

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: ROBERT SCHUMANN'S KERNER-LIEDERREIHE,
OP. 35: ITS COMPOSITIONAL GENESIS AND THE
QUESTION OF ORGANIC UNITY

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Robert Schumann's *Zwölf Gedichte von Justinus Kerner*, Op. 35 has received little scholarly attention, perhaps because it does not seem to be musically or poetically unified. Part 1 of this study is an examination of the biography and work of the poet of the texts, Justinus Kerner. In Part 2, a possible compositional genesis of the work is posited, based on study of unpublished autograph material, letters, Schumann's *Tagebücher*, and relevant historical context. Other scholars have established that financial need influenced Robert Schumann's "Year of Song." The Kerner-Liederreihe, composed during this year, seems to have been especially motivated by financial worries, because Schumann created it in response to the request of a local publisher. The published order of the twelve songs, which several other scholars have failed to explain convincingly, is here shown to result from the composer's compositional process and marketing issues raised by the publisher.

ROBERT SCHUMANN'S KERNER-LIEDERREIHE, OP. 35:
ITS COMPOSITIONAL GENESIS AND THE QUESTION OF ORGANIC UNITY

By

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- TB I, II, III* Schumann, Robert. *Tagebücher*. 3 vols. Georg Eismann, ed. Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1971.
- Lb* Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, mit Mendelssohn-Archiv. *Mus.ms.autogr.R.Schumann 16*. Facsimile.

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Introduction

For the last few decades, scholars have slowly chipped away at the myth shrouding Robert Schumann's song cycles, namely that in his hands this genre became another example of organicism.¹ In 1971 Arthur Komar claimed, in his influential Schenkerian study on *Dichterliebe*, that a detailed compositional plan, governed by a single key, existed in the work.² This study, and others that reached similar conclusions, fixed *Dichterliebe* as an ideal model for the Romantic song cycle, perceived as an inherently organic genre.³ Debates still persist concerning the extent of *Dichterliebe*'s unity, but by the 1980s some scholars began to question the importance of such discussions altogether. Barbara Turchin's landmark study, based largely on nineteenth-century reviews of Lieder, revealed that Schumann's contemporaries, and even the composer himself, did not consider musical unity to be a primary ingredient for a successful song cycle.⁴ The term, *Liederzyklus* or *Liederkreis*, which today evokes weighty expectation, was essentially interchangeable with other, less magnanimous terms

¹ The entry for the "song cycle" in *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, published in 1986, states that, "Schumann's numerous song cycles, which appeared in the 1840s, are among the most highly unified musically; in addition to those mentioned above [*Frauenliebe und Leben* and *Liederkreis* Op. 39] these include *Liederkreis* Op. 24 and *Dichterliebe*." The statement remains in the newest edition of the dictionary (4th edition, published 2003).

² Arthur Komar concluded that the sixteen songs were interdependent in poetic subject and construction, thematic material, harmonic material, and continuity between adjacent songs. On a deeper level, Schumann had created a coherent key scheme, governed by a single key. See Komar, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and Its Parts," in *Robert Schumann: Dichterliebe* (New York: Norton, 1971), 66.

³ David Ferris summarizes the influence Komar's study has had on other scholars: "Since his essay appeared, subsequent analysts, such as David Neumeyer, Patrick McCreless, and Peter Kaminsky, have expanded on his conception by considering other unifying elements such as motive and poetic narrative and have applied it to a growing number of Schumann's song and piano cycles." See Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12.

⁴ "Among *Liederkreise* composed in the first half of the nineteenth century, Robert Schumann's 1840 song cycles occupy a special place. A comparison of these works reveals a degree of diversity in poetic content and musical structure which forces us to conclude that Schumann did not define the song cycle in a narrow manner..." Barbara Turchin, "Schumann's song cycles in the context of the early nineteenth-century *Liederkreis*" (Ph.D diss, Columbia University, 1986), 36.

such as *Liedersammlung* and *Liederroman*.⁵ Turchin's study still paid homage to the organic perception of the genre, but the historical evidence she presented cast doubt on its authority.

More recently, scholars have turned to another promising avenue of research into the context of Schumann's song cycles: Romantic literary theory.⁶ They have illuminated the perplexing structural elements of even his most "unified" cycles by drawing parallels to the Early Romantic fragment, a literary structure that was purposefully incomplete, contradictory, and elusive. In the most recent of these studies, Julia Beate Perrey emphasizes the disconnection between the songs of *Dichterliebe*, countering the traditional view of one of Schumann's most popular works.⁷

Sketch and autograph studies offer a needed glimpse into Schumann's compositional process, which includes his ordering of songs into cycles. In light of the success of his research, which examined the extant autographs for *Dichterliebe*, Rufus Hallmark lamented the general lack of attention given to sketch and autograph study in research on Schumann Lieder.⁸ Using both autograph study and Romantic literary theory, David Ferris reassessed the value of those studies that had examined the extent to which a certain song cycle manifests organic unity. Unlike studies on organic unity that proceed from the published version of the songs and ignored Schumann's compositional process, Ferris concentrates on the genesis of the Op. 39 *Liederkreis*. He shows convincingly that the composer often postponed serious thought about the order of the

⁵ Ibid., 231.

⁶ For example see Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, revised edition (New York: Norton, 1988); John Daverio, "The Song Cycle: Journeys through a Romantic Landscape," *German Lieder in the Nineteenth-Century*, Rufus Hallmark ed. (New York: Schirmer, 1996); and Richard Kramer, "The Hedgehog: Of Fragments Finished and Unfinished," *19th-Century Music* 21 (1997): 134-48.

⁷ Julia Beate Perrey, *Schumann's Dichterliebe and Early Romantic Poetics: Fragmentation of Desire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24.

⁸ Rufus Hallmark, "The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*," *19th-Century Music* 5 (1977): 110.

songs until after drafting them, challenging the long-held assumption that Schumann composed song cycles with organic unity as a central concern.⁹

Because the concept of organicism dominated scholarship on Schumann's songs until recently, collections of Lieder that apparently lacked unifying characteristics, including the *Zwölf Gedichte von Justinus Kerner, Op. 35*, received little scholarly attention. Schumann composed fourteen songs on Kerner texts in the last month of his "Year of Song," eventually choosing twelve for publication in the spring of 1841. Only a few scholars have looked into its possible organic structure, with dismal results, leading me to investigate whether factors other than artistic concerns influenced the contents and order of this particular song opus. Subsequent study confirmed this suspicion. Following the critiques of Hallmark and Ferris, I posit a possible compositional genesis for Op. 35 from unpublished autograph material and written statements by Schumann in his journals and letters. The unique genesis of this song opus seems to have been primarily shaped by financial motivation, marketing concerns, and the composer's waning interest in the genre, rather than a predetermined compositional plan.

In this study, structural analysis of the Kerner-Lieder never goes into great detail, because I chose to explore the genesis of the work from a historical, rather than an analytical, perspective. I devote more time to analysis of autograph material than the published versions of the songs. The issues raised by historical research always dictated any analysis of autograph or published material. For instance, some of Schumann's earliest musical compositions were several settings of Kerner's poetry, in 1828, and I compared the structure of these early songs to those of Op. 35 to better understand

⁹ Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 172.

Schumann's maturation as a composer of song. Other scholars, particularly Hans-Udo Kreuels, have published extensive theoretical analyses of Op. 35.¹⁰

Because the term, "song cycle," currently connotes musical and literary organicism, I will avoid its usage in this study.¹¹ I do not intend to comment on the unity of Op. 35, and therefore it seems dangerous to apply to it such a loaded term. Instead, I describe the work with more benign labels, such as "song collection" or "song opus." The withholding of the designation, "song cycle," is not meant to indicate that Op. 35 lacks the artistic legitimacy of other compositions.

My study begins with two chapters on the poet of the Op. 35 Liederreihe, Justinus Kerner, who has been largely ignored by English-speaking scholars of German Lieder.¹² While a better understanding of Kerner's poetry does surface as relevant to later chapters, which present a detailed historical context for the genesis of the Liederreihe, these chapters serve a few other purposes. First, performers who desire to improve their interpretations of Kerner's work can look to this study for a summary of his biography and poetry that pertains to the texts of Op. 35. In a musicological study such as this, the composer's musical interpretation must take precedence. However, the poems existed first as purely literary artworks, thus scholars can also gain from this investigation into the poems, because text and music are so intertwined in Schumann's songs. Schumann considered the texts of his songs carefully, and wanted to portray their emotional atmosphere accurately. His interpretations were certainly colored by his own experiences, but this does not negate those of the poet. While the musical setting – the

¹⁰ Hans-Udo Kreuels, *Schumanns Kerner-Lieder: Interpretation und Analyse sämtlicher Lieder Robert Schumanns nach Gedichten von Justinus Kerner mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liederreihe op. 35* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2003).

¹¹ Cf. note 1.

¹² All translations of Kerner's poetry are mine unless otherwise indicated.

pitches, dynamics, and chord progressions – alters the poet's voice, the words remain unchanged, and it is important for careful scholars and performers alike to know something about the person who created them.

PART I

Biographical Information on Kerner

The current body of literature concerning Justinus Kerner largely portrays him as a mystical doctor who irresponsibly allowed German Romanticism to affect his medical practice.¹³ Although he wrote hundreds of poems and maintained relationships with several prominent politicians, nobles, and poets, very little has been written about his contributions to German Romantic poetry and literature. The small amount of scholarly literature devoted to the topic is all in German, posing difficulties for English speakers interested in Kerner's work and, more relevant to this study, vocalists and pianists who desire to perform Schumann's Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe thoughtfully. This biography, which concentrates on Kerner as poet and parapsychologist, fills this gap in the literature. Because its purpose, within the context of this study, is to elucidate the texts of the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe, which Schumann chose from an 1834 edition of Kerner's poetry, this biography only covers Kerner's life between his birth and this date.¹⁴

Biography

Justinus Kerner was born in 1786 in Ludwigsburg, a small town in southwest Germany, the youngest of twelve children, six of whom survived early childhood. His

¹³ Uwe-Henrik Peters, "Justinus Kerner als Arzt," in *Justinus Kerner: Dichter und Arzt, (1786-1862)*, *Marbacher Magazin* 39, Hans Bender ed. (Marbach am Neckar: Deutscher Schillergesellschaft, 1986), 53.

¹⁴ Otto-Joachim Grüsser's excellent biography of Kerner supplies most of the details presented in this chapter that have no citation. See Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner, 1786-1862: Arzt, Poet, Geisterseher* (New York: Springer, 1987).

father held governmental positions in Ludwigsburg and then in nearby Maullbronn, to where the family moved in 1795. In 1796 Justinus's father died and his mother moved back to Ludwigsburg, where he attended the local Lyceum and wrote his first poems. Several private tutors fostered his interest in nature and the natural sciences, and in his spare time he read Romantic authors such as Schiller and Goethe.

After completing his secondary education and a few short apprenticeships in Ludwigsburg, he left for the University of Tübingen in 1804. The medical student's interest in medieval and modern German literature was fostered there. He quickly encountered several students from various disciplines who also loved such literature, and formed a circle of friends built on common interests, with himself and Ludwig Uhland, a law student, at its center. The group included notable figures such as Karl Mayer, Gustav Schwab, Karl August Varnhagen, and Ludwig Uhland. In contrast to the Jena Romantics, many of whom devoted their lives to creating Romantic philosophy and literature, the Tübinger Romantics all studied literature as a hobby.

The group of friends also shared an admiration for traditional *Volkslieder*. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a collection of traditional German *Volkslieder* published by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Bretano in 1806, greatly excited them, spurring them to incorporate a folk-like tone, vocabulary, and subject matter into their own poetic styles. On weekends the group would often travel to small towns near the university, searching for books of *Volkslieder* and visiting structures built in the medieval era. *Volkslieder* attracted Kerner with particular intensity, and the style of his poetry written while at Tübingen shows frequent use of vocabulary from the local dialect, Schwäbisch, and

markedly rustic themes. In his later poems this influence became subtler, but his poems always maintained simplicity in structure, syntax, meter, and rhyme scheme.¹⁵

The Tübinger Romantics were well-informed about the struggle of various groups of Romantic authors against the majority of German publishers and literary critics. In opposition to a weekly literary journal produced by the publisher J.K. Cotta that was strongly against Romanticism, the group circulated their own weekly journal, the “Sonntagsblatt für gebildete Stände,” which appeared sporadically in 1807. In one of the earliest issues, Uhland proclaimed the group’s manifesto, which is clearly patterned after the early Romantic philosophy that they avidly read and discussed.¹⁶ Shortly after Uhland’s graduation from Tübingen in 1808 the literary circle disbanded, although many members remained lifelong friends and regularly visited the Kernerhaus in Weinsberg.

