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The Protagonist's Experience: Temporality, Narrative, and Harmonic Process in Brahms's Solo Lieder

Loretta Terrigno

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THE PROTAGONIST’S EXPERIENCE: TEMPORALITY, NARRATIVE, AND HARMONIC PROCESS IN BRAHMS’S SOLO LIEDER

by

LORETTA TERRIGNO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Loretta Terrigno

This manuscript has been read and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

The Protagonist’s Experience: Temporality, Narrative, and Harmonic Process in Brahms’s Solo Lieder

by

Loretta Terrigno

Advisor: Professor William Rothstein

This dissertation explores musical and poetic temporality—expressions of the past, present, and future—in eighteen of Johannes Brahms’s solo Lieder. The selected songs illustrate that common tonal patterns in Brahms’s instrumental music, including tonal and modal ambiguities and associative harmonies, also suggest recurring narrative archetypes in his songs. Separate poetic and musical analyses use literary theory (narratology), as well as Schenkerian analysis and Schoenbergian conceptions of motivic development.

Narratological interpretations of poetry by Daumer, Platen, Köstlin, Goethe, Groth, Schenkendorf, Hebbel, and others first demonstrate that a series of psychological transformations form a lyric poem’s “plot” or “temporal progression.” This subjective level of discourse communicates the poetic protagonist’s perceptions, desires, anxieties, and mental states or incidents. Each poem’s structural features (its tense, syntax, meter, and rhyme) also contribute to its expression of real and implied temporalities. Close readings of each song’s musical structure interpret harmonic processes such as cadentially realized keys, implied keys, and prolonged harmonies as actualizing latent poetic temporalities. These harmonic processes model the protagonist’s non-linear experience of time as memories, dreams, anticipations, and other perceptions distort the ongoing present. Comparisons between Brahms’s songs that share the
keys of F minor, B minor, F# minor, and E major suggest that he engaged with his own compositional past through self-modeling. I explore possible intertextual connections between Brahms’s songs and songs by Josephine Lang, Franz Schubert, and Caspar Othmayr, as well as explore Brahms’s engagement with his own compositional past.

My interpretation of the voice and piano as musical agents links each analysis to performance. By realizing conflicts and oppositions between these agents, a singer and pianist might enact the psychological transformations that the poem implies and that Brahms’s musical setting realizes.
Acknowledgements

In the summer of 2012, I was lucky enough to attend the Vancouver International Song Institute as both a scholar and a pianist during a year in which the theme of the program focused on Johannes Brahms’s solo Lieder. After realizing that many of these songs had not been analyzed in depth, I spent the years since then immersing myself in a study of them. My aim has been to provide close readings that might offer interpretations that are realizable in performance. Brahms’s songs have not only provided deep musical fulfillment along the way, but have mediated my long and meaningful mentorship with the scholars who first spurred my interest in these pieces: Benjamin Binder, Harald and Sharon Krebs, Susan Youens, and Michael Musgrave. These immensely generous, kind people have faithfully offered their time, musical insights, and in the case of Deborah Stein, additional care for my well-being throughout my work on this project.

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Chapter One

Constructing Meaning: Poetic Temporality and Harmonic Process

Introduction

The past, present and the future come into the world as a project of consciousness which not only is temporal but which chooses itself as temporal at the moment in which it turns to its objects in the temporal mode....I was that someone looking at the landscape, I am the person using the pen, I will be that person going on holiday after he has finished this book. It is only in this mode of consciousness that I discover I have a past, a present and a future; it is only thanks to this reflexive act that my existence appears to me as dilated in time and that I realise that my present image is nothing but a moment of the whole temporal being that I am and that I cannot help but be.

–Gianfranco Dalla Barba, Memory, Consciousness and Temporality

How do the protagonists in Brahms’s songs experience time? According to the citation above, temporal experience arises as a result of becoming aware of ourselves and our perceptions. The moment in which we realize our own consciousness in the present is the one in which we recognize our past and our future as such. Something of this process appears in Georg Friedrich Daumer’s poem “Von waldbekränzter Höhe” shown in fig. 1.1, and a moment in Brahms’s G-major setting (op. 57, no. 1) shown in ex. 1.1, where the piano denies a continuation in B major (III#) that the voice implies.

Both the poem and the setting call to mind this manner of becoming presently conscious.

As fig. 1.1 shows, Daumer’s protagonist casts her gaze upon different facets of the physical landscape, thereby becoming aware of its spatial and temporal relation to herself. The

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1Gianfranco Dalla Barba, Memory, Consciousness, and Temporality (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 142.
2“Waldbekränzter” in Brahms’s version of the text (fig. 1.1) replaces the implied name of a town in Daumer’s original version, indicated with asterisks as “Von ***’s schöner Höhe.” Georg Friedrich Daumer, poem no. 5, “Gedichte weiblichen Ursprungs,” Frauenbilder und Huldigungen vol. 3 (Leipzig: Wigand, 1853), 191. Owing to the title’s indication of a female author, I refer to the protagonist as “she,” although Daumer is likely impersonating a female author here.
Figure 1.1: Georg Friedrich Daumer, poem no. 5, “Gedichte weiblichen Ursprungs,” Frauenbilder und Huldigungen vol. 3. Leipzig: Wigand, 1853

Example 1.1: Brahms’s “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” op. 57, no. 1 (mm. 48–54)
Example 1.1a: “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” hypothetical continuation of mm. 48ff.
landscape accrues symbolic meaning: the stream (stanza 2) and clouds (stanza 3) separate the speaker from a beloved who was lost in the past, and with whom she hopes to reunite in the future. Somewhere between stanzas 3 and 4, the protagonist begins to envision the blissful reunion that would occur if she were able to traverse the physical and temporal distances that separate them.

But, as ex. 1.1 shows, Brahms’s song problematizes this moment (mm. 48–54). In m. 50 the piano’s D♭s prevent the voice’s melodic continuation (analogous to earlier strophes) and the piano’s initiation of an expanded cadential progression in B major, shown in my hypothetical ex. 1.1a, creating a discrepancy between poetic and musical meanings. The voice’s rising fourths C♯–F♯ (ex. 1.1, m. 48–50) suggest the melody that appears bracketed in ex. 1.1a, as if confirming the protagonist’s imagined future union at the end of stanza 3. But D♭s (m. 50) replace D♯s in register 5, leading to a return of G major by m. 54 (ex. 1.1). The protagonist’s striving for reunion, expressed by anxious rising-fourth motives in the vocal line, opposes the piano, which disrupts B major’s projected arrival. An underlying inescapable present (G major) seems to prevent the attainment of future bliss (B major). We might also interpret this tonal conflict as capturing the moment in which Daumer’s protagonist becomes aware that present distance...
inhibits a return to the past (the lost beloved) or motion into the future (reunion). Present reality eclipses her fervently desired future at this dramatic juncture.

The conflict between the piano and voice in m. 50 represents musical “agents” or “personae,” anthropomorphized conceptions of the accompaniment and vocal part that often appear in analyses of text-music relationships. That is, since Edward T. Cone’s seminal idea in *The Composer’s Voice* (1974) that the voice and accompaniment of a song convey independent volition, studies of Lieder have invoked musical personae to explain aspects of the poetic protagonist’s perceptual experience and evidence of the composer’s reading of a text (“the composer’s voice”). To be sure, we might regard the discrepancy between the voice’s projected B-major continuation and the piano’s derailment of this goal as Cone might have done; the piano and voice represent the protagonist’s divided conscious and subconscious thoughts, both controlled by the composer (Brahms). The protagonist consciously tries to overcome distance, but subconsciously knows that this is impossible. The piano’s D-flat seems to reflect this negative fate.

But only viewing this moment through the lens of Cone’s personae does not address B major’s larger tonal context or how it relates to the series of perceptions that form the

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5Berthold Hoeckner distinguishes between Cone’s different conceptions of “the composer’s voice,” one in which a triad of vocal, accompanimental, and complete musical personae reflect the “composer’s persona” or “the composer’s complete message,” and another in which there is a “unitary vocal-instrumental protagonist that is coextensive with the persona of the actual composer of the song.” My interpretations reflect Cone’s first idea: that the composer of the song (Brahms) reveals a reading of the text through the vocal and pianistic agents, who may be understood as expressing different parts of the protagonist’s experience. See Berthold Hoeckner, “Poet’s Love and Composer’s Love,” *Music Theory Online*, 7/5 (2001). I therefore adhere to Cone’s “unitary, monological, and strictly hierarchical image” that Seth Monahan describes in “Action and Agency Revisited,” *Journal of Music Theory* 57/2 (2013): 323.
protagonist’s temporal experience. A middleground graph of the song’s tonal structure within its varied strophic form (ABB¹A¹), shown in ex. 1.2, interprets the piano’s evaded B-major cadence

**Example 1.2:** “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” middleground graph (mm. 1–53)

![Middleground Graph](image)

within the large-scale progression I→♭III⁵→III(♯–♯)→♭V–(I). B major’s absence in the song’s large-scale tonal plan at m. 50 reveals its symbolic role as one perception or temporality in a series. Its absence also highlights the inability of Eb (locally, 4 in B♭ major) to become a stable D♯ (3 in B major) in mm. 22–50; G major’s diatonic III, B minor, displaces its parallel triad as ♭III⁵ leads to III(♯). By conveying the motion of the stream and clouds in stanzas 2 and 3, both chromatically altered III chords suggest transporting the protagonist into the future. B major’s implied sharpward motion reflects the speaker’s increasing eagerness to reclaim a beloved who otherwise remains in her past. But the hoped-for B-major cadence does not survive contact with middleground reality; it remains as illusory as the protagonist’s desired reunion with her beloved.

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Daniel Stevens interprets the song’s background voice-leading structure similarly, but he does not address the same temporal issues or the failure of B major’s emergence. Instead he interprets the song as reflecting in microcosm the harmonic issues that arise in the op. 57 group. Stevens notes, however, that the “modulation [from B♭ major to B major] produces a tonal shift that corresponds to the spatial shift in the attention of the protagonist.” See Daniel Stevens, “Brahms’s Song Collections: Rethinking a Genre” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 138.
This dissertation explores correspondences between harmonic processes, such as the prolongation of chromaticized III chords described above, and poetic temporality—the protagonist’s evolving perceptions of past, present, and future. It claims that prevalent tonal patterns in Brahms’s solo songs map onto recurring temporal progressions in their poetry. In light of Cone’s ideas, I interpret tonal processes that signify temporal ones as representing one facet of “the composer’s voice,” reflecting Brahms’s interpretation or critical reading of the protagonist’s temporal experience. That is, I suggest that harmonic processes model a series of the protagonist’s conscious and subconscious perceptions, reflecting explicit and latent temporalities in the text. Whereas some temporalities remain latent in the poem alone, Brahms’s settings seem to interpret, or realize them.\footnote{In his study of Brahms’s “Schicksalslied” and its reception, John Daverio notes Brahms’s own conflicting comments on the matter of composers musically supplying elements that are lacking in the poem alone. Daverio notes that Brahms’s letter to Karl Reinthaler, dated October 1871, reads “I’m certainly saying something that the poet doesn’t say, and indeed it would have been better if this missing element \textit{das Fehlende} had been his chief point.” But in a letter from Christmas Day, 1871, Brahms also disavows this claim. Daverio again quotes Brahms, who writes that “[...] a composer should guard against [imposing] his own views [on a text].” See Daverio, “The ‘Wechsel der Töne’ in Brahms’s ‘Schicksalslied’,” \textit{Journal of the American Musicological Society} 46/1 (1993), 90.}

In this chapter, close readings of “Von waldbekränzter Höhe” (op. 57, no. 1), “O kühler Wald,” (op. 72, no. 3), and “Es steht ein Lind in jenem Thal,” (WoO 33, no. 41) will show that different degrees of harmonic stability conveyed by implied keys, which lack a cadence, and cadentially confirmed, “realized” keys often reflect the strength with which a protagonist experiences one temporality over another. Some temporalities are evasive and fleeting; others are established more permanently. Degrees of tonal stability also suggest that certain temporalities reside at either a subconscious or conscious layer of the protagonist’s mind.

Analyses throughout this dissertation appear in groups of three or four songs, arranged into chapters based on 1) their demonstration of recurring tonal techniques, 2) types of progressions between opposed temporalities, and 3) references to Brahms’s own compositional
Chapters 2 and 3 interpret modal ambiguity between parallel or relative keys and minor-to-major progressions as conveying competing temporalities and tragic-to-transcendent narratives, respectively; the latter type models the present yielding to an implied future. Chapter 4 considers the narrative potential of so-called tonal problems—a prominent aspect of the Schoenbergian critical tradition—which foreshadow latent temporalities, desires, and regrets that emerge later in a song. Chapter 5 explores temporality from a compositional perspective, claiming that Brahms might have responded to his own musical past by modeling songs in a given key on earlier songs in the same key. The songs in chapter 5 possess similar tonal traits to those analyzed in earlier chapters, reinforcing the claim that recurring poetic narratives might have spurred Brahms’s memory of an earlier song, inspiring him to recompose it, exploring previously undeveloped tonal features.

**Metrical and tonal processes in studies of Brahms’s songs**

Studies of text-music relationships in Brahms’s songs commonly relate meter, declamation, and tonality to poetic meaning; yet only some emphasize the processual qualities of these musical parameters—those perceivable in the listener’s moment-to-moment experience of the song and represented in deeper-level structures, such as hypermetric or Schenkerian voice-
leading analyses. Meter and declamation, which are most directly linked to the listener’s and protagonist’s experience of time, seem to correlate most obviously with poetic temporality in analyses of Brahms’s songs. Harald Krebs, Yonatan Malin, and Deborah Rohr show that Brahms often manipulates meter and declamation to convey a protagonist’s emotions. Krebs identifies Brahms’s alterations of the “basic rate of declamation” (BRD) when reflecting a protagonist’s extreme feelings.\(^{11}\) Malin, Rohr, and most recently, Wing Lau also explore meanings that arise from other metrical conflicts, such as notated changes of meter.\(^{12}\)

While this dissertation points to selected metrical and rhythmic techniques in Brahms’s songs, it focuses on tonal processes, extending studies of Brahms’s tonality by Heather Platt and Melissa Hoag that relate harmonic and voice-leading processes to poetic meaning. Platt’s pioneering Schenkerian analyses of Brahms’s songs reveal narrative arcs toward what she terms “dramatic turning points” in the poetry, which often coincide with the achievement of the Kopfton.\(^{13}\) The ever-sensitive, comprehensive interpretations in Platt’s dissertation and recent analyses of Brahms’s “Mädchenlieder” link tonality to the protagonist’s emotional life.\(^{14}\) She interprets off-tonic beginnings and plagal endings that lack an Urlinie descent, for instance, as

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\(^{11}\) Harald Krebs shows that Brahms alters the BRD (basic rate of declamation) when the protagonist experiences heightened emotions. For instance, lengthened syllables express the protagonist’s exhilaration at imagining her beloved as a strong hunter in “Der Jäger,” op. 95, no. 4. Harald Krebs, “Expressive Declamation in the Songs of Johannes Brahms,” in Brahms and the Shaping of Time, ed. Scott Murphy (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, forthcoming).


signifying “yearning emotions.”15 Songs that “[avoid] the expected concluding perfect authentic cadence” also seem to mimic the protagonist’s unfulfilled emotions.16

In a dissertation on “multiply-directed moments” in Brahms’s music, Melissa Hoag focuses on meaning created by moments of melodic disjunction in three Brahms songs.17 Using Schenkerian analysis and theories of projected melodic continuation, Hoag shows that melodic goals in each song are often undercut and delayed by disruptions of expected melodic continuation. By invoking notions of projection, in which a melody suggests a continuation that is denied, or only fulfilled later, Hoag provides an analogy between musical process—here, melodic trajectories—and poetic tense and temporality.18

Both Platt and Hoag address aspects of musical and poetic narrative (a term defined further below) in Brahms’s songs.19 But while Platt interprets each protagonist’s emotional or psychological states holistically (she does not focus exclusively on temporality),20 Hoag’s perceptive readings of poetry by Daumer and Geibel describe specific musical analogues for poetic tense. Hoag claims that Brahms’s settings actualize and manipulate the order of the protagonist’s perceived past, present, and future. She explains, for instance, that interrupted or

16 Ibid.
17 Hoag analyzes “Schön war, das ich dir weihte” (op. 95, no. 7), “Frühlingslied,” (op. 85, no. 5), and “Ach, wende diesen Blick,” (op. 57, no. 4). See Melissa Hoag, “Multiply-Directed Moments in the Music of Brahms” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2008).
18 In a recent paper on declamation in Mendelssohn’s songs, Harald Krebs also links declamatory processes to the protagonist’s temporal experience. He shows that Mendelssohn’s expressive decelerations in the rate of declamation often convey altered temporal states. Harald Krebs, “Changes of Pace: Expressive Acceleration and Deceleration in Felix Mendelssohn’s Vocal Rhythms” (lecture, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY, October 1, 2016).
19 Construed broadly in both literature and music, the term “narrative” usually indicates temporal succession, either of events (the “story”) or the organized sequence in which the events are presented (the “discourse”).
20 In her analysis of “Am jüngsten Tag” (op. 95, no. 6), for instance, Platt interprets the “transition back to F major” as “follow[ing] the woman’s change in mood and the corresponding change in the level of discourse: she gradually gathers her thoughts and returns to the present for the start of the next stanza.” Platt, “Brahms’s Mädchenlieder,” 97 (emphasis mine). Platt’s analysis also claims, “[t]his progression from initial uneasiness to more clearly directed rhythms and tonal motions loosely maps the girl’s experiences: it is as though she gradually awakens or regains full consciousness and then, after finding firm footing, focuses on her beloved. Ibid., 83.
denied melodic events might express contingency or a lack of fulfillment, providing a musical analogue for the subjunctive mood:

This confusing realm of possibility and reality, which is represented grammatically in the text by the subjunctive mood, is reflected musically in the B section’s vagrant phrase structure and indecisive path. Like the grammatical subjunctive, the uncertain terms of the pitches F and G-flat state a possibility which is contrary to the reality of fact...In this way, Brahms has created a musical subjunctive mood which serves to characterize the song as a whole, besides setting a very specific instance of the subjunctive mood in the B section.21

Her analysis of “Schön war, das ich dir weihte” (op. 95, no. 7) posits that Brahms’s setting realizes the temporalities implied by poetic tense and temporal structure:

The two opening phrases tell us that the protagonist offered gifts to someone in the past. The poem itself is inverted, as well; instead of beginning with the present and discussing the past in context of the present, the poem begins with two statements describing the past out of context, and then moves through time to the present. As the poem moves through time, the context is clarified. Also, while the sense that the poem changes time states is somewhat clear in the poem itself, it is Brahms’s setting that actualizes this interpretation. The specific ways in which this trajectory through time is musically clarified will be revealed as the analysis continues.22

Hoag even proposes that Brahms’s musical representations of temporality, which reveal a disparity between the protagonist’s physical present and the recalled past or projected future, are central to his expressive aims in song composition.23

Yet in explaining musical manifestations of the poem’s trajectory through time, Hoag focuses mostly on upper-voice trajectories, or multiply-directed melodic moments. I will emphasize the role played by harmonic processes including harmonic prolongation, and the emergence of implied or cadentially confirmed keys in communicating the temporalities that Hoag describes. This study thus extends both scholars’ work, positing that deceptively simple

22Ibid., 43 (emphasis mine).
23Defending Brahms against critics of his declamation, Hoag claims that Brahms’s priority was instead musical expression of the text. Ibid., 41.
tonal techniques in Brahms’s songs are often organized in hierarchies that map onto layers of time and perceptions in each poem.

Poetic Analysis

Interpreting latent poetic meaning: temporality, focalization, and lyric plot

The literary theory of narratology offers an analytical method for understanding latent meanings in lyric poetry. The literary scholar Peter Hühn’s recent application of the narratological concepts of “voice” and “focalization” (introduced by Gérard Genette in analyses of prose narrative) to lyric poetry allows us to view this genre, despite its frequent absence of concrete events, as expressing a level or type of “discourse.” A speaking persona—synonymous with the “lyrical I” or “protagonist”—distinguishes lyric poetry from epic or dramatic genres. As Hühn notes, this persona often functions as both the main consciousness—the “focalizer,” or “deictic center whose perceptual as well as cognitive, psychological, and ideological focus on the events is conveyed”—and the narrative “voice,” the “agent to whom the language used [the utterance] is ascribed.” As a result of this subjectivity, lyric poetry often replaces the concrete events found in prose narrative with “mental or psychological incidents such as perceptions, imaginations, desires, anxieties, recollections, and emotions and their

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24In contrast to my approach, John Daverio’s analysis of Brahms’s “Schicksalslied” (op. 54)—one of the few vocal works by Brahms to end in a different key than its original tonic—stands out for its special reference to literary theory (in this case, that of the poet, Hölderlin) in relation to Brahms’s setting. See John Daverio, “The ‘Wechsel der Töne’ in Brahms’s ‘Schicksalslied’,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46/1 (1993): 84–113.


emergence or development.”

The speaking persona communicates a series of such psychological transformations at the level of the poem’s subjective discourse, forming its narrative, or plot. Hühn further claims that “narration frequently has a specific function: self-clarification, self-identification, overcoming a crisis, [or] negotiating a necessary transition,” indicating that poetic plots—the dynamic progression or series of psychological transformations forming a text—conveys an attendant change between opposed emotional states.

Owing to the conflation of the protagonist and narrator in lyric poetry, the temporality in which the persona’s actual experience of psychological transformations occurs and that in which the narration takes place (which may be different) become entangled in the lyrical persona’s language, but they can be teased apart by analyzing the poetic grammar. Poetic tenses, which Genette characterizes as “mood,” indicate that the speaker’s utterance emanates from a certain vantage point, or time, with respect to the psychological transformations that form the poetic plot. That is, by speaking in the past or present tense, describing only selected images while omitting others, and communicating expressively about his or her perceptions, the persona reveals both sensibility toward and degrees of temporal distance from the poetic incidents that Hühn describes. Hühn thus identifies three types of narration: retrospective, simultaneous, and prospective, depending on whether the persona speaks about past, present, or future “events.”

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28Ibid., 151. Whereas Hühn calls these “incidents,” I will refer to them as “psychological transformations.”
29Hühn claims that “[n]arratological concepts can be employed for a more differentiated analysis of the sequence of incidents in poems than hitherto possible by explicitly specifying the techniques applied for creating a coherent causal, temporal or otherwise ‘motivated’ syntagmatic string—what may be called plot.” Ibid., 149.
30In Hühn’s conception of narrative, the perceptions, anxieties, and other “mental incidents” noted above assume causal and temporal relationships to each other within what he calls “frames (thematic or situational contexts, such as death, sea travel or sexual love) and scripts (sequence patterns such as established conventional procedures or stereotyped processes, such as bodily deterioration in dying, the regulated departure of a ship from a harbor for an ocean voyage, or, to take a literary example, the formalized ritual of courtly love),” creating a dynamic narrative progression. Hühn writes, “Whereas the activation of frames enables the reader to connect various elements in different parts of the text and interpret a poem (like any other text) in terms of its situational or thematic significance and coherence in a primarily static respect, referring the sequence of the elements to one or more scripts within such a frame presents a specific means of modelling the dynamic, i.e., particularly narrative dimension of the text.” Peter Hühn, “Plotting the Lyric,” 150 (emphasis mine).
Yet the tense in which the persona speaks often remains separate from the temporalities that psychological transformations suggest; for instance, the persona might narrate past love while also describing it in terms that imply reliving it in memory—a present act. In this case, the persona’s dual function as both “focalizer” (the agent who experiences) and “narrator” creates tension between the temporalities that are literal (evident through narration) and implied (described). Taken together, both convey a synoptic view of the persona’s psychological processes to the reader, and, as well, more than the text literally explains. Genette explains that a narrator’s description similarly embodies more than its purely literal meaning:

In fact, Proustian ‘description’ is less a description of the object contemplated than it is a narrative and analysis of the perceptual activity of the character contemplating: of his impressions, progressive discoveries, shifts in distance and perspective, errors and corrections, enthusiasms or disappointments, etc. A contemplation highly active in truth, and containing a ‘whole story’.  

Owing to the difference between narration and perceived experience, layers of temporality that the lyric conflates, the sequence of transformations comprising the poetic plot may convey the past, present, and future out of order. As the persona navigates the roles of narrator and perceiving protagonist, the reader witnesses the persona’s fluctuating “perceptual activity.”

Finally, Hühn’s analysis of Wordsworth’s poem “I wandered lonely as a cloud” illustrates how changes in grammatical tense and perspective (i.e., voice and focalization) often create turning points along the narrative path between two opposed states within a lyric poem. Hühn identifies “two stages of decisive change, through a shift first in focus and second in temporality,” that enable the protagonist to progress from an isolated existence to experiencing community. The speaker’s focus first shifts “from the description of the perceived (the flowers)

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31Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 102 (emphasis mine).
32Ibid., 102.
33Hühn, “Plotting the Lyric,” 151.
to the perceiver and his reaction,” and is then followed by a temporal shift “from immediate perception to delayed recollection, from the present experience to the imaginative representation of past experience, from unreflective spontaneity to self-conscious awareness,” revealing a poem-spanning change from the speaker’s unreflective, isolated state to one that celebrates “the experience of joy and communality.”\textsuperscript{34} The shift in focus highlights the temporal change.

By identifying the literary mechanisms that indicate temporal and perspectival shifts, Hühn’s and Genette’s theories offer a method for interpreting similar turning points in the poetry that Brahms set. As in Hühn’s analysis of Wordsworth, the protagonist’s shifting focus and conscious and subconscious perceptions often point to oppositions between the tense in which he or she speaks, which I will call explicit temporality, and that which is only described or alluded to, which I will call implicit or latent temporality. Poem-spanning oppositions between explicit and latent temporalities are linked to changes of state that are similar to the opposed poles of isolation versus community in Hühn’s analysis.

**Latent and explicit temporalities in Brahms’s poetry**

The following analyses of narration and temporality in lyric poetry by Brentano, Daumer, and a sixteenth-century folksong text illustrate the nuances of mood and voice described above in poetry that Brahms set. These analyses focus on temporal oppositions that emerge from the poetic grammar and descriptions. In two cases, comparisons between two different versions of a poem reinforce my interpretation of the temporal oppositions the poem conveys.

\textsuperscript{34}“The event [the point of the narrative, which makes it worth telling], which thus is realized in two successive stages, consists in the sudden transition from the unreflected singular experience (told in the past tense) to the repeated and infinitely repeatable [...] renewal of this joyful experience through recollection and imagination (told in the present tense)[...].” Ibid., 151.
“Von ***’s schöne Höhe” provides an example of temporal shifts and conflicts between the present and future arising from a sequence of perceptions. As fig. 1.1 shows (see p. 2), the persona speaks in the present tense throughout Daumer’s four stanzas; yet as her desire intensifies, her “ardent gaze” (“heißen Blick,” line 2) becomes anthropomorphized, as if its increasing proximity to the transitory natural phenomena around her (the stream and clouds in stanzas 2–3) signify a gradually emerging, envisioned future reunion. In stanza 1 the persona narrates in the present tense and describes both lost love and physical distance from the past. Yet the adjectives “heißen” and “liebefeuchten” convey activated passion and longing, suggesting that the persona’s narration is suffused by a desire to transcend the present and reconnect with her past—a process signified by the shifting gaze. After viewing the valley from forest-crowned heights (stanza 1), her gaze shifts to the imagined river and stream, which inspire her first musings on reunion (stanzas 2–3), finally shifting inward (stanza 4) as she envisions the future and union.

Daumer’s use of changing tenses in stanzas 2–4 also emphasizes the protagonist’s heightened yearning to connect with the past in the future. Present-tense verbs appear in stanza 1, but stanzas 2 and 3 introduce contingent statements (“Vermöcht’ ich”/“Ach, flöge’ ich”). The subjunctive verbs “vermöchte” and “flöge,” which reflect the protagonist’s stirred imagination, also depict the unhappy present as inescapable. As stanza 4 omits the present tense entirely, invoking the future (“Wie wollt’ ich dich umstricken”), it signals that the speaker begins to perceive the future as her imagination thrusts her into the beloved’s presence from the past. By combining heightened poetic imagery with a progression from the present to the future tense, Daumer suggests that the protagonist’s perceptions of the future reach a peak in stanza 4, eclipsing her present-tense narration. Stanza 4 seems to reflect this psychological change by
shifting the verb that expresses contingency (“wollt’”) to its first line, as if indicating that an urgent desire for the future overwhelms the protagonist, causing her to become immersed in the experience that her imagination provides.

The persona in Clemens Brentano’s “O kühler Wald,” shown in fig. 1.2, also speaks mainly in the present tense.\(^\text{35}\) The poem was first published in a series of letters between Brentano and his sister, Bettina von Arnim, in which the poem is preceded by Brentano’s statement: “I only want to collect myself and go through the many songs that I have heard in the

**Figure 1.2:** Clemens Brentano, “O kühler Wald,” version found in Clemens Brentano and Bettina von Arnim, *Clemens Brentanos Frühlingskranz: aus Jugendbriefen ihm geflochten, wie er selbst schriftlich verlangte.* Charlottenburg: E. Bauer, 1844\(^\text{36}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O kühler Wald,</td>
<td>Oh cool forest,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wo rauschest du,</td>
<td>Where do you sough,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In dem mein Liebchen geht?</td>
<td>Oh forest in which my darling walks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Widerhall,</td>
<td>Oh echo,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wo lauschest du,</td>
<td>Where do you listen,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der gern mein Lied versteht?</td>
<td>[Oh echo] that understands my song so well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Echo_ alludes to the past

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\(^{35}\)Although the lines “Die Lieder sind verweht” and “Ich singe andre dir!” also express the past and future, only the past is included in Brahms’s version, as discussed below.

\(^{36}\)Italics indicate stanzas that Brahms omits.
area and in which I have overheard bustling nature, so that it may give you real joy.”37 This original context emphasizes the intimate act of listening for meaning within nature, and reflects the concepts of interiority and the past that pervade Brentano’s poetic imagery. “O kühler Wald” invokes the act of listening within oneself, and contrasts external (present) nature with a concealed internal process of discovering the past through memory.

Brahms modifies Brentano’s original text, causing explicit present-tense narration to exist in conflict with an implicit past temporality. Figure 1.2 clarifies how Brentano’s poem differs from Brahms’s version. Brentano’s version reflects how “O kühler Wald” emerged from his surroundings; the original four-stanza poem invokes the bustling forest (“da rauscht der Wald”) in its third stanza. The protagonist must ultimately listen within his heart (stanza 3, lines 1–2), a vessel that contains memories of this forest, for echoes of lost songs and, implicitly, the past that he attempts to recapture in stanzas 2 and 4. Brahms compresses the poem’s original four stanzas into two. He omits Brentano’s vivid descriptions of past and future songs (printed in italics in fig. 1.2); as a result, the described past is infused with even greater strength into the two remaining stanzas.38 Although the protagonist speaks in the present tense, the beloved (“mein Liebchen”) and echoes of lost songs (“Widerhall”/”Lied”) allude to the irrecoverable (implicit) past that Brahms’s stanza 2 places inside the protagonist’s heart. Moreover, questions (stanza 1) and answers (stanza 2) imbue a sense of causality to the poem’s two halves. Present self-inquiry and unawareness (stanza 1) serve as a necessary precondition for the protagonist’s interior discovery

37 “[...] ich will ja nur noch ein Weilchen mich sammeln und so manches Lied was ich der Gegend und der geschäftigen Natur im ihr abgelauscht habe, noch einmal durchgehen, damit es Dir rechte Freude machen soll...” Clemens Brentano and Bettina von Arnim, Clemens Brentanos Frühlingskranz: aus Jugendbriefen ihm geflochten, wie er selbst schriftlich verlangte (Charlottenburg: E. Bauer, 1844): 67–8 (emphasis mine).

38 Eric Sams, however, interprets Brahms’s alteration of the poem as a criticism of Brentano’s text: “The missing twelve lines are not especially inspired. [...] Even so, it [Brahms’s treatment of the text] seems cavalier. In particular it rejects Brentano’s hope for love and the lyrics thus induced; for Brahms, those days are over.” Eric Sams, The Songs of Johannes Brahms (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 242.
of loss (stanza 2). Across stanzas 1 and 2, the persona evolves from a seemingly naïve narrator into the fully conscious, perceiving protagonist as the text unfolds a temporal progression from the present into relived, bittersweet memories.

The text of the German folksong “Es steht ein Lind” (fig. 1.3) demonstrates how intertextual and historical context may reinforce oppositions between latent and explicit poetic temporalities. Unlike the figurative past described in Brentano’s poem, the complicated musical and textual history of “Es steht ein Lind” alludes to Brahms’s inherited musical past. The version of the text that Brahms set as WoO 33, no. 41, draws from two chronologically disparate sources, both of which he likely knew: a collection of folksong settings by Wilhelm Tappert titled *Deutsche Lieder aus dem 15. 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (published c. 1870), shown in fig. 1.3, and the sixteenth-century folksong collection *68 deutsche, französische, lateinische mehrstimmige Lieder* (fig. 1.3a), which includes a C-major setting of “Es steht ein Lind” by Caspar Othmayr.39

Tappert’s poem (fig. 1.3), which Brahms might have used as his textual source, increases the poignancy of musical intertextual references that emerge from a comparison of his setting with Othmayr’s (see “case studies” below). The poem has a temporal progression from the present to the past; the present perfect tense that ends each stanza (“daß ich mein’ Lieb’ verloren hab”/“that I have lost my love”) bestows a depth of meaning on this version that is lacking in

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39Max Friedländer mentions this discrepancy between these texts, but provides only two stanzas from the original, found in *68 deutsche, französische, lateinische mehrstimmige Lieder* (Nürnberg: Johann von Berg & Ulrich Neuber, 1550). Although Friedländer claims that Brahms did not know of Tappert’s authorship regarding the version that he set, it is likely that Brahms might have learned about the earlier version of “Es steht ein Lind” directly from the Berg & Neuber publication or from either 1) the folksong collection compiled by Erk and Böhme, or 2) the collection by Ludwig Uhland. See Max Friedländer, *An Introduction to the Songs for One and Two Voices*, trans. C. Leonard Leese (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 241–42; Ludwig Erk and Franz Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: Auswahl der vorzüglichen Deutschen Volkslieder*, nach Wort und Weise aus der Vorzeit und Gegenwart vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1893), 217; Ludwig Uhland, *Alte hoch- und niederdutsche Volkslieder in fünf Büchern* vol. 1 (Stuttgart, Tübingen, Cotta: 1844), 68. The contents of the Berg and Neuber collection are outlined in Susan Jackson, “Berg und Neuber: Music Printers in Sixteenth-Century Nuremberg” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1998).
earlier sources. This temporal shift implies that dormant past pain infuses the protagonist’s present experience, which is emphasized by infinitive verbs.

**Figure 1.3:** Version of “Es steht ein Lind in jenem Tal” found in Wilhelm Tappert, *Deutsche Lieder aus dem 15.,16. und 17. Jahrhundert: für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte*. Berlin: Challier, c. 1870

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Es steht ein’ Lind’ in jenem Tal, ach Gott, was tut sie da? Sie will mir helfen <strong>trauten</strong>, daß ich mein’ Lieb’ verloren hab’.</td>
<td>There stands a linden tree in the valley, Oh God, what is it doing there? It wishes to help me to mourn That I have lost my love.</td>
<td>present implied past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es sitzt ein Vöglein auf dem Zaun, ach Gott, was tut es da? Es will mir helfen <strong>klagen</strong>, daß ich mein’ Lieb’ verloren hab’.</td>
<td>There sits a little bird on the fence, Oh God, what is it doing there? It wishes to help me lament That I have lost my love.</td>
<td>present implied past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es quillt ein Brünnlein auf dem Plan, ach Gott, was tut es da? Es will mir helfen <strong>weinen</strong>, daß ich mein’ Lieb’ verloren hab’.</td>
<td>A little spring wells up on the green, Oh God, what is it doing there? It wishes to help me to weep That I have lost my love.</td>
<td>present implied past</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As fig. 1.3 shows, the protagonist characteristically projects his emotions onto nature, anthropomorphizing three features of the landscape—a linden tree, a bird, and a stream—that seem to lament with him in the present. The verbs “trauten,” “klagen,” and “weinen” imply that the protagonist mourns together with these animate objects for a happier, lost past. Each repeated verb suggests that the speaker projects his feelings onto nature and then empathizes or identifies with nature. By contrast, the text found in Berg und Neuber (fig. 1.3a) emphasizes a simpler present tense (stanza 1, line 4): “daß ich kein Buhlen hab’.” Its protagonist laments having no beloved and does not dwell in painful emotions. Tension between the lost past and present lamenting in Brahms’s (and Tappert’s) three stanzas thus does not appear to stem from

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40Although its publication date remains uncertain, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek dates Tappert’s publication from around 1870.

41The repetition of these verbs further emphasizes their connotation of “presentness.”

42Stein and Spillman discuss this common device of the poet’s projection onto nature. Stein and Spillman, *Poetry Into Song*, 30.

43Some sources show “Feinslieb” (or “Feinsliebchen”) instead of “Buhlen.”
Figure 1.3a: Version of “Es steht ein Lind in jenem Tal” found in Ludwig Erk and Franz Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: Auswahl der vorzüglichen Deutschen Volkslieder, nach Wort und Weise aus der Vorzeit und Gegenwart* vol. 2. Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1893

| 1. | Es steht ein Lind in diesem Thal, Ach Gott, was macht sie da? Sie will mir helfen trauern, Daß ich kein Buhlen hab. |
| 2. | So traur, du feines Lindelein, Und traur das Jahr allein! Hat mir ein brauns Meidlein verheißen, Sie woll mein eigen sein. |
| 3. | Ich kam wol in ein Gärtelein, Darinnen ich entschlief; Mir träumet also süße Wie mein feins Lieb gegen mir lief. |
| 4. | Sie that mich freundlich umfangen, Sie gab mir viel der Freud; Nach ihr steht mein Verlangen, Ich wünsch ihr viel der guten Zeit. |
| 5. | Und da ich auferwachet, Da war es alles nicht: Denn nur die lichten Röselein Die reisten her auf mich. |
| 6. | So reis, so reis, feins Röselein, So laß dein Reisen sein; Hat mir ein feins Meidlein verheißen Sie woll mein eigen sein. |
| 8. | Da macht sie mir ein Kränzlein drauß Und setzet mirs auf mein Haar; Das Kränzlein that mich erfreuen Viel länger den ein Jahr. |
| 9. | Und da daß Jahr herumber war, Das Kränzlein mur verdarb; Was fraget ich nach dem Kränzlein Da ich mein feins Lieb erwarb? |
| 10. | Das Liedlein sei gesungen, Der Liebsten zu Dienst gemacht, Ich wünsch ihr viel Freud und Wunne Und auch viel gutter Nacht. |

the sixteenth-century sources that he might have also consulted.\(^{44}\) This temporal conflict emphasizes the persona’s psychological transformations, such as observing present surroundings and experiencing the loss they represent.

These brief analyses demonstrate that temporal oppositions emerge from poetic grammar and descriptions, reflecting specific poetic content. As noted above, the opposed temporal states

\(^{44}\)Virginia Hancock discusses Brahms’s intimate knowledge of Renaissance music and sources. She details the contents of Brahms’s handwritten manuscripts of folksong incipits, for instance, and his meticulous cross-checking of historical sources. Virginia Hancock, “Brahms and His Library of Early Music: The Effects of Renaissance and Baroque Music on His Choral Writing” (DMA diss., University of Oregon, 1977).
also convey an abstract layer of poetic structure that Peter Hühn calls the poetic plot. Lauri Suurpää uses a similar approach in his analysis of Schubert’s *Winterreise* by analyzing the poetry before the music and using Gremassian semiotics to posit an abstract opposition between two contrasting states.\(^4\) The present study suggests a more nuanced method for interpreting the abstract layer that forms a poetic plot. Past, present, and future temporalities, which function as poles within a poem’s narrative or temporal progression, are also projections of the protagonist’s moment-to-moment perceptual experience. As I explore below, tonal ambiguities, modal conflicts, and other harmonic processes in Brahms’s songs realize these poetic temporalities, as if modeling a reading of subjective discourse in the poems that he set.

**Musical Analysis**

**Hierarchy in studies of musical temporality and narrative**

Following a seminal article by Carolyn Abbate that questions music’s ability to convey a past tense—to narrate—scholars have created various ways to describe how music expresses temporalities other than an ongoing present.\(^4\) The resulting theories of musical temporality share notions of hierarchy between meaning at the musical surface and at higher levels of organization. Since temporality is evident in literary narratives at two levels, the story (events located in time) and discourse (the narrator’s conscious arrangement of events into a sequence), studies of instrumental music invoke these literary concepts as analogues for musical events and their

\(^4\)Suurpää notes that “[b]oth music and text can include tension and resolution, for instance. Or they both can exhibit binary oppositions, of which one is often normative, while the other is a source of contrast or tension. [...] But the structure of a text can also be analyzed on an abstract level. The origins of such a structure are in the content of the text, but the structure can be described without making direct references to that content.” Suurpää states that his is only one type of interpretation, and acknowledges that he omits any discussion of poetic grammar or prosody. Lauri Suurpää, *Death in Winterreise: Musico-Poetic Associations in Schubert’s Song Cycle* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 36.

organization. Robert Hatten distinguishes between story and discourse in his concepts of “expressive genres”—progressions between two opposed emotional states—and “troping temporality”—arranging musical events into a non-consecutive or unexpected sequence at the level of discourse. The “troping” of temporality not only relates the composer’s conscious arrangement of musical events to the act of speaking figuratively, as if he or she suggests a meaning other than the literal one, but also explains how music conveys a sense of shifting time:

A third type of trope involving temporality is related to the Beethoven example. When a presumably continuous idea is broken off, or its clearly projected goal is evaded, as in certain rhetorical gestures or shifts in level of discourse, then there is also a sense of shift in temporality (or perhaps a shift to another temporal plane, in Frank Samarotto’s [1999: 129–70] characterization). This shift may involve a troping of temporalities, very much the way a stream of consciousness may shift from present to past event or imagined future. By interrupting the unmarked or expected flow of events, especially in such dramatic or rhetorical fashion, time is problematized as neither strictly sequential nor smoothly continuous.

Byron Almén similarly adapts a hierarchy of “agential, actantial, and narrative” from the literary theorist James Jacób Liszka to layers of musical meaning. His theory of musical narrative shows how topics and other semantically meaningful musical units at the agential level (the musical surface) can be arranged within recurring narrative archetypes, such as a tragic narrative that is overturned by an ironic outcome.

47 According to Hatten, the composer’s conscious ordering of musical topics at the level of discourse, or the narration, may suggest a non-linear succession of events (e.g., the music may suggest the past within an otherwise ongoing present). Hatten also claims that the way in which events are ordered yields a particular perspective on them. In Hatten’s interpretations, musical topics and other qualities (defined by register, dynamics, and texture, for instance), or the reversal of an expected sequence of musical events, suggests the guiding control of a narrator (the composer) who speaks at some distance from the musical events that compose the work. See Robert Hatten, “The Troping of Temporality,” Approaches to Meaning in Music, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 62–75.

48 Ibid., 68 (emphasis mine); Frank Samarotto, “A Theory of Temporal Plasticity in Tonal Music: An Extension of the Schenkerian Approach to Rhythm with Special Reference to Beethoven’s Late Music” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1999).

49 Almén shows that marked or unmarked features in a piece often change their status in a process called “transvaluation.” In transvaluation, “a hierarchy set up within a system of signs is subjected to change over time; this change, filtered through an observer’s design or purpose, is interpreted as being isomorphic to a change applied to a cultural hierarchy (whether social or psychological). Thus, narrative tracks the effect of transgressive shifts or
Other research correlates musical representations of changing temporality either with musical form, as in Anne Hyland’s recent study of Caplinian formal functions and temporality in Schubert’s G-major string quartet (D. 887), or locates temporality in specific musical parameters—such as register, texture, and dynamics—which lend qualities to the music that may suggest temporal distortions of the present. Benedict Taylor interprets extreme dynamics, excessive repetition of musical motives or themes, and the unstable position of harmonies as signifying the past or future within an ongoing present:

There is a sense of otherness about this theme, which, although previously unheard, has the quality of a memory to it. Partly this is due to the uneasy second inversion of the F minor chord, imparting a dream-like, suspended quality, the slowing of rhythm and pianissimo dynamic, and the theme’s repetitive, undevelopmental nature, its harmony swinging between I\(_6\) and V\(_7\) without ever cadencing strongly to the implied tonic of F minor.

Taylor cites Augustine in order to reinforce the long-held idea that subjective temporal experience is more complex than the clear distinction between “past, present, and future” implies. States of consciousness such as dreaming and memory reveal hierarchies between the subconscious and conscious mind or reality and imagination that might cause time to be perceived as something other than a continuous present. As Taylor notes:

A more pertinent and indeed fundamental question than that of tense is whether or not memories are actually past at all. Aristotle does not say that they are past, merely that memories relate to events which are past. *Similarly that other great theorist of time, Augustine, famously held that the present consists of three times—a present of things past (memory), a present of things present (perception), and a present of things to come (expectation).*

conflicts on a prevailing cultural system, as inflected by that which is important to the observer.” Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 40.


He further qualifies memories or dreaming as less “real” than the present, claiming that “a memory, as the past in the present, must have duration too, otherwise it in turn does not exist.” When the past and future assume duration as part of present experience, they merely replicate earlier times or project an unknown future event; both remain unreal products of imagination.

Although Hatten and Taylor focus on instrumental music, both scholars’ suggestion that an ongoing musical present might be perceived as interrupted by other temporalities provides a useful means for relating layers of poetic temporality to tonality in Brahms’s songs. Following Hatten, I will explore the idea that topics in Brahms’s songs provide a level of discourse that either enhances or conflicts with temporalities forming the poem’s plot. But while Hatten focuses on temporal troping of musical topics and form (for example, introductions and codas), I will emphasize the role that harmonic prolongations play in portraying and reordering implied poetic temporalities. The tonic in Brahms’s songs, which often signifies the present, is permeated by a stream-of-consciousness-like psychic meandering among visions of the relived past and projected future, reflecting Lawrence Kramer’s idea (expressed with respect to Schubert’s Lieder) that the composer’s setting “identifies and substantially revises the poetic persona’s pattern of consciousness.”

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53 “Musical memories are therefore context dependent. [...] They must possess a past marking, a modality of pastness, whether implied gesturally, topically, or by whatever other means. They exhibit Abbate’s ‘way of speaking’ that enables us to hear [music] constituting or projecting events as past.” Ibid., 150.

54 That is, Hatten’s “temporal troping” provides another way of understanding the non-real memories and anticipations that Taylor describes. Hatten compares the musical representations of memories or projections to speaking in a past or future tense: “[...] even in cases of prospective introductions or retrospective codas, we are presently experiencing an anticipation of future events or presently enjoying a reminiscence of past events. Indeed, this is no different from the present, experienced time of a speech act in which one employs the future or past tense. Instead, it is the temporality of the events referenced in speech acts or expressed as musical performative acts—specifically, how they relate to one another and to the temporal location of the experiencing agent—that is crucial to our understanding of a play with temporal experiencing.” Hatten, “The Troping of Temporality,” 63.

tonal or modal ambiguities or oppositions in the musical foreground or middleground may convey these illusory poetic temporalities. Finally, I will show that Brahms often expressively manipulates these harmonic processes within familiar Caplinian theme types (periods, sentences, and hybrids) whose extension or abbreviation may also model aspects of a persona’s temporal experience.

**Schenkerian and Schoenbergian methodologies**

In addition to invoking theories of musical narrative, this dissertation borrows metaphors from Schenkerian theory and Schoenbergian views of motivic development. Both convey tonal and motivic processes that map onto psychological and temporal poetic processes.\(^5^{6}\) Since the poetic persona’s temporal experience often stems from interactions between conscious and subconscious thoughts—different mental layers—hierarchical and organicist theoretical metaphors will signify not only temporal hierarchies in the text (e.g., a past nested, or relived, within the present), but also the process by which protagonists’ conscious and subconscious perceptions actualize, or gradually reveal, latent connections between past, present, and future.\(^5^{7}\) Specifically, some metaphors inherent in Schenkerian graphic analyses and Schoenbergian tonal-

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\(^{56}\)Janet Schmalfeldt also discusses musical form as a process experienced by a listener who retroactively interprets some formal attributes differently in light of later events, showing the “dynamic, processual nature” of Schenkerian and Schoenbergian ideas. Schmalfeldt cites Schenker’s well-known statement from *Free Composition* that “[i]n the art of music, as in life, motion toward the goal encounters obstacles, reverses, disappointments, and involves great distances, detours, expansions, interpolations, and, in short, retardations of all kinds. Therein lies the source of all artistic delaying, from which the creative mind can derive content that is ever new. Thus we hear in the middleground and foreground an almost dramatic course of events.” (Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. Ernst Oster [New York: Longman, 1979], 5. Schmalfeldt claims that one aim of her study is to show the relevance of these qualities when *Formenlehre* theories and Schenkerian voice-leading structures are combined. She writes: “What I regard as a chief contribution is my renewal of an effort to imbue both formal and Schenkerian concepts, taken together, with a capacity to capture, if tenuously, the dynamic, processual nature of the musical experience.” See Janet Schmalfelt, *In the Process of Becoming* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12. This dissertation’s aim to combine dynamic poetic and voice-leading processes resembles certain aspects of Schmalfeldt’s approach.\(^{57}\)Frank Samarotto emphasizes the metaphorical status of these musically mimicked mental processes and seemingly causally related events. Frank Samarotto, “Determinism, Prediction, and Inevitability in Brahms’s Rhapsody in Eb Major op. 119, no. 4,” *Theory and Practice* 32 (2007): 67–99.
problem analyses may embody teleological, causal, or processual aspects of a persona’s experience as revealed through poetic analysis of syntax and tense:

1) chromatic pitches that entail harmonic consequences,

2) the goal-oriented (descending) trajectory of a Schenkerian Urinline,

3) hierarchical relationships between fully realized keys (i.e., keys confirmed by an authentic cadence), implied keys lacking an authentic cadence), and individual harmonies prolonged through voice-leading processes at the foreground or middleground.

My interpretations make the important distinction between a succession of “keys,” articulated by varying degrees of cadential confirmation, and the Schenkerian prolongations or voice-leading processes that often encompass them, sometimes ignoring their boundaries.58 As Carl Schachter notes, Schenker’s interpretation of changing keys within the prolonged dominant of F major in the Largo of Bach’s Sonata no. 3 for solo violin (BWV 1005) tacitly illustrates that the boundaries of keys and prolongations do not necessarily coincide. William Rothstein has explained the related but non-Schenkerian principle of associating sonorities or keys that exist within a prolonged harmony with other instances of the same sonority elsewhere in a piece.59

I will draw upon both Schachter’s and Rothstein’s points in order to show the following in Brahms’s songs: 1) prolongations that do not align with the boundaries of a key, whether implied or realized, and 2) associative relationships between otherwise hierarchically unrelated

58 Analyses of Bach and Wagner by David Temperley and Patrick McCreless point out the importance of key successions and hierarchies that remain independent of Schenker’s theory, although I do not adopt their views here. Nevertheless, their attempts to rectify an alleged lack of emphasis on “the arrangement of key sections” in Schenkerian analysis (for which Temperley offers the term “key structure,” which indicates a hierarchy of key “sections”) highlights the importance of the “analysis-by-key” method (exemplified by Donald Francis Tovey, among others) that Schachter’s article places in conflict with Schenker’s ideas. David Temperley, “Key Structure in ‘Das alte Jahr vergangen ist,’” Journal of Music Theory 50/1 (2006): 103–10; Patrick McCreless, review of Wagner’s Das Rheingold: Studies in Musical Genesis and Structure by Warren Darcy, 19th-Century Music 18/3 (1995): 277–90.

chords (as when Rothstein explains that “a harmony may refer outside its own context to some other context, forging an associative relationship between the two”).\(^6\) Such discrepancies between the boundaries of keys and prolongations in Brahms’s songs may model conflicts between explicit and implied poetic temporalities. Associative harmonic relationships and Schoenbergian views of motivic development suggest the narrative techniques of recall or foreshadowing.\(^6\) The presence of implied keys and tonal ambiguities, even within clearly defined tonal prolongations, may further signify conflicting psychic layers (e.g., between reality and illusion) within poem-spanning temporal progressions.

In determining the extent to which a key is cadentially confirmed or realized, I adopt aspects of both Schachter’s and William Caplin’s ideas. As Schachter points out, keys may be established to varying degrees. At one end of the spectrum, a listener may perceive being “in a key” even when no cadence appears.\(^6\) Schachter shows that absent tonics may lack a cadence entirely but still exert palpable control over a passage. The absence of these tonics marks them in the listener’s consciousness, cultivating an expectation for their arrival. At the other end of the spectrum lies Caplin’s notion that a cadence must contain a root-position V−I progression (or a root-position V chord in the case of a half cadence) that functions to end a theme or a significant section of a theme. Caplin’s definition will guide my interpretation of realized keys.\(^6\) In other words, Caplin’s measure of cadential sufficiency will serve as my criterion for determining the

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\(^6\)Schachter illustrates such “apparent centers” in Chopin’s F-minor prelude (op. 28, no. 18), in which the tonic eventually arrives, and in Schubert’s piano sonata D. 845, III, which never confirms its F-minor tonic. (“As the example shows, the expected F-minor tonic never materializes, for the chromatic pitches serve instead to prepare A♭ major.”) Schachter, “Analysis by Key,” 291 and 295–96.

presence of an explicit (or realized) *versus* an implied tonality, and, by extension, will signal the actualization or denial of real or implied poetic temporalities.  

Finally, drawing upon statements by Brahms’s student, Gustav Jenner, Schachter reinforces Schenker’s idea that cadentially confirmed keys are conceptually subsumed by a piece’s governing tonic, and sometimes also by linear progressions. He thus finds in Brahms’s own circle expressions similar to Schenker’s theory of monotonality. Schachter’s analysis of the Allemande from Bach’s Eb-major French Suite, reproduced in ex. 1.3, provides an example of such distinctively Schenkerian hierarchies. He reads the C-minor tonicization in m. 13 as supporting the transitory passing tone C₃ within a larger rising-fifth motive from B♭₂ to E♭₃. This idea of subsumption—a prolongation or linear progression encompassing some key, even a realized key—inform my interpretation of layered musical and poetic temporalities in Brahms’s songs.

**Example 1.3:** Carl Schachter, “Analysis by Key,” Bach Eb-major French Suite, Allemande (ex. 9b) showing C-minor tonicization (m. 13) subsumed by rising-fourth motive

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64 While I adopt Caplin’s definition for the purposes of analytical simplicity, I will discuss in greater detail passages in which ambiguities arise, rendering cadence labeling more difficult. I thus acknowledge the need for a nuanced reading of passages that do not yield easily to Caplin’s distinctions, as Poundie Burstein explores in “The Half Cadence and Other Such Slippery Events,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 36 (2014): 203–27.

65 The most beautiful formulation of this idea that I know stems from Brahms, though the precise wording comes from his pupil, Gustav Jenner. In discussing his lessons in song composition, Jenner writes: ‘[...] In the disposition of even a very long song with extended and self-contained episodes, the main point was to express fully the primary key and to reveal its control over secondary keys through clear relationships. In this way, so to speak, the sum of all the keys employed in a piece appeared like an image of the primary key in a state of activity.’” Schachter, “Analysis by Key,” 299.
Schenkerian analysis of Lieder

Analysts have long invoked Schenkerian theories of harmonic structure when describing music’s narrative qualities. But correspondences between musical structure and mental processes such as consciousness and perceived temporality arise most frequently in the Schenkerian literature on songs, especially songs by Schubert and Schumann.66 Carl Schachter’s Schenkerian reading of Schubert’s “Ihr Bild” (D. 957) illustrates a conflict between the musical foreground and middleground, relating the absence of the structural tone 3 (D♭) and its replacement by 3 (D♭) to the increasing animation of a lost beloved in the protagonist’s mind.67 The listener immediately perceives the opposition between major and minor, but the conflict between D♭ and D♭ assumes a deeper meaning when linked to hierarchies in the graph. The protagonist’s total absorption in fantasy eclipses the surrounding reality of loss, much as D♭ obscures D♭ in the middleground.

Schachter also combines temporal and spatial metaphors in his analysis of Schubert’s “Nacht und Träume” (D. 827).68 He interprets the transitory chromatic passing tone F♯, respelled as G♯ within a prolonged G-major span (♯VI in the song’s B-major tonic), as reflecting the protagonist’s perceptions shifting into a magnified dream state. The static G-major prolongation


contrasts with the fleeting passing tone, portraying the protagonist’s static and magnified
perception of time. Although Schachter does not cite temporality explicitly, his analyses will
provide a model for understanding how harmonic prolongations in Brahms’s songs, as in
Schubert’s, depict shifting temporality. In the Schenkerian literature on Brahms’s songs, only
Edward Laufer’s analysis of Brahms’s A-major song “Wie Melodien zieht’ es mir” (op. 105, no.
1) similarly implies that chromatic events reveal hidden poetic images. Laufer links Brahms’s
tonicization of B♭ major (which occurs in m. 38) and the supported melodic pitch D5 (set to
“ein” in m. 40) in strophe 3 of “Wie Melodien” to the concept of “art,” which the poem only
reveals in its third stanza. Earlier the text only alludes to “art” using the pronoun “es.” Laufer
writes:

This d2 [D5] becomes now a subtle realization of the ‘es’ of the beginning: the implied
becomes reality. [...] But finally here, m. 40, the d2 is explicitly stated, on a higher
structural level, strongly asserted by the unusual and deliberate accentuation of ‘ein,’ its
placement within the repetition of the last two lines of the text, and the harmonic
support—the end of the bass arpeggiation [...]. The point of this emphasis is surely then,
to express again the poem’s message, realization through art, through the ‘realization’ of
the d2 by endowing it with structural weight.  

Schachter’s analysis of Schubert’s “Nacht und Träume” regards G major as the harmonic
consequence of the chromatic pitch F♯, evoking Patricia Carpenter’s analyses using
Schoenberg’s “tonal problem,” a method that I extend in this dissertation. Carpenter has shown
that tonal problems in Schubert’s and Brahms’s instrumental works often suggest causal

69 Edward Laufer, “Brahms’s Song op. 105, no. 1: A Schenkerian Approach,” 49 (emphasis mine). The arpeggiation
that Laufer describes refers to the three pitches comprising the B♭-major triad. Each bass tone in the arpeggiation
supports an upper-voice progression, thus “realizing” B♭ major. Laufer earlier writes: “The word mild is now
associated with ‘leise’ in m. 4. The same sound ([the] B♭-major triad) returns, and in a certain sense the B♭ of m. 4,
only an embellishing [n]eighbor [n]ote, is also ‘fulfilled’ or ‘realized,’ having become the final note of the bass
arpeggiation, as shown in the voice-leading sketch.” Ibid., 47–50.
70 Murray Dineen describes Carpenter’s “tonal-problem” analyses, an adaptation of Schoenberg’s concepts, in “The
connections between chromatic pitches and succeeding musical events. The analyses in chapter 4 (“Tonal Problems and Narratives That Incorporate Them”) develop Carpenter’s tonal-problem narratives, showing that Brahms’s songs often harness chromatic pitches’ potential to introduce distant tonal regions as if suggesting the protagonist’s subconscious awareness of impending temporalities, which emerge later. Moments that realize the harmonic consequences of chromatic pitches introduced earlier, or that use enharmonic reinterpretation, model the instant in which the protagonist becomes aware of his or her present self in relation to the past or future.

Finally, this study extends Lauri Suurpää’s method, demonstrated in his analysis of Schubert’s Winterreise, of combining Schenkerian analysis with theories of musical narrative in instrumental music in order to analyze interactions between multiple layers of musical and textual structure. However, I depart from Suurpää’s idea that music only expresses tragic or joyful emotions. Schenkerian and Schoenbergian notions of musical process instead redirect each analysis toward the listener’s moment-to-moment experience of developing tonal processes, and the hierarchical representations of such processes in Schenkerian graphs. Rather than representing a static interpretation of each piece, these graphs aim to convey the dynamic and evolving psychological transformations that constitute the protagonist’s experience.

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71Frank Samarotto calls this analytical process, by which later events are attributed as the consequence of earlier ones, “retrospective causality.” Samarotto, “Determinism, Prediction, and Inevitability,” 77.  
73This idea echoes this chapter’s epigraph (p. 1).  
74Suurpää outlines five propositions about music’s representational capabilities. While my analyses invoke some of his claims about mimetic musical attributes, I do not subscribe to his idea that music represents only generic joyful or tragic emotions.
Three Case Studies

Illusory keys and the imagined future in “Von waldbekränzter Höhe” (op. 57, no. 1)

A brief return to “Von waldbekränzter Höhe” will illustrate how degrees of cadential realization—both the degree of cadential strength and the number and placement of cadences in a tonicization—suggest increased desire for the future.\(^7\) This imagined future is signaled by the protagonist’s perception shifting toward the stream (strophe 2) and clouds (strophe 3). As I showed in ex. 1.2 (p. 6), I interpret the G-major A and A\(^1\) sections within the song’s ABB\(^1\)A\(^1\) form as reflecting present narration. But tonal digressions into D major (in the A section) as well as B\(^b\) major and B major in the B and B\(^1\) sections cast the G-major reprise (A\(^1\)) into a new light. It is as if the increasing cadential strength of each tonicization and the increasing distance from G major enacts the protagonist’s wandering imagination until the failure to cadence in B major puts an end to centrifugal motion. The certainty of harmonic closure at the structural cadence in A\(^1\) then suggests a return to the present, as if departing from the imagined union described in strophe 4. Yet despite the return of G major, Brahms recomposes earlier material in section A\(^1\). Subtle changes in register and tonal structure suggest that the protagonist continues to long for an unfulfilled future.

Different degrees of cadential closure establish the keys of D major, B\(^b\) major, and B major as shown in ex. 1.2 (above) and ex. 1.4 (below). In mm. 8–14, a descending fifth-progression in an inner voice, accompanied by an auxiliary cadence, accomplishes the tonicization of D major (V) when the speaker first mentions returning to the field that surrounds the lost beloved (ex. 1.2). Owing to the strong perfect authentic cadence that confirms D major in m. 14, this tonicization might be interpreted as reflecting a departure from present-tense...

\(^7\)Such foreground tonicizations reflect Schenker’s concept of “illusory keys” in Der Freie Satz (see n. 76 below).
narration into the past that the protagonist mentions. The D-major key is illusory in a Schenkerian sense, however, because it is not part of the deep-middleground harmonic progression that I identified earlier: $I \rightarrow III^{5} \rightarrow III(\flat-\#) \rightarrow II^{6} \rightarrow V \rightarrow I$ (see ex. 1.2).\textsuperscript{76}

**Example 1.4:** “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” A section (mm. 1–24)

76I interpret D major as a back-relating dominant (or upper fifth) of G major. It thus resides at a level closer to the foreground than the ensuing chromaticized III chords. It functions as an illusory key owing to its use of an auxiliary cadence, supported by the bass line G–G#–A–D ending in m. 14 (ex. 1.2). Schenker describes a similarly illusory key in *Free Composition*, trans. Ernst Oster, 112, with reference to fig. 39/3 (Haydn’s “Emperor Hymn”).
A new melody in the piano interlude (mm. 14–18, bracketed in ex. 1.4) confirms D major, echoing the diminished fifth G5–C#5 (m. 17) that the voice outlined earlier (mm. 6–7). This time, resolution to D5 is attained by dovetailing the piano’s C#5 with the vocal entrance in m. 18. As the voice repeats and provides text for the piano’s wordless melody, it seems to portray the protagonist’s imagination continuing to take flight.
As shown in exs. 1.4 and 1.5, the voice enables seamless harmonic transitions into strophes 2 (in Bb major) and 3 (in B major) by seizing and transposing the piano’s melody above two pivot chords: D minor and Eb minor. The imperceptible reinterpretation of each pivot chord mimics the protagonist’s stream-of-consciousness as her imagination rapidly shifts into projections of reunion. Example 1.4 shows D minor reinterpreted as III in Bb major (m. 18), while ex. 1.5 shows that Eb minor functions enharmonically as D# minor, III in B major (m. 38). Each transposition of the melody sets text that describes the shifting gaze (“Ich senk ihn auf die Quelle” in ex. 1.4, mm. 18–22; “Ich richt’ ihn auf die Züge” in ex. 1.5, mm. 36–39), aligning each harmonic juncture with the protagonist’s changing perceptions. These smooth harmonic transitions highlight stages in the imagined future’s gradual emergence; each new key accompanies a psychological transformation. Examples 1.4 and 1.5 show that, like the earlier D-major tonicization, two perfect authentic cadences in Bb major (mm. 18–22 and 30–32) frame strophe 3 using the cadential progression II® (or IV)–V–I. The piano interlude (mm. 32–36) also confirms Bb major as a realized key.\textsuperscript{77}

Example 1.5: “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” A section (mm. 29–54)

\textsuperscript{77}As in the D-major tonicization, the piano’s melody in mm. 32–36 confirms Bb major by echoing its key-defining diminished fifth, E♭–A. But in m. 36 the voice supplies 3, resolving E♭, rather than the expected resolution of A♭ to B♭ (1). This less conclusive melodic ending perhaps suggests that the protagonist’s fantasy increasingly unhinges her from surrounding reality. Measures 34–36 also provide an instance of the type of ambiguous cadential identity that Burstein has noted. The V\textsuperscript{7} chord in m. 35 might be interpreted as a half cadence or, alternatively, as an imperfect authentic cadence in m. 36, eliding with the beginning of a new phrase. See Burstein, “The Half Cadence and Other Such Slippery Events,” 214.
While strong cadences in D major and B♭ major seem to enact the present (stanza 1) yielding to an imagined future (stanza 2), Brahms’s subsequent thwarted attempts to cadence in B major in mm. 38–50 (ex. 1.5) suggest an unsustainable, heightened vision of the future in strophe 3. To be sure, B major first arises through a perfect authentic cadence and the progression III−II⁶−V⁶−V⁴−V³ in mm. 38–42, which is similar to the cadence that established B♭ major in mm. 30–32. Yet this new cadence is immediately more fragile, because the piano simultaneously overlaps the voice’s ¹ (B4) with its own ³ (D♯5), as it had not done in m. 32. Measures 48–50 convey a fraught second cadential attempt as the voice ecstatically repeats the refrain “zu dir” and the rising fourth C♯−F♯ (see page 2 above).⁷⁸ As the piano dovetails F♯5 into

⁷⁸Brahms prevents C♯5 (mm. 48 and 49) from resolving to B4 above a local B-major tonic, as if B major represents a fissure between the present and future. Melodic resolution to B4 might have signified that the distance between the protagonist and beloved is finally bridged.
an altered version of its original melody (mm. 50–54) and G major’s diatonic III (B minor) prevents B major’s arrival, Brahms suggests that increasingly distant keys are unsustainable. B♭ major is closer to G major than B major is; the former key arises through simple major-minor mixture rather than the more remote secondary mixture; B major is one fifth more distant from G major, in the opposite direction on the circle of fifths.79

This closer look at the foreground tonicizations first shown in ex. 1.2 illustrates my earlier claim that B♭ major exerts greater strength at the middleground than B major, which lacks an equally strong cadence. Interpreted as a chromatic passing tone within the large-scale bass line G–B♭–B–C–D, B (prolonged in mm. 42–51), B major might function similarly to the transitory C-minor key in Schachter’s analysis of the Bach allemande (ex. 1.3).80 Or, like the F♭s in Schubert’s “Nacht und Träume,” B major might signify the tenuous, unsustainable future, which nevertheless dominates the persona’s perceptions in the song’s interior strophes. According to this reading, the resulting minor-mode bass arpeggiation G–B♭–D freezes into place, as it were, the leading tone A♯ that would potentially mobilize and confirm a B-major key. This further highlights the distance of B major from G major despite its mode-conforming bass tone, B♮, which would appear in the bass’s composing-out of the G-major tonic triad. Instead the bass line outlines the parallel G-minor key, reflecting the harmonically close relationship of simple mixture that produces B♭ major. Measure 50 captures the moment in which lingering striving toward B major briefly overshadows G major, revealing two keys perceived at different

79 B major represents secondary mixture in relation to G major, as described in Edward Aldwell, Carl Schachter, and Allen Cadwallader, Harmony and Voice Leading, 4th ed. (Boston: Schirmer/Cengage Learning, 2011), 544. All subsequent citations refer to this edition.

hierarchical levels. B major—an illusory foreground key—and G major, the background tonic, compete in the listener’s perception here, much as the present and future coexist in different psychological layers. The distant B-major key points toward an imagined future, but G major returns to the present, framing the song’s narrative.

