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Review of Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics: Fragmentation of Desire by Beate Julia Perrey

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Beate Julia Perrey. *Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics: Fragmentation of Desire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

REVIEWED BY YONATAN MALIN

Do the sixteen songs of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*—or twenty songs, in the conception of 1840—cohere as a single work, an organic, unified whole? Should the model of organic unity and coherence be applied to *Dichterliebe*? Might we rather consider the songs as individual, separate fragments, related by association and fantasy, and the entire work as essentially sketch-like, leading us towards the ineffable and the beyond? And is there a theoretical framework with which one can validate the structural anomalies, the moments of rupture, and the semantic gaps in such a work? In *Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics: Fragmentation of Desire*, Beate Julia Perrey argues that both the individual songs and the entire cycle are fragmentary. Perrey offers, further, a "theory of Romantic song," based on "the Early Romantic conception of form, which rejects the cardinal neo-Classical ideal of a coherent whole, and which advances instead an *aesthetic of fragmentation*" (1, emphasis Perrey's). The study validates the experience of anyone who has first heard and wondered at the hanging dominant seventh at the end of "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai"; at the incomplete vocal cadences in "Aus meinen Thränen spriessen," completed so perfunctorily in the piano; at the extreme brevity of "Die Rose, die Lilie"; or, later in the cycle, at the extensive postludes that become like independent pieces for the piano; and at "Ich hab' im Traum geweinet," which sets itself apart from the rest of the cycle because of its sparse texture, remote key, and inconsolable melancholy.

Perrey's book has three main sections. The first section (chapters 1–5) focuses on Early Romantic Theory, elucidating central concepts such as the Romantic fragment, Romantic irony, reflection, and theories of language and representation. Chapter 5 explores nineteenth-century theories of song, drawing on the views of Koch, Schilling and Nauenburg, Hegel, Hoffmann, and, much later, Schoenberg.[1] This leads to an extended discussion of Schumann's own writings on song; topics include the ideal of a deep affinity between poet and composer (not a surface correspondence between poem and music), Schumann's response to the "new school of poets," and his goal of raising the Lied to a "higher sphere of art" (59). The second section (chapters 6–10) focuses on Heine and his *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, the poetic source for *Dichterliebe*. Perrey touches on topics that are familiar in Heine scholarship: his critique of Romantic sentimentality, the *Stimmungsbruch* (breaking of mood) that is common in his poetry, and the purposeful artificiality in his use of language.[2] She also provides an original juxtaposition of texts from the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* and the biblical *Song of Songs*. As these texts show, Heine takes the sensuous love-poetry motifs from the *Song of Songs* and imbues them with "a modern feeling of estrangement" (95).[3] In Chapter 10, Perrey discusses the genesis of the *Buch der Lieder*, of which the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* is a part.

The third section of the book (chapters 11–14) then explores the poetics of *Dichterliebe*. In the introduction to this section (chapter 11), Perrey reviews some of the extensive literature on *Dichterliebe*, arguing against approaches that have sought to discover narrativity, unity, or coherence. Chapter 12 draws on Schumann's writings to argue that he was well aware of the bitter irony and sarcasm in Heine's

1 Perrey cites Walter Dürr's work on the Lied as an important source for this Chapter (Dürr 1984).

2 For the discussion of Heine's use of language, Perrey draws on Adorno's famous essay "Heine the Wound" (Adorno 1991–92).

3 For further discussion, see Perrey 1999.

poetry.[4] In Perrey's view, Schumann understood this irony, but his music "unmasks" the pain that lies behind it.[5] Chapters 13 and 14 consist of "musico-poetic" analyses of six songs from *Dichterliebe*. In order of presentation, these are: "Ich hab' im Traum geweinet" (no. 13, discussed in conjunction with "Der schwere Abend," op. 90, no. 6), "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" (no. 1), "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh" (no. 4), "Dein Angesicht" (no. 4a), "Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen" (no. 12), and "Die alten, bösen Lieder" (no. 16, focusing especially on the postlude).

It should be noted that Perrey's book has a similar subject and the same critical orientation as another recent book, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis and the Genre of the Romantic Cycle* by David Ferris.[6] Both authors use early Romantic poetics, and especially the notion of the fragment, to interpret song cycles by Robert Schumann. (Ferris's main focus is the *Eichendorff Liederkreis* but he includes an extensive chapter on *Dichterliebe*.) Both books, in fact, extend this line of inquiry from the work of John Daverio and Charles Rosen, and both argue that Daverio and Rosen were on the right track but did not go far enough.[7] Beyond this, however, Perrey and Ferris approach their projects with different tools and sensibilities. Ferris seeks to demonstrate the fragmentary nature of individual songs through structural analysis (with categories such as "weak openings" and "open endings"); Perrey takes the fragmentary nature of the songs largely as a given and focuses on "intertextuality," "allusion," "evocation," and "metaphor." Ferris critiques Schenkerian analyses of *Dichterliebe*, but he also finds insight in them and develops his own Schenkerian readings; Perrey dismisses the Schenkerian analyses altogether. Ferris develops a tight argument drawing on historical sources, previous analyses, and his own readings; Perrey presents a series of essays on related topics. Remarkably, Perrey cites Ferris only once, in a footnote about Schumann's use of the terms "collection" (*Sammlung*), "cycle" (*Zyklus*), "song composition" (*Liederwerk*), and "song cycle" (*Liederkreis*) (118, footnote 38). One further comparison can be made here. Both authors discuss selected songs from their chosen cycles, and, in accordance with their critical view, make no attempt to account for the cycles as wholes. But whereas Ferris discusses songs with a range of tempi and affect, Perrey discusses only songs with moderate or slow tempi, songs of interiority which can be said to represent "rare" and "secret states of the soul." The fact that these two books were written by authors with such different sensibilities is perhaps an indication that the fragment as an analytical category has come of age.[8]