Kerner and Ludwig Uhland developed a strong friendship, based on their many shared interests. Considered the leaders of the literary circle, they both found old German poetry and literature endearing, but Kerner consistently gravitated towards fairy tales and legends, which Uhland tended to dismiss because he did not share his friend’s predilection for the fantastic and the spiritual. Kerner focused primarily on a poem’s content, but Uhland dwelled on issues of structure and poetic theory. Under the influence of Uhland, Kerner revised his poetry and paid greater attention to structural issues in poems written during his time at the university. This practice slackened after he graduated and reverted back to his earlier partiality for content over structure. The two remained friends until Kerner’s death, but after leaving Tübingen their disagreements sharpened. Differing political stances, in particular, caused a temporary rift in their

¹⁵ Henry and Mary Garland, ed. *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, 3rd ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), s.v. “Kerner, Justinus.”

¹⁶ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 52-53.

friendship. Uhland criticized Kerner's involvement in parapsychology, and was especially critical of Kerner's *Geschichte zweyer Somnambülen*.¹⁷

After graduating from Tübingen in 1809, Kerner undertook a year of student travel, which took him throughout Germany and Austria, ending in an apprenticeship at his brother's medical practice in Hamburg. While he journeyed, Kerner indulged his interest in literature and the German folk culture. He acquired several new books of Volk and Medieval literature and visited Medieval cities. Kerner's traveling experiences inspired some of his most famous works, including the poem, "Wanderlied," and *Reiseschatten*, a short novel based on his travel journal.¹⁸

When his travels ended, Kerner served as a doctor in several small cities before attaining the post of *Oberamtsarzt* (senior physician) in Weinsberg in 1819. This post provided enough income for Kerner's ambition and he loved the city, remaining there until his death in 1862.¹⁹ He continued to consider the writing of poetry a priority in his life, but his medical duties greatly increased after he became an *Oberamtsarzt*. This left less time for writing poetry, and although it would be incorrect to state that his writing became a hobby, it does seem to have become more for personal enjoyment than public consumption. As a doctor he undertook some medical research that related to widespread illnesses among his patients. His documentation of poisoning caused by spoiled sausage,

¹⁷ The first of Kerner's publication that dealt with mentally ill patients who, in magnetic sleep (under hypnosis), displayed extra-sensory perception. Kerner's pursuit of the supernatural as a medical doctor is described later in this chapter.

¹⁸ Kerner felt so excited about the poem, "Wanderlied" that immediately after writing it as he walked to Stuttgart, he shared it in letters to Uhland and his fiancée, Friederike Ehemann. The poem was first published in *Poetischer Almanach für das Jahr 1812* (Heidelberg: G. Braun, 1812) and it is currently available in *Die lyrischen Gedichte*, in *Kerners Werke: Auswahl in Sechs Teilen*, vol. 1, Raimund Pissin ed. (Berlin: Deutsches Verlagshaus Bong & Co., 1914). Braun of Heidelberg also published the first edition of *Reiseschatten*, in 1811. The most recent edition of this work is Justinus Kerner, *Reiseschatten* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1996).

¹⁹ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 152.

a previously unexplained, regional phenomenon, is usually cited as his most important medical contribution. He was regarded as a very kind doctor, especially among his poorer patients.

In 1813 Kerner married Friederike Ehemann, whom he had met in 1807. Friederike, or Rickele as he often called her, provided a great deal of support for his medical work and also his poetic endeavors. By all accounts they were happily married until her death in 1854. The couple's children, Rosa Maria and Theobald, both published memoirs of their father. Kerner's house in Weinsberg was a place of constant activity. To the physically and mentally ill, it was a place of healing; to Kerner's large literary circle it was a point of gathering. Kerner was well-known as a hospitable host, a lover of German literature, and a captivating teller of ghost stories. Today *Reiseschatten* and *Die Seherin von Prevorst* (1829) retain a place of some importance in German Romantic literature.²⁰

Kerner and the Spritual World

In medical history, Kerner is primarily remembered for his interest in parapsychology. In 1824 his *Geschichte zweyer Somnambülen* was published, and studies on mentally ill patients with psychic ability preoccupied the doctor for the remainder of his life. His interest in the spiritual world caused many of his colleagues and medical historians to dismiss him as a mystic. Only recently have historians of medicine looked at his studies in the realm of parapsychology with greater objectivity.²¹

²⁰ *Die Seherin von Prevorst* is included in Pissin's edition of Kerner's complete works. Its contents are discussed in greater detail on pages 11 and 12 of this chapter.

²¹ Grüsser summarizes the negative view that several authors, both contemporary to Kerner and more recent, took of Kerner's studies in parapsychology in *Justinus Kerner*, 4-5. Uwe-Henrik Peters describes

A discussion of this aspect of Kerner's medical practice, and his general belief in the *Nachtseite der Natur* (nightside of nature), is imperative to an understanding of his poetry.²² Firstly, he was part of the Romantic generation, which largely rebelled against the naturalism of the Enlightenment and instead embraced spirituality. The Romantics rejected the idea that empiricism could yield perfect understanding of the material world, conceiving nature (the material world) as mysterious, mystical and impermeable. Humans could only gaze dimly into the true reality around them, although this perception could be heightened by the arts, particularly poetry. Much of the natural world was unseen and unexplained, and this was the spiritual realm. Various Romantics expressed and explored the spiritual in a multitude of ways.²³

Kerner's spiritual beliefs are arguably more complex and were more devoutly held than Novalis's or Schlegel's. They were multi-faceted and complex, because they developed from numerous personal experiences, writings of medical and philosophical persuasion, and especially his medical study of the supernatural. Spiritual themes and situations occur frequently in Kerner's poems, stories, letters and journals. The following discussion aims to take these many influences into consideration, in preparation for an examination of his poetry.

the reactions of Kerner's contemporaries, who considered his research dangerous and silly. The author, who is also a member of the medical community, believes that even though Kerner's research might have been misguided, it is unfair to ridicule it in hindsight. Uwe-Henrik Peters, "Justinus Kerner als Arzt."

²² This term was first used by G.H. von Schubert in his 1808 *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft*, which many Romantics, including Kerner, found very convincing. It was the place of the unconscious, the spiritual and dreams, an integral part of the natural world, just like the visible realm; sleepwalkers, the mentally ill, and clairvoyants had special access to this world. Uwe-Henrik Peters, *Studies in German Romantic Psychiatry: Justinus Kerner as a Psychiatric Practitioner, E.T.A. Hoffmann as a Psychiatric Theorist* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1990), 5-7.

²³ Friedrich Schlegel, for instance, experimented with magic, superstition, and mysticism before becoming a devout Catholic in the later years of his life. In his *Christenheit*, Novalis proclaimed the Romantics the bearers of a new, pantheistic form of Christianity. Siegmund V. Hellerich, *Religionizing, Romanizing Romantics: The Catholico-Christian Camouflage of the Early German Romantics, Wackenroder, Tieck, Novalis, Friedrich & August Wilhelm Schlegel* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1995), 75-6.

A few years before Kerner entered the University of Tübingen, he encountered the writings of Anton Mesmer and Eberhardt Gmelin concerning animal magnetism, a method of hypnotism that was popular in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries in Europe.²⁴ This concept gradually became an integral part of his medical treatment for the mentally ill. Doctors had experimented with hypnotism since antiquity, but Anton Mesmer had popularized his own version of it in the late eighteenth-century in France and central Europe. Scientists such as Luigi Galvani and Alexander Humboldt had recently discovered the mysterious connection between electricity and animal life, and theorized that an electrical fluid ran through the nervous system. Based on this research, Mesmer believed that a magnetic fluid, or *Nervengeist*, coursed through the body and was intimately connected with its state of health.²⁵ Illness, especially mental illness, was caused when the magnetic fluid of the body was not in equilibrium and needed to be channeled to parts of the body where it had become deficient.

After his body had been magnetized through contact with various metals, water, or other materials, Mesmer would locate the part of the body that needed more magnetic fluid, or where there was an obstruction in the flow, and direct the fluid towards this area with his hands. The hand motions involved were termed magnetic strokes (*magnetische Striche*) and were administered without touching the patient. When magnetic equilibrium had been achieved in the sufferer's body, Mesmer noticed that he or she often experienced a "crisis point," in which they experienced physical symptoms such as uncontrollable laughter, crying, convulsions, sleepiness, or fainting.

²⁴ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 26.

²⁵ Frank A. Pattie, *Mesmer and Animal Magnetism: A Chapter in the History of Medicine* (Hamilton, N.Y: Edmonston, 1994), 11.

Early animal magnetists noticed that when some patients reached this hysterical point, they exhibited extra-sensory perception. They described this state as somnambolic, because it was thought to result from a level of consciousness in between sleeping and waking, which is similar to our modern understanding of the word. These patients, who were exclusively female and usually suffered from some sort of mental illness, exhibited a variety of psychic abilities when under magnetic sleep. Some could see with their eyes closed, share the sensory responses of their magnetizer, or perceive events or people removed from them by time, space, or both. Generally, the somnambulists' aptitude in hearing, language, and memory sharpened as a result of their altered state of consciousness. When the patients awoke, they could remember nothing, similar to someone who had undergone hypnosis.²⁶

Mesmer theorized that somnambulists received extra-sensory perception because while in magnetic sleep the outer senses were unconscious, but the inner senses were greatly heightened and could receive information directly from the cosmos, through the *Nervengeist*.²⁷ Between 1802 and 1820, the German medical community viewed animal magnetism as a respectable, scientific approach to healing patients whose illnesses did not respond to conventional treatment. Schumann even underwent mesmerism in 1844 for relief from his worsening psychological and physical condition.²⁸ It was widely taught at universities, and most doctors understood it as a scientific phenomenon, grounded in reasonable theory.²⁹ By 1810 many magnetizers had begun to use Mesmer's

²⁶ Ibid., 79.

²⁷ Robin Waterfield, *Hidden Depths: The Story of Hypnosis* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2002), 99.

²⁸ John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a New Poetic Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 299.

²⁹ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 20.

technique to induce and explore somnambulatory ability, rather than to treat suffering patients.³⁰

Eberhardt Gmelin, who was largely responsible for the proliferation of animal magnetism among the German medical community, magnetized Kerner as a youth. Kerner suffered for several months from a mysterious illness at the age of twelve. After receiving treatment from several traditional physicians, a friend took Kerner to see Gmelin in Heilbronn, who used magnetism to put him into a trance. The treatment not only healed Kerner, but he claimed after that to have developed a special sensitivity to the spiritual world. Right before he left for Tübingen, Kerner discovered Mesmer's and Gmelin's writings on animal magnetism. Gmelin taught the subject to Kerner at Tübingen, where he served on the medical faculty. He approached this controversial aspect of medicine as an empiricist of the Enlightenment, performing experiments to evaluate the scientific explanation for the effects of magnetic stroking.³¹

Study of Schelling's philosophy of nature, which he undertook with close friend Karl Varnhagen in his last year at Tübingen, complimented Kerner's theoretical understanding of animal magnetism.³² Central to Schelling's philosophy was the concept of polar forces acting upon each other.³³ One of the many examples of the polarity in nature was magnetism. The polarizing, or magnetizing, of a single object reflected the primordial polarizing of the Absolute, or the divine and singular material of the universe. Consequently, Schelling showed great interest in animal magnetism as it became more

³⁰ Pattie, *Mesmer and Animal Magnetism*, 141.

³¹ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 44.

³² Schelling's term nature refers to the material universe. His philosophy of nature was an attempt to provide a rationality and inherent unity of all things in man's experience.

