'Denk an meinen Hund': Applied Subdominants and Motivic Treatment in Schoenberg's "Warnung," Op. 3, No. 3

Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers

In Die Bilanz der Moderne (1904), the literary historian Samuel Lublinski described a paradox particular to modern novelists and poets: namely, that they renewed the Romantic concept of sexuality as "cosmic life" while at the same time emphasizing more fully and openly its "sensual-physiological reality." Perhaps no other writer embodied this paradox more forcefully than Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), who, when a young Arnold Schoenberg discovered his work, had firmly positioned himself at the forefront of the literary Jahrhundertwende and whose lyric poetry proposed a provocative fusion of the sexual and the religious that triggered either fervent admiration or virulent criticism. In his early twenties when he attempted his first Dehmel settings, Schoenberg quickly joined the ranks of the contentious poet's supporters. As Walter Frisch has sensitively shown, Dehmel's verse exerted a decisive influence on Schoenberg's technical development at the turn of the century, an influence traceable in no less than nine songs for piano and voice, a fragment for baritone and orchestra, and the sextet Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night), all of which were composed between 1897 and 1899. Schoenberg's efforts to cultivate a language appropriate to Dehmel's intense worldview, one in which sensory experience formed a bridge between chaos and violence on one side and exaltation and redemption on the other, resulted in an expanded tonal palette and a more integrated approach to motivic development. In particular, the amalgamation of Brahmsian techniques with Wagnerian chromaticism and sequential harmonic language that characterizes Schoenberg's 1899 works constituted, Frisch argues, the composer's direct response to Demhel's

I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers and to the *Intégral* staff for their helpful feedback on this article.

¹ Roy Pascal, From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society, 1880–1918 (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 229.

audacious writing.2 "Warnung" ("Warning"), Op. 3, No. 3, which Schoenberg drafted in 1899 and revised for publication in 1903, exemplifies the composer's early forays into extended tonal territory and offers a particularly grim sample of Dehmel's controversial style.3 The poem "Warnung" appeared in Weib und Welt (Woman and World), the 1896 collection that inspired most of Schoenberg's Dehmel lieder. It expresses a recurrent theme in Dehmel's oeuvre, that of man confronting his primal sexual drive, and more particularly, that of man "abandon[ing] himself to a sensual passion, and [being] thereby driven by the most painful emotional turmoil," as Dehmel wrote when defending Weib und Welt in court against charges of blasphemy and immorality.4 In "Warnung," the speaker informs his beloved that he has killed his dog for the minor transgression of having growled at her-and threatens her with the same end should she be unfaithful. Whereas critics never fail to acknowledge the aggressive vein that runs through some of Dehmel's writings, most studies of Schoenberg's Dehmel-inspired compositions have focused on works that evince less perturbing aspects of the poet's worldview, in particular Verklärte Nacht.⁵ Yet the role that this vein plays in his oeuvre, as well as its impact on Schoenberg's language, bears closer scrutiny. This article probes those aspects of Dehmel's poetics that engage

² See Walter Frisch, *The Early Works of Arnold Schoenberg, 1893–1908* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chapters 2 ("The Songs") and 3 ("The Dehmel Settings of 1899"). Not all of Schoenberg's Dehmel lieder were completed or published.

³ Frisch, Early Works of Schoenberg, 87–92, proposes a thorough analysis of the original version and offers an overview of the revisions.

⁴ Richard Dehmel, open letter to the imperial district court, June 23, 1897. Original German in *Richard Dehmel: Dichtungen, Briefe, Dokumente*, ed. Paul Johannes Schindler (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1963), 126–27; trans. in Frisch, *Early Works of Schoenberg*, 81.

⁵ Except for Frisch's discussion of the 1899 draft (see note 3 above), the general Schoenberg literature usually grants "Warnung" only cursory description. The Dehmel-inspired work that has elicited the largest body of studies (too extensive to be reviewed here) is *Verklärte Nacht*, Op. 4. For a detailed exploration of *Jugendstil* traits in Schoenberg's Dehmel lieder, in particular in "Erwartung," Op. 2, No 1, see Frisch, "Schoenberg and the Poetry of Richard Dehmel," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 9 (1986): 137–79; and Frisch, "Music and *Jugendstil*," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1990): 138–61.

with the predatory dimensions of sexuality and shows how Schoenberg's Op 3, No. 3 progressively draws out and intensifies the sexual violence latent in the text of "Warnung." In this song, pathologically aggressive poetry calls forth striking harmonic transgressions and reversals that override traditional syntactical considerations. In particular, Schoenberg develops a tonal syntax that exploits the inverted functional drive of plagal motions and combines it with taut motivic work based on tonally ambiguous collections. Together, these strategies lend musical substance to the unrelenting force of the speaker's sexual instinct, to his vain attempts at keeping this instinct in check, and to his ultimate surrender to it.

Dehmel's "Terrible Imperative"

I want it with all of a creator's furor, What in us lusts and burns; I do not want to tame my ardor, Hot, hungry element.⁶

Man's struggle for self-redemption constituted an important theme in Dehmel's esthetic, as the title of his 1891 collection *Erlösungen (Salvations* or *Redemptions*) intimates. Redemption for Dehmel consisted of a mystical integration of the divine and the mundane, a quest for spiritual exaltation that took its source from the core of earthly experiences, a connection with the godly that could only be attained by grappling with all dimensions of one's own humanity. "Whatever delights, terrifies, shocks man, [this is what] redeems him, since it expands him and fills him with life," he wrote in *Erlösungen*.7 For Dehmel, such a quest necessarily involved

⁶ "Ich will es mit all der Schöpferwut, / die in uns lechzt und brennt; / ich will nicht zähmen meiner Glut / heißhungrig Element." Richard Dehmel, second strophe of "Bekenntnis," from Erlösungen (1891); quoted and discussed in Sabine Henning, "'Kopf hoch, Beine breit! Alles Andre macht die Zeit.' Richard Dehmel und die Frauen," in WRWlt – o Urakkord: Die Welten des Richard Dehmel, ed. Sabine Henning (Herzberg: T. Bautz, 1995), 102.

