



Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century 'Lied'

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THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY *LIED*

INTRODUCTION

In spite of its ubiquity, and its singular claim to represent a natural mode of musical expression, song has had a less than decisive influence on the development of music theory and analysis in the twentieth century. Our canonical techniques of analysis have emerged primarily from considerations of instrumental music, not vocal music. And although nothing in principle precludes the application of such techniques to non-instrumental works, song analysis accepts the transfer only with some difficulty.¹

The marginalization of song *as song* in the literature speaks to a very real problem, namely, how to account for the syntax of a genre that includes two nominal semiotic systems, music and language. A pursuit of the dynamics of that inclusion relationship cannot be simply reduced to a routine search for patterns of coincidence or non-coincidence between words and music. To embrace the theoretical challenge fully, we need to define song as a single genre and test its semiotic status. And it is because of this need for basic research that the problems of song analysis cannot be left to music historians, who are usually more content to borrow, apply and criticise analytical methods than to develop them in the first place.²

The aim of this essay is to discuss, by means of example, some of the analytical and interpretative issues raised by the German art song of the nineteenth century. Theory-based analysis of song is notoriously lacking in models. The literature is dominated by individual 'readings'. But the failure to construct explicit models does not necessarily reflect the genre's resistance to theoretical definition. This is not to deny that the balance in disposition between words and music in song shifts at different moments in the history of European music – the songs of Zelter and Schubert, Schumann and Loewe, and Brahms and Wolf present marked contrasts in the relative weighting of words and music. Such differences, however, are more stylistic than structural, more concerned with individual composery preference than with song itself. Just as it was necessary for Schenker and

his followers to compress nearly two hundred years of tonal practice into a single time frame in order to develop a powerful theory of tonality, so it is necessary, in this significantly more modest context, to downplay the influence of composers' personal styles in order to arrive at some broad characterizations of the theory and practice of song analysis.³

My main example is the opening song of Schumann's 1840 cycle, *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Op. 42. However, the theoretical self-consciousness of the ensuing discussion will make it clear that the purpose here is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of the song as such, but to use a few analytical observations as point of departure for reflecting on methodological issues. The essay is in four parts. The first, most general part deals with problems of defining the genre, and goes on to summarize four competing models for the analysis of song. In Part 2, a method for song analysis is proposed. Parts 3 and 4 contain the principal analytic demonstration. Part 3 provides raw data in the form of a detailed commentary on the first seventeen bars of the song; this is followed by an analysis of the analysis. Part 4 explores a more formal approach through the notion of a Schenkerian poetics of song. My interest, then, is as much in the practical activity of analysing as it is in the 'results' of performing the analysis.

WHAT IS SONG?

The nineteenth century art song has been defined as 'a combination of poetry and music, a miniature *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a composite musical form'.⁴ Such a seemingly uncontroversial statement is rife with definitional problems, however. When the words of a poem are appropriated for musical use, do they retain their status as parts of an original work? Does Schubert's 'Erlkönig' contain both Goethe's ballad 'Erlkönig' and a superstructure which is Schubert's song, or does the song 'assimilate' (in Suzanne Langer's sense) Goethe's poem?⁵ If a poem, in the hands of a composer, is nothing more than a sequence of words, can song be redefined as a structure of words-and-music or language-and-music as distinct from poem-and-music? And if this redefinition allows us to explain the not uncommon practice of modifying the poet's words to make them more suitable for a particular musical context,⁶ what is to stop us from going one stage further and defining song not as an amalgam of words-and-music or language-and-music but as a fusion of *text*-and-music, using 'text' to register an interpretative move from a bounded or closed 'work' (a poem) to an open, process-orientated and irreducibly plural 'text'?⁷ Those markings on paper that are, in one view of the compositional process, read and then set by the composer cannot be described neutrally as a poem, a set of words, language or a text, without confronting the implications of each designation. One needs to investigate varying degrees of 'wordness', 'textness' and 'poemness', since differences in the patterns

of weighting may prove crucial to a characterization of structure.

The foregoing may serve as an indication of some of the problems posed by a search for a suitable definition of song. Although many critical debates have been waged about this matter, it is remarkable that it is not the status of 'music' – ontological problems notwithstanding – that is a problem in this search for a definition, but rather the status of what might be called the 'Other'. The relationship between music and the Other (be it a poem, a play, a programme, a film, dance or some combination of these) is a reflexive one, for otherness often serves as the observer's mirror, providing a mechanism for music to see itself more clearly. Only in this catalytic role, and not as an equal partner, can the Other provide maximum illumination of the subject.⁸

FOUR COMPETING MODELS FOR SONG ANALYSIS

Among the wide variety of ways in which scholars have written about the nineteenth-century *Lied*, four competing explanatory models may be identified. The first, the *assimilation model*, derives from the work of Suzanne Langer, who argues as follows:

When words and music come together in song, music swallows words; not only mere words and literal sentences, but even literary word-structures, poetry. Song is not a compromise between poetry and music, though the text taken by itself be a great poem; *song is music* [my emphasis].⁹

Like anything else that goes into the making of a song, words function in a generative capacity to release a composer's creative energies; once this has been accomplished, the words disappear *as words* and assume a musical form. In Langer's words,

What all good composers do with language is neither to ignore its character nor to obey poetic laws, but to transform the entire verbal material, sound, meaning, and all – into musical elements.¹⁰

Like many philosophers writing about music, Langer does not provide us with a concrete analytical demonstration of this process of assimilation. So, although her basic thesis is attractive, it leaves unspecified the nature of a corroborative technical analysis. It should be emphasized that Langer is not advocating a total dismissal of words. On the contrary, she posits the more challenging task of demonstrating the process by which non-musical elements are transformed into musical ones. Song analysis, according to this model, is based on a musical ground that is formed in part autonomously (that is, as part of a purely musical conception) and in

part generatively (that is, as part of a process of ‘musicalizing’ non-musical elements).¹¹

There are problems with the assimilation principle, however. Since words remain in the final song, how does the listener separate out their new mode of existence (as musical elements) from their previous one (as non-musical elements)? What happens to the inherent musicality of certain poems during the process of assimilation? Is it perhaps the case that the listener hears, simultaneously, the music of the poem, the non-music of the poem and the transformed music of what used to be a poem? These are not questions that Langer addresses, but they are pertinent to any attempt to adapt her principle to music analysis.

The second model postulates an irreducible relationship between words (or language, or text) and music. Song, in other words, does not result from a loss of identity of the words (Langer’s assimilation model); rather, song is a structure in which words and music coexist, rub shoulders with each other, so to speak, without ever losing their individual essences. Edmund Wodehouse, writing in the fourth edition of *Grove’s Dictionary*, gives the following definition: ‘[A] song may be defined as a short metrical composition, whose meaning is conveyed by the combined force of words and melody. The song, therefore, belongs equally to poetry and music.’¹² In a more recent study, Lawrence Kramer, arguing specifically against Langer’s assimilation principle, contends that ‘A poem is never really assimilated into a composition; it is *incorporated*, and it retains its own life, its own body, within the body of the music’.¹³ This model leaves open the nature of the interaction between the two systems, only stressing the fact of interaction. While Langer, Wodehouse and Kramer all acknowledge the role of words as ‘formative factors’ in the making of song, Wodehouse’s (and to a lesser extent Kramer’s) model allows a less radical transformation of inputs, one that never obliterates the integrity of ‘words’ or of ‘music’. In practice, then, the words of a song are analysed in the conventional way, with due attention to matters of phonology, syntax and semantics, always preserving a measure of their independence.

This model, however, fails to account for the exact nature of the resulting ‘alloy’, to use Schoenberg’s term.¹⁴ To say that ingredients X and Y go into the making of an alloy is not the same as defining that alloy by a third term. For the model to have explanatory power, we need an equation in the form $X + Y = Z$ rather than in the truistic form $X + Y = X + Y$. If song is a genuine alloy, that is, a self-sufficient and self-regulating semiotic system, then its identity cannot be defined simply by listing the ingredients that go into its making. By the same token, analysis cannot be content with a taxonomy of inputs, or with an interpretation that shows little or no trace of the inputs’ new environment.