³³ Robert Stern explains that, "This emphasis on polarity was associated by Schelling with a conception of nature as a balance of opposed forces or tendencies, a balance that when disrupted leads to strife and activity." See Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, "Introduction," Robert Stern ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), xi.

popular in Germany.³⁴ Because everything in the universe came from one source, all things were seen in relation to each other. Schelling warns of the necessity of man's relationship with the natural world: "Between [man] and the world, therefore, no rift must be established; contact and reciprocal action must be possible between the two, for only so does man become man."³⁵ He broadened the definition of the *Nervengeist*, believing that it existed throughout the universe, because it was a manifestation of the divine Absolute. In it, the material and spiritual world interacted.³⁶

Pantheism, a natural outgrowth of Hegel's, Schelling's, and even Kant's philosophies, pervaded nineteenth-century Romanticism. Schelling's concept of the unity of nature was widely read and adopted by the early Romantic writers and philosophers, including E.T.A Hoffmann and Friedrich Schlegel. If all things resulted from a divine Absolute, then all things could be used to commune with God, because of their inherent divinity.³⁷ Like these writers, Kerner adopted a pantheistic view of the universe and believed that because all things were inherently divine, they were also inherently connected.³⁸

Kerner's interest in the *Nachtseite* made somnambulism very appealing. Since his youth he had sought a way to attain contact with, and more knowledge about, the unseen spiritual world. Experimentation with somnambulists allowed him to investigate

³⁴ Pattie, *Mesmer and Animal Magnetism*, 142.

³⁵ Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, 10.

³⁶ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 187.

³⁷ Hellerich, *Religionizing, Romanticizing Romantics*, 49-50.

³⁸ Heinrich Straumann, *Justinus Kerner und der Okkultismus in der deutschen Romantik* (Leipzig: Verlag der Münster-Presse, 1927), 80-81: "Dabei spielt die konkretisierte Idee der Weltseele, die schon stark stofflich vorgestellte Allverbundenheit, eine grundlegende Rolle. Als 'Geist der Natur, Allgemeinleben fasst Kerner diesen Begriff das eine Mal und gibt ihm die Wertung des Unbedingten und Absoluten, was sich folgegemaß dadurch ausdrückt, dass alles Sein und Leben darnach hinstrebt." (Of basic importance in this regard is the concretely realized idea of the world soul [Weltseele], the already distinctly imagined material all-connectedness. Kerner conceives of this notion as 'Spirit of Nature, General Life' and he values it as the Complete and Absolute, which consequently finds its expression in the striving of all existence and life to attain this state). Translation graciously provided by Dr. Peter Beicken.

this world through science. From 1822 to 1824 the doctor closely observed two female patients, whom he treated with animal magnetism. He formed an especially close bond with the first, Christiane Kepplinger, who suffered from a sort of narcolepsy and claimed to see ghosts while asleep. At the request of another doctor, Kerner evaluated her and immediately began daily sessions of magnetism.

His fruitful experiences with Kepplinger led him to experiment more freely upon the other of his first somnambulists: Caroline Stähle. For instance, he hid several types of metal in his Weinsberg garden and then asked Stähle, who was in magnetic sleep, to identify them. Kerner meticulously recorded his method of treating both patients and the observations he made about their abilities; these records were the basis of the *Geschichte Zweyer Somnambülen*. He hypothesized that a somnambulist could tap into *Nervengeist* outside of her own nervous system, allowing her to communicate with the spiritual world.³⁹ Many medical colleagues and close friends, such as Ludwig Uhland, were skeptical of Kerner's findings, but his fame as the "Magier von Weinsberg" spread throughout southwest Germany.

In 1827 Kerner began the study of his most famous somnambulist: the *Seherin von Prevorst*, Friedericke Hauffe. She came to the doctor with complaints of various mental illnesses, and a keen awareness of the spiritual world. For two years, until 1829, Hauffe lived at the Kernerhaus in Weinsberg. As her time of residence progressed, the patient's clairvoyant powers seemed to sharpen and her abilities became more pronounced, mysterious, and varied. She claimed that while in trance she could see ghosts and spirit doubles that corresponded to familiar people. While in trance she often gave explanations for her curious mental and physical illnesses, and received clairvoyant

³⁹ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 213.

visions. Kerner reported that Hauffe believed she could step outside of herself while in magnetic sleep and that this resulted from the traveling of her *Nervengeist* from her body. His relationship with Hauffe was even stronger than it had been with the other two somnambulists and he eventually began to view her as an oracle, trusting her visions of the spirit world and explanations for her ability to reach it. After nearly three years of observation, Hauffe left the Kernerhaus and moved back to her home, where she died three weeks later.

In 1829 Kerner published *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, which reached a level of fame that none of his other publications, poetic or scientific, had ever achieved. The book generated enough interest to be translated into English in 1845.⁴⁰ His fame also brought more attention to his work as a poet and mystic. In the opinion of several friends and medical peers, however, Kerner had overstepped the bounds of science and objectivity. The subtitle of the book, “Being revelations concerning the inner-life of man, and the inter-diffusion of the world of spirits in the one we inhabit,” is indicative of how Kerner’s work had been transformed from experimentation into philosophy. He founded the *Blätter aus Prevorst* in 1831, a magazine devoted to the collection and publication of accounts of spiritual happenings, regardless of their validity.⁴¹ It appeared until 1839.

Magikon, another magazine edited by Kerner, served a very similar purpose.

Animal magnetism spilled into Kerner’s poetry. Most overt are four of his poems that stem from his experiences with Hauffe. In “An die Seherin von Prevorst,” he praises her spiritual gift, declaring at the end, “And you do not have to die, because you are

⁴⁰ Justinus Kerner, *The Seeress of Prevorst: Being Revelations Concerning the Inner-life of Man, and the Inter-diffusion of a World of Spirits in the One we Inhabit*, Catherine Crowe trans. and ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1845).

⁴¹ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 217.

already a spirit.”⁴² Several of the middle stanzas describe Hauffe’s contact with the spiritual world during magnetic sleep. Kerner’s theories on somnambulism permeate this poem, for example in the third stanza, where he describes the separation of her inner, spiritual senses from her outer, material awareness, allowing her to unite with the unseen world. “Nach der Seherin Tod” is a tribute penned directly after her death, while in “Der Seherin Erscheinen,” Kerner imagines that Hauffe rises from her grave. He wrote “An ****” (mysteriously replacing Hauffe’s name with asterisks) after sending the finished version of his study on the *Seherin* to the publisher, as a note underneath the poem’s title indicates.

Kerner’s fascination with the spiritual and fantastic greatly influenced his work as doctor and poet. Since his early childhood, he had felt curious about both the natural and the unseen world, and the often fantastic nature of the Romantic literature he read only strengthened this tendency. When Kerner began his medical studies at Tübingen, he quickly found a group of friends who shared his penchant for fantastic literature, both modern and Medieval. While Kerner published some of his earliest, major works in the 1820s, he simultaneously began to actively investigate animal magnetism, which flourished at that time across Europe. Through this treatment method, the doctor found that patients with somnambulist tendencies offered him direct contact with *die Nachtseite der Natur*. By 1834, his experiences with animal magnetism had greatly affected his own beliefs, causing him to spend much of his time observing patients who he believed had special access to this unseen realm. In the following chapter this aspect of Kerner’s worldview is shown to be directly related to his poetry, from which Schumann chose the texts of the Op. 35 Liederreihe.

⁴² “Und du hast nicht zu sterben, weil du schon jetzt ein Geist.”

The Poetry of Justinus Kerner

Kerner is sometimes called a *Gelegenheitsdichter*, a term with a rich etymology that can be traced back to antiquity.⁴³ In the eighteenth-century, a *Gelegenheitsgedicht* was a poem composed for a special occasion, such as a wedding, funeral, birthday, or a day deemed important for whatever reason. Kerner created many of his poems for specific people and events. He often indicated when a precise event had sparked his creativity in published versions of his poems, particularly in later collections. Under the title of “Impromptu,” for instance, Kerner indicates that it was written “at the gathering of natural researchers, at the residence of Duke Paul von Württemberg.”

Because they were created for some specific purpose, which necessarily restricted the poet, *Gelegenheitsgedichte* were often considered a form of art lower than poetry created for the sake of art.⁴⁴ As he surveyed his poetry at the age of sixty-three, in the forward to *Der letzte Blüthenstrauß*, Kerner gladly accepted the description that many of his contemporaries attached to his poems, even though it carried these negative connotations:

A part of the verses of this collection warrant an introduction; there are many that relate to experiences in the lives of dear friends, verses that some have placed in a lower class of poetry and described as *Gelegenheitsgedichte*. Here I must remark, that if one wants to name these poems so, he should name all of my poems *Gelegenheitsgedichte*; because only from the experiences in my own life or my friends' lives, which I cannot separate from my own life, do all of my poems arise. I create these poems often, almost as though without knowledge of the

⁴³ Reinhard Tgahrt, “Einladung: Gedichte von Justinus Kerner zu lesen,” *Justinus Kerner: Dichter und Arzt, (1786-1862)*, *Marbacher Magazin* 39, Hans Bender ed (Marbach am Neckar: Deutscher Schillergesellschaft, 1986), 79. Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 336.

⁴⁴ Wulf Segebrecht, *Das Gelegenheitsgedicht: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Lyrik* (Stuttgart: JB Metzlersche, 1977), 2.

expression, without the involvement of great, rational thought, only with my inner feeling. Joy, and more often pain, have made all of them, and friends' birthdays or deaths and other events in their lives with which I am involved often give me joy and pain, and as a result, a poem.⁴⁵

Kerner presented a broader definition of this term, applying it to any poem born from personal experience that caused a deep emotion. He elevates the *Gelegenheitsgedicht* from a casual composition, limited in subject matter and passion, to an intimate expression. This idea echoed frequently in Kerner's letters.⁴⁶ Further in the forward to *Der letzte Blütenstrauß*, Kerner explained that he used the term in the spirit of Goethe, who used it as a synonym for an *Erlebnisgedicht*, a poem inspired by personal experience. Goethe regarded this type of *Gelegenheitsgedicht* as "the first and truest of all types of poetry," making it superlative to even poetry conceived purely as art.⁴⁷ While Kerner did write many poems that fit the more traditional definition of *Gelegenheitsgedichte* (a casual, functional poem) the majority of the poems written before 1834 are better described as complex *Erlebnisgedichte*. Such poems are a pastiche of several experiences, often highly personal and idiosyncratic, sprinkled throughout the poet's life.

⁴⁵ "Ein Teil der Verse dieser Sammlung bedarf eines Vorworts; es sind die vielen, die sich auf Ereignisse im Leben teurer Freunde beziehen, Verse, die man gerne in eine niedere Klasse der Poesie stellt und mit dem Namen Gelegenheitsgedichte bezeichnet. Hier muß ich nun bemerken, daß, will man jene so nennen, alle meine Gedichte Gelegenheitsgedichte zu nennen sind; denn nur aus Veranlassungen in meinem eigenen und meiner Freunde Leben, das ich von meinem eigenen nie zu trennen wußte, entstanden alle meine Gedichte. Dieselben schuf auch oft, fast wie ohne Wissen des Äußern, ohne Zutun vieler rasonierende Gehirntätigkeit, bloß mein Gemüt im Innern. Die Freude und noch mehr der Schmerz machten sie alle, und der Freunde Geburtstage oder ihr Tod und sonstige in ihr Leben eingreifende Ereignisse gaben mir ja auch oft Freude und Schmerz und damit ein Lied." Justinus Kerner, Vorwort to *Der letzte Blütenstrauß*, in *Justinus Kerners Werke*, vol. 1, p. 223, translation mine.

⁴⁶ "Was ich nicht lebte, was mir nicht auf die Nägel brannte und zu schaffen machte, habe ich auch nicht gedichtet und ausgesprochen." (What I have not lived... I have also not set into verse and articulated.) Quoted in Pfäfflin, "Das Schattenspiel kann ich in Wahrheit nicht vollenden," *Justinus Kerner: Dichter und Arzt (1786-1862)*, Marburger Magazin Sonderheft 39, Hans Bender ed. (Marbach am Neckar: Deutscher Schillergesellschaft, 1986), 79.