⁷ "Was man entzückt, ensetzt, empört, das erlöst ihn, weil's ihn außer sich bringt, weil's ihn mit Leben erfüllt." Trans. in Otto Eduard Lessing, *Masters in Modern*

an unapologetic, and at the time shockingly outspoken, affirmation of sexuality as a transfigurative vehicle towards salvation. "In Eros," suggested Emil Ludwig, an early critic of Dehmel's work, "he resolved all discord. Love for him was no lyrical theme, no romantic adventure; it had become a sacred service, a rite of procreation and birth."8 Dehmel strove to tie instinctual impulse to spiritual experience, insisting that he "d[id] not posit the internal world (in the sense of the universal soul [Allseele]) primarily in opposition to the corporeal external world, for it is only apparently that they are opposed...; in reality they form a single, indivisible world."9 Thus convinced that the physical was integral to the mystical, Dehmel explored the sexual drive in a variety of poetic guises, and Schoenberg's absorption with this poetry meant that he, too, created works that refract sexual drives in a wide spectrum of shades. Themes of sexual anticipation ("Aprilwind" "Erwartung," Op. 2, No. 1), coy seduction and pressing desire ("Nicht doch" and "Jesus bettelt," Op. 2, No. 2), and rapturous union ("Im Reich der Liebe" and "Erhebung," Op. 2, No. 3) run through his Dehmel songs.¹⁰ Schoenberg's largest Dehmel work, his sextet Verklärte Nacht, engaged Dehmel's esthetic at its most exalted: the work's program describes the transfiguration of a nocturnal scene in which a man forgives his lover for carrying another man's child and in so doing sanctifies their bond.

German Literature (Freeport, NY, 1967: Books for Libraries Press; reprint of the 1912 original ed.), 69.

⁸ Emil Ludwig, *Genius and Character*, trans. Kenneth Burke (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1927), 283.

⁹ "Ich stelle die Innenwelt (in der Bedeutung Allseele) gar nicht erst im Gegensatz zur körperlichen Außenwelt, denn sie sind gegensätzlich nur dem Anschein nach, für unsern Verstand; in Wirklichkeit bilden sie die eine, unteilbare Welt." Richard Dehmel to Harry Graf Kessler, August 1, 1899, *Ausgewählte Briefe aus den Jahren 1883 bis 1902* (Berlin: Fischer, 1923), 333.

¹⁰ At some unknown date Schoenberg recopied by hand a number of Dehmel's poems, which he may also have considered interesting candidates for songs. The one-page manuscript, held at the Arnold Schoenberg Institute (ASC T50.04), contains the poems "Bitte[!]" "Liebe[!]" and "Gieb mir" (from the 1893 collection *Aber die Liebe*; the exclamation marks were added by Schoenberg), as well as "Geheimnis," "Klage," and "Mannesbangen" (from *Weib und Welt*). None of these were set to music except the last.

But Dehmel also wrote several texts that probed darker, more violent manifestations of Eros, texts to which Schoenberg was equally drawn. "Mannesbangen" ("Men's Fears"), which the composer set in 1899 but did not publish, offers one example. Here, hostile undertones simmer beneath a surface of fear-filled desire:

You must not think I am afraid of you. Only when you with your shy eyes desire happiness and with such quivering hands like daggers run through my hair, and my head lies upon your loins: then, you, sinful woman, I tremble before you—11

It is perhaps poems of this kind that Rainer Maria Rilke had in mind when he wrote to Franz Xaver Kappus, the recipient of his famous *Letters to a Young Poet*:

[Dehmel's] poetic power is great and as strong as a primal instinct; it... explodes from him like a volcano... When, thundering through his being, it arrives at the sexual, it finds... a world that is not human enough, that is only male, is heat, thunder, and restlessness... Because he loves only as a male, and not as a human being, there is something narrow in his sexual feeling, something that seems wild, malicious... Dehmel's world... is so infinitely afraid 12

"Warnung" expresses with even more vigor than "Mannesbangen" those traits that Rilke perceived as wild, malicious, and frightened. Like the poems "Verklärte Nacht" and "Mannesbangen," "Warnung" appeared in *Weib und Welt*, a collection composed in the early days of Dehmel's liaison with Ida Auerbach (who would become his second wife in 1899) which perhaps most powerfully conveys the paradoxical antithesis that governs Dehmel's esthetic universe. In contrast to the quasi-sacred tone of "Verklärte Nacht" and its advocacy of sexual morals based on the love and free emotional commitment of both partners, "Warnung" expresses an irrepressible will to power and control. For Dehmel's quest for

¹¹ Trans. in Frisch, *Early Works of Schoenberg*, 84. For further discussion of Dehmel's inquiry into the "delights of Eros and its dangers," see Robert Vilain, "Schoenberg and German Poetry," in *Schoenberg and Words: The Modernist Years*, ed. Charlotte M. Cross and Russell A. Berman (New York and London: Garland, 2000), 6–14.

¹² Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 25–28. On the relationship between Dehmel and Rilke, see also Carly McLaughlin, "Reluctant Affinities: Rainer Maria Rilke and Richard Dehmel," *Sprachkunst: Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft* 37 (2006): 203–20.

redemption also involved embracing, or at the very least acknowledging, what he himself called the "animal-like" dimension of the sexual instinct: a force both so elemental and overwhelming that it prevailed over conventional notions of morality.¹³ In a letter to his first wife Paula Oppenheimer, in which he admitted to an affair, Dehmel wrote of the ravenous hunger that certain women aroused in him: "Like a predatory animal flaring its nostrils, something in me becomes feverish: here is nourishment for you, new blood." He went on to describe the "terrible imperative" (furchtbares Müssen) that compelled one to pluck the fruit of "savage baseness" from the "tree of sin" (die Frucht der wilden Niedrigkeit). This imperative, he explained, awakens in men a primitive but essential consciousness: "And then they open their eyes, and they feel afresh that they are human, and, trembling, they recognize their naked resemblance to animals."14 There is certainly something of the predatory animal inhabiting the speaker of "Warnung," who scarcely represses a need to own and dominate his beloved. Denying this kind of similarity, in Dehmel's view, meant repressing the instinctual understanding of the world that he believed was a sine qua non to self-salvation. Any sincere assertion of life instincts, therefore, partook in the intimate connection that he believed linked the "corporeal world" to the "universal soul." It is this multifaceted exploration of the sexual instinct that connects poems

¹³ After "Verklärte Nacht" appeared in *Weib und Welt*, Dehmel integrated it into his epic *Zwei Menschen: Roman in Romanzen (Two People: A Novel in Ballads*) of 1903, in which the two lovers' spiritual quest takes a macabre turn. In order to break free of the social bonds that stand in the way of their union, Lukas (the Man) abandons his wife, who subsequently succumbs to grief, whereas Lea (the Woman) murders her blind child. Unsurprisingly, the way in which Dehmel attempts to fold these events into a greater trajectory of redemption has left some critics unconvinced (see, for example, Lessing, *Masters in Modern German Literature*, 74–77).