Although the return of the G-major tonic in A¹ implies a return to the present (as outlined in ex. 1.2 above), A¹ also cultivates anticipation. Annotions in ex. 1.6 illustrate musical elements that create expectation and suspense, such as lingering suggestions of D major at the structural cadence and an apparent separation of the vocal and pianistic agents during the descent of the Urtinie, which the voice abandons in order to strive for pitches in register 5. These features seem to imply the still-unbridged distance between present reality and union with the beloved. The score in ex. 1.6 shows that despite Brahms’s recomposition of A¹ (beginning in m. 61) to remain in the tonic, C#'s continue to imply D major. In mm. 62–63, Brahms replaces the A-minor chord that functioned as II in section A and as an applied dominant to D major (compare mm. 11 and 13 in ex. 1.4) with the bass motion 4–#4–5. This bass line supports the

Example 1.6: “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” A¹ section (mm. 59–68)
progression $\text{IV}^{\flat 7} - \text{IV}^{\flat 7} - \text{V}$ leading to a tonicized dominant (D major) in m. 63. Measures 64–67 then introduce the progression $\text{VI} - \text{II}^{\flat} - \text{V}^{\flat 7} - \text{I}$ beneath a projected upper-voice motion $\text{B5} - \text{C5} - \text{D5}$ in mm. 64–66 of the vocal line, as if subtly alluding to the now-unreachable D-major region. In m. 66, the piano supplies D5, which the voice’s C# (m. 65) seeks, but leads it to C4, cancelling D major’s influence.

A separation between the voice and piano at the structural cadence, as shown in ex. 1.7, also implies the protagonist’s longing. The upper-voice motion D–C in m. 66 appears above the *Urlinie*, the voice arpeggiating down to the ₂, A4, only at the very end of m. 65 (A4 is sounded
in the piano, but only weakly.) The voice’s strenuous ascending gestures suggest the protagonist’s increasingly ecstatic desire to transcend the present.\(^8\) Although the voice and piano both achieve \(\hat{1}\) in m. 67, the piano attains G5 in m. 68. It thus completes the double-neighbor figure G5–A5–F#5–G5, shown in ex. 1.6, as if providing the melodic closure that “should” have appeared one measure earlier. These musical representations of expectation and incompleteness convey yearning, supporting the idea that the piano and voice enact continued striving despite the G-major reprise. Brahms seems to imbue the disappointing return to G major in A\(^1\) with an irreversible sense of desire, activated by the protagonist’s shifting gaze and continuing beyond the song’s ending.

**Example 1.7:** “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” graph of A\(^1\) section (mm. 57–67)

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\(^8\)William Rothstein shows a related moment in Schubert’s song “Mein!” from *Die schöne Müllerin*, in which an implied 2 within the song’s final descent gradually materializes, rectifying its initial absence and creating a “crescendo of 2 functions.” Rothstein writes, “The increasing ‘possession’ of 2 by the singer seems to mirror his growing certainty of possessing his sweetheart....” Rothstein, “On Implied Tones,” 292.
Nested harmonies and the past: metaphors of interiority in “O kühler Wald” (op. 72, no. 3)

Three non-tonic keys were cadentially realized in “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” including two chromatically distinct versions of a single Stufe, III. The correspondence between Stufen and temporal changes in that song contrasts with Brahms’s use of chromatic sonorities in “O kühler Wald (op. 72, no. 3).” The song is in A\textsubscript{b} major, and the chromatic sonorities are C\textsubscript{b} major and F\textsubscript{b} major, both derived through simple mixture. The song as a whole has the form of a grand antecedent and grand consequent—a large period, AA\textsuperscript{1}—but two chromatic measures separate the sections, as I will show. Importantly, neither chromatic chord becomes a realized key. Instead, their subordination to encompassing prolongations reflects Brentano’s poetic depictions of interiority, signified by echoes of lost songs that reside within the vessels of the forest and the heart. Simple mixture pervades the serene A\textsubscript{b}-major tonality, but it is contained by diatonic progressions that repress (barely) the burgeoning chromaticism. This chromaticism seems to portray echoes of the past within the protagonist’s repressed subconscious, creating fissures in his present consciousness.

Brahms introduces phrase-expanding chromaticism in section A (mm. 1–14), as shown in ex. 1.8 (score) and ex. 1.9 (graph). An antecedent phrase, articulated by a half cadence in m. 5, seeks a consequent phrase and a perfect authentic cadence; the latter is projected to arrive four measures later, on the downbeat of m. 9, much as the protagonist seeks an answer to his question, “O kühler wald, wo rauschtest du?” But Brahms delays the cadence toward which the piano leads, independently of the voice, by descending from B\textsubscript{b}4 in mm. 8–9 (compare exs. 1.8

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83The music of “O kühler Wald” seems to allude to the duet “O sink hernieder” from Tristan und Isolde, which portrays Wagner’s enraptured lovers as unaware of external reality. The allusion seems to reinforce the song’s depiction of the persona’s private, internal memories.
and 1.9). A chromaticized 5–6 motion at “mein Lied” (m. 9) prevents V from resolving directly to I; the upper voices D₄ and E♭, which could have achieved this closure, are transferred into an inner voice of the right hand. The C♭-major sonority and 3/2 hypermeasure (mm. 8–9) thus extend the projected consequent phrase that began in m. 6. Having faltered into a moment of chromaticism and a temporal extension of the failed consequent phrase, the piano proceeds toward an imperfect (rather than perfect) authentic cadence in E♭ major in m. 10, but even this lesser cadence is immediately reinterpreted as a second half cadence with the addition of the chordal seventh, D♭3. As ex. 1.9 shows, I interpret a prolongation of B♭ major (V of E♭ major, II₄ of A♭ major) encompassing mm. 8–9. The repeated text “mein Lied” echoes within this B♭-major span, much as the protagonist’s past, triggered by the memory of lost songs, reverberates in his present perceptions.

Example 1.8: “O kühler Wald,” A section (mm. 1–14)
Example 1.9: “O kühler Wald,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–11)
Modal mixture is more pervasive in section A¹ (mm. 14–25), shown in exs. 1.10 (score) and ex. 1.11 (graph), and more pervasive still in the two-measure interpolation, mm. 12–13, included in ex. 1.11 (see ex. 1.8 for the score of these two measures). Mixture now occurs in prolongational contexts that reflect the metaphor of interiority as well as the past’s increasing intrusion into the present. Example 1.11 shows that bVI⁵ (mm. 12–14) supports the melodic motive E♭–A♭–G♭–F♭–E♭, a chromaticized version of the tenor voice in m. 4 (compare ex. 1.9). It is as though mm. 12–14 motivically signify an answer to the protagonist’s question (“O kühler Wald, wo rauschst du, in dem mein Liebchen geht”): the now-lost beloved lingers as a memory.

**Example 1.10:** “O kühler Wald,” A¹ section (mm. 14–25)
Example 1.11: “O kühler Wald,” graph of the A section (end) and A¹ section (mm. 12–25)
concealed deep in the heart. (This question and answer emerges from the poetic grammar; the word “da,” which occurs on the upbeat to m. 14 poetically answers “wo,” occurring on the upbeat to m. 3.) While speaking from the vantage point of present narration (A♭ major), the protagonist also seems to relive a past experience in which he wandered together with his beloved, as bVI b5 is prolonged in the expanded caesura-fill between sections A and A1. The emergence of the “forest motive” into the upper voice—a musical process—seems to reflect the protagonist becoming aware of the lost past. The piano’s tenor voice from m. 4 is transformed (chromaticized) in the vocal line in mm. 12–14 as subconscious memories rise into the protagonist’s consciousness. As ex. 1.11 shows, I interpret bVI b5 as prolonged within the V–I resolution spanning mm. 11–14. This resolution is not a cadence for reasons of form (A1 is a new beginning, not an ending), but it is a resolution nonetheless. Nested between the half-cadential V7 (m. 11) and the reprise of I (m. 14), the deceptive motion to F♭ major and its subsequent prolongation seem to represent a deep interior realm.

Both the isolated prolongation of the flattened submedian (F♭ major) in mm. 12–13 and modal ambiguity between A♭ major and minor, which pervades A1, signal a psychological transformation, as if the suppressed past in section A floods the protagonist’s present experience in A1. As shown in ex. 1.10, changes of both texture and surface rhythm in the accompaniment in A1 musically evoke the word “rauscht,” as if the piano now depicts the previously concealed and unacknowledged past.
rustling of the forest. As ex. 1.11 shows, a modified reprise of the antecedent phrase from section A (mm. 14–17) fails to achieve either an authentic or a half cadence; the consequent phrase (mm. 17–25) reaches an imperfect authentic cadence. Continuity between antecedent and consequent phrases allows the *Urlinie* to descend uninterrupted from 5 (m. 14) to 4 3 (m. 17) in A 1, continuing to 1 in an inner voice (m. 24). (We will return to the ending shortly.) As modal mixture briefly inflects the *Urlinie* (b 3 in m. 17), it seems to manifest the previously latent songs, foreshadowed by Cb in m. 8 (compare ex. 1.9).

As in section A, Brahms does not establish chromatic keys cadentially in A 1. Each chromatic chord remains subservient to larger diatonic voice-leading processes. Like the chromaticized 5–6 motion in m. 8, that in m. 16 only yields a fleeting chromatic sonority—now the Neapolitan, Bbb-major. But within the large-scale “forest motive” (bracketed beneath the bass of ex. 1.11, mm. 17–23, a six-four chord above Gb 2 (m. 19) hints at Cb major’s tonicization. As ex. 1.10 shows, this bass Gb supports the word “Widerhall,” invoking the echo of “mein Lied” from section A. Brahms here revisits the Cb-major sonority as if attempting to render it explicit through tonicization, along with the past echoes that desire reanimation. This Cb major sonority, however, exists within a prolongation of Ga, a chromatic passing tone within the bass’s descent of a chromatic fourth from Ab (m. 17) to Eb (m. 23). Since it remains unrealized, the potential Cb-major key suggests that the past remains concealed. Although the protagonist alights on its presence, he cannot relive it in memory—the unreal replica that Benedict Taylor cites. Further, the bass’s arrival on V (m. 23) signals the upper voice’s return from register 5 (mm. 18–22) into register 4, as though attempting to close the *Urlinie*. But support for such closure is denied by the accompaniment. The *Urlinie* instead retreats into an inner voice, much as irrevocably lost songs return to the heart’s interior after being recalled painfully into the protagonist’s consciousness.
The *Urlinie* seems unable to complete its descent in the vocal line, perhaps indicating that pain and longing linger in the present.

“O kühler Wald” represents the poetic concepts of interiority and the past at various levels of musical signification. Motivic associations within the song invoke the poetic image of echo; the chromaticized “forest motive” preceding A¹ seems to recall the inner voice from m. 4. Insufficiently tonicized mixture chords (♭VI⁵ and ♭III⁵), which remain nested within larger progressions and fail to achieve cadential confirmation, seem to strive for deeper structural status but fail to become *Stufen als Tonarten* (*Stufen* expressed as keys). Just as Rothstein invokes a “crescendo of 2 functions” to describe the gradual transformation of an implied 2 into a real, sung pitch in Schubert’s “Mein,” so C⁰ major’s increasing prominence in Brahms’s song conveys its growing desire to be tonicized despite the linear progressions (such as the “forest-motive” A♭−E♭ in mm. 17–23) that contain and repress the burgeoning ♭III⁵.

**Delayed resolution of the *Urlinie* and the acceptance of loss in “Es steht’ ein Lind” (WoO 33, no. 41)**

Brahms’s setting of the folksong “Es steht ein Lind” (published in 1894), a harmonization of a preexisting melody, serves as a final example that shows how the *Urlinie*, interpreted within harmonic prolongations suggested by the accompaniment, can signify latent poetic temporalities. The *Urlinie* in “Es steht ein Lind” progresses toward ̂1 at its C-major structural cadence, but Brahms’s accompaniment delays its arrival, just as the protagonist avoids accepting the nostalgia and loss expressed in the poem’s final line (“daß ich mein Lieb verloren hab’”). Repeated attempts to achieve ̂1 seem to prolong the act of lamenting in the present. Brahms’s avoidance of

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90Schenker uses this term frequently in his analytical essays of the 1920s; see especially *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* (*The Masterwork in Music*).
perfect authentic cadences also forges intertextual associations with Caspar Othmayr’s C-major *Tenorlied*, found in the collection by Berg and Neuber (published c. 1550) cited above. Brahms seems to allude to Othmayr’s contrastingly frequent use of firm triadic support for C4 in the tenor’s melody, as if paying homage in this late folksong setting to his inherited musical past. The setting suggests grieving for the lost art of composing German folksong, much as the protagonist in “Es steht ein Lind” mourns a lost love.⁹¹

I interpret text painting in the tune of “Es steht ein Lind,” which affects the trajectory of the *Urlinie* in Brahms’s setting, as expressing the original poem’s principal present tense.⁹² Brackets in ex. 1.12, which shows the melody as transcribed in an appendix to Tappert’s folksong volume, highlight an expressive melisma beginning on C4. The melisma denies melodic closure at the repeated verb “trauren,” an expression of lament.⁹³ By lengthening the verb, the melisma allows the singer to dwell in it and to experience the pain that it embodies. Yet, as ex. 1.13 shows, Othmayr’s *Tenorlied* consistently places C-major sonorities with the root in the lowest voice beneath the tenor’s arrival on C4 (see mm. 10 and 18), creating a feeling of closure that Brahms’s setting repeatedly denies.

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⁹¹This interpretation of lamenting a lost era of German song captures something of the original purpose for which Brahms apparently intended the WoO 33 set. Imogen Fellinger notes that Brahms’s unpublished folksongs may have served as a manifesto in tones that was meant to accompany the now-lost written manifesto on the true art of composing German folksong settings, intended as a *Streitschrift* against the volume of folksongs compiled by Erk and Böhme—a pair of authors that Brahms condemned for their pedantic interest in “authenticity.” Imogen Fellinger, “Brahms’ beabsichtigte Streitschrift gegen Erk-Böhmes ‘Deutscher Liederhort,’” *Brahms-Kongress Wien 1983: Kongressbericht*, ed. Susanne Antonicek and Otto Biba (Tutzing: Schneider, 1988), 139–53.

⁹²The close union of text and music is reinforced by their transmission together in the surviving sources.

⁹³The other stanzas set the verbs “klagen” and “weinen” to this melisma.
Example 1.12: “Es steht ein Lind” melody as transcribed in Wilhelm Tappert, *Deutsche Lieder aus dem 15. 16. und 17. Jahrhundert für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte*, c. 1870

The act of lamenting: delayed melodic closure in strophes 1 and 2

Brahms seems to allude to Othmayr’s setting in two ways: he reharmonizes its expressive melisma, and he recomposes Othmayr’s imitative counterpoint in order to thwart the achievement of C-major closure beneath C5 in the vocal line. As ex. 1.14 shows, Brahms’s

Example 1.14: Brahms, “Es steht ein Lind,” A section (mm. 1–18)
chorale-like introduction (mm. 1–4) foreshadows the vocal entrance using the same subject and answer entries (a rising fifth and fourth) that characterize the imitative entries in Othmayr’s Lied (compare mm. 8–10 in ex. 1.13). As if responding to Othmayr’s tonicization of V (mm. 6–7 and 14–15), Brahms recomposes it to include an entirely stepwise motion in the bass, creating a more fluid motion toward the marked arrival of V/V (ex. 1.14, mm. 10–11) beneath the vocal melisma on “trauren” and “klagen.” Example 1.15 shows that this renders C5 (m. 11) a passing tone between D5 and B5 in the upper voice, preventing closure beneath 1. This voice-leading analysis (m. 15) shows that the upper-voice motion 5–4–3–2 spanning mm. 1–10 revisits the interrupted ♯ from the half cadence in m. 4, while the piano’s A5 (m. 10) poignantly echoes the
upper neighbor A4 (emphasized by an accent marking) from m. 2. F#3 (m. 10) alters F\#2 from the piano introduction (m. 2), fulfilling the latent potential for 4, now chromaticized as #4, to tonicize V when the recalled past activates the protagonist’s imagination. Measures 9–12 thus explore the compositional consequences of material presented in the introduction.

**Example 1.15:** “Es steht ein Lind,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–18)

As ex. 1.15 shows, Brahms’s seamless transition into the tonicized dominant (G major) in mm. 10ff. suggests a psychological transformation into the recalled past. G major is initially tonicized (mm. 10–12), then de-tonicized and reactivated (mm. 13–17), but it never exerts its influence as an explicit (realized) key since it lacks cadential confirmation. Rather, it governs the musical span containing the repeated refrain “daß ich mein Lieb verloren hab’” and contextualizes C5 (m. 10) as a transitory, unstable passing tone. Because it lengthens the

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94 By imitating the voice’s folksong melody at the interval of a fifth, the piano introduction foreshadows the upper-voice descent G–F–E–D–[C] prior to its emergence after the voice’s highpoint (G5) in m. 9 (ex. 1.15).

95 The predominantly stepwise bass line in mm. 1–10, and the fluid parallel sixths between the outer voices in mm. 7–10, help to prevent C-major closure in mm. 9–11. Instead, the Kopfton (G4 in m. 1) is transferred an octave higher, to G5 (m. 9), as shown in ex. 1.15.
dominant’s control over this passage, the G-major prolongation seems to give the protagonist’s memory of the past duration in the present.  

Brahms harmonizes two other instances of the closing melodic gesture E–D–C during the text “daß ich mein Lieb verloren hab’” and the prolonged dominant (mm. 12–17), which evoke the past. Example 1.14 shows that the voice seeks tonic support beneath C5 in m. 14, as if attempting to correct its earlier digression into the tonicized dominant. But the piano’s chromatic passing tone G#3 (m. 14), marked fp, deflects C major’s arrival, forcing continued motion in the bass toward IV and I. In this reading (shown in ex. 1.15), the relatively unstable I in m. 14 once again renders C5 a passing tone to B4 (m. 15), itself an inner voice above V.

As mm. 15–18 gradually restore tonal and metrical stability, correcting the misalignment between the piano’s evaded C-major cadence (m. 14, beat 1) and the voice’s seemingly late arrival on C5 (m. 14, beat 3), Brahms cultivates a mood of resigned acceptance. Beneath the rhythmically augmented version of the folksong melody (mm. 15–18), Brahms now aligns IV (m. 16) and V7 (m. 17) with beat 3 of the measure, creating the expectation for imminent cadential closure on a downbeat. The increased metrical and tonal stability of the C-major

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96 Brahms’s G-major prolongation seems to reflect a lesser degree of tonal intensity than a G-major cadence would have done, but the local centricity of G in m. 10 conflicts audibly with the song’s governing C-major tonality. G major’s non-key status perhaps reflects the unreal quality of the past, while the tonicization itself suggests motion away from the C-major present.

97 Although the bass reaches I6 (m. 14), I interpret this chord as a foreground harmony within the prolonged dominant spanning mm. 12–17 (see ex. 1.15). Brahms’s staggered imitation of the rising fourth G–A–B–C between the voice and the piano’s left hand (bracketed in mm. 13–14) also seems to reference imitation between the soprano and tenor in Othmayr’s setting, as mm. 22–23 in ex. 1.13 shows.

98 The voice’s C5 seems to arrive “late” on account of its inability to coincide with the projected C-major chord on beat 1, which has been delayed by the time C5 appears.

99 As a result, the piano’s G#4 (m. 16) appears as a metrically weak passing tone on beat 2 rather than an accented passing tone on beat 1, as in m. 14.
tonic, which finally supports C5 in m. 18, seems to correlate with the protagonist’s emergence from the recalled past into a present (albeit tenuous) acceptance of loss.\textsuperscript{100}

**Pianistic agency and present lamentation in strophe 3**

The A\textsuperscript{1} section in “Es steht ein Lind” is shown in ex. 1.16 (score) and ex. 1.17 (graph). The section, which sets strophe 3 of the poem, progresses harmonically from the C major that ended section A (m. 18) to a prolonged V (mm. 31–35), much like strophes 1 and 2. But mm. 27–29 contain a new tonicization of E minor. Whereas F\# only tonicized V in strophes 1 and 2, now it functions as the root of E minor’s II chord (mm. 27–28), leading to an imperfect authentic cadence (m. 29). E minor is thus established as a key more strongly than G major was in the A section, despite the parallelism of mm. 27–29 to mm. 10–12; there, any G-major cadential effect was undermined by the first-inversion presentation of V/V (see ex. 1.14).\textsuperscript{101} Example 1.17 shows that Brahms’s reharmonization of the melody creates a sixth-progression from G5 (m. 26) to B5 (m. 29). The sixth-progression subsumes the melisma at “weinen” (C5), which is deemphasized, and replaces the upper-voice motion 5–4–3–2 from section A (compare ex. 1.15).

Owing to its replacement of the G-major tonicization from section A and its membership within the large-scale bass motion I–(III)–II\textsuperscript{6}–V spanning mm. 18–33 (ex. 1.17), E minor (III) seems to convey the increasing stability of the C-major triad across strophe 3, represented by the bass tones C2 (m. 18), E3 (m. 29), and G2 (mm. 31 and 33). In this reading, C major’s prominence in the middleground bass progression might convey the protagonist’s increasing

\textsuperscript{100}Measures 13–18 also highlight Brahms’s expressive treatment of E5 at “verloren,” the word that directly refers to loss. E5 is highlighted through metrical emphasis and vertical dissonance in m. 14, and by vertical dissonance in m. 17. The harmony in the first half of m. 17 might be interpreted as either including or excluding E5.

\textsuperscript{101}See the discussion of inverted dominants in Caplin, “The Classical Cadence,” especially 74–76.
Example 1.16: Brahms, “Es steht ein Lind,” $A^1$ section (mm. 21–37)

21

| 2. Es | 3. Es quil de Brün-nein auf dem Plan, ach Gott, was tut es da? Es will mir hel-fen |

27

*voice "lament" leads to E minor

28

Expected PAC -

Local E-minor tonicization

Large-scale arrival of V

32

*piano corrects E-minor turn
in m. 28, leading to V

Denied PAC reactivates tonicized, prolonged V

Plagal cadence extinguishes modulatory potential of $F^4$
Example 1.17: “Es steht ein Lind,” graph of the end of the A section (mm. 18–21) and the A\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 21–37)
acceptance of a lost-tinged present. The Urlinie, which repeats the stepwise motion from G5 to D5 (compare ex. 1.17, mm. 18–31 to ex. 1.15, mm. 1–10), also raises the listener’s expectation for a perfect authentic cadence to appear in m. 32. That m. 31 is a 2/4 measure promises that C5, and the expected cadence, will fall on a downbeat (compare m. 14, where C5 falls on beat 3).

The piano’s deceptive harmonic turn to VII⁶/V (m. 32) highlights its agential role in the upper-voice narrative. The piano “corrects” the E-minor turn taken in mm. 27–29 by seizing the voice’s melisma and wordlessly evoking the act of lamenting (m. 32). In so doing it causes the piece to “remember its own past”—the voice’s laments at “trauren” and “klagen”—while in m. 33 it reactivates the prolonged V, as in section A. The piano seems to tell us that the anthropomorphized natural phenomena (the linden tree, bird, and stream) that were only observed earlier now become animated, grieving with the protagonist. As if representing still-lingering mourning in m. 32, the bass’s deceptive motion to A3 supports yet another passing C5 (m. 32), as shown in ex. 1.17, further delaying melodic and harmonic closure.

The upper voice regains D5 (♯, m. 35) after the piano’s expressive interjection, and finally achieves a cadence on C5 (m. 36) as Brahms resolves the dominant that has lingered through much of the song. The final plagal cadence (mm. 36–37), which invokes the subdominant’s pastoral connotations, also recalls the appearance of IV in the piano introduction. Brahms suggests that the potential of F♯ to lead toward a tonicized, prolonged V

102 Suurpää interprets the large-scale Eb-major bass arpeggiation in “Letzte Hoffnung” as similarly representing a concealed aspect of the text that increasingly comes to the fore: “In spite of this local uncertainty, the deep levels in mm. 8–22 exhibit a stable progression, an arpeggiation of an Eb-major chord in the bass, which provides the music with a solid harmonic foundation. [...] Likewise, in the poem, the protagonist knows, deep down, that only the second option is possible. [...] The unconscious layer of the narrator’s mind thus maps onto the deep-middleground structure of the music.” Suurpää, Death in Winterreise, 95.

103 This G–A motive also recalls the piano’s neighboring figure G–A–(G) in the introduction (compare mm. 1–4).

104 The F♯–F motions in mm. 32–33 and m. 35 (ex. 1.16) echo and reverse the large-scale association between F♭ (mm. 2 and 4) and F♯ (m. 10). Brahms’s final plagal cadence settles this pitch-class conflict in favor of F♭.

105 Robert Hatten cites the pastoral connotations of the subdominant. Hatten, Musical Meaning in Beethoven, 105.
and, more firmly, into E minor—tonal areas that allow the protagonist to reconnect with a remembered past—is now extinguished, as the bittersweet C-major present prevails.

Summary

These three case studies have aimed to show that tonal phenomena—local tonicizations in “Von waldbegränzter Höhe,” nested prolongations and modal mixture in “O kühler Wald,” and the upper-voice narrative produced by conflicts between the tonic pitch and prolongations of III and V in “Es steht ein Lind”—musically manifest a protagonist’s shifting perceptions of time, or the psychological transformations that the poetic persona experiences as his or her speech alternates between narrating and focalizing functions. The larger structure of this dissertation reflects the organization of this chapter, examining latent poetic meaning and temporal plots before analyzing musical structures.106

While the distinction between explicit and implicit keys is largely based on the presence or absence of an authentic cadence in the analyses throughout this dissertation, the preceding analyses show a variety of ways in which Brahms’s songs convey temporality through tonal and modal ambiguities. The conclusion to Gustav Jenner’s statement on song composition that Carl Schachter cites (mentioned above) seems to capture this aspect of Brahms’s practice:

That precisely the lack of clear identification of a key, even the tonic, can serve as an excellent means of expression is the nature of the matter.107

By leading with analytical case studies, the foregoing chapter emphasizes the mostly analytical content of this study. Each of the subsequent chapters will highlight the role that the

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106As noted above, this approach emulates Lauri Suurpää’s approach to Schubert’s Winterreise.
pianistic and vocal agents play in conveying each song’s tonal features, and will posit temporal narratives in Brahms’s songs. These narratives are intended to deepen an understanding of Brahms’s songs for analysts, listeners, and performers alike.
Chapter Two

Modal Ambiguity, Tonal Pairing, and the Portrayal of Layered Psychological States

Among the recurring tonal devices that appear in Brahms’s songs, major-minor
oppositions resulting from simple modal mixture and juxtaposed relative keys are perhaps the
most common. These modal conflicts occur in a wide range of nineteenth-century musical
genres, yet Brahms’s integration of the major mode in his minor-mode Lieder betrays a special
kinship with Schubert’s songs, especially those in Die schöne Müllerin and Winterreise.¹ Paul
Mies, an early- twentieth-century scholar of Brahms’s songs, was among the first to interpret
Brahms’s expressive juxtaposition of major and minor.² His inventory of relative and parallel
keys highlights their contrasting emotional connotations (Affekt). In a major key, for instance, the
relative minor communicates painful and depressed emotions, while in a minor key, the relative
major produces a mellow and gentle contrast.³

Whereas Mies focuses on the opposed Affekt that major and minor create in short sections
of Brahms’s Lieder, such as successive melodies or strophes, this chapter interprets pervasive
large-scale modal oppositions and ambiguities that span entire songs as reflecting transitory,
elusive, and desired mental states.⁴ The major mode is marked through its gradual emergence in

¹Lauri Suurpää has shown that Schubert’s use of C major’s dominant (G major) suggests its presence within the C-
minor songs “Der greise Kopf” and “Die Krähe.” He notes the major mode’s inability to be confirmed by a cadence.
Lauri Suurpää, Death in Winterreise: Musico-poetic Associations in Schubert’s Song Cycle (Bloomington: Indiana
University Press, 2014), 64–5; 84.
Mies also suggests that opposed parallel keys in Brahms’s songs find precedent in Schubert’s songs. (“Der Wechsel
einer Tonart und ihrer Variante kommt bei Brahms außerordentlich häufig vor; Schubert ist ihm darin
vorausgegangen, bei Schumann fehlt er weit mehr.”) Ibid., 70.
⁴Carl Schachter’s analysis of “Ihr Bild,” (D. 960), cited in ch. 1, and Lauri Suurpää’s analyses of Winterreise (D.
911) cited above posit similar affective oppositions in Schubert’s Lieder. David Damschroder’s analysis of
Schubert’s “Erster Verlust” (D.226) also interprets opposed states of “loss” (F minor) and a “sweet time of love” (Ab
major) resulting from juxtaposed relative keys. David Damschroder, Harmony in Schubert (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2010), 121.
opposition to a contrasting minor mode, exemplified by a parallel or relative key as modal mixture (the P-relation) or the diatonic R-relation.  

A brief explanation of parallel and relative relationships will provide a helpful introduction to the analyses offered in this chapter. Both P- and R-relations invoke a modal opposition; the P-relation expresses a change in mode, while the R-relation changes mode and tonality. The R-relation is often explained through the two related techniques of “tonal pairing” and “directional tonality.” Tonal pairing occurs when two tonics are juxtaposed so that neither is subsidiary to the other, while directional tonality describes pieces that begin and end in different keys. Both concepts arise in recent studies of Schumann’s and Brahms’s instrumental music and studies of Schubert’s and Wolf’s songs by Harald Krebs and Deborah Stein. Steven Laitz shows that the pitch-class motive 5 – #5 – 6 (the “submediant complex”) often functions as “the mediator between [the] two harmonies” in Schubert’s songs that exhibit tonal pairing and directional tonality. Laitz notes that when an equally strong presence of both R-related keys renders the tonic ambiguous, the submediant complex offers “one stable element in the fluctuating tonal focus.” Enharmonic reinterpretation of the central pitch in the complex, #5 into b6 (or vice versa), provides the opportunity for association between “diverse harmonic contexts.” These studies’ emphasis on Schubert’s songs and Brahms’ instrumental music have also provided a

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5. The idea of major as “marked” recalls the creation of meaning through markedness and “difference,” theorized by Robert Hatten. Although neo-Riemannian theorists invoke the “P-relation” to denote the relationship between major and minor tonic chords, I use it here to mean borrowing b3, b6, and b7 from the minor mode.


8. Ibid., 128.
context for interpreting tonal pairing in Brahms’s Lieder, which Heather Platt has recently analyzed as an expressive device in Brahms’s folksong settings dating from 1859–60. These settings accommodate folksong tunes that seem to begin in one key and end in another. As Platt writes, these works “exhibit a type of directional tonality in that the key of the opening phrases is abruptly supplanted by its relative, which then closes out the song.”

The Schenkerian voice-leading models shown in ex. 2.1 portray selected interpretations of modal mixture (P-relation) and mode-reversing third relations (R-relation and L-relation) in works by Schubert and Schumann, which possess varying degrees of similarity to the models that are relevant to Brahms’s songs. These models include:

1) $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{5}$ differentiating the A and B sections of an ABA$^1$ form (P-relation; ex. 2.1a);
2) $\frac{7}{5}$ in a minor mode becoming $\frac{5}{3}$ of the relative major (R-relation; ex. 2.1b); and
3) $\frac{3}{5}$ in a minor mode becoming $\frac{5}{3}$ in the submediant (VI), then completing the Uirlinie’s descent in the major mode (L-relation; ex. 2.1c).

Unlike ex. 2.1b and ex. 2.1c, which represent songs that seem to begin and end in different keys, Brahms’s cultivation of tonal ambiguities and modal mixture often occurs within a monotonal framework. As I will show, Brahms’s songs “Nachtigall” (op. 97, no. 1), “Es träumte mir” (op. 57, no. 3), and “Es hing der Reif” (op. 106, no. 3) show major-minor oppositions and parallel and relative relationships through significant local ambiguities within AA$^1$ and ABA$^1$ forms, but use the dichotomy between major and minor modes within varied spans of their large-scale monotonal designs. Each song represents variations of the model illustrated in ex. 2.1a above,

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Example 2.1: Schenkerian Ursatz models for major-minor oppositions

a) P-relation (Modal Mixture; Schubert’s “Der Wegweiser,” (D. 911), Lauri Suurpää)

b) R-relation (Tonal Pairing; Model for Schumann’s Early Works, Benjamin Wadsworth)

c) L-relation (Directional Tonality; Schubert’s “Trost,” (D. 523), Harald Krebs)

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including (1) a complete minor-mode *Urlinie* from the *Kopfton* ̄5 that uses ♭3 but invokes ♯3 at the foreground; (2) ambiguity between the *Kopfton* #3 and ♯3 engendered by a large-scale auxiliary cadence in the major mode; and (3) a complete minor-mode *Urlinie* in which ̄5 becomes 3 in the relative major (all descents from this major-mode 3 exhibit significance at the foreground only).12

Each song also ultimately represses one mode at the foreground. “Es träumte mir” begins in B major, but turns toward B minor throughout its binary design until the major mode overtakes the minor. “Nachtigall” (a ternary form) begins in F minor, but F major gradually overtakes the minor mode in the B section. “Es hing der Reif” begins in A minor, but the increasingly strong presence of C major illustrates modal and tonal ambiguity (the R-relation) across its ternary form.13 Furthermore, since C major persists until the A-minor reprise prevents its cadential confirmation in “Es hing der Reif,” this song does not reflect the strict definition of tonal pairing referred to above (p. 65). Rather, as I will show, the return of its A-minor tonic reflects the tendency for one key to prevail at the end of the piece in Brahms’s solo songs.14

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12“Schwermut” (op. 58, no. 5) and “Todessehnen” (op. 86, no. 6), analyzed in ch. 3, will demonstrate additional features of these models.

13The ambiguity exhibited in “Es hing der Reif,” in which an expected C-major cadence is ultimately denied by a return of the A-minor tonic, resembles the harmonic fluctuations between G major and E minor in Brahms’s various settings of “Gunnhilde” (WoO 32, no. 10, WoO 37, no. 5, and WoO 33, no. 7), as Heather Platt demonstrates in “Brahms’s Laboratory: Probing the Limits of Competing Tonal Centers,” cited in n. 10 above. Platt shows that Brahms’s earliest setting of the folksong cadences in two different keys suggested by the melody, while his latest setting is monotonal—an aspect of Brahms’s tonal practice that is also modeled in “Es hing der Reif.” Platt notes that it remains undetermined “why Brahms—especially the younger Brahms—was willing to explore the limits of monotonality and the possibility of directional tonality within the constraints of folksong arrangement and not in his Lieder.” (See n. 10 above.)

14The only instances of directional tonality that Platt identifies in Brahms’s art songs include “Botschaft” (op. 47, no. 1) and “Es bebet das Gesträuche” from the *Liebeslieder Walzer* (op. 52, no. 18). These songs work out tonal structures playing with shifts between B♭ minor and D♭ major (personal communication).
“Nachtigall” (op. 97, no. 1)

The emergent past in Christian Reinhold Köstlin’s “Nachtigall”

Köstlin’s poem “Nachtigall,” published in 1853, exhibits complex grammatical usage and a nuanced portrayal of temporality, aspects that are expressed by modal mixture in Brahms’s musical setting. As shown in fig. 2.1, the text evokes multiple temporal layers and cultivates images of interiority by focusing on the protagonist’s conflicting perceptions of present and remembered events. Köstlin’s imagery draws from a rich tradition of nineteenth-century German and English literature that portrays the nightingale as a powerful catalyst for catharsis in others. As Frederick Doggett notes, the nightingale is often portrayed as a singing poet more powerful than either the poem’s historical author or the narrating protagonist who commonly adopts an authorial voice. In Köstlin’s poem, the nightingale figures prominently as an external agent. Its song provides a medium through which the protagonist’s internal perceptions are made evident and magnified. An opposition between internal and external phenomena also emerges from the protagonist’s use of apostrophe. He speaks to the nightingale—a separate being—much as the wanderer in Schubert’s Winterreise speaks to the crow flying above him in “Die Kräh,” projecting internally harbored knowledge onto the bird’s own sounds.

Two competing structures based on rhyme and syntax emerge from the single stanza in “Nachtigall,” depicting the protagonist’s fluctuating perceptions of time. As shown in fig. 2.1, a ternary grouping of lines based on separate “a,” “b,” and “c” rhymes contrasts with a meaning-based structure governed by complete sentences, demarcated by punctuation following “Bein,”

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15 Köstlin wrote the poem in 1838.
16 References to the nightingale are prevalent in English and German sources throughout the nineteenth century. English poets who invoke the nightingale also include William Wordsworth and Sir Philip Sidney. Frank Doggett, “Romanticism’s Singing Bird,” Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 14/4 (1974): 547–61. Also see p. 86, n. 41 below.
17 This mode of address is discussed in Rufus Hallmark, “The Literary and Musical Rhetoric of Apostrophe in Winterreise,” 19th-Century Music 35/1 (2011): 3–33.
“nein,” and “Widerhall.” These structures are not coextensive; they cut across each other, creating subtle tensions and giving the impression of prose lightly demarcated by rhetorical emphases. For instance, the stressed interjection “Nein” in line 4 and the syntactical enjambments across lines 2–3, 7–8, and 8–9 discourage the reader’s perception of recurring iambic dimeter and tetrameter by disrupting extended entrainment to any normative metrical pattern.18 Amidst these instabilities, Köstlin nevertheless provides a sense of what Barbara H. Smith calls “thematic closure”; the words “Nachtigall,” “Schall,” and “Widerhall” (“a” rhymes) all refer to the phenomenon of “sound,” which is empty, as opposed to that of “song,” which is imbued with meaning.19 These images refer to the remnants of lost song, conjuring its presence, paradoxically, by describing its absence. Brahms’s setting focuses on this distinction between past songs and their echoes in the protagonist’s present perceptions, signifying the differences

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18 Köstlin’s manuscript for “Nachtigall” (fig. 2.2) indicates that prior to the addition of “trauter,” which further characterizes the nightingale’s relationship to the protagonist, line 4 originally maintained the iambic dimeter from lines 1–2.

19 Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End, 96ff. This recursive layering of “sound,” “song,” and “echo” also appears in Theodor Storm’s poem “Die Nachtigall,” which Gustav Jenner set as “Die Nachtigall” (op. 7, no. 5). Its text reads: “Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall/die ganze Nacht gesungen:/Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall/Da sind in Hall und Widerhall/Die Rosen aufgesprungen.” The progression from mere sound to a more meaningful utterance (song) reflects the poetic persona’s change in attitude from merely hearing sound to identifying with the song it represents.
between the nightingale’s song in F minor, versus the version of it that the protagonist hears in F major.

Together with Köstlin’s two distinct structures based on rhyme and syntax, imagery and dramatic pacing in “Nachtigall” imply three temporal layers:

(1) A dynamic portrayal of time emerges from the poem’s consistent use of the present tense, which expresses the protagonist’s thoughts as they occur to him. In narratological terms, this present tense represents “simultaneous narration”; the reader learns about the persona’s environment as he reacts to it.  

(2) A static portrayal of time emerges from the poem’s evocation of an implied past, which is suggested by text indicated in boldface type in fig. 2.1. This past is implied only through description, opposing the present-tense narration, and is displayed most clearly by the extended adjectival construction in lines 7–8. Adjectives that lead to the noun “Widerhall” disclose the past (echo) and imply the protagonist’s yearning to reclaim it. (“Himmelschönen” suggests that the speaker wishes to reconnect with the beautiful lost tones.) The dichotomy between an unfolding present and static past expresses literal distance (physical and temporal) between the protagonist and his song, but also implies a turning point in line 4 between simultaneous narration and focalizing functions. The proliferation of expressive adjectives in lines 5–9 cultivates songful language that seems to evoke the renewed presence of songs in the protagonist’s inner ear as he gradually experiences them in memory. To be sure, Köstlin’s manuscript of the poem, shown in fig. 2.2, lacks the crucial past-tense descriptor “längst.” Brahms likely added this word himself.  

This word heightens the disjunction between present

\[\text{between the nightingale’s song in F minor, versus the version of it that the protagonist hears in F major.}\]

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This word heightens the disjunction between present

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\[\text{Hühn, “Plotting the Lyric,” 158.}\]

\[\text{“Längst” also appears in Gustav Ophüls, } Brahms-Texte: Vollständige Sammlung der von Johannes Brahms komponierten und musikalisch bearbeiteten Dichtungen (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1923), 206.\]
Figure 2.2: Manuscript of Köstlin’s “Nachtigall” from the Nachlass at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach. Poetry book Z 2702; “99. Gedicht, 9. Juni [1838]”

and past tenses that lies at the core of the poem’s meaning, and implies that the persona’s experience of listening to the nightingale is more emotionally fraught than the poem’s simultaneous narration of it suggests.

(3) Overall, the poem depicts an evolving temporal experience in which narrating and focalizing are combined. The structure of “Nachtigall” mimics in the reader the protagonist’s perceptual changes by implying a psychological transformation in line 4—a turning point between pure present experience and one that is increasingly tainted by memories. This more abstract temporal plot encompasses the protagonist’s gradual, three-stage realization: (a) in lines 1‒3, he speaks to the nightingale, an external being, who produces a song separate from himself; (b) in line 4, the interjection “Nein” signals his introspective turn, away from the nightingale’s song and into his own memories; finally, (c) in lines 5‒9, the protagonist reveals his emotional affinity for the nightingale: it contains a lingering echo of his own, human song (“tones”).

I distinguish this temporal layer from the others since it combines the static and dynamic layers outlined above.

In another possible interpretation, the protagonist might not hear the echo of his own song, but that of a lost beloved.
listening deeply, the protagonist transforms “Schall” (“sound”) into “Widerhall” (“echo”), symbolizing the memory of meaningful, communicative songs that he yearns to recapture.²⁴

Form in Brahms’s “Nachtigall”

Brahms’s setting of “Nachtigall” grafts a ternary form (ABA¹), shown in fig. 2.3, onto the poem’s erratic structure, responding to the punctuation in lines 1–3 and the recurring “a” rhyme, which has thematic implications. F minor spans the A section, and is coextensive with a complete sentence (lines 1–3), while the bulk of the poem (lines 4–8) appears within the B section’s standing on the dominant.²⁵ Brahms sets the musical reprise (A¹) starting in m. 25, so that the returning “-all” rhyme, “Widerhall,” coincides with material in the tonic, F minor. The harmonic contrast between the A sections’ static tonic harmony and the B section’s active dominant imparts a dramatic arc-like structure to the setting. The arc’s climax arrives at the V₇₄₈ chord in m. 22 and the ensuing caesura in m. 25. In opposition to the poem’s punctuation, the caesura ruptures the enjambment between lines 8 and 9. This delays resolution of the Uralinie’s 4 (Bb, mm. 20–23), shown in ex. 2.2, to 3 (Ab, m. 26), a voice-leading connection that highlights the reprise of musical material in F minor (A¹). Yet as I will show, this reprise is tenuous, representing F-minor’s diluted presence at the end of the song. An F-major structural cadence signifies the protagonist’s altered perception of the nightingale’s song in the concluding section.

Within this basic harmonic plan, Brahms’s setting invokes modal mixture through a gradual transformation. This transformation can be understood as an analogue for the

²⁴Deep contemplation of the nightingale’s song is linked to its cathartic power. Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale titled “The Nightingale” contrasts an emperor’s preference for the song of a mechanical nightingale with the real nightingale, whose song inspires Death to relinquish its hold on him. The mechanical nightingale represents mere sound and malfunctions from overuse, but the true nightingale produces communicative song and rescues the emperor. Sharon Krebs, “Listening like a Nightingale” (lecture, Vancouver International Song Institute, University of British Columbia, 2012).
²⁵The A section links the harmonic stability of F minor with grammatical stability in the first sentence.
**Figure 2.3:** Brahms, “Nachtigall,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>5–8</th>
<th>8–11</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>11–24</th>
<th>25–33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures:</td>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>5–8</td>
<td>8–11</td>
<td>11–24</td>
<td>25–33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent:</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>voice/piano</td>
<td>(caesura)</td>
<td>voice/piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem:</td>
<td>lines 1–3</td>
<td>4–8</td>
<td>9 (9 repeated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic progressions in F minor:</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>(I)</td>
<td>(I)</td>
<td>HC on V (standing on the dominant)</td>
<td>I((b)) V(^7) (\rightarrow) I((b))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 2.2:** Graph of “Nachtigall,” (mm. 1–31)
protagonist’s three temporal perceptions in Köstlin’s poem: (1) entranced by its song, the protagonist initially speaks to the nightingale in the F-minor A section; (2) in the B section, the protagonist’s emotions toward the nightingale change from indifference to catharsis, as a standing on the dominant initiates and prolongs tension; (3) the protagonist realizes that his lost song is unattainable, modifying his initial, naïve interpretation of the nightingale’s music as the A\textsuperscript{1} section introduces F major. (F major emerges most prominently in the combined B and A\textsuperscript{1} sections, and thus across the thematic and tonal F-minor return of A material.) While the modal opposition at the song’s background represents an underlying separation between past and present, the teleological progression from F minor to F major on the musical surface represents the protagonist’s evolving awareness of the past.\textsuperscript{26}

As ex. 2.2 summarizes, “Nachtigall” uses $\flat 3$ within an overarching linear progression from $\flat 5$. It emerges as the Urlinie articulates $\flat 4$ as a passing tone between the Kopfton, C5 ($\flat 5$), and A\textsubscript{b}4 ($\flat 3$, m. 26). Yet despite its complete, minor-mode Urlinie, an emergent F-major tonic, indicated by $\sharp 3$, remains an implicit presence until the structural cadence in mm. 30–31. Prior to this, in mm. 10–22, $\flat 3$ (A\textsubscript{b}) is confined to the foreground; its nascent presence hovers behind a façade of dominant prolongation that spans mm. 10–30 (see brackets).

Gradually, however, F major penetrates deeper into the background structure, eventually replacing F minor by repressing the Urlinie tone A\textsubscript{b} (ex. 2.2). Though A\textsubscript{b} ($\flat 3$) is supported by a root-position F-minor chord in m. 26, this tonic chord is interpreted as the upper third of a dominant-seventh chord built on D\textsubscript{b} (VI), which also supports a Neapolitan six-four chord; at the middleground, D\textsubscript{b} functions as a neighbor note to the dominant. This renders the F-minor chord

\textsuperscript{26}This progression between two different affective, or emotional, states resembles Robert Hatten’s “expressive genres.”
in m. 26 a tonic by association only—that is, a sonority that recalls the previous structural tonic without functioning structurally itself. By coinciding with the return of A-section thematic material at the onset of A¹, this F-minor chord mimics return but is ultimately subordinated to the materialization of F major in the song’s final measures, as the dominant prolonged across the B and A¹ sections resolves to F major in m. 31, supporting the prominent inner voice A₃. Owing to this metamorphosis between structural layers, F minor and F major might be understood to signify opposed poetic temporalities (the nightingale’s song in the present = minor, the protagonist’s lost song = major), illustrating the distance between present and the irretrievable past. Although A₃ achieves structural status at the background, indicated by the cadence in mm. 30–31, Brahms suggests its elusiveness by placing its arrival after the poem’s ending (during a repetition of “ein leiser Widerhall,”), much like the past that is so elusive to the protagonist.

Prescient motives in sections A and B

In order to show how the modal progression in “Nachtigall” can be understood metaphorically to represent the protagonist’s internal realization of the past, this section will focus on the relationship of the modal narrative to the song’s motivic content. Motives in the A section introduce chromatic pitches that Schoenberg might have called “tonal problems”; these are developed in the B section, where they appear in an F-major context, in retrograde, and in counterpoint with each other.²⁷ Meanings we might ascribe to these motives are linked to their use in the nightingale’s initial song in the A section, where they signify externality. This

²⁷Patricia Carpenter shows tonal problems in Brahms’s A-major Intermezzo (op. 76, no. 5) in “A Problem in Organic Form: Schoenberg’s Tonal Body,” Theory and Practice 13 (1988): 31–63. The motivic development in “Nachtigall,” however, is not “developing variation” in the sense that Schoenberg describes. Rather, the song displays motivic elaboration through its use of diatonicized, F-major motives in the B section. I revisit Brahms’s use of tonal problems in ch. 4.
contrasts with their augmentation and expansion in the B section, representing their heightened meaning when magnified inside the protagonist’s mind. Further, interactions between the piano and vocal personae actualize this motivic evolution. In the A section, the piano mimics the nightingale, but in the B section, it assumes the role of accompanist. In the A¹ section, Brahms suggests an ironic twist, depicting the piano “as nightingale” in a separate realm from the voice, as if it has achieved distance from the nightingale’s song.

**Mimesis of the nightingale in section A**

The A section in “Nachtigall” establishes F minor and exemplifies the piano’s mimetic role in portraying the nightingale as an external being. The piano first imitates the nightingale’s song in the prelude (mm. 1–4), cast in a mechanical, repetitive idiom within a perceived four-measure sentence: ex. 2.3 shows that a repeated basic idea (mm. 1–2) leads to fragmentation and a cadence (mm. 3–4). These features solidify the regular duple hypermeter, which holds throughout the A section, and characterize the nightingale’s song in a literal way, reflecting its separation from the protagonist in Köstlin’s poem through registral means. (The nightingale’s register exists between D⁴ and F⁶, and reappears during the piano’s interlude in mm. 8–10).

A comparison of mm. 1–4 with Messiaen’s transcription of the nightingale in “Oiseaux exotiques” and Beethoven’s evocative portrayal in his Sixth Symphony (exs. 2.3a and b) reveals that Brahms’s version resembles elements of both: the quick grace-note figures in mm. 1–2 recall

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28Brahms’s basic idea occupies one quarter-note beat, invoking Caplin’s real versus notated measures. Here, a notated four-measure sentential structure may be perceived as eight measures. William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 35.

29Elizabeth von Herzogenberg uses an incipit from “Nachtigall” in one of several letters to Brahms that invoke bird transcriptions in connection with musical works (this letter is dated June 3, 1885). *Johannes Brahms: The Herzogenberg Correspondence*, trans. Hannah Bryant, ed. Max Kalbeck (New York: Da Capo Press, 1987), 235. A letter dated July 10, 1881 also invokes the blackbird as the harbinger of spring in connection with Johann Strauss’s waltz melody, set to the text “Freut euch des Lebens.” Ibid., 135.
Example 2.3: “Nachtigall.” A section (mm. 1–12)

Example 2.3a: Messiaen, transcription of the nightingale

Messiaen’s literal representation, while the held syncopations in the inner voice of mm. 3–4 allude to Beethoven’s instrumental recreation. Brahms’s prelude also suggests a temporal aspect: the nightingale’s song pervades the protagonist’s atmosphere before he begins to speak.

31Carl Schachter has suggested that the syncopations in Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony reflect a characteristically nineteenth-century representation of the nightingale (personal communication).
Example 2.3b: Beethoven Symphony no. 6, mvmt ii (mm. 129–132)\textsuperscript{32}

This musically illustrates a past tense that was latent in the poem and indicates that the voice (representing the protagonist) listens to the nightingale’s music before entering. When it finally enters, the voice expresses its entrancement with the nightingale’s song by singing it verbatim in a lower register that idiomatically denotes a human voice.

Within the A section’s AA\textsuperscript{1}B design—which corresponds to the agential alternation piano, voice, piano\textsuperscript{33}—the nightingale’s music yields various motives that reappear later on, including: (1) the dyad B\textsubscript{b}–C in m. 1; and (2) the fifth-progression C–B\textsubscript{b}–B\textsubscript{b}–A\textsubscript{b}–G–F, labeled in ex. 2.4. Each motive in mm. 1–4 arises from harmonic and metrical ambiguities. The upbeat in the actual score obscures the notated barline, resulting in a shadow meter beginning on the fourth eighth note of each measure, shown by the recomposition in ex. 2.4. In Brahms’s original version, however, a weakly placed tonic six-three chord vies for structural priority with a common-tone augmented-sixth chord (on beats 1 and 2) that seems to prolong it (see ex. 2.3).

Brahms underscores the instability of the augmented-sixth and the structural priority of the F-minor tonic through two separate grouping slurs in each basic idea, stressing the inability of B\textsubscript{b}5 (a tonal problem) to resolve to C6 in m. 2. The brief resolution of B\textsubscript{b}4 to C5 in mm. 2–3

\textsuperscript{32}Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphonies Nos. 5, 6, and 7 in Full Score* (New York: Dover Publications, 1989).

\textsuperscript{33}The piano’s sections imitate the nightingale.
(within an unstable $A^b$-major six-four chord) is only permitted in an inner voice, at the expressive climax of the phrase. The issue of $B^b$’s resolution is also contextualized as part of a descending fifth-progression between C5 and F4 that traverses two registers; $\dot{3}$ is transferred to an inner voice (compare ex. 2.4 with ex. 2.2, mm. 1–4).34 In this context, $B^b$ functions like a $C^b$, descending through $\dot{4}$ en route to $A^b$, the midpoint of the fifth-progression.35 It is as though each basic idea (mm. 1–2) tries to initiate a descent from $\dot{5}$ but is prevented from achieving $\dot{1}$ until m. 4—a feature of the voice leading that mirrors the mannered depiction of the nightingale’s song.

**Example 2.4:** “Nachtigall,” hypothetical rebarring of mm. 1–4, showing perceived meter

Three additional motives later revisited in the B section emerge from the nightingale’s music in mm. 1–4 and the interlude in mm. 8–10. In mm. 3–4, as ex. 2.5 shows, a descending tetrachord from $F_6$ (and $F_5$) in the upper voice ($F–E_b–D_b–C$) is constrained with its major-mode, ascending version in the bass ($C–D–E–F$), while mm. 8–11 introduce $\frac{b2}{2}$ ($G_b$) via a double-neighbor figure encircling $F$. Both passages are linked through the tonal problem of $B^b/C^b$; mm. 8–10 revive the enharmonic potential of $B^b$ and harmonically fulfill its function as $C^b$, which supports a $V^4_2$ chord in m. 8, resolving to a Neapolitan six-three chord. Brahms’s respelling of the augmented-sixth chord from m. 1 as $D_b–F–A^b–C_b$ allows the chromatic pitch $B^b$ to relinquish

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34 This registral transfer emphasizes $A^b$’s lack of stable harmonic support.
Example 2.5: Motives that emerge from the piano’s imitation of the nightingale (mm. 1–4 and 8–11)

its need for upward resolution, giving the sense that the interlude (mm. 8–10) revisits and rectifies issues posed in the prelude.\(^\text{36}\)

Returning to Köstlin’s poem, we may summarize how Brahms’s setting of lines 1–3 might imply musical personae, or agents—more specifically, a vocal persona distinct from that embodied by the piano (see ex. 2.3 above). Register is perhaps the clearest distinguishing factor; put simply, the piano occupies a higher range when its persona mimics the nightingale.\(^\text{37}\) In its lower range, the piano merely accompanies the voice (mm. 5–8), who adopts the original melody intact, while sixteenth-note rhythmic displacements in the right hand suggest its subservience. Moreover, the one-to-one identity between the nightingale’s song and the vocal line portrays the protagonist’s total absorption in the sounds around him, which penetrate his ear and thought (“er dringt mir durch Mark und Bein”).\(^\text{38}\) This correlation between the voice and piano melodies in mm. 5–8 assumes greater significance when compared to their lack of correspondence in the A\(^1\) section (ex. 2.6). Despite the thematic return of the basic idea in mm. 25–28 and the “a” rhyme “Widerhall,” the melodies of the voice and piano remain in separate registers. In mm. 26–27, the voice introduces a new melody that emphasizes the descent $3\rightarrow2\rightarrow1$ while the piano recapitulates

\(^{36}\)This respelling is foreshadowed in the accompaniment in m. 5.

\(^{37}\)Suurpää notes Schubert’s similar use of a high register in “Die Krähe” to depict the crow circling above the protagonist. Suurpää, Death in Winterreise, 82.

\(^{38}\)Stylistically, the vocal entrance in the nineteenth-century Lied often reiterates material originating in the prelude. Brahms uses this convention to communicate a facet of the poem’s meaning.
mm. 1–2, implying that events in the B section have severed the ability of voice and the piano “as nightingale” to sing the same song.

**Motivic expansion and F major as implicit key in section B**

Whereas F minor governs the A section, F major emerges only gradually in mm. 11–25 of the B section, together with an expansion of the A section’s motives (ex. 2.7). Despite the complete absence of an F-major triad from the foreground, a standing on F major’s dominant, initiated at the half cadence in m.11, and the salient A♭s that emerge in mm. 12, 19, and 22 suggest that F major pervades the B section although it remains an implicit key. As shown in ex. 2.7, Brahms heightens expectations for a root-position, major-mode tonic through two attempts to resolve C major (V): (1) mm. 12–20; (2) mm. 21–23. In the first attempt, the descending fifth-

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39Elizabeth von Herzogenberg considered the change to F major in the Lied’s second part one of its most noteworthy characteristics. She expressed this by comparing “Nachtigall” to “Wanderer” (another Köstlin setting by Brahms that may have originated as Brahms’s first attempt at composing “Nachtigall”) in a letter from May 21–22, 1885. Her letter indicates that Brahms may have initially considered grouping both songs as a pair (an issue I take up in ch. 5). She writes, “I’m afraid of not saying the right thing about the Nightingale and the Wanderer, for the fact is, only one of them meets with my entire approval—the Nightingale, which I like very much. The melody has the bittersweet of the real nightingale’s song; they seem to revel in augmented and diminished intervals, passionate little creatures that they are!—and the simple tenderness of the F major part is so charming by contrast.... whereas the Wanderer has a touch of the chilly north; one misses the pleasing contrast, which the second part fails to supply satisfactorily. In any case, it would not come well after the Nightingale and could only detract from its effect by being placed before it.” Kalbeck, *The Herzogenberg Correspondence*, 228.
Example 2.7: “Nachtigall,” B section (mm. 8–25)

progression pervades the piano’s texture, engendering expectation for Š (see ex. 2.8). Initially, however, the fifth-progression is chromatically altered to C–B♭–A♭–G–F♯ and imitated in canon in mm. 13–14. This chromatic alteration of Š to F♯ tonicizes II in m. 15, while the alteration back to F♯ tonicizes IV, thus “reactivating” the dominant arrival in m. 12 through pre-dominant
Example 2.8: “Nachtigall,” canonic fifths (mm. 12–20)

preparation. Later, in mm. 18–19 (as ex. 2.7 shows), augmentation of the fifth-progression in the bass line suggests an imminent root-position F-major chord as the bass seeks out F in m. 20, but a B♭-major six-four chord on the downbeat thwarts this resolution. A new cycle through IV♭ and II♭ then reinforces V7 by tonicizing it (mm. 20–22).

Within the song’s modal narrative, the B section’s dominant reactivations not only suggest impending closure in F major, but also support the song’s freest and lengthiest declamatory section. This suspension of tonal resolution provides an analogue for the fluid syntax in lines 5–8 of Köstlin’s poem, which builds grammatical tension leading toward the protagonist’s climactic perception of lost songs. The adjectives “andern,” “himmelschönen,” and “verklungenen” propel the reader forward in search of the noun “Tönen” in line 8, driving the syntactical momentum onwards and glorifying the human song. In succumbing to this gravitation toward the noun, the reader experiences the protagonist’s mental process of searching internally for long-lost tones. It is as if an isomorphism exists between tonal and grammatical structures: a string of adjectives await the noun in much the same way the dominant awaits the tonic.

Brahms also portrays this forward motion musically through dynamics (compare the pianissimo in mm. 18–19 with the forte in m. 22) and the rising vocal line, which peaks twice after passages that accumulate tension: at G5 in m. 17 and A5 in m. 22 (ex. 2.7). Factors including the long-held arrival on V7, the voice’s striving for A♭5 (the song’s highest pitch and ⏤
of F major) at the word “längst,” and the diminuendo and ritardando following the reiteration of forte in m. 22 suggest that m. 22 is the song’s climax, where the voice enacts the process of reaching for an irretrievable, lost song. A hypothetical reduction of this passage in ex. 2.9 below

Example 2.9: “Nachtigall,” reduction and hypothetical reharmonization of mm. 18–24

![Example 2.9: “Nachtigall,” reduction and hypothetical reharmonization of mm. 18–24](image)

provides a different harmonization for A♭5 using a cadential six-four (Robert Hatten’s “arrival six-four”) that would actualize the F-major cadence implied by the entire B section.\textsuperscript{40} In contrast to this achievement of A♭5 posited in the alternative harmonization, the voice’s straining for A♭, a dissonant non-chordal tone that grates against the long-held dominant-seventh chord in m. 22 of the actual score (ex. 2.7), seems more aptly to depict the protagonist’s frustrated striving toward an unattainable goal.

In order to prepare this climax in m. 22, Brahms presents expanded, diatonicized variants of motives from the nightingale’s music within the B section’s two dominant reactivations (mm. 11–19 and 20–24). Example 2.7 highlights these motives: (1) the descending fifth from C to F; (2) the rising fourth-motive; and (3) the double-neighbor figure F–E♭–G–F. Indeed, as the voice uses the nightingale’s music, striving toward A♭ in m. 22, it transcends the registral boundary of G♭5 established in m. 17, supported by the piano’s textural change to rapturous arpeggios in m. 20. These sweeping gestures indicate an agential change: the piano resumes its role as

\textsuperscript{40}Hatten, Musical Meaning in Beethoven, 15.
accompanist to the voice as “singer,” as it had in mm. 5–8, as the protagonist alights on the idea that songs “other” (“andern”) than the nightingale’s move him to catharsis. Brahms musically manifests what Köstlin’s poem left to the imagination: when filtered through the protagonist’s perception, external “noise” (“Schall”) is transformed into the memory of lost, ecstatic human song (“Lied”). Brahms encodes this poetic transformation of external song into internal song in the B section’s motivic content.\textsuperscript{41}

\textbf{Depictions of echo in A\textsuperscript{1}}

Following the B section’s protracted motions toward the dominant, mm. 25–26 present a thematic reprise of the basic idea from mm. 1–2, initiating the A\textsuperscript{1} section (ex. 2.10). Although varied reprises appear frequently in Brahms’s ternary-form and strophic Lieder, the A\textsuperscript{1} section in “Nachtigall” distinctively revisits agential and tonal issues posed earlier in the song. It achieves a major-mode structural cadence (mm. 30–31) outside the poem’s formal close, offering fulfillment of the B section’s harmonic trajectory.\textsuperscript{42} That this final cadence is not merely a Picardy third, but part of the work’s structural background is suggested by its register; as shown in ex. 2.10, the piano’s harmonic reinstatement of the V\textsuperscript{7} that Brahms seems to have abandoned in m. 24, now marked dolce in m. 30, also restores the original voicing and register of this chord. This connection between mm. 24 and 30 suggests that the F-minor return in mm. 25–28 is

\textsuperscript{41}It is noteworthy that Köstlin’s protagonist does not identify the origin of his lost song, leaving the reader to imagine it. Moreover, by appropriating the nightingale’s wordless song in rapturous melody, the voice supplies it with text, evoking a dichotomy between texted and absolute music discussed by Lawrence Kramer. Referring to the enigmatic essence of absolute music, Kramer cites the poet’s “impulse to insert his own words in the linguistic gap opened by [the] song.” Kramer lists Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale” and Shelley’s “To a Skylark,” as examples of poetry in which the nightingale and protagonist interchange roles. Lawrence Kramer, \textit{Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 139.

parenthetical, subordinated to the harmonic prolongation of $V^7$ across the reprise of the basic idea.\textsuperscript{43}

**Example 2.10:** “Nachtigall,” A\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 22–33)

By blurring the formal boundary between B and A\textsuperscript{1}, these parenthetical measures enable the music to revisit and resolve the enharmonic issue or tonal problem of C\textsubscript{b}/B\textsubscript{b} that pervaded the A section and the nightingale’s interlude in mm. 8–10 prior to the song’s structural close (compare ex. 2.5). As the voice pursues minor-mode closure on $\hat{1}$ in mm. 26 and 28, shown in ex. 2.10, the bass note D\textsubscript{b} subverts its achievement. D\textsubscript{b} denies root-position tonic support in both measures by reiterating the enharmonically related augmented-sixth and dominant-seventh

\textsuperscript{43}Peter Smith shows that Brahms often blurs thematic returns in his sonata forms by extending a prolonged dominant across the end of the development and the beginning of the recapitulation. Peter Smith, “Brahms and Schenker: A Mutual Response to Sonata Form,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 16/1 (Spring 1994): 77–103.
chords Db–F–Ab–B♭ and Db–F–Ab–Cb, permitting both spellings to appear successively and
directly highlighting the B/Cb opposition. In its dominant-seventh spelling, the chord resolves to
the Neapolitan in m. 29. As shown in my graph of the structural close (see ex. 2.2), this coincides
with an initiation of the nightingale’s descending-fifth motive from the inner voice C4 that
curtails its descent to end on A♭3 in m. 31 as the voice achieves 1.⁴⁴

After re-introducing all of the chromatic scale degrees indigenous to F minor’s
“Neapolitan complex” (♭6, ♭2, and ♭3), Brahms resolves the harmonic tensions they created in the
A section, through the song’s major-mode ending (see ex. 2.10; mm. 30–31).⁴⁵ As the bass note
Db resolves to C in m. 30, the piano’s gently rising arpeggios recall the climax in m. 22; this is
complemented by an allusion to the nightingale’s double-neighbor motive in the piano’s right
hand (now in F major) and an embellishing ♭6 in the voice. The smooth resolution of B♭ to A♮, in
the same register, between V⁷ and I highlights the piano’s elevation of ♭3 to A♭5 (achieved
previously on the word “längst” in m. 22) above the stable F-major tonic (as noted above). In the
final measure, A♭ rings out in the piano accompaniment within a full-voiced chord that
encompasses all of the registers used in the song, while the appoggiaturas G♭–F (mm. 31–32)
portray the “echo” in Köstlin’s text: ♭2 (G♭) is resolved to 1 in all registers that previously
expressed G♭. Motivically, the G♭–F motive creates a subtle resonance with the word “leiser” in
m. 27, which appears in a strong metrical position without bass support. A similar motivic
connection appears between the voice’s embellishment of D♭–C in m. 30 and the preceding Db–C

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⁴⁴This final inner-voice descent recalls the prelude’s arrested at A♭ in the middle of its larger fifth-progression, here
stated in its major-mode form.
⁴⁵Peter Smith and Christopher Wintle discuss Brahms’s use of the Neapolitan complex selected F-minor chamber
works, the E-minor Cello Sonata (op. 38) and “Unbewegte laue Luft” (op. 58, no. 7)—an aspect of this song that I
will revisit in ch. 4. Christopher Wintle, “The Sceptered Pall: Brahms’s Progressive Harmony,” in Brahms 2:
Biographical, Documentary, and Analytical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 197–222;
Peter Smith, “Brahms and the Neapolitan Complex: ♭II, ♭VI, and Their Multiple Functions in the First Movement of
at “Tönen.” It is as if the protagonist, having experienced the height of the nightingale’s cathartic powers in attempting to retrieve long-lost tones, accepts the lost past by enjoying the song’s lingering echo, signified by both motivic dyads at the structural close.

