TEXT, TIME, AND TONIC: ASPECTS OF
PATTERNING IN THE ROMANTIC CYCLE

by

Christopher Lewis

In *Farbenlehre*, Goethe writes, "Sometimes a most curious demand is made: that one should present experiences and perceptions without recourse to any kind of theoretical framework, leaving the student to establish his conviction as he will. But this demand cannot be fulfilled even by those who make it. For we never benefit from merely looking at an object. Looking becomes considering, considering becomes reflecting, reflecting becomes connecting. Thus, one can say that with every intent glance at the world we theorize."[1]

Theorizing about the *Lied* is informed by a broad spectrum of frameworks. We have Schenkerian and other models for the tonal language and the structure of single pieces; we can refer to literary critics for exegesis of the symbolic world of German Romantic literature; and a long history of analysis has shown that text/music cross-reference at many levels is normative. For the song-*cycle*, however, we are still very much at the stage of considering, reflecting, and connecting; recent reflections by Arthur Komar, Barbara Turchin, David Neumeyer and Patrick McCreless have been specifically aimed at drawing connections both among the

---

[1]Cited in Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. Ernst Oster (New York and London: Longman, 1979), p. 3.

individual songs of certain cycles, and among cycles as representative of a genre. Their work considers the roles played by a variety of poetic and musical procedures in the creation of a cyclic sense, and provides the starting point for an examination of the textual and musical patternings of certain whole cycles.

The central dilemma of the Romantic artist is his sense of alienation from society and the normal world. In the course of a detailed history of the cycle before Schumann, Barbara Turchin identifies three principal genres of poetry--*Müllerlieder, Wanderlieder* and *Blumenlieder*--which refer autobiographically to this dilemma by invoking fundamental symbols from the Romantic vocabulary, and particularly, almost to the point of cliché, the abandoned lover who woefully wanders through song after song.[2] At the very least, then, there is a common theme, and a common symbolic realization of that theme, at the poetic core of the great German cycles. Simply as poetry, the texts have at least two levels of meaning: the literal narrative or descriptive sense, and the symbolic poetic expression relating to the artist's Romantic conception of himself. Because that conception is indulged in by composers as well as by poets, its expression may be interpreted as autobiographical for both authors

---

[2]Barbara Turchin, "Robert Schumann's Song Cycles in the Context of the Nineteenth-Century 'Liederkreis'." (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1981). See especially the discussion of the *Wanderlieder* tradition (pp. 71-76). Other useful sources include Theodore Gish, "*Wanderlust* and *Wanderlied*: The Motif of the Wandering Hero in German Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 3 (1963):228-239; Walter Silz, *Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1929); and Marianne Thalmann, *The Literary Sign Language of German Romanticism*, trans. Harold A. Basilius (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972).

when the poems are turned into songs.[3]   It is important to understand, however, that autobiography itself can operate at either of two levels: more naively, as a literal description of the events of a life; and more artistically, as symbolic commentary upon the condition of a life.   For example, a literal autobiographical interpretation might attempt to relate the *Kindertotenlieder* to the death of Mahler's child, or to read into *Die Winterreise* premonitions of Schubert's death.   But the symbolic autobiography transcends particular events, providing the common poetic thread that runs through virtually every Romantic and post-Romantic cycle.   It is therefore the basis of the literary coherence of even those cycles which are not narrative.

The poetry of a song has an independent meaning before being set, and the music of a song may exhibit certain coherencies independently of its text (see Figure 1).   So too for the cycle, the structure of which may be supported by a tonal design created by the key succession of the individual *Lieder*, by melodic or motivic recurrences from song to song, or by patterning of texture, register, and so on.[4] Especially interesting, however, are those works whose artistry turns upon a symbiotic reflection of text in music and *vice versa*. Some such procedures are familiar, perhaps even to the point of being taken for granted: simple tone-painting and poetic/musical cross-references [e.g., the rippling accompanimental figurations

---

[3] Edward Cone makes a similar point: "in the song, it is the composer who speaks, in part through the words of the poet." *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 19.

[4] See Patrick McCreless, "Song Order in the Song Cycle: Schumann's *Liederkreis*, Op. 39," *Music Analysis* 5 (1986):8-11; and Arthur Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and its Parts," in *Schumann: Dichterliebe*, ed. Arthur Komar (New York: Norton, 1971), pp. 63-66.

denoting water in *Die schöne Müllerin*], literal or ironic reflections of the mood of the text in the mode of the music [e.g., "Die liebe Farbe" and "Die böse Farbe" in the *Müllerin* cycle], the realization of poetic voices through textural, tonal or registral contrast [Schubert's "Erlkönig"[5]], and so on. Coming under recent scrutiny are more abstract procedures such as the parallel realization of poetic and musical *conceptions*,[6] and the large-scale design of the cycle--especially in comparison with multi-movement instrumental genres of the same period.[7]

Turchin's exhaustive research has established that key succession was consistently referred to in reviews of contemporary cycles in the 1830s and 40s. She cites, for example, Julius Becker's review of Schumann's Op. 24:   "The composer has called the collection a '*Liederkreis*,' and with reason. Apart from the inner aesthetic unity, the musician finds in its harmonic succession an external, technical unity."[8] Another, anonymous, reviewer observed of the same piece: "As implied by the contents of the words, a charming connecting thread also moves through the whole, inclusive of the cycle of keys which . . . reveal the secret nexus of [the songs']

---

[5]See Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, pp. 20-40.

[6]See, for example, Edward Laufer, "Brahms, Song Op. 105, no. 1: A Schenkerian Approach," in *Readings in Schenker Analysis and Other Approaches*, ed. Maury Yeston (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 254-72; and David Lewin, "*Auf dem Flusse*: Image and Background in a Schubert Song," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 6 (1982):47-59.

[7]See V. Kofi Agawu, "Concepts of Closure and Chopin's Op. 28," *Music Theory Spectrum* 9 (1987):1-17; and David Neumeyer, "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 4 (1982):92-105.