⁴⁷ Segebrecht, *Das Gelegenheitsgedicht*, 297.

For example, a complex mix of present circumstances and childhood memories probably inspired “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud.” Because of the strong connection to biographical data, Kerner’s poems can be fairly accurately dated by matching imagery and symbols with events in Kerner’s life. Although this poem has not been dated, several events in Kerner’s life from 1809 match with its imagery, suggesting he penned it in this year. Several times during 1809 he visited his fiancée, Friederike Ehemann, who was then living with relatives in Augsburg, the city named in the opening lines of “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud:”

Zu Augsburg steht ein hohes Haus,
 Nahbei dem alten Dom,
 Da tritt an hellem Morgen aus
 Ein Mägdelein gar fromm;
 Gesang erschallt,
 Zum Dome wallt
 Die liebe Gestalt.

Mit Staunen sehen all die Leut’
 Dies Kränzlein licht im Haar,
 Das Mägdlein aber wallt nicht weit,
 Tritt vor den Hochaltar;
 “Zur Nonne weiht
 Mich arme Maid!
 Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud!”

Dort vor Maria heilig Bild
 Sie betend niederkniet,
 Der Himmel hat ihr Herz erfüllt
 Und alle Weltlust flieht;
 “O Jungfrau rein!
 Laß mich allein
 Dein eignen sein!”

Gott, gib, dass dieses Mägdlein
 Ihr Kränzlein friedlich trag’!
 Es ist das allerliebste mein,
 Bleibt’s bis zum jüngsten Tag.
 Sie weiß es nicht. -
 Mein Herz zerbricht -
 Stirb, Lied’ und Licht!

Alsbald der Glocke dumpfer Klang
 Die Betende erweckt.
 Das Mägdlein wallt die Hall’ entlang,
 Es weiß nicht, was es trägt;
 Am Haupte, ganz
 Von Himmelsglanz,
 Ein Lilienkranz.

(In Augsburg stands a tall house, near the old cathedral, on a sunny morning a pure-hearted girl walks out of the house; song rings out, the lovely figure walks to the cathedral. There before Mary’s holy image she prays on bended knee; heaven has filled her heart and all of the world’s desires flee; “O Holy Virgin! Let me be yours alone!” At the bell’s thudding tone the prayerful awake. The girl walks down the hall, she does not know what she wears; on her head, set aglow by heaven, a crown of lilies. With amazement all of the people see this little crown shining in her hair, but the girl does not walk very far, but steps before the great altar: “Consecrate this poor maiden as a nun! Die, love and joy!” God, allow this girl to carry her crown joyfully! She is the love of my heart, and has been since my youngest days. She does not know. – My heart breaks. – Die, love and light!)

The symbolism of this poem relates to Kerner's deeply held emotions concerning a female figure that suggests his fiancée. In the poem, the young girl pledges to become a nun, thus dashing the hopes of the poet, who loves her dearly. This girl clearly represents Friederike, because Kerner feared losing her to an illness that had plagued her for several months in 1809.⁴⁸ Descriptions of dreams and fantasies in letters Kerner wrote to her after this visit share many similarities with the imagery of this poem.⁴⁹ In the third stanza the girl rises from her prayer to the Virgin Mary and walks down the aisle of the church. In her hair is a delicate crown of lilies, symbolizing purity. In May of 1809 Kerner dreamt that Friederike had unexpectedly died. He gazed in horror upon her corpse, which was surrounded by lilies and roses.⁵⁰ A memory of his childhood likely fueled his recurring dreams of Friederike's death as well as "Stirb, Lieb' und Freud." In his autobiography, Kerner recalled a similar childhood memory of his mother sending flowers to put on the casket of a young girl.⁵¹ The power that he attributes to this memory suggests that it quite possibly contributes to "Stirb, Lieb' und Freud."

The overt Catholicism expressed in this poem is symptomatic of the prevalence of Catholicism in Romantic thought, even among Protestants. The Romantics fought

⁴⁸ "For a long time she has had a cough, that once again causes me to worry...her health has greatly declined." "Sie hat seit längerer Zeit einen Husten, der mich wieder befürchten läßt...Sie ist ganz, ganz abgefallen." Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 87.

⁴⁹ From Hamburg, where he stayed with his older brother for several months in spring of 1809, Kerner wrote several letters to Friederike describing his dreams of her. See Maria Niethammer and Karl Pörnbacher ed, *Das Leben des Justinus Kerner* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1967), 70-75.

⁵⁰ Niethammer, *Das Leben des Justinus Kerner*, 274. Since the Medieval Era, these flowers carried special symbolism in Christianity. Lilies symbolized virginity and roses symbolized martyrdom. Karl Müller, a German Romantic painter, adorned Mary's grave with lilies and roses in *Birth of Mary*.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 79: "Meine Betrübnis war sehr groß, und ich blickte den Blumen, die die Mutter [dem Mädchen] zu seinem Sarge sandte, mit Tränen nach, weil man mich nicht mit ihnen gehen ließ. Dieses weiße Mädchen ist mir oft später noch in *Träumen* ganz wie es lebte vorgekommen und hat für mich heute noch etwas mysteriöses Heiliges." (My sorrow was very great, and I looked at the flowers my mother sent to have placed on her casket with tears, because I was not allowed to go with them. This girl often still comes to me in dreams as though she still lived, and is still something mysteriously holy to me.)

against the emphasis on objectivity and reason of the Enlightenment, and sought refuge from the political turmoil that spread across Europe after the French Revolution.⁵²

Protestantism embraced the values of the Enlightenment and political struggle, but to the Romantics Catholicism seemed simple and reassuring. The Jena Romantics, who initiated a great deal of the Romantic philosophy, lived in Protestant northern Germany. They placed great emphasis on art and spirituality, and many of them felt that in Catholicism the two concepts merged into a pleasing, sensual experience. Friedrich Schlegel, one of the most influential Early Romantics, and his wife, Dorothea, converted in 1808.⁵³

Kerner, who was Protestant all of his life, read a great deal of Early Romantic poetry, prose, and philosophical writings in his childhood and college years, which exposed him to the Romantic version of Catholicism. The poem “Lied auf die heilige Jungfrau Maria,” was written in 1808, showing that by this year Kerner had absorbed this influence into his own style. In February of 1809, during his year of student travel, he visited the Schlegels at their home in Vienna and left deeply impressed by their ardent Catholicism.⁵⁴

Weltschmerz in Kerner's Poetry

A sense of late Romantic *Weltschmerz* permeates Kerner's poetry. The Early Romantics felt confident that through education, political revolution, and proliferation of the arts they could usher great change into society. By 1815 this optimism faded for many proponents of the movement, because it failed to produce these promised results.

⁵² Hellerich, *Religionizing, Romanticizing Romantics*, 275.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁵⁴ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 89.

In its place came a strong sense of disillusionment with the state of the world in which they lived. To them the greatest age of their society had already passed, leaving them in a civilization that did not meet their individual needs. They felt an increased sense of alienation and purposelessness. In response to this pessimism, some authors “rejected contemporary issues and political engagement” and instead buried their heads in the sand, becoming preoccupied with nature, provincial life, or reverting back to past literary models.⁵⁵ The authors affected by *Weltschmerz* felt a sense of alienation on three relational levels: from other people, from the natural world, and even from themselves. In addition to all this, Kerner also found the quickly advancing industrialism of the nineteenth-century frightening and problematic, because it would only increase man’s sense of alienation, although he still recognized the ability of technology to improve life. Some of his poetry, such as “Im Eisenbahnhofe,” reflects these opinions.

In his poetry Kerner occasionally discussed political issues, but he more often reacted to *Weltschmerz* as did his peers, writing fictional stories that contained supernatural and provincial elements. His poems are filled with images of nature, with which he felt a sense of connection that he found absent in his relationships with other people. When Kerner does mention the social realm, it is often cast in a negative light, as in “Wer machte dich so krank?”:

Dass ich trag Todeswunden,
Das ist der Menschen Thun;
Natur ließ mich gesunden,
Sie lassen mich nicht ruhn.

(That I bear deathly wounds, this has been done by man; nature allows me to heal, they do not let me rest.)

⁵⁵ Gail Finney, “Revolution, Resignation, Realism (1830-1890),” *The Cambridge History of German Literature*, Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 292-3.

In this poem Kerner also feels distanced from his own heart to the extent that he must question it as a physician, in order to discover the source of his pain.

In the middle stanzas of “Sehnsucht,” he explains the pain man causes him in greater detail:

Der Menschen Treiben, ach!
Das hält mich nun gefangen,
Das folgt mir störend nach,
Wo Erd’ und Himmel prangen.

Doch ist dies Treiben mir
So fremd und so unherzlich,
Und, Mutter, ach! Nach dir
Zieht mich ein Heimweh schmerzlich!

(Man’s way of life, oh! It now has me ensnared, it follows me unceasingly, where earth and heaven flaunt. But this way of life is to foreign and insincere to me, and mother, oh! From you trails a painful longing for home!)

Other people have done nothing specific to cause the poet’s discomfort. Rather, he laments the treatment of the individual by his society, feeling a constant sense of alienation. He cannot understand the actions of his fellow men and would rather live apart from them, in nature’s solitude. The harsh criticism Kerner received for his published investigations into animal magnetism led him to divide people into two groups in “Metall und Glas,” in which opponents to his spiritual worldview are made of cold, unfeeling metal. The poems “Frühlingskur” and “Im Winter” express similar feelings of irritation and isolation from his fellow man. In works such as these where Kerner compares man to nature, he evokes a feeling of *Sehnsucht*, longing for a consummate unity with the natural world that will arrive only with death.

Kerner’s sense of melancholy was further exacerbated by episodes of crippling depression.⁵⁶ He reveals in his poetry that although the cloud of his depression sometimes lifted, he lived in a constant state of unhappiness, causing him to declare in

⁵⁶ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 6.

the poem, “1847,” that “the fundamental tone of my life is pain.”⁵⁷ Poems such as “Alte Laute,” “An das Herz im Frühling,” and “Schwere des Herzens” describe the pain of depression. In each, the poet asks why the beauty of nature, which usually gives him great comfort, cannot ease his suffering. In “An das Herz im Frühling,” Kerner asks his heart, “Have you met a chill so great, that you will never rise out of it?”⁵⁸ A sense of hopelessness pervades these poems, and no earthly cure for the poet’s pain is ever presented. Such depressive episodes plagued him throughout his life, often agitated by unhappy circumstances or perceived isolation.

An Answer to the Problem of *Weltschmerz*: Poetry, Nature, and Death

There were, however, some things that could temporarily ease his unhappiness. Three of Kerner’s common poetic subjects are the art of creating poetry, nature, and death. Despite their apparent difference, these subjects are united, because Kerner believed that each of these things could lead to the *Auslösen* (process of resolution) of pain. Concerning poetry, this estimation is supported by Kerner’s philosophy of poetry, as revealed in several poems which address the source, generation, and stifling of poetry. Two basic things could inspire the poet: pain and contact with nature. In the poem, “Poesie,” the connection between pain and poetry is so strong that he identifies them as analogous in the first line:

Poesie ist tiefes Schmerzen,
Und es kommt das echte Lied
Einzig aus dem Menschenherzen,
Das ein tiefes Leid durchglüht.

Doch die höchsten Poesien
Schweigen wie der höchste Schmerz,
Nur wie Geisterschatten ziehen
Stumm sie durchs gebrochene Herz.

⁵⁷ “Der Grundton meines Lebens ist Der Schmerz...”

⁵⁸ “Hat dich so sehr ein Frost getroffen, daß du dich nimmer richtest auf?”

(Poetry is deep pain, and the true song comes only from the heart, through which a deep sorrow glows. But the highest poetry falls silent like the highest pain, as ghostly shadows silently fly through a broken heart.)