The third model may be visualized as a pyramid structure with music at the base and words at the top. Song is interpreted as a compound structure in which words, lying at the top, provide access to meaning, while the

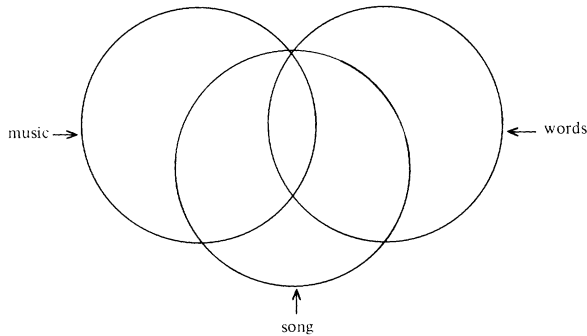
music lies at the base and supports the signification of text. This is a paradoxical formulation which gives priority to either or both systems: music is the indispensable foundation of song structure, but song only means through its words, which provide access to the semantic dimension. The model seems calculated to deal with the problem of meaning by taking full advantage of the semantic dimension of language. While it does not deny the meaningfulness of music, the model does not embrace such potential directly either. In practice, the model is invoked in analyses of song that are totally constrained by the words, so that few assertions are entertained that are not tied to the words. Although it is not always the case that words dictate the development of the analyst's insights, word-dependency dictates the terms of the final formulation.¹⁵

The fourth and final model explains song as a confluence of three independent but overlapping systems. This model is shown in Fig. 1. In this diagram, the two outer circles, representing words and music, overlap with an inner circle representing song. Song can thus be explained as including three areas, an area of words, an area of music and a third, autonomous area, the area of song. According to the model, some aspects of the function of words may be explained exclusively in terms of the poem, just as the music may also have independent existence outside song. At the same time, the explanatory domains of both words and music retain a degree of autonomy – words need not always be tied to musical functions, just as interesting or striking musical features need not be explained away as motivated by the words. The model allows such analytical practices as extensive meditation on words which may or may not have much direct resonance with the musical setting, as well as a dwelling on musical details that may not be tied directly to the semantic domain of words. One need not apologise for either activity. Song retains an ultimate identity that is not reducible to word influence or musical influence, but that acknowledges the sphere of influence exercised by both domains.

Attractive as it is, this model seeks to have its cake and eat it. Like the second model, it avoids the difficult question: what is song apart from the two acknowledged inputs? To say that it has an independent existence which is neither as words (or a poem or a text or language) nor as music is still to leave open the difficult question of a concrete identity for song. It is to allow song an identity by default. Perhaps, then, what the model points to is song as process, not product. What is interesting, in other words, is not what song *is*, but what it *becomes* in its perpetual striving for a concrete mode of existence.

To summarise: Model 1, the assimilation model, explains song as a musical structure at base that turns every one of its inputs into something purely musical. Model 2 explains song as the irreducible combination of words and music. Model 3, like Model 2, accepts the existence of words and music, but places them in a hierarchical arrangement in which the

Fig. 1 One conception of the relationship between words and music in song



foundation is music and the apex is words, thus allowing words to dictate the terms of a semantic interpretation without dispensing with the constructional role of the music. Finally, Model 4 allows both words and music an input into song, allows both of them an independent existence outside song and allows song an independent existence not limited to the contribution of words or music.

Although not all writers on song have been absolutely explicit about their method(s) of analysis, I believe that all existing studies can be made to fit in one or more of the models outlined above. The dividing line between models is, of course, not as hard and fast as the foregoing summary may lead one to believe. There are grey areas as well as transitions between, and fusions among, contiguous areas. But, as general stances, these models may serve as points of departure for elucidating the nature of theory and practice in the analysis of song.

A CRITIQUE OF TWO POPULAR PRACTICES IN THE ANALYSIS OF SONG

Before turning to some technical aspects of song analysis, I need to perform one final preliminary task, and that is to comment on two enduring problems in the practice of song analysis. The first is the *ad hoc* factor; the second is the failure to distinguish sufficiently between matters belonging to the genesis of a song and others belonging to the song itself.

Ad hoc reasoning, which may be defined as reasoning 'for the particular purpose in hand, and without consideration of wider applications',¹⁶ seems to be an unavoidable part of music analysis. If we think of analysis as a fact-gathering or taxonomic step followed by an explicitly interpretative step, *ad hoc* reasoning is especially difficult to avoid at the second step. For

example, when an analyst, explicating the contrapuntal fabric of a tonal piece by means of a voice-leading graph, looks for an event or occurrence in another domain (such as timbre, duration, registral placement and so on) to justify or reinforce a decision made within the purely contrapuntal realm, we have an instance of *ad hoc* thinking. Such thinking seeks 'outside' or extra-dimensional corroboration for points made in an otherwise systematic investigation. *Ad hoc* thinking sometimes unearths certain 'marriages of convenience' between musical dimensions. Although these marriages can often seem arbitrary, arrived at by means of an uncomfortably selective process, they are of some interest on account of their putative artistic value, their rhetorical power or the degree of interpersonal resonance they achieve. The inter-dimensional equations produced by *ad hoc* thinking are valid only for the particular context and not necessarily for others.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss our apparently unavoidable need to use *ad hoc* reasoning in the course of analysing music. I wish only to observe that of all the genres of music, song (or, more generally, genres that include an 'Other' such as programme music, opera and ballet) seems especially to encourage such story-telling. The neighbour-note G in b.2 of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Song 1 (Ex. 1), though syntactically subservient to F, bears a relatively longer duration; it also projects the word 'ihn', the protagonist's 'other' in Adelbert Chamisso's cycle. Rather than embark on separate and systematic investigations of 1) neighbour-note patterns, 2) durational patterns, 3) other occurrences of 'ihn' or similarly-resonating words, the analyst labouring under the lure of the *ad hoc* circumvents the longer, explicitly analytical process by simply concluding that Schumann wishes to project in the foreground the object of the protagonist's desire. While such formulations may ring true commonsensically, they are often based on

Ex. 1 Bars 1-3 of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Song 1

Larghetto

Seit ich ihn ge - se - hen.

questionable analytical premises. It could be argued, in fact, that the primary condition of signification in song is a conflict or contradiction between syntactic significance and aesthetic or representational import. It may be that any move from taxonomy (which, in any case, is not completely devoid of interpretation) to interpretation involves a shot in the dark, a leap of faith, an *ad hoc* invocation. In that case, an awareness of this possibly unavoidable tendency may help to refine the stories we tell about song.

A second problem arises when we fail to distinguish sufficiently between the way in which a song came into being and the nature of the song as a finished product. In the analysis of instrumental music, and despite the suggestiveness of studies of compositional process, analysts do not normally look for the composer's first thoughts in order to determine how to approach a given work. First thoughts (as distinct from the earliest *recorded* thoughts), even where recoverable, become pertinent only where the musical work shows them to be so. The situation is sometimes thought to be different in the analysis of song. Here is an example of the credo that informs many song analyses: 'I start where the composer of virtually every song has presumably started, with a reading of the poetic text.'¹⁷ Leaving aside the question whether this statement is factually accurate — are there not songs for which a musical idea went in search of a poetic idea? — it should be noted that the text-to-music method carries a heavy baggage because it downplays the possible significance of ordinary *musical* elements. Yet most writers seem to find unproblematic the by now familiar methodological sequence of first extracting a 'reading' of the poem (which is, of course, attributed to the composer) and then proceeding to elucidate the musical details with this sense of the words in mind. Words thus cast a shadow on the rest of the analysis. This practice is based on the dubious authority that the composer always began with a reading of the poetic text.¹⁸

Some scepticism towards this stance may prove productive to the song analyst. If the finished song contains elements other than words, and if the actual composition of song could conceivably include a foundational musical stimulus, then our analytical methods cannot unduly privilege words or be totally constrained by them. While aspects of the genesis of a particular song may be interesting from the point of view of musical biography, these aspects cannot necessarily dictate the terms of theory.

AN INFORMAL METHOD FOR ANALYSING SONG

How does one go about analysing a song? The genesis of an analysis does not lend itself easily to systematization. An analyst may begin by observing a striking cadence, a particularly powerful climax, an unusual harmonic progression and so on, and then seek to understand how the particular

feature or event fits into the larger context of the song. Song analysis offers numerous possibilities for beginning an analysis mainly because of the semantic plurality of words. It is possible, however, to present an outline of a method which proceeds from an informal taxonomy through a more formal taxonomy to an explicit interpretation. The following outline is not intended as a prescription for generating an analysis (although it could fulfil that function); it is, rather, intended as something akin to an informal verification procedure, a way of thinking through an analysis.

The method may be schematized in six stages as follows:

Stage 1a: Informal data-gathering: collect as many significant musical features of the song as possible.

Stage 1b: (More) formal data-gathering: use an explicit method (such as a voice-leading graph) to generate more data and to revise or reorganise previously collected data.

Stage 1c: Preliminary interpretation 1): develop metaphors for 'purely musical' devices.

Stage 2a: Develop a contextual reading of the text.

Stage 2b: Preliminary interpretation 2): compare the results of 2a with those of 1a, 1b and 1c.

Stage 3: Explicit interpretation: 'Narrativize' the various profiles and data assembled in stages 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a and 2b, adding information from 'external' sources, including style, biography and reception.

Stages 1a, 1b and 1c: The first stage of the analysis involves a search for the most significant *musical* events in the song. Ignoring (or at least downplaying the significance of) the words for now, the analyst gathers all meaningful or potentially meaningful features together, this whether or not they can be readily related to each other. A more formal analysis follows (stage 1b), using one or more explicit methods to uncover patterns of signification in the music's basic dimensions. Stage 1b could produce, among other representations, 1) a voice-leading graph, 2) a rhythmic and/or metric reduction, 3) a chart of the thematic process, or 4) some combination of these. It is important to avoid undue selectivity at this stage, and to follow discovery procedures that force the analyst to make a decision about (ideally) every note in the piece. Every analytical method comes with its own ideological baggage, of course, and the assumption is that each chosen method will not only codify but also extend or challenge the analyst's hearing. Stage 1b may also serve to revise or contextualise some of the raw data gathered during stage 1a.