[8]Turchin, p. 225.

Figure 1: Some Aspects of the Liederkreis

The Poetry

The Meaning of the Poem

1.As Narrative	2. As Poetic Expression

The Meaning of the Poem for the Composer

1. Autobiography: as description of the events of a life	2. Autobiography: as commentary on the condition of a life

The Music

The musical coherence of
a) individual songs
b) the cycle qua cycle
   i) tonal design
   ii) melodic/motivic referents
   iii) other patterning processes

The Text/Music Problem

1. Text/music interaction
   a) surface coherencies, cross-references, "tone-painting deriving from words.
   b) ditto deriving from symbols & symbolic meaning
   c) Tonal design--textual cross-referencing
   d) ditto deeper-level symbolic references
     i) text/key associations
     ii) functions, motions, resolution/non-resolution related to text

2. The realization of "poetic voices."

3. The structure
   a) of single songs
   b) the musico-dramatic structure of the cycle
   c) grouping within the larger design
   d) continuity or discontinuity between successive songs.

elective affinity."[9] Turchin concludes that at least by the time of Schumann, that secret nexus, key relationship, was for both composer and informed, attentive listener, "the primary means of musical coherence" in a cycle.[10]

Neumeyer and Komar take positions that oppose not only each other, but also, in different ways, Turchin. In the introduction to his critical score of *Dichterliebe*, Komar begins by postulating seven criteria that may distinguish the true cycle from the song collection. Although the first is "Similiarity of style, construction and subject matter of the poetry; or style of the music," none of the other six even mentions the text.[11] In his analytic essay, Komar virtually excludes text from the discussion, even going so far as to claim that the words impede his enjoyment of the cycle.[12] He attributes the tonal coherence of *Dichterliebe* largely to the stepwise succession of tonics unfolded by every second song--if we consider songs one and two as a unit, and completely ignore songs four, ten and eleven.[13] Neumeyer rejects Komar's analysis,[14] and concludes that analytic methods based on tonal procedures of 18th-century instrumental movements will not "bear extension to [19th-century] cyclic vocal forms."[15] For him, *Dichterliebe* shows that "key unity is not necessary to an integrated song cycle; whatever the manner of tonal

---

[9] Ibid., p. 226. As Turchin points out, the term "elective affinities" has powerful Goethian associations.

[10] Ibid., p. 250.

[11] Komar, p. 63-66.

[12] Ibid., p. 11.

[13] Ibid., p. 80.

[14] Neumeyer, p. 96.

[15] Ibid., p. 104.

integration may be, it has not been identified yet."[16]   Thus
Neumeyer defines the problem addressed in this paper--the
integration of the tonal design with the textual structure of the song
cycle, to create an ordered, patterned unity.

As Figure 2b shows, the nine Heine poems set as
Schumann's *Liederkreis*, Op. 24 have been wedded to an almost
mechanical tonal plan. From D major, Schumann proceeds in
major/minor pairs through the circle of fifths back to D, establishing
the conventional harmonic succession I-vi-ii-V-I. The tonic actually
returns one song early, but Schumann both avoids closure and
reflects the uncertainty of the text by ending that eighth song with a
phrygian cadence to the dominant, thus making a single tonal entity
of the last two songs. Any doubt that the succession of fifths is an
essential aspect of Schumann's conception of the cycle is dispelled by
"Mit Myrthen und Rosen." As Example 1 shows, the first stanza of
this final song carefully recapitulates the tonal ground just covered
by the first eight songs, even to the point of invoking in the cadential
extension the minor tonic mode of the penultimate song.

Consistency in the realization of Schumann's tonal plan
would demand that the sixth song, "Warte, warte, wilder
Schiffsmann," be in A minor and thus paired with song seven; in
fact, it is in E major and linked--tonally, at least--with song six.[17]
Since all three poems are based on the metaphor of travel, either
pairing seems possible, but a little deeper under the surface lies a
powerful connection between the two E major songs [see Figure 2a].

---

[16]Ibid., pp. 104-105.

[17]Turchin notes the scheme of successive fifths (p. 306), but does not address
explicitly the question of pairs of songs differentiated by mode.

Figure 2a: Schumann Op. 24/ 5 & 6

E MAJOR (1)
Beautiful cradle of my sorrows,
Beautiful gravestone of my rest,
beautiful city, we must part,
Farewell, I call to you,
Farewell, Farewell,
Farewell, sacred threshold
where my loved one walks.
Farewell, sacred place
where I first saw her.
Farewell, Farewell,
Had I never see thee,
beautiful queen of my heart,
never would it have happened
that I would be miserable as I now am
I never wanted to touch your heart
I never begged for love,
I only wanted to lead a quiet life
where your breath wafted.
But you yourself are driving me away from here
your mouth utters bitter words,
madness rage sin my mind
and my heart is sick and sore
And my limbs, weary and numbed
I drag along leaning on my pilgrim's staff
until I lay my tired head
far away in a cold grave.
Beautiful cradle of my sorrows,
Beautiful gravestone of my rest,
beautiful city, we must part,
Farewell, Farewell

5. E MAJOR (1)
Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden,
schönes Grabmal meiner Ruh',
schöne Stadt, wir müssen scheiden,
lebe wohl! ruf' ich dir zu.
Lebe wohl, lebe wohl!
Lebe wohl, du heil'ge Schwelle,
wo da wandelt Liebchen traut;
lebe wohl, du heil'ge Stelle,
wo ich sie zuerst geschaut.
Lebe wohl, lebe wohl.
Hätt ich dich doch nie geseh'n,
schöne Herzens königin!
nimmer, nimmer wär' es dann geschehen,
dass ich jetzt so elend bin.
Nie wollt' ich dein Herze rühren,
Liebe hab' ich nie erfleht;
nur ein stilles Leben führen wollt' ich,
wo dein Odem weht, wo dein Odem weht.
Doch du dringst mich selbst von hinnen,
bittr'e Worte spricht dein Mund;
Wahnsinn wühlt in meinen Sinnen,
und mein Herz ist krank und wund.
Und die Glieder matt und träge,
schlepp' ich, schlepp' ich fort am Wanderstab,
bis mein müdes Haupt ich lege
ferne in ein kühles Grab.
Schöne Wiege meine Leiden,
schönes Grabmal meiner Ruh',
schöne Stadt, wir müssen scheiden—
lebe wohl, lebe wohl!

