 48 Wolf begins a very rare practice in his work as a whole: he repeats text. By repeating the text after the “Stimmungsbrechung,” Wolf highlights the importance of the text, which is additionally accented by the harmonic shift to the mediant. [Figure 5.3] The mediant harmony has only been hinted at in passing chords in the opening section to underline the act of standing. The c minor harmony inextricably links the act of standing and being motionless to the poet’s own inability to believe in the loss. Wolf then uses a cadential second inversion of tonic to return to A♭ and the cadence in m. 55. This leads to a repeat of the opening material only through m. 61, at which point Wolf interrupts the counterpoint and provides a truncated harmonic cadence.
Figure 5.3 mm. 46 through 63 “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”
Basic Idea

The opening to Wolf’s “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” is highly chromatic and contrapuntal. Susan Youens points out that eleven of the chromatic pitches in the gamut are presented in the first four measures of the piece. What is most interesting about this song is how the chromatic nature of the two individual lines of the prelude works itself out in the piece as a whole. This canonic introduction not only serves the purpose of introducing the elements of the “Grundgestalt,” but it is essentially the “Grundgestalt.” As with the doubling feature in the Schubert, Wolf’s choice of a simple contrapuntal presentation in the introduction provides no clue as to tonic. The first pitch does not even lie within the gamut of the key shown by the key signature. The second entrance of the line (F♯) enters at the interval of a fourth but also lies outside the gamut of the key signature and is sounded simultaneously with a B♭. Although this sonority is enharmonically consonant, the spelling hints at the broader goal of tonal uncertainty as a major goal of the “Grundgestalt.” Absent in the first three measures of this introduction is the actual tonic pitch. This most fundamental ambiguity combined with the leading-tone figure leading to everything but the tonic, establishes the idea of ambiguity as part of the “Grundgestalt” itself. The listener is then left to discover tonic and reality as the piece proceeds. These melodic figures also suggest some crucial harmonies and sonorities that have already been shown to be critical in the construction of the piece as a whole. The most easily recognized facet of the basic idea is the lower-neighbor relationship identified in figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4 The lower-neighbor element of the Grundgestalt
This construct appears in the first notes of the song and is repeated four times in the first four measures. As Youens points out, this figure is seen throughout the piece and becomes the basis for the many harmonic movements of the song. While it is true that the gesture illustrated in Figure 5.4 is a fundamental element of the work and can be readily seen in many places in the piece, it is only a single element of a larger construct that forms the structural coherence that holds the song together. One aspect of the element in Figure 5.4 is its implication for tonicization. There is no harmonic movement more basic to the theory of Western tonal music than the half-step relationship between the leading tone and tonic. Even though the first two measures can clearly be heard as tonic and dominant, the idea of the leading tone gives the impression that the mediant, super-tonic, leading tone, and dominant are briefly tonicized. This further highlights the ambiguity of tonic.

The two phrases together are heard as tonic leading the dominant because of the clarity of dominant function in the second voice. While manipulating the listener into hearing tonic, when the note actually does not appear, Wolf establishes the basic harmonic movement of Western music in the dichotomy of tonic and dominant, which presents the listener with a portent of important key relationships to come. The significance of the harmonies of the mediant, super-tonic, and dominant were discussed at length in the first section. The sonority of the leading-tone harmony is incredibly important in the overall structure of the song. In m. 11 the leading-tone harmony is tonicized by its own leading tone harmony to set the
word “Träumen.” This harmonic movement is foreshadowed in the second
measure of the piece with the movement of F♯ to G in the bass as well as the A♭ to
the B♭ in the treble. By resolving one diminished sonority to another, Wolf provides
no resolution to the setting of “dreams.” “Dark dreams” without resolution—which
could be a more fitting setting?

The importance of the diminished sonority in this piece also emphasizes
another key element in the “Grundgestalt”-- that of the melodic tritone, in figure 5.5.
Figure 5.5 The melodic tritone figure of the Grundgestalt

Although the melodic tritone appears in the voice part twice, in mm.10 to 11 and
mm. 34 to 35, it is much more crucial to the piece in other ways. The leading tone is
the only pitch in the gamut that when harmonized in thirds is a diminished sonority.
This occurs because of the tritone inherent in the chord. This harmony, which
emphasizes the tritone, is important in the setting of the aforementioned dark
dreams and crucial to the “Stimmungsbrechung” discussed in the previous section.
The tritone is also of great interest when analyzing the entrances of the two voices.
[Figure 5.6] The intervalic relationships of the two entrances are exactly the same
except for the “Grundgestalt” elements shown in figures 5.5 and its Doppelgänger in
the second entrance.

Figure 5.6 mm. 1 through 8 of “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”
In the second entrance (in the dominant), Wolf “fixes” the tritone and replaces it with a minor 6th. The first iteration of the line in tonic also contains the melodic tritone, but does not contain the actual tonic pitch. This ambiguity is further enhanced when the line resolves to the supertonic instead of the tonic. The conversion of the melodic tritone of the first line to a minor 6th allows Wolf to resolve to the dominant, the tonal center of the second line. As these two lines begin to interact in m. 3 and into m. 4, the tonic/dominant dichotomy becomes more clear and leads to a brief tonicization of the sub-dominant (the importance of which has already been discussed), which Wolf follows through an extended cadential progression to the final presentation of tonic in m. 9.