As a result of this data-gathering process, the analyst can proceed to a preliminary interpretation by looking for the metaphorical equivalents of purely musical devices. How, for example, does a modulation mean? How do voice exchanges signify? What image of process is communicated by middleground arpeggiations? The pursuit of these questions is likely to

throw up contradictory answers. Music-technical devices are notoriously capable of supporting not only a variety but often a contradictory set of verbal-semantic meanings. By not discounting any of the semantic possibilities suggested by these devices, the analyst prepares the ground for a richer and truer characterization of the work.

Stages 2a and 2b: With the musical ground in place, the analyst proceeds to read the text as it appears in the composer's reading. This reading of the composer's reading, contrary to what one sometimes reads about song analysis, could hardly produce a stable set of meanings. While it is generally true that the composer's reading is in principle a selection from a number of possible readings, it should not be forgotten that the analyst's reading of the composer's reading retains the same interpretative fallibility. The temporal progress from poet through composer to analyst, with its numerous tributaries and detours, may contribute eventually to the annihilation of the poem as a separate work of art (Langer's assimilation principle). Concretely, then, stage 2 of the method insists that, beyond the analysis along conventional lines of phonological patterns, semantic fields and syntactical patterns of text, all passed through the appropriate stylistic sieve, the analyst should develop an interpretation based on an explicit technical framework.

Stages 2a and 2b should produce correspondences *as well as* non-correspondences between text (or words, or language) and music. The analyst might produce a list with three types of information: 1) points at which text and music support or reinforce each other; 2) moments in which text and music contradict each other; and 3) areas in which text and music may be said to be indifferent to each other. The importance of all three types of information cannot be overemphasized. Aspects of the text that do not seem to have been readily translated into, or appropriated by, the music must be acknowledged as positive residues. Similarly, poignant and beautiful musical events that do not seem in any obvious way motivated by the text remain an essential part of the fund of insights that this second stage produces.

Clearly, then, a method of song analysis that seeks only correspondences, or privileges them at the expense of non-correspondences, is fundamentally flawed. Consider, for example, the following claim, which equates text-music correspondence with high aesthetic value and thus indirectly prescribes the search for such correspondences for the analyst:

Music set to words can reflect them in many different ways. Perhaps the most fascinating and greatest settings are those where the tonal and rhythmic structure, the form, and the motivic design embody equivalents for salient features of the text: grammar and syntax, rhyme schemes and other patterns of sound, imagery, and so forth.¹⁹

The overwhelming advocacy of correspondences or homologies, of which

the above statement is only one example, often leads to a discounting of pertinent information and produces analyses in which the irreducible tension characteristic of any expressive structure that is formed by more than one semiotic system is undervalued.

Information gathered in stages 1a, 1b, 1c and 2a provides the foundation for the formulation of a syntax for song (stage 2b), that is, a series of nested, interdimensional equations that may be said to define the primary sonic condition of song. The idea here is to capture all possible bases for connection among musical and textual domains, defining them strictly as dyadic, triadic, quadratic (or whatever else) relations until the permutational possibilities are exhausted.

Stage 3: This is the most explicit interpretative level of the analysis. Here the analyst develops a narrative based partly on the syntax formulated in stage 2b, and partly on information drawn from the intertextual space of the song. The methodological move is from invariant meanings to specific, contextual ones, the aim being to allow grammatical security to dictate the terms of a semantic interpretation. For example, the various taxonomies unearthed in stage 1 may be examined for overall profiles. These profiles may then be set alongside the patterns of interaction unearthed in stage 2. The resulting 'super-profile' may be said to embody aspects of the meaning of the song. This 'internal' musical meaning may be supplemented by 'external' factors deriving from biography, intention, contemporary response and so on. In analysing Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*, for example, one might draw, among other things, on some of his own (mostly) contradictory views of the nature of the relationship between words and music, on the contemporary response to his songs, on the role of autobiographical cyphers in his music, and, to the extent that they are recoverable, on aspects of the reception of his music throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁰ The aim in all this is to keep the analyst as listener in the centre of the process of investigation, and to develop an account that does not only passively acknowledge, but actively incorporates, as much of this information as possible into a single (ideal) audition of the work.

ANALYSING SONG 1 OF SCHUMANN'S *FRAUENLIEBE UND LEBEN*

Analysing song, like all music analysis, is a potentially boundless activity. Only the practical requirements of writing and representation compel us to isolate some dimensions and ignore others, present some of our findings but not others, choose certain songs and not others, and so on; in short, dismantle the very context that enabled the formation of our insights. In what follows, I present information on Song 1 of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben* that belongs essentially – though not exclusively – to

Schumann, *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Song 1

Larghetto

Seit ich ihn ge - se - hen, glaub' ich blind zu sein; wo ich hin nur

p

bli - cke, seh' ich ihn al - lein. Wie im wa - chen Trau - me schwebt sein Bild — mir vor, — tauchtaus

ritard.

tief — stem Dun - kel hel - ler, hel - ler nur em - por. Sonst ist licht - und

pp

farb - los al - les um mich her nach der Schwe - stern Spie - le nicht be - gehr' ich mehr, möch - te

ritard.

lie - - ber wei - nen still im Käm - mer - lein: seit ich ihn ge - se - hen,

glaub'ich blind zu sein.

pp

pp

the data-gathering stage of the method outlined above. The resultant 'mixed strategy' is unavoidable in any discussion of the theory and practice of song analysis. This strategy will also confirm the greater usefulness of the method as a way of thinking through an analysis than as a way of generating one. If previous sections of this essay have been concerned mainly with the theory of practice, then this section may be regarded as geared towards the practice of theory, with emphasis on the conditions of possibility of musical, poetic and musico-poetic meaning. After presenting the data, I will analyse the analysis, drawing attention to some of its enabling moves.²¹

Seit ich ihn gesehen

The piano opens the song with the most conventional of harmonic progressions, I-IV-V⁷-I, giving rise to numerous intertextual resonances. Eighteenth-century conventions of opening and closing come readily to mind. As a microcosm of the harmonic content of the entire song, the sense of the progression's gesture is of an opening out (I-IV) and a complementary closing in (V⁷-I), or, to use an alternative metaphor, an undermining of I and its restoration. The progression is closed, and it is presented in a very compressed space (four crotchet beats out of a total of

108, or 3.7% of the duration of the piece). Since this is the inaugural progression of the piece, we are immediately alerted to the dialectical relation between opening and closing. Indeed the song closes with a twofold statement of this progression (bs 33-5), followed by a single prolonged tonic chord. The progression is also recomposed at the end of the first stanza. Comparing the bass of bs 1-2¹ with that of bars 13²-17 shows that, in the latter passage, the direct V-I cadential progression is considerably enlarged by means of an interrupted cadence, while the progression as a whole occupies twelve beats instead of the initial four. We carry forward an expectation that the problematic of closure will play a significant role in the song.

When the singer accepts the pianist's 'offer' of a 5-6-5 progression and sings the words 'Seit ich ihn gesehen' to it, she invites the listener to rehear the short piano introduction as an embodiment of the sense of the text that is now being made explicit. It is not that the wordless piano introduction is meaningless; rather, its meanings — including a formulaic 'Once upon a time' suggested by the I-IV-V⁷-I stock progression — are brought into direct confrontation with those of Chamisso's text. Explicit word-based meanings interact with no less explicit but musically based meanings to produce the larger significance of the first two bars.

The temporal marker 'Seit' locates the origin of the narrative at an unspecified moment in the past. We may draw an analogy between this originary textual move and the conventional harmonic progression with which the song began. 'Since I first saw him' encapsulates the tension between closure and non-closure implicit in the harmonic progression. 'I' and 'him' are the essential and opposing terms in the drama. As the cycle unfolds we reread the force of alterity as a unitary rather than a divided conception: he is an-Other, a version of herself. Note that the entry of the voice overlaps with the conclusion of the piano introduction. Bar 2¹ thus represents both a beginning (for the voice and piano) and an ending (for the piano), establishing a precedent for overlap between two agents who, in truth, represent a single voice.

glaub' ich blind zu sein

The VI chord in b.3 is a new event. As a novel harmony (each previous chord has occurred at least twice), it promises to provide, or at least lead us to, the consequent of the previous antecedent phrase. 'Since I first saw him' left us waiting for a consequent. It could be argued that the VI chord in b.3 *is* that consequent. But how can a single chord on the piano answer a fully-articulated verbal antecedent? This is precisely the point. The song's 'discourse' or 'voice' or 'guiding idea' or 'narrative thread' transcends the immediate (and surface, and pragmatic) division of roles into singer and pianist; it may even be heard in the silences of Schumann's music. The melodic profile of the VI chord in b.3, a dotted crotchet B_♭, echoes the 'ihn' of b.2, indicating that the consequent will remain focused

on him. Furthermore, b.2² and 3² are both local highpoints. But there are differences in similarity. For example, the accent on 3² coincides with the first appearance of minims in the song. And the slow, triple-metre, second-beat emphasis further calls to mind the outmoded dance *sarabande*, adding another conventional dimension to this opening. The sarabande's outmodedness, here as elsewhere in Schumann, produces a classicizing effect, and hints at the outer limits of Schumann's expressive language. These limits are marked, on the one hand, by eighteenth-century *topoi*, whose symbolic status is under erasure in this 1840 composition, and, on the other hand, by the introspective, private language that is uniquely Schumann's own. In many ways, then, the first four bars saturate the song's expressive dimension, providing innumerable opportunities for the construction of meaning.