Kerner describes the poetic process in two steps. In the first, a sharp pain causes the heart to glow with emotion, which then releases the best kind of poetry. As a poet motivated by specific experiences, it is logical that Kerner refers in the first stanza to pain which he feels as a reaction to an unhappy occurrence, like the death of a close friend. The second step results from the exhaustion that composing poetry eventually brings to the heart, causing it to fall silent. For Kerner, his times of creativity might have ended frequently in depression. After just a few months in Dürrenmenz, where Kerner took up his first medical position in 1810, he wrote to Uhland of an unshakable depression and that “the source of my poetry is empty and withered.”⁵⁹

The delicate balance that must be achieved between productive pain and mental exhaustion is explained in “Das Lied.” Kerner begins by describing a swan that only sings at night, which he compares to the poet, who experiences the release of tears and poetry after his pain turns to romantic longing (*Sehnsucht*). In the final two stanzas Kerner turns to his own poetic source:

So ist auch mir entsprungen
Dies Lied bei mildrem Schmerz,
Doch kaum ist es verflungen,
Kehrt starrer Gram ins Herz.

(So such a song springs from me during times of mild pain, but has hardly evaporated before it returns as numbing grief.)

⁵⁹ “...leer und verdorrt ist meine poetische Quelle.” Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 96.

He initially feels the effect he ascribes to the general poet in the middle two stanzas, as “mildrer Schmerz” issues a song from his heart. But immediately a “starrer Gram,” lingering grief, arises in his heart, drying up this source.

A second impetus for poetry is contact with the natural world. Kerner did not just admire the beauty of nature, but craved the natural world, because there he found sympathy. Kerner often uses similes involving nature to adumbrate the poetical process, whether obviously referring directly to himself or an archetypal poet. In “Das Lied,” the poet is compared to a melancholy swan, who sings only at night. “Die Mischung” compares poetry to a rainbow:

Wenn Schmerz mit Lust des Sängers Brust durchzieht,
Entspringt aus ihr das farbenreichste Lied.
Fällt Regen in den Glanz der Sonne mild,
Ensteht des Regenbogens buntes Bild.

(When pain, mixed with desire, pervades the singer’s breast, out of it springs a colorful song. Rain falls in the rays of the gentle sun, and the rainbow’s colorful image emerges.)

Rain, symbolizing the release of pain (see p. 30), falls into the brilliance of the sun, symbolizing joy, and the mixture of these two elements creates a rainbow. The dominant force seems to be the rain/pain, which receives the active verb, echoing Kerner’s statement that pain elicited poetry more often than joy. For both nature and the poet, pain initiates the creation of beauty.

Kerner’s natural world was alive and able to communicate with and comfort him. Schelling taught that everything that exists, material or spiritual, was derived from a divine absolute and that as a result, everything shared an essence. Kerner subscribed to this theory and his poems reveal that he indeed felt such a kinship with nature. In

“Wanderung” the poet travels to an unfamiliar land, but even there he finds that “the earth and the heaven are deeply related to me.”⁶⁰

Prevailing images – the forest, streams, mountains, valleys, and meadows – come from his native Southwestern Germany.⁶¹ More specifically, green plants and trees frequently appear in Kerner’s poetry, because their color signifies life and health. He despised winter, which in Southwestern Germany lasted for several months. To Kerner the temporary death of the natural world caused him great unhappiness and all of his poems about winter are essentially a complaint against the separation this season caused him from the vibrant life of the forests and meadows. “Frühlingskur,” which Schumann set and renamed “Erstes Grün,” expresses longing for the grass, which has been sickened by winter’s snow:

Du junges Grün, du frisches Gras!
Wie manches Herz durch dich genas,
Das von des Winters Schnee erkrankt,
O wie mein Herz nach dir verlangt.

Wie treibt’s mich von den Menschen fort!
Mein Leid das hebt kein Menschenwort,
Nur junges Grün, ans Herz gelegt,
Macht, daß mein Herze stiller schlägt.

Schon brichst du aus der Erde Nacht,
Wie dir mein Aug’ entgegenlacht!
Hier in des Waldes stillem Grund
Drück’ ich dich, Grün, an Herz und Mund.

(You young green, you fresh grass! How many find enjoyment through you, which has been sickened by the winter’s snow, O how my heart longs after you. Already you break forth from the earth’s night, how my eyes greet you with laughter! Here in the forest’s silent floor I press you, green, to my heart and mouth. How I am driven away from man! No word from man raises my painful feeling; only young grass, laid on my heart, causes my heart to beat more quietly.)

In the third stanza Kerner explains that he longs for green grass, and nature in general, because it can do what his fellow man cannot: take away his feelings of melancholia and *Weltschmerz*, and heal his wounds. He anticipates the spring, when the green things of

⁶⁰ “...Erd’ und Himmel sind innig mir verwandt.”

⁶¹ Elements of nature uncommon to this area, especially the ocean, sometimes represent the unknown in his poetry. See “Wanderlied” and “Nähe der Fernen.”

nature are rejuvenated and their healing properties return. The frequent use of the word “Herz” indicates how strongly nature affects the poet’s heart, as Kerner clearly states in the last two lines of the poem.

Many other poems describe nature as able to heal the poet’s heart, and to provide him with rest and recovery from wounds dealt to him by other people. In “Wer machte dich so krank?” Kerner declares that nature allows him to heal from deathly wounds, but that mankind will not allow him to rest. The poet in “Trost in der Natur,” who is weary with pain and wounds, finds himself in a forest, where he leans against a tree and watches the birds. The final stanza is similar to that of “Wer machte dich so krank?” where the poet declares that while nature is warm and comforting, man is cold and poor, lacking the magnanimity of nature. As a child, Kerner had often escaped into nature when experiencing grief or depression. As an adult, struggling with episodes of serious depression, his poems indicate that time spent in nature had an important healing affect.

Several of Kerner’s poems praise storms and rain. This facet of his poetry will be explored at some length, because Schumann opens the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe with a setting of “Lust der Sturmnacht.” Kerner saw his daily struggle with *Weltschmerz* reflected in this phenomenon of nature. In his poetry, rain always symbolizes the release of pain, serving the same function for nature that crying does for man. This connection is the subject of “Regen und Tränen” and also appears in one of the poems set by Schumann, “Stille Thränen.” The first stanza of “Glut des Herzens” describes the rain as tears of heaven, which cool the poet’s burning heart.

Comments concerning thunderstorms by Schelling, in *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, likely influenced Kerner's infatuation with nighttime storms.⁶² Schelling states that "at the moment when Nature is most actively at work, the oft repeated drama of the thunderstorm begins."⁶³ During a thunderstorm, the dense and lighter air in the atmosphere mix, and the resulting discharge of rain, heat, and electricity has good effects on the earth. In light of these ideas, it is logical that Kerner, who longed for a greater feeling of kinship with nature, would find great joy in storms. Nature appears more dynamic during a storm, offering the chance for a heightened encounter with it. The exhilaration of such a feeling is described in two very similar poems, "Lust der Sturmnacht" and "In der Sturmnacht:"

Lust der Sturmnacht

Wenn durch Berg' und Thale draußen
Regen schauert, Stürme brausen,
Schild und Fenster hell erklingen,
Und in Nacht die Wanderer irren,

Ruht es sich so süß hier innen,
Aufgelöst in sel'ges Minnen;
All der goldne Himmelschimmer
Flieht herein ins stille Zimmer.

Reiches Leben! hab' Erbarmen!
Halt mich fest in linden Armen!
Lenzesblumen aufwärts dringen,
Wölklein ziehen, Vögel singen.

Ende nie, du Sturmnacht wilde!
Klirrt, ihr Fenster! schwankt, ihr Schilde!
Bäumt euch, Wälder! braus', O Welle!
Mich umfängt des Himmels Helle.

In der Sturmnacht

Es kommt mein Freund, schon hör ich laut ihn singen,
Der Sturmwind ist es, der mit mächt'gen Schwingen
Hinfähret durch die finstre Mitternacht,
Sein Lied hat mich aus trägem Schlaf gebracht.

Der Wälder Rauschen und des Wasser Wogen,
Der Wolken Tanz am finstern Himmelsbogen
Und drein des Sturmes donnergleiches Lied
Mit Macht hinaus in die Natur mich zieht.

Da möcht' ich mich mit ihm so ganz verweben,
Ein Luftgeist – singend mit dem Sturme schweben,
Mit Wäldern, Bergen und dem Meer im Bund,
Nicht mehr genannt von eines Menschen Mund.

Sturm! Sing dein Donnerlied, Luftgeisterheere
Einstimmend – fahrt mit ihm durch Land und Meere!
Noch halt der Erde Band fest meinen Geist.
Doch Luft! Zu wissen, daß dies Band zerreißt.

Dann heb mich auf, O Sturm! Mit deinen Schwingen
Dann, Freund, laß mich dein Donnerlied mitsingen,
Mitfliegen laß mich über Land und Flur
Wie du – ein Teil der schaffenden Natur.

⁶² See pages 9-10.

⁶³ F.W. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, translated by Errol Harris and Peter Heath (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 108.

(Lust der Sturmnacht - When storms roar outside through mountain and valley, sign and window brightly rattle and in the night wanderers go amiss. It rests so sweetly in here, dissolving into blessed love [Minnen]; all heaven's golden shimmer flies into this quiet room. Rich life! Have mercy! Hold me tightly in linden arms! Spring blooms bend forward, little clouds move across the sky, birds sing. Never end, you wild storm night! Jangle, you windows! Sway, you signs! Writhe, you forests! Roar, O wave! Heaven's brightness surrounds me!)

(In der Sturmnacht - My friend comes near, already I hear him loudly sing. It is the storm wind that with powerful vibration travels through the dark night. His song has brought me from languid sleep. The forest's whispering and the water's wave, the cloud's dance on the curve of the sky and there the storm's thunderous song pushes me out powerfully into nature. There I would like to be so fully interwoven with the storm, a ghost of the air – songfully floating with the storm, with forests, mountains and the ocean in unity, no more named by man's mouth. Storm! Sing your thundering song, host of ghosts of the air, with one voice – travel with him through land and sea! Still the earth's binding force holds my spirit tightly. But air! To know that this band will be broken. Then raise me up, O storm! With your vibration then, friend, let me join in with your thundering song, let me fly with you through country and meadow, like you – a part of the created nature.)

In both poems Kerner personifies the storm, giving the reader the impression that it truly is as alive as man. It is addressed with the familiar “du” in the final stanza of “Lust der Sturmnacht,” while in “In der Sturmnacht” Kerner calls the approaching storm his friend in the opening line. Description of the storm's power and ability to intimately interact with the earthly aspects of nature – signs, forests, bodies of water, flowers – pervade each poem.

Kerner states his belief that storms provide an opportunity to unite with nature in both poems. He alludes to this only once in “Lust der Sturmnacht,” in the final line of the poem. Schelling's philosophy achieves much greater prominence in “In der Sturmnacht.” In the final line, Kerner describes the storm as “ein Teil der schaffenden Natur.” The use of this adjective signifies his understanding of the term “Natur” as analogous to Schelling's usage of it. The concept of the poet uniting with nature appears in every stanza except for the first, and is the sole subject of the third stanza. The storm allows the poet to unite with all aspects of nature, not just that which resides in the sky, causing a transformation of the poet's body into “a spirit of the air.”

This discussion of nature, as Kerner presents it throughout his poems, culminates in his poem, “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend,” because its subject, the forest, epitomizes all that he valued in the natural world. He wrote “Sehnsucht,” which contrasts the forest and the plain, in 1813. This is truly a *Gelegenheitsgedicht*, because experiences from that year, namely a move from Welzheim to Gaildorf, inspired this poem. While the move allowed the Kerners to live in a better house, it also took Kerner away from close proximity to the Black Forest.⁶⁴

Wär ich nie aus euch gegangen,
Wälder, hehr und wunderbar!
Hieltet liebend mich umfangen
Doch so lange, lange Jahr'! –

Hier in diesen weiten Triften
Ist mir alles öd und stumm,
Und ich schau' in blauen Lüften
Mich nach Wolkenbildern um.

Wo in euren Dämmerungen
Vogelsang und Silberquell,
Ist auch manches Lied entsprungen
Meinem Busen, frisch und hell;

In den Busen eingezwinget,
Regt sich selten nur das Lied;
Wie der Vogel halb nur singet,
Den von Baum und Bach man schied.

Eure Wogen, eure Halle,
Eure Säuseln, nimmer müd,
Eure Melodien alle
Weckten in der Brust das Lied.