“Es träumte mir” (op. 57, no. 3)

Degrees of the past in Georg Friedrich Daumer’s “Es träumte mir”

Whereas the predominantly present-tense narration in Köstlin’s “Nachtigall” conjures an implicit past tense by evoking memory and echo, “Es träumte mir,” shown in fig. 2.4, narrates in the past tense (Hühn’s “retrospective narration”) but also communicates a latent present tense through descriptions. The simple past tense arises through the persona’s grammar, since he describes a dream in the past and remains temporally distant from it. But the content of the protagonist’s story conveys his experience of the dream, thereby focusing on an implicit present tense. This distance between the past tense, in which the protagonist recounts a melancholy story after the dream has ended, and a present tense in the ongoing dream represents a psychological transformation from telling about the dream to an implication of reliving it.

Within the persona’s focalizing function, the poem also conveys a hierarchy between two conflicting states of consciousness: awareness of reality and absorption in illusion. While surrounded by the dream’s comforting illusions, the protagonist feels treasured by the beloved. Yet he is also beset by a distressing external reality that threatens to puncture the dream’s protective atmosphere. Subjunctive grammatical constructions help to blur this boundary between the protagonist’s awareness of harsh reality and immersion in a peaceful (albeit fragile) dream world. The poem’s first line (“Es träumte mir”) and its frequent use of the word “sei” imply hypothetical events as if narrated in the third person, gently infusing uncertainty into the
poetic language itself, as if the traumatic experience of a painful illusion has caused the persona
to question the plausibility of his entire experience.46

**Figure 2.4:** Georg Friedrich Daumer, “Es träumte mir.” *Polydora: Ein weltpoetisches Liederbuch.* Frankfurt am Main: Literarische Anstalt, 1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Es träumte mir,</td>
<td>a I dreamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ich sei dir teuer;</td>
<td>b I was dear to you;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Doch zu erwachen</td>
<td>c But to waken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Bedürft’ ich <strong>kaum.</strong></td>
<td>d I hardly needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Denn, ach, im Traume</td>
<td>d For in the dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Bereits empfand ich,</td>
<td>e I already felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Es sei ein <strong>Traum.</strong></td>
<td>d That it was a dream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rhyme, syntax, and temporality**

Together with the poem’s nested temporalities, its rhyme scheme, syntax, and line groupings simulate for the reader the protagonist’s experience inside the dream. These poetic devices manipulate the ebb and flow of our expectations and create various emotional states that fluctuate within the poem’s generally despondent mood. In its first part (lines 1–4 in fig. 2.4), the protagonist retains hopeful sentiments toward the beloved in his dream; in its second part (lines 5–8), a biting, negative conclusion interrupts his enjoyment of the dream’s blissful illusion. Since Daumer’s poem divides into two asymmetrical sections of four and three lines each, the poem’s only rhyme, “kaum” and “Traum,” reinforces this structure.47

The poem’s main division in line 4 also implies a causal relationship between the sections that creates dramatic tension: waking was unnecessary (section 1) because the protagonist presumed reality all along (section 2). This binary relationship between parts is mirrored by more

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46Since Daumer’s source for the poem is an anonymous Spanish text, we cannot compare it with his translation.
47In the poem’s metrics, “kaum” and “Traum” are stressed, single-syllable endings that create closure. These are contrasted by the unstressed final syllables of “teuer,” “erwachen,” “Traume” and “empfand ich,” which suggest continuation.
local syntactical tensions between lines; the poem cultivates the reader’s expectation that the end of each two-line group will supply crucial information about the narrative. In line 2, we learn the subject of the dream ("I dreamed that → I was dear to you"). Yet in the ensuing lines, uncertainty rather than clarification occurs. Line 4 suggests ambiguity between wakefulness and dreaming ("but to awaken" → "I hardly needed"), while the end of line 6 ("Bereits empfind ich") prevents poetic closure by compelling the reader to wonder what the protagonist felt. The text “es sei ein Traum” provides semantic closure by answering this question and resolves syntactical tensions that accumulate from line 5, bursting through the poem’s potentially symmetrical six-line form as if providing an extra line. When line 7 is interpreted as overflowing past the poem’s hypothetical boundary, it becomes a poetic-structural metaphor for a distressing reality intruding into the dream’s protective environs.

In addition to projecting a two-stage dramatic trajectory, the poem’s use of punctuation implies an emotional journey from hope to despair. The protagonist not only becomes gradually disillusioned with the dream in each two-line group, but is also overwhelmed by sadness. The semicolon at “teuer” (line 2) is a performance directive to pause as the protagonist lingers in the hope of being treasured. Yet the foreboding “doch” (line 3) warns against waking. Finally, “ach” (line 5) conveys the protagonist reliving the painful realization internally before expressing it through the stark final noun, “Traum,” its delayed arrival enhancing the climactic effect. This third return of the poem’s subject, “dreaming” (“Traum”) imparts thematic closure to the poem by alluding to the previous words “träumte” (implying hope) and “Traume” (implying fear of reality). By the poem’s ending, the reader experiences the protagonist’s jarring recognition that

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48In Brahms’s version of the text, “ach” is replaced by “schon” in the first iteration of the text, which appears twice. The word “schon” indicates the temporal priority of the protagonist’s awareness in contrast to his wakefulness.

49See n. 19 above.
the dream is futile, a dénouement enhanced by his gradual progression through increasingly distraught emotions.

After examining the temporal, psychological, and structural features that convey emotional and psychological progressions in Daumer’s text, we can begin examining the ways that Brahms offers a reading of the poem. More specifically, we can explore how Brahms draws out an implied double reality—or layered consciousness—that remains latent when the text is read alone. In my interpretation, the past tense in which the protagonist speaks is subordinate to his experience of the dream. I argue that Brahms portrays the relived dream using expressive declamation and fluidly intertwined parallel major and minor modes. Each mode is supported by either the vocal or piano persona, signifying a certain layer of the protagonist’s consciousness. This modal dichotomy thus represents a thematic division in the text: preservation of the illusory dream (B major) versus the knowledge of bitter reality (B minor).

**Form and harmonic process in Brahms’s setting**

Whereas Daumer’s text depicts an emotional progression between hope and disappointment, I suggest that Brahms’s setting focuses on the poem’s latent present tense by portraying the protagonist’s intertwined mental states over the course of its binary design (AA\(^1\); see fig. 2.5). This added psychological complexity arises from its harmonic features, including a large-scale prolongation of V\(^7\) that delays the tonic’s arrival until the structural cadence in m. 32, and the reciprocal relationship between B major and E minor, perceived in the A section as
**Figure 2.5:** “Es träumte mir,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th></th>
<th>A¹</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent:</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>voice/piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic lines:</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>5–6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic progression in B major:</td>
<td>V⁷ (standing on the dominant)</td>
<td>(V⁷)</td>
<td>IV₆</td>
<td>(Aug 6⁷)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 2.11:** “Es träumte mir,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–20) and A¹ section (mm. 21–38)
Example 2.11 continued:
$V^7 \rightarrow I$ and $I^7 \rightarrow IV(\hat{1})$ (see my graph in ex. 2.11).\footnote{Delayed tonic arrivals appear frequently in Brahms’s output and are discussed in: Heather Platt, “Text-Music Relationships in the Lieder of Johannes Brahms” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1992).} In the A section (mm. 1–20), Brahms sets the entire poem within a prolongation of $V^7$ that is initially denied resolution to the tonic. Instead, it is reactivated by an augmented-sixth chord in m. 20 following an auxiliary cadence in E minor (mm. 16–19). In the $A^1$ section, Brahms corrects this thwarted resolution of $V^7$ by resolving the dominant-seventh chord to a B-major tonic at the structural cadence in m. 32. Owing to Brahms’s repetition of lines 5–7 in the $A^1$ section, this harmonic progression assumes the role of rectification in the musical narrative. Much as the voice revisits the poem’s final passage, Brahms revisits previous harmonic tensions in order to lay them to rest.

In conjunction with the teleological harmonic progression from $V^7$ to $I$ that governs the entire song, an opposition between $D#$ and $D_b$ at the foreground creates an additional narrative layer. As shown in ex. 2.11, the opposition between $D#$ and $D_b$ is “enacted” by the vocal and piano personae; $D#$ ($\hat{1}$) appears prominently during the piano’s prelude (m. 2) and interlude (m. 22), while $D_b$ occurs in the vocal line (mm. 20 and 28) and in the postlude at m. 36. The chromatic passing motion $C^\flat - C_X - D#$, which appears locally in mm. 1–7 and globally, spanning mm. 11–22 at the middleground, further emphasizes the conflict between $D#$ and $D_b$ in the Urtext by enharmonically associating $C_X$ with $D_b$ and highlighting the pitches’ opposed directional tendencies in the song’s narrative.\footnote{In a nuanced reading of this song, Daniel Stevens also interprets the enharmonic relationship between $C_X$ and $D_b$ as reflecting the voice’s inability to achieve closure in B major by descending from $D#$. He relates the dyad $A#/C_X$ above the song’s prolonged dominant chords as echoing the dyad $B/^b/D$ in “Von waldbekränzter Höhe,” op. 57, no. 1, revealing a musical echo between these songs. Stevens, “Brahms’s Song Collections,” 145.} In the A section, the piano uses $C_X$’s rising tendency in order to regain $D#$ above an unstable B-major six-four chord. However, in the $A^1$ section, the voice reiterates $D_b$’s tendency to descend to $\hat{1}$. At the fermata between A and $A^1$ in
m. 20, Brahms draws attention to piano’s role in transforming D♭ into C♯ above an augmented-sixth chord that reactivates the V⁷ chord from m.1, motivating the song to continue even after the singer declaims the poem’s final line.⁵²

**Agential depictions of modal mixture**

Three passages from “Es träumte mir” demonstrate that the song’s voice-leading structure and use of modal mixture project agents representing two levels of consciousness: the prelude and vocal entrance (mm. 1–8), the song’s climax (mm. 16–20), and the structural cadence and postlud (mm. 28–38). Each passage supports the claim that Brahms introduces harmonic ambiguity through the reciprocal relationship between E minor and B major at the song’s midpoint (m. 20) in conjunction with an overarching major-minor modal dichotomy. The reciprocal relationship between the two keys can be expressed through either plagal or authentic harmonic motions (as I → IV♭ or V → I♭) that occur across different spans of the song. Although the authentic harmonic motion from B to E suggests a cadence in E minor, its function is nevertheless to tonicize the minor IV chord. In this context, E minor enables the threat of a

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⁵²Owing to its beginning in *medias res* with C♯ above dominant harmony, “Es träumte mir” displays evidence of intertextuality with Brahms’s earlier Ballade in B major (op. 10, no. 4), which begins with the rising motive D♭–D♯ in mm. 1–2 (D♭ alludes to C♯; see ex. below). Following the achievement of V⁷ at the end of the Ballade’s B section, Brahms uses the chromatic passing motion C♯–D♭–D♯ to initiate the reprise of A-section material.
structural cadence in B minor (B major’s parallel minor), which signifies intrusive present reality.

Example 2.12: “Es träumte mir,” A section (mm. 1–22)
Measures 1–8, shown in ex. 2.12, present various melodic and harmonic features that project agential interaction between the piano and voice. Its prelude begins in medias res, prolonging the V7 chord in mm. 1–3 with a B-major six-four chord (m. 2) that ambiguously suggests both neighboring and cadential functions. The six-four’s instability, along with gradually rising arpeggiated left-hand gestures that buoy the right hand’s chords in mm. 1–4, aptly depict the dream’s fragile, ethereal atmosphere unfolding in the present tense. The right hand’s D#5 emerges aloft in m. 2 from C#5 through the chromatic passing tone C×5, as if pressed gently upward by the piano. As ex. 2.13 shows, D#5 also initiates the melodic descending-fifths 

Example 2.13: “Es träumte mir,” chordal reduction of mm. 1–8

sequence D#, G#, C#, F#, B, E, A#, extending to the pitch A#4 and encompassing mm. 1–6. The sequence arises through the freely super-positioned inner-voice pitches G#5 and F#5 in the diminished-seventh chords in mm. 2–3. While this fluid use of register portrays the dream’s amorphous quality, the sequence’s consistent dotted-quarter-note rhythm also provides unifying

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metrical regularity prior to regaining the dominant in m. 8. When the voice enters in m. 4, Brahms expands the last fifth in the sequence (E–A#) across two measures, as if the new layer of the persona’s consciousness signified by the voice disturbs the melodic pacing. Nevertheless, viewed in the context of mm. 1–8, the melodic fifths-sequence and harmonic expansion of V7 in mm. 4–6 begin to model a nascent B-major mode that emerges later in the song.

By presenting B major as a nebulous key veiled behind dominant prolongation in mm. 1–8, Brahms connects it metaphorically with the protagonist’s desire to be treasured. After its first appearance in m. 2, D♯5 only makes fleeting appearances within dominant prolongation in mm. 4–6, where the harmonic expansion heightens expectations for resolution to a root-position tonic chord. Yet, owing to the melisma that lingers on “teuer” in mm. 6–7, resolution to D♯ is evaded in m. 6; instead, D♯5 is relegated to a passing tone between E5 and C5 on the measure’s final eighth note, supported by a B-major five-three chord. Expressive word painting motivates Brahms’s emphasis of “teuer,” here inspired by the poem’s semicolon and pause that depict the protagonist’s temporary immersion in the illusion.53 In defiance of the voice’s resultant descent from D♯ to C♯ (3–2) Brahms highlights the piano’s role of continually restoring D♯ through the motive C♯–C♮–D♯ across mm. 7–8. The voice-leading connection between both agents demonstrates the volition required in attaining #3. Finally, casting a retrospective glance back to mm. 1–2, the fleeting descent of D♭ (an inner voice) in m. 2 subtly hints at its relationship to the chromatic passing tone C♮, foreshadowing the enharmonic transformation that occurs at the climax of the song.

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53 Heathers Platt discusses different types of word painting in Brahms’s Lieder in ch. 3 of her dissertation (see n. 50).
The E-minor climax

Over the course of the A section in “Es träumte mir,” Brahms sets Daumer’s poem to a sixteen-measure design illustrating Caplin’s hybrid 3, which has implications for an interpretation of the climax in E minor, B minor’s subdominant. As shown in ex. 2.12 (see above), mm. 8–19 not only provide this climax, but complete the hybrid phrasal structure begun in m. 1. In mm. 4–19, the vocal line contains a compound basic idea, fragmentation, and harmonic motion toward a cadence characteristic of Caplin’s hybrid 3, which appears frequently in Brahms’s songs that illustrate Deborah Rohr’s “strophic period” form.54

Even within the stylistic restrictions of this phrasal type, the voice and piano enact in their musical details the poem’s emotional progression, described earlier in connection with its rhyme scheme and punctuation. Like the basic idea in mm. 4–7, the contrasting basic idea (mm. 8–11) sets two poetic lines using similar declamation and rhythm in the vocal melody, but alters the harmony, which displays a prolonged dominant four-two chord in C# minor (see m. 8–11; ex. 2.12). Nevertheless, the altered content in mm. 8–11 recalls material from the prelude: the piano’s use of thirds and sixths (in the right hand, mm. 8–11) invokes the prelude’s fluid intervallic inversion of the same intervals; in mm. 8–9, Brahms alters the third-progression D#–C#–B, formed by successive downbeats in mm. 2–4 (shown in ex. 2.11) by transforming 1 into B#. Beneath #1, C# minor’s dominant-seventh chord suggests the prospect of waking at “erwachen,” representing the increased poetic tensions and change in tone signified by “doch” in lines 3–4. In mm. 11–12, the piano’s expressive interjection connects the presentation and

54Deborah Rohr defines the term “strophic period” in order to describe Brahms’s tendency to set one poetic stanza to a single harmonic progression, culminating in a cadence during a repetition of the stanza’s final line of text. (This is also a common Schubertian practice.) In repeating “Es sei ein Traum,” Brahms invokes this common nineteenth-century stylistic convention of the Lied withholding the strophe’s definitive cadence until after the stanza’s final line is repeated. Deborah Adams Rohr, “Brahms’s Metrical Dramas,” 35.
continuation phrases, continuing musical momentum across the poem’s main sectional division between lines 4 and 5.⁵⁵

Each subsequent fragmentation of the basic idea in the vocal line (mm. 12–13, 14–15; see ex. 2.12) aligns with lines 5 and 6, and responds to the poem’s lack of semantic closure by building musical tension toward the climax in m. 16. The voice’s unfolded augmented fourth G♭–C♯ (m. 12) and diminished fifth A♯–E (m. 14) that approach the climactic G♯5 in m. 16 recall the melodic fifths-sequence in mm. 1–8 through their melodic use of the same interval. As the voice declaims line 7, “Es sei ein Traum,” its G♯ initiates two closing melodic gestures as if cadencing in the parallel mode (B minor) via the third-progression G♯♭–♭–♭♭. Example 2.14 illustrates this hypothetical cadence in B minor, representative of the protagonist’s inability to escape his knowledge of harsh reality.

Example 2.14: “Es träumte mir,” hypothetical B-minor cadence in mm. 15–19

Yet Brahms’s A section uses this harmonically closed strophic model as the foil for a more innovative formal procedure: the A section in “Es träumte mir” remains harmonically open and motivates a reprise of the prelude, the onset of A¹, in m. 21. In opposition to the voice, the piano gradually subverts the melodic impulse toward B minor through a series of thwarted

⁵⁵In the score, the period ending line 4 is also altered to a semicolon, reinforcing this fluidity between phrasal parts.
harmonic resolutions (ex. 2.12). In m. 15, the piano transforms the tonic, B major, into V\(^7\) of the subdominant, E minor. This denies tonic closure through the addition of a chordal seventh (A\(^\#\)), expressed as a “reaching-over” in the graph (compare ex. 2.11), as outer voices in the piano’s right and left hands achieve their greatest registral distance from each other, spanning B\(^2\)–A\(^5\).

Emphasized by Brahms’s forte dynamic, the V\(^7\) chord displays a remarkable synthesis of poetic and musical meaning. Its syntactical dependence on the E-minor chord that follows in m. 16 reflects the semantic dependence and dramatic tension that exists between lines 6 and 7 in the poem. The resolution of V\(^7\) also causes a reinterpretation of the duple hypermeter established from m. 9 onward: m. 15 is interpreted as a weak anacrusis to the strong hyperbeat in m. 16.

This hypermetrical shift occurs with a change in declamatory emphasis: Brahms places the first stress of line 7, “sei,” on a downbeat (m. 16).\(^{56}\) As the voice continues to assert duple groupings—suggesting duple hypermeter—in mm. 16–17 and 17–18, the piano expresses dissent through its harmonic rhythm; the B-minor chord in m. 17 appears in a weak hypermetrical

\(^{56}\)The strong declamatory emphasis on “sei” is the first instance in the song of a stressed initial syllable, which heightens its climactic effect. As shown through Yonatin Malin’s declamatory schema notation, which indicates the dotted-quarter note beats with Arabic numerals, this stress in m. 16 forms the culmination of a dramatic trajectory extending throughout Brahms’s setting (see the example given below). Yonatan Malin, Songs in Motion: Rhythm and Meter in the German Lied (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[—2—]} & \text{Es träumte mir.} \\
\text{[—2—1— (2)—1]} & \text{Ich sei dir teu—er;} \\
\text{[—2—1—2]} & \text{Doch zu erwachen} \\
\text{[—1—2—1— (2)]} & \text{Bedürft' es kaum.} \\
\text{[—2—1—2]} & \text{Denn ach im Traume} \\
\text{[—2—1—2]} & \text{Bereits empfand ich,} \\
\text{[—1— (2)—1—(2)]} & \text{Es sei ein Traum.}
\end{align*}
\]
position, suggesting that the voice’s belief in the strong hypermetrical status of m. 16 is not shared by the piano.

During the E-minor tonicization in m. 16, the strong bass motion B–E provides the first definitive progression away from the song’s prolonged dominant. By converting the B-major tonic into an agent of harmonic motion toward E minor—which provides the expanded, rhetorically powerful predominant preparation for a B-minor cadence—Brahms exploits the ambiguous relationship between B major and E minor cited earlier, and momentarily obscures the song’s tonality. At m. 16, E minor and B minor are both viable tonics, holding the listener in suspense for further cadential confirmation. Their overlapping tonal functions signify the protagonist’s ability to experience illusion and reality at the same time (see my analysis in ex. 2.12).

At the deceptive motion to G₅ in the piano’s left hand (m. 18; ex. 2.12), the voice and piano suggest different levels of consciousness; only here is the B minor six-four chord in m. 17 denied cadential resolution and revealed as passing chord within prolonged subdominant harmony. A chromatic voice exchange leads to the augmented sixth chord in m. 20 (see ex. 2.11, mm. 16–20). This augmented-sixth is the vehicle for the right hand’s transformation of D₅ into Cₓ, underscored by Brahms’s directive diminuendo e molto ritardando and the tenuto signs before the fermata. Viewed in light of minor-mode intrusions made by the voice (mm. 15–19), the enharmonic transformation and reprise of the prelude convey the piano’s role in reinstating B major and restoring the dream state that was threatened by B minor. Brahms denies the poetic stanza conventional harmonic closure and transforms a putative ending (mm. 19–20) into a climax. In this climax, suggestions of cadential closure in E and B minor representing truth—or worse, wakefulness—amplify the fraught opposition between two coexisting psychological states
in the dream. Following such extreme psychological interiority and conflict, the A\(^1\) section enables resolution. Like the A\(^1\) section in “Nachtigall,” it rectifies the climax’s evaded cadences and clarifies the harmonic excursion to E minor in the context of a fully emergent B-major tonic.

**Resolution and rectification in A\(^1\)**

The A\(^1\) section in “Es träumte mir,” shown in ex. 2.15, repeats lines 5–7 and abbreviates A-section material, leading from a reprise of the prelude in mm. 21–27 (signifying illusion) to the voice’s reiteration of D\(\flat\)–C\#–B in mm. 28 and 31 (signifying reality). In mm. 26–27, Brahms tonicizes E minor, yielding a condensed version of the climax in m. 16. This truncation shifts expressive emphasis to the voice’s obsessive iterations in B minor at “es sei ein Traum,” transferred here from m. 19 in order to be rectified by the authentic cadence in mm. 31–32.

As part of its overall narrative trajectory toward consolation and resolution, the A\(^1\) section conveys subtle changes in agency. In mm. 28–29, the piano’s right hand restates the D\(\flat\) that it previously changed into C\(\times\) (marked tenuto). D\(\flat\) is here a member of the #IV\(^7\) and augmented-sixth chords in mm. 28 and 30, becoming an appoggiatura above the structural dominant in m. 31. Unable to be transformed again, however, D\(\flat\) persists in the vocal line and descends to 1\(\flat\) above the tonic in m. 32. Meanwhile, in the preceding measures, the piano contextualizes the B-minor six-four chord in m. 29 as a passing chord, thereby clarifying the hypermeter that was obscured at the climax (see ex. 2.15a, mm. 28–31). As further evidence of its mitigating role, the piano no longer prevents the voice’s minor-mode cadence, but sublimates

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57Brahms’s fermata heightens the dramatic impact of the enharmonic transformation between D\(\flat\) and C\(\times\). Brahms’s student Gustav Jenner also uses an expressive fermata after “kaum” in order to separate the poem’s two parts in his song, “Es träumte mir” (op. 7, no. 3), suggesting that he knew Brahms’s setting.
Example 2.15: “Es träumte mir,” A\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 21–38)
it by introducing D# in the right hand’s inner voice (m. 32). Simultaneously, the left hand’s arpeggiation introduces the seventh A#, propelling the music forward into a neighboring E-major six-four chord (m. 33) that alludes to the E-minor tonicization at the climax (mm. 15–16) and its subsequent abbreviation (mm. 26–27), recast in the major mode (see ex. 2.15a). This musical dovetailing initiates a postlude that solidifies B major as a firmly established tonic.

The piano postlude (mm. 32–38) synthesizes previously dispersed music in a B-major context as if transfiguring and resolving earlier conflicts. First, as mentioned above, both the Bachian structural cadence (with an added seventh) and dovetailing in mm. 31–33 create a remarkable allusion to the E-minor climax, its G5 transformed into G#5 (compare the score and reduction in ex. 2.15a). But the postlude’s transposition also allows for previously minor-mode music to appear transformed into B-major surroundings; for instance, in mm. 32–35, the piano unfurls a chromaticized, metrically displaced iteration of the melodic fifths-sequence from mm. 1–8. By omitting its final pitch, A#, Brahms permits E5 resolution to D#5 in m. 35, above stable tonic support. This places the song’s first achievement of #3 within the piano’s agential

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58This moment resembles Schubert’s B-major/minor songs, including “Die Liebe Farbe” from Die schöne Müllerin and “Was bedeutet die Bewegung” (D. 720), in which the piano supplies D# following a dominant prolongation and projected B-minor cadence (see the example below, mm. 108–112).

Example 2.15a: “Es träumte mir,” score (mm. 28–38), chordal reduction of mm. 31–38, and score of the E-minor climax (mm. 14–19)

Hypermeter: 1 2 3 4 1!

mm. 28–38:

mm. 31–38: (reduction)

mm. 14–19: (E-minor climax)
domain—a realm free from the conscious awareness signified by the voice. In the following mm. 36–38, as if to portray D♭’s descent into forgetful oblivion, the piano thrusts D♭ into a lower register restating the structural cadence from mm. 31–32 “ohne Worte.” Here, D♭ remains a chromatic passing tone between D♯ and C♯, subordinated to the governing major mode and subsumed into inner-voice depths by the piano’s gradually enveloping texture.

Finally, the passage’s rhythm conveys the protagonist’s slow succumbing to rest through its gradually slowed pace. A ritardando and successive diminutions in the left hand (illustrated by decreasing rhythmic divisions: sextuplet, quintuplet, quadruplet and triplet—“6, 5, 4, and 3”—in mm. 35–38) convey the piano ushering the voice (“as protagonist”) back into the dream. Its continued right-hand syncopations add a written-out ritardando that rhythmically augments the D♭–C♯–B motive—an echo of the voice’s melody that no longer rises to the brink of awareness in its earlier register. In defiance of the poem’s unsettling ending, the song’s musical narrative indicates reconciliation and consolation by suggesting a reinstatement of the dream that is absent in the text.

“Es hing der Reif” (op. 106, no. 3)

Fantasy in Klaus Groth’s “Es hing der Reif”

As in the previous two poems, “Es hing der Reif” (fig. 2.6) reveals a psychological progression between two layers of its protagonist’s consciousness, signified by external reality and internal fantasy. The poem conjures a wealth of familiar Romantic images and metaphors, including the linden tree (symbolic of lost love and death), hoarfrost (indicating the death of flowers, youth, and spring), and windows (portals through which lovers communicate) and uses a
folk-like verse form, indicated by its rhyme scheme (“abab, cdcd,” etc.) and use of iambic tetrameter and trimeter.

Although these features of Groth’s high-German poems have been criticized as trite and uninspired, I suggest that the use of paired themes in “Es hing der Reif” such as winter and spring, cold and warmth, external and internal, and distance versus closeness warrants a deeper consideration of the poem’s meaning that takes Groth’s modification of conventional metaphors and imagery into account. Groth’s most provocative use of imagery is his enhancement of the term “Reif,” in contrast to its use in poetry by Heinrich Heine (“Es fiel ein Reif in der Frühlingsnacht”) and Emanuel Geibel (“Lied des Mädchens”), among others. Whereas Heine and Geibel invoke frost to symbolize either the death of Romanticism’s “blue flower” or flowers that denote blossoming love in spring, Groth describes the frost’s clarity and ability to distort light. This forges a metaphorical relationship between the frost’s transparency and the beloved’s window in stanza 2: as the protagonist gazes through each, he enters into progressively deeper perceptions that provide shelter from the wintry reality surrounding him.

In order to illustrate distance between external and internal environments over the course of the poem’s three stanzas, Groth depicts a parallel progression from contingency to finality (see fig. 2.6). As in “Es träumte mir,” Groth’s predominantly past-tense narration in “Es hing der

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60 Theodor Storm issued a negative review of Groth’s Hundert Blätter in the Literaturblatt des Deutschen Kunstblattes vol. 1 (1854): 75ff. Storm compares Groth to the Greek god Antaeus, who loses his strength when divorced from the earth, signified by his mother, Gaia. Thus, when Groth writes in high-German, he is considered weak and ineffective; in his mother tongue, low-German, he is a true poet. Theodor Storm—Klaus Groth: Briefwechsel. Kritische Ausgabe Mit Dokumenten und den Briefen von Storm und Groth zum Hebbel-Denkmal ed. Boy Hinrichs (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1990), 181–84.

61 Heine’s poem depicts frost’s negative effects on a “tender blue flower” (“Es fiel auf die zarten Blaublümelein”) as a metaphor for the similarly negative fate inflicted upon young lovers. The young lad and woman in the poem wander together and encounter “neither luck nor aiding star” (“Sie haben gehabt weder Glück noch Stern,”) before perishing like the flower does. The maiden who speaks in Geibel’s poem describes her garden as “covered with frost” (“Der Reif bedeckt den Garten,”) which causes her to await spring and love (signified by the melted frost) in solitude. She says, “So the day will come when, relieved of this frost, my heart may bloom in bliss.” (“So wird der Tag auch kommen,/Da diesem Frost entnommen /mein Herz in Wonnen blühen mag.”)
Reif” expresses temporal distance between the protagonist and the content of his tale; this distance is most prominent in the first stanza. Yet each successive stanza portrays the protagonist’s gradual entry into deeper internal perceptions using a semantic progression toward its final line. In the last line of stanza 1, the beloved’s house accrues the magical garb of a “fairy castle ("ein blitzend Feenschloß),” denoting its imaginary status. In stanza 2, the last line reveals that the beloved is beheld through her window as a “dark fairy;” here, the window provides access into the protagonist’s imagination. After invoking winter in line 1 (“Es hing der Reif”), Groth introduces words indicating warmth and light ("hell," "blitzend," and “Sonnenschein”), creating a string of evocative nouns leading to the protagonist’s blissful shiver—which denotes the cold—at the beginning of stanza 3 (“Ich bebt’ in seligem Genuß”). Groth’s portrayal of extreme warmth and a shiver whose cause—either the external cold or internal bliss—remains ambiguous at the juncture between stanzas 2 and 3 implies that the protagonist’s visions reach an equally extreme depth, affording him closeness to his beloved. In a classically ironic ending reminiscent of Heine’s poetry, however, Groth rips the protagonist away from internal warmth. In stanza 3, the figurative return of winter (lines 3–4) confirms the protagonist’s isolation. Fantasy—the protagonist’s illusory vision—provided the possibility of reunion at the poem’s beginning, but the poem’s ending proves the illusion to be transient and unsustainable.

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62 The window has both metaphorical and literal meanings. Groth’s inspiration for the poem was his own love for “the unattainable Matthilde Ottens.” Groth is reported to have stood beneath Matthilde’s window, into which he threw poems of courtship. Peter Russell, *Johannes Brahms and Klaus Groth: Biography of a Friendship* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 147.

63 Light is here contrasted with darkness, symbolized by the phrase “dunkelste der Feen.” In this metaphor, Groth alludes to the mystical powers of female figures in German literature, including sirens, mermaids, and witches.
**Figure 2.6:** Klaus Groth, “Es hing der Reif” from “Klänge,” *Hündert Blätter: Paralipomena zum Quickborn*. Hamburg: Perthes-Besser & Mauke, 1854

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Hoarfrost hung in the linden tree boughs,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Through which the light streamed like silver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>I saw your house, as brightly as in a dream,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>A sparkling fairy castle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>And your window stood open,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>[And] I could see you in your room--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Then you stepped into the sunshine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>You darkest of fairies!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>I shivered with blissful pleasure,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>So spring-warm and wonderful:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>But I soon realized from your greeting,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>That it was frosty winter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 2.16:** “Es hing der Reif,” graph
Example 2.16 continued:

Example 2.17: “Es hing der Reif,” mm. 1–6
C major as implicit key

Brahms’s setting of “Es hing der Reif” displays what Platt might call “competing tonal centers” and Laitz’s submediant complex within a monotonal framework, invoking C major as an implicit tonality that exists in an R-relation with the tonic, A minor. As shown in ex. 2.16 (graph) above, the A-minor tonic arrives in m. 5 and is confirmed at the structural cadence in A\(^1\) (m. 72), yet it is destabilized in the B section through the introduction of C major’s dominant, G\(^\#\) (VII). The G-major harmony exerts its strongest presence at m. 25 in the graph’s middleground structure, where a prolonged dominant-seventh chord above the bass tone G2 leads through the chromatic passing tone G\#2 (supporting #VII\(^7\) A minor) to A2 (m. 48), yielding the submediant complex’s defining pitch-class motive, G\(2\)–G\#–A. In m. 44, a functionally ambiguous C-major six-four chord supports the upper-voice passing tone E\(\flat\)5 (\(\hat{3}\) in C major), and is preceded by an augmented-sixth chord that suggests the six-four’s latent cadential function, yet Brahms prevents resolution in the major mode. In addition, the enharmonic opposition between A\(\flat\) and G\# appears at various locations at the foreground and middleground, exploiting the enharmonic reinterpretation of the complex’s central tone, G\# (compare the bass notes in mm. 42 and 47).\(^{64}\)

The following close readings of each section in the song’s ternary form will show Brahms’s depiction of C major as an elusive, veiled presence, just as F major was implicit in the B section of “Nachtigall” and B major’s emergence was forestalled until the final measures of “Es träumte mir.” Unlike the emergent major-mode structural cadences in “Nachtigall” and “Es

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\(^{64}\)“Es hing der Reif” exhibits the four features of the submediant complex outlined by Laitz: 1) it facilitates modulation to a new key; 2) it functions as a foreground motive; 3) it is replicated at deeper level of structure; and 4) the enharmonic potential of the its central tone creates large-scale association over the course of the Lied. Laitz, “The Submediant Complex,” 134.
träumte mir,” no C-major cadence appears in “Es hing der Reif.” C major remains unfulfilled, signifying the protagonist’s unsustainable fantasy.65

Ambiguity and inevitability in the A section (mm. 1–25)

Brahms cultivates ambiguity between A minor and C major through harmonic and metrical instabilities in the brief piano prelude of “Es hing der Reif” (mm. 1–4), comprising an auxiliary cadence that suggests two analytical interpretations, shown in ex. 2.17 above. Although the progression suggests III6r–V74–I in A minor, Brahms’s metrical displacement of the dyad Ah–G, which begins on an upbeat, blurs the notated meter, implying A minor and C major as equally plausible tonics (compare the two analyses in ex. 2.17). In the tenor voice, the chromatic passing motion (G–G♯–A) functions as 5–♯5–6 in C major and 7–♯7–8 in A minor, mediating between both tonalities. It is only in m. 4 that Brahms reveals A minor lingering behind these surface ambiguities. The voice’s metrically strong achievement of E5 (m. 5) completes the A-minor triad suggested by the appoggiaturas A4 and C5 (upbeats to mm. 1 and 2 in the piano’s right hand),

65 Laitz discusses a similar feature in Schubert’s A-minor song “Hippolits Lied” (D. 890): its middle section suggests, but does not realize, a C-major cadence. In a striking parallel, Brahms’s earlier A-minor songs “Spanisches Lied” (op. 6, no. 1), written in 1852 and “Mädchenlied” (op. 85, no. 3, written in 1878), the latter analyzed by Heather Platt, display comparable non-cadential uses of C-major six-four chords, leaving the major mode unconfirmed (see op. 6/1, mm. 4–6 below). Heather Platt, “Brahms’s Mädchenlieder and their Cultural Context,” in Expressive Intersections in Brahms: Essays in Analysis and Meaning, ed. Heather Platt and Peter Smith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 80–110.
correcting their previous metrical instability by aligning the Kopfton, E5, with the poem’s first stressed syllable (“hing”).

Despite its fleeting appearance, C major remains in tension with A minor throughout the first strophe, reflecting an agential division between the voice and piano and a temporal division between the protagonist’s hopeful vision (C major) and the bleak reality of winter (A minor). When it enters in m. 5 (ex. 2.18), the voice declaims Groth’s folk-like iambs within a prospectively sixteen-measure sentence to a melody that remains in C major until the entrance of F#4 in m. 17, followed by an implied tonicization of C major’s dominant, G, in mm. 19–20. But in contrast to the voice’s naïve melody, the piano’s inexorable descending 7–6 sequence suggests its psychological omniscience of the protagonist’s bleak reality. As shown in ex. 2.18a, the accompaniment’s stepwise bass line draws the voice’s C-major melody into its orbit, denying its attempts to stabilize C major through the third-progression E5–D5–C5 (3–2–1 in C major) in m. 12. Although the passing C-major six-four chord in m. 7 and the “added-sixth” chord (E–G–A–C) in m. 12 hint at C-major’s dormant presence, the piano prevents harmonic closure until m. 16, where G# reinstates A-minor through its six-three chord, expanding the tonic across the sentence’s presentation and continuation phrases. After two statements of the motive A♭–B♭–G in the inner voice (mm. 5–12) that highlight A♭ as b♭6 in C major, the piano’s G# thus marks A-minor’s definitive return (mm. 15–16), recalling the harmonic stability of m. 5 and foreshadowing the structural cadence.

66Brahms’s use of the descending 7–6 sequence recalls Chopin’s use of the same device in the A-minor Mazurka (op. 17, no. 4) and E-minor Prelude (op. 28, no. 4). The latter, especially, has been cited for its portrayal of deep melancholy and its suggestion of a tragic narrative. Describing the stretto passage in m. 16 of the prelude, Carl Schachter notes that Chopin’s chromatic notation, A♯ occurs at “the very spot where the music breaks out of its resigned lament, characterized by steady downward movement, into a brief but impassioned protest.” Carl Schachter, “The Prelude in E minor Op. 28 no. 4: Autograph Sources and Interpretations,” in Chopin Studies 2, ed. John Rink and Jim Samson (New York: Cambridge University Press: 1994), 179.

67These local instances of a third-progression between E5 and C5 in a C-major context invokes aspects of the R-relation model shown in ex. 2.1.
Example 2.18: “Es hing der Reif,” A section (mm. 1–25)

In a remarkable fusion of stylistic convention and agential depiction, Brahms allows the voice an impassioned outburst at the end of the first strophe (see ex. 2.18), using its repetition of the last line of text to effect two significant changes: hypermetrical reinterpretation and harmonic motion toward C major. Brahms’s declamatory emphasis of “Fe-enschloss” (“fairy castle”) in m. 18 and “bli-tzend” (“shimmering”) in m. 20 disrupts the consistent four-bar hypermeasures established in mm. 5ff by rendering m. 18 hypermetrically ambiguous and m. 20 a strong measure, while F♯5 and G5 (mm. 18 and 20), regain the register used by F♯5 and G5 in the initial basic idea (mm. 5–6). At “ein blitzend Feenschloß” (m. 18), Brahms derails the piano’s seemingly endless descent, replacing F♯ with F♯ in order to avert closure in A minor and to illustrate the protagonist’s disturbed psychological state, which is stirred by his increasingly fanciful vision. Simultaneously, the piano’s left hand introduces A♯ (m. 17), deflecting the harmony momentarily toward E minor before arriving at C major’s V⁷ chord in mm. 20–25. A
prospective E-minor cadence (bracketed in ex. 2.18a) could have completed this motion toward the minor dominant (V₃) with no hypermetrical change.

**Example 2.18a:** “Es hing der Reif,” reduction and partial recomposition of mm. 1–25 showing hypothetical E-minor cadence in brackets

Brahms’s abrupt shift toward C major’s dominant ruptures the regular hypermeter and distorts the sentence’s ending beyond recognition; six measures of prolonged G-major harmony in mm. 20–25 allow the perception of regular meter to be temporarily suspended as a reflection of the poem’s temporal shift from past-tense storytelling (describing an external event) to present-tense fantasizing (the experience of internal, perceived events). By indicating the protagonist’s psychological turn inwards, Brahms makes a latent feature of the poem manifest in the musical setting. Further reflecting this narrative, C-major’s dominant-seventh chord suffuses the poem’s syntactically closed stanza with expectancy as the reader’s curiosity about the mysterious castle is piqued. As the protagonist delves further into his illusion, perceiving it through the frost, the harmony moves toward C major (III) and its altered submediant, A♭ major (♭VI). Yet in the ensuing B section, Brahms holds resolution to either key in abeyance, reflecting the poem’s narrative tension between external reality and internal illusion.⁶⁸

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⁶⁸Aspects of mm. 7–10 foreshadow the reappearance of G major and the F♯–G motive in m. 17ff. The dominant four-two chord in m. 10 functions as an associative harmony in relation to the tonicized dominant-seventh in m.
Ab major (C: bVI) and C major (a: III) as symbols of illusion

In the A section, the piano and voice were bound together by suspensions and a literal doubling between the voice and right hand. Yet both parts exhibit greater independence in mm. 26–38 of the B section, which prolongs C major’s dominant from m. 25 (ex. 2.19). Brahms illustrates the parts’ greater differentiation by contrasting the vocal line’s melismatic lyricism (mm. 26–30) with intermittent, punctuating chords in the piano that summarize the melodic content of the vocal line (F–D–B–G and (G) –E–C–G; see the chords above the staff in ex.

Example 2.19: “Es hing der Reif,” B section (mm. 26–38)

As in the previous strophe, the voice remains in C major, even attempting to resolve C major’s dominant-seventh chord to a root-position tonic as D5 moves to C5 in mm. 31–32. But in m. 32, the piano’s inner voice, B♭, creates V7 of F, preventing the voice’s easy achievement of C major. As shown below in ex. 2.19a, B♭ enters as an anticipation in m. 31, but ultimately functions as a momentary, harmonically supported chromatic pitch en route from B♭ (above V7 in C major) to Ab. These chromatic pitches illustrate the piano’s increased volition and the agents’ differing levels of awareness by preventing closure in C major; instead, the piano pursues

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20ff. In mm. 7–8, F#3 suggests a resolution to G3 that is elided (replaced by F♯), foreshadowing the vocal line in mm. 18–20 (ex. 2.18).
69The voice’s prolonged declamation at “offen” and “könnte” in mm. 26 and 31 results in the extended hypermetrical grouping 1+ 4, which contributes to the feeling of melodic expansiveness. The piano’s chords also provide new harmonic context for the motivic figure A♭–G.
F major, then F minor, on the flat side of C major. Thus, by altering A♯ to A♭, the piano suggests the hypothetical cadence shown in ex. 2.19b. F minor is also evaded, however, by the stepwise motion from G4 to Eb4 in mm. 35–38 (ex. 2.19a), which reveals the passing function of F4, a result of the upper voice’s contrapuntal “6–5” motion (F–Eb) above the root A♭ (ex. 2.19c).

Example 2.19a–c: “Es hing der Reif,” reductions of mm. 30–38 and hypothetical F-minor cadence

(a):  
(b):  
(c):  

Following A♭ major’s entrance in m. 38, Brahms alludes to the A section in various ways that signify poetic meaning (ex. 2.20). The weak-to-strong metrical position of the motive F–Eb (“da tratst”; mm. 37–38) creates a chromatically altered reprise of the vocal entrance (F–E♯) in m. 5, reinforced by the piano’s return to arpeggiated figuration. The text “da tratst du in den Sonnenschein,”—where the beloved appears to be closest—appears within this “false” return in the “wrong” key of A♭ major, which functions locally as bVI in C major (invoking modal mixture and a common use of the flattened submediant in Schubert’s songs). Globally, A♭ major is the

70 The B section also displays motivic resonances with the A section. The piano’s agitated repetition of the A–G motive to the rhythmic pattern engenders momentum and transforms A–G into A♭–G. Motivically, F–Eb is both a transposition of A–G, and in its pitch-class content, an alteration of the F–E motive at “es hing” (m. 4), a parallelism that is manifest in the reprise of A material (m. 38).

71 As noted in ch. 1, Schubert’s song “Nacht und Träume” in which F♯ (♯7 in the key of VI, G♯ minor) is respelled as G♭ within the piece’s B section, in G major, provides an example (Carl Schachter, “Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs.”). Brahms’s combination of minor-third related (a/C) and major-third related (C/A♭) harmonies
point of furthest tonal remove from A minor. This coupling of formal reprise with the harmonically remote key of Ab major suggests that the protagonist believes in his delusion. That is, prior to m. 42, Ab major provides temporary harmonic stasis indicative of the protagonist’s sustained, innermost fantasy. Only in mm. 41–42, where the voice supplies the passing motion Ab–G–F♯ (chromatically altered from mm. 17), does Ab major reveal itself as an augmented-sixth chord, preparing a cadential six-four chord in C major at “Feen” in m. 44.

**C major as an interior climax**

The C-major six-four chord in m. 44 portrays a richly meaningful moment in the song. Its complexity results from its overlapping beginning and ending formal functions and its exploitation of harmonic ambiguity. At the expressive culmination of the B section and the point of greatest interiority across stanzas 2 and 3, m. 44 suggests that an imminent C-major cadence will confirm C major’s emergence as a locally supported, “realized” key at the middleground. However, Brahms denies its consummation. Instead, he dovetails the “arrival six-four” in

*Example 2.20: “Es hing der Reif,” transition between the B and A¹ sections (mm. 33–67)*

invokes two levels of delusion: at one level, C major represents deeper interiority than A minor; at another, Ab major signifies interiority within the already internal C-major world expressed in the B section.
m. 44 with a reprise of the prelude and revisits harmonic ambiguities displayed earlier in the song.

As ex. 2.20a shows, Brahms alters the prelude in the interlude in mm. 44–47, influencing an interpretation of its meaning. Within the interlude (mm. 44–47), Brahms sustains dominant prolongation across the onset of $A^1$ in m. 44, obscuring the thematic reprise of the prelude that is exemplified by the 6–5 motion ($A^\#$–$G$) above the root $C$ (compare mm. 1 and 44). Brahms’s metrical realignment of the appoggiaturas $A^4$ (m. 44) and $C^4$ (m. 46) with downbeats (enhanced by hairpins) clarifies their melodic function as non-chord tones and enables the prolongation of $C$ major’s dominant. In other words, in mm. 1–4 these pitches foreshadowed the emergent A-minor chord in m. 5, but they are now recontextualized in $C$ major—a key as palpable and near as the protagonist’s vision is to his mind’s eye. By placing the motives $A$–$G$ and $C$–$B$ in a $C$-major context determined by the piano alone, Brahms encodes the protagonist’s experience of his vision (suggested across stanzas 2 and 3) in purely instrumental music, allowing it to be enacted by the agency of the piano. $C$ major’s heightened saliency, however, is short-lived. Following the

Smith notes this type of prolonged dominant across recapitulations in Brahms’s sonata forms. See n. 43 above.
resolution of its cadential six-four chord to a dominant-seventh in m. 46, the piano replaces Ab (a chordal ninth in m. 45) with G# (the leading tone in A minor), exposing the harmonic pun between VII○7 of A minor and VII○7 of C major that facilitates the quick return of A minor as the voice enters.

**Example 2.20a:** “Es hing der Reif,” comparison of m. 1 (prelude) and m. 44 (A1)

Yet Brahms suggests that this return is not as straightforward as it seems.

Notwithstanding the harmonic and thematic reprise of A-section material in m. 48, C major continues to exert control over the ensuing measures. As ex. 2.20 shows, the piano’s descending bass line omits the passing tone Ab in m. 48 (compare m. 6), enabling the piano’s two-measure echo of the voice in mm. 50–51 to prolong G major’s dominant, D (or II7 in C major). This renders the A-minor chord at “ich bebt” (“I shivered”) a submediant (VI) in C major. The A-minor chord associatively recalls the song’s opening, however, offering a reminder of the protagonist’s bleak winter surroundings despite the hopeful presence of C major. Through this pervasive ambiguity, therefore, Brahms invokes A minor in a harmonic pun that has poetic
implications. The protagonist shivers in delight in his imagination, where a C-major context encloses A minor (VI), yet A minor also signifies a different cause for this physical reaction: the winter that envelops him in reality. Brahms’s pp dynamic in mm. 47–48, which implies slowing in performance, highlights this momentary subordination of A minor to C-major diatony. It is as if the protagonist’s fantasy and reality are temporarily superimposed.

The dissipation of illusion in A¹

Owing to C major’s lingering presence across the thematic return of A-section material in m. 48, A minor is only gradually reestablished during the last strophe (ex. 2.20); the piano does not reinstate G# as #7 until m. 59, resolving it to an A-minor six-three chord in m. 61. From this point forward, however, an extended cadence solidifies A minor and corrects the harmonic motion to G major found at the analogous location in the A section, precluding any further appearance of C major and the illusion it signifies. A comparison of both passages (ex. 2.20b) shows that Brahms recomposes the passing motion A₉–G₉–F# as A₉–G₉–F₉ (mm. 59–61). As a result, the first strophe’s rising motion between F#₅ and G₉₅ is replaced by F₉ at the biting poetic close: “daß Frost und Winter war.” As if its fate is sealed by the stark, past-tense verb “war,” the F–E motive is subsumed within parallel six-three chords in the piano that enforce F₉’s descent as a 7–6 suspension above the bass tone G₂ in m. 63. Since the dominant-seventh sonority (G–B–F) in m. 63 occurs within these parallel six-three chords, it lacks syntactical function. Rather, it is an associative harmony that refers back to the extended syntactic dominant seventh chord at the end of the first strophe (mm. 16–25)—now a lingering memory of the protagonist’s entry into
reverie. In m. 65, the successive six-three chords finally reach IV\(^6\) of A minor, its bass note F\(_2\) signaling definitive closure in the minor-mode tonic.

**Example 2.20b:** “Es hing der Reif,” comparison of mm. 15–21 (A section) and mm. 59–65 (A\(^1\) section)

As ex. 2.21 shows, lengthy emphasis on harmonic closure in A minor at the structural cadence suggests the poem’s harsh conclusion. As is typical of Brahms’s practice, this tonal closure occurs after the poem’s formal close, during a repetition of the poem’s last line. Brahms summarizes much of the song’s harmonic and motivic content within this final cadence and four-measure postlude. As shown in the upper staff of ex. 2.21, the melisma on “Frost” in mm. 65–66 alludes to the voice’s melody in mm. 26–29 of the B section. In m. 67, however, the melodic continuation to \(\frac{1}{2}\), B\(_b\), suggests reality’s foreboding presence in place of the protagonist’s earlier entrance into C-major fantasy. The Neapolitan extinguishes hope for C major’s return in m. 67 as B\(\sharp\)4 descends through A\(_b\)4 to G\(_b\)3 in an inner voice, recontextualizing

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74 This also occurred in “Nachtigall” and “Es träumte mir.”
A₆ (♯1) as a passing tone above the cadential six-four chord in m. 68. Bounded by chromatic pitches that define A minor (B♭ and G♯), A₆ can no longer function as Ⅵ₆ of C major, while G♯

Example 2.21: “Es hing der Reif,” comparison of mm. 26–30 (B-section melody) with mm. 65–77 (A-minor structural cadence); asterisks denote corresponding pitches

must resolve to A. Stripped of its transformative powers, the submediant complex can no longer provide a gateway into the protagonist’s imagination.

As an expression of the overarching narrative from contingency to finality in “Es hing der Reif,” the voice and piano revisit the prelude for a final time at the structural cadence (mm. 68–72). Example 2.21 shows the voice’s expansion of the word “Winter,” which allows the C–B motive to appear within a four-measure unit (mm. 68–71) that recalls its metrically varied placements earlier in mm. 2–3 and in the B section. Brahms now emphasizes the descending tendency of C5; it lingers as a suspension above the dominant in m. 70 and emphasizes the finality of the Urlinie’s descent (♯3–♯2–♭1) in A minor. Duple hypermeter also persists into the postlude (another four-measure unit, mm. 74–77), placing heightened emphasis on F5 in a strong measure that presents the vocal entrance from m. 5 in augmentation, cast in the piano alone.

As the piano echoes the slowed, expansive vocal entrance from m. 5, recalling the text “es hing” and “ich bebt” in the piece’s final measures, A minor asserts its undeniable role as the
tonic. In the piece’s closing gesture, the upper voice’s motive F–E coalesces into a closed-position A-minor chord as the bass enacts the process of freezing, crystallizing the left hand’s earlier fluid arpeggios within its slowed rhythmic pattern (♩♩). These indications of finality in the postlude provide a musical correlate for the protagonist’s submission to reality, which is embodied in the simplicity of the final verb, “war.” Thus, within a repetition of the text’s final lines, Brahms refers to a number of formal, tonal, and expressive closural functions that recontextualize and resolve problems posed throughout the Lied, as the protagonist is enveloped by winter once more.

Conclusion

As we have seen, Brahms uses major-minor pairings that evoke modal mixture and the relative relation to represent thematic dichotomies between reality and illusion—or between external reality and internal perception—in “Nachtigall,” “Es träumte mir,” and “Es hing der Reif.” Similar to Schubert’s use of major-minor pairings, Brahms often uses the major mode to signify transient, internal psychological states, and either forestalls its emergence until the end of the song or represses it entirely. Moreover, although the major mode emerged only gradually in “Nachtigall,” Brahms displays a preference for blending both modes at the foreground in “Es träumte mir,” and “Es hing der Reif,” as well as the latter part of “Nachtigall,” through the use of harmonic and metrical ambiguities similar to those noted by scholars of his instrumental music. All three songs have been shown to display intertextual resonances with works by Brahms in the same keys (F minor, B major, and A minor), a topic that I will revisit in ch. 5.
Chapter Three

Emergent Modality: Minor-to-Major Progressions as “Tragic-to-Transcendent” Narratives

Chapter 2 suggested that Brahms often pairs a nascent, implicit key—major in “Nachtigall” and “Es hing der Reif,” minor in “Es träumte mir”—with the song’s tonic in order to depict the protagonist’s persistent psychological ambivalence or coexisting, tenuous mental states such as imagining fantastic images, perceiving song internally, and dreaming. In this chapter, I posit a different narrative for the minor-mode songs “Todessehnen” (op. 86, no. 6), “Schwermut” (op. 58, no. 5), and “Dämmrung senkte sich von oben” (op. 59, no. 1), each of which ends firmly in the major mode, signifying the protagonist’s journey from a state of initial unrest to one of peaceful transcendence. Tonal hierarchies and progressions that prepare the confirmed major mode illustrate the protagonist’s psychological transformation from a troubled present existence to an imagined transformative future as well as the emotional evolution from pain to peace.

This type of P-relation is a quintessential nineteenth-century chromatic technique and widely known feature of Brahms’s tonal language, as the list of minor-to-major progressions in Brahms’s song output shown in table 1 demonstrates.¹ The case studies presented here further refine Brahms’s use of this deceptively simple technique, by categorizing the following:

1) specific tonal paths that Brahms uses to connect minor and major keys;

2) the location of the modal change with respect to the song’s outer formal design versus its inner form, or voice-leading structure;

¹David Beach’s study of modal mixture in Schubert’s music examines the importance of borrowing from major in a minor mode, rather than vice versa—a topic also relevant to Brahms’s works. David Beach, “Modal Mixture in Schubert’s Harmonic Practice,” Journal of Music Theory 42 (1998): 73–100.
3) correspondences between modal shifts between major and minor and changes in poetic tense; and

4) the tendency for narratives modeled by the minor-to-major progression to depict a transformative death.

Concerning the last issue, Heather Platt has noted that the tonic arrival and turn to the major mode in “Mit vierzig Jahren” (op. 94, no. 1), which progresses from B minor to B major (see table 1), depicts death as a release from earthly cares—a narrative type that, borrowing from Robert Hatten, I will call “tragic-to-transcendent.” James Webster’s analysis of the C-minor-to-major progression in Brahms’s *Alto Rhapsody* (op. 53) similarly links its concluding major-mode tonic (C major) its “topos,” which denotes sublimity and transcendence. Webster interprets the *Alto Rhapsody*’s deep integration as stemming from its concluding section in C major, which “does not merely follow on the preceding ones [sections], it resolves them.” I will relate this common emotional trajectory in Brahms’s works to causally related events, or psychological transformations, in each song’s musical narrative, suggesting that they form part of a larger group of works in his output that model this theme of transcendent death, expressed either literally or metaphorically.  

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2 Although I borrow Hatten’s terminology, I only use it to signify tonal progressions, not to indicate the marked styles such as “high, middle, and low” that topics denote in his interpretations. See Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

3 Webster further cites four typical meanings of C major *qua* key in Brahms’s time: (1) the sublime (religious and romantic varieties); (2) climax; and (3) psychological resolution. In “Auf dem Kirchhofe” (op. 105, no. 4), C major most likely represents the blessedness implied by the word “genesen.” He also interprets C major as signifying psychological resolution in Brahms’s choral song “Im Herbst” (op. 104, no. 5). James Webster, “The *Alto Rhapsody*: Psychology, Intertextuality, and Brahms’s Artistic Development,” *Brahms Studies* 3 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001). However, not all minor-to-major progressions suggest analogous peaceful or transcendent psychic resolutions.

4 Webster, “The *Alto Rhapsody*,” 44.

5 Inge van Rij and Daniel Beller-McKenna cite similar subgroups in Brahms’s output. Van Rij suggests that Brahms’s song collections exhibit “sorrow-to-comfort” progressions, while McKenna discusses the emotional trajectory of the *Vier ernste Gesänge* (op. 121), as discussed further below. Brahms’s songs “Ich wandte mich” and “O Tod, wie bitter bist du” from op. 121 also belong to this category, although I do not analyze them here.
**Table 1: Minor-to-major progressions in Brahms’s solo Lieder**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Op.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Spanisches Lied”</td>
<td>A minor to A major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Parole”</td>
<td>E minor to E major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Heimkehr”</td>
<td>B minor to B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Vor dem Fenster”</td>
<td>G minor to G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“In der Ferne”</td>
<td>D minor to D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Von ewiger Liebe”</td>
<td>B minor to B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Liebesglut”</td>
<td>F minor to F major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“In meiner Nächte Sehnen”</td>
<td>E minor to E major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Blinde Kuh”</td>
<td>G minor to G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Schwermut”</td>
<td>E♭ minor to E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Dämmerung senkte sich von oben”</td>
<td>G minor to G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Nachklang”</td>
<td>F♯ minor to F♯ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Eine gute, gute Nacht”</td>
<td>A minor to A major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>“Mein wundes Herz”</td>
<td>E minor to E major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“An den Mond”</td>
<td>B minor to B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Willst du, dass ich geh?”</td>
<td>D minor to D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Ade!”</td>
<td>B minor to B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Todessehnen”</td>
<td>F♯ minor to F♯ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Mit vierzig Jahren”</td>
<td>B minor to B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Das Mädchen”</td>
<td>B minor to B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Es schauen die Blumen”</td>
<td>B minor to B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Vorschneller Schwur”</td>
<td>D minor to D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Nachtigall”</td>
<td>F minor to F major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Salamander”</td>
<td>A minor to A major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Ich wandte mich”</td>
<td>G minor to G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“O Tod, wie bitter bist du”</td>
<td>E minor to E major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before we proceed to an analysis of songs, a brief summary of the types of minor-to-major progressions they illustrate will prove helpful. Common to all three songs are Brahms’s use of (1) VI as an independent key and as a neighbor to the structural V; and (2) extended passages that stand on the shared dominant of parallel major and minor keys. These recurring tonal patterns refine an understanding of the specific way that Brahms mediates between each song’s modally opposed sections. Brahms introduces 3 and 6 from the major mode in combination with expansive prolongations of each song’s structural dominant, causing the major-mode tonic to emerge as a nascent presence before it is confirmed by an authentic
cadence. The major mode enters as if subliminally and slowly gains priority over its parallel key as the listener expects V to resolve to I. The major mode thus arises through a process that culminates with a structural cadence. This process differentiates it from a Picardy third (a sudden modal change that remains at the musical surface). Moreover, Brahms often does not introduce a change in key signature coinciding with the modal change. When present, a new key signature often confirms or clarifies the major mode foreshadowed in earlier passages.

Finally, whereas the tonal events described in chapter 2 enact the poetic subjunctive or past tenses, here they allude to the future, foreshadowing a psychological transformation that does not arrive in the song. A resolution of the structural dominant to the major tonic often signals the protagonist’s changed emotional state, but the postlude may supply other types of resolutions that rectify earlier tonal or registral issues, indicating that transcendence lies in the future despite the protagonist’s present-tense descriptions. In “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” the poem entirely lacks indications of either present or future transcendence, which Brahms’s setting supplies.

Dämmerung senkte sich von oben (op. 59, no. 1)
The process of attaining spiritual enlightenment in Goethe’s “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben”

“Dämmerung senkte sich von oben” (1827; see fig. 3.1) combines imagery from German Romanticism with features of Goethe’s late style within a simple, folk-like idiom and trochaic tetrameter. The poem derives from the collection Chinesisch-Deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten (1827), which, like the Persian-inspired West-Östlicher Divan (1819) reflects the German

Wolfgang Kayser notes that poetry of this kind (described as volkstümliche) lends itself most easily to musical setting. As I will show, Brahms’s setting complicates the four-square declamation implied by Goethe’s poem. Wolfgang Kayser, Kleine deutsche Versschule (Bern: A. Francke, 1946).
Romantics’ penchant for Oriental themes. In addition, the poem combines an Eastern influence with Goethe’s characteristic late-style traits such as heightened, stylized language. Its detached mood and symbolic imagery contrasts with the direct, personal expression of internal emotions (Erlebnislyrik) in Goethe’s early poetry. Meredith Lee ascribes the poem’s “unlyrical, objective, moralizing, and didactic” quality to the influence of Chinese literature on Goethe’s works, owing to its use of symbolic natural imagery rather than direct emotion as the bearer of meaning. This symbolism—a device that distances the reader from the protagonist—affects the reader’s perception of poetic temporality, tense, and perspective. My narratological analysis in this section extends Lee’s idea that the moon is a symbol for enlightenment in order to understand the protagonist’s shifting perspective.

Behind the poem’s simple façade, in which the protagonist narrates about a natural scene, speaking from a central, interior vantage point, “Dämmrung senkte sich von oben” veils a complex allegory for achieving spiritual enlightenment. This process occurs in stages and is indicated by symbolic oppositions. A landscape shrouded by dusk—and afterward, night—is

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7 Common themes in Romantic poetry are discussed in Stein and Spillman, *Poetry Into Song*, 3–16.
8 However, an exception is “Meeresstille” (1796) which demonstrates a deemphasized lyrical subject (“I”) as in stanzas 1 and 2 of “Dämmrung senkte sich von oben.” Further, Meredith Lee notes that in Goethe’s late cycle, the poet distances himself from quotidian language, using stylized, “foreign” language to emphasize symbolic imagery (e.g., the rose and the moon). This type of language requires the reader’s active participation and contemplation, since he or she must complete the sense of the text; passive reading is insufficient. Meredith Lee, “Goethes Chinesische-Deutsche Jahres-und Tageszeiten,” *Goethe und China—China und Goethe: Bericht d. Heidelberger Symposions* ed. Günther Debon and Adrian Hsia (Bern, Frankfurt am Main and New York: Lang, 1985).
9 Ibid. In a well-known conversation with Eckermann, Goethe says that “[t]he thoughts, actions, and sentiments of people over there [referring to Chinese novels] are almost the same as ours, and very soon one feels to be similar to them, only with the difference, that with them everything seems to be clearer, more clean, and more moral...The difference is to be found in the circumstance, that with them nature always lives together with human beings. The goldfish can be heard making splashes in the ponds, the birds are continuously singing on their branches, the day is always serene and sunny, the night always clear, the moon is mentioned frequently, but she does not change the landscape, because her light is thought to be as clear as daylight.” [31 Jan 1827]. Daniel Purdy also notes that Goethe’s cycle “performs precisely that projection of inner thoughts onto nature that he ascribes to Chinese poetry in his chat with Eckermann.” See Daniel Purdy, “Goethe, Rémusat, and the Chinese Novel: Translation and the Circulation of World Literature,” *German Literature as World Literature*, ed. Thomas Oliver Beebee (New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
10 Comparisons between knowing nature and self-revelation or understanding of inner psychology pervade German Romantic ideology in its earliest to latest stages: “For the Romantics, nature is the outer, visible side of the spirit,
contrasted with sources of light: the day that is over (past), the evening star (present), and the moon’s clear light (future), creating dichotomies between darkness and light that have temporal implications. These oppositions situate the protagonist’s narration between dusk and night, suggesting that only a portion of the full twenty-four-hour cycle described by the work’s title (“Tageszeiten”) elapses during the poem’s four stanzas, as shown in fig. 3.1. The poem also shifts from the past tense (stanza 1, line 1) into the present tense (stanzas 2–4), reinforcing its pictorial journey from darkness to illumination:

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and human consciousness is the highest form of nature. This implies that the discovery of nature in its parts and as a whole is necessarily also a journey of self-discovery, in which self-knowledge and the understanding of nature mutually condition and support each other.” Nicholas Saul, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 211.

11Although the words “Tageszeiten” and “Jahreszeiten” express different lengths of time, both symbolize the human lifespan between youth and old age. In her reading, Lee adds metaphors of physical distance to the temporal progression between seasons and times of the day, equating spring with the East and summer with the West. When summer arrives in the cycle, the protagonist attempts to recall spring, reflecting the poems’ redirected perspectives toward the East. This region symbolizes clarity, awareness, and peace resulting from acceptance of life’s transitory nature.
(1) In line 1, the simple past tense ("Dämmerung senkte sich von oben") emphasizes that twilight emerged before the protagonist speaks.