¹⁴ "Wie ein wilder Hunger überkommt es mich, wenn ein Mensch mir nahetritt, der Eignes in sich hat. Als ob ein Raubtier die Nüstern bläht, fängt dann etwas in mir an zu fiebern: da ist Nahrung fur dich, neues Blut." The context of the letter (Dehmel discusses his affair with a certain Käte) makes it clear that "ein Mensch" here means "a woman." "Und dann tun sich ihre Augen auf, und sie fühlen wieder, dass sie Menschen sind, und sehen mit Beben ihre Tieresähnlichkeit und nacktheit..." Richard Dehmel to Paula Dehmel, July 25, 1891, in *Ausgewählte Briefe*, 47, 48.

so outwardly different as "Verklärte Nacht" and "Warnung": they stand as opposite sides of a same esthetic coin.

Applied Subdominants in "Warnung," Op. 3, No. 3

Schoenberg's "Warnung," a terse ABA' form in Bb minor for mezzo-soprano or baritone (Anton Moser premiered it in 1907 with Alexander Zemlinsky at the piano), is a brusque and foreboding statement. It responds to Dehmel's "terrible imperative" and "savage baseness" with a tense, impassioned declamation, a motivically tight-knit piano part, and an idiosyncratic harmonic language that Edward T. Cone characterized as "superficially tonal." "The song sounds tonal," Cone explained, "but it is actually so only in an inverted sense. The chordal progressions that have traditionally taken on the burden of large-scale structure are now demoted to details of succession; the harmonic motion is assigned to progressions once typically subsidiary or even decorative." ¹⁵ The song's opening measures already reveal several such "superficially tonal" processes. I shall therefore examine these initial elements in some detail, before tracing how they develop into the slow escalation of tension that accounts for the song's disturbing expressive power. The poem and its translation appear below:

Warnung

Mein Hund, du, hat dich bloß beknurrt und ich hab ihn vergiftet; und ich hasse jeden Menschen, der Zwietracht stiftet.

Zwei blutrote Nelken schick' ich dir, mein Blut du, an der einen eine Knospe; den dreien sei gut, du, bis ich komme.

Warning

My dog, you, merely snarled at you, And I have poisoned him; And I hate everyone Who sows discord.

I send you, my blood you, Two blood-red carnations, On one of which is a bud; Be good to the three, you, Until I come.

¹⁵ Edward T. Cone, "Sound and Syntax: An Introduction to Schoenberg's Harmony," *Perspectives of New Music* 13, no. 1 (1974): 27–28.

Ich komme heute Nacht noch; sei allein, sei allein, du! Gestern, als ich ankam, starrtest du mit Jemand ins Abendrot hinein—Du: denk an meinen Hund! I'm still coming tonight; Be alone, be alone, you! Yesterday when I arrived, You were staring with someone Deep into the dusk —you: Remember my dog!¹⁶

The song's opening section is shown in Example 1. Schoenberg immediately captures the faintly disquieting atmosphere conveyed by the first verse, "My dog, you, merely snarled at you," with hushed dynamics, stunted rhythms in the left hand of the piano, and a hazy tonal environment. The key words here are "Mein Hund, du," a greeting that initially conceals the beloved's identity ("du") behind the dog's: only with the remainder of the verse does it become apparent that "du" is the addressee and distinct from "my dog." The music further conspires at folding the two characters into one. "Mein Hund, du" is set to Gb-F-C, in pitch-class terms the collection (016), the so-called "Viennese trichord" which would become a staple sonority of the atonal music of the Second Viennese School. This collection will be labeled motive a. Already its appearance in the voice echoes a briefer statement in the piano (Eb-A-Bb in m. 1, first beat); as we will see, the subset <Gb-F> that sets the words "mein Hund" also returns at key moments throughout the song. The association of the dog and the beloved with a single, obsessively recurring pitchclass set is indicative of the speaker's state of mind. At first glance, the action of the poem's opening strophe could be construed as one of protective affection: the speaker tries to shield his beloved from a snarling dog. But as the song accumulates injunctive "du"s, often in purposefully clumsy grammatical positions—"Mein Hund, du," "Mein Blut du," "Sei gut, du," "Sei allein, du" and the final, inauspicious "Du: denk an meinen Hund"—it becomes apparent that he fanatically desires to control, not protect.

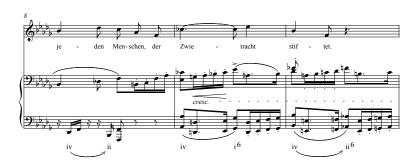
From the outset, Schoenberg's highly chromatic language is instrumental in establishing the unsettling emotional temperature of the song. Despite the presence of a five-flat key signature, Bb

¹⁶ Translation slightly modified from Frisch, Early Works of Schoenberg, 88.

WT1

Example 1. "Warnung," mm. 1–10



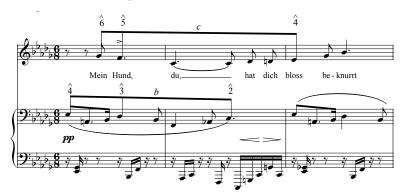


147(=V 7

minor does not forcefully emerge as the home key. Indeed, the sequential nature of the opening two measures, which feature four chords in root position progressing by descending fourths, from Eb through Bb, F, and C, does much to veil any sense of centricity. Faint clues nevertheless hint at Bb as the song's tonic, namely an ornamental raised-leading tone (the incomplete neighbour Ab in

the opening sonority), a Bb chord that coincides with the first poetic line ending (on "beknurrt," m. 2), and more obliquely, an applied dominant of V (the C chord in m. 2).¹⁷ Above this cryptic progression, the melodic lines, too, defeat our normative expectations for an unambiguously tonic-prolongational opening. Example 2 shows how the upper voice of the piano's right hand forms a 4-3-2 melodic descent (or Eb-Db-C, mm. 1-2), whereas the vocal part traces a 6-5-4 span (or Gb-F-Eb>, mm. 1-3). Like motive *a*, these descents (motives *b* and *c* respectively) will figure prominently—and at pitch—in the remainder of the song.

