

MUSIC AND THE EMBODIMENT OF DISABILITY

by

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Abstract

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Recent studies of music as an art form fundamentally embodied (whether through the physicality of the performer or the perception of music as a physical object) have much to gain from a consideration of disability, which disrupts and disturbs assumptions of bodily normalcy. In considering music as a site of multiple embodiments, this dissertation offers possible incorporations of the emerging interdisciplinary field of Disability Studies into music scholarship and embodiment discourse. Four modular chapters treat this topic:

1. “Schubert, Mayrhofer, and the Dissolution of the Body.” Schubert’s final four settings of the poetry of Johann Mayrhofer revolve around a shared narrative: when ruptured by active centrifugal (outward-seeking) forces, bodily limitation may yield a desirable state of spiritual transcendence. This philosophy treats the body as a disabled limitation that must be “heroically overcome”—an idea that may have had personal resonance for Mayrhofer, who had been recently diagnosed with disorders associated with excessive interiority (gout, hypochondria).

2. “Music and the Agents of Obsession.” Since the late eighteenth century, obsession has typically been theorized as the product of two dueling agencies—the rational, mobile agent, and the fixed, obsessive agent. The eighteenth-century doctor

Andrew Harper published a treatise that includes a description of obsession in this vein, filled with intriguing musical metaphors: the mental faculty is “fixed” on a “predominant note” that “brings every image or modulation into unison with itself,” so that “the order and harmony of mental operation is destroyed, and discord or insanity ensues.” Harper’s imagined battle of tones is prescient of a “fixed note” device found in a number of compositions depicting obsessive behaviors, including works by Alkan, Britten, Brunetti, Chopin, Cornelius, Vaughan Williams, and Wolf.

3. “Beauty, Ugliness, and the Challenge of Synthesis in Schreker’s *Die Gezeichneten*.” Schreker’s *Die Gezeichneten* (1916), written as a “tragedy of an ugly man,” positions beauty and ugliness as oppositional poles in need of synthesis and reconciliation; dramatic tension stems from the difficulty of empathizing with the physically disfigured Other. The process of empathy is dramatized in the opera’s aesthetic and moral climax, in which a beautiful character (Carlotta) decides to paint a portrait of, and thereby empathize with, the ugly character (the hunchback Alviano).

4. “Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability.” A pianist whose right arm was amputated in World War I, Paul Wittgenstein spent much of his career developing strategies for one-hand piano performance. Relevant models of disability narratives include notions of “passing” (one-hand piano music written in the style of two-hand piano music); “cure” (Friedrich Wührer’s controversial two-hand arrangements of Schmidt’s one-hand compositions for Wittgenstein); and “heroic overcoming” (in which virtuosity is compensation for corporeal deficiency, a narrative that also has implications for an ethics of able-bodied performance).

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The completion of this dissertation has provides a welcome opportunity to reflect upon the overwhelming support, personal and professional, that I have received since beginning studies at The Graduate Center. It was in Joseph Straus's wonderful (and life-changing) interdisciplinary seminar Disability Studies in the Humanities that I first began to sketch the diverse topics included here; I am tremendously grateful for his generous assistance as adviser and mentor. Richard Kramer encourages his students to ask the most

difficult questions of music and to be dissatisfied with facile answers; his critical eye and deft skills with prose have benefited my work greatly. I must also thank Anne Stone and Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, for their willingness to serve on my committee; William Rothstein, for his helpful advice on several of my musical analyses; and Allan W. Atlas, Barbara Hanning, and Leo Treitler, for their good humor and supportive mentorship during my years in coursework and beyond. Friends at The Graduate Center—my fellow students, my colleagues at RILM—have offered much in the way of personal encouragement and advice.

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INTRODUCTION: MUSIC, EMBODIMENT, DISABILITY

Disability Studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field that supports the study of disability as a pervasive human condition and identity category subject to social, cultural, and political constructions. In the past five years alone, contributions to the field have included substantial studies in critical theory,¹ performance theory,² cultural history,³ literature,⁴ and the history and critique of medical practice.⁵ Recently, musicologists and music theorists have begun to incorporate the insights of Disability Studies into their own disciplines; studies have focused on topics such as disabled performers and composers, the use of disability as a metaphor in analytical discourse and musical narratives, and pedagogical methods for disabled music students.⁶ Through four different case studies,

¹ Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), and Shelley Tremain, *Foucault and the Government of Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

² *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance*, edited by Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

³ Carol Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Sharon L. Snyder and Donald T. Mitchell, *Cultural Locations of Disability* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); and Michael Davidson, *Concerto for the Left Hand: Disability and the Defamiliar Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

⁴ Ato Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), and Susannah B. Mintz, *Unruly Bodies: Life Writing by Women with Disabilities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁵ Lennard Davis, *Obsession: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), and Bradley Lewis, *Moving Beyond Prozac, DSM, and the New Psychiatry: The Birth of Postpsychiatry* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006).

⁶ Joseph N. Straus, "Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59 (2006): 113–84; *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, edited by Neil Lerner and Straus (New York: Routledge, 2006); and Straus, "Disability and 'Late Style' in Music," *Journal of Musicology* 25

this dissertation seeks to explore further the ways in which a cultural understanding of disability can inform music scholarship, particularly theories of musical embodiment.

Borrowing language from Joseph Straus's recent study of disability and music, disability is defined as any "culturally stigmatized bodily condition."⁷ Compared with other performed identities such as those of sexuality and gender, disability is unusual in that it is a condition both highly fluid and nearly universal. An accident or an illness can immediately and involuntarily render a person disabled; further, all who live long enough will eventually come to experience the disabilities associated with aging.⁸ Just as gender theory separates biological sex from socially-constructed gender, so too does disability theory separate biological impairment from socially-constructed disability. Of course, this division lacks nuance and should be read as a preliminary and pedagogical in function; as we will see, certain impairments, particularly those that involve pain, are disabling in ways that can hardly be the consequence of societal forces (just as recent gender theories have allowed for the blurring of sex and gender). But the distinction is still an important one, for it allows for the treatment of disability not just as a medical phenomenon but also as a social and cultural one, a product of the "ideology of ability" that considers able-bodiedness a normative condition against which all non-normative body types are deficient. To better understand the process and effect of such

(2008): 3–45. See also the articles in the Special Issue on Music and Disability, *Popular Music* 28, no. 3 (2009), and the Special Issue on Scholars with Disabilities in *Music Theory Online* 15, nos. 3–4 (2009), < <http://mto.societymusictheory.org/issues/mto.09.15.3/toc.15.3.html> > (accessed 1 June 2010).

⁷ Straus, "Normalizing the Abnormal," 119.

⁸ As Tobin Siebers pithily writes, "I know as a white man that I will not wake up in the morning as a black woman, but I could wake up a quadriplegic." Siebers, *Disability Theory*, 5. See also Simi Linton, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

stigmatization, this definition of disability can be further refined in three subcategories: (1) *disability* more specifically defined as a stigmatized state of function (what one is *able* or *not able* to do), (2) *disfigurement* as a stigmatized appearance, tied with aesthetic constructions of beauty and ugliness, and (3) *disease* as a stigmatized medical-diagnostic category. For example, a wheelchair user is disabled by raised sidewalk curbs, but would not be disabled by sloped curbs; and a person with facial scars or a non-normative body shape is disfigured by socially constructed and highly variable standards of beauty. And even though we might think of medical diseases as scientifically immune from cultural influence, there are actually many diseases with large socially-constructed components: consider the thoroughly transient mental disorders of hysteria, neurasthenia, “fugue” states, monomania, Children’s Gender Identity Disorder, or (until it was removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* in 1973) homosexuality. Such constructions frequently consider health through the lens of morality: for example, addiction, cancer, and AIDS have large moral components; similarly, the diagnosis of gout in the early nineteenth century was typically interpreted comically, as just punishment for a sedentary and overindulgent lifestyle.

With the term *embodiment*, I refer to three strands of scholarship in musicology and music theory that treat the musical experience as fundamentally corporeal: (1) performance studies, (2) image-schematic approaches, and (3) virtual energetic gesture. Studies of musical performance (of the “carnal musicology” proposed in the title of Elisabeth Le Guin’s recent book) consider the choreographed physical movements of

performers as potential locations of signification and meaning.⁹ A “carnal” analysis might consider, for example, hand crossings on a keyboard or bowing directions on a string instrument. Disability has the potential to complicate our image of this imagined (and often idealized) performer: bodies are different (in terms of hand size, finger number, breath capacity, arm strength, etc.), and their ability to meet the challenges posed by a musical score will vary accordingly.

An additional strand of embodiment discourse was developed by the cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and has been applied to music by Candace Brower, Lawrence Zbikowski, Steve Larson, and others. This approach considers how music is conceptualized through metaphorical spatial and bodily constructs (rendered visually as image schemata); for example, melodies “ascend” and “descend” (along a horizontal-line schema of VERTICALITY), harmonies “progress forward” (along the here-to-there schema of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL), and pitches lie “within” or “outside” a scale (via the boxed schema of CONTAINER).¹⁰ These corporeal and spatial constructs are rigidly neutral, grounded in the experiential knowledge of a prototypically normal body. Disability diversifies the body shapes used: a wheelchair user might have different conceptions of VERTICALITY, for instance, and an infected body disrupts the barriers defined by CONTAINER.

The third component of embodiment theory under consideration here deals with energetic musical gesture (distinct from operatic or performance gesture), developed by

⁹ Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

¹⁰ Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). For a good introduction to the musical applications of this strand of embodiment theory, see the articles in *Theory and Practice* 22–23 (1997–1998).

Robert Hatten, Yonatan Malin, Anthony Gritten, Steve Larson, and others. As defined by Hatten, gestures are “energized shapings of time.”¹¹ Musical energy is determined by the degree to which tones either succumb to or fight against various “virtual environment forces,” such as gravity, magnetism, or inertia.¹² For example, the melodic motion $\hat{b}7$ - $\hat{b}7$ might be thought of as highly energized, for such motion resists the magnetic tendency to resolve and the gravitational tendency to descend. Similarly, theorists such as Harald Krebs, Justin London, and Yonatan Malin have discussed how rhythmic gestures might be energized by their position within virtual metrical grids: to conform to metric expectation requires less energy than to break from it. Energized forms are frequently imagined as actors, with intentions and wills (a note moves because it is compelled to do so by a selfishly motivated external source); conceiving of music in this manner can help us speak more concretely of different types of “musical bodies.” The *alla zoppa* rhythm, for instance, is energetically marked by its non-compliance with metrical order—suggesting a body that is imbalanced and lopsided (or, to be more specific, a body that is “limping”).

Though the theoretical underpinnings of these three approaches to embodiment are quite different (drawing from historical musicology, cognitive linguistics, music perception, and traditional music theory), the methodologies are interconnected and interdependent. One strand of embodiment theory will almost certainly inform the other two.

¹¹ Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 114.

¹² Steve Larson, “The Problem of Prolongation in Tonal Music: Terminology, Perception, and Expressive Meaning,” *Journal of Music Theory* 41 (1997): 101–36.

Without an awareness of disability, embodiment discourse can be incomplete. Straus has criticized embodiment theory for this transgression—its tendency to universalize bodies, to treat each and every body in the same way.¹³ By imagining a “neutral” body as the virtual subject of music analysis, embodiment theorists have implicitly imagined an unproblematic, nondisabled body, ignoring what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson has called the “biodiversity” of human forms: bodies are different and may have different responses to “environmental forces” such as gravity, or different perceptions of spatial concepts such as VERTICALITY.¹⁴ The remedy for such universalizing discourse is contextualization. Consider hypochondria, which, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was frequently described as a disorder of excessive “interiority” (quite different from the more extroverted comedy with which the disease is represented today). As the male equivalent of female hysteria, hypochondriachal bodies were considered weak and porous, vulnerable to attack by airborne “spirits.”¹⁵ How might this contextualized understanding of hypochondria inform a study of Schubert’s close friend (and diagnosed hypochondriac) Johann Mayrhofer, whose poems glorify the rupture of the body for spiritual transcendence? How might spatial metaphors such as “interiority” and “porous” localize the universalizing tendencies of an image schema like CONTAINER (internal space divided

¹³ Straus, “Normalizing the Abnormal,” 121–6.

¹⁴ Garland-Thomson, “Welcoming the Unbidden: The Case for Conserving Human Biodiversity,” in *What Democracy Looks Like: A New Critical Realism for a Post-Seattle World*, edited by Amy Schrager Lang and Cecelia Tichi, 77–87 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Khalfa (London: Routledge, 2006), 286–94, and Susan Meld Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 264–305.

from external space)? And how might Schubert's compositional gestures react to these poetic forces in musical space?

In my first chapter, I examine Schubert's final four settings of the poetry of his close friend and mentor Johann Mayrhofer ("Der Sieg," "Abendstern," "Auflösung," and "Gondelfahrer," D. 805–8), which revolve around a shared narrative: corporeal limitation, when ruptured by active centrifugal (outward-seeking) forces, yields to a desirable state of spiritual transcendence—a philosophy that may have had personal resonance for Mayrhofer, who had been recently diagnosed with disorders associated with excessive interiority (for instance, hypochondria). This narrative, common in the philosophical, theological, scientific, and medical texts of several major contemporary writers, treats the body as a disabled limitation that must in turn be "heroically overcome": the spirit "breaks through the leaden body's sluggishness" ("Der Sieg"), and the "embers of rapture sear [the poet's] remains" ("Auflösung"). Such language evokes the image schema of the CONTAINER—but one that is ruptured by an emergent spirit. Schubert's music embodies this narrative: energized musical gestures are "released" at poetic moments of corporeal death, and chromatic mediant—particularly the flatted submediant—are used as centrifugal harmonies that breach diatonic limitation.

In my second chapter, I survey musical representations of psychological obsession, which has typically been theorized as the product of two dueling agencies—the mobile, rational agent and the fixed, obsessive agent. The eighteenth-century doctor Andrew Harper published a treatise on insanity that includes an imaginative description of obsession in this vein, filled with intriguing musical metaphors: the mental faculty is "fixed" on a "predominant note" that "brings every image or modulation into unison with

itself,” so that “the order and harmony of mental operation is destroyed, and discord or insanity ensues.” Using theories of musical gesture, we may map the psychological spaces and forces of obsession onto a number of “fixed note” compositions that seem to depict a fractured mental state: Alkan’s “Fa,” Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Brunetti’s *Il maniático*, Chopin’s Prelude in D-flat major, and Cornelius’s “Ein Ton,” among many others. In these and other examples, repetitive pitches can embody with impressive specificity the historically relevant spatial metaphors of mental pathology. This is done, primarily, by converting oppositional agencies within the mind into oppositional musical voices, which have the capacity to unfold simultaneously in musical space. This “fixed note” device, in addition to other common musical devices such as the ostinato or *idée fixe*, can help us speak more specifically of the musical embodiment of obsession as a disabling narrative force.

In my third chapter, I examine Franz Schreker’s opera *Die Gezeichneten* (published in 1916 and premiered in 1918). The opera’s main character, Alviano Salvago, is described as “an ugly man...with a hunched back and large, shining eyes,”; his disfigurement determines much of the opera’s dramatic and musical narrative. The aesthetic construction of beauty and ugliness is predicated on the existence of a dialectical opposition; to label something as beautiful is to acknowledge that it is not ugly, and vice versa. Yet Schreker was a composer concerned primarily with the “integration of differences” (to use Adorno’s phrase), and so another topic running throughout the opera is the power of *empathy* (a newly emerging concept in phenomenology and psychology of the time) to establish points of similarity between a subject and its observed object. To establish an empathic connection despite the existence

of total opposition is a major concern of the opera, particularly in the climactic scene in which an agent of beauty “paints” (and therefore empathizes with and embodies) Alviano, the agent of ugliness. If beauty and ugliness continually spawn each other, the synthesist’s aesthetic crisis, repeatedly confronted in *Die Gezeichneten*, involves finding a union between these oppositional and seemingly irreconcilable poles.

Like gender, sexuality, and race, disability is a performed identity—that is, its signifiers are publically displayed and socially interpreted. In my fourth chapter, I examine disabled musical performance, primarily through a case study of the career of one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein. I examine the left-hand piano music composed for him by Britten, Prokofiev, Ravel, Schmidt, and others; excerpts from his extensive training manual *School for the Left Hand*; and scores of two-handed piano music that he owned, filled with penciled re-fingerings and edits. Wittgenstein’s one-handedness has typically been framed as a physical limitation at odds with an able-bodied ideology driving musical performance. Contemporary reviews, for instance, frame the pianist’s disability as a tragedy heroically transcended during the course of virtuosic performance; others suggest that Wittgenstein successfully “passed” as two-handed. Despite the stigma it may have accrued, one-handed pianism is but a more prominent, more public example of the “bodily limits” all performers must confront; similar discourse surrounds the deficiencies of small hands or stiff fingers, for example. The performer’s body must negotiate its corporeal finitude with the complex demands of the musical score. As seen here in the career of Wittgenstein, an aesthetics of disabled performance presents this dialectic in heightened microcosm.

Throughout this diverse series of topics, three general themes guide my analytical approach: (1) *disability is often imagined as a bodily limit*, (2) *disability establishes a binary opposition*, and (3) *disability creates narrative*. As Tobin Siebers writes, “We believe at once that history charts the radical finitude of human life but that the future promises radical infinitude. [...] [The ideology of ability] describes disability as what we flee in the past and hope to defeat in the future.”¹⁶ As a reminder of this “radical finitude,” disability serves as the universal enforcer of *bodily limitation*. For instance, in the poetry of Mayrhofer, the diseased body is imagined as a restrictive container, prison, or restraint, entrapping an expansive spirit. Margaret Stonborough, Paul Wittgenstein’s sister, wrote disapprovingly that her brother was “trying to do really what cannot be done.” And Alviano’s disfigurement in *Die Gezeichneten* prevents an empathic connection with other characters in the opera, resulting in a life of isolation and seclusion. Though in practice disability can be *enabling* (something that we will see in terms of one-hand piano performance), it is frequently imagined to be its opposite—a terminus, a boundary, a limit.

Disability also frames bodily difference in relationship to *ability*, thus creating an opposition between what somebody can and cannot do. This was a central dilemma throughout much of the career of Paul Wittgenstein, whose disability was often at odds with the two-handed (able-bodied) performance culture with which he was involved. Other dialectics follow from this ability/disability pairing: beauty and ugliness, for instance, are often conceived as irreconcilable opposites (a dialectic that concerns much of Schreker’s *Die Gezeichneten*, as we will see), and metaphors of mobility and fixity

¹⁶ Siebers, *Disability Theory*, 8–9.

often describe states of mental health and pathology (especially in the psychiatric discourse on obsessive behaviors). In Schubert's 1824 songs we find another dialectic in the opposition between centripetal and centrifugal motion, spatial metaphors suggesting a body contracting into and expanding from its bodily limit.

As a marked element within these oppositions, disability is often considered unstable and is frequently used as a source of narrative tension; to resolve this tension, disability must either be normalized, cured, or expunged. A classic, succinct example is a line from John Newton's "Amazing Grace": "...I once was lost but now am found/Was blind, but now I see." To be blind is to be lost; but blindness is cured so that the subject of the narrative can resolve to a condition of stability (sight), metaphorically imagined as spiritual awakening. This simple narrative can be replicated in longer sagas of normalization, induced via a medical cure or social rehabilitation (Styron's *Darkness Visible*, Brooks's *As Good as it Gets*) or the banishment and destruction of a disabling force (Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*).¹⁷ In the four studies that follow, we will encounter narratives of bodily *transcendence*, the heroic overcoming of ability over disability (Schubert's setting of "Auflösung," Wittgenstein's virtuosic one-hand compositions; the sublime union of beauty and ugliness in *Die Gezeichneten*); narratives of *cure* and *rehabilitation* (fixed, obsessive musical gestures eventually encouraged to move; two-hand arrangements of one-hand piano music); and narratives of

¹⁷ See, for example, Cindy LaCom, "It Is More Than Lame': Female Disability, Sexuality, and the Maternal in the Nineteenth-Century Novel," in *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability*, edited by David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, 189–201 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); and Robert McRuer, "As Good as it Gets: Queer Theory and Critical Disability," *GLQ* 9, no. 1–2 (2003): 79–105. See also David T. Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

infection or *defeat* (an obsessive gesture's total control over its harmonic surroundings).

In all of these cases, disability is aestheticized as an expressive means to a narrative end.

In these four case studies, I will focus on problematic musical bodies: bodies that “rupture,” one-armed pianists and the music composed for them, “obsessive” musical agents that simulate psychological drama, and disfigurement and the musical representation of “ugliness.” Incorporating these elements of disability theory, I will show how musical limits (within musical space) may mirror bodily limits, how musical dialectics (expansion/contraction, major/minor, mobility/fixity) may follow the aforementioned dialectics of disability, and how musical narratives (overcoming, rehabilitating, curing) may follow various models of disability narrative. Throughout, I use a cultural understanding of disability to speak more specifically about these extraordinary bodies, whether they are the bodies of composers, performers, poets, or other musical agents.

CHAPTER ONE:
SCHUBERT, MAYRHOFER, AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BODY

“He moves awkwardly in our air...”

“Geh unter, Welt,” the poet Johann Mayrhofer intones, commanding the physical world to “sink under.” Those ominous words, with their suggestion of destruction and annihilation, come from a poem whose title itself—*Auflösung*—casts these qualities into a challenging substantive: dissolution, disintegration, decomposition, termination are all implied here. And they deftly capture an idea that, as we learn from Mayrhofer’s other writings, is central to his philosophy: to obtain spiritual purity, one must transcend the entrapments of physicality by annihilating them. Described by those who knew him as “morose,” “shy,” “hypochondriacal,” “ailing,” “rigid,” “icy-cold,” “misanthropic,” “sickly,” “peevish,” and “gloomy,” Mayrhofer was haunted by the prospect of *self*-annihilation throughout his life.¹ He would attempt suicide three times: first, by throwing himself into the Danube in 1831; then again, circa 1835 (method unknown); and finally, in 1836, successfully plunging himself from the window of the censorship office for

¹ The adjectives are taken from descriptions of Mayrhofer by Wilhelm von Chézy, Franz Gräffer, Eduard von Bauernfeld, and Julius Seidlitz, as quoted in Rita Steblin, “Schubert’s Problematic Relationship with Mayrhofer: New Documentary Evidence,” in *Essays on Music and Culture in Honor of Herbert Kellman*, ed. Barbara Hagg (Paris: Minerve, 2001), 479–80; the chapter “Chromatic Melancholy: Johann Mayrhofer and Schubert” in Susan Youens, *Schubert’s Poets and the Making of Lieder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 152 and 171–75; and Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: Die Erinnerungen seiner Freunde* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1957; repr. Wiesbaden, Leipzig, and Paris: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1983), 299 [hereafter *Erinnerungen*]; trans. Rosamond Ley and John Nowell as *Schubert: Memoirs by His Friends* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958), 261 [hereafter *Memoirs*]. There are, of course, exceptions to these bleak descriptions. Michael Lorenz attempts to tone down the sensational rhetoric surrounding Mayrhofer’s character in “Dokumente zur Biographie Johann Mayrhofer,” *Schubert durch die Brille* 25 (2000): 21, note 1.

which he worked.²

In late 1814, Franz Schubert met this distressed figure for the first time, and, over the course of the next decade, set forty-seven of his poems to music (more than any other poet save Goethe). From the beginning, Mayrhofer was highly supportive of Schubert's musical creativity, and the two "best of friends" eventually decided to live together in a small apartment on Wipplingerstrasse for roughly two years (from November 1818 to the end of 1820).³ But as Mayrhofer himself recalled, a clash of opposing personalities would eventually cause deepening rifts:

While we lived together our idiosyncrasies could not but show themselves; we were both richly endowed in that respect, and the consequences could not fail to appear. We teased each other in many different ways and turned our sharp edges on each other to our mutual amusement and pleasure. His gladsome and comfortable sensuousness and my introspective nature were thus thrown into higher relief and gave rise to names we called each other accordingly, as though we were playing parts assigned to us. Unfortunately, I played my very own!⁴

² The most extensive contemporary biography of the poet is Ernst Freiherr von Feuchtersleben, "Joh. Mayrhofer," in *Gedichte von Johann Mayrhofer: Neue Sammlung; Aus dessen Nachlasse mit Biographie und Vorwort*, 1–25 (Vienna: Ignaz Klang, 1843; microfiche repr. in the series *Bibliothek der deutschen Literatur* [Munich: K. G. Saur, 1990–94], fiche 14979). The suicide attempts are documented in Youens, *Schubert's Poets*, 169–70, and in Steblin, "Schubert's Problematic Relationship," 485–87. Steblin includes mention of the previously unknown 1835 attempt, and provides in full Heinrich Josef Hölzl's wrenching account of Mayrhofer's final moments: "ribs broken, cheek and eye highly swollen ..." (487).

³ Josef von Spaun recalls the supportive role that Mayrhofer played in Schubert's musical life: "[Mayrhofer] had an exceptionally good ear and a great love for music. When Mayrhofer had heard some of Schubert's songs, he reproached me for having been much too modest in my praise of Schubert's talent. Mayrhofer sang and whistled Schubert's melodies the whole day long, and poet and composer were soon the best of friends. ... Mayrhofer often maintained that he only liked and valued his poems after Schubert had set them to music. ... Every evening Mayrhofer and I revelled in the news of what Schubert had written during the day." *Memoirs*, 130; *Erinnerungen*, 151–52. Also, Josef Kenner: "The gayest of Schubertiads used to be celebrated at Mayrhofer's." *Memoirs*, 88; *Erinnerungen*, 102.

⁴ "Während unseres Zusammenwohnens konnte es nicht fehlen, daß Eigenheiten sich kundgaben; nun waren wir jeder in dieser Beziehung reichlich bedacht, und die Folgen

Of key importance is Mayrhofer's description of his tendencies toward "introspection" (or more precisely his "in sich geschlossenes Wesen")—words built around a spatial metaphor, suggesting the poet to be more comfortable turned inward on his *internal* selfhood than outward on *external* sociability. Seven years after Schubert's death and seven months prior to Mayrhofer's suicide, Ernst Freiherr von Feuchtersleben (Mayrhofer's friend and first biographer) described the poet's introspective nature in similar terms, but with a greater sense of urgency and mystery; the poet had left Vienna for Salzburg: "He listens to his own works with amazement,—as if he were a prisoner in his cell listening to a song from his homeland that is sounding outside the door. He should move only in pure aether; he moves awkwardly in our air."⁵ Alienated from his homeland, from his friendship with Schubert, and imprisoned by his body, Mayrhofer here is described as surviving only in the most elemental sphere of physical existence (aether, or space), so that even the substance of air rubs proves discomfoting.

Following Schubert's departure from the Wipplingerstrasse apartment, what had once been a close artistic relationship between poet and composer dissolved over the next three years. The reasons for the separation are not known, but one is tempted to engage in speculation—perhaps a lover's quarrel,⁶ a clash of temperaments,⁷ Mayrhofer's

blieben nicht aus. Wir neckten einander auf mancherlei Art und wendeten unsere Kanten zur Erheiterung und zum Behagen einander zu. Seine frohe, gemüthliche Sinnlichkeit und mein in sich geschlossenes Wesen traten schärfer hervor und gaben Anlaß, uns mit entsprechenden Namen zu bezeichnen, als spielten wir bestimmte Rollen. Es war leider meine eigene, die ich spielte!" *Erinnerungen*, 19; trans. in *Memoirs*, 14.

⁵ "Mit Staunen hört er seinen eignen Werken zu,—wie ein Gefangener in seinem Kerker einem Lied aus seiner Heimath, das vor den Thoren schallt. Er sollte sich in einem reinern Aether bewegen; in unserm bewegt er sich ungeschickt." Quoted from and translated in Steblin, "Schubert's Problematic Relationship," 484 and 494.

⁶ Mayrhofer's sexuality has been the subject of much discussion. See, in particular,

hypochondriacal aversion to Schubert's newly contracted syphilis,⁸ the political dangers caused by the police raid at Johann Senn's in March 1820,⁹ or a need on Schubert's part to distance himself from his early artistic mentors.¹⁰ There are but a few remaining points of professional (and even fewer points of personal) contact following their split. In October 1821, Mayrhofer completed his twenty-poem cycle *Heliopolis* (dedicated to

Maynard Solomon, "Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini," *19th-Century Music* 12 (1989): 200; Youens, *Schubert's Poets*, 159–65; John Reed, *Schubert* (London: Dent, 1987; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60; Philip Brett, "Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire," *19th-Century Music* 21 (1997): 156–57n27; and Steblin, "Schubert's Problematic Relationship," 487–91.

⁷ Mayrhofer's occupation as a censor likely caused a clash of *political* temperaments. As Anton Holzappel recalls, "[N]o more is it to be wondered at if their [Mayrhofer and Schubert] continued living together foundered on their day-to-day relations, perhaps on small differences of opinion regarding money matters, in which Sch.[ubert] may well have often been to blame. Certainly the cleavage between Mayrhofer's inclination and his position in life, for he was compelled to act as a respectable Imperial book censor whereas he was an enthusiastic admirer of intellectual freedom, gave rise to the malady in his extremely sensitive soul and to the difficulty of living with such a character." *Memoirs*, 63; *Erinnerungen*, 73.

⁸ On Schubert's syphilis, see Eric Sams, "Schubert's Illness Re-Examined," *Musical Times* 121 (1980): 15–22; and Peter Gilroy Bevan, "Adversity: Schubert's Illnesses and Their Background," in *Schubert Studies*, ed. Brian Newbould, 244–66 (Aldershot, UK, and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998). Mayrhofer's hypochondria is discussed in Steblin, "Schubert's Problematic Relationship," 483. Schubert seems to refer to hypochondria in a letter to Mayrhofer from 8 September 1818: "[h]öre auf zu kränkeln, wenigstens zu mediciniren, so gibt sich das andere von selbst" ("cease ailing, or at least dabbling in medicines, and the rest will come of itself"). Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *Schubert: Die Dokumente seines Lebens, Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, ser. 8, suppl. 5 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1964; repr. Wiesbaden, Leipzig, and Paris: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), 67 [hereafter *Dokumente*]; trans. in Deutsch, ed., *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom (London: Dent, 1946), 100 [hereafter *Documentary Biography*].

⁹ The fact that Schubert was present at the raid, which resulted in the deportation of Senn for subversive activities, and may have caused problems for Mayrhofer, who was employed by the government. *Documentary Biography*, 128–30; *Dokumente*, 87–89.

¹⁰ On Schubert's move away from the members of the original *Freundeskreis*, see David Gramit, "The Intellectual and Aesthetic Tenets of Franz Schubert's Circle: Their Development and Their Influence on His Music" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1987).

Franz von Schober), from which Schubert completed three settings in 1822.¹¹ In June 1823, Schubert published three earlier Mayrhofer settings as a trio of “Fischerlieder” (Op. 21) and chose to dedicate the collection “to the author of the poems by his friend Franz Schubert.” Mayrhofer later attended a Schubertiad at the home of Franz von Bruchmann in November 1823.¹²

And, lastly, in March 1824, Schubert somehow came in contact with the newly published edition of Mayrhofer’s first volume of poetry (he was not among the list of subscribers, though many in the Schubert circle were).¹³ One wonders how Schubert must have felt upon leafing through the poems in Mayrhofer’s new publication: as if the volume were an homage to an abandoned partnership, over one-third of its contents are poems that Schubert had previously set to music, with the texts of forty of his then forty-three Mayrhofer settings.¹⁴ This may have prompted Schubert in the early days of March

¹¹ For more on this poetic cycle, see David Gramit, “Schubert and the Biedermeier: The Aesthetics of Johann Mayrhofer’s *Heliopolis*,” *Music & Letters* 74 (1993): 355–82. Ilija Dürhammer suggests that these and other Mayrhofer poems following the 1821 split were “seelische Hilfeschreie.” *Schuberts literarische Heimat: Dichtung und Literatur-Rezeption der Schubert-Freunde* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 1999), 224.

¹² *Documentary Biography*, 302; *Dokumente*, 208.

¹³ Based on the scarcity of variants between Schubert’s songs and Mayrhofer’s printed poems, Gramit suggests that Schubert was probably working from published texts; this would seem to indicate that Mayrhofer’s volume had already been published sometime between January and March 1824. “Intellectual and Aesthetic Tenets,” 161n26. Lorenz has suggested that the volume may have been published sometime around 20 October 1824, when Mayrhofer sent a copy to Goethe (“Dokumente zur Biographie,” 46–47), but this date is trumped by an announcement in a May 1824 volume of Leipzig’s *Literarische Conversationsblatt* that states, “Am poetischen Blumen war der diesjährige Vorfrühling reicher, als er sonst zu sein pflegt. Der Freiherr von Schlehta, die Herren Meyrhofer und Pfeiffer haben Gedichte herausgegeben” Quoted in Fritz List, “Johann Mayrhofer: Ein Freund und Textdichter Franz Schuberts,” (PhD diss., University of Munich, 1921), 98. Also, Moritz von Schwind writes on 6 March 1824 that Mayrhofer’s poems had “already appeared” (“bereits erschienen sind”). *Documentary Biography*, 331; *Dokumente*, 229.

¹⁴ Maximilian and Lilly Schochow, eds., *Franz Schubert: Die Texte seiner einstimmig komponierten Lieder und ihre Dichter*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms,

1824 to set four more: in the order they appear in the poetry volume, their titles are “Der Sieg,” “Abendstern,” “Gondelfahrer,” and “Auflösung” (D. 805–808).¹⁵ (Texts and translations for these poems may be found on pp. 75–76.) These are Schubert’s final Mayrhofer settings, and, as will become clear, the selection of texts was not haphazard. The four songs operate collectively, though not necessarily cohesively: as a prism refracts a single ray of light in multiple directions and colors, these four poems treat similar themes to different but complementary ends. And at the inspirational origin of this scattered, multicolored light is *an inclination toward Auflösung*—a meditation on what it means to *dissolve* (how it happens, where it leads). The musical illumination of such a theme is especially poignant considering that Mayrhofer nearly disappears from Schubert’s life after March 1824, resurfacing prominently only after the composer’s death with his moving elegy “Nachgefühl”; as Ilija Dürhammer suggests, Schubert’s tremendous and stunning setting of “Auflösung,” perhaps ironically in retrospect, also signals a very personal dissolution: the *Auflösung* of his friendship with Mayrhofer.¹⁶

A sense of *Auflösung* would permeate Schubert’s life in more mundane ways as well. Schubert himself used this word in a letter to Leopold Kupelweiser dated 31 March 1824 to describe the slow death of the buffoonish “reading circle” founded by Schober in

1974), 1:316–58.

¹⁵ Mayrhofer, *Gedichte* (Vienna: Friedrich Volke, 1824; microfiche repr. in the series *Bibliothek der deutschen Literatur* [Munich: K. G. Saur, 1990–94], fiche 8690), “Der Sieg,” p. 64; “Abendstern,” p. 96; “Gondelfahrer,” p. 112; and “Auflösung,” p. 122. In part III, I discuss the songs in an order different from the one in Mayrhofer’s publication; the reason for this will be found in part IV.

¹⁶ Ilija Dürhammer, “‘Affectionen einer lebhaft begehrenden Sinnlichkeit’: Der ‘Schöbert’-Kreis zwischen ‘neuer Schule’ und Weltschmerz,” in *Schuberts Lieder nach Gedichten aus seinem literarischen Freundeskreis: Auf der Suche nach dem Ton der Dichtung in der Musik; Kongreßbericht Ettlingen 1997*, ed. Walther Dürr, Siegfried Schmalzriedt, and Thomas Seyboldt (Frankfurt: Lang, 1999), 53.

1822 (and modeled upon the *Freundeskreis* of Schubert's youth): "Our society (reading circle), as you probably know already, has done itself to death owing to a reinforcement of that rough chorus of beer-drinkers and sausage-eaters, for its dissolution [*Auflösung*] is due in a couple of days, though I had hardly visited it myself since your departure."¹⁷

This is the standard usage of the word *Auflösung*; we need not dig further for metaphysical implications. And yet this sense of dissolution and disintegration resonates with the tremendous change occurring in Schubert's life during the early months of 1824—the collapse of something familiar, the start of something new. The dispersal of the reading circle's core members created a void in Schubert's intellectual and social worlds (Schober, Kupelweiser, and Josef von Spaun had left Vienna; only Moritz von Schwind and Bruchmann remained). Crass new members drove down the level of high-minded discourse, and increasingly infrequent Schubertiads held little of their former magic.¹⁸ Freed from the influence of his artistic mentors, Schubert found his compositional voice in a state of aesthetic flux. After completing *Die schöne Müllerin* (poetically, musically, structurally, a major stylistic break from earlier songs), Schubert

¹⁷ "Unsere Gesellschaft (Lese-gesellschaft) hat sich, wie Du wohl schon wissen wirst, wegen Verstärkung des rohen Chors im Biertrinken u. Würstelessen den Tod gegeben, denn ihre Auflösung erfolgt in 2 Tagen, obwohl ich schon beynahe seit Deiner Abreise sie nicht mehr besuchter." *Dokumente*, 234–35; trans. in *Documentary Biography*, 339. Notably, Johann Senn, reminiscing in 1849 (and still in exile in Innsbruck), also used the word "Auflösung" to describe the disintegration of the *Freundeskreis*: "ein großartiger *geselliger* Kreis von jungen Literaten, Dichtern, Künstlern und Gebildeten überhaupt ... desgleichen die Kaiserstadt bis dahin schwerlich je gesehen hatte, und der mehrere Jahre fortbestand, wornach dessen Auflösung nach allen Richtungen Samen der Zukunft streute" Quoted in Gramit, "Schubert and the Biedermeier," 357n12.

¹⁸ Reed, *Schubert*, 98–99, and Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 186–87. See also *Documentary Biography*, 300–305, 338–40, and 342; *Dokumente*, 207–10 and 234–37.

nearly abandoned the song genre, shifting his focus instead to instrumental music.¹⁹

Fewer songs were composed in 1824 than in any year of Schubert's musical career after 1812; in fact, the four final Mayrhofer settings are the only songs which can be ascribed with certainty to this year.²⁰ In many ways, then, these four songs are marked by their isolation, sitting as lonely, nostalgic invocations of a past when the original *Freundeskreis* was active and fully formed, when Schubert was composing nearly a hundred songs a year, and when many of those songs used the texts of his once-dear friend.²¹

More tangible, physical dissolutions were afoot, as well: in the summer of 1823, the symptoms of syphilis had repeatedly sent Schubert to the hospital (only there to receive grisly forms of treatment). But by autumn he was on the mend; he may have even believed he was cured (30 November 1823: “[M]y health, thank God, seems to be firmly

¹⁹ For more on this stylistic break and on Schubert's instrumental music from this time, see John Michael Gingerich, “Schubert's Beethoven Project: The Chamber Music, 1824–1828” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1996).

²⁰ For a chronological table that highlights these compositional shifts, see Walther Dürr, “Franz Schuberts Wanderjahre: Einführung in das Generalthema,” in *Franz Schubert: Jahre der Krise, 1818–1823; Arnold Feil zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Werner Aderhold, Dürr, and Walburga Litschauer (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1985), 16–17. Reed suggests a composition year of 1824 for two other songs—“Dithyrambe” (D. 801) and “Suleika II” (D. 717)—but adds that “there is little doubt ... that 1824 is the least productive year of all, so far as songs are concerned, a fact which must reflect Schubert's preoccupation with instrumental music.” *Schubert*, 110.

²¹ Gramit writes, “Settings of texts from within Schubert's circle demonstrate both the variety of texts and settings among these songs and their intimate relationship to the ideas around the composer. Indeed, Schubert's last four settings of texts by Mayrhofer, from March 1824, completed immediately before Schubert's long abandonment of the song, bring the prevalence of such songs to a surprisingly abrupt ending, as if Schubert were consciously ending the period for himself by setting from Mayrhofer's newly published book his final settings of poems by a poet who had once been a strong direct influence.” “Intellectual and Aesthetic Tenets,” 209.

restored at last....”).²² During the fall and winter of 1823–24, numerous letters from Bruchmann, Anton Doblhoff-Dier, Johanna Lutz, and Schwind report unanimously on the composer’s improved health. The favorable prognoses continue up to 6 March 1824, when Schwind wrote to Schober that Schubert was “pretty well,” but added, without explanation, that a doctor had put the composer on a new treatment but a few days prior—a sign, perhaps, of some kind of recurrence.²³ This is the last piece of information we have on Schubert’s physical and mental condition until the disturbing sentiments expressed in five of Schubert’s daily journal entries beginning 25 March and culminating in a lengthy letter to Kupelwieser on 31 March.²⁴ Passages in these heavily self-indulgent documents reveal Schubert’s rapid emotional shifts from states of optimistic excitability to bleak depression; to Kupelwieser, he writes:

Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who in sheer despair over this ever makes things worse and worse, instead of better; imagine a man, I say, whose most brilliant hopes have perished, to whom the felicity of love and friendship have nothing to offer but pain, at best, whom enthusiasm (at least of the stimulating kind) for all things beautiful threatens to forsake, and I ask you, is he not a miserable, unhappy being?²⁵

How long had these feelings lasted? And when in March did Schubert—who had once seemed confident at the prospect of recovery—reconfront his mortal, disabled body?

Though there is certainly no hard and fast evidence for such a conjecture, it does not take

²² “[M]eine Gesundheitsumständen, die sich (Gott sey Dank) nun endlich ganz fest zu stellen scheinen” *Dokumente*, 207; trans. in *Documentary Biography*, 300.

²³ *Documentary Biography*, 330–31; *Dokumente*, 228–29.

²⁴ *Documentary Biography*, 336–40; *Dokumente*, 232–35.

²⁵ “Denk Dir einen Menschen, dessen Gesundheit nie mehr richtig werden will, u. der aus Verzweiflung darüber die Sache immer schlechter statt besser macht, denke Dir einen Menschen, sage ich, dessen glänzende Hoffnungen zu Nichte geworden sind, dem das Glück der Liebe u. Freundschaft nichts biethen als höchstens Schmerz, dem Begeisterung (wenigstens anregende) für das Schöne zu schwinden droht, und frage Dich, ob das nicht ein elender, unglücklicher Mensch ist?” *Dokumente*, 234; trans. in *Documentary Biography*, 339.

a very long line to connect this end-of-March despair with the composition of the Mayrhofer settings—with their collective meditation on *dissolution*—some three weeks earlier.²⁶

Meanwhile, the perennially ailing Mayrhofer had fallen sick once again. Symptomatic since early February, Mayrhofer obtained a doctor's note dated 1 March 1824 diagnosing the poet with chronic liver disease and wandering gout.²⁷ He was using a walking stick for support, presumably because the gout had caused an inflammation in one of his feet.²⁸ Much like syphilis, the diagnosis of gout was simultaneously medical and moral: though the disease was quite painful, the markers of the disease (heavily bandaged limbs) were typically viewed with great condescension and mockery, as just punishment for an indulgent, sedentary, and—to return to an adjective from Mayrhofer's self-description, quoted above—*introspective* lifestyle.²⁹ By April, Mayrhofer had not yet recovered and subsequently requested from his employer a two-month vacation for a *Badekur* (then a typical treatment for gout). The timing is uncanny: Schubert had completed at least three of the four final Mayrhofer settings sometime between 1 March and 6 March, precisely when Mayrhofer's doctor's note was written. One can only speculate on what effect these events might have had on the already-troubled Schubert, but it is within the realm of possibility that the compositional impulse operating behind

²⁶ Youens makes a similar connection between the Mayrhofer settings and the late-March notebook entries and letters in *Schubert's Poets*, 158–59.

²⁷ Lorenz, “Dokumente zur Biographie,” 36. For more on Mayrhofer's extensive health problems, see Steblin, “Schubert's Problematic Relationship,” 483; and List, “Johann Mayrhofer,” 16–19.

²⁸ Deutsch mentions Mayrhofer's walking stick (without reference) in the *Documentary Biography*, 332. The information is absent from the corresponding pages of the *Dokumente*.

²⁹ Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). On wandering gout, see esp. 119 and 237–38.

these four songs was driven by news that his former friend and partner was, like him, confronting the stigmatized markers of a diseased, disabled body.

Rupturing Bodies

“Stürz’ nun Alles in die Lethe,” Schubert intones, commanding that everything—a forebodingly unspecific *Alles*—be plunged into the river of Hades. Those ominous words, with their evocation of annihilation, come from one of the composer’s own poetic ventures: “Mein Gebet,” written sometime during the years 1823–25.³⁰ The final stanza of this remarkable document foregrounds an underlying threat of violence and impulse toward willful self-destruction:

<p>Tödt’ es und mich selber tödte, Stürz’ nun Alles in die Lethe Und ein reines kräft’ges Sein Lass’, o Großer, dann gedeih’n.</p>	<p>Kill it, and kill myself, Throw all into the Lethe, And let a pure, virile being Blossom forth, O great one.</p>
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As Susan Youens has observed, the similarities of this verse to Mayrhofer’s poetic ruminations on *Auflösung* are striking: in Schubert as in Mayrhofer, eradication of physicality (whether dissolved or sunk) yields the transcendence of an inner spirit.³¹ The composer’s voice does not lie far from the poet’s.

Operating within a Cartesian separation of mind and body, both Mayrhofer and Schubert seem to see the physical world as a hindrance to an inner, immaterial being; externality suffocates internality, and so that which is internal must fight back. But what does this mean, exactly? In much German literature from the late eighteenth and early

³⁰ A poetic translation can be found in *Documentary Biography*, 279; the original is in *Dokumente*, 192–93. Note that Deutsch, using questionable rationales, contradicts Ludwig Stark’s claim that the poem was written on 2 July 1825 and opts instead for 8 May 1823.

³¹ Youens, *Schubert’s Poets*, 221.

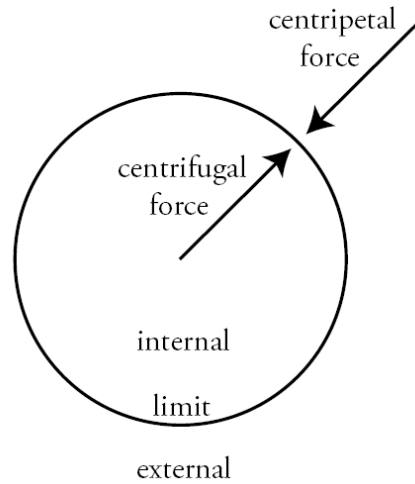
nineteenth centuries, similar spatial and bodily metaphors served as *loci communi* for a great number of philosophical and aesthetic topics. For example, many theories of art from this time were based on a conception of an internal/external divide: as Novalis writes concerning the topic of artistic inspiration and production, “An idea, a spirit is realized, produced from within outward.”³² Or, as A. W. Schlegel observed, the German word for artistic expression (*Ausdruck*) was in itself a spatial metaphor, not entirely dead: “The inner is pressed out as though by a force alien to us.”³³ At stake is the very nature of poetry: internally produced, intangible ideas must be pushed (ex-pressed) into external space for realization and consumption.

Figure 1.1 configures the operation of these metaphors into three rubrics, ordered in a narrative sequence: (a) BOUNDARY, (b) RUPTURE, and (c) TRANSCENDENCE. These may be thought of as overdeveloped image schemata—visual renderings of abstract spatial concepts onto which metaphorical language maps.³⁴ (“Overdeveloped,” because

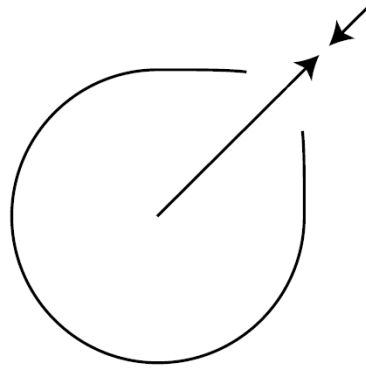
³² Quoted in M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 90.

³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 48. Abrams describes the source of expressive poetry as “an efficient cause—the impulse within the poet of feelings and desires seeking expression, or the compulsion of the ‘creative’ imagination which, like God the creator, has its internal source of motion” (22).

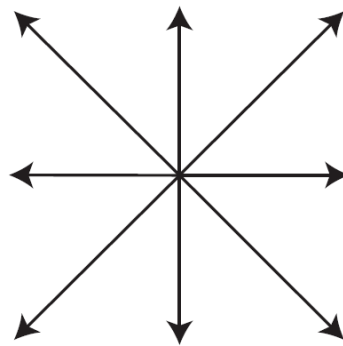
³⁴ The foundational texts on image schemata and embodiment are Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987). There are also several helpful introductions to this topic in the music theory literature: Lawrence M. Zbikowski, “*Des Herzraums Abschied*: Mark Johnson’s Theory of Embodied Knowledge and Music Theory,” *Theory and Practice* 22–23 (1997–98): 1–16; Joseph N. Straus, “Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59 (2006): 113–84; and Golan Gur, “Body, Forces, and Paths: Metaphor and Embodiment in Jean-Philippe Rameau’s Conceptualization of Tonal Space,” *Music Theory Online* 14, no. 1 (2008), <http://mto.societymusictheory.org> (accessed 1 August 2008).



(a) **BOUNDARY** (LIMITATION, CONFINEMENT, OBSTRUCTION)



(b) **RUPTURE** (EMERGENCE, ACQUISITION)



(c) **TRANSCENDENCE** (LIBERATION, ACTUALIZATION)

Figure 1.1. Three consecutive spatial models (“overdeveloped image schemata”).

my schemata make no pretense for cognitive purity or universality, reflecting instead the imagery and terminology of a limited historical and cultural moment. Note that the additional nouns listed in Figure 1.1 are included to expand the possible range of meanings within any one rubric.³⁵) The sequence depicts a division of internality from externality, created by a balance of counterforces; when one force overpowers its opposite, the balanced separation is ruptured, and internality subsequently bleeds outward. The third image in the set imagines the total dissolution of finite space as infinite internality. As we will see, this narrative sequence underpins the spatial metaphors operating in Mayrhofer's four poems, and, likewise, the musical gestures in Schubert's settings.