(2) The evening star ("Abendstern," stanza 2) allows images to be perceived during dusk, but prior to nightfall.

(3) “Nun” (stanza 3, line 1) signals night’s arrival, embodied by the moon. Following the poem’s initial expository narration, it is as if the reader here enters the protagonist’s present experience. This temporal evolution toward a single transformative moment—the moon’s emergence—magnifies the period between dusk and night. This moment now encompasses a range of the protagonist’s perceptions, leading toward a climax: total visual absorption of the moonlit environment, expressed in stanza 4 (“Und durch’s Auge schleicht die Kühle/Sänftigend in’s Herz hinein”).

The poem’s narrative progression from dusk to night and darkness to light depicts passing time through the protagonist’s changing perceptions as different sources of light affect his vision (starlight gradually yields to moonlight). In order to simulate the protagonist’s shifting perspective for the reader, Goethe implies causal connections between images. Line 2 ("schon ist alle Nähe fern") describes the effects of line 1 ("Dämmerung senkte sich von oben"): to conflate nearness and distance. The opacity of the dusk-shrouded scene also symbolizes the protagonist’s underlying anxiety and uncertainty, emotional states that contrast with enlightenment. This eerily uncertain ("Ungewisse") atmosphere pervades the poem until the moon emerges in the East (stanza 3), signaling the protagonist’s first awareness of his own perceptions ("ahn’ ich Mondenglanz und Glut”/”I sense the moon’s brightness and glow"). The protagonist ends his passive observation of the environment (stanzas 1–2) and instead actively senses the moon’s
nascent presence before its light affects him directly.\textsuperscript{12} It is only in stanza 3 that the moon animates the protagonist’s imagination, as the verbs “scherzen” and “zittern” illustrate, causing him to fully perceive the surrounding natural scene. The words “Kühle” and “sänftigend” in stanza 4 suggest that peace and certainty replace the anxiety and doubt caused by twilight. As Lee suggests, the moon’s light in “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben” signifies enlightenment that is associated with the increased vision (paradoxically) \textit{enabled} by the night, since it conjures the moon’s presence. This contrasts with the all-embracing illumination—a reigning “night without darkness”—in \textit{Faust}.\textsuperscript{13}

Crucially, Goethe’s poem implies that the act of observing nature, enabled by light and vision amidst surrounding darkness, is the means to achieving an enlightened state. The moon’s light must enter the protagonist’s eyes, the vehicle of observation, in order to soothe his heart (stanza 4, lines 3–4). This reflects an Eastern idea noted by Lee: man can only commune with nature in solitude, a pervasive theme in Goethe’s poetic cycle. Just as solitary contemplation of nature yields timeless truths about man’s existence, the reader’s active search for meaning in Goethe’s symbolism mirrors the protagonist’s quest for an enlightened state.\textsuperscript{14} The moon’s first appearance (stanza 3) is therefore a narratologically significant turning point between the poem’s two poles, shown in fig. 3.1: 1) dusk, darkness, and uncertainty (which the protagonist narrates

\textsuperscript{12}Each present-tense verb communicates animated, lively motion in contrast to verbs implying slow progress (“senkte”) and rest (“ruht”) in stanzas 1 and 2.

\textsuperscript{13}This observation about \textit{Faust} stems from Lee, “Goethes Chinesische-Deutsche Jahres-und Tageszeiten,” 40–1.

\textsuperscript{14}Jane Brown clarifies this aspect of Goethe’s style, tracing its first appearance in Goethe’s earlier years (c. 1790–1810): “Goethe still worked comfortably in the tradition of allegorical world theater....It descended ultimately from morality drama and reached its peak in the seventeenth century. In this form of dramatic allegory the focus was not on the discrepancy between the allegorical tenor or meaning and its vehicle...but rather on truth made concretely visible via allegorical representation: what you see is what it means....The older form of allegory, largely trivialized in the eighteenth century, takes on new life in Goethe’s use under the name ‘symbol,’ in which a sign combines within itself its concrete reality and its ineffable referent. Goethe used this new technique to suggest what cannot be known (the first scene of \textit{Faust}, part 2, as I have argued elsewhere, offers an excellent example).” Jane K. Brown, \textit{Goethe’s Allegories of Identity} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014): 10.
about), versus 2) night, light, and clarity (which, as indicated by “nun,” the protagonist experiences in the present). The moon is also the poem’s most potent symbol, since it enables an expressive paradox, as noted above: only the onset of night allows the moon’s light to emerge, just as obscurity and darkness are a necessary precondition for clarity and rebirth into an enlightened state.  

**Modified ternary form and the role of VI in Brahms’s setting**

Just as Goethe’s poem conveys a narrative from darkness (anxiety, naïveté) to light (peace, knowledge) in stages articulated by changes in perspective and tense, Brahms implies an analogous harmonic narrative signified by the modally opposed keys of G minor and G major across the song’s modified ternary form (fig. 3.2). Strophes 1 and 2, separated by a piano introduction (mm. 1–4) and an interlude (mm. 21–24), remain in G minor; authentic cadences in mm. 21 and 41 elide the ending of each strophe with the beginning of the next interlude. Following the interlude in mm. 41–45, strophes 3 and 4 merge into a larger section (mm. 46–91) containing neither an interlude nor internal cadences. Beginning in Eb major (VI), strophe 3 (the B section) instead leads to a prolongation of G major’s dominant (mm. 58–69), overlapping the formal beginning of strophe 4 (the A² section; m. 62), signaling the parallel mode’s presence before a cadential confirmation of its root-position tonic. After diversions into modally mixed versions of the subdominant (C major/minor, mm. 71–87), the song’s structural dominant arrives in m. 88, extending the structural cadence across mm. 88–90. G major is confirmed only in m. 90.

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15 Night’s transformative power recalls Novalis’s *Hymnen an die Nacht* (see my discussion of “Schwermut” below).  
16 The four-measure interlude is here extended by one measure.  
17 This definition of cadence is based on harmonic considerations. In m. 61, a rest in the vocal line corresponding with the end of stanza 3 provides rhetorical closure, or “cadence-like stoppage.”
**Figure 3.2:** “Dämmrung senkte sich von oben,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A (intro)</th>
<th>A¹</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A²</th>
<th>postlude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent(s):</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem:</td>
<td>lines 1–4</td>
<td>5–8</td>
<td>9–12</td>
<td>13–16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic progression in G minor:</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I → (VI)</td>
<td>VI–V</td>
<td>(V)–IV(ⅷ)–I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporality in Brahms’s setting:</td>
<td>“past” (narration)</td>
<td>present</td>
<td>present enhanced by enlightened state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brahms’s tonal scheme divides Goethe’s poem into two halves (stanzas 1–2 and 3–4), responding to the moon’s appearance in stanza 3 with the song’s first extended motion away from G minor into a major key: a tonicization of Eb major (VI), foreshadowed by a brief tonicization thereof in mm. 13–16. As I demonstrate further below, VI (which is itself major) functions as a large-scale neighbor note to G major’s dominant. During a standing on this dominant, Brahms introduces the melodic pitch E₃ (♯6), which signals the nascent presence of G major, and models the poem’s gradual shift from uncertainty to clarity. I posit that 1) VI functions as an intermediate tonal stage in the progression from G minor to G major just as the moon’s light aids the protagonist’s internal transformation; and that 2) Brahms suggests that this change is a process by repeating the song’s final two lines, and the conflict between Eb and E₃, before confirming the major mode’s arrival.

In addition to tonally articulating the song’s modified ternary form, textural changes and topical associations convey mood and temporality, as shown by the incipits in ex. 3.1. A recurring piano interlude (as in mm. 1–4) articulates the beginning of strophes 1 and 2, and in altered form, strophe 3. Its walking bass and held tenor line (as if a chorale tune) together invoke a chorale-prelude topic that conveys the solemn landscape. Yet contrasting with the chorale prelude, a syncopated accompaniment in mm. 13–16 depicts the evening star’s glimmering light.¹⁸ Interlaced among these topics, motives at the musical surface and replicated on deeper levels of a Schenkerian structure, as shown further below, demonstrate the setting’s illustration of poetic imagery through invertible and imitative counterpoint. These motives often appear at

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¹⁸This material foreshadows the opening motive in the third movement (Andante con moto) of Brahms’s Clarinet Sonata in Eb Major (op. 120, no. 2). See mm. 1–4.
cadences and points of phrasal elision, linking them to the idea of closure—a metaphor for the protagonist’s achieved enlightenment.

**Example 3.1:** Incipits showing textural and topical changes introduced in mm. 1–4 and 13–16

Harmonic ambiguity, the motive D–Eb–D, and illustrations of obscurity in strophes 1 and 2

I believe the song’s G-minor tonality signifies the darkness-steeped environment in stanzas 1 and 2. Within G minor, the motive D–Eb–D creates metrical and harmonic ambiguities that provide fleeting instability, just as ephemeral alternations between light and dimness distort the protagonist’s vision. The piano introduction shown in ex. 3.2 (mm. 1–4) encapsulates these ambiguities and foreshadows later events. The 5–6 motion D–Eb (m. 1) creates metrical ambiguity by momentarily obscuring the chordal inversion (53 or 63) and therefore the downbeat, but clearly perceived downbeats reemerge in mm. 3–4. The left hand, however, repeats the D–Eb motive in mm. 4–5, reinstating uncertainty. Here, the D–Eb motive spans two four-measure groups, yielding a deceptive motion to VI (m. 5) that renders m. 4 a pseudo-half cadence by creating voice-leading continuity across a grouping boundary. This conflict between grouping structure and harmonic prolongation presents ambiguities that seem to reflect the protagonist’s disoriented vision described in the text.
Although the pitch E♭ is subsidiary in both four-measure groups—in mm. 1–2 it melodically embellishes 5; in mm. 4–8 it prolongs the dominant as upper neighbor—it is emphasized by additional motivic factors. As ex. 3.2a shows, the deceptive motion to E♭2 (m. 5) prevents tonic closure beneath a descending-fifth motive (D4–G3). A further appearance of this fifth-motive, inverted in the left hand (mm. 3–4; motivic replication is shown in brackets), emphasizes the motivic saturation created by invertible counterpoint in mm. 1–5. This

counterpoint seems to signify the protagonist’s densely shrouded environment, where layered darkness (“schwarzvertiefte Finsternisse”) causes each semi-visible element, both near and far, to become intertwined (“schon ist alle Nähe fern”).

Example 3.2: “Dämmung senkte sich von oben,” mm. 1–8
Similar motivic and harmonic ambiguities in strophes 1 and 2 (A and A¹) continue to convey the protagonist’s shrouded vision. As ex. 3.2b shows, the design of strophe 1 corresponds to Caplin’s hybrid 1 (antecedent + continuation).  

Measures 9–12 present a contrasting idea to mm. 5–8, leading to a cadence in D minor (albeit with the third omitted). Measures 13–16 stand on the dominant of E♭ major while fragmenting the melody into two-measure units.

Example 3.2b: “Dämmrung senkte sich von oben,” hybrid phrase design and implicit tonicization of E♭ major (VI) in strophe 1 (mm. 5–21)

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20Although the piano’s F♭ in m. 10 suggests that m. 12 presents a D-minor cadence, Brahms’s omission of the third creates a hint of major-minor ambiguity.
Measures 17–21 (four measures expanded to five) increase the rate of harmonic motion and lead to an authentic cadential progression in G minor. Like the prelude, however, this thematic design veils subtle harmonic ambiguity and an implicit tonality: VI. The brief D-minor tonicization in m. 12 leads to Eb major’s dominant above the common bass note (D3), implying that a subsequent D–Eb motion (the original 5–6 motive) will confirm Eb major (ex. 3.2b). Thus mm. 12–13 subtly recall the deceptive motion and Eb-major chord in m. 5, now intensified through the suggestion of tonicization. Yet following this dominant prolongation (mm. 13–16), the chordal seventh, Db (m. 18) thwarts resolution to VI, tonicizing bII instead.\(^{21}\) This evasion of Eb major renders it an implicit key, made palpable by the strong presence of its own dominant. Despite its absent confirmation, however, the sense of an emergent Eb-major key conveys the evening star’s first flickering light (“Abendstern”), hinting at illumination without fulfilling it completely.

In addition to forming an expanded cadential progression in the strophe’s hybrid design, this harmonic diversion also continues the unfolding motivic narrative suggested earlier. As shown by the graph in ex. 3.3, the tonal digression within Eb major supports a gapped fifth-progression in the upper voice between m. 8 and the perfect authentic cadence in m. 21. This gapped fifth-progression reproduces earlier motives. As ex. 3.2a demonstrated, its first iteration occurred in the prelude’s lower register (a gapped fifth in mm. 1–5), where closure was thwarted by an ascent from D to Eb in the bass. In mm. 1–5, C4 (m. 3) was an unsupported, accented passing tone, but in the upper voice spanning mm. 8–21, the D–G motive lacks C (\(\hat{4}\)) entirely. In both passages, mm. 1–5 and 8–21, the melodic descending fifth appears in counterpoint with the bass’s rising arpeggiation G–Bb–D (see brackets). This gapped fifth-motive foreshadows later

\(^{21}\)This tonicization is emphasized by a hemiola that rhythmically extends the cadence. Measure 21 elides the end of this phrase with the four-measure interlude (mm. 21–24).
Example 3.3: “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” A and $A^{\dagger}$ (mm. 1–38)
events: as we will see, the *Urlinie*’s attainment of C5 becomes a prominent feature of the upper-voice descending fifth in strophe 4, linked to repeated tonicizations of C major (IV) that recontextualize the D–Eb motive in transformed major-mode surroundings.

Strophe 2 (A\(^1\)) replicates the form of strophe 1, but pervasive figuration here produces new motives, latent keys, and modal ambiguities (see ex. 3.4 below). In the motivic domain, figuration in mm. 21–24 depicts creeping (“schleichen”), juxtaposing the chromatic motive E–Eb–D with the rising fourth D–Eb–F♯–G and the descending fourth G–F–Eb–D (outlined on the second staff), thereby introducing a pitch-class conflict between Eb and Eb based on their opposed descending and rising tendencies. Harmonically, Brahms suggests Eb minor (V\(^1\)b) in mm. 29–30 by reinterpreting G minor’s leading tone (F\(^\#\)) as the mixture-inflected chordal third, G\(^\#\). He also creates tension between the possible keys of C major and minor (IV) in mm. 33–36 owing to their shared dominant seventh, expressed as a standing on the dominant. Since the listener associates this passage with the continuation phrase (mm. 13–16) in strophe 1, he or she may expect this dominant to resolve, or as in the prior passage, resolution to be denied. Indeed, chromatic alterations in m. 32, expressing the major dominant (vs. D minor; cf. m. 12) suggest resolution to G minor that is evaded in m. 33 (the tonic is inflected to become I\(^7\)), followed by evaded C-minor resolution in m. 37. Both cadential evasions cultivate expectations in the listener that prolonged dominants will resolve, but withhold fulfillment of the keys that are suggested (Eb major and C minor). In other words, because of the shared dominants between major and minor modes, the listener remains unaware during a dominant prolongation whether Brahms will proceed to a major or minor key, despite melodic evidence that points to one or another in
preceding measures (for instance, the voice’s $A_b4$ in m. 33). The tension engendered by the prolongation of V here creates uncertainty and foreshadows a later prolongation of G major’s dominant chord, which the listener will expect to resolve and rectify prior evaded cadences.

**Example 3.4:** “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” strophe 2 (mm. 21–41), showing (1) similar phrase design to A section; (2) additional modal ambiguities and motives

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22Schoenberg terms the power of the dominant to suggest both a major and minor key its “potency.” He states that “[a] dominant can introduce a major or minor triad, and can be the dominant of a major or of a minor region. Upon the potency of the dominant is based the interchangeability of major and minor.” Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, ed. Leonard Stein (New York: Norton, 1969), 51. Schoenberg’s example 74b (an excerpt from Schubert’s A-minor quartet, op. 29 (i) shows dominant chords resolving to A-major or A-minor chords, demonstrating the fluid interchangeability he describes. Although this interchangeability may characterize Schubert’s harmonic practice (for example, in the G-major string quartet, D. 887, i) more than Brahms’s practice, Brahms nevertheless seems to be referencing in “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben” the tension between major and minor that the dominant chord can create. This is also demonstrated, for instance, by the hint of modal ambiguity expressed by the resolutions to D minor (m. 12) and D major (m. 32) shown in my ex. 3.2b and ex. 3.4.
Over the course of strophes 1 and 2, Brahms therefore implies a complex of modally inflected third-related keys (G minor/major, E♭ major/minor, and C minor/major) while also linking the implicit keys E♭ major (VI) and C major/minor (IV) by virtue of their analogous locations in each strophe’s hybrid thematic design. As C minor emerges in 37, it evades an authentic cadence (appearing in six-three position) and negates the potential emergence of C major. C minor functions as the large-scale pre-dominant preparation for a G-minor cadence in m. 41 that closes AA₁ and temporarily resolves the preceding modal ambiguities. Bound within a G-minor frame encompassing strophes 1–2, VI and IV are prevented from fully emerging. This mirrors the poem’s description of transient light in prevailing darkness and its deeper signification: the protagonist’s true contemplation of his environment is impeded by his inability to see it fully. As light gradually pervades the atmosphere and enables sight during strophes 3 and 4, Brahms’s setting depicts the process of achieving complete union with nature, or enlightenment.

**E♭ major as a symbol of illumination (strophe 3)**

Strophes 3 and 4 may be regarded as a single entity owing to their lack of strong internal formal or cadential articulations (see the annotated score in ex. 3.5; voice leading is outlined on
the middle staff in mm. 44–53). Unified by the pervasive syncopated accompaniment that characterized the continuation/cadential phrases in strophes 1 and 2, strophes 3 and 4 are instead divided by the re-emergence of material from mm. 13–16 and 33–36 in mm. 62–65, setting apart the firm tonicization of E♭ major in strophe 3 (mm. 46–57) from the implicit G-major tonality that follows, taking hold in m. 62. As shown in ex. 3.5, G major is an implicit key veiled behind dominant prolongation in mm. 62–65, signaled by the emergence of E♭ (♯6) in the vocal line (m. 62) and key-signature change. Since this dominant prolongation begins earlier in m. 58, it blurs the boundary between strophes 3 and 4. This also creates the effect that G minor (m. 59) yields to G major (signaled by the voice’s E♭5 in m. 62) within a single gesture encompassed by the governing dominant prolongation. As the listener hears the correspondence between mm. 62–65 and mm. 13–16 and 33–36, he or she fully expects this “corrected” dominant (now in the tonic, G) to resolve.

**Example 3.5:** “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” strophe 3 and the beginning of strophe 4 (mm. 44–67) summarizing the voice leading on the second staff in mm. 44–53
The thematic return in m. 62 marks a poetic turning point in the poem’s narrative, and gives the first hint of the protagonist’s internal transformation. This turning point occurs between the moon’s actual emergence in the East (stanza 3) and its infiltration of the protagonist’s environment (stanza 4). Measures 46–65 set the portion of Goethe’s poem describing the protagonist’s visceral sensation of the distant moonlight before it affects his environment directly or enters his eyes and heart. This progression from mere sensation of the moon (latency) to its exertion of an effect on the natural scene (realization), or the shift from describing the moon to experiencing its effects, is modeled by the tonal journey from Eb major (strophe 3) to G major—a key implied prior to its cadential confirmation in the song’s final measures.

Various aspects of strophe 3 convey the protagonist’s subliminal sensation of the moon’s Eastern presence. Contrasting the solemn mood, low register, and descending motives in
strophes 1 and 2, higher registers and ascending motives appear in strophe 3. As shown in ex. 3.5a (below), the piano interlude in mm. 41–46 prepares strophe 3 with a three-octave ascending resolution of the D–Eb motive that tonicizes Eb major in a higher register, signifying the protagonist’s upward gaze. This interlude also refers back to the piano introduction, reviving the ambiguities that were created there by the D–Eb motive. Whereas the D–Eb motive across mm. 4–5 used a deceptive resolution of V to VI to erase a grouping boundary and create instability, the transformation of V in G major (m. 4) into V₆₅ of Eb major in mm. 44 (enabled by A♭ replacing A♮), allows the tonicization of Eb major to signal increased metrical and harmonic stability.

**Example 3.5a:** “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” comparison between the piano introduction (mm. 1–4) and interlude (mm. 41–46), showing corresponding measures 4 and 44 and the ascending registral resolution of D–Eb into strophe 3.
Beginning in m. 46, E♭ (♭6) renounces its descending tendency as an imitative rising-fifth motive (E♭−G−B♭ in mm. 46–48) and rising-fifths sequence illustrate the moon’s ascent (see the brackets in ex. 3.5). In mm. 46–52, a series of reachings-over and the voice’s ascent from E♭ to E♭5 emphasize the resolution of A♭ to G in mm. 51–52 (echoing mm. 44–46) in register 5, the song’s highest register, cadentially completing the emergence of E♭ major implied in mm. 13–16. In mm. 52ff., canonoc rising fifths (see brackets) also blur grouping boundaries both at the two-measure level and between the strophe’s two main phrases (mm. 46–53 and 54–61), leading to the textural break and reprise of continuational material in m. 62. As shown by the graph in ex. 3.6, the rising-fifths sequence in mm. 53–58 also disguises the bass’s rising stepwise progression, B♭–C–D, leading to D major in m. 58—an anticipation of G major’s dominant.

**Emergent C major (IV) and G major (I) keys signify internal transcendence**

I have suggested that the thematic return in m. 62 marks the beginning of strophe 4 with a reprise of material from section A. Yet this formal juncture warrants further explanation. First, as shown in my graph (ex. 3.6), dominant prolongation in mm. 58–63 suggests continuity across the thematic recapitulation in m. 62.23 In the large-scale bass line, D major occurs within a passing motion E♭–D–C spanning mm. 52–71, connecting E♭ (m. 53) and C (m. 71)—the two implicit keys in strophes 1 and 2. Second, m. 62 recapitulates continuational (or medial-functioning) material from strophes 1 and 2, creating the expectation for a subsequent four-measure cadential progression analogous to those in mm. 17–21 and 37–41. Instead, strophe 4 dramatizes the cadential process (see the score in ex. 3.7). Two protracted cadential attempts in C major

Example 3.6: “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” graph of the B and A² sections (mm. 38–94)
(mm. 72–77 and 80–85) temporarily divert the song from its G-major goal. Both cadential attempts, however, expand the subdominant (mm. 72–85) within the song’s major-mode structural cadence. As shown in my graph (see ex. 3.6, mm. 71 and 84), C major (IV) provides consonant support for \( \hat{4} \) (C) in the *Urлине*—the pitch missing from each previous iteration of the gapped descending-fifth motive D–G.

Example 3.7 (an annotated score of mm. 68–81) shows how ambiguity between common-tone and leading-tone seventh chords complicates the cadential attempts in strophe 4 by preparing C major both as a local tonic and as the subdominant in an imminent G-major cadence. C major emerges as an implicit key (signaled by its dominant) in m. 70, becoming a six-four chord in mm. 71, 76, and 84. The diminished seventh chord F\#–A–C–Eb (boxed in mm. 75 and 83) precedes each of the latter two C-major six-four chords. Reinterpreted as a common-tone diminished seventh chord, F\#–A–C–D\# emphasizes resolution to Eb (\( \tilde{3} \) in C major) at “sänftigend” in mm. 76 and 84 when the poem describes the moment that light enters the protagonist’s eyes. Also functioning as vii\(^7\) of V, F\#–A–C–Eb tonicizes a cadential six-four chord in mm. 76 and 84 whose resolution to V\(^5\)\(_3\) is elided. Different meanings emerge from this simultaneous reference to both the local C-major key and the global G-minor/major tonality.
First, by surpassing Eb—a pitch that signified obscurity in strophes 1 and 2 and stability in strophe 3—the pitch-class motive Eb/D♯—E♭ (mm. 75–76 and 83–84) opposes forms of Š, dramatizing the large-scale modal transformation from G minor to G major. Second, E♭’s local
function as 3 in C major—a key fulfilled by the appearance of its root-position chord—suggests that it signifies the moon’s presence, radiant clarity, and light.

If C major is ultimately IV in a cadential passage framed by I6 in m. 68 and the song’s structural dominant in m. 88, I interpret its immense prolongation as depicting the temporal magnification of a single poetic moment when the protagonist becomes united with nature. This psychological transformation is facilitated by the moon’s light. C major’s enlargement is thus a tonal process that mirrors a poetic process and results from Brahms’s repetition of the poem’s two final lines in mm. 80–90 (ex. 3.7). This repetition enables a second cadential attempt (mm. 81–90), initiated by a deceptive motion to VI (m. 80) in which the bass restates the motive D–Eb/(D#)–E. The motive replicates D–Eb (now spelled as D–D#) in its original register from mm. 4–5, creating an association to strophe 1. Revisions in Brahms’s autograph, shown in ex. 3.8 below,

**Example 3.8:** Brahms’s autograph of “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” showing his recomposition of mm. 79ff. Pierpont Morgan Library, Cary 172 (Record ID: 114281)²⁴

suggest that he reconceived the song’s G-major structural cadence (originally in m. 80) to include this repetition, thereby lengthening the process of achieving G major. The voice and piano originally formed a perfect authentic cadence in mm. 78–80, coinciding with the poem’s ending; the voice’s rising motive D–E♭–F♯–G is apparent beneath the crossed-out passage, which also shows a reprise of mm. 70ff. in the piano part that is absent from the revised version.25

**Modal resolution and signified transcendence at the structural cadence**

One effect of C major’s lengthy tonicization is to cast subsequent appearances of C minor in the song’s final measures (mm. 86–87) as minor-mode inflections in G major, and the bass’s E♭–D motive (mm. 87–88) as the resolution of an earlier conflict. The structural cadence resolves E♭ in a G-major context, as ex. 3.9 shows, while also summarizing motives used throughout the song. In m. 86, E♭ returns as 6 in G minor, functioning as an upper neighbor to the inner-voice descending-fifth motive spanning mm. 88–92. In mm. 88–90, the voice completes an inner-voice descent (3–2–1) above stable tonic closure (m. 90) in the same low register used in the piano introduction. This closure rectifies both the evaded cadence in m. 80 and the deceptive motion (V–VI) in mm. 4–5, while its *ossia* variant (D–E♭–F♯–G) repeats the prominent ascending-fourth motive from strophe 2 (compare ex. 3.4). Whereas both motives were associated with the opaque dusk-shrouded environment in strophes 1 and 2, here they provide melodic closure, mirroring poetic closure and the emotional change from naiveté to enlightenment. This change is signaled by the image of coolness entering the protagonist’s heart, a symbol for union with the natural environment that was previously unattainable.

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25In the autograph, Brahms’s measure-long continuation in the piano part and the vocal line’s repetition of the melody from mm. 72–75 suggest that he planned to repeat Goethe’s text even after the original G-major close in m. 80. Repetition of the text, therefore, does not seem to be his only motivation for this revision.
**Example 3.9:** “Dämmrung senkte sich von oben,” motives and counterpoint at the structural cadence in the \( A^2 \) section (mm. 85–94)

Dovetailed inner-voice iterations of the descending fifth-motive and the inverted fourth-motive (G–F–Eb–D) further extend this process of resolution into the postlude, which revisits the Eb/ Eb conflict one final time (ex. 3.9). In m. 90, a 4–3 suspension above the bass note G2 extends the descending-fifth motive in the piano’s left hand into the postlude’s plagal cadence (mm. 93–94). In mm. 93–94, a two-octave registral transfer from Eb2 to Eb4 highlights resolution to D4. This appearance of the D–Eb motive in register 4 invokes the piano interlude’s most prominent register and its attendant depiction of the dark landscape in mm. 1–4, as if the song’s ending signifies the protagonist’s newly enlightened perspective on the opening scene. The diminished seventh chord F#–A–C–Eb (m. 93) forms an associative connection to the ambiguous diminished seventh chords from strophe 4. Its placement atop the left hand’s open fifth C–G (m. 93) and the G-major chord in m. 94 subtly echo the protagonist’s transformative moment.26

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26The arpeggiated chord that resolves Eb4 to D4 (m. 94) emphasizes the significance of register. As shown in ch. 2, Brahms uses a similar arpeggiation in the final measure of “Nachtigall,” op. 97, no. 1 to highlight A#5. In both songs, the arpeggiation suggests a resolution of chromatic conflicts in multiple registers evoked throughout the piece.
As the goal of the song’s minor-to-major transformation, the structural G-major tonic in m. 90 represents the final stage in the poetic progression between passive observation of external nature (strophes 1 and 2) to active contemplation of the illuminated environment (strophes 3 and 4). This psychological transformation is conveyed by the arc-like musical progression I—VI—IV—V—I, which highlights Eb major and C major as pivotal moments in the transformative process. As shown above, I suggest that immense prolongations of VI and IV in strophes 3 and 4—implicit keys that remained unconfirmed by a complete cadential progression in strophes 1 and 2—signify the protagonist’s magnified perception of time caused by the moon’s illumination of the atmosphere. Just as the evening star foreshadowed the moon’s emergence, early instances of the pitches Eb and E♭ signal later tonicizations (VI and IV) that contextualize each pitch class, depicting the protagonist’s enlightenment as a potential that is realized over the course of the song.27

“Todessehnen” (op. 86, no. 6)

Love and death as catalysts for transcendence in Schenkendorf’s “Todessehnen”

Like the symbolic pairing of darkness and light in Goethe’s poem, Max von Schenkendorf’s “Todessehnen” forms a thematic opposition through its imagery and tense (fig. 3.3). The protagonist describes secretly harbored pain in the present tense (stanzas 1–2), but imagines an opposed state of blissful eternal life (stanzas 3–5). The protagonist’s address to his heart mediates between these two temporalities. In stanzas 1–3 it first reveals his struggle with

27In strophes 1 and 2, C major and Eb major remained implicit owing to incomplete cadential progressions that suggested, but did not confirm, these keys. Yet in strophes 3 and 4, Eb major (strophe 3) and C major (strophe 4) appear in root position (supporting I in the upper voice) and are prepared harmonically by the authentic progression V–I.
internal pain, but it later conveys intimate prayers to a divinity (stanzas 4–5), an external being who is capable of bringing the protagonist into new life through death.

**Figure 3.3**: Max von Schenkendorf, “Todessehnen,” *Gedichte: dritte Auflage mit einem Lebensabriß und Erläuterungen*, ed. Ernst August Hagen. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1862

A three-stage temporal progression and an opposition between internal and external perceptions accompany this thematic dichotomy between suffering in earthly life and peace achieved in death. In the first temporal stage (stanzas 1–2), the protagonist speaks in the present tense, describing the pain that his heart conceals as he laments present suffering (fig. 3.3). The juxtaposition of “hier” (stanza 2, line 3) and “dort” (stanza 3, line 1) opposes the physical realms of earth and heaven, suggesting that a new temporality begins as Schenkendorf contrasts earthly suffering with an imagined blissful death, which is implied by imagery conveying healing and union in stanza 3. The imperative that begins stanza 4 (“Hör’ es”) indicates a final transition
from the present to the future: the protagonist actively prays to Christ (present) for absolution from suffering (future; implied death), but the poem does not confirm death’s arrival. Words that indicate distance emphasize the temporal overlapping between the protagonist’s present pleas and the desired heavenly future. The noun “Fremde,” for instance, indicates the protagonist’s separation from Christ, yet the adverb “bald” implies imminent union in a higher life, bestowed by death’s “life-giving wind,” creating an expectant atmosphere. At the end of the poem, the protagonist sits poised at the boundary between present hardship and the peaceful hereafter, which he imagines with increasing fervor.

In addition to their similar thematic oppositions (pain/darkness versus peace/light), psychological transformations in “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben” and “Todessehnen” are mediated by catalysts. Goethe’s protagonist achieves union with nature through solitary contemplation of the moon, but love enables the transition between earthly and eternal life in Schenkendorf’s poem. Stanzas 1–2 express love as earth-bound yearning for an unnamed subject; stanzas 3–5 evoke eternal love that transcends earthly separation. This transition from earthly to divine love reflects Schenkendorf’s religious beliefs, which also pervade his political ideology. According to the scholar Bernhard Suphan, Schenkendorf’s ideas about German nationalism and his desire for political unification, which affiliates him with the poets E.M. Arndt and Achim von Arnim, fuse nationalistic “love” of freedom with religious love. That is, love for God is seamlessly transferred onto the image of an emperor (or German unification). Suphan describes Schenkendorf’s longing for political freedom as a “sermon” that resonates throughout his writings:

Schenkendorf (and in his own way, Arndt) clings intimately and with childlike thought to Christian belief. Difficult times taught belief, struggle taught prayer. Heaven and hell are
seen once more in their old ways. ‘Emperor and empire’ are, in Schenkendorf’s true, pure manner of thinking and soul truly a ‘sermon’; it is no battle cry, as with other poets.²⁸

Religious imagery in “Todessehnen” also veils the poem’s biographical origins: Schenkendorf clothes his erotic love for Henriette Elizabeth Barcklay (his future wife) in the sacred garb of a devotional poem to Christ.²⁹ Love thus functions as a catalyst in Schenkendorf’s religious, political, and personal belief systems, and is symbolic at multiple levels of meaning in “Todessehnen,”

Owing to the pervasive presence of love—the pious yet passionate feeling directed at once toward Christ, the beloved, and the fatherland—in Schenkendorf’s poetry and thought, I suggest that it facilitates the narrative progression from earthly suffering to renewed life (through death) in “Todessehnen.” Love is initially bound within the protagonist’s heart as if in servitude, causing his pain (stanzas 1–2), but is gradually redirected towards a deity (stanzas 3–5) who enables entrance into eternal life. This opposition between inner and outer manifestations of love reflects a known dichotomy in Lutheran belief. Lutherans claim that a pious believer’s relationship to God (“the Father”) is based in grace and enabled by Christ’s (“the Son’s”) love for humankind. Love in this ideology signifies an internal state of readiness for salvation, often signified as a change in the Lutheran believer’s heart. As the protagonist in Schenkendorf’s poem shifts his longing away from earthly existence and toward Christ, he thus models a process undertaken by Lutherans who seek a blessed death, and through it, the promise of renewed life.³⁰

²⁹The poem’s biographical origins are noted by Hagen and also in Elsa von Klein, Max von Schenkendorf: Eine Literarhistorische Studie (Wien: Gerold & Co., 1908).
³⁰David Yearsley describes this concept as “the art of dying” in Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
The images of an earthly existence mired in longing as well as transcendence through love of Christ are, further, fundamental principles in the late seventeenth-century theologian Jakob Böhme’s extremist Lutheran ideology. Paola Mayer notes that Böhme’s theology, which echoes similar ideas, was a known influence on Schenkendorf:

As a consequence of man’s fall, longing became the principal and best feeling in the created world. Not only would man long for the lost communion with Sophia and the forfeited participation in the second principle, but nature also, cursed of man’s fall, would long for restoration to its pristine state. As salvation was lost, so must man regain it, namely, by a proper redirection of will and desire. That is to say, man must give himself over to complete love and faith in Christ, and, most importantly, to true “Gelassenheit” (resignation), the abandonment of all self-will and total reliance on God’s will.\(^{31}\)

In “Todessehnen,” the persona’s psychological transformation, or the shift from narrating about love’s painful effects to experiencing its divine power, maps onto the Lutheran ideas about bearing the burdens of earthly love in order to eventually redirect it outward toward God. Schenkendorf’s text models the speaker’s spiritual evolution from earthly servitude to internal readiness for transcendence. Yet the protagonist’s union with Christ remains implicit (suggested but unrealized), recalling two further aspects of Lutheran belief: faith in Christ despite his concealment from view, and the importance of the believer’s active pleas for God’s grace. Citing evidence of Brahms’s lifelong adherence to such Lutheran ideals, Daniel Beller-McKenna cites the following underlined passages in his 1833 Bible, which echo similar tenets: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen,” and “For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”\(^{32}\)

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In light of these common Lutheran influences on Brahms and Schenkendorf, the following analysis of Brahms’s setting suggests that he might have read “Todessehnen” with a particular sensitivity to its themes of dormant internal love and concealed divine power, which affect his musical portrayal of temporality. Specifically, Brahms seems to have responded to the future tense in stanzas 3–5, which creates expectation for transcendence that is left unresolved when the poem ends. As the reader of the poem anticipates thematic closure in these stanzas, he or she mimics the protagonist’s hope for salvation and his expectant posture toward the deity. The protagonist has not yet experienced the passage between earthly and eternal life, and only envisions it when the poem ends. I interpret Brahms’s setting as depicting the protagonist’s anticipation of heavenly bliss and enacting spiritual transcendence that the text only foreshadows.

Form in “Todessehnen” (op. 86, no. 6)

Brahms’s through-composed setting of “Todessehnen,” an arc-like design, AA\(^1\)B CC\(^1\) (see fig. 3.4), models the poem’s three-stage temporal progression from a burdened earthly existence (stanzas 1–2; present tense) through an implicit envisioned future state of healing (stanza 3; future tense) to a sustained period of prayer signifying imminent entrance into a higher realm (stanzas 4–5; present and future tenses). Figure 3.4 shows that lengthy A and C sections
**Figure 3.4:** “Todessehnen,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>((A^1))</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>C(^1)</th>
<th>postlude</th>
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<tr>
<td>Measures:</td>
<td>mm. 1–10</td>
<td>mm. 11–19</td>
<td>mm. 20–22</td>
<td>mm. 22–30</td>
<td>mm. 31–35</td>
<td>mm. 36–51</td>
<td>mm. 52–55</td>
<td>mm. 56–79 (m. 80)</td>
<td>mm. 81–85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agent(s):</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>voice and piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines in the poem:</td>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>5–8</td>
<td>9–12</td>
<td>13–16</td>
<td>17–20 (20 repeated)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonies in F# minor:</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>(\frac{7}{3}) becomes (V^7/III)</td>
<td>III (\rightarrow) (I#)</td>
<td>(V#)</td>
<td>V#</td>
<td>V# (\rightarrow) I#</td>
<td>(I#)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporality in Brahms’s setting:</td>
<td>present</td>
<td>implied future</td>
<td>present &amp; implied future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>future</td>
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</table>
frame a shorter, eight-measure B section. The song’s sectionalized harmonic structure reinforces this formal design: the A section (mm. 1–19) begins in F# minor, but a transitional passage (mm. 19–22) uses ⅦⅦ as V7 of A major (III), the key of the B section (mm. 23–30). In the C section (mm. 31–85), a protracted dominant prolongation across two poetic stanzas signals imminent resolution to a modally transformed tonic (F# major) that is only confirmed at the structural cadence in m. 79. This cadence extends across mm. 75–79 following the poem’s structural close in m. 71.

A consequence of the key scheme shown in fig. 3.4 is that a large-scale bass arpeggiation of the tonic chord (F#–A–C#) undergirds the overarching progression from F# minor to F# major represented by the A and C sections. In the song’s global tonal design, A major is a chromatic pivot chord (ⅨⅢ in F# major) and a composing-out of the bass note A in the large-scale bass arpeggiation that mediates between minor and major forms of the tonic F#. On account of its major quality, A major foreshadows F# major. Yet owing to the three-sharp key signature shared by F# minor and A major, I also interpret the A and B sections as a continuous musical unit (bracketed beneath fig. 3.4). This formal unit (AB) sets apart the close relationship between F# minor and A major (and the stability of each key) from the instability and desire for resolution created by the C section’s dominant prolongation. Both of these sectional groupings have implications for my narrative interpretation of the song. The symmetrical form created by the outer sections’ shared tonic (F#) suggests the opposition between the protagonist’s initial burdened state and his eventual release through death, while the progression from F# minor to A major signifies an intermediate stage in the tonal narrative. In order to achieve transcendence

33I interpret m. 22 as an anacrusis to the eight-measure B section (mm. 23–30).
signified by $\#$ at the structural cadence, the protagonist must pass through a preparatory, though hopeful, spiritual state (III).

In addition to creating a tonal narrative, each of the keys supported by the bass arpeggiation recontextualizes recurring motives at pitch, transposed, or enharmonically reinterpreted. Each motivic transformation implies a new facet of the protagonist’s emotional journey from earthly suffering to peaceful release. Finally, the structural cadence (m. 79) and piano postlude (mm. 81–85) provide the song’s first stable, root-position tonic chord in the parallel key (F# major). This extended process of achieving firm cadential closure in F# major seems to signify that the protagonist has achieved transcendence, albeit only in his imagination.\(^{34}\)

### Phrase structure and the depiction of an emotional burden in the A and A\(^1\) Sections

The A and A\(^1\) sections in “Todessehnen” depict the protagonist’s emotional constriction and attempts to break free from a burden through expansions of hybrid phrase structure, large-scale motives that suggest descent (or succumbing to pain), registral oppositions conveying striving, and topical associations with Baroque idioms. As shown in ex. 3.10, mm. 1–10, which evoke a chorale prelude topic through doubling in octaves (as on an organ), also reflect Caplin’s hybrid 1 (antecedent + continuation), and contain a nested sentence (mm. 1–4).\(^{35}\) Owing to the sentence’s characteristic forward-driving motion toward a cadence, half-note rhythms in the chorale tune (mm. 1–2) convey stasis followed by the quickened melodic descent of each two-

\(^{34}\)My distinction between the protagonist’s achievement of transcendence in reality versus in his imagination—a theme that recurs in this dissertation—is often based on my interpretation of the postlude in each song. In “Todessehnen,” the postlude seems to qualify the finality of the structural cadence, as if suggesting that the protagonist’s transcendence is contingent upon future events. As I will show, this interpretation is supported by motives that bridge m. 79 and the postlude.

\(^{35}\)The voice’s consistent emphasis of downbeats and the piano’s walking bass and sustained right-hand part imitate an accompanied chorale tune, while Brahms’s tempo indication (Langsam) conveys solemnity, as if the protagonist embarks on a weighty spiritual pilgrimage.
Example 3.10: “Todessehnen,” A section (mm. 1–4)

Brahms opposes a depiction of the protagonist’s heavy burden (mm. 1–4) with his struggle to withstand this pain (mm. 5–10) by contrasting musical parameters that depict descent with those that convey ascent, or striving. D major’s prominence in the first nested sentence (VI; m. 2) highlights the descending harmonic roots F−D−C# in mm. 1–4 (ex. 3.10). In m. 2, D major is emphasized motivically and harmonically; it creates a deceptive harmonic resolution that denies tonic closure beneath the upper-voice third-progression A−G#−F#. D major is also momentarily stabilized by its altered dominant (the deceptive resolution of F# minor’s altered dominant, C#−E#−A, ends the presentation phrase and becomes D major’s altered dominant, A−

36Although the stepwise melodic segments E−F# and C#−D in the voice depict ascent, each two-note unit descends by the interval of a third.
C#–E#), poetically suggesting short-lived emotional stability. Brahms again dramatizes descent in mm. 3–4 as diminished-seventh chords tonicize D major (VI) and B minor (IV). Both chords lead to an augmented-sixth chord that resolves to V in m. 4, creating a large-scale iteration of the descending D–C# motive, which I interpret as signifying resignation to a burden, spanning mm. 2–4. Framing this motivic descent, a progression from F# minor to F# major encompasses mm. 1–4, foreshadowing the song’s global modal trajectory between parallel keys.

Following Brahms’s depiction of the protagonist’s weighty burden through a descending bass motion in m. 4 (D–C#), the continuation phrase (mm. 5–10) strives futilely for greater stability. As ex. 3.10a shows, the bass fails to sustain the V chord it achieves in m. 7 (represented by the doubled root C#). Brahms’s subsequent depiction of registral descent into the piano’s lower range, accompanied by fragmented rising-fifth motives, conveys the protagonist’s rapidly deteriorating emotional strength. In mm. 5–7, sequence units of rising fifths first convey root

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37 The augmented triad A–C#–E# facilitates this tonicization by combining the dominant chords of both keys into a single sonority. The deceptive motion in m. 4 thus acquires its expressive meaning by replacing an expected tonic within the normally tonic-prolongational presentation phrase.
motion by ascending third between downbeats, evoking the protagonist’s increasing efforts to conceal his suffering. Reachings-over within this sequence, shown in ex. 3.10b, embody the protagonist’s struggle by grasping for higher registers. This registral striving culminates with C#5 in the vocal line (m. 7), recalling the registral nadir (C#4; “Last”) in m. 4.38

Yet, m. 7 is too soon to achieve the half-cadential goal (V#); the text “immer mächtiger mich faßt” has not been completed, and an arrival on V in m. 7 would violate the symmetrical four-measure groupings of the hybrid by placing the cadential goal one measure earlier than its normative placement in m. 8. Having risen too quickly, the sequence thus breaks off, initiating the phrase’s second narrative stage: dissolution. As ex. 3.10a shows, the piano fractures the sequence’s rising-fifth motive into rising fourths and double-neighbor figures encircling F# and A (doubled in octaves in m. 8). In mm. 5–6, the voice inverts its previous rising fourths C#–F# and E–A into the descending-fourth motive C#–G# (mm. 7ff.) as if attempting to retain C#5, much like the protagonist struggles to withstand his emotional pain.

Owing to this motivic dissolution and subsequent registral descent, the moment at which the continuation phrase achieves its half-cadential dominant—signifying the protagonist’s resignation—is obscured and requires further comment. Example 3.10a shows that although the dominant chord in m. 7 occurs too early, the dominants on the downbeats of mm. 8, 9, and 10 are plausible candidates for the half-cadential goal.39 The following factors suggest a half-cadential

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38 The rising fourth-motive F–G#–A#–B forms a “lead-in” between the subphrases through an inversion of the descending tetrachord F#–E–D–C#, inflected with the leading tone, A#. This motive recurs throughout the song in connection with the opposed upward and downward directional tendencies that portray the protagonist’s struggle and ultimate release.

39 The half-cadential arrival in m. 7 is weakened owing to its sequential, rather than cadential, preparation. The bass line approaching V# in m. 7 also breaks the preceding pattern of ascending major sevenths (fifth plus major third) in mm. 5–6, rising only by fifth (F#–C#). The major third that completes the seventh is represented by C#4–D#4–E#4, which is repeated in mm. 8–10 (outlined on the middle staff of ex. 3.10a).
Example 3.10b: “Todessehnen,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–10)

Example 3.10c: “Todessehnen,” mm. 5–10, re-barred to show corresponding locations in the antecedent phrase (mm. 1–4)
arrival in m. 9, followed by a post-cadential dominant prolongation. Failing to maintain V in m. 7, the piano repeats the half-cadential progression IV\(^7\)–V\(^\#\), first in root position approaching m. 8, then with an inverted altered subdominant (#IV\(^7\)) that emphasizes the dramatic falling bass motion F\(^\#\)–C\(^\#\) as the bass achieves C\(^\#\)2 (m. 9). The downbeat of m. 9 is thus marked by a change in register. This moment also coincides with the voice’s termination of its fragmented C\(^\#\)5–A\(^4\)–G\(^4\) motives; the voice settles on G\(^4\) (m. 9), now a lengthy dotted-quarter note. (The re-barred version in ex. 3.10c shows that the downbeat of m. 9 corresponds temporally to beat 3 of m. 4, owing to m. 8 being a 2/4 measure.) Finally, the voice’s G\(^4\) (m. 9) seems to pick up where the failed V in m. 7 (beat 3) left off, as if attempting to “correct” the weakly achieved V in the second half of m. 7 and m. 8 by placing V in m. 9 (beat 1), resulting in an extension of the continuation phrase to 4 + 2 measures. Based on the voice’s subsequent descent to E\(^4\) (m. 10), a reflection of its now-dissipating energy, I interpret a dominant prolongation in mm. 9–10 as the piano continues to dispel tension that was created by inserted, fragmented material in mm. 7–8.\(^{40}\)

Example 3.10a also shows that the continuation phrase prolongs the pitch E\(^4\) (m. 7) and introduces the rising-third motive C\(^\#\)–D\(^\#\)–E\(^\#\) across mm. 7–10 (outlined on the middle staff), foreshadowing its later revelation as the completed rising fourth C\(^\#\)–D\(^\#\)–E\(^\#\)–F\(^\#\) in section C. As I will show, this motivic evolution models the protagonist’s changed spiritual state. Within the A section, the leading tone E\(^\#\), supported by dominant prolongation in mm. 9–10, desires immediate resolution to F\(^\#\) that Brahms denies. The D–C\(^\#\) motive is also stated in register 1 in m. 10.

\(^{40}\)Although the final V chord in m. 10 is approached more strongly—via a root-position #IV\(^7\) chord—than its analogue in m. 9, I regard the voice’s cessation of struggling to occur with the G\(^4\) in m. 9 and therefore locate the half-cadential arrival there. Nevertheless, the completion of repeated text (“immer mächtiger mich faßt”) in m. 10 bestows weight on the final cadence as the phrasal goal. In performance, the pianist might consider emphasizing the progression #IV\(^7\)–V preparing m. 10 as if to suggest that it realizes the “finality” of the half-cadential arrival later than the voice.
10, recalling the descending bass motion in mm. 2–4 and highlighting the unresolved dominant. It is as if the protagonist remains bound to suffering, signified by the motive 5–6–5 in F♯ minor, a key in which rising melodic and harmonic motion has so far proved untenable.

The transposed 5–6–5 motive and future hope in A¹

Whereas the A section extends a hybrid phrase and invokes the motive C♯–D–C♯ as if symbolizing emotional struggle, A¹ recomposes the continuation phrase, which underpins the protagonist’s hopeful address to his heart, to include a turn to A major (III). The harmonic progression toward A major’s half-cadential dominant (prolonged in mm. 19–22) reflects this emotional transition. I will show that A major is attained through a lengthy prolongation of B minor (II in A major) that leads to the auxiliary cadence II–V–I, reflecting the poetic transition between the present (“hier”) and future (“dort”).

Since Brahms alters the hybrid from mm. 1–10 in A¹, mm. 11–14 first repeat the antecedent phrase from mm. 1–4. Yet as ex. 3.11 shows, Brahms recomposes the continuation phrase in A¹ (mm. 15–20) as if to omit the references to striving found in the A section’s sequential continuation. A descending-fifths sequence in mm. 15–17 (represented by the roots F♯–B–E–A) instead suspends directed tonal motion in order to compose out a B-minor pivot chord (IV in F♯ minor, II in A major) in mm. 15–17 via the rising stepwise bass line B–C♯–D, shown in ex. 3.11a.⁴¹ Although the root motion by descending fifth mimics physical motion here, this is at the service of prolonging a single B-minor chord—a static entity. Owing to Brahms’s

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⁴¹This rising third is concealed, however, since the walking bass expresses each ascending step as a descending seventh that includes a change of register, yielding the stepwise motions E–D–C♯ and F♯–E–D across each barline.
Example 3.11: “Todessehnen,” A\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 15–23)

concealment of the underlying prolongation, feigned harmonic motion by fifth seems to suggest an invisible spiritual (internal), rather than a physical (external) journey between two realms.

Within the B-minor prolongation that pivots between F\# minor and A major, Brahms also transposes the motives C\#–D–C\# and C\#–D\#–E\#–[F\#] that were linked to images of descent and struggle in the A section in mm. 15–21, as ex. 11a shows, as if suggesting that the protagonist’s spiritual evolution is underway. I interpret the contrast between the motives’ recurrence at pitch (reflecting constancy), and sequential harmonic motion (simulating movement) as capturing the protagonist’s persistent meditation on the transformative catalyst of
Example 3.11a: “Todessehnen,” graph of the A¹ section (mm. 15–22) and B section (mm. 23–28)

Example 3.11: “Liebe,” love. Whereas earthly love burdened him in the A section, it now opens the gateway between earthly life and imagined transcendence.

The graph in ex. 3.11a shows the motive C♯–D♯–E–[F♯] and the descending motive D–C♯, which signified resignation in section A, in new harmonic surroundings. Beginning in m. 14, the upper voice prolongs C#4; in m. 15, it moves to D4 as part of the non-prolongational fourth-motive C♯–D–E–F# spanning mm. 15–17 (bracketed in ex. 3.11a) supported by parallel tenths between the outer voices. Following the half-cadential arrival in m. 19, D4 becomes the chordal seventh (and an inner voice) above E (m. 21) that is transferred into the bass and resolved to C# (m. 23), completing the progression I–VII⁷–III⁶ begun in m. 1 beneath the upper-voice descent 5–4–3—a linear progression that creates continuity between the A¹ and B sections. As the score (ex. 3.11) and graph (ex. 3.11a) show, the piano’s lengthy meditation on D4, indicated by syncopations and hairpins in m. 20ff., is also part of the bass’s third-progression E–D–C♯ (mm. 19–24), which echoes earlier linking third-motives, emphasizing a smooth transition between the present and a nascent imagined future (compare 15–17). As if evoking the effect of Bebung on a

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42“Liebe” (love) is emphasized by the portamento, executed between B5 and D4 in the vocal line, and registral climax (B5) in m. 17.
clavichord (see ex. 3.11 above), this passage effaces the written barline, suggesting the amorphous psychic transition between real and imagined realms.

Brahms’s transposition of the motive C#–D–C# in mm. 19–20 also yields E–F♯–E. F♯ (the bass of mm. 18 and 19), enharmonically respells the A section’s frequent E♯s, foreshadowing the chordal third of D minor—a prominent key in the C section, where the duality between E♯ and F♯ represents a tonal problem in the sense described by Schoenberg. Brahms’s transposition of the motive C#–D–C# in mm. 19–20 also yields E–F♯–E. F♯ (the bass of mm. 18 and 19), enharmonically respells the A section’s frequent E♯s, foreshadowing the chordal third of D minor—a prominent key in the C section, where the duality between E♯ and F♯ represents a tonal problem in the sense described by Schoenberg.43 E♯ is largely absent from the transitional harmonic passage between F♯ minor and A major in mm. 15–22, but its enharmonic respelling here and later in the C section introduces the tonally distant key of VI♯, another manifestation of transformation.

The implicit key of F♯ major (I♯) and the signified future in the B section

The B section, which is less an independent section than an extended transition, pivots between A major (III) and F♯ major (I♯), which remains an implicit key in the B section owing to the lack of a confirming cadence. In the B section’s antecedent and consequent phrases, shown in ex. 3.12, declamation and motivic linkage technique using the third-motives E–D–C# and B–A–G# (mm. 22–23 and 26–27) also continue to overlap phrase boundaries and deemphasize downbeats, depicting a weightless realm in which the protagonist’s burden no longer holds sway.44 For instance, linkage technique in m. 27 highlights the thematic parallelism between mm. 23 and 27. But the bass’s repeated third-motive E–D–C# connects the half-cadential V⁷

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43Schoenberg’s definition of the “tonal problem” is described by Severine Neff, who calls it “the first chromatic version of the basic motive.” She then explains that the “‘problem’ demands expansion and continuation in regions away from the tonic, eventually including the most tonally distant reinterpretation of the opening material, the climax of the centrifugal force.” She cites the conflict between F♯ and F♯ in Brahms’s C-minor String Quartet (op. 51, no. 1) as an example of the tonal problem. Severine Neff, “Schoenberg as theorist: Three forms of presentation,” Schoenberg and his World, ed. Walter Frisch (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 60–1.
44For instance, “dort nur” appears on an upbeat linking mm. 22 and 23 and deemphasizing the downbeat of m. 23.
Example 3.12: “Todessehnen,” B section (mm. 22–31)

chord (m. 26) with an A-major six-three chord (m. 27), deemphasizing the internal cadence that defines the B section’s two-part design. The chromatic passing motion E–E♭–F♭ provides additional continuity across mm. 24–25 and appears within a transposed ♯5–6–♯5 motive (now in A major) that associatively refers back to the A section (ex. 3.12; mm. 24–26).

The B section’s expanded consequent phrase (mm. 27–31), shown in ex. 3.12, sets the text “schwesterliche Wesen,” which first alludes to directing love toward an external deity. As if depicting the protagonist’s conversion from internal suffering to external prayer, this section modulates to F♯ major, transposes significant motives, and expands the expressive use of register to include a conflict between registers 4 and 5. The graph in ex. 3.12a summarizes these

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45The B section’s internal half cadence initially appears over a V6 chord. This is an unconventional way to represent a half cadence, particularly in Caplin’s theory, where a half cadence requires a root-position V chord. The vocal melody, the conclusion of the poetic line, and the four-measure phrase rhythm, however, are the keys to locating this half cadence.
Example 3.12a: “Todessehnen,” graph of the B section (mm. 27–36)

elements and prepares my later argument that F# major remains an implicit key that is undefined by a perfect authentic cadence until the end of the song. Despite its presence in mm. 27–36, I interpret this key as hard won at the structural cadence (m. 79).\footnote{The perfect authentic cadence that confirms F# major provides the cadence required to make it explicit as a key. The upper-voice achievement of $\hat{1}$ strengthens the cadence but is not required for a key to become explicit.} The F#-major chord in m. 29 thus represents a nascent key; although it is tonicized by the VII\(6\) chord (E\#–G\#–B) in m. 28, this F#-major chord is ultimately subsumed within an encompassing 6–5 motion (above the bass note C\#2) that connects III\(6\),\(3\) and V#. Similarly, the F#-major chord in m. 28 functions as a passing chord that connects VII\(6\) in A major (G\#–B–D) with VII\(6\) in F# major.\footnote{The F\# is omitted from the passing chord on beat 3 of m. 28.} It then acts as an upper third to D\#3 (m. 29). This D\# supports $\hat{3}$ (A\#4), which chromatically inflects the 3–2 motion spanning the upper voice in mm. 27–31.

Both F#-major chords also refer associatively to m. 4, reviving the sense of latency surrounding F# major in the A section. These factors prompt the listener’s expectation for the dominant seventh chord that arrives in m. 31 to resolve to F# major, yet this resolution is withheld until the end of the C section. In the poetic narrative, the latent implication of F# major reflects an analogous change in the protagonist’s heart that is underway yet incomplete: love is
redirected outward toward the deity, but consummation still lies in the future. Finally, ex. 3.12 shows that the voice achieves C♯5 in m. 29 by floating up to a lengthy dotted-half note, alluding to the voice’s short gasps as it reaches for a seemingly unattainable C♯5 (mm. 7ff.) in the A section (refer to ex. 3.10a and ex. 3.10b). Similarly, the bass note C♯2 that supports V⁷ in m. 31 revisits the register of the A section’s half-cadential dominant (m. 10). C♯2 completes a large-scale neighboring motion in the bass with D♯ in m. 30, the first transposition of the 5–6–5 motive into F♯ major. In m. 31, the arrival of the dominant signals a formal climax; the bass note C♯2 is the goal of the large-scale bass arpeggiation F♯–A–C♯ that undergirds the A, A¹, and B sections. Moreover, the return in m. 31 to the half-cadential dominant that framed the A section (m. 10) reminds the listener of its prior, unresolved state in order to suggest its eventual resolution. This promise is fulfilled in the C section.

**The Role of VI(♮) in the C section’s confirmation of F♯ major**

As A major yields to the emerging key of F♯ major in the C section, the protagonist shifts from envisioning the future (stanza 3) to actively praying for its arrival (stanzas 4–5). I suggest that the C section’s lengthy dominant prolongation, spanning mm. 33–75 until the structural cadence in m. 79, shown in the ex. 3.13 score and ex. 3.13a graph, models the protagonist’s fervent anticipation of transcendence. Local resolutions of this C♯-major dominant chord prior to the structural cadence, however, introduce modal mixture in C# major, recalling the motive C♯–D♯–E♯ and chromatically altering the C♯–D–C# motive to become C♯–D♯–C#. Enharmonically reinterpreted augmented sixth and dominant seventh chords in C and C¹ also tonicize C♯ major and D major, creating functional ambiguity and suspense while portraying two poetic

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48 This narrative is easily transferred onto the poem’s autobiographical meaning; see above, p. 159.
transformations: the arrival of “death’s life-giving wind” (“Todes Lebenswind”), and love’s transformation into eternal life (“wo die Geistersprache Leben/mit der Liebe Name nennt”).

The C section’s first part (mm. 33−56), shown in ex. 3.13 below, recalls motives introduced in the A section, as if bringing them to fuller completion. Its lengthy dominant prolongation also resolves, first (locally) to the tonic (F♯ major) in m. 41 and, deceptively, to A major (ⅤⅠ in C♯ major), a chord to which I will return later, in m. 45. First, as ex. 3.13 shows, the piano interlude that prepares the C section (mm. 33−35) states the C♯–D♯–E♯ motive in the bass; the outer voices progress in parallel tenths, promising resolution to A♯5 and F♯3 (and an implied F♯-major chord) in m. 36 as if rectifying the failed resolution of E♯ in mm. 7−10 (compare the annotated score of section A in ex. 3.10a). But this resolution is delayed by a measure of rest (m. 36) and undercut by the chordal seventh E♭ in m. 37 (although F♯3 reappears).

Example 3.13: “Todessehnen” C section (mm. 33−56)
Although the missing tonic seems to arrive in m. 41, it, too, remains an apparent tonic subsumed within the suspenseful dominant prolongation spanning mm. 34–43 (compare ex. 3.13a). The F#-major chord in m. 41 is, however, emphasized motivically; melodic closure on F#4 (m. 41) not only fulfills E#’s resolution in an inner voice (completing the C#–D#–E# motive, which becomes the fourth-motive C#–F#), but completes a polyphonic melody between dovetailed third-motives: C#–D#–E# and A#–G#–F# that Brahms will reveal, transformed, at the structural cadence and postlude (see the arrows at mm. 77–80 in ex. 3.14). In m. 79, the motive C#–D#–E# finally emerges from the inner voice, reaching toward A#5 in m. 79 in a grandiose registral gesture that fulfills the upper-voice resolution withheld from m. 36. I suggest that this eventual resolution functions within a registral narrative across the C and C¹ sections that is coextensive with their gradual cadential confirmation of F# major.
Whereas the beginnings of C and C\textsuperscript{1} (mm. 36–43 = 56–63) seem to connect the inner-voice motive described above with its apotheosis at the structural cadence, the intervening passages in each section (mm. 43–51 and 63–75) introduce modal mixture and tonal ambiguities that express more local spiritual transformations. Enharmonic reinterpretation of augmented sixth and dominant seventh chords display modal mixture in both F\# major and C\# major, illustrating the emotional transformations embodied by death and love in the text “deines Todes Lebenswind” and “mit der Liebe Name nennt,” forging a narrative connection between them. Supporting this narrative, as the graphs in ex. 3.13a and ex. 3.14 show, the neighbor notes D\textsubscript{b} and D\# connect the prolonged upper-voice tones C\#5 and C\#4.

**Example 3.13a:** “Todessehnen” graph of the C section (mm. 33–55)
Example 3.14: “Todessehnen” graph of the C\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 63–85)

During the first harmonic transformation (mm. 45–51; ex. 3.13a), D\textsharp\textsuperscript{4} is a neighbor note within the 6\textsubscript{4} chord that prolongs A major (locally, VI\textsuperscript{5}). In m. 48, Brahms reinterprets A major’s chordal seventh (G\textsharp) as F\textasterisk, implying that D major will be tonicized as in m. 2. But the apparent dominant seventh functions instead as a diminished-third chord in C\# major—a key suggested by the cadential six-four chord in m. 49. This six-four chord leads to what seems to be a C\#-major cadence in m. 51, except that the local tonic remains in six-four position. The piano repeats the cadential gesture (m. 52 = m. 50) and supplies the missing root, C\#3 (m. 53), but the C\# harmony
now gains a seventh, becoming $V^7$ of $F#$ major.\textsuperscript{49} The second, extended harmonic transformation in mm. 63–75 (ex. 3.14) implies a connection to the first; it restates and resolves D major’s dominant seventh chord in mm. 69–70, stabilizing D major as $\flat VI^{5}$ in $F#$ major and $\flat II^{5}$ in $C#$ major as the protagonist invokes love (“Liebe”). I consider D major’s function as a pivot chord between these two keys to signify love’s poetic role as a portal between opposed earthly and eternal realms.\textsuperscript{50} Moreover, the expansion of D major in mm. 69–72 contrasts its earlier, fleeting appearances in the A section.\textsuperscript{51}

As Brahms repeats the poem’s last line in mm. 69ff., D major finally leads to a diminished third chord (m. 74) and attains a structural cadential six-four chord (m. 75) using the same (albeit inverted) harmonic progression from m. 4 (compare ex. 3.10). The song then presses toward the dramatic arrival of $F#$ major. The neighbor note D#5 shown in ex. 3.14 (m. 75) now replaces D♭5 (m. 69), while most of the Urlinie descent (4–3–2–1) occurs uncharacteristically over the dominant spanning mm. 75–78. In counterpoint with this descent, the inner voice restates the vocal melody from mm. 37–41 (“Hör’ es Vater”), resolving the motive $C#–D♭–E#$ to $F#$ in register 4 at the root-position tonic arrival in m. 79. D♭ is submerged into an alto voice in m. 82 of the postlude, where it resolves to $C#$, as if recalling now-distant struggle from a blissful hereafter.

These two transformations demonstrate that the complex around D major/minor invokes both double mixture ($\flat VI^{5}$) and the Neapolitan complex in $F#$-major and $C#$-major contexts and

\textsuperscript{49}The root-position $C#$-major chord in m. 53 is a V, not a I. Brahms elides resolution to $C#$ major within the tonic six-four in m. 51. Tonicization of $C#$ is reflected, however, by the upper voice: D♭4 becomes D#5 in m. 50, preparing the C↓ reprise.
\textsuperscript{50}The dual meaning of D major as both $\flat VI^{5}$ in $F#$ major (I) and $\flat II^{5}$ in $C$ major (V) forms the “Neapolitan complex,” a term that originated with Christopher Wintle in “The Sceptred Pall: Brahms’s Progressive Harmony.”
\textsuperscript{51}Compare mm. 2 and 12.
provides local harmonic resolution of the C and C¹ sections’ prolonged dominant chord. The pitch class F₅ (within D minor) also alludes to the prevalent unresolved E₃s in section A, as if indicating a lingering echo of earthly pain that has not entirely dissipated. Moreover, like the C-major tonicization in “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,” the lengthy D-major tonicization at “Liebe” signifies the enlargement of a single, transformative poetic moment. The listener’s experience within the duration of each tonicized key mimics the protagonist’s magnified experience of his imagined future.

Interpreted in light of these transformations, the postlude’s prolongation of F₅ major seems to confirm the poetic future tense, achieving the eternal life that the poem lacks. Its repetition of 3−2−(1) in F₅ major in both registers 5 and 4 seems to thrust the protagonist’s prayer (represented by the vocal melody at “Hör’ es, Vater”) jubilantly upward as it seeks final closure on 1 above a stable tonic, completing the prayer begun in the C section (stanzas 4–5). Not only does F₅ major’s arrival point to Brahms’s technique of delaying cadential confirmation of the major-mode tonic until the song’s ending; through its reference to previous music, it establishes a long-range narrative connection to the C section’s opening (as mentioned earlier) and implies a continuation—or supplementation—of grammatical tenses that the poem implies, but does not realize.