Example 2. Melodic Descents in mm. 1–3



Both Cone and H. H. Stuckenschmidt single out the initial "pile of falling fourths" of mm. 1–2 as the song's harmonic hallmark; these and later descending fourths are precisely what Cone has in mind when he speaks of "progressions once typically subsidiary" taking control of the harmonic motion and establishing Bb minor in an "inverted" manner. ¹⁸ In a purely descriptive

¹⁷ The C chord on the last beat of m. 2 at first seems to imply a dominant function in F minor instead, but that fleeting moment of functional clarity fails to materialize as a genuine tonal area. Note that the applied dominant's third is missing, but that it will sound in the corresponding measure in section A'.

¹⁸ As Stuckenschmidt points out, this "pile of falling fourths... anticipates by years what Schoenberg carried out in a radical manner in 1906 in his first chamber symphony." H. H. Stuckenschmidt, *Arnold Schoenberg: His Life, Work and World*, trans. Humphrey Searle (New York: Schirmer, 1978), 39. See also Cone, "Sound and Syntax," 28.

nomenclature (see Example 1 above), mm. 1–2 read as "iv – i – v - V/v." The analysis just given, however, obscures the recurrent plagalisms of mm. 1 and 2, that is, the successive plagal motions to Bb and C, two chords whose special role in the replicative chain of fourths are underscored with an accent and a hairpin respectively. As a means of highlighting these plagalisms, we might borrow some of Schoenberg's own analytical techniques. In his Structural Functions of Harmony, the composer analyzes altered sonorities as diatonic scale steps that feature chromatic substitutions in one or more voices. He explains that "crossed Roman numerals, VI, V, HH, H, etc., indicate that the chords are altered through the use of substitute tones," and he illustrates this concept with abundant musical examples. 19 The composer later adds that "from the standpoint of structural functions only the root of the progression is decisive."20 According to this scale-degree oriented outlook, mm. 1-2 in "Warnung" read as "iv - i - iv/ $\frac{H}{H}$ - $\frac{H}{H}$." Though Schoenberg's nomenclature has not entered mainstream analytical discourse,21 and, in the case of "Warnung," perhaps claims a stronger sense of tonal orientation that the densely chromatic harmony actually projects, it nevertheless reveals a key aspect of the song's compositional logic. Indeed, Schoenberg's notation nicely captures the plagal trajectory of ascending scale-steps that, as we will see, turns out to underlie the remainder of the A section as well as the lied's gripping conclusion.

After the opening plagal gestures to i and H, the song immediately proceeds to the altered mediant. As Example 1 shows, when mm. 1–2 repeat at mm. 3–4, the C chord of m. 2 is replaced by a Db⁷ chord. Db⁷ functions locally as an applied dominant to the

¹⁹ Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, ed. Leonard Stein (New York: W. W. Norton, 1954), 9. Schoenberg demonstrates a variety of these alterations in the section titled "Transformations" (pp. 35–43).

²⁰ Ibid., 46.

²¹ One issue with this notation is its vagueness, as several types of chords may be subsumed under a single crossed roman numeral. For example, Schoenberg lists twelve substitute chords for the supertonic, which include an applied dominant of V, half-diminished and fully diminished seventh chords, a French-sixth sonority, and the Neapolitan chord. See *Structural Functions of Harmony*, 35 (ex. 50); and Norton Dudeque, *Music Theory and Analysis in the Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* (1874–1951) (Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 74–79.

subsequent vi chord, but also acts as an altered \overline{H} in Schoenberg's notation. The next scale degree that this rising progression leads us to expect, the subdominant, materializes not only as a chord but also as a tonal region; at m. 7, the song modulates to E^{\flat} minor, the subdominant of the home key. The progression leading to this modulation consists of vagrant whole-tone sonorities deployed above a bass-line built on an expanded motive ϵ (G^{\flat} –F– F^{\flat} – E^{\flat} , mm. 5–6). ²² The last chord in this progression, a whole-tone sonority on E^{\flat} , functions locally as the applied dominant of the following A^{\flat} chord; but just as importantly, it also serves as the altered subdominant of B^{\flat} minor (\overline{I}). As such, it caps an ascent through " $i - \overline{I} - \overline{I}$ " that spans mm. 1–6. The subdominant then blossoms into a tonal area in its own right, one that twice recalls the opening plagal progressions "iv - i - iv/ii - ii" (mm. 7–10).

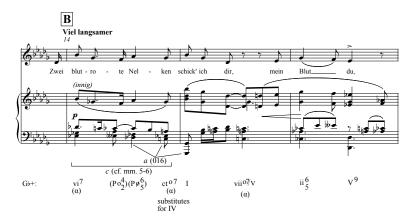
As a whole, the processes at work in Section A resonate with Dehmel's ambivalence towards the "terrible imperative" that he believed lay in every man, and which he regarded as frightening and repulsive on the one hand, but irresistibly attractive on the other. The inverted functional drive of the plagal gestures in Section A—as Cone implies, the syntactically backward progression of a circle of fourths, the retrograde of a cycle of fifths—thus projects the speaker's striving to bridle his jealousy. At the same time, the stepwise rise from tonic to subdominant, together with the rise in register and augmentation of rhythmic activity over mm. 1–10, underscores the compulsive allure that this "terrible imperative" holds for him. Throughout, the halting, off-beat interjections in the left hand of the piano compound the sense of the protagonist's agitation and suggest his inability to master his primal impulses.

The song's middle section at first offers a welcome respite from this nervous energy. A mellow passage in the warm key of the submediant Gb major (shown in Example 3a) ushers in a much more relaxed tempo, while a flowing vocal part, which Stuckenschmidt has compared to *Tristan und Isolde*, and broad, *legato* piano lines replace the stifled gestures of section A.²³

²² See Frisch, Early Works of Schoenberg, 91 on the extensive revisions that mm. 5–6 underwent.