What does it mean to say that both the individual songs and the cycle as a whole are fragments? At one level Perrey's argument is simply a negative one: it rejects analyses that impose unity on the work. Perrey writes, "As a result of concentrating exclusively on coherence and closure as the self-justifying law of aesthetic achievement, certain structural moments in *Dichterliebe*, which do not easily fit into such a system of stability, have been ignored" (2). Unfortunately, the

4 Perrey writes, in the beginning of the chapter, "Schumann bought his copy of the *Buch der Lieder* in 1828" (124). Then at the end of the chapter she writes, "In 1836, thanks to Ulex's present, Schumann finally owned a copy of Heine's *Buch der Lieder*" (130). Note 15 on page 129 clarifies that the latter is true.

5 Schumann himself wrote of Byron, Heine, Victor Hugo, and Grabbe, "Poetry has on occasions in eternity, put on the mask of irony so as not to show its face of pain; perhaps the kind hand of a genius will take it off someday." Perrey (110) quotes this in the epigraph to the third section. The original passage occurs at the end of Schumann's review of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*: see Schumann 1891 I, 150 and the translation in Bent 1994 II, 194.

6 Ferris 2000.

7 Daverio 1993 and Rosen 1995. Daverio 2002 responds to Ferris's book.

8 There are dissenting voices. Robert Morgan (2003), for example, defends the concept of unity and critiques "anti-unity" analyses by Kofi Agawu, Daniel Chua, Joseph Dubiel, Kevin Korsyn, and Jonathan Kramer. The editorial in the same double issue of *Music Analysis* (Cross 2003) briefly reviews the history of the debates about musical organicism and unity.

unfolding of this argument is one of the more problematic features of the book, not because the argument itself is untenable, but because of how it is pursued.[9] Let us jump in and consider the classic site for arguments of unity and fragmentation, the first and second songs. Perrey argues that "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" (song 1) has no tonal center: "It has no tonal ground. Instead, the very absence of tonal definition constitutes an ever-present gap within the song" (168). In this analysis, more than anywhere else in the book, there is a postmodernist credo that celebrates fragmentation, indeterminacy, and non-functionality. The analysis suffers, as a result. We are given a reduction that presents the harmonies of the song with neither functional-harmonic nor voice-leading relations: b^6 in m. 1, $C\sharp^7$ in m. 2, and so forth.[10] Perrey notes initially that this example "simply states the underlying harmonies" in order to facilitate the analytical discussion (166). She then writes, however, "The first arpeggio . . . cannot truly be burdened with any functionality as it stands" (167). Why not? Her reasons are the following: "Here, the argument for F♯ minor only holds if one accepts the retrospective interpretation of the first arpeggio (b. 1) as IV^6 in the light of the arpeggio in b. 2 on C♯ as V^7 (with E♯ as 3 and B as 7), and if one further accepts that the positive absence of an F♯ chord throughout the song does not challenge its absolute status as tonic" (167). Yes, if one were to play m. 1 without m. 2, the tonal status of m. 1 would be ambiguous; tonality only emerges in contextual relationships. Measure 2 does in fact follow quite seamlessly; m. 2 can be heard as V^7 in F♯ minor, and m. 1 can be heard retrospectively as IV^6. Why deny these relations?[11] The power of this passage emerges, as many have observed, from the fact that it implies an F♯ minor tonic but does not realize it. We feel the absence because of the implied presence, and the absence itself becomes a paradoxical form of fulfillment; the rhythmic tensions and surging lines of mm. 1 and 3 resolve and dissipate in mm. 2 and 4.[12]

Perrey introduces the discussion of key in "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai" with the following:

> Unlike Komar, whose attitude ("I shall assume A major as tonic") has the undeniable advantage of allowing for the discovery of a "large-scale harmonic progression of song 1, A–D–C♯," which then leads to his construction of a "typical *Ursatz* in A major" . . . Rosen does not engage further in the "largely misguided . . . controversy about the real key of the song" (167).

This passage initiates an outline and critique of Charles Rosen's analysis.[13] It begins, however, with a misreading of Arthur Komar's essay. Komar does not simply say, "I shall

9 David Ferris makes the same argument, more convincingly, in a nuanced review of analyses by Arthur Komar, Heinrich Schenker, and David Neumeyer. See chapter 2, "Analyzing *Dichterliebe*," in Ferris 2000.

10 Measures 1 and 3 in Example 9 (on p. 166) should have a b^6 triad in the notation, rather than a D major triad, and mm. 12 and 23 should have B♮ rather than B♭.