**Angel and Monster in the House?**

The first part of the prelude gives the impression of two characters. The more likely conclusion is that the two lines represent contrasting realities—one reality, which is slightly unbalanced and uncertain of its proper resolution, and a second, which contains the certainty of the inevitable and proper resolution. One of the elements that leads to this reading is that the “beloved countenance” is strongly delineated by the sub-dominant harmony. If the poem were to be interpreted as having two characters, the “beloved” is the only possible other character in addition to the speaker. Another facet of the piece that argues for this reading is that the
sections in which the poet focuses on himself --the beginning of the vocal line and the beginning of the recapitulation-- are sung to the notes of the first presentation of the theme in augmentation. Wolf reinforces the idea that when the poet exists without the "beloved," or his memory of her, he is off balance and unsure of how his life is to resolve. Thus, Wolf provides the inadequate resolution in m. 15. [Figure 5.2] Not only is the tonic chord in first inversion deployed, but the lower neighbor motion from the “Grundgestalt” is used to delay the cadence to the second half of the measure. Wolf also uses an inner voice to tonicize the mediant as seen in the opening motive. [Figure 5.6] The authentic tonic cadence is delayed so as not to coincide with any act of the poet, but with the “beloved’s countenance.” [Figure 5.2] As the poet’s world becomes full of the “beloved’s” image (memory), the promise of life resurrected is accompanied by a strong cadence in the dominant in m. 23. In the middle section, which focuses on the “beloved,” Wolf makes use of harmonies that focus on dominant function. Wolf reinforces the idea of solidity in movement and direction with a strong cadence on the dominant in m. 31.

In this sense the “Angel in the House” provides the direction and movement toward completion and fulfillment, which the sections in the tonic have somehow lacked. When the poet’s tears shake him from his dream the vocal line once again returns to the opening pitches. This time the emphasis is more powerful. Once again in m. 39 the listener is reminded that the poet’s life without the “beloved” is bereft of direction and left with the same sense of unappeased longing when the same weak cadence from m. 15 is repeated. It is here, at the very moment of the “Stimmungsbrechung,” that the futility of tonic is fully revealed. At the very moment
that the poet had seen his “Angel in the House” resurrected, in the initial
presentation of the theme, he now utters his disbelief that he has lost her. The key
areas that are tonicized in the initial theme are highlighted in retrograde as the
“Stimmungsbrechung” and its repeat are sung. In mm. 45-48 the B♭ is highlighted,
which was tonicized at the end of the initial theme. The mediant is tonicized in mm.
49-52. [Figure 5.3] The listener feels and hears an extended version of the harmonic
implications of the initial theme, which is much more unsettling than the bare
voicing from the prelude. The memory of the poet’s unrequited love has left him
devoid of purpose and lacking direction. “The Monster in the House” has once again
left the poet without his most prized of masculine traits—movement.

The young Wolf is, however, not yet finished with the story. Wolf moves
through c minor to a cadential second-inversion tonic chord to provide a cadence in
tonic on the downbeat of m. 55, which, interestingly, leaves out the 5th. In this
cadence Wolf chooses not to hold the common E♭, leaving the listener strangely
unsatisfied. Immediately Wolf transitions into a postlude, which is exactly identical
to the prelude for the first five measures. It is as if by returning to the opening
material, the composer is reinforcing the cyclical nature of the poet’s memory. It is
therefore perfectly reasonable for the composer to break the sequence of memory
when the harmony of the “beloved” is heard. This time Wolf avoids the tonicization
on the sub-dominant and instead replaces it with a diminished sonority, which
connects to the initial presentation of the “Grundgestalt.” As a diminished sonority
the chord prominently features the tritone. It also provides the composer with
ample opportunity to use the half step motion [Figure 5.4], both from above and below, to resolve to a minor dominant of the dominant.

Unlike the ending of the Schubert, which leaves the poet bleak and without hope, the young Wolf remains optimistic of finding fulfillment with his “Angel in the House.” Beginning in M. 61 Wolf abandons the ambiguity in the initial contrapuntal presentation and adopts a much clearer tonal approach to tonic. Gone is the starkness of the introduction replaced by the inevitable progression to tonic. In the penultimate measure Wolf reaches the dominant in the final fulfillment of the tonic, but instead of delivering a definitive cadence on the downbeat of the final measure Wolf presents a dominant seventh in root position over a tonic pedal. [Figure 5.3] In the final moment of the anticipated fulfillment of the tonic the listener instead hears both tonic and dominant simultaneously. As the first half of the measure’s suspension resolves, the listener anticipates full resolution in the second half of the measure. Wolf instead moves the resolution to the second half of the second beat, thus making the anticipated arrival on beat three somewhat confused and unclear. This time Wolf holds the common tone (the fifth) so the tonic chord sounds in its completed form. The poet, in Wolf’s setting, is still able to hold out hope of finding fulfillment with his “Angel in the House.”

2 Ibid., 404.
3 Ibid., 402.
4 Ibid., 404.
5 Although the setting of Heine texts played a large role in Wolf’s early career, it is interesting to note that only once did he revisit Heine in his “mature style period.” “Wo wird einst” (1888), which was published in 1898 in *Vier Gedichte nach Heine,*
Shakespeare und Lord Byron. This song coincidently was the only setting of Heine that he deemed worthy of publication (see the citation below).