²³ Stuckenschmidt, Arnold Schoenberg, 39.

Example 3a. "Warnung," mm. 14–16

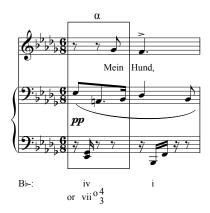


Lyrical in tone and text, this passage cleverly reconfigures the initial iv—i plagal gesture and motives a through c so as to accompany the speaker's gift of carnations. At m. 14, motive c appears in the bass, now tonally adjusted to G > 0 major and with a 6 - 0 chromatically dilated into a 6 - 0 6 - 0 interestingly, this line can also be understood as the initial motive b sounding at pitch. This motivic bass now supports a modified version of a subdominant prolongation. Were the last bass eighth-note in m. 14 a C > 0 instead of a C, the whole measure would express a c > 0 in m. 15. As it is, c > 0 slides to a diminished-seventh chord, which acts as a common-tone link to the subsequent tonic. As a result, that tonic is not approached by a descending perfect fourth, but rather by the tritone C - G > 0 of motive c > 0 in the bass.

The opening measure of Section B may also be understood as an enlargement of the song's very first beat. While the subdominant forms the structural harmony of m. 1, beat 1, the ornamental A in this measure also generates an incomplete, second-inversion diminished-seventh chord with the pitches Eb and Gb (C is missing; see Example 3b). Fleeting as this diminished coloration may be, the composite opening sonority (iv ~ vii⁰⁷) is nonetheless rich in harmonic potential. Not only does Schoenberg use the diminished chord to create a hint of directed motion to Bb within the iv—i pair of chords, he also revisits both aspects of this

sonority, which I will call the "alpha chord" (" α "), throughout Section B. This happens for the first time in m. 14, where Schoenberg places the two components of the alpha chord, the Ebminor and the A^{o7} chords, at the beginning and end points of the modified plagal approach to Gb.

Example 3b. "Warnung," m. 1, "alpha chord"



These motivic and harmonic reworkings of mm. 1 and 2 profoundly alter their original expressive effect. Now, the quasiplagalism of mm. 14–15 supports a $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$ descent in the local key of Gb that, in contrast to mm. 1–2, clearly projects a local tonic. The passage also conveys a strongly directional harmonic progression that is oriented towards the song's first unequivocal dominant in m. 16, a progression in which the alpha chord's viio⁴ serves as a complete, enharmonically respelled viio⁷/V in m. 15. Finally, the easeful atmosphere of mm. 14–16 contrasts with the lied's pervasive harmonic restlessness and emphasizes the only words in the poem, namely the gift of flowers, that do not implicitly convey a threat.

This reprieve, however, is short-lived. In mm. 17–18, the piano again sounds the "carnation" music of mm. 14–15 at the singer's mention of a budding flower, but from mm. 20–25 the speaker adopts a more aggressive tone and issues a direct admonition: "sei gut, du, bis ich komme" ("be good, you, until I come"). Accordingly, Schoenberg ratchets up the harmonic tension with

even tighter motivic work. As Example 3c shows, mm. 20–21 superimpose motives a and b, the latter adjusted to its Gb major environment through the addition of a Cb. Schoenberg also reintroduces the alpha sonority's two components, the characteristic pair of Eb minor and A^{o7} chords.

Example 3c. "Warnung," mm. 17-23

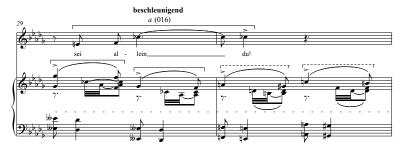


Even though an applied dominant of vi (of Eb) sounds at m. 19, the subsequent motive *a* in m. 20 is not harmonized with an Eb chord, but rather with Ao7: one constituent of the lied's initial sonority thus substitutes for the other. An Eb chord finally materializes at m. 22, where it launches a reappearance of the song's menacing opening materials in the piano's right hand.

When the "carnation" music appears a third and final time at mm. 26–27 (Example 3d), it offers only illusory respite and cannot long ward off the song's degeneration into further violence.

Example 3d. "Warnung," mm. 26-30





In a grisly reminder of the dog's demise, appoggiaturas in the piano's right hand at mm. 28–29 retake the Gb-F semitone that had set the words "Mein Hund" at the beginning of the song. This semitone now underscores the warning "sei allein" ("be alone") over what is probably the strongest dominant function of the song. Significantly, Schoenberg thwarts any sense of resolution: instead, the music ascends through a chain of thirds (m. 30) and the motivic semitone expands into a full (016) motive a (mm. 29–30) as the

speaker raises his voice, both registrally and dynamically, to insist: "be alone, you!" "Or else" is clearly implied.

In sum, the song's central section retreats from the extended tonal processes of section A in favor of less dissonant harmonies and phrases oriented towards the dominant. But if the speaker feigns intimacy by clothing motives a, b, and c and the alpha chord in a harmonically mellifluous guise with the "carnation" music, the subterfuge is quickly disclosed when dissonant recalls of the song's opening measures repeatedly intrude. Harmonic explicitness and tonal stability thus prove fragile and deceptive in this song, a fitting illustration of the protagonist's thin veneer of self-control. By surrounding Section B with two intensely chromatic and sequential strophes—A' is about to introduce the highest degree of harmonic restlessness yet—Schoenberg reverses the traditional narrative arc (stability to tension to renewed stability) common to so many ternary designs, thereby denying traditional harmonic syntax the capacity to resolve the protagonist's psychological conflict.

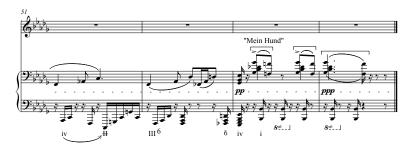
The song's final section, shown in Example 4, reveals the speaker's jealousy in its full pathological depth. When, in m. 35, he recalls finding his beloved with another man at sunset, the music erupts in a cycle of fourths that threatens to spin out of control. In a striking harmonic and motivic summary, Schoenberg reprises the song's opening plagalisms, now as the model for a relentless sequential pattern in which each supertonic determines the transposition level (or the new tonic) for the next iteration of that pattern. As Example 4 shows, mm. 35–36 sound the initial plagal progression "iv – i – iv/H – H" in the tonic Bb minor (cf. mm. 1–2). This progression is then sequentially repeated in C minor, itself the altered supertonic of Bb (see the boxed # at m. 37). From there, the sequence proceeds to D minor with the progression "iv – i⁶ – iv/ii – ii⁶" (mm. 39–40)—D minor being, of course, the main key's raised mediant.