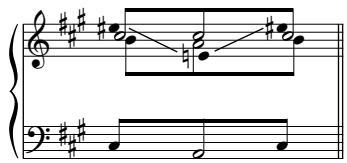
11 David Lewin (1986, 361) suggests that one avoid "false dichotomies," as in, the opening arpeggio either is or is not a functional harmony in F♯ minor. Our perceptions change as we listen to and analyze musical events in a variety of contexts, and this is entirely reasonable, but, Lewin argues, "What is *not* reasonable is any concomitant urge to deny or bad-mouth perceptions we are coming to modify" (Lewin's emphasis).

12 Schumann may have still been under the influence of Eichendorff's poetry, even as he began *Dichterliebe*, for Eichendorff's poetry embodies precisely this dichotomy. (Schumann began work on the songs of *Dichterliebe* only days after completing the Eichendorff *Liederkreis* Op. 39.) David Wellbery (1996, 70) writes that in Eichendorff's works, "the object of desire is hallucinated as absented, withdrawn to an infinite remove . . . this very absence is experienced by the subject as a fulfillment." Eichendorff's "Intermezzo" ("Dein Bildniss wunderselig"), set by Schumann as op. 39, no. 2, is a classic instance: the poet finds fulfillment by gazing at an image of the beloved deep within his heart and sending his heart's song out to her. For an analysis of how rhythmic/metric tensions correlate with harmony, melodic line, and text in "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai," see Malin 2003, 65–68.

13 Rosen 1995, 41–48.

assume A major as tonic"; rather, he notes the tonal ambiguity of the first song, and he then writes, "For now, I shall assume A major as tonic. . . ."[14] More importantly, Komar's analysis does not "lead to the construction of a 'typical Ursatz in A major'," it leads to the radically unorthodox background structure shown here in Example 1. The A-major Ursatz is provided by way of contrast.[15] This particular voice-leading graph, in fact, could be used to support Perrey's notion that *Dichterliebe* is characterized by fragmentary and even incoherent structures.[16] Of course, Komar's analysis does impose tonal unity as it proceeds to examine larger collections of songs and the cycle as a whole, and for this reason (among others) it has not been widely accepted.[17]

Charles Rosen analyzes the first song as a fragment. Rosen does not go far enough, however, in Perrey's view: "Rosen's preference for an A major/F♯ minor focus, and its C♯^{7} distraction, remains within the Classical orbit. The teleological model has simply been inverted through replacing the conventional sonata procedure of "stability–instability–stability" with one representing "instability–stability–instability" (173). Perrey objects that the key of A major is "not to be experienced as a point of stability," because it is immediately undermined by the further move to B minor, and because it is part of a sequence of keys: F♯ minor–A major; B minor–D major (173 and 168). This is a good point, but I would add that the repeated A major cadences present at least an illusion of stability. If we admit to an *illusion* of stability, we also find that this is a wonderful example of what Perrey herself calls the "fragmentation of desire." The poet sublimates his desire in images of springtime, in what seems to be a stable A major. Desire then destabilizes the key and creates fragmentation, in the song and in the poetic self, as it re-emerges at the end of each stanza.[18]



EXAMPLE 1. *Komar's Unorthodox Background Structure.*

What of the link—or the gap—between song 1 and song 2, the sense in which the V^7/F♯ both is and is not resolved by the beginning of song 2? When the second song begins, A$_4$ resolves the chordal seventh left hanging at the end of song 1, but C♯$_5$ in the voice and piano denies this resolution. Likewise, the A/C♯ dyad can be heard initially as the third and fifth of an F♯ triad, and the full F♯ triad is heard on the second beat of m. 1, but there is a quick and definitive move to A major.[19] Perrey writes, "Anticipation is the general gesture by which song 1 is characterized, the defining gesture

14 Komar 1971, 66–67.

15 Komar 1971, 69.

16 David Ferris (2000, 52) has contrasted Schenker's graph of the song with the graph by Komar: ". . . where Schenker emphasizes the continuity from one harmony to the other [i.e., from C♯ major to A major], Komar calls attention to the break between them and creates a voice-leading graph that hovers at the very margins of musical coherence . . . If one plays Komar's graph at the piano, it does not sound as if it could be the basis of a piece of tonal music."

17 The most thorough critique of Komar's essay is in Ferris, 26–38. See also Lerdahl 2001, 138, and Neumeyer 1982, 94–96.

18 Perrey uses the phrase "fragmentation of desire" in the book's subtitle, and she discusses this in general terms in the preface, pp. xiii–xiv. The fragmentation that occurs at the end of each stanza can be heard in the imprecise doubling of the melodic line. Rosen writes, "The two versions, vocal and instrumental, of the same melody appear to pull at each other in bars 5 to 12 as one moves ahead or drags behind . . . At the end of the phrase [in m. 12], we might consider the voice and piano to have split apart as the piano's G♯ attacks the previous G♮ in the voice, except that the melodic line remains essentially unbroken." Perrey quotes the end of this passage on p. 172. See Rosen 1995, 46. Reinhold Brinkmann, following Adorno, uses the term *das ungenaue Unisono* (imprecise unison) for such situations. See Brinkmann 1997, 60–68.

19 See Rosen 1995, 53.

of a piece that reaches out ever further beyond itself. In this sense, song 1 is not connected to song 2, and thus does not support a totalizing argument" (171). I would agree that there is a palpable break between the two songs. The text and music of song 1 do indeed move outward in a gesture of hope, love, and longing, and song 2 takes a different turn; it already evokes tears and sighs, and it has a descending line that opposes the upward reach of the first song's defining gesture.[20] Analyses that ignore this break certainly miss something. Perrey responds to the first song's outward reach when she suggests that the final C♯[7] "is the opening for a potential continuation in any tonal direction, and indeterminably so" (169). And yet, it is precisely the way in which Schumann takes up one thread from the initial song, as he turns in a new direction, that fascinates us. The paradox (a quintessentially Romantic one) is that the brief tonal link makes the break all the more evident.