8 Ibid., 37.
Chapter 6: Ingeborg von Bronsart’s “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen” (1872)

The life of Ingeborg von Bronsart née Stark bears some striking similarities to that of Clara Schumann. The young Stark was first recognized as a concert pianist and enjoyed much success all over Europe. She did not study with her father, but had similar training at the hands of a master pedagogue, Franz Liszt. The young Stark also fell in love and married one of her teacher’s other students—a young composer and pianist, Hans von Bronsart. Like Clara Schumann, she continued to concertize after her marriage while her husband's position allowed it.\(^1\) They both were at home with the elite of musical circles during their time. The Bonsarts were well acquainted with Liszt, of course, as well as von Bülow, Wagner, Berlioz, Rossini, and Auber.\(^2\)

One thing, however, that she did not share with Clara Schumann was a reticence to compose. Ingeborg’s composition of songs is spread throughout her career and together with her operas form the largest percentage of her oeuvre. Her first known song is based on a Heine poem that once again links her with Clara Schumann, “Die Loreley” by Heine.\(^3\) In 1867, when her husband became an officer of the court, she was no longer permitted to perform in public. While she did cease her performance career, in deference to her husband's position, she devoted more time to composition. During this period she returned to her love of vocal music. Not only did she focus on the writing of song, but she also began to experiment with the masculine-dominated field of opera composition. Her first opera (the music of
which has been lost), *Die Göttin von Saïs*, was given its only performance in 1867. In 1870 the Franco-Prussian war broke out and she focused on writing patriotic material, which included her only piece for “large-scale” orchestra, *Kaiser-Wilhelm Marsch*, composed for the return of the troops in 1871. In the same year she produced three songs dedicated to the Kaiser as well as her patriotic work for male choir, “Hurrah Germania.” The *Kaiser-Wilhelm Marsch* was most famously played at the opening of the Women’s Building at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

In 1872 Ingeborg wrote her first successful opera, *Jery und Bätley*, which was produced in at least ten German cities and well received by both the critics and public alike. Even as the work was receiving great acclaim, it is apparent from the reviews that the stereotypes of women composers still held true. Georg Cruse wrote that the opera is full of “dainty, attractive music” and that it was “a harmless piece.” Richard Pohl thought that the work was “elegant” and “very pretty...and stuck in a happy mood.” Despite the gendered reception of her music she wrote two more operas. In the same year she celebrated her first successful opera, she wrote three songs, including “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen.” According to the *New Grove Dictionary* she composed over 53 songs between 1872 and 1891. In 1879 she set the poems of Friedrich von Bodenstedt in her op. 8-10 and again in Op. 12 (1880). Bodenstedt is the same poet who wrote the libretto for her third opera, *Hiarne (1891)*, which was also a success. The next opera, *Die Sühne (1909)*, was largely a failure and received only one documented performance. She continued to compose songs until three years before her death in 1913.
As the first female composer of a large-scale opera in Germany, Ingeborg von Bronsart obviously did not shy away from the stereotyped genres of composition. It could be that her sense of value as a composer springs from Liszt, when he told her that perhaps she could become the “George Sand of music.”\(^{11}\) Whatever the source of her remarkable ability to succeed in such a heavily stereotyped genre, it is apparent from her letter (1902) to her early biographer La Mara (Marie Lipsius) that she was extremely proud of the fact that Breitkopf & Härtel was going to publish several of her songs. Melinda Boyd further states that “Ingeborg took great pride that her oeuvre now included thirty lieder.”\(^{12}\) Although known as the “first lady” of the German operatic stage, her oeuvre and her letters demonstrate that song as a genre proved a lasting and constant compositional inspiration.

**Form and Harmony**

Ingeborg von Bronsart makes use of a through-composed form for her setting of Heine’s three-strophe poem. Several aspects of this piece are interesting on first hearing. One of the most obvious is the readily apparent minor mode from the first measure. Another is the introduction. Unlike the more expansive introductions of Wolf and Clara Schumann, Bronsart gives the listener a simple introduction of the tonic. [Figure 6.1] Although the function of the introduction is similar to that of the Schubert, gone is the sparseness that so dominates the Schubert setting. Bronsart reveals the tonic in full melodic arpeggiation. (See Appendix E for a full harmonic Analysis) The two measures of tonic lead into a dominant seventh in m. 3, only to lead back to tonic at the first presentation of the text. The first image, identified in Chapter 2 for “stand,” is set to the tonic chord and
once again, as with the Schumann and Schubert settings, is rhythmically set to a
dotted-quarter note. Bronsart chooses the diminished sonority for the word “dark”
and provides a descending chromatic line in the bass for the word “dreams.” The
bass line provides for a diminished sonority on the
Figure 6.1 mm. 1 through 7 of “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

second beat borrowed from F major, which resolves to the major seventh chord on
beat three. The chromatic bass descent leads to the d7 in m. 6, which yields another
chord borrowed from the major, a minor super-tonic. The super-tonic becomes a
focus of mm. 6 and 7, leading to a movement to G major in m. 8. [Figure 6.2] It is
noteworthy that the setting of “staring at her portrait” is set harmonically to the
supertonic and the result of that action is transposed into G, or the major supertonic.
Interestingly, this harmonic movement does not coincide with Heine’s original
poetic structure, but occurs halfway through the first strophe.