(Had I never gone out from you, forests noble and wonderful! You held me so lovingly for many, many years! Where in your twilight there was birdsong and silver springs, many a song is sprung from my breast, fresh and bright; your undulation, your clanging, your whispering, never fall silent, all of your melodies wake a song in my breast. Here in your vast planes everything is dull and mute, and I search in the blue air for pictures in the sky. When forced into the breast, a song seldom stirs; as a bird only half-sings when one separates him from trees and streams.)

It is evident from Kerner’s poetry that he felt particular affection for the forest. Whenever thinking of nature, his mind quickly recalled images of tall trees sheltering green grass and flowers, while birds flew overhead and sang softly.⁶⁵ In the first stanza of “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend,” the poet does not simply feel a happy affection for the forest, but desperation to re-attain a necessary component of his life. Because Kerner

⁶⁴ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 109.

⁶⁵ Other poems that feature the forest include “Im Walde,” “Sehnsucht,” “Waldesleben,” “Der Einsame,” and “Der Grundton der Natur.”

lived near forested areas his entire life and wrote poems based on his experience, it is logical that the forest would weigh heavily in his nature poetry. His descriptions of the magnificence of Germany, such as “Sommerabend auf Kloster Lorsch,” are filled with prominent forests, suggesting that such landscapes also aroused feelings of patriotism.

To Kerner, the forest was a particularly comforting place for two reasons. The first was that it epitomized his view that nature felt and expressed profound emotion, particularly pain. “Der Grundton der Natur” is perhaps the poem quoted most often by scholars when they discuss this philosophy.⁶⁶ The first stanza ruminates on the forest: “When the forest rustles in the wind and the leaves speak to each other, I would like to ask the leaves, do you sound with delight? Do you sound with complaints?”⁶⁷ In the final stanza he concludes that the leaves whisper in pain rather than joy: “Listen to the Aeolian harp! Pain is the fundamental tone of nature, of which the rustling forest sings.”⁶⁸ Kerner feels comfort in the forest because it is alive and experiencing pain, just like him. Its gentle noises, particularly the rustling of the canopy of leaves, sooth weary travelers and help them to bear their pain.⁶⁹ The third stanza of “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend” exclusively describes the rustling of the trees, alluding to this belief. The noise is not just enjoyable sound, but music that deeply affects the poet, causing him to sing.

Kerner commonly contrasts nature and man in his poetry. Nature provides comfort, rest and peace, while man imparts pain and strife. Particularly in the forest, Kerner found relief from the ills of mankind, because it provided a physical barrier from

⁶⁶ See Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 6 and Mayr, *Der schwäbische Dichterbund*, 71.

⁶⁷ “Wenn der Wald im Winde rauscht, Blatt mit Blatt die Rede tauscht, möcht’ ich gern die Blätter fragen: Tönt ihr Wonnen? tönt ihr Klagen?”

⁶⁸ “Lauscht der Äolsharfe nur! Schmerz ist Grundton der Natur; Schmerz des Waldes rauschend Singen...”

⁶⁹ See “Vom morschen Baume.”

other people. Surrounded by the forest the poet could not hear or see other people, he could essentially leave the world and enter into a sanctuary of quiet solitude. “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend” alludes to this quality of the forest in the opening stanza, as Kerner states that the forest lovingly embraces him.

“Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend” clearly reveals Kerner’s belief that nature inspires poetry. Kerner declares in the second stanza that in the forest “many a song springs forth from my breast, fresh and bright,” and in the third that “your many melodies awake a song in my heart.”⁷⁰ The sights, and particularly the sounds, of the forest move the poet to sing. He then turns to the opposite side of the issue: separation from nature causes a loss of inspiration. In the final stanza Kerner laments that while he is away from the forest, surrounded by silent plains, his poetic voice rarely stirs just as “a bird only half-sings when one separates him from trees and streams.”⁷¹

Thus far the poetic process and the natural world have both been revealed in Kerner’s poetry as related to the concept of absolving pain. A final subject in Kerner’s poetry, death, also revolves around this idea. Death is perhaps this poet’s favorite subject; nearly half of the poems he published before 1850 use words that directly denote death, such as *Tod*, *Grab*, *Sarg*, and *sterben*.⁷² Ambros Mayr declared that “Everywhere that he looks, he sees what he wishes for: death and the grave.”⁷³ This tendency became stronger as Kerner aged, his friends and wife died, and his own death seemed imminent.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ “Ist auch manches Lied entsprungen meinem Busen, frisch und hell... Eure Melodien alle weckten in der Brust das Lied.”

⁷¹ “Der Vogel halb nur singet, den von Baum und Bach man schied.”

⁷² This approximation is based on a survey of all the poems in the “Lyrische Gedichte,” *Kerners Werke: Auswahl in Sechs Teilen* vol. 1, Raimund Pissin ed. (Berlin: Deutsches Verlagshaus Bong & Co., 1914).

⁷³ “Everywhere that he looks, he sees what he wishes: death and the grave.” Mayr, *Der schwäbische Dichterbund*, 71.

⁷⁴ The titles of two collections of poems published in the last decade of his life, *Der letzte Blütenstrauß* and *Winterblüten*, allude to his nearing death.

As a child, Kerner was sensitive to the pain and mystery of death. Before his birth, six of his older siblings had died in early childhood, and these events must have haunted the entire family. His father died in 1798, which affected him deeply, as he reveals in his *Bilderbuch aus meiner Knabzeit*.⁷⁵ As an adult, Kerner still vividly remembered funerals from his childhood, including descriptions of several of them in the *Bilderbuch*. He portrays the deceased and the intricate details of the ceremonies with surprising attention.⁷⁶ At the age of fifteen he worked as a cabinetmaker's apprentice in Ludwigsburg, and one of his most memorable duties was the making of coffins. Years later, as he dealt with the corpses of his patients, the doctor recalled the images of the many coffins he had helped to build.⁷⁷ This preoccupation with death greatly increased after Kerner finished study at Tübingen, as his correspondence from this time period reveals. Kerner was serving as a doctor in Welzheim when feelings of loneliness and isolation contributed to a period of depression in 1812. In a letter to Ludwig Uhland, he expressed his longing for death, which would end the mental darkness that he could not overcome.⁷⁸

Even after Kerner learned to stave off his depression, death still held a prominent place in his poems and correspondence. His study of the spiritual and the fantastic increased throughout his medical career and with it came a strong belief that death was the doorway to the spiritual world. In 1812 he declared in another letter to Uhland that, "I name death the greatest union with the spirit of nature..."⁷⁹ Death became something

⁷⁵ Niethammer, *Das Leben des Justinus Kerner*, 168-173.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 79 and 84.

⁷⁷ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 21.

⁷⁸ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 105: "The pain of my mind is medically indescribable, more and more, the longer I feel this way, I see my meaningless illness leading to death and this gives me indescribable fear...Oh Uhland! For God's sake! But if we were all already dead!" Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 105.

⁷⁹ Pfäfflin, "Das Schattenspiel," 12: "Tod nenne ich die innigste Vereinigung mit dem Geiste der Natur."

to look forward to, because through it man achieved unity with the natural world. The pain of life also ceased in death, where one achieved a state of eternal rest.

Death, to Kerner, was the ultimate fulfillment of the principle that governed nature and the purpose of poetry: the resolution of pain. While both the poet and nature must continually accumulate and release pain, death allows lasting peace. Kerner's depression, which sometimes impaired his daily living, could not be cured during his earthly existence, a feeling that poems such as "Alte Laute" express. Only death had the power to release his heart from its senseless unhappiness, a belief clearly espoused in "Ehmals":

Wohl hab' ich manches Lied erdacht
In Waldes Dämmerungen,
Die Vögel haben's mitgemacht,
Der Bach hat drein geklungen,
Den langen Weg, die fels'ge Bahn
Ging ich ein sel'ger Wandersmann.

O armer Sohn der Arznei!
Bist selbst erkrankt im Herzen,
Kennst der Heilkräuter mancherlei,
Such' eins für eigne Schmerzen!
Welt, daß ich's finde, laß mich los!
Mich heilt nur meines Grabes Moos.

Nun aber es mir nicht mehr glückt,
Noch Bach und Vögel singen,
Ich gehe trauernd und gebückt,
Träum' von verlorenen Dingen,
Den langen Weg, die fels'ge Bahn
Sieht man mir im Gesichte an.

(Well have I conceived of many a song in the forest's twilight, the birds have taken part, the stream adds it's klanging, along the long path, the rocky way I went as a blessed wanderer. But now it brings me no more joy, the stream and birds still sing, I go dolorous and weighed down, dreaming of lost things, the long path, the rocky way, one beholds me in a vision. O poor son of medicine! You are yourself sick in your heart, you know of various healing herbs, look for one for your own pain! World, when I find it, let me go! I will only be healed by my grave's moss.)

In the first stanza Kerner remembers when solitude, poetry, and nature brought him joy. These remedies have lost their ability to relieve the burden of his depression in stanza two, which jumps to the present. Kerner comments on the irony that while he is a doctor, he lacks the ability to heal himself. Finally he offers his heart one hope, that in death it

will finally experience unmitigated healing. While life on earth offered only pain and “Menschentreiben,” man could rest in death, as the last few lines of “Das Ruhkissen” morosely admonish: “You will only find rest in your coffin, when you lay upon your corpse-pillow.”⁸⁰

The Manifestation of *Geistertheorie* in Kerner’s Poetry

Kerner believed that death caused the deceased person to enter into a dual existence. While the body rested in the arms of nature, the spirit reached a greater unity with the unseen world and the Absolute. “Letzte Bitte” captures this sublime moment of transformation:

Tief in Waldeinsamkeit ein Grab! ein Grab!
Von allen Menschen ferne, ja! recht ferne!
Da senkt den müden Sanger bald hinab,
Wann funkeln durchs Gezweig die Abendsterne.

Dann aber geht und la das Grab in Ruh’!
Verborgen und vergessen werd’ die Statte!
Efeu und Moos deck’ ganz den Hugel zu,
Und nur das wunde Reh find ihn zum Bette.

(Deep in the forests’s solitude a grave! A grave! From all men far, yes! Indeed far! There the weary soon sinks down, when the evening stars glow through the branches. However, then he goes and leaves the grave in peace. Secret and forgotten becomes the place! Ivy and moss completely blanket the hill, and only the wounded doe finds it as a bed.)

The poet wishes for his grave to lie deep in the forest, where nature can eternally embrace him, as he rests in solitude. Ivy and moss blanket the gravesite, symbolizing a synthesis with nature so complete that his former, individual identity is absorbed and his grave becomes “secret and forgotten.” “Ehmals” and “Die Lilie” also describe a grave hidden by moss and foliage.

⁸⁰ “Du findest nur zur Ruh’ im Sarge noch das Leichenkissen.”

The spirit of the poet described in “Letzte Bitte” experiences unification with the spiritual world as well as with nature. In the third and fourth line of the first stanza, two actions occur in tandem: the weary singer sinks into the earth and the evening stars rise in the sky, symbolizing the releasing of his spirit into the heavens. Both types of unification appear in the second stanza as well. Before describing the forgotten grave, covered over by nature, the first line indicates that the singer’s spirit leaves the grave, where his body remains. Kerner very directly states in “Was sie alle meinen” that he will become a spirit, united with other spirits, when he dies. In the final stanza of “Erwarten in Demut,” he states that at death “my spirit will separate from my body.”⁸¹

While Kerner sometimes refers to his own death in his poetry, he more frequently discusses the spiritual nature of death in poems that eulogize the deceased. In many of these eulogies, rather than merely praising the memory of the dead, he constructs a narrative of an experience with the deceased’s spirit. Kerner believed that the living could have contact with the spiritual world, and in these narratives he often receives comfort in the midst of his mourning, because of intimate contact with a friend’s spirit.⁸² Such an experience occurs in “Geisterzug.” The poet wanders through a dark valley at night and thinks about a recently deceased friend, who remains unnamed. His friend’s spirit floats comfortingly over him and causes him to long for death, so that they might be together once more.

“An das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes” is another eulogy that describes an experience with the deceased:

⁸¹ “Mein Geist vom Leib sich trennt.”