Reconsider A. W. Schlegel's statement that the "inner is pressed out." The verb "to press" implies that there is some limit that prevents inner space from freely flowing outward (BOUNDARY). Thus an energized force must overcome its counterforce in order to "press" (or "ex-press") internal space past the dividing limit and into external space (RUPTURE). Borrowing from the language of physics and planetary motion, some prominent late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German writers described such force and counterforce as *centrifugal* and *centripetal*.³⁶ Goethe defines these terms in a discussion of the unstable properties of biological metamorphosis (written in 1823):

[Metamorphosis] leads to formlessness; it destroys knowledge, dissolves it [*löst es auf*]. It is like the *vis centrifuga*, and would be lost in the infinite if it had no counterweight; here I mean the drive for specific character, the stubborn persistence of things which have finally attained reality. This is a

³⁵ My "overdeveloped" schemata find their most direct parallel in Johnson's CONTAINMENT, EQUILIBRIUM, COUNTERFORCE, and REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT. Johnson, *Body in the Mind*, 23, 46–47, and 87.

³⁶ The most substantial discussion of these forces is in Marshall Brown, *The Shape of German Romanticism* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1979), 142–60.

vis centripeta which remains basically untouched by any external factor.³⁷

Balanced against each other, these counterforces create a limit that wards off both the centripetal dangers of persistence and similarity, and the centrifugal dangers of dissolution and continuous formlessness. *Auflösung*, to substantivize one of Goethe's verbs, entails the centrifugal dismantlement of this balance.

Consider how the acquisition of new knowledge might fit within these visual models. What lies beyond the limit in external space is the great unknown, toward which centrifugal forces push the self. This is how we learn and grow: pushing outward, beyond centripetal reflection and constancy, in order to acquire that which was previously unknown. With education, the borders separating internal space from unknown external space expand, pushing further and further outward.³⁸ And to obtain access to outside

³⁷ “[Die Metamorphose] führt ins Formlose, zerstört das Wissen, löst es auf. Sie ist gleich der *vis centrifuga* und würde sich ins Unendliche verlieren, wäre ihr nicht ein Gegengewicht zugegeben: ich meine den Spezifikationstrieb, das zähe Beharrlichkeitsvermögen dessen was einmal zur Wirklichkeit gekommen. Eine *vis centripeta*, welcher in ihrem tiefsten Grunde keine Äußerlichkeit etwas anhaben kann.” J. W. von Goethe, *Zur Morphologie* (1823), in *Zur Naturwissenschaft überhaupt, besonders zu Morphologie*, ed. Hans J. Becker, Gerhard H. Müller, John Neubauer, and Peter Schmidt, vol. 12 of *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Richter (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1989), 295. Translation from Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, ed. and trans. Douglas Miller, *Goethe's Collected Works* 12 (New York: Suhrkamp, 1988), 43.

³⁸ Analyzing Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794–95), Marshall Brown writes, “[T]he ability to reflect [centripetally], [Fichte] argues, presupposes the existence of something to think about, something that stands in the way of immediate and infinite self-knowledge. Reflection thus always brings with it the thought of its own potential limitation, of something outside the bounds of the self. And this thought that moves beyond the self is the centrifugal aspect of the self.” *Shape of German Romanticism*, 145–46. And in his analysis of the quest for knowledge in Goethe's *Faust*, Géza von Molnár writes, “If, for example, a person is to acquire new information that would expand the horizon of that individual's knowledge, the precepts to which previously held knowledge had been limited must be suspended in order to create the state of receptivity necessary for new information to be received. In effect, learning is not so much a passive response to imposed data as an effort directed at freeing the self

space, one must tip the balance between centrifugal and centripetal motion *outward*—thereby breaching the circular limit. This is RUPTURE, and the process may be violent. Hegel writes, “The concept wants to *explode* the husk of exteriority and become for-itself,”³⁹ and “The goal of nature is to *kill* itself and to *break* through the husk of its immediacy and sensuousness; as Phoenix, to *burn* itself, in order to emerge rejuvenated as spirit from this exteriority” (my italics).⁴⁰ Hegel’s “exploding husks” recall Mayrhofer’s poem “Der Sieg,” in which the “leaden body’s sluggishness” is dealt a suicidal death-blow; and the fire imagery brings to mind how, in “Auflösung,” Mayrhofer’s physical remains are seared by the “Gluthen der Wonne.”⁴¹ (As we will later

from error, from the confines within which habit and complacency of thought tend to hold us captive all too easily.” *Romantic Vision, Ethical Context: Novalis and Artistic Autonomy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 186–87. The valuation of interiority is given a rich history in Holly Watkins, “From the Mine to the Shrine: The Critical Origins of Musical Depth,” *19th-Century Music* 27 (2004): 179–207.

³⁹ “Der Begriff will die Rinde der Äußerlichkeit zersprengen und für sich werden.” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830): Zweiter Teil, Die Naturphilosophie mit den mündliche Zusätzen*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 9 of *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), 37. Translated in David Farrell Krell, *Contagion: Sexuality, Disease, and Death in German Idealism and Romanticism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 121.

⁴⁰ “Das Ziel der Natur ist, sich selbst zu töten und ihre Rinde des Unmittelbaren, Sinnlichen zu durchbrechen, sich als Phönix zu verbrennen, um aus dieser Äußerlichkeit verjüngt als Geist hervorzutreten.” Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, 538. Translated in Krell, *Contagion*, 162–63. Or, as Krell aptly puts it, “For only in the fires of the funeral pyre can the contagion of life—the infection, the contamination, the poisoning, the polluting—be purified. Purification is pyrifaction” (163).

⁴¹ The use of fire imagery also invokes the cosmology of the Stoics: the cyclic death and rebirth through creative fire. As John Sellars explains, “The cosmos is born out of this creative fire, and it is resolved back into this creative fire at the end of its life cycle, the moment of conflagration. At that moment, the cosmos is pure fire, that is, pure *pneuma*. The cosmic animal will be pure soul, without body This implies that at the moment of conflagration the cosmos will be pure active principle, the passive principle having been in some sense converted into active principle, and awaiting conversion back again.” *Stoicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 99. Throughout his life, Mayrhofer was deeply engaged with Classical texts, including those of Stoic

see, Schubert's music follows suit: such moments of RUPTURE—providing the impetus for total dissolution—find their musical equivalent in thematic gestures that act centrifugally in musical space.)

Once this counterforce is violently annihilated, inner space can expand freely.

Friedrich Schleiermacher associates this unimpeded centrifugal motion with a drive toward the infinite:

Each human soul—its transitory actions as well as the inner peculiarities of its nature that lead us to this conclusion—is merely a product of two opposing drives. The one strives to draw into itself everything that surrounds it, ensnaring it in its own life and, wherever possible, wholly absorbing it into its innermost being. The other longs to extend its own inner self ever further, thereby permeating and imparting to everything from within, while never being exhausted itself. ... [The latter drive] wants to penetrate and to fill everything with reason and freedom, and thus it proceeds directly to the infinite⁴²

As a famous Protestant theologian, Schleiermacher was probably known to Mayrhofer, who, before moving to Vienna, spent four years training for the priesthood at the

philosophers. In particular, the poem “Freiwilliges Versinken” (and Schubert's setting, D. 700) draws from this cosmological imagery. See Youens, *Schubert's Poets*, 202–5.

⁴² “Jede menschliche Seele—ihre vorübergehende Handlungen sowohl als die innern Eigenthümlichkeiten ihres Daseins führen uns darauf—ist nur ein Produkt zweier entgegengesetzter Triebe. Der eine ist das Bestreben alles was sie umgibt an sich zu ziehen, in ihr eignes Leben zu verstricken, und wo möglich in ihr innerstes Wesen ganz einzusaugen. Der andere ist die Sehnsucht ihr eigenes inneres Selbst von innen heraus immer weiter auszudehnen, alles damit zu durchdringen, allen davon mitzuthemen, und selbst nie erschöpft zu werden. ... [A]lles will er durchdringen, alles mit Vernunft und Freiheit erfüllen, und so geht er gerade aufs Unendliche” Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799), ed. Günter Meckenstock (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 59. Ed. and trans. Richard Crouter as *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5. For more on this passage and the revisions that Schleiermacher made to it, see Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution, and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787–1802* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 18–20. As Izenberg observes, “Individual particularity is by definition finite, because it is delimited by its difference from others. If, however, the self tries to expand by a constant absorption of the world into itself, its tendency is to become infinite and hence to obliterate its individuated identity” (18).

monastery in St. Florian.⁴³ Schleiermacher's concept of infinity derives from a negation of spatial limit by unchecked outward forces that "proceed," "fill," and "penetrate." Hegel, too, seems to be imagining similar spaces and forces when he speaks of *satiated desire*: "Satiated desire does not here mean that the individual produces itself as this singular individual; rather [it produces itself] as universal ...; the inner organism, being-for-itself, has become externality."⁴⁴ This is TRANSCENDENCE, a conception of infinity in which the finite nature of the self has been thoroughly superseded so that interiority expands without obstruction.

Easily metaphorized into these conceptual spaces and forces are the spaces and forces of the body; the BOUNDARY between internal and external space becomes the separation of spirit and corporeality. Jean Paul, for instance, writes of how nerves perceive physical space by extending outward, centrifugally—quite different from how we might "take in a scene" today.⁴⁵ Using the language of a dissector, Schiller describes

⁴³ Molnár writes at length of the role of Christian mysticism in Novalis and Goethe, distilling the metaphysical quest of the mystic into three "stations": purgation, illumination, and union. "Purgation refers to the process of disengagement from the controls exercised by the physical realm. The physical realm has no longer any power over the spirit who recognized that realm as negation of absolute fulfillment." *Romantic Vision*, 172. See also Ariel Glucklich, *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴⁴ "Die gesättigte Begierde hat hier nicht die Bedeutung des sich als dieses einzelne hervorbringenden Individuums; sondern als allgemeines ...; der innere Organismus, das Fürsichsein, das zur Äußerlichkeit geworden." Hegel, *Naturphilosophie und Philosophie des Geistes*, vol. 3 of *Jenaer Systementwürfe*, ed. Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1987), 159. Translated in Krell, *Contagion*, 132.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Catherine J. Minter, "Literary *Empfindsamkeit* and Nervous Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *Modern Language Review* 96 (2001): 1016–28, esp. her analysis of the character Liane in Jean Paul's *Titan*: "Liane's delicate nerves wrapped themselves around beautiful forms in the outside world. The order of events is important here: Liane's nerves are not passively responding to external stimuli, but actively reaching out to embrace external objects; by implication, her refined nervous organization beautifies the world around her" (1026).

the fragmenting and tearing of bodies (RUPTURE) in order to understand the fundamental concepts within.⁴⁶ In his *Denkwürdigkeiten*, Karl Philipp Moritz writes of physical sickness as immaterial to the power of his inner *Denkkraft*.⁴⁷ And the Beautiful Soul in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* says, "It was as if my soul were thinking without my body, looking on the body as something apart from itself, like some garment or other."⁴⁸ In all of these examples, the body is subservient to the soul as passive, weak, or expendable.

In a remarkable study of Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, David E. Wellbery charts the language Werther uses to describe his body.⁴⁹ At his moments of angst and frustration, the BOUNDARY module seems to be used: "Won't this imprisoned

⁴⁶ John B. Lyon, "'You Can Kill, but You Cannot Bring to Life': Aesthetic Education and the Instrumentalization of Pain in Schiller and Hölderlin," *Literature and Medicine* 24 (2005): 31–50. Lyon focuses on Schiller's *Philosophie der Physiologie* (1779) and *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (1794). See also Lyon, *Crafting Flesh, Crafting the Self: Violence and Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century German Literature* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2006).

⁴⁷ Karl Philipp Moritz: "Krankheit?—Was kann mir die Krankheit rauben, als einen vorbeirauschenden Genuß? ... Meine Denkkraft, worin ich mich gesichert fühle, kann sie mir nicht rauben, denn diese Denkkraft bin ich selbst Kann ich mich denn also nicht in jedem Augenblick, wo es mir gefällt, in diesen Mittelpunkt meines Daseins zurückziehen, der dem Unglück keinen einzigen Berührungspunkt darbietet?" *Denkwürdigkeiten, aufgezeichnet zur Beförderung des Edlen und Schönen* (Berlin: Unger, 1786). Quoted in Catherine J. Minter, *The Mind–Body Problem in German Literature, 1770–1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 69.

⁴⁸ "Es war als wenn meine Seele ohne Gesellschaft des Körpers dächte, sie sah den Körper selbst als ein, ihr fremdes, Wesen an, wie man etwa Kleid ansieht." Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Schings, vol. 5 of *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Richter (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1988), 417. Translation from *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, ed. and trans. Eric A. Blackall, in cooperation with Victor Lange, vol. 9 of *Goethe's Collected Works* (New York: Suhrkamp, 1983), 252–53.

⁴⁹ David E. Wellbery, "Morphisms of the Phantasmatic Body: Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*," in *Body & Text in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Veronica Kelly and Dorothea von Mücke, 181–208 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

soul some day be released for such bliss?”⁵⁰ and “however confined [man] may be, he still preserves in his heart the sweet feeling of liberty, and knows that he can quit this prison whenever he likes.”⁵¹ (Recall Feuchtersleben’s description of Mayrhofer, quoted above: “... as if he were a *prisoner* in his cell, listening to a song from his homeland that is sounding outside the door ...”; italics mine.) These souls are incarcerated, and the gates that trap them are the limitations of physicality: both the corporeal prison of the body and the psychological forces that hem in the entrapped spirit.

However, we shift to a different model of space when Werther writes of his waltz with beloved Charlotte: “Never had I danced more lightly. I felt myself more than human, holding this loveliest of creatures in my arms, flying with her like the wind, till I lost sight of everything else.”⁵² In contradistinction to the regulated minuet that precedes this dance in the novel, the waltz was a dance of freedom and individuality, and so it is only natural that Werther should be “ex-pressing” (in A. W. Schlegel’s sense) himself through his newly light body.⁵³ As Wellbery observes,

⁵⁰ From Werther’s letter of 12 December: “O Wilhelm! wie gern hätte ich mein Menschsein drum gegeben, mit jenem Sturmwinde die Wolken zu zerreißen, die Fluten zu fassen! Ha! und wird nicht vielleicht dem Eingekerkerten einmal diese Wonne zu Teil?” J. W. von Goethe, *Leiden des jungen Werthers*, in *Erstes Weimarer Jahrzehnt, 1775–1786*, ed. Hannelore Schlaffer, Hans J. Becker, and Gerhard H. Müller, vol. 2.2 of *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Richter (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1987), 440. Translation from Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther, Elective Affinities, Novella*, trans. Victor Lange, ed. David E. Wellbery, vol. 11 of *Goethe’s Collected Works* (New York: Suhrkamp, 1988), 70.

⁵¹ From Werther’s letter of 22 May: “Und dann, so eingeschränkt er ist, hält er doch immer im Herzen das süße Gefühl der Freiheit, und daß er diesen Kerker verlassen kann wann er will.” *Leiden*, 356; *Sorrows*, 10.

⁵² From Werther’s letter of 16 June: “Nie ist mir’s so leicht vom Flecke gegangen. Ich war kein Mensch mehr. Das liebenswertigste Geschöpf in den Armen zu haben und mit ihr herum zu fliegen wie Wetter, daß alles rings umher verging” *Leiden*, 367; *Sorrows*, 17.

⁵³ “The minuet, it may be said, reflected and incorporated the worldly ranks which its

[T]he concept of human being (“Menschheit” or “Menschsein”) in the novel is inextricably tied to the concept of limit (“Grenze”) and therewith to the concepts of finitude, relativity, determination through difference. Waltzing with Charlotte, then, Werther senses something like a transcendence of human corporeal limitation, a possibility of corporeal movement that would be centered within itself and would course, without resistance, through a boundless space.⁵⁴

This reading of Goethe’s text mirrors Schiller’s references to the novel in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, where he uses similar spatial conceptions: Werther strives for a “substanceless infinite,” despite his existence within “perennial limitations.” This tension between infinity and limit, lying at the very nature of the sentimental poet, leads such personalities to the point of RUPTURE:

A [sentimental] personality who embraces the ideal with burning feeling and abandons actuality in order to contend with a substanceless infinitude, who seeks continuously outside himself for that which he continuously destroys within himself, to whom only his dreams are the real, his experience perennial limitations, who in the end sees in his own existence only a limitation, and, as is reasonable, tears this down in order to penetrate to the true reality.⁵⁵

Werther’s suicide is less about artistic inadequacy or lovesickness, than, to use Schiller’s words, about confronting “limitations” (BOUNDARY) in order to “penetrate” (RUPTURE)

participants brought with them when they entered the ballroom. Paradoxically, this was made possible by the very uniformity of the minuet. Not so the waltz. The waltz emphasized not uniformity, but individual expression; there are no rules to be studied, save for a few basic steps; the individual is encouraged to introduce his own variations and interpretations.” Ruth Katz, “The Egalitarian Waltz,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15 (1973): 371.

⁵⁴ Wellbery, “Morphisms,” 183–84.

⁵⁵ “Ein Charakter, der mit glühender Empfindung ein Ideal umfaßt und die Wirklichkeit flieht, um nach einem wesenlosen Unendlichen zu ringen, der, was er in sich selbst unaufhörlich zerstört, unaufhörlich außer sich sucht, dem nur seine Träume das Reelle, seine Erfahrungen ewig nur Schranken sind, der endlich in seinem eigenen Dasein nur eine Schranke sieht und auch diese, wie billig ist, noch einreißt, um zu der wahren Realität durchzudringen” Friedrich Schiller, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, in *Erzählungen, Theoretische Schriften*, ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert, vol. 5 of *Sämtliche Werke* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1959), 738. Trans. adapted from idem, “*Naive and Sentimental Poetry*” and “*On the Sublime*,” trans. Julius A. Elias (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966), 137.

toward a state of “true reality” (TRANSCENDENCE). The obstacle—the physical, corporeal state—falls away as a forgotten casualty.

And so we return to the concept of *the body as limit*. The body—and the body’s relationship to space—is invariably the tangible foundation for much abstract discourse. And yet for all of these philosophical tracts, religious speeches, scientific studies, and fictional narratives (some exhibiting quite positive qualities of breakthrough: striving for liberty, freedom, actualization), we must remind ourselves that the bodies of Schubert and Mayrhofer were *not* abstractions. It is hard to imagine these metaphors bypassing their source domain without Schubert or Mayrhofer pausing to reflect on the syphilitic rashes and pustules that would cover the composer’s skin, or the bandages for gout that were probably wrapped around one of the poet’s limbs. Such markers were public visual signifiers of bodies in a state of medical and moral decline. Would Hegel’s metaphor of “exploding the husk of exteriority” have seemed an appealing prospect for these two men, so active as they still were in both of their respective mental, intellectual, internal spaces?

Mayrhofer’s hypochondria, too, operates within these spatial realms, for in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it was a disease associated with obsessive introspection—an association coupled, of course, with the the parallel trend of the feminization of artistry. For example, Goethe writes of a “self-centered hypochondriac,” a hypochondriac “withdrawn into himself” and “sinking into subjectivity.”⁵⁶ And Hegel writes that “every disease (but especially acute illnesses) is a hypochondria of the

⁵⁶ Robert D. Tobin, *Doctor’s Orders: Goethe and Enlightenment Thought* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press; London and Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2001), 102.

organism, in which the latter disdains the outer world which sickens it.”⁵⁷ Seen as a condition that could possibly lead to suicide,⁵⁸ hypochondria was a popular diagnosis in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; as the male equivalent of female hysteria, hypochondria was a medical category frequently used for *introspective* people like philosophers, book-bound intellectuals, and “sentimental” artists and poets—that is, for people primarily residing in their minds (internality) to the exclusion of the social obligations imposed by the world around them (externality). Further, such diseased bodies were conceived not only as weak and frail (as we conceive of diseased bodies today)—but as *porous*, vulnerable to penetration by airborne spirits.⁵⁹

Taking into consideration Joseph N. Straus’s recent criticisms of embodiment theory (its universalizing discourse, as if each and every body were the same),⁶⁰ we might imagine how the particularities of the bodies of Schubert or Mayrhofer as constructed in the medical discourse of the time might react to the conceptual models of Figure 1.1—how the introspective hypochondriacal concentration on internal space might lead to a wish to *expand* this space, and how the thin coverings of porous bodies may already be

⁵⁷ “Denn jede Krankheit (besonders aber die akute) ist eine Hypochondrie des Organismus, worin er die Außenwelt verschmählt” Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, 532. Trans. from idem, *Philosophy of Nature*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 438. In this passage, Hegel goes on to write about medicine as an external agent, stimulating the sick body from (internal) self-absorption.

⁵⁸ George Minois, *History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 243.

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Khalfa (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 286–93. See also the extended discussion of Immanuel Kant’s hypochondria in Susan Meld Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 264–305. Shell writes: “Unlike derangement (*Verrückung*), a condition in which what one merely imagines is taken to exist in the external world, hypochondria involves an illusion of inner sense alone, whereby what one immediately feels concerning one’s own state itself deceives” (268).

⁶⁰ Straus, “Normalizing the Abnormal,” 121–26.

on the verge of disintegrating RUPTURE. As David B. Morris writes in his provocative study of the subject, we yearn for pain to *signify*, so that we might assign to it a justifiable purpose.⁶¹ The sequence BOUNDARY–RUPTURE–TRANSCENDENCE, which, as we will see, lies at the inspirational heart of Schubert’s four Mayrhofer settings, recontextualizes pain as a necessary intermediary state toward desirable spiritual release; if the leaden body is to be destroyed, a painful RUPTURE is obligatory. This sequence also fits well into the “overcoming disability” narrative model that was beginning to emerge at the beginning of the nineteenth century (and will play a role at the climactic moment in Schubert’s setting of “Auflösung”)—the notion that physical difference, as a prime source of narrative tension, must be triumphantly expunged in order for resolution to occur.⁶² The preferential treatment of internality in this mind–body duality is a major (perhaps even fundamental) contributor to the notion that disability is inherently unstable and deficient. The bandaged, scarred, porous—*disabled*—body cannot exist in a state of narrative resolution. It must be overcome: it must be ruptured, it must be transcended.

Centrifugal Forces

“Gondelfahrer” (D. 808) begins with a curious musical gesture that taunts listeners with hermeneutic possibility: in the three-measure piano prelude, the tonic C

⁶¹ David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

⁶² On the construction of disability as an unstable identity category that needs to be “heroically overcome” (a narrative model still entrenched in discourse today), see David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Arthur W. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Tanya Titchkosky, *Reading & Writing Disability Differently: The Textured Life of Embodiment* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), esp. 177–207. On this narrative model in musical contexts, see Straus, “Normalizing the Abnormal.”

Mäßig

Es tan - zen Mond_ und

5

Ster - ne den flücht' - gen Gei - ster - reihn: — wer wird_ von Er - den -

pp

cresc.

pp

Example 1.1. Expanding and contracting gestures in Schubert, “Gondelfahrer” (D. 808), mm. 1–8

major twice alternates with the flatted submediant, A-flat major (**Example 1.1**).

Suggesting depth, darkness, and weight, the accented A \flat octaves in the bass sink past the preestablished three-octave ambitus of the preceding C major. However, upon the entrance of the voice (m. 4), the bass descends not from C to A \flat , but from C to A \sharp , a motion that isolates the opening A \flat and brands it as peculiar and external to the world of the song. For the next nineteen measures of music (setting two quatrains of poetry), this A \flat is abandoned. What might this pitch signify?

While there is nothing unusual about the motion from I to \flat VI, the reverse is less common: \flat VI, often with an added augmented sixth degree, typically precedes the

Figure 1.2. Chromatic-median voice leadings between A-flat major, C major, and E major: one note ascends by half step, one note descends by half step, and one note is held as a common tone.

dominant.⁶³ Assignments of Roman numerals to these chords (I– \flat VI–I) do little to illuminate the freshness of the C/A \flat relationship, precisely because there is little at stake in determining the harmonic function of A \flat here. Rather, the transformation receives its character from the parsimonious voice leading between two chromatic mediants: moving from A \flat to C involves one common tone and two semitone alterations in opposite directions (see **Figure 1.2**).⁶⁴ (Emphasizing this common tone, Schubert pulses octave Cs in a manner that isolates those pitches rhythmically; they are notated with up-stems, visually separated from their chromatic interior.) The alternation between these two sonorities might be symbolized spatially and energetically as the balanced “to and fro” between the centrifugal, outward-seeking tendencies of chromatic mediants and the

⁶³ For a brief list of examples from the classical repertoire of the progression I– \flat VI–V at various structural levels, see Harald Krebs, “Alternatives to Monotony in Early Nineteenth-Century Music,” *Journal of Music Theory* 25 (1981): 16n5.

⁶⁴ Richard L. Cohn speaks of a Schubertian harmony that “de-emphasizes diatonic collections and emphasizes voice-leading efficiency.” Root motion by the third is one compositional technique that achieves this. “As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at Tonality in Schubert,” *19th-Century Music* 22 (1999): 215. See also David Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). The recent work of neo-Riemannians has gone far in explaining how common-tone tonality operates, but this should not rob passages like the opening measures of “Gondelfahrer” of their provocation and mystery.

centripetal, inward-pulling forces of functional harmony.⁶⁵ This metaphor is embodied physically in the stretching and shrinking motions of the pianist's left hand and the interior fingers of the right hand; note how Schubert's chosen registration of the notes in the right hand (E below G, not the other way around) contributes to the quality of these motions. And the metaphor conforms with expectations of traditional harmony: nonfunctional, unstable, and (to use Goethe's word in *Zur Morphologie*) "metamorphic," chromatic mediant branches outward, into the harmonic unknown; the collapse inward returns us to diatonic familiarity.

Applying the same chromatic-variant transformational operation can also take us a major third in the opposite direction—from C major to E major, and it is to this chord that Schubert turns at the bridge between the first two four-measure phrases of the song (mm. 7–8). This second chromatic-variant glide completes what Matthew Bribitzer-Stull terms the "A^b–C–E Complex," the prototypical chromatic-variant collection whose roots symmetrically divide the octave along the lines of the augmented triad (bVI–I–III[#]).⁶⁶ From the outset, and within the first eight measures, Schubert has marked the realm of chromatic mediant with signifying potential. Echoes of this provocative opening will resonate not just through the rest of "Gondelfahrer," but through the other three Mayrhofer settings under consideration here; they will underscore poetic moments of RUPTURE and TRANSCENDENCE, moments when corporeality is shunned and the soul

⁶⁵ I draw from a similar (but distinctly different) use of the centrifugal/centripetal, chromatic/diatonic metaphor in William J. Mitchell, "The Study of Chromaticism," *Journal of Music Theory* 6 (1962): 4–9.

⁶⁶ "Gondelfahrer" is not identified in Matthew Bribitzer-Stull's list of works that exemplify this particular chromatic-variant collection. "The A^b–C–E Complex: The Origin and Function of Chromatic Major Third Collections in Nineteenth-Century Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 28 (2006): 167–90.

21

Schoß. _____ Vom Mar-kus-tur-me

decresc. *ppp*

1 2 3 4 5 6

26

tön - te der Spruch der Mit - ter - nacht: _____ Sie schlum-mern fried - lich

ppp

7 8 9 10 11 12

Example 1.2. Tolling of midnight and the “rupture” of A-flat major in Schubert, “Gondelfahrer” (D. 808), mm. 21–29

strives for emergence.

Cue the tolling of the twelve chimes of midnight from the bells of St. Mark’s: twelve rolled \flat VI chords (mm. 23–28, **Example 1.2**), each numbered by Schubert in the autograph score with hyperrealistic precision.⁶⁷ Marked in the opening measures of the

⁶⁷ A facsimile of the autograph with Schubert’s numbering can be found in *Lieder*, ed. Walther Dürr, ser. 4, vol. 13 of *Neue Ausgabe sämtliche Werke* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992), xxix; and in Joseph Kerman, “A Romantic Detail in Schubert’s *Schwanengesang*,” *Musical Quarterly* 48 (1962): 36–49, but not in the revised version (which I will cite later, note 73).

song but then quickly abandoned, A \flat now receives its contextual definition, retroactively affecting our interpretation of the prelude. The chimes enter in an air of expectancy; an extra bar (m. 22) breaks the regular groupings of paired measures, extending V⁷ for one additional beat.⁶⁸ This lingering V⁷ resolves irregularly: V⁷→ \flat VI, with the seventh of the dominant abandoned in the piano register; it descends to an implied E \flat , later articulated by the voice at measure 26. (Tuck this progression away for later consideration; Schubert will return to something similar in “Auflösung,” discussed below.)

This deceptive motion startles the solidity of C major into the terrain of its flatted submediant: we move centrifugally, outward, toward nondiatonic otherness—in A flat, a key associated with night and darkness.⁶⁹ The twelve A \flat chimes embody something more profound than the hour of the night; they set the stage for the announcement of a cosmic judgment (“der Spruch der Mitternacht”): “everything slumbers peacefully, and only the boatman is awake.” This enigmatic decree arrives via a transition from \flat VI (A \flat) back into C major; but, unlike the evocative juxtaposition of root-position triads found in the prelude (mm. 1–3), C major is now in *second* inversion (mm. 28–29). This was not Schubert’s first instinct. He had originally composed a major-third ascent in the bass (A \flat –

⁶⁸ The extra measure mimics, perhaps, that moment of frozen expectation when awaiting a clock tower’s hourly chimes. For more on the rhythmic structure of “Gondelfahrer,” see Erdmute Schwarmath, *Musikalischer Bau und Sprachvertonung in Schuberts Liedern* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1969), 71–78.

⁶⁹ Though there was not consensus about the meaning of keys among early nineteenth-century writers, many of the characteristics associated with A flat apply well to the sonic landscape of “Gondelfahrer.” Particularly evocative is E. T. A. Hoffmann’s description of a pianissimo A \flat -major chord: “What is it that rustles so miraculously, so strangely around me? Invisible wings glide up and down. I am swimming in an ethereal fragrance. But the fragrance shines in flaming circles, mysteriously intertwining. They are tender spirits, moving their golden wings in magnificently voluminous tones and chords.” Quoted in Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, 2nd ed. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 277.

C) to correspond identically with the bass motion found in the prelude.⁷⁰ Schubert then crossed this out, deciding instead to sink the bass A \flat by a semitone to G. As it might in an augmented-sixth chord, the bass A \flat serves as a flatted upper-neighbor to G, with the resulting semitone descent concluding the bass's protracted $\hat{5}-\flat\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ gesture: begun in measure 21 (G), moving upward in measure 23 (A \flat), and, following the revision, sinking down into a *pianissimo* arrival 6/4 chord in measure 29 (G).⁷¹ And what a strange, haunted arrival it is: emerging from the sonority of A-flat major, the tonic feels fresh, rediscovered; the moment begs for a slight ritardando and a generous sensitivity to the expressive sounds in the word "schlummern" (pursed [ʃ], liquid [l], hummed [m]). The $\hat{5}-\flat\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ motive—so pervasive in Schubert's music—here acts as a defamiliarizing agent of change, and will continue to haunt these Mayrhofer settings at multiple structural levels.⁷²

A \flat makes one final appearance in this song, in a coda that mirrors the I- \flat VI-I undulation of the prelude (mm. 1–3 and 37–40).⁷³ As the song ends, the gondolier is

⁷⁰ For citation of the facsimile, see note 67.

⁷¹ Basing her observations on a comment in Thrasybulos G. Georgiades, *Schubert: Musik und Lyrik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1979), 321n1, Schwarmath compares this second-inversion chord (accompanying the words "sie schlummern friedlich alle") with 6/4 chords in fourteen other Schubert songs that underlie the "abolition of consciousness" apparent in sleep, night, dream, and death (all "disembodied" states). *Musikalischer Bau*, 74–75, esp. note 49. On the signification of the arrival 6/4 chord, see Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 9–28; and Michael L. Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 62–76.

⁷² The literature on $\hat{5}-\flat\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ in Schubert is vast. See esp. Carl Schachter, "Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs," in [his] *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis*, ed. Joseph N. Straus (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 209–20; and Walter Everett, "Grief in *Winterreise*: A Schenkerian Perspective," *Music Analysis* 9 (1990), 157–75.

⁷³ Kerman writes of how the framing device in "Gondelfahrer" mirrors that in "Am

awake in a sleeping world: “freed from all restraints,” flowing in “moonbeams.” From out of the centripetal weight of “earthly problems” (*Erdensorgen*), the boatman, witness to the “ephemeral dance of the spirits” (*flücht’gen Geisterreih’n*), experiences a centrifugal push out toward the spiritual realm. Temporarily transcending the physical, he beholds the unearthly from within his barque; the music follows suit, creating harmonic RUPTURE on the watery diatonic surface: I- \flat VI-I- \flat VI-I.

In “Der Sieg” (D. 805), Mayrhofer’s identical opening and closing quatrains depict a heavenly realm: an “unclouded life, so pure, deep, and clear”—a life without BOUNDARY, a life of TRANSCENDENCE. Schubert sets this verse as a diatonic hymn, noble and stable, utilizing the half/quarter/quarter-note rhythm frequently found in his chordal textures. Clusters of dissonances, particularly those that color the word “Blumen,” add tenderness and vulnerability to this otherwise stately music. In measures 10–11 (**Example 1.3**), after the voice’s descent to a low A for the primordial “uralte Träumen,” the singer arpeggiates up the octave, blossoming out of the depths of his range to reach a higher A for “Blumen”—a note that is simultaneously dissonant with both outer voices of the piano (B \flat and G). The dissonance is heightened at the repetition (m. 13): A and C are suspended over B \flat and D, creating a four-note diatonic cluster. Such a moment brings to mind the tenderness of Mayrhofer’s “Nachtviolen” (D. 752), or the prodigious flower of his “Heliopolis I” (D. 753), also set by Schubert as a hymn. In this latter song (composed in 1822), the realm of the sublime is described as the land of the sun, the land of art and

Meer,” another song that depicts water. See “A Romantic Detail in Schubert’s *Schwanengesang*,” in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch, 48–64 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

(8)

ur - al - te Träu - me__ schwe - ben auf__ Blu - men wun - der -

12

-bar, auf__ Blu - men wun - der - bar. Der

Example 1.3. A life “without BOUNDARY”: Schubert, “Der Sieg” (D. 805), mm. 9–14

pure inspiration, and it is another tender flower that points an earthly wanderer to the beyond, skyward: “Dort ist Wonne,” it says, “dort ist Leben.”⁷⁴ Implicit in the flower’s

⁷⁴ “Heliopolis I” is a critical song in the Mayrhofer settings, explicitly laying out many of the poet’s tenets and beliefs. See Michael Kohlhäufel, “‘Das Schönste’ und ‘das Herrlichste’: Freiheitsgedanke und Ästhetik im literarischen Freundeskreis Franz Schuberts,” in *Schubert und seine Freunde*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda et al., 137–43 (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 1999); Dürhammer, “‘Von den lachenden Fluren des Ideenreiches,’ oder, ‘Die schlafenden Jünglinge’: Schuberts oberösterreichische Dichter-Freunde,” in *Schubert und seine Freunde*, 119–36; Walther Dürr, “‘Tatenfluten’ und ‘bessere Welt’: Zu Schuberts Freundeskreisen,” in *Schuberts Lieder nach Gedichten aus seinem literarischen Freundeskreis: Auf der Suche nach dem Ton der Dichtung in der Musik; Kongreßbericht Ettlingen 1997*, ed. Walther Dürr, Siegfried Schmalzriedt, and Thomas Seyboldt, 23–37 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1999); and Gramit, “Schubert and the Biedermeier,” 355–82.

conception of space is BOUNDARY—a divider between *here* and *there* which must be surpassed.

Over the course of the chromatic, militaristic middle stanza of “Der Sieg,” we learn how the poet arrived in the “unclouded life,” how he transcended the present and completed the metaphysical pilgrimage toward that ever-elusive, ever-distant *dort*. As Mayrhofer describes, an epic battle took place, with mythical and metaphysical forces triumphing over their antagonistic opposites: spirit over body, Eden over Satan, and—death over life, for this was a victory achieved through suicide.⁷⁵ Much like “Gondelfahrer,” the dichotomy between restriction and release underpins this poem; note the oppositional use of the words “Schranken” and “wallen” in “Gondelfahrer,” and “Schranken” and “zerbrechen” in “Der Sieg.” The mysterious, wondrous transcendence of the former poem becomes violent and epic in the latter—the emergence from physicality here made explicitly corporeal through bodily death.

At the moment of RUPTURE (“und meine Hand, sie traf!” mm. 39–43 of **Example 1.4**), Schubert moves from the tonic (F major) to \flat VI (D-flat major)—an unexpected denial of the natural submediant so prevalent in the opening hymn (see F–D \sharp in mm. 2, 5, and repeatedly in mm. 9–12). (This chromatic shift of the sixth scale degree is reminiscent of the tension between A \flat and A \sharp in the opening measures of “Gondelfahrer”; see Ex. 1.1.) The voice, previously doubling the bass line to its depths (“Todesschlaf”), springs up with newfound independence to approach $\flat^{\wedge}6$ (D \flat) from below. Schubert adds

⁷⁵ Though suicide isn’t made explicit in the poem, it is strongly implied. Youens, *Schubert’s Poets*, 214–18; John Reed, *The Schubert Song Companion* (Manchester, UK: Mandolin, 1997), 127–28; and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, *Schubert’s Songs: A Biographical Study*, trans. Kenneth S. Whitton (New York: Knopf, 1977), 193, all interpret the poem in this vein.

38

-schlaf, und mei-ne Hand, sie traf!

42 **Wie oben**

O un - be - wöl - k - tes

fz *p*

decresc. *mf*

Example 1.4. The moment of suicide and corporeal transcendence.
 Schubert, “Der Sieg” (D. 805), mm. 38–44

a flattened-seventh to the chord underneath “traf”—a moment of suspense—and chooses to resolve the chord not as a German augmented sixth (which would have led us straight back to F, no questions asked) but as a dominant seventh, and not to G \flat but to F \sharp . He thus visually annihilates the cluster of flats and replaces them with their musical opposites.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ This juxtaposition of opposites reflects Mayrhofer’s frequent use of antithesis in his poetry. Wilhelm Seidel, “‘Die Erde ist gewaltig schön, / Doch sicher ist sie nicht’: Über Joseph Mayrhofer’s Lebenslieder,” in *Schuberts Lieder nach Gedichten aus seinem literarischen Freundeskreis: Auf der Suche nach dem Ton der Dichtung in der Musik; Kongreßbericht Ettlingen 1997*, edited by Walther Dürr, Siegfried Schmalzriedt, and Thomas Seyboldt, 257–70 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1999).

Figure 1.3. Voice-leading sketch of “Der Sieg,” mm 38–44 [compare with Ex. 1.4]

This eye-music is also partially audible, if only in hindsight: the rising $F\sharp$ – G semitone in the treble (mm. 41–42) must be heard as a sharped chromatic, yet the descending semitone $C\sharp$ – $C\flat$ in the bass (mm. 42–43) must be heard as a flatted chromatic ($D\flat$ – C , despite its notation); the intervening diminished seventh chord (m. 42) exists in a nebulous state between these two rising and sinking pulls. Schubert frequently uses enharmonic shifts between sharps and flats to underscore images and meanings in his songs (one might think especially of the revisions in the autograph of “Du liebst mich nicht,” in which $F\sharp$ replaces $G\flat$ at an implication of suicide).⁷⁷ And though in this song we are dealing with an $F\sharp$ -major chord,⁷⁸ one might also think of the juxtaposition of G -

⁷⁷ Kristina Muxfeldt, “Schubert, Platen, and the Myth of Narcissus,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996): 526–27 (Appendix B).

⁷⁸ Or so it would seem. Presumably taking its lead from the first published edition of the song (1833), the edition in the *Gesamtausgabe* differs from the Witteczek transcription by omitting a sharp sign in front of the A in the $F\sharp$ chord in m. 41; see Schubert, *Lieder und Gesänge*, ed. Eusebius Mandyczewski, ser. 20, vol. 8 of *Werke: Kritisch durchgesehene Gesamtausgabe* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1895), 17. The stakes surrounding one accidental could not be higher (is death major or minor?), and many

flat major with F-sharp minor in the first movement of the Piano Sonata in B-flat Major (D. 960)—particularly the moment in the recapitulation when the enharmonic modulation into the latter key prompts the sublime emergence of the thematic material in the key of A major. The white-hot F# chord in “Der Sieg” similarly fissures the surface of the music and strains for emergence: death is not a (sinking, flatted, *centripetal*) end but a (rising, sharped, *centrifugal*) release—a RUPTURE of the “sluggish body’s leadenness” by the newly freed spirit.⁷⁹

Musically, too, this moment of death is not an end—just as the $D\flat^7-F\sharp^{6/4}$ progression is not cadential; performers should be propelled by (and must not relax into) this F# chord. As the voice-leading sketch in **Figure 1.3** shows, the F# is but a brief chromatic passing tone within a third-progression in the piano’s treble, which ascends (F–G–A) to prepare for a final *Terzzug* descent come the *da capo* of the noble, heavenly opening quatrain. (As the sketch clarifies, this major-third ascent is complemented by a diminished-fourth descent in the alto, from $D\flat$ to A; might this be another instance of centrifugal expansion, the two voices pushing outward chromatically into an “unclouded” A-octave of TRANSCENDENCE?) As for the $D\flat$ (= $C\sharp$) in the bass: it is ultimately an incomplete upper neighbor to the dominant ($C\flat$), which in turn resolves to the tonic (F); the harmonic motion can be reduced, then, to the much simpler progression $I-\flat VI-V^7-I$ which accompanies a linear $\wedge 1-\wedge 2-\wedge 3$ ascent in the treble. As was the case in “Gondelfahrer,” $\flat VI$ provides the outward-pushing impetus for change: the moment of

otherwise wonderful recorded performances of the song lamentably transcribe this error. Walther Dürr opts for the Witteczek reading, which is the earliest source for the song, in the *Neue Ausgabe*, ser. 4, vol. 13, p. 244.

⁷⁹ Given the biblical imagery in Mayrhofer’s poem, mention should be made of the association of the sharp sign (*Kreuz*) with the Crucifixion (*Kreuzigung*).

enharmonic metamorphosis embedded within \flat VI is a bright, sharpened moment of fissure and disruption on the way toward a higher plane—and physically so, for the pianist embodies this transformation by moving both hands from the piano’s white keys (F major) to the raised plane of black keys (F-sharp major) and back down again. At the repetition of the opening quatrain, this metamorphic musical moment lingers in our memories; we are now fully aware of the struggle necessary to escape the poet’s physical entrapment, the struggle to *dissolve* the corporeal.

In Schubert’s autograph, the final measures of “Der Sieg” share their page with the opening measures of “Abendstern” (D. 806)—presumably the two songs were composed together, one right after the other.⁸⁰ The songs could not be more different: whereas “Der Sieg” is a song of cosmic battle and victorious suicide, “Abendstern” is a song without RUPTURE, indulging rather in melancholic inaction, in an inability to find—or even search for—completion.⁸¹ As David Gramit has written, struggle between bold action and languid resignation was a central conflict in the work of Schubert’s early *Freundeskreis*: “The friends lauded determined activity while recognizing their inability to engage in it; they were prone to melancholy reflections while at the same time strongly suspicious of them.”⁸² We might find this dichotomy represented in Schubert’s harmonic

⁸⁰ Robert Winter, “Paper Studies and the Future of Schubert Research,” in *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe, 209–75 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), esp. 228.

⁸¹ Feuchtersleben also wrote a poem entitled “Abendstern” which may be a response to Mayrhofer’s verse. See Ernst Freiherr von Feuchtersleben, [*Gedichte*], ed. Hermann Blume, vol. 1.1 of *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. Hedwig Heger (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987), 25, and also the critical commentary in vol. 1.2, p. 504.

⁸² Gramit, “Intellectual and Aesthetic Tenets,” 141.

language, as well, for “Abendstern” is the only song among the 1824 Mayrhofer settings that does not engage in the centrifugal chromatic mediant that have thus far provided the impetus for dissolution into the unfamiliar, transcendence beyond the physical; the melancholic star, bound by its inaction and stubborn constancy, exists in a world of functional harmonies.

In spite of the stargazer’s incredulous, skeptical questions (a singer can evoke this wonderfully by emphasizing Mayrhofer’s series of insistent labiodental fricatives: “*warum entfernt das funkelnde Gewimmel*”), the “wayward” star replies in short, submissive couplets. Schubert’s harmonies imitate the form that the dialogue takes: man’s A-minor questions (mm. 3–12 and 18–26) followed by the star’s A-major responses (mm. 13–17 and 27–31), which introduce a halo-like E cover tone in the right hand of the piano. (Note that the A-minor questions end with the harmonic equivalent of a question mark—half cadences, or E-major dividing dominants [mm. 12 and 26]. This structural motion is echoed without transposition on a more local level in “Gondelfahrer” [mm. 6–7, Ex. 1.1], where the A–E movement occurs as a brief harmonic diversion to underlie—rather appropriately, in hindsight—the stars’ and the moon’s “Geisterreih’n.”) As a study of the autograph reveals, Schubert was even originally inclined to change the key signature from A minor to A major when the star’s voice first enters, but then saw fit to revise. The major key evokes the star’s sweetness and mildness—but (and this is surely the reason for Schubert’s key signature deletion) the brightness of the C# is fleeting and soon descends to C \flat , ushering the return of the minor mode.

As Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht has observed in regard to other Schubert songs, the “illusory world of beautiful, bright dreams” found in Schubert’s major keys is often

(a)

15

Stern, ____ sie hal - ten sich von Lie - be ____ fern.”

(b)

29

Keim, ____ und blei - be trau - ernd still ____ da - heim.”

Example 1.5. A resigned descent, and an expressive *out-burst*. Schubert, “Abendstern” (D. 806), (a) mm. 15–17, and (b) mm. 29–31

stripped away to reveal the “actual world of banal, sordid, bare-footed reality” that signifies his minor.⁸³ Upon resigning itself to this stasis in the final couplet, the voice of the star breaks through the upper notes of the piano for the first time in the song—ascending a minor sixth to F[♯] (**Example 1.5b**, mm. 29–30) instead of descending a third,

⁸³ Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, “Prinzipien des Schubert-Liedes,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 27 (1970): 96. Commenting on this passage, William Kinderman writes of “the relationship between musical contrast and the dichotomy of external and internal experience—perception and imagination—that so preoccupied the Romantic poets set by Schubert in his Lieder”; see “Schubert’s Tragic Perspective,” in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, edited by Walter Frisch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 65.

as it had done in the previous verse (**Example 1.5a**, mm. 15–16). It is a muted *Geschrei*, an outburst of yearning—not just for its unexpected registral shift, or for the extroverted, open-mouthed diphthong [aʊ] of “trauernd” that contrasts physically and phonetically with the high-tongue, narrow [i] of “sich” at the corresponding moment in the previous stanza, but for its refusal to persevere in the “illusory reality” of majorness. The extroverted, energized leap briefly *ruptures*—breaking strophic similarity, breaking past the E cover tone—but, instead of continuing its upward expansion, becomes caught in an overpowering centripetal current, collapsing back in on itself.

We turn finally to “Auflösung” (D. 807), one of Schubert’s most important and impressive songs—and one that has unjustifiably received little attention in the scholarly literature.⁸⁴ The present analysis differs from its few predecessors, however, by drawing much of its insight from the dangling analytical threads developed in my discussions of the three other Mayrhofer settings. These four songs may be imagined as existing in tandem with one another, collectively, their thematic elements interwoven in a manner not entirely random.

“Auflösung” is dense and virtuosic: subtlety is banished in favor of extreme images—the sun, spring’s beauty, the fires of rapture. But while the first stanza addresses monumental physical forces of nature, the second stanza concerns itself with music (“ethereal choirs,” “celestial singing”), treating it as symbolic of the underlying purity of the cosmos—but here an internalized cosmos, for this celestial music comes from within

⁸⁴ The most extensive analysis can be found in Youens, *Schubert’s Poets*, 221–26. Also, the song is briefly treated in David L. Mosley, “*Auflösung* in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Music,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (1993): 437–44.

the poet's own soul, enveloping and overwhelming his physical body. And thus the frightening command "geh unter, Welt" is tinged with suicidal implications: if spiritual purity is impeded by physical impurity, the latter must be annihilated. "Geh unter, Welt" is the response.

Schubert's setting of "Auflösung" begins with a repeated pianistic gesture that encompasses nearly a four-octave range: on top of a tremolo G pedal in the bass, the right hand of the piano spans two octaves to reach a prominent D/B oscillation, followed by an arpeggiated diminished-seventh chord (**Example 1.6**). Thinking in terms of Steve

Nicht zu geschwind

The musical score for Schubert's "Auflösung" (D. 807), measures 1-5, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-2) features a tremolo G pedal in the bass and a right-hand melody of eighth notes spanning two octaves. The second system (measures 3-5) continues this pattern with a more complex right-hand melody. The score includes dynamic markings like *p* and *con pedale*.

Example 1.6. Inward contraction and catapulted expansion, repeated throughout the song. Schubert, "Auflösung" (D. 807), mm. 1-5

Larson's "virtual environmental forces" for musical pitches, these two opening gestures might embody the upward/downward flight of an object in motion along the vertical axis, catapulted against the gravity of a G pedal.⁸⁵ But we also may think in multiple dimensions, in the outward-pushing/inward-pulling tendencies of centrifugal and centripetal motion that can locate this gesture in space. First the notes in the right hand accumulate tension by contracting in toward the static left hand for three notes (B/G/D); then they centrifugally spring to the right on the keyboard—expanding the range outward for two octaves. This is followed by a gradual centripetal collapse back toward the bass pedal in a diminished sonority that requires harmonic release into yet another catapulted centrifugal explosion outward. This energized gesture—brief contraction, explosive expansion—becomes thematic, repeated in nearly every measure of the song.