6. E MAJOR (2)

Wait, Wait, impetuous seaman!
At once, I will follow you to the harbour,
At once, at once, at once.
From two young maids I take my leave
From Eurpoe and from her.
Stream of blood, pour out of my eyes
Stream of blood, burst from my body
so that I can with my own blood
write down my sorrows.
Oh my love, why is it today
you are afraid to see my blood
You saw me pale and with bleeding heart
for long years stand before you.
Do you not know the old song
about the serpent in Paradise
that through the evil gift of the apple
drove our ancestor into misery?
All unhappiness was brought by apples
Eve brought us death with one,
Eris brought flames to Troy,
You, you brought both, flames and death.

Warte, warte, wilder Schiffsmann,
gleich folg'ich zum Hafen dir,
gleich, gleich, gleich!
Von zwei Jungfrau'n nehm' ich Abscheid,
von Europa und von Ihr.
Blutquell, rinn' aus meinen Augen,
Blutquell, brich' aus meinem Leib,
dass ich mit dem heissem Blute
meine Schmerzen nieder schreib'.
Ei, mein Lieb, warum just heute
schaudert dich mein Blut zu seh'n?
sah'st mich bleich und herzeblutend
lange Jahre vor dir steh'n.
Kennst du noch das alte Liedchen
von der Schlang' im Paradies,
die durch schlimme Apfelgabe
unsern Ahn' in's Elend stiess?
Alles Unheil brachten Aepfel!
Eva bracht' damit den Tod,
Eris brachte Troja's Flammen,
Du, du bracht'st Beides, Flamm' und Tod.

Figure 2b: Key sequence in Schumann's Op. 24

A min.?
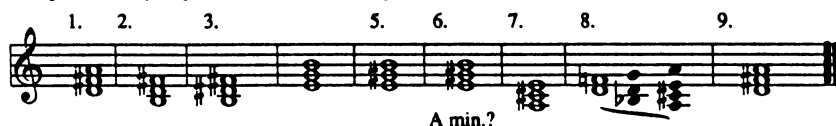
Example 1: Schumann, Op. 24/9 *"Mit Myrthen und Rosen"* mm. 1-16.

In fact, "Warte, warte, wilder Schiffsmann" can be read as a general application of the specifics of "Schöne Wiege"; that is, while the fifth song might be autobiographical in the personal sense, the sixth explicitly broadens the scope to include all mankind. The protagonist and his mistress are represented by the archetypal Adam and Eve, and the rejection of love, itself a symbol for alienation from human society, is symbolized by the expulsion from Paradise and the loss of immortality. The mythopoeic foundation is made explicit by the reference to the pagan mythology of Eris and the fall of Troy. "Warte, warte," then, with its radical change in poetic conceit, creates a break in the narrative progress of the cycle, which Schumann associates with a break in the narrative progress of the tonal scheme--both plot and progression slip, as it were, for a moment into neutral. However logical the purely musical scheme may be, Schumann apparently was compelled by the text to modify the abstract musical plan of alternating modes through the cycle of fifths. The lucidity of the musical design throws the single aberration into sharp relief, but although it is particularly striking here, a reliance on some kind of key scheme influenced in some way by the text is not unique to this cycle.

Let us look very briefly at *Dichterliebe* in the double light cast by the text *and* the music. The narrative thread was spun by the composer as he chose first twenty and then only sixteen from Heine's set of sixty-five poems in the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*.[18] Nonetheless, a plot can be discerned, and its structure is tied both to

---

[18] The compositional history of *Dichterliebe* is given in Rufus Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's* Dichterliebe: *A Source Study* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979); see especially pp. 110-128.

the imagery of the poems and to their sense of narrative time (see Figure 3).[19] In songs one to four, the poet expresses his love, which is in the present. "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" recalls the first budding of love, with no hint of its loss; in the next three songs the love is in full bloom, and only at the very end of "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'" is there a suggestion of the tragedy to come.[20] In the fifth to the tenth songs, the love is clearly lost. Already in song five, the poet is remembering the kiss "she once gave me" ["Der sie mir einst gegeben"]. "Im Rhein, im heiligen Strom" gives only the image of love, and from the first lines of song seven on, the love is "eternally lost" ["Ewig verlor'nes Lieb," "Ich grolle nicht"]. Further, the direct mode of address of the opening section gives way for this whole section (except for "Ich grolle nicht") to allusive invocation of the beloved in images and symbols.

Song eleven brings us abruptly out of this world for a straightforward retelling of the plot underlying the whole cycle in a three-stanza parable, which generalizes the autobiographical scope exactly as does "Warte, warte" in Op. 24. The final five songs, then, add nothing to the progress of the actual story, but rather comment

---

[19] I make a distinction between the actual grammatical present tense and the sense of a narrative present.

[20] According to Hallmark [pp. 16-18], from the earliest stages Schumann's plans included two songs which, after Komar, Hallmark calls 4a and 4b. The poems develop the foreboding suggestion of $\sharp\hat{4}$, and the key sequence—E-flat major and G minor (with a half close) merely extends the tonic of $\sharp\hat{4}$ with a change of mode. In other words, both textually and tonally, these two songs would, if included in the cycle, have belonged in what I read as Part One. Hallmark finds the tonal relations of these two songs "problematical" [p. 143]; and Komar explains their omission in terms of his model of the tonal design of the cycle [Komar, pp. 80-81], even though on those grounds songs four, ten and eleven should also have been omitted. Schumann may simply have cut them because they too explicitly interpret the allusion of "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'."

on its effect upon the rejected lover. Again there is a change of language and imagery, as events give way to dreams and their fusion of past, present and future.