The key, however, is never fulfilled with a cadence. Bronsart avoids
providing clarity to G major as tonic by sounding tonic in second inversion instead
of a more traditional tonic-function voicing, such as the root or first position in m. 8.
The closest Bronsart comes to fulfilling G major as the key is the use of the pedal
points of G and D in mm. 10 and 11. Here again, although tonic and dominant are
Figure 6.2 mm. 8 through 15 of “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

sounded simultaneously as pedal points, they do so in second inversion. Over this
pedal point figure are the words “secretly sprung to life.” The word “secretly” is set
off by rests on both sides and marked pianissimo. This section can be understood in
two ways. The first is that the pedal points are completed by the Bs on the word
“life” in m. 11. This would mean that the overall function is that of a cadential tonic
second inversion chord to the dominant seventh in m. 12. While functional, this
solution implies an overabundance of non-harmonic tones, which seem to have
harmonic function. The other interpretation is that the Bs are the non-harmonic
tones and that the rest of the notes form the harmonic function of ii to the V^7/V to
V^7 in m. 13. I believe it is most likely that both of these functions are happening
simultaneously, in order to set this miraculous moment with the maximum amount
of harmonic movement. The wonderful half cadence in m. 12 serves not only to
provide maximum harmonic movement, but also to reassure the listener of the G
major tonality.
In mm. 13 to 15 Bronsart uses the tonic second inversion chord along with a couple of augmented sonorities, particularly the V₆ of A♭ in m. 15, to transition to the new key of A♭ major. Measure 15 also sees a metrical shift as Bronsart moves from triple meter to common time. [Figure 6.2] These changes correspond to the middle strophe of Heine’s original three-part form. As the “portrait’s” lips wear a smile, Bronsart remains in the key of A♭, and it’s not until the end of the word “wonderful” that she begins to make another harmonic shift. For the second half of Heine’s middle strophe she moves back again to the original key of f minor. [Figure 6.3] Here, again, Bronsart alters the form of Heine’s poetry. While the poem Figure 6.3 mm. 21 through 26 of “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

discusses the “portrait’s” tears the composer has chosen to return to the original tonic key. Even though the piece is clearly back in f minor at this point, Bronsart focuses our attention on the dominant and not the tonic. After m. 21 the actual sounding of tonic is delayed until the poet is describing his own “tears” (m. 26). This is a wonderful compositional device to lead the listener to relate two poetic ideas in retrospect. By revealing the dominant-tonic relationship, Bronsart allows the listeners to link the two ideas together and know that it was not the portrait
weeping, but the poet doing so. As the poet shifts to his own “cheeks” in m. 28 there is a quick tonicization of the sub-dominant. Bronsart cadences to tonic in m. 30 through a diminished leading-tone chord on beat 4 of m. 29. [Figure 6.4]

Figure 6.4 mm. 28 through 37 of “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

To set the very moment of the “Stimmungsbrechung” to a tonic chord is a shocking choice. Even though the composer returns to the tonic key, it is obvious that Bronsart finds the statement of great importance because she repeats the text. In addition, the text of the “Stimmungsbrechung” is rhythmically set to triplet figures, which do not exist elsewhere in the score. Vocally the
“Stimmungsbrechung” also contains the highest pitch, which is held by a fermata. Harmonically, that same pitch is set to an augmented (German) sixth chord, providing the word “believe” with the utmost feeling of tonal ambiguity. [Figure 6.4] But for the completion of the “Stimmungsbrechung” Bronsart reminds the listener that although she had returned to the harmonic tonic, the piece has not completely reverted to the feeling of the beginning.

Not until the vocal high point is finished, and the poet’s agony has been expressed, is the listener returned to the metrical “tonic” of triple meter. It is not until the return of three-four meter in m. 30 that the listener realizes that the poet has not yet re-awakened to himself and is still lost in memory. Only the memory of “I have lost you!” can recall the poet to himself. Harmonically Bronsart respells the aforementioned augmented sixth chord to set the word “lost.” This time the ambiguity of disbelief is gone and only tonal clarity remains as the listener is led toward inevitable cadence. The return of the original vocal line in the piano accompaniment and the outline of the vocal line only serve to highlight this return. Bronsart brilliantly does not allow the melody to coincide with the text, but instead delays the poet’s words so that it seems the poet is waking to reality after a melancholy dream.

**Basic Idea**

As discussed in the previous section, the opening motive of the piano prelude is a fairly straightforward presentation of the tonic in a lyrical arpeggiation of the chord. In two and a half measures, Bronsart simply lays out the plan for the entire growth of the piece as well as its basic motivic ideas. The basic melodic, harmonic,
and rhythmic ideas of the “Grundgestalt” are laid out in Figures 6.5 though 6.7. These elements will not only recur in the piece as initially presented, but in diminution, augmentation, retrograde, and transposition as well. Bronsart’s use of her “basic idea” is definitive in its thoroughness and clarity. The two most crucial elements of the “Grundgestalt” are the simple melodic descent in Figure 6.5, which breaks up the monotony of the arpeggiated tonic chord while emphasizing scale degrees A♭, G, F, and the upper neighbor figure seen in figure 6.6. The pitches in Figure 6.5 represent the key scheme for the entire piece, presented in retrograde.