“Schweremt” (op. 58, no. 5)

Melancholy and temporal stasis in Karl Candidus’s “Schweremt”

“Schwermeut,” a poem whose title invokes what Susan Youens calls the “darkest, blackest-hued” form of depression in the nineteenth century, also opposes present melancholy with the promise of future release in death. Its use of simultaneous narration in the present tense (“Mir ist”) communicates the protagonist’s earthly suffering, but his desire to enter eternal night—symbolizing death—implies a conditional future tense (“Möcht’ ich”) in its final line (fig. 3.5). In addition to evoking common symbols found in Goethe’s and Schenkendorf’s poems, such as night and transcendent death, “Schwermeut” also expresses the transformative power of catharsis, reflecting imagery found in the third poem from Novalis’s Hymnen an die Nacht:

Once, when I was shedding bitter tears, when, dissolved in pain, scattered, and I was standing alone at the barren mound which hid the figure of my life in its narrow, dark space—alone, as no one could be more alone, driven by unspeakable anxiety—strengthless, with just one thought left of need. —As I looked around for help, could not move forwards and not backwards, and hung onto the fleeting, extinguished life with infinite craving:—then came from blue distances—from the heights of my old blessedness, a twilight shiver—and with one stroke my birth’s bond ripped—Light’s chains. There the earthly splendor fled and my sadness with it—misery flowed into a new, unplumbed world—You, Night—inspiration, heaven’s sleep, came over me—the region lifted gently up; over the region my released and newborn spirit floated. The hill became a cloud of dust—through the cloud I saw the transfigured features of my beloved. In her eyes rested the forever—I took her hands, and my tears were a glittering and unrippable bond. Years by the thousands flew off to the distance, like storms. In her embrace I wept overjoyed tears at the new life. —It was the first and the only dream—and only since then I’ve felt an unchangeable, eternal faith in the heaven of Night and its Light, the beloved.

53Susan Youens, Schubert’s Late Lieder: Beyond the Song Cycles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 57.
The frequent reference to ecstatic versus bitter tears, as well as the dichotomy between eternal and earthly life in Novalis’s hymn resembles the imagery in “Schwermut.” Like Novalis, Candidus implies that cathartic tears—symbols of pain, love, and union—must occur if the protagonist is to be transfigured into new life. But while the speaker weeps openly in the second part of Novalis’s poem, which contrasts with the static, bitter depression described in its first part, Candidus instead uses the verb “möchten,” implying a future tense that emphasizes the protagonist’s yearning to cry. His unrelieved melancholy instead highlights an inability to experience catharsis (and afterwards, transcendence), as if he remains trapped in a depressed state.

The somewhat unpredictable meter in “Schwermut,” as fig. 3.5 shows, creates dynamism in its structure that contrasts with the protagonist’s fixed emotions (a facsimile of the original edition appears in fig. 3.5a).\(^{56}\) The poem’s six lines use mostly iambics, but introduce a dactyl to emphasize “möcht[e]” at the beginning of line 6 (its longest line).\(^{57}\) It also displays inconsistent numbers of metrical feet per line (3/4/1/2/2/6), creating the sense of fluctuating emotions as the protagonist describes his pain. Amidst this metrical variability, lines 4 and 5 are set apart as a unit on account of their shared meter and rhyme. The independence of these lines from the rest of the poem highlights noteworthy syntactical and semantic aspects in the text.

Figure 3.5 also shows that “Schwermut” consists of two complete sentences ending in lines 3 and 6, respectively. The divisions created by punctuation (exclamation points in lines 3 and 6) create another source of variation in the text, since they coincide neither with its rhyme scheme, nor with any internal symmetries implied by its metrical layout. Rather, both sentences use syntax and semantics to create a sense of drama for the reader that complements the poem’s


\(^{57}\) Although I interpret a dactyl at the beginning of line 6, Brahms sets “möcht’ ich” as an iamb (weak/strong).
Figure 3.5: Karl Candidus, “Schwermut,” *Vermischte Gedichte*. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1869

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mir ist so weh um’s Herz</td>
<td>My heart is so sore,</td>
<td>Earthly suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mir ist als ob ich weinen möchte</td>
<td>It is as if I want to weep</td>
<td>(present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vor Schmerz!</td>
<td>For pain!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gedankensatt</td>
<td>Tired of thinking,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Und lebensmatt</td>
<td>And weary of life,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Möcht’ ich das Haupt hinlegen in die Nacht der Nächte!</td>
<td>I’d like to lay down my head in the night of all nights!</td>
<td>Transcendent Death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.5a: Karl Candidus, “Schwermut,” *Vermischte Gedichte* (1869) original edition
varied metrical scheme. In the first sentence, for instance, “mir” creates parallelism at the beginnings of lines 1 and 2, articulating a two-line group and suggesting that this regular pattern may recur. (Both lines are syntactically complete clauses.) Lines 1 and 2, however, are semantically incomplete; they do not communicate the reason behind the protagonist’s desire to weep. Line 3 supplies this semantic clarification, specifying earthly pain as the cause of the protagonist’s suffering and creating enjambment between lines 2 and 3 that propels the reader forward into an abrupt climax (“vor Schmerz”). Candidus thus creates a structural overflow in the text comparable to the cathartic act that it describes. That is, the poem paradoxically highlights the absence of catharsis by simulating it, forcing the reader past what initially seems like a structural boundary at the end of line 2.

The poem’s second sentence (lines 4–6) embodies greater tension than the first, owing to its use of syntactically incomplete structures. The words “Gedankensatt” and “Lebensmatt” (lines 4–5) cannot stand alone; rather, they require clarification supplied by the subject “ich” in line 6. Unlike the early repetition of “mir,” which indicates the centrality of the protagonist’s emotional experience in lines 1 and 2, the late entrance of “ich” in the poem’s second sentence creates suspense. It forces the reader to linger in uncomfortably incomplete syntax, just as the protagonist lingers in a state of purgatory, halfway between earthly and eternal life, signified in lines 4–5. These syntactical features lend increased dramatic significance to line 6, which relieves tension by completing (and contextualizing) lines 4 and 5. While lines 4 and 5 reinforce the protagonist’s weighty fatigue and inertia that result from the struggle depicted in lines 1–3, line 6 functions as a poetic climax, describing the protagonist’s transcendent passage into eternal night, albeit only in the implied (imagined) future.
Candidus also imbues the last sentence (lines 4–6) with tension, as mentioned above, by using the modal verb “möchten,” which expresses desire, leading to the compound noun “Nacht der Nächte” (“night of [all] nights”). This noun is emphasized by the preposition “in” and the possessive form of its article (“der”). Both preposition and article simulate in language the goal-directed motion indicated by imagery in line 6, which describes the path into a transcendent night that lies ahead of the protagonist.\(^5\) The extreme length of line 6 might even suggest a second structural overflow of the hypothetical shorter line that should have closed the poem. Yet these emotional fluctuations ultimately remain bound within the text, much like the protagonist is trapped by the earthly constraints that prevent his catharsis and passage into unending night. As I will show, Brahms’s setting responds to the poetic depiction of constraint (as in Novalis’s text) by contrasting melancholy in its first part with release in its second part. Brahms’s achievement of the major mode suggests future transcendence that the poem lacks.

**Form in Brahms’s “Schwermut”**

As discussed above, the protagonist in “Schwermut” expresses melancholy exclusively in the present tense, but conveys the tenuousness of imagined transcendence into an unending “night of nights” through the subjunctive mood and modal verbs (e.g., “möchten”). The form chart in fig. 3.6 and my graph in ex. 3.15 show that Brahms’s two-part setting (AB), divided by a dominant in m. 14 (a harmonic goal that reappears throughout the song) seems to reflect this dichotomy. Similar harmonic progressions toward V during the A section’s tonic prolongation (bracketed in ex. 3.15) also mimic this dividing V, yet the dominant chord in m. 14 is marked

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\(^5\)The opposition between extreme concision in lines 4–5 and length in line 6 also helps to direct the reader toward the end of the poem.
through its use of a cadential six-four chord. Following a descending major-thirds cycle in mm. 17–23, the B section also progresses toward V (m. 25), yet its status as a goal is lessened by the subsequent prolongation of Cb (bVI)—an upper neighbor to the structural dominant that arrives in m. 29. As I will show, this prolonged bVI eventually recontextualizes the structural dominant, transforming the A section’s Eb-minor cadential six-four chord (m. 14) into an Eb-major six-four chord (m. 29). This transformation rectifies the A section’s thwarted minor-mode cadence and equates major-mode resolution with the protagonist’s entrance into eternal sleep (death).

**Figure 3.6:** “Schwermut,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>transition</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>postlude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent:</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem:</td>
<td>lines 1–3</td>
<td>lines 4–5</td>
<td>line 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonies in Eb minor:</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I → V\exo{4},3–I (with echo of prelude)</td>
<td>octave divided into major thirds</td>
<td>(Ib) – V [bVI] V–I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporalities in Brahms’s setting:</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
<td>implied future (external)</td>
<td>implied future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The fourth-motive B♭–C♭–D♭–E♭ and frustrated striving in the A section**

Notwithstanding the stable tonic prolongation and consistent four-measure grouping that provide stability in the A section of “Schwermut,” a narrative of frustrated striving emerges from the music’s motivic, harmonic, and topical features; all are foreshadowed in the prelude, shown in ex. 3.16.⁵⁹ The bass’s descending motive Eb–Db–C♭–B♭ (mm. 1–5) conveys melancholy descent, in opposition to the A section’s large-scale ascent from I to V (mm. 6–14). Reinforcing this “lament bass,” the prelude also invokes a homophonic chorale (soprano/tenor) and a funeral

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⁵⁹I interpret m. 1 as an anacrusis to the four measure group in mm. 2–5.
Example 3.15: “Schwermut,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–17) and B section (mm. 18–32)
march (alto/bass), enhancing the solemnity of the lament topic. This registral pairing of contrapuntal lines also highlights an opposition between the descending tetrachord and the chorale’s rising-fourth motive B♭–E♭ (mm. 2–3; ex. 3.16), a disposition portraying agency: it is as if the voice (representing the poetic protagonist) meditates silently upon his burden, signified by the chorale, prior to entering. The graph in ex. 3.15 also highlights the inner-voice descent 5–4–3 in the prelude leading to G♭3 in m. 5—a separate voice from the upper voice’s retained 5. This emphasizes 3 (elaborated with a double neighbor in mm. 6–7) as separate from the Urlinie, which repeatedly strives upward, attempting to break free from its obligatory descent.  

As in the songs analyzed above, Brahms’s use of register in the A section of “Schwermut” implies a narrative spanning the song (ex. 3.16). In mm. 6–9, the voice reiterates the prelude’s melody—a now-conscious manifestation of pain—reaching E♭5 in m. 7. In mm. 9–12, the rising fourth B♭–E♭, now filled in by a step, spans the upper voice above a sequential rising-step progression signifying the protagonist’s growing frustration and desire for cathartic relief. Brackets in ex. 3.15 show that I interpret the sequence in mm. 10–13 as part of an interpolation in the phrase structure between V♮ (m. 9) and I (m. 17), replacing tonic resolution in m. 9. This interpolation also extends the motion away from the tonic by replacing expected closure on a root-position tonic in the second half of m. 9 (corresponding to the second half of m. 5, an imperfect authentic cadence) with an elided 5–6 motion above the bass note E♭2 in m. 9 (see my recomposition in ex. 3.16a). The fifth and sixth (B♭ and C♭) are heard simultaneously

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rather than successively; the elision, which prevents tonic closure by omitting an expected imperfect authentic cadence, conveys the protagonist’s increasing emotional constriction.

**Example 3.16: “Schwermut,” A section (mm. 1–17)**
Example 3.16a: “Schwermut,” recomposition of mm. 6–9, showing the expected imperfect authentic cadence in m. 9

In the sequence following m. 9, the rising vocal line builds intensity toward a registral boundary—Eb5 at “möchte”—and surpasses it at “vor” (F5) in m. 13 (ex. 3.16). This dramatic moment emphasizes the cadential six-four chord in m. 14, which promises imminent resolution to a root-position tonic. 61 Both the drastic dynamic shift in the piano between mm. 13 and 14 (subito piano) and the retained bass note B♭ in m. 15 prevent tonic closure. Instead, the subito piano stifles the A section’s climactic dominant, reflecting the protagonist’s inability to cry or relieve his earthly suffering. Root-position tonic closure occurs only in m. 17, after an echo-like

61 By extending the sequence until m. 14, Brahms also creates musical continuity, reflecting the poetic enjambment between lines 2 and 3.
reprise of the prelude that dissipates energy and regains harmonic stability. Agentially, this reprise may signal a return to the protagonist’s emotional interiority (or subconscious thought) portrayed by the prelude’s restricted, low register. Topically, the reprise intensifies Brahms’s allusion to the ground-bass genre (the lament bass).

Owing to differences between the sequence in the published version of “Schwermut” and the version of mm. 9–14 that appears in Brahms’s autograph, I further suggest that the sequence in the published version highlights the protagonist’s emotional constriction (ex. 3.16b).62 Two Example 3.16b: Brahms’s autograph of “Schwermut,” held at the Library of Congress, and a transcription of the revision found on the lower part of the page (= mm. 9–15)

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aspects of the version found at the bottom of Brahms’s autograph, by contrast, seem to express catharsis described in the text. First, the alternate version uses text painting: slurred, chromatic sighing gestures enabled by sequential repetition of the word “weinen” (voice, mm. 10–12). Second, it allows the phrase begun in m. 6 to achieve tonic closure in m. 9 and to tonicize Gb major in m. 11 (a chord lacking from the published version’s sequence). Harmonic resolution provided by the root-position chords I and III contrasts the tense effect of the sequential passage in the published version. In light of this revision, the voice’s usurping of the piano’s chorale melody and rising fourth (B♭–Eb) in the published song yields new meaning: in the bass’s register (mm. 1–5), the chorale and lament bass suggested deeply concealed sorrow and unavoidable descent, yet its rising variant suggests the protagonist’s desire to break free from melancholy through catharsis.

**The major-thirds cycle, neighboring prolongation of VI, and transcendence in the B section**

Following the A section’s firmly established E♭-minor tonic prolongation (spanning mm. 1–17), the B section (see ex. 3.17 below) harmonically portrays transition between earthly and eternal life in four stages: (1) a major-thirds cycle in mm. 17–23 signifies the protagonist’s progression between life and death; (2) Eb major emerges as a nascent mode in mm. 24–25, underpinning the poem’s evocation of future transcendence (“möcht’ ich das Haupt hinlegen in die Nacht der Nächte”); (3) bVI is prolonged in mm. 26–28, during the repeated text “in die Nacht der Nächte,” suggesting that a transcendental process is underway; and (4) the structural cadence in mm. 29–30 confirms E♭ major, implying that the protagonist achieves transcendence.

Enharmonically reinterpreted pitch classes play a significant role in the B section’s depiction of this four-stage “tragic-to-transcendent” narrative. The notational change between
Gb4 and F♯4 in mm. 17–18 shown in ex. 3.17 creates a common-tone enharmonic seam bridging Eb minor (I) and B minor—the respelled, mixture-inflected submediant chord (bVI♭). As mm. 17‒23 progress through major thirds dividing the octave between Eb2 and Eb1, Brahms implies the unending descent into flats that a lack of respelling would have produced, as shown in ex. 3.17a). When Gb3 appears above a regained tonic in m. 23, tone and harmony are respelled to disguise the distant realm of F♭b minor—a metaphor for the protagonist’s journey into the “night of nights.” This respelling also emphasizes the upward resolution of F♯ to G♮ in mm. 19–21 (see ex. 3.17), foreshadowing the return of F♯ in mm. 24–26, where the inner-voice F♯–G♮ motive signals a nascent Eb-major key; G♮ remains as Eb major is tonicized in m. 25. Once G♮ is established as ♯3 in the emergent major mode, Gb is rendered a chromatic pitch requiring resolution (which occurs in m. 29).

The graph in ex. 3.15 shows that the emergence of Eb major (and its ♯3, G♮) in mm. 23ff. can be contextualized within the B section’s overall minor-to-major progression. Following the reestablished Eb-minor tonic chord in m. 23, the G-minor chord (♯III♮5) used previously in the transition returns within the rising bass arpeggiation I–♯III♮5–V, leading to an ambiguously functioning Eb-major six-four chord in m. 25. The six-four chord denies harmonic closure to ♯1, Eb4, the goal of a fifth-progression in the upper voice that would confirm the emergent Eb-major tonic (albeit at the cost of a Lydian fourth, A♭). Rather than providing a cadence beneath ♯1, mm. 26–28 prolong C♭ major (locally, bVI♭5) and support an arpeggiated melodic ascent directed toward Eb5 in m. 29. This pitch completes a veiled (non-prolongational) rising-fourth motive and

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63Schubert’s “Der Wegweiser” uses a similar enharmonic technique, alluding to an “infinite series” of minor thirds (within an arpeggiated diminished seventh chord), a metaphor for “a road from which no one has ever returned.” Edward Aldwell, Carl Schachter, and Allen Clayton Cadwallader, Harmony & Voice Leading, 630–31.
64Although the raised fourth scale degree A♭ presents an irregular, Lydian-inflected form of this melodic descending-fifth progression, the piano corrects the voice’s A♮ by introducing A♭ in m. 25.
recalls the voice’s achievement of $E_b^5$ in the A section (mm. 7 and 11). Owing to this lengthy pre-dominant preparation of the structural dominant, the climactic arrival of the cadential-six-four chord in m. 29 seems to rectify the failed resolution of the minor-mode cadential six-four in m. 14. Recast in $E_b$ major, the song’s structural dominant confirms the major mode, resolving to a root-position tonic ($I_n$, in m. 30) as the protagonist envisions laying down his head into eternal sleep.

**Example 3.17: “Schwermut,” B section (mm. 17–32)**
Example 3.17a: “Schwermut,” harmonic progression in mm. 17–23 showing the octave divided into major thirds without enharmonic respelling

To my ears, m. 29 creates a sense of arrival that renders the preceding prolongation of ♭VI a delay of Eb major’s confirmation and imbues Brahms’s repetition of the text “in die Nacht der Nächte” with suspense that mirrors the protagonist’s own expectations for fulfillment. Also, as stated earlier, voice leading within this prolongation enables melodic ascent (compare the prelude’s descent and the descending major thirds in mm. 17ff.). After reaching unstable melodic closure on Eb in m. 25, the upper voice rises to Cb (m. 27), creating an upper neighbor to the Kopfton 5 whose descending tendency is temporarily neutralized by the voice exchange in m. 28. The cadence in mm. 29–30 then balances this extensive submediant prolongation with a similarly protracted process of resolution that seems to model the poem’s extended syntax toward “Nächte” in line 6: in m. 29 the piano recasts Gb as an inner-voice chromatic passing tone between G♭4 and F4, as if exorcising its ability to function as 3 in E♭ minor. The vocal line outlines a broad descent from Eb5 to Eb4, thus encompassing almost the entire range of the vocal part within a single measure. The voice thereby evokes the registral space between Eb5 and Eb4 dramatized elsewhere, yet defers the chordal third to the piano’s agential realm. By the time ī is achieved (m. 30), we sense the imminent completion of a lengthy process, and we recall earlier
cadential denial in mm. 25 and 14–15. This creates a semblance of narrative causality between all three sections; each successive cadence attempts to rectify the previous one, yet only the last succeeds.

Finally, expressing a reconciliatory tone and function that is typical of Brahms’s postludes, mm. 30–32 encapsulate and resolve chromatic pitches and motives used throughout the song, functioning as an integral component in its overall narrative (compare the graph in ex. 3.15 with the score in ex. 3.17). An added chordal seventh (Db) in m. 30 defers complete tonal resolution until the last measure and initiates a melodic closing gesture (8−7−6−5) above a tonic pedal that recalls Bachian cadential procedures.65 As shown in chapter 2, this cadence type also appeared in “Es träumte mir” above a similarly notated ritardando in the piano’s left hand, combined with a gradual rhythmic augmentation in the bass approaching the final tonic. This commonality perhaps reflects both songs’ depiction of returning to sleep—a temporary sleep in “Es träumte mir,” a final sleep in “Schwermut.”66 Example 3.17 also demonstrates that a double-neighbor figure in the tenor voice (mm. 31–32) elaborates Gn3, echoing the double-neighbor embellishments encircling Gb3 in the prelude’s funereal inner voices (mm. 1–5). Faint recollections of the prelude’s two motives—the upper voice Bb–Ab–Gb (now Gn) and lower voice Eb–Db–Cb–Bb—may also be found inverted between the upper voice and tenor in mm. 29–32, providing a motivic summation that signifies laying conflicts to rest.

65James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy note a similar melodic formula (8−7−6−5−8) above a pedal as a closing gesture in “dissolving P-codettas,” further evidence of this pattern’s static rhetorical function and appropriateness as a closing gesture. James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 103.
66Both songs also use similar arpeggiated left-hand gestures to buoy suspended right-hand chords, characterizing sleep as a hovering, tenuous mental state connected to the subjunctive mood and hypothetical tone in both poems.
Postlude: intertextual resonances in Schumann’s “Ich hab im Traum geweinet” (op. 48, no. 13)

Brahms’s interest in revising mm. 9–14 in “Schwermut” assumes greater significance through an intertextual connection: I suggest that the musical interrogation of the word “weinen” that I read into Brahms’s revision and the harmonic features of “Schwermut” discussed above recall Schumann’s “Ich hab im Traum geweinet” from Dichterliebe (op. 48). While there is no documentary evidence to suggest a direct relation between these two songs, a brief comparison of their texts draws both together, paradoxically, through a striking opposition: while Brahms’s revisions suggest a preoccupation with the lack of catharsis in Candidus’s poem, Schumann dwells heavily upon Heine’s torrential flow of tears. (Heine’s protagonist is beset by uncontrollable crying, triggered by the disturbing visions in his dreams.)

The greater part of Schumann’s setting, also in E♭ minor, uses the same lament bass that is prominent in “Schwermut” (ex. 3.18). As shown in the score, staccato chords in the piano de-emphasize beat 3 in each measure (mm. 3 and 6), yielding the descending lament bass E♭–D♭–C♭–B♭ across mm. 4–11 (see the reduction in ex. 3.18a). In Schumann’s song, descending motion is only momentarily upset by fragmented declamation of the text “Ich wachte auf,” punctuated by the piano’s recitative-like accompaniment (mm. 8–9) and a chromatic passing motion (♯5–♯4–♯3–♯2) above the bass C♭; both suggest the sudden, startled experience of consciousness being wrenched from an active dream into the motionless, dark surroundings of reality.

Schumann also uses a lament bass for the stanzas in Heine’s poem that explicitly describe loss, as the protagonist envisions his lover in the grave and feels forsaken by her (see ex. 3.18). Yet Schumann musically depicts the greatest outpouring of grief and anxiety during Heine’s final stanza (ex. 3.19). When the poem recalls a moment when the protagonist possessed his
beloved’s affection, Schumann’s setting most closely resembles Brahms’s through the voice’s iteration of the rising fourth B♭–E♭ (mm. 25–32) and its tortured striving toward G♭ major in m.
31—the triad missing from the published version of mm. 9–14 in “Schwermut.”\(^{67}\) Furthermore, Schumann’s use of a dynamically stifled, rhythmically displaced E\(_b\)-minor six-four chord on beat 3 in m. 35 evokes the goal in the A section of “Schwermut” (m. 14).\(^ {68}\) The rising sequence preceding each song’s dominant depicts the protagonist’s increasing agitation. Chronologically, of course, Brahms was well aware of Schumann’s cycle in the 1870s, when he likely composed “Schwermut.”\(^ {69}\) Although the textual resonance between Candidus’s suppression of tears and

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\(^{67}\) As in “Schwermut,” B\(_b\)–E\(_b\) is not a linear progression here. Rather, E\(_b\) is an upper neighbor to the chordal seventh D\(_b\) in m. 32.

\(^{68}\) Like the E\(_b\)-minor tonic chord in m. 3, the cadential six-four on beat 3 of m. 35 is deemphasized through its rhythmic placement on a weak third beat. Yet unlike the tonic in m. 3, which functions as an anacrusis to the following dominant seventh chord, the bass B\(_b\) of the cadential six-four chord completes the rising-fifth motion from E\(_b\) (m. 25) to B\(_b\) (m. 35). It is this cultivation of expectation for a dominant as a goal of the preceding passage that renders m. 35 a cadential six-four chord, albeit a problematic one owing to its weak metrical placement.

\(^{69}\) According to George Bozarth, “Schwermut” could not have been composed prior to 1869. He dates the song somewhere between 1869 and 1871. Bozarth, “The Lieder of Johannes Brahms,” 66c–67.
Heine’s portrayal of excessive catharsis is not definitively established through documentation, it is nevertheless a suggestive one that offers new insights into Brahms’s setting.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Minor-to-major progressions spanning a single piece are common in Brahms’s vocal music, yet the analyses in this chapter propose a refined categorization of the local tonal progressions that enable these expansive modal shifts. Brahms prepares each song’s nascent major mode within prolongations of auxiliary keys and often emphasizes VI at transformative poetic moments that imply the protagonist’s progression from an initial burdened state to one of enlightenment and peace. In “Dämmrung senkte sich von oben,” VI (Eb major) is stabilized in strophe 3, where the moon’s light emerges, and the pitch Eb functions as a large-scale upper neighbor to the structural dominant. In “Todessehnen,” VI (D major) is tonicized only fleetingly until the two decisive enharmonic transformations in section C that occur when the poem describes transcendent death. These transformations introduce modal mixture (D minor) and reinterpret D major as the Neapolitan in C♯ major (V) before resolving to the F♯-major tonic. In “Schwermut,” the B section’s interpolated prolongation of VI (C♭ major) prepares the structural dominant—a major-mode cadential six-four chord that rectifies failed minor-mode cadences in the A section as the protagonist mentions eternal night. In each case, the tonal area of VI is linked to a transformative catalyst in the poem: the moon’s light; pious love; and emotional catharsis as the gateway to eternal sleep.

⁷⁰As Janet Schmalfeldt shows, there is also ample precedent for interpreting Schumann’s influence on Brahms’s songs, as in Brahms’s setting of “In der Fremde,” op. 3, no. 5. See Schmalfeldt, “Brahms, Again the Master of Allusion, With his Godson in Mind,” Ars Lyrica 21 (2012, actually published 2014): 115–54.
Chapter Four

Tonal Problems, Promissory Notes, and Narratives That Incorporate Them

The analyses in previous chapters show that Brahms often uses modal mixture—specifically, large-scale modal shifts between parallel keys and intertwined major and minor modes—to express narrative trajectories between two opposed emotional states or concurrently experienced psychological states. This chapter will focus on narratives suggested by chromatic pitches that do not directly invoke modal mixture (e.g., the role of $\text{#}4$ and $b\text{2}$). These chromatic pitches destabilize each song’s tonal center, throwing the tonality into doubt and foreshadowing later events in the piece. I will therefore draw upon Arnold Schoenberg’s concept of the chromatic “tonal problem” as summarized by Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff, and Schoenberg’s theory of regions presented in *Structural Functions of Harmony*, in addition to invoking the Schenkerian framework used throughout this dissertation.1

To be sure, scholars have long explored the narrative potential of tonal problems—their ability, that is, to introduce tonal uncertainty and conflict and to necessitate tonal resolution—in nineteenth-century instrumental music. Edward T. Cone’s seminal concept of the “promissory note” suggests that chromatic pitches entering early in a piece can foreshadow later tonal events, creating narrative causality between temporally separated phenomena. Cone demonstrates the expressive potential of chromatic notes—for instance, E♭’s ability to depict “the occurrence of a disquieting thought to one of a tranquil, easy-going nature.”2 Patricia Carpenter and Severine

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Neff likewise show this concept (albeit not always so named) at work in Brahms’s chamber music and works for solo piano. Carpenter also clarifies how Schoenberg’s Grundgestalt in Beethoven’s F-minor Piano Sonata, op. 57 (“Appassionata”) reveals “tonal analogies” that contextualize a piece’s basic musical idea within different tonal regions, thereby “mak[ing] manifest that process by which instability is brought about in a work and stability finally restored.” Yet the analyses in this chapter extend such established claims about the tonal problem and the promissory note by showing their potential to depict nuanced, nested temporal hierarchies—foreshadowed and remembered events (for instance, a protagonist may recall the past or envision the future during the present). This is musically represented by one prolonged harmony existing within the governing span of another, or certain sonorities referring associatively to their later manifestations in new tonal contexts.

Brahms’s Lieder simulate narrative processes by treating chromatic pitches in recurring ways, including (1) using them to foreshadow closely or distantly related tonal regions, and (2) attempting to contextualize chromatic pitches into multiple tonal regions, thereby clarifying the relationship between chromatic (or “foreign”) and diatonic elements. Both tonal trends frequently invoke the “Neapolitan complex” (a group of chords including bVI and bII that mediates between tonic and dominant keys by reinterpreting b6 in the tonic as b2 in the dominant), a harmonic pattern identified by Christopher Wintle and further explored by Peter Smith. Brahms’s early introduction of b2 in the songs analyzed here often foreshadows its later emergence when the protagonist enters a new temporal state, as in “Unbewegte laue Luft” and

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4This term is coined by Wintle. Peter Smith, “Brahms and the Neapolitan Complex: bII, bVI, and Their Multiple Functions in the First Movement of the F-minor Clarinet Sonata,” Brahms Studies 2 ed. David Lee Brodbeck (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 169–208. Also, see Margaret Notley, Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Christopher Wintle “The ‘Sceptred Pall’: Brahms’s Progressive Harmony.” (See p. 88, n. 45.)
“Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” where the eventual tonicization of $b^\text{II}$ signifies desire and fate, concepts located in the protagonist’s future.\(^5\) Moreover, distantly related tonalities in the songs analyzed below often highlight a disjunction between actual and perceived events in the protagonist’s psyche. Brahms seems to deploy tonal problems and tonal distance as metaphors for the discrepancy between unfulfilled desires in the protagonist’s reality that persist in his imagination, or a bleak present existence that cannot reclaim past happiness.\(^6\)

As I will show, the chromatic pitches $F_n$ and $C_n$ in the E-major song “Unbewegte laue Luft” (op. 57, no. 8) foreshadow a failed cadential attempt in F major ($b^\text{II}$), signifying a denial of the protagonist’s desires.\(^7\) In the B-minor song “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (op. 32, no. 5) the chromatic pitches $E^\#$ and $G^\#$ foreshadow their enharmonic twins, $F_n$ and $A^b$, in the song’s B section. This notational enharmonic respelling disguises modulations into extremely sharp keys that convey the protagonist’s imagined freedom from emotional constraints. Finally, the chromatic pitches $D^b$, $G^b$, $B^b$, and $A_n$ in the F-major and F-minor songs “Vorüber” (op. 58, no. 7) and “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht” (op. 32, no. 1), respectively, link past events to inevitable tragic outcomes.\(^8\)

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\(^5\) Despite Christopher Wintle’s claim that the Neapolitan complex does not depict specific, recurring poetic images in Brahms’s songs, I nevertheless suggest that it facilitates Brahms’s depiction of similar narratives. Wintle writes that “there is, perhaps, an implicit invitation...to look for manifestations of the use of the Neapolitan complex in the vocal music, and to see whether it is associated with any particular set of poetic images. But the results of such a search are of limited interest only. From a preliminary point of view, one might cite ‘Der Frühling,’ op. 6, no. 2 (1852) (J.B. Rousseau), ‘An die Nachtigall,’ op. 46, no. 2 and ‘An ein Veilchen,’ op. 49, no. 2 (both 1868 and both with texts by Höltje), and even the more mature ‘Heimweh II’ op. 63 no. 8 (1874) (Groth). Yet despite the fact that all these are in E major, none pursue the Neapolitan associations with the same vigour as may be found in the instrumental music. Before 1871, Brahms wrote many songs in E major or minor; after that date, very few.” Wintle, “The ‘Sceptred Pall’,” 216.

\(^6\) Schoenberg characterizes $b^\text{II}$ as “indirect and remote” from a major-mode tonic. It is often attained through the minor-subdominant region.

\(^7\) Wintle discusses the Neapolitan complex in “Unbewegte laue Luft,” but does not mention what I interpret as a failed F-major cadence in the song’s emerging narrative.

\(^8\) In “Vorüber,” this narrative involves a progression from F major to F minor spanning the song. Moreover, although these analyses discuss minor-to-major progressions like those shown in earlier chapters, I view modal mixture here through the narrative lens afforded by the tonal problem.
“Unbewegte laue Luft,” (op. 57 no. 8)

**Opposed forces in Daumer’s “Unbewegte laue Luft”**

Georg Friedrich Daumer remains little known outside of Brahms’s settings of his poetry. Scholars have only begun to debunk his image as an eccentric heretic, replacing it with one of a polymath and Vielschreiber whose poetry betrays his constantly shifting religious outlook and eclectic influences. The extreme sensuality and exoticism that nineteenth-century audiences ascribed to Daumer’s poetry indeed stems from these various influences. Reviewing Karlhans Kluncker’s biography of Daumer, Bernd Fischer cites two formative experiences in Daumer’s life, including his role as the teacher of the Kaspar Hauser, who inspired his view of “natural man”—or the direct religious connection between man and nature—and Daumer’s reception by Bettina von Arnim, who helped to transpose the image of the “natural man” onto an idealized female (“Weib”).

Owing to Daumer’s conflicted religious views, the mystical, glorified image of women in his poetry is similarly fraught, as demonstrated by “Unbewegte laue Luft” and its larger collection, *Frauenbilder und Huldigungen* (1853). On the one hand, ecstatic imagery in

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**Figure 4.1:** Georg Friedrich Daumer “Unbewegte laue Luft” (“Adele,” no. 11) from *Frauenbilder und Huldigungen* vol. 1 (Leipzig: Wiegand, 1853)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unbewegte laue Luft</td>
<td>Nature’s deep rest (external/present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tiefe Ruhe der Natur;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Durch die stille Gartennacht</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Plätschtert die Fontane nur.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aber im Gemüte schwillt</td>
<td>Protagonist’s desires (internal/present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Heißere Begierde mir,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aber in der Ader quillt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Leben und verlangt nach Leben.</td>
<td>Imagined union with the beloved (external/implied future)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sollten nicht auch deine Brust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sehnlichere Wünsche heben?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sollte meiner Seele Ruf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nicht dir deine tief durchbeben?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Leise mit dem Ätherfuß</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Säume nicht, daherzuschweben!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Komm, o komm, damit wir uns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Himmlische Genüge geben!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Unbewegte laue Luft a Motionless, tepid air,  
2 Tiefe Ruhe der Natur; b Deep rest of nature;  
3 Durch die stille Gartennacht c Through the still garden-night  
4 Plätschtert die Fontane nur. b Only the fountain splashes.  
5 Aber im Gemüte schwillt d But in my heart there surge  
6 Heißere Begierde mir, e More fervent desires,  
7 Aber in der Ader quillt d But in my veins swells  
8 Leben und verlangt nach Leben. f Life, which longs for life.  
9 Sollten nicht auch deine Brust g Should not your breast also  
10 Sehnlichere Wünsche heben? f Be lifted by more ardent wishes?  
11 Sollte meiner Seele Ruf g Should not the cry of my soul  
12 Nicht dir deine tief durchbeben? f Reverberate deeply in yours?  
13 Leise mit dem Ätherfuß g Softly, with ethereal steps,  
14 Säume nicht, daherzuschweben! f Do not tarry to float to me!  
15 Komm, o komm, damit wir uns g Come, oh come, so that we might  
16 Himmlische Genüge geben! f Give each other heavenly contentment!
“Unbewegte laue Luft” reflects an extreme, sensual idealization of women promoted by the fourteenth-century Persian poet Hafiz, who conflated erotic images of a female beloved and a worshipped deity in spontaneous, ecstatic visions. On the other hand, Natasha Loges identifies the distant, unattainable status—almost a type of censorship—exhibited by the enchanting females that pervade Daumer’s poetry:

Relationships with women were always problematic due to his chronic shyness and natural prudishness. The idea of womanhood was central to both his religious beliefs and his poetic vision but in completely opposing ways, resulting in an irreconcilable rift between the notion of woman as exalted (divine) and untouchable, and as all too human, whimsical to the point of cruelty and deeply desirable. Through poetry Daumer could drop his reserve and speak of woman in flagrantly sexualized terms while respecting the conventions of courtly love, since the protagonist is limited to expressing his longing and the inaccessibility of his Beloved either through station or distance. *Consummation is not part of Daumer’s world.*

The conflict between idealized desires and consummation in “Unbewegte laue Luft” identified by Loges provides a lens through which the reader views the protagonist’s emotionally charged process of self-discovery, linked to his perception of the future. An opposition between external forces (nature) and internal forces (the protagonist’s passion), described with organicist metaphors, enable this process. The protagonist’s contemplation of nature’s inner stirrings—external forces—veils his frustrated internal passion for an unattainable beloved. That is, procreative biological forces that surge beneath nature’s apparently calm exterior metaphorically signify the latent sensual urges harbored within the protagonist himself. This sensuality functions

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12 Writing to Brahms on December 16, 1877, Elizabeth von Herzogenberg indicates that the poem’s transparent sexual imagery was a controversial feature of the song that generated negative comment: “You think me prudish, and it is useless to defend myself, although nothing could be more unjust. If you only knew how many lances I have broken for your Daumer songs, even the much-abused ‘Unbewegte laue Luft’.” Johannes Brahms, Heinrich von Herzogenberg, Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, Max Kalbeck, and Hannah Bryant, *Johannes Brahms: The Herzogenberg Correspondence* (New York: Vienna House, 1971), 35. Natasha Loges cites Herzogenberg’s comment in her discussions of exoticism in Brahms’s songs.

13 Loges, “Exoticism and Artifice,” 150 (emphasis mine).
as the catalyst for the protagonist’s psychological shift between present longing and imagined future bliss, as his initially subconscious desires gradually become conscious ones.

As fig. 4.1 shows, Daumer uses meter, rhyme, and syntax to create a teleological progression from calmness to agitation (or between the protagonist’s passive observation of nature’s rest and his active, awakened desires). The poem’s unchanging trochaic tetrameter functions as a frame for the progression from calm contemplation to rampant emotions. Two complete sentences that comprise its first part in lines 1–4 and 5–8, respectively, maintain regular meter (and masculine endings) until line 8, where an extra, unstressed syllable (a feminine ending) begs continuation into the next line, as if mimicking the protagonist’s inner desires by pressing outward. In lines 9–16, two-line sentences repeat ecstatic questions to the beloved framed by question- and exclamation marks; Daumer thus allows the extra syllable from line 8 to persist in even lines until line 16 (“geben!”), when the protagonist’s desires seem to break through the poem’s metrical frame and structural ending.

On account of the metrical change in line 8 and the syntactical demarcation of complete sentences in lines 1–4, 5–8, and 9–16 (where two-line sentences prevail), I interpret a three-stage temporal progression across the poem (outlined in the rightmost column of fig. 4.1):

(1) the first sentence in lines 1–4 conveys nature’s expansive, restful state. Semantically incomplete clauses in lines 1–2 hover like the tepid air itself in search of contextualization, supplied by lines 3–4 after a semicolon.

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14 This thematic opposition between nature and internal emotions in the poem’s two parts is also noted in Lilian Sprau, “<Polyvalenz> der Form: Beobachtungen zu einer analytischen Kategorie am Beispiel von Johannes Brahms Unbewegte laue Luft, op. 57/8” Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie 10/1 (2013), but Sprau does not discuss temporality.

15 Although Brahms’s declamation does not emphasize this aspect of the poetic meter, the piano interjections that follow the feminine endings at “leben,” “heben,” and “geben” seem to reflect the dissipation of immense energy gain, as shown in the musical analysis below.

16 “Nur,” the second “-ur” rhyme (labeled “b” in line 4), emphasizes this semantic completion as the protagonist’s environment comes fully into view.
(2) “aber” signals a change in lines 5 and 7: the protagonist now describes his turbulent internal emotions. This forms a dichotomy with lines 1–4 and signals the poem’s first division in line 5. Both the comparative “heissere” (“hotter”) and the repetition of “aber” in line 7 intensify this contrast. Parallelism (“aber”) in lines 5 and 7 demarcates two-line groups that constrict the previous spaciousness of lines 1–4. Finally, a new rhyme (“schwillt,” labeled “d”) also emphasizes the repetition of “aber” by signaling a shift from rhyming even to odd lines;

(3) Anxious questions and strong imperatives in lines 9–16 create forward momentum, as if portraying the protagonist’s overflowing desires.

Lines 1, 5, and 9 thus indicate that each stage in the temporal progression coincides with the protagonist’s changing perceptions. Present-tense observations of external phenomena yield to internal, present-tense desires, and finally to an implied future tense as the protagonist again projects his desires outward to an absent beloved, begging for blissful union (“Komm, o komm, damit wir uns/himmlische Genüge geben!”). But the poem provides no explicit consummation. The protagonist stands open-armed, awaiting future bliss that does not arrive within the poem’s temporal frame. The poem therefore depicts a psychological, rather than a physical, change; spurred by his perceptions of nature, the protagonist becomes aware of his desire—a now-conscious state. The evolution of tonal problems in Brahms’s setting represents this latent poetic change.

**Form in Brahms’s “Unbewegte laue Luft” (op. 57, no. 8)**

Daumer’s poem merely contrasted external and internal phenomena, but Brahms’s two-part, E-major setting (AB//C (A¹) + coda) musically models the protagonist’s emerging
perception that external nature *embodies* his dormant internal passions. The form chart in fig. 4.2 summarizes this musical narrative, signified by the early appearance of the chromatic pitches F₃ and C₃ and their later emergence in new harmonic contexts. F₃ and C₃ arise in section A (framed by I in m. 1 and V in m. 13) and recur during a standing on the dominant in section B (mm. 13–25). In mm. 20–25, an enharmonically reinterpreted augmented sixth chord (C–E–G–A#) becomes V⁷ in F major (C–E–G–B♭), temporarily stabilizing F₃ and C₃ by briefly tonicizing F major (♭II). F₃ and C₃ thus foreshadow this unsatisfactory fulfillment (or tonicization via an authentic cadence) of ♭II. Brahms repeats the A section’s I–V progression throughout section C (mm. 25–62) and suggests an imminent F-major cadence by prolonging its dominant (mm. 43–55). Yet here Brahms thwarts the promise of an authentic cadence and delays the arrival of E major’s V until the song’s dramatic climax in m. 55. Both V and ♭II are largely absent from the coda (mm. 63–70), in which a plagal progression (I–IV–I) fails to revisit or resolve earlier unresolved V chords, as if reflecting the protagonist’s unfulfilled yearning for the future.

**Tonal problems and latent desire in section A**

Brahms’s setting conveys the protagonist’s experience of external nature in lines 1–4 of Daumer’s poem in two stages: (1) section A (mm. 1–13) depicts nature’s deep rest (lines 1–2); (2) section B (mm. 13–25) portrays stasis as the protagonist listens to the fountains (lines 3–4). Melodic and harmonic progressions model both narrative stages—dormant striving followed by stasis (see ex. 4.1). The large-scale ascending bass line in mm. 1–13 between the tonic and half-

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17 Owing to the introduction of new thematic material and the extensive duration of the dominant in bars 13–25, I have indicated a separate letter (‘B’) within the song’s first part, yielding a three-part melodic design. On the basis of its main harmonic division (V) in bar 25 and *Lebhaft* marking, however, I regard its overarching form as a two-part design.
**Figure 4.2:** “Unbewegte laue Luft,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>A introduction</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>interlude //</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>(A¹)₁⁸</th>
<th>(A¹)</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>Coda (A¹)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poem:</td>
<td>lines 1–4</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>lines 5–8</td>
<td>lines 9–16</td>
<td>lines 15–16 repeated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency:</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano + voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano + voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Tonal Narrative involving F₆ and C₇:</td>
<td>F₆ introduced as part of the altered dominant F₆–B–D♯–A</td>
<td>C₇ introduced as upper neighbor to B</td>
<td>F₆ and C₇ stabilized through the tonicization of ′II.</td>
<td>F major’s V attempts to fulfill the promise of cadentially confirming ′II. (cadence evaded!)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporality in Brahms’s setting:</td>
<td>(foreshadowed future)</td>
<td>present (external)</td>
<td>(foreshadowed future)</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
<td>imagined future</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>unrealized future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁸“A one” refers to the modified thematic returns (albeit in a faster tempo) of mm. 3–4 that begin to pervade the song beginning in m. 37, reappearing at m. 43 and m. 63. Brahms’s reprise of this thematic material from section A occurs after the tonic return (E major) in m. 26 and during the repeated I–V motions that characterize the song after the Lebhaft marking, perhaps indicating that the protagonist’s longing, which pervades section A, and knowledge of the inescapable present returns even before the climax in mm. 53–56.
Example 4.1: “Unbewegte laue Luft,” graph of mm. 1–70

Repeated I–V progressions underscore two-line groups in the poem.
cadential dominant (I−I\(^6\)−IV\(^7\)−#IV\(^7\)−V) first conveys nature’s gathering forces. Yet the lengthy dominant prolongation spanning mm. 13–20 fails to resolve the V chord achieved in m. 13 to I; it instead seems to represent a single magnified psychological state as the protagonist becomes entranced by the fountains. The large-scale upper-voice (3−♭♭3−♭2) across mm. 1–13 also invokes the mixture-inflected chromatic passing tone G\(_b\) (m. 9), depicting languid descent above the rising chromatic bass line between I and V.

Brahms’s use of local rising bass lines, modal mixture, and the tonal problems F\(_b\) and C\(_b\) at the musical foreground in section A suggest latent, yet gradually burgeoning natural forces that remain concealed in Daumer’s poem (see the annotated score in ex. 4.1a). In mm. 1–2, the piano’s rocking semitone E−F\(_b\), transposed to B−C\(_b\) in the vocal line in mm. 3–4, lingers on beat 2 as F\(_b\) supports an altered dominant seventh chord.\(^{19}\) F\(_b\)’s descending tendency prevents the idiomatic rising bass line E2−F\#2−G\#2 and the tonic-prolongational progression I−V\(^d\)3−I\(^6\) shown in ex. 4.1b. As ex. 4.1a shows, I\(^6\) arrives in m. 5, albeit in a lower register suggested by octave doubling (G\#1 and G\#2).\(^{20}\) The voice and piano in the song’s opening measures thus depict the dependency of F\(_b\) and C\(_b\) on E and B, respectively, in the song’s E-major tonality, conveying the inability of both pitches to successfully participate in rising melodic or harmonic motion.

The A section continues to portray hindered striving in two stages following the I\(^6\) chord in m. 5 (see ex. 4.1a). In m. 8, VI functions as the local registral highpoint of the rising chromatic bass line from G\# to C\# (mm. 5–8). Although VI functions as a stable harmonic goal, its registral

\(^{19}\) I borrow the label FrV\(^4\) from Steven G. Laitz in order to convey the chord’s ambiguous function as an altered dominant and a pre-dominant French augmented sixth chord. Steven G. Laitz, *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

\(^{20}\) G\# does not complete the passing motion E−F\#−G\#, but emerges as an unfolding from E2. This further supports the idea that E cannot rise to G\#. Rather, the achievement of the Kopfton G\#5 later in section C (m. 34) seems to suggest the fulfillment of this rising motion in the vocal part, withheld from the bass in section A.
Example 4.1a: “Unbewegte laue Luft,” A section (mm. 1–13)

prominence bestows a sense of striving to the bass line. As C₇ (m. 7) becomes B# and ascends to C# (supporting VI) in m. 8, a deceptive progression prevents tonic closure beneath ¹ (E⁴). C# also begins the melodic descent C#–B–A–G# that will reemerge (with C₇) at the song’s climax.

Example 4.1b: Recomposition of mm. 1–5 showing I–V₄₃–I⁶ progression

create tension between the gradually rising bass and falling vocal line. In mm. 10–11, 7–6
suspensions also highlight the local tonicization of G major (V\(^4\)−I\(^6\)) that supports G\(\sharp\)4 (m. 11) in the upper voice. Brahms casts mm. 10–11 as if in a 9/4 meter, thereby nesting the G-major tonicization within the large-scale rising bass motion IV−#IV\(^7\)−V. This tonicization provides temporary support for ½ 3 (a descending pitch comparable to the tonal problems F\(\natural\) and C\(\natural\)), yields another descending C\(\natural\)−B motive in the bass, and delays the arrival of V until m. 13. Both VI (m. 8) and G major (m. 11) thus provide fleeting harmonic stability—moments of rest within the large-scale I−V motion that portrays slow-moving, subterranean forces in the A section.\(^{21}\)

Nature’s slow undulations reside beneath the protagonist’s conscious perceptions in the A section, but the protagonist detects the first hints of his nascent passion when he becomes entranced by the fountains in section B.\(^{22}\) Example 4.2 shows that pitch-class conflicts created through modal mixture (C\#/C\# and G\#/G\#) here temporarily overshadow the tonal problem F\(\natural\)—the main harbinger of the Neapolitan chord. Prominent F\#5s (mm. 14 and 16) that replace F\(\natural\) and on account of their register, convey the splashing fountains, indeed foreshadow the voice’s attempts to surpass the registral boundary F\#5 in section C. Moreover, Brahms extends the phrase in mm. 15–18 to 4 + 2 measures by repeating the text “pläschert die Fontaine nur.” This extension contrasts C\# and C\(\natural\) within modally opposed forms of the descending tetrachord E−D\#−C\#−B (mm. 16–19), and during the descent from C\#3 to C\#2 in the bass (mm. 17–19). Indeed, the C\#−B motive that bridges mm. 19 and 20 now suggests ½ 2−1 in V (B major) and links

\(^{21}\)Rapid I−V progressions in section C later transform this languid version into depictions of the protagonist’s outward desire.

\(^{22}\)Daumer’s invocation of fountains may veil a more explicit reference to sensuality, much like overflowing tears in the poetry of Heinrich Heine and Wilhelm Müller functions as a substitute for the sexual act, as suggested by Lawrence Kramer, who writes: “Second, tears act as a symbolic substitute for sexual passion, up to and including orgasm. Like the older metaphor of dying, crying in this usage was readily understood and sometimes close to explicit. The two figures combine in a poem by Heine that Schumann set for use in his song cycle Dichterliebe...but ultimately withheld...” See Lawrence Kramer, “‘Little Pearl Teardrops:’ Schubert, Schumann, and the Tremulous Body of Romantic Song,” Music, Sensation, and Sensuality ed. Linda Phyllis Austern (New York: Routledge, 2002), 58.
the augmented sixth chord C−E−G−A♯ to the corresponding FrV\(^4\) in mm. 1–2 (both chords resolve to the harmonic poles V and I, respectively). Brahms will revisit this C♯–B motive at the song’s climax, when the protagonist envisions the consummation of his desire.

**Example 4.2:** “Unbewegte laue Luft,” B section (mm. 13–20)

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**The piano interlude as an agential device**

Whereas Daumer contrasts the poetic lines 1–4 with 5–8 using the word “aber,” illustrating the poem’s basic thematic opposition between external rest and internal passion, Brahms problematizes this poetic turning point by inserting a piano interlude (mm. 20–25) within the B section where no structural break occurs in the poem (ex. 4.3). The interlude seems
to enact the poetic transition between an explicit present tense and an implied future tense, conveying a change in the protagonist’s psyche as he focuses his attention inward. Example 4.3 shows that Brahms here reinterprets the relationship between \( F_7 \) and \( C_7 \) by temporarily discharging their dependency on \( E \) and \( B \); \( F_7 \) and \( C_7 \) now support stable triads. Brahms first

**Example 4.3:** “Unbewegte laue Luft,” mm. 20–25, showing the tonicization of \( F \) major (\( \sharp \)II\(^5 \)) in the piano interlude

develops the \( B-\text{C}_7 \) motive in mm. 20–21 by inverting and enharmonically respelling the augmented sixth chord \( C-E-G-A\# \) as \( V^{6}_5 \) of \( F \) major (\( \flat \)II), tonicizing \( F \) major (m. 22) using the rising fourths outlined on the lower staff (\( B-E/\text{C}_7-F_7 \)). Contrasting its dependence on \( E \) in mm. 1–2, \( F_7 \) now becomes a root, exerting the “will” described by Schoenberg.\(^{23}\)

As \( F_7 \) and \( C_7 \) support \( I \) and \( V \), respectively, in \( F \) major, they threaten to direct the song away from its \( E \)-major tonic. But ex. 4.3 shows that the Neapolitan chord in m. 22 is short-lived and yields quickly to a passing motion in the bass (\( F_7-E-D\# \) in mm. 22–23). In m. 23, \( D\# \) (doubled in registers 2 and 3) supports \( \text{VII}^{7} \), which prolongs the dominant that arrived in m. 20. The bass’s unfolding between \( B \) and \( D\# \) renders \( \flat \)II (m. 22) an apparent tonic nested within

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\(^{23}\)Schoenberg’s discussion of the relative strength of ascending, descending, and “super-strong” root-progressions, suggests that tones may either advance to become the root of their own triad or be demoted (in other words, they may begin as a root, but become a third or fifth). Schoenberg, *Structural Functions*, 6–7.
dominant prolongation, lying a distant tritone away from the governing harmony, B major. As the E-major tonic (I⁰) returns in m. 24, the tonicized F-major chord in m. 22 seems increasingly remote.

As the piano interlude returns to E major in m. 23, it seems to echo across mm. 23–25 the I–V progression that connected sections A and B (compare mm. 10–13 in ex. 4.1a with the middle staves in ex. 4.3, which shows the chromatic bass line G#–A–A#–B supporting the tonicized half cadence I⁶–IV–♯IV⁷–[V]). The graph in ex. 4.1 (see above) further shows that G♯ (treated here as F♯) now rises to G♯, contrasting its earlier descent as a 7–6 suspension in m. 9.

By preventing G♯’s resolution to F♯ as Lebhaft begins, Brahms thus dismisses the minor tonic (E minor) as if signaling the perceptual transition between the languid external scene and passionate internal desire across lines 8–9 in the poem.

**Tonal problems, implied cadential resolution, and unfulfilled desires in the C section**

The A and B sections seemed to draw out latent poetic temporality in lines 1–4 by illustrating nature’s rest. Example 4.4 shows that a stark metrical change to 4/4 and the rapidly surging arpeggios at Lebhaft (m. 25) in the C section intensify Daumer’s poetic description of the protagonist’s desires. Brahms portrays these with extroverted music that indicates their power over the protagonist’s perceptual experience, as if modeling the externalization of desire through its emergence into the protagonist’s consciousness. The vocal line in mm. 26–28 outlines the

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²⁴Schoenberg (and earlier theorists, including Kirnberger) regarded VII⁷ as an incomplete V⁹ chord. His view lends support to my interpretation of the VII⁷ chord in m. 23 as part of a prolongation of V.

²⁵The expected dominant (m. 25) is omitted and replaced by I⁶ in E major, allowing a smooth progression into the *Lebhaft* section.
rising-fourth motive B–E/C₅−F₅ that remained hidden in the piano’s left hand during the interlude (compare mm. 20–23 in ex. 4.3 with mm. 26–28 in ex. 4.4). Supported first by an F-minor ⁶₃ chord, then by an apparent dominant seventh chord in m. 28, F₅ now pushes up to F#₅ in m. 29, invoking its more optimistic enharmonic twin E#, as if breaking past a physical barrier. As the piano contrasts F₅ and C₅ in mm. 27–28 with F#, C#, and D# in mm. 29–30, it seems to point with these sharped pitches into an unattainable world signified by the unresolved leading tone, D#₅. As the piano quickly reintroduces the pitches C₅ (emphasized by a sf marking) and A₄ in m. 30, Brahms reactivates B major’s function as V(⁷) in E major. The tonicized V in m. 30 is thus interrupted, demanding a return to the E-major tonic and the renewal of surging I–V progressions.

My graph in ex. 4.1 (see p. 213 above) and the score in ex. 4.5 (below) show that half-cadential progressions leading to V (as in mm. 26–30) are repeated throughout section C. Each

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26 The rising fourth emerges into the vocal line through a process of “developing variation,” as discussed by Walter Frisch in Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

27 Just as the voice’s D# lacks resolution to E, the piano’s C₅ negates the rising motion implied by C# in m. 29. Hepokoski and Darcy’s label for the change in meaning from a tonicized dominant to a dominant chord is from Vₜ to Vₐ, the latter label reflecting the dominant chord’s reactivated need for resolution to the tonic. The reactivated V poetically signifies the protagonist’s renewed striving. James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 16–19.

I–V progression now depicts rapid surges that portray the protagonist calling out to the beloved, while enharmonic respellings of F♯ and C♯ convey his inner struggle. Example 4.1 shows that the descending C♯–B motive (in mm. 26–28) in an alto voice opposes the motive E♯–F♯ in the upper voice, which transforms F♯ into E#. Similarly, the passing motion B–B♯–C♯ in the tenor of mm. 31–34 allows C♯, respelled as B#, to ascend to C# as in m. 8. But as the voice achieves the

Example 4.5: “Unbewegte laue Luft,” C section (mm. 31–52)
Kopfton G#5 in m. 34, surpassing previous registral boundaries, B# descends to B♭ in an alto voice, as if unable to escape the descending tendency of its enharmonic twin, C♭.29

Further harmonic consequences implied by F♭ and C♭ are revealed in mm. 43–56 (ex. 4.5). F♭’s attempts to become the root of a tonicized chord here suggest imminent, consummated union implied by the text “säume nicht, daheuschweben” (“don’t tarry to come to me”). After a reprise of mm. 1–2 (mm. 43–44), the E-major tonic in m. 45 gains a seventh (D♭), implying resolution to IV (A major). Yet Brahms instead prepares an authentic cadence in F major using an expanded Ⅳ7 and V6(4) (mm. 46–47), and thwarts resolution to F major by prolonging its

29One might label the moment at which G#5 is achieved a “dramatic turning point,” a term introduced by Heather Platt to describe late arrivals of a Kopfton that coincide with significant dramatic shifts in the poem. Although the Kopfton G# (♯3) is already present in m. 1, it achieves its obligatory register (register 5) in m. 33 as if reflecting the protagonist’s increasingly fervent desires. Platt, “Dramatic Turning Points in Brahms’s Lieder,” Indiana Theory Review 15/1 (1994): 69–104.
dominant in mm. 47–54. Within this dominant prolongation, the repeated motive C–E–F
echoes the ascending-fourth motive B–E/C–F from the piano interlude, revisits the melodic goal
F♮5 (in the piano and voice, mm. 49–50), and recalls the inability of the piano’s rocking
semitone E–F♮ in mm. 1–2 to achieve F♯.

Brahms transforms the tonal problem F♮ at the climax in m. 53, where incessant
repetitions of the motive E–F♮ convey the ecstatic poetic transformation of internal desires into
envisioned future bliss. F♮ becomes E♯ in m. 54, preventing both a V⁶–₄–₃ resolution and an F-
major authentic cadence. The bass instead transfers C♮ down two octaves (C4 to C2) and
presents a climactic C♮–B motive across mm. 54–55; E♯ presses upward to F♯ and the
contrapuntal progression V–VII¹–¾–Ⅰ reestablishes E major. As the voice transposes the C–E–F
motive to C♯–F♯–E in mm. 55–56, it emphasizes this abrupt return to E major; F♯ and C♯ seem
to nullify the descending tendency and disquieting passions represented by F♮ and C♮. As the
upper voice climactically achieves F♯5 in m. 55 (2 in the song’s only ³–₂–¹ upper-voice descent
(see ex. 4.1 above), F♮—the “worm in the apple” that prevented rising harmonic motion in mm.
1–2—seems purged of its power to be tonicized.

**Imagined transcendence in section C and the coda**

The immense energy gained during the climax in mm. 55–56 is dissipated in mm.
61–70—a modified reprise of section C. Example 4.6 shows that Brahms sets the poem’s

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30 Brahms indeed suggests imminent cadential closure in F major by briefly tonicizing a root-position F-major chord—an apparent tonic—in m. 50.
31 Brahms emphasizes the achievement of B♮ in m. 55 through a grace note in the piano’s left hand.
32 As shown in fig. 4.2, mm. 63–64 contain a reprise of material from mm. 3–4, as if the latent desires that motivated this music in section A still consume the protagonist, who continues to long for release.
structural close in m. 61 to a lingering, unresolved D♯5 in the voice above the song’s final V–I progression, echoing the unresolved D♯5 in m. 30 (compare ex. 4.4). Coupled with the piano’s diminuendo, this unresolved leading tone deemphasizes the connection between V and I. But the piano exerts its agency by echoing (now in the higher register) the descending bass line C♮–B–A–G# from the earlier climax in mm. 53–55 (V–VII4–I6), opposing C#6 with C♯6 (both marked sf in m. 61); C♮ seems to deny the voice’s suggestion of fulfilled heavenly bliss (C♯), providing a glimpse of reality amidst the passionate visions that overtake the protagonist.33

George Bozarth’s transcription of Brahms’s autograph in ex. 4.6a indeed shows that the piano’s C♮5 was a compositional afterthought; C♯ appears in Brahms’s original version.34

Example 4.6: “Unbewegte laue Luft,” coda (mm. 61–70)

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33 C♮’s syncopated entrance further highlights this pitch.
After the two-measure interlude, the poem’s last two lines are repeated in a coda-like section (mm. 63–70) notable for its lack of dominant harmony. Since the ensuing plagal progression (IV–I in mm. 66–67) fails to revisit or resolve any of the C section’s earlier dominant chords, the reprise does not imply resolution in a traditional sense.\(^{35}\) F\(_{b}\) lingers while C\(_{b}\) is gradually overtaken by C\(_{b}\), a harbinger of the future, suggesting a final narrative stage in Example 4.6a: Segments of Brahms’s autograph manuscript of “Unbewegte laue Luft” showing revisions of mm. 61–62 and Bozarth’s ex. 3.25: a transcription of both passages\(^ {36}\)

\(^{35}\)Heather Platt links this type of cadence to unrequited longing in Brahms’s songs in “Unrequited Love and Unrealized Dominants,” \textit{Intégral} 7 (1993): 119–48. She shows that plagal cadences either occur with authentic cadences or substitute for the dominant. (“The plagal cadence either follows the structural close of the song—that is, concludes the coda—or it occurs at the end of the voice’s melody and the piano provides the structural close....By contrast, some of his songs employ plagal cadences in a more innovative manner, using them as substitutes for an expected final authentic cadence.” Platt, 120. The plagal progression in “Unbewegte laue Luft” occurs in the coda, but unlike some of the songs Platt analyzes, op. 57 no. 8 contains no authentic cadence; instead mm. 53–56 evade an authentic cadence using stepwise motion in the bass.

\(^{36}\)See n. 34 above.
the musical-setting (see ex. 4.6). C# seems to ascend to E (mm. 66−67) in the “rise of 6” pattern noted by Jeremy Day-O’Connell; this melodic ending formula signals transcendence in late-Romantic music.\(^{37}\) The piano’s final arpeggios then gradually rise toward G# in the right hand’s upper register, suggesting the potentially eternal attempts of E major’s 3 to complete the failed Uurlinie descent 3–2–1. Using the persistent tonal problems F₃ and C₃, Brahms seems to tell us that the bliss of love’s consummation only prevails in the protagonist’s imagination when the setting ends.

“Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” (op. 32, no. 5)

Promethean struggle in Platen’s “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder”

Like the depictions of external and internal forces in Daumer’s poem, August von Platen’s “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” embodies its protagonist’s struggle to free his soul from metaphorical constraints. Formal symmetries in the text, paradoxically, contribute to its portrayal of agitated emotions. The syllabic pattern 8/8/7, as shown in fig. 4.3, demarcates recurring tercets throughout the poem; eight-syllable lines create momentum that is frustrated by truncated seven-syllable lines (3, 6, 9, and 12) at the middle and end of each six-line stanza. Yet the imperatives “auf,” “grusse,” and “atme”—impetuous commands—push toward the end of each shortened line (3, 9, and 12). These are emphasized by exclamation points and a final, accented syllable that highlights Platen’s relentless dactylic rhythms, which produce aggressive, beginning-accented pulsations. Each three-line segment thus contrasts frustration with desire for ecstatic freedom, creating tension by repeating the progression between struggle and release.

Platen’s rhyme scheme and varied punctuation contributes to the poem’s volcanic instability. The rhymes “Luft,”/“Duft” and “Lust”/“Brust” (“c” and “f”) reinforce three-line groups, but each stanza’s second half inverts the rhymes “a/b” and “d/e.” Frequent use of commas, forceful questioning, and exlamations convey the protagonist’s agitated, constantly shifting address to himself (internally) and to the external forces that bind him. For instance, “Wehe,” which expresses a pained reaction to the burden of being fettered, is isolated by a comma in line 1 from the protagonist’s address to the “hindering shackles” in line 2. Similarly, the syntactically complete commands in lines 3, 9, and 12 are independent within each tercet and press feverishly toward each exclamation point.

The poem’s combined use of the present tense and imperative mood contributes to its turbulent atmosphere and creates a narrative progression from present-tense struggle to imagined future release across stanza 1 (see the brackets outlining “narrative progression 1”). In lines 1–2, the protagonist speaks in the present tense; in line 3, he commands his soul to cast off its restrictive shackles. This demand implies that the protagonist will be freed in the near future.38 Lines 4–6 convey this implied future: the protagonist envisions the ecstatic freedom that awaits his soul. But stanza 2 inverts this progression; while 7–9 elaborate upon the protagonist’s vision of future freedom, lines 10–12 thematically recall the “shackles” in line 2, implying that the “foe” (“den Feind”), perhaps symbolizing the protagonist’s internal fear, is not yet cast aside. The poem’s narrative progression thus exhibits a chiastic design. Its beginning and ending (lines 1–3 and 10–12) describe the protagonist’s current entrapped state, but contrast this with digressions into an envisioned future (lines 4–9). At the end of the poem, the reader senses that

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38A contrasting interpretation of the poem might regard the shackles that the protagonist casts aside as merely threatening to fetter him. Yet on account of the poetic speaker’s forceful commands, which suggest a struggle, I interpret a conflict between his present fettered state and imagined future freedom. Below I suggest that Brahms’s setting highlights this opposition.
the protagonist remains trapped in present-tense suffering, barred from the freedom that he visualizes.