Perrey's views of the song and of the Romantic Fragment are inspired by the French writer Maurice Blanchot. Blanchot's provocative statements provide an intriguing context for *Dichterliebe*. He observes, for example, that fragmentary writing has a place only "as that which is written . . . in the sheer suspense which without restraint breaks the seal of unity by, precisely, not breaking it, but by leaving it aside without this abandon's ever being able to be known" (Blanchot 1995, 61, quoted in part by Perrey, 171). Blanchot's interpretation itself remains in a state of contradiction. Perrey repeats this quote as an interpretation of "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai," but she leaves out the central clause ("by, precisely, not breaking it") and thus annuls the interpretive tension (172).

Perrey also cites a letter from Schumann to the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel, written in August 1843, to support the notion that song 1 should be viewed "in its own right," that it is "self contained." Schumann wrote, "It is a cycle of 20 songs, which form a whole, but each of which is also self-contained."[21] In fact, Perrey cites this letter three times in the course of her analysis of the first song, and it is played as a trump card, in opposition to Rosen's discussion (168, note 112; 170; and 170, note 123). This seems ironic, given that the letter supports two forms of interpretation, both of the individual songs as separate, self-contained entities, and of the cycle as a whole. In any case, the purpose of the letter was to facilitate publication of the cycle, and interpretations that use it to deduce Schumann's own view on issues of cyclicity should take this into account.[22]

Let us return to the question, What does it mean to say that both the individual songs and the cycle as a whole are fragments? For at another level, Perrey's argument is a positive one: it is that the songs as fragments exemplify and participate in a range of ideas and ideals set forth by the Early Romantics. Here Perrey is on firmer ground. Early Romantic writings have been introduced often in the musicological literature; still, Perrey weaves a good range of primary material into her text, and it is valuable background for an interpretation of *Dichterliebe*.

Perrey's discussion of early Romantic theory is difficult to summarize, since it moves quickly, and more by association than by systematic exposition (somewhat like the writings of the early Romantics themselves). Perrey introduces the chapter on the Romantic fragment (chapter 2) with this description: "The form of the Romantic fragment is precisely what its name suggests: a piece which is broken off from a

20 An illuminating interpretation of the break between song 1 and song 2 can be found in Ferris 2000, 57.

21 "Es ist ein Zyklus von 20 Liedern, die ein Ganzes, aber auch einzeln für sich ein Abgeschlossenes bilden." The most extensive quote from this letter is on p. 119 of Perrey's text. On p. 170, when Perrey refers to "note 181, above," the reference should be to footnote 43 on page 119. On p. 119, Perrey notes that the letter is housed in the University Library of Darmstadt, but she neither gives a reference number for it nor says that it is uncatalogued.

22 For further discussion of Schumann's conception of cyclic coherence, as well as other contemporary views on cyclicity and coherence, see Turchin 1985, Ferris 2000, and Daverio 2002.

greater whole, say the Hegelian Absolute which itself, however, was thought no longer to exist" (26). From there she moves to a discussion of fragmentary consciousness and the notion that the subject is itself never whole (as in Schlegel: "Man *does not exist as a whole*, but only in parts" [emphasis in the original]); to the sense of an incomplete self and an open, contingent future; to the fragment as an expression of the unconscious (27); to the image of pieces of a broken vase (which allude to a greater whole, but do not directly complement one another or neatly fit together); and to the "coexistence of contradictory forces as an 'infinite multitude' whose 'totality can never be completed' " (29). Perrey notes the presence of the chaotic in fragment ensembles, and then, intriguingly, observes, "the tendency towards a greater synthesis, towards the Absolute is always also present, articulating itself as hope and *Sehnsucht*" (31). Could we not understand some of the motivic and tonal links in *Dichterliebe*—many of which Perrey herself discusses, in analyses that follow after that of song 1—in these terms, as a tendency towards greater synthesis, which, however, is never fully realized? The following passage from Friedrich Schlegel's writings, quoted twice in Perrey's text, indicates that "constant interconnection" can generate a larger structure which itself remains fragmentary:

> The thread of thought moves imperceptibly forward *in constant interconnection* until the surprised spectator, after the thread abruptly breaks off or dissolves in itself, suddenly finds himself confronted with a goal he had not at all expected: before him an unlimited, wide view, but upon looking back at the path he has traversed and the spiral of conversation distinctly before him, he realizes that this was *only a fragment of an infinite cycle* [emphasis added].[23]

This is indeed suggestive for an interpretation of *Dichterliebe*, and of the Romantic song cycle more generally.