The opening G major is prolonged for two full vocal phrases (the first ten measures in all), until a strange progression occurs: we move to the mediant (m. 11), to the mediant's dominant (m. 12), and—as if a magnet were forcibly pulling the sonority toward its origins—straight back to the tonic G major again. (The voice-leading sketch in **Figure 1.4** summarizes these and other important harmonic events in "Auflösung.") This progression (V⁷/III–I) is unusual in that it eliminates the intervening mediant to which V⁷/III ought to resolve (the expected chord bracketed with "No!" in Fig. 1.4). There is something disorienting about the progression—indeed, something *unheimlich*: to use that

⁸⁵ Steve Larson, "The Problem of Prolongation in Tonal Music: Terminology, Perception, and Expressive Meaning," *Journal of Music Theory* 41 (1997): 101–36. See also Robert Hatten's use of "environmental forces" in musical gesture in "A Theory of Musical Gesture and Its Application to Beethoven and Schubert," in *Music and Gesture*, ed. Anthony Gritten and Elaine King, 1–23 (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); and idem, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 115–20.

III# III \flat I

5 ————— $\flat 6$ ————— 5 (5— $\flat 6$ —5)

mm. 1 7 11 12 No! 18 19 20 36 37 38 39 43 45 46 59 61 62 63 67–8

I V_{6-5}^{8-7}/III [III] I $\flat II$ $III_{4}^{\#6}$ $\flat 6/4$ I IV^6 I $II_{3}^{\#6/4}$ V^7 I

“versengen
mein Gebein” “laß mich allein!” “geh unter,
Welt” “süssen, ätherischen
Chöre” “geh unter,
Welt”

bypassing the mediant $\flat \rightarrow \sharp$ descending fifths G-E G-E G-E “trapped” “released” “triumphant”

Figure 1.4. Voice-leading sketch of “Auflösung,” noting especially the bypassed mediant following m. 12, the chromatic mediant transformation (B major to G major) in mm. 38 – 43, the moment of heroic transcendence (boxed, m. 59), and the appearance of the D-E \flat -D motive within the structural background (m. 7, m. 20, m. 39) and on the melodic surface (mm. 67–68)

popular metaphor for tonics, the elided move to G major hardly feels like a return to the “home” key.⁸⁶ G major has been defamiliarized by one of its mediant: briefly, we may wonder—is G major now $\flat VI$ of B? It is not, but the specter of that chromatic mediant and its centrifugal, metamorphic properties lingers at Mayrhofer’s imaginings of

⁸⁶ For more on the *Unheimliche* and the use of the metaphor “home” for a tonic, see Nicholas Marston, “Schubert’s Homecoming,” *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 125 (2000): 248–70. The subject of the uncanny is also treated at length in Richard L. Cohn, “Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57 (2004): 285–323, though the progression under consideration here is not a “hexatonic pole.”

corporeal destruction: “... denn die Gluthen der Wonne /Versengen mein Gebein.” We have examined a similar progression earlier, at a similar moment of RUPTURE: the tolling of an otherworldly midnight in “Gondelfahrer,” when V^7 bypasses the tonic and resolves deceptively to $\flat VI$ (mm. 22–23, Ex. 1.2). The voice leading in both progressions is approximately the same, though occurring in different places within their respective chromatic-mediant frameworks. In both, the actual resolution occurs a major third lower than the expected resolution: $V^7-[I]-\flat VI$ (“Gondelfahrer”) vs. $V^7/III-[III]-I$ (“Auflösung”). Whereas the former example is a relatively common deceptive progression, the latter example is a striking intensification of these deceptive qualities.

The progression $V^7/III-[III]-I$ occurs once more in measures 30–32, for the “liebliche Gewalten” that envelop the poet’s soul (not shown in Fig. 1.4). And we might also hear echoes of this progression in a slightly different context, when, in measures 18–20 (**Example 1.7**), G major very quickly modulates to its flatted supertonic with one intervening chord—a common-tone diminished seventh (the G^\sharp enharmonically common to A-flat major). But “common-tone diminished seventh” is one of those harmonic labels that says little and absolves us of having to pry much deeper. An additional interpretation of this progression might draw from the same “bypassing mediants” template: that is, the

18
flüch - te - dich und laß mich al -

21
-lein, laß mich al - lein! _____

f *cresc.* *ff* *fp* *decresc.*

Example 1.7. Modulation into A-flat major. Schubert, “Auflösung” (D. 807), mm. 18–23

diminished-seventh chord in measure 19 may be heard in its third inversion, with B as the leading tone; an expected chord of resolution (one of many) is C major. Instead resolving here, we “bypass the tonic,” overshooting C major and moving one major third lower (one chromatic mediant lower) to the flatted submediant, A flat.

There is plenty more to say about this pivotal modulation from G major to A-flat major, which underscores the poet’s clearest renunciation of physicality (“laß mich allein!”). The sudden appearance of A flat invokes the prominent use of the same key in “Gondelfahrer,” there providing a quality of transcendence to the chimes of midnight

(Ex. 1.2). The enharmonic nature of Schubert's modulation—a substitution of $A\flat$ for $G\sharp$ that pushes the resolution of the diminished chord in measure 19 into flat territory—brings to mind the metamorphic moment of self-annihilation found in “Der Sieg”; there, $C\sharp$ replaced $D\flat$ (Ex. 1.4). Similarly, the use of $\flat II$ ($A\flat$ in G major) as a distant tonal region reflects the use of $\sharp I$ ($F\sharp$ in F major) as the chord of death in “Der Sieg.” Note also that, in sliding upward (and outward) to $F\flat$, the voice twice sings an ornamented variant of $\flat^6-\flat^5$ —the upper neighbor which has now appeared at pivotal moments in all songs. Because these four songs were composed within days of each other, the motivic correspondences between them resonate strongly; they are memories, echoes that contribute to a sense of transformation and metamorphosis, of externally directed transcendence. What is further surprising is the ecstatic quality of the music depicting a corporeal death, a dissolution; it is difficult to imagine a composer less familiar with Mayrhofer who would have dared to set such a moment so.

Whereas the modulation from G to A flat was accomplished with just one intervening chord, the harmonic path from A flat to G is more protracted. Implied root

himm - lisch - sin - gen - Geh un - ter, geh un - ter Welt, geh un - ter, geh un - ter Welt und stö - re nim - mer, -

40

Example 1.8. Commanding dissolution, accompanied by a chromatic mediant shift (B major → B minor → G major). Schubert, “Auflösung” (D. 807), mm. 37–43

motion of descending fifths underlies this progression, but the simplicity of this device is obfuscated by the different inversions and modes of the participating chords. The end goal of this passage is not the tonic, but its adversarial mediant: A-flat major, C-sharp minor, F-sharp major, and, for the first time, *B major* (the chord that was bypassed in mm. 12–13). No longer a specter, this restored mediant is now in the major mode as a chromatic mediant, and it is *as* a chromatic mediant that B major returns to the tonic G major (**Example 1.8**, mm. 37–43). What is unusual about this $\text{III}^{\sharp}\text{--I}$ progression is that the two semitone alterations required to transform the chord into the tonic are now

separated by four measures—first, D \sharp to D \flat (mm. 38–39); then, F \sharp to G (mm. 42–43). (In between these two semitone transformations [mm. 39–42], III \sharp is prolonged as a 6/4 chord, with the bass’s F \sharp ornamented by upper and lower neighbors—something we hear only in retrospect upon reaching G major; up to this point, we may be tempted to hear the bass’s F \sharp as a passing tone between G–E, and not as the chord tone.) The first of these transformations back to G major is the D \sharp –D \flat descent in the piano’s treble at the words “geh unter, Welt” (m. 39)—an innocuous local \flat^6 – \wedge^5 resolution that actually operates at a deeper level. This D \sharp is a prolongation of the singer’s “laß mich allein!” E \flat in measure 22, thus outlining a long-range melodic motion of \wedge^5 – \flat^6 – \wedge^5 . This prolongation of \flat^6 is accompanied in the bass by a large-scale chromatic upper- and lower-neighbor figure (A \flat , F \sharp). Thus the poem’s two pivotal commands for spiritual emergence are structurally linked: “laß mich allein!” and “geh unter, Welt.”

At measure 39, halfway through the III $\sharp^{6/4}$ –III $\flat^{6/4}$ –I progression, there is a crisis: the contracting/expanding gestures in the piano stop for the first time in the song since the fateful modulation to A flat. Mayrhofer’s command of annihilation (“geh unter, Welt,” to be repeated ten times) exists in a darker musical world not previously encountered (mm. 39–42 and its repetition in mm. 49–52).⁸⁷ From this moment through to the end of the song, the bass descends G–E three times, in three different harmonic contexts, each time accumulating consonance, energy, and a sense of heroic triumph. The

⁸⁷ In “Gondelfahrer,” “Der Sieg,” and “Abendstern,” Schubert had closely adhered to Mayrhofer’s text. But in “Auflösung,” repetitions of words abound—most significantly the command “geh unter, Welt” and its abridgement, “geh unter.” The abridgement nicely clarifies Mayrhofer’s verse, ensuring that the command is not heard as “geh, Unterwelt.” Ilija Dürhammer has more to say on the implications of hearing “Unterwelt”; see *Schuberts literarische Heimat*, 95.

first G–E descent occurs in measures 39–42: the G and E are upper and lower neighbors to the intervening F \sharp , and the descent is trapped in dissonance by the upper-voice D. From the restricted earthly prison of “geh unter, Welt,” into the heavenly realm of the “süssen, ätherischen Chöre,” the ecstatic arpeggios return, and G descends to E for a second time (m. 45); instead of becoming trapped in dissonance, however, this E now instigates release as part of the ever-significant sonority (a sort of “hyper-consonance”) of C major, our first subdominant in the song. Repeating the phrase, the bass now *ascends* G–E—and now leading to a *forte* precadential II $\sharp^{6/4/3}$ chord (m. 59), over which the singer sings a virtuosic high A, the highest pitch thus far encountered in any of the March 1824 songs. Because the root of this precadential chord is A, and because this chord sharps the C \natural of the preceding C-major chord, we may recall the A minor/major of “Abendstern,” and how the pivotal C \natural /C \sharp polarity of that song came to signify tension between action and resignation. In “Auflösung,” the C \sharp now triumphs over C \natural , energetically breaching its centripetal tendencies to descend. All of these factors (the energetic accumulation of three G–E motions, the singer’s high A, and the chromatic victory for the C \sharp) contribute to a triumphant moment of “heroic overcoming” of spirit over frail body, with three musical hurdles overcome in one leap.

At the cadence that follows this triumphant climax, the right hand of the piano ascends into its stratosphere. The lack of strong descending melodic resolution amidst all this upward motion is confounded by the inconclusive nature of the melodic closure (mm. 61–63): the voice decidedly does not descend via a *Quintzug* or *Terzzug* to $\hat{1}$, but unfolds from the fifth to the third scale degree—a reversal of its entrance in measures 6–

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Schubert's "Auflösung" (D. 807), measures 65-70. The top system (measures 65-67) shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part features a tremolo in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are "Geh un - ter Welt, geh". The bottom system (measures 68-70) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "un - ter Welt, geh un - ter." The piano part continues with the same tremolo and bass line. The dynamic marking *pp* is present in the piano part of the first system.

Example 1.9. Commanding dissolution (again) while replicating ^5-^b6-^5 motive. Schubert, “Auflösung” (D. 807), mm. 65–70

7, where it had unfolded upward from the third to the fifth.⁸⁸ This lack of decisive closure opens up dramatic room for an astonishing coda that prolongs G major for twelve measures of shimmering tremolos (**Example 1.9**).⁸⁹ Into the void left between the piano’s six-octave registral expanse, the voice reenters, twice repeating “geh unter, Welt” on a D ornamented by its upper neighbor Eb —a localized iteration of the same, ^5-^b6-^5

⁸⁸ Indeed, a strong case for an *ascending Uralinie* can be made for this song—most convincingly, an ascending six-line from B to G (replicating the motivic usage of melodic ascending sixths throughout the song). Models for such an interpretation can be found in Walter Everett, “Deep-Level Portrayals of Directed and Misdirected Motions in Nineteenth-Century Lyric Song,” *Journal of Music Theory* 48 (2004): 25–68.

⁸⁹ The *Reinschrift* of “Auflösung” shows that the postlude originally contained fourteen measures, but Schubert at some point decided to delete two of these. See Walther Dürr’s comments and transcription in the *Neue Ausgabe*, ser. 4, vol. 13, pp. 245 and 258.

motive that arches through the song on a structural level (see Fig. 1.4). This musical texture comes about as close as physically possible to a musical realization of TRANSCENDENCE: as in the outward-pointing arrows of Figure 1.1c, the hands of the pianist push outward to the extremes of both the treble and bass registers, embodying a state of openness; from the epicenter in between these two poles, the voice continues to *rupture* $\text{^5}\text{-}\text{b}\text{^6}\text{-}\text{^5}$, sending centrifugal impulses out to both register extremes.

The absence of a D in the piano further adds to the provocative nature of this coda, for it permits us to hear, in conjunction with the voice's $\text{^5}\text{-}\text{b}\text{^6}\text{-}\text{^5}$ gestures, an alternation between an augmented triad (G–B–E \flat) and a major triad (G–B–D)—a harmonic movement that may be heard spatially as stretching outward (augmentation), collapsing inward (diatonicism), stretching outward (augmentation), and collapsing inward (diatonicism). And so this gesture has even deeper resonance when considered within the context of the four songs collectively: it is a recollection of the I– b VI–I– b VI–I opening of “Gondelfahrer”—faint, yes, but the D–E \flat –D motive of “Auflösung” can prompt us to imagine those I– b VI–I harmonies, a related manifestation of the same embodied centrifugal/centripetal motions with which my analytical performance began. To recompose the right hand of the piano in “Auflösung” by inserting a phantom G-major/E-flat-major undulation makes the connection too explicit, even trite. An echo suffices: “geh unter, Welt,” $\text{^5}\text{-}\text{b}\text{^6}\text{-}\text{^5}$, and again, “geh unter, Welt,” $\text{^5}\text{-}\text{b}\text{^6}\text{-}\text{^5}$, pushing upwards in pitch space and outwards in harmonic space before collapsing downward and inward into the diatonic purity of G major.

* * *

“Auflösung” reverberates. Though references to physical finitude, its violent eradication, and an emergent spiritual expansion can be found in a number of Schubert’s songs from before 1824, several late songs take up the theme with even greater engagement.⁹⁰ Perhaps most evocative is “Nachthelle” (D. 892); the final quatrain of Seidl’s poem reads like Mayrhofer at his most urgent:

Ich fass’ in meinem Herzenshaus	I cannot contain all of the rich light
Nicht all’ das reiche Licht,	within the house of my heart.
Es will hinaus, es muß hinaus,	It wants out, it <i>must</i> out—
Die letzte Schranke bricht.	the last barrier breaks.

Schubert’s setting (for tenor solo, male chorus, and piano) contrasts violence with sublimity; moments of RUPTURE pervade the work, with the conclusion providing TRANSCENDENCE nearly as spacious as the final moments of “Auflösung.” At Seidl’s description of bright, overflowing interiority as “free and clear,” Schubert initiates the first of what will be a series of daring harmonic events (**Example 1.10**, mm. 48–51): leaving its D-flat-major arpeggiations, the bass descends a diminished fourth through C \flat to A \sharp . The local chromatic-mediant shift from D-flat major to A major, combined with an enharmonic brightening into sharp keys, is an explosive moment of centrifugal expansion (note the energized chromatic ascent in the solo tenor’s upper register in opposition with

⁹⁰ Among the early songs, see especially “Der Gott und die Bajadere” (D. 254, Goethe: “Und mit ausgestreckten Armen / Springt sie in den heißen Tod. / Doch der Götter-Jüngling hebet / Aus der Flamme sich empor”); “Memnon” (D. 541; Mayrhofer: “... Mit dir, des Morgens Göttin, mich zu einen, / Und weit von diesem nichtigen Getriebe ...”); “Elysium” (D. 584; Schiller: “Die Seele schwillt aus in unendlichen Räumen. / Wahrheit reisst hier den Schleier entzwei”); “Schwestergruß” (D. 762; Bruchmann: “In reiner Flamm’ / Schwebt sie empor, / Ohne Schmerz und Harm, / Zu der Engel Chor”); and “Todesmusik” (D. 758; Schober: “Und die schrecklichen Minuten, / Wo ich schmerzlich könnte bluten, / Werden mich mit Lust umklingen, / Und Verklärung werd’ ich sehen, / Ausgegossen über allen Dingen”).

48

-voll, und wal - tet drin - nen frei und klar ganz

voll und ü - ber - voll, und wal - tet drin - nen frei und klar ganz

voll und ü - ber - voll, und wal - tet drin - nen frei und klar ganz

voll und ü - ber - voll, und wal - tet drin - nen frei und klar ganz

voll und ü - ber - voll, und wal - tet drin - nen frei und klar ganz

Example 1.10. “Rupture” and “emergence” and the chromatic-mediant shift from D-flat major to A major. Schubert, “Nachthelle” (D. 892), mm. 48–51

the descending bass).

A more subtle but equally relevant echo can be found in “Die junge Nonne” (D. 828). Craigher’s nun invites the “heavenly bridegroom” to come and “release the soul from fleshly confinement” (“Erlöse die Seele von irdischer Haft!”). This wish gives rise to miraculously ringing bells, the sounds of which are captured in alternations between D-flat major and F major, with the common tone F sounding above (**Example 1.11**, mm.

(66)

Er - lö - se die See - le von ir - di - scher Haft!-

69

Horch! fried - lich er - tö - net das

Example 1.11. Release from earthly bonds and fluctuation of chromatic mediants (D-flat major and F major). Schubert, “Die junge Nonne” (D. 828), mm. 67–72

67–72)—a progression highly reminiscent of the shifts between C major and A-flat major of “Gondelfahrer,” in which midnight chimes similarly signal a spiritual emergence from earthly bonds.⁹¹ Here, again, the dissolution of corporeality is accompanied by the strange undulation between chromatic mediants, creating fissure in the tonal body of the composition.

⁹¹ Note that the seventh of the D^o chord rises upward to become the fifth of F major chord, which might prompt us to hear this progression as the resolution of a German augmented sixth chord. But the doubled D^o roots do not descend by semitone, as would be expected. Kopp suggests that the juxtaposition of these harmonies “brings to mind (and ear) the clash of the complex overtones which characterize the sound of large bells.” *Chromatic Transformations*, 259n14.

Clearly this is a significant trope in Schubert's oeuvre, akin to others with which we commonly associate the composer (landscape, memory, *Sehnsucht*, the wanderer). Yet the meanings behind such metaphors of confinement are multivalent, mapping broadly on a number of aesthetic trends. They resonate not only with the medical realities of Schubert's and Mayrhofer's health, but also with the political realities of early nineteenth-century Austria. Given the fate of Senn, the intimidations of Metternichian control, and the increasing visibility of the prison, the looming threat of *political* confinement was surely palpable.⁹² Further, these metaphors can also be interpreted in terms of emergent theories of artistic self-expression, as in Wordsworth's famous description of poetry as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,"⁹³ or A. W. Schlegel's formulation "The inner is pressed out ...," quoted above. The aesthetic of emergence necessarily creates an antithesis (an "emergence from ..."), and here the abandoned victim—sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit—is the body, cast off as inherently inefficient and disabled.⁹⁴ This theme and its implications are prominent in these Mayrhofer poems, and with energized musical gestures creating RUPTURE, Schubert

⁹² Stephen Meyer's study on the popularity of prison scenes in operas of this time exhibits clear parallels with my own work. "Terror and Transcendence in the Operatic Prison, 1790–1815," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55 (2002): 477–523.

⁹³ Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), in *Prefatory Notes and Essays*, vol. 10 of *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 9.

⁹⁴ See, for instance, Judith Butler on Hegel's treatment of the body "as the encasement, location, or specificity of consciousness" in *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories of Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 34. Tobin Siebers's commentary on Butler is also relevant: "Power involves forgetting that one is a body, while projecting one's body in the place of the subjected other. ... Moreover, it is the fear of death, Butler argues, that causes the wholesale abandonment of the body and privileging of thought. The finite character of the body causes great terror, but this terror becomes the very condition by which self and other might recognize each other." *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 77.

articulates—even emphasizes—this spirit/body hierarchy, in which corporeality is cast as the central obstacle for an emergent subjectivity.

Dissolving Cycles

This analysis has imagined Schubert’s final four Mayrhofer songs existing in tandem, with musical and poetic ideas resonating from one song to the next. Dare we go one step further and speak of the songs as a *cycle*? Indeed, there are many indications that we may be in the presence of one, beginning with the very components of Schubert’s music, including the use of A-flat major (“Gondelfahrer” and “Auflosung”), the dyad C \flat /C \sharp (“Abendstern,” “Auflösung,” and “Der Sieg”—as D \flat /C), enharmonic modulations (“Auflösung” and “Der Sieg”), the prominent use of chromatic mediants, particularly \flat VI (“Gondelfahrer,” “Der Sieg,” and “Auflösung”), and, in all songs, the melodic gesture \flat^6 – \wedge^5 . On a poetic level, too, Schubert has selected texts that, despite their disparate moods, collectively illuminate common themes and operate in common spaces. How much more impossible an argument toward “cycle” would be if Schubert had also decided to set something embarrassingly out of place, like one of Mayrhofer’s classically themed poems, or one of his excruciating patriotic odes. No—the four poems complement each other so effectively that it is difficult to imagine that their selection was random, haphazard, or careless.

Judgments regarding the validity of a song cycle tend to cluster around the composition’s “organic” properties, the relationship between individual part and the corporate, full-bodied whole. A central concern is the perceived logic of a cycle’s inner ordering. Though the autographs of the March 1824 songs are only partially extant (the

first pages of “Abendstern” and all but a *Reinschrift* of “Auflösung” have been lost), there are valuable clues regarding this matter found in the paper evidence. As mentioned previously, the final eleven measures of the autograph of “Der Sieg” share their page with the first eleven measures of “Abendstern,” forming a clearly ordered pair. The title pages of “Gondelfahrer,” “Abendstern” (coupled with the final measures of “Der Sieg”), and “Auflösung” are all dated “März 1824,” and, as Robert Winter has shown, all three surviving complete and partial autographs (“Gondelfahrer,” the first pages of “Der Sieg,” and “Abendstern”) use the same type of paper with identical watermarks.⁹⁵ These three songs were almost certainly composed within quick succession of one another.

A letter from Moritz von Schwind to Franz Schober, in which Schubert’s “inhumanly industrious” compositional activities are summarized, further refines this initial chronology and provides a glimpse into the composer’s other projects at the time: the String Quartet in A Minor (D. 804), the Octet in F for strings and winds (D. 803, completed March 1), two Müller songs (possibly relating to preparations for the second booklet of *Die schöne Müllerin*, to be published 24 March 1824), and three Mayrhofer settings—“Gondelfahrer,” “Abendstern,” and “Der Sieg.”⁹⁶ Conspicuously absent in this laundry list of music Schubert had been working on is “Auflösung.” It is much too breathtaking a song to have gone unnoticed or unmentioned. And though it is certainly possible that Schubert simply did not mention the song to Schwind, an equally safe

⁹⁵ Winter, “Paper Studies,” 227–28. A lingering number (6.) on the first page of the “Abendstern” autograph suggests some abandoned, lost, or hidden order. It appears to be in Schubert’s hand, but it is slightly fainter when compared to the other writing on the page, indicating that it was probably added after the song was completed. Perhaps once there were other songs (now lost) which were part of this set, and “Abendstern” was the sixth of this grouping, or perhaps the song was to be performed sixth at a Schubertiad. None of the other surviving autographs contains such a marking.

⁹⁶ *Documentary Biography*, 330–31; *Dokumente*, 228–29.

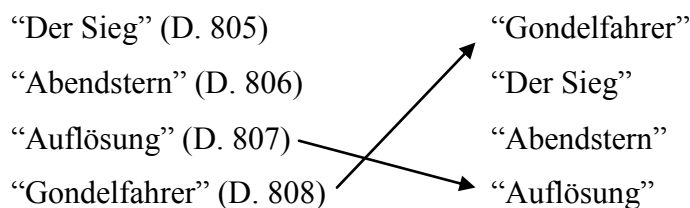


Table 1.1. Two orderings of the March 1824 songs: Deutsch’s ordering (left), and a proposed reordering (right)

assumption is that the song had not yet been composed. Armed with this interpretation of the documentary evidence (the only evidence available concerning the composition of “Auflösung”), there is simply no good justification for “Auflösung” (D. 807) having been positioned *before* “Gondelfahrer” (D. 808) in Otto Erich Deutsch’s catalogue of Schubert compositions (see **Table 1.1**).⁹⁷ Placing “Auflösung” fourth within the set of four restores this astonishing song to a climactic position that is both dramatically appropriate and emotionally satisfying; the song’s exhilarating virtuosity and its matrix of musical cross-references (serving as a reservoir of sorts for musical and aesthetic ideas developed earlier) demand that it be placed last. The chronological order that results thus parallels a highly effective cyclical order; one could not think of ending a performance of this set of songs with anything else!

If “Der Sieg” must come before “Abendstern” (as it does in the autograph), and if “Auflösung” can be positioned last, “Gondelfahrer” could have been composed either

⁹⁷ Deutsch may have placed “Gondelfahrer” last because he wanted to pair the solo version of the song with the male quartet version, D. 809. But he still claims that “Gondelfahrer” was “the last poem by Mayrhofer to be set to music by his friend.” *Schubert: Thematic Catalogue of All His Works in Chronological Order* (New York: Norton, [1951]; repr. New York: Dover, 1994), 388–89. Dürhammer also suggests that “Auflösung” was the final Mayrhofer setting, presumably for the same reasons I have outlined. *Schuberts literarische Heimat*, 94.

first or third; there is no way to pinpoint either order for certain.⁹⁸ But there are some rather remarkable structural consequences if this set opens with “Gondelfahrer”: to place the song first is to cast the subsequent songs in the light of its C major, and the ordering that results outlines a motion from I (C major, “Gondelfahrer”) to V (G major, “Auflösung”); the F major of “Der Sieg” acts as IV, with the A minor of “Abendstern” unfolding smoothly from that subdominant harmony. Also, we have seen how \flat VI has crept into many pivotal moments within these songs. By thinking of the G major of “Auflösung” as a dominant harmony, we encounter one more instance: the prolonged $A\flat$ of “laß mich allein” (mm. 20–33) sounds not just as the \flat II of the local G major, but as \flat VI of the initial C major established in “Gondelfahrer.”

What a nice cycle this would make—and yet a performance of these four songs by one singer is physically impossible. “Der Sieg” is written in the bass clef for a bass or bass-baritone (it descends to a low F) while the climactic high A of “Auflösung” was clearly intended for a high voice. One song precludes the other—or so it might seem. The formal characteristics of the early nineteenth-century song cycle’s representative masterworks (*An die ferne Geliebte*, *Die schöne Müllerin*) too narrowly define the amorphous nature of this genre. As Ruth Otto Bingham has shown, the “song cycle” (a catchall term conflating the traditions of the *Liederkreis*, *Liederspiel*, *Liederzyklus*, *Liederreihe*, among others) existed without a lexicographic definition until 1865; early

⁹⁸ Placing “Gondelfahrer” third would order the songs as they appear in the Mayrhofer’s *Gedichte* from 1824. (See note 15.) Richard Kramer finds sequences of poems in their original volumes highly suggestive of how Schubert sets out to compose. That said, “Gondelfahrer” also makes a rather nice *Gehlied*; it is in 6/8, like “Das Fischermädchen” and “Der Musensohn”—both songs which Kramer orders first in their respective “cycles.” See *Distant Cycles: Schubert and the Conceiving of Song* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 84–101 and 125–47.

song cycles were bound by few regulations of genre and freely utilized multiple personae and multiple singers (including chorus, as in Schubert's settings from *The Lady of the Lake*, Op. 54).⁹⁹ Since no convincing narrative thread exists in these Mayrhofer poems (save for a possible multisong musical progression from I to V), the tradition of the topical song cycle can serve as a relevant if still loose template: songs radiate out from a central theme, forming a cyclical collection of different (even oppositional) responses to one common topic.¹⁰⁰ These Mayrhofer settings similarly make up a loosely knit collection of disparate units, but with connective tissue in the form of shared musical motives that work together to illuminate a central theme in Mayrhofer's aesthetic program. The performance of such a "cycle" would make for an appropriate event at an informal Schubertiad (where more than one voice type was sure to be available), perhaps one convened to celebrate Mayrhofer's recently published poetry volume. Or perhaps the form of tribute was less public, even hidden—the act of composition itself being a private homage to an abandoned partnership. In either scenario—imagined purely in the spirit of

⁹⁹ Ruth Otto Bingham, "The Song Cycle in German-Speaking Countries, 1790–1840: Approaches to a Changing Genre" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1993). Other relevant investigations of the early nineteenth-century song cycle include Barbara Pearl Turchin, "Robert Schumann's Song Cycles in the Context of the Early Nineteenth-Century *Liederkreis*" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1981); idem, "The Nineteenth-Century *Wanderlieder* Cycle," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 498–525; Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 116–236; John Daverio, "The Song Cycle: Journeys Through a Romantic Landscape," in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark, 279–312 (New York: Schirmer Books; London: Prentice Hall, 1996); David Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff "Liederkreis" and the Genre of the Romantic Cycle* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Michael Hall, *Schubert's Song Sets* (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003). My discussion here has been informed by Inge van Rij's examination of the "song bouquet" in *Brahms's Song Collections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁰ Ruth Otto Bingham, ed., *Topical Song Cycles of the Early Nineteenth Century* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2003).

speculation—the traditional conception of the song cycle (the singer and his solitary tale) seems unhelpful here.

Yet there was one compositional imperative of the song cycle genre with which Schubert would have had to contend: navigation between the pulls of *Einheit* and *Vielfältigkeit*. Novalis describes pulls between these two extremes in terms of centrifugal and centripetal motions: centripetal motion is the synthetic tendency, striving toward unity, and centrifugal motion is the “analytical” tendency, striving toward diversity.¹⁰¹ To imagine a song as existing within a larger unit is to engage with material beyond its strictly delineated double barlines—to draw connections in the establishment of a larger cohesive collection while at the same time appreciating the autonomy of that collection’s constituent parts.¹⁰² This in/out dialectic operates on two levels: the level of the collection (or cycle) and the level of the component (or song). On the level of the collection, centripetal force controls a cycle’s unifying properties, while centrifugal force encourages its diversity. On the level of the component, however, centripetal force controls the song’s self-sufficiency, while centrifugal force controls the song’s engagement with matters outside of itself. Note the discrepancy between these two perspectives: the unifying tendency can be cast as either centripetal from the level of the collection (“looking in”) or centrifugal from the level of the component (“looking out”).

¹⁰¹ Novalis writes, “Zentripetalkraft—ist das synthetische Bestreben—Centrifugalkraft—das analytische Bestreben des Geistes—Streben nach Einheit—Streben nach Mannichfaltigkeit—durch wechselseitige Bestimmung beyder durch Einander—wird jene höhere Synthesis der Einheit und Mannichfaltigkeit selbst hervorgebracht—durch die Eins in Allem und Alles in Einem ist.” *Das philosophische Werk* 1, edited by Richard Samuel, vol. 2 of *Schriften*, ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Samuel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960), 589.

¹⁰² See, for instance, Helen Mustard, *The Lyric Cycle in German Literature* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1946), 255.

Because analyses of song cycles so often situate themselves at the level of the collection—looking *in* on its components—unity of the whole has long been a valued characteristic of the genre. But to examine how songs achieve such unity shifts the rubric. The impetus to group, to synthesize songs into collections or cycles, simultaneously reflects the impetus to burst boundaries, to expand past a song’s isolation and form connections with exteriority in the beyond. Cycles involve cohesion and organic unity, yes—but the songs within cycles must involve RUPTURE for this to happen. In this sense, a cycle—like a body—is a fluctuating container, demarcating its boundaries while also pushing past them in interactions with its environment.

In his book *Distant Cycles*, Richard Kramer is carefully suggestive of a vulnerability in Schubert’s character that might speak to an inclination to “disengage” or “retreat” from cohesive cyclical works.¹⁰³ Perhaps we can speak of the same inclination in these final Mayrhofer settings, but recast the discourse to reflect the ramifications of their underlying aesthetic program. For synthesis seems to be the very antagonist of Mayrhofer, who writes so passionately of bursting BOUNDARY outward into an endless, formless *Auflösung*. For Schubert, too, his much-discussed “cyclical tendency” (*zyklische Verfahrensweise*) often remained just that—a unifying tendency in absence of a whole, resulting in songs that strain for meanings beyond themselves; grouped together, they form quasi cycles that exhibit traces of interconnectedness but remain partial: distant, dissolved.¹⁰⁴ Such is the case with the final Mayrhofer settings. Rather than unifying

¹⁰³ Kramer, *Distant Cycles*, 139.

¹⁰⁴ The term “zyklische Verfahrensweise” originates with Dietrich Berke, “Schuberts Liedentwurf ‘Abend’ D 645 und dessen textliche Voraussetzungen,” in *Schubert-Kongreß Wien 1978*, ed. Otto Brusatti (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1979), 307. See also Martin Chusid, “Schubert’s Cyclic Compositions of 1824,” *Acta*

these four songs cohesively, and rather than recanting cyclical composition altogether, Schubert negotiates his position from somewhere in the middle of this centripetal/centrifugal dialectic: pushing his “body” of songs together, just as he pulls them apart.

Texts and Translations

Texts and translations of Schubert's settings, adapted from Susan Youens, *Schubert's Poets and the Making of Lieder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); John Reed, *The Schubert Song Companion* (Manchester, UK: Mandolin, 1997); and Richard Wigmore, *Schubert: The Complete Song Texts* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988).

“Gondelfahrer” (D. 808)

Es tanzen Mond und Sterne
Den flücht'gen Geisterreih'n:
Wer wird von Erdensorgen
Befangen immer seyn!
Du kannst in Mondesstrahlen
Nun, meine Barke, wallen;
Und aller Schranken los,
Wiegt dich des Meeres Schooß.
Vom Markusthurm tönte
Der Spruch der Mitternacht:
Sie schlummern friedlich Alle,
Und nur der Schiffer wacht.

“Der Sieg” (D. 805)

O unbewölktes Leben!
So rein und tief und klar.
Uralte Träume schweben
Auf Blumen wunderbar.

Der Geist zerbrach die Schranken
Des Körpers träges Bley;
Er waltet groß und frey.
Es laben die Gedanken
An Edens Früchten sich;
Der alte Fluch entwich.
Was ich auch je gelitten,
Die Palme ist erstritten,
Gestillet mein Verlangen.
Die Musen selber sangen
Die Schlang'¹⁰⁵ in Todesschlaf,
Und meine Hand—sie traf.

O unbewölktes Leben!
So rein und tief und klar.
Uralte Träume schweben
Auf Blumen wunderbar.

“Gondolier”

The moon and stars dance
the ephemeral dance of the spirits.
Who will ever be caught up in
earthly problems?
My barque, in moonbeams
you can now flow,
and, freed from all restraints,
the bosom of the sea cradles you.
From St. Mark's tower,
the decree of midnight sounded:
All slumber peacefully,
and only the boatman is awake.

“The Victory”

O unclouded life,
so pure and deep and clear.
Ancient dreams waft
marvelously over flowers.

The spirit broke the restraints
of the sluggish body's leadenness;
it rules greatly and freely.
The mind refreshes itself
with the fruits of Eden;
the old curse disappeared.
Whatever I have been afflicted with,
the palm is now secured,
my longing calmed.
The muses themselves sang
the serpent into the sleep of death,
and my hand—it struck.

O unclouded life,
so pure and deep and clear.
Ancient dreams waft
marvelously over flowers.

¹⁰⁵ In Schubert's setting, “Sphinx” instead of “Schlang’.”

“Abendstern” (D. 806)

Was weilst du einsam an dem Himmel,
 O schöner Stern? und bist so mild;
 Warum entfernt das funkelnde Gewimmel
 Der Brüder sich von deinem Bild?
 » Ich bin der Liebe treuer Stern,
 Sie halten sich von Liebe fern. «

So solltest du zu ihnen gehen,
 Bist du der Liebe, zaudre nicht!
 Wer möchte denn dir widerstehen?
 Du süßes eigensinnig Licht.
 » Ich säe, schaue keinen Keim,
 Und bleibe trauernd still daheim. «

“Auflösung” (D. 807)

Verbirg dich, Sonne,
 Denn die Glut der Wonne
 Versengen mein Gebein;
 Verstummet Töne,
 Frühlings Schöne
 Flüchte dich, und laß mich allein!

Quillen doch aus allen Falten
 Meiner Seele liebliche Gewalten;
 Die mich umschlingen,
 Himmlisch singen—
 Geh’ unter Welt, und störe
 Nimmer die süßen ätherischen Chöre!

“Evening Star”

Why do you tarry alone in the heavens,
 O lovely star? and you are so mild.
 Why do the glittering swarms of your brothers
 distance themselves from your image?
 “I am the faithful star of love.
 They stay away from love.”

So you should go to them—
 if you are of love, do not waver.
 Who would want to resist you,
 you sweet, wayward light?
 “I neither sow nor behold any seed,
 and stay here at home, sorrowfully and silently.”

“Dissolution”

Conceal yourself, sun,
 for the embers of rapture
 sear my remains.
 Be silent, sounds.
 Spring’s beauty:
 fly away, and leave me alone!

From out of all recesses
 of my soul gush pleasing powers
 that envelop me
 with heavenly singing—
 Sink under, world, and never disturb
 the sweet, ethereal choirs.

**CHAPTER TWO:
MUSIC AND THE AGENTS OF OBSESSION**

Describing a musical motive, rhythm, melody, or harmonic progression as “repetitive” is a relatively dispassionate, nonjudgmental venture. To repeat is to do one thing at least twice. To label a musical segment “repetitive,” one must count the segment’s appearances; they should total two or more.

Describing a musical motive, rhythm, melody, or harmonic progression as “obsessive” is to cast a judgment and venture a diagnosis. To obsess is to do one thing too much. To label a musical segment “obsessive” is to make a distinction between “just enough” and “too much.” Excessive quantities signal disproportion, imbalance, unevenness: something is amiss, something is disordered.

Obsession and its grammatical variants—*obsessive*, *obsessional*, *to obsess*—are rhetorically powerful words, frequently used in music-analytical prose to intensify and enrich description. Charles Rosen, for instance, notes that the alternation between major and minor tonics in Mozart’s Piano Concerto in C major (K. 503) is “more than consistent; it is almost obsessive.”¹ In Jeffrey Kallberg’s phrase, Sibelius’s use of motives is magnified by “epic, obsessive repetition.”² Here, “obsession” signals excess: Mozart’s alternations or Sibelius’s motives are not merely repetitive—they are “too” repetitive, “too” severe. “Obsession” is also used as a diagnosis of musical dysfunction. In

¹ Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: Viking, 1971; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 254.

² Jeffrey Kallberg, “Finnish modern: Love, Sex and Style in Sibelius’s Songs,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Sibelius*, ed. Daniel M. Grimley, 117–36 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 123.

Janáček's opera *The Makropoulos Case*, the senile Count Hauk-Šendorf is accompanied by, in Michael Beckerman's words, the "obsessive buzz" of repeated notes (this is preceded by a "madman rhythm" in the bass).³ Dorothy Lamb Crawford describes the narrative trajectory of Bartók's String Quartet no. 1 as a "metamorphosis of spirit from the anguished opening to the triumphant end"—a transformation determined by a once-pronounced "obsessive four-note theme," subsequently "cast away" by the Quartet's end.⁴ An early modulation in Beethoven's String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132, marks an expressive moment that, to quote Robert Hatten, "gesturally 'opens up' the obsessive and cramped confines of the A minor theme and allows, in an embodied sense, more breathing room, along with a sense of relief or release into a more euphoric mode."⁵ Obsession is excess, and obsession is disorder: its musical representations create narrative tension, and its musical cure creates narrative resolution.

Despite its ubiquity and rhetorical power, obsession remains elusive, its operations—like so many processes of the mind—unknowable. Recent studies of musical obsession have largely focused on how compulsions—that is, on the performed actions sourced to an internal obsession—are tied to the activities of music composition, performance, and consumption: we have learned about the supposed influence (or not) of Bruckner's numeromania on his compositional systems, Glenn Gould's highly regulated

³ Michael Beckerman, "Kundera's Eternal Present and Janáček's Ancient Gypsy," in *Janáček Studies*, ed. Paul Wingfield, 109–26 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 124.

⁴ Dorothy Lamb Crawford, "Love and Anguish: Bartók's Expressionism," in *Bartók Perspectives: Man, Composer, and Ethnomusicologist*, ed. Elliott Antokoletz, Victoria Fischer, and Benjamin Suchoff, 129–39 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 132.

⁵ Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 280.

performance environment, or the compulsive behaviors of record collectors.⁶ (One might broaden the implications of these studies: to be a musician is to be obsessed with music.) This chapter investigates musical obsession from a different angle, however, exploring not how we obsess over music (by composing it, practicing it, consuming it, studying it), but how music might narrate the psychological spaces in which obsession is constructed—how music itself might “obsess.” To do so requires an understanding of the origins of obsession, the spatial metaphors first drawn upon to describe it, and the ways in which musical gesture may map onto these metaphorical spaces.

Developed primarily in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as a response to the decline of humoral theory, and coinciding conveniently with the rise of psychiatry, early psychological theories of obsession (including monomania, “fixed delusions,” and hysteria) tell a story of two oppositional agents, each battling the other for dominance and total control over the mind.⁷ One agent moves: this is rational thought, which is frequently imagined as efficient and mobile. The other agent remains fixed: this is the obsession, stubborn and sticky. Contemporaneous with the emergence of these theories, an evocative musical gesture—in which a note or group of notes is stuck, repeating itself within a shifting (and mobile) harmonic context—has been used in a

⁶ On Bruckner’s numeromania, see the chapter “Psychobiography and Analysis” in Julian Horton, *Bruckner’s Symphonies: Analysis, Reception and Cultural Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 223–57. (Janáček, too, is frequently described as “obsessive”; see Paul Christiansen, “On Janáček and Obsession” *ECHO* 8, no. 1 [2008]). On Glenn Gould, see S. Timothy Maloney, “Glenn Gould, Autistic Savant,” in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus, 121–35 (New York and London: Routledge, 2006). On obsessive-compulsive behavior among record collectors, see Roy Shuker, “Beyond the ‘High Fidelity’ Stereotype: Defining the (Contemporary) Record Collector,” *Popular Music* 23 (2004): 311–30.

⁷ The historical conditions that prompt the emergence of obsession as a disease entity are discussed in Lennard Davis, *Obsession: A History* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2008), esp. 31–65.

number of different compositions to depict these obsessional spaces in purely musical terms, signifying through metaphoric transfer: the metaphors of obsession (the “mobile idea vs. the fixed idea”) are assigned musical equivalents (the “the mobile melody vs. the fixed note”). By externalizing an internal process, these musical gestures are uniquely situated to contribute to the discourse on obsession, influencing our conceptualization of abstract mental processes by narrating (and thus constructing) their operation in musical code.

Speaking of Obsession

To describe the obscure, elusive nature of the human nervous system, metaphors help to visualize the workings of the mind in physical, spatial, and even anthropomorphic terms. Consider some commonplace metaphors, each influential in proposing a conceptualization of the abstract. The mind is commonly referred to as a container, separating internal (subjective) space from external (objective) space. Perception involves the transference of external phenomena into internal phenomena as thoughts. Thoughts are objects, collected within the container of the mind (they are *things* that one “has”). Thoughts are objects that move, interacting with other thoughts to form new intuitions, resuscitate memories, and apprehend and process newly obtained thoughts objects. Thoughts that do not move are problematic in some way (“writer’s block”); so are thoughts that move too quickly (“my mind is awirl”) or too slowly (retardation).⁸

⁸ This paragraph is loosely based on arguments presented by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). Another important influence within this section is Allan Ingram, *The Madhouse of Language: Writing and Reading Madness in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1991).

Conceptualizations of obsession use these spatial, physical, and anthropomorphic properties to imagine a disordered mind. Nearly all theories of obsession stem from the influential model of a mind divided against itself: *partial insanity*. Developed in the mid-eighteenth century in both medical and legal discourses, the concept of partial insanity meant that mental illness was no longer a total, all-encompassing mental state (*possession*—lunacy, idiocy, madness), but an isolated infection within an otherwise healthy, rational mind (*obsession*—monomania, neurasthenia, hypochondria). Obsessions can be isolated and potentially cured—but when allowed to fester, they interrupt rational mental processes, spreading like a viral or bacterial infection. Common in discussions of mental illness since the late eighteenth century is the metaphor of a conflict or battle: two agents of the mind—one rational, one irrational—fight for control. The task of psychiatry (itself only a recognized field of medicine since the early nineteenth century, developed in the void left by the decline of humoral theory) was to isolate and remove the intrusive agent, thus restoring the mind to a healthy state of rationality. As Hegel summarizes in his *Philosophie des Geistes* (1817), “insanity is not an abstract loss of reason (neither in the point of intelligence nor of will and its responsibility), but only derangement, only a contradiction in a still subsisting reason—just as physical disease is not an abstract, i.e. mere and total, loss of health (if it were that, it would be death), but a contradiction in it.”⁹ In a similar vein, the prominent French psychiatrist Jean-Étienne Dominique

⁹ “Die wahrhafte psychische Behandlung hält darum auch den Gesichtspunkt fest, daß die Verrücktheit nicht abstrakter *Verlust* der Vernunft weder nach der Seite der Intelligenz noch des Willens und seiner Zurechnungsfähigkeit, sondern nur Verrücktheit, nur Widerspruch in der noch vorhandenen Vernunft, wie die physische Krankheit nicht abstracter, d. i. gänzlicher Verlust der Gesundheit (ein solcher wäre der Tod), sondern ein Widerspruch in ihr ist.” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (1817), volume 3, *Philosophie des Geistes*, ed. Georg

Esquirol so defined his newly coined, briefly popular, deeply controversial, and thoroughly transient disease entity *monomania*: “a chronic disease of the brain, without fever, characterized by a *partial lesion* of the intellect, the emotions, or the will” (my italics).¹⁰ Just as part of the body can incur wounds or infections while the rest of the body remains healthy, so too can the mind embody states of disease and health. The mind is a container filled with thought-objects, and one of these thought-objects can become disordered.

Further, the normal mind is, according to the British psychiatrist Theophilus Hyslop, “polyideational”—its thoughts are broad, diverse, and varied. The opposite condition entails a mode of obsession that Hyslop diagnoses as “hyperattention”: “When there is a predominance of an intellectual state, or group of states, to the exclusion or defection of other states, the individual is in the condition generally known as being ‘mad on a subject.’” Following these metaphors, obsession is a disease of false perspective, of zooming and focusing in on one thought while cropping the others out—or, as Hyslop writes, the “reduction of the general with exaltation of the particular.”¹¹ It is not simply

Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1905), 362 (§408). Translation from Hegel, *Philosophy of the Mind*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon, 1894), 38–9.

¹⁰ “La monomanie et la lypémanie sont des affections cérébrales chroniques, sans fièvre, caractérisées par une lésion partielle de l’intelligence, des affections ou de la volonté.” Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales: Considérées sous les rapports médical, hygiénique et médico-légal* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1838), 2:1. Translated in German E. Berrios, “Obsessional Disorders during the Nineteenth Century: Terminological and Classificatory Issues,” in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*, volume 1, *People and Ideas*, ed. W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd, 166–87 (Tavistock, 1985), 170.

¹¹ Theophilus B. Hyslop, *Mental Physiology: Especially in its Relations to Mental Disorders* (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1895), 301. The source is cited in Michael J. Clark, “‘Morbid Introspection,’ Unsoundness of Mind, and British Psychological Medicine, c. 1830–c. 1900,” in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of*

perspective that is lost, however, but also *motion* (thoughts being objects that should move). Obsession entails fixity, stickiness. Johann Christian Reil went so far as to define obsessional delusion (*der fixe Wahn*) as a “catalepsy of the imagination” (*Starrsucht des Vorstellungsvermögens*), using physical paralysis as a metaphor for mental pathology.¹² Such fixity is not passive, but enforced by strength and power—the stubbornness of obsessive thought fighting against any tendency to yield to motional rationality. As Henri Dagonet writes on the diagnosis of impulsive insanity (*folie impulsive*), “the more one tries to discard the idea, the more it becomes imposed upon the mind, the more one tries to get rid of the emotion or tendency, the stronger it becomes.”¹³ A different but related image is offered by Esquirol, who defines his diagnosis of *monomanie instinctive* as being when the patient is “chained to actions that neither his reason nor emotion have originated, that his conscience rejects and his will cannot suppress.”¹⁴ Here, the agents of obsession are invested with personalities and intentions: the rational agent favors

Psychiatry, vol. 3, *The Asylum and its Psychiatry*, ed. W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd, 71–101 (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 78.

¹² “Das ganze Wirken der Seele ist eine langweilige Monotonie; aller Wechsel, der sie im gesunden Zustande charakterisirt, hat aufgehört: sie leidet an einer *Starrsucht des Vorstellungsvermögens* in verschiedenen Modifikationen.” Johann Christian Reil, *Rhapsodien über die Anwendung der psychischen Curmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen* (Halle, 1803; repr. 1818), 317.

¹³ “Plus on cherche à écarter une idée, plus elle s’impose à l’esprit, plus on s’efforce d’étouffer un sentiment ou un penchant naturel, plus il tend à se développer avec énergie.” Henri Dagonet, “Des impulsions dans la folie et de la folie impulsive,” *Annales Médico-Psychologiques* 4 (1870): 20. Translated in German E. Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms: Descriptive Psychopathology since the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 144.