Figure 6.5 The bass line element of the Grundgestalt

Figure 6.6 The upper-neighbor element of the Grundgestalt

Although not as grounded in the overall harmonic structure of the piece, the melodic element in Figure 6.6, along with its rhythmic corollary in Figure 6.7, play crucial roles throughout the piece. The role of the upper-neighbor motion and its inverse, Figure 6.7 The dotted rhythmic element of the Grundgestalt
the lower-neighbor, is quickly highlighted in m. 4 when Bronsart uses both the upper and lower neighbor motions to highlight the word “dark.” The same technique appears in m. 6 for the setting of “portrait.”

In the setting of the word she brings back the rhythmic pattern in Figure 6.7 to intensify the importance of the “beloved’s” image. In m. 11 Bronsart utilizes the compositional tool of doubling the upper-neighbor motion, but in her added use of the rhythmic motif in diminution gives the line its utmost motion when the portrait “comes to life.” The idea of doubling a single element of the “Grundgestalt,” while simultaneously reducing another to achieve just the perfect setting, is a masterful stroke. The compositional end game of the upper and lower neighbor figure plays out in mm. 31 and 32. The arrival of the word “believe” on beat three of m. 31 is set with a German augmented sixth chord. The usual function of such a chord is to provide resolutions from both the top and the bottom to strengthen the arrival of the dominant. In this case Bronsart uses the upper and lower neighbor motion established in the “Grundgestalt” along with the line in retrograde from Figure 6.5 to highlight this very important moment in the piece. The confluence of so many elements of the “basic Idea” provides more than just a melodic high point, but rather an explosion of the “expressive core.”

Figure 6.5 also emphasizes the G by presenting the pitch as the only passing tone in the middle of an arpeggio. This foreshadows the importance of the supertonic, which has already been established in the previous section. This same pattern of scale degrees is used in mm. 16 and 17 to describe the actions of the resurrected beloved’s image. Hearing the same scale degrees, with the new intervalic makeup
of the major scale, alters the listener’s perception of reality. Although familiar, this
is not the same motivic material from the beginning. The familiarity provides the
listener a sense of coherence, while the change in the intervallic content signals that
reality has been altered. The motive returns in retrograde at the approach to the
augmented sixth chord in m. 31. This time it heralds the moment of greatest
ambiguity. Finally, the motive returns in its “native” form to emblazon the cadence
with the final truth: “I have lost you!”

**Lost Angel in the House?**

The piano postlude accomplishes many things, which have already been
discussed, and it also serves to set the mood for the piece. The choice of minor goes
a long way in setting a melancholy feel to the piece. The minor mode can instill a
foreboding mood as in the stark emptiness of the Schubert, but Bronsart disarms
this tendency with the arpeggiated figure and the combination of triple meter, which
results in a more rhapsodic and dreamlike sonic environment. Although Bronsart
gives her setting of the poet’s memory of lost love a slight melancholy feel with the
minor mode, the treatment of this memory reminds the listener of the Schumann
reading. Gone are the sparseness of the Schubert and the chromaticism of the Wolf.
As the act of “staring” at the portraits yields to memory, the piece moves from the
melancholy minor into the major modes of G and A♭ and even metrically augments
the dream reality to common time. The listener is left with the impression that the
poet was fulfilled when this dream reality was actual truth.

The tonality ascends through G major to the relative major of the original f
minor, A♭. The meter moves from the dancelike, rhapsodic triple to a simpler and
more folk-like duple. The dream world does not make a sudden shift to the poet’s completed reality with his “Angel in the House,” but approaches it slowly as the dream state grows ever closer to reality. Even as the poet perceives “tears” in the “beloved’s” eyes with the return to f minor in m. 22, the composer concentrates on major chords borrowed from the dominant of the parallel major (mm. 22-26). It is only when the poet realizes that the “tears” are his own, does Bronsart return to the “natural” tonal scope of minor in mm. 26-29. For the listener, the memory of the loss of his “Angel in the House” is most poignant as the poet leads into the “Stimmungsbrechung.” Not only does Bronsart reject Heine’s original moment of self-irony in the “Stimmungsbrechung,” she replaces it with her own. Bronsart instead breaks the voice with the object of the loss—“you.”

Bronsart replaces Heine’s focus of the “Stimmungsbrechung” to the word “you,” the object of the loss. Heine had instead focused his attention on the poet’s own role. This is highlighted in Bronsart’s setting with both upper-neighbor and lower-neighbor figures in m. 32. [Figures 6.6 & 6.3] This re-write completely disarms the poet’s disbelief. Once again, as in the Schumann, the listener is left with the feeling that the poet’s dubiety is merely part of the dream. The return to reality occurs with the declaration of the loss and the melancholy of the original introduction. Clearly the poet is still bereft of the completion that his “Angel in the House” once had brought him. Bronsart, however, has tempered the agony of the loss by setting a more melancholy than bitter tone to the prelude and postlude. Here, there is no evidence of a “monster” withholding masculine plenitude, merely a wistful remembrance of loss and self-responsibility.
1 Hans von Bronsart took a position as Intendant of the Königs Theater in Hanover, and as he was a Prussian official his wife was forbidden to appear in public as an artist, except for charitable events. This law, however, did not apply to the “domestic” sphere but only the “public” arena. See Melinda Jean Boyd, “Opera, or the Doing of Women: the dramatic works of Ingeborg von Bronsart (1840-1913)” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2002), 16-17.
2 Ibid., 14.
5 Ibid., 18.
8 Ibid., 327.
9 Deaville, “Bronsart”, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article_works/grove/music/48026#S48026.1
11 Ibid., 11.
12 Ibid., 27.
Chapter 7: Differences: Towards an Understanding of Gendered Traits in Compositional Choice