Romantic irony emerges in chapter 3 as the attitude which "tolerates the coexistence of statement and counterstatement and thus becomes an image of 'the truly contradictory nature in our I' " (33). It creates and accepts fragmentary utterances, and it "reflects the Romantics' awareness that expression . . . is limited in its capacity to represent the absolute" (34). Here Perrey shows the link between Romantic irony and the aesthetics of the fragment, and she draws a further link with the new theories of language, communication and expression that emerged at the end of the 18th century. These themes come together in fragment no. 108 from Friedrich Schlegel's "Critical Fragments," quoted by Perrey. Irony, according to Schlegel, "contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication."[24]

Chapter 4 focuses on the new theories of language that emerged during the period of early Romanticism, as well as the new aesthetics that valued music over other art forms, because of its abstract nature. This is basic material, but I shall review it here because it emerges as a leitmotif in Perrey's text, and it has implications for my interpretation of *Dichterliebe* and critique of Perrey's "musico-poetic" analysis. Drawing early twentieth-century linguistic terminology into her analysis, Perrey writes, "In the Romantics' perception of language, the idea of a correspondence between signifier and signified had loosened to such a degree that words no longer necessarily referred either to objects or to concepts. This idea was believed to be fully realized in the case of music" (40). This same theme is sounded in the section on irony: ". . . Romantic irony is like a palliative against the mania of total communication. It is that element of resistance inside lan-

23 Schlegel 1958 III, 50, quoted in Perrey's text on pp. 20 and 219. Perrey observes in her footnotes that this is "one of Friedrich Schlegel's descriptions of poetry." In fact, it refers to poetic prose, exemplified in this case by Plato's writings. The application to Schumann's compositional process is a leap, but it can be justified by the all inclusive nature of Early Romantic thought. The translation is from Behler 1993, 141.

24 Schlegel 1958 II, 160. The quote is broken up in Perrey's text: it appears in part on p. 33 and in part on p. 34. The entire fragment is given in translation in Behler 1993, 149.

guage which works against the deceptions of illusion, against the analogy between signifier and signified" (37). Indeed, the theme recurs throughout the book (e.g., 2, 7, 9–10, and 177–78).[25] In Chapter 4, Perrey associates the new function of language in particular with a turn inward, a focus on self-consciousness and reflective thinking in the work of Fichte, and then in the reception of Fichte by Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. Words escape their mimetic function, so as to reach a truth that lay within, and to "represent the unrepresentable" (*das Undarstellbare darstellen*).[26] Perrey writes, "The Romantics' abandonment of the doctrine of mimesis coincides with their discovery of the potential of language to evoke a world that is non-existent in objective, that is material or natural terms" (43). The material on early Romanticism will be familiar to some, but its presentation here in a book on *Dichterliebe* is valuable, and Perrey provides a useful guide to the interconnection among central concepts, such as the link between the aesthetics of the fragment and irony, between irony and the new theories of language, and between the new theories of language and subjectivity.

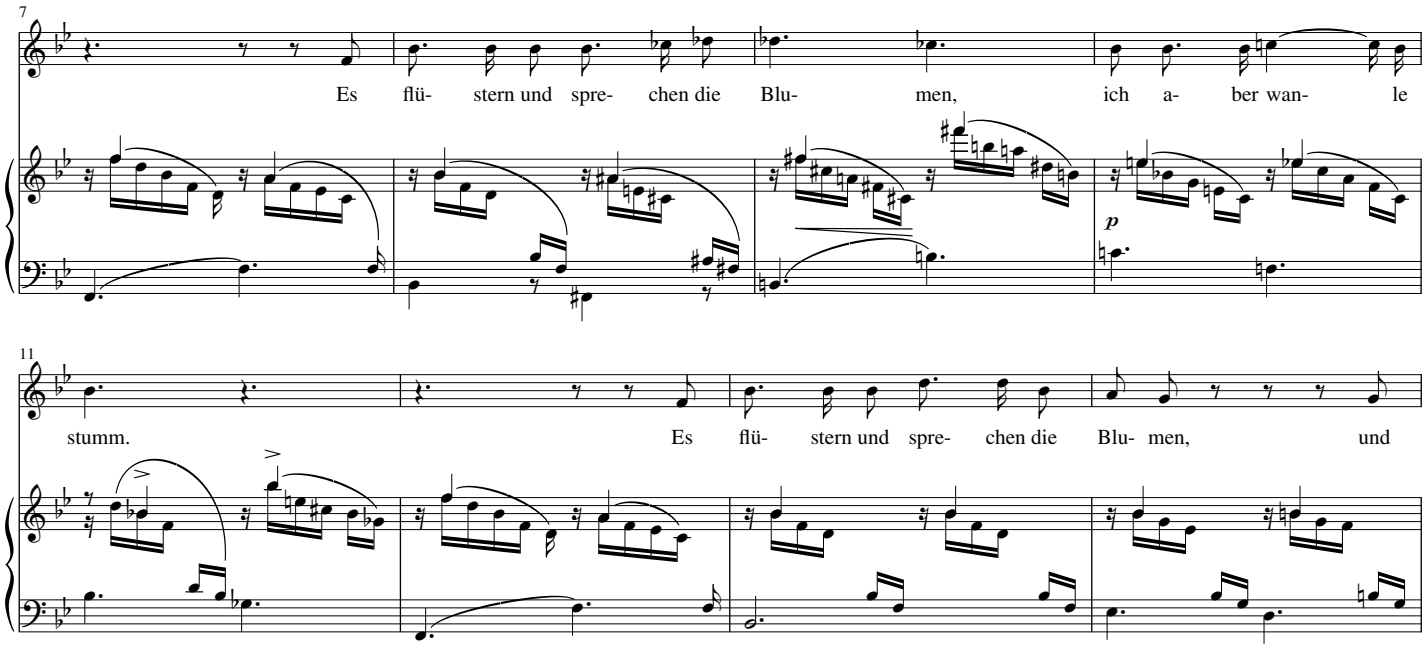
Let us now examine how these ideas apply in the "musico-poetic analyses" (beyond the analysis of song 1, discussed above). Analyses and interpretations of songs 4, 4a, 12, and 16 pivot around the idea that a single sonority, the fully diminished seventh, "functions like a figure of musical speech which consistently occurs when imaginary love is named" (179). This, in and of itself, is not convincing. It is essentially an attempt to generalize from the striking diminished seventh in song 4, "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh." In song 4, the diminished seventh occurs as love is named, on "doch wenn du *sprichst*: Ich liebe dich. . . ." The diminished seventh that Perrey discusses in song 4a (mm. 11–12), however, passes quickly into an augmented sixth; it seems loath to bear the kind of interpretive weight that she places on it. And what of the climactic diminished seventh towards the end of song 16, on "Die sollen den Sarg forttragen, und senken in's Meer hin*ab*" (when the poet *disavows* his songs, his love, and his pain)? Perrey takes note of this moment, but, oddly, focuses the argument on one pitch-class manifestation of the diminished seventh, {2, 5, 8, 11}, while the diminished seventh in song 16 is a {1, 4, 7, 10} chord, built on A♯. More generally, it seems strange to suggest that there might be a consistent one-to-one correspondence between a tonal formation and a poetic topic, given Perrey's own observation that the early Romantics "abandoned an absolutist position towards signification," and that *Dichterliebe* "remains outside signification through the opacity of Schumann's poetic language" (177–78).