These compulsively ascending chord roots not only resonate suggestively with the growing violence of the protagonist's speech; they also offer structural parallels with the rising scale steps of the song's opening section. Example 5 elucidates the relationships between sections A (top half) and A' (lower half) by showing how Schoenberg intensifies the harmonic ascent of A in the sequential

Example 4. "Warnung," A¹ Section



Example 4, cont.



plagalisms of A'. Compare mm. 1-4 (leftmost column) with the model/sequence of mm. 35-40 below: here, the recursive plagalisms of section A' form a chromatic enlargement of the harmonic ascent of the song's opening. That is to say, the tonic, supertonic, and mediant sonorities of mm. 1-4 (boldfaced in the table; the subdominant has yet to appear) all function as "tokens" that receive their own discrete set of plagal motions in mm. 35-40.24 The rigorous cyclical organization of mm. 35-40, which strongly prefigures Berg's trademark cyclical gestures, accounts for the appearance at m. 39 of the raised mediant D minor in place of the diatonic third scale-step Db. Sounding D minor in place of Db at this juncture projects a sense of transgression, as though the speaker's possessiveness were bursting its bounds at the sight of his beloved with another. The music gets back on track, so to speak, in mm. 41-46 through a chromatic expansion of the corresponding passage in section A, as the middle column of Example 5 shows. As the speaker utters his last, most threatening "du" (mm. 41–42), a half-diminished seventh chord built above C# enharmonically substitutes for the diatonic mediant Db.25 This chord connects with the altered Eb chord of m. 45 by way of vagrant whole-tone sonorities, very much as in the corresponding passage in mm. 5–6.

²⁴ The term "token" is borrowed from Brian Alegant and Don McLean's article "On the Nature of Enlargement," *Journal of Music Theory* 45, no. 1 (2001): 31–71. They call "tokens" the individual elements of an ordered string of pitch-classes that successively serve as the initial pitch classes for subsequent strings.

²⁵ A half-diminished sonority on III appears in ex. 55b in *Structural Functions of Harmony*, 38.

Example 5. Enlargement of the opening " $I - H - HH^7 - HV^7$ " string in the A^1 section

Eb Bb F C (mm. 35–36) (37–38) iv_i iv_H iv_iiv_H i ##
mm. 35–3 iv. i iv.

The identical vocal lines in these two passages, moreover (cf. mm. 5–6 and 43–45 in exx. 1 and 4), lend chilling eloquence to the speaker's final warning. Indeed, the vocal contour at the words "Denk an meinen Hund" in mm. 43–45 ($G\flat-G\flat-A\flat-G\flat$) is identical to that at mm. 5–6, where we first learned of the dog's sad fate. The warning remains audible as the $A\flat-G$ semitone on "Hund," itself a replica of the song's pervasive "Mein Hund" $G\flat-F$ semitone, ripples through the following measures.

As it did previously in m. 6, the Eb chord of mm. 45-46 functions as the last element in a string of ascending scale steps from Bb to Eb. In both contexts (shown in the last column of Example 5), Eb forms IV7 in Bb minor and proceeds locally to an Ab sonority (m. 7, beat 1 and m. 47 respectively), which itself introduces a more structural, unaltered subdominant Eb (m. 7, beat 2 and m. 48). In section A', this formal juncture is a dramatic moment. On the downbeat of m. 47 (see Example 4), Ab sounds not as a triad but as the launching point for a chain of tightly interlocking (016) trichords. These overlapping instances of motive a can be partitioned in two significant ways, either as ascending fourths, which the pattern of accentuation makes aurally prominent, or in successive semitones, the interval directly associated with the dog throughout the song.26 The last of these (016) trichords ushers in the return of the lied's opening materials, while the bass Ab of m. 47 plagally approaches Eb in m. 48. Thus we return to where we began: the subdominant Eb reinstates, in condensed form and by way of conclusion, an echo of the plagalisms that underpinned so much of the song. The double plagal motion to i and H that opened "Warnung" returns twice as a concluding frame in mm. 48-49 and 50-51, before progressing onwards to III6 and iv. The lied ends with a final iv-i progression (mm. 53-54), which activates for the last time the Gb-F semitone associated with "Mein Hund." This unspoken warning reverberates three times, a Parthian shot that mutely reminds the beloved of the sinister fate that awaits the protagonist's foes.

²⁶ Friedheim notes that with the m. 47 *unisono* passage, Schoenberg presents eleven of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale. Philip Alan Freidheim, "Tonality and Structure in the Early Works of Schoenberg" (PhD diss., New York University, 1963), 94.

"Warnung" and Beyond

When Schoenberg turned to Dehmel's poetry in 1897 and 1899, he discovered an oeuvre that depicted sexual instincts with unprecedented forthrightness-many said coarseness-as a vital force that could both redeem and debase, and which one could not escape, since it resided at the very core of human nature. For two intense years of composition, Schoenberg found the poet's blunt lyric verse irresistibly compelling and drew from it the inspiration for an increasingly advanced, and often strikingly idiosyncratic, harmonic language—the shock value of which is compounded in Op. 3, No. 3 by the conjunction with the text. I would like to conclude by offering some thoughts on how we may situate the song's disturbing subject matter within Schoenberg's musical output in the years when his style shifted into highly extended tonality and, eventually, atonality. Though (so far as I know) the composer never commented directly on "Warnung," nevertheless offered insights into the creative process of his formative years when he wrote in his 1911 Theory of Harmony that technical innovations in musical language, in particular "that which is new and unusual about harmony," result from the necessity for "the true composer" to find an expressive outlet for "something that moves him, something new, something previously unheardof." 27 Dehmel's volatile blend of traditional lyric forms and provocative themes, his refusal to admit a chasm between the human and the godly, his embrace of the sincere self at all costs, and his faith in the redemptive power of sexuality clearly provided Schoenberg with such a stimulus. A composer finely attuned to the innovative literary and poetic currents of his time, as his later engagement with the work of Rainer Maria Rilke and Stefan George also attests, he heard in the works of the "fervent child of his age" (as a contemporary fellow poet put it) a modernist voice inciting—even compelling—the development of equally modernist musical means.²⁸ For Frisch, the result was an unprecedented level

²⁷ Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Carter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 399–400.