⁸² In 1812 Kerner’s older brother, Georg, died and in a letter he professes his belief that he felt a spiritual connection to him. “Ich habe ihn oft, ich habe ihn schwer betrübt, aber immer herzlich geliebt und erkannt, und jetzt wo er in mein Herz schauen kann ist er mir wieder gegeben, er liebt mich wieder!” Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 112.

Du herrlich Glas, nun stehst du leer,
Glas, das er oft mit Lust gehoben;
Die Spinne hat rings um dich her
Indes den düstern Flor gewoben.

Jetzt sollst du mir gefüllet sein
Mondhell mit Gold der deutschen Reben!
In deiner Tiefe heil'gen Schein
Schau' ich hinab mit frommen Beben.

Was ich erschau' in deinem Grund,
Ist nicht Gewöhnlichen zu nennen,
Doch wird mir klar zu dieser Stund',
Wie nichts den Freund von Freund kann trennen.

Auf diesen Glauben, Glas so hold!
Trink' ich dich aus mit hohem Mute.
Klar spiegelt sich der Sterne Gold,
Pokal, in deinem teuren Blute.

Still geht der Mond das Tal entlang,
Ernst tönt die mitternäch't'ge Stunde,
Leer steht das Glas, der heil'ge Klang
Tönt nach in dem kristallinen Grunde.

(You noble glass, now you stand empty, glass that he often raised with joy; the spider has woven the bleak morning cape around you here. Now you are filled to me, moonlit with gold of the German vines! In the sacred glint of your bottom, I look down to it with devoted trembling. What I see in your depth, is nothing familiar to name, but it becomes clear to me in this hour, how nothing can separate a friend from a friend. Upon this belief, glass so lovely! I drain you with great courage. The stars' gold reflects clearly, goblet, in your precious blood. Silently the moon travels along the valley, solemnly the midnight hour tolls, the glass stands empty, the sacred clang echoes in its crystal depth.)

He wrote this poem in 1813, after the death of Revisor Sterlein Lorch, whom Kerner had befriended in Welzheim.⁸³ Kerner senses Lorch's nearness much more subtly than in other poems. Rather than seeing an apparition or feeling a breeze, Kerner receives a heightened sense of spiritual perception as he drinks wine from a glass formerly belonging to the deceased. Kerner loved wine and believed that Riesling, a German white wine, had properties similar to the *Nervengeist*, an invisible fluid in which the spiritual and the natural world interacted.⁸⁴ Wine, because it also allowed the natural to contact the spiritual, could be a catalyst for an encounter with a spirit. Just like the

⁸³ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 112. This poem was first published in 1813 under the title "Um Mitternacht," in *Deutscher Dichterwald: von Justinus Kerner, Friedrich Baron de la Motte Foqué, Ludwig Uhland und Andern* (Tübingen: J.F. Heerbrandt'schen Buchhandlung, 1813).

⁸⁴ Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 163-4. The *Nervengeist* is discussed on pages 12-17.

Nervengeist, wine had healing properties, because it was a medium through which life could be transmitted. “Trinklied zum neuen Weine” praises the ability of German wine to give youth to the old. The wine that Kerner drinks in “An das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes” is presumably also Riesling.⁸⁵

After reflecting upon the sentimental value of the goblet, Kerner sees it full of golden wine in the second stanza of the poem. In the next stanza, he senses that something has occurred in the glass; he perceives the spirit of his friend in the wine, and takes comfort in the realization that “nothing can separate friends.”⁸⁶ Kerner then lifts the glass and drinks the wine. He is made visually aware that Lorch’s spirit resides in the glass as he sees the stars, which represent the divine, reflected in the wine. The stars and the sky are often archetypes for spirituality in Kerner’s poetry. In “Letzte Bitte,” for instance, the rise of the stars in the sky symbolizes the death of the poet.⁸⁷

The language used in the fourth stanza, especially the identification of the wine as blood, arouses the idea of Communion, which symbolizes a unity with the crucified Christ. Kerner draws a parallel between this sacrament and the essence of Stierlin Lorch contained in the wine of this poem. The wine of “Trinklied zum neuen Weine,” is also called blood and for a similar reason: it has the ability to transmit life. In the final stanza of “An das Trinkglas” Kerner feels peace and comfort as the clock chimes the magical hour of midnight, because his experience strengthens his belief in the spiritual world.

Similar imagery appears in other poems, in which the main subject is a glass, including “Mein Kristallglas,” “An ein grünes Glas von Duller,” and “Das Sängerglas.”

⁸⁵ Indicated by the description of the wine in stanza two.

⁸⁶ “Nichts den Freund von Freund trennen kann.”

⁸⁷ Another symbol which indicates the spiritual in Kerner’s poetry is an angel. In the first stanza of “Alte Laute,” Kerner concludes that only death can release him from his feeling of *Weltschmerz*, when he says “Weckt mich ein Engel nur.” Angel imagery also appears in “Todesopfer” and “Engelseinkehr.”

Kerner declares a spiritual truth reminiscent of “An das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes” in “Mein Kristallglas,” dedicated to Nikolaus Lenau:

Seh' ich in seine Tiefe,
Wird es gar seltsam mir,
Als ob ein Freund mir rief:
Herz! Herz! ich bin bei dir!

(I see in your depth, it becomes not at all strange to me, as if a friend called to me: heart! heart! I am near to you!)

Isolation in Kerner's Poetry

An overwhelming sense of isolation permeates the vast majority of Kerner's poetry. Because Kerner thought of nature as a harbor from other people, his *Naturlyrik* is very lonely; he purposefully experiences nature in these poems alone. Many of his poems focus on the pain of living, which his sensitivity to contact with other people caused him to feel more acutely. In the poem “Sehnsucht” he laments the lack of understanding he feels exists between people. Oddly, the poems in which Kerner feels the greatest sense of connection to other people are those that describe contact with the spiritual world. Perhaps Kerner felt more at ease around ghosts than he did with the living.

Because Kerner tended to write about isolated figures, romantic love seldom finds expression in his poetry. The Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe attests to this. Robert Schumann tended to set poems about love. Love poetry dominates *Dichterliebe*, *Frauenliebe und Leben*, the Op. 37 Rückert-Lieder, and the Op. 39 Eichendorff *Liederkreis*, but just three of the Op. 35 Lieder mention the subject. In the first song, “Lust der Sturmnacht” the poet expresses bliss, an unusual emotion in Kerner's poetry, and this happiness is partially due to feelings of love. But he names this love not “Liebe”

but “Minnen,” or courtly love, the Medieval concept of love from afar. The poet of this song never acts on this love, which exists mostly in his mind.

Although the word “Minne” is not used in the poem “Stille Liebe,” the eighth of the Op. 35 Kerner-Lieder, the love described clearly bears similarity to courtly love. No action occurs in the poem, Kerner merely explains his inability to cause his feelings of love to develop into a true relationship. He bemoans an inability to communicate with the object of his desire:

Könnst' ich dich in Liedern preisen,
Säng' ich dir das längste Lied,
Ja, ich würd' in allen Weisen
Dich zu singen nimmer müd.

Und daß du, was laut ich sage
Oder preis' in Sangeslust,
Meinest, daß ich tiefer trage
Als dich, Herz, in warmer Brust.

Doch was immer mich betrübte,
Ist, daß ich nur immer stumm
Tragen kann dich, Herzgeliebte!
In des Busens Heiligtum.

Dieser Schmerz hat mich bezwungen,
Daß ich sang dies kleine Lied,
Doch von bitterm Leid durchdrungen,
Daß noch keins auf dich geriet.

(If I could praise you in poetry, I would sing to you the longest song, yes, I would in every way, never tire of singing to you. But, what always afflicts me is that I can only carry you, my heart's love, silently in the holiness of my breast. And whatever you, which I proclaim aloud or praise in joyous song, mean to me, I only carry you, heart, deeper in my warm breast. This pain has overcome me, so that I sang this little song, but it is permeated with sorrow, because still none of it has reached you.)

It is likely that Kerner wrote this poem during his engagement to Friederike, because in letters written to friends he confesses an inability to communicate with her. He felt particularly speechless when he visited her in Augsburg in 1809. In a letter to Rosa Varnhagen he expressed that on the first night of his visit he felt the urge to flee from her house because of his feelings of awkwardness.⁸⁸

Kerner expresses the same inability to communicate in “Stille Liebe.” The second stanza gives a perfect description of *Minne*. Rather than express his feelings of

⁸⁸ “I could not speak to her, I had to leave...Oh Rosa! Help! I will never be able to speak to her alone.” Grüsser, *Justinus Kerner*, 87.

adoration, he carries his love “in the holiness of his heart,” a statement that could have easily appeared in a Renaissance motet praising the Holy Virgin. The medieval *Minnesänger* also venerated the Virgin as the ultimate object of courtly love, because she was worthy of great praise, but her holiness made her decisively unattainable.⁸⁹ The reservations Kerner has about love might also reflect Biedermeier sensibility, which emphasized modesty and traditional values.⁹⁰ Following this ethos, the male in Kerner’s romantic poems always respects the purity of the female, and never describes her in sensual terms. He often chooses subjects that are overtly symbolic of the Virgin Mary.

The poem “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud,” discussed earlier in this chapter, is the third poem set by Schumann in the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe.⁹¹ The young girl in the poem, who represents Friederike, identifies herself with the Virgin Mary when she gives her life to the holy work of the church. This is a further example of *Minne* in Kerner’s poetry. Another sense of isolation emerges from “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud,” though in a subtler way. The poet has a bird’s eye view of the entire church; one can imagine that he has stationed himself up in the rafters, or in the organ loft, so that he might clearly view his beloved. Many worshippers sit in the pews and worship together, in song, but the poet does not join them: he is separated from everyone else in the cathedral. In the final stanza of the poem, the poet reveals that the young girl is his childhood love. There is no indication, though, that he has ever attempted to express his feelings to her. Rather, he

⁸⁹ Grüsser discusses Kerner’s “Marienverehrung” and the three roles women played in his life, one of which was “The sorrowful, austere Virgin, who he only saw from afar, unreachable like a ghost, a girl, that he sang of in his poems, but never believed he could win...” Ibid., 334-335.

⁹⁰ “Qualities connoted by the term ‘Biedermeier’ include...the respect for traditional, middle-class values such as stability and order, moderation and modesty, and the preservation of the status quo; and, reflecting the meaning of the ‘bieder’, virtues like honesty, competence and uprightness.” See Finney, “Revolution, Resignation, Realism,” 292.

⁹¹ See pp. 22-24.

begins this stanza by acknowledging that she has no idea that she is his “Allerliebste mein.” The poet has hidden these feelings in his heart since his childhood.

In all three poems, then, romantic love appears only as distant love, which exists purely in the poet’s heart. Due to Kerner’s feeling of isolation from others, it is natural that love that develops from admiration, rather than a personal relationship, attracted his poetic inspiration. Additionally, Kerner elevates romantic love from sensual passion to religious devotion, which may be symptomatic of the Biedermeier era, or an indication that his spiritual beliefs even affected this area of his thinking.

Kerner’s poetry is enchanting because it reflects contemporary literary elements, such as *Weltschmerz* and Biedermeier sensibility, while still remaining definitively idiosyncratic. Because he wrote as a *Gelegenheitsdichter*, a poet who responded to sudden moments of inspiration, his poems are indicative of his daily thoughts. The frequent appearance of spirituality in his poems attests to how greatly his worldview rested upon his spiritual beliefs, and his *Naturlyrik* indicates how much he valued the companionship of nature. The three main preoccupations of Kerner’s poetry – nature, death, and poetry itself – all radiate from his persistent *Weltschmerz*. While Kerner’s idiosyncrasies drove some readers away from his poetry, these particular qualities attracted Robert Schumann, as the beginning of the next chapter explains.