The textual structure of *Dichterliebe*, articulated by events of the plot, by symbol, and by the sense of narrative time, is exactly matched by a tripartite tonal scheme, the idea behind each section of which is an actual progression in the usual harmonic sense of the term. In each of the first two parts, the progression is to G, and the second section is thus an extended version of the first (see Figure 3). It is more difficult to understand the logic of the last six songs, the key to which lies at the very beginning of the cycle, in the notoriously ambivalent "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai." The song begins and ends with a $C^{\#7}$ chord,[21] but the central vocal portion seems to be in A, even though both vocal strophes cadence--if that is the right word--on a tonicized IV of A. The question usually asked is, "Is this song in A or $F^{\#}$?" David Neumeyer's very convincing answer is that songs one and two are certainly a pair, that their key is A, and that the final $C^{\#7}$ of song one resolves correctly in the opening measures of song two.[22]

But perhaps we might also ask, "What is the role of the cadential $C^{\#7}$ chord in the design of the whole cycle?" If the chord functions in one sense as a local dominant of $F^{\#}$, then it does so as an unstable sonority displacing the "proper" A-major tonic of the

---

[21]The remarkable ending of the song was planned from the earliest stages [Hallmark, *Genesis*, pp. 34-36]. Hallmark establishes that Schumann began composition of the cycle before even its preliminary poetic shape was fully established [pp. 110-123], but that he also planned the key sequences for at least some groups of poems before actual composition [p. 91].
[22]Neumeyer, pp. 103-104.

vocal line. The third part of the cycle, textually founded on a dreamy fusion of past and present, is musically founded on a tonal fusion of aspects of the previous parts, represented by the unfolding of two incomplete chains of fifths through the last six songs. The first chain (songs eleven to thirteen) starts on $D^\#$ and might easily continue through $G^\#$ to $C^\#$; the second (in songs fourteen and fifteen) starts on B, and would logically continue to A. Thus the two successions imply the possibility of progression to either the putative tonic of the vocal line of the opening song, or the closing piano chord. Example 2 shows mm. 40-55 of "Die alten bösen Lieder"; it begins in $C^\#$ rather than in the A which would more naturally follow the preceding E major. The vocal strophes do not end with a conclusive cadence, but with a passage in which four measures of simply prolonged $C^{\#7}$ (that is, V/$F^\#$) are followed by progression to V of $C^\#$.[23] The ensuing coda then confirms the "conversion," as it were, of $C^{\#7}$ to a tonic triad. The dominant of mm. 50-52 is simultaneously the structural dominant of this song, the means of finally establishing that $C^\#$ is tonic and not V of $F^\#$, and the penultimate step in the succession of fifths from songs eleven through thirteen. Parts I and II are defined by progression to G beginning in the ambiguous tonality of song one; Part III uses the process of the earlier parts first to recall, and then to resolve, that ambiguity. In the broad view, the internal design of the text is matched by the internal design of the musical structure. More abstractly, as the protagonist's existential problems sink into the sea, with them goes the tonal problem of the first song and the cycle.

_____

[23] Barbara Turchin also notes the parallel to the first song (p. 335).

Example 2: Schumann, Op. 48/16 "
Die alten, bösen Lieder" mm. 40-55.

The great Schubert cycles are less than a generation older than Schumann's, but because the texts are so much more directly narrative, it is tempting to assume that as musical structures they must be founded on very different principles. The plot of *Die schöne Müllerin* unfolds in three stages (see Figure 4), which I have designated "Exposition," "Development," and--with great restraint--"Dénouement." The songs of Part I introduce the protagonist. Like Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, he is a wanderer, a stranger in the landscape, and his situation and destiny are linked to the brook, which also wanders. We uncover the principal character, the beginning of his problem (the maid of the mill), and a foreshadowing of his eventual solution (the brook).

Songs five through eleven develop the plot-line of the miller's pursuit of love. The section is anchored by songs five, seven, nine and ten (all in A), in which the traveller analyses the progress of his love as a natural activity. He compares himself to other men, the mill, the wind and the brook (song five); he would declare his love to nature: to every tree, every stone, every flower (song seven); he invokes a natural expression of his love in the flowers along the brook (song nine); and at last (song ten), the natural light of the moon and the stars is supplanted by his love's eyes and her image in the brook. The other three songs in Part II tell us about the actual events: his recognition that in her is now bound up his whole world (song six), his direct address to her (song eight), and her return of his love (song eleven).

As figure 4 shows, it is not difficult to find a common element among all the songs on a given tonic, nor to isolate some sense in which the songs on different tonics differ in content. Some

Figure 4: Key Choice in *Die Schöne Müllerin*

B-flat "Him"	G "The brook"	C "Her"	A "Nature"
EXPOSITION 1. Das Wandern Protagonist foreigner to landscape	2. Wohin? Brook as alter ego of prot. 4. Danksagung an den Bach Brook/trav'r destiny linked	3. Halt! First sights mill and house	
		DEVELOPMENT 8. Morgengruss Addresses maid first time	5. Am Feierabend Reflects on his unworthi- ness; cf. mill/wind/brook (place in nature and society) 7. Ungeduld Declares his love to nature 9. Des Müllers Blumen Miller/Brook .Brook/Flowers Flowers/maid 10. Thränenregen In love with image of love light/vision/ tears/brook
DENOUEMENT 12. Pause Prot. revealed as artist 13. Mit dem grünen Lautenbande Art transferred to love	15. Eifersucht und Stolz Brook as agent of love 19. Der Müller und der Bach Loss of love=loss of life		