²⁸ "...der so ganz inbrünstiges Kind seiner Zeit ist." Joseph Winckler also described Dehmel's poetry as "the consciousness of the age" ("das Gewissen der

of thematic integration and harmonic advances that place "Warnung" in the orbit of the First String Quartet, Op. 7; for Cone, Op. 3, No. 3 can literally be heard as a prophetic warning that the song's daring harmonic syntax would inevitably lead to the development of new, more radical means of expression in subsequent years.²⁹ Interestingly, by Schoenberg's own standards, the accumulation of plagalisms discussed in this article also constituted a form of harmonic transgression, at least according to the precepts laid down in the Theory of Harmony. There Schoenberg classifies chord progressions into three categories according to root motion, namely "strong" or "ascending" (roots ascending by fourths and descending by thirds), "weak" or "descending" (descending by fourths and ascending by thirds), and "superstrong" or "overskipping" (ascending or descending in seconds). He then emphasizes that "in planning our root progressions we shall give absolute preference to the ascending progressions [Schoenberg's italics]."30 The song's signature plagal conceit thus effects a hierarchical reversal in relying precisely on the "descending/weak" model, the use of which Schoenberg goes on to restrict. Although Schoenberg would abandon entirely the appellation "weak" in favor of "descending" in Structural Functions of Harmony, it seems somehow fitting that "Warnung" conspicuously employs what the composer considered to be subordinate progressions as the expressive vehicle for a masculine sexuality that, despite its tempestuous attempts at domination, ultimately appears to be, as Rilke put it, "so infinitely afraid."

Schoenberg's interest in texts such as "Warnung" does not imply, of course, that his musical language of circa 1900 can or should be read along the same hermeneutic lines that this article has advanced. Nor do I wish to propose that the composer personally endorsed the violent portrayal of masculinity of

Zeit") in "Lieber, großer, schöner, wilder Weltdichter Dehmell" *Quadriga* 6 (Fall 1913), 350; quoted and discussed in Rüdiger Schütt, "Von Kandinsky zu *Quadriga*: Richard Dehmel als Mitarbeiter expressionistischer Zeitschriften," in *WRWIt – o Urakkord*, 229–30.

²⁹ Frisch, Early Works of Schoenberg, 91; Cone, "Sound and Syntax," 28.

³⁰ Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 115–23, quote on p. 120; he revisits this threefold categorization in *Structural Functions of Harmony*, 6–9.

"Warnung" as some kind of ethical credo—nothing in Schoenberg's biography or writings remotely suggests so. Rather, Schoenberg is far more likely to have agreed with Dehmel that it was the artist's task to "help the human soul open its eyes to its bestial urges," as the poet wrote in an attempt to justify his verse against censorship. ³¹ And as Joseph Auner has sensitively emphasized, Schoenberg's whole output was distinguished by a dogged—no pun intended—determination to leave no stone in the realm of human emotional and intellectual experience unturned. ³²

Nevertheless, it seems significant that practically all the texts that Schoenberg borrowed from Dehmel deal explicitly with aspects of sexuality—in contrast, for example, to Webern's Dehmel songs, in which lovers' feelings are more indirectly expressed through, or even subordinated to, delicate natural and spiritual metaphors.³³ And if these and other Schoenbergian portrayals of sexual themes cannot be reduced to the aggressive ethos of "Warnung," that song may nevertheless be seen as the first of a series of published works in which dismal, unforgiving depictions of sexuality act as catalysts for technical innovation. For when Schoenberg eventually emerged from his Dehmel absorption and turned to other literary sources, a number of sexually charged poems continued to mark watersheds in the development of his progressive techniques prior to World War I. Kurt Aram's "Lockung" ("Temptation"), for example, reads like a darker version of the seduction narrative of Dehmel's "Nicht doch" ("Come now" or "Enough"), a poem that the composer had set in 1897. The concluding sections of both texts suggests that the narrator has convinced a reluctant beloved to yield to his advances,

³¹ Dehmel, open letter to the imperial district court, June 23, 1897, trans. in Frisch, Early Works of Schoenberg, 81.

³² See Joseph Auner, "On the Emotional Character of Schoenberg's Music," in *Schoenberg and Nono: A Birthday Offering to Nuria on May 7, 2002*, ed. Anna Maria Morazzoni ([Florence]: Leo S. Olschki, 2002), esp. 77, 80.

³³ Examples includes his early songs "Tief von fern," "Ideale Landschaft," "Himmelfahrt," and "Helle Nacht" (composed between 1901–04 and 1906–08). On Webern's Dehmel lieder, see Robert Wason, "Signposts on Webern's Path to Atonality: The *Dehmel Lieder* (1906–08)," in *Music Theory in Concept and Practice*, eds. David Beach, James Baker, and Jonathan Bernard (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997), 409–32.

but the images of terror and screaming at the end of "Lockung" appear far more coercive than beguiling.

Dehmel, "Nicht doch" (last strophe)

Siehst du, Mädel, war's nicht nett so an meiner Seite heute? Das ist was für junge Leute, alte gehn allein zu Bett!— Was denn, Kind? weinen, Schätzchen? Nicht doch—sieh, der Abendwind schäkert mit den Weidenkätzchen... Do you see, maiden, wasn't it nice to be by my side today?
That kind of thing is for young people; Old folks go to bed alone!—
Well now, child?
Are you crying, treasure?
Come now—look, the evening breeze is flirting with the willow catkin...³⁴

Aram, "Lockung" (second half)

Komm, mein Mäuschen, Ei sieh da, da sind wir ja Hier in dem Eckchen, pst nur kein Schreckchen, wie glüh'n deine Bäckchen, jetzt hilft kein Schrein, mein bist du, mein! Come, my little darling, Oh, just look, we're there! Here in the little corner, pst! don't be afraid, How your little cheeks are burning, Now no screaming will help, You are mine, mine!³⁵

Aram's poem would elicit one of Schoenberg's most dissonant and tonally advanced songs, his Op. 6, No. 7 of 1905, which he famously cited as an instance of "fluctuating" or "suspended tonality." And about a decade after Schoenberg's breakthrough encounter with Weib und Welt, the poetry of emasculation in Stefan George's Das Buch der hängenden Gärten, in which sexuality becomes a destructive and paralyzing force, famously marked the composer's first vocal foray into atonality. One might be hard pressed to find two poets more dissimilar than Dehmel and George: where the former employed direct and vigorous brush strokes, the latter chiseled cryptic symbols and mesmerizing allusions—perhaps unsurprisingly, the two came to detest each

³⁴ Trans. from Frisch, Early Works of Schoenberg, 73.