In the preceding examinations of the Heine poem “Ich stand in Dunkeln Träumen” and its musical settings by four different composers, several obvious trends have begun to surface. The analyses show that the four composers shared a basic understanding of the surface imagery of the poem. By surface imagery I am referring to the specific, individual imagery, such as “stand.” Each composer has reacted to that particular image with a more stagnant setting than the surrounding text. There have been similar choices in terms of rhythmic setting and even some, such as the retrograde progress in the Clara Schumann song, that further highlight the inability of the poet to move beyond the “beloved.” All the settings convey a basic understanding of the contrast in images of motion and those of stasis. In each case the composer grants the textual phrase “zu leben begann” or resurrection of the portrait greater harmonic motion and power. The “Grundgestalt” analyses also show that each of the four composers uses a basic organic structure to provide coherence to their song. One might argue as to the level of individual success achieved, but each of the composers work out their fundamental ideas in a similarly organic way. While the local effects of the settings of the individual composers bear a slight resemblance to one another and all of the pieces seem to deal with the act of composition in a similarly organic way, the global effects of the pieces are quite different.
The gap between the similarity of the imagery and the differences in the larger effect can be characterized in a concept introduced by Castel Nuovo-Tedesco.¹ His notion of “expressive core” denotes the interaction of the surface symbols with the global environment of the song. Schubert, Cl. Schumann, Wolf, and Bronsart have used a wide variety of techniques to create the sonic field that fits their judgment as to the “expressive core” of the poem. These large-scale decisions in form, texture, and modality provide contextual weight beyond the discursive nature of the surface symbol. It is in these elements that some of the most interesting patterns emerge along gendered lines and offer possible insights into a “feminine” style in the nineteenth century.²

**Form**

In the four settings of the Heine poem that have been examined in detail, only two different song forms were used: through-composed and ternary. The original three-stanza layout of the poem tends to lend itself to ternary form, yet two composers deploy a musical form that does not directly correspond to the poetic form of the Heine. In this particular case, the decisions have been made along gendered lines with the male composers using the ternary form and the female composers the more linear through-composed form. Form places a set of heavy expectations for the listener. Just as Heine uses a simple poetic form to set the expectations of his reader, the composer uses a certain form to give the listener an aural expectation of ensuing events. In ternary form, for example, the listener anticipates the arrival of the recapitulation to provide a connection both textually and musically with the beginning. That aural connection allows composers to
supply musical coherence to overall structure by providing closure to the piece. It also sets up expectations in the listener that allows the composer to create twists and surprises to the endings in order to thwart expectations. It is this trait that Schubert uses to his benefit when, instead of ending the piece in the major as he does with the first section, he concludes with the fully harmonized \( \text{b}\) minor chord. Another major aspect of this form is its cyclical nature. By returning to the original material the listener is reminded of the original presentation of material. Whatever progression or development that has occurred in the meantime has been resolved or nullified when the song returns to the opening section. In a way, the listener is reminded that reality is always present in spite of our wishes, how much we struggle, or what our memory presents for us.

In contrast, the women composers disregard Heine’s three-part form and instead structure their reading in a more linear way – setting the poetry to a continuous flow of new music. The adoption of through-composed form means that all of the anticipatory meanings associated with ternary form are missing. Through-composed organization prepares the listener to interpret the meaning of any given musical idea without the automatic recognition that it must be heard in light of the original theme. In this sense, the advantage of the through-composed song is that all new utterances can be taken in a linear rather than a cyclical way and each new idea can then become a reality of its own. The songs by Cl. Schumann and Ingeborg von Bronsart use this device to weave a narrative in which each memory occurs and is understood on its own. The impact of each memory maintains its own personality without deference to another act. In these cases there are no overriding issues of
dominance. The image of the beloved does not hold power over the unfulfilled lover because there is no predominance of imagery. As each memory moves to the next and then onward, the listener can lose track of who is to blame and how the story began and ended. What is important in these portrayals is that a love has been lost and, although bitter at some point, the linear nature of time and memory has tempered pain with recognition. Here there is neither “Angel” nor “Monster,” merely the time-ravaged memory of what could have been.

**Texture and Modality**

The uses of both of texture and modality are elements that show division along masculine and feminine lines. Both male versions of the song have shown a tendency toward using a more sparse texture. As highlighted earlier, the Schubert makes use of its “basic idea” of the doubling throughout the different textures used in the piece. Even though Schubert moves to an almost hymn-like texture for sections of the piece, he always returns to the emptiness of the doubling technique. Even the Wolf composition, which uses a wider variety of textures than the spare portrayal of the Schubert, begins with a two-voice contrapuntal introduction, which also reappears as the postlude. Furthermore, Wolf uses texture to reinforce the formal aspects of his ternary form and adopts an accompaniment texture which displays increased movement to highlight the action of the resurrected beloved.

The texture of the songs by Bransart and Schumann tends to be the same throughout. Unlike the Wolf, they seem to highlight the idea that this is a dream-state from beginning to end and that the poet has previously incorporated his memories into his own self image. Even the sense of modality seems to be impacted
by a gendered bias. Schumann consciously avoids giving a cadential fulfillment to
the minor mode, which seems to reinforce the idea that the tragedy of this loss has
been tempered by the passage of time. In contrast, Schubert uses the minor to
portray a vast emptiness of loss and betrayal, which in effect has rendered the poet
inert both emotionally and physically. The same mode (minor), which Schubert
portrays with such emptiness and foreboding, is altered by Bronsart’s use of texture
and form to yield its modal timbre as melancholy and distant.