'I think I must be blind' is the consequent verbal phrase that we have been waiting for. Its delivery is marked by a memorable event on the downbeat of b.4, where the most dissonant harmony in the song so far occurs on the key word 'blind'. Why should this word bear a striking representation? According to Chamisso's protagonist, blindness is a condition brought on by the first sight of her beloved. To underline the extent to which she is enveloped in this space, the pair of lines is repeated at the end of the song. Although they are in one sense opposites, *seeing* and *blindness* collapse into each other: blindness is not a condition of seeing nothing but of seeing darkness. By underlining the occurrence of the word 'blind' with the first appearance of non-diatonic pitches in the song (B and A_b are presented simultaneously on the downbeat of b.4) Schumann invites the listener to meditate on the word, and possibly to enter into a semantic arena far beyond the immediate world created by supertonic harmony.

The concluding piano chords in b.4 force us to reconsider the relationship between piano and voice. In b.1, the piano offered a network of ideas, to which the voice responded by selecting the melody for declaiming its opening phrase. Then, in b.3, the piano offered a note, B_b, which the voice immediately took up, creating a partial overlap again. In bs 4-5 the piano plays both a recapitulatory and an anticipatory role. First it recapitulates the song's inaugural harmonic progression, now up a step. Stating a progression on I and then on ii suggests at least three, not necessarily complementary, meanings. First, repetition implies stasis – things have not changed. At this point in the song, we might expect a reenactment of the drama that has unfolded in the first four bars. Second, repetition carries a sense of emphasis – so important is what was earlier stated that it deserves to be heard again. Third, the nature of this particular repetition could suggest a diminishing of values. The song's inaugural progression suffers a scale degree demotion from the principal tonic to a subsidiary supertonic. By acknowledging all three meanings, the analyst, without shrinking from the task of choosing, allows a stronger assessment of his or her interpretative plot.

As regards its anticipatory function, the little interlude in b.4 prepares the next phrase most obviously in the A_b-G melodic motion but more fully in the near-identity of harmony as well. Bar 4, like b.2¹, is both an end and a beginning. Schumann is ‘problematizing’ the notion of phrase boundary by making points of departure and termination merge into each other and thus promoting a forward or ‘narrative’ sense. The listener is left with a sense of an incipient conflict between an ordinary, teleological movement — the drama unfolding before our very eyes — and a circular movement conveyed by the musical processes.

wo ich hin nur blicke

Shadows of a multiply implicative opening phrase (bs 1-4), as well as the specific transpositional parallel between bs 1-2 and 4-5, force the analyst into comparative mode at the start of this phrase. Where before a temporal term (*seit*) inaugurated the verbal narrative, now a geographical term (*wo*) opens up a complementary spatial dimension. *Wo* both complements and extends the ideas presented earlier, for in ‘Seit ich ihn gesehen’ both the temporal (‘Seit’) and the spatial (‘gesehen’) have been adumbrated. Bar 5 therefore heightens — by making explicit — what is already implicit in bs 2-3. At the same time, b.5 is a recomposition of b.2. It is now in the minor mode, and on a subsidiary scale degree (ii rather than I). As a new antecedent phrase, however, it generates expectations consistent with the earlier antecedent-consequent pattern: we expect a self-reflexive consequent in which the protagonist’s condition continues to be portrayed as generally tragic – she remains blind.

seh’ ich ihn allein

The expectations generated by ‘wo ich hin nur blicke’ meet a first block at b.6², where the ii⁶ chord disrupts an otherwise exact sequence of b.3. But although b.6² represents a harmonic change, it retains something of the rhythm and texture of b.3². In that sense, b.6² confounds our expectations, for it is both a change and not a change. ‘I see him only’ reveals the consequence of looking everywhere. Since blindness is a form of uniform seeing, seeing only him is another form of blindness. Chamisso’s words establish an even more direct connection with the opening phrase, ‘Seit ich ihn gesehen’, recapitulating three of its four words (the verb *sehen* exists in two tenses). We now have further confirmation of a circular process, this time in the dynamic of the poem. Over and above the pairing of lines 1/2 and 3/4, a strong surface connection is established between lines 1 and 4. This pattern of returning to a point of departure is a key feature not only of this poem (the last two lines, 15 and 16, are the same as the first two, the only difference being one of punctuation: line 2 ends with a semicolon whereas line 16 ends with a full stop) but of the cycle as a whole. It suggests an extensive use of repetition on a variety of structural and expressive levels. Repetition may well provide the key to the work as a whole.²²

The phrase 'seh' ich ihn allein' achieves its effect partly structurally and partly rhetorically. Structurally, it presents a three-note chromatic motion, G-G \flat -F in the piano right hand (previous chromaticisms had been two-note ones, all except the implied B \flat -B \natural -C of an inner voice in the right hand of bs 3-4). Rhetorically, the phrase ends with a 'ritard', the first of Schumann's phatic signs, inviting the listener to 'stop' and 'listen' and thus escaping momentarily from the temporal frame circumscribed by an initial 'Larghetto' marking. This arresting of attention gains added force from the V $\frac{1}{2}$ chord on the downbeat of b.7. No previous phrase in the song has ended so potently. This gives rise to another contradiction between words and music: while the words attain a relative finality (Chamisso's punctuation is a semicolon), the musical moment is maximally open.

Wie im wachen Traume

With this phrase we enter a climactic region. Four features may be noted. First, the phrase contains the highest vocal pitch in the song so far, e \flat^2 , a pitch that lies a minor third above the highest pitch heard previously (c 2 at b.6 2). Second, the approach to e \flat^2 is by means of the largest melodic leap in the song so far, a perfect fourth (the previous fourths in bs 3 and 6 are 'dead intervals'). Also noteworthy is the tritone a 1 -e \flat^2 , which frames the pitch contour of the ascent to, and the descent from, the highpoint. Third, the phrase contains the first extended stepwise bass motion in the song. The note e \flat , introduced as bass note at b.6 2 , persists for the duration of nine quavers, before continuing down by step to B \flat in b.8. The result is a not-so-hidden canon between outer voices (see the pitch succession E \flat -D-C-B \flat in the left hand of bs 6 2 -8 2 and in the right hand and voice part of bs 8-9 1). Fourth, the phrase redefines the relationship between voice and piano as a single, compound texture, not a dual one. Up until this moment, we have heard the voice and piano moving in and out of synchrony with each other, with the piano performing an overall leading role. Now the voice doubles the piano (not vice versa) in order to expose the dominating illusion of the song: 'as in a trance or waking dream', says the poet. (Two more small features of this phrase: first, the piano has three-note chords in the right hand, the most extended sequence of such sonorities in the song as a whole; second, the first melodic melisma is performed over the first syllable of the key word *wachen*).

Have we been dreaming all along? At this superlative moment of dynamic emphasis, the listener is encouraged to doubt his or her understanding of the narrative events expressed in the first seven bars. The phrase is multiply implicative: the celebration of the physicality of 'voice' is contradicted by the openness of harmony, while the uncertainty of the protagonist's words contrasts with an emergent musico-poetic order: the 4-3 suspension in b.9 recalls similar suspensions in bs 4 and 7. Blindness and the dream world are thus brought into close proximity and revealed as substates of a single state. Blindness, after all, is a form of sleep, and it is

sleep that normally brings on the dream world.

schwebt sein Bild mir vor

By this point in the song, it will have become quite difficult, if not impossible, to formalize the expectations generated by the totality of events thus far. It is somewhat paradoxical that the factor that most decisively shapes this confusion is none other than the liberating role played by the phrase 'wie im wachen Traume', with its promise to unmask the reality of the dream world. Out of the many possibilities, two obvious expectations are that previous tensions will be resolved or purposefully denied. The fact, then, that 'schwebt sein Bild mir vor' is mostly a literal repetition of the previous phrase does not eliminate the ambiguity. A telling change occurs, however, on the last two words, 'mir vor', which move in a different melodic and harmonic direction from the parallel ending, 'wachen Traume'. With this hint, we retrieve from our memories the pattern of antecedent-consequent (verbal) phrases established from the beginning of the song, and prepare for the staging of a reversal. We may rationalise our expectations in this way. The first four lines of text centred on 'him' (and, by the logic of alterity, on her). Emergence from the dream world is an implied reference to reality, promising information about her. Yet, it is *his* image that hovers before her, so that in both her 'normal' and her dream states — suppressing for now the possibility that the dream world holds stronger historical claims to representing reality in Schumann's 1840 world — she can neither free herself from him nor from herself. Here, then, is another form of blindness: her inability to see anything except his image. If the previous phrase, 'Wie im wachen Traume', represented the musical highpoint, 'schwebt sein Bild mir vor' may be said to represent a complementary poetic highpoint in the specific sense that the protagonist announces her impotence to do anything other than to traffic in the world circumscribed by him. By him? Provision should be made for the possible interchangeability of the pronouns.