³⁵ Trans. (slightly modified) from Stanley Applebaum's in Schoenberg's *The Book of the Hanging Gardens and Other Songs* (New York: Dover Publications, 1995).

³⁶ See Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 383–84.

other. Despite the obvious stylistic differences between Weib und Welt and Das Buch, their common images of anxiety-ridden sexuality offered analogous spurs to Schoenberg's creative imagination. Lawrence Kramer has observed that the composer's "harsh reading of George's texts" prefigures "the relentlessly tragic view of sexuality that shapes his other expressionist vocal works, Erwartung, Die glückliche Hand, and Pierrot lunaire." 37 This harsh reading, one could argue, may well have begun some ten years earlier, for with "Warnung" the composer had begun exploring in earnest notions of musical syntax and expressions of sexuality from a premise of tension rather than of resolution. As we have seen, in this song Schoenberg confers architectonic status upon the atonal collection (016), the harmonically ambiguous alpha sonority, and most of all the opening series of plagal progressions, thereby undermining the conventional workings of tonal hierarchy and harmonic progression. Each of these elements is, in some way, dual in nature: the motivic (016) signifies both the dog and the beloved, the composite alpha sonority may express either a stable triad or a dissonant diminished seventh, and the reverse directionality of the plagal motions is countered by the ascending path they follow. These dualities work together to convey the conflict between the speaker's primal sexual drive and his attempts to master it, and the outburst of violence that this conflict engenders. In particular, the recurrent plagalisms of Section A form an ominous precursor to the enlarged structure of Section A', which itself gives vivid musical voice to the jealous lover's tortured state by discharging all of his pent-up violent impulses into inexorable sequences. The mastery with which these processes pace the song's emotional curve magnifies the disturbing impact of the final ultimatum: "Remember my dog."

³⁷ Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth-Century and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 166.

References

- Alegant, Brian, and Don McLean. "On the Nature of Enlargement." *Journal of Music Theory* 45, no. 1 (2001): 31–71.
- Applebaum, Stanley, trans. "Lockung." In Arnold Schoenberg, *The Book of the Hanging Gardens and Other Songs*. New York: Dover Publications, 1995.
- Auner, Jospeh. "On the Emotional Character of Schoenberg's Music." In Schoenberg and Nono: A Birthday Offering to Nuria on May 7, 2002, edited by Anna Maria Morazzoni, 75–86. [Florence]: Leo S. Olschki, 2002.
- Cone, Edward T. "Sound and Syntax: An Introduction to Schoenberg's Harmony." *Perspectives of New Music* 13, no. 1 (1974): 21–40.
- Dehmel, Richard. Erlösungen: eine Seelenwandlung in Gedichten und Sprüchen. Stuttgart: Gösegen, 1891.
- _____. Weib und Welt. Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1896.
- ------. Ausgewählte Briefe aus den Jahren 1883 bis 1902. Berlin: Fischer, 1923.
- Richard Dehmel: Dichtungen, Briefe, Dokumente. Edited by Paul Johannes Schindler. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1963.
- Dudeque, Norton. Music Theory and Analysis in the Writings of Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951). Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005.
- Freidheim, Philip Alan. "Tonality and Structure in the Early Works of Schoenberg." PhD diss., New York University, 1963.
- Frisch, Walter. "Schoenberg and the Poetry of Richard Dehmel." *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 9 (1986): 137–79.
- -----. "Music and Jugendstil." Critical Inquiry 17 (1990): 138-61.
- . The Early Works of Arnold Schoenberg, 1893–1908. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Henning, Sabine. "Kopf hoch, Beine breit! Alles Andre macht die Zeit.' Richard Dehmel und die Frauen." In WRWlt o Urakkord: Die Welten des Richard Dehmel, edited by Sabine Henning, 101–23. Herzberg: T. Bautz, 1995.
- Kramer, Lawrence. *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Lessing, Otto Eduard. *Masters in Modern German Literature*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1967. Reprint of the 1912 original edition.
- Ludwig, Emil. *Genius and Character*. Translated by Kenneth Burke. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1927.
- McLaughlin, Carly. "Reluctant Affinities: Rainer Maria Rilke and Richard Dehmel." Sprachkunst: Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft 37 (2006): 203–20.
- Pascal, Roy. From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society, 1880–1918. London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1973.

Rilke, Rainer Maria. Letters to a Young Poet. Translated by Stephen Mitchell. New York: Vintage Books, 1986.

- Schoenberg, Arnold. *Structural Functions of Harmony*. Edited by Leonard Stein. New York: W. W. Norton, 1969.
- Theory of Harmony. Translated by Roy E. Carter. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Schütt, Rüdiger. "Von Kandinsky zu *Quadriga*: Richard Dehmel als Mitarbeiter expressionistischer Zeitschriften." In WRWlt o Urakkord: Die Welten des Richard Dehmel, edited by Sabine Henning, 205–43. Herzberg: T. Bautz, 1995.
- Stuckenschmidt, H. H. Schoenberg: His Life, World and Work. Translated by Humphrey Searle. New York: Schirmer, 1977.
- Vilain, Robert. "Schoenberg and German Poetry." In Schoenberg and Words: The Modernist Years, edited by Charlotte M. Cross and Russell A. Berman, 1–29. New York and London: Garland, 2000.
- Wason, Robert. "Signposts on Webern's Path to Atonality: The Dehmel Lieder (1906–08)." In Music Theory in Concept and Practice, edited by David Beach, James Baker, and Jonathan Bernard, 409–32. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997.