¹⁴ “[Le] malade, hors des voies ordinaires, est entraîné à des actes que la raison ou le sentiment ne déterminent pas, que la conscience réproouve, que la volonté n’a plus la force de réprimer.” Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales*, 2. Translated in Berrios, “Obsessional Disorders,” 170.

diversity while the obsessive agent favors specificity; the rational agent moves while the obsessive agent is stuck (stubborn, paralyzed, tethered, or chained).

Nineteenth-century conceptualizations of delusion follow from the notion that obsessions can become so deeply rooted as to blur the mind's ability to distinguish between external reality and internal fantasy. According to the Austrian physician Ernst Freiherr von Feuchtersleben's *Lehrbuch der ärztlichen Seelenkunde* (1845), the "fixed delusion" [*der fixe Wahn*]

begins with a caprice and represents a sensation or an impulse, which has absorbed the entire personality of the man; it is characterized by the predominance of one idea, or of a series of ideas constantly recurring.... Every thought and desire of the patient revolves around this fixed delusion, which seizes upon, and, as it were, hurries them along with it. Beyond its influence he is often capable of acting sanely, and with acuteness and energy. Such patients are frequently capable of accounting for and defending their delusions with a rationality which confounds even the most sensible.¹⁵

Similarly, in his description of mania, Charles-Gaspard de la Rive writes that the obsessive's mind is "almost totally absorbed by the vivacity of the ideas produced by the altered state in his brain. These ideas have a degree of vivacity such that the patient believes that they represent real objects, and judges accordingly."¹⁶ Delusions, liked

¹⁵ "[Der fixe Wahn] beginnt mit einer *Grille*, und stellt eine Empfindung oder einen Trieb dar, der die ganze Persönlichkeit eines Menschen absorbiert hat; die Herrschaft einer Vorstellung oder einer sich stets wiederholenden Reihe von Vorstellungen charakterisiert ihn. Alles Denken und Wollen des Gestörten rotiert um seinen fixen Wahn herum, der es ergreift und gleichsam mit fortschleudert; ausser seinem Bereiche vermag er sich gesund, oft mit Scharfsinn und Energie zu äußern. Solche Kranke wissen häufig ihre Einbildung mit einem Verstande zu motivieren und zu vertheidigen, der dem verständigsten Gesunden imponiert." Ernst Freiherr von Feuchtersleben, *Lehrbuch der ärztlichen Seelenkunde* (Vienna: Carl Gerold, 1845), 299–300. Translated in Ernst Freiherr von Feuchtersleben, *The Principles of Medical Psychology*, trans. H. Evans Lloyd, rev. and ed. B. G. Babington (London: Sydenham Society, 1847), 276–77.

¹⁶ Charles-Gaspard de la Rive, Letter to the Editors, "Sur un établissement pour la guérison des aliénés," *Bibliothèque britannique* 8 (1798): 304–5. Cited and translated in

obsessions, are “fixed,” and may be sourced to a thought-object so infectious that it seems to be a rational actor within the mind. This formulation will have important ramifications for the representation of delusion (musical or otherwise).

To the growing list of obsessive disorders compiled here so far (monomania, *monomanie instinctive*, hyperattention, *der fixe Wahn*, *folie impulsive*, delusion, mania), we may add a number of other diagnoses, disease entities, and symptoms developed or popularized in the nineteenth century: *Zwangsvorstellung* (“irresistible thoughts”), *idée fixe*, *lypemanie*, hypochondria, hysteria, neurasthenia, *folie circulaire*, psychasthenia, dysthymia, among many others; the remarkable popularity of monomania (ca. 1820–70) spawned a number of subcategories of the disease, including *monomanie homicide*, *monomanie triste*, *monomanie érotique*, *monomanie affective*, *monomanie intellectuelle*, *monomanie incendiaire*, and so on.¹⁷ Even insanity can be conceptualized as a type of obsessive behavior. It is so defined in an essay published in the *American Journal of Insanity* (1856–57); the anonymous contributor is identified only as a former patient at the New York State Lunatic Asylum in Utica, New York:

...excessive activity or predominance of some particular faculty, sentiment, or propensity, or the entire occupation of the mind by some leading subject of thought, till the perceptive powers become distorted

Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, edited by Jean Khalfa, translated by Jonathan Murphy and Khalfa (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 272.

¹⁷ The stunning rise and fall of monomania is told in Jan Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 153–96. See also two recent studies of monomania and music: Stephen Meyer, “Marschner’s Villians, Monomania, and the Fantasy of Deviance,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 12 (2000): 109–34, and Francesca Brittan, “Berlioz and the Pathological Fantastic: Melancholy, Monomania, and Romantic Autobiography,” *19th-Century Music* 29 (2006): 211–39.

with regard to all objects connected with that object, while they remain correct on all others—this is insanity.¹⁸

This description of insanity as sourced to an infectious obsessive thought is a far cry from the descriptions of pre-Enlightenment lunacy, which was a totalizing and incurable state (possessive, not obsessive). To say as much is not to deny the existence of obsession before the eighteenth century, only to acknowledge that the available medical framework at the time could never have supported such a diagnosis. Only in the late eighteenth century does a language for describing obsession develop, and only since the nineteenth century does obsession flourish as a deep-seated trope of madness. As Lennard Davis has argued, the “emergence of obsession” in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was contingent on a number of significant shifts in medicine and culture: the Enlightenment, which promoted the rationality and ennoblement of the human mind as something that could either be ordered or disordered, declined; theories of self-awareness and partial insanity arose, legally and medically; psychiatry, which depended on the idea that one could cure mental illness, rooted itself as an established field of medical practice; and an increasingly regulated existence encouraged specialization and precision, promoting obsessive behaviors as efficient and economical. Representations of obsession, as both a pathology and a way of life, flourish: we may think of the works of Henri Balzac, Edgar Allen Poe, Hector Berlioz, and Émile Zola; or of how a number of fictional characters—Werther, Müller’s miller boy, Frankenstein, Tristan, Ahab, Aschenbach—seem uniquely indicative of an era obsessed with obsession.¹⁹

¹⁸ Anonymous, “Insanity—My Own Case,” *American Journal of Insanity* 13 (1856–57): 25, quoted in Davis, *Obsession*, 71.

¹⁹ Davis, *Obsession*, 31–103. Davis writes, “Modernity may be seen as a period in which the normal state of being is defined as allied with being somewhat mad, and particularly

Distinguishing from among the disease entities in which obsession has been pathologized is beside the point of this essay. Rather, it is important for us to define the general qualities of obsession (how it operates, and what metaphors are used to describe its operation), acknowledging that these qualities are described with surprising consistency among different practitioners of psychiatry since the late eighteenth century. A brief summary of the qualities under consensus is in order: To conceive of obsession, early psychiatrists relied on a model of the split mind, divided into two parts—the rational agent (promoting diversity and motion) and the obsessive agent (promoting specificity and fixity). Further, the obsessive thought can press itself so forcefully into the mind so as to appear real; depending on its strength, the obsessive thought can cause delusion and insanity.

Listening to Obsession

When the discourse on obsession was young and its metaphors malleable, the British surgeon Andrew Harper penned his *Treatise on the Real Cause and Cure of Insanity* (1789). Using the same oppositions of fixity vs. mobility, specificity vs. diversity, Harper imagines obsession as music:

I do not conceive that multiplicity, diversity, or variation of ideas, as far as my reason and observations goes, can by their own effects, without any cause, produce Insanity. But if the mental faculty happens to be particularly occupied and engaged by the presence and operation of some separate exclusive object, affection, or idea, or even peculiar train of uniform ideas, the mind, by being thus *pitched upon a specific note* and its

with being obsessed. The form of this obsession is a singular attention to a particular thing or things, which in effect is the definition of specialization—itsself an acknowledged feature of modernity” (81). See also the literary figures discussed in Marina van Zuylen, *Monomania: The Flight from Everyday Life in Literature and Art* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

nervous motions *circumscribed within the limits of a certain modulation*, receives too deep an impression, from this unchanging effect, in *the tone of its movement*. Now this particular object, affection, or idea, thus in possession of the mental faculty, or prime movement, gains ground by continuance, and if it still remains in exercise, it gradually becomes the fixed, habitual motion, or *predominant note*, and then by engrossing the natural and general movements, it begins to obtund and interrupt the efficiency and perfection of the common and incidental ideas or impressions, and at last brings every image or *modulation into unison with itself*, and thus ultimately, by drawing the whole circle of sensorial motions into its own vortex, the order and *harmony* of mental operation is destroyed, and *discord* or insanity ensues.²⁰

Deciphering the potent (if somewhat contradictory) musical metaphors at work here, let us imagine Andrew Harper's obsessive music. Where a healthy musical narrative favors "multiplicity, diversity, or variation" (melodic *motion*, harmonic *progression*), an obsessive music narrates an opposition between two different agents: an unchanging, fixed note (representing the obsession), and a rational melodic and harmonic stream (representing the "mental faculty"). In accommodating the fixed note, the range of musical motion is restricted harmonically to a limited number of triads with which the fixed note is consonant; whenever the stream of musical motion utilizes other chords, discord ensues. Two outcomes are possible. The first (not described by Harper) entails the removal of the obsessive note and the subsequent liberation of harmonic motion. The second entails the obsessive note's ultimate control over its surroundings, drawing everything "into unison with itself." But this unison is dissonant (a confusing and ill-prepared paradox of Harper's conceptualization): as the order offered by harmonic hierarchy has dissolved, all subsequent music will sound disordered.

²⁰ Andrew Harper, *Treatise on the Real Cause and Cure of Insanity* (London: C. Stalker, 1789), 33–4, quoted in *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535–1860: A History Presented in Selected English Texts*, ed. Richard Alfred Hunter and Ida Macalpine (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 523–4, and in Davis, *Obsession*, 61–2 (italics mine).

Harper was no musician, nor should we expect any composer to have stumbled across his treatise, which was influential in the medical community but obscure outside of it. However, his musical imagination was prescient of a recurrent musical gesture that a number of composers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would use to depict obsessive space, one related to but distinct from other types of musical obsessions with which we are already familiar, like the *idée fixe*.²¹ Just as an obsessive mind is split into antagonistic agents, so is an obsessive musical space divided in two: one musical agent produces what should otherwise seem to be a normal stream of musical content, and another musical agent, an embedded note or group of notes, repeats itself over and over and over, disabling and disrupting the coherence of its surroundings.²²

(A paragraph of caveats: Given that the opposition between fixity and mobility has generated a wide variety of compositional practices, not all of them “obsessive,” the following examples are restricted to those in which that opposition is cast by a significant degree of *markedness*, both in the characterization of the agents and in the level of conflict between them. The ground bass, ostinato, pedal point, and cover tone, for instance, are compositional devices in which repetition is innate and may or may not rise to the levels of excessiveness demanded by obsession. Similarly, while certain musical

²¹ On the obsessive qualities of the musical *idée fixe*, see especially Brittan, “Berlioz and the Pathological Fantastic,” and Stephen Rodgers, “Mental Illness and Musical Metaphor in the First Movement of Hector Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*,” in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus, 235–56 (New York and London: Routledge, 2006). Rodgers’s musical analyses are further developed in his *Form, Program, and Metaphor in the Music of Hector Berlioz* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²² Though the focus of this chapter will be on gestural repetition, it is worth noting that Henry Zajackowski has proposed hearing marked structural repetitions under the rubric of obsession; his model also uses the concept of oppositional agencies. See “The Function of Obsessive Elements in Tchaikovsky’s Style,” *The Music Review* 43 (1982): 24–30.

styles are certainly marked by their propensity for repetition—much Spanish music, for instance, or minimalism—repetitive compositions emerging from these traditions will be marked only insofar as they exceed our stylistic expectations. Finally, much repetitive music is repetitive without conflict and does not employ the model of oppositional agents developed by psychiatry. Consider Monteverdi’s “Lamento della ninfa,” which predates the era of obsession by nearly two centuries: the descending tetrachords of the ground bass generate the entire harmonic structure of the composition, and the singers and continuo ensemble may be understood to improvise from this pattern. This pathologized musical space, and others like it, would be more aptly described as *possessive*—an all-encompassing mental state.²³)

In discussing examples of musical obsession, it will be helpful to speak of agency (in order to venture a diagnosis or explore why a note or group of notes might act the way

²³ On the aesthetics of musical repetition (a vast but still underdeveloped topic), see especially Scott G. Burnham, “Landscape as Music, Landscape as Truth: Schubert and the Burden of Repetition,” *19th-Century Music* 29 (2005): 31–41; Luis-Manuel Garcia, “On and On: Repetition as Process and Pleasure in Electronic Dance Music,” *Music Theory Online* 11, no. 4 (2005); Yosef Goldenberg, “A Musical Gesture of Growing Obstinacy,” *Music Theory Online* 12, no. 2 (2006); Serge Gut, “Le phénomène répétitif chez Maurice Ravel: De l’obsession à l’annihilation incantatoire,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 21 (1990): 29–46; David Lidov, “Structure and Function in Musical Repetition,” in *Is Language a Music? Writings on Musical Form and Signification*, 25–40 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Adam Ockelford, *Repetition in Music: Theoretical and Metatheoretical Perspectives* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005); and Laure Schnapper, *L’ostinato, procédé musical universal* (Paris: E. Champion, 1998), some of which appears, translated, in Schnapper, “Ostinato,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20547>> (accessed 2 May 2010). Also of relevance is David Schwarz’s distinction between “repetition” and “reiteration” in music: “*Repetition* serves symbolic mastery and representation (the Kantian “beautiful”); *reiteration* serves that which resists symbolization (the Kantian “sublime”). Through repetition, meanings change; through reiteration a moment tries over and over again to register in symbolic space and fails.” *Listening Awry: Music and Alterity in German Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 32.

it does) and narrative (in order to analyze the ways in which the obsessive conflict is played out). To speak of “musical agents” is to assume that musical gestures have distinct *gesturers*—that is, musical gestures are initiated by implied personas with wills and intentions. (As Hatten writes, “Musical gesture is *movement (implied, virtual, actualized) interpretable as a sign*, whether intentional or not, and as such it *communicates information about the gesturer* (or character, or persona the gesturer is impersonating or embodying.”²⁴) A gesture comprised of a repeated note might seem stubborn, for instance, while a gesture of rapidly ascending sixteenth notes might imply a cheerfully optimistic persona. Appropriating the psychological model of the divided mind, a musical composition—a metaphorical container (like the body or mind)—may create a space in which a single, overarching subjective agency is comprised of two *gestural fields* (Hatten’s term), each interacting with the other.²⁵ As we will see, the personality of the *gesturers* and the conflict they play out within these *gestural fields* create narrative. In some examples, an obsessive agent might be said to “infect” or “disable” a rational agent. In others, the rational agent might be said to “accommodate” or “cure” the obsessive agent. In all, our interpretive quest for musical meaning (or, at least, for precise musical descriptors) derives from an historically grounded understanding of the history of obsession and its vivid opposition of motion and fixity.

Fixations (I): Symptom and Diagnosis

Something is ailing **Example 2.1**. Leading up to this excerpt, the fourth movement of Mozart’s Quintet for Clarinet and Strings (K. 581) has been sprightly and

²⁴ Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 224.

²⁵ Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures*, 228.

The image shows a musical score for Variation III of Mozart's Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, K. 581, movement IV. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of 16 measures. It features a prominent, repetitive figure in the viola part, which is described as a 'pathetic' neighbor-tone figure. The score includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Clarinet, and Cello/Double Bass.

Example 2.1. Repetition of the viola’s “pathetic” neighbor-tone figure as a symptom of obsession. Mozart, Quintet for Clarinet and Strings (K. 581), mvt. IV, variation 3, mm. 49–56

cheerful, residing entirely in the tonic A major: as first presented, the theme (mm. 1–16) is simple and tuneful; its first variation (mm. 17–32) adds a lively clarinet countermelody; and the second variation (mm. 33–48) offers robust and energetic rhythmic patterns. The third variation, however, differs sharply from this prevailing levity: in place of major, minor; in place of buoyant melody, only the starkest outlines of the underlying tonic-dominant alternations. The most active performer here is the violist, who, after quickly arpeggiating tonic and dominant-seventh chords in m. 49, plays an E-F-E “pathetic” neighbor-tone gesture, then repeats it, then repeats it again, and again—for a total of twenty-one iterations over the course of the sixteen-measure variation. These excessive repetitions, from which the “character” of the violist scarcely wavers, suggest *fixity*; the slender, constricted melodic range of the figure (expanded only a step by an *acciaccatura* irritant on the lowered seventh degree) suggests *specificity*. These two qualities, against the otherwise *mobile* and *diverse* music in the preceding and subsequent variations, suggest an *obsession* that briefly intrudes and invades the body of the Quintet, infecting the other instrumentalists as they perform similarly restrictive melodic lines. (Recall Andrew Harper: “By engrossing the natural and general movements, [the fixed

note] begins to obtund and interrupt the efficiency and perfection of the common and incidental ideas or impressions.”) Successful musical interpretation involves assigning musical gesturers convincing intentions or motivations for enacting their gestures. Here, obsession offers the interpreter an effective way of describing—or, possibly, “diagnosing”—the excesses of the violist’s severe, restrictive, and repetitive musical line.²⁶

Something else is ailing **Example 2.2**. Another short motive, repeated repeatedly, winds its way through Wolf’s ode to *Sehnsucht*, “Im Frühling.” Appearing in full in the piano’s treble in mm. 82–83, the motive is divided in two parts: first, a rising sixth, followed by an upper-neighbor ornament that propels another upward leap (F#-D#-E-D#-F#); and, second, a chromatic double-neighbor figure around that expressive high point, twice confirming F# as the goal of the phrase (F#-E#-F#-G#-G#-F#). Identified by Eric Sams as Wolf’s “yearning motive,” the open-ended first half of the figure is often isolated from its more conclusive second half, resulting in a quality, when looped time and time again, of perpetually unfulfilled upward striving.²⁷ The fragmentary nature of the motive (always beginning, rarely concluding) is put to good rhetorical effect throughout Wolf’s setting of Mörike’s poem. The abridged melody’s most extensive repetitions set the unanswerable questions that express the poet’s insatiable *Sehnsucht*: “Ach, sag’ mir, alleinzig Liebe,/Wo du bleibst, daß ich bei dir bliebe!” (“Oh tell me, one

²⁶ For instance, the performance of this viola line by Mikhail Terian deemphasizes the expressive nature of the pathetic gesture, instead drawing the listener’s ear to its severe repetitions. Vladimir Sorokin (clarinet), David Oistrakh and Pyotr Bondarenko (violins), Mikhail Terian (viola), Sviatoslav Knushevitsky (cello), *David Oistrakh Collection*, vol. 2, Doremi CD 7702 (rec. 1949; pub. 1998).

²⁷ Eric Sams, *The Songs of Hugo Wolf* (London: Eulenburg, 1983), 23.

Lust, halb ist es Klage; mein Herz, o

sa - ge, was webst du für Er - in - ner - ung in gol - den grü - nei

Zwei - ge Däm - mer - ung?

Example 2.2. Repetition of the “yearning” motive in the piano’s treble.
 Wolf, “Im Frühling,” mm. 82–93

and only love, where you are, that I may be by you!”); “Frühling, was bist du gewillt? Wann werd’ ich gestillt?” (“Spring, what do you want? When will I be stilled?”); and “Mein Herz, o sage,/Was webst du für Erinnerung/In golden grünen Zweige Dämmerung?” (“Tell me, my heart, what memory do you weave in the twilight of gold-green branches?”).

English translations of *Sehnsucht* tend to favor the first half of the compound noun (*sich sehnen*: “to yearn”) while glossing over its second half.²⁸ At its etymological roots, *Sucht* describes a disease or a pain—hence *Fallsucht* (epilepsy), *Schwindsucht* (tuberculosis or consumption), and *Gelbsucht* (jaundice). Keeping with early psychiatry’s agenda of making the psychical physical, *Sucht* was also defined as a “sickness of the soul” (“Krankheit der Seele”), originating from a “persistent or dominating disordered craving” (“eine anhaltende oder herrschende ungeordnete Begierde”). *Sucht* was thus attached to a number of potentially obsessive, excessive, or addictive behaviors, like *Ehrsucht* (ambition), *Eifersucht* (jealousy), *Rachsucht* (vengefulness), *Spielsucht* (gambling addiction), and so on.²⁹ (In 1868 the word officially entered into the German medical discourse on obsession via psychiatrist Wilhelm Griesinger’s disease entity *GrüBELsucht*, the obsessive compilation of data.³⁰) Following these constructions the word *Sehnsucht* suggests not just yearning, but a disordered yearning, sourced to some internal “craving,” “persistent or dominating.” The person beset by *Sehnsucht* is fixed and focused with a unidirectional urge for upward striving; the urge is wholly irrational and inefficient, divorced from any clearly defined need or purpose; and the urge is repetitive in its insistent yet impossible pursuit of this absent goal.

²⁸ See David Krell’s thorough etymological deciphering of the two halves of *Sehnsucht* in *The Tragic Absolute: German Idealism and the Languishing of God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 84–89 and 136–38. See also Katja Löhr, *Sehnsucht als poetologisches Prinzip bei Joseph von Eichendorff* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003).

²⁹ Johann Christoph Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart*, vol. 4 (Vienna: Anton Pichler, 1808), 495. This definition appears, with slight emendations, in German etymological dictionaries throughout the nineteenth century.

³⁰ Berrios, *History of Mental Symptoms*, 142.

In short, *Sehnsucht* is obsessive. And when, near the end of “Im Frühling,” Mörike’s poetic subject declares in memorable verse, “Ich sehne mich, und weiß, nicht recht, nach was” (“I yearn—and don’t really know what for”), Wolf creates an appropriately obsessive musical space by initiating a final chain of upward-striving, perpetually looping “yearning” motives. They appear in the piano’s treble against a descending bass line, which casts the melodic repetitions within a new harmonic light every bar (mm. 84–92). Tethered, the motive still strives upward, alternatively gaining and losing its obsessive strength in response to a shifting musical environment. Fixed repetition contrasts with fluid motion, the bass line gradually tugging the treble from its rigidity as it descends: first the D# sinks to D \flat in m. 88, then the neighbor-tone figure descends by step in m. 92. The tightly-spun motive slackens further, stalling twice on its penultimate note before the thickly weighted block chords of m. 95 put an end to the motive’s repetitions for good. By song’s end, the “yearning” motive has appeared, in various forms, over seventy times. The repetitions of the motive create an undercurrent of distress in an otherwise tranquil song: they gain in intensity during the poet’s most desperate expressions of *Sehnsucht*, then relinquish control when he temporarily alleviates his longing or drifts into slumber.

Nothing much seems to ail Chopin’s Prelude in D-flat major, op. 28, no. 15—at least, not at first. The A section (mm. 1–27; its final measures are printed in **Example 2.3**) is as sublime and contented a musical landscape as the composer ever dared to paint: lyrical, playfully ornamented, *con espressione e semplice*. Its only peculiarity is the repeated patten of the A \flat below middle C, though this first registers as an unproblematic repetition. Often occurring in groupings of three (and never more than five) eighth notes,

Example 2.3. Flexible $A\flat$ turning into an obsessive $G\sharp$. Chopin, Prelude in D-flat major, op. 28, no. 15, mm. 24–32

$A\flat$ maintains a quality of lightness and flexibility despite its prevalence. Note, for instance, the upper-neighbor ornament offered by the $B\flat$ in m. 25 and elsewhere, which breaks up the repetition of $A\flat$ by briefly bending its musical line. Such flexibilities are avoided in the Prelude's B section (mm. 28–70). Now enharmonically respelled as $G\sharp$, the repeated note acquires a piercing fixity and focus (eight eighth notes per bar, a pattern maintained for much of the B section). The mood darkens, appropriately. Replacing D-flat major is its enharmonic parallel minor, C-sharp minor. The tempo accelerates. While soft dynamics prevail within the A section, the B section is characterized by violent fortissimo outbursts. The melody, formerly lilting in the piano's treble, now grumbles in its bass. More to the point, the $G\sharp$, now in the treble, takes control of the discourse. Where the moderate repetitions of $A\flat$ contributed to an environment of tranquility and stillness, the excessive repetition of the $G\sharp$ initiates a passage of musical turmoil and distress.

The nickname with which this Prelude is so often identified—“Raindrop”—can limit our imagination from conjuring other, less literal interpretations of the A \flat /G \sharp repetition and the complex questions of gestural agency it raises. Derived from George Sand’s reminiscence of Majorcan rainfall, the nickname is linked to the Prelude in D-flat major only by tradition; the pervasiveness of its famous “patter” has edged out other equally plausible contenders for the title.³¹ But the rainfall that Sand once described involves much more than the sound of pattering (and, as Peter Dayan has effectively argued, Sand’s text actually argues against the superficial representation of natural sound in music).³² The rather benign, pastoral title (“Raindrop”) hardly conveys the surreal, nightmarish experiences from which Sand’s story emerges. Indeed, Sand’s original text is a compelling tale filled with ominously repetitive sounds, natural and musical, real and imagined, all gnawing at a Chopin characterized by obsessive and delusional behaviors.

Appropriately Gothic, Sand’s story begins on a dark and stormy night. The setting is a wintery Majorca (1838–39), where Chopin, Sand, and her two children temporarily moved, under the hope that a change of scenery would improve the composer’s perennially ailing health. It did not, and Chopin’s increasingly severe tuberculosis earned him suspicion and hostility from the native population. (Again, this reads like a Gothic novel.) Leaving the composer at the cold, clammy monastery where they were staying, Sand and her children ventured outdoors. A dangerous storm caught them off-guard:

³¹ See Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, “Le prelude ‘de la goutte d’eau’ de Chopin: Etat de la question et essai d’interprétation,” *Revue de musicologie* 61 (1975): 70–90, which identifies op. 28, no. 15 as the “raindrop” prelude; and Eigeldinger, “L’achèvement des Preludes op. 28 de Chopin: Documents autographes,” *Revue de musicologie* 75 (1989): 229–42, which backtracks from that identification.

³² Peter Dayan, *Music Writing Literature: From Sand via Debussy to Derrida* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 1–10

The rain had arrived, the mountain streams had burst their banks; it had taken us six hours to travel back three leagues through the floods; we were arriving well after nightfall, without our shoes, and without our coachman, who had abandoned us; the journey had been extremely dangerous. We had been hurrying because we knew that our ill friend would have been worrying. Indeed, he had been; but his anxiety had moulded itself, so to speak, into the fixed form of a calm despair, and he was playing his admirable prelude as he wept. When he saw us enter, he rose to his feet with a great cry, then, with an air of strange distraction, said to us: “Ah! I knew it; I knew that you were dead!”

The implication of this ominous exclamation is that Chopin believed Sand and her children to be ghosts. Sand continues:

When he returned to his senses and saw the condition that we were in, the retrospective spectacle of the dangers we had been through made him ill; but he later confessed to me that, while waiting for us to return, he had seen it all in a dream, and, no longer able to distinguish that dream from reality, he had, as he played the piano, entered a calm and semi-somnolent state, convinced that he, too, was dead. He saw himself drowned in a lake; heavy and icy drops of water were falling rhythmically onto his breast, and when I drew his attention to the sound of these drops of water, which were indeed falling rhythmically onto the roof, he denied that he had heard them. Indeed, he became angry at what I translated by the expression: imitative harmony.... His composition of that night was indeed full of drops of rain which fell on the resounding tiles of the monastery, but they had been translated in his imagination and in his music by tears from heaven falling on his heart.³³

As previously noted, early psychiatry conceptualized delusions as obsessions so deeply rooted that the mind no longer distinguished its fantasies from reality. Sand’s portrait of Chopin depicts the composer in a state of delusional madness, with an appropriately obsessive sound (pattering rain) linking natural, psychological, and musical domains: the sound is at once real (pattering on the stones of the monastery), imagined (pattering on the composer’s corpse), and musical (“pattering” in his preludes).

³³ Quoted and translated in Dayan, *Music Writing*, 2–4.

Chopin has long been described as an obsessive personality, and Sand's story, while shocking, is similar to other extraordinary hallucinations the composer is supposed to have experienced. Often dominated by images of death, these episodes are well-worn by his biographers: shortly after the winter in Majorca, Sand describes how, in Chopin's visions, "The phantoms called him, embraced him...and he pushed away their skeletal faces from his [face] and fought under their icy hands." The ferocious intensity of Chopin's diaries from 1829–31, with their vivid imageries of writhing corpses, also speak to his obsession with death ("The clocks on Stuttgart towers ring the nocturnal hour. Ah, how many cadavers were created in the world at that moment!").³⁴ Additionally, "obsession" is frequently used to describe the composer's erratic behaviors. Tad Szulc, for instance, writes of the composer's "obsessive orderliness," "obsessive preoccupation with detail," "obsessive secretiveness," and "obsessive jealousy."³⁵ While Chopin was diagnosed with hypochondria during his lifetime (though a phobia today, it was an obsessive pathology then), posthumous diagnoses of schizophrenia or manic-depression abound; Sand herself suspected melancholy.³⁶

Sand's tale of Majorcan rainfall is valuable as a psychoanalytical reading of how Chopin's oft-noted obsessive and delusional episodes might map onto an oft-noted stylistic feature of his music—namely, his excessive repetition of a note, melodic fragment, or short rhythmic pattern. We may think, firstly, of the other preludes with which the nickname "raindrop" is occasionally attached: the rocking neighbor-tone

³⁴ These stories of Chopin's extraordinary hallucinations are summarized in Tad Szulc, *Chopin in Paris: The Life and Times of the Romantic Composer* (New York: Scribner, 1998), pp. 47 and 246.

³⁵ Szulc, *Chopin in Paris*, 235, 294, 257, and 350.

³⁶ Szulc, *Chopin in Paris*, 128–31.

motion that agitates the Prelude in E minor, op. 28, no. 4; or the rhythmically consistent tapping that runs through and well past the final cadence of the Prelude in B minor, op. 28, no. 6. Much like the contrasting character of A \flat and G \sharp in op. 28, no. 15, the tolling of the detached D \sharp in the Mazurka in E minor, op. 41, no. 2, is alternatively comforting and ominous, as are the tolling octaves that usher in both pleasant and tumultuous music in the Ballade in A-flat major, op. 47. Consider also the relentless, exhausting triplets that propel the agitated final movement of the Piano Sonata in B minor, op. 58, or the short, fragmented motivic repetitions that comprise the primary theme of the Piano Sonata in B-flat minor, op. 35.³⁷ John Rink writes of “obsessive repetition of tiny cells—motives, melodic fragments, grace notes and other ornaments” in the third movement of both piano concertos; and Rosen describes the “obsessive, hammered violence” necessary to perform the Scherzo in B minor, op. 20.³⁸

Such tightly coiled music—fixed, persistent, agitated—suggests the symptoms of musical disorder. And, as it does in biographical accounts of Chopin, obsession (symbolized by Sand as droplets of water “rhythmically falling”) can serve as a convincing interpretive diagnosis. In this vein, the Prelude in D-flat major responds well to the metaphors of obsession, its marked repetitions hinging on the distinction between

³⁷ Mirroring my characterization of excessive repetition as “obsessive,” Eero Tarasti writes, “Chopin expands or exaggerates conventional signs in a way that transforms them into something else. Dialectically, a new quality emerges from the endless repetition of such conventional corporeal signs. This occurs, for example, in the triple, ‘balladic’ rhythm of the last movement of the B minor Sonata. There the dance-like figure, which as such has an almost pastoral quality, turns into a fanatic, frightening, and obsessive process....” Eero Tarasti, *Signs of Music: A Guide to Musical Semiotics* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002), 133.

³⁸ John Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10; and Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 360.

eccentricity (the relaxed pattering of A \flat) and pathology (the excessive repetition of G \sharp). Andrew Harper's metaphors can be helpful, providing suitable motivations for the gesturer to navigate to and from these two modes. An "incidental idea" (A \flat , isolated by the specificity of its character on the keyboard) "receives too deep an impression," "gains ground by continuance," and "gradually becomes the fixed, habitual motion, or predominant note" (A \flat morphing into G \sharp , mm. 27–28). The obsessive pitch then "begins to obtund and interrupt the efficiency and perfection of the common and incidental ideas or impressions" (the end of the lyrical A section) and "engross[es] the natural and general movements" (the modulation into the turbulent B section). The parallels between treatise and prelude end here: where Harper's model of obsession veers into total insanity, Chopin's obsessive music relaxes into a recapitulation of the A section, in which the obsessive G \sharp reverts to the pattering A \flat . As in the above examples by Mozart and Wolf, distress here may be sourced to an embedded infection that agitates its surroundings. As with the qualities of an obsessive thought, the qualities of an obsessive note are aurally unnerving and will inevitably promote symptoms of musical unease.

Fixations (II): Triumph, Defeat, and a Draw

The most common metaphorical framework used in the medical discourse on obsession is the imagery of the fight or battle. (Recall Henri Dagonet's description of oppositional agents: "The more one tries to discard the idea, the more it becomes imposed upon the mind, the more one tries to get rid of the emotion or tendency, the stronger it becomes.") Such a model characterizes the oppositional agents of obsession as, in fact, *opposed*: each agent competes with the other for dominance, and, by the

narrative's end, one agent will reign supreme, establishing total control over the mind. The triumph of rationality employs a "cure" narrative, in which the mobile, rational agent eliminates, suppresses, or rehabilitates the repetitive behaviors of the obsessive, fixed agent. The triumph of obsession, however, leads to delusion and insanity—the rational agent now fully gripped and controlled by the obsessive agent's symptoms. As we will see, a provocative third outcome is the radical absence of victory or defeat, in which the obsessive and rational agents maintain, indefinitely, a powerfully balanced and disconcertingly unresolved struggle.

Narratives of "overcoming" (which originate from the "heroic" actions of the disabled subject) or "cure" and "rehabilitation" (in which the disabled subject is acted upon by external "curers") are among the most popular of the narrative typologies used to accommodate disability; as Lennard Davis argues, "narratives involving disability always yearn for the cure, the neutralizing of disability."³⁹ Closely aligned with the medical model of the body (which, in the words of Tobin Siebers, treats disability as "an individual defect lodged in the person, a defect that must be cured or eliminated if the person is to achieve full capacity as a human being"), cure narratives depend on the presence of bodily difference for their source of dramatic tension and on the normalization of that difference for their source of dramatic resolution.⁴⁰ The triumph of

³⁹ Lennard Davis, *Bending over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002), 99.

⁴⁰ Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 3. On cure narratives, see especially Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Reflections on Disability* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 81ff; Donald Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 47; and Lois Keith, *Take Up Thy Bed and Walk: Death, Disability and Cure in Classic Fiction for Girls* (New York: Routledge, 2001). Musical cure narratives are discussed in Joseph N. Straus, "Normalizing the Abnormal:

rationality over obsession—a narrative dependent on the psychiatric theory that mental illness can be isolated and eliminated—is a variation of this cure narrative, one already encountered in Chopin’s Prelude in D-flat major, which ends with the assuagement of the excessively repeated G#.

One of the most explicit musical enactments of a cure narrative can be found in a little-known programmatic symphony by Gaetano Brunetti, entitled *Il maniático* (1780). According to the program included by Brunetti in the manuscript score, the symphony describes

the fixation of a madman on one single purpose or idea. This part is given to a solo cello. Other instruments assume the role of friends pledged to free him from his delirium, offering him an infinity of other ideas, in the form of various musical motifs. The maniac for some time clings to his original fancy, until he meets an *allegro* motif which attracts him, and he joins the others. But soon he falls back into his previous manner. At last, swept along by the general feeling, he ends with the others quite happily.⁴¹

The common metaphors of mental pathology are all invoked: the obsessive agent is rigid and focused (“fixation...on one single purpose or idea”), and the oppositional agents are mobile and diverse (“an infinity of other ideas,” “swept along”). But note that the story is

Disability in Music and Music Theory,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59 (2006): 113–84, and Kelly Gross, “Female Subjectivity, Disability, and Musical Authorship in Krzysztof Kieslowski’s *Blue*,” in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus, 41–56 (New York and London: Routledge, 2006).

⁴¹ “...la fissazione di un delirante ad un oggetto, e questa parte viene eseguita da un Violoncello solo, a cui si uniscono gli altri strumenti quasi amici impregnati a liberarlo dal suo deliro, presentandogli una infinita varietà di idee nella varietà de’ motivi. Rimane il Maniático per molto tempo fisso nel primo oggetto, finché incontra un motivo allegro che lo persuade, e lo fa unire agli altri, dopo questo novamente ricade, ed in fine, trasportato dall’impulso commune [*sic*] termina cogli altri allegramente.” Quoted and translated in Alfredo Bonaccorsi, Prefazione and Preface to Gaetano Brunetti, *Il “Maniático,” Symphony no. 33; Sinfonia in Sol Min. no. 22*, ed. Newell Jenkins (Rome: Lorenzo del Turco, 1960), xiii and xvii. The symphony is briefly mentioned as an early example of a musical “fixed idea” in Brittan, “Pathological Fantastic,” 214.

indicative of the symphony's relatively early position within the history of obsession, composed years before psychiatry would radically reshape and popularize conceptualizations of mental illness. Brunetti's little fable does not occur within a split mind, but rather is enacted on a macrocosmic level: the cello plays the character of the *maniático* himself (not just his obsessive thought), while other instruments perform as his friends (and not just as rational thoughts). The "problem" that disability so often presents within narrative structures here has become societal—an internal battle externalized, the "cure" to be credited ultimately to the community of the able-bodied.

In its first appearance (**Example 2.4**), Brunetti's obsessive cello is identified with the word "Mania," represented as the quick, repetitive alternation of a chord tone with its lower neighbor at the interval of the (usually chromatic) semitone. Brunetti's label confirms and specifies what is immediately apparent to the casual reader of the score: the cello soloist is a distinct character in the symphony, its repetitive neighbor-tone figure acting as an isolated irritant within otherwise "rational" (if still somber) musical surroundings. The choice of instrument is significant, for cellos rarely assert their melodic independence so casually (they more typically fulfill their musical duties by obediently playing the bass line). In one of its longest iterations, the cellist removes himself from the community of the orchestra further, single-handedly extending a half cadence by performing over thirty half-step alternations in quick succession (**Example 2.5**)—an "obsessive" cadenza of sorts, favoring repetition and fixity over melodic fluency and virtuosity. Though typical of melodic motion leading into cadenzas, the upper-neighbor figure adopted by the oboes (D-E \flat and F-G \flat , mm. 49–51) acquires new contextual significance given the nature of the cello's obsessive motive—as if the oboes,

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system consists of five staves: two treble clefs, two bass clefs, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The second system also has five staves, with the first two treble clefs and the first bass clef containing musical notation, while the second bass clef and grand staff are empty. The third system has five staves, with the first two treble clefs and the first bass clef empty, while the second bass clef and grand staff contain musical notation. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *pp*, and *p*. A section is marked "Si levano y Sordini". The tempo marking "più piano, movendo" is present at the bottom of the third system.

Example 2.5. An “obsessive” cadenza by the solo cello. Brunetti, Symphony no. 33 (*Il maniático*), mvt. 1, mm. 46–53

The image shows a musical score for Example 2.6, consisting of two systems of staves. The top system includes a first violin staff and a cello/bass staff. The violin staff has a box labeled "alternate idea" with an arrow pointing to a short melodic phrase. The cello/bass staff has a box labeled "il maniático" with an arrow pointing to a repetitive rhythmic pattern. The bottom system includes a first violin staff, a second violin staff, and a cello/bass staff. The first violin staff has a box labeled "alternate idea" with an arrow pointing to a short melodic phrase. The second violin staff has a box labeled "il maniático" with an arrow pointing to a repetitive rhythmic pattern. The cello/bass staff has a box labeled "il maniático" with an arrow pointing to a repetitive rhythmic pattern. The score is in 2/4 time and features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p*.

Example 2.6. The first violin offers the obsessive cellist an alternative idea. Brunetti, Symphony no. 33 (*Il maniático*), mvt. 2, 280–86

too, were under the spell of his hypnotic repetitions. At other points during the symphony, the “friends” of the *maniático* are more proactive in their interactions with the solo cellist, “offering him an infinity of other ideas,” as according to Brunetti’s program. One such idea may be found in **Example 2.6**, excerpted from the symphony’s second movement. Here, the obsessive cellist continues to play his neighbor-tone motive (B \flat -A) while his “friends” in the first violins, using these pitches as a template, expand past the motive’s deviant restriction, first by normalizing the cello’s A \sharp as a diatonic A \flat and then expanding the melodic range from the restrictive minor second (B \flat -A \sharp) into a slightly more spacious minor third (B \flat -G). The cellist does not join, however, and the violinists’ repetition of their short melodic suggestion—each iteration producing a fleeting but still jarring cross-relation: A \sharp versus A \flat —suggests an increasingly *obsessive* rational agent.

The frustrated qualities of the cellist's supposedly rational counterparts may be detected elsewhere in the symphony. In the first movement, for instance, a fortissimo outburst from the instrumental ensemble repeatedly quotes from the obsessive cello's neighbor-tone motive in frustrated exasperation—as if the curers, in their quest to purge the cellist from his obsession, had themselves become obsessed.⁴²

These frustrated interactions compile gradually over the course of the symphony, strategically building toward a conclusion of triumphant rehabilitation. The remaining elements of Brunetti's tale can be summarized in a brief overview of the symphony's movements:

- I. Largo – Andantino
- II. Allegro
- III. Allegretto
- IV. Allegro spiritoso – Andantino – Allegro spiritoso

The first movement of the symphony begins in C minor with a slow introduction (Largo); the cello solo is entirely absent. Only once the Andantino begins do the obsessive notes “infect” the music (this was Example 2.4). They appear again in the second movement (Allegro, as seen in Example 2.6), are absent for much of the third movement (Allegretto), but reappear about three-quarters of the way through when an unsettling use of the minor mode lays the conditions for another obsessive disturbance: the obsession has not yet been cured. During the first section of the three-part final movement (Allegro spiritoso [in E-flat major] – Andantino – Allegro spiritoso [in C major]), the motive is

⁴² Davis argues for a history of obsession that acknowledges shared behaviors between patient and curer: “Obsession became an illness, and the obsessive study of obsession became a profession. As this split happened, medicine—notably psychiatry and neurology—came into its own, and part of its professional agenda was the establishment of taxonomies and categories whose effect it was to separate out varieties of behavior into a signifying group of the pathological on the one hand and the heuristic on the other.” Davis, *Obsession*, 10.

absent, and the cello soloist—seemingly cured!—mostly doubles the sprightly music of his fellow cellos in the orchestra. This movement contains a surprising insert, however—recapitulatory material from the *first* movement, prompted by a recollection of (and temporary lapse back into) the “mania” theme (Andantino). But the obsession is once again undone by the *fortissimo* outburst of the Allegro spiritoso material—this time, contrasting with the key of the opening Largo, in C major.⁴³ The orchestral strings play a repetitive lower-neighbor figure (“as if to test the maniac’s resistance to his original obsession,” writes one commentator), but the solo cellist has none of it, instead fulfilling his orchestral duties by assuming the bass line.⁴⁴ The purgation of the *mania* theme entails a reversal of a number of other distressful symptoms: once lethargic, a newly energetic tempo concludes the symphony; and the large-scale tonal structure involves the “transcendence of major over minor”—which, as Floyd Grave has argued, can be heard as a metaphor of corporeal recuperation.⁴⁵ Mode reversed, tempo accelerated, and *mania* expunged, the cellist’s cure is complete.

⁴³ Marshall Brown mentions *Il maniático* in his discussion of the symbolic importance of C major: “This symphony has two introductions: the standard fanfare and then a programmatic introduction, where the wavering pitch of slow trills in the solo cello is used to symbolize mental alienation. Reason (and C major) triumphs over unreason at the end of the piece.” See his *Turning Points: Essays in the History of Cultural Expressions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 292. Richard Will also briefly discusses this symphony as an example of an eighteenth-century “characteristic symphony” in which material from the first movement reappears in the final movement; see *The Characteristic Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 166.

⁴⁴ René M. Ramos, “The Symphonies of Gaetano Brunetti (ca. 1744–1798),” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1997), 158.

⁴⁵ Floyd Grave, “Recuperation, Transformation and the Transcendence of Major over Minor in the Finale of Haydn’s String Quartet Op. 76 No. 1,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 5 (2008): 27–50.

The cure narrative's opposite—the triumph of obsession and the dissolution of rationality—is difficult to represent in musical terms, perhaps because the performance of fixity is, by definition, restrictive and limiting. For this very reason, Andrew Harper's musical model of obsession seems to fall apart with his description of the obsessive thought's total dominance over the mind as a “discordant unison,” at once wholly focused and wholly irrational. But perhaps Harper was more prescient than one might at first suspect. Working well over a century later, Alban Berg seems to have attempted such a “discordant unison” in Act III, scene 2, of *Wozzeck*. Diagnosed early in the opera with “eine schöne *fixe idée*,” the deranged title character murders Marie during the celebrated “Invention on a Note”: B♯ sounds obsessively in every bar of the scene, culminating famously with the orchestra's protracted *pianississimo* to *fortississimo* crescendo in B octaves—as if the triumph of obsession had erased all other pitches from the tonal palette.

A less radical if still complex example of obsessive triumph can be found in Britten's festival cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb*, which set newly discovered poetry of the famously “mad” Christopher Smart. The first modern edition of Smart's lengthy, fractured, and previously lost poem *Jubilate Agno* (ca. 1760) was published in 1939 under the editorship of William Force Stead with the title *Rejoice in the Lamb: A Song from Bedlam*.⁴⁶ The unfortunate subtitle is editorial, deriving not from Smart but from the legend of the poem's conception and its provocative, highly unorthodox style. Smart wrote the poem during his six-year confinement in a private madhouse in London (not Bedlam), and the work's numerous eccentricities—including its fragmented nature (1,200

⁴⁶ Christopher Smart, *Rejoice in the Lamb: A Song from Bedlam*, ed. William Force Stead (New York: Holt, 1939).

lines spread across four manuscripts, written at the rate of two or three pairs of lines per day), its jumble of esoteric scriptural references, and the compulsive repetition of the words “Let” and “For” to begin each line of poetry—have contributed to the poem’s reception as an artifact of obsessive madness. Recent scholarship has sought to rehabilitate Smart and his poem from the legacy of pathology: his confinement in an asylum stemmed from disorderly conduct, not mental illness; his other poems written during confinement display few eccentricities; one should not confuse poetic nonconformity with madness.⁴⁷ But first impressions are powerful. As Clement Hawes writes, Stead’s editorial subtitle (*A Song from Bedlam*) brands Smart’s poem “as a specifically mad text”: “We have read [the poem] ever since, whether explicitly or implicitly, under the shadow of private pathology.”⁴⁸

And so, it seems, did Britten. Early in his three-year stay in the United States (1939–42), the young composer was introduced to the poetry of Smart by W. H. Auden, who presumably shared his new copy of Stead’s edition with his circle of friends.⁴⁹ And it was to Smart’s poetry that Britten turned when shortly thereafter he was commissioned to compose a festival cantata: *Rejoice in the Lamb* (premiered in 1943). The text of

⁴⁷ See especially Harriet Guest, *A Form of Sound Words: The Religious Poetry of Christopher Smart* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989); Clement Hawes, *Mania and Literary Style: The Rhetoric of Enthusiasm from Ranters to Christopher Smart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 155–78; and Tom Keymer, “Johnson, Madness, and Smart,” in *Christopher Smart and the Enlightenment*, ed. Clement Hawes, 177–94 (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999).

⁴⁸ Hawes, *Mania and Literary Style*, 177.

⁴⁹ Britten credits Auden with introducing him to the poetry of Smart; see *Letters from a Life: Selected Letters and Diaries of Benjamin Britten, 1913–1976*, vol. 2, ed. Donald Mitchell (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 1172. On Auden’s interest in Smart’s poetry, see Karina Williamson “Surfing the Intertext: Smart among the Moderns,” in *Christopher Smart and the Enlightenment*, ed. Clement Hawes, 235–81 (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999).

Britten's work is an assortment of fifty different lines from Smart's poem—in effect, a new, adapted text that substantially rearranges and severely abridges the contents of the original poem. For instance, the four lines that constitute the fifth movement of the cantata (easily its most obsessive) are taken from four different places within Fragment B of Smart's poem, creating new narratives and new contexts; the numbers in parentheses indicate line numbers in Smart's autograph:

For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour—for they said, he is besides himself. (B151)
 For the officers of the peace are at variance with me, and the watchman smites me with his staff. (B90)
 For silly fellow! silly fellow! is against me and belongeth neither to me nor my family. (B60)
 For I am in twelve HARDSHIPS, but he that was born of a virgin shall deliver me out of all. (B139)

18 Slow and passionate ($\text{♩} = 54$)
 (*Grave ed appassionato*)
pp TREBLES

For I am un - der the same ac - cu - sa - tion — with my

pp ALTOS

For I am un - der the same ac - cu - sa - tion — with my

pp TENORS

For I am un - der the same ac - cu - sa - tion — with my

pp BASSES

For I am un - der the same ac - cu - sa - tion — with my

18 Slow and passionate ($\text{♩} = 54$)
 (*Grave ed appassionato*)

Example 2.7. Chorus's assumption of the organ's obsessive motive.
 Britten, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, mvt. 5, mm. 1–18

m. 3

fp Sa-viour — For they said, he is be - sides him-self. *pp*
fp Sa-viour — For they said, he is be - sides him-self. *pp*
fp Sa-viour — For they said, he is be - sides him-self. *pp*
fp Sa-viour — For they said, he is be - sides him-self. *pp* “obsession” “obsession”
 (Solo)
p *pp* *p*

m. 7

19 *pp* For the of - fi-cers of the peace are at va - ri-ance with me — *fp*
pp For the of - fi-cers of the peace are at va - ri-ance with me — *fp*
pp For the of - fi-cers of the peace are at va - ri-ance with me — *fp*
pp For the of - fi-cers of the peace are at va - ri-ance with me — *fp* “obsession”
 19 *pp*

Example 2.7, continued

m. 10

cresc. and the watch-man smites me with his staff. *f*

cresc. and the watch-man smites me with his staff. *f*

cresc. and the watch-man smites me with his staff. *f*

cresc. and the watch-man smites me with his staff. *f*

(Solo) *ff* [Ped.]