The parallels between 'Wie im wachen Traume' and 'schwebt sein Bild mir vor' extend to the somewhat mundane level of textural doubling as well. In bs 7³ to 8², the doubling was literal, between voice and the highest part of the piano right hand. In bs 9³ to 11², however, the doubling is hidden between voice and an inner part of the piano right hand. Consequently, the note F, which is heard in most of the sonorities sounded in bs 7-8², regains prominence as an inner voice pedal in bs 9³-11 (see piano right hand). We shall follow its fuller reemergence in b.17.

Is it possible to locate a highpoint for the song as a whole? If we re-hear the song from the beginning and consider those moments that have served to focus its emotional temperature, we notice that as a rule there is one highpoint per phrase. Phrase 1 has 'ihn' in b.2, phrase 2 'blind' in b.4. Phrase 3 is a bit more complicated, with a poetic highpoint on 'blicke' (b.6) and a musical one on 'hin' (b.5). The pronoun 'ihn' emerges again as

the highpoint of the fourth phrase (b.7), the first syllable of 'wachen' in the next phrase (b.8) and 'Bild' in phrase 6 (b.10). The highpoint process, then, is not a systematic one, composed into a single musical dimension. On the contrary, it cuts across dimensions, assuming the form of a word, a pitch, a harmony or a texture. A compromise solution would be to hear the pair of phrases 'Wie im wachen Traume' and 'schwebt sein Bild mir vor' as a 'high region' on a different level of intensity from the phrases that we have heard so far. More concretely, a coincidence of musical and poetic turning-points in the former phrase is replaced by a weighting of words over music in the latter phrase. We pass, in short, from a musical to a poetic highpoint.²³

taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel

So charged was the activity in the two previous phrases that this one begins as if it were a spillover. Gradually the tension accumulated is reduced. Specifically, the voice exchange between treble and bass in b.11 ensures that the parallels between an emergence from a dream and an emergence 'out of the deepest darkness' are conveyed musically as well as verbally. This phrase projects an overall sense of resolution by means of sequential motion readily heard in the bass, B-C and A-B_b. Incidentally, these are the four pitches that finished off the two previous phrases: B_b-A (b.9) and B-C (b.11). Bars 11³-13² may therefore be heard as a further recomposition of bs 7³-11².

So far, every new phrase has projected a prominently new feature, giving an overall impression of song as narrative. The phrase 'taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel' also has its share of firsts, perhaps the most striking being the literal dip down a major seventh and back up a major sixth on the word 'tiefstem' (b.12). These are the largest leaps in the song (excepting the repeat of the phrase in b.28). Only the setting of 'blind' in b.4 comes close to outdoing this one in the degree of iconicity.

heller, heller nur empor

For the first time in the song we hear an immediately repeated word. This turns out to be Schumann's idea, not Chamisso's. The repetition provides a more direct link between bs 13² and 14¹. The phrase is the last vocal phrase to be heard before the structural cadence of stanza 1. His image rises ever brighter. The 'Bild' of the beloved is here to stay. This surplus of semantic signs allows perceptual attention to be shifted to the musical business of closing. Schumann recomposes his beginning as his ending. Specifically, the progression I-IV-V⁷-I of bs 1-2¹ is expanded to I-IV-V⁷-(vi-ii ⁶/₅-v⁷)-I in bs 13² to 17¹. We are back where we began, although from a different approach. Again, we sense the circular element even as we experience a linear fulfilment. In my ending is my beginning.

The status of the piano music between bs 15 and 17 hovers between the function of a postlude (in an immediate sense) and an interlude (in the

global context). In general, passages for piano throughout *Frauenliebe und Leben* function in three ways: to extend or complete a given thought; to anticipate a forthcoming idea; or to refer backwards or forwards to an idea that does not lie contiguously with the passage doing the referring. These functions are, of course, not mutually exclusive. The passage in bs 15-17 in fact allows an explanation in all three ways. First, the piano completes the complex thought initiated by both piano and voice. In so doing, the piano literally advances the narrative line of the song. This is its completion function. Second, the cadence at bs 16-17, which is also the global close of the first strophe, places us where stanza 2 can begin. This is its leading and/or anticipatory function. Third, b.17 is the same as b.1, so that a further cross-reference is signalled. Bar 17 will again return as b.33.

ANALYSING THE ANALYSIS

Not all readers will agree with the details of this eclectic analysis. By presenting these observations as raw data (recall stage 1 of the method outlined earlier), however, I hope to have facilitated an analysis of the practice of song analysis. The foregoing analysis displays many familiar interpretative habits, makes a number of assumptions and draws connections so freely and frequently that it would require a separate essay to lay bare all of its enabling structures. I shall confine my remarks to two matters: first, construing the purposes of a song analysis; second, demonstrating an awareness of enabling systems in order to transform a series of observations like the foregoing into a proper, theory-based analysis.

An analysis of song can include observations about musical, poetic or musico-poetic elements. It seems unlikely, however, that an analysis will concentrate exclusively on the poetry and ignore either the music or musico-poetic relations. We are left then with two possibilities, the musical and the musico-poetic. Although different, the two approaches are in fact indispensable to any attempt to explicate the meanings and resources of song. It is important, however, to construe correctly an analyst's purposes before pronouncing judgement on the success or failure of a particular analysis. Consider, for example, Joseph Kerman's 'How We Got into Analysis', which, among other things, confronts theoretical discussions of the second song from Schumann's *Dichterliebe*.²⁴ Unable to find much interest in arguments over where the principal structural tones are located, Kerman writes:

More serious interest might attach to this debate if someone would undertake to show how its outcome affects the way people actually hear, experience, or respond to the music. In the absence of such demonstration, the whole exercise can seem pretty ridiculous.²⁵

Unfortunately, none of the writers Kerman criticizes (Schenker, Forte and Komar) claims to present a musico-poetic analysis. Schenker cites the song as an example of divided form, Forte quotes the analysis to illustrate some of the basic concepts and methods of representation in Schenkerian analysis, and Komar reads Schenker's analysis with a view to demonstrating harmonic and voice-leading connections *between* songs, not only within a given song. Kerman's 'alternative' musico-poetic analysis is therefore not an alternative but the sketch for a different kind of analysis. One is free to adopt the ideological position that song analyses *must* explore musico-poetic relations rather than purely musical ones. But if we observe that Kerman's own analysis is notably short on information about harmony and voice leading, we will probably hesitate before adopting such a position. While analysts who focus on the music and ignore the text could be accused of overlooking an indispensable part of the work of art, those who adopt a musico-poetic framework from the beginning frequently miss — or ignore — many aspects of the musical structure for which analogies with poetic processes cannot readily be found.

Carefully construing the purposes of a song analysis may further reveal the wisdom in the claim that there is no necessary relationship between the words and music of a song. Such relationships are read, their meanings and significance constructed according to particular theoretical dispositions. This should discourage the covert belief — evident in many song analyses — that, because words allow easy access to the semantic dimension, song analysis somehow demands less rigorous attention to musical details than the analysis of instrumental music. This is the approach enshrined in my Model 3, which, as we remarked, stages a retreat from the investigation of purely musical meaning.

A second issue arising from the foregoing analysis is the unavoidability of enabling systems. For those not committed to method — including those for whom hermeneutics signals unbounded interpretative freedom — the foregoing analysis may well appeal because of its seemingly 'intuitive' manner. Yet practically every observation made, including all *ad hoc* connections drawn between words and music, is constrained by some larger mechanism or system, whether or not such a system is made explicit. We must not mistake the rhetorical suppression of enabling systems for their non-existence. No analysis is free of enabling systems. Differences arise between analysts willing to accept the challenge of high methodological self-awareness and those who have no patience for such self-examination. By way of illustration, I should like to point out three of the many enabling concepts that made the analysis possible.

First, comments about highpoints or moments at which the emotional temperature of the song reaches a boiling-point are enabled by an awareness of a highpoint scheme. In order to support the perception of b.8 as a melodic highpoint, one needs to study all the melodic contours of the song and to show how they relate to other dimensions. Similarly, it is not

enough to remark on the harmonic impact of b.4¹ if one is not going to explore systematically the progression of harmonies in the song as an ideally moving stream with its own turning-points. Shrinking from these tasks is nothing less than shrinking from theory.

Second, at several points during the analysis, I invoked particular views of musical time, which led to comments about the narrative progress of the cycle. By pointing out, for example, that beginnings are similar to endings, or that endings are recompositions of beginnings, or that $\hat{5}$ guides the progress of the narrative, I sought a view of Schumann's song that takes recurrence as a pointer to temporal and structural significance. Again, there is nothing mysterious about such an assumption. Yet, instead of confronting the theoretical challenge of systematically investigating recurrence as an indicator of temporal processing, I stopped short.