Schubert, Cl. Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Ingeborg von Bronsart render both
modality and texture to create quite different readings of the same poetry. Although
their readings of the poem vary, the differences are most readily apparent across
gendered lines.

**Impact of the “Expressive Core”**

There are some obvious differences in the way in which the masculine and
feminine composers play out the “Angel in the house”/ “monster in the house”
scenario. It is perfectly reasonable that women would not choose to be portrayed as
villain in a relationship in which they possess no power (the romantic relationship
of the nineteenth century). For women in the nineteenth century, no stereotype
could be clearer or more well articulated than that of the domestic role of the
woman. It was well established where the power lay and how the social roles were
to be played out. Although the male and female composers reacted to the “local”
images in a very similar way, these global differences point to the possibility that,
due to powerful and oppressive stereotypes and social pressures, the metaphorical
language of men and women can differ vastly. The way in which the metaphorical
language of poetry turns into the musical language in song depends largely on the personal metaphorical language of the interpreter. The composer, as the first interpreter of the poem, brings his or her metaphorical language to the setting of the poem. It seems only natural that, given the heavy social stereotypes and stigmas, women in the nineteenth century would not embrace the paternalistic view of their role as “monster.” It seems likely then that these roles would play themselves out in the “expressive core” that reveals the metaphorical understanding of the reader—i.e., the composer—of the symbols of a given poem. A person’s metaphorical understanding comes from the sense of how one fits in the world and all the incumbent stereotypes, social pressures, and contextual issues that help to form the core of one’s self-image. The crucial work on “stereotype threat” and its resultant outcomes is critical in the understanding of the formation of metaphorical language.

“Stereotype threat” and Feminine Creativity

Claude Steel’s concept of “stereotype threat,” discussed in Chapter 1, reveals such a metaphorical understanding. In his book, Steele relates the following story. A young African-American graduate student would walk home in the evening surrounded by what he referred to as “language of fear.” He quickly discovered, through trial and error, that whistling tunes familiar to “white” culture immediately set people at ease and the “language of fear” quickly became one of interaction and greater understanding. The whistling of tunes such as Vivaldi’s Four Seasons and tunes from the Beatles and the Beach Boys set him in a metaphorical relationship of the familiar. The tunes ceased to be merely musical expression, but ones which set him in metaphorical relationship with their context and thus setting this outsider in
a social context with which his neighbors could relate. These same interactions between metaphorical meanings of images drive the way we understand and interpret poetry.

Steele suggests that those being stereotyped often achieve a more successful performance in areas in which there is no “stereotype” pressure and, therefore, feel more comfortable performing in those areas. I posit that this makes the field of song a “safer” field of female composition, which might lead to women achieving more successful results in this genre. This, combined with an increased understanding of the way in which these same social stereotypes imbue people with a unique understanding of the metaphorical language of symbol, provides a unique perspective to the study of the songs of female composers of the nineteenth century.

As discussed extensively in Chapter 1, women in the nineteenth century functioned under powerful social constructs. Patriarchal society crafted a narrow field for women in which to create a self-image. This weighed particularly heavily on the category of “creation” or “authorship.” In the first chapter, quotes by Anne Finche (pg. 5), Virginia Woolf (pg. 6), Clara Schumann (pg.12), and Fanny Mendelssohn (pg.12-13) show significant attention by these women to the stereotype of women as creators. In her book *Gender and the Musical Canon*, Marcia Citron includes the idea of “anxiety of authorship” in her chapter on “Creativity.” She documents that women in the nineteenth century struggled with the patriarchal view of creativity and their ambivalent place in it. This same concept is well represented in the quotes included in Chapter 1. One of the aspects of this idea is revealed in an anonymous response from a survey of female composers from the
1980s. The statement reveals that the main issue for women as composers is early development in “ego, courage, and independence” and that these fundamental issues affect “self-image.” The idea of “self-image” has far reaching consequences when it comes to creation and artistic expression.

How you see yourself in the world and your relationship to it profoundly affects how one interprets signs and symbols. This is the concept behind Citron’s “gendered reading” of Cécile Chaminade’s Sonata Op. 21. Citron takes to task the idea that one can separate artistic expression from self-image and the resultant effect on your world-view. By relating a reading of the work that takes into consideration the impact of the powerful social stereotypes in the time period in which the composer wrote, Citron takes a huge step in the “global” understanding of a work and the way in which it interacts with the composer’s field of reference. In the realms of “absolute music” there lies little in the way of context to provide one with the particular social signs or symbols that provoke a given artistic response. With song this is not the case. Although there is no possible way to truly know, absent a composer’s narrative, what a composer’s reading of the poem is, the interaction of the multiple expressive arts can provide a more complete roadmap to understanding than in absolute music. This combined with the fact that song was an accepted feminine genre, which afforded women the opportunity for expression without “stereotype threat,” makes song an ideal study for looking for these metaphorical differences.