A second feature of her discussion, with greater interpretive potential, is the notion that the diminished seventh induces "a sense of stasis" and "rupture" (178). Consider song 12, "Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen." Example 2 gives excerpts from this song. The diminished seventh occurs in the postlude, at the end of m. 24 (see Example 2(b)). Schumann dynamically accentuates it, and it is, as Perrey notes, the only harmony in the song that is struck as a simultaneity. Perrey's Example 21, reproduced here as Example 3, makes a nice point; it shows that measures 23–29 reiterate the progression of mm. 7–13.[27] In mm. 8–9, the song's signature augmented sixth harmony is re-notated as V^7/B, and it resolves to B^7 (or V^7/E), as shown in Example 2(a). "Es flüstern und sprechen die Blumen" ("the flowers are whispering and talking") thus moves smoothly into the domain of the Neapolitan, with the Neapolitan itself taking on a dominant function. Schumann then moves abruptly back to B♭ major for "ich aber wandle stumm" ("but I wander silently"). As Perrey observes, there is

25 Perrey's view of the change in the perceived function of language is informed by Foucault 1970.

26 The phrase *das Undarstellbare darstellen* comes from Novalis 1960–88 III, 685, no. 671. Perrey presents this as the early Romantics' main thesis (2 and 177).

27 It is not clear what "3 –" under m. 9 in Perrey's example refers to. Also, the measure number at the end of the bottom staff should be 29, not 28.

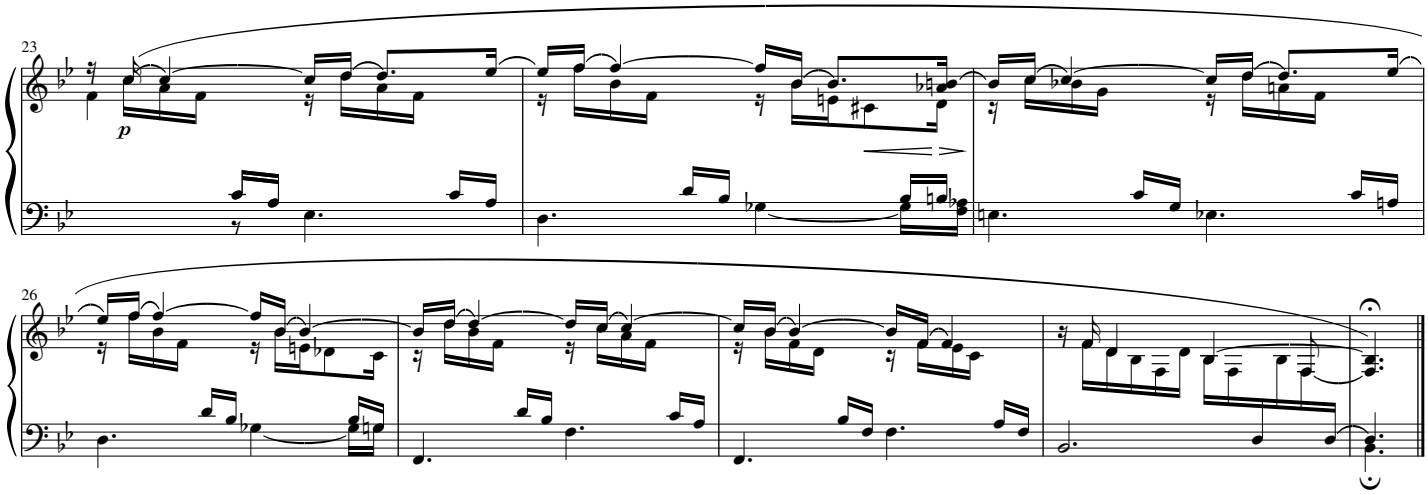


(a) mm. 7–14

EXAMPLE 2. *Schumann, Dichterliebe, "Am leuchtenden Somnmnermorgen."*

a rupture between B^7 (V^7/E) and C^7 (V^7/V in B♭) in mm. 9–10, and this seems to represent the poet's own loss of voice, which is in painful contrast with the flowers' speech. There is also a registral break that coincides with the harmonic and poetic rupture: after suddenly reaching up to $F\sharp_6$, the piano's upper voice drops back down to E_5.