Third, at the beginning of the analysis, I appealed to convention, to supposedly obvious and widely held views about musical style and structure. Reference to a sarabande *topos*, or to the conventional status of the I-IV-V⁷-I progression, are references to commonplaces. But *ad hoc* invocations of *topoi* will not take us very far unless we develop a historically sound theory of intertextuality for this repertoire. While a synchronic view of tonality may lend support to the conventional status of certain harmonic progressions, such a view needs to be supplemented by a more constrained, historically particular, analysis of harmony.

This argument for greater self-consciousness is by now a familiar rallying cry of post-structuralist criticism. There can, of course, be something crippling about critically regarding every assumption and connection that an analyst wishes to make. The argument here is not that we must always spell out all our ways of knowing but that we must be ready to do so. In any interpretative community, a number of methodological moves are taken for granted. But beliefs quickly harden into dogmas if they are not tried by the beliefs of other communities. It is for this reason that, whatever rhetorical mode we adopt in presenting an analysis, we do well either to leave clear traces of its enabling structures or, where appropriate, to make them absolutely explicit. This is a matter of some urgency to the analysis of song because of the numerous ways in which words and music signify.

TOWARDS A SCHENKERIAN POETICS OF SONG

An enduring problem for the song analyst is deciding what to do with those aspects of structure that appear not to participate directly in the signifying processes of the text. Are they merely gaps to be ignored? Text-based interpretations (Model 3) often bypass this problem by simply discounting musical information that the analyst does not need. This, however, does not make the problem go away. If Langer's claim that 'song is music' is

correct, then we need to consider the status of these gaps. Music's 'structural continuity', to borrow David Lidov's phrase, demands explication in its own right:

If the signifying power of the music rests principally on a number of discrete elements or fragments ('musico-dramatic signs') which stand in what would once have been called a semiotic 'foreground', what of all the rest of the music? Is it just noise? Every nuance of the composer's art is meaningful. Music is not a fragmentary communication in which some sounds are signs and others are purely structural in function. Music is a continuously semiotic material, rather than an audible ether into which discrete signs are separately embedded.²⁶

Lidov does not recommend Schenkerian theory as a way of capturing music's 'structural continuity'. He might as well have, for although the theory does not claim to explain 'every nuance of the composer's art', it possesses the greatest potential for illuminating aspects of the bounded temporality of song. Proceeding from purely musical metaphor, Schenker, Oswald Jonas and Edward Laufer, among others, have produced readings of songs that are suggestive for a general Schenkerian poetics. Schenker's 1921 essay on Schubert's 'Ihr Bild' lays great store by 'mixture', a 4-3 suspension and an 'Urlinie', this last providing evidence of 'the composer's prophetic vision'.²⁷ Each of these devices is available for a semantic reading. Similarly, Jonas's study of 'The Relation of Word and Tone' identifies 'composing out' as 'the central matter' in song composition.²⁸ And Edward Laufer's imaginative study of Brahms's song 'Wie Melodien zieht es mir' allows syntactic security – in the form of voice-leading sketches – to dictate the terms of a musico-poetic analysis.²⁹ Not only do these studies solve the problem of 'gaps' (in Lidov's sense), they also make available a rich set of perceptions for interpreting song.³⁰

What follows is an attempt to rescue a 'semantic' meaning from what would appear to be purely musical metaphor. I shall read a Schenkerian interpretation of the first half of Schumann's song against a reading of Chamisso's text. This is a formal stage of the method outlined earlier insofar as it uses a more explicit technique to generate data than the stage represented by the previous analysis. It is also a music-to-text rather than the more familiar text-to-music approach.

Example 2 is a three-level graph of the first seventeen bars of Schumann's song, constructed without regard for the words and treated as a complete composition. What the graph shows, first and foremost, are instances of particular theoretical formations deemed to be significant in tonal music and exemplified in this particular song. By simply applying the technique, the analyst contends with its intertextual resonance. And consistent application will ensure that it is not merely the song's membership of a general class of tonal compositions that will emerge from this analysis,

but rather its structural and stylistic particularity.

In the abstract, all 'theoretical formations' or morphological units unearthed in a Schenkerian analysis subtend certain metaphors. These metaphors enshrine various, sometimes contradictory, meanings. For example, although cadences conventionally signify closure, various idiomatic presentations either enhance or undermine that sense of closure. Thus the close of the song we have been looking at, with its open $\hat{5}$ and octave descent, makes possible semantic interpretations that privilege incompleteness or ellipses as well as those that privilege completion. Similarly, voice exchanges allow interpretations that emphasize sameness — the voices pass through the same interval — and difference — the voices are registrally distinct and move in opposite directions. And it would be easy to extend the list to repetition, pedal points, circle-of-fifths progressions, sixth spans, obligatory register and so on. Each meaning is constructed, and such construction in turn demands an acceptance (in principle) of latent contradictions among the signifying properties of the musical signs. It is not that music is 'hollow at the core' (to borrow Paul de Man's phrase) but rather that it normatively enshrines potentially contradictory meanings.

How, then, does Ex. 2 signify? Graph 2a shows a $\hat{3}$ -line. This is an abstract but potentially expressive proto-structure, one whose expressive dimension emerges only in relation to the other levels. At this remote level of structure, the song text has no status. While it is possible to extrapolate from the poem's own deep structure a sequence of functions possibly analogous to that of the *Ursatz*, the mediation of an explicit semantic dimension in the poetic deep structure discourages the search for a 'compound background' uniting words and music. Backgrounds that are not well-formed, however, are more readily suggestive of expressive meaning.

Graph 2b shows that the skeleton of Graph 2a is composed out by means of an ascending sixth-progression (f^1 - d^2) followed, first, by a preliminary dash for the tonic (denied the cooperation of the bass) and then by a proper arrival. Parentheses around the last two treble notes indicate that closure is provisional, since the obligatory register is not attained at the end of the strophe. An expressive dimension can be inferred from Graph 2b, especially from the conjunct nature of the melodic motion and the delay in the arrival of the primary note. As will be seen, both of these features support, or are transformed into, salient textual events.

It is in the foreground, Graph 2c, that the drama of tones is played out most vividly. First, on the level of form, the gradual and inexorable ascent through the interval of a sixth to the primary note is shown to involve a rhetoric of falling back on previously activated pitches. Neighbour-note patterns abound. As the ascent nears its goal, the rate of unfolding increases, and the primary note is finally reached by means of an implied voice exchange between outer voices. Second, the region after the

attainment of $\hat{3}$ is marked by two conflicting tendencies. On one hand, there is a semblance of increased contrapuntal activity that presents a contrast to the music leading up to the primary note. On the other hand, the sonority $\hat{3}/I$ persists on a sub-surface level throughout this portion of the piece, simulating but engendering no real contrapuntal activity.

This, then, is the sketch of the purely musical drama enshrined in Ex. 2c. Without attempting to illustrate the shades of meaning inherent in each and every formation on the graph, I should like to outline a few of the ways in which the interpretation presented in the graph conveys the sense of Chamisso's text. Perhaps the most dramatic feature of the graph is the gradual but inexorable ascent to the primary note in b.8. The ascent spans nearly half the length of the first strophe. Such delayed primary notes often acquire an added significance because they represent a departure from the norm.³¹ The protagonist's story begins at a moment in the past and reaches a present state analogous to an awakening from a dream. Tension mounts as the narrative unfolds, and we see this most clearly in the textural interplay between voice and piano, which reaches a climax in the phrase 'Wie im wachen Traume'. Graph 2c concretizes this development as an urgent linear-melodic ascent, an instance of what Schenker calls *Anstieg* or preliminary ascent. While the ascent may be functionally preliminary, its rhetorical impact is hardly 'preliminary'. Structural and expressive importance do not always reinforce each other.

As invariably happens when the appearance of the primary note is delayed, the two terms of the Fundamental Structure are displaced in the foreground. The metaphor here is one of security in the bass against an

Ex. 2 Schenkerian interpretation of bs 1-17 of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Song 1

a)

b)

Ex. 2 cont.

c)

The image shows a musical score for two staves, treble and bass, in a key with one flat (B-flat). The treble staff has circled numbers 3, 5, and 8 above it. Above notes 3 and 5 in the treble staff are the letters 'N'. Above note 8 is 'A 3'. The bass staff has Roman numerals below it: I, V, ii, V, ii⁶, V₂⁴, I⁶, and V. A bracket connects the treble staff's notes 3-8 to the bass staff's notes 3-8.

initial insecurity or an emerging security in the treble. The displacement of the two contrapuntal voices is only apparent, however, for on a deeper level — as Graph 2a shows — the $\hat{3}/I$ sonority is nominally coincident. The metaphor could be seen to split here into a double trajectory, supporting textual interpretations that advocate an apparent separateness within a real oneness. The security of the bass resonates with the (unchanging) condition of blindness, an interpretation enhanced by a literal registral assignment: man = bass, woman = treble. The meditation on this condition, with its moments of ecstasy, is her melodic job. The play of these polarities (male-female, low-high, given-emergent) is thus textual as well as musical.