The following musical analysis suggests that the poem’s arc-like narrative structure (“present—imagined future—present”) presents a problem for Brahms’s strophic setting: Brahms aligns a reprise of first strophe with the second stanza of text, creating a disjunction between the poem’s implied future tense (lines 7–9) and the musical setting’s depiction of present-tense struggle (this alternative reading is outlined as “narrative progression 2”). Yet I contend that this incongruity strengthens the setting’s global depiction of ecstatic release by throwing ecstatic desire and the temporal progression from present to future expressed in lines 6 and 12 more boldly into relief.
**Figure 4.3:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (c. 1820), poem XVIII from *Romanzen und Jugendlieder*, as printed in August von Platen-Hallermünde, *Werke in zwei Bänden*, vol. 1, ed. Kurt Wölfel and Jürgen Link. Munich: Winkler, 1982

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>1. Wehe, so willst du mich wieder, Alas, so you would again,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>2. Hemmende Fessel, umfangen? You hindering shackles, imprison me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>3. Auf, und hinaus in die Luft! Up and out into the air!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>4. Ströme der Seele Verlangen, You longing of the soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>5. Ström es in brausende Lieder, Stream forth in clamorous songs,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>7. Strebe dem Wind nur entgegen Only strive toward the wind,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>8. Daß er die Wange dir kühle, That it might cool your cheeks,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>9. Grüße den Himmel mit Lust! Greet the heavens with joy!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>10. Werden sich bange Gefühle Shall anxious emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>11. Im Unermeßlichen regen? Arise in [the sight of] the infinite?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/ u u / u u / u</td>
<td>12. Atme den Feind aus der Brust! Exhale the foe from your breast!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Temporal Progressions**

1. (Poetic) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (imagined future) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (imagined future) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (imagined future) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (imagined future) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (imagined future) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (present) 2. (Musical) Internal Struggle (imagined future)
Strophic form as narrative in Brahms’s “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (op. 32, no. 5)

Unlike any of the settings discussed in previous chapters, “Wehe so willst du mich wieder” models teleological narrative progressions from present to future tenses within its strophic form—an inherently repetitive design. Figure 4.4 models the song’s narrative progression; each of its two strophes is coextensive with mm. 1–27 and reflects the form AB. Section A (mm. 1–13) outlines the progression from I (B minor) to V (F sharp major); section B (mm. 13–27) contains an ascending chromaticized sequence (mm. 13–22) and the structural cadence (mm. 23–27). The piano postlude forms a brief third section (mm. 28–34) that reinstates the tonic and resolves earlier tonal conflicts. The overall form of Brahms’s setting (AB + postlude) thus maps onto a three-stage temporal progression in each stanza (see “temporal progression” in fig. 4.4): 1) the progression from I to a tonicized V in section A (mm. 1–13) depicts the present-tense struggle yielding to an imagined future tense; 2) the tonicized V chord beginning section B (m. 13) is extended by a rising chromatic sequence and prolonged until m. 23, signifying the protagonist’s imagined future as the parallel major key (B major) becomes a viable tonic; 3) the structural cadence (mm. 23–27) denies further progression into both B major and keys on the sharp side of F sharp major, tragically succumbing to the original B-minor tonic as an expression of the protagonist’s denied future and return to the present. In the prelude, the interlude between each strophe, and the postlude, the pianistic agency enacts the protagonist’s resignation to present-tense struggle and, in the end, defeat.

Brahms’s treatment of the chromatic pitches E sharp and G sharp also models the poetic narrative from struggle to release (fig. 4.4, “tonal narrative”). The two pairs of conflicted pitches, E sharp/E flat and G sharp/G flat (mm. 1–2), oppose ascending and descending resolutions, signifying the protagonist’s striving for freedom versus yielding to his burden. In mm. 7–8, E sharp resolves to F sharp, fulfilling its
**Figure 4.4:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form (within each strophe):</th>
<th>A introduction</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>B interlude</th>
<th>13–14</th>
<th>15–22</th>
<th>23–27</th>
<th>Postlude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>3–6</td>
<td>7–8</td>
<td>8–13</td>
<td>15–22</td>
<td>23–27</td>
<td>28–34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano and voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano and voice</td>
<td>piano and voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic Progressions in B minor:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I–V (HC)</td>
<td>V (standing on the dominant)</td>
<td>PAC in F# major (V); II′–V–I</td>
<td>V → V7 ascending chromaticized 5–6 sequence bridges F# major (V) → expected C# major (V/V)</td>
<td>B min: II–V6–5–3–I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic lines:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(strophe 1)</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>3, 3 (repetition)</td>
<td>4–6</td>
<td>6 (repetition)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(strophe 2)</td>
<td>7–8</td>
<td>9, 9 (repetition)</td>
<td>10–11</td>
<td>12 (repetition)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Tonal Narrative involving E# and G#:</td>
<td>E#/E and G#/G⁷ conflicts introduced signifying opposed ascending (striving) versus descending (yielding) tendencies</td>
<td>E# suggests tonicization of V (F# major)</td>
<td>E# and G# = neighbor notes to F# as V is tonicized</td>
<td>7⁷ of V⁷ (E#) respelled F#, preventing the resolution of V⁷ to B minor.</td>
<td>Notational enharmonic respellings of E# (F#), and G# (A⁷) disguise extreme sharpened motion.</td>
<td>A⁷ is revealed as G#. The E#/E⁷ conflict returns.</td>
<td>E# and G# are replaced by their descending counterparts E⁷ and G⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal progression in Brahms’s setting:</td>
<td>present⁷⁹ (enacted by piano)</td>
<td>present becoming the future (enacted by piano)</td>
<td>imagined future →</td>
<td>imagined future denied!</td>
<td>return to present tense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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³⁹ Italics denotes that a tense is implied by the piano alone. Arrows signify a transition between suggested tenses.
rising tendency—and the future tense implied by the poem’s imperative commands—as F# major (V) is tonicized. During the ascending chromaticized 5–6 sequence in mm. 13–22, notational enharmonic respellings of E# and G# (as F♯ and A♭) disguise harmonic motion into sharp keys, culminating in a tonicization of F# major’s own dominant (C# major) in m. 22. But the song fails to sustain E#’s stability as 3 in C# major (a function that temporarily neutralizes its desire to ascend as 7 in F# major), reflecting the protagonist’s increasing proximity to a heavenly realm. Both the dramatic breakdown of C# major, linked to the return of E#, and a second harmonic failure to achieve cadential closure in B major imply that unending struggle (signified by B minor) prevents the protagonist’s ecstatic vision of eternity from being realized.

**Tonal problems and metrical conflicts in section A**

I interpret section A in Brahms’s setting (mm. 1–13) to reflect the protagonist’s ongoing internal struggle in three ways (ex. 4.7). First, the syncopated, accented entrance of F#4 (m. 1, beat 3) reveals a nascent, recurring metrical conflict between 6/8 and 9/8 that conveys frustrated striving. A local third-progression D–C#–B stemming from D4 (accented on beat 1) initially suggests 6/8 meter, owing to the listener’s projected expectation of a repeated 6/8 measure (or a single 12/8 measure). The recomposition in ex. 4.7a shows the resolution of both of these metrical and tonal tensions. But the abrupt downbeat (D5) in m. 2 of Brahms’s setting denies continuation in 6/8 as the listener retrospectively infers the song’s 9/8 meter. Second, Brahms

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40My analysis will show that Brahms leads to an imperfect authentic cadence in C# major (m. 22) using what Carl Schachter and Edward Aldwell label the 5 variant of the ascending 5–6 sequence. See Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 326.
Example 4.7: “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” A section (mm. 1–13)

emphasizes E# and G# in a dissonant, common-tone diminished seventh chord that crashes in on beat 1, forcing G#’s awkward descending resolution in the minor mode (ex. 4.7). Third, as m. 2

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43Common-tone diminished seventh chords usually appear in $4_2$ position (implying the spelling B−Cm−E♯−G♯), but here Brahms places the chord in $4_3$ position, highlighting D♯′s identity as 3 in B minor.
repeats m. 1 one octave higher, it conveys the piano’s striving between F#4 and F#5—a gesture imitated by the voice in m. 5. Brahms suggests that F#5 is a registral boundary to be attained and surpassed, foreshadowing its later appearance during an ensuing tonicization of F# major.

**Example 4.7a:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” metrical recomposition of m. 1

![Example 4.7a](image)

My graph in ex. 4.7b shows that mm. 1–6 further develop musical features that I interpret as conveying struggle in the piano introduction. Interrupted linear descents (3–2) in mm. 1–3 fail to achieve 1, contrasting F#’s registral ascent in mm. 1–2. Nested third-progressions (D–C#–B) within each encompassing 3–2 motion also seek 1, but the defiant F#s that strive upwards on beat

**Example 4.7b:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–6)

![Example 4.7b](image)
3 (mm. 1–2) prevent melodic closure melodic. The third-progression F♯–E–D♭ likewise seeks D♭3 in a tenor voice, but disruptive rising E♯–F motions delay resolution until m. 4 (beat 1).\textsuperscript{44} Finally, the large-scale bass motion undergirding mm. 1–6 (B–D–E–E♯–F♯) summarizes the conflict between E♯ and E♭.\textsuperscript{45} The half-cadential progression IV\(^7\)–#IV\(^7\)–V invokes the common-tone diminished seventh chord from m. 1—now a functional applied chord (vii\(^{77}\)/V) that foreshadows the tonicization of F♯ major in section B. D♭5, an unstable chordal seventh above E♯ in m. 5, is forced to descend to C♯ (♯2), mimicking the 3–2 motions in mm. 1–3, rather than to rise (as C♮) to D#. Foreshadowed in m. 1 by D♭, C♮ will emerge during the B section’s rising sequence.

As the present yields to the imagined future in the poem, mm. 7–13 build toward a climax that tonicizes V in m. 13 (ex. 4.7 and the graph in ex. 4.7c). In mm. 6–8, the piano repeats its D–C# motive, echoing earlier 3–2 motions and providing a two-measure extension to the previous four-measure group (mm. 3–6). But since the D–C# motive here begins on beat 3, mm. 7–8 also prepare an ensuing metrical conflict (articulated by beats 3 and 1) that continues into mm. 9ff. F♯s (doubled in octaves in the piano’s left hand on beat 1) articulate a contrasting metrical layer to the accented D♭s on beat 3 (mm. 6–8). Motivically, these F♯s form the upper boundary of the stepwise fourth-motive C♯–F♯, a scalar segment that foreshadows the forthcoming F♯-major tonicization in m. 13 and highlights the opposed ascending and descending tendencies of E♯ and E♭, respectively.\textsuperscript{46} Yet Brahms keeps these burgeoning metrical

\textsuperscript{44}By evading B♭5 until the upbeat to m. 5, the voice further prevents melodic closure on ♯1 despite the piano’s inner-voice iteration of B4. The voice’s omission of ♯1 indeed seems to conflict with the piano’s agency, indicating the absence of this pitch class as “marked.”

\textsuperscript{45}This bass line and harmonic progression (I–I\(^6\)–IV–#IV\(^7\)–V) reflects a standard Caplinian antecedent-phrase model.

\textsuperscript{46}Although mm. 7–8 prolong the dominant (thus adding no new harmonic content to the phrase), they nevertheless focus the listener’s attention on the obsessively repeated rising fourth C♯–F♯ that foreshadows the ensuing large-
conflicts in mm. 7–8 at bay, maintaining the notated meter through the strong metrical placement of each cadential six-four chord.

**Example 4.7c:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” graph of the A section (mm. 6–13)

Brahms develops metrical conflicts in mm. 9–13 as if depicting the protagonist’s gradual achievement of the poetic future tense expressed by lines 3 and 9 (“auf, und hinauf in die Luft!/grüße den Himmel mit Lust”). Example 4.7 shows that two 3/2 hypermeasures convey this transformation. In the first 3/2 hypermeasure (mm. 8–10), repeated C#5s in the vocal line articulate nested 6/8 measures, continuing the conflicting metrical layers between the piano’s right and left hands. On the basis of these repeated C#5s, the second 3/2 hypermeasure (beginning in m. 10) implies analogous repetitions of the voice’s D#5. But G#5 (m. 12) departs from this pattern. As the voice achieves the climactic chromatic pitch G#5, it surpasses the song’s previous registral highpoint (F#5) and triggers an equivalent culmination and subsequent dissipation of metrical tension as Brahms superimposes two meters in mm. 12–13 (9/8 in the scale upper voice. I interpret this repetition as the protagonist’s meditation (a subliminal process) on the prospect of achieving future bliss—a subtle change from the present tense to the future tense enacted by the pianistic agent.

47In this 3/2 measure, quarter notes are divided into triplets.
piano and 3/4 in the voice, removing conflicts with 6/8. This metrical climax emphasizes the neighbor notes G# and E# around F# in register 5 (see the score and graph), recalling their earlier association with the harsh common-tone diminished seventh chord (mm. 1–2) that depicted struggle-laden ascent. G# and E# are now supported by stable II7s and V7s chords that tonicize F# major, signifying the protagonist’s imagined release from his burden.

The graph in ex. 4.7c summarizes motives signifying the implied future. First, the upper voice in mm. 7–13 outlines a large-scale stepwise fourth motive between C#5 (2) and F#5. This rising motive prevents the resolution of C# (m. 7) to 1 in m. 8 (echoing earlier interrupted D–C# descents) and casts the rising fourth-motive earlier found in the piano’s left hand (mm. 6–8) across the upper voice. This motivic parallelism reinforces the resolutions of E# (now supported by C# major in m. 12) to F#, rectifying earlier failed resolutions in mm. 1–2 and more tenuously, in the piano’s left hand during mm. 7–8. Yet soon after the successful tonicization F# major, Brahms adds its chordal seventh, E# (m. 13, beat 2), reactivating its chordal status as V7 in B minor. The tension created by this reversal (implied future succumbs to momentary failure) is extended by an ongoing conflict between E# and E# in section B; Brahms emphasizes the listener’s expectation for V7 to resolve to either a B-major or B-minor tonic in connection with the song’s increasing distance from its original B-minor key in section B, as I will show. If E# evokes the protagonist’s emotional transformation, then Brahms overturns its temporary stability when the tragic B-minor tonic returns.

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48 G# is locally diatonic in F# major, but a chromatic tonal problem with reference to the song’s global B-minor tonic.
49 This rising segment of the Ur linie uses 5–6–7–8 in F# major, invoking patterns of rising Ur linien cited by David Neumeyer. See p. 190, n. 59 cited above.
50 In the terminology of Hepokoski and Darcy, V_T becomes V_A.
Chromatic ascent and (more) metrical conflict in section B

Example 4.8a (below) shows that section B prolongs the tonicized dominant achieved in m. 13 as if maintaining the protagonist’s envisioned future. Brahms here recasts the conflict between E♯ and E♭ in the enharmonically respelled flat keys of D♭ major (m. 22) and A♭ major (m. 23), thereby disguising the extremely sharp realized and implied keys of C♯ major (seven sharps) and G♯ major (eight sharps), respectively. By threatening to surpass seven sharps on the circle of fifths—a musical space—with a G♯-major cadence, Brahms conveys the protagonist’s efforts to traverse the physical space between earth and the empyrean, yet ultimately falls short of breaking past the C♯-major barrier.

Example 4.8: “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” B section (mm. 13−27)

51 An imperfect authentic cadence confirms C♯ major (m. 22), while G♯ major is only implied.
Example 4.8a: “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” graph of the B section (mm. 13–27)

The score and graph in ex. 4.8 and ex. 4.8a show that the chromaticized sequence in mm. 13–20 leads away from B minor into increasingly sharp keys, further conveying the protagonist’s attempted flight into the heavens. To avoid unwieldy notation, Brahms enharmonically respells E₇ (the seventh of V⁷) as F♭ in a two-measure piano interlude (mm. 13–14; ex. 4.8). Owing to the recent tonicization of F♯ major, “E₇” (respelled as F♭5) may resolve either to D♯ or to D♭ in m. 14. This echoes earlier E–D motions (supported by V⁴₂–I⁶) summarized in ex. 4.8b and throws the song’s mode into doubt. Brahms undercuts the descending resolution F♭–E♭ in the voice and C♭ major or minor (the B-major or minor tonic in disguise) using a ⁶₅ chord above the bass note G♭3 in mm. 14–15 that ascends as F♭ to G♯ (A♭) in m. 19 (ex. 4.8c). The bass’s G♭ begins an
ascending chromatic sequence that portrays limitless soaring when the poet describes clamorous songs streaming forth from his soul (lines 4–5). Brahms seems to suggest that the protagonist now draws his euphoric energy and freedom from the atmosphere around him.\footnote{This strophe in Brahms’s setting may arguably correspond better to lines 4–5 in strophe 1 than to lines 10–11 in strophe 2. David Damschroder shows Schubert’s use of this ascending, chromaticized 5–6 sequence in “Aus Heliopolis II” (D. 754), where it also depicts striving. Damschroder notes that Schubert abbreviates the sequence (eliding some of its five-three chords) to avoid tedium and to depict the text. He writes “the poetic text, which offers a set of prescriptions for leading a worthy life, is well served by a sequence that starts its ascent slowly and methodically. But as does a life that is thriving through honorable pursuits, eventually the arduous becomes a joyous and energetic striving ever upwards, and in the ethereal atmosphere of that higher order of existence, the friction of earthbound life dwindles.” David Damschroder, \textit{Thinking About Harmony} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 81–3.}

\textbf{Example 4.8b}: “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” summary of V\textsuperscript{4}–I progressions that use E\textsharp–D motives

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{example_4.8b.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Example 4.8c}: “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” \textsuperscript{5} variant of the ascending chromaticized 5–6 sequence in mm. 13–24

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{example_4.8c.png}
\end{center}

Both an imperfect authentic cadence in C\# major and an implied G\#-major cadence function as goals of the ascending, chromaticized 5–6 sequence in mm. 13–20 (ex. 4.8a).\footnote{I respell flats as sharps in my graph in order to illustrate coherent linear progressions stemming from the F\#-major key established in m. 13.} In m. 22, the upper voice reaches its first melodic goal, E\#5, above a C\#-major chord (V in F\# major) in m. 22. This renders the tonal problem E\# (respelled as the chordal third F\#) temporarily stable,
relieving its arduous upward striving toward F♯. But as the bass note C♯3 pushes toward D♯3 (supporting D♯ major; VI♯) in m. 23, Brahms prepares a cadence in the still sharper key of G♯ major only to withhold its consummation (see the recomposed version in ex. 4.8d). In m. 24, II♭ in B minor (C♯ minor, which differs from V/V only through the pitch E♭) replaces G♯ major’s dominant. By introducing E♭ where E♯ was expected, Brahms therefore denies further lingering in the tonal environs around F♯ major (prolonged since m. 13) and strongly suggests a B-major cadence. On the one hand, Brahms indicates no further achievement of seven-or eight-sharp keys, signaling the song’s climactic narrative failure to strive further into ecstatically sharp keys representing the imagined future. On the other hand, a projected B-major structural cadence suggests that a positive outcome remains on the horizon; B-minor struggle becomes an increasingly distant memory.

**Example 4.8d:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” hypothetical recomposition of mm. 24–26 showing a G♯-major cadence

![Example.png](attachment:Example.png)

The height of tonal striving for sharp keys (m. 24) corresponds with the second poetic climax in line 6 (and line 12), provoking a culmination of metrical conflicts that heightens Brahms’s tragic denial of B-major triumph (ex. 4.8). Prolonged spans of D♯-major, G♯-major, and C♯-minor harmonies in mm. 23–24 create a hemiola, obscuring the notated meter. Simultaneously, 9/8 meter in m. 23 yields to three superimposed meters in m. 24—9/8, 6/8, and
3/4—that dramatize the protagonist’s violent return to earthly reality from an unsustainable height (registral height in the musical setting signifies aerial height in the poem). As G#5 and E♭5 (substituting for E♯) appear successively in m. 24, both pitches echo the double neighbor around F♯5 from m. 13 (ex. 4.8a). Whereas G♯ and E♯ depicted present-tense struggle in the piano introduction and enabled a tonicization of V in m. 13 that implies the future, G♯ and E♭ now convey a final narrative stage: E♭’s victory over E♯ confirms the protagonist’s negative fate during the structural cadence, recalling the promissory notes in mm. 1–2.54

The structural cadence as tragic dénouement

Examples 4.8 and 4.8a show that the structural cadence depicts a tragic dénouement using chromatic pitches, motives, and registral conflicts that appear throughout the song, followed by a postlude conveying emotional resignation. After G♯5 (m. 24) overcomes the registral barrier F♯5 (compare m. 12) and introduces II₆ in B major, Brahms invokes both D♯ and D♭ (♯♯3 and ♭♭3) as if to portray the catastrophic breakdown of B major (five sharps) at the structural cadence—the last opportunity for harmonic closure in the major tonic. Both ♩♯3 and ♩♭3 appear as accented passing tones between ♩♯4 and ♩♯2 during the Urlinie’s rapid descent in mm. 24–27, supported by a cadential six-four chord in mm. 25–26. The listener might indeed expect a B-major cadence until m. 25, but the diminished-seventh chord E♯–G♯–B–D (m. 25, beat 3) seems to stir the protagonist’s memories of B-minor struggle (the poem’s present tense) through its association with m. 1.

54Example 4.8a also shows that E♭5 (m. 24) prevents the rising stepwise fourth C♯–D♯–E♭–F♯ from achieving F♯5, corresponding to m. 13, a second time.
Following the cadential six-four chord that arrives in m. 25 (beat 1), the voice desperately clings to F\#5 (signifying height) as the piano’s left hand plunges its doubled F\#s down one octave, conveying immense plummeting, and its right hand realizes the *Urlinie’s* descent.\textsuperscript{55} This agential distinction between the voice (clinging to the future) and the piano (succumbing to inevitable descent) reflects the protagonist’s divided consciousness; the piano foreshadows a return to reality, while the voice only experiences an abrupt return (m. 27). The unfolded linear progression F\#−E\#−E\#−D in an alto voice shows the forced descent of E\# to D\# in m. 27, and creates an association with the diminished seventh chord E\#−G\#−B−D. When the voice finally achieves 1 (B4), it is the piano’s D\#—an inner voice—that signals the tragic victory of B minor over the implied B-major tonic. Despite the protagonist’s vicarious soaring throughout section B, B minor’s return characterizes the inescapable present-tense struggle as a powerful force that tethers the protagonist to earth despite his desire for freedom.

After strophe 1, the piano began a reprise of the entire song, reinstating the protagonist’s initial struggle in order to depict his imagined release a second time. In the postlude (mm. 27–34), the pianistic agency undercuts the decisive melodic and harmonic closure that closes the song in m. 27 by repeating mm. 1–2 (ex. 4.9). The tonal problems from the introduction therefore return, demanding further resolution that the postlude does not provide. The piano first reinstates E\#’s upward striving and G\#’s unnatural descent to F\# in mm. 27–28, feigning the beginning of another strophe. But a change occurs in m. 29: the piano achieves F\#5, capturing the song’s highest register, but denies any reference to the tonicized dominant chord associated

\textsuperscript{55}Brahms bisects the octave between both registers containing F\# using interjected octaves on B. In m. 25, B (doubled in the piano’s left hand) functions as a cast-out root to the cadential six-four, much like 6\_4 chords may substitute for a cadential 6\_4 chord. In m. 26, however, the doubled Bs impinge upon the harmonic span of V\_3 (the resolution of V\_3). This rushed entrance of the tonic’s root seems to convey the protagonist’s desperation to stop his plunging descent. As if searching urgently for stability, the protagonist seems to “slam on the brakes,” so to speak, in the hopes that the bass anticipation of the tonic might lessen the shock of its definitive harmonic arrival in m. 27.
with this pitch in m. 13. F♯5 now appears above D♯3 (supporting F♯), the long-postponed resolution of the seventh E♯ from m. 28 (ex. 4.9a).

**Example 4.9:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” A¹ section (mm. 27–34)

![Example 4.9: Piano postlude graph](image)

**Example 4.9a:** “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” graph of the piano postlude in A¹ (mm. 27–34)
As ex. 4.9 shows, metrical and tonal conflicts continue to dissolve in mm. 29–30. A hemiola created by the accented, doubled pitches F#, D4, and B (mm. 29–31) reins in the surging rhythms that enabled F# to rise between registers 4 and 5 in mm. 1–2 and 27–28. F#5 now descends into register 4 (m. 31). As if the protagonist succumbs to exhaustion, the piano omits the interjected F# on beat 3, stabilizing F#4. The protagonist’s pulse also seems to slow in mm. 31–34 as traces of 6/8 and 9/8 meter gradually disappear. Yet the piano conveys faint echoes of struggle through dissonant A#s sounding against B-minor chords. By m. 33, throbbing eighth notes yield to duplets that elsewhere signaled the dissolution of extended metrical conflicts. All semblances of meter grinds to a halt as the song ends. Fermatas over the B-minor chord in m. 34 and a rest in the vocal part allow energy to dissipate even after the song is over.

Interlude: Intertextuality in a setting by Josephine Lang

Metrical conflicts between 6/8 and 9/8 in Brahms’s setting emerge more starkly when compared with Josephine Lang’s setting of the same text, dating from around 1840 (ex. 4.10). Brahms owned editions of Lang’s settings, attesting to his close relationship with Lang’s daughter, Maria Fellinger, as is well known. As I will briefly show, Lang’s setting betrays evidence of her sensitivity to the natural inclination toward 6/8 meter embedded within the poetic meter. Every two measures of 6/8 in her setting accommodate three poetic stresses (a single

56 These measures seem to recall Schubert’s “Der Atlas” from Schwanengesang. Indeed, the following chapter in this dissertation will argue that Brahms’s portrayal of Promethean struggle here is connected to his depiction of the mythical figure of Atlas in an early song titled “Heimkehr,” (op. 7, no. 6) dating from 1851.
57 This notated ritardando is emphasized by the piano’s diminuendo and ritenuto.
58 I am grateful to Harald and Sharon Krebs for introducing me to this setting and providing the score shown below in ex. 4.10.
59 There is no documentary evidence, however, that suggests that Brahms knew Lang’s setting of “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder.” Richard Fellinger, Maria Fellinger, and Imogen Fellinger, Klänge um Brahms: Erinnerungen (Mürzzuschlag: Österreichische Johannes Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1997).
line); Lang fills out the fourth stress by providing an extra “beat”—or dotted quarter note (see the model in ex. 4.10a).\textsuperscript{60} Brahms’s declamation of the poem in 9/8 therefore distorts this more idiomatic 6/8 meter. These features in Brahms’s setting appear more prominently when viewed in comparison with similar tonal and metrical features in Lang’s setting.\textsuperscript{61}

Example 4.10 summarizes the aspects of Lang’s setting that (albeit perhaps coincidentally) resemble Brahms’s song. Like Brahms, Lang composes a strophic setting, repeating lines 3, 6, 9, and 12 and honors the common nineteenth-century practice of bringing each musical strophe to a cadence by repeating each stanza’s final line. (Perhaps the throbbing eighth-note accompaniment in Lang’s setting also inspired Brahms’s use of a similar texture.) But Lang’s tempo (\textit{Agitato molto}) seems to overly prescribe the setting’s mood as if bolstering her traditional, albeit expressive, declamation of the text. That is, Lang adheres strictly to early nineteenth-century declamatory practice; in mm. 5–12, she aligns the first poetic stress in each line with a downbeat, setting each poetic line within two measures. These constraints throw her expressive declamation into relief. In m. 5, she mimics speech-like recitation by setting “Wehe” apart with the sixteenth-note rest, while the voice’s rapid, ascending arpeggiation toward “Luft” (Eb5) in mm. 9–10 illustrates the protagonist’s wish to escape upward. This gesture uses a one-octave ascent between Eb4 and Eb5 similar to that between F#4 and F#5 at “hemmende Fesseln” in Brahms’s setting (compare mm. 9–10 in ex. 4.10 with mm. 4–5 in ex. 4.7). Whereas Lang directly aligns this rising gesture with “auf und hinaus,” suggesting release, Brahms illustrates

\textsuperscript{60}I thank Harald Krebs for sharing this observation with me. Wolfgang Kayser also notes that there is often an implied stress at the end of poetic lines. Wolfgang Kayser, \textit{Kleine deutsche Versschule} (Bern: A. Francke, 1946).

\textsuperscript{61}Although Brahms did not undertake the enterprise with the ferocity displayed by Hugo Wolf, he did engage in one-upmanship during Lied composition, as evidenced by his allusion to Hermann Levi’s melodic setting of Goethe’s “Dämmerung senkte sich von oben” in his own setting (op. 59, no. 1), analyzed in ch. 3. Frithjof Haas, \textit{Hermann Levi: From Brahms to Wagner}, trans. Cynthia Klohr (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 45.
conflict. He places “hemmende” on an upbeat in 9/8, displacing the first stressed syllable in line 2 and depicting a rapid ascent to F#5—a registral boundary—suggesting imprisonment.

Similarly to Brahms’s setting, Lang’s song also projects heightened emotions that depict lines 3, 6, 9, and 12. When Lang repeats line 6 (“athmend ätherischen Duft”) in m. 18, her emphasis of beat 4 (E♭5, marked sf) recalls the syncopated F#4s and the piano’s repeated D–C#

Example 4.10: Josephine Lang, “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” op. 40, no. 4 (c. 1840)

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62 These stanzaic divisions (lines 3/6, and 9/12) appear in mm. 12 and 31, and 39 and 56, respectively.
Ströme der Seele Verlangen, ström'es in brausende Lieder!
più lento

athmend är the.rischen Duft, athmend är the.rischen Duft!
a tempo

V₆ ⁷/₃

leggiero

più lento
Example 4.10a: “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” model for declamation in 6/8
motives in mm. 1–2 and 6–8, respectively, of Brahms’s 9/8 setting. Lang creates a metrical emphasis of beat 2 (E♭5, marked sf) that resembles the syncopated F♯4s and the piano’s repeated D–C# motives in mm. 1–2 and 6–8, respectively, of Brahms’s 9/8 setting. Lang produces metrical conflict by emphasizing beat 2, but like Brahms, maintains the notated meter by placing the cadential six-four chord on a downbeat in m. 19. The registral descent from E♭5 to E♭4 in mm. 19–20 confirms authentic cadential closure, while the piano interlude in mm. 20–31 repeats the syncopated E♭s, much like the metrically displaced D–C# motive in Brahms’s piano interlude (compare mm. 6–8 in ex. 4.7).

Finally, Lang’s postlude (mm. 47–55) emphasizes the piano’s striving for register 5 (G5, marked forte) in m. 51, just as Brahms’s restates the ascent from F♯4 to F♯5 in the postlude (mm. 27–28, see ex. 4.9). In the piano’s right hand, G5 in m. 52 then descends to G4 in m. 55, closing the song. Lang’s expressive use of register and syncopations in 6/8 therefore reveals much that may have influenced Brahms. Yet Brahms’s bold metrical displacement of poetically stressed syllables in 9/8 creates a tempestuous vocal line that embodies the protagonist’s visceral struggle.

“Vorüber,” (op. 58, no. 7)

Layered temporality in Hebbel’s “Vorüber”

Christian Friedrich Hebbel’s poem “Vorüber” evokes the style of Heinrich Heine, whose combination of biting sarcasm and folk-like forms transformed the earlier naïve poetic style of Wilhelm Müller.63 The two stanzas comprising “Vorüber,” shown in fig. 4.5, emulate Müller and Heine’s models; each quatrain alternates tetrameter and trimeter verse in its odd and even lines.

63Max Kalbeck was the first to note the similar style of “Vorüber” to poetry by Heine. George Bozarth, “Brahms’s setting of Hebbel’s ‘Vorüber,’” Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies, ed. Robert Pascall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 78.
respectively. The poem depicts a grim underlying poetic theme—death’s inevitability—revealed as if through the technique of Stimmungsbruch in stanza 2 (lines 7–8). Building here upon George Bozarth’s analysis of the poem’s syntax, meter, and imagery, my own narratological analysis will posit that the poem’s deceptively simple form veils its complex temporal hierarchies, which I will argue Brahms’s setting makes manifest. Bozarth only briefly mentions poetic temporality and tenses in his statements regarding Hebbel’s descriptions of nature:

Hebbel’s relationship to nature, as revealed in his poems, underwent a series of transmutations. In many of his earlier poems, as well as in his extensive diaries, he portrayed nature as incomprehensible and therefore threatening in its vastness, capable of making man feel insignificant and alone....however, in both his reminiscence about Lobsitz and the poem ‘Vorüber,’ nature is not threatening, but merely ineffectual: the night watchman finds himself amidst nature, but still sees suicide as his only recourse; the weary, anguished poet seeks solace and rest in the beauty and peace of nature, but soon realizes that the solution is but temporary, and only death will suffice.65

In contrast to Bozarth’s, my poetic interpretation emphasizes latent and nested tenses by examining the protagonist’s role as a narrator who speaks about the past from his present-tense vantage point (see fig. 4.5). In stanza 1, the protagonist narrates his memory—lying under the linden tree— in the simple past tense, reflecting the poem’s title (“Past”). But a temporal shift into relived memory occurs within this past tense when the nightingale lulls the protagonist to sleep (lines 3–4). Indeed, poetic imagery here indicates foreboding lurking behind this otherwise pleasant scene: the linden tree often symbolizes death, while the nightingale, whose song evokes the protagonist’s painful memories, conjures the lost past.66 Thus although the protagonist

64 In contrast to my interpretation, Bozarth interprets this Stimmungsbrechung in stanza 1, lines 3–4 (Ibid.).
65 Ibid., 83. Bozarth explains that the reference to Lobsitz stems from a letter between Hebbel and his wife that describes a tree in this town by which a nightwatchman had hung himself. Bozarth implies that the tree was Hebbel’s inspiration for “Vorüber.”
66 Ibid., 81. This symbolism is also evident in the poem “Nachtigall” by Christian Reinhold Köstlin that Brahms set as op. 97, no. 1 (see ch. 2).
describes his “sweet” experience of dreaming, Hebbel suggests that the comfort provided by the linden tree and nightingale masks the protagonist’s deeper existential troubles.

The change to the present tense signaled by “Denn nun” in stanza 2 (enhanced by the repetition of “nun”) is thus an uncomfortable one. This abrupt shift seems to reflect the protagonist’s violent awakening from sleep in the previous stanza. Stark, short clauses emphasize the present-tense verb “ist,” (“now I am awake,” “now she is gone”) as if overthrowing the simple past tense in stanza 1. Hebbel renders the recalled events in stanza 1 and their attendant psychological states irrecoverable to the protagonist in this present, conscious state. Indeed, as the reader becomes aware that both the dream itself and the scene described in the simple past tense are lost to the protagonist, the ramifications and grim tone of the poem’s title emerge. The linden’s “wilted leaves” suggest the arrival of late autumn or early winter; the protagonist can neither seek comfort in its shade, nor access soothing sleep. Time elapsed between stanzas 1 and 2 brings the reader into the present from which the protagonist speaks.

A temporal change also occurs midway through stanza 2: the protagonist turns away from the past and present in lines 7–8 to focus on the future. “Noch nicht” (line 7) invokes a time that has not yet arrived, indicating that the protagonist only imagines this future. But unlike the unattainable future depicted by the poems analyzed above, Hebbel alludes to an inevitable (albeit unfulfilled) one: the protagonist’s dead body, described as “burned-out ashes,” will be covered with dust, a symbol for the grave.

67 Bozarth interprets a change to amphibrachic feet at the beginning of stanza 2 that emphasizes this change in poetic tense. Ibid., 84.
68 Bozarth shows that one of Hebbel’s earlier autographs of the poem used the past tense here (“Denn als ich erwachte/da war sie fort”). Ibid., 84.
69 The falling leaves that Hebbel invokes resemble the imagery in Wilhelm Müller’s cycle Die Winterreise. Falling leaves in Müller’s poetic cycle signify winter, which is juxtaposed with images of springtime and warmth that only exist in the protagonist’s dreams. Müller’s poem “Die Krähe” also depicts the protagonist’s brutal awakening into reality.
70 As Bozarth shows, complex syntax reinforces this comparison between lines 6 and 8. In line 6, the verb “bedeckt” indicates that the wilted leaves cover the protagonist and continues to function as the verb in line 8, where it describes the verglühte Asche der Staub.”
Figure 4.5: Christian Friedrich Hebbel, “Vorüber,” written in 1861, published in *Orion, Monatsschrift für Literatur und Kunst*, edited by Adolf Stradtmann. Hamburg, 1863

1 Ich legte mich unter den Lindenbaum,  
2 In dem die Nachtigall schlug;  
3 Sie sang mich in den sübesten Traum,  
4 Der währte auch lange genug.

Rhyme  
1 a I laid myself down beneath the linden tree,  
2 b In which the nightingale was singing;  
3 a She sang me into the sweetest dream,  
4 b Which lasted quite a long time.

Temporal Progression  
1 past-tense narration (the  
2 protagonist describes his memory)  
3 nested past tenses  
4 (dreaming/memory)

5 Denn nun ich erwache, nun ist sie fort,  
6 Und welk bedeckt mich das Laub,  
7 Doch leider noch nicht, wie am dunkeln Ort,  
8 Verglühte Asche der Staub.

5 c For now I’ve awakened, she is gone;  
6 d And I am covered with wilted leaves,  
7 c But sadly not yet, as in that darker place,  
8 d Does dust cover [these] burned-out ashes.

Temporal Progression  
5 present-tense narration (the  
6 protagonist’s current state)  
7 implied, inevitable future (death)

Figure 4.6: “Vorüber,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A introduction</th>
<th>3−9</th>
<th>10−20</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>31−40</th>
<th>postlude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures:</td>
<td>1−2</td>
<td>3−9</td>
<td>10−20</td>
<td>20−22</td>
<td>23−30</td>
<td>31−40</td>
<td>41−43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic progressions in F major:</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1−(♭VI)−IIT−V</td>
<td>(V) standing on the dominant</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>(III)−IV♭♭−VI− [♭II♭]−V♭♭♭♭−♭I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent:</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano + voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano + voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic form (lines):</td>
<td>1−2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5−6</td>
<td>7−8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal Narrative involving A♭ and B♭♭:</td>
<td>A♭/A♭♭ conflict is introduced (and simple modal mixture, using D♭/A♭♭)</td>
<td>A♭ = upper neighbor to G and is enharmonically respelled as B♭♭ (defamiliarization)</td>
<td>A♭ becomes a root.</td>
<td>A♭ is enharmonically respelled as B♭♭ and finds temporary support above ♭II♭ (♭♭♭♭ minor)</td>
<td>A♭ sounds as if it is a Picardy third in an F-minor context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal progression in Brahms’s setting:</td>
<td>(past)</td>
<td>narrated past</td>
<td>experienced past</td>
<td>narrated past</td>
<td>present</td>
<td>present—imagined future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71 In an appendix to his article, Bozarth lists the different autograph and printed versions of Hebbel’s “Vöruber” as listed in *Friedrich Hebbel Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Richard Maria Werner (Berlin, 1904), VII: 379–80. See Bozarth, “Brahms’s Setting of Hebbel’s ‘Vöruber’,” 97–8.

The protagonist yearns in line 7 (“doch leider noch nicht”) for the state described in lines 7–8. He no longer desires the living person’s fragile sleep, which is often disturbed by painful memories, but instead seeks a calm eternal sleep that will shield him from intrusive reality.⁷³

Hebbel’s poem thus progresses through four temporal stages that are reinforced by its punctuation (secolons and periods articulate the end of lines 2, 4, and 8), summarized as follows:

1) In lines 1–2, the protagonist narrates his experience under the linden tree in the simple past tense;
2) The simple past tense continues in lines 3–4, but also indicates that the protagonist relives his dream (this creates a memory nested within the past tense governing stanza 1);
3) Lines 5–6 convey the protagonist’s own present tense, a central point from which he narrates the entire poem;
4) Lines 7–8 imply a future state (impending death) that does not arrive. This forge a metaphorical connection between the ends of stanzas 1 and 2: the sleep invoked in lines 3–4 finds permanence in death’s finality.⁷⁴

**Form in Brahms’s “Vorüber” (op. 58, no. 7)**

Hebbel uses both literal and implied poetic tenses to depict the temporal progression from the past through the present and future. The protagonist’s narrated, idyllic past (stanza 1) yields to a harsh present existence and an imagined fatalistic, future death (stanza 2). Figure 4.6 (shown

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⁷³The protagonist’s desire for a protective, eternal rest in Karl Candidus’s poem “Schwermut” evokes a similar narrative theme (see ch. 3).
⁷⁴Bozarth interprets a connection between these two locations in the poem owing to their similar use of “ü” sounds. He claims that the “ü” sounds connect “this final moment of despair [in stanza 2] to the moment of supreme bliss in stanza 1.” Bozarth, “Brahms’s Setting of Hebbel’s ‘Vorüber’,” 84.
above) illustrates that Brahms’s setting uses a tonal progression from F major to F minor to depict this temporal change. A tonicization of D♭ major (♭VI) in section A, and both A minor (III) and D♭ major (♭VI) within section B signify changes from the simple past tense to the present tense and from the present tense into a future that was foreshadowed by earlier tonal events. Remnants of F major and echoes of the piano introduction within the F-minor structural cadence (mm. 37–41) and the postlude (mm. 41–43) signify that the protagonist’s imagined future is tinged by the lingering present, which prevents its consummation.

During the local tonicizations of III and ♭VI that signify changes in poetic tense within sections A and B, the chromatic pitches D♭, E♭, G♭, and most significantly, B♭♭ recall previous tonal events and foreshadow later ones, as summarized by the “tonal narrative” in fig. 4.6. In section A (mm. 1–22), D♭ and A♭ reflect simple modal mixture (♭6 and ♭♭♭ borrowed from the parallel minor), foreshadowing F minor’s emergence at the end of the song, and the paradoxical recurrence of A♮. But the absence of D♭ and A♭ during the A-minor tonicization in section B (mm. 23–30) suggests the protagonist’s stark reality. Similarly, B♭♭s in mm. 10–20 and 31–40 signify an uncanny, defamiliarized form of the melodic pitch A♮ (♯♭♭ in F major) that resides in D♭ major (B♭♭ expresses mixture locally as ♭♭). The minor-Neapolitan chord (G♭ minor) often supports B♭♭ within larger prolongations of D♭ major (♭VI). The dual enharmonic identity of A♮ (♯♭♭ in F major, or respelled as B♭♭, ♭♭ in D♭ major) seems to signify that the protagonist’s unbearable present condition, in which neither the past nor the future is accessible to him, masks these other temporalities. As the song ventures away from its F-major tonic, A♮ seeps into tonicized, flat keys as B♭♭, much like the present tense in stanza 2—a focal point—serves as a

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75 This major-to-minor progression occurs less frequently in Brahms’s output than the major-to-minor progressions discussed in ch. 3.
76 See p. 253, n. 72.
center from which the protagonist’s narration radiates outward, encompassing the past and future in stanzas 1 and the second part of stanza 2, respectively, as detailed in the following close reading.

**Tonal problems and the minor mode in section A**

As shown in ex. 4.11, section A in “Vorüber” is articulated by three subsections that demonstrate overlapping formal functions: 1) a prolongation of the tonic (F major; mm. 1–9); 2) a gradual digression into D♭ major (♭VI; mm. 10–17); and 3) a tonicized dominant (mm. 18–22). Each subsection within the harmonic progression from I to V spanning mm. 1–22 effects transitions between stages of the poetic narrative. Prior to any chromatic events, mm. 1–9 depict the narrated past in F major, using an abbreviated form (4 + 3 measures) of Caplin’s hybrid 3 (cbi + continuation), articulated by a PAC in F major in m. 9. The piano’s purely diatonic introduction (mm. 1–2) introduces neighboring motions (C–D–C and B♭–A) that will later be chromaticized. The piano’s left hand tosses the motive C–D–C between registers 3 and 4 as if depicting the linden tree’s branches swaying in the wind, evoking an un tarnished, idyllic past. In mm. 3–4 the voice seems to ride upon the same wind, tracing an arpeggiation of the tonic chord through registers 4 and 5 using the diatonic double-neighbor motion E5–G5–F5 in m. 4. This motive from the piano introduction will reemerge at the piece’s F-minor climax (mm. 37ff.).

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77 Measures 10–13, for instance, constitute a Schmalfeldtian example of one formal function turning into another; these measures harmonically extend the tonic in a post-cadential manner, but also begin the second subsection. Also, compare my discussion of “Todessehnen” (op. 86, no. 6) in ch. 3.
Example 4.11: “Vorüber,” A section (mm. 1–22)
Yet, like the seemingly Arcadian past it portrays, the F-major prolongation in mm. 1–9 is not free from conflict, signified by destabilizing chromaticism and subtle emphasis of the pitch A₅ that foreshadows its later incarnation as B♭♭ (ex. 4.11a). In mm. 1–5 the upper voice’s diatonic 5–6–5 motive (C–D–C) and the stepwise descending-fifth progression C–F that spans mm. 5–9 express F major, but an ominous A♭4—an alto voice within the diminished-seventh chord in m. 5—foreshadows ♭3 (F minor), contrasted by A♯4 in the piano’s upper-voice motion B♭–A♯ (4–3) in m. 6. In m. 6, A♯4 is weakly supported by a passing six-four chord that denies an internal cadence to the first subphrase (mm. 3–6). The piano transfers this B♭–A motive into the bass in mm. 7–8; A♯2 supports I⁰ beneath the voice’s second achievement of F⁵ in m. 8. Indeed, Brahms seems to problematize the B♭–A♯ motive. As ex. 4.11 (above) shows, an inner voice in the piano’s right hand states this motive throughout mm. 1–4; Brahms’s hairpin also reinforces B♭–A♯ in the right hand’s upper voice in m. 6.

**Example 4.11a: “Vorüber,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–9)**

![Graph of the A section (mm. 1–9)](image)

Iterations of F⁵ further complicate the overt depiction of the present tense in mm. 1–9, as if depicting another narrative layer. Example 4.11a shows that the voice articulates F⁵ twice, in mm. 4 and 8, floating into an upper register that the piano avoids until m. 9. This pitch remains
above, and therefore separate from, linear progressions that descend from the Kopfton C5. The main upper-voice descent into register 4 indeed seems drawn away from register 5 by descending parallel six-three chords in mm. 5–8 that lead to I♭ (m. 8)—a climactic moment that emphasizes the extreme registral distance between F5 in the voice and A1 in the piano.

As the protagonist’s past-tense narration (mm. 1–9) yields to his experience of dreaming (mm. 10–17), Brahms introduces A♭ and D♭ (simple modal mixture) as part of an emergent F-minor key (ex. 4.11). This illustrates fluid interpenetration between F major and minor and continues to problematize the enharmonic pitches A♯ and B♭. First, the piano’s arpeggiated texture across mm. 9–10 bridges the end of the consequent phrase with the oscillating, post-cadential plagal progression II♭₃–I in mm. 10–13—a four-measure subphrase that ends the first subsection and begins the second subsection. Although Brahms here introduces the descending pitches E♭ and D♭—♭♭♭ and ♭♭♭—contrasting the ascending leading tone E♯ and directed authentic V–I progression in mm. 8–9, A♯ (♯♯♯) still persists as a faint reminder of F major. A♯ appears in an alto voice in mm. 10 and 13; in m. 12, the piano resolves A♯6 to G5 as a 7–6 suspension, a transitory, dependent dissonance that the piano vaguely recalls in its upper register (ex. 4.11b).

By continuing asymmetrical groups of 4 + 3 measures throughout section A, Brahms depicts the protagonist’s entrance into a deeper dream state. As ex. 4.11 shows, the four-measure subphrase in mm. 10–13 yields another three-measure attempt to complete a consequent phrase that breaks off without achieving a cadence, as if the protagonist dozes off. First, the diatonic C–D motive becomes C–D♭ mm. 13–14, a 5–♭♭♭ motion that implies the protagonist’s entrance

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78 Bozarth notes that the fourth-motive F–E♭–D♭–C in mm. 10ff. remains in register 5, while other descending motives originate from C5. He does not make the same hierarchical claims, however, about register 5 within governing harmonic prolongations, an aspect of the song that I suggest adds to Brahms’s depiction of distance. That is, I suggest that in sections A and B (until the piano postlude) motives in register 5 signify the irretrievable past, since they reside at a level closer to the musical surface than the middleground harmonic prolongations.
Example 4.11b: “Vorüber,” graph of the B section (mm. 9–23)

Example 4.11b shows that the descending stepwise melodic progression $8 \rightarrow b7 \rightarrow 6 \rightarrow 5$ above $D\flat2$ (attempting a closing gesture in mm. 15–17) passes through $bb\hat{6}$ ($B\flat\flat4$) supported by $bII^6$—a transient neighboring chord within $D\flat$-major prolongation—in m. 16. Only the piano states the chromatic passing tone $B\flat\flat4$. Its enharmonic respelling indeed seems to veil an increasingly distant $A\flat$ (3 in F major), as if the protagonist’s dreaming temporarily overshadows, but does not completely erase, the past-tense narration depicted by F major in mm. 1–9.

As ex. 4.11b shows, following the ephemeral $G\flat$-minor chord in m. 16, the upper-voice motion $A\flat4$–$G4$ in m. 17 suggests $3 \rightarrow 2$ in F minor, but closure on $\hat{1}$ above $I^6$ (m. 18) is subordinated to a large-scale tonicization of the dominant ($I$–$II^7$–$V$) spanning mm. 13–20. As if correcting the turn to $D\flat$ major taken in m. 14, $D\flat5$ ($\hat{6}$) in m. 19 appears above $II^7$ and leads to a half-cadential dominant in F major (mm. 20–22) as the protagonist emerges from his dream. The tonicized dominant in m. 20 thus functions as the harmonic goal of the section begun in m. 13, delayed by the extensive $D\flat$-major interpolation in mm. 14–18. Following the dominant in m.

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79 This fourth-descent echoes the motive $F\rightarrow Eb\rightarrow D\flat\rightarrow C$ from m. 10 and mimics a closing pedal point over the bass note $D\flat2$. Potential melodic closure is disturbed by the tonal events in mm. 18ff.
20, the upper-voice descent from 5 again suggests closure on 1 in F minor in mm. 23, but this is postponed by a shocking turn to A minor, depicting the protagonist’s present reality.\textsuperscript{80}

**Depictions of present-tense reality in section B**

The present tense occupies only two lines in Hebbel’s poem, but Brahms prolongs A minor in mm. 23–30 through evaded cadences, suggesting that the protagonist’s stark present agony dominates his experience. As shown in ex. 4.12, A minor arises through another 5–6 motion (G–A) across mm. 22–23, but is denied authentic cadential closure until m. 31. The graph in ex. 4.12a shows that Brahms hinders A-minor cadences by denying a root-position tonic beneath the repeated melodic third-progression C5–B4–A4 in mm. 25 and 28, focusing the listener’s attention on $A_b$4 (enharmonically, $B_b$). Whereas Brahms problematized this pitch earlier as F major’s unstable +3 and disguised it as $B_b$ in the keys of $b$VI and $b$II, $A_b$4 is here denied the most fundamental closure as 1 in a key associated with the present tense. In a characteristic Schubertian gesture often associated with harsh fate, Brahms even invokes A minor’s own $b$II ($B_b$ major) leading to the perfect authentic cadence in m. 31, casting $A_b$4 (m. 30) as a passing dissonance over E2 within the upper-voice linear progression B–A–G#.\textsuperscript{81}

Brahms heightens the tension of each denied cadence and emphasizes the distance between A minor and F major by introducing pitches that are foreign to F major in mm. 23–31. As ex. 4.12 shows, dominant and common-tone diminished seventh chords in each deceptive progression (mm. 24–25) contain D#, G#, and F#, enharmonically respelled versions of $b$7, $b$2 and +3 ($E_b$, $A_b$, and $G_b$) in F minor, thereby echoing the emergence of these chromatic pitches in

\textsuperscript{80}Bozarth also claims that A minor represents the poetic present tense.

\textsuperscript{81}Schubert invokes the Neapolitan (C major) in the B-minor song “Irrlicht,” no. 9 from Winterreise (D. 911), for instance, in the last of the song’s repeated authentic cadences. These cadences set the repeated text “jeder Strom wird’s Meer gewinnen, jedes Leiden auch sein Grab,” which compares the fate of every stream finding the sea to every sorrow finding the grave—a metaphor for the inevitable death of every human being.
Example 4.12: “Vorüber,” B section (mm. 22–43)

Denn nun ich er wache, nun ist sie fort, und welk... bedeckt mich das Laub,

Laub, und welk... deckt mich das Laub; doch leider noch nicht wie am dunklen Ort,

wie am dunklen Ort, verglüh... Asche, verglüh... Asche der Staub.
section A. A♯ and F♯ also mimic G♭ and B♭♭ from the V6/4 chord in m. 16 as if stark, present reality (A/F♯) now masks the irretrievable past, earlier signified by G♭/B♭♭. Furthermore, according to Schoenberg, D♯, G♯, and F♯, “substitute pitches” that require ascending resolution before the music can modulate away from A minor, create a desire for musical resolution that emulates the protagonist’s desire for rest. But ex. 4.12a (below) shows that F♯3 (m. 25) finds no resolution to G♯ and A, while F♯5 in the vocal line (m. 28) does not ascend but resolves down to E5. Indeed, F♯3’s failure to resolve upward represents the tenor’s inability to complete the rising line E−F♯−G♯−A—an inversion of the song’s prominent descending-fourth motive 8−7−6−5. If the descending 8−7−6−5 figure earlier signified the protagonist’s easy descent into past dreams, then its reversal as frustrated ascending motion here seems to signify inescapable A-minor reality.

The structural cadence: denied peace (and death)

Brahms depicts the A-minor present as though it is harmonically distant from the song’s F-major past (paradoxically so, on account of its diatonic relationship to F major), but still farther from F minor, the key of its structural cadence. The song is pulled toward F minor as the protagonist is drawn toward death, but A♯’s return suggests that death does not arrive. F minor emerges from A minor in two stages in mm. 31−36 (see ex. 4.12a). First, the upper voice (mm. 31−35) rises toward the melodic climax D♭5 above a locally tonicized B♭-minor chord (IV6/4 in m. 35). Its status as the minor-Neapolitan region in A minor mimics the earlier relationship between F minor and G♭ minor. D♭5—a large-scale neighbor note (♭6) to the Kopfton C5—begins another descending 8−7−♭6−♭5 motive (D♭−C♭−B♭♭−A♭) in mm. 35−36 (compare

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82Schoenberg’s term for resolution of substitute tones is “neutralization.” Schoenberg, Structural Functions, 18.
Example 4.12a: “Vorüber,” graph of the B section (mm. 23–37)

mm. 15–17 in ex. 4.11b). The upper-voice descent again passes through $B_{bb}$—now supported by $bII_{bb}$ in m. 36—and suggests a cadence in $G_{bb}$ minor that coincides with the end of the poem—perhaps signifying that the protagonist will achieve the final sleep (death) he desires (see the recomposition in ex. 4.12b). But this cadence is denied; Brahms instead enharmonically respells the dominant seventh chord $D_{bb}–F–A_{bb}–C_{bb}$ (m. 36) as an augmented sixth chord that requires

Example 4.12b: “Vorüber,” recomposition of mm. 35–38 showing a hypothetical $G_{bb}$-minor cadence

resolution to the structural dominant ($V^{64}$) in mm. 37–39. This cadential six-four chord is approached by a large-scale $D_{bb}–C$ motive in the bass (mm. 36–37) that echoes upper-voice $D_{bb}–C$ motives throughout the song. By destabilizing $D_{bb}$ major, Brahms depicts the voice’s inability to
sustain B♭ in m. 36—a melodic pitch earlier stated only by the piano as A♭ and B♭ in register 4 (compare mm. 6 and 16)—and the tonicized Neapolitan chord (♭Ⅲ). A♭’s fateful enharmonic twin B♭ is therefore harmonically unsupported, much like the protagonist’s inaccessible past-tense dreaming and future death do not soothe his current pain.

Brahms draws out the poem’s tragic ending by extending the setting’s structural cadence over a four-measure span (mm. 37–40), as shown in ex. 4.12 (score) and ex. 4.13 (graph). This cadence casts the idyllic past signified by F major in mm. 1–9 into a darker mood (F minor) by

Example 4.13: “Vorüber,” graph of the structural cadence (mm. 37–43)

echoing earlier motives from the piano introduction and revealing the F-minor key that modal mixture (♭Ⅲ and ♭Ⅲ) foreshadowed in section A. As ex. 4.14 further shows, Brahms recomposes the vocal entry from mm. 3–4 in F minor at the song’s dramatic climax. In m. 37, the voice’s F-minor arpeggiation mediates between F4 and F5, a pitch encircled by the neighboring motions F–G (voice) and E–F (piano) and supported by a cadential six-four chord in the accompaniment. 83

83 Both F4 (above V6 in m. 37) and F5 (above II7 in m. 38) are dissonant with respect to the chords supporting them. Nevertheless, the double neighbor figure persists as an aurally salient melodic motive reminiscent of the vocal line in m. 4.
Octave doublings between the voice and the piano’s right hand now emphasize the motion into register 5, which was supported in mm. 3–4 by root-position F-major chords. The piano’s appoggiatura chords in mm. 37–39 also derive from the suspensions in mm. 1–2, but

**Example 4.14:** “Vorüber,” comparison between mm. 2–4 and mm. 36–39

emerge here with harsher dissonances, as if reflecting an unforgiving fate. The descending tetrachord $\hat{8} \rightarrow \#7 \rightarrow 6 \rightarrow 5$ (F–Eb–Db–C) in mm. 38–39, stemming from F5 in the voice, echoes the same motive from mm. 10–13, where it was associated with the nightingale’s song.

The graph in ex. 4.13 shows that beneath the stepwise fourth-motive F–C in mm. 38–39, the *Urlinie* articulates B♭ and A♭ (4−3 in F minor), as if overshadowing earlier A♭s that appeared in Brahms’s depiction of the F-major past and A-minor present. The piano alone realizes this descent as the voice clings to the cover tone C5—a sign, perhaps, of its resignation to fate. But following the arrival of 1 (m. 40), the piano seizes the F–Eb–Db–C motive and continues the song’s pervasive conflict between F major and F minor. Its omission of the chordal third in m. 40 initially obscures the song’s mode. But in m. 40 the B♭–A motive returns in a tenor voice, repeating the problematic 4−3 motion while a neighboring B♭-minor six-four chord embellishes

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84 The descending minor-mode tetrachord $\hat{8} \rightarrow \#7 \rightarrow 6 \rightarrow 5$ also appears in the postlude of “Schwermut” (op. 58, no. 5; see ch. 3). There it also seems to signify resignation, but appears in major-mode surroundings.

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F major, revealing A♮ as a Picardy third. During the structural cadence and postlude, therefore, F-minor motives highlighted in register 5 (mm. 37–38) coalesce in the piano’s lower range (mm. 40–43). Both sections recall motives from mm. 10–17, as if the piano here implies a correlation between death in stanza 2 and sleep in stanza 1: both states are unattainable. In addition, A♮’s lingering presence recalls the conflict between B♭♭ and A♮, reinforced throughout the song by B♭♭’s function as the chordal third of ♭II♭—a fleeting, inaccessible key. Through the identity between A♮ and B♭♭—an uncanny enharmonic resemblance—Brahms indicates that the protagonist is trapped between an inescapable present and a distant past, and unable to find future rest in death.

The sf marking stresses A♮ in an inner voice. It also draws attention to the dissonant dyad formed by D♭ and C in the piano’s left hand—a verticalization of the prominent ♭6–♭5 motive that appears in the song’s large-scale upper voice.
“Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” (op. 32, no. 1)

Inescapable fate in Platen’s “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht”

Unlike Platen’s strict ghazals, “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht” (1820) stems from the collection titled Romanzen und Jugendlieder and evokes only certain aspects of this well-known Persian form. As fig. 4.7 shows, the poem’s rhyme scheme “abaaab,” contrasts the rhyme scheme aa/xa/xa (etc.) and couplets of the traditional ghazal. It instead emphasizes “non-a” rhymes in lines 2 and 6 that define the boundaries of each six-line stanza. Yet the poem’s characteristic refrain “in der Nacht, in der Nacht” in lines 1 and 5 simulates the repetitive refrain in the traditional ghazal. Along with the poem’s relentless dactylic meter, the refrain creates a sense of inexorability and obsessive forward motion in the text. Ira Braus interprets formal symmetries in the poem (its refrain and prominent “a” and “o” sounds) as indicating symmetrical images related to the protagonist’s existential anguish:

The dominant a-o opposition...is reversed in stanzas 2 and 3 and then rectified in 4. This larger symmetry also informs the sensory level of the poem—the gothic arch, the poet’s wavering between the earth and the heavens, and his gazing ‘hinauf ... hinunter.’ The emotional commonality among these images is the poet’s unhappy realization that not day, but only night remains for him.

Extending Braus’s claim that the poem’s outer stanzas (1 and 4) contrast its inner stanzas (2 and 3), I interpret the refrain “in der Nacht in der Nacht” as the propulsive force enabling the poem’s narrative progression between subconscious angst and conscious regret. Platen indeed sets the

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Figure 4.7: August Graf von Platen-Hallermünde, “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” Romanzen und Jugendlieder (1820)

u / u       u       u / u       u   (11)
1 Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht, in der Nacht, a I roused myself in the night, in the night,
   u / u       u       u / u   (9) b And felt myself drawn farther onward,
2 Und fühlte mich fürder gezogen, c I left the alleys, guarded by the watchmen,
   u / u       u       u / u   (11) d And wandered quietly
3 Die Gassen verließ ich vom Wächter bewacht, e through the gate with the gothic arch.
   u / u       u   (6) f The millbrook rushed through the rocky gorge, (past tense): waves & stars
4 Durchwandele sacht g Melodic movement of the stars, (function as external catalysts)
   u u / u   u / u   (5) h With them, the moon in calmed splendor,
5 In der Nacht, in der Nacht, i They rolled so quietly,
   u / u u / u       u   (9) j In the night, in the night,
6 Das Tor mit dem gotischen Bogen. k Yet not a single one rolled back.
7 Der Mühlbach rauschte durch felsigen Schacht, l Overhead wandered the infinite, flickering
8 Ich lehnte mich über die Brücke, m Melodic movement of the stars,
9 Tief unter mir nahm ich der Wogen in Acht, n With them, the moon in calmed splendor,
10 Die wallten so sacht, o They twinkled quietly,
11 In der Nacht, in der Nacht, p In the night, in the night,
12 Doch wallte nicht eine zurücke. q At a deceptively remote distance.
13 Es drehte sich oben, unzählig entfacht r I gazed up in the night, in the night,
14 Melodischer Wander der Sterne, s And looked down again anew:
15 Mit ihnen der Mond in beruhigter Pracht, t Alas, how have you spent your days,
16 Sie funkelten sacht u Softly, now, still
17 In der Nacht, in der Nacht, v In the night, in the night
18 Durch täuschend entlegene Ferne. w The remorse within your pounding heart!
19 Ich blickte hinauf in der Nacht, in der Nacht, x
20 Und blickte hinunter aufs neue: y
21 O wehe, wie hast du die Tage verbracht, z
22 Nun stillte du sacht a
23 In der Nacht, in der Nacht, b
24 Im pochenden Herzen die Reue! c
obsessive refrain (line 5) apart from “sacht,” isolated in line 4, an invariant word in later stanzas. This creates a varied succession of 11/9/5/6/9 syllables in stanza 1 rather than the symmetrical arrangement (11/9/11/9) that would have resulted if lines 4 and 5 were merged.

The repeated “a” rhymes “sacht” and “Nacht” function as constant elements amidst the changing imagery and temporality in stanzas 2, 3, and 4 (see “temporal progression” in fig. 4.7). In stanza 1, the refrain functions as part of the past-tense expository narrative: the protagonist explains that he was propelled out “into the night” and isolated from society by an unnamed force.89 Stanzas 2 and 3 continue the past-tense narration, but the refrain “in der Nacht” now conveys later stages of the protagonist’s wandering, as he describes external phenomena. Night becomes the unchanging backdrop against which inexorable forces of nature—waves that disappear into the ocean and stars that hover at a deceptively remote distance—arouse the protagonist’s self-awareness. Platen describes the waves and the stars analogously to the protagonist himself; all three figures exist “softly, in the night.” Through the common descriptor “sacht” in stanzas 2 and 3, Platen gradually connects all three images, paradoxically highlighting their differences by drawing them together. Unlike the eternal course of the waves and stars, the protagonist’s quickly spent and irrecoverable lifespan is finite.90

The protagonist’s contemplation of the waves and stars (stanzas 2 and 3) provokes his conscious awareness (stanza 4) of subliminal existential regret (“die Reue”) that forced him into the night (stanza 1); thus stanzas 2 and 3 act as catalysts in the poem’s temporal progression between the past and present. Platen indeed took pains to indicate the word “Reue” as the poem’s

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89Platen’s wanderer, who departs from society and travels alone in search of rest, resembles Wilhelm Müller’s protagonist in Die Winterreise.

90The text “nicht eine” stresses that each wave is unique and irreplaceable. Also, Platen’s autograph gives line 18 as “Durch ewig unendliche Ferne,” conveying immense distance. By contrast, the text set by Brahms (“Durch täuschend entlegene Ferne”) reflects a kinship between the protagonist and the stars, which seem closer to him than they actually are. See August von Platen Werke Band I Lyrik ed. Kurt Wölfel and Jürgen Link (München: Winkler, 1982), 738.
dramatic dénouement. Lines 20 and 24 appear in the poem’s manuscript as “Ich blickte hinunter im Schmerze”/“Das reuige, pochende Herze,” emphasizing the rhyme between “Schmerze” and “Herze,” yet Platen’s revised rhyme (“neue”/“Reue”) in the published version serves two narrative functions. First, the word “neue,” punctuated with a colon, signals a change of address, confirmed by “nun” in line 22. At this poetic juncture, the pained narrative voice that cries “O wehe” seems detached from the protagonist himself (“du”). Second, the poem’s last word (“Reue”) focuses the reader’s attention on the protagonist’s now-conscious regret. Only here does the narrative momentum prompted by the protagonist’s departure in stanza 1 end, as Platen reveals the protagonist himself—a surrogate for mankind, generally—as the ultimate symbol of finitude. The subliminal force that compelled the protagonist to wander in stanza 1 (past) is thus not exorcised until regret is made conscious (present).

Form and metaphorical wandering in Brahms’s “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” (op. 32, no. 1)

The form of Brahms’s setting (ABBA\(^1\)) outlined in fig. 4.8 reflects the poem’s stanzaic divisions, while its fluid modulations between F minor and C minor (I and minor V) seem to convey the fragile boundary in the protagonist’s mind between an existentially fraught present and memories of a past journey. The protagonist first describes progressing out into the night in section A (I→V), but gradually re-experiences nocturnal phenomena in sections B and B\(^1\) (as V

\(^{91}\)Jürgen Link suggests that the appearance of “du” in the poem indicates increased distance between the protagonist and his surroundings, allowing the protagonist to speak “about the world.” He writes, “Wenn das lyrische Ich bei Goethe, im Vollbesitz der Gegenwart, mit seinem Gegenstande verschmilzt, so steht das Ich bei Platen, dem die Gegenwart verloren ging, der Welt völlig distanziert gegenüber: deshalb kann es ‘über Welt’ sprechen.” See Jürgen Link, *Artistische Form und Ästhetischer Sinn in Platens Lyrik* (Fink: Munich, 1971), 31. Kristina Muxfeldt also notes that a poet of the ghazal would typically identify himself in the final couplet. See Muxfeldt, *Vanishing Sensibilities*, 176. This separation of narrator from the “du” representing the protagonist may, therefore, imply that Platen assumes one of these roles. Finally, Ira Braus calls the line “O wehe, wie hast du die Tage verbracht” an “apostrophe to the alienated self.” Braus, “Textual Rhetoric and Harmonic Anomaly,” 196.
is tonicized) that encourage his self-realization. He finally directs his attention inward, becoming aware of his own regret in A\(^1\) (V→I). Cadences ending each strophe convey each stanza’s completion of one stage in this transformation of subconscious angst (which is masked by the past) into present, conscious regret. The following analysis details how Brahms uses the song’s F-minor and C-minor tonalities as if to symbolize the protagonist’s renewed experience of wandering to distant places (C minor) even amidst an unavoidable present dilemma (F minor).\(^{92}\) By using D\(^b\) major (VI) as \(\flat II\) in the minor dominant (C minor) and as V in G\(^b\) major, Brahms also invokes the Neapolitan complex, and illustrates fluctuating tonal functions that simulate the rapport between subconscious and conscious parts of the protagonist’s psyche, foreshadowing Brahms’s revelation of present inescapable angst.