E-flat minor as the key of the *Doppelgänger*:
reversal of obsessive motive: E/G dissonant and F#/G# consonant

m. 13

lamenting (lamentoso) [20]

chorus assumes the voice of the obsession

For Sil - ly fel - low! — Sil - ly fel - low!_

For Sil - ly fel - low! — Sil - ly fel - low!_

For Sil - ly fel - low! — Sil - ly fel - low!_

For Sil - ly fel - low! — Sil - ly fel - low!_

[20] *l.h.* *f*

Example 2.7, continued

In his commentary on the first line, Stead remarks that “[t]his is one of the places where Smart shows that he knew why he was in confinement” (he was arrested while conducting disruptive prayer in public); in his commentary on the second line (which, in Stead’s edition, immediately follows Smart’s allusion of his arrest), Stead writes that the poet “betray[s] an enthusiasm which must have been ‘noxious to society’”; and in his commentary on the third line, Stead writes, “one hears in these words the taunts or reproaches of the keepers who had him in charge.”⁵⁰ Following Stead’s commentary on these lines (which are generally disputed today), Britten seems to have collected themes of persecution, entrapment, and insanity dispersed throughout *Jubilate Agno*; their concentration in quick succession suggests a poetic voice consumed by paranoia and mania. The list of accusers moves from abstraction to specificity, beginning with the persecutors of the savior, then the police, then a watchman, then, in the third line, a “silly fellow” (once echoed)—someone who, Smart insists, he is not.

The fifth movement of the cantata is built as a call-and-response between chorus and organ (**Example 2.7**). The chorus declaims the text through a winding progression of harmonic shifts and thus may safely be classified as the “mobile agent.” Over the tonic E minor, the organ plays a melodic motive in the treble (m. 3): F#-G-E-D#, a pair of two chord tones with their incomplete lower and upper neighbors. Though occurring at different pitch levels, the motive’s shape and its scale degrees in relation to the underlying harmony remain unchanged throughout the movement; repeated nine times,

⁵⁰ Stead, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, pp. 201, 202, and 205. Note that more recent editions of Smart’s poem offer radically different interpretations of these lines.

its fixity suggests an obsession.⁵¹ But the clear division between these two agents does not last. Singing “Silly Fellow” to the obsessive motive (in m. 13), the chorus temporarily assumes the obsessive agent’s voice and persona. And so we may add another person to Smart’s list of accusers: the persecutors of the savior, the officers of the peace, the watchman, and, finally, this obsessive “silly fellow,” which, as imagined by Britten, seems to symbolize an obsessive agent within the mind. The narrative trajectory of this revelation of madness rings familiar in a post-Freudian age: the moment when voices or sounds are exposed as phantom figments of a divided psyche, when the monstrous Other is revealed to be the Self’s *Doppelgänger*—these are the favored plot twists in horror and psychological fiction that Britten seems to draw upon here.

The composition of this “reversal” unfolds most clearly on the melodic surface of the composition, but Britten’s obsessive motive also has a hand in influencing the movement’s harmonic structure. The principal versions of the obsessive motive, as first found in mm. 3, 6, and 9, create a chain of interlocking tetrachords (**Figure 2.1**). Strung together, they form an ascending scale consisting of ascending thirds along white-key notes (E, G, B, D), each paired with a chromatic lower neighbor drawn from black-key notes (D#-E, F#-G, A#-B, C#-D). **Figure 2.2** shows the relationship between this scale and the five harmonies traversed by the chorus in mm. 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12 (culminating with the chorus’s assumption of the obsessive voice). The harmonies—arrived at via two LP cycles [*Leittonwechsel* and *Parallel* transformations], the first incomplete and the second complete—alternate root position and second inversion chords so that their bass notes

⁵¹ William Kumbier, in his study of *Rejoice in the Lamb*, writes of this motive’s “obsessive repetition.” “Benjamin Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb*: Figural Invention, ‘Impression’ and the Open Text,” in *Christopher Smart and the Enlightenment*, ed. Clement Hawes, 215–34 (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999), 225.

move by third through the white-key notes previously identified in the ascending scale (E, G, B, D); the black-key chromatic lower neighbors are bypassed. After exhausting its available white-key pitches with the second-inversion G-minor chord in m. 9, the bass continues to rise by third—but doing so reverses the harmonic character of the composition. In m. 12, what were formerly lower neighbors (D \sharp and F \sharp) are now enharmonically used as chord tones (the organ plays E \flat in its lowest register while the basses in the chorus sing G \flat). Further, these bass notes are used to harmonize E-flat



Figure 2.1. “Obsessional” motive in *Rejoice in the Lamb*, mvmt. 5. The motive is replicated at three different pitch levels: D \sharp -E-F \sharp -G (m. 3), F \sharp -G-A \sharp -B (m. 6), and A \sharp -B-C \sharp -D (m. 9).

Figure 2.2. Motion from E minor to E-flat minor in Britten, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, mvmt. 5, mm. 1–12. The “scale” in the lower staff is derived from Fig. 2.1; its whole notes represent the *bass* note of each chord. (LP = *Leittonwechsel* + *Parallel* transformations)

minor, the black-key triad so close yet so far from the white-key tonic triad of E minor.⁵² The triumph of the oppositional agent and the revelation of Smart's obsessive madness thus operate motivically, contrapuntally, and harmonically: chromatic notes triumph over diatonic notes, lower neighbors triumph over chord tones, and black keys triumph over white keys. The fortissimo E-flat minor chord accompanying the chorus's assumption of the obsessive melody entails a radical shift within each of these musical domains.

Charles-Valentin Alkan's "Allegretto" (subtitled "Fa," 1848) depicts another struggle between fixed and mobile agents—but, unlike the examples by Brunetti and Britten, there is no clear victor in this dispute. As can be seen in the composition's opening measures (**Example 2.8**), the rational musical material—mobile, diverse—consists of a soprano melody with an arpeggiated bass accompaniment, beginning in the tonic A minor. The obsessive agent—fixed, specific, excessive—is the F above middle C, played nearly every eighth note of the piece to total 414 iterations. These two agents might at first seem to be wholly autonomous, each independent of the other: after all, if the "obsessive F" is extracted, the composition will almost magically sound "normal" (if comparatively uninteresting). But in a number of significant ways, the rational agent is organized in opposition to the F, principally through its use of harmony, figuration, and gesture—as if this supposedly rational agent had been shaped and structured to obsessively beat the fixed note into submission (or, at least, into resolution). As we have

⁵² The use of oppositional keys one half step apart is a compositional feature encountered repeatedly in Britten's music, most famously in the opposition of B-flat major and B major in *Billy Budd*.

Allegretto. (M.M. 144 = ♩)

* m: v: *p* *Poco tenuto.*

Example 2.8. Obsessive “F” against the tonic A minor. Alkan, “Allegretto” (“Fa”), mm. 1–10

seen in Brunetti’s symphony, narratives of obsessive struggle or battle tend to involve the frustration of the rational agent, call into question the excessive nature of its behavior.

Consider the choice of tonic harmony: A minor frames the obsessive F as the flatted-sixth scale degree, a tone strongly inclined to descend by half step to the fifth scale degree. In resisting this tendency, the F fights the forces of harmonic magnetism and gravity, accumulating stubborn momentum with each of its iterations. Figuration, too, seems designed for maximum abrasion. For instance, in the first sixty measures of the piece—residing in A minor, then C major, then A major—the harmonic arpeggiations in the right hand repeatedly involve the E below the “obsessive F,” framing that pitch as highly dissonant within its harmonic surroundings. A recurrent musical gesture (what I call here the “hammer motive”) also seems shaped with this agenda in mind, as if designed to “pound” the obsessive irritant away. Its major features can be noted from its first appearance (**Table 2.1**, second row): an ascent to and descent from the melodic high




mm.	Harmony	Conflict with the “Obsessive” Note (F)
1–20	A minor (I)	E always present, one half step below the obsessive F. 
21–31	C major (III)	E always present, one half step below the obsessive F. First appearance of “hammer” motive (V ^{4/2} /IV): 
32–39	return to tonic (V ⁷ - I)	E always present, one half step below the obsessive F.
40–60	A major (I)	E always present, one half step below the obsessive F.
61–75	B-flat major (bII)	F consonant, but G ^b -F (b6-5) is used for embellishment. Second appearance of “hammer” motive: 
76–87	A2 (-3/+4) sequence: A ^b , B ^b , C, D (IV)	G almost always present, above the obsessive F.

Table 2.1. Structural summary of Alkan, “Allegretto” (“Fa”)




88–99	modulation back to A	<p>Long pedal on dominant, with E/F clash heightened:</p> 
100–22	A minor (I)	<p>E returns, present in every measure. Final cadence. Final two appearances of “hammer” motive:</p> 
126–35	Coda	<p>Tonic prolongation; mode shift to A major. E always present.</p>
136–41	coda (cont'd)	<p>A major vs. F: A draw!</p> 

Table 2.1, continued

point of the gesture, which consists of three repeated notes (here, G), played *forte* and *marcato*. The underlying chord ($V^{4/2}/IV$) brackets the F within the double-dissonance of E, below, and G, above. A brief harmonic respite from this toxic conflict is offered in mm. 61–75, when F assumes its place as the fifth scale degree of B-flat major (Table 2.1, fifth row). But even here there are fights to be picked: Alkan has a penchant for $b^{\wedge}6-^{\wedge}5$ neighbor-tone motion (either as figuration or as part of a precadential augmented-sixth chord), and the brief clashes that result do much to destabilize the overriding harmonic consonance of the passage. Further, the second appearance of the hammer motive has been altered so that the pounded note (now a consonant F) alternates with its dissonant lower neighbor (E). These and other musical details call into question the motivations of the rational agent in its temporary harmonic accommodation of the obsessive F.

In a remarkable final page, the conflict intensifies. The chord of the dramatic dominant pedal leading to the return of A minor (Table 2.1, seventh row) is spelled so that the root of the chord (E) and the fixed note (F) are fully locked in semitonal conflict, pounded simultaneously. Consider also the tonal clashes created by the two remaining “hammer” motives (Table 2.1, eighth row): “hammer” motives (Table 2.1, eighth row): the first produces a three-note cluster around F (again surrounded by E and G), and the second produces a *four*-note cluster around F (E, F, G, and A). None of this displaces the obsession. As suggested by the provocative coda (Table 2.1, eleventh row), the tonic triad (now A major) and the repetitive F remain in a precarious, unresolved state of imbalance. According to the performance indications, the pianist might enact this tense unevenness physically: the C#-E of the arpeggiated chord are to be played by the right hand, thereby pulling the pianist’s body toward the piano’s bass as the fifth finger holds fast to the F in

the piano's treble. With the pianist's hand stretched open to maintain all registers, the dampers serve as judge and jury, bringing the conflict to a draw by silencing both agents at the same time.⁵³

Fixations (III): Accommodation and Prosthesis

Narratives of struggle or battle rely on the conflict of antagonistic agents: the more well-matched and aggressive the opponents, the more suspenseful the drama and the more surprising the resolution. But the oppositional agents of obsession are not always so opposed. We may think, for instance, of how obsessive behaviors are often put to good use, providing comfort and motivation, or promoting focused, ambitious, and efficient behaviors. This model suggests a more symbiotic relationship between rational and obsessive agents, in which fixed notes are “nudged” rather than “hammered,” accommodated rather than cured, made essential rather than made extraneous.

Peter Cornelius's song cycle *Trauer und Trost* (1854) offers an intimate portrait of a man grappling with the death of his beloved. As suggested by the title, the cycle begins in despair and ends with solace; the six poems (all written by Cornelius himself) progress through the various stages of grieving. As shown in **Table 2.2**, the tonic of the cycle is E minor/major, but an equally important note is its fifth, B: the only pitch

⁵³ In his performance of the “Allegretto,” Ronald Smith leaves the F ringing in the piano, radically recomposing Alkan's final verdict. *The Alkan Project: Carnival; 25 Pieces in Miniature*, Arabesque CD Z6523 (rec. 1984; pub. 1985). L. Poundie Burstein reads the F as a “disabled” note that resists the expected narratives of normalization; unlike, say, the cured “mania” of *Il maniático*, “This weirdly reiterated F does not achieve heroic victory or suffer tragic reversal, nor is it changed in any manner; it simply persists, as though insensible to the changing surroundings.” “*Les chansons des fous: On the Edge of Madness with Alkan*,” in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus, 187–98 (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 190–1.

1. "Trauer"	Em	
2. "Angedenken"	Em/D	[begins in E minor, ends in D major]
3. "Ein Ton"	Em	[voice sings B throughout]
4. "An den Traum"	Bm	[piano plays B throughout]
5. "Treue"	G	
6. "Troost"	E	

Table 2.2. Tonal regions of Cornelius, *Trauer und Trost*, op. 3

common to the tonic triads of the other songs, B also receives prominent placement at the cycle's center: in the third song, "Ein Ton," it is the only pitch sung by the voice, and in the following song, "An den Traum," it is played continuously in the piano accompaniment.⁵⁴ The significance of this B is revealed in the text of "Ein Ton":

Mir klingt ein Ton so wunderbar In Herz und Sinnen immerdar. Ist es der Hauch, der dir entschwebt, Als einmal noch dein Mund gebebt? Ist es des Glöckleins trüber Klang, Der dir gefolgt den Weg entlang? Mir klingt der Ton so voll und rein, Als schlöss' er deine Seele ein, Als stiegst liebend nieder du Und sängest meinen Schmerz in Ruh!	A sound rings so wondrously within my heart and mind forever. Is it the breath that wafted from you, as when your mouth once trembled? Is it the sad note of the bell, which followed you on your way? A sound rings so fully, so clearly, as if it embodied your soul, as if lovingly you descended and sang my pain to sleep!
---	--

An unidentified sound—wondrously ringing in the poet's heart and mind—provokes several hallucinations, each involving memories of the dead beloved: her breath, her funeral bell, her soul, and, finally, her consoling voice. As discussed early, delusions were conceptualized as obsessions that had become so firmly rooted in the mind so as to seem real. Here, the poet's hearing has been affected: a repetitive sound, ever ringing,

⁵⁴ The key structure of *Trauer und Trost* is discussed in Walther Dürr, *Das deutsche Sololied im 19. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zu Sprache und Musik* (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1984), and Jürgen Thym, "Crosscurrents in Song: Five Distinct Voices," in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rufus Hallmark, 153–85 (London: Prentice Hall, 1998).

embodies the obsession, at once bringing comfort to his grief while also preventing him from obtaining closure.

Cornelius's setting (**Example 2.9**) is an almost word-for-word enactment of the “fixed note” model of musical obsession: the obsessive agent—here, the singer—harnesses the vocal line into a static monotonal chant on B, while the second, rational agent—the piano—must restrict its palette of possible harmonies to those in which that pitch can be successfully accommodated. But the drama enacted between these two agents is not strictly oppositional—after all, the poet's obsessive thought is the memory of his dead beloved. Rather, the piano acts as a negotiator and accommodator: gently nudging the obsessive pitch out from its fixity by proposing various harmonies, then

Etwas bewegt

Mir klingt ein Ton so wunderbar in Herz und Sinnen immer
gebunden.

dar. Ist es der Hauch, der dir entschwebt, als ein-mal

Example 2.9. The singer's “fixed note” with an accommodational piano.
Cornelius, “Ein Ton” (*Trauer und Trost*, no. 2), mm. 1–31

m. 11
 noch dein Mund ge - beb? ist es des Glückleins trü - ber

m. 16
 Klang, der dir ge - folgt den Weg ent - lang?
 - scen - do

m. 20
 Mir klingt der Ton so voll und rein, als schloss'er del-ne See - le

m. 24
 ein, B \flat / B \flat ! als stie - gest

m. 28
 lie - bend nie - der du und sän - gest mei - nen Schmerz in Ruh!

altered dominant (G# for F#); will recur in mm. 27-8

G#/B held as common tones into altered dominant

The image displays a musical score for a vocal piece, continuing from Example 2.9. It consists of five systems, each representing a different measure (m. 11, m. 16, m. 20, m. 24, and m. 28). Each system includes a vocal line with German lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The piano accompaniment features various textures, including arpeggiated figures and block chords. Annotations include dynamic markings like 'cresc.', 'p', 'pp', and 'dim.', and specific harmonic notes such as 'B \flat / B \flat !'. Two callout boxes provide additional context: one points to a G# note in the piano part of m. 16, labeling it as an 'altered dominant (G# for F#); will recur in mm. 27-8', and another points to a G#/B chord in m. 24, noting it is 'held as common tones into altered dominant'.

Example 2.9, continued

scrambling to accommodate when the voice refuses to budge. The accented, prolonged arrival six-four chord in mm. 7–8 (repeated in mm. 13–14), for instance, raises expectations for a cadence in G major. But no such modulation occurs, perhaps because the B and G of the cadential six-four are not allowed to descend to the A and F# of the necessary applied dominant (V^7/III). This is but the first of several denied modulations that Cornelius has in store.

Beginning in m. 16, Cornelius begins two remarkable parallel phrases that bring the two agents into more explicit confrontation—the piano, proposing several modulations, and the voice, obsessively hanging on despite it all. (The voice-leading graph in **Figure 2.3** provides an interpretation of this passage.) A diminished-seventh chord in m. 16 hints at a modulation that may be the fixed note's undoing. Unfolded through an omnibus wedge through m. 17 into m. 18, the diminished-seventh's absent root, E, confirms a proposed modulation toward the subdominant, A. But the V^7/IV does not resolve as it should—nor could it, since such a modulation would dislodge the voice from its obsessive pitch. The voice declines, and the piano accommodates. Finding another triad with which B is consonant, the dissonant minor seventh in m. 18 (E-D) resolves outward in m. 19 (D#-D#), as a German augmented-sixth chord might. The resultant six-four chord suggests a goal of G-sharp minor, but the cadential resolution of the six-four suspension would require the obsessive voice to descend from B to A#—and this is not going to happen. Instead, the chord of m. 19 (B-D#-G#) is reinterpreted as a modified dominant in E minor (an added sixth filling in for the fifth). Cornelius has granted this sonority dominant function earlier in the cycle: the G# acts as a suspended

["omnibus"]

m. 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 27 28 29

Em: I ct^{o7} I I ct^{o7} I $V^{\#6/3}$ I

$G^{\#}m: Ger. \frac{6}{5} V_4$ (V^7/IV) $G^{\#}m: \frac{4}{IV} V^9$ I_4 $V^{\#6/3}$ I

cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ in $G^{\#}$ reinterpreted as $V_3^{\#}$ (with added $\#6$) in E minor

maximal threat to B: resists resolutions of inverted aug. 6th and dom. 9th

$[G^{\#}m: V^9/V V_4]$

Figure 2.3. Voice-leading sketch of Cornelius, “Ein Ton,” mm. 15–29

D: Ger.₅ V₄ no!
 E \flat m: V⁹ I no!
 Em: V₃⁶ - 5
 aug. 6th toward D? dominant ninth? B held as common tone

Figure 2.4. Possible resolutions of the chord in m. 24 (Cornelius, “Ein Ton”)

note, which may fleetingly resolve to F \sharp , if at all. The progression ends on the tonic, having proposed but bypassed two possible modulations on account of the voice’s fixity.

The stakes are raised in the second of these chromatically thorny phrases (mm. 21–29), which contrasts increasingly aggressive harmonic motion with an increasingly obsessed singer (who now recognizes the B as the embodiment of his beloved’s soul: “...als schlöss’ er deine Seele ein”). Mirroring mm. 15–19 in structure, this parallel phrase begins with the G \sharp of the diminished seventh similarly unfolding to its absent root (G \sharp to B \flat , mm. 22–24). (This unfolding, directed upward to a dissonant pitch, is unusual: the ascending diminished third, from G \sharp to B \flat , can be interpreted as a transformation of a descending minor seventh, from A \flat to B \flat , which would be a more common way of unfolding a dissonance of this nature.) The chord inserted into this unfolding (m. 23) initiates the moment of maximal threat to the immobility of the obsessive agent. V^{4/2} in E minor, this chord could point toward the tonic (where B would be comfortably accommodated). The chord’s resolution to the dominant of E-flat minor, however, suggests that it operates as an inverted augmented-sixth chord, with the major-second dissonance (A-B) resolving *inward* to B \flat . As can be seen in m. 24, this is what the

piano's bass does—but instead of descending by half step the singer resolutely holds fast, his B \natural now an enharmonic minor ninth above the bass.

This chord, first played in m. 24 and sustained for three full measures, is tantalizingly ambiguous in function: it pits the obsessive agent (B \natural) in direct conflict with the mobile agent (whose bass has arrived at B \flat). **Figure 2.4** provides some possible interpretations and resolutions. The chord's spelling suggests a German augmented-sixth chord, with an added B \natural on top: this would take us D—an option refuted by the obsessive agent. The chord could also be treated as a dominant ninth, with the singer's B respelled as C \flat : this would take us to E-flat minor, another option refuted by the obsessive agent. In the third possibility—this is the strategy pursued by Cornelius—the bass follows the root motion characteristic with the resolution of the dominant, leaping a perfect fourth from B \flat to E \flat (spelled as D \sharp).⁵⁵ But B \natural and G \sharp are held as common tones, presenting the rational agent with the same harmonic dilemma faced in m. 19. The resultant six-four chord—pulsed three times in m. 27—creates harmonic suspense: will the B natural descend to an A \sharp /B \flat ? It does not. As in the earlier phrase, D \sharp in the bass unfolds to B \natural , and the resultant B-D \sharp -G \sharp chord is reinterpreted as a modified dominant in the tonic, now E major. The lushly rolled chords in the music that follows (mm. 29–31) suggest a return to the vivid world of illusion.

⁵⁵ Given the distance between B \flat and its D \sharp resolution, pianists should weight the chord in m. 24 with a heavy emphasis on the bass, to contrast more explicitly with the singer's strengthened B \natural . The few recorded performances of this song deemphasize this B \natural , thereby diminishing the ambiguity of this conflict on expressive and structural levels. See, for instance, the otherwise masterful performance by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone) and Gerald Moore (piano), *Les introuvables de Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau*, vol. 3, EMI Classics CD 68509 (rec. 1967; pub. 1995).

Cornelius's song follows an agenda of negotiation and accommodation in its treatment of a fixed, repetitive pitch: the pianist might be said to harmonically coax or nudge the singer from its obsession; when the voice refuses to budge, the piano's harmonies must adjust themselves accordingly. At the moment of greatest conflict (m. 24, B \sharp clashing with B \flat), the rational agent ultimately capitulates, untying its cleverly twisted chromatic knot by seeking alternate strategies for safe, consonant resolution. Though B is common to the tonic triads of the three remaining songs of *Trauer und Trost*, the pitch gradually loses its influence on the progression of harmonies: the fifth song modulates to A-flat major, for instance, and the sixth song contains phrases in C major. By the cycle's end, the B—though still present—has ceased to be excessive, and the poet, no longer obsessively delusional, finds comfort in the prospect of a heavenly reunion with his beloved.

Vaughan Williams's "In Dreams" similarly uses a repeated note to evoke an obsessive love—but where Cornelius's song suggests the accommodation of obsession, "In Dreams" uses its repeated note as a prosthesis, filling in the deficiencies of a harmonically fractured environment. The song is part of Vaughan Williams's *Songs of Travel* (1901–04, on the poetry of Robert Louis Stevenson), which, in the tradition of the great *Wanderlieder* cycles, depicts an alienated wanderer, compelled to drift from place to place with only an ambiguous sense of purpose: continually moving, continually wandering. In the fifth song, the shadowy, elusive nature of the wanderer's obsessive behaviors briefly reveals itself:

In dreams unhappy, I behold you stand
 As heretofore:
 The unremember'd tokens in your hand
 Avail no more. [...]

He came and went. Perchance you wept a while,
 And then forgot.
 Ah me! But he that left you with a smile
 Forgets you not.

Haunting the poet's thoughts and nightmares, the memory of an absent beloved pulses through most of the song on a fixed, repeated note (**Example 2.10**). Its repetitions are syncopated, dislocated by one eighth-note from the surrounding musical material; due to its solo entrance, the fixed note's opening iterations distort our initial conception of the meter—are the C's syncopated, or is everything else (**Example 2.11**)? But just as they

Example 2.10. Obsessive syncopated C in Vaughan Williams, “In Dreams,” mm. 1–5

Example 2.11. A “normalized” metrical reinterpretation of Vaughan Williams, “In Dreams”



Example 2.12. Ending on a syncopated C. Vaughan Williams, “In Dreams,” mm. 42–45

disrupt metrical order, the syncopated fixed notes also *establish* harmonic order. By filling in the absent tonal center of the opening measures of the song, the excessive C acts as a “crutch” of sorts, stabilizing the rickety tonic six-four chord, while still revealing itself as ill-fitted and artificial on account of the resultant metrical discrepancies.

Descending by step, this “obsessive prosthesis” is fairly prominent during the first stanza of the song (it will also serve as the missing root of a passage in B-flat minor), then briefly retreats for the second. It reappears and gains in intensity during the final outburst (“Ah me!”), the entire accompaniment now throbbing with syncopated chords. A gradual decrescendo depletes the bulky texture, and the song ends inconclusively (**Example 2.12**): the final chord, like the first, is an unstable tonic six-four. Though nearly all examples discussed so far have considered excessively repeated notes as irritants of one sort or another, the obsession here is harmonically necessary—its capacity to “irritate” the music enacted only through its rhythm.

Ending on an Obsessive Note

There are a few other examples of obsessive notes tolling away in the repertoire: we may think of the tapping of the F# in Schubert’s “Die liebe Farbe” (**Example 2.13**);

klei - - - den, in grü - ne Thrä - nen - wei - - - den: mein
 Ja - - - gen, wohl - auf - durch Haid' und Ha - - - gen! mein
 Wa - - - sen, deckt mich mit grü - nen Ra - - - sen: mein

Example 2.13. The fixed F# in Schubert, “Die liebe Farbe” (*Die schöne Müllerin*, no. 16), mm. 7–9

Très lent [$\text{♩}=69$]
 Sans presser ni ralentir jusqu'à la fin

pp

un peu marqué

Sourdine durant toute la pièce

p expressif

Example 2.14. Fixed B \flat octaves in Ravel, “Le gibet” (*Gaspard de la nuit*), mm. 1–7

the B \flat octaves in Ravel’s “Le gibet,” which, as with the B in Cornelius’s “Ein Ton,” suggest a phantom sound repeatedly heard (**Example 2.14**); the anguished G# that pierces its way through an equally obsessive string section in Schnittke’s Piano Quintet (**Example 2.15**); or even the rigid, severe ostinato winding its way through Bernard Hermann’s score for Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*—an obsessive tale if there ever were one. In these and other examples, repetitive pitches—used as either a

The image shows a musical score for a piano quintet. It consists of five staves. The top four staves are for string instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The bottom two staves are for piano. The score is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. A specific G# note is highlighted as an 'obsessive' element, appearing in various parts of the score, often with dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The piano part features a sequence of chords, some marked with an '8' and a dotted line, suggesting an octaved or sustained texture.

Example 2.15. An obsessive G# in Schnittke, Piano Quintet (1972), mm. 50–53

post-Classical “topic” of sorts, a signifying code used for narrative purposes; or as a reflection of a composer’s own mental state—can embody with impressive specificity the historically relevant spatial metaphors of mental pathology. This is done, primarily, by converting the model of oppositional agencies within the mind into oppositional musical voices, which have the capacity to unfold simultaneously in musical space. And while there are certainly other ways of representing mental pathology, this “fixed note” device seems to be obsession’s most literal embodiment, hinting at what the abstract and ultimately unknowable inner processes of the obsessive mind might *sound* like.

CHAPTER THREE:
BEAUTY, UGLINESS, AND THE CHALLENGE OF SYNTHESIS
IN SCHREKER'S *DIE GEZEICHNETEN*

Hearing Double

Let's begin where Franz Schreker does, with the justly famous intermingling of D-major and B \flat -minor triads that opens his unjustly obscure opera *Die Gezeichneten* (**Example 3.1**). At once highly dissonant and highly stable, the hexatonic collection resulting from this triadic combination—D \flat , D \natural , F \natural , F \sharp , A, B \flat , or set class (014589)—exhibits a number of extraordinary properties. The considerable harmonic distance between these two chords—which may be interpreted as the distance between the major tonic (D) to its flatted minor submediant (B \flat)—contrasts with the efficiency of their voice leadings: to move from the first chord to the second, one voice ascends by half step and two voices descend by half step. As shown in **Figures 3.1a** and **3.1b**, each member of the major triad (D-F \sharp -A) clashes by semitone with a corresponding member of the minor triad (D \flat -F \natural -B \flat), resulting in three minor-second dissonances. Plotted on a chromatic clock face (**Figure 3.1c**), the hexatonic set is also revealed to be inversionally symmetrical around these three dyads, each pair of pitches equidistant from the other two pairs within a looped chromatic scale. In quality and color and signification, the two triads are wholly oppositional—major vs. minor, lightly sharpened vs. heavily flatted,

Langsam.

Baßklarinetten in B. *mp* sehr ausdrucksvoll (ben legato)

Klavier. *pp* (mit Versch.)

Harfe 1. (a due) *pp legato*

Harfe 2. (a due) *pp legato*

Celesta.**) (a due) *mp* r.H. i.H.

Violine 1. Sord. *pp*

Violine 2. Sord. *pp pian.*

Bratsche. *mp* sehr ausdrucksvoll (ben legato)

Violoncello. *mp* sehr ausdrucksvoll (ben legato)

Kontrabaß. *mp* sehr ausdrucksvoll (ben legato)

Langsam.

Example 3.1. D-major triads alternating with B \flat -minor triads—the Schrekerian “chiaroscuro.” *Die Gezeichneten*, prelude, mm. 1–2

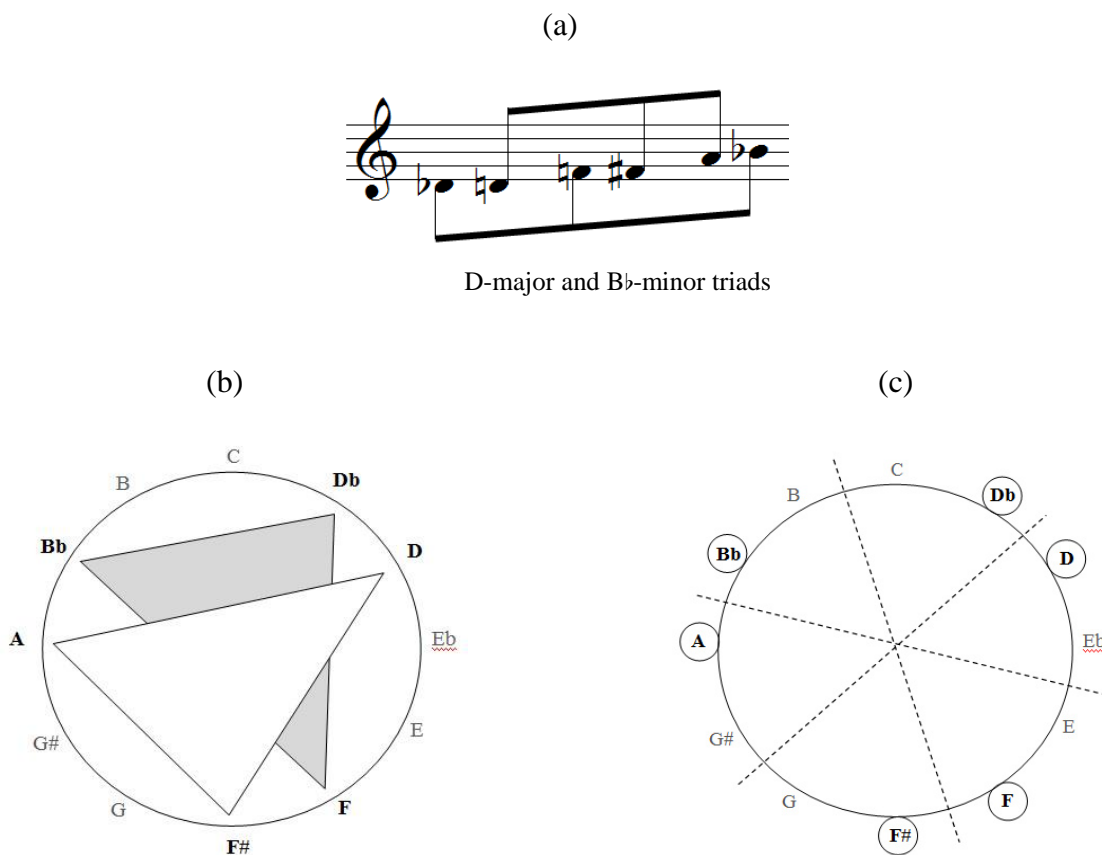


Figure 3.1. The D \flat -D \sharp -F \flat -F \sharp -A-B \flat hexachord, shown as (a) three semitonal dyads, (b) interlocking triads, and (c) an inversionally symmetrical set (014589)

familiar vs. obscure—and yet they complement each other well when combined, creating a master set that is symmetrically balanced by three different axes.¹

Though juxtaposed most distinctly in the second violins and by the beaming in the celesta, the two triads blend more seamlessly in other instruments. Consider the melodic sextuplets in the first violins, which alternate members of both triads: the first group of first violins plays A-C \sharp -D-E \sharp -F \sharp -E \sharp —a melodic line derived from the strict alternation

¹ Defined by Richard Cohn as a “hexatonic pole,” this type of progression is discussed at length in his article “Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Music,” *Music Analysis* 15 (1996): 9–40.

between members of the D-major triad (A-D-F \sharp) and members of the B \flat -minor triad (C \sharp /D \flat -E \sharp /F \natural). Note also the neighbor-tone figures in the second group of first violins and the major sevenths in the third group, which switch between the two triads by alternating the members of the three aforementioned half-step dyads (F \sharp and E \sharp /F \natural ; D and C \sharp /D \flat ; and A and B \flat). In one form or another, all instruments within Schreker's orchestral collage produce this rapid fluctuation between oppositional triads, and the spectacular cumulative effect has been described as musical "glittering" (Sherry D. Lee), "shimmering" (Peter Franklin), and "beguiling iridescence" (Christopher Hailey).² Theodor W. Adorno traffics further in these imageries of flickering light in his description of a "Schrekerian chiaroscuro" (an orchestral "shimmering" of sound-colors, quickly fluctuating between light and dark). As it would in the visual arts, this musical *chiaroscuro* balances brightness and shadow to form a balanced, stable synthesis—what Adorno describes in his discussion of Schreker's musical style as the composer's distinctive "integration of differences."³ The triads of D major and B \flat minor are particularly well-suited for this oppositional pairing: Richard Cohn has proposed that harmonic progressions of this kind (consisting of a tonic major triad and a minor counterpart, rooted one major third below) often signify as motion from a *heimlich* sonority to an *unheimlich* one, with the minor

² Sherry D. Lee, "Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity," (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2003), 178; Peter Franklin, "'Wer weiss, Vater, ob das nicht Engel sind?' Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*," in *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany: 1848 to the Third Reich*, ed. Nikolaus Bacht, 173–83 (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 178; and Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker (1878–1934): A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

³ Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, translated by Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso, 1992), 136 and 140–41.

chord acting as an “uncanny resemblance” of the tonic “home.”⁴ Here, we find D major and its shadowy other, B \flat minor, in interlocked opposition—their combination inherently dissonant, yet still producing a state of harmonic balance and stasis, a radiant sonic field over which the bass clarinet, violas, and cellos play the opera’s main theme. As orchestrated, this opening hexatonic space determines much of the prelude (the entirety of reh. 1 and reh. 17) and returns at the end of the opera (act III, mm. 1323–27)—and only once recurs within the opera proper. Appropriately, it does so at the opera’s moral climax (act II, mm. 805–10), in which two oppositional forces—a lighted agent of “beauty” and a shadowy agent of “ugliness”—merge into a state of empathic synthesis and sublime union.

“The Tragedy of the Ugly Man”

Set to the composer’s own libretto and completed in 1916, *Die Gezeichneten* (translated, loosely, as “The Branded Ones”) is a complex and ambitious opera about many things, very little of which coheres into a well-plotted, well-argued whole. (To suggest that the opera is “about” any one topic, or even that any one of its topics is presented in an entirely consistent manner, would be folly.) But within this tangled knot of an opera, two thematic threads, which intertwine at its narrative crux, seem to dominate. The first is contingent upon an historical development within mid-nineteenth-century phenomenological aesthetics and early-twentieth-century psychology: the emergence of the concept of *Einfühlung* (literally, “feeling into,” but more commonly translated as “empathy”). Following the language of Sigmund Freud, *Einfühlung* is the

⁴ Richard Cohn, “Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57 (2004): 285–323.

process whereby “we take the producing person’s psychical state into consideration, put ourselves into it and try to understand it by comparing it with our own.”⁵ An empathic person will observe a given signifier (a person smiling, for instance), “feel into” (*empfinden*) this signifier by drawing from personal experience (“I know I smile when I am happy”), and then project that personal experience onto the observed other (“the smiling person is happy”), thereby merging subject and object through communal experiential knowledge. An empathic failure occurs when the differences between subject and object cannot be bridged, when nothing from the subject’s experience allows the subject to relate itself to the object in question.

And this takes us to the second of Schreker’s two “thematic threads” mentioned above: the contrasting aesthetics of physical beauty and physical ugliness. Deformity, monstrosity, grotesquery, and the “shadow self” were of central concern to early expressionists, Schreker included.⁶ Written originally for Alexander Zemlinsky, who wanted to compose an opera about “the tragedy of the ugly man,” Schreker’s libretto for *Die Gezeichneten* fosters a tension between beauty and ugliness, first creating an aesthetic distinction between the two and then allowing their separate qualities to blur,

⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten* (1905), translated in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1960), 230.

⁶ See, for instance, Klaus Vondung, “‘Schön bei allem Grausigen’: Zur ambivalenten Faszination des Häßlichen zwischen Fin de siècle und Expressionismus” in *Im Schatten des Schönen: Die Ästhetik des Hässlichen in historischen Ansätzen und aktuellen Debatten*, ed. Heiner F. Klemme, 173–84 (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2006). On musical grotesqueries of the time, including a brief discussion of Schreker and *Die Gezeichneten*, see Federico Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge: Das musikalische Groteske in der Wiener Moderne (1885–1914)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006).

intermingle, and, in some cases, complement one another.⁷ (Intrigued by his own libretto, Schreker decided to compose the opera himself; several years later, Zemlinsky would compose his “tragedy of the ugly man,” *Der Zwerg*.⁸) Of central concern is the problem of representing beauty and ugliness in artwork (one of the central characters in the opera is a painter); indeed, the opera’s cryptic title draws part of its elusive meaning from the relationship between the words *zeichnen* (to draw) and *gezeichnet* (marked, branded). As a number of art historians in the late nineteenth century argued, aesthetic constructions of beauty imply the absence of ugliness, a pure whiteness free from shadow; and aesthetic constructions of ugliness imply the absence of beauty, a murky darkness devoid of light. Following this logic, the terms derive their meanings as the inverse of their opposites, so that one word cannot exist without drawing upon the other. Sensations of beauty resulted from an empathic merging of subject and object. Sensations of ugliness, however, were the result of an empathic failure—the disfigured, deformed object too impenetrable and unfathomable for the (nondisabled, it was assumed) subject to establish an empathic understanding.

Played out in musical microcosm through the interplay of D-major and B \flat -minor triads of the opera’s Prelude, this struggle to create empathic *synthesis* between oppositional qualities, between beauty and ugliness, between self and shadow, is

⁷ Schreker, recalling Zemlinsky’s request: “Schreiben Sie doch einmal die Tragödie des häßlichen Mannes.” Quoted in Haidy Schreker-Bures, Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, and Werner Oehlmann, *Franz Schreker* (Vienna: Elisabeth Lafite, 1970), 22.

⁸ Based on Oscar Wilde’s short story *The Birthday of the Infanta* (which, incidentally, was also set to music by Schreker as a pantomime in 1908), Zemlinsky’s *Der Zwerg* was premiered in 1921. Sherry D. Lee’s recent study of the opera also examines constructions of ugliness and subjectivity, though along different lines than those I explore here in *Die Gezeichneten*. See her essay “The Other in the Mirror, or, Recognizing the Self: Wilde’s and Zemlinsky’s Dwarf,” *Music & Letters* 91 (2010): 198–223.

consistently alluded to throughout Schreker's convoluted libretto. Ugliness—as an aesthetic category standing outside the limits of early models of empathic embodiment—offers an especially valuable interpretive framework for the opera's most important scene, which dramatizes the psychological process of empathy through an elaborate depiction of the artistic process of portraiture.

Before proceeding, a brief overview of the opera's plot and its reception history is in order. Set in sixteenth-century Genoa, Schreker's "tragedy of the ugly man" is the tragedy of Alviano Salvago, described by Schreker in his libretto as "an ugly man, about thirty years old, with a hunched back and large, shining eyes."⁹ Differing from more commonplace representations of the hunchback as a lowly entertainer (*Rigoletto* and *Pagliacci*) or tragic recluse (Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* and its numerous operatic adaptations), Schreker's Alviano is a wealthy, well-respected nobleman.¹⁰ His fortunes have allowed him to create Elysium, an island paradise of beauty and sensuality—so beautiful and so sensual, in fact, that he has not dared to set foot on his own artistic creation, lest his deformity pollute its purity. (Immediately, this premise establishes beauty and ugliness as oppositional poles.) Unbeknownst to Alviano, but

⁹ "...häßlicher Mann von ungefähr 30 Jahren, buckling, große leuchtende Augen." Franz Schreker, *Die Gezeichneten* [libretto] (Vienna and Leipzig: Universal Edition, 1918), 5. Further references to the libretto will cite this edition. English translations are adapted from the translation prepared by Gary Bramall in the booklet for *Die Gezeichneten*, London CD 444442-2 (rec. 1993; pub. 1995).

¹⁰ Operatic adaptations of Hugo's novel are numerous, though they lie beyond the periphery of the standard repertoire; see especially the adaptations by Louise Bertin (1836), Alberto Mazzucato (1838), Eugène Prévost (1840), Alexander Dargomizhsky (1847), William Henry Fry (1864), Arthur Thomas (1883), and, roughly contemporaneous with *Die Gezeichneten*, Franz Schmidt (1914). Edmond Dédé also composed a "Quasimodo Symphony," which was premiered in 1865 in New Orleans. The stock character of the hunchback is discussed in *The Tyranny of the Normal: An Anthology*, ed. Carol Donley and Sheryl Buckley (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996).

revealed to him during the course of the opera, the island has already been polluted by the activities of Vitellozzo Tamare, the handsome count who has been holding secret orgies in the island's underground grotto—and kidnapping and raping Genoese women to do so. Disapproving, Alviano decides to sell the island to the city of Genoa (an altruistic gesture complicated by various subplots involving political machinations, none of which is relevant to this essay).

During negotiations with the city's rulers, Alviano encounters the mayor's daughter Carlotta Nardi, the third member of what will eventually become the Alviano-Carlotta-Tamare "love triangle." She is a "painter of souls" and, intrigued by the disfigured nobleman, convinces Alviano to sit for a portrait. The narrative crux of the opera, its moral and aesthetic climax, follows from this agreement: Carlotta paints Alviano's figure in an extended scene that brings the two characters into an intimate (and *empathic*) union. Reaching an ecstatic peak as she completes his portrait, Carlotta and Alviano profess their love for each other; her fragile heart already weakened by tuberculosis, she collapses in his embrace.

Carlotta awakens from her momentary spell as a changed woman, no longer expressing interest in the subject of her completed painting. Her attention turns instead toward Tamare, who had set his lustful sights on her in their first encounter earlier in the opera. In the third act, which takes place entirely on Elysium, Tamare easily seduces Carlotta, and the two quickly flee to the island's underground grotto to consummate their fast-realized attraction. Alviano, meanwhile, operates under the assumption that his (passionate, but chaste) encounter with Carlotta held the promise of a married future together—a fantasy vanished when he arrives at the orgiastic grotto and finds Carlotta

and Tamare *in flagrante*. As promised, this “tragedy of the ugly man” ends tragically for Alviano: Genoese law enforcement ultimately believes him to responsible for the multiple kidnappings of the city’s women, and the formerly sympathetic citizenry quickly turns on him; taunted by Tamare, Alviano kills the count in a fit of rage; and, awakening in the grotto to find her new lover dead, Carlotta does not recognize Alviano—instead recoiling from him in fear (“A troll!” she cries, “a creature of the night!”). The noble hunchback descends into madness.

As mentioned above, *Die Gezeichneten* is an opera about many things: in addition to the concept of empathy and its interaction with the beauty/ugliness binary, even this selective synopsis touches on a number of other equally prominent topics and themes, including degeneracy, the excesses of art, the dangers of false utopias, love vs. lust, and an especially pernicious conception of femininity (suggestive of the gender theories found in Otto Weininger’s *Geschlecht und Charakter*, a text of great influence to Schreker’s early works).¹¹ Explicit in its frank depictions of sexuality, such scandalous

¹¹ Interpretations of *Die Gezeichneten* along these lines are rich and diverse. See especially Franklin, “Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy,”; Lee, “Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity,” 168–201; Walter Windisch-Laube, “Thomas Mann versus Franz Schreker?” *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch* 7 (1994): 71–122; Reinhard Ermen, “Der ‘Erotiker’ und der ‘Asket’: Befragung zweier Klischees am Beispiel der *Gezeichneten* und des *Palestrina*,” in *Franz Schreker (1878–1934) zum 50. Todestag*, ed. Ermen, 47–57 (Aachen: Rimbaud, 1984); Hellmut Kühn, “Warum ist Alviano Salvago verkrüppelt? Über die Möglichkeit der Erweckung eines erneuerten Interesses an Schrekers Opern,” in *Franz-Schreker-Symposion*, ed. Elmar Budde and Rudolph Stefan, 102–9 (Berlin: Colloquium, 1970). On the problematic characterization of Carlotta, see Carmen Ottner, “Frauengestalten in der österreichischen Oper: Zum Schaffen der bedeutendsten Komponisten ab der Jahrhundertwende bis in die Dreißiger Jahre,” in *Kundry & Elektra und ihre leidenden Schwestern: Schizophrenie und Hysterie/Frauenfiguren im Musik-Theater*, ed. Silvia Kronberger and Ulrich Müller, 145–69 (Anif and Salzburg: Mueller-Speiser, 2003); and Claire Taylor-Jay, “‘I am blessed with fruit’: Masculinity, Androgyny and Creativity in Early Twentieth-Century German Music,” in *Masculinity and Western*

subject matter earned *Die Gezeichneten* a great deal of “buzz” in critical circles: the opera was among Schreker’s most successful, receiving performances in over twenty different German cities in the decade after the 1918 premiere. By the 1930s, however, the political and cultural climate had become unfavorable to the composer, who was Jewish: his final two operas (*Der Schmied von Gent* and *Christophorus*) were critical failures, he was forced to resign from his position as the director of the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, and, in 1938, he was unceremoniously entered into the Nazi’s *Entartete Musik* exhibit (a flyer read, “There was no sexual-pathological aberration [Schreker] would not have set to music”).¹² Over the course of a few years, an important composer’s masterwork had faded into obscurity (a condition surely worsened by the enormous cost of assembling Schreker’s 120-piece orchestra), and only in recent years have a handful productions begun to appear in Germany, Austria, and, as of April 2010, the United States.¹³ Though underperformed, *Die Gezeichneten* occupies an important position in the history of early modernism and expressionism, not only as an important artifact of music-cultural history but also as a valuable contribution to the histories of disability representation and embodiment discourse; as we will see, Schreker consistently alludes to these themes of disability (as disfigured ugliness) and embodiment (as empathy) throughout his libretto, and they emerge as prominent in the opera’s most crucial scene.

Musical Practice, ed. Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson, 161–182 (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009).

¹² Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 298.

¹³ The opera’s first complete postwar staging took place in Frankfurt in 1979 (directed by Jonathan Miller). Notable recent productions include a revival during the Salzburg Festival in 2005 (directed by Nicholas Lehnhoff and preserved on DVD) and the U.S. premiere by the Los Angeles Opera in April 2010.