PART 2

A Prelude to the Genesis of Op. 35

Schumann's Early Kerner Songs (1828)

Among Schumann's earliest compositions are four settings of Kerner's poetry, completed in the summer of 1828. At this point, Schumann had just graduated from the gymnasium and remained uncertain about future career plans, considering himself equally a musician and a poet. For instance, earlier in the year Schumann had taken part in an evening of entertainment at his school in Zwickau, at which he first gave a monologue from Goethe's *Faust* and later in the program performed a movement from a Kalkbrenner piano concerto. Daverio notes that Schumann purposefully chose to compose Lieder at this time, because this genre appealed to his musical and literary sensibilities.⁹² Schumann even composed the text and the music for two of his early songs, "Sehnsucht," and "Die Weinende," both from 1827.

In August of the same year, Schumann courageously sent six of his Lieder to Gottlob Wiedebein, a popular composer whom he greatly respected, especially because Wiedebein shared his affinity for the contemporary author, Jean Paul. Of the six Lieder, four were on texts by Kerner: "Im Herbste," "An Anna," "Kurzes Erwachen," and "Gesanges Erwachen." In the letter that accompanied the Lieder Schumann reveals why he found the Kerner texts so compelling:

⁹² John Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 30.

“Your songs gave me quite a few happy moments, and I came to understand and decipher Jean Paul’s veiled words through them. Jean Paul’s dark sounds of mystery became lucid and clear to me only by means of that magic veil of your composition – rather like two negations leads to affirmation, and the entire heaven of sounds, of tears of the soul’s joy, drenched in transfiguration all my feelings...Kerner’s poems, which engaged me especially because of that enigmatic, supernatural power which one often finds in the poetry of Goethe and Jean Paul, originally stimulated me to try out my poor abilities, because in these poems each word is already a sound of the spheres which must be defined through the musical note.”⁹³

This passage reveals what Schumann hoped to accomplish with his composition of Lieder in 1828. He praises Wiedebein for revealing to him the deeper meaning of Jean Paul’s poetry in a collection of his Lieder. He revered this writer above all others, because behind his tortured syntax and rambling style Schumann felt that Jean Paul intimated the highest level of artistic expression.⁹⁴ Schumann sensed that Jean Paul’s words carried great truth and thanked Wiedebein for clarifying it through music.

In 1828 Schumann wanted his Lieder to evoke the very personal feelings he attached to the poetry, and to reveal to others its deep, supernatural meaning. His expectations at this point exceeded those he adopted in 1840, that a Lied should musically express the general emotional content of a poem.⁹⁵ Schumann’s letter to Wiedebein reveals his deep sense of admiration for Kerner’s poems. He calls Kerner’s poetry “sounds of the spheres” (*Sphärentone*), meaning that he considered it able to

⁹³ Quotation of the letter as copied by Schumann in *TB I*, 95, translated into English by Julia Beate Perry in *Schumann’s Dichterliebe*, 59. “Ihre Lieder schufen mir manche glückliche Minute u. ich lernte durch diese Jean Pauls verhüllte Worte verstehen u. enträtseln. Jean Paul’s dunkle Geistertöne wurden mir durch jenes magische Verhüllen Ihrer Tonschöpfungen erst licht u. klar, wie ungefähr zwey Negationen affirmieren u. der ganze Himmel der Töne, dieser Freudenthränen der Seele sank wie verklärt über alle meine Gefühle... Kerner’s Gedichte, die mich durch jene geheimnißvolle, überirdische Kraft, die man oft in d. Dichtungen Göthe’s und Jean Paul’s findet, am meisten anzogen, brachten mich zuerst auf den Gedanken, meine schwachen Kräfte zuerst zu versuchen, weil in diesen (Gedichten) schon jedes Wort ein Sphärenton ist, der erst durch die Note bestimmt werden muß.”

⁹⁴ “Schumann recognized the sense of an enigma resting within poetic language in the writings of his most admired author, Jean Paul. Like Jean Paul in his synaesthetic orientation, Schumann intended his music to carry a similarly enigmatic quality through an emphasis on non-representational content.” *Ibid.*, 59.

⁹⁵ See reviews summarized in Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 164-171.

transcend ordinary meaning, revealing a higher level of truth and beauty just like the words of Jean Paul and Goethe.⁹⁶ Schumann explains that he wishes to elucidate the transcendent and mysterious meaning of Kerner's poetry, in a way similar to his perception of the older composer's settings of Jean Paul. In the letter, Schumann never separates music from the words of the poem. In the fifth line of the quoted passage, he evaluates the composer's settings as effective on a purely emotional level, making no specific reference to the music. His appreciation of Wiedebein's songs lies not in their musical genius, but in their expression of the emotional content he read into Jean Paul's poetry. What he hopes to achieve in his settings of Kerner's poems is a similar musical expression of poetry that evokes meaning beyond the reach of words alone.

Wiedebein graciously reviewed the songs and replied in a letter from early August, 1828. His main comments concerned Schumann's lack of experience in composition and knowledge of compositional technique. He found occasional spots of "genuinely poetic feeling," but encouraged Schumann to harness his tendency for intuitive fantasy by attending to poetic truth and stylistic precision.⁹⁷ Indeed, all four songs are extravagant, idiosyncratic, and in many places difficult to interpret and perform.

The longest setting, "An Anna," best exemplifies Schumann's early, intuitive approach to song composition. First, consideration must be given to the poem itself, which was perhaps not the best choice for a novice composer. "An Anna" is long and seems to have no regular rhyme scheme or meter, so much so that it approaches prose.

⁹⁶ Perry, *Schumann's Dichterliebe*, 54-59.

⁹⁷ "Above all, attend to truth. Truth of melody, harmony, and expression – in a word, poetic truth. If you don't find it, or if it is threatened – then cut even your favorite passage." Translated and quoted in Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 32.

Schumann chose to set the text in very slow, 12/8 time, a metrical choice that allowed him several weak beats and relatively few strong beats, and thus an impression of unmetered music. Frequent repetition of words and phrases attests to the difficulty Schumann had transforming this irregular text into metered song. He employs four changes in tempo, a high number for a piece of this length, in an attempt to preserve Kerner's frequent changes in meter and line length. With each tempo change comes a completely new rhythmic pattern, which the lack of regular meter in the poem also dictates as necessary. He sets some phrases in a highly declamatory style, which allows him to evade establishing a definite meter.

Schumann intensifies the complexity inherent in the poetic text, going beyond sensitive text-setting in an attempt at ultra-expressivity (recall that this was the goal he stated in his letter to Wiedebein). The song is full of unusual and difficult performance indications (see Ex. 1). The opening tempo is *schwärmerisch* (excitedly), but the pianist is instructed to play *leise und langsam* (quietly and slowly). Schumann places directions above specific notes, for example a sudden pianissimo and *zart* above the third note of the voice part in m. 5. In the next measure he instructs the pianist to play *dolcissima*, and then in the next he indicates *träumerisch, fromm* (dreamily, religiously), as well as two changes in tempo and a ritardando.

Example 1. "An Anna," mm. 4-10

end - lich brei - ten aus - ein - an - der sich des Fen - sters Flü - gel, und an sei - nem wei - Ben

mf *pp zart*

dolce *p* *pp*

Kreu - ze ste - hest du, ste - hest du Berg und Tal ein stil - ler Friedens - en - gel.

dolciss. *p* *rit.* *pp*

Bewegter (♩. = 52) *mf*

Vög - lein zie - hen nah an dir vor - ü - ber; Täub - lein sit - zer

p *dolce*

It is evident in the early songs that Schumann already sought to elevate the German Lied from an imitation of simple *Volkslieder* to a complex genre appropriate for the concert hall. Both the piano and vocal part of all four songs are quite difficult; the vocalist continually sings large, uncomfortable leaps rather than the simple stepwise melodies that dominated early nineteenth-century Lied. The piano part does not merely

double the vocal melody in “An Anna,” but plays an expressive role and is fairly difficult. From m. 21 to the end it overtakes the expressive role from the vocalist. While the melody consists of fragments of the text in parlando rhythm, trills and arpeggios abound in the accompaniment. In the final two measures, marked *largo*, the final vocal statement is an echo of the melody that has already been elaborated in the accompaniment. In “An Anna,” Schumann considers the piano to be more expressive than the voice. It clearly dominates the composition, an approach that differs from the melody-dominated process Schumann discovered for song composition in 1840.

Although they betray a lack of experience, the four Kerner songs that Schumann sent to Wiedebein contain seeds of several compositional traits that would surface again in the Kerner songs of 1840, with greater subtlety and effectiveness. As an eighteen-year-old composer, Schumann already considered harmony a primary means of text expression, and therefore composed intuitive chord progressions. In his early songs, Schumann destabilizes the tonic, with frequent changes in harmony. Through unusual chord progressions and chromaticism, he attempts to catch his changing, nuanced reaction to individual words of the text. “Gesanges Erwachen,” composed on July 10th, 1828, begins with a short piano introduction, in which the tonic, Ab major, is completely absent (Ex. 2). When the vocalist enters, Schumann begins with a progression from $V^{6/4}$ to V^7 , but then deceptively alters the tonic into a V^7 of IV, which he surprisingly augments with an A-natural. He does not reach a tonic chord until m. 12; along the way chromaticism and altered chords continually surprise the ear.

Example 2. "Gesanges Erwachen," m. 1-12

1. Könnt' ich
 ein - mal wie - der sin - gen, wär' ich wie - der - um ge - sund, a - ber
 noch will's Herz zer - sprin - gen und in Trau - ern schweigt der Mund.

After reviewing countless songs for the *Neue Zeitschrift* Schumann refined his conception of what a successful song should achieve. A comment in a review from October of 1840 sounds curiously similar to Wiedebein's suggestions about maintaining poetic truth and solid musicianship:

“The lieder composer, he wrote, aims ‘to produce a resonant echo of the poem and its smallest features by means of a refined musical content.’ Such an artist will naturally be concerned with ‘truth,’ that is, with a

faithful rendering of the poetic thought in tone, but will also strive to present it ‘in a beautiful garb.’⁹⁸

Schumann’s change in aesthetic viewpoint causes the group of Kerner songs written in 1840 to contrast strikingly with his novice attempts; rather than riddling the setting with chromaticism and non-functional harmony in an attempt to color every word, he uses unexpected chords and unusual progressions to serve a specific purpose. Schumann composes “Lust der Sturmnacht,” in the key of Eb major, but lowers the third of the tonic chord throughout the song.⁹⁹ It is not until he comes to the ecstatic final phrase of Kerner’s poem, “Mich umfängt des Himmels Helle,”¹⁰⁰ that he uses a major tonic triad. This is an example of Schumann’s attention to a subtle detail in the poetry, which Wiedebein had called “refined musical content.” This shift in mode is not eccentric, but after hearing so many measures of Eb Minor, the switch to major powerfully increases the sense of ecstasy at the end of the poem.

In the later set of Kerner songs, Schumann often places altered chords in tonally stable sections, making them more effective than the exhaustive chromaticism of the earlier songs. “Wer machte dich so krank?” begins similarly to “Gesanges Erwachen.” Although the song is again in Ab major, Schumann quickly introduces an Ab⁷ chord and tonicizes IV. The piano part sounds a G octave while the singer rises to the Ab (see Ex. 3, m. 19), creating a sharp dissonance that underscores the most agonizing words of the text. It first highlights the word “krank” (sick) in m. 3 and then in the return of the opening material emphasizes the even more painful “Todeswunden” (fatal wounds) at m.

⁹⁸ Translated and quoted in Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 206.

⁹⁹ See Robert Schumann, *Werke*, Clara Schumann, ed. (Farnborough, England: Gregg Press, 1967), 109.

¹⁰⁰ “The sky’s brightness surrounds me.”

19 (Ex. 3). The altered chords of “Wer machte” stand out against the tonal stability surrounding them, sounding more striking than those of “Gesanges Erwachen,” where Schumann spends more time thwarting the tonic key than establishing it.

Example 3. “Wer machte dich so krank?” 17-22



He similarly writes unusual chord progressions in the later songs, but uses them for a specific, poetic purpose. The key signature of the brief “Frage,” no. 10 of the Op. 35 Lieder, is Eb major, but the song is better described as circling around Ab major (see Ex. 4). Schumann opens on an Eb major triad, but never returns to this harmony after m. 2. The constantly rising bass line and the use of appoggiaturas on the downbeat of each measure, through m. 9, create a feeling of instability and expectancy, as though the music rises