The tonal problems F\# and G\(^b\) facilitate the tonal narrative outlined above (see fig. 4.8). I interpret the tonal problem F\# (#A in C minor) as signifying the protagonist’s subconscious (unrealized) regret in strophes 1–3; F\# foreshadows its enharmonic twin G\(^b\), which emerges in the neighbor-note motive F–G\(^b\)–F (mm. 15–18) and the eventual tonicization of G\(^b\) minor by D\(^b\) major—its own dominant—in strophe 4 (mm. 54–62), as if the brief tonicization of \(\flat II\) (m. 57) signifies the protagonist’s initial unrest becoming conscious and reveals a latent harmonic goal initially masked by F\#. Like the tonal problems C\(^\natural\) and F\(^\natural\) in “Unbewegte laue Luft,” D\(^b\) and G\(^b\) (the roots of VI and \(\flat II\)) are here gradually brought into a closer relationship.\(^{93}\) But while F-

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\(^{92}\) This reading builds upon the idea expressed by Ira Braus that D\(^b\) becomes \(\flat II\) in C minor. Braus calls D\(^b\) major a “consort to the tonic,” claiming that it “colors the tonic throughout [the song].” My analytical focus on the narrative significance of the tonal problem F\#, however, differs from Braus’s methodology. Braus claims that Brahms used symmetrical triadic structures to reflect his awareness of classical, rhetorical structures in the poetry. Braus, “Textual Rhetoric and Harmonic Anomaly,” 201–2.

\(^{93}\) Like F\(^\natural\) and C\(^\natural\) in “Unbewegte laue Luft,” both D\(^b\) and G\(^b\) function as \(\flat II\) in F minor (I) or C minor (V), respectively. By using D\(^b\) major to tonicize G\(^b\) minor, the song exhibits typical Neapolitan-complex traits as noted by Wintle and others.

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**Figure 4.8:** “Wie raft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>(A) “intro”</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>B¹</th>
<th>interlude</th>
<th>(A¹) “intro”</th>
<th>A¹</th>
<th>postlude</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic progressions in F minor:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(C min → F min)</td>
<td>I–V⁶–I</td>
<td>I–ib–V</td>
<td>I–V</td>
<td>I–V</td>
<td>C min</td>
<td>C min</td>
<td>C min</td>
<td>C min</td>
<td>C min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agent:</td>
<td>piano + voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano + voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano + voice</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
<td>piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tonal Narrative involving F#/G♭:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F# functions as a gateway (#4) into C minor</td>
<td>F# becomes G♭ within B ♭</td>
<td>G–F#–F♭ motion associates F# with G♭</td>
<td>F# occurs within distant B- minor triad.</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>F# functions as a gateway (#4) into C minor</td>
<td>G♭ minor (ibIb) is tonicized via D♭ major (VI)</td>
<td>G♭ lingers within prolonged F-minor tonic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal progression:</td>
<td>past-tense narration (internal/subconscious regret)</td>
<td>waves &amp; stars function as external catalysts</td>
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major closure was evaded in “Unbewegte laue Luft,” Brahms confirms G♭ minor with an unstable six-four chord, suggesting that a previously latent facet in the text becomes apparent. The tonicization bII♭ thus fulfills F♯’s potential to destabilize the song’s F-minor tonality, but is ultimately assimilated (respelled as G♭) within F minor at the structural cadence, briefly usurping the position of the overall tonic during the climactic poetic revelation of regret.

**Tonal problems and the protagonist’s departure in section A**

Section A divides into two parts (as shown in fig. 4.8), mm. 1–8 and mm. 9–15, punctuated by a piano interlude in mm. 15–18. The score in ex. 4.15 shows that mm. 1–8, cast in a march topic, remain in F minor; mm. 9–10 briefly tonicize C minor, invoking a throbbing triplet accompaniment similar to Schubertian textures that depict embarking on a momentous journey. On account of the C-minor arrival and stark textural changes (half notes and the triplet

**Example 4.15:** “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” A section (mm. 1–18)

94 Schubert’s “Aufenthalt” from *Schwanengesang* (D. 957, no. 5) uses this prominent accompanimental texture. The triplets perhaps also allude to timpani strikes, which will reappear at the song’s ending.
für der gezo gen, fühlte mich für der gezo gen, die Gas sen verließ ich vom

Wächter bewacht, durch wandelte sacht in der Nacht, in der Nacht das Tor mit dem gotischen

Bo gen.
accompaniment) in m. 9, mm. 1–8 seem to function as an extended harmonic anacrusis to m. 9, which signals that the protagonist’s wandering has begun (“die Gassen verließ’ ich”). Brahms indeed cultivates the listener’s growing anticipation for increasing tonal and metrical stability through harmonic ambiguity between D♭ major and F minor (created by the third F–D♭ and octave doublings in mm. 1–2), the voice’s rising melody between registers 4 and 5 (mm. 2–7), and relentlessly fragmented dotted rhythms of the march in mm. 5–6. The incessant dotted rhythms in mm. 1–8 thus convey a manic, uncontrollable urge forcing the protagonist out into the night and contrast with the slowed rhythms of wandering that enter in m. 9.

My graph in ex. 4.15a shows that the large-scale bass line F–B♭–B♮–C (the harmonic progression I–IV–II♭5–V) undergirding mm. 1–9 suggests two narrative stages, as if the protagonist first describes his urge to break out into the night in the past tense, then enters into relived memories of past wandering. Brahms conveys compulsion into the night using an initial arpeggiation in mm. 2–4 (F–A–C) to the Kopfton C5. The bass line’s melodic ascent between the roots F and B♭ (from I to IV) in mm. 5–7 also frame a chromatic stepwise ascent between D♭5 and F5 in the vocal line that enharmonically respells E♭5 and F♭ as D♮ and E♮, respectively, pushing past each flattened pitch by resolving it upward (compare ex. 4.15 and ex. 4.15a). Parallel sixths in the outer voices highlight the voice’s ascent to F5 (m. 7). Despite the easy rise of these voice-leading sixths, Brahms also portrays the protagonist’s difficult struggle with internal forces by fragmenting the text “und fühlte mich fürder gezogen” (ex. 4.15). This

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95Brahms characteristically dovetails mm. 8 and 9 by continuing the harmonic sequence begun in m. 7. This yields V♭5 in C minor on the downbeat of m. 9, obscuring the formal boundary between A’s two subsections. Nevertheless, I interpret a new subsection in m. 9 signaled by stark textural and dynamic change.

96The neighbor notes G♮ and B♭, which fall to F and A♭, delay the arrival of C5.
Example 4.15a: “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” graph of the A section (mm. 1−15)
fragmentation conveys an arduous process as Brahms respells each flattened, or descending, pitch ($E_{bb}$ and $F_b$) into a rising one.\footnote{Accents emphasize these enharmonically respelled pitches (e.g., $E_{bb}$ and $D_{b}$).}

As the protagonist departs from society, local tonicizations within the progression $I \rightarrow IV \rightarrow II^6 \rightarrow V$ depart from the $F$-minor tonic. $B_b$ minor (IV) functions as the first harmonic goal in m. 7 (ex. 4.15a); the voice’s ascent to its melodic climax ($F_5$) coincides with the transformation of the tonic ($F$ minor) into $V^6_5$ of IV. $B_b$ minor here supports the upper-voice $D_b$ ($\hat{6}$), which is part of the stepwise ascent $C \rightarrow D_b \rightarrow D_{b} \rightarrow E_b$ in the upper voice as well as the unfolded, descending diminished fifth $D_b \rightarrow G$ (mm. 7–9), a motive that opposes the initial arpeggiation’s rising fifth ($F \rightarrow C$).\footnote{Both fifths foreshadow similar unfolded intervals later in the song.} Brahms prepares the second tonal excursion into $C$ minor via the rising bass motions $E_b \rightarrow F$ and $B_e \rightarrow C$ (mm. 8–9) supporting tonicizations of IV and I, respectively, in $C$ minor. Subordinated to the large-scale bass line encompassing mm. 1–9, $F$ minor now seems distant and de-familiarized, much like the protagonist’s state in relation to his surroundings.

The tonal problem $F\#$ ($\hat{4}$ in $C$ minor), which spurs much of the song’s tonal narrative, arises during Brahms’s excursion into $C$ minor in m. 9. As ex. 4.15 shows, $F\#$ leads to $C$ minor’s dominant ($G$ major) as part of the chromatic passing motion $F \rightarrow F\# \rightarrow G$, and is linked to the transformation of $D_b$ into $D_{b}$.\footnote{Schoenberg (and many others) regard “v-minor” as a closely-related region.} Since the dominant seventh chord in m. 9 contains the perfect fifth $D_b \rightarrow G$ (ex. 4.15a) rather than the diminished fifth $D_b \rightarrow G$ that required resolution in $F$ minor, $D_{b} \hat{5}$ enables the upper voice’s subsequent rise to $E_b$ (m. 9) and upper-voice descent ($3 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 1$) confirming $C$ minor in mm. 9–11. $D_{b} \hat{5}$ also signals the disappearance of $F$ minor’s $\hat{6}$—a tonal fluctuation that perhaps reflects the protagonist’s temporary suppression of present regret. In m. 12, $C$ major reclaims its dominant function in $F$ minor, replacing $C$ minor and signaling the end.
of the first tonal digression (ex. 4.15a).\textsuperscript{100} Fifth-motives $F-C$ and $D_b-G$ (see brackets) in the upper voice and bass within an authentic cadence ($II^7-V^{4+4}-I$) also reinstate the key-defining diminished fifth $6\#-2$ in F minor, indicating an inevitable return of the tonic and framing the protagonist’s first experience of relived C-minor wandering within section A.

**The transformation of tonal problems in section B (and B\textsuperscript{1})\textsuperscript{101}**

As if responding to $F\#$’s presence in m. 8, the piano interlude (mm. 15–18) introduces prominent $G\#s$, extending the tonal-problem narrative. The score and graph in ex. 4.16 and ex. 4.16a show that the piano’s left hand unfolds the motivic fifths $F-C$ and $D_b-G_b$, reinstating $D_b$ and supplying $F\#$’s enharmonic twin. Hidden deep in the piano’s low register, $G\#$ alludes to the now-split identity between C minor’s $\#\#4$, the compulsive force that actively led section A (past-tense description) into the minor dominant (relived memories), and F minor’s $b2$, a harbinger of passive, subconscious *present* regret that still remains concealed from the protagonist’s conscious mind. As the piano extends its $F-G_b-F$ motive between registers 2 and 3 in m. 16 ($G\#3$ surpasses F3), it again echoes section A by recalling the voice’s sweeping gesture between $F\#4$ and $F\#5$ in m. 9 (compare ex. 4.15). But these subtle hints of $G\#$ “regret” remain subordinate to the governing F-minor tonality during the piano interlude. As ex. 4.16a shows, an interrupted, upper-voice linear motion $5-4-3-2$ (mm. 15–18) reinstates $G\#$ and seeks closure on $1 (F4)$ that

\textsuperscript{100}The opposition between C major ($V$ in F minor) and C minor is important throughout the song. By casting $V$ as a major chord, it may return to the F-minor tonic. But C minor’s inability to do this seems to reflect its narrative significance as a tonal digression mirroring the protagonist’s own journey.

\textsuperscript{101}Since the B and B\textsuperscript{1} sections mostly repeat the same material (mm. 19–32 = mm. 33–45), I will restrict my discussion to the B section (mm. 19–32), its preceding piano interlude (mm. 15–18), and the transition into A\textsuperscript{1} (mm. 46–50).
Example 4.16: “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” A section piano interlude (mm. 15–18) and B section (mm. 19–32)
Example 4.16a: “Wie raff’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” graph of the A section piano interlude (mm. 15–18) and the B section (mm. 19–32)
is denied by an elided (5)–6–5 motion (C)–Db–C in the upper voice (ex. 4.16), as if propelling the music (and the protagonist) forward.

Although the piano hinted at G♭’s emergence in mm. 15–18, Brahms continues to explore the narrative potential of F# during poetic references to the waves and the stars in section B (mm. 19–32). The protagonist’s contemplation of these natural phenomena seems to provoke his regret, which nevertheless remains subconscious—as F# rather than G♭. F# indeed sounds intrusive and other-worldly within the expanded period spanning mm. 19–31. Following the half-cadential dominant that ends the antecedent phrase in m. 22, as ex. 4.16 shows, the ascending melodic motion C–Db–Eb (mm. 23–25) reaches 3 in C minor. This implies that a PAC in C minor will conclude the modulating consequent phrase in m. 26, as shown in ex. 4.16b, a hypothetical recomposition of mm. 23–26. But C minor’s dominant arrives seemingly late in Brahms’s setting (m. 26, beat 3; ex. 4.16), preventing a firm PAC in C minor and the end of the consequent phrase; Brahms instead prolongs G major across mm. 26–28. Acting as G♭, F#4 descends to Fn, displaced in register 5.102

The pitch F# therefore provides momentary harmonic instability within the expanded G-major chord in mm. 26–27 by “finding” (in Riemann’s dualistic sense) its own root, B♭, as shown in ex. 4.16a.103 The resulting unfolded B-minor chord (VII♭5), a triadic byproduct of the registrally displaced linear passing motion 8–#7–♭7 within dominant prolongation, is extremely remote from C minor.104 Owing to its transitory appearance within an 8–7 passing motion, B minor enters as if unprepared, portraying the unsettling jolts created by the protagonist’s nascent

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102 This also recalls the voice’s dramatic registral ascent in m. 9 (compare ex. 4.15).
103 I invoke the idea that F# “finds” its lower fifth because this gesture mimics the frequently recurring descending fifths C–F and Db–Gb that accrue meaning throughout the song.
104 In *Structural Functions of Harmony*, Schoenberg indicates that VII is a distant key, labeling it as “too remote.”
realization of his life’s ephemerality. The protagonist here compares himself to the waves that fail to return, subconsciously flirting with the idea of his own death. As if gazing down into an endless abyss, he glimpses both the disquieting present containing his regret and his inexorably approaching fate, which prevent his return to the still-hopeful past.

Brahms ultimately resolves the G-major dominant that arrives in m. 26 during a C-minor PAC in mm. 28–31 that ends the expanded consequent phrase (ex. 4.16 and ex. 4.16a). By reaching for G♯5 (a 9–8 suspension above F3) in m. 28, surpassing the voice’s F5 and erasing previous F♯s, the pianistic agency portrays the enveloping waves within the now-fulfilled cadence. The cadential approach to m. 31 (I6♭–II6–V) also emphasizes Db (♭2) within the upper-voice motion 3♭–♭2–♭♯2–♭♭1, the subordinate linear progression ending section B (ex. 4.16a). Despite its new context within this cadence, Db major (the Neapolitan in C minor; m. 28) indeed echoes VI in F minor. That is, contrasting with the diatonic C-minor PAC in mm. 9–11 (ex. 4.15a), Db major here provides chromaticism that disturbs the protagonist’s relived diatonic C-

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105 And mm. 42–45 in B♭.
106 The piano also outlines the motive G5–Db5 (inverting the descending fifth-motive Db–G) and alludes to the fifth Db–Gb in m. 15.
minor wanderings, which are increasingly tainted by surfacing present remorse, signified by harmonies borrowed from F minor.

**Revealed regret and the minor Neapolitan in the A\textsuperscript{1} section**

Platen’s protagonist becomes aware of his own existential regret in stanza 4 after contemplating the waves and stars. Brahms’s setting musically depicts this poetic transition between descriptions of external phenomena and the protagonist’s hidden emotions during a musical transition between B and A\textsuperscript{1}. This transition, shown in ex. 4.17, transposes the song’s opening measures into C minor (mm. 47–49), followed by a varied reprise in mm. 50–54 of mm. 5–9. By fragmenting the text “Ich blickte hinauf in der Nacht”/“und blickte hinunter aufs Neue,” Brahms emphasizes the protagonist’s altered perspective as his dormant pain (indicated by the outcry “Wehe”) becomes conscious. Reflecting this change, VI and bII\textsubscript{b} emerge as V and I in an unsatisfactorily realized G\textsubscript{b}-minor cadence (mm. 55–57).\textsuperscript{107}

The graph in ex. 4.17a shows that Brahms tonicizes V\textsubscript{b} (m. 55) through a reaching over (G\textsubscript{b}5) that alludes to earlier instances of F#/G\textsubscript{b}, depicting the final transformation of C minor’s #\textsuperscript{4} into F minor’s b\textsuperscript{2}. The bass stands on D\textsubscript{b}3 in mm. 56–57, confirming V\textsubscript{b}, while melodic descending-fifth motives (see brackets) unfold within the large-scale stepwise upper voice F\textsubscript{b}–E\textsubscript{bb}–D\textsubscript{b}–C\textsubscript{b}–B\textsubscript{bb}–Ab (mm. 55–57).\textsuperscript{108} Brahms’s fz markings here highlight the upper-voice descent toward b\textsuperscript{4}, supported by a minor Neapolitan six-four chord (m. 57), and reinstate the descending pitches E\textsubscript{bb} and F\textsubscript{b} in the vocal line that earlier struggled to ascend in mm. 4–7

\textsuperscript{107}The emergence of bVI and bII here recall the transition (mm. 20–25) in “Unbewegte laue Luft.”

\textsuperscript{108}Recurring triplets here forge an associative connection between the protagonist’s initial departure (mm. 9–10 in ex. 4.15) and the inevitable realization of his fate (mm. 56–57 in ex. 4.17), as if section A foreshadows the protagonist’s consciousness in section A\textsuperscript{1}.  

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Example 4.17: “Wie raff’ ich mich auf in der Nacht,” A\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 45–67)
These pitches now descend toward an ephemeral B♭ that, as in “Vorüber,” functions as a tenuous melodic goal above a six-four chord and descends quickly to A♭ (the fifth of D♭ major). In m. 59, as Brahms casts B♭ as the uncanny enharmonic double to A♯4 (reinforced through octave doublings in the voice and piano), he thus respells the analogous diminished fourth from m. 12 as a major third (A♯–F) rather than as A♯–E♯, as if invoking the absent parallel key of F major. Contrasting with B♭’s descending tendency, A♯ appears deceptively stable and hints at the unattainable major mode.109

As ex. 4.17a shows, B♭⁶ (mm. 56−57) remains subordinate to the larger modal shift of the VI chord spanning mm. 55–59 (VI♭−Ⅴ), but fulfills the promise of earlier F♯s by briefly

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109 This single appearance of A♯ as the chordal third of F major resembles a similar appearance of F major in the F-minor song “Ein Wanderer” (op. 106, no. 5), analyzed in ch. 5.
enabling its enharmonic double (Gb) to become a triadic root. Acting here as V\textsuperscript{7} of bII\textsuperscript{b6} (m. 57), D\textsubscript{b} major forfeits its ability to serve as a pivot between the F-minor present (as VI) and C-minor past (as bII), as if signaling the protagonist’s final emergence from recreated C-minor wanderings into stark present reality and regret. Brahms’s insufficient realization of G\textsubscript{b} minor, further, might represent the protagonist’s now-revealed but unresolved existential dilemma. Brahms’s treatment of G\textsubscript{b} in mm. 60–62 and the postlude models the final emergence of inevitable fate.\textsuperscript{110} The voice and piano in mm. 60–61, as shown in ex. 4.17, replace the F-minor chord from mm. 13–15 with G\textsubscript{b} major (compare ex. 4.15). As the voice’s earlier arpeggiated fifth F–C becomes G\textsubscript{b}–D\textsubscript{b} at “pochenden Herzen,” bII seems to seize the role of the overall tonic, but Brahms ultimately returns to F minor using the descending fifths D\textsubscript{b}–G\natural and C–F that closed section A. That is, the throbbing triplets that earlier depicted departure in m. 9 now conflate the Neapolitan chord in F minor (and its attendant perfect fifth G\textsubscript{b}–D\textsubscript{b}) with the image of the protagonist’s beating heart, the source of his present anxiety and remorse. Brahms seems to reveal its pulsations as the coercive internal force that caused the protagonist to recreate his past nocturnal journey.

Unfolded fifths buried earlier in the piano’s left hand (mm. 15–17) now materialize into its middle register, perhaps signifying newly-exposed regret (mm. 62–65, ex. 4.17). The piano echoes G\textsubscript{b}5 in m. 63, foreshadowed by its G\textsubscript{b}3 in in m. 16 and by the voice’s registral peak (G\textsubscript{b}5) in m. 55. The piano’s two final attempts in mm. 64–65 to restart the initial arpeggiation and the protagonist’s journey prove futile (ex. 4.17). The descending arpeggiation C\textsubscript{4}–A\textsubscript{b}4–F\textsubscript{4} (mm. 66–67) instead inverts the song’s opening gesture, suggesting narrative closure. The piano’s

\textsuperscript{110}Brahms’s original title for this song, “Die Reue” (“Regret”), shown in the song’s autograph, suggests that he acknowledged this revelation of regret as the poem’s main theme.
Example 4.17a: “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht, graph of the A¹ section (mm. 47–62)¹¹¹

motivic vertical fifth F–C in m. 67 indeed freezes into place the arpeggio that began earlier tonal digressions, halting the protagonist’s compulsions to re-experience past wandering.

Conclusion

By contending that Brahms uses a range of tonal-problem types to depict a protagonist’s psychological passage among different temporalities in poetry by Daumer, Platen, and Hebbel, my analyses extend the work by Cone and Carpenter cited at the beginning of this chapter. Whereas these scholars have shown that pitches propel works into distant tonal regions, represent a promise to be fulfilled, and provide a basic premise for possible tonal relationships that a work explores during its course, I suggest that Brahms’s songs gradually mask or reveal the tonal function of chromatic tonal problems in order to reveal the protagonist’s temporal position with respect to the temporalities evoked by the poem. In other words, tonal problems in Brahms’s songs actualize the protagonist’s longing to escape from an undesirable present into a blissful

¹¹¹Whereas Bb minor (IV) earlier supported D♭5 in the upper voice and lead to C minor (compare ex. 4.15, m. 7), I interpret the upper voice as B♭4 here on account of the different harmonic context in which B♭ minor (IV) leads to V♭ and B♭II♭ rather than to C minor (minor V).
future or an idyllic past (as in “Unbewegte laue Luft,” “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” and “Vorüber”). They also depict the protagonist’s subconscious imperative to emerge from memories of past wandering in order to confront present reality (as in “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht”).

More specifically, Brahms emphasizes the dichotomy between♯4 in the key of the dominant and ♩2 in the key of the original tonic, thereby conveying motion into the envisioned future (as E♯ becomes F♯ in “Unbewegte laue Luft”) and recreating the past act of wandering (as F♯ becomes G♭ in “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht”). In “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder,” the notational enharmonic respelling of E♯ and G♯ as F♯ and A♭ only temporarily permits initially upward-striving pitches to feign stability, suggesting that the protagonist remains barred from the ethereal future into which his imagination soars. Tonal distance between B minor (I) and an elusive G♯-major key (♯VI♯5) also signifies an unattainable stratospheric realm. Finally, the dual identity of A♭ and B♭♭ in “Vorüber” conveys the tonal distance between F major (I) and G♭ minor (♭II♭), creating a metaphor for the physical distance between the protagonist’s unendurable present (A♭) and a desired past or restful future death (B♭♭).

112As (&)VI and ♩II become V and I in the major or minor Neapolitan key, their evolving tonal relationship thus signifies both temporal and psychic change: the protagonist’s latent pain or desire becomes conscious as he enters the present or an envisioned future.
Chapter Five

Brahms’s Self-Modeling: Recurring Keys and Their Narratives

Brahms’s use of the Neapolitan complex in E-major, E-minor, and F-minor chamber works from the 1860s betrays his interest in employing recurring tonal plans in pieces that share a key.¹ Allan Cadwallader has shown that Brahms’s A-major intermezzi (op. 76, no. 7 and op. 118, no. 2), both pieces for piano, also use similar tonal plans and motives to an extent that suggests Brahms’s composition of one piece may have influenced his conception of the other.² This chapter suggests that Brahms’s solo Lieder also reflect his lifelong interest in revisiting keys in order to recompose some aspect of an earlier song’s tonal plan. On the basis of common poetic themes in Brahms’s poetry and historical evidence about his arrangement of songs that share a key into published opera, the following analyses of B-minor, F-minor, F♯-minor, and E-major songs posit that Brahms might have engaged in “self-modeling” throughout his career in this genre.³ Often a later song develops a tonal feature that remains undeveloped in an earlier or coexisting one and, further, depicts similar poetic interactions among the past, present, and future.

Brahms’s self-modeling is distinct from self-parody, allusion or quotation, and intertextual references to works by other composers, which occur infrequently in his songs.⁴ That

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³Heather Platt touches on the ideas that Brahms’s songs in parallel-related keys, such as “In Waldeseinsamkeit” (op. 85, no. 6) and “Es schauen die Blumen,” (op. 96, no. 3) possess notable resemblances to each other. She writes: “Written in 1878 and 1884, these songs share a number of characteristics: both are in B, they have similar melodic motives, and both end with plagal cadences accompanied by an ascending tonic triad ending on 5.” (See Platt, “Unrequited love and Unrealized Dominants,” 130.) Likewise, Platt discusses the pervasive pairing of A minor and C major in two A-minor songs, “Spanisches Lied” (op. 6, no. 1) and “Anklänge,” (op. 7, no. 3), in “‘Anklänge’ as Brahms’s Lied Manifesto,” The American Brahms Society Newsletter (Spring 2010): 6–9. In ch. 2, I show that this tonal pairing also characterizes Brahms’s A-minor song “Es hing der Reif” (op. 106, no. 3).
⁴Brahms quotes Schubert’s “Der Leiermann” in his op. 113 canons and alludes to Schumann’s songs “In der Fremde” and “Schöne Fremde” in two songs: op. 3, no. 5 and op. 63, no. 5, respectively. See Schmalfeldt, “Brahms,
is, although some of Brahms’s songs quote other composers’ works (including Scarlatti, Schumann, and Schubert), they generally do not lend an ironic or satirical tone to borrowed material. Brahms’s self-modeling instead resembles Schubert’s practice, as reflected in the ordering of the old Gesamtausgabe, of setting the same poem in multiple versions, and engaging with a single poet in batches of Lieder composed during short time-spans. In this case, the listener can derive meaning from one song without reference to another like it, but comparing both songs often yields insight into Brahms’s reading of the text. Lacking multiple settings of a single text in Brahms’s output (excepting the related Köstlin settings described below and “Regenlied”), we may instead examine his harmonic practice in songs that share a key, seeking evidence of what Richard Kramer, referring to Schubert’s multiple settings of the same text, terms “narrative memory.” Kramer writes: “in effect, the new setting is a rehearing, a rehearsing, another singing of a song held faintly in memory.”

To be sure, songs in Brahms’s output that share a key exist in various relationships to each other that, while possibly drawing them together, do not necessarily bear upon their conception, such as 1) belonging to separate collections of published Lieder, 2) occurring non-consecutively in a published opus, and 3) occurring as a consecutive pair of songs within a

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5 Inge van Rij suggests, however, that Brahms’s quotation of Scarlatti in “Unüberwindlich” (op. 72, no. 5) conveys irony. Inge van Rij, Brahms’s Song Collections (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 110.

6 See Franz Schuberts Werke ed. Eusebius Mandyczewski, ser. 20 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1895). Richard Kramer notes that the relationship of Schubert’s “variants” to each other is complex. On the one hand, Kramer cites Walther Dürr’s warning that viewing related works in chronological order obscures the possibility of viewing an artwork as “a thing in itself,” but on the other hand, Kramer notes that “...we are forever setting works of art in contexts and yet construing them as things in themselves; this oscillation between critical modes is a necessary condition for the reading of art.” See Richard Kramer, Distant Cycles: Schubert and the Conceiving of Song (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994), 12.

7 Ibid.
published opus. But despite these varied arrangements, Brahms’s manuscripts and letters provide evidence that he not only situated songs sharing a key together for publication, but also conceived of a song pair in the same key. Inge van Rij notes that the B-major songs “Liebe und Frühling I and II (published as op. 3, nos. 2 and 3) share motives and retain the title of their literary source, enhancing their cohesion in op. 3. She further shows that the Eb-minor songs “Liebestreu” and “Lied,” composed separately in January and July of 1853 respectively, appear on the same paper type in a manuscript that shows Brahms paginating them consecutively for publication, despite their eventual non-consecutive ordering as nos. 1 and 4 in the published version of op. 3. Van Rij argues convincingly that motivic correspondences link these songs despite their separation in the op. 3 set. Most significantly, Brahms’s letter to Elizabeth von Herzogenberg of May 16, 1885 claims that “Nachtigall” (op. 97, no. 1) and “Ein Wanderer” (op. 106, no. 5), two F-minor settings of poems by Christian Reinhold Köstlin, were composed together. Brahms writes, “I need not say that they are more or less twins on whom I am now trying all sorts of experiments,” implying that Herzogenberg would readily perceive the songs’ musical similarities.

The significance of keys in which songs were conceived extends further to songs with composition dates ranging across Brahms’s career. Brahms’s transposition of the song “Wie bist

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8 Both Inge van Rij and Robert Snarrenberg support the idea that resemblances between consecutive songs in Brahms’s published opera enhance narrative cohesion within their group. Van Rij further posits that Brahms carefully arranged his songs in order to highlight relationships within published “bouquets.” See Robert Snarrenberg, “Brahms’s Six Songs, Op. 3,” Music Analysis 31/i (2012): 2–37.
9 Inge van Rij, Brahms's Song Collections, 68.
10 Ibid., 60. “The only hint of an order that predates the assembling of songs for publication is the fact that two of the songs using the same paper type (nos. 1 and 4) are paginated consecutively. However, by the time he came to publish the songs Brahms had decided against pairing these two Lieder and settled on a different order.”
11 Van Rij’s outline of the contents in Brahms’s poetry notebooks indicates that “Ein Wanderer” appears consecutively with “Auf dem See” (another Köstlin text), which Brahms likely copied around the same time, but is separated from “Nachtigall.” See Inge van Rij, Brahms's Song Collections, 42. Any connections that Brahms drew between “Ein Wanderer” and “Nachtigall” are therefore expressed in his decision to compose the songs as a pair, but are not apparent from his copying of the poetry.
12 Kalbeck, The Herzogenberg Correspondence, 225.
du, meine Königin” (op. 32, no. 9) from E major to E♭ major, for instance (made for the singer’s convenience), veils its similarity to other E-major songs employing the Neapolitan complex. Thus while Inge van Rij notes that Brahms “does not appear to have subscribed to any consistent notions of key characteristics” and “was quite willing to sacrifice them [certain keys] to issues of practicality” (such as transposition), recurring tonal plans in works sharing a key might indicate that Brahms regarded the key in which a song was conceived as an important aspect of its identity, potentially linking aspects of its meaning to other songs in the same key.

This chapter first revisits the “twin” songs composed in 1885 in order to determine how Brahms’s tonal “experiments” on this pair might relate to his expression of poetic temporality. These F-minor songs then provide the basis for assessing other instances of self-modeling. Modal ambiguity between parallel keys in the B-minor song “Heimkehr” (op. 7, no. 6), composed in 1851, betrays similarities to “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (op. 32, no. 5), composed in 1864. Both songs realize a future temporality that remains latent in the poem and depicts their protagonists’ struggle to overcome colossal forces. Similar prolongations of D minor (VI₃) in the F♯-minor songs “Treue Liebe” (op. 7, no. 1), composed in 1852, and “Herbstgefühl” (op. 48, no. 7), composed in 1867, seem to manifest death’s presence, which remains absent from the poem. Finally, the E-major song “An die Nachtigall” (op. 46, no. 4), composed in 1868, displays a nuanced use of the Neapolitan complex that relates it to “Unbewegte laue Luft,” (op. 57, no. 8), composed in 1867 or later. Both songs deploy F major.

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13 Margit McCorkle, *Johannes Brahms: Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis* (München: Henle, 1984), 107. Other E-major songs, noted by Wintle, which display Brahms’s evolving use of the Neapolitan complex include “Frühling,” (op. 6, no. 2, composed in 1852), and “O wüsst’ ich doch den Weg zurück,” (op. 63, no. 8, composed in 1874). Tonality in both songs depicts temporal conflicts—anticipation for the future in the former, and irreversible loss in the latter.


15 These dates stem from McCorkle (see n. 13) and Bozarth, “The ‘Lieder’ of Johannes Brahms,” 66c.
within prolonged dominant harmonies, but “An die Nachtigall” also pursues the minor dominant, an undeveloped region in “Unbewegte laue Luft.”

“Ein Wanderer” (op. 106, no. 5)

Existential angst in Christian Reinhold Köstlin’s “Ein Wanderer”

The analysis of Köstlin’s “Nachtigall” (op. 97, no. 1) in ch. 2 focused on the poetic contrast between the present and a lost past awakened by the nightingale’s song, yet Köstlin opposes the present and future in “Ein Wanderer,” shown in fig. 5.1. Despite their different temporal emphases, the poems similarly distinguish between their protagonists’ explicit and latent knowledge. “Ein Wanderer” refers explicitly to the protagonist’s inclusion in society during a time before he speaks in the poem and only alludes to his isolation—a pervasive, present existential state. As in “Nachtigall,” the protagonist’s innately sensed knowledge also remains hidden from the external world. His exclusion from society and awareness of his fate (death) contrasts with the naïveté of fellow travelers who speak to him. Köstlin thus conveys a rift in the protagonist’s psyche between sensed existential loneliness and real proximity to other people, resembling similar themes in Wilhelm Müller’s poems “Der Wegweiser” and “Das Wirtshaus.” Both poets portray a wanderer who is denied rest and forced to endure a seemingly eternal nomadic existence.¹⁶

¹⁶In line 1 (fig. 5.1), Köstlin describes a fork in the road similar to the diverging paths in “Der Wegweiser,” in which the protagonist travels a road untrodden by others (implying death). Köstlin’s reference to denied burial (stanza 3, lines 1–2) also echoes the wanderer’s inability to find room at a cemetery in “Das Wirtshaus.” Yet there is no suggestion that Müller’s poetry influenced Köstlin. Rather, Köstlin’s poetry is largely informed by his own biography, for example his courting and marriage to Josephine Lang. The chronology of Köstlin’s “Nachtigall” (written in 1838) and “Ein Wanderer” (written c. 1846) reveals that the description of an existential crisis in “Ein Wanderer,” paradoxically, emanates from a happier time than the troubled years approaching Köstlin’s death in 1856, when his poetry acquired a darker mood. Harald and Sharon Krebs explore thematic trends in Köstlin’s poetry in Josephine Lang: Her Life and Songs (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
Each stanza in “Ein Wanderer,” four lines in trochaic tetrameter, contains an opposition between an explicit present and an implied future, which its present-tense narration masks. As fig. 5.1 shows, a question and answer bisect each four-line stanza, corresponding to the rhyme scheme ab/ab, cd/cd, ef/ef. Lines 1–2 in each stanza describe external phenomena (the streets and passersby), but lines 3–4 reveal the protagonist’s internal awareness of his future, a fate hidden to the outside world. The poem’s large-scale temporal progression from present suffering to desired future release from wandering thus mimics that enacted in each stanza. Yet the future burial described in stanza 3 (“Wo ich einst begraben werde”), paradoxically, underscores the inescapable present, suggesting that longing for death compels the protagonist to wander onward in a futile search for rest.17

**Form in Brahms’s “Ein Wanderer”**

Brahms’s “Nachtigall” (analyzed in ch. 2) uses a conflict between parallel keys (F major and minor) and weak Gb-major tonicizations to suggest the protagonist’s subconscious awareness of the lost past and its conscious manifestation (signified by F major). His setting of “Ein Wanderer” focuses more directly on bII. Its nascent Gb-major key, as I will show, models the protagonist’s externalization of dormant internal knowledge to the outside world. Denied cadences in an increasingly implausible and insufficiently established Gb-major key seem to reflect the speaker’s increasing frustration at his estrangement from others and strained attempts

17My interpretation of Köstlin’s poem is similar to Lauri Suurpää’s reading of Schubert’s Winterreise, which highlights the protagonist’s isolation by showing that he is tragically unable to find either past love or hoped-for future death, resulting in his eternal wandering and a bereft emotional state. Suurpää, Death in Winterreise, 7–8.
Figure 5.1: “Ein Wanderer,” Christian Reinhold Köstlin, Gedichte von C. Reinhold. Stuttgart: Mäcken, 1853

Hier, wo sich die Straßen scheiden, a Here, where the roads diverge,
Wo nun gehn die Wege hin? b Where do the paths go now?
Meiner ist der Weg der Leiden, a Mine is the path of sorrows,
Deß ich immer sicher bin. b Of which I am always certain.

Wandrer, die des Weges gehen, c Travelers who take this path
Fragen freundlich, wohinaus? d Ask with friendliness: where are you going?
Keiner wird mich doch verstehen, c None will understand me
Sag’ ich ihm, wo ich zu Haus. d If I tell him where I live.

Reiche Erde, arme Erde, e Rich earth, poor earth,
Hast du keinen Raum für mich? f Have you no room for me?
Wo ich einst begraben werde, e Where I will someday be buried,
An der Stelle lieb’ ich dich. f That is the place I shall love you.

Figure 5.2: “Ein Wanderer,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A¹</th>
<th>//</th>
<th>A²</th>
<th>postlude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures:¹⁹</td>
<td>(1); 2–5 (6)</td>
<td>7–12</td>
<td>(13); 14–17 (18)</td>
<td>19–25</td>
<td>(26); 27–30 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem (lines):</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>5–6</td>
<td>7–8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency:</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>piano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic progression in F minor:</td>
<td>Bachian pedal over F</td>
<td>V leads to V₃,–→I₆ in G₉</td>
<td>D♭ becomes V/G♭, suggesting a forthcoming cadence in bII</td>
<td>bII₆ leads through voice exchanges to II₇–V₇,</td>
<td>(reprise of A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal narrative involving G♭ major:</td>
<td>B♭ foreshadows 4 in G♭</td>
<td>B♭ becomes C♭ and tonicizes bII₆</td>
<td>G♭ overtakes G♭</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁸Sharon Krebs speculates that the poem most likely dates from Oct. 10, 1846 (personal communication).
¹⁹Measures in parentheses indicate anacruses to phrases and the piano’s echo of single measures.
to overcome it. As if alluding to the lack of tonicized root-position Gb-major chords in “Nachtigall,” Brahms dramatizes an unattainable Neapolitan region in “Ein Wanderer,” while also recomposing the same large-scale tonal progression from I to V that characterizes its “twin” song.20

As shown in fig. 5.2 (above), Brahms’s varied strophic setting of “Ein Wanderer” (AA¹A²) displays his self-proclaimed modeling of “Nachtigall” most clearly through its progression toward a climactic tonicized V⁷ chord ending section A¹ (mm. 24–25), which creates a large-scale interruption in m. 25 (see the brackets).21 “Ein Wanderer” portrays the parallel major key (F major) that signified lingering past songs in “Nachtigall” as distant and harsh in sections A and A². The music suggests, but does not achieve, a cadence in Gb major in section A¹ (mm. 17–18), foreshadowed by a conflict between B₃ and C♭ in section A.22 These pitches symbolize the protagonist’s hidden anguish and its revelation, respectively. That is, desire for a Gb-major cadence throughout the song implies the protagonist’s inability to find rest, while the Neapolitan’s nascent presence reflects the speaker’s increasing frustration at his inevitable plight.

20Brahms’s letter to Elizabeth von Herzogenberg indicates that he initially set the text of “Nachtigall” to the melody that begins “Ein Wanderer,” but later “gave the nightingale a new note,” recomposing “Nachtigall” entirely. Kalbeck, The Herzogenberg Correspondence, 225.

21The F-minor song “Ach wende diesen Blick” (op. 57, no. 4), composed between 1868 and 1871, uses a similar tonal design, progressing toward a tonicized V⁷ chord that foreshadows the climax in both later songs. Yet Brahms does not mention this earlier song in his letter from 1885. This additional tonal similarity suggests that self-modeled songs might not be limited to those composed together. See Melissa Hoag, “Brahms’s ‘Great Tragic Opera’: Melodic Drama in ‘Ach, wende diesen Blick,’ (op. 57, no. 4),” Music Theory Online 17/1 (2011).

22F major’s failure to return in “Ein Wanderer” elicited Elizabeth von Herzogenberg’s unfavorable review of the song in a subsequent letter to Brahms from May 21 and 22, 1885. She writes, “I am afraid of not saying the right thing about the Nightingale and the Wanderer, for the fact is, only one of them meets with my entire approval—the Nightingale, which I like very much. The melody has the bitter-sweet of the real nightingale’s song; they seem to revel in augmented and diminished intervals, passionate little creatures that they are!—and the simple tenderness of the F major part is so charming by contrast. How finely the climax at ‘Verklungenen Tönen’ is prepared, and how happy the return to the opening motif at the words, ‘In deinem Lied ein leiser Wiederhall!’ Indeed, this song, delicious as the first tender green of the woods, seems to me ‘gefunden,’ inspired from the first to last...whereas the Wanderer has a touch of the chilly North; one misses the pleasing contrast, which the second part fails to supply satisfactorily.” Kalbeck, The Herzogenberg Correspondence, 228.
Implied $b\text{II}$ and the protagonist’s isolation in sections A and A$^1$

As ex. 5.1 shows, the extended hybrid phrase comprising section A of “Ein Wanderer” (mm. 1–12) foreshadows and tonicizes $G_b$ major in its antecedent and continuation phrases, respectively, conveying the protagonist’s frustrated desire for future release across stanza 1.\textsuperscript{23}

**Example 5.1: “Ein Wanderer,” A section (mm. 1–13)**

Following a Bach-like expansion of the tonic over $F$ in the bass, shown in ex. 5.2 (mm. 2–3), in which the piano’s prolonged $A_b5$ covers the vocal line, the voice seizes $A_b5$ above $B_n2$ (m. 4).\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23}This reflects Caplin’s hybrid 1. I interpret m. 1 as an upbeat to the antecedent phrase.

\textsuperscript{24}Like the chorale-prelude topic in “Todessehnen” and the chorale topic in “Schwermut” (see ch. 3), I interpret the opening tonic pedal to signify embarking on a journey, owing to its introductory function. Bach’s Prelude in C Minor from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, book I (BWV 847), uses a similar progression in its first four measures.
The resulting jarring diminished seventh B♭–Ab between the piano and voice and the progression IV⁷–V⁷ in m. 4, interrupted by the piano’s Db, doubled in octaves, seems to imply a bleak answer to the question “Wo nun gehn die Wege hin?,” as if foreshadowing a negative outcome to the protagonist’s journey. Although the voice strains for register 5 (and unattainable rest) in m. 4, it quickly retreats into register 4, where an upper-voice 3–2 motion (mm. 4–5) promises F-minor closure beneath F4. Closure and rest are denied, however, by a deceptive turn to Db major (VI) in m. 8.²⁵

Example 5.2: “Ein Wanderer,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–14)

The extended continuation phrase (mm. 7–12) reveals the tonal consequences of B♭, depicts F major as distant and harsh, and portrays the voice’s renewed attempts to attain pitches in register 5, conveying the protagonist’s frustration when alluding to his fate in lines 3–4 of the poem. Examples 5.1 and 5.2 show that an F-major six-four chord in m. 7 (marked sf), which provides the song’s only F-major sonority, prolongs F minor’s dominant in mm. 5–8. As a neighboring six-four chord above the bass C, F major seems remote and illusory. It does not replace F minor with its parallel key, as it did in “Nachtigall,” or resolve the lingering

²⁵By robbing the voice of F-minor tonic support, the piano suggests the protagonist’s powerlessness to achieve peace. The piano’s echo of the 3–2 motion in m. 5 also seems to echo the voice’s failure to attain a stable 3 in register 5, as if reminding the listener of the protagonist’s plight.
dominant. Instead, after V resolves deceptively in m. 8 and the voice ascends from Ab⁴ to Ab⁵, recapturing the pitch it grasped for in m. 4, Brahms respells Bb as Cb in the piano’s left hand (m. 9), tonicizing Gb major via the progression V⁴₂—I⁶ within a two-measure interpolation that extends the continuation phrase (mm. 9–10).

As ex. 5.2 shows, the weakly established bII⁶ chord in m. 9 exists within a prolongation of VI in mm. 8–10. This prolongation prevents F-minor closure beneath F⁵ in m. 10, the goal of a descending third-progression (♯3–♯2–♯1) beginning from Ab⁵. That is, while this two-measure extension of the continuation phrase strives for melodic closure, the underlying Db-major prolongation prevents a satisfactory cadence and subsumes the insufficiently established key of bII. bII remains nested within the prolonged VI, much as the protagonist remains trapped in his present nomadic state, certain that his path is the path of sorrows (“deß ich immer sicher bin”). In mm. 11–12, the voice finally abandons its attempts to close in register 5. The piano’s descent into register 3 above the resolution of V⁷ to I suggests recoiling from the fate revealed by the voice’s third-progression Ab⁵–Gb⁵–F⁵ and the tonicized Neapolitan.

Tonal modifications to the extended hybrid phrase in section A¹ (mm. 14–25) convey a new opposition between the starkly isolated protagonist and the passing travelers described in stanza 2 of the poem. The compound basic idea (mm. 14–18) and continuation phrase (mm. 19–24) are shown in ex. 5.1a and graphed in ex. 5.3. Measures 14–15 are a varied reprise of mm. 2–3, but mm. 16–17 seem to depict the travelers’ friendly inquiries, replacing the strained Ab⁵

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26 This contrasts with Brahms’s eventual resolution of F major’s dominant to I in section A¹ (m. 30) of “Nachtigall” (see ch. 2).

27 The compound basic idea and continuation phrase group into 4+1 and 4+2 measures, respectively, leading to the climactic tonicized half cadence in mm. 23–25. I label the first part of this theme a contrasting basic idea owing to the lack of a cadence in m. 17.
Example 5.1a: “Ein Wanderer,” $A^1$ section (mm. 14–25)

Contrasting basic idea (4 + 1 mm.)

Contrasting basic idea (4 + 1 mm.)

Example 5.3: “Ein Wanderer,” graph of the $A^1$ section (mm. 14–25)
and diminished seventh chord from m. 4 with the promise of a G♭-major cadence. Brahms denies this promise by retaining the bass’s D♭3 into m. 19.

As a tenuous G♭-major six-four chord (m. 17) replaces the expected root-position Neapolitan, Brahms seems to depict the travelers’ questions arousing the protagonist’s anxieties. As ex. 5.3 shows, two voice exchanges that unfold within the stepwise motion from D♭3 (m. 19) to F2 (mm. 22) further prevent tonal closure in the Neapolitan region, connecting VI♭7 (m. 17) with Ⅳ♯3 (m. 22). Brahms here echoes the Ⅳ7 chord from m. 4 as the voice strains to project Ⅱ♭ (G) into register 5 above a tonicized V7 (mm. 23–24). Ⅳ7 is only one semitone removed from V7 of G♭ (D♭ replaces D♭; B♭ and C♭ are enharmonically equivalent.) By forcing the harmonic agent that tonicized G♭ major back into an F-minor context, Brahms seems to depict the protagonist’s failed struggle to overcome his loneliness, which culminates in the difficult upper-voice ascent into register 5 and the uncomfortable descent of B♭4 (which desires ascending resolution) to B♭5 in an inner voice (m. 23). The piano’s inner-voice motion B♭–B♭ respells 4 and 3 from the unstable G♭-major region, echoing the C♭–B♭ motion in m. 17 as if illustrating the impossibility of its achievement.

Measures 23−25 provide the large-scale goal of sections A and A1 (V7), where the protagonist’s frustration reaches its peak. Here Brahms recomposes the climax from “Nachtigall” (see ch. 2, exs. 2.2 and 2.7, mm. 20−24) but now he suppresses F major rather than revealing it. As ex. 5.3 shows, voice exchanges connecting mm. 19 and 22 bridge the division that punctuation (a question mark) creates between lines 2 and 3 in stanza 2; Brahms’s setting dovetails the traveler’s questions with the protagonist’s violent response, heightening the

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28Brahms’s dolce marking seems to represent the travelers’ friendly tone.
29The voice’s registral ascent echoes its similar displacement into register 5 in m. 9 (compare ex. 5.2).
revelation of his anguish. The dramatic reactivation of the dominant creates the desire for a root-position tonic chord and, owing to the piano’s B♭5 (m. 25), which lingers unresolved when A♭1 ends, resolution to A♭5 in the upper voice. Yet B♭4 and D♭5, inner voices within II⁷ in m. 23, deny the possibility of optimistic F-major closure. Instead the large-scale progression I–II⁷→V⁷ spanning mm. 14–24 distantly alludes to a chromatically altered, incomplete version of the Bachian pedal from mm. 2–3, as if projecting a magnified symbol of the weighty journey suggested at the beginning of the song across its large-scale middle section. As the protagonist expresses his fate, Brahms seems to transform the progression that earlier signified his burden into an enormous half cadence that requires resolution, much like the speaker longs to end his futile plight.

**The unrelieved present (F minor) in section A²**

Although section A² varies A only slightly, the final strophe in “Ein Wanderer” seems to cast its F-minor tonic into a grimmer light; A² also fails to rectify harmonic problems, such as G♭ major’s instability, presented earlier in the song. Subtle musical changes instead reinforce the protagonist’s frustration, as shown in ex. 5.1b (score) and ex. 5.4 (graph). As in section A, A♭5 enters in the third measure of the vocal line (m. 29); the third-progression A♭5–G♭5–(G♭5)–F5 (mm. 34–35) also corresponds precisely to the earlier section (compare mm 34–35 in ex. 5.1b to mm. 9–10 in ex. 5.1). A² also fails to resolve earlier pitch-class conflicts. B♭ and C♭ return, while the *Urlinie* remains unable to achieve closure in register 5, suggesting the protagonist’s inability to achieve peaceful death. The piano provides tonic support for 1 only after the poem ends in m.

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30 As the vocal line descends from G5 (♭5) to E♭5, an inner voice in mm. 23–24, it also bypasses F5, recalling its failed attempts to achieve 1 in section A (ex. 5.3).
31 The pre-dominant II♭⁴ from m. 2 resembles the half-diminished II chord in m. 23 (beat 2).
37, coinciding (as in m. 10) with a deceptive motion to VI as if indicating an end to the narrative, but not resolution.\textsuperscript{32} Despite the *Urlinie*’s achieved descent in register 4 (mm. 36–37), the piano’s echo of the resolution $\hat{2} \rightarrow \hat{1}$ in a tenor voice suggests a pessimistic ending, permanently abandoning the voice’s hope for resolution in register 5. Unlike the F-major key that ends “Nachtigall” with bittersweet echoes of the past, the oppressive F-minor tonic in “Ein Wanderer” provides no escape from present wandering, as if rest remains unattained and unattainable.

**Example 5.1b:** “Ein Wanderer,” $A^2$ section (mm. 26–40)

\footnote{\textsuperscript{32}As in the F-minor setting “Wie rafft’ ich mich auf in der Nacht” (see ch. 4), the descending arpeggio C–Ab–F (mm. 38–39) provides a closing gesture, but does not seem to resolve the tensions created throughout the song.}

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“Heimkehr” (op. 7, no. 6)

Struggle in Uhland’s “Heimkehr”

Brahms’s setting of “Heimkehr,” the final poem in Uhland’s nine-poem cycle titled *Wanderlieder* (1815), emphasizes his affinity for Uhland’s folk-like idiom and sheds light on recurring poetic images in his songs. Uhland’s poem, shown in fig. 5.3, portrays the heroic (if brief) struggle of its wandering protagonist, who defies collapsing surroundings to return home to his beloved. Whereas Platen’s “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (op. 32, no. 5) portrays a Promethean struggle to break free from binding shackles (see ch. 4), Uhland’s “Heimkehr” evokes the plight of mythical Atlas; its protagonist withstands the trembling earth’s weight and

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33 William Horne notes that “[t]here were only eight Wanderlieder poems in Uhland’s initial published order, with “In der Ferne” omitted....The completed nine-poem cycle first appeared in Ludwig Uhland, *Gedichte* (Stuttgart: Tübingen, Cotta, 1815). William Horne, “Recycling Uhland: Brahms and the Wanderlieder,” *Notes* 69/2 (2012), 281, n. 7. Brahms’s interest in Uhland’s poetry also extends to his studies of the poet’s folksong collections dating from 1844–5.

34 Horne shows that Uhland’s Wanderlieder cycle conforms to a common nineteenth-century genre and notes that contrary to its present-day obscurity, the cycle gained great popularity in the nineteenth century, both as a complete cycle and as individual poems within larger anthologies (Ibid., 217–59). See also Barbara Turchin, “The Nineteenth-Century Wanderlieder Cycle,” *Journal of Musicology* 5/4 (1987): 498–525.
fury.\textsuperscript{35} Yet while Platen’s imagery likely reflected his personal struggles, Uhland’s conflation of apocalyptic imagery with a wanderer’s journey focuses on the Romantic wanderer’s quest, conveying its magnitude. Brahms’s setting of “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (op. 32, no. 5) denies its protagonist’s imagined freedom, but his setting of “Heimkehr” (op. 7, no. 6) actualizes the poem’s implied future homecoming. The songs’ similar minor-to-major progressions (Brahms points to, only to repress, B major in op. 32, no. 5, but achieves it in op. 7, no. 6) and their motivic resemblances suggest the earlier song’s influence on the later one.

The single quatrain comprising “Heimkehr” evokes a folk-like style, using iambic tetrameter and symmetrical rhyme scheme, aabb (see fig. 5.3). Despite the poem’s brevity, its rhyme, punctuation, and implied temporalities create a dramatic progression toward a climax in lines 3–4. Peter Jost notes that the brief change to dactyls in line 3 accompanies increasing intensity in the poem’s imagery.\textsuperscript{36} Syntax further supports a dramatic arc leading to line 3. Syntactically complete commands in lines 1–2, which exhibit parallelism on account of their shared “a” rhymes, commas before “du,” and concluding exclamation points, are compressed within line 3. Line 3 instead fragments the commands that encompass the sky and earth (reflecting the enormity of the protagonist’s task), and finds its completion in line 4, which invokes the beloved. Enjambment between lines 3 and 4 increases expectation for a “b” rhyme to end the poem, rendering its arrival in line 4 more emphatic than the corresponding “a” rhyme in line 2.

\textsuperscript{35}There is no documentary evidence to suggest that Uhland referenced the mythical figure of Atlas in this poem. The position of “Heimkehr” within Uhland’s “Wanderlieder” highlights its positive \textit{Affekt}, depicting the wanderer’s imagined joyous, heroic return, yet I will show that Brahms’s setting seems to center on the poetic depiction of struggle to overcome antagonistic forces.

A temporal progression from the present (lines 1–3) to the future (line 4) reinforces this dramatic arc, creating tension at the end of line 3, where the present will lead either to catastrophic failure or joyous homecoming. The protagonist’s imminent (but unrealized) return home even suggests a future event arriving after line 4. Jost also identifies a change in perspective that strengthens this temporal shift: line 4 (“Bis ich mag bei der Liebsten sein!”) lingers in the protagonist’s grandiose vision of achieved return, attempting to overcome the threatening external forces described in lines 1–3. Interpreted within the entire Wanderlieder cycle, however, the perception described in line 4 seems to indicate forces coalescing toward the cycle’s central image: the beloved. Weighty poetic imagery conveys the beloved’s magnitude in the protagonist’s imagination, while his desire to be reunited creates intense anticipation. Within only four lines, Uhland compresses a visceral struggle between the inescapable present and longed-for future that appears in each of Platen’s two stanzas (compare ch. 4, fig. 4.3).

The sentence theme type as a narrative frame in Brahms’s setting

Brahms sets “Heimkehr” as a single sentence (and strophe) leading from B minor to B major—a unique instance in his output of solo songs—in which intervening tonal events and the B-major structural cadence model a gradual realization of the protagonist’s imagined

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37 Line 4 in Uhland’s original poem reads “Eh’ ich mag bei der Liebsten sein,” (“before I may be [with] the beloved”), which is replaced by “until” (“Bis”) in Brahms’s version of the text. I interpret “until” as suggesting a more certain future, whereas “before” focuses on the protagonist’s present environment.

38 The poem’s projected future resembles “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (see ch. 4).

39 Jost interprets the change to dactyls in line 3 as linked to a change in line 4 from the protagonist’s local to a global perspective. He claims that the temporary meter “correspond[s] to its [the poem’s] escalating content: starting with the bridge and rocks, the poem only spoke about single elements of the visible surroundings, but now it describes the world as a whole and finally even heaven. In line 4, the lyrical ‘ich’ again returns to a human perspective, and with this the poetic meter [dactyls] ceases.” While Jost interprets line 4 contextually within the poem, I interpret this perspectival change (line 4) in light of the complete “Wanderlieder” cycle, which focuses on the beloved. See Peter Jost, “Brahms und das Deutsche Lied,” 16.

40 The overwhelming focus on departure from the beloved in the other eight songs in Uhland’s cycle render the return to her in “Heimkehr” even more powerful.
**Figure 5.3:** Ludwig Uhland, “Heimkehr,” from “Wanderlieder” (1815)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O brich nicht, Steg, du zitterst sehr!</td>
<td>Oh break not, footbridge, you shake so very much!</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O stürz' nicht, Fels, du dräuest schwer!</td>
<td>Oh fall not, crags, you threaten so mightily!</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welt, geh' nicht unter, Himmel, fall' nicht ein,</td>
<td>World, do not end, and sky, do not fall,</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bis</strong> ich mag bei der Liebsten sein!</td>
<td>Until I may be with my beloved!</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Temporal Progression**
- present-tense struggle (potential energy)
- implied future (projected achievement)
Example 5.5: “Heimkehr,” (mm. 1–22)
future. Example 5.5 shows that the sentence mirrors the poem’s syntactical divisions (1+1+2 lines), containing a five-measure piano introduction, a repeated two-measure basic idea in mm. 6–9 (lines 1 and 2), fragmented one-measure units in mm. 10–12 (line 3), and an extended V−I cadence in mm. 13–20 (line 4) that delays the arrival of the B-major structural tonic. This lengthy delay reflects the poetic enjambment across lines 3–4 and the protagonist’s extreme anticipation of return as line 3 awaits closure. As I will show, the minor-to-major progression spanning the song (I−#IV7−V#64−53−I#) supports a tonal narrative involving the chromatic pitches

\[ I − # IV^7 − V^#6_4 − 5_3 − I^# \]

41 This corresponds to the “tragic-to-transcendent” narratives analyzed in ch. 3. Another comparable instance of a song comprising a single theme type occurs in “Kein Haus, keine Heimat” (op. 94, no. 5). As Harald Krebs recently noted, an inverted period in this song (in which the antecedent follows the consequent) progresses from D minor to D major.
42 Jost interprets the song as being in bar form (aab). See Peter Jost, “Brahms und das Deutsche Lied,” 20.
43 Later multi-strophe songs continue to align single strophes with a sentential phrase design and a single harmonic progression, creating a “strophic period.” See Deborah Rohr, “Brahms’s Metrical Dramas,” 35.
E# and G#. In op. 32, no. 5, these pitches struggle to resolve and foreshadow thwarted B-major and G#-major keys depicting the speaker’s imagined freedom from shackles (see ch. 4); in “Heimkehr,” by contrast, Brahms fulfills the upward resolution of E# to F# and G# (via A#) to B, and achieves a structural B-major cadence that rectifies tonal problems in the piano introduction.

To summarize, four main features in “Heimkehr” foreshadow compositional problems in “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder”: 1) registral ascents from F#4 to F#5 convey the protagonist’s struggle to return home; 2) E#’s thwarted resolutions to F# portray desire; 3) the neighbor notes G# and E# (encircling F# in registers 4 and 5) foreshadow B major when the protagonist imagines victorious homecoming; and 4) D# (3) triumphs over D♭, implying successful union with the beloved. While “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” returns to the tragic present, “Heimkehr” realizes the future projected by Uhland’s final line, supplying the return lacking from the poem and cycle.

#4 as dramatic turning point

Just as Brahms dramatizes the frustrated resolution of E# to F# in mm. 1–2 of “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” (see ex. 4.7b, p. 234), the piano introduction in “Heimkehr” emphasizes #4, portraying the protagonist’s difficult plight before the voice enters, and foreshadows B major within the progression I–#IV7–II7–V# spanning mm. 1–5, as ex. 5.5 (above) shows. The piano conveys an opposition between the protagonist’s labored journey (mm. 1–2) and the earth’s fury as mountains rumble around him (mm. 3–5), a division that hinges upon the ambiguous tendency of E# in m. 2. As ex. 5.6 shows, E#’s forced descent to E♭ (m. 2) thwarts expectations for its

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44Brahms conveys E#’s rising tendency, but does not respell this pitch as in op. 32, no. 5.
45Peter Jost notes the introduction’s foreshadowing of later events, but does not cite voice leading or harmony in his analysis. Jost, “Brahms und das Deutsche Lied,” 19.
resolution. Following the bass’s initial descending tetrachord B–A–G–F♯, E♯ (supporting #IV in m. 2) implies resolution to F♯ (and V). But as E♭2 (m. 2) prevents F♯’s arrival, it begins a voice exchange, evoking the protagonist’s strength through hard-won contrary motion.46 E♭5 descends to E♭5 again in m. 3 before the Kopfton F♯5 is achieved in an inner voice (m. 4), rectifying earlier failed E♯–F♯ motions.47 As F♯5 (m. 4) finally arrives, completing the initial arpeggiation B–D–F♯ and registrally displacing F♯4 (m. 1), the bass tonicizes V from above.48 Striving for an F♯-major chord, held tenuously across the barline in mm. 4–5, the piano might even imply a forthcoming B-major chord (I♯) that does not arrive. While the incomplete tetrachord F♯–G♯–A♯–[B] in an alto voice spanning mm. 1–4 (bracketed in ex. 5.6) exists in B minor, it also hints at B major’s latent presence, as if foreshadowing the protagonist’s efforts to return home even before the voice enters.

Example 5.6: “Heimkehr,” graph of the piano introduction (mm. 1–5)

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46 A textural change reinforces this opposition in the introduction: the left hand continues march-like dotted rhythms, suggesting the protagonist’s purposeful quest, beneath the right hand’s full-voiced chords, which seem to embody his strength.

47 As in op. 32, no. 5, the C♯-minor and major chords in m. 3 allude to B major on account of their G♯s. Both chords are marked by the sudden dynamic change to ff and by the uncharacteristic upper-voice descent E♯5–E♭5.

48 The left hand’s entirely stepwise descent contrasts with the upper voice’s steep ascent.
The large-scale tonal structure of “Heimkehr” resembles the piano introduction, in which the failed resolution of $\#I_V^7$ to $V$ (m. 2) causes a dramatic turning point. The return of $\#I_V^7$ (ex. 5.7, m. 12) functions analogously within the large-scale harmonic progression spanning mm. 6–20, but here begins an expanded cadential progression. As in mm. 1–5, a diminished fifth $B–E#$ unfolds in the bass across mm. 6–12, now forming descending parallel sixths with the upper voice, which descends from the Kopfton $F^4$. After reaching $D_{b}4$ (m. 12), the upper voice strives into register 5, where $D_{b}$ and $D#$ continue to vie for supremacy above modally opposed cadential six-four chords—a tonicized $V_{6_{4}}^{6_{4}}$ (m. 13) and B major’s $V_{6_{4}}^{6_{4}}$ (m. 19). As the bass resolves $E#$ to $F#$ supporting each cadential six-four chord (mm. 12–13 and 18–19), it corrects $E$’s earlier descents to $E_{b}$, just as the protagonist faltered earlier, but now envisions a victorious return.

The presentation and continuation phrases (mm. 6–20) develop the pitch-class conflicts between $D#/D_{b}$, $G#/G_{b}$, and $E#/E_{b}$ from the piano introduction. These emerge in the accompaniment and vocal line in ways that depict increasing separation between the two agents, perhaps symbolizing a struggle between the protagonist’s present constraints and future triumph over them. As ex. 5.5 (above) shows, the voice highlights $B$ minor, $D_{b}5$ (mm. 6 and 8), and the conflict between $G_{b}4$ and $G#$ during the repeated basic idea, which progresses from I to V. $G_{b}4$ in the upper voice’s descending tetrachord $B–A–G–F#$ (mm. 6–7) contrasts with $G#$ (and $E#$), neighbor notes encircling $F#4$ (mm. 8–9). Brahms further highlights the opposition between

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50$D_{b}4$, hidden in the piano’s inner voice in m. 11 provides a fleeting sign of B major, but it is only supported by a passing $I^{3_{1}}$ chord and remains covered by the rising vocal line.

51$D_{b}5$ earlier separated mm. 1–2 from the increasing struggle depicted in mm. 3–4.
Example 5.7: “Heimkehr” graph of mm. 6–22
B major and minor during the continuation phrase. Fragmented one-measure units extend into m. 12, where the inner-voice D♮4 appears above E♯2 (ex. 5.7). D♮ is transferred into register 5 as a voice exchange between G♯ and E♯ expands #IV♯ (m. 12), and E♯5 ascends to F♯5 (m. 13), now a cover tone. 3–2 motions in the upper voice above repeated resolutions V6−5 resolutions (mm. 13–16) frustrate the Urlinie’s attempts to descend as it unsuccessfully seeks 1 and a perfect authentic cadence in the tonic, B minor.

The expanded cadential progression models the protagonist dwelling in visions of future reunification with the beloved in line 4 of Uhland’s poem. As if reinforcing the speaker’s singular focus on his quest and triumph over the forces that threaten him, Brahms’s setting obsessively repeats “ich,” centering on the protagonist, beginning in m. 13. Following the extended fragmentation in m. 12 and repeated text “Himmel fall nicht ein,” the voice declaims “ich” on downbeats in mm. 13, 15, and 17, as if drawing out the extended cadential progression in mm. 13–20 (ex. 5.5). Its repeated F♯–E motives (5–4), shown in ex. 5.7, yield repeated 8–7 motions above F♯3, representing a superimposed inner voice above the frustrated D–C♯ (3–2) motions that seek 1. Although the first 3–2 motion coincides with the poem’s ending, Brahms continues the song past this boundary, increasing the listener’s expectation for a cadence in the tonic—albeit while casting the song’s mode into doubt. By highlighting the conflicts between poetic distance and homecoming (and minor versus major), Brahms dramatizes the song’s inability to achieve harmonic closure.