Similarity, Empathy, Consummation

Though precedent for the concept of aesthetic and psychological empathy may be found earlier, principally in the works of Herder and Novalis, it was Robert Vischer, in his influential doctoral dissertation *Ueber optische Formgefühl: Ein Beitrag zur Aesthetik* (1873), who first used the term *Einfühlung* extensively. The young art historian and aesthete, grappling with the enigma of aesthetic contemplation, writes that “the criterion of sensation lies, I believe, in the concept of *similarity*. This is not so much a harmony within an object as a harmony between the object and the subject, which arises because the object has a harmonious form and formal effect corresponding to subjective harmony.”¹⁴ This communal experience—in which formal properties of an object (a painting, for instance) correspond to similar properties within the subject (its observer)—creates empathic synthesis. This mode of perception and contemplation results in an embodied experience of external phenomena:

When I observe a stationary object, I can without difficulty place myself within its inner structure, at its center of gravity. I can think my way into it, mediate its size with my own, stretch and expand, bend and confine myself to it. With a small object, partially or totally confined and constricted, I very precisely concentrate my feeling. My feeling will be compressed and modest (a star, a flower: true reality; a tight belt: a constrictive feeling). When, on the contrary, I see a large or partially over-proportioned form, I experience a feeling of mental grandeur and breadth, a freedom of will (a building, water, air: true reality; a loose cloak: an expansive feeling). More specifically, the compressed or upward striving,

¹⁴ “Als Massstab für den Charakter der Empfindung glaube ich, kann man einfach den Begriff der *Aehnlichkeit* aufstellen. Es handelt sich nicht sowohl um eine Harmonie im Objekt als um eine Harmonie zwischen Objekt und Subjekt, welche dadurch zu Stande kommt, dass das Objekt eine der subjektiven Harmonie entsprechende harmonische Form und Formwirkung besitzt.” Robert Vischer, *Ueber optische Formgefühl: Ein Beitrag zur Aesthetik* (Leipzig: Hermann Credner, 1873), 5–6. Translated in *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics (1873–1893)*, ed. and trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities), 95.

the bent or broken impression of an object, fills us with a corresponding mental feeling of oppression, depression, or aspiration, a submissive or shattered state of mind.¹⁵

This observation—that an observer will respond emotionally, even physically, to an object based on perception of its formal properties—was an important development for aestheticians and art historians in the mid-nineteenth-century and well beyond. As James Elkins has recently written, Vischer’s influential conceptualization of empathy “can help us understand how our bodies are partly our own, and partly owned by the objects we see.”¹⁶

The Munich psychologist and philosopher Theodor Lipps first considered the psychological implications of *Einfühlung* in 1897 and followed this initial investigation with a flurry of publications on the subject during the first decade of the twentieth century. Where Vischer considered the empathic connection between person and object

¹⁵ “Betrachte ich einen ruhigen, festen Gegenstand, so kann ich mich ganz folgsam an die Stelle seines inneren Aufbau’s, seines Schwerpunktes setzen, Ich bilde mich demselben ein, vermittele meinen Umfang mit dem seinigen, strecke und erweitere, biege und beschränke mich in demselben. Habe ich es mit einer kleinen, ganz oder theil weise beschränkten und verengten Erscheinung zu thun, so wird sich mein Gefühl demnach pünktlich concentriren, es wird sich ducken und bescheiden (Stern, Blume [eigentliche Wirklichkeit: enger Gürtel]. —Zusammenföhlung). Stehe ich dagegen vor einer grossen oder theil weise übermässigen Form, so werde ich ein Gefühl von geistiger Grossheit und Weite, von Willensfreiheit bekommen (Gebäude; Wasser, Luft [Eigentliche Wirklichkeit: weiter Mantel].—Ausföhlung).—Und—mehr im Einzelnen—erfüllt uns das gedrückte oder emporgerichtete, das geneigte oder gebrochene Gepräge einer Erscheinung mit einem geistig gedrückten, deprimirten oder stolzgehobenen, mit einem nachgiebig milden oder zerrissenen Stimmungstone.” Vischer, *Ueber optische Formgeföhl*, 21. Translated in *Empathy, Form, and Space*, 104–5.

¹⁶ James Elkins, *Pictures of the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 24. For more on the early history of aesthetic empathy, see especially Michael Fried, *Menzel’s Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 35–9; *Empathy and its Development*, ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Bjarne Sode Funch, *The Psychology of Art Appreciation* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1997), 195–99.

(a work of art, a building, a tool, the natural environment), Lipps focused instead on the empathic connection between people. The two processes, though, are described in similar terms: “When I see a gesture, there exists within me a tendency to experience in myself the emotion that naturally arises from that gesture. And when there is no obstacle, the tendency is realized.”¹⁷ Lipps contrasts an external *gesture* [*Gebärde*] with an internal *emotion* [*Affekt*], and his construction of interpersonal empathy thus creates a connection between external appearance (as evidenced through expressions, gesticulations, or other corporeal signs) and the internal motivations behind them, which are hidden from sight but “felt into” by empathy. Further, knowledge of others is predicated on self-knowledge; one must feel a sensation for oneself before feeling it into somebody else.

In his libretto for *Die Gezeichneten*, Schreker seems to consider these limitations of empathy by contrasting the different perspectives of Tamare and Alviano. The handsome count, blissfully (and dangerously) numb to signs of distress, states, “There are some men who *only see light*, and to whom *darkness is alien*. I was such a one. If a friend complained to me of grief and sorrow I heard him out, yes, but *did not understand him*.”¹⁸ Drawing on a deeper well of knowledge, the hunchbacked nobleman says, “*I can see into depths* of which you cannot fathom”—his experiences as a disabled man granting

¹⁷ “Es besteht also in mir allerdings, wenn ich eine Gebärde sehe, die Tendenz, den Affekt, aus welchem dieselbe naturgemäss hervorgeht, in mir zu erleben. Und diese Tendenz verwirklicht sich, wenn kein Hindernis besteht.” Theodor Lipps, “Das Wissen von fremden Ichen,” in *Psychologische Untersuchungen*, ed. Lipps, 694–722 (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1907), 719. Quoted and translated in Gustav Jahoda, “Theodor Lipps and the Shift from ‘Sympathy’ to ‘Empathy,’” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 41 (2005): 157.

¹⁸ “Es gibt Menschen, Herzog, die sehen nur Licht—und das Dunkel ist ihnen fremd. Solch einer war ich... Klage ein Freund mir von Leid und Schmerzen—hört ich ihn wohl—doch verstand ihn nicht” (31).

him a capacity for empathy far greater than that of Tamare.¹⁹ These passages also demonstrate the significance of *sight* within the opera: one empathizes through one's eyes ("see the light," "see into depths"). This formulation will present problems for Alviano, whose physicality (apparent through sight) resists the formation of empathic connections.

The study of these two strands of aesthetic and psychological empathy thus fit well into the agenda of early-twentieth-century psychoanalytic theory, which sought to uncover and assign meaning to the elusive subconscious, as well as the agenda of the newly formed field of phenomenology, which engaged with similar concepts like "interpersonal subjectivity." (Writing under the advisement of phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein's doctoral dissertation of 1916 was entitled *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*; the same year saw the pre-premiere publication of *Die Gezeichneten*.) We may think ahead to similar incarnations of empathy in philosophy and the sciences—for instance, to Hermann Rorschach's inkblot tests, published in 1921, in which subjective interpretations of abstract imagery supposedly reveal otherwise hidden mental disorders; to Ludwig Wittgenstein's distinction between "seeing," which is reflexive, and "seeing-as," which is predicated on a subjective imagination; and to the relatively recent discovery of "mirror neurons" in the brain, which empathize with, or "mirror," an observed object by acting as if that external object were in fact the self.²⁰ Indeed, since Vischer's and Lipps's early investigations, the topic and its theoretical underpinnings have been so widely adopted and discussed that it is easy to forget that *Einfühlung*

¹⁹ "...weil ich in Tiefen blicke, die Du nicht ahnst..." (80).

²⁰ Hermann Rorschach, *Psychodiagnostik* (Bern: Bircher, 1921); Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1952); *Mirrors in the Brain: How Our Minds Share Actions and Emotions*, ed. Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Sinigaglia, trans. Frances Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 115–38.

(coined in 1858) and *empathy* (coined in 1903 as a translation of that German term) have had a relatively short history—a history that coincides with much of Schreker’s early compositional output.²¹

In *Die Gezeichneten*, sex is used to dramatize the process of empathic union, the fusing of subject and object. And *eyes* frequently stand in as both the observing subjects and observed objects of perception: they seek to determine the true inner nature of another person, while also functioning as the proverbial “windows to the soul,” involuntarily communicating otherwise hidden motivations and intentions. Eyes, as previously mentioned, perform as the agents of empathy: both passive and active, pairs of eyes must first interlock with one another for connection (and consummation) to occur. For instance, Schreker’s libretto includes several indications of how the eyes of Carlotta and Tamare at first do not—and then, do—interlock. Early in the opera, Carlotta taunts Tamare: “You are so tall, so powerful and strong, so high above me. I have to stretch just so that *I can look into these eyes of yours*, so confident of victory...!”²² In the same conversation, Tamare speaks of a similar ocular disconnection, describing the moment when he first spotted her: “Do you recall, Signorina [Carlotta], a rider [Tamare himself] early this morning...? The rider *gazed into two sparkling eyes*; confused and dazzled by them, he forgot to rein in his horse.”²³ In these early scenes, the fixed, interlocked gaze eludes the future couple, preventing their empathic connection—but in the third act, when

²¹ For more on the history of empathy, see George W. Pigman, “Freud and the History of Empathy,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 76 (1995): 242.

²² “Ihr seid so groß, so mächtig und stark—so hoch über mir. – Ich muß mich stricken—seht—Euch nur in die (*spöttisch*) ach, so siegesgewissen Augen zu blicken – !” (17)

²³ “Erinnert Ihr Euch, Signorina, an einen Reiter, heut’ früh – ...Der Reiter aber sah in zwei blitzende Augen; vergaß darob, verwirrt und geblendet, zu zügeln das Roß” (16–17).

Carlotta and Tamare consummate their passion in the underground grotto on the island of Elysium, eyes unite and intentions are revealed. Dramatizing the nature of this internal exposure, Tamare first wears a mask (as part of an earlier bacchanal); after listening to Tamare confess his love, Carlotta insists, “Let me peer under your mask, *to see if your eyes are bright or dull*”; they are bright.²⁴ After Alviano catches the two lovers in the grotto, Tamare defends his actions: “*Her eyes begged for delight. From her mouth came an excruciating confession; fear and horror—but in her eyes there blazed, untamed and unruly, the sparks of kindled desire.*”²⁵ For Tamare, eyes are the principle operators by which the two subjects detect and express submission (even while other gestures of the body—including spoken word—might protest). Reading into Carlotta’s eyes the same affects of his own passion (his eyes, “bright,” and her eyes, “blazing”), Tamare finds both carnal and empathic synthesis.

As Vischer wrote, empathy requires “similarity,” and an empathic connection (as with, one presumes, Carlotta and Tamare) results in harmonious synthesis between two people. Difference, however, poses a more destabilizing problem. For instance, Lipps writes of seeing

a person who appeared...arrogant. I experience within myself the arrogance contained in that look. It is not just that I imagine this inner conduct or inner condition; it is not just that I know about it; rather, it obtrudes, forces itself into my experience. But within myself I work against it. My inner being objects; I feel in the arrogant look a life-denial or life-inhibition affecting me, a denial of my personality. Because of that,

²⁴ “Doch laßt mich blicken durch Eure Maske, ob hell sind Eure Augen—oder trübe” (69).

²⁵ “[I]hre Augen flehten um Lust. Aus ihrem Munde rang sich lost ein qualvoll Bekenntnis; Angst und Entsetzen—doch in den Augen, wild unbändig, sprühten die Funken entfachter Begierde” (80).

and only because of that, the arrogance can hurt me. My feeling of discomfort rests on this negative empathy.²⁶

Lipps imagines a consciousness at once active, capable of penetrating the external object, and passive, capable of being penetrated—thus creating a fluidity whereby subject and object, perhaps involuntarily and uncontrollably, merge into one. “Positive empathy” results from a “consonant” union, while “negative empathy” results from a “discordant” union (the musical metaphors are Lipps’s own).²⁷ In her essay *Beauty and Ugliness* (1912), Violet Paget goes further, writing that Lipps’s concept of empathy “would explain how beauty has come to be associated with all our notions of order, of goodness, of health, and of more complete life; and ugliness on the contrary with everything by which the life of body and soul is diminished and jeopardized.”²⁸ Implicit in these texts is the neutral able-bodiedness of the subject. When empathically merging itself with an external object, the subject experiences corporeal similarity as confirmation and substantiation of its own form, and therefore perceives the object, and itself, as beautiful (which, as Lipps writes, the human forms inherently is). But the neutrally able-bodied

²⁶ “Ich sehe...einen Menschen nicht stolz, sondern hochmütig blicken. Auch den in diesem Blick liegenden Hochmut erlebe ich in mir. Ich stelle mir dies innere Verhalten oder diese innere Zuständlichkeit nicht nur vor; ich weiss nicht nur davon; sondern sie drängt sich mir auf, drängt sich in mein Erleben ein. Aber ich arbeite innerlich dagegen. Mein inneres Wesen widersetzt sich; ich fühle dem hochmütigen Blick eine eigene innere Lebensnegation oder Lebenshemmung, eine Verneinung meiner Persönlichkeit. Darum und nur darum kann mich der Hochmut verletzen. Mein Gefühl der Unlust ist begründet in dieser negativen Einfühlung.” Theodor Lipps, *Ästhetik: Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst*, vol. 1, *Grundlegung der Ästhetik* (Hamburg and Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1903), 139–40. Quoted and translated in Jahoda, “Theodor Lipps,” 158.

²⁷ “Positive Einfühlung ist das Erlebnis jenes Einklanges, negative das Erlebnis jenes Missklanges.” Theodor Lipps, *Die ästhetische Betrachtung und die bildende Kunst* (Hamburg and Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1906), 21. Quoted and translated in Jahoda, “Theodor Lipps,” 158–9.

²⁸ Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) and C. Anstruther-Thomson, *Beauty & Ugliness and Other Studies in Psychological Aesthetics* (London and New York: John Lan, 1912), 30.

subject experiences corporeal difference as contrary to this prototypical form—*disfigurement, deformity*—and therefore alien, obscure, and (according to Paget) ugly.²⁹ Aesthetic constructions of an external object—interpreting it as “beautiful” or “ugly”—is grounded first in the corporeal knowledge of the self.

In *Die Gezeichneten*, Alviano’s disfigured appearance (his externality) is at odds with his strong sexual desire (his internality), and the avoidance of any “discordant union” with another person results in a life of self-imposed isolation. When Tamare’s friends invite him to experience the carnality of the island grotto, Alviano declines by referring to the incompatibility of his disfigurement with the indulgences held there. “You only speak of yourselves, you, who are well-shaped and endowed with charm, and you forget me—a cripple. If he were to attend your revels as you demand, he would spoil them and instead of delight there would be horror.”³⁰ (As is typical throughout the opera, Alviano speaks of himself in the third person, as if to dissociate his identity from his body.) If subject and object do indeed merge within the grotto’s chambers (as they do in

²⁹ Lipps writes, “For the human being, truly the most beautiful thing there is or can be is the human being, precisely because he or she is human. Thus we have to say that the human being is not beautiful on account of his or her form; rather the forms are beautiful because they are forms of the human being, and thus they are for us a carrier of human life.” But as Joseph N. Straus has written, this mode of embodiment discourse has often operated under “blithe assumption that we all inhabit the same kind of body, a normatively abled body, and thus all experience our bodies in pretty much the same way.” On Lipps, see Marianne Sawicki, *Body, Text, and Science: The Literacy of Investigative Practices and the Phenomenology of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), 17; and Straus, “Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59 (2006): 123.

³⁰ “Ihr sprecht stets von Euch nur. Von Euch—die Ihr wohlgestalt seid, und mit Anmut begabt, – und vergeßt mich,—den Krüppel. Käm der zu den Festen, so wie Ihr begehrt—er vergällte sie Euch—und statt der Lust zög das Grausen ein!” (8) The incongruity between Alviano’s inner intentions and outer appearance is repeatedly expressed throughout the opera—for instance, at the end of Alviano’s opening lines: “Was gab die Natur—mir—mit dieser Fratze und diesem Höcker, solch ein Fühlen, solch eine Gier—” (5)

the passionate encounters of Tamare and Carlotta), the inclusion of a disfigured body would create barriers impeding desirable consummation: any empathic connection would be, in Lipps terms, negative and thus discordant.

Continuing his conversation with Tamare's friends, Alviano relates the story of an earlier sexual encounter with a prostitute; here, as in the dialogue of Tamare and Carlotta, eyes form the empathic connection:

By the light of the lantern, *she would examine my wretched appearance*, with a glance, a smile so disgraceful that the blood would freeze in my veins. Then the gold would work! On painted lips *its sparkle reflected the terrible need of my misery*; obscene words promised me acceptance, but I was not strong enough to spit upon myself and to desecrate that spring night.³¹

Further representing Alviano's "discordant union," Schreker's setting of this speech (**Example 3.2**) is notable as the first extensive use of a leitmotif associated throughout the opera with deformity and ugliness.³² And though the motive itself can hardly be construed as "ugly" (it is neither angular nor harsh), it is almost always framed against a maximally dissonant harmonic context: ugliness, here, is not a permanent quality but a societal judgment. Setting nearly all uses of the word *häßlich* and nearly all references to Alviano's body, the chromatic motive appears in a number of different harmonic contexts throughout the opera, shifting and mutating in degrees of dissonance and consonance;

³¹ "Im Schein der Laterne mustert sie meine arme Gestalt, mit einem Blick—einem Lächeln so schmachvoll, daß mir das Blut in den Adern gerann. Da—wirkte das Gold! Auf geschminkten Lippen spiegelt sein Gleissen, all meines Elends furchtbare Not; unflät'ge Worte verhießen Gewähr—doch mir fehlte die Kraft, mich selbst zu bespei'n und zu entweih'n die Lenznacht" (9).

³² The opera's motives are thoroughly compiled in *Franz Schreker: Die Gezeichneten; Thematische Analyse; Einführung in den Inhalt und die Thematik* (Vienna and Leipzig: Universal Edition, [1918]). In this text (written anonymously, but likely made in consultation with the composer), the motive is associated with "Alviano's deformity" (*Alvianos Mißgestalt*, p. 13)—but the use of the motive throughout the opera, setting nearly all uses of the word *Häßlichkeit*, suggests broader aesthetic signification.

135

Alv. mit ei - nem Blick_ ei - nem Lächeln_ so schmach - voll, daß mir das

140 *Etwas fließender.*

Alv. Blut in den A - dern ge-rann. Da wirk - te das Gold!

“ugliness” motive:
A-C-B-F
(see Fig. 3.2)

Breiter.

Alv. Auf geschminkten • Lip - pen spie - gelt sein Gleißer all meines E - londs

145

Alv. furcht - ba-re Not; un - flät-ge Wor - te ver -

“ugliness” motive:
E-Ab-G-D
(see Fig. 3.3)

Detailed description: The image shows a page of a musical score for 'Die Gezeichneten', act I, measures 135-52. It features vocal lines for 'Alv.' and piano accompaniment. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 135-139) includes the vocal line 'mit ei - nem Blick_ ei - nem Lächeln_ so schmach - voll, daß mir das' and piano accompaniment with dynamics like *f*, *ffz*, and *p*. The second system (measures 140-144) is marked 'Etwas fließender.' and includes the vocal line 'Blut in den A - dern ge-rann. Da wirk - te das Gold!'. A box highlights a melodic phrase in the vocal line with the annotation '“ugliness” motive: A-C-B-F (see Fig. 3.2)'. The piano accompaniment in this system has dynamics *mp* and *p*. The third system (measures 145-149) is marked 'Breiter.' and includes the vocal line 'Auf geschminkten • Lip - pen spie - gelt sein Gleißer all meines E - londs'. A box highlights a melodic phrase in the vocal line with the annotation '“ugliness” motive: E-Ab-G-D (see Fig. 3.3)'. The piano accompaniment in this system has dynamics *f* and *fp*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Example 3.2. Melodic and harmonic statements of the “ugliness” motive.
Die Gezeichneten, act I, mm. 135–52

Alv. hie - ßen Ge - währ, doch mir fehl - te die

molto accel.

Alv. Kraft, mich selbst zu be - speih, und zu ent - weihn die

Zurückhalten. f *Noch mehr rit. (ohne zu schleppen)*


dim. *cresc.* *(mf)*

“ugliness” motive:
D/G-B-B \flat -D
(see Fig. 3.4)

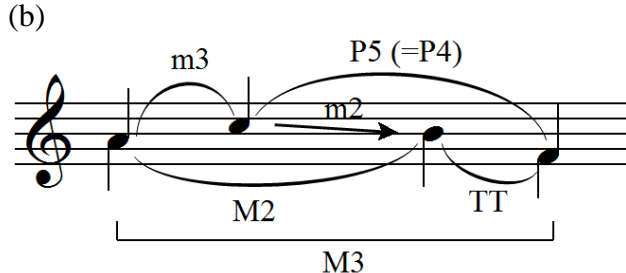
Example 3.2, continued

likewise, its meanings shift as those who seek to empathize with Alviano provide a more suitable (or more harsh) harmonic environment for his ugliness to inhabit. (For short, the motive will be referred to as the “ugliness motive,” though this term should not inhibit us from thinking about these and other fluctuations in the melody’s signification.) The motive’s dissonance with the surrounding harmony indicates an experience of “negative empathy,” following Lipps’s term; the motive’s successful accommodation (accomplished only twice in the opera) indicates an experience of “positive empathy.” The “ugliness” motive’s first melodic appearance may be found in the accented inner voices of m. 140 (A-C-B-F, **Figure 3.2**), then again in m. 142 and 145 (E-A \flat -G \sharp -D,

(a)



(b)



(c)

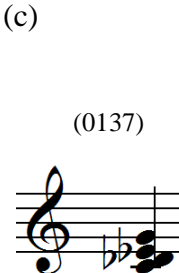

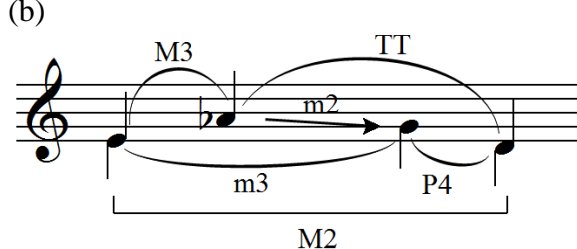


Figure 3.2. First “ugliness” motive (A-C-B-F): (a) as it appears in act I, m. 140; (b) as an all-interval tetrachord; (c) as compressed in “normal” form (set class [0137])

(a)



(b)



(c)

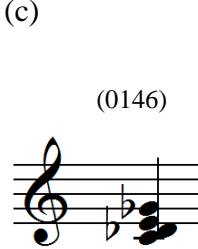


Figure 3.3. Second “ugliness” motive (E-A \flat -G-D): (a) as it appears in act I, mm. 142 and 145; (b) as an all-interval tetrachord; (c) as compressed in “normal” form (set class [0146])

Figure 3.3., fragmented and looped in the treble in m. 150 (G \sharp -C-B, B-D-C \sharp , C \sharp -F-E), and culminating *fortissimo* in m. 150 (D [standing in for G]-B-B \flat -G, **Figure 3.4**). From these three iterations, all slightly different, we may extract a general definition of Schreker’s “ugliness” motive: it is played by the trombones, almost always articulated

(a)

(b)

G-major and Eb-minor triads

(c)

m3/M3
m2
M3/m3

(d)

(0347)

Figure 3.4. Third “ugliness” motive (D/G-B \flat -B-D): **(a)** as it appears in act I, m. 150; **(b)** as it relates to the hexatonic collection (014589), which combines G-major and E \flat -minor triads; **(c)** as a symmetrical set, consisting of an open fifth with major and minor thirds; and **(d)** as compressed in “normal” form (set class [0347])

with accents; its arched melodic profile consists of a rising third (major or minor), a descending half-step (a critical interval—always present), and a second descent of a larger interval (sized between a fourth and a sixth); and its penultimate note is held for a dotted-quarter or dotted-eighth note, while its final note is doubly articulated (first quickly as an eighth or sixteenth note, then sustained in the subsequent measure).

This rough outline of a definition grants Schreker some flexibility in practice, particularly with the motive’s pitch content. For instance, the three iterations of the “ugliness” motive in Example 3.2 (each summarized in Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4) suggest a gradually evolving melodic tetrachord, transforming from relative stability to inherent

instability. Indeed, the first version of the motive (A-C-B-F, or set class [0137]) is diatonic within its quasi-dorian surroundings; it is formed by combining a major triad (F major) and an embedded tritone (B). Considered together, the four pitches form one of the two all-interval tetrachords, in which all interval classes (minor second, major second, minor third, major third, perfect fourth, tritone) are embedded (Figure 3.2b). The only other all-interval tetrachord (set class [0146]) appears as the second incarnation of the “ugliness” motive (Figure 3.3), derived from the first by expanding the opening third (formerly minor, now major) and, to compensate, contracting the final descent (formerly a tritone, now a perfect fourth). The third iteration of the “ugliness” motive (Figure 3.4) is the strongest rhetorically, reserved for the *fortissimo* climax of this passage. Following the opening motion of the second version of the motive, the third version ascends by major third and descends by half step, but then breaks from its model by descending by a much wider interval, a minor sixth. (Though here the motive is outlined as D-B \sharp -B \flat -D, its appearances elsewhere in the opera suggest G—the root of the surrounding harmony—as the operative “first note.”) The outlined set class—(0347)—consists of an open fifth with both major and minor triads within, producing symmetry around its inner dyad (Figure 3.4c). Though appearing here as a transformation of the second “ugliness” motive, this third motive is also a subset of the hexatonic collection that opens the opera (G-major and E \flat -minor triads replace D-major and B \flat -minor triads; see Figure 3.4b). If that hexatonic collection balances interlocking opposites, this version of the “ugliness” motive (reserved for its most important appearances) represents a splintered, unopposed fragment from that unified synthesis.

In m. 137, this third version of the motive is prefigured harmonically, in the searing *sforzandissimo* dissonance setting the word “schmachvoll” (the prostitute’s “disgraceful” reaction to Alviano’s appearance). The chord—actually a diminished-seventh in second inversion (C-E \flat -F \sharp -A)—first sounds with D and B acting as neighbors to the C, creating what initially registers as the outline of a seventh chord (B-F \sharp -A) with both major (E \flat /D \sharp) and minor (D \flat) thirds. Embedded within this sonority is the third “ugliness” motive (B-D \sharp -D \flat -F \sharp , or [0347]), now sounding as a simultaneity to reveal the melodic figure’s harmonic implications: juxtaposing two types of thirds, the “ugliness” motive is inherently “disfiguring,” disrupting the oppositional qualities of major and minor triads by compressing them into violent dissonance. These appearances of the “ugliness” motive may be heard as a musical extension of the process of negative empathy: originating as a sign of Alviano’s disfigurement, the melody is transferred onto the prostitute’s “disgraceful” gaze, then onto the prostitute’s body herself (Alviano sees her lips, sparkling from the shining money), then back onto Alviano’s internal shame for initiating the whole encounter in the first place. To appropriate and retool James Elkins’s description of empathy (quoted and cited above), Alviano’s disfigured body is partly his own, and partly shaped by the prostitute that beholds his figure.

Shadow Selves

Even as it is defined by its contrariness to the prototypical human form, ugliness, as a number of aestheticians and art historians have argued, is a useful and even

necessary foil to the potentially intoxicating power of beauty. Writes the nineteenth-century art critic John Ruskin,

[B]eauty deprived of its proper foils and adjuncts ceases to be enjoyed as beauty, just as light deprived of all shadow ceases to be enjoyed as light. A white canvas cannot produce an effect of sunshine; the painter must darken it in some places before he can make its beauty look luminous in others; nor can an uninterrupted succession of beauty produce the true effect of beauty; it must be foiled by inferiority before its own power can be developed. Nature has for the most part mingled her inferior and nobler elements as she mingles sunshine with shade, giving due use and influence to both, and the painter who chooses to remove the shadow, perishes in the burning desert he has created.³³

Ruskin's statement is enticing but potentially dangerous: ugliness, inferiority, and strangeness, he suggests, are desirable only as contrast, only as they enable beauty and normality; this leaves Alviano's disability as a purely aesthetic phenomenon, divorced from the very real injustices made against him during the course of the opera. Yet his theories have relevance to much of the opera. They might well stand in as a critique of Alviano's Elysium: the overwhelming, oversaturated beauty of the island so inundates its visitors with pleasurable experiences that the morally vulgar grotto eventually begins to fester within its caves. Accompanying Alviano on the island in the third act, a Genoese official expresses his unease with the astonishing beauty of the landscape; he is unaware of the grotto, though senses the potential for its presence: "You show us heaven, so close and captivating, that we become dissatisfied with the earth and its power, which holds us fast and checks our ascent into the holy regions of eternal bliss.... Will your generosity [the gift of the island] bring blessings to us all—or corruption?"³⁴ As Ruskin might say,

³³ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (New York: John Wiley, 1888), 1:33

³⁴ "Ihr zeigt uns den Himmel, so nah und berückend, daß wir unfroh werden der Erde und ihrer Macht, die uns halt und den Aufstieg uns wehrt, in die sel'ge Region ew'ger Freude.... Wird Eure Großmut Segen bringen uns allen—oder Verderbnis?" (57)

shadows, darkness, and other “inferiorities” keep humanity grounded, tethered to the roughness of reality, and through such reminders of mortality we come to appreciate the rarity of beauty. (As Alviano says to Carlotta, his hunchback “provides the contrast.”)³⁵

The aesthetic construction of beauty is thus predicated on the existence of its opposite; to label something as beautiful is to acknowledge that it is not ugly.³⁶

The apparent permanence of this opposition between beauty and ugliness causes distress for Carlotta, who, in a conversation with Alviano, describes an “ugly shadow” that has found its way into one of her portraits; it is persistent and immovable, its removal a futile task completed only by emptying the canvas of all shades and colors: “The painting grew, so wondrously fine—but there was only *an ugly shadow* between the chin and mouth..., and no matter what I did, how I worried at it, it kept returning. Whenever I thought I had gotten rid of it for good, then unexpectedly, cunningly, *it crept out of my brushes* and took hold.”³⁷ The shadow originates from Carlotta’s hand—it creeps through her paintbrushes—and thus may be understood as an empathic extension of her own subjectivity, of her own personal conditioning of the neutral external object. Indeed, Carlotta’s hidden, burrowed shadow-self will emerge more prominently in the third act,

³⁵ “Vielleicht als Narr in einem Gemälde, unter schönen Herren und Frauen, wirksam als Kontrast—mit ’ner Kappe und Schellen—der Buckel paßte nicht schlecht—zum Gespött der Leute—verewigt für alle Zeiten!” (25)

³⁶ In a similar vein, philosopher and literary critic William Angus Knight writes, “[A]ll knowledge is a knowledge of differences and contrasts. We neither know nor can know anything except in its contrast with something unlike it. We are conscious of self only as distinguished from what is not-self, of matter in opposition to mind, of good as opposed to evil, of Beauty as contrasted with ugliness, of the Infinite in its antithesis to the finite, and so on. The element of opposition, difference, or contrariety, conditions all our knowledge.” *The Philosophy of the Beautiful* (London: John Murray, 1893), 103.

³⁷ “Das Bild erstand, so wundersam fein—nur ein häßlicher Schatten, zwischen Kinn und Mund—sehete—da—und wie ich auch sann und mich bastelnd mühte—er kamm immer wieder. Schon glaubt’ ich ihn fort und für immer gebannt—da—unversehens—tückisch schleicht’s aus den Pinseln und setzt sich fest!” (24)

in the magical night-world of Elysium. Though her character has been earlier associated with the light of the dawn (to a heroic and transcendental vocal line, she sings, “Then there arose, in glistening, radiant mists like ghostly heralds announcing the approach of the sun...”),³⁸ Carlotta, on the island, becomes consumed by the darkness of the night in anticipation of her encounter with Tamare: speaking to a Genoese official, she says, “I hate myself, the world, and you. (*With a fearfully intense expression:*) I love only the night, *this very night and its shadows*.... Deep into its blackish light will I burrow, submerge myself in the depths of its *radiant darkness!*”³⁹

The switch in Carlotta’s character—from a painter of the dawn to a shadow of the night—offers yet another oppositional pairing in this Schrekerian world of perennial contrast. The evocation of a shadow realm is indicative of the psychological *Doppelgänger* that populate much of the literature, theater, and film of early German expressionism (and prefigure the Jungian “shadow,” introduced in the 1930s). In a Freudian age, the ghostly double represents an internalized, psychological opposition—an opposition often expressed visually through mirror or shadow. Consider, for instance, two stills from the roughly contemporary Austrian film *Schatten: Eine nächtliche Halluzination* (1923): the normal, neutrally lighted self contrasts with its distorted,

³⁸ “Da stieg auf, purpurn glühend—Schleier in tausend Farben schillernd, leuchtende Nebel, gespenstischen Herolden gleich, zogen, ihr Nahen kündend, voran—die Sonne” (26).

³⁹ “Ich hassen mich und die Welt und Euch. (*mit furchtbar lüsterne Ausdruck*) Nur die Nacht, diese Nacht lieb’ ich und ihre Schatten— ...In ihr schwärzliches Licht will ich tief mich verkriechen, eintauchen tief in ihr leuchtendes Dunkel!” (64). Italic lines in parentheses indicate Schreker’s stage directions, which appear both in the libretto and the score.

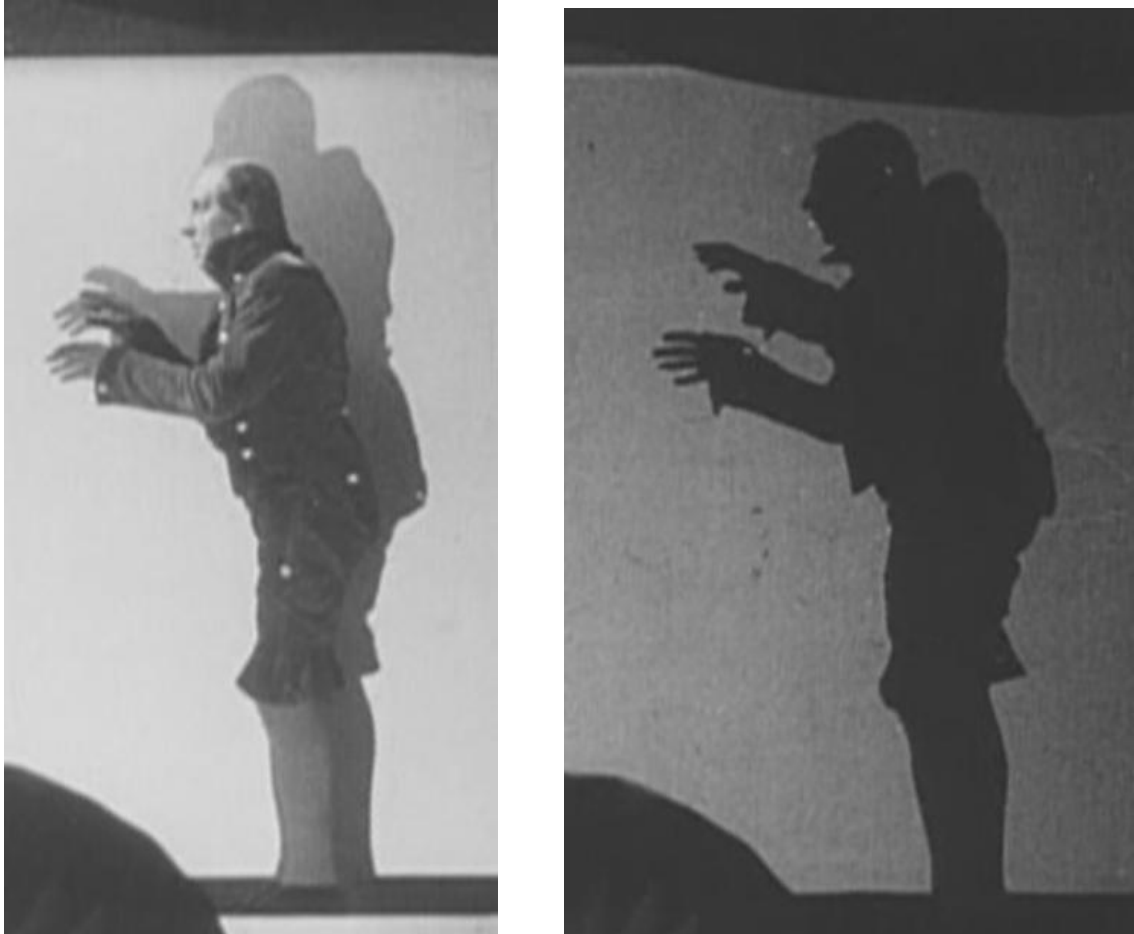


Figure 3.5. The lighted body and its disfigured shadow. Two stills from *Schatten: Eine nächtliche Halluzination* (1923), dir. Arthur Robison

deformed, and disfigured shadow (**Figure 3.5**).⁴⁰ Like the eternal bond between beauty and ugliness, both self and shadow are forever interlocked: in a lighted world, one cannot exist without the other. Shadows—first creeping out of Carlotta’s hand, then consuming her entire persona—represent the sinister half of this embodied duality.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Andrew Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 317–57; and Lorna Martens, *Shadow Lines: Austrian Literature from Freud to Kafka* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

⁴¹ A clue regarding Carlotta’s “shadow self” may be found in her description of her painting of a hand: “...a hand pale and waxen, like that of a corpse, with uncannily long withered fingers, clenched around something that could not be seen. Only a faint purple

The image shows a musical score for a piano and harpsichord. The piano part is in the upper system, marked *molto espress.* and *mf*, with dynamics increasing to *f cresc.*. It features complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sextuplets. The harpsichord part is in the lower system, marked *fff*. A box highlights a chord in the piano part labeled "D-major triad + B \flat (cf. Fig. 3.1)".

Example 3.3. D-major chord, with added B \flat , derived from opening hexatonic collection (see Fig. 3.1). *Die Gezeichneten*, Prelude, reh. 2⁺³⁻⁵

In his essay on Schreker's music, Adorno writes of a "so-called Schrekerian false note": "Consonance and dissonance are interwoven. Melodious sounds are enriched by searing pain."⁴² The formulation is odd, but apt: harmonically, even one additional

glow leaked out through the ghostly fingers, but this gleam was like a silent lament, like a suppressed whimpering cry and like a scream, restrained in deathly fear, like a stifled cry for deliverance" (70). As others have noted (Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 66), Carlotta's description of the painting is reminiscent of Arnold Schoenberg's painted studies of hands; indeed, Schoenberg even inscribed one of his hand studies (Ritter 81) to Schreker after seeing *Die Gezeichneten* in 1919. But Schreker may very well have been imagining a different painting by Schoenberg (Ritter 79); fitting in with the notion that Carlotta possesses a sinister "shadow," it depicts the shape of a hand gripped with a grayish mirror image of itself. Both images are available online at R. Wayne Shoaf, Arnold Schoenberg's Paintings and Drawings, University of Southern California Library Archives, <<http://www.usc.edu/libraries/archives/schoenberg/painting/abstracthtms/ritter95.htm>> and <<http://www.usc.edu/libraries/archives/schoenberg/painting/abstracthtms/ritter79.htm>> (accessed 5 May 2010).

⁴² Adorno, *Quasi una Fantasia*, 137.

Mit brutaler Leidenschaft.

Example 3.4. Tamare's theme. *Die Gezeichneten*, Prelude, reh. 10⁺¹⁻²

dissonant note will create a dissonant chord (consonance is pure, and dissonance is relative)—but Schreker often thinks about sound as a painter might, adding a hint of a dissonant shadow to a chord that otherwise maintains its consonant autonomy. Consider the expressive climax within the first half of the prelude (**Example 3.3**): a *fortississimo* D-major triad, sturdily built on its root, with added B \flat octaves (the peak of an appoggiatura, originating in the previous measure) dissonantly piercing through the sonority. Repeatedly used, this is a favored chord throughout the opera, reminiscent as it is of the oppositional balance achieved with the combination of D-major and B \flat -minor triads in the prelude. Here, however, only a single dissonance is added, slightly tapering what would have otherwise been an overly bright, excessively rapturous D-major triad.

The juxtaposition of motivic opposites provides additional ground for even more overt contrast. Though there is no “beauty” motive to correspond with the aforementioned “ugliness” motive, the sweeping melody of Tamare's theme comes close: with Pucciniesque exuberance, the motive first appears in a bright, unshaded D major (**Example 3.4**); it also announces, *appassionato* and *molto espressivo*, Tamare's somewhat indulgent entrance in act I, m. 269. By the end of the second act (**Example 3.5**), however, the motive has transposed to E minor and, more strikingly, sounds



Example 3.5. Tamare’s theme (in the treble) juxtaposed with “ugliness” motive (in the tenor). *Die Gezeichneten*, act II, mm. 876–78

simultaneously over Alviano’s “ugliness” motive in the brass (E-G-F#-B). The lyrical sweep of Tamare’s motive now contrasts sharply with the angular chromatics of Alviano’s—but the themes have also been harmonically united, so that neither melody sparks dissonance with the other. The “integration of difference” that Adorno finds in Schreker’s music extends even to the integration of opposites: if beauty and ugliness continually spawn each other, the synthesist’s aesthetic crisis, repeatedly confronted in *Die Gezeichneten*, involves finding a union between these oppositional and seemingly irreconcilable poles. Sex offers one method of reconciliation (Tamare: “In the delirium of the orgy the ugly becomes beautiful and the beautiful ugly. Opposites vanish in ecstasy”); as we will see, portraiture offers another.⁴³

Painting Alviano

The centerpiece of *Die Gezeichneten*, in which the themes of empathy and ugliness intersect in an aesthetic climax, is the celebrated *Atelierszene* (act II, scene 2). Taking place in Carlotta’s studio, the scene is an extended meditation on empathic and

⁴³ “Im Taumel der Orgie wird häßlich schön und das Schöne wird häßlich. Die Gegensätze schwinden im Rausch” (37).

artistic synthesis, dramatized as the painter's struggle to represent Alviano's disfigurement in portrait form. Many of the tropes encountered elsewhere in the opera are manifest here: empathy as ecstatic, rapturous experience, merging the similarities of self and other; eyes as the agents of empathy, acting as both perceiving subject and observed object; beauty and ugliness, or light and shadow, as oppositional poles; and the crisis of synthesis as the challenge of reconciling these irreconcilable poles. Within this complex and eclectic array of aesthetic and psychoanalytic predicaments, Alviano's body is treated as the primary impediment: his hunched back (constructed as structurally disfigured and aesthetically ugly) is a corporeal abnormality resistant to desirable synthesis. As represented through the act of portraiture and participation in love, attempts to empathize with Alviano's otherness—another example of the Schrekerian “integration of differences” (here, writ large!)—brings the opera to an appropriately exuberant state of rapture.

For Carlotta, the challenge of painting Alviano is the inaccessibility of his inner nature, the spiritual essence beneath his disfigured corporeal facade; this, after all, is her habit: “I paint pictures of animals and people, trees and lakes, the sky, the light, but what I love most of all is *to paint souls* . . .”⁴⁴ As in the empathic connection forged earlier with Tamare, Carlotta's connection with Alviano's inner desires and motivations occurs primarily through their eyes. (Recall that Alviano is initially described in Schreker's libretto as possessing “large, shining eyes.”) And, as with Tamare, early attempts at forging an interlocked gaze are unsuccessful. When requesting that Alviano sit for a portrait, for instance, Carlotta has difficulty even catching his glance or holding his

⁴⁴ “Ich male Bilder. Tiere und Menschen, Bäume und Seen—den Himmel, das Licht—doch am liebsten male ich—(*still*) Seelen” (24).

attention (indeed, he has been consciously avoiding her): “All my winks, my covert gestures, my questions...were of no avail.”⁴⁵ The sense of disconnection within this earlier scene is strongly felt by Alviano, who is suspicious of Carlotta’s intentions: “You must think me a dolt, ignorant of life, simple and daft,” he says, “I converse only rarely with beautiful women.”⁴⁶ Such dialogue contributes to the sense of an early division between the painter and her subject, a division that must be bridged through the art of portraiture.

Part of what convinces Alviano to sit for Carlotta is the revelation that she is already near the completion of his portrait: for some time, she has been secretly observing his solitary morning walks from her studio window (recall that Carlotta begins as a creature of the dawn); from these observations, she has begun to paint his figure:

Beside my cottage there is a path edged by tall cypress. You know it well—you have walked along it often. Shy, hunched, deep in thought—suddenly, distrustfully scanning the windows, behind whose curtains the watcher [Carlotta] was concealed so that you could not see her.... Then...*the sun rose*. I saw the small, pitiful wanderer raise his head. Every muscle in his lanky body grew firm and taut; he lifted up his arms towards the sky. *He walked into the light, toward the sun*; I saw him growing larger and larger. *He grew into a giant*—my heart was beating. Thus did I paint your picture, Signor Alviano. Thus did I depict your form, walking into the sun. Yet I still lack the face....⁴⁷

⁴⁵ “Und da all’ mein Blinzeln, verstohlenes Winken, mein Fragen, ob Ihr nicht hättet in Eurem Besitz ein Bild, eine selt’ne Skulptur, mir zu zeigen—nichts half, verfiel ich darauf—” (23).

⁴⁶ “Für einen Tölpel müßt Ihr mich halten, lebensunkundig, einfältig und albern. – Doch selten nur blüht mir Umgang mit schönen Frauen...” (23).

⁴⁷ “An meinem Häuschen vorbei führt ein Weg, gesäumt von hohen Zypressen—den kennt Ihr wohl—Ihr schrittet ihn oft. Scheu und gebückt in Gedanken versunken—plötzlich mißtrauisch musternd die Fenster, deren Gardinen die Späherin bargen—doch Ihr saht sie nicht. Da stieg auf...die Sonne. [cf. note 37] Ich sah—wie der kleine, armsel’ge Wand’rer sein Haupt hob. Jeder Muskel spannte sich straff in dem schwächtigen Körper—die Arme stiegen an, hoch zum Himmel gebreitet. So schritt er hinein in den Glast, der Sonne entgegen; und größer und größer sah ich ihn werden—riesenhaft wuchs die Gestalt, —mir klopfte das Herz—. So malte ich Euch, Signor

Carlotta's description of the positioning of light source, object, and observer is crucial to an interpretation of this scene. Alviano faces the rising sun, his arms stretched upward. Carlotta, having not seen Alviano's face, views his figure from behind. From the painter's perspective, then, the subject is backlit, Alviano's body silhouetted by the magnificence of the sun (which has been described by Carlotta in excessive detail). This explains the cryptic description of the hunchback as a "giant," "growing ever larger": as the sun rises over the horizon, and as Alviano walks toward it, light casts a shadow extending outward from Alviano's body, its length far exceeding his height. Carlotta has thus far only been able to paint Alviano's "darkness" (his silhouette, his shadow, *his hunched back*); all that remains now is for her to complete the lighted half of his internal opposition (his face, *his eyes*). (Recall the two stills in Figure 3.5: the back is misshapen in the shadow, but normal in the light.) Indeed, Carlotta adopts this language when directing her subject in his pose: "Think about beautiful things—that *I am your sun*, which drives all darkness out of your life with dazzling light."⁴⁸ The painter is now positioned so that she faces Alviano (as the sun would), and *her* light now illuminates his figure.

Missing from Carlotta's portrait are Alviano's eyes, which perform as the agents of empathy, the window into the other's inner nature. "I lack that *ecstatic eye* in which *all beauty* is reflected," Carlotta says, suggesting again that her incomplete portrait of Alviano has thus far represented only his ugliness; she now requires its opposite—

Alviano. So malte ich Eure Gestalt, entgegenschreitend der Sonne. Doch mir fehlt noch das Antlitz. . . ." (26).

⁴⁸ "...(*sehr innig und warm*) und denkt viel Schönes—dass ich—Eure Sonne bin,—die alles Dunkle—aus Eurem Leben—verscheucht—mit strahlendem Lichte" (47).

beauty—to finish.⁴⁹ Throughout the scene, the emphasis on this feature of Alviano’s body becomes almost hypnotic: “Look at me full in the face,” Carlotta says, “and *let your eyes bore deeply into mine.*”⁵⁰ The imagery almost certainly carries deliberate sexual overtones, analogous to the ways in which the gaze between Tamare and Carlotta led that couple straight to the secret grotto (the island’s dark, internalized shadow self). Here, the method of empathic connection is more chaste—portraiture, not sex—but a passionate intensity, rivaling the one kindled by Tamare, begins to develop between Alviano and Carlotta. He is the one who first expresses his attraction, “But there it is, *as you look at me with eyes, whose very glance shines with promise!* And when your mouth smiles, it is as if there were nothing on earth called ‘friendship,’ as if that word, that wretched consolatory word, were absurdity, a lie, a disgrace.”⁵¹ The desire to not only be understood and loved but to be lusted after is a deep-seated source of anxiety within Alviano, as we have seen. But in this scene, Carlotta (albeit disturbingly fleetingly) offers reciprocation.

A more explicit confession of love is offered by Carlotta, who speaks with the aggressive energy of a predator: “You will not escape me. Now I shall drive you into a corner—and if you do reject me—well then, have your triumph! For I must tell you...you must know that I love you.”⁵² Empathic connection entails the fusion of subject and

⁴⁹ “...mir fehlt noch das trunkene Auge darin all die Schönheit sich spiegelt...” (27).

⁵⁰ “Ich bitt’ Euch—sprecht nicht—und blickt mich nur an—so ganz voll—und senkt—Euren Blick—tief in den meinen...” (47).

⁵¹ “Doch so, wie Ihr blickt, mit Augen, deren Leuchten allein schon Verheißung—! Und wenn Euer Mund lächelt, ist mir—als gäb’s auf Erden nichts, was da “Freundschaft” heißt—als wär’ dies Wort, dies elende Trostwort ein Unding, Lüge und Schmach!” (44)

⁵² “Doch entgeht Ihr mir nicht. In die Enge treib’ ich Euch jetzt—und weist Ihr mich ab—so habt den Triumph! Denn ich muß es Euch sagen— ...Ihr sollt es wissen—daß ich Euch—liebe” (47).

object through shared experiential knowledge—and Carlotta’s explicit declaration of love seems to draw out a formerly elusive quality within Alviano that enables such a union. After hearing the words “I love you” from Carlotta, his eyes immediately change, allowing the painter to quickly complete the portrait: “What eyes you have! ...I need your eyes for my picture—*they are just right for me like that...*”⁵³ The furious painting that erupts from Alviano’s expression is saturated with an anxious sexual energy: in the libretto, Carlotta is described as painting “with obviously mounting, almost feverish, excitement,” while Alviano remains frozen in his pose, “devouring her with his eyes, breathing heavily, as though fighting against an overwhelming emotion.”⁵⁴ The passionate encounter has permitted Carlotta, “painter of souls,” to access Alviano’s inner motivations and desires, to see past his slouched posture (his *difference*) and empathize with his “large, shining eyes.”