Graph 2c further enables the claim of a powerful coincidence between rhetorical and structural processes in b.8. I have said that the climactic region begins with the phrase 'Wie im wachen Traume'. This phrase contains the first deeper-level structural pitch (white note D in the top voice). One way of interpreting this feature is to say that the protagonist's awakening from her dream, conveyed forcefully by means of an *Anstieg*, contrasts with the attainment of $\hat{3}$, which represents the real world. The sweep up to $\hat{3}$ encounters resistances and takes detours. The music continually falls back on itself, delaying but not ultimately denying the overall ascent. Musical metaphor may therefore support an interpretation of this prodding (bs 1-8) as marked by doubts and uncertainties. The turning-point is reached in b.8, where the pattern is broken.

The contrast between patterns on either side of $\hat{3}$ then becomes especially striking. The consistency (not straightforwardness) in the approach to $\hat{3}$ partly disintegrates in the second half of the song. It is almost as if, once the ambivalent status of trance or dream is broached, the course of the music grows less predictable. The unanimity of utterance in bs 1-8 is replaced by a set of competing voices in bs 8-15. Among them is register, which, having been established in the top voice (d^2), makes a

The image shows a musical score for a 19th-century lied. It consists of two staves: a vocal line (top) and a piano accompaniment (bottom). The score is marked with measure numbers 10, 12, 15, and 17. The vocal line features various melodic phrases, including a climactic note at measure 8. The piano accompaniment includes harmonic support with chords labeled I, N, V, and vi. A fermata is present over the final measure (17).

preliminary dash for the tonic in bs 14-15 but lacks the proper bass support, closing yet not closing. When the bass is ready to close in bs 16-17, the voice has been silent and will remain silent. The piano must close, not in the obligatory register, but one octave below. These events make us certain of the essential uncertainty of Strophe 1 and prepare us for Strophe 2. Broadly speaking, then, the second half of the song problematizes the canonical voice-leading structure, leaving a residue of imbalance and incompleteness.

One consequence of reading sub-surface voice exchanges (see Graph 2c) is that the climactic note, e_b^2 , on the downbeat of b.8, is interpreted as a substitute for a passing and more conjunct C: $b_b^1-e_b^2-d^2$ instead of $b_b^1-c^2-d^2$. The implicit claim that the highpoint is a 'surface' phenomenon in no way undermines its emotional impact. Schumann sets up his middle-ground syntax so securely that he can, as it were, play against the resulting structure in the foreground. To complain about this apparent demotion of the climax is to misunderstand the nature of what Schenker, in a different context, described as the 'tension of musical coherence'.³² Applied to the present context, we may claim a nominal conflict or non-parallelism between foreground salience (variously measured) and middle- or back-ground syntactical significance.

These, then, are a few of the ways in which a Schenkerian poetics of song might be developed. Apart from its obvious force as a syntactical reading of the song, the method provides a 'home' for developing musico-poetic insights that may reinforce or contradict those gained from a Schenkerian reading; at no point, however, is there any doubt about the nature of the music's 'structural continuity'. While there may sometimes be little difference between the results of a text-to-music and a music-to-text approach, the possibilities of a Schenkerian poetics suggest that we may yet learn more from a music-to-text approach.

CONCLUSION

The position taken in this essay may be stated in the form of four simple propositions:

- 1) Song makes possible a musical and/or a musico-poetic analysis.
- 2) There is no necessary relationship between the words and music of song; the music may support, contradict or remain indifferent to the text.
- 3) Any connections drawn between words and music are *ad hoc* and provisional, and should ideally be set against other possible connections.
- 4) If 'song is music' (Langer), then song analysis must be based on a continuous musical background against which the textual content may be explored.

Not everyone believes that the problem addressed in this essay is deserving of close scrutiny. But even where the problem is dismissed, the grounds of dismissal are instructive. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson writes unambiguously as follows:

Argument over the relative importance of music and text in song is as everlasting as it is pointless. From Plato through Renaissance Humanism, the Reformation, the birth of opera, through Gluck and Wagner, musicians have argued with themselves and with authors about the duty of music to mirror the stresses and quantities of spoken text. Music history, as a result, has woven a drunken path back and forth between enforced recitation and more natural melodic exuberance as writers and musicians have exchanged the upper hand. The endlessly repeating arguments, which will continue as long as there remain articulate people unresponsive to music, are so much wasted energy; for music always wins. As was well understood in the Middle Ages, music dominates whatever it accompanies, imposing its shape and character in a process which appears to be psychologically unavoidable. However it may be restrained by diktat, therefore, there follows inevitably a drift back towards a style in which musical rules determine musical details: the two cannot be separated in a satisfying way. But attitudes are governed by ideology, not art.³³

Thus Leech-Wilkinson echoes the voices of Nietzsche, Schoenberg, Langer and others. It is not, however, the reminder that 'musical rules determine musical details' that has failed to be taken seriously by analysts but rather the elucidation of the specific technical means by which such transformation takes place. We await the development of a syntax of song.

NOTES

1. In three major texts on the history, theory and practice of music analysis

published recently, song analysis does not receive separate consideration. Ian Bent's *Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1987) and Jonathan Dunsby's and Arnold Whittall's *Music Analysis in Theory and Practice* (London: Faber, 1988) refer to and analyse mainly instrumental works. In *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (London: Dent, 1987), Nicholas Cook opens his seventh chapter, 'Starting an Analysis', with comments on Schumann's song 'Auf einer Burg' from the Eichendorff *Liederkreis* Op. 39, but he does not refer to the text. This practice, familiar from numerous music theory texts in which whole songs or excerpts thereof are cited as illustrations of musical patterns and technical devices, is of course perfectly legitimate. It is the status of song *as song* that remains untouched by such practice.

2. I retain the fragile and increasingly problematic distinction between historians and theorists here in order to distinguish between the deliberate and self-conscious attempts to formalize certain analytical procedures ('theory') and the aesthetic criticism of individual works of art without an attendant concern for systematization. In his long article 'Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception' (*Music Perception*, Vol. 3, No. 4 [1986], pp.327-92), David Lewin devotes considerable space to formalizing a perception of the first seventeen bars of Schubert's song 'Morgengruss', from the cycle *Die schöne Müllerin*. By contrast, Joseph Kerman writes about the whole of Beethoven's cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* in thirty-five pages (see 'An die ferne Geliebte', *Beethoven Studies 1*, ed. Alan Tyson [New York: Norton, 1973], pp.123-57). The point is not that one study is more valuable than the other but that Kerman's critical approach, covering a substantial terrain, is possible only because he takes for granted the perceptual reality of his observations. Lewin on the other hand takes little for granted and confronts the theoretical basis for each perception. It is the latter type of study that has not been sufficiently attempted by analysts of song.
3. The literature on song is too vast and diverse to be summarized in a single footnote. The provisional list that follows privileges works that could serve as introductory texts. Three exemplary critical readings are Jürgen Thym, 'Text-Music Relationships in Schumann's "Frühlingsfahrt"', *Theory and Practice*, Vol. 5 (1980), pp.7-25; Don Michael Randel, 'Dufay the Reader', in *Music and Language: Studies in the History of Music* (New York: Broude Brothers, 1983); and Richard Taruskin, 'Stravinsky's "Rejoicing Discovery" and What It Meant: In Defense of His Notorious Text Setting', in *Stravinsky Retrospectives*, ed. Ethan Haimo and Paul Johnson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp.162-99. The most concise introduction to the aesthetic and analytical issues raised by the nineteenth-century *Lied* remains Edward T. Cone's 'Words into Music: The Composer's Approach', in *Sound and Poetry*, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp.3-15. Four years after the appearance of Cone's essay, Nicolas Ruwet published an important essay which states some of the same positions, though with more theoretical concern: see 'Fonction de la parole dans la musique vocale', *Revue belge de musicologie*, Vol. 15 (1961), pp.8-28. Recent

efforts partly to extend and partly to improve upon Ruwet's thought may be found in Raymond Monelle, 'Levels of Rhythm in Vocal Music', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 22 (1982), pp.17-36, and 'Word-Setting in the Strophic Lied', *Music and Letters*, Vol. 65 (1984), pp.229-36. Lawrence Kramer's *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) includes a stimulating chapter on song. A valuable collection of essays is *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986). For historical documentation, see Walter Wiora, *Das Deutsche Lied: zur Geschichte und Ästhetik einer musikalischen Gattung* (Wolfenbüttel: Möselers, 1971) and James Anderson Winn, *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations between Poetry and Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). Although it deals mainly with the twentieth century, William W. Austin's 'Words and Music: Theory and Practice of 20th-Century Composers' in *Words and Music: The Composer's View*, pp.1-8, refers to many of the issues raised by the nineteenth-century *Lied*. Interested readers may wish to consult the entire issue of *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 5 (1989), which is devoted to the issue of 'Music and Text'. Recent operatic criticism also includes vigorous discussions of the relationship between words and music: see, for example, Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Theory-based analyses will be referred to later in this essay.

4. Jack M. Stein, *Poem and Music in the German Lied from Gluck to Hugo Wolf* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p.1.
5. Suzanne K. Langer, 'The Principle of Assimilation', in *Feeling and Form* (New York: Scribner, 1953), pp.149-68. The principle is discussed further in her 'Deceptive Analogies: Specious and Real Relationships Among the Arts', in *Problems of Art* (New York: Scribner, 1957), pp.75-89.
6. Alterations made by composers to the poems they set are noted in the annotations to Philip L. Miller, *The Ring of Words: Anthology of Song Texts* (New York: Norton, 1963).
7. On the 'plural text', see Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text', in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp.156-64.
8. There may be some doubt as to whether the words of a song can properly be regarded as 'Other'. In anthropological and ethnomusicological writing, where matters of alterity have traditionally been built into the scholarly enterprise, otherness is often defined within the language and framework of the Self in order to arrive at a better understanding of that very Self. (For a good recent discussion, see George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986].) It is in this sense that the 'otherness' of a song text is at least conceivable. It may not be altogether accidental that at important moments in the history of European music, revolutionary developments in musical syntax have been made possible by the conjoining of music

and an Other. The list is long and would include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

9. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, p.152.
10. *Ibid.*, p.150.
11. While Langer's is probably the best-known general discussion of the principle of assimilation, it is not the only one. Friedrich Nietzsche's fragment 'Über Musik und Wort' ('On Music and Words', trans. Walter Kaufmann, in Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980], pp.106-19), which, according to Dahlhaus, probably dates from 1871, goes even further than Langer in denying 1) a poetic ('image') input into the creation of song, and 2) a 'necessary relation between poem and music'. He grants '[no] more than an external relationship' between the two. Nietzsche's translator points out that this aesthetic position is deeply influenced by Nietzsche's own practice as a composer. See also Carl Dahlhaus's commentary on the essay in *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, pp.19-39. In a 1912 essay, 'The Relationship to the Text', Arnold Schoenberg grants the text no more than a generative role in song composition:

One has to hold to what a work of art intends to offer, and not to what is merely its intrinsic cause. Furthermore, in all music composed to poetry, the exactitude of the reproduction of the events is as irrelevant to the artistic value as is the resemblance of a portrait to its model... When one has perceived this, it is also easy to understand that the outward correspondence between music and text, as exhibited in declamation, tempo and dynamics, has but little to do with the inward correspondence, and belongs to the same stage of primitive imitation of nature as the copying of a model. Apparent superficial divergences can be necessary because of parallelism on a higher level. Therefore, the judgement on the basis of the text is just as reliable as the judgement of albumen according to the characteristics of carbon.

Schoenberg thus pre-echoes Langer's principle of assimilation. See *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p.145.

12. Edmund Wodehouse, 'Song', *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. H. C. Colles, 4th edn (1940).
13. Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry*, p.127.
14. Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony* (London: Faber, 1948), p.76.
15. A not dissimilar model, which incorporates a foundational rhythmic element, is offered by Raymond Monelle in 'Levels of Rhythm in Vocal Music'. In a subsequent essay, Monelle summarizes his earlier thesis as follows: 'A song represents, not two semiotic modes in harness, but a single semiotic mode

with its roots in dance and its crown in semantics, the whole of which is characterized by a single feature: rhythm'. See Monelle, 'Word-Setting in the Strophic Lied', p.229.

16. *Longman Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Longman, 1984), s.v. 'ad hoc'.
17. Anthony Newcomb, 'Structure and Expression in a Schubert Song: *Noch einmal Auf dem Flüsse zu hören*', in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, p.154. In the same spirit, Joseph Kerman begins his sketch of alternatives to Schenker's, Forte's and Komar's analyses of Schumann's 'Aus meinen Thränen spriessen' with the claim that 'Sooner or later we shall have to retrace the course taken by the composer himself and peek at the words of the poem': 'How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1980), p.326.
18. One testimony among many will serve to challenge the universality of the words-into-music premise. Natalie Bauer-Lechner recalls Mahler's view of the composition of the song 'Der Tambour'sell' in 1901:

On another occasion, he told me that ['Der Tambour'sell'] — almost as if according to a pre-established harmony between notes and words — came into being as follows. It occurred to him literally between one step and the next — that is, just as he was walking out of the dining-room. He sketched it immediately in the dark ante-room, and ran with it to the spring — his favourite place, which often gives him aural inspiration. Here, he had the music completed very quickly. But now he saw that it was no symphonic theme — such as he had been after — but a song! And he thought of 'Der Tambour'sell'. He tried to recall the words; they seemed made for the melody. When he in fact compared the tune and the text up in the summer-house, not a word was missing, not a note was needed; they fitted perfectly!

Recollections of Gustav Mahler, trans. Dika Newlin, ed. Peter Franklin (London: Faber Music, 1980), p.173.

19. Carl Schachter, 'Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs', in *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory*, ed. David Beach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p.61.
20. Such information may be obtained from many sources, including the following: Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumann: Einführung in Persönlichkeit und Werk* (Berlin: Hahnefeld, 1941); Edward A. Lippman, 'Theory and Practice in Schumann's Aesthetics', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (1964), pp.310-45; and Eric Sams, *The Songs of Robert Schumann* (London: Eulenberg, 1969). Boetticher pursues a theory of tonal symbols in the music of Schumann, Lippman discusses the role of the word (including the use of titles) in the composer's creative output, and Sams traces the occurrences of a number of ciphers throughout the songs. See also Rufus Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's Dichterliebe: A Source Study* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1979), and *Schumann: Dichterliebe*, ed. Arthur Komar (New

- York: Norton, 1971).
21. In presenting this analysis, I have used the lines of Chamisso's poem as a convenient set of markers. I do not intend this as an ideological endorsement of a text-to-music over a music-to-text approach, however.
 22. Limitations of space forbid an extensive demonstration of the role of repetition in Schumann's cycle. Such a study would include repetitions of two- or four-bar units in a song (No. 7), cross-referencing (songs 1 and 8) and large-scale recompositions (songs 2 and 4).
 23. For more on highpoints in Schumann's songs, see V. Kofi Agawu, 'Structural "Highpoints" in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*', *Music Analysis*, Vol. 3 (1984), pp.159-80.
 24. Joseph Kerman, 'How We Got into Analysis' (reference given in note 17).
 25. 'How We Got into Analysis', p.325.
 26. David Lidov, 'Musical and Verbal Semantics', *Semiotica*, Vol. 3 (1980), p.375.
 27. Heinrich Schenker, 'Franz Schubert: "Ihr Bild"', *Der Tonwille*, Vol. 1 (1921), pp.46-9; trans. William Pastille, *Sonus*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1986), pp.31-7.
 28. Oswald Jonas, *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker*, trans. John Rothgeb (New York: Longman, 1982), p.153.
 29. Edward Laufer, 'A Schenkerian Approach [to Brahms's Op. 105, No. 1]', in *Readings in Schenker Analysis and Other Approaches*, ed. Maury Yeston (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp.254-72.
 30. In addition to those cited in notes 27, 28 and 29, the following analytical works interpret song from a Schenkerian perspective: Schachter, 'Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs'; Charles Burkhardt, 'Departures from the Norm in Two Songs from Schumann's *Liederkreis*', in *Schenker Studies*, ed. Hedi Siegel (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), pp.146-64; Heinrich Schenker, 'Graphic Analysis of Brahms's *Auf dem Kirchhofe*, Op.105, No. 4', *Theory and Practice*, Vol. 13 (1988), pp.1-14; and Walter Everett, 'Grief in *Winterreise*: A Schenkerian Perspective', *Music Analysis*, Vol. 9 (1990), pp.157-75. Equally important is a larger group of Schenkerian and neo-Schenkerian studies of song, which provide penetrating insights into the purely syntactical framework but leave un- or under-explored the relationships between words and music. See for example, the 'Analysis Symposium' on Brahms's song 'Der Tod, das ist der kühle Nacht', *In Theory Only*, Vol. 2 (1976), with contributions by Marianne Kielian, Marion A. Guck and Charles J. Smith; Deborah Stein, *Hugo Wolf's Lieder and Extensions of Tonality* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986); and Allen Forte and Steven Gilbert, *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1982), especially the analysis of Schumann's song 'Du Ring an meinem Finger' on pp.216-17. These and other studies could provide the basis for a Schenkerian poetics of song.
 31. For further discussion of delayed primary notes, see Heather Platt, 'Dramatic Turning-Points in the Lieder of Johannes Brahms', paper read at the meeting of the Music Theory Society of New York State, Rochester, 5-6 October 1990. I am grateful to Ms Platt for letting me read this instalment of her

ongoing research.

32. Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman 1979), p.6.
33. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Right at the Wrong Time' (review of Don Harrán, *In Defense of Music: The Case of Music as Argued by a Singer and Scholar of the Late Fifteenth Century*), *Times Literary Supplement*, 16-22 March 1990, p.185.

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¹⁷ **How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get out**

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²³ **Structural 'Highpoints' in Schumann's 'Dichterliebe'**

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