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52 Brahms’s placement of “Welt” and “Himmel” on downbeats within this fragmentation creates a parallel in the music between contrasting physical realms (“Earth” and “Heaven”).

53 This registral ascent in the upper voice (mm. 12–13) echoes m. 4, allowing the voice to resolve E♯ to F♯ in register 5 at “bis ich.”

54 The inherent instability of 3 within the cadential six-four chord heightens suspense, prolonging the listener’s uncertainty about which mode will prevail.
As Brahms repeats IV\(^7\) in m. 18 (an echo of m. 12), redirecting it toward B major’s V\(^6\) beneath a tenuous D\#5 (\(^#3\)) in m. 19, he also revisits and resolves pitch-class conflicts from the piano introduction. Instead of resolving the dissonant seventh E (m. 16) to D\#, the voice presses upward, installing G\#5 (m. 18) as the rightful \(\hat{\delta}\) in an emerging B-major tonality. Its chromatic passing motion F\#–G–G\# (mm. 17–18) reinterprets G\# as F\#, bursting past the earlier registral highpoint F\#5.\(^{55}\) As if portraying the protagonist’s ability to harness nature’s forces, the voice seems to will the song into B major, omitting the problematic passing tone E\# entirely, and seizing F\#5 (m. 17). It conveys the protagonist’s increasing strength, thrusting the double-neighbor figure F\#–G\#–E\#–F\# (which the piano introduced in mm. 8–9) into a prominent, hard-won register 5, fulfilling earlier, hidden implications of B major (see the annotations in ex. 5.7).\(^{56}\)

Splintering away from the Urlinie descent to \(\hat{1}\) in the piano part, the voice’s imperfect authentic cadence highlights \(\hat{3}\) (m. 20), as if expressing triumphant future homecoming.\(^{57}\) The piano provides further B-major resolution, alluding to the voice’s earlier arpeggios from mm. 6

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\(^{55}\)Prominent accents in the vocal line (mm. 17–21) echo those found during mm. 3–4, recalling the austere struggle depicted by the piano’s strong chords. Brahms sets “ich” to G\#5 as the protagonist finally overcomes threatening earthly forces.

\(^{56}\)Heather Platt discusses the motivic significance of the double neighbors G\# and E\# around F\# in the B-minor song “Von ewiger Liebe.” (op. 43, no. 1), which also progresses from B minor to B major, reflecting the confirmed strength of eternal devotion between two lovers. The modal shift in “Von ewige Liebe” differs, however, from the ongoing tension between B minor and B major in “Heimkehr” and “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” on account of its decisive change to B major (including a changed key signature) beginning the final strophe, as shown in Platt’s ex. 5.23b (Platt, “Text-Music Relationships,” 221–22 and 224). Thus Brahms does not depict B major as a hard-won key that battles with B minor for supremacy.

\(^{57}\)A similar trajectory from E minor to E major in “Parole” (op. 7, no. 2) illustrates the protagonist’s vision of greeting her beloved, a hypothetical future event. Ludwig Finscher notes that “the song’s principal tonality is E minor, which in the end—predictably, after the outburst on ‘tausendmal’—turns to E major.” This provides another instance of the “tragic-to-transcendent narrative” type ending with an envisioned future state signified by an achieved major key. Finscher, “Brahms’s Early Songs,” 342. Further, Inge van Rij interprets the B-major close of “Heimkehr” as concluding the entire op. 7 collection: “The tonality of the final song thus answers the laments of all five lonely girls of the previous poems. The sense of optimism and resolution that this provides at the close of the set, as B minor is transformed into a resounding B major, is typical of Brahms’s characteristic progression from sorrow to comfort.” Van Rij, Brahms’s Song Collections, 118. Van Rij’s sorrow-to-comfort archetypes typically occur across entire published collections of songs, to which she ascribes various types and degrees of coherence.
and 8 (F#–B–D), which now reach D#6 in mm. 20–21 (ex. 5.7). The B-major chord in m. 21 also supplies the long-awaited resolution of the tonicized dominant (F# major), which appeared in the same register in mm. 4–5 (compare ex. 5.6), suggesting a victorious resolution of the struggle modeled in mm. 3–4.\textsuperscript{58} If the piano envisions successful reunion, the voice suggests that some uncertainty remains when the song has ended.

Among the B-minor songs in Brahms’s output that progress to B major (see ch. 3, table 1), “Heimkehr” and “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” suggest Brahms’s self-modeling on account of the distinctive struggle between parallel tonics that they convey. By contrast, the major mode in “Mit vierzig Jahren” (op. 94, no. 1) arrives during the structural cadence (above V\textsuperscript{6}4), but does not compete with B minor throughout the song.\textsuperscript{59} The fluid alternation between B major and minor in “Es schauen die Blumen” (op. 96, no. 3) likewise does not imply conflict but, as Heather Platt shows, remains subordinate to a two-part interrupted form and concluding plagal cadence that she interprets as expressing yearning in the text. Platt also notes that the change to B major “anticipates the unexpected ironic twist in Heine’s poem” by invoking the major mode where one expects B minor.\textsuperscript{60} Brahms’s particular treatment of B major as a hard-won tonic ending “Heimkehr” and during “Wehe, so willst du mich wieder” thus sets both songs apart. The later song’s tonal digressions into G# major reflect a more extreme tonal consequence of the motion into B major that Brahms did not pursue in “Heimkehr,” but explored when inspired by Platen’s portrayal of visceral struggle.

\textsuperscript{58}An alternate view might interpret the salient ending on s3 in the vocal line (an imperfect authentic cadence) as lending a contingent quality to the song’s conclusion despite its successful B-major structural cadence and the piano’s successful descent to 1 in an inner voice (ex. 5.7, mm. 19–20). Further, by reading the Urlinie as descending from 5 (F#), one might regard this ending on s3 as more than contingency. It might rather reflect the special case of a structure that does not close on 1 in the top voice.

\textsuperscript{59}The minor-to-major progression in “Mit vierzig Jahren” instead suggests a similar tragic-to-transcendent narrative as those modeled in chapter 3.

VI₆ (in F♯ minor) and the portrayal of death

Tonicizations of V by E♯ (#♯4) in “Heimkehr” and of the Neapolitan (G♭ major) by VI♭ in “Ein Wanderer” manifest temporal oppositions in the poem and reveal Brahms experimenting with further harmonic consequences of chromatic pitches. His recurring use of VI and VI₆ in the F♯-minor songs “Treue Liebe” (op. 7, no. 1) and “Herbstgefühl” (op. 48, no. 7) likewise modifies some tonal features in the later song “Todessehnen” (op. 86, no. 6), which portrays the spiritual transformation enabled by love for God and death’s “life-giving wind” (see ch. 3), using the opposition between E♯ and F♯.¹ “Treue Liebe” and “Herbstgefühl” also express both foreboding and comforting views of death, while distinctive tonal resemblances between both songs and “Todessehnen” include (1) expansions of VI and VI₆; (2) reinterpretation of E♯ (♯7) as F♯ (♯3 in D minor); and (3) the prominent ♯5–♭6–♯5 motive C♯–D–C♯.² Yet unlike other F♯-minor songs, these nest D minor’s Neapolitan (E♭ major) within more extensive prolongations of VI♭ that suggest a temporal and psychic manifestation of death foreshadowed earlier in the poem.

Death in Ferrand’s “Treue Liebe” and Schack’s “Herbstgefühl”

While Schenkendorf identifies death as the outcome of the protagonist’s divine transformation through love in “Todessehnen,” Eduard Ferrand’s three-stanza poem “Treue Liebe,” shown in fig. 5.4, only implies death’s presence. Despite its elusiveness, however, death

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¹The parallel major tonic (F♯ major) does not appear in either song.
²D major and D minor appear in some of Brahms’s other F♯-minor works such as “Regenlied” and “Nachklang” (op. 59, nos. 3 and 4) and in a capriccio for piano (op. 76, no. 1). On the basis of similar temporalities manifested by VI(♭) in the op. 59 pair and “Todessehnen,” and references to death in all of these songs, a stronger case for more extensive self-modeling among this entire group of F♯-minor songs might be made than for the songs in B minor listed above. Van Rij connects the parallel major (F♯ major) and submediant major (D major) in “Regenlied” to temporality in the poem, suggesting that D major accompanies “[...] raindrops [that] transport the narrator back to fond memories of childhood.” Van Rij, Brahms’s Song Collections, 54. A turn to D minor within the D major B section of “Regenlied” occurs during the text “[...] drang bis ins verborgne Leben,” further linking D minor to the concept of future death. Yet D minor’s own Neapolitan (E♭) only appears in “Treue Liebe” and “Herbstgefühl.”
drives the poem’s narrative progression from contingency to finality, functioning as the vehicle that symbolically reunites a yearning maiden with her departed beloved. The poem’s narrator, who speaks in the past tense, only gradually reveals that the maiden’s longing for her lover causes her tragic death by drowning. But death remains an invisible force. The reader learns of its presence through the maiden, whose voice influences the poetic structure. Figure 5.4 shows that her speech divides stanzas 1 and 2 into 2 + 3 lines, while its absence from stanza 3 signifies her death.

The maiden’s voice also creates shifts from the past to present within the poem’s main past-tense narration. In stanzas 1 and 2, Ferrand sets the maiden’s questions (which depict her present) apart, while rhymes between lines 2 and 5 connect her speech to the narrator’s text. That is, although the narrator arguably quotes the maiden, lines 3–5 (stanzas 1 and 2) revive her own experience—a present within the past. Day also turns to night, conveying a temporal progression within stanza 2 as the maiden awaits her beloved’s return. Yet stanza 3 denies this shift into the maiden’s present experience. A colon between lines 4 and 5 (stanza 3) provides a syntactical connection that periods in the maiden’s speech disrupted earlier, and shifts from a description of the maiden’s present (‘‘Es zog sie...’’) into the narrator’s present (‘‘Nie stand mehr...’’). Lines ending in “i” rhymes in stanza 3 thus fulfill the logical consequence of dramatic and temporal changes conveyed by corresponding lines (“c” and “f” rhymes) in stanzas 1 and 2.

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63Her questions separate the final line’s rhyme from its correlate in line 2. The question mark between lines 3 and 4 further interrupts the stanza’s syntax.
**Figure 5.4:** Eduard Ferrand (Schulz), “Treuhe Liebe,” *Gedichte*. Berlin: Stur’schen Buchhandlung, 1834

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ein Mägdlein saß am Meerstrand,</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (maiden’s present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Und blickte voll Sehnsucht in’s Weite.</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (Present within the past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Wo bleibst du, mein Liebster, wo weilst du so lang?</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (Present within past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicht ruhen läßt mich des Herzens Drang.</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (narrator’s present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Abend nahte, die Sonne sank</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (narrator’s present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Wasser umspielten ihr schmeichelnd den Fuß,</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (narrator’s present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wie Träume von seligen Stunden —</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (narrator’s present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sie hat den Geliebten gefunden. —</td>
<td>Past-tense narration (narrator’s present)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.5:** Adolf Friedrich Graf von Schack, “Herbstgefühl,” *Gesammelte Werke des Grafen Adolf Friedrich von Schack*, vol. II. Cotta: Stuttgart, 1883

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wie wenn im frost’gen Windhauch tödlich</td>
<td>present (external)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Sommers letzte Blüte krankt,</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Und hier und da nur, gelb und rötlich,</td>
<td>implied future (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So schauert über mein Leben</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ein nächstiger, kalter Tag,</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warum noch vor dem Tode bebend,</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Herz, mit deinem ew’gen Schlag!</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sieh rings entblättert das Gestäude!</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was spielst du, wie der Wind am Strauch,</td>
<td>present (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gib dich zur Ruh! Bald stirbt sie auch.</td>
<td>implied future (internal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
extending their sequence of events one stage further. After night falls and the maiden realizes that her lover will not return, she ventures into the sea after him. The reader must infer her deadly fate from the narrator’s evocative tale alone.

Whereas “Treue Liebe” describes a foreboding death, Adolf Friedrich Graf von Schack conveys peaceful death as the desirable alternative to stormy life in “Herbstgefühl,” shown in fig. 5.5 (above). Schack’s poem resembles Wilhelm Müller’s “Letzte Hoffnung,” which relates the wanderer’s fear of losing hope to an autumn leaf clinging tenuously to a branch. Schack’s three-stanza poem similarly models the protagonist’s external (stanzas 1 and 3) and internal (stanza 2) perceptions. Its protagonist’s heart clings to “withered pleasures” just as the leaf lingers in a transitory autumn season, awaiting winter. Autumn signifies the cold impersonal outer world, contrasting with the protagonist’s heated internal fears, which are caused by his bleak perception of life. Thus Müller equates the tenacious leaf with hope (not death), but Schack compares it to the protagonist’s inability to pursue a peaceful future, alluding to a release from earthly suffering that the poem does not fulfill.

Although death does not arrive in “Herbstgefühl,” it motivates a progression from the present to the implied future. Following stanza 1 (the present tense), the leaf inspires the protagonist’s thoughts about an enduring unpleasant life, which pervade stanza 2. In stanza 3

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64 As in Müller’s poem, Schack’s equation of a leaf with the protagonist’s life in “Herbstgefühl” reveals the protagonist’s distorted perceptions. Schack also anthropomorphizes inanimate objects, a device that Susan Youens highlights in Müller’s poetry: “Unlike Dante, who does not confuse souls and leaves, Müller’s protagonist invests the leaf with volition it does not have, confuses its passive powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music.” Susan Youens, Retracing a Winter’s Journey (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 21, n. 29. Brahms’s version of the poem also anthropomorphizes autumn. Brahms replaces the word “Luftzug” in Schack’s original version with “Windhauch” (line 1), implying that autumn’s icy breath chills the poor dangling leaf.

65 The colon connecting stanzas 1 and 2, and the words “wie” and “so” help to facilitate this comparison between the leaf and the protagonist.

66 Lauri Suurpää suggests that Schubert’s cycle does not pursue death as a positive option until its second part. “Letzte Hoffnung” does not reference death, but only the “loss of hope” at this point in the cycle. Suurpää, Death in Winterreise, 93.
(line 4), the imperative “Gibt dich zur Ruh” and the word “bald” suggest that death is near when the poem ends. Punctuation also reveals temporal changes in stanza 3 that the regular rhyme scheme (abab/cdcd/efef) masks. Stanzas 1 and 2 each comprise two clauses separated by a comma in line 2; only stanza 3 connects lines 2 and 3. Imperative statements isolate lines 1 and 4 of stanza 3. Thus although the poem’s final line emphasizes closure through punctuation (using both an exclamation point and a period) as if to suggest death’s imminence, death still evades the protagonist, who, like the leaf, lingers in present suffering.

In both poems, the reader must infer the instant of the protagonist’s death: in “Treue Liebe,” it occurs within stanza 3; in “Herbstgefühl” it occurs after the poem ends. Tonality in Brahms’s settings—both the highly diatonic F♯-minor environment in “Treue Liebe” and the ambiguity-laden tonal uncertainty in “Herbstgefühl”—will further emphasize the junctures between the past, present, and future that death, although it remains hidden, highlights in each text. Prolongations of VI in the earlier song emerge into greater relief against Brahms’s increasingly ambivalent tonal language in the later song.

“Treue Liebe” (op. 7, no. 1)

Tonal foreshadowing in A and A¹

Brahms’s varied strophic form in “Treue Liebe” (A://A¹) models the separation of stanza 3 (A¹), in which the maiden dies, from stanzas 1 and 2 (A). Brahms alters the hybrid phrase from section A in A¹, and respells earlier E♯s as F♯s in the context of D minor (VI↓; mm. 20–22), suggesting a temporal shift into the maiden’s present experience as she drowns. Just as the maiden’s speech, signifying her present in stanzas 1 and 2, foreshadows her death in stanza 3, the neighbor-note motives F♯–E♯–F♯ and C♯–D–C♯ in section A reappear at deeper structural
levels in A\textsuperscript{1} within an extended D-minor prolongation, as if modeling the narrator’s gradual revelation of the maiden’s death by taking the listener into the narrated story.

Although the A section firmly establishes F\# minor, it also foreshadows the maiden’s tragic demise by using phrase expansions and by destabilizing D5 within an irregular sentence (mm. 1–14), as shown in ex. 5.8 (score). A four-measure compound basic idea (mm. 2–5) and an abbreviated repeated basic idea (mm. 6–7) lead to fragmentation (mm. 8–11) and an expanded cadential progression, grouped as 2 + 1 measures (mm. 12–14). Dovetailing the narrator’s speech with the maiden’s text (stanzas 1 and 2), Brahms treats D–F\#–A–C\textsubscript{n} as an augmented sixth chord (m. 5), leading it to a cadential six-four chord (m. 6). Yet while the voice suggests a new group in mm. 6–7 (reinforced by the \textit{a tempo} marking in m. 6), the piano completes the tonic prolongation begun in m. 2, as ex. 5.9 (graph) shows, subsuming the beginning of the maiden’s questions just as the water laps threateningly at her feet. After diminished seventh chords obscure the tonic within the fragmentation (mm. 8–11), evoking the maiden’s anxious questions, IV\textsuperscript{b} (m. 12) restores tonal clarity in F\# minor, providing consonant support for D5 in the vocal line.

\textbf{Example 5.8: “Treue Liebe,” A section (mm. 1–14)}
Within this harmonically stable framework, Brahms foreshadows D minor and renders D5 dissonant as if alluding to the maiden’s fatal end in A¹. As ex. 5.9 shows, the prescient motives F#–E#–F# and C#–D–C# first appear in the piano’s undulating wave-like gestures (mm. 1–5). (D5 appears within the upper-voice 5–6–5 motive above VI—D major, m. 4—embellished
by a neighboring six-four chord implying D minor.\(^{67}\) The supported consonance D5 suggests the maiden’s belief in her lover’s return, expressed as she gazes into the distance after him (“und blickte voll Sehnsucht ins Weite”).\(^{68}\) But D\(_5\) becomes the unstable bass note of an augmented sixth chord leading to V\(^6\) as the maiden’s doubt-ridden speech begins (mm. 5–6; ex. 5.9).

**Example 5.9:** “Treue Liebe,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–14)

Brahms also alludes to the maiden’s negative fate by transforming D5, a consonance above IV\(^6\) in m. 12, into the dissonant ninth in V\(^9\)\(_7\) (m. 13). As D5 becomes dissonant, Brahms seems to unveil the maiden’s delusion, which she only subconsciously acknowledges. Regaining D5 in m. 13 (ex. 5.8), the voice creates tension that remains unresolved as 2 (G\#4) unsuccessfully seeks 1 (F\#4).\(^{69}\) Only the piano descends to 1 in an inner voice, as ex. 5.9 shows. The voice repeats the cover tone C\#5 instead, perhaps suggesting that the maiden’s destiny remains hidden.

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\(^{67}\)Since neighboring six-four chords often occur above the dominant, this passage also suggests the distant region of G minor (♭II\(_b\)). It seems noteworthy that Brahms does not choose to pursue Neapolitan-complex relations here by using D major to tonicize ♭II\(_b\), as he does in “Vorüber” and in F-minor songs throughout this dissertation.

\(^{68}\)In stanza 1, the narrator merely alludes to the maiden’s belief. The illusory stability of D5 thus occurs within the narrator’s past-tense narration.

\(^{69}\)Brahms’s hairpin and sf marking emphasize the pervasive [C\#]–D–C\# motive, recalling its earlier accented position in the piano’s left hand in mm. 5–6, where D (♭6 supporting an augmented sixth chord) likewise descends to C\#.

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The motives F♯–E♯–F♯ and C♯–D–C♯ appear at deeper levels of the voice-leading structure in A¹, supporting an expansion of D minor that I interpret as realizing the maiden’s death implied in stanza 3. As ex. 5.10 shows, the C♯–D–C♯ motive appears in the accompaniment and, expanded, in the vocal line during a modified version of the compound basic idea (mm. 16–19) that omits D major.⁷⁰ The piano reaches D6 (m. 19), depicting ominous swelling waves within the prolonged F♯-minor tonic spanning the compound basic idea. A¹ diverges further from section A in mm. 20–24, where an interpolated D-minor prolongation evokes the maiden’s death between mm. 19 and 25 (corresponding to mm. 5–6) within the tonic prolongation spanning mm. 15–26, as shown in ex. 5.11. That is, Brahms musically reinstates the maiden’s present where the poem omits it, in stanza 3.⁷¹ As if echoing earlier F♯–E♯ motions that foreshadowed this moment, the D-minor expansion in mm. 20–22 seems to unfold from a respelled E♯ (the motive F♯3–F♯3 in mm. 19–20), replacing the D-major chord that appeared in m. 4 (compare ex. 5.9).⁷² The leading tone E♯ becomes a more stable pitch, ♯3 in D minor, as if signifying the waves’ now-realized potential to harm the maiden. D5 in the large-scale neighboring motion spanning mm. 16–26 (♯5–♭6–♭5) achieves the consonant support of the unfolded third between F♯3 and D2 (see ex. 5.11, mm. 20–22), recalling D major’s support for D5 in section A.

D minor becomes an increasingly stable chord in section A¹. The piano’s expansive D-minor arpeggios (mm. 22–24) wash over registers 5 and 4 as the maiden submerges herself in the sea (“Es zog sie zur Tiefe mit stiller Gewalt”). In m. 21 (ex. 5.11), D5 (♯6) gains its own upper

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⁷⁰The tonic-prolongational pedal that replaces D major here (I⁵–♭⁴–♭⁵♭⁴–♭⁵) uses a Bachian progression and suggests associations with fate that are similar to the opening progression in “Ein Wanderer.”

⁷¹Section A¹ seems to musically depict lines 1–3 in stanza 3 as a group. Melodic parallelism and the a tempo marking in m. 26 suggest a new section.

⁷²Measures 15–20 yield a chromaticized 5–6 motion above the bass F♯–F♯. Compare the prominent neighbor-note F♯–E♯ motive in m. 1.
Example 5.10: “Treue Liebe,” A\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 14–36)

4mm. basic idea

(D major omitted)

\textit{Die\ Was\ -\ ser\ um\ -\ spielen\ ihr}

\textit{telling waves}

\textit{dolce}

\textit{semper Ped.}

\textit{shmecking\ Fu\ddless, wie Tr\u00e4u\ -\ me von\ seh\ -\ gen\ Stun\ -\ den, es}

\textit{schmecking\ Fu\ddless, wie Tr\u00e4u\ -\ me von\ seh\ -\ gen\ Stun\ -\ den, es}

\textit{Arpeggies = sea\ submerges\ maiden}

\textit{D minor\ gains\ Neapolitan\ (Eb)}

\textit{\textit{a}\ tempo}

\textit{stand\ mehr\ am\ U\ -\ fer\ die\ hol\ -\ de\ Ge\ -\ stalt, sie}
neighbor (E♭5), reflecting its increased stability and opposing its earlier descents to C# in mm. 5–6 and m. 14 (compare ex. 5.9). But after F♯ minor returns (m. 26), the voice reclaims its cover tone C#5, (m. 28), the neighboring D5 becomes a dissonant ninth (m. 29), and the piano alone completes the Urlinie descent in m. 30 (ex. 5.11). A neighboring IV chord (m. 29) supports D5 within the voice’s final C#–D–C# motive as the piano descends to E♭2 beneath the inner-voice motion ½–⅔ above the structural dominant. The vertical dyad D/E♯ within V9 echoes D and F♯ from the tragic D-minor climax. E♯ persists as a neighbor to F♯ until m. 34, dissolving into F♯-minor arpeggios that cease as the maiden disappears into the water. F♯ minor’s tragic return suggests a narrative frame, reflecting the narrator’s speech. Each musical depiction of the

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73 Example 5.11 shows an implied E♯4 at m. 29 for reasons of registral continuity.
maiden’s experience in Brahms’s setting portrays death, represented by D minor, as if in the present, though it ultimately remains in the past.

Example 5.11: “Treue Liebe” graph of the A¹ section (mm. 15–36)

“Herbstgefühl” (op. 48, no. 7)

In “Herbstgefühl” Brahms further explores the potential for insufficiently established D-major and D-minor keys, which lack a cadence, to signify changing temporality. Unlike the stable F#-minor tonic in “Treue Liebe,” “Herbstgefühl” cultivates tonal ambiguity that captures the paired images of a leaf clinging weakly to its branch and the protagonist clinging ineffectively to life. Brahms’s ternary-form setting (ABA¹) depicts the protagonist’s present uncertainty about life in sections A and A¹, while the key of VI♭ in section B conveys menacing visions of present life triggered by the leaf. This region suggests the protagonist’s psychological turn inwards as he compares the leaf with his internal emotions. Although attempts to cadence in D major in A and A¹ convey desire for future rest, troubling D-minor intrusions prevent its achievement.
Tonal ambiguity in sections A and B

Both tonal and phrase-structural ambiguities reflect the protagonist’s emotional uncertainty in “Herbstgefühl.” Brahms creates instability using irregular groups of three, five, and six measures to declaim each poetic line in section A (ex. 5.12). Unstable D-major six-four chords, associated with death at “tötlich” (mm. 8–9), oscillate within the tenuous F♯-minor key, established only by a six-three chord (m. 14) and the prolonged dominant chord spanning mm. 4–30, as shown in ex. 5.13. The half step D/C♯, which differentiates the F♯ minor and D major triads, seems to depict the fragile boundary between life and death, holding both states in abeyance just as neither dominant—C♯ major or A major (m. 16)—confirms a principal tonic. Primed by the lengthy prolongation of V of F♯ minor (mm. 4–30) and the briefer V⁷ of D major (mm. 16–17), the listener expects tonal resolution in either key, but the deceptive resolution of D major’s V⁷ in m. 18—as an augmented sixth leading to an apparent cadential six-four chord in C♯ minor—delays D major’s arrival until m. 22, where it still lacks firm tonicization by its dominant.

Brahms provides momentary tonal clarity as a root-position D-major prolongation (mm. 22–24) provides consonant support for D⁴ (m. 24) and respite from the prolongation of F♯ minor’s dominant (ex. 5.13). Yet while D major’s I and IV chords prolong it (mm. 20–25), Brahms withholds a cadence in this still-ephemeral key. D major’s temporary stability suggests

74 Heather Platt’s analysis of the F♯-minor song “Regenlied” (op. 59, no. 3) locates a similar prolonged dominant beginning the song. Inge van Rij also notes that D major suggests temporality in “Regenlied”: “[…] in ‘Regenlied’ the raindrops transport the narrator back to fond memories of childhood (and, in Brahms’s setting, to sections in the relative major and submediant major….” Van Rij, Brahms’s Song Collections, 54 (emphasis mine). A fleeting appearance of D minor during the repeated text “drang bis ins verborgne Leben” (mm. 90–92) in “Regenlied” further links the minor submediant to the theme of death.

75 The voice emphasizes this D–C♯ motive throughout mm. 4–6.

76 Tonal clarity provided by D major coincides with the song’s first unambiguous four-measure group, mm. 22–25, as passing V⁴₃ chords in D major and G major prolong I and IV respectively.
the protagonist’s heightened focus on the single leaf (“ein einzles Blatt”), a crystalline image whose assured fate contrasts with his own internally harbored uncertainty. As in “Treue Liebe,” D4, a supported consonance in m. 24, becomes a dissonant ninth within V9 (m. 26) as if to illustrate the protagonist’s thoughts turning to anxiety inspired by the leaf (ex. 5.13). The

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This negative turn occurs during repeated text in both songs. I interpret Brahms’s repetition of “ein einzles Blatt” as reflecting his desire to emphasize the leaf’s importance as a catalyst in the protagonist’s emotional experience.
Example 5.13: “Herbstgefühl,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–33)

piano tends toward a consonant D₄ again in register 3 (m. 28) supporting VI, a neighboring chord within F# minor’s prolonged dominant (mm. 26–31), but D descends, yielding a C#–D–C# motive in the bass (echoed in the alto), as shown in ex. 5.13.

Lacking an authentic cadence, D major does not emerge as a key but exists within prolongations of F# minor’s unstable V chord in section A. Section B pursues greater stability for VI—the envisioned future—through repeated attempts to revisit and resolve D major’s V⁷ chord (compare m. 16 in ex. 5.13) as a metaphor for the protagonist’s attempts, like the leaf, to achieve future peace. Section B (mm. 35–63), shown in ex. 5.14, compares the protagonist’s inner turmoil to a gloomy day (“ein nächtig, trüber, kalter Tag”), depicting blustery winds in the accompaniment that contrast with the slow, icy breezes depicted in A and A¹.⁷⁸ As in “Treue Liebe,” D minor (established in m. 37 as E# becomes F⁵) conveys an emerging present; Brahms prolongs it as the protagonist acknowledges his present burden (“so schauert über mein

⁷⁸Brahms’s depiction of the chilled atmosphere (“frost’gen”) in the outer sections also highlights similarities between this song and “Es hing der Reif” (op. 106, no. 3, analyzed in ch. 2). Similar vocal melismas, declamation, stark accompanimental textures, and tonal ambiguity between third-related keys (F# minor/D major and A minor/C major) suggest an intertextual relationship between the two songs that is further supported by their related wintry themes and simple declamation. The intertextual relationship, however, remains at the tonal surface of both songs, since “Es hing der Reif” does not establish its tonally paired key (C major) to the same extent that occurs in section B of “Herbstgefühl,” where D major and minor appear in root position. As shown in ch. 2, C major remains largely unconfirmed not only by cadences, but also by any root-position chord in the former song.
Leben...”), while its Neapolitan (Eb major, m. 39) functions as the predominant in a cadence that attempts to confirm the minor-submediant region, coinciding with the upper-voice fourth-progression D5–A4 in mm. 35–43 (ex. 5.15).79

Example 5.14: “Herbstgefühl,” B section (mm. 32–63)

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79This resembles m. 21 of “Treue Liebe,” although a cadence is lacking there.
As ex. 5.15 shows, the large-scale modal shift toward D major (VI\(_7\)–#) and the upper-voice fourth progression in mm. 35–43 echo references to death (“tötlich”) that coincide with unstable D-major six-four chords in section A (compare mm. 5–8 in ex. 5.13), as if depicting the protagonist’s now-magnified anxieties that were hidden in stanza 1.\(^80\) When the protagonist addresses his heart’s unceasing palpitations, Brahms turns again toward D major (ex. 5.15). The upper voice repeats stepwise descents from A\(_4\) (5–4–3, mm. 43–57) that oscillate between D major and minor while seeking \(\hat{1}\). By confirming D major’s presence through an imperfect authentic cadence (m. 57), mm. 43–57 also recall the protagonist’s first encounter with the leaf in section A (compare mm. 22–24 in ex. 5.13), as if musically suggesting that the protagonist comes closer to death. But as the upper voice seeks \(\hat{1}\) and a perfect authentic cadence in D major,

\(^{80}\)The voice’s descending fourth-motive D–C\(_5\)–B–A (mm. 35–36; ex. 5.14) also outlines D minor much as the fourth-progression D\(_5\)–A\(_4\) outlined D major at “tötlich” in section A. Although D major also suggests V of G minor at m. 43, D minor’s return at m. 47 leads me to analyze the D major chord in m. 43 as representing the underlying key of D.
Brahms frustrates this goal with a deceptive motion to B♭ major (♭VI) in m. 50 and provides melodic closure only on ♭3 (F♯) in m. 57. The piano’s right hand reaches D4 too late (m. 62), passing through this pitch on the way to the F♯-minor half cadence in m. 63, which dissolves any further promise of a cadence in VI as it announces the beginning of section A¹. The voice regains the Kopfton C♯5 in m. 63 and E♯4 in the accompaniment replaces F♯ with F♯ minor’s leading tone, restoring the unstable tonic region as the ambiguous present overtakes fleeting visions of future death.

Explicit harmonic support (VI and IV) for the descending thirds in the piano’s right hand (mm. 57–62), which appeared unsupported in mm. 1–4, enables a seamless connection between B and A¹. As ex. 5.15 shows, a 5–6 motion above D3 (mm. 57–62) connects VI with IV, leading to F♯ minor’s dominant (m. 63); the function of D3 as a dependent neighbor to C♯2 here echoes its similar function in section A (compare mm. 22 and 28 in ex. 5.13). Emerging gradually, the A¹ reprise restores the uncertain atmosphere from section A as the protagonist’s fears recede.⁸¹

Example 5.15: “Herbstgefühl,” graph of the B section (mm. 35–63)

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⁸¹This harmonic dovetailing into the A¹ reprise also minimizes the punctuation across stanzas 2 and 3, which separates line 4 in stanza 2 from line 1 in stanza 3. Brahms’s continuous harmonic connection reflects the protagonist’s uninterrupted address to his heart across this boundary.
D major and death in A\textsuperscript{1}

Subtle musical alterations in section A\textsuperscript{1} (mm. 63–89), shown in exs. 5.16 (score) and 5.17 (graph), seem to replace earlier unsettled visions of the leaf with a peaceful imagined (albeit unfulfilled) future death. Whereas D5 became a dissonant ninth above C\# in section A, it now remains consonant through m. 84 (ex. 5.17), where the V chord that appeared in m. 26, the corresponding point in section A, is omitted (compare ex. 5.14). The command “Gib dich zur Ruh” also connects the leaf’s fraught image from stanza 1 with the peaceful death suggested by the text. A broadened 6/4 meter, shown in ex. 5.16, depicts the calm hereafter that now accompanies VI. Moreover, the dual function of D major and G major (mm. 80–84), as I and IV in D major or VI and bII in F\# minor, seems to reflect a future (D major) nested within the protagonist’s present (F\# minor), which is no longer disturbed by anxiety.\textsuperscript{82} A rearticulated pp marking (m. 81), D’s strong-beat arrival (doubled in octaves in the left hand), and dotted-half-note rhythms separate D major from the consistent iambic rhythms elsewhere in A\textsuperscript{1}. G major’s V\textsuperscript{4}/3 (sustained over the bar line in mm. 83–84) obscures the meter, as if enacting desired release into death. Despite the augmented note values, groups of four dotted-half-note units persist (ex. 5.16), reflecting a change from grouping based on vocal entrances to hypermeter. Regular four-beat hypermeasures that follow the change to 6/4 seem to reflect the protagonist’s calm visions of death. The voice moves effortlessly between D4 and D5, a now-supported consonance in m. 84, much as tormenting visions no longer disturb the protagonist. But F\# minor returns at the structural cadence on Î (m. 89), as if reinstating the present and suggesting narrative closure.

\textsuperscript{82}I interpret mm. 80–84 as depicting the future in A\textsuperscript{1} on account of the now-absent dominant that transformed D5 into a dissonance.
During the postlude, the piano resolves $E^\#$ (m. 90) recalling $F_\flat$, and echoes the Kopfton in a tenor voice ($C^\#$), perhaps reflecting the protagonist’s still-ambivalent state.

Example 5.16: “Herbstgefühl,” $A^1$ section (mm. 63–89)
Example 5.17: “Herbstgefühl,” graph of the A¹ section (mm. 63–89)

Brahms’s E-major narratives

While the comparisons above suggest that Brahms modeled songs in the same key on each other, the following brief analysis of “An die Nachtigall” (op. 46, no. 4) returns to the Neapolitan complex in order to acknowledge the possible narrative similarities of songs in different keys whose tonal plans resemble each other. Wintle and others have shown that both F-minor and E-major songs often exhibit a strong tendency toward the major and minor Neapolitan regions, elevating the importance of the keys these pieces tend to visit.⁸³ The following analysis focuses on how Brahms’s choice to pursue one particular path through the Neapolitan complex over another might reflect his reading of poetic temporality. Specifically, Brahms’s treatment of F major (♭II) and B minor (minor V) in “An die Nachtigall” pursues the minor dominant more than in other Neapolitan complex songs, which influences the song’s large-scale, two-part form. As shown in ch. 4, “Unbewegte laue Luft” denies an F-major cadence by nesting it within dominant prolongations, and invokes the enharmonic twins F♯ and E♭ during a pivotal temporal change from the present to the envisioned future. “An die Nachtigall” also tonicizes F major

⁸³Wintle, “The Sceptred Pall,” 204.
within dominant prolongation, but it suggests the reawakening of past love within the protagonist’s present experience of the nightingale’s song. Modal mixture, which prepares the Neapolitan region in stages, also assumes a more important role in “An die Nachtigall,” as if conveying the nightingale’s song slowly saturating the protagonist’s present consciousness.84

“An die Nachtigall” (op. 46, no. 4)

Two versions of Hölty’s poem

The analyses of nightingale-inspired poetry in earlier chapters demonstrate changes from an implied to an explicit past, which Brahms realizes musically. A comparison between two versions of “An die Nachtigall”—both the poem adapted by Johann Heinrich Voss (fig. 5.6) and the original by Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty, titled “An eine Nachtigall, die vor meinem Fenster sang” (fig. 5.6a)—similarly reveals an emergent poetic past.85 Voss’s two stanzas abbreviate Hölty’s six-stanza original using classically inspired, hendecasyllabic odd lines and recurring iambic dimeter in even lines.86 Voss’s shorter text also condenses a relationship between past and present found in the original version. While Hölty’s poem dwells at length on the dismal emotional effects of implied lost love, Voss includes only a short description (lines 9–12) that focuses the reader on the nightingale, which powerfully revives the protagonist’s dormant memories. As fig. 5.6a shows, stanzas 1–2 in Hölty’s poem reference the protagonist’s suffering (“Qual”) and describe the nightingale’s cathartic effect—it awakens a painful past,

84It is interesting to note Brahms’s similar depiction of the nightingale’s cathartic role in songs that are not grouped here based on tonal similarities. The nightingale in “Nachtigall” (op. 97, no. 1) suggests a reawakened past within the protagonist’s present experience. In “Vorüber” (op. 58, no. 8), the nightingale’s song implies that the past is inaccessible and emphasizes an inescapably painful present.

85Both Schubert and Brahms set Voss’s adaptations of Hölty. I show the version of these poets’ texts (figs. 5.6 and 5.6a) as they appear in Maximilian and Lilly Schochow, Franz Schubert: Die Texte seiner einstimmig komponierten Lieder und ihre Dichter (Hildesheim: Olms, 1997): 172–73.

86Voss was a known expert in Classical meters, and he may have attempted to render Hölty’s original poem in stricter meters here.
embodied by an image that has long lain asleep in the protagonist’s soul. Stanzas 3–5 center on the demonic suffering (“Die Unholdinn”) unleashed by lost love. The protagonist resumes his subjective address to the nightingale only after this lengthy, distanced proclamation, bitterly ordering the bird away (stanza 6).

As noted above, Voss limits this description to four lines (9–12) in stanza 2, privileging the protagonist’s present hearing of the nightingale (lines 1–4 and 13–16) and only alluding to past pain (lines 5–12). That is, Voss’s internal quatrains (bridging stanzas 1 and 2) create a chiastic form that is bracketed in fig. 5.6; the protagonist’s address to the nightingale in the outer quatrains (lines 1–4 and 13–16) encloses his attempts to repress painful memories (lines 5–12). Yet despite his efforts, the past bleeds into the present during the poem’s central eight lines, albeit on a smaller scale than in Hölty’s version. As I will show, a reprise within Brahms’s modified strophic setting acknowledges the two-part poetic form—stanzas 1 and 2 remain separate—but also resurrects the poem’s central implied past by developing chromaticism foreshadowed earlier and tonicizing increasingly distant chromatic keys across the song’s interior sections.

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87Voss refers directly to love (substituting “Liebe” for “Bildniss”) and removes references to pain (“Qual”) from quatrain 2.
**Figure 5.6:** Johann Heinrich Voss, “An eine Nachtigall,” *Gedichte von Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty besorgt durch seine Freunde Friederich Leopold Grafen zu Stolberg und Johann Heinrich Voß.* Hamburg: Bohn, 1783

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Temporal Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Geuß nicht so laut der liebentflammten Lieder</td>
<td>Do not pour forth your love-enflamed songs’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tonreichen Schall</td>
<td>Tuneful sounds so loudly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Vom Blütenast des Apfelbaums hernieder,</td>
<td>Down from the apple tree’s blossoming branch,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 O Nachtigall!</td>
<td>Oh nightingale!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Du tönest mir mit deiner süßen Kehle</td>
<td>With your sweet throat you awaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Die Liebe wach;</td>
<td>Love within me;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Denn schon durchbebt die Tiefen meiner Seele</td>
<td>For already the depths of my soul are stirred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dein schmelzend Ach.</td>
<td>By your melting cry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Dann flieht der Schlaf von neuem dieses Lager,</td>
<td>Then sleep flees once more from this my bed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Ich starre dann,</td>
<td>Then I stare,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Mit nassem Blick, und todenbleich und hager,</td>
<td>With a tearful gaze, deathly pale and haggard,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Den Himmel an.</td>
<td>At the sky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Fleuch, Nachtigall, in grüne Finsternisse,</td>
<td>Fly, nightingale, into the green darknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Ins Haingesträuch,</td>
<td>Into the bushy grove,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Und spend’ im Nest der treuen Gattin Küsse;</td>
<td>And shower kisses on your faithful mate in your nest,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Entfleuch, entfleuch!</td>
<td>Fly off, fly off!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.6a: Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty, “An eine Nachtigall, die vor meinem Kammerfenster sang,” Maximilian and Lilly Schochow, Franz Schubert: Die Texte seiner einstimig komponierten Lieder und ihre Dichter. Hildesheim: Olms, 1997

Gieß nicht so laut die liebeglühenden Lieder,  
Zu meiner Qual,  
Vom Blüthenast des Apfelbaums hernieder,  
O Nachtigall!

Sie tönen mir, o liebe Philomele,  
Das Bildniß wach,  
Das lange schon, in meiner trüben Seele,  
Im Schlummer lag.

Die Unholdinn verbannet Rast und Schlummer  
Durch ihren Stab,  
Und stürzet uns, nach jahrelangen Kummer,  
Wohl gar ins Grab.

Sie trinkt voll Gier von unserm Herzensblute,  
Und schwelgt sich satt;  
Giebt Dornen dem, der sonst auf Rosen ruhte,  
Zur Lagerstatt.

Und machte ihm die Welt zum offnen Grabe,  
Das seiner harrt.  
Unglücklich, wer von ihrem Zaubertaube  
Getroffen ward!

Fleuch tiefer in die grünen Finsterniße,  
O Sängerin,  
Und spend im Nest der treuen Gattin Küße,  
Fleuch hin, fleuch hin!

Do not pour the love-enflamed songs so loudly,  
To my torment,  
Down from the branch of the apple blossom tree,  
Oh nightingale!

They awaken, oh dear Philomel,  
The image  
That long lay asleep  
In my dreary soul.

The demoness banishes rest and sleep  
With her staff,  
And casts us, after years of sorrow,  
Even into our grave.

She greedily drinks of our heart’s blood,  
And satiates herself,  
Gives thorns to him who once rested on roses  
As a bed.

And [she] turned the world into the open grave  
That awaits him.  
Woe unto him who was struck by  
Her magic wand!

Fly deeper into the green darkness,  
Oh singer,  
And shower kisses upon your faithful mate in your nest,  
Fly off, fly off.

**Form and the Neapolitan in Brahms’s setting**

Brahms sets Hölty’s two-stanza poem as a modified strophic form (AA¹) that models the nightingale’s gradual effects on the protagonist. As fig. 5.7 shows, it manifests the implied poetic past (lines 5–12) by (1) introducing modal mixture in section A that prepares F major’s tonicization and (2) tonicizing B minor in section A¹ (see “tonal narrative”). That is, although two parallel strophes reflect the two-stanza poetic design, heightened chromaticism appears mainly in the latter part of A and the first part of A¹, reflecting the focus on internal past perceptions that bridges the poem’s two halves.

As fig. 5.7 shows, A and A¹ each contain two subsections. The first part of section A, labeled a and a¹ (mm. 1–14), extends an eight-measure period to encompass antecedent and consequent phrases of six and seven measures, respectively, tonicizing V in m. 14, while the second section, labeled b and b¹ (mm. 15–27), passes through an F-major region (mm. 21–23). After mm. 25–27 reinstate the E-major tonic, the first subsection in A¹ (mm. 29–44) echoes modally inflected pitches from section A (C₃ and G₃), and tonicizes B minor. F⁷ ascends (as E⁷) to F# here, as b₂ in the tonic region becomes #₄ in the dominant region.⁸⁹ The opposition between C# and C₃ in A¹ (mm. 29–55) and the postlude suggests a final acceptance of loss despite reawakened pain in the present.

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⁸⁹Wintle’s three-tiered diagram of the Neapolitan complex shows the dominant region on its own staff, visually reinforcing the perception that B minor is “distant” from E major despite its capability to be quickly reactivated into a major V chord and resolved to an E-major tonic.
**Figure 5.7:** “An die Nachtigall,” form chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form:</th>
<th>A (a)</th>
<th>(a1)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>(b1)</th>
<th>—</th>
<th>A1 (a)</th>
<th>(a1)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>(b1)</th>
<th>postlude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poem:</td>
<td>lines 1–2</td>
<td>3–4</td>
<td>5–6</td>
<td>7–8</td>
<td>9–10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency:</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
<td>piano interlude</td>
<td>voice + piano</td>
<td>piano postlude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic Progression in E major:</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V_T</td>
<td>V_A</td>
<td>VI→II→V^4_2→I^6→I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>minor V_T</td>
<td>V_A</td>
<td>(IV tonicized; deceptive motion to VI)</td>
<td>I→IV^6→I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal Narrative involving F, C, G:</td>
<td>diatonic E major undisturbed by chromaticism</td>
<td>C₆ and G₆ introduced within iVI^5, F major tonicized</td>
<td>G₆ becomes G#</td>
<td>*C₆ replaces earlier C#s</td>
<td>F₇ resolves as E# to F#</td>
<td>C₆/C# conflict continues</td>
<td>C# resolves upward through D# to E</td>
<td>C₆ lingers, as if unresolved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporality in Brahms’s setting:</td>
<td>present/external</td>
<td>present effects/internal</td>
<td>re-lived past within present/internal</td>
<td>re-lived past continues to control present</td>
<td>present/external</td>
<td>past-tinged melancholy present remains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Tonal foreshadowing of the past in A

Just as the nightingale’s song stirs the protagonist’s latent pain, chromaticism gradually suffuses the period in mm. 1–14, shown in ex. 5.18. The piano’s high register and syncopations portray the nightingale rustling in the trees at the beginning of the antecedent and consequent phrases (mm. 1–5 and 8–11), but this yields to a “human” vocal register during the text “tonreichen Schall” and “O Nachtigall,” denoting the protagonist’s speech. The simple diatonic progression from I to V in the antecedent phrase (mm. 1–7) implies an undisturbed, serene atmosphere, but the chromatic pitches B# (m. 6), E# (m. 11), and A# (m. 10) hint at the later emergence of C♯, B♭, and F♯ in F major. Expanded II and V chords (mm. 5–6 and 13–14) also extend the antecedent and consequent phrases by delaying the half cadence in m. 7 and the suggested (but not literal) perfect authentic cadence in the dominant (B major) in m. 14, as if signifying magnified time when the protagonist listens to the nightingale. The motive B–C♯ (mm. 2–3 and 8–9) creates parallelism between the antecedent and consequent phrases and highlights C♯5 (♯6). Later altered to B–C♯ (mm. 18–19), this motive will suggest the protagonist’s entrance into pained memories.

Measures 15–29 continue phrase expansions and demonstrate further interplay between nightingale and human registers (ex. 5.18). During a standing on E major’s dominant (mm. 15–18), sforzando markings in mm. 15 and 16 mimic the nightingale’s piercing song as the piano outlines a stepwise melody from G♯ to implied D♯ in the nightingale’s register. As ex. 5.19 shows, this appears above the descent of the principal upper voice from 5 to 2 (mm. 14–18),

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90 Brahms emphasizes both prolongations by setting the text “tonreichen Schall” and “O Nachtigall” to augmented rhythms (half notes versus quarter notes). These harmonic expansions also foreshadow the F-major prolongation in mm. 21–23.
Example 5.18: “An die Nachtigall,” A section (mm. 1–28)
which repeats the same descent in the antecedent phrase (mm. 2–7). Yet G₄ and a diminished seventh chord (m. 17) now inflect the upper-voice descent from the Kopfton B₅. G₄ seems to evoke the emerging past love that Brahms’s lengthened declamation of “Liebe” actualizes.⁹¹ Measures 19–20 continue to depict this awakening, starting a second four-measure group that Brahms interrupts in m. 21 (ex. 5.18). An interpolated four-measure tonicization of F major (mm. 21–24) instead suggests the latent pain stirred by the nightingale’s outbursts (“Dein schmelzend Ach”). As ex. 5.19 shows, C₃, introduced beneath the piano’s third-progression G♯₅–F♯₅–E₅ in mm. 19–20 transforms the diminished seventh chord from m. 17 into ⫷Vº₅ (m.

⁹¹Brahms creates a sense of time magnified here by dwelling for an entire measure on the diminished seventh chord E–G₄–A♯–C♯, which disturbs the standing on the dominant spanning mm. 15–18 just as chromatic pitches earlier disturbed mm. 6, 11, and 12.
Example 5.19: “An die Nachtigall,” graph of the A section (mm. 1–27)
21) in order to smoothly enter the Neapolitan region. The voice even seems to reach into the nightingale’s register here, attaining G♭5 and F♯5 in mm. 21–22 (ex. 5.18).

As F major emerges into the foreground, it pushes E major into the background, as if portraying the protagonist shifting his focus from external to internal phenomena and from the present to the past. As ex. 5.19 shows, the upper-voice progression 5–4–3–2 spanning mm. 14–25 also reflects this temporal shift, passing through the chromatic pitches G♭4 (m. 20) and F♯4 (m. 24), earlier sung by the voice, en route to ¹ (m. 25). The larger progression V–V⁺₂–I⁶ spanning mm. 18–25, subsumes the F-major prolongation, an interpolation within the motion from V to V⁺₂, as if depicting a momentary faltering into the past, while the I⁶ chord in m. 25 seems to replace an imminent E-minor key that could have ended the strophe, confirming the protagonist’s irreversible loss.

By preventing an E-minor cadence, E major’s return suggests a return to the repressed present, as if the speaker can only temporarily withstand the pangs of past memories (F major). Interpreted within this narrative and the tonal frame of an E-major present, the piano interlude (mm. 27–28) might be understood to act as a dispassionate narrator, gently recalling the pained diminished seventh chord (and G♯) from m. 17 and restoring the nightingale’s actual song (versus the protagonist’s modally inflected hearing of it) through its “corrected” third-motive G♯5–F♯5–E5 in E major (mm. 28–29; see exs. 5.18 and 5.21).

92 Brahms similarly replaces imminent E-minor cadences (and the Neapolitan region) with E major in the A section of “O wüsst ich doch den Weg zurück” (op. 63, no. 8), as if conveying the speaker’s shift between present loneliness and cherished (albeit bittersweet) recollections of childhood. Brahms later revisits this opposition between E minor, fulfilled at the song’s structural cadence, and E major, restored in the piano postlude.

93 During both b and b¹, Brahms projects the inner voices G♯ and G♭ into register 5, as if indicating that the nightingale’s song becomes more pronounced in the protagonist’s perceptions.
Tonal irresolution in A¹

Persistent modal mixture in section A¹ implies that the nightingale continues to inspire visions of the past that control the protagonist’s present experience.⁹⁴ C♯5 (mm. 30 and 36; see ex. 5.20) twice undercuts the listener’s expectation for C♯5. The voice’s B–C♯ motive in mm. 35–36 inaugurates a longer stepwise ascent (supported by a chromaticized 5–6 sequence), reaching E♯ en route to a dramatic B-minor tonicization (mm. 39–42; ex. 5.21). As in “Unbewegte laue Luft,” the opposition between F♯ and its twin E♯ embodies a latent poetic connection: the implied past emerges and evolves acrossquatrains 2 and 3, bridging Hölty’s two stanzas, just as E♯ further develops F♯’s potential to destabilize E major. Brahms pursues this surprising turn to B minor just as lines 9–12 (stanza 2) reveal the nightingale’s increasing cathartic powers, first described in lines 5–9 (stanza 1).⁹⁵ And while B minor’s dark mood aptly expresses the protagonist’s sleepless, isolated state, it only simulates a distant tonality.⁹⁶ The quick reactivation of V♯ in m. 44 (ex. 5.20), coinciding with the late arrival of B2 (which is expected on the downbeat of m. 42), seems to draw the listener out of the protagonist’s internal perceptions (effects of the past; B minor), back into expository narration (present; E major).⁹⁷

Despite the frequent use of the present tense and focus on external phenomena inquatrains 1 and 4 of Voss’s poem, dark imagery in quatrain 4 (“grün Feinstnisses”) replaces the signs of spring in quatrain 1 (“Blütenast des Apfelbaums”). This imagery enhances the progression between the present and implied past, as if portraying a change from naivety to lost

⁹⁴This chromaticism prevents the otherwise exact correspondence between A and A¹. The only textural alteration in A¹, triplets in the accompaniment, suggests that the nightingale’s rustling increases, and that it eventually flies away.
⁹⁵I interpret quatrains rather than couplets on account of the poem’s rhyme scheme (abab, cdc, etc.), and its punctuation, which articulates four-line sentences.
⁹⁶Schoenberg regards v-minor as a closely related region. Schoenberg, Structural Functions of Harmony, 51.
⁹⁷Rhyming fifth-progressions, shown in exs. 5.18 and 5.19, articulate the mid- and endpoints of A and A¹ at B-major, E-major, and B-minor cadences (see n. 101 below). These betray motivic development, further suggesting that B minor depicts the developing poetic temporal progression.
innocence spanning the poem. Both the lingering modal mixture in A\textsuperscript{1} (C\textsubscript{3} and G\textsubscript{4}) and Brahms’s recomposition of “b\textsuperscript{1}” seem to superimpose this suggestion of lost innocence onto the poem’s chiastic temporal structure, in which the protagonist returns completely to the present in lines 13–16. As ex. 5.20 shows, G\textsubscript{4} (m. 47) persists within the evocative diminished seventh chord from earlier sections, while C\textsubscript{3} (m. 52) opposes C\# following the modified 5–6 sequence in mm. 49–51 and within a plagally embellished perfect authentic cadence (mm. 54–57).\textsuperscript{98}

**Example 5.20:** “An die Nachtigall,” A\textsuperscript{1} section (mm. 29–57)

\textsuperscript{98}Platt cites this type of plagal embellishment of a perfect authentic cadence in “Unrequited Love and Unresolved Dominants,” 120, n. 4.
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Example 5.21: “An die Nachtigall,” graph of the piano interlude (mm. 27–28) and A$^1$ (mm. 29–44)

Example 5.22 summarizes Brahms’s recomposition of mm. 49–51 in A$^1$, which replaces the F-major interpolation from section A with a modified ascending 5–6 sequence that emphasizes the major and minor subdominant (A major/minor). Following the inner-voice progression from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{2}$ (mm. 44–48), this sequence prevents the attainment of $\hat{1}$ (E4), enabling a stepwise upper-voice ascent ($\hat{5}$–$\hat{6}$–$\hat{7}$–$\hat{8}$) to E5 (mm. 48–51) instead.$^{99}$ Owing to its arrival above an unstable dominant (V$^7$ of IV$^6$), E5 provides insufficient melodic resolution where the voice’s lengthened declamation of “Küsse” (ex. 5.20), paradoxically, suggests vanished kisses. (By holding E5 for a longer duration, the voice suggests lingering in the memory of kisses that were once enjoyed, adding meaning to the poem, which only describes the kisses of the nightingale and his mate.) Along with the unstable chromatic stepwise descent in the piano’s left hand, this

$^{99}$An alternate interpretation locates the descent $\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{2}$ in the highest voice of the piano’s right hand in mm. 52–53, and $\hat{1}$ in m. 55. Yet the salience of the ascending line and its motivic resemblances with earlier rising fourth-motives leads me to analyze the song’s ending as lacking a final descent of the Urlinie. The piano’s A–G#–F# motion in register 5 instead sounds like a faint echo of the descent that should have occurred.
might reflect the protagonist’s bittersweet realization of loss. Further, the upper voice’s registral displacement of D# and E into register 4 and the plagal embellishment in mm. 55–56

**Example 5.22:** “An die Nachtigall,” graph of the A¹ section continued (mm. 44–57) cause E4 (m. 55) to sound insufficiently supported. As if unable to face the nightingale any longer, the protagonist seems to turn his head away when the vocal line abandons its projected motion through D#5 and E5, bowing away into an inner voice.

**Conclusion**

This chapter compares a limited number of Brahms’s shared-key songs within his output of Lieder, a single genre, and does not consider the influence of other types of works in the same key. The similar tonal features in chamber music and song noted by Walter Frisch, for instance,

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100 Additionally, the stepwise rising fourth B–E seems to fulfill the earlier desire of º6 to resolve upward, through D#, to E. Carl Schachter notes a similar tendency of º6 to function as an uncomfortable neighboring tone to 5, citing the desire of F# in Brahms’s A-minor song “Meerfahrt” (op. 96, no. 4) to rise through G# to A in the large-scale upper voice. Carl Schachter, *The Art of Tonal Analysis*, ed. Joseph N. Straus (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5–6.

101 The *Urlinie’s* failure to descend through a complete, stepwise fifth-progression from B–E is further highlighted by the presence of the completed fifth-progressions F#–B and B–E in mm. 11–14 (the piano’s left hand), 25–27 (vocal line), and 41–44 (the piano’s left hand), which punctuate their respective sections.
or the vast array of earlier compositions that likely informed Brahms’s compositions at any given time remain outside the scope of this study of self-modeling.102 Yet, notwithstanding this limited purview, the analyses in this chapter posit that Brahms’s interest in revisiting tonalities corresponds to his interest in recurring poetic themes (including struggle and victory in the B-minor songs and death in the F#-minor songs) and highlight similarities between chronologically disparate songs in his output. Viewing the songs’ tonal plans through the lens of poetic temporality reveals subtle differences among them, such as varying emphases on recurring tonal regions, recomposed motives, and in the case of the 1885 “twins,” an entire climax reworked between songs.

While these songs do not represent Brahms’s only works in F minor, B minor, F# minor, or E major, their texts allow a comparison of tonal deviations that sheds light on Brahms’s explorations of new expressive possibilities when returning to a key. If Brahms’s self-modeling resembles Kramer’s estimation of Schubert’s faint “rehearings” (see p. 291, n. 7), it also provides insight into his sensitivity to each protagonist’s inner desires and thoughts and Brahms’s own engagement with his compositional past. Brahms’s practice of self-modeling reinforces the basic tenets of his songwriting practice. He portrays the richness and depth of human perceptual and temporal experience using deceptively simple nineteenth-century tonal techniques, but he arranges these in complex hierarchical relationships that model human temporal experience. Brahms’s use of tonal ambiguities, harmonic prolongation, and implied keys to draw forth concealed poetic temporalities and to depict psychological transformations as the text expresses

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102: For instance, in Walter Frisch’s book *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation*, ch. 4 (“Song and Chamber Music”) pairs two genres and explores the mutual influence of these on each other, while Wintle discusses Brahms’s chamber music and songs from the 1860s in “The Sceptred Pall.”
narration versus direct perceptual experience calls to mind George Henschel’s recollections about Brahms’s admiration for Schubert’s Suleika songs:

Schubert’s Suleika songs are to me the only instances where the power and beauty of Goethe’s words have been enhanced by the music. All other of Goethe’s poems seem to me so perfect in themselves that no music can improve them.103

It seems that in critically “reading” a poem, Brahms musically supplies the listener with a completed image of the speaker’s perceptual life, which the poem only partly discloses. He also bestows new dynamism upon the poem’s language—its tenses and implied temporal shifts—using harmonic processes and tonal hierarchies to recreate for the listener the protagonist’s experience of temporality.

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103 George S. Bozarth, Johannes Brahms & George Henschel: An Enduring Friendship (Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2008), 266–67 (emphasis mine).
Chapter Six

Conclusion

Writing about Brahms’s songs in 1992, Heather Platt aimed to defend them against the criticism issued by early-twentieth-century German authors who found fault with Brahms’s phrase structure and declamation. Platt countered these negative views of Brahms’s songs with a positive assessment, emphasizing his concern for text expression. This favorable opinion of Brahms’s songs, which resembles their enthusiastic reception by Brahms’s own contemporaries (such as Gustav Jenner, Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, Clara Schumann, and Georg Henschel, among others), provided the basis for later scholarly work to further demonstrate Brahms’s engagement with poetic meaning.

In the years since Platt’s dissertation, Inge van Rij has shown that Brahms carefully copied poems into his notebooks, and that he published songs in groups, or bouquets, that reflect narrative trajectories and recurring poetic themes. Still more recently, Susan Youens has suggested that “Kein Haus, Keine Heimat” (op. 94, no. 5), which sets only two stanzas from a longer narrative poem by Friedrich Halm titled “In der Südsee” might reflect Brahms’s awareness of this original poetic source and his tacit acknowledgement of its controversial subject matter. Compilations of Brahms’s song texts by Max Friedländer and Eric Sams further reveal that Brahms did not hesitate to alter poetic texts. This research has expanded the notion

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1 As Harald Krebs notes, Mendelssohn’s songs were subjected to a similarly negative critique in the early twentieth century by partisans of Wolf’s approach to text setting. Yet Krebs’s recent analyses show that, like Brahms, Mendelssohn used expressive declamation to highlight the protagonist’s experience. “Changes of Pace: Expressive Acceleration and Deceleration in Felix Mendelssohn’s Vocal Rhythms,” Rethinking Mendelssohn (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

2 Susan Youens, “Anthropophagy, Abolition, and Brahms: An Unlikely Conjunction” (lecture, University of Rochester, 2016).

that Brahms read poems closely and expressed an enduring interest in their broader literary context.⁴

This dissertation has aimed to continue cultivating a positive assessment of Brahms’s songs as works that deeply express their texts. It fills a lacuna in existing scholarship by focusing on Brahms’s use of harmony to signify protagonists’ fluctuating perceptions and experience of time—a topic that, as Platt notes, early-twentieth-century studies by Paul Mies, Walter Hammerman, and others only touch upon.⁵ Further, since Brahms’s great admiration for the songs of Schubert and Schumann manifests itself in various ways, including his emulation of Schumann’s knowledge of literature and his self-professed emulation of Schubert’s tendency to set a text strophically when possible, a second thread that runs through the present study is its goal of aligning Brahms more directly with his most esteemed song composers.⁶ In ch. 2, for instance, I have demonstrated that Brahms deploys modal oppositions in a manner related to Schubert’s practice. More broadly, I have attempted to cultivate an image of Brahms as a song composer that echoes Josef von Spaun’s frequently cited tribute to Schubert:

Whatever filled the poet’s breast Schubert faithfully represented and transfigured in each of his songs, as none has done before him. Every one of his song compositions is in reality a poem on the poem he set to music.⁷

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⁴The volumes of poetry that Brahms compiled in his extensive library are catalogued in Kurt Hofmann, *Die Bibliothek von Johannes Brahms: Bücher- und Musikalienverzeichnis* (Hamburg: Verlag der Musikalienhandlung Wagner, 1974). Gustav Jenner writes, “He [Brahms] knew and read just about everything there was; but he once told me that he had almost never bought a book himself. Into that [his] armoire disappeared those volumes that were sent to him by the modern poets of the day, always without success. But I often held in my hands proof that he had read even the most miserable, pitiful scribblings. Once, in one of these volumes, I found a poem that Brahms had marked with signs of his most extreme displeasure: in it, Rückert was arrogantly and contemptuously dismissed. I mentioned this to Brahms, and he said, ‘I know, a fellow like that abuses Rückert!’” See Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Karnes, *Brahms and His World* rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 400.


⁶Jenner recalls that Brahms demanded a strophic treatment of the text and recommended that he study Schubert’s strophic songs. Frisch, *Brahms and His World*, 400.

That is, in addition to honoring Brahms’s expressive musical settings, I hope to have shown that he is a poet comparable to the type described by William Wordsworth and interpreted by Kristina Muxfeldt (cited below), thereby drawing him closer to Spaun’s estimation of Schubert. Muxfeldt writes:

For William Wordsworth the cultivation of one’s ability to make absent things become present was the essence of what it meant to be a poet. In the revised “Preface to the Lyrical Ballads” of 1802 he asserted that in addition to such qualities as a lively sensibility and a great knowledge of human nature, the poet ‘has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present [...].’

That Brahms, who identified himself poetically as “the young Kreisler,” might have been receptive to setting poetry in this way is suggested by his entry of a poem titled “Die Tonkunst” (shown below), written by the fourteen-year old poet Elizabeth Kulmann in 1822, into his Schatzkästlein:

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**“Die Tonkunst”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O Töne, ohne Worte</td>
<td>Oh tones, without words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprecht zu den Herzen ihr,</td>
<td>You speak to [human] hearts,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erreget allgewaltig</td>
<td>Stir all-powerfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der Seele Tiefen mir.</td>
<td>The depth of my soul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geheimnisvoll und dennoch</td>
<td>Mysterious and yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wie Menschenworte klar,</td>
<td>Clear like human words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ist eure Geistersprache,</td>
<td>Is your language of spirits,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophetisch, ernst, und wahr.</td>
<td>Prophetic, serious, and true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oft weckt aus ihrem Grabe</td>
<td>Often you wake from its grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ihr die Vergangenheit,</td>
<td>The past,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Und rüttelt nach vors Auge</td>
<td>And shake before my eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mir Szenen künft’ger Zeit.</td>
<td>Scenes of a future time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8Kristina Muxfeldt, *Vanishing Sensibilities*, 120.
Thus while Brahms figured prominently in debates about the power of instrumental music in the nineteenth century—a topic that Kulmann’s poem *seems* to refer to—my invocation of this poem suggests that Brahms activated the power of tonality to render psychological portraits in his songs, allowing the music alone to bring forth “the past” and “scenes of a future time.”

Since Brahms also engaged with poetry in his choral music, in vocal duets and quartets, and in his folksongs (a topic that I mention briefly in ch. 1), suggestions for further research include an extended exploration of how Brahms depicts temporality in these works. Such a study would assess whether the tonal patterns that appear in his solo songs also emerge from his other texted pieces. Another fruitful avenue for further study would be a thorough exploration of Brahms’s folksongs, including their sources, transmission, and texts. Finally, while Brahms’s method for composing songs often stems from his antecedents, including Schubert and Schumann, additional studies of his Lieder might seek evidence of related compositional features in the songs of his student, Gustav Jenner, and his circle, including composers such as Hermann Levi, Julius Otto Grimm, and Adolf Jensen. This research would add to existing literature that compares the songs of Robert and Clara Schumann, or those of Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, in attempts to seek their potential mutual influence.\(^\text{10}\) One might also explore philosophies of temporality in the nineteenth century in order to show how they relate more generally to poetic and musical depictions of temporality in nineteenth-century song.

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**General**