To repurpose an analogy from Chapter 2, the word “tiger” may bring up images of an animal in a cage, along with other metaphorical meanings of power,
etc. to someone like me. But to someone living in a remote village in India, the word “tiger” must have a much different metaphorical meaning. It is just such a difference in metaphorical understanding that can be seen illustrated by Clara Schumann and Ingeborg von Bransart. Their “expressive core” is very different from that portrayed by Franz Schubert and Hugo Wolf. Women react in a much different way than do their male counterparts, particularly in light of some of the standard patriarchal images such as “The Angel in the House.” These settings have made clear that there are differences along gendered lines and that composers of different genders react to similar images in varied ways.

This study has revealed that there is a case to be made for difference in the gendered application of musical language to the same set of literary symbols. It is in the metaphorical understanding of those symbols that the “expressive core” differs. The comprehension of this difference and further study of its possible meanings can only serve to highlight the way in which an “Other”\textsuperscript{10} group responds to the imagery and metaphorical language of the privileged class. If “stereotype threat” is as universal as Claude Steele maintains, then this historical study has impact on the present and future of musical composition. Can we afford to continue to disregard the differences we ourselves create by our stereotypes and social pressures? These differences deserve more study and on a larger scale.

\footnote{1 Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, “Music and Poetry: Problems of a Song-Writer”, \textit{The Musical Quarterly}, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1944), 106.}

\footnote{2 By style, I am not referring to a biologically engineered difference but a divergence established by stereotype and sociological pressures, which fundamentally changes one’s metaphorical language. This type of action/reaction and the resultant outcomes is a primary focus of Claude Steele’s research highlighted in his book \textit{Whistling Vivaldi}, discussed at length in the first chapter. Claude M. Steele, \textit{Whistling}
Vivaldi: how stereotypes affect us and what we can do (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

3 Ibid., 106.
4 Steele, Whistling Vivaldi. 6-7
5 Ibid., 6-7.
6 Ibid., 6.
7 Marcia Citron, Gender and the Musical Canon, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 54-78.
8 Citron, Gender, 54.
9 Ibid., 145-159.
10 The concept of “Other” is a basic element of continental philosophy. The idea is used to understand the way in which society exclude “Others” whom they choose to marginalize or subordinate. In this specific case it refers to women in the nineteenth century, but it can be used to refer to any group who lies outside the mainstream of society.
Bibliography


Appendix A: Schubert’s “Ihr Bild”

Heinrich Heine

Ihr Bild

Langsam

Schubert D.957 - 9

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen und

Piano

pp

b:i i i ii° i VII i ii°

starr' ihr Bildnis an, und das geliebte

VI v VI v° v V ii° i II° V I° ii° I°

Antlitz Heimlich zu leben begann.

II° V ii VI° I I° V/I V° IV° II IV II V°

Um ihre Lippen zog sich Ein Lächeln wunder-

I i i VI I° V°
Appendix B: Schumann's "Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen"

Sechs Lieder
Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
Clara Schumann op. 13 Nr. 1

Ziemlich Langsam

stand in dunkeln Träumen und starrte ihr Bildnis an, und
das geliebte Antlitz Heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich Ein Lächeln wunder-

Heinrich Heine

Piano

I

V\textsuperscript{6}

IV\textsuperscript{6}

V\textsuperscript{6}

I

V\textsuperscript{6}

IV\textsuperscript{6}

V\textsuperscript{6}

I

V\textsuperscript{7/4}

V\textsuperscript{6}

V\textsuperscript{7/4}

V\textsuperscript{6}

V\textsuperscript{7/4}

V\textsuperscript{6}

I

V\textsuperscript{3/4} IV\textsuperscript{6} V\textsuperscript{3/4} IV IV IV IV IV IV IV IV IV
Appendix C: Schumann’s “Ihr Bildniss”

4 Ihr Bildnis
(Henrich Heine)

Mit tiefster Wehmut

Adagio
Sehr getragen

Erste Fassung
Erstdruck

Ich stand in dünkeln Träumen und

starrte ihr Bildnis an, und das gelegte
Ant - litz heim-lisch zu le - ben be - gann.

Um ih - re Lip - pen zog sich ein

Lä - cheln wun - der - bar, Und wie von Weh - matts -

trä - nernen er - glänz - te ihr Au - gen - paar. Auch
mei-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-ne Trä-n
Appendix D: Wolf’s “Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen”

Wolf
Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen
(Heine)
an, und das ge - lie - be -
tränen Erglänzte ihr Augen paar. Auch

meine Tränen fllossen

mir von den Wängen herab, und

ach, ich kann's nicht glauben, daß ich
dich ver-lo-ren hab',

und

ach, ich kann's nicht glau-ben, daß ich

wie zu Anfang

I V/V V7 I I6 V3 V/V V

cresc. pp

I V7 I V/IV vii6/ii vii3 V3 V3sus I
Appendix E: Bronsart’s "Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen"

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen

Heinrich Heine

Ingeborg von Bronsart

James Deville, editor

Andante con moto

Träumen und starrtete ihr Bildnis an.

Antlitz heimlich zu leben begann.

V/iV

ii

ii

V/iV

V?
L'estesso tempo

Um ihre Lippen zog sich Ein

Lächeln wunderbar, Und wie von Wehmaris

tränen Er glänzte ihr Auge

\text{\textit{a tempo}}

\text{poco più f}

\text{rit.}

\text{V/ V/V}
Poco più lento

rit.

a tempo

Auch meine Tränen floessen

Mü von den Wangen herab
und ach, ich kann es nicht glauben, und

ach, ich kann es nicht glauben, dass ich dich ver-

loren habe!