6. Der Neugierige
Does she love him?

11. Mein!
She loves him--but love
stops all else

14. Der Jäger
Enter the other man

16. Die liebe Farbe
Green is his sweetie's color.
17. Die böse Farbe
Green is his rival's color

18. Trockne Blumen
Withered flowers, withered love

20. Des Baches Wiegenlied
Suicide; mists clear; return to nature

of the connections may indeed seem trivial. For example, although the songs on A do directly connect love, nature, and the wanderer's sense of place, all the songs in the cycle deal with love, and all invoke nature symbols in one way or another. On the other hand, the association of the brook with G, and of the failed love with B, seems more clearly defensible. But to recall the question of "elective affinity," more to the point is the exactly parallel textual and musical intensification provided by the rising tessitura as we climb from *his* key (B-flat) in song one, through *her* key (C) in songs three and eight, to *their* key (D) in song eleven. The only interruption to the upward progress of the five "plot" songs is the slip back to B as he dithers about his love in song six, "Neugierige." Thus the affinity of text and tonic provides both affective associations and a musical definition of the distinction between the narrative and the contemplative texts.

"Mein!," the last song of Part II, is of course crucial to both the surface plot, and the symbolic dilemma it covers. Part III of the cycle then traces the protagonist's path downward from this ecstatic moment, beginning with explicit reference to his original appearance. In B-flat major, his "signature key" from song one, the wanderer's symbolic representation as a stranger in the natural landscape is interpreted; he reveals himself in songs twelve and thirteen as an artist for whom there is now no art, for in the Romantic dilemma, the artist must give up either love for art, or art for love.[24] And this is reflected in the extraordinary tonal design of song eleven itself. None of the first ten songs harmonizes anything

---

[24]This formulation I owe to Robert Bailey, whose influence on my view of the Romantic cyle is very far-reaching.

like an entire stanza in a remote key, but the ternary design of "Mein!" is dramatized by the return of D major after a second stanza in B-flat major. The text for that B-flat stanza reads: "Spring, have you no more flowers? Sun, can't you shine more brightly? Ah, so must I, *all alone*, with my blessed word, *be understood by no-one in all creation*."[25] For the wandering love-struck miller, those words in B-flat have one meaning; for the Romantic artist, they have quite another.

The key choices in Part III of the cycle also create an internal patterning that reflects the design of the text in a broader sense. We first note that the textual reference to the beginning of the cycle at songs twelve and thirteen is only part of a larger pattern, which may be summarized as follows: 1) The protagonist identified; 2) His apostrophe to the brook; 3) The love element; and 4) The brook and destiny. In Part I of the cycle, the love element is expressed in the song of the mill and the maid, in C; in Part III, the love element is the disaster of lost love, and it occurs in B. We find, then, that songs twelve and thirteen interpret song one--the wanderer is revealed as an artist; the invocation of the brook in song fifteen corresponds to that in song two; songs fourteen, sixteen, and seventeen answer song three by denying the wanderer his love; and song nineteen fulfills the promise of song four as the wanderer links his destiny to the brook. In each case the correspondence of textual meanings is underscored by a correspondence of tonics, and songs eighteen and twenty, which describe the wanderer's watery fate, introduce a new aspect of the plot and are in a new key. The

---

[25]Translation is from Philip Miller, *The Ring of Words* (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 213.

narrative and symbolic structure is articulated and reinforced by the key choice of the successive songs. In a proper drama, the dénouement should devolve logically and perceptibly from the exposition. Part III of *Die schöne Müllerin* has the effect of a recapitulation with coda because the key choices create an internal patterning that reflects exactly the design of the text. Thus, although the key successions are not functional in the sense of a harmonic progression, they articulate and reinforce the narrative and symbolic structure.

Composed barely four years after *Die schöne Müllerin*, *Die Winterreise*, through both intent and accident, presents a far more complex face. The text problem is difficult because there are at least three possible orderings of the poems, and the tonal discussion is confused by the transposition of five of the songs sometime between composition and publication. What little we do know about the compositional history of *Die Winterreise* has been known for some time, but perhaps a brief review will be useful. The case is summarized in Figure 5.[26] In 1823 Müller published twenty-two of the *Winterreise* poems--the first twelve in the *Urania Taschenbuch*, and, soon after, another ten in the *Deutschen Blätter*. In 1824 the two sets were conflated, two poems were added, and the whole thing was reordered and published as the *Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten*. The reordering was quite drastic: "Irrlicht," "Rast," "Frühlingstraum," and "Einsamkeit" were

---

[26]The sources for the chronology are Arnold Feil, *Franz Schubert: "Die Schone Mullerin"; "Winterreise"* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1975), pp. 23-31; and Thrasybulos Georgiades, *Schubert: Musik und Lyrik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 357-62. See also Susan Youens, *"Winterreise*: In the Right Order," *Soundings* 13 (1985):41-50.

removed from the end of Part I to near the end of Part II. "Die Nebensonnen" was inserted into the middle of this group, so that it remained fifth from the end. "Letzte Hoffnung" and "Die Krähe" simply exchanged places.

Schubert came to know the poems through the 1823 *Urania* version, and he set these twelve pieces apparently as a self-sufficient cycle which was probably finished by February of 1827.[27] Only then did he discover the full set of twenty-four poems and decide to set the extra dozen, apparently in the late summer of 1827.[28] Schubert merely extracted the unset songs from the full cycle and made of them his second half in that order--with the sole exception of "Die Nebensonnen," which was moved to the penultimate position. Thus, if we except the two new songs, Schubert's Part II is very similar to Müller's Part II from 1823.