In m. 24, the song's signature sonority is spelled once again as a German augmented sixth chord. Here is a telling point that is implicit in Perrey's example (Example 3, here) but not explored in her text. The diminished seventh on the last sixteenth of m. 24 seems to "correct" the previous move to B^7, forming a smooth—or at least smoother—link to the following C^7 sonority (now in first inversion). In other words, the move into the diminished seventh creates a moment of rupture (made especially clear by the anti-metrical accent and cluster effect), but the diminished seventh then resolves smoothly to $C^{6/5}$. The musical poet experiences blockage but immediately overcomes it. At the end of m. 26 there is yet a further revision: $V^{4/3}/V$, with G♮ in the bass, "corrects" the diminished seventh from the end of m. 24, creating yet a smoother transition, which leads to closure in B♭.



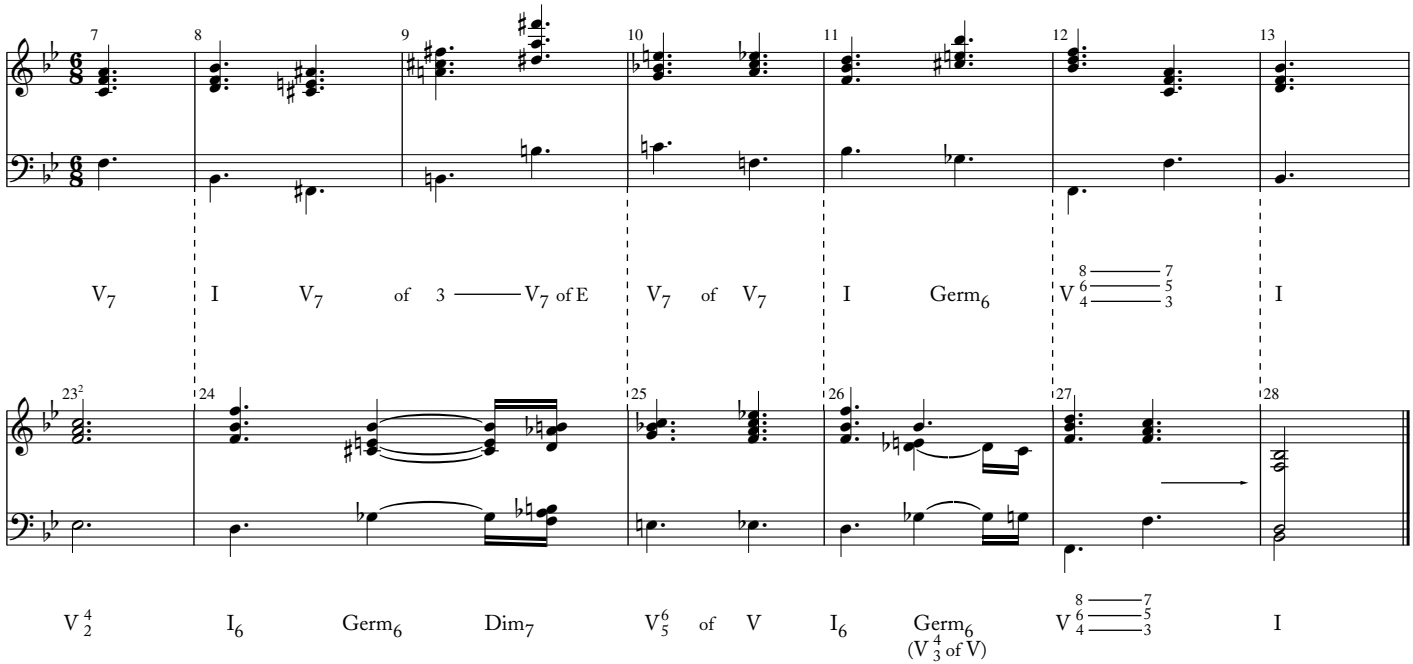
(b) postlude, mm. 23–30

EXAMPLE 2. [*continued*]

Thus, in the postlude, in place of the painful contrast of speaking/whispering flowers and silent Poet, we find a *musical* poet who sings.[28] The E♮–E♭–D descent in the piano's top line (mm. 10–11) moves into a supportive role in the bass (mm. 25–26), and the syncopated upper voice finds a lyrical line, moving up to F_5 in a typically Schumannesque gesture of yearning. The diminished seventh in m. 24 interrupts the lyrical line but it also facilitates its recurrence in mm. 25–26. And Schumann liked the singing line of this musical poet enough to bring it back in the final postlude, as an antidote to the bleak ending of the poem (which is also the last poem of Heine's *Lyrisches Intermezzo*).