Schreker has done the same, empathizing with Alviano’s “ugliness” in musical—not painterly—terms. The consummation of painter with her subject—resulting in the creation of art—is musically indicated through the gradual weakening of the formerly distinctive “ugliness” motive. Consider the three appearances of the motive that propel Carlotta toward her declaration of love (**Example 3.6**): E-G-F#-C (m. 763), G#-B-A#-E (m. 765), and E-G-F#-C (m. 766), all based upon the “weakest” of the three “ugliness” motives previously identified (set class [0137], Figure 3.2). In all, the pungency of the

⁵³ “Um Gott, Signor, was macht Ihr—für Augen! Da habt meine Hände—und küßt sie—rasch———! Doch laßt mich—zur Arbeit! Ich brauch’ Eure Augen zu meinem Bilde—so sind sie mir—recht—” (47)

⁵⁴ “Sie halt ihn mit flehender Gebärde zurück und fesselt ihn so an seinen Platz, malt in sichtlich sich steigender Erregung, nahezu fieberhaft an dem Bilde weiter. Er verharret, ihre Gestalt mit glühenden Blicken verschlingend, schwer atmend, wie eine übermächtige Bewegung gewaltsam bekämpfend” (48).

Nicht langsam.

Car. Doch mer-ke ich eins: Ihr weicht mir aus_ wie frü-her mit

mp *espr.*

sfz pp *p* *pp*

“ugliness” motive:
E-G-F#-C
(cf. Fig. 3.2)

765

Car. Blick - ken, so nun in Wor - ten. Doch entgeht ihr mir nicht.

p *cresc.*

“ugliness” motive:
G#-B-A#-E
(cf. Fig. 3.2)

“ugliness” motive:
E-G-F#-C
(cf. Fig. 3.2)

Example 3.6. “Ugliness” motive, harmonically transfigured. *Die Gezeichneten*, act II, mm. 762–66

motive is further diminished: its melodic shape is the same, but it produces soft, rather than hard, dissonances; it is still played by the trombones, but here at a mild *piano*, not an aggressive *forte* (as in Examples 3.2 and 3.5). As previously noted, the motive’s dissonant bite is located in its chromatic middle, the half-step descent clashing with either the root or the third of the surrounding harmony. In m. 763, for instance, a more aggressive “ugly” motive might begin A-C#-C \flat (derived from the hexatonic collection [014589], Figure 3.4)—but instead the motive proceeds primarily through chord tones: its E and G are suggestive of E minor, its F# creates a fifth with the tremolo B, and its C may

join the outlines of A minor produced in the lower instruments. In its third iteration (m. 766), the mild severity of the clash between the motive's F# and the bass's G \flat is further reduced when the dissonant bass descends a half-step, joining the motive in a brief unison. Within this new harmonic environment, the violent distinctiveness of the motive dissolves, its pungency accommodated and pacified.

In Carlotta's eyes, the markedness of Alviano's disfigurement likewise diminishes in severity: "Look at me and bear in mind that never again will you be lonely and unloved in spite of your ugliness," she says. "See how calmly I say it, the word that tormented you

Car.
ein - sam sein wirst und un - ge - liebt, trotz dei - ner.

(Zeit lassen!)

Car.
Häß - lich - keit_ sieh, wie ru - hig ichs sa - ge, das Wort, das dich quäl - te so lan - ge_ nun ist's vor -

Example 3.7. "Häßlichkeit" without its motive, followed by transition into the painting interlude. *Die Gezeichneten*, act II, mm. 801–06

Car. 805
bei_

sempre pp

l. H.

Car. dennein Wort ist's_ und ein Begriff_

cresc.

f

Example 3.7, continued.

for so long; and now it is over; for it is a word, and an idea, nothing more.”⁵⁵ Indeed, the word “Häßlichkeit” is sung to a melodic line remarkable only for its surprising diatonic simplicity (**Example 3.7**): no “ugly” motive in the trombones, no aggressive word-painting—just transparent, unadorned recitative. Long Alviano’s defining characteristic, “ugliness” is now “just a word, an idea”—and as Carlotta announces that this aesthetic judgment has loosened its grip on Alviano’s personhood (“now it is over” [“...nun ist’s

⁵⁵ “Und sieh’ mich nur an und denk’ dran—daß Du nun nicht mehr—einsam sein wirst—und ungeliebt—trotz Deiner—Häßlichkeit—sieh’ wie ruhig—ich’s sage—das Wort, das Dich quälte—so lange—; nun ist’s vorbei—denn ein Wort ist’s—und ein Begriff—nichts weiter” (48).

vorbei”]), Schreker returns to the “glittering,” “flickering,” “shimmering” hexatonic undulation of light and dark with which the opera opens. The extended orchestral interlude that follows (actually a recapitulation of nearly the entire prelude) depicts Carlotta as she begins to complete Alviano’s portrait, adding beauty into ugliness and thus “integrating difference,” restoring balance, and merging those two qualities into a more truthful, more sublime synthesis.

Synthesis and Discontinuity

But let’s end where Schreker does—not with the sublimity of synthesis, but with the violence of discontinuity. This is a tragedy, after all, and the devastating conclusion of the opera offers a more ambiguous vision of oppositional polarity than does its second act finale. Beginning after Alviano has murdered Tamare, after Carlotta has called Alviano a “troll,” and after Alviano stumbles offstage in a state of madness, the opera’s

Traumhaft leise, verloren.

“ugliness” motive:
D-F#-F-A
(cf. Fig. 3.6)

Example 3.8. Three final statements of the “ugliness” motive. *Die Gezeichneten*, act III, mm. 1323–36 (end)



Figure 3.6. Final “ugliness” motive (D-F#-F#-A): (a) as it appears in act III, m. 1323; and (b) as it relates to the opening hexatonic collection (014589), which combines D-major and B \flat -minor triads

coda first recapitulates the opening hexatonic collection, combining D-major and B \flat -minor triads (m. 1323, **Example 3.8**). And amid this undulation appears the third version of the “ugliness” motive (D-F#-F#-A, set class [0347]). As this version of the motive is derived from the hexatonic collection, each of its pitches is now consonant with the surrounding harmonies (**Figure 3.6**)—a far cry from the harmonic disruption the motive initially caused in the musically “ugly” representation of the prostitute’s “disgraceful” glance (**Example 3.2**) In m. 1330, however, a different pair of oppositional triads begins to alternate: not D major and B \flat minor, but D major and D minor. The motive sounds again, and again is accommodated (its half-step descent from F# to F# toggles the shift in mode). But the opera ends in D minor, and the third and final iteration of the “ugliness” motive is an astonishing *coup de musique* (m. 1333). With brass blaring *fortississimo* across all notes, the motive’s initial leap of a major third produces a jarringly harsh simultaneity of D major and D minor—a clash that evokes discontinuity, contrast, and

irreconcilability. The coda thus opposes two depictions of opposition: the first evokes the synthesis of oppositional pairs (beauty and ugliness, in balanced stasis), while the second marks ugliness as an incongruity, an anomaly—appropriately “branded” (*gezeichnet*) in brutal negative empathy by its harmonic surroundings.

CHAPTER FOUR:

PAUL WITTGENSTEIN AND THE PERFORMANCE OF DISABILITY

To do something *single-handedly* is to accomplish without accommodation, to perform without assistance.¹ Nondisabled bodies often take full advantage of their binary status—listening with two ears, seeing with two eyes, walking with two feet—but “single-handed” accomplishment requires the denial of such bodily symmetries. An anatomically literal interpretation of this oft-used idiom raises questions: where, exactly, is the second hand, and why has its counterpart assumed the full workload? Accomplishment has been metaphorized through an embodied imbalance: the marked ability of one hand becomes dependent on the marked absence of the other.

Limits

Writing to her younger brother Ludwig, Margaret Stonborough—*née* Wittgenstein—expressed concern over the international piano career of their brother Paul Wittgenstein (1887–1961), then the most prominent living bearer of their family name (**Figure 4.1**). Her severe tone is typical of the skepticism and condescension that the Wittgenstein siblings generally held for their brother’s musical aspirations: “His playing has become much worse,” she writes. “I suppose that is to be expected, because he insists on trying to do, what really cannot be done. It is eine Vergewaltigung.”² Translated most

¹ The term “single-handed” principally means managed or done by one person, without assistance; in nautical use, for example, a “hand” is a person—a sailor.

² Letter from Margaret Stonborough to Ludwig Wittgenstein (in English, with German words interspersed), ca. 1942. Quoted in Brian McGuinness, Maria Concetta Ascher, and



Figure 4.1. Paul Wittgenstein on concert tour in New York, 30 October 1934

specifically as “rape,” *Vergewaltigung* also connotes a mutilation, or, more generally, some form of violation—the implication being that Paul Wittgenstein, in “trying to do, what really cannot be done,” failed to adhere to (and in so doing, violated, mutilated, raped) an ideological narrative of musical performance. Confronted with the demands of a musical score, the performer’s body—necessarily finite, limited—must transcend its

Otto Pfersmann eds., *Wittgenstein: Familienbriefe, Schriftenreihe der Wittgenstein-Gesellschaft*, 23 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1996), 180.

boundedness to embody not just music's ineffability but the superhuman agility, dexterity, and skillfulness its physical performance demands. Within this ideology, bodily limitations are to be superseded rather than affirmed, overcome rather than embraced. This trope—in which the limitations of bodies are framed not as valuable differences but as deficiencies—runs through much of the career of Paul Wittgenstein, whose “bodily limits” were more acutely public than those of most performers. As we will observe, it drives aspects of his performance practice, repertoire selection, critical reception, and self-identification as a disabled pianist, as well as several controversial attempts to marginalize his influence.

Emblazoned on dozens of headlines throughout his career, the unusual nature of Paul Wittgenstein's “bodily limit” received tremendous press coverage: “One-Armed Pianist Undaunted by Lot” (*New York Times*, 4 November 1934), “One-Armed Pianist Plays Ravel Solo” (*Montreal Gazette*, 5 November 1934), “Wittgenstein a One-Armed Piano Marvel” (*New York Daily News*, 19 November 1934), “One-Armed Pianist Features Symphony” (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 20 February 1944), “One-Handed Piano Soloist Will Play Concerto Tonight” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 November 1946), culminating, inevitably, with “Paul Wittgenstein, 73, 1-Armed Pianist, Dies” (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 March 1961). There is an insidious synecdoche employed in this litany of headlines: disability, here a missing limb, is used to signify the whole body—indeed, the whole performer and whole person—so that Paul Wittgenstein the pianist becomes defined primarily by his one-handedness. As Neil Lerner pithily writes, “To claim the title *pianist*, one must have two functioning hands. With only one functioning hand, someone who wishes to play the piano becomes not a pianist but a one-handed pianist.”

Such headlines entice and intrigue by positioning Wittgenstein as an incongruous exception amidst this widely held assumption—or “constructed normalcy,” to borrow from Lennard Davis—that all pianists are able-bodied, possessing two hands and ten fingers.³ Compressed within a single body, disability (“one-handed...”) and ability (“...pianist”) are tightly juxtaposed in dialectical opposition, disrupting the traditional hierarchy separating the one from the other. Sufficiently confounded and in need of reconciliation, we read on.

There are no examples of professional pianists who began their musical training with only one functioning hand. One-handed pianists typically begin their careers “normally”—that is, two-handed—until a mid-career injury temporarily or permanently forces the shift into one-hand repertoire. Such was and is the case with a number of pianists who continued their careers after suffering serious and sometimes devastating hand impairments, including Géza von Zichy (amputee, hunting accident), Otakar Hollman (amputee, war injury), Siegfried Rapp (amputee, war injury), Harriet Cohen (severed artery, broken glass accident), Cor de Groot (temporary infection), Cyril Smith (stroke), Gary Graffman (focal dystonia), Leon Fleisher (focal dystonia, recently treated with Botox), Keith Snell (focal dystonia), Antonio Iturrioz (cartilage damage, sport

³ Neil Lerner, “The Horrors of One-Handed Pianism: Music and Disability in *The Beast with Five Fingers*,” in Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus eds., *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 75; and Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 23–49. On the incongruities of one-handed piano performance, pianist Keith Snell writes, “Often when I tell someone that I play piano music written for the left hand alone, at first I see a puzzled or even blank expression staring back at me. I imagine their brain whirling in an attempt to make sense of what I have said—possibly trying to imagine that such a thing could be something anyone would want to listen to, let alone play.” “Piano Music for the Left Hand Alone,” Keith Snell’s Official Website, http://www.keithsnellpianist.com/left_hand_piano_music.html (accessed 2 May 2009).

injury), and João Carlos Martins (victim of assault), among others. This was also true of Paul Wittgenstein, who had a brief, successful concert career as a two-handed pianist in Vienna before a bullet wound sustained during World War I forced the amputation of his right arm. While held in Omsk as a Russian prisoner of war, he immediately set to work improving his left-hand piano technique and imagining the possibility and feasibility of one-handed performance. As a member of an elite and wealthy Austrian family, Wittgenstein was in a good, well-financed position to build a new repertoire for his extraordinary body, commissioning left-hand-only works from some of the most prominent composers of twentieth-century music, including Richard Strauss (a family friend), Erich Korngold, Paul Hindemith, Maurice Ravel, Sergei Prokofiev, and Benjamin Britten.⁴ Wittgenstein's initial investment in this repertoire has paid off for subsequent generations of disabled pianists: before Wittgenstein, one-hand piano music

⁴ The tumultuous history of the Wittgenstein family (which included Paul's father Karl Wittgenstein, the industrialist and primary earner of the family wealth; Paul's brother Ludwig Wittgenstein, the philosopher; and his nephew Felix Salzer) is richly and vividly told in Alexander Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein: A Family at War* (New York: Doubleday, 2008). Other notable biographical studies include E. Fred Flindell, "Paul Wittgenstein (1887–1961): Patron and Pianist," *Music Review* 32, no. 2 (1971): 107–27; So Young Kim-Park, *Paul Wittgenstein und die für ihn komponierten Klavierkonzerte für die linke Hand* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 1999); Matthias Kroß, "Paul und Ludwig Wittgenstein," in Thomas Karlauf ed., *Deutsche Brüder: Zwölf Doppelporträts* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1994), 287–329; Brian F. McGuinness, "The Brothers Wittgenstein," in Irene Suchy, Allan Janik, and Georg A. Predota eds., *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein* (Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 2006), 53–66; and Irene Suchy, "Sein Werk: Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein," *ibid.*, 13–36. Paul Wittgenstein's life is fictionalized in two novels: John Barchilon, *The Crown Prince* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1984), and Lea Singer, *Konzert für die linke Hand* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2008).

consisted mostly of etudes and pedagogical exercises; today, there are hundreds of quality one-hand compositions available for performance.⁵

Wittgenstein's important legacy as a commissioner stands in stark contrast with the relatively low esteem in which he is often held today as a performer. This tarnished reputation has been based largely on three mediocre recordings, two of which were made quite late in his life.⁶ And though it surely would not be fair to extrapolate the substance of a five-decade performance career from these unfortunate documents, the faults they display—Alexander Waugh writes of “[c]lumsy errors, thoughtless phrasing and unnecessary tampering with the music”—can be mapped onto several first-hand accounts of Wittgenstein's technique. In a published reminiscence, friend Trevor Harvey noted that “the nervous intensity that [Wittgenstein] developed led him often to play insensitively and loudly and not always with great accuracy.” Theodor Leschetizky, with

⁵ There are several helpful catalogues of one-hand piano music: Theodore Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994); Donald L. Patterson, *One Handed: A Guide to Piano Music for One Hand* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1999); and Hans Brofeldt, *Piano Music for the Left Hand Alone*, <http://www.left-hand-brofeldt.dk/> (accessed 2 May 2009). Albert Sassmann surveys the history of one-hand piano music in “‘...Alles, was nur möglich ist, aufzufinden und auszugraben’: Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein,” in *Empty Sleeve*, 103–32. About eighty percent of one-hand piano music is composed for the left hand (leaving twenty percent for the right); speculation on why this is so can be found in Patterson, *One Handed*, 2.

⁶ Wittgenstein's recordings are analyzed in Won-Young Kong, “Paul Wittgenstein's Transcriptions for Left Hand: Pianistic Techniques and Performance Problems” (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 1999), 67–79. In addition to these late recordings, there is a piano roll of Wittgenstein's performance of Bach's Chaconne in D Minor (as arranged for piano left hand by Brahms); Waugh describes this performance as “faultless” in *House of Wittgenstein*, 277–78.

whom Wittgenstein studied before the war, unflatteringly dubbed his student as a “*Saitenknicker*” (key-smasher).⁷

Yet contemporary reviews of Wittgenstein’s live performances were almost unanimously positive—gushingly and enthusiastically so, with frequent reports of standing ovations and multiple encores. Such critical praise, however, was tempered by condescension, as reviewers struggled to make sense of the incongruity posed by Wittgenstein’s physical disability. These passages attempt to rehabilitate the pianist, normalizing him in accordance with narrative tropes commonly used to neutralize the disruptive threats posed by bodily difference.⁸ Perhaps most popular is the theme of “redemption” and “heroic overcoming. As a reviewer for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* writes, “Wittgenstein is renowned the world over, not only for the tremendous technique he has achieved for himself with his one remaining set of fingers, but also for the indomitable courage that turned misfortune to good fortune, and defeat into victory.”⁹ Julius Korngold, writing for the *Neue Freie Presse* after Wittgenstein’s debut as a one-handed pianist in Vienna, was more presumptuous: “Let us, after [Wittgenstein’s] debut,

⁷ Waugh, *House of Wittgenstein*, 278; Trevor Harvey, “A Personal Reminiscence: Paul Wittgenstein,” *The Gramophone* 39, no. 457 (June 1961): 2; and Flindell, “Paul Wittgenstein,” 111. The occasional negative reviews offer similar criticisms: “His principal failing is not in coverage of the keyboard but rather in dynamics; it is clearly not possible to secure so subtle a palette of nuance with one hand as it is with two” (Alfred Frankenstein, “‘One of His Greatest Performances’: Monteux Livens a Schumann Symphony,” *San Francisco Chronicle* [30 November 1946], 9); and “In the chromatic fantasy and chaconne there was again much hard tone, some rather slip-shod technique and not much indication of musical insight” (Jerome D. Bohm, “Wittgenstein, 1-Armed Pianist, Gives Concert,” *New York Herald Tribune* [24 January 1935].)

⁸ Such tropes are identified and discussed in David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

⁹ “Final ‘Pop’ Concert Here Thursday Night,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (13 February 1944), 6H.

crowned with success, clasp the courageous hand, which he has learned to use so skillfully. The sounds produced by his left hand do not betray the artist's melancholy at no longer possessing a right hand, rather they express his triumph at being able to bear his loss so well."¹⁰ "Triumph," "defeat," "courage," "victory"—such language pits Wittgenstein in combat against his own body, and his emergence as heroic from this musical battle becomes a central narrative of the positively-reviewed concert performance. As it frequently does in discourse about disabled bodies elsewhere, the trope of "heroic overcoming" returns repeatedly in reviews of Wittgenstein's performances—not to portray his justifiably heroic battle against music culture's constructed normalcy, but to describe (and thus construct) an embodied battle of ability versus disability, triumphant music versus pitiable appearance, left arm versus absent right.¹¹ (A reviewer for the *Montreal Gazette* explicitly uses this language: "Mr. Wittgenstein *overcomes* what might at first seem to be an *insuperable limitation*."¹²)

"Passing," another trope commonly used in narrative treatments of disability, entails the concealment and suppression of the signifying markers of disabled identity in daily public performance—either on the part of the performer (through displays of overcompensation or the adoption of prostheses), or the performer's societal audience

¹⁰ Julius Korngold's review of 19 December 1916 is quoted and translated in Waugh, *House of Wittgenstein*, 107.

¹¹ The narrative of "overcoming disability" has been subject to much critique in the interdisciplinary field of Disability Studies. See, for instance, Simi Linton, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 17–22, and Tanya Titchkosky, *Reading and Writing Disability Differently: The Textured Life of Embodiment* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 177–207. The trope is applied to musical narrative in Joseph N. Straus, "Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59, no. 1 (2006): 113–84.

¹² "One-Armed Pianist Plays Ravel Solo," *Montreal Gazette* (5 November 1934), italics mine.

(through the real or imagined assignment of such normalizing mechanisms).¹³ In this vein, reviewers often expressed astonishment that Wittgenstein's disabled performance could sound so nondisabled: "[w]ith closed eyes it would have been near impossible to detect how many digits were actually involved in his renditions"; "bold chords that began the piano solo section sounded two-handed in their power and bravura"; "his physical handicap was forgotten."¹⁴ *Musically* forgotten, that is: the able-bodied sound that Wittgenstein produced allowed listeners to ignore the signifying markers of his disabled body, resulting in a false disconnect between visual and aural experiences. In explaining away this gap between audible ability and apparent disability, the assignment of a virtual musical prosthesis (an imagined second hand) allows Wittgenstein to "pass" as normal and two-handed. Hyperbolically inclined critics went further, assigning multiple prostheses and granting Wittgenstein not just normalcy but superhuman ability: naming

¹³ The term "passing" originates in studies of racial identity (see Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black," *Transition* 58 [1992]: 4–32), and has since been applied to other identity categories (see María Carla Sánchez and Linda Schlossberg eds., *Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion*, [New York: New York University Press, 2001]). The term's applicability to disability identity has been widely noted in the literature of Disability Studies; see, for instance, Carrie Sandahl and Phillip Auslander eds., *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Linton, *Claiming Disability*, 17–22; and the chapter "Disability as Masquerade" in Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 96–119. Pianist Stefan Honisch writes: "Partly because of different physical circumstances at the time, and perhaps out of some un-acknowledged need to feel as able-bodied as possible—a phenomenon referred to in Disability Studies literature as 'passing'—I would often walk out on stage, or if I used my wheelchair, would have it removed from public view, and would transfer to the piano bench in order to play." "Re-narrating Disability' through Musical Performance," *Music Theory Online* 15, no. 3 (2009), paragraph 12, <http://mto.societymusictheory.org/issues/mto.09.15.3> (accessed 1 September 2009).

¹⁴ *Los Angeles Evening Post-Record* (4 December 1934); Moses Smith, "Mozart, Ravel, Moussorgsky and a Pianist: American Premiere of the Concerto Written for Paul Wittgenstein," *Boston Evening Transcript* (10 November 1934), part 3, 3; and Olin Downes, "Paul Wittgenstein, One-Armed Pianist, Scores Success in Ravel Concerto with the Boston Symphony," *New York Times* (18 November 1934), N6.

him the “pianista manco,” a Cuban newspaper reports that Wittgenstein’s performance “gives the impression that four hands [!] are covering the keyboard.”¹⁵

Still other reviewers felt obliged to include reassurances to their readerships that their attendance at Wittgenstein’s performance was not tainted by prurience—this at a time when disabled performance was more commonly associated with the lurid exploitations of the sideshow. (Tod Browning’s controversial film *Freaks*, featuring a cast of disabled sideshow performers, was released in 1932, two years before Wittgenstein’s American premiere.)¹⁶ From the *San Francisco Chronicle* readers learn that there is “nothing freakish and nothing pathetic about [Wittgenstein’s] piano-playing,”¹⁷ and the *Boston Evening Transcript* reports that “[Wittgenstein] has been praised all over Europe, not merely as a freak, but as a musician and virtuoso whose performances are legitimate and artistically fruitful.”¹⁸ In a review that seems to double as an act of confession Lawrence Gilman at the *New York Herald Tribune* takes these sentiments further: “It was evident that Mr. Wittgenstein is an artist first and a curiosity afterward. Of course, human nature being what it is, only a creature of superhuman detachment from those vulgar frailties that even critics share would be likely to succeed in forgetting completely the amazing thing that he was witnessing—the performance of

¹⁵ “El jueves, Paul Wittgenstein,” *Diario de la marina* (25 December 1934), 6, translation mine.

¹⁶ On the history of the freak show and the cultural influence of Browning’s film, see Rachel Adams, *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson ed., *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

¹⁷ Frankenstein, ““One of His Greatest Performances,”“ 9.

¹⁸ Smith, “Mozart, Ravel, Moussorgsky and a Pianist,” part 3, 3.

an elaborate piano part by a player with a single hand.”¹⁹ The recurring need to preemptively defend Wittgenstein against (unleveled) charges of freakishness speaks not only to how the seedy legacy of the sideshow had tarnished the legitimacy of other modes of disabled performance, but also to the reflexive tendency to stigmatize or, in David Hevey’s word, “enfreak” disabled bodies as monsters, curiosities, or Others.²⁰ The reviewers’ recurring assurances to the contrary—“he is not a freak,” “he is more than a curiosity”—are both revealing and damning.

Tempered by these narratives of validation, such accounts of Wittgenstein’s disability leave little room for Wittgenstein-the-*Saitenknicker*. In the disembodied medium of sound recording, the pianist’s disability remains comfortably out of view, and his musicality thus a more vulnerable subject for harsh critique; but in live concert performance, one-handedness—represented as an empty sleeve dangling from the performer’s right shoulder, facing the audience—was a marked feature against generally accepted musical norms, a discrepancy requiring explanation. And so we find reviewers rationalizing away Wittgenstein’s bodily difference with narratives attempting to normalize him, validating his ability through the stigmatization or elimination of his

¹⁹ Lawrence Gilman, “A One-Armed Pianist Plays a New Concerto with the Boston Orchestra,” *New York Herald Tribune* (18 November 1934), 24.

²⁰ Describing the process by which able-bodiedness is legitimated through the stigmatization of a disabled body, the term “enfreakment” originates with David Hevey, *The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 53–74. The use of one-hand piano performance in Robert Florey’s horror film *The Beast with Five Fingers* (1946), in which a pianist’s amputated hand comes to life, is a more explicit example of this monstrous musical enfreakment. Also relevant is the silent Austrian horror film *Orlacs Hände* (1924), remade in the United States as *Mad Love* (1935), in which a pianist who loses his two hands in an accident receives the hand transplants of a recently executed murderer. On *The Beast with Five Fingers*, see Lerner, “The Horrors of One-Hand Pianism.”

disability. He “heroically overcomes” his bodily limit, “passes” as nondisabled, and thus “legitimizes” his act.

Unaccommodated disability occupies an uncomfortable position within modern concert performance, which typically serves as a vehicle to showcase able-bodied talent. Though certain musical abilities such as virtuosity push the body to and beyond its capacity for finesse, dexterity, and strength, disability is a reminder that the body is in fact finite and extraordinarily fragile, susceptible to injury, sickness, and ultimately death; disfigurement conjures imagined histories of pain, violence, disease, or, in Wittgenstein’s case, war. The disabled musical performer—embodying these two extremes—disrupts and exposes the inherent contradictions in what Tobin Siebers terms the “ideology of ability,” defined broadly as a “preference for able-bodiedness” that propels modern cultures to suppress bodily weaknesses, against all odds, whether through eugenics, biotechnological advancements, cosmetic surgeries, or religious belief in a blissfully *disembodied* afterlife. “We believe at once that history charts the radical finitude of human life but that the future promises radical infinitude,” Siebers writes. The ideology of ability “describes disability as what we flee in the past and hope to defeat in the future.”²¹ The performer’s body must negotiate the dialectic between corporeal finitude and the complex demands of the musical score, between the deficiencies of the body and the weighty burden of flawless performance. At the center between these two poles lies the bodily limit, the line between capacity and impossibility with which performers must constantly contend. An aesthetics of disabled performance presents this narrative in heightened microcosm.

²¹ Siebers, *Disability Theory*, 8–9.

Fractions

Though his performance career was dominated primarily by concerto appearances, Wittgenstein also regularly appeared in solo recitals. As the vast majority of his commissions were concertos or chamber pieces, he drew this solo repertoire from two other sources: the few pre-existing left-hand piano compositions available to him (such as Brahms's piano arrangement of Bach's Chaconne in D Minor, BWV 1004), and his own left-hand arrangements of well-known compositions from the two-hand piano repertoire. These pieces, in addition to his wide assortment of technical exercises for the left hand, provide a fascinating glimpse into the technical specifics of Wittgenstein's performance practice, more generally into his self-identification as a disabled pianist, and into the way he negotiated his one-handedness in an almost exclusively two-handed performance genre. As we will see, much of Wittgenstein's accommodational re-fingerings and edits fight against the stigma of deficiency, serving as musical evidence of his (sometimes effective, sometimes misguided) attempts to "pass" as two-handed and able-bodied.

Among the few pre-existing left-hand compositions that Wittgenstein regularly performed were selections from Leopold Godowsky's *Studies on Chopin's Etudes*, which include nearly two dozen pieces for the left hand alone. Indeed, these studies probably served as models for Wittgenstein as he began to experiment with the possibilities of one-hand pianism upon returning home from war. Considered to be among the most difficult piano pieces in the repertoire, the arrangements—which compress Chopin's already difficult two-hand etudes into a single hand while scarcely deleting a note—were born from a spirit not of disability accommodation but of able-bodied progress, as giant leaps forward in the development of keyboard performance. Concerning the Godowsky/Chopin

etudes, one critic wrote how they “increas[e] the [left hand’s] capabilities to an astonishing degree”; another predicted that the arrangements would be used in piano curricula in as soon as ten years, “so rapid is the technical standard advancing.”²² In an essay on the Chopin studies, Godowsky himself writes of an inspirational trip to the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago 1893, where he witnessed “many scientific and aesthetic wonders.” As if he were an inventor perfecting a bodily machine, he calls the etudes “experiments” that “further the art of piano playing,” and describes how each arrangement is framed around a “special mechanical problem.”²³ In the introduction to the 1903 edition of his etudes Godowsky speculates optimistically on future advances in piano technique: “If it is possible to assign to the left hand alone the work done usually by both hands simultaneously, what vistas are opened to future composers, were this attainment to be extended to both.”²⁴ Through enforced restriction, the bodily limit expands.

From this tradition, in which bodies beget super-bodies and the inevitability of progress knows no bounds, emerges Wittgenstein. A self-proclaimed innovator of piano technique, Wittgenstein participated in this quest for transcendental virtuosity while his disability was simultaneously marked by the ideology of ability that fueled it. For *virtuosity*—a super-embodied or even disembodied mode of musicality (or, as Jim

²² Arthur M. Abell, “Leopold Godowsky: An Appreciation of Him as Man, Composer and Pianist,” *The Musical Courier* (1906); and J. G. Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1900), both quoted in Jeremy Nicholas, *Godowsky: The Pianists’ Pianist: A Biography of Leopold Godowsky* (Hexham, UK: Appian, 1989), 38–39.

²³ Leopold Godowsky, “Pedagogical Experiments at the Two Extremes of Pianism,” *Overtures* (March 1938), quoted *ibid.*, 36–7.

²⁴ Leopold Godowsky, Preface to *Studies on Chopin’s Etudes*, 5 vols. (Berlin: Schlesinger; New York: Schirmer, 1903), vii.



Samson writes on Lisztian performance, a “sense of a humanity transformed by the divine spark”)—entails a surfeit of ability, a mastery over the human body and all its pesky deficiencies.²⁵ In pursuit of this able-bodied ideal, the subject-as-body is both vehicle and obstacle, the quest for perfection creating a hierarchy between what was and what is to be. Disability serves as a potent symbol of the bodily limit impeding such desirable progress: it is what performers must strive against; it is what performers must “overcome.”

Like Godowsky, Wittgenstein was keenly interested in training his left hand to manage the work of two hands, designing a repertoire of novel techniques to accommodate the many instances where such a conversion would otherwise appear to be physically impossible. Indicators of these tendencies can be found in Wittgenstein’s published exercises and arrangements—principally his three-volume, bilingual training manual *School for the Left Hand/Schule für die linke Hand*—as well as his recently resurfaced sketchbooks, manuscripts, and piano scores, the fingerings and markings of which offer a window into his performance practice.²⁶ His idiosyncratic notational system for these techniques includes (1) small circles to mark notes that should be pounded with multiple fingers, almost always placed on bass notes that needed to be loudly sustained while the left hand dashed to the right on the keyboard to play in the treble register; (2) pedal markings for half-changes, where again the issue was sustaining notes in separate


²⁵ Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 83.

²⁶ Paul Wittgenstein, *School for the Left Hand/Schule für die linke Hand*, 3 vols. (Vienna, Zurich, and London: Universal Edition, [1957]). Formerly kept under a tight lock, the Paul Wittgenstein Archive was auctioned at Sotheby’s in 2003. For more information, see the auction catalogue, *Music, Including the Paul Wittgenstein Archive: London, Thursday 22 May 2003* (London: Sotheby’s, 2003). Paul Wittgenstein’s papers—representing the bulk of the auction—were purchased by a private collector.

registers; (3) short horizontal lines shooting out the left or right side of a note head, which seem to indicate that the note should be played on the preceding or subsequent sixteenth-, quarter-, or half-beat (this, to accommodate a prioritized note out of physical range that should be played on the beat); and (4) a vertical slur marking, which Wittgenstein describes thus:

In instances such as  the bracket is meant to suggest approximately the following execution: , in which, it

will be noted, the accent is on the *chord* and not on the bass note.

Therefore, one must not play thus: , but the bass must

immediately follow the chord *pianissimo*; the chord itself must be held by means of the pedal, in order to achieve the impression that both are played simultaneously—a special feature of technique which must be practised separately.²⁷

All such techniques, some quite idiosyncratic and potentially counterproductive, are compensatory mechanisms designed to expand (or give the impression of expanding) the left hand's limited keyboard coverage. With this set of tools, Wittgenstein tackled musical tasks that might at first seem impossible—simultaneously playing treble and bass lines, for instance, and covering widely-spaced chords that spanned multiple octaves.²⁸

These techniques were utilized in one of Wittgenstein's most remarkable attempts to “pass” in a two-handed medium: his heavily notated score of Mendelssohn's Prelude

²⁷ Paul Wittgenstein, Preface to *School for the Left Hand/Schule für die linke Hand* [unpaginated].

²⁸ Other features of Wittgenstein's piano technique are discussed in Kong, “Paul Wittgenstein's Transcriptions,” 28–66.

and Fugue in G major, originally for organ, though the fingerings indicate that Wittgenstein was imagining piano performance (**Figure 4.2**). The aforementioned vertical slurs, for example, allow the pianist to play chords over three octaves in width, the bass having already been extended by an octave (see mm. 33 and 35, and the deletion in m. 36). In m. 24, horizontal lines dislocate the lower three notes from a wide chord, pulling them ahead in time by an eighth note. Implied rolled chords must accommodate other spacing issues: in that same measure, Wittgenstein uses a 1-2-4-5 fingering for the $c^{\#2}-e^1-a-e$ chord, and a 1-3-5 fingering for the $b^1-g^{\#}-d$ chord on the last eighth note; the top three notes of the next chord, $a-e^1-a^1$ on the downbeat of m. 25, are separated from the bass $c^{\#}$, which is syncopated to the second eighth note of the beat. And so on. The accommodations—in their one-hand reduction of a wide, three-staff organ score intended for two hands and two feet—are staggeringly thorough and ambitious. At the same time, such alterations obviously tamper with the very nature of Mendelssohn's composition—the rolled chords giving a harp-like quality to organ counterpoint that ought to be kept delineated and legato, and the more difficult bass-to-treble leaps requiring an unfortunate amount of rubato. Yet judging the success of this arrangement from a hypothetical performance might be beside the point: instead of viewing this document as a case study proving his sister Margaret's skepticism ("he insists on trying to do, what really cannot be done"), perhaps it is better to think of it as an elaborate musical puzzle solved, with nearly every improbable chord, every inconvenient note accounted for.²⁹ At least on

²⁹ There is no clear evidence that Wittgenstein performed this piece in public or at a private recital; question marks below mm. 36, 39, and 40 may indicate that the arrangement was a work in progress.

paper, if not in practice, Wittgenstein tests his own bodily limits against the demands of an unaccommodating musical score. Scarcely deleting a note, the feat is impressive.

Whatever flexibility he may have had in imagining a performance of Mendelssohn's organ prelude, Wittgenstein's left hand was metaphorically tied when he set out to arrange basso continuo realizations of two Bach trios (BWV 1037, for two violins, and BWV 1038, for flute and violin).³⁰ Such chamber music, collaborative by nature, prevents the accommodation that a slight variation in tempo might otherwise provide to an overstretched hand. Thus in **Figure 4.3** we find Wittgenstein prioritizing his chief responsibility as continuo player and deleting much of the material originally given to the right hand; some of these deleted chords have been resituated an octave lower in more convenient inversions (see especially mm. 13–14). Yet Wittgenstein did not preclude performance in a two-handed style. In m. 17, for instance, he used his horizontal-line marking to split the bass D from the $a^1-d^2-f\#^2$ chord above, even though a condensed version of this chord, with the bass note taken up an octave and the treble chord taken down, would have fit well within the style of part-writing that Wittgenstein developed in the previous measures. But the quarter-note in the bass—temporarily stagnant after a long series of eighth-note runs—allows Wittgenstein time to opt for the more dramatic gesture, jumping across four octaves on the keyboard. (A similar choice is made in the third beat of m. 18.)

Yet even in passages where spacing was not an issue, Wittgenstein's hand-twisting fingerings betray a struggle to “pass” as two-handed. For example, while the first

³⁰ There is documentation for several public performances of the trio sonata for two violins (BWV 1037), but none for the trio sonata for flute and violin (BWV 1038). Markings in the latter score, however, suggest that he at least prepared the sonata for performance in collaboration with other instrumentalists.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the left hand of a continuo realization of Bach's Trio Sonata in G major, BWV 1038, measures 13-18. The score is written on six staves, with the first two staves for the right hand and the last four for the left hand. It includes dynamic markings such as 'cresc.', 'p', and 'dim.', and contains numerous handwritten annotations in pencil, including fingering numbers (1-5) and slurs.

Figure 4.3. Continuo realization arranged for left hand. Bach, Trio Sonata in G major for Flute, Violin, and Basso Continuo (BWV 1038), mvt. 1, mm. 13–18, in *Trios*, ed. Henri Rabaud (Paris: Durand, 1919), with markings by Paul Wittgenstein. Private collection

three fingers take responsibility for the harmony, the scalar bass line is given almost entirely to fingers 4 and 5, generally considered to be the hand's weakest. Comfortable crossing of finger 4 over finger 5 (a tricky task in itself) requires the wrist to twist inward, pulling the other fingers up and away from the keyboard—yet these three upper fingers must take the place of the absent right hand, improbably stretching for keys sometimes more than an octave away (Figure 4.3, mm. 14–15, and **Figure 4.4**, mm. 25 and 27). Occasionally there is no finger crossing at all, but the reuse of finger 5 for a sequence of bass notes (Figure 4.3, m. 13). Similar responsibilities may be given to the thumb, which sometimes plays the melody line alone (Figure 4.4, m. 26). While such fingering does allow Wittgenstein to play multiple lines with his left hand, there are obvious pitfalls—mainly, the impossibility of legato, and, to compensate, the subsequent overuse of the damper pedal, indicated by a cursive “p” or “x” in the penciled markings.

This problem of maintaining separate musical lines with a single hand was among Wittgenstein's chief concerns, as is revealed in an examination of his substantial repertoire of left-hand exercises. In **Example 4.1**, taken from the first volume of the *School for the Left Hand* (devoted entirely to keyboard exercises), Wittgenstein expects his pianist to devote the thumb to a chromatic ascent in the treble clef, while the bottom four fingers navigate a treacherous chromatic ascent of parallel major thirds an octave below (the same fingering is given for minor thirds, the subsequent exercise in the *School for the Left Hand*). One wonders how successful Wittgenstein was at reproducing the given fingering: while the suggestions for the first three thirds (3/5, 2/4, 2/3) are tenable, smooth movement from 2/3 back to 3/5 is only possible if the pianist holds finger 2 in place while fingers 3 and 5 swing into position; doing so, however, naturally dislodges

58. zwei durch dem Violinkonzert von Mendelssohn

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a trill exercise. The page is numbered 58 in the top left corner. The title at the top reads "zwei durch dem Violinkonzert von Mendelssohn". The notation consists of six staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The middle two staves are in a different clef, possibly alto or tenor. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and trills. There are also some handwritten annotations and corrections throughout the page.

Figure 4.5. Trill exercise. Paul Wittgenstein, notebook no. 24, p. 58 ("Frei nach dem Violinkonzert von Mendelssohn"). Reprinted with permission from The Octavian Society. All rights reserved

Ziemlich langsam
Rather slowly

Geuss' nicht so laut der lieb'-ent-flamm-ten
Pour forth no more thy bur-ning songs of

Example 4.2. Syncopation as accommodation. Brahms, “An die Nachtigall,” mm. 1–4, as arranged for the left hand in Paul Wittgenstein, *School for the Left Hand/Schule für die Linke Hand*, vol. 2, *Etudes/Etüden*

respectively) utilized syncopations extensively, even thematically.³¹ Such is the case with Brahms’s song “An die Nachtigall,” included in Wittgenstein’s volume of etudes with added fingerings, vertical slurs, and half-pedal markings—but no altered or deleted notes (**Example 4.2**). Though composed for two hands, the piece works reasonably—indeed, surprisingly—well for one: syncopation offsetting the treble from the bass provides the accompanist one eighth-note of time to dash up and down between registers. There are dangers, of course: landing too forcefully on the syncopated treble would disrupt the fragile, tranquil *piano* of the song, and the pianist’s physically energetic gestures, hurrying left and hurrying right, are antithetical to Brahms’s peaceful, static original, in which the two hands scarcely move. “Passing,” here, requires a great deal of extra

³¹ In one interview, Wittgenstein describes the superiority of the left hand for accomplishing such gestures: “[E]very pianist knows that leaping—the quick motion from bass to treble to back—is easier with the left hand than with the right hand. Fortunately, Leschetitzky had taught me to play with a loose wrist.” Quoted in Robert W. Pelton and Bob Doerschuk, “The Indomitable Paul Wittgenstein: One-Handed Virtuoso,” *Contemporary Keyboard* 3 (1977): 10.

exertion and concentration from the performer. While the aural experience of Wittgenstein's edition may closely if not exactly resemble the aural experience of a two-handed performance, the visual (for the audience) and embodied (for the performer) experiences are significantly affected. Such are the symptoms of "single-handed" accomplishment: marked ability becomes dependent on marked disability, so that the visual impression of one-handed exertion startles, dislodges, and perhaps bolsters an aural impression of two-handed normalcy.

This problematic trope—in which certain limitations are framed as deficiencies, and certain abilities are framed as their compensation—was preached repeatedly by Wittgenstein, who advocated an exercise regimen in an inversely proportional relationship with his number of hands. The strategy was twofold:

[I]t may be said that aiming at complete results with only half the means, demands double energy and work! The work consists partly in exaggerating the old skills, partly in modifying them. In other words, the single playing hand has to go through a sort of hypertrophy—an overfeeding of the old exercises; at the same time, it must be developed by new and special ones.³²

The "half the means, double the work" refrain was frequently repeated by Wittgenstein; he elaborated on this theme on several occasions.³³ But danger lurks in the implications of such a philosophy: despite what his sister Hermine once wrote, Wittgenstein was not "one half a man" ("ein halber Mensch"), nor, of course, are any other disabled persons

³² Wittgenstein, "What Is the Outlook for a One-Armed Pianist?" *The Etude* 64, no. 9 (1946): 504.

³³ In a radio interview from 1959 he asserted: "It takes double the talent and energy for a left hand pianist to convey the impression of a musician with two arms." Quoted in Flindell, "Paul Wittgenstein," 113. Flindell later paraphrases passages from this interview: "It was, he conceded, the greatest satisfaction in his life to succeed in doing with one hand something that others did with two." *Ibid.*, 113.

fractioned off from able-bodied templates of normalcy.³⁴ Yet in his music manuscripts and exercises we repeatedly find Wittgenstein struggling with the ratio of 1:2—the one hand, five fingers of his physical capacity, versus the two hands, ten fingers required by or implied in the musical scores he confronted. To overcome, to pass, to legitimate, the left hand struggles to transcend itself, to balance the imbalanced ratio. Embodied and performed, the metaphor of “single-handedness” frames such adaptive abilities as virtuous overcompensation for deficiency. And if there are moments when the illusion of two-handedness is achieved, there are also plenty of moments where the adaptive techniques are exposed as insufficient. As in the critical responses to Godowsky, in which bodies train and develop in a modern quest for bodily perfection, we may find in Wittgenstein’s performances a heightened duality between ability and disability—his one-handedness but a more prominent, more visible example of the finitude of all bodies against which progress (musical or otherwise) charges.

One of Wittgenstein’s most daunting arrangements was his virtuosic one-hand transcription of Liszt’s two-hand arrangement of Wagner’s orchestral *Isoldes Liebestod*—an appropriately transcendental composition, thematically, musically, and physically. In the arrangement we locate some of Wittgenstein’s most explicit attempts to “try to do, what really cannot be done,” to push past the limits not only of one-handedness, but also of two- and three-handedness, as in the climactic final pages of the arrangement Wittgenstein’s left hand dashes across four staves (**Example 4.3**). The chords are improbably thick—none more so than in the crunchy but metrically unimportant seven-note chord offered as a variant in m. 64 (fingers 1 and 5 must play two

³⁴ Letter from Hermine Wittgenstein to Ludwig Wittgenstein (18 February 1918), quoted in Waugh, *House of Wittgenstein*, 117.

Example 4.3. Four staves for one hand. Wagner/Liszt, *Isolde's Love Death/Isoldes Liebestod*, mm. 64–65, as arranged for the left hand in Paul Wittgenstein, *School for the Left Hand/Schule für die Linke Hand*, vol. 3, *Transcriptions/Bearbeitungen*

keys at once). Similarly, the fingering 1/2/3/4/5 in a subsequent chord is more comically redundant than helpful. Wittgenstein could have condensed the score into two staves (a pedal marking to sustain the arpeggiated chord in m. 65 would have sufficed), yet the initial visual impression dazzles and impresses: is this music for one hand or four?

Cure

In an inverse relationship with Wittgenstein's numerous arrangements of two-hand piano music for his left hand are at least three documented attempts, at various stages of planning and success, to convert his left-hand commissions into piano music for two hands: Prokofiev's expressed interest in pursuing a revision of his left-hand concerto, Alfred Cortot's completed but unpublished arrangement of the Ravel concerto, and the

near-disappearance of Franz Schmidt's six left-hand compositions for Wittgenstein on account of Friedrich Wührer's more successful two-hand arrangements. The inversion exists not only in the reversal of hand number but also in intention and agenda, for while Wittgenstein's one-hand arrangements may be thought of as adaptive variations on an original (two-hand) source, the reverse operation—from one hand to two—is a more dubious enterprise. Of the three ventures, Wittgenstein was in direct combat only over Wührer's, and the antagonism with which the commissioner unsuccessfully fought off the arranger demonstrates (in Wittgenstein's eyes, at least) the profundity of the violation. Unlike Wittgenstein, the two-handed pianist hardly confronts the same "barriers to access" in attempting to perform one-hand music. (The two-handed pianist, after all, is capable of playing with just one hand.) There is also a more elusive issue raised by Hans Brofeldt on his website devoted to one-hand piano music. Needless to say, he is "very firmly against" these two-hand arrangements:

For the suddenly invalidated pianist a whole world collapses: Never again will he or she be able to play the great concertos of Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms—or any their great solo works. If he wants to fight back at Fate and stay in business, he will be compelled to playing [sic] the works written or arranged for one hand. Even though the repertory is enormous with hundreds of suitable works—it is the sad fact that there is no Emperor concerto, no Tchaikovsky B flat minor, no Mozart D minor K466 etc. among them. It just takes that little respect to realize how important it is to leave the works written for one hand alone—as they are!³⁵

There are many strands of thought and emotion woven into this paragraph, including a sense of alienation from the standard, two-hand repertoire, invoking memories of loss and invalidation, and a possessive protection of the repertoire that adequately accommodates

³⁵ Brofeldt, "Rearrangement of Left-Hand Music for Two Hands," *Piano Music for the Left Hand Alone*, http://www.left-hand-brofeldt.dk/Appendix_003_Protest.htm (accessed 12 September 2009).

the disabled pianist's body. In Brofeldt's mind—and perhaps also in Wittgenstein's—the small but rich repertoire of one-hand piano music should be defended and preserved from revisions that would marginalize its legitimacy.

But it would be reductive to filter these problematic two-hand arrangements only through the lens of disability. There is certainly more at play in each of the three situations, especially when considering how Wittgenstein's combative disagreements with the composers of his commissions earned him a great deal of notoriety within the music community. Wittgenstein viewed commissioned pieces as his own property (he bought them, he owned them). He demanded alterations from composers, and, famously, refused to play—and refused to let others play—those commissions that did not pass his liking.³⁶ Wittgenstein also freely edited his commissioned concertos by adding extra cadenzas and thinning the orchestration. Such tampering disturbed Britten, who in 1953 created a newly revised “official version” of his Wittgenstein commission (*Diversions*, op. 21), in effect relegating Wittgenstein's indulgent performances to the past, and opening the concerto up for future interpretations from other, more accomplished pianists. But Britten's revisions are relatively mild and preserve the one-handedness of

³⁶ Wittgenstein did not perform his Prokofiev commission, which Prokofiev completed in 1931. (Siegfried Rapp premiered the piece in 1956). The Hindemith concerto suffered an even worse fate: composed in 1923, then held by the Wittgenstein estate for decades after the pianist's death, it was premiered only in 2004 by Leon Fleisher. For more on Wittgenstein's possessive tendencies as a commissioner, see Georg A. Predota, “Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage,” in *Empty Sleeve*, 71–101. On the Prokofiev concerto, see Waugh, *House of Wittgenstein*, 178–81, and Sergei Prokofiev, *Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, comp. S. Shlifstein, trans. Rose Prokofieva (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House [1959?]), 80. On the Hindemith concerto, see Susanne Schaal-Gotthardt, “‘Es würde mir Leid tun...’: Hindemiths *Klaviermusik mit Orchester* Op. 29 für Paul Wittgenstein,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 166, no. 3 (2005): 46–47; and Giselher Schubert, “Hindemiths *Klaviermusik mit Orchester* für Paul Wittgenstein,” in *Empty Sleeve*, 171–80.

his concerto; two-hand arrangements present a frustrated composer an easier if more provocative way to literally tug the composition out from Wittgenstein's grasp, in other words "stealing it back" through enforced exclusion.