In the first edition of *Die Winterreise*, five songs were transposed down from the composition keys, and for only one of those changed--the transposition of "Rast" from D to C--is there any authority in Schubert's hand.[29] Numbers six and twelve were changes in the copyist's *Stichvorlage*, and the publisher Tobias Haslinger gave instructions for the transpositions of numbers twenty-two and twenty-four.[30] We have no evidence that Schubert

---

[27]Anthony Newcomb, "Structure and Expression in a Schubert Song: *Noch einmal Auf dem Flusse zu hören*," in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 165; see also Robert Winter, "Paper Studies and Schubert Research," in *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology*, ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 241.

[28]Winter, p. 248.

[29]Newcomb, pp. 168-69.

[30]Newcomb, p. 169.

| Müller's order #1: | Müller's order #2: |
| The publications of 1823 | The publication of 1824 |

[From *Urania: Taschenbuch auf das Jahr 1823*]

[From *Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten . . .*]

1. Gute Nacht	1. Gute Nacht
2. Die Wetterfahne	2. Die Wetterfahne
3. Gefror'ne Tränen	3. Gefror'ne Tränen
4. Erstarrung	4. Erstarrung
5. Der Lindenbaum	5. Der Lindenbaum
6. Wasserflut	6. Die Post
7. Auf dem Flusse	7. Wasserflut
8. Rückblick	8. Auf dem Flusse
9. Irrlicht	9. Rückblick
10. Rast	10. Der greise Kopf
11. Frühlingstraum	11. Die Krähe
12. Einsamkeit	12. Letzte Hoffnung

From *Deutschen Blättern für Poesie, Litteratur . . .*

1. Der greise Kopf	13. Im Dorfe
2. Letzte Hoffnung	14. Der stürmische Morgen
3. Die Krähe	15. Täuschung
4. Im Dorfe	16. Der Wegweiser
5. Der stürmische Morgen	17. Das Wirtshaus
6. Die Nebensonnen	18. Irrlicht
7. Der Wegweiser	19. Rast
8. Das Wirtshaus	20. Die Nebensonnen
9. Mut	21. Frühlingstraum
10. Der Leiermann	22. Einsamkeit
	23. Mut
	24. Der Leiermann

Schubert's Order	Keys (Composed)	Keys (1st ed.)
1. Gute Nacht	d	
2. Die Wetterfahne	a	
3. Gefror'ne Tränen	f	
4. Erstarrung	c	
5. Der Lindenbaum	E/e	
6. Wasserflut	f#	e
7. Auf dem Flusse	e/E	
8. Rückblick	g/G	
9. Irrlicht	b	
10. Rast	d	c
11. Frühlingstraum	A	
12. Einsamkeit	d	b
13. Die Post	E^b	
14. Der greise Kopf	c	
15. Die Krähe	c	
16. Letzte Hoffnung	E^b/e^b	
17. Im Dorfe	D	
18. Der stürmische Morgen	d	
19. Täuschung	A	
20. Der Wegweiser	g/G	
21. Das Wirthshaus	F	
22. Mut	a	g
23. Die Nebensonnen	A	
24. Der Leiermann	b	a

even knew of these last changes. The question, then, is whether such
a confused compilation could possibly exhibit any real cyclic
coherence, and even if that might be so, whether that coherence
could be reflected by large-scale correspondences between the music
and the text.[31]

Now, Schubert's version of Müller's story is certainly
complex, but that does not mean it is incoherent; indeed, in *any* of
the orderings, the surface plot of the narrative is almost lost in a
series of flashbacks, soliloquies, and commentaries. The wandering
of the protagonist is itself both symbol and primary narrative thread,
for the loss of love and of artistic vision is only gradually, and even
then very allusively, revealed through the flashbacks.   Only the
journey is in the narrative present, and it takes place in three stages
that define the three parts of the poetic structure (see Figure 6). In
song one, the traveller is introduced; a stranger he came, and a
stranger he departs. In songs four, eight, and nine, his journey
progresses, but songs two and three are reflections on the past, on
the delusions of love and life. Songs five, six, and seven, all in E,
form a unit that stands apart from the other songs as it summarizes
the plot and imagery of the whole cycle, blending three stages of
time to recall the past, narrate the present, and foretell the future.
Not at all incidentally, the alternations of mode within songs five and
seven articulate the changing temporal point of view. The set of nine
songs in Part I begins with a sense of alienation from human society

---

[31]Kurt von Fischer discusses the question of groups of tonally related songs in
"Einige Gedanken zur Tonartenordnung in Schuberts Liederzyklen," *Muzikoloski
Zbornik* 17 (1981):87-95. Fischer speculates that the transposed keys provide a
better interpretation of the text (pp. 93-94).

(represented by dwelling places), and ends with a reference to the grave.

Part II, comprising songs ten through sixteen is contained by exactly the same narrative frame. The journey begins again, and it begins from the deserted hut in which the traveller has found temporary rest. The journey is then broken a second time as, in "Letzte Hoffnung," he sinks down on the grave of his hopes. The transposition of songs ten and twelve destroys both the sense of closure they would have given to the original twelve-song conception, and the reinforcement of the textual connection to the very beginning of the journey. The subdivision of the cycle I propose is therefore defined in the usual performing version only by the narrative.

As after the first pause, the interruption in "Letzte Hoffnung," is followed by songs which recall both the text and the tonic of the opening. "Im Dorfe," and "Der stürmische Morgen," both in D, thus mark the beginning of the third stage in the traveller's progress. In song seventeen, as in songs one and ten, he is again passing by human habitations; it may even be that *this* village is the same as that in song one,[32] and that the rest of the cycle represents a compressed, undistorted "recapitulation" of the journey started in "Gute Nacht." Here there are no disruptive flashbacks--no interruptions of the chronological sequence. Each of the three parts, then, begins with the traveller alone, and ends, either explicitly or--in the case of "Der Leiermann"--implicitly, with an invocation of the

---

[32]Susan Youens notes that the scenes in "Gute Nacht," "Im Dorfe," and "Der Leiermann" are practically identical ["Retracing a Winter Journey: Reflections on Schubert's *Winterreise*," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 9 (1985):132.]