The latter part of the analysis given here has to be teased out from Perrey's text and example. At the critical moment when it seems that she would discuss the implications of Example 21 (Example 3, here), Perrey takes a different turn. She takes note of the fact that the bass in measure 24 moves down from G♭ to F, and hears this as a mirror of the G♭ to F motion that supports "trauriger, blasser Mann," at the conclusion of the vocal part. She then continues, "As the diminished-seventh chord in b. 24 contains the identical bass motion, a transference of meaning from the spoken to the unspoken is ensured" (206). Is the transference of meaning from the spoken to the unspoken such a simple matter?

28 An 1828 entry in Schumann's diary, quoted by Perrey, speaks directly to this song: "When man wants to say something that he cannot say, he turns to the language of music or to that of the flowers—because the world of the flowers is as sacred as the world of music, and at moments of pain or of joy man prefers to turn to music or to nature, and both are guarantors of one deity and one endlessness." Quoted on p. 206, from Schumann 1971–87 I, 101.



EXAMPLE 3. *Perrey's Example 21.*

G♭ to F occurs, after all, in the introduction and in each of the interludes, with the signature progression of a German-augmented sixth to a cadential $^{6}_{4}$, and we might associate it with the song as a whole, including the "leuchtenden Sommermorgen" and the "trauriger blasser Mann."

If one wishes to find the expressive meanings of the diminished seventh at the end of measure 24, one needs to go beyond a direct mapping of text onto music. The meaning of this moment, it seems to me, has to do precisely with the problem of meaning, that is, with the difficulties of speech and representation. In the postlude, Schumann, as musical poet, overcomes the silence of Heine's poetic subject (the one who says, "ich aber wandle stumm"); he uses music to "say something he cannot say."[29] The accented diminished seventh in measure 24 interrupts the musical poet's lyrical effusion—it creates a moment of rupture—but it also immediately re-initiates the lyrical rise, and mm. 25–26 recall and undo the silence associated with mm. 10–11. The diminished seventh, in other words, is a blockage that impedes the free flow of expression—thereby referencing the silent poet—but it gives way immediately to the piano's singing voice. Thus, it is not, as Perrey suggests in the title for this section, that the diminished seventh is "a tonal metaphor for the amorous" (177), rather, as she concludes at the very end of

29 See the entry in Schumann's diary, quoted above in note 28.

the section, it "speaks when words become deficient in naming desire's alienating, disintegrating force" (208). It speaks to the very difficulty of naming, to the painful failure of words, which gives way, in Schumann's cycle, to the eloquence of musical yearnings.

Perrey's musico-poetic analyses tend to interpret the music in rather literal terms. The interpretation of the diminished seventh is one example; another occurs in the interpretation of the final postlude. Perrey hears a recollection of song 4a, "Dein Angesicht," in the final postlude, following the recollection of song 12 (this in itself is an intriguing connection). She then reads the two quotations as "negation" (song 12), followed by "affirmation" (song 4a). Song 12 represents negation because it is associated with "an image of a Romantic's lost voice," while song 4a represents affirmation since it is "a paradigm of the Romantic's Lied," and "one of the most intense invocations of the Other" (215). I would ask again, are the meanings so simple and direct? The postlude of song 12 can be heard as a successful emergence of the purely musical voice, and the affirmation of song 4a is twisted: musical warmth sets a vision of the beloved's death.

As one continues to read Perrey's text, one finds that literal readings are coupled with the opposite, invocations of indeterminacy. For instance, Perrey asks: what is one to make of the juxtaposition of song 12 and song 4a? There is no higher meaning, she concludes; it is an example of Romantic irony, of "fragmentary consciousness," and in this way, "the artist is also able to 'represent the Unrepresentable' " (216). "The last postlude," she writes later, "is hence the musical expression of a mode of thought and a mode of diction that is intrinsically polymorphous, polyvalent and fractional" (218). Or analogously, Perrey writes initially that the diminished seventh "crystallizes into an image of this song cycle's very theme: A Poet's Love" (178); then, in the introduction to the analysis of song 4, she writes, "Since this [the diminished seventh] is a sonority that can be made to function in any of the twenty-four keys, it is imbued with an unsurpassed multiplicity of meaning" (180–81).

This shuttling back and forth between interpretive determinacy and indeterminacy is symptomatic of the current discipline of music theory: there is a desire to find meaning, and a disavowal of meanings that are too literal. The issue becomes more acute, not less, as we seek to interpret music with text, for we cannot simply look to the text as a source of meaning. In Schumann's songs, music-text correlations may seem stable in the moment, but they are undermined as other moments impinge. A productive strategy in this context might be to situate the determinacy/indeterminacy dialectic as a tension between the moment and the larger whole (which itself remains but a moment). Unfortunately, in Perrey's analyses, neither side of the dialectic is compelling enough to create productive tension, or irony in the Romantic sense. The moments are generalized too freely, and the generalizations are tossed off.

At one level, the book poses a challenge: is it possible to combine modern analytical insight with a sensitivity towards the intellectual and aesthetic context of early Romanticism? Perhaps, as some would contend, modern analysis is based entirely on the false search for unity. I suspect not. I suspect that we can apply our "modern" analytical intuitions with a sensitivity towards both unity and disunity, both flow and rupture. I suspect, further, that we find meaning here in the poet's struggle with meaning, in the yearning for a stable, unitary voice and the sometimes-pleasurable, sometimes-disturbing reality of multiple voices and rupture.

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