This seems to be one of several possible motivations for Prokofiev, who was concerned early on that his one-hand composition would receive limited performance. He had requested Wittgenstein's permission to use material from the commissioned concerto in later compositions after a waiting period of several years. Unbeknownst to Wittgenstein, Prokofiev's plans for compositional recycling included the possibility of later revising the one-hand concerto for two hands. On 14 September 1931, about two months after completing the concerto, Prokofiev described this option in a letter to the composer Boris Asaf'ev (1884–1949): "[The commission is] already called my Fourth Concerto, and probably in about four years, when my contract with Wittgenstein expires, it will turn into a concerto for two hands (incidentally, I'm keeping quiet about that for now, so as not to offend my customer)."³⁷ Three years later, during which time Wittgenstein declined to perform the concerto on aesthetic grounds, the composer wrote to his "customer" about the possibility of revising the piano part for two hands: "You must understand how a composer suffers when a work has been buried since its birth."³⁸ Wittgenstein capitulated, while expressing concern that the revision's eventual popularity would mainstream the two-hand adaption and delegitimize the one-hand original: "In adapting it mention its source. Should in several years' time, after the version for two

³⁷ Letter from Prokofiev to Boris Asaf'ev, 14 September 1931, quoted in *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, trans. and ed. Harlow Robinson (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 121. Most of the concerto was completed by July 1931.

³⁸ Letter from Prokofiev to Paul Wittgenstein, 8 October 1934, quoted in David Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West, 1891–1935* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 318.

hands has taken place, my ears adjust themselves to your music, and should I have the desire to play this concerto in public, I should not like the public thinking it's an arrangement that I play."³⁹ (This may have been true in 1934, but it wasn't true in 1931, i.e., before it became clear that Wittgenstein was unwilling to perform the piece.) The story ends here: there were no developments beyond this stage, nor is there any evidence why the two-hand concerto never materialized. But in the absence of other information it is worth noting that Prokofiev seems to have viewed one-handedness not only as a compositional inconvenience, something easily written out of his concerto, but also as a blight, something that might prevent the concerto from receiving performances from able-bodied pianists.

By engraving the body of the soloist into the very title of his Wittgenstein commission (*Concerto pour la main gauche*), Ravel was hardly ambivalent about the one-handedness of his composition. Indeed, it is in the light of this explicit, prominent branding that the concerto derives its energy and excitement, delighting the audience in the kinetic musicality of the *main gauche* as it performs its dexterous feats on the keyboard.⁴⁰ Certainly this is true at the end of the first cadenza, when alternation between treble and bass registers accelerates while the distance between these two extremes increases (**Example 4.4**). The steady crescendo from *piano* to *fortissimo* contributes to the surge of physical energy required here. Few pianists can successfully navigate through these notes (and some recorded performances are wildly off). This is difficult

³⁹ Letter from Wittgenstein to Prokofiev, 11 October 1934. Quoted in Nice, *Prokofiev*, 318.

⁴⁰ For an excellent account of the physical qualities of this concerto from the perspective of two performers, see Daphne Leong and David Korevaar, "The Performer's Voice: Performance and Analysis in Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche*," *Music Theory Online* 11, no. 3 (2005), <http://mto.societymusictheory.org/> (accessed 8 June 2009).

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked 'Vivo' at the beginning and 'Ritenuito' towards the end. The dynamics are marked 'p subito' at the start and 'ff' at the end. The music features complex, dense chordal textures with many accidentals and a high level of technical difficulty, particularly in the right hand.

Example 4.4. “Suspenseful athleticism”: one-handedness as physical challenge. Ravel, *Concerto pour la main gauche*, first cadenza, reh. 4⁺²⁵

music, and could be played much more easily by two hands. Yet the exhilarating, suspenseful athleticism of the left hand’s choreographed movements—amplified by the high-stakes threat of error—would be lost were the right hand added to split duties.⁴¹

Alfred Cortot’s two-hand arrangement of the one-hand concerto infuriated Ravel, initiating a conflict that strained their once-cordial friendship past the breaking point.⁴² In passages such as shown in Example 4.4, the two-hand solution is obvious; but in passages such as in **Example 4.5**, in which Ravel’s piano writing is so closely attuned to and even

⁴¹ Michael Russ makes a similar argument regarding the apparent two-handedness of the concerto, but his comparison of this technique with “a good conjuring trick” is too dismissive. See “Ravel and the Orchestra,” in Deborah Mawer ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 126.

⁴² When suggesting potential soloists to conductor Ernest Ansermet, Ravel writes, “[For] several reasons which you will easily understand, I don’t dare mention Alfred Cortot, who, I have been told, is supposed to play [the *Concerto pour la main gauche*] at a date which I do not know.” Letter to Ansermet, 29 October 1937, quoted in Arbie Orenstein ed., *A Ravel Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 327. Marguerite Long gives a few more details about the dispute: “I cannot therefore agree to the arrangement of the Concerto for two hands, not even when projected by important musicians. Moreover, Ravel also expressed his opposition shortly before his death, and I was not the only one to be witness to it. Durand, the publisher, and M. Demange were in full agreement at such arrangement. This is but simple respect for an absolutely original work of which even the slightest kind of re-arrangement would appear as a degradation.” Quoted in Pierre Laumonier ed., *At the Piano with Ravel*, trans. Olive Senior-Ellis (London: Dent & Sons, 1973), 58.

Example 4.5. Ravel, *Concerto pour la main gauche*, second cadenza, reh. 50⁺²⁵⁻²⁸

shaped by the physiology of the left hand, the viable two-hand revisions are less clear. At times in his arrangement (**Figure 4.6**) Cortot seems interested in finding ways to thicken and complicate the passagework by adding additional notes (see the dyads alternating with single notes in reh. 50⁺²⁵), while at other times he appears inclined to simplify by weeding notes from the original (groups of twelve notes reduced to groups of eight notes in reh. 50⁺²⁷). The result is an arrangement that is vertically thicker and horizontally thinner (both properties can be easily seen in a comparison of reh. 50⁺²⁸ of Ravel's original and Cortot's arrangement). Perhaps the intention, then, was to create an easier concerto, but one in which the sound production (at least in terms of the number of

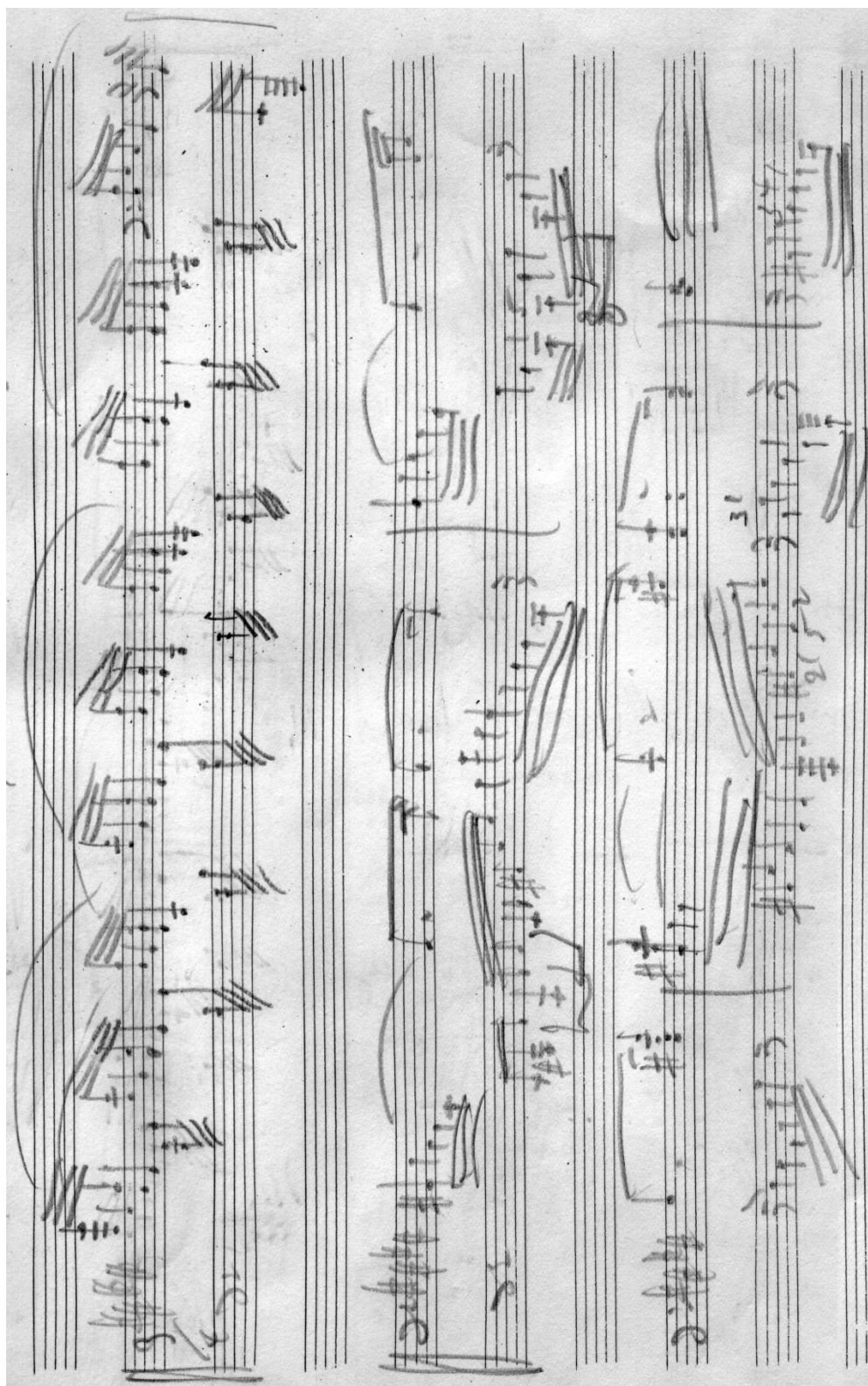


Figure 4.6. Alfred Cortot's "horizontally thinner" and "vertically thicker" two-hand arrangement of Ravel, *Concerto pour la main gauche*, second cadenza, reh. 50⁺²⁵⁻²⁸ [Ex. 4.5]. Coll. Médiathèque Musicale Mahler, Paris

simultaneities) was bolstered to match the number of hands used—the underlying principle being that a two-hand concerto, regardless of its difficulty, should sound two-handed. Such revisions challenge the legitimacy of one-hand piano music, as if accommodational composition were inherently weak, whereas able-bodied composition always strong and robust. Yet it would be false to assume that an additional hand could do no damage, only strengthening and never disrupting. In reh. 50⁺²⁶, for instance, Ravel draws his melody from selected notes in an undulating accompanimental pattern; by relegating this melody to the right hand, Cortot’s two hands uncomfortably collide and interweave in a manner that betrays the music’s one-handed origins—easier, yes, but more awkward.

Cortot’s motivations for undertaking such a time-consuming task are unclear, though it was surely not done on account of any pianistic deficiency: he was a tremendously skilled pianist, with a left hand perfectly capable of tackling the concerto in its original form. Did he arrange the concerto in order to ensure its future performance by able-bodied pianists? In the decades since the arrangement was made, the underlying assumption behind this question, namely that two-handed pianists will not want to temporarily “disable” themselves by withholding a functioning limb, has since been proven false, but both Prokofiev and Cortot acted at a time when the future of what must have seemed like a “niche” repertoire was unclear.⁴³ Such mainstreaming, however,

⁴³ Though dramatic performance and musical performance involve different sets of ethical considerations, here it is worth mentioning the sharp critiques sometimes leveled by disability scholars against able-bodied actors who portray disabled characters (with Dustin Hoffman’s performance in *Rain Man* as the iconic example). Siebers calls this “disability drag”: “The advantage of disability drag is that it prompts audiences to embrace disability. Its disadvantage is that disability appears as a facade overlaying able-bodiedness. The use of able-bodied actors, whose bombastic performances represent their

would have resulted in a composition more exclusive than before: in attempting to make the concerto more accessible to two-handed pianists, Cortot was also denying access to one-handed pianists. This consequence of two-hand transcriptions turns the otherwise benign process of adaptation into a potentially threatening seizure of a still slim (and once vulnerable, at least in Wittgenstein's eyes) repertoire. We have seen how Cortot was not contented by simply re-fingering Ravel's notes (this would be less objectionable): he added notes, deleted them, and rearranged them, to the point that the revision prohibits one-hand performance. Fortunately such a power grab was not to be: rebuffed by Ravel and his publisher, Cortot ultimately abandoned his revision. It exists today only in manuscript. (One wonders, however, whether Cortot's lightning-fast recording of the concerto made in 1939 did not also involve a bit of two-handed trickery).⁴⁴

The abandonment of the Prokofiev arrangement and the failure of the Cortot transcription contrast with the almost insidious success of Friedrich Wührer's two-hand arrangements of the left-hand piano music of Franz Schmidt (1874–1939). Wittgenstein's friend, one of his favorite composers, and easily his most popular source for

able-bodiedness as much as their pretense of disability, not only keeps disability out of public view but transforms its reality and its fundamental characteristics. It renders disability invisible because able-bodied people substitute for people with disabilities, similar to white performers who put on blackface at minstrel shows or to straight actors who play 'fag' to bad comic effect. As a result, the audience perceives the disabled body as a sign of the acting abilities of the performer—the more disabled the character, the greater the ability of the actor." Siebers, *Disability Theory*, 116.

⁴⁴ Alfred Cortot, piano, and Charles Münch, conductor, Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Naxos Historical CD 8.110613 (2000), first issued on Gramophone DB3885/6 (1940), recorded on 12 May 1939 in Paris. Cortot does not follow his two-hand arrangement in the portion of the manuscript that I have viewed, though the improbable speed of the treble/bass alterations in the first cadenza suggests he was playing with two hands during at least part of the performance.

Compositions	Original (piano, left hand)	Arrangement by Friedrich Wührer (piano, two hands)
<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven</i> , for piano and orchestra (1923)	Vienna: Georg Kugel, 1926	Vienna: Universal Edition, 1952 (repr. Munich: Musikproduktion Höflich, 2004)
Quintet in G Major (1926)	Vienna: Georg Kugel, 1927	Vienna and London: Weinberger, 1954
Quintet in B-flat Major (1932)	(not available)	Vienna and London: Weinberger, [1957]
Piano Concerto in E-Flat (1934)	(not available)	Vienna: Universal Edition, 1952 (repr. Munich: Musikproduktion Höflich, 2004)
Toccatà in D Minor (1938)	Vienna and Munich: Doblinger, 1979 [edited by Johann Sonnleitner for harpsichord]	Vienna and Munich: Doblinger, 1969
Quintet in A Major (1938)	(not available)	Vienna: Weinberger, [1959]

Table 4.1. Publications of Franz Schmidt’s compositions for Paul Wittgenstein, comparing the one-hand originals with Friedrich Wührer’s two-hand arrangements

commissions, Schmidt produced an impressive and diverse mini-repertoire of left-hand piano music, with two concertos, three chamber works, and a solo toccata (**Table 1**).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Wittgenstein described Schmidt as the “greatest Austrian composer of the last twenty years” in K. H., “Paul Wittgenstein Tells of Franz Schmidt,” *Musical Courier* 26 (December 1939): 1. When commissioning his left-hand concerto from Britten, Wittgenstein went so far as to send the composer one of his two Schmidt concertos for study as a model; see Donald Mitchell ed., *Letters from a Life: Selected Letters and Diaries of Benjamin Britten, 1913–1976*, vol. 2, (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 843. The rare affinity between the prickly commissioner and his composer probably had as much to do with their shared taste for the late-Romantic aesthetic as it did with Schmidt’s willingness to accept and implement Wittgenstein’s suggestions for revisions. For

The story of how the Wührer arrangements originated, and how they eventually managed to supplant the Schmidt originals, is a veritable soap opera, complete with trans-Atlantic betrayals and death-bed pleading. After fleeing Nazi Austria for New York in December 1938 (the Wittgenstein children were surprised to discover that three of their four grandparents were Jewish), the pianist was no longer able to exercise exclusive control over the six compositions written for him by Schmidt.⁴⁶ In the meantime, the composer had aligned himself with the Nazis who warmly embraced him as a late-Romantic example of the Austro-Germanic musical heritage (Schmidt's last, unfinished work was an oratorio, *Die deutsche Auferstehung*, 1938–39).⁴⁷ Wittgenstein later learned that one of Schmidt's former students—Friedrich Wührer (1900–1975)—was arranging and performing his Schmidt commissions, supposedly after having received permission at the dying composer's bedside (Schmidt died in February 1939). Objecting to the arrangements on legal grounds, Wittgenstein wrote to Schmidt's widow Margarethe, apparently accusing her of having resold his "property"; in her defensive responses, the widow frames herself as a caretaker of Schmidt's legacy: "You ask me to protect your

information on the relationship between Wittgenstein and Schmidt, see E. Fred Flindell, "More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and Their Triumph with the E-flat Concerto," in *Empty Sleeve*, 133–70.

⁴⁶ The Wittgensteins' escape from Austria is told in suspenseful detail in Waugh, *House of Wittgenstein*, 190–250.

⁴⁷ See Reiner Schuhenn, *Franz Schmidts oratorische Werke: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des "Buches mit sieben Siegeln" und der "Deutschen Auferstehung"* (Vienna: Doblinger, 1990). At the premiere of *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln* (Vienna, 15 June 1938), the young conductor Georg Tintner (1917–1999) apparently saw Schmidt giving the Nazi salute in appreciation of the audience's applause. See "Georg Tintner" [obituary], *The Musical Times* 140, no. 1869 (1999): 9. In a reminiscence, the violinist Oskar Adler (1875–1955) defends the composer: "One fact I have to state with all the emphasis at my disposal: Schmidt never was a Nazi. But politically, he was quite extraordinarily naïve." Quoted in Hans Keller, "Personal Recollections: Oskar Adler's and My Own," in Harold Truscott, *The Music of Franz Schmidt*, vol. 1, *The Orchestral Music* (London: Toccata Press, 1984), 15.

rights. Have you considered carefully what a strange position this would place me in? In relation to the public, but above all as the custodian of the late Franz Schmidt's musical estate I cannot contribute to a state of things in which five big works simply disappear instead of becoming the common property of the musical world."⁴⁸ Later, it was agreed that the arrangements could continue receiving performances so long as program booklets and radio announcements included the following statement: "This work was written by the composer for the one-armed pianist Mr. Paul Wittgenstein, for the left hand only. With the composer's permission it has now been arranged for two hands by Friedrich Wuehrer."⁴⁹ But as Table 4.1 indicates, there was a clear victor in this dispute. Wuehrer's two-hand arrangements were published shortly after the war and are all readily available today, some even recently reprinted; with one exception, Schmidt's one-hand originals exist only in manuscript and private, limited printings.

In undertaking these arrangements, Wuehrer adopted an explicit agenda of normalization: "I have distributed the one-hand part over both hands, and have strengthened and filled it in by means of octave or chord doublings or by incorporating orchestral parts in those passages where expressivity demanded it."⁵⁰ Wuehrer's language

⁴⁸ Quoted in Norbert Tschulik, *Franz Schmidt: A Critical Biography*, trans. Angela Tolstoshev (London: Glover & Blair, 1980), 88. The "five big works" consist of the concertos and chamber pieces. Eventually Margarethe Schmidt would also rescind her offer of letting Wittgenstein preserve control of the toccata, which the composer presented to the pianist as a gift.

⁴⁹ As found, for example, in the unpaginated introductory material to Franz Schmidt, *Quintett B-Dur für Klavier, Klarinette, Violine, Viola u. Violoncello* (Vienna: Weinberger, 1952). A slightly different German sentence is also offered as an option: "Dieses Werk wurde vom Komponisten für Herrn Paul Wittgenstein für die linke Hand geschrieben; es wird heute mit dessen Zustimmung zweihändig vorgetragen."

⁵⁰ Quoted in the introduction to Franz Schmidt, *Klavierkonzert Es-Dur, 1934*, arr. Friedrich Wuehrer (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1952; repr. Munich: Musikproduktion

(a)

(b)

Example 4.6. Octave quadrupling as “strengthening.” Franz Schmidt, *Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven*, reh. 51⁺⁶–52⁺¹, piano part only: (a) original for left hand alone (Vienna: Georg Kugel, 1926); and (b) arrangement for two hands by Friedrich Wührer (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1952)

is littered with metaphors commonly used to stigmatize disabled bodies: one-hand piano music is weak and needs to be “strengthened”; it is porous, and needs to be “filled in.” But as we have seen with Cortot’s arrangement, the process of “normalization” is hardly so straightforward. For instance, octave quadruplings—Wührer’s preferred method of “strengthening”—often stretch on for dozens upon dozens of measures without any clear sense of expressive purpose (for one of many possible examples of this, compare **Examples 4.6a** and **4.6b**). In “normalizing” Schmidt’s music by giving the right hand something to do, Wührer constructed a very abnormal piece of music: few two-hand compositions rely so heavily on such quadruplings, and the resultant passages are

Höflich, 2004). Elsewhere, Wührer argues that the piano concertos “attain their full effect only through the strength of both hands,” quoted in Tschulik, *Franz Schmidt*, 86.

(a)

(b)

Example 4.7. Adding a second hand by rescoring the original. Schmidt, *Concertante Variationen*, reh. 13⁺⁵⁻⁸, piano part only: (a) original for left hand alone; and (b) arrangement for two hands by Friedrich Wührer

texturally dry, bordering on monotonous. Elsewhere, Wührer leaves Schmidt's readily playable original intact, but rescors the music across two staves in order to involve the right hand.⁵¹ In **Example 4.7**, for instance, the notes of an ascending scale across white keys—one of the most rudimentary tasks for the novice piano student, to say nothing of the concert professional—are played in Wührer's arrangement by a pair of crossing hands. Equally unchallenging is the f^2 - e^2 - g^2 - f^2 - e^2 melody in reh. 13⁺⁷ (and repeated an octave lower in the following measure); yet this too has been split and fragmented. Such a revision was probably made to take advantage of the potential for hand alternations to achieve crisp melody articulation. But visually the passage (and others like it, see especially reh. 5⁺⁶⁻⁹) seems disfigured rather than cured, fragmented rather than repaired.

⁵¹ The arrangement of the *Concertante Variationen* is also discussed in Kim-Park, "Paul Wittgenstein," 105–7.

(a)

Piano solo

Violin solo

Strings

(b)

sehr ausdrucksvoll

p

poco marc.

poco cresc.

cresc.

Example 4.8. Replacing a violin solo with the pianist’s right hand. Schmidt, *Concertante Variationen*, reh. 15⁺¹⁻⁵, piano with violin solo and orchestra: (a) original for left hand alone; and (b) arrangement for two hands by Friedrich Wührer

Among the more troubling of Wührer’s “rehabilitations” are those that expressly exclude and disqualify left-hand performance. Although it may be possible to piece together the remnants of one-handedness in the excerpts discussed so far, a comparison between **Example 4.8a** and **4.8b** reveals a more thorough erasure. Wührer converts what was originally a brief duet for violin and piano into a full-fledged piano solo, replacing the violin’s melody with thick block chords in the pianist’s right hand—“filling in” and “strengthening.” Eliminating Schmidt’s accommodational solo violin (which nicely elides the heaviness of the full orchestral texture with the more intimate solo cadenza,

allowing the violin to “help” the pianist along), Wührer instead emphasizes the able-bodiedness of the piano part, its strength to stand independent and alone without aid or support. So substantial are the changes here that it is impossible to deduce the one-hand original from the two-hand revisions, much less for the one-handed pianist to attempt their performance: mainstreamed, the disabled composition has been cured of its symptoms.⁵²

What was Wührer thinking? Franz Schmidt did not compose much in the way of “normal” piano music—a source of much regret among some of his advocates, now as ever—and Wührer’s efforts probably represent an attempt to bolster his teacher’s legacy as a composer for that important instrument.⁵³ There were surely practical, legal concerns, as referenced earlier with quotations from Margarethe Schmidt’s correspondence with Wittgenstein: in supporting Schmidt’s posthumous rise as a celebrated Austro-Germanic composer, it was no longer tenable for Wittgenstein, exiled in America, to retain sole performance rights for this key repertoire. The political environment of the time suggests that there were also racial motives at work. For the sake of Schmidt’s posterity it was surely appealing to suppress his extensive involvement with Wittgenstein, whose name appears in the fourth and final volume of the *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* (1943).⁵⁴ Whether Wührer himself was anti-Semitic is not known,

⁵² Wührer claimed to find the one-hand piano parts in the three quintets unproblematic, since the left-hand piano there acts as a fifth voice and does not attempt to accompany the ensemble. This, however, stands in contrast with the troublesome revisions identified by Gerhard J. Winkler in his study of those Wührer arrangements. See Winkler’s essay “Franz Schmidts Quintette: Kammermusik mit Klavier für die linke Hand allein,” in Carmen Ottner ed., *Kammermusik zwischen den Weltkriegen: Symposion 1994*, Studien zu Franz Schmidt 11 (Vienna: Doblinger, 1995), 47–63.

⁵³ This regret is expressed, for instance, in Truscott, *Franz Schmidt*, 23–24.

⁵⁴ Suchy, “Sein Werk,” 21.

though certainly strains of an implicit anti-Semitism, to say nothing of an explicit ableism, can be detected in a vicious postwar condemnation of Wittgenstein, attributed to Wührer secondhand: “We in Austria do not take Mr. Wittgenstein seriously. A choleric neurasthenic—rich, arrogant, and an abysmal pianist.”⁵⁵ (In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries neurasthenia was gendered female and coded Jewish.)⁵⁶ Yet none of this—not even a personal or racially prejudicial dislike of Wittgenstein—sufficiently explains why Wührer went to such great lengths to erase the remnants of one-handedness from his teacher’s music.⁵⁷

After all, two-handed pianists like Wührer were perfectly capable of “acting disabled,” leaving their able right hand inactive at their side while their left dashed up and down the keyboard. But would this have been seen as virtuous? In a powerful display of the ideology of ability in one of its fiercest incarnations, the Nazis were careful to expunge images of disabled bodies from public view. In artworks, for instance, depictions of bodily weakness and irregularity warranted the branding of *Entartete Kunst* (degenerate art); prized instead were representations of the healthy, robust Aryan,

⁵⁵ Originally in a letter from Friedrich Wührer to Siegfried Rapp, 26 December 1949, which was quoted in a letter from Siegfried Rapp to Otakar Hollman, 1 December 1956, as reproduced in Sassmann, “...Alles, was nur möglich ist,” 119.

⁵⁶ Leopold Löwenfeld writes in his late-nineteenth-century study of neurasthenia and hysteria: “Concerning the claimed predisposition of the Semitic race, one can only state the fact that among the Israelites today there is an unusually large number of neurasthenics and hysterics.” This was not due to race, but, according to Löwenfeld, the Jewish lifestyle. See Leopold Löwenfeld, *Pathologie und Therapie der Neurasthenie und Hysterie* (Wiesbaden: J. F. Bergmann, 1894), 44–45, quoted in Sander L. Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 96.

⁵⁷ One possible factor is that Wührer was keenly interested in issues of piano performance throughout his life. His dozens of editions of concertos and cadenzas are testament to this, as are his arrangements of Chopin etudes in which hand positions are reversed and fingerings are creatively revised. The Schmidt arrangements may serve as early precedents for these later explorations. Friedrich Wührer, *Achtzehn Studien zu Frederic Chopins Etuden: “In motu contrario”* (Heidelberg: W. Müller, 1957).

embodying the favored qualities of purity (*Reinheit*) and wholeness (*Heil*).⁵⁸ Whether Wührer was sympathetic to Nazi ideology is a matter of some debate, but his agenda of “strengthening” and “filling in” Schmidt’s music suggests he was not immune to the influence of Nazi cultural values in his attempt to promote the music of his beloved teacher.⁵⁹ For the asymmetries of one-handedness are neither *rein* nor *heil*: the performance of music, itself a quasi-sacred act in Nazi culture, required full-bodied vigor.⁶⁰

Difference

To do something *single-handedly* is to perform despite restricted means, to demonstrate ability in the presence of disability. The emergence of the former quality from the latter creates a hierarchy. In a battle to negate (and not validate) weakness, and to shun (and not embrace) limit, valorized ability triumphs over stigmatized disability. The extraordinary career and legacy of Paul Wittgenstein repeatedly confronts this problematic trope, whether in the critical press, where attempts to reconcile the pianist’s

⁵⁸ Carol Poore, *Disability in Twentieth-Century German Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 67–137. The use of disability metaphors (“impure,” “weak,” “deformed”) to stigmatize racial elements in “degenerate music” is also indicative of this preference for able-bodiedness. See, for instance, Albrecht Dümling, “The Target of Racial Purity: The ‘Degenerate Music’ Exhibition in Düsseldorf, 1938,” in Richard A. Etlin ed., *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 43–72.

⁵⁹ Wührer was reportedly spotted at a pro-Nazi rally on one occasion. Without citation, Waugh quotes Wittgenstein’s description of Wührer as someone who “went about for ten years shouting ‘Heil Hitler!’ and now only plays music to erase the past” (Waugh, *House of Wittgenstein*, 270). In light of Wittgenstein’s cross-Atlantic dispute such information should be read skeptically.

⁶⁰ The Nazi ideology of ability also led to its practice of eugenics, aimed specifically at those with mental and hereditary disabilities. Institutionalized for twenty-three years, Franz Schmidt’s first wife was murdered by the Nazis under this policy.

able-bodied sound with his disabled body reveal subtle biases; or in Wittgenstein's one-hand arrangements, in which the pianist's (sometimes flawed, sometimes clever) efforts to map his disabled body onto two-handed music can be tracked; or, most insidiously, in the rehabilitation of one-hand music, in the effort to detach it from its disabled origins and elevate it into a more standard, more normal medium. To accommodate the deviation presented by disability, transformations occur: bodies must "pass" or "overcome," be "fixed" and "rehabilitated," "othered" or "enfreaked."

As an enforcer of such conversions, the constructed normalcy of Western art music is monolithic. The qualification "Western art music" is important, for musicians in many non-notated musical traditions may freely shape their performance style in accordance with their bodies.⁶¹ Yet the standardized nature of classical music allows its performers few if any such flexibilities. Just as architectural and societal barriers like non-sloped curbs, guide dog restrictions, and heavy doors prevent disabled people from full participation in the physical world, so too may a musical score—along with a communal assumption that the score ought to be performed as is, without emendation—exclude certain bodies from performance. When not writing for anyone in specific (that is, when writing under—and thus contributing to—the assumptions of constructed normalcy), composers nearly always envision their performer as a "normal" body,

⁶¹ For example, jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt and jazz pianist Horace Parlan both allowed their hand impairments to dictate salient features of their musical idiom. On Reinhardt, whose left hand was damaged in a fire, see Benjamin Givan, "Django Reinhardt's Left Hand," in *Jazz Planet*, ed. E. Taylor Atkins (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 19–39. Horace Parlan, whose right hand was weakened by polio, "plays fluent linear passages with the left hand, while using his right (almost like drumsticks) for powerfully rhythmic chords." See Gary Giddins, *Weather Bird: Jazz at the Dawn of its Second Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 22.

possessing all limbs and all fingers, with able capacity for breath control, dexterity, and strength. Performers whose bodies are unable to comply with the standards dictated by a specific piece of music must find alternate ways to participate, either by learning adaptive performance techniques (the use of a prosthetic, for instance), or by approximating a composition's desired effects (musical reductions or transpositions). When a community of similarly-disabled musicians develops, a repertoire with sufficient accommodation surely follows, as is the case with left-hand piano music, thanks to Wittgenstein's initiative. But such examples are rare. Without repertoire, most differently shaped bodies are dissuaded from pursuing classical musical performance from the outset; and without performers, composers have few incentives to undertake any specialized projects. The vicious cycle repeats.

Musical instruments, like musical scores, can also construct "bodily limits" on account of their weight, shape, even construction material (performers may be allergic to any number of metals, woods, and resins found in instruments). This is particularly true of pianos, organs, and other site-specific instruments that resist customization. Even for able-bodied musicians, the stress and strain associated with the repetitive actions of musical performance can cause severe physical injury: thumb strain in clarinetists, temporomandibular joint disorder (TMJ) in violinists, reduced pulmonary function in wind players, pharyngeal incompetence and decreased visual fields in high-resistance wind instrumentalists (oboists, trumpeters), vocal nodules in singers, overuse syndrome and tendonitis in pianists, and so on.⁶² Even this very selective catalogue of maladies—

⁶² These and many other medical disorders found in musicians are outlined with bibliographic citation in Sarah Bache and Frank Edenborough, "A Symphony of Maladies," *BMJ* 337 (2008), http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/337/dec12_1/a2646

barely scratching the surface of the expansive and growing field of performing arts medicine—yanks music down from the heights of aesthetic purity and sublimity, reminding us of the earthy, sweaty physicality of music-making, the severe exhaustion after hours of nonstop rehearsal, the potential for music to cause pain and life-altering injury. The highly competitive nature of the music industry almost ensures that performers will injure their bodies at least once during the course of their careers. Like sports, music performance is an enterprise that concentrates on displays of ability, especially virtuosic ability, in which the over-trained body pushes up against its bodily limit; but in their strain and stress such bodies can easily break past their capacity, incurring career-threatening injury. And the injured musician, like the injured athlete, faces the prospect of exclusion, his or her bodily limits now too narrowly defined to warrant participation.

Though a relatively unimportant feature of the body in most life activities, hand size is a potent example of the “bodily limits” many performers must confront. Consider the performance of parallel octaves on the piano: such music can only be played with hands that stretch 6.5 inches (the distance of one octave on standard piano keyboards today), and may only be *comfortably* played when the pianist can cover those inches as naturally as possible, with minimal stretch or strain. Discomfort can lead to injury, especially after the extensive practice required to play parallel octaves in rapid

(accessed 2 July 2009). This subfield of medicine has its own full-fledged society, the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA), complete with its own quarterly journal, *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*.



Figure 4.7. The construction of “bodily limits” through keyboard size: 7/8” DS (Donison Steinbuhler) Standard keyboard (left) vs. “conventional” keyboard (right). Promotional photographs, Steinbuhler & Company Official Website, <http://www.steinbuhler.com/html/handsizepage.html> (accessed 1 June 2009)

succession.⁶³ This bias for larger hand sizes is gendered, of course: much of the piano repertoire was written for and the modern standard piano built for male hands, which average slightly larger than female hands. Indeed, women are more prone to experience pain after extended piano practice.⁶⁴ Recently, a piano company based in Pennsylvania has offered a line of alternatively sized keyboards, including one with octave spans of approximately one inch smaller than a conventional keyboard (**Figure 4.7**). An independent study has confirmed anecdotal and promotional assertions that such

⁶³ Naotaka Sakai, “Hand Pain Attributed to Overuse Among Professional Pianists: A Study of 200 Cases,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 17 (2002): 178–80. Charles Rosen writes that “hours of practicing parallel octaves have been conjectured to be the reason in recent times for so many pianists’ having lost control of the fourth and fifth fingers of their right hand.” In Charles Rosen, *Piano Notes: The World of the Pianist* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 7. He also observes that there is “no such thing as an ideal pianist’s hand.” *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁴ C. H. Pak and K. Chesky, “Prevalence of Hand, Finger, and Wrist Musculoskeletal Problems in Keyboard Instrumentalists,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 16 (2001): 17–23. A piece of relevant trivia is that regulation basketballs used in the Women’s National Basketball Association have a circumference one inch smaller than basketballs in the National Basketball Association (for Men).

keyboards are ergonomically more comfortable and effective for small-handed pianists.⁶⁵ Yet despite such positive initial reports, it should hardly be surprising that the piano builders acknowledge reluctance among pianists to accept such accommodations: “Since the keyboard did not exist elsewhere, everyone believed their careers would be hurt by working with them,” piano builder Dabid Steinbuhler writes.⁶⁶ Presumably “elsewhere” entails the majority of concert halls and practice rooms across the world, stocked with standardized pianos. Equally threatening, perhaps, are the standardized pianos used in competitions (could judges ever allow competitors to each bring in their own customized keyboards?).⁶⁷ Requests for accommodation are often stigmatized, sometimes through overt malevolence, but more commonly through the passive, stubborn grind of efficient bureaucracy (pianos are cumbersome to move and expensive to acquire, and standardization helps the wheels of the industry turn). Yet there is nothing inevitable or determined about the current shape of the modern piano. It is a cultural construction, one that—like repertoire—predefines and idealizes a certain type of body. As Kenneth

⁶⁵ Brenda G. Wristen, Myung-Chul Jung, Alexis K. Wismer, and M. Susan Hallbeck, “Assessment of Muscle Activity and Joint Angles in Small-Handed Pianists: A Pilot Study on the 7/8-Sized Keyboard Versus the Full-Sized Keyboard,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 21 (2006): 3–9. See also Carol Leone, “Goldilocks Had a Choice,” *American Music Teacher* 52, no. 6 (June-July 2003): 26–9. Ergonomically designed instruments have seen an upsurge in popularity in recent years; see, for instance, founder David Nabb’s and builder Jeff Stelling’s One-Handed Woodwinds Program, University of Nebraska at Kearney, <http://onehandwinds.unk.edu/index.html> (accessed 8 August 2009).

⁶⁶ David Steinbuhler, “Our Research,” Steinbuhler & Company official website, http://www.steinbuhler.com/html/our_research.html (accessed 8 June 2009).

⁶⁷ In *PGA Tour vs. Martin* (2001), the Supreme Court of the United States considered whether a rule requiring golfers to walk between shots was illegally discriminatory against the disabled defendant. The broader philosophical questions invoked here require discussion and debate in regard to competitive musical performance. Can skills performed by differently shaped and differently sized bodies ever be fairly compared? Does accommodation establish fairness, or create new advantages and disadvantages?

Hamilton writes, “There have been so few changes in the basic construction of the piano for so many years now that it is easy to lose sight of the instrument’s fluid state for most of the nineteenth century” (or earlier, when we consider the narrow keys of pre-piano keyboard instruments).⁶⁸ It is all too easy to forget the numerous accommodations and prostheses—tacitly deemed acceptable—with which the piano is currently equipped: adjustable bench height, adjustable action, the availability of three pedals. But key size is unofficially regulated.

Among the most prominent pianists with small hands was Alicia de Larrocha (1923–2009). Her body was described in an interview with the *New York Times* in 1995:

Off stage, she looks more than ever like the incredible shrinking pianist, barely able to reach the pedals. “I used to be 4 foot 7,” she said. “Now I’m 4 foot 6, or 4 foot 5.” In other words, she is about as tall sitting at the piano as standing up. Her hands are tinier than ever. “I used to reach a 10th,” she said. “Now, a ninth, with some difficulty.” [...] Fans may have noticed this in her three recordings of “Goyescas” by Enrique Granados. “The first and second record, you can hear the 10th,” she said. “The third, no, because my hand is shrinking.” What about demanding, big-handed composers like Rachmaninoff? “I don’t play him anymore.”⁶⁹

Certainly De Larrocha was not disabled by her hand size in most daily activities. But in discussing her musical performance, the language of disability (particularly the trope of “overcoming limitation,” which haunts the critical reception of Wittgenstein) persists. In an earlier interview, after describing hand-stretching exercises given (“prescribed...”) to her by her teacher (“...like a doctor”), De Larrocha states, “I wouldn’t care for longer fingers, just a broader hand spread. But by training and hard work, I’ve managed to

⁶⁸ Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 208. See also Naotaka Sakai, “Keyboard Span in Old Musical Instruments: Concerning Hand Span and Overuse Problems in Pianists,” *Medical Problems in Performing Artists* 23 (2008): 160–71.

⁶⁹ James Barron, “At Home With Alicia de Larrocha: A Pianissimo Star,” *New York Times*, (23 November 1995), C1.

overcome that limitation” (my italics).⁷⁰ Similarly, in his biographical dictionary of pianists, David Dubal writes: “Born with unusually small hands, she *transcended her limitation, overcoming every problem*” (my italics).⁷¹ As with Wittgenstein’s disability, De Larrocha’s smallness is framed as an obstacle to wage battle against; the barriers lie not in the music, not in the instrument, but in the body.

Many of these issues, including the aesthetics of one-handed pianism, coalesce into an intriguing ethical quandary inspired by Alicia de Larrocha’s recorded performance of the *Concerto pour la main gauche*.⁷² The *main gauche* for which Ravel wrote is particularly large, far larger than De Larrocha’s. (Pianist Marguerite Long, a friend of Ravel and frequent performer of his music, never played the concerto. As she said, her hand was “too small to be able to encompass the vast stretches.”⁷³) Occurring throughout, these “stretches” are at their most exposed and vulnerable early in the first cadenza, when a succession of chords spanning the interval of a tenth (and in one case an eleventh) must be played clearly to maintain the continuity of treble and bass lines (**Example 4.9**). Available recorded performances reveal vastly different solutions to the problems posed in this passage. Few pianists manage to play block chords throughout (Krystian Zimerman comes very close). The most common solution, even among pianists with large hands, is to roll selected wide chords upward; other chords—especially those not thick enough to be rolled—may be split, though performances vary as to whether the

⁷⁰ Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1980), 59.

⁷¹ David Dubal, *The Art of the Piano: Its Performers, Literature, and Recordings* (New York: Summit Books, 1989), 82.

⁷² Alicia de Larrocha, piano, and Leonard Slatkin, conductor, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, *Ravel: Piano Concertos*, RCA Victor Red Seal 60985 (1993).

⁷³ Long, *At the Piano*, 58.

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has three measures. The left hand plays wide chords, and the right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line. The second system also has three measures. The left hand plays wide chords, and the right hand (bass clef) plays a melodic line. Annotations include 'Led.', '8vb', and '3'.

Example 4.9. Wide chords requiring a large left hand. Ravel, *Concerto pour la main gauche*, first cadenza, reh. 4⁺⁶⁻¹¹

upper or lower notes are played first. De Larrocha’s solution is an effective assortment of rolled and broken chords, performed convincingly and expressively, yet there is little doubt that such gestures are accommodational in origin.⁷⁴ The disabled music (accommodating one disability) proves disabling (for another). And though stylistic suitability and widespread practice have here deemed rolled and broken chords acceptable solutions for performance, a simple but curiously taboo alternative would be far more effective in masking the limits of small-handedness: allowing the dormant right hand to briefly awaken and assist. Even without visual confirmation, it is audibly apparent that De Larrocha passed such a solution over—opting instead to perform Ravel *single-handedly*. And in doing so, we are aware more than ever of De Larrocha’s body,

⁷⁴ Some of De Larrocha’s techniques are discussed and transcribed in Atsuko Jozaki, “Maurice Ravel’s Two Piano Concertos: A Study of Sociology, Analysis and Performance Practice,” (D.M.A. diss., Boston University, 2000), 133.

her hand on the keyboard, its size and its stretch. This is De Larrocha's *main gauche*—not Ravel's idealized one.

The bare, transparent acknowledgment of the body—as it is, and not as it ought to be—can be powerfully expressive, even enabling. Consider the inventive piano writing in Richard Strauss's first Wittgenstein commission, the *Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica*, op. 73 (1925). Curling, twisting, and trilling with decorative playfulness, its piano part seems to evoke a new mode of keyboard performance, one different from any traditional two-hand model. A similar tactic was adopted by Britten, who writes in his preface to *Diversions*: “In no place in the work did I attempt to imitate a two-handed piano technique.” Instead, the composer approaches the piano freshly, compiling techniques and strategies as if to compose for a newly invented instrument. Consider also Franz Schmidt's use of one-handed pianism in his chamber works: liberated from its role as dutiful accompanist, the pianist weaves its way into the texture of the single-lined string and wind instruments as an equal, as a true fifth voice. (Recall also the violin “prosthesis” in Example 4.8a, supplementing the piano in its one-handed cadenza—an inventive compositional accommodation untenable in Wührer's two-hand arrangement.) Antonio Iturrioz, himself a one-handed pianist, acknowledges the potential for one-handed pianism to enable musical performance: “[T]here is an immediate tendency to want to play louder because we are conditioned to hearing the voluminous sounds of normal two hand piano music. [...] [L]eft hand playing enables us to be more intimate and personal (almost fragile) without as much physical effort as in normal playing.”⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Antonio Iturrioz, “Playing Left Hand Piano Music,” The Unconservatory, <http://www.unconservatory.org/articles/lhpiano.html> (accessed 2 May 2009).

After attending Paul Wittgenstein's performance of the Ravel *Concerto pour la main gauche* at the Municipal Auditorium in New Orleans, a reviewer for the *Times-Picayune* penned a rather heartfelt review that seems to imagine this alternate model of disabled musical performance. He writes,

Mr. Wittgenstein undoubtedly is a great artist in his own right. And his art is entirely legitimate in itself. That it is the art of playing the piano with one hand, the left hand, in no way detracts from its completeness or beauty anymore than the limitations of the harp detracts [sic] from the entirely artistic legitimacy of scores for that great instrument; nor is a solo for horn less artistic because it is less encompassing than the piano; nor even is the piano unsatisfying because it is less complete than the whole orchestra. If man had only one arm and one hand he would have created music for one hand, and Mr. Wittgenstein demonstrated that that music would have been great music of which there would be great masters.⁷⁶

Difference is not deficit, and the differences offered by disability are part of a continuum of limitations that all bodies confront. How divergent these statements are from Paul Wittgenstein's aforementioned motto ("half the means, double the energy and work"), or from Margaret Stonborough's skeptical condescension ("he insists on trying to do, what really cannot be done"). Dissolving narratives of overcoming, imbalanced ratios of deficiency, and rehabilitations from abnormality, this alternate framework removes disability and its many performances from a stigmatized ranking below ability, and acknowledges that bodies themselves are infinitely variable, differently sized and differently shaped and differently vulnerable.

* * *

⁷⁶ G. A. Trufant, Jr., "Austrian Proves Pianist of Note, Declares Critic: Physical Handicap No Detriment to Wittgenstein Says Reviewer," *The Times-Picayune* (7 January 1943), p. 17.

Example 4.10. Confronting the limits of one-handedness. Britten, *Diversions*, op. 21, reh. 33⁺¹⁻⁹, piano part only

By way of a coda, a brief music example: In the tenth variation of Britten's *Diversions*, the piano enters only after the orchestra has played the entire theme through once. It does so directly, with a single, accented *forte* f^2 (**Example 10**). A stepwise ascending melody begins to emerge in the following measure ($g^b2-ab^2-b^b2-c^3-d^3$) while a stepwise descent emerges concurrently ($eb^2-d^b2-c^2-bb^1$). Synchronized, the two melodies reach their C octaves simultaneously—but they stall here, accumulating pent-up energy as they impede the expected steady expansion. The wedge pushes out further for the bb^1-d^3 interval; a *fortissimo* dynamic confirms the accomplishment. Though Britten placed the lowest note in this final chord in parentheses immediately after its initial appearance, and though this chord is sometimes rolled in recorded performances, Wittgenstein's large left hand would probably have been able to cover the stretch posed by this tenth. But he would not have been able to cover a twelfth, the next interval in this pattern. This does not stop Britten's performer protagonist from trying: accumulating momentum again, the chord contracts inward, then outward, then inward again, as if attempting to expand

further. But this is not possible: the subsequent outward expansion is fragmented, and the chord breaks, descending in pieces. The bodily limit has been reached.

CONCLUSION

Disability is the product of binary thinking. It is the negation of a predetermined ideal: fixity in place of mobility (recall the definition of obsession—and its musical motions), ugliness in place of beauty (recall the aesthetics of empathy), limitation in place of transcendence (recall the tenets of Mayrhofer), and capacity in place of incapacity (recall the tenets of Wittgenstein).

Ability and its opposite, *disability*, are only one negation away from each other. Opposites rarely maintain their mandated distance—they feed each other. Though formed as antitheses, they are bonded by the extremity of their definitions. (The shadow is inextricably linked to the lighted form, as exemplified in the symbolic imagery of *Die Gezeichneten*.)

And yet few of the oppositions thus far identified are equally weighted in terms of either their quantity or power. On account of its sheer ordinariness, one pole is common and receives little notice. On account of its radical peculiarity, the other pole is marked. This imbalance—between the pervasive-and-ordinary and the unusual-but-powerful—creates tension.

In a tonal soundscape, where musical motion is the norm, the “fixed note” sounds as an intruder or an irritant. The portrait of the one-handed pianist demands explanation; the portrait of the two-handed pianist requires none. Indeed, the markedness of the “peculiar opposite” sometimes reminds us of the very existence of the ordinary norm, which may be common to the point of invisibility. The deformed body is deformed only

against a blank, prototypical form, which may otherwise escape notice. Predefined boundaries attract our attention most when they are *ruptured*.

How do we emerge unscathed from these oppositional conflicts? We tell stories in which the binary is collapsed. Whether it be Mayrhofer's heroic transcendence, Brunetti's societal cure, or Schreker's empathic synthesis, narratives may offer resolution: one pole "accommodates" the other; the peculiar opposite "overcomes" its own deficiencies; the pervasive norm "cures" its uncommon other. Or more concrete action is taken: recall Wührer's purging ("strengthening" and "filling in") of Wittgenstein's commissions. More provocatively, the conflict is left to stand as it is, like the "shimmering" hexachord that opens and closes *Die Gezeichneten*; there, each oppositional triad complements the other to form a well-balanced, highly symmetrical whole.

Binary thinking is dangerous, of course; by now this is more sentimental truism than provocation. Yet our very definition of *disability*—indeed, its etymological origin from the act of negation ("dis-ability")—inevitably reinforces this binary, this oppositional pairing in which ability and disability are positioned as the normative standard and its stigmatized other.

A way out of this bind is the subversion of prejudice: as we have seen in the realm of one-handed piano performance, disability can be *enabling*, and its cure (as was the case with Wührer's transcriptions) actually *disfiguring*. Acknowledging as much, we begin to pry loose the tight hold this binary has on our way of thinking about the body. Within this new ideology, bodily limitations are to be affirmed rather than superseded, embraced rather than overcome.

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