D	**A**	**F**	**C**
(Alienation)	(Love as delusion)	(Life as delusion)	(Search for death.)

STAGE ONE.

The journey from town

1. Gute Nacht: Stranger in dark.			4. Erstarrung: Love and nature are dead.

Flashbacks & Reflections

	2. Die Wetterfahne: Inconstancy of love	3. Gefrorne Tränen: life turns to death	

STAGE TWO.

Continuing the journey

10. Rast: finds rest in abandoned hut 12. Einsamkeit: alone, with none to greet him; he goes on.			15. Die Krähe: searches for grave.

Flashbacks & Reflections

	11. Frühlingstraum: dreams of faded love		14. Der greise Kopf: horror of youth; yearns for death

STAGE THREE.

The journey resumes. . .

17. Im Dorfe: he is a stranger in village 18. Der stürmische Morgen: next morning a stranger on earth	19. Täuschung: Love as delusion		
	22. Mut: façade of ironic glee.	21. Das Wirtshaus: Inn as graveyard.	

. . . and concludes

	23. Die Nebensonnen: 2 suns (the "extras") set.		

E (Summary - - - - - -)	F#	G (Longing)	B (Art as illusion)	Eb (Lingering hope)
		8. Rückblick: leaves and remembers	9. Irrlicht: drawn onward by illusion-- to grave?	
5. Der Lindenbaum: passes by the symbol of life	6. Wasserflut: passes out of town/society.			
7. Auf dem Flusse: passes out of life.				
			13. Die Post: hopes for word	
				16. Letzte Hoffnung: ponders the fate of "hope's grave."
		20. Der Wegweiser: "mad longing" for wilderness; he trudges on.		
			24. Der Leiermann The last "run" sets as the artist's journey ends	

grave. With the single exception of the last song of Part II, all the correspondences of text are articulated by a correspondence of tonics.   Not only are the opening songs of each section exactly parallel in symbolic meaning and tonic choice, but Parts I and III, and therefore the cycle as a whole, all progress from D to B as the traveller progresses from lonely darkness, drawn on by illusion to his ultimate goal (see Figure 7).

If we accept this tripartite textual and musical structure, we discover that Schubert, in his apparently muddle-headed cobbling together of a cycle with the poems in the wrong order, has managed to have things both his way *and* Müller's, and that there may be an important advantage in the lack of tonal definition of the close of Part II.   As Figure 8 illustrates, the crucial structural division in Müller's full conception of the cycle falls between the rest on the grave in "Letzte Hoffnung," and the resumption of the journey in "Im Dorfe." That is precisely where Schubert's tonal plan articulates the division between what I read as his Parts II and III. In neither *Die schöne Müllerin* nor *Die Winterreise* does the sequence of keys seem to have a musical harmonic function anything like that of Schumann's Op. 24, but in the Schubert cycles, both affective associations and the internal patterning do closely link key choice with narrative structure.

In early 1830, Felix Mendelssohn published a set of twelve *Lieder* as his Op. 9 (see Figure 9). They are a most unlikely cycle. There is no immediately apparent narrative; there hardly could be, since the texts are drawn from five different poets: Voss, Klingemann, Droysen, Uhland and Heine. Further, since it is known

Figure 7: Correspondences among Parts I, II and III of Schubert's *Die Winterreise*.

	OPENING			CLOSE	
	D	A	F	B	E♭
I. Gute Nacht	Die Wetterfahne	Gefrorne Träne		Irlicht	
II. Rast	Fruhlingstraum	Das Wirshaus			Letzte Hoffnung
III. Im Dorfe & Der stürmische Morgen	Täuschung	Der Leiermann			

Figure 8: Correspondence between Müller's two-part, and Schubert's three-part, designs.

MÜLLER: I: Gute Nacht   *to*   Letzte Hoffnung   II: Im Dorfe *to* Der Leiermann

SCHUBERT: I: Gute Nacht *to* Irlicht   II: Rast *to* Letzte Hoffnung   III: Im Dorfe *to* Der Leiermann

that Felix's sister Fanny composed songs seven, ten, and twelve,[33] the music is from two different pens. So much for cyclic coherence; nevertheless, the key scheme is most intriguing, and one really cannot look at it without reflecting and connecting.[34] For example, the first eight songs all stand in simple diatonic relationship to the key of songs one and two. The first six songs progress from I through an arpeggiated supertonic to V, which is then itself prolonged in songs seven and eight by a lower neighbor. Even the modes are right for the central tonic of A major. Song nine plunges us into the flat side, and from there an arpeggiated sub-dominant returns us to A; again the modes from songs nine to twelve are right for A minor.

Now, a second look at the texts of Op. 9 shows that if they are not precisely narrative, nonetheless, like those of *Dichterliebe*, they address a single theme, and indeed carry the skeleton of a story. The first six songs trace the progress of a man's love from the first questioning declaration, through the return of love, and on to the journey to the "autumn of life." In practical terms, the journey in "Scheidend" separates him from his love as it separates him from his own "golden years of youth." The narrative chronology and the progress of the tonal succession are equally straightforward. Song five, "Im Herbst," to the only poem of the first six not by Voss, is hardly an intrusion; on the contrary, it is the perfect foil for the preceding "Im Frühling."

---

[33] Marcia Citron, ed., *The Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn* (Pendragon Press, 1987), p. 679.

[34] Barbara Turchin has noted certain motivic connections in this set of songs (Turchin, pp. 128-29). She also suggests (pp. 123-24) that the cycle might have been performed with the songs from the first and second sestets in alternation.

**Figure 9: Patterning in 12 Songs, Op. 9
by Felix [and Fanny] Mendelssohn**

Composer	Song	Poet	Key	Synopsis
Part I: Him				
Felix	1. Frage	[Voss]	A	"Is it true that you wait for me?"
"	2. Geständniss	[Voss]	A	"I will live for you alone, Maria"
"	3. Wartend	[Voss]	b	She dreams of him
"	4. Im Frühling	[Voss]	D	Blooming spring, blooming love
"	5. Im Herbst	[Klingemann]	f#	Autumn of year, of love, of life
"	6. Scheidend	[Voss]	E	Far from youth, from love, from pain
Part II: Her				
Fanny	7. Sehnsucht	[Droysen]	D	"There is no rest for me; now my dreams go out over the world"
Felix	8. Frühlingsglaube	[Uhland]	E	Spring is coming--to the world, but not to my heart
Felix	9. Ferne	[Droysen]	Eb	"I'll dream in distant lands while I await your return"
Fanny	10. Verlust	[Heine]	d[V-V]	"Nature should reflect my sorrow"
Felix	11. Entsagung	[Droysen]	F	"Lord, with Thee I will take refuge"
Fanny	12. Die Nonne	[Uhland]	a	In a convent garden, a pale young maiden walks.

A: I   I   ii   IV   vi   v   IV   v   N6/iv?   iv   VI   i

The second sestet of poems is framed from a different point
of view, the woman's, but that changed aspect becomes only
gradually apparent. Songs seven and eight begin in the mood of the
previous set. "Sehnsucht" is her response to his second song,
"Geständniss," and the next song, "Frühlingsglaube," answers his "Im
Frühling." The barely concealed pessimism of songs seven and eight
is explained in "Ferne," song nine, as the symbolic voyage of song six
is now literally realized in the lover's separation. The final three
songs, although drawn from three poets, nonetheless form a tight
narrative unit. Separation turns to pain and sorrow for a broken
heart (song ten). The bereaved maiden renounces the world in song
eleven, and then in song twelve is secluded in a convent awaiting the
physical death that will complement her spiritual death.

The tragic turn of *her* point of view is reflected by the
dramatic tonal shift to the flat side in the ninth song, "Ferne"--
appropriately enough in the key most distant from A. Not at all
incidentally, the shift to the flat side is foreshadowed in the second
half of "Sehnsucht" by invocation of the tonic minor, and then carried
through as the mode of the central key changes, and the last three
songs arpeggiate through D minor, F major and A minor, instead of
D major, $F^{\#}$ minor and A major. The tonal pattern created by the
key succession is thus both coherent on its own terms, and closely
linked to the internal patterning of the text. We have, then, a set of
twelve songs that carry a double narrative thread, but nonetheless
address a common theme, central to Romantic thought. The tonal
scheme is musically and textually logical, and at least some of the
songs are motivically linked. Op. 9 is surely a cycle in all the ways

that matter, including the characteristic linkage of the textual and musical patterns.

It is, however, hardly a great cycle, and none of the individual pieces is a great song. With few exceptions, they are rather pedestrian settings, undistinguished by great beauties of melodic line, of harmonic invention, of textural variety or of structural subtlety. But it is for precisely that reason that these songs are an instructive example. If we find particular compositional features in masterpieces like *Die schöne Müllerin* or *Dichterliebe*, then those features may simply be the idiosyncratic strokes of genius that *make* a masterpiece. But when the same sorts of procedures occur also in lesser works, it is more likely that they are normative characteristics that actually define the genre. It may well be, as Charles Rosen would have it, that it is the masterworks that establish the essential traits of a style;[35] but it is the incorporation of those stylistic traits in a broad body of music of various qualities which allows us to generalize, to theorize, about a style-period or a genre.

From this study, and from its extension to a number of other cycles, I conclude that in the nineteenth-century cycle the key scheme is a crucial aspect of the genre itself. The key choices may be highly affective, as seems to be the case in *Die schöne Müllerin*, or they may suggest aspects of a functional harmonic succession as in the Schumann and Mendelssohn cycles. But there is always some sense in which the cycle's structural outlines are delineated by the coincidence of text and tonic in such a way that one key serves as a central tonal point of reference. That tonic may begin the cycle (as in both *Die Winterreise* and the Op. 9 set), or it may not (as in

---

[35]Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 7.

Dichterliebe); it may conclude the cycle (again, *Dichterliebe*, and the Op. 9), or not (*Die schöne Müllerin* and *Die Winterreise*). In any case, the key sequence devolving from, to, or around that central tonic in one way or another also articulates structural features of the text.

Schumann once commented that transposition of a piece from the key of composition into another produces a different effect from that of the original. But, says Schumann, "the process by which the composer chooses this or that key . . . is as unclear as the achievement of genius itself. . . . The composer finds the right key in much the same way that the painter finds the right colors."[36] The problem, then, is not to determine *how* a choice is made, but rather to have confidence that the composer *chooses*; that his choice is right; and that we can, through the study of the text and its relation to the music, understand at least some of the reasons why it is right.

Analysis is of course a kind of interpretation, and like all interpretations, is to some degree subjective. An analyst, no more than a performer, cannot avoid the intrusion of his or her own self into the interpretation, but that should never obscure the goal--the uncovering of the composer's intent. Further, as Pope's "Essay on Criticism" observes, interpretation has its dangers:

---

[36]Cited in Komar, pp. 132-33.

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill

Appear in writing, or in judging, ill;

But, of the two, less dangerous is the offense

To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.

'Tis our judgements as our watches, none

Go just alike, yet each believes his own.[37]

But the ordered phalanxes of these steadily marching heroic couplets are more to us than just a cautionary epigram, for their patterned predictability ensures that while we may not always know *what* it is that Pope is going to say, we always know *how* he is going to say it; and that expresses the essence of a Classical conception. On the other hand, the unpredictable patterning of text and tonic in the nineteenth-century cycle reveals the ironic Romantic conception of saying what is known, but always saying it in a new way.

---

[37]Alexander Pope, "Essay on Criticism," *Poetical Works*, ed. by Herbert Davis (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 64, 11.1-4 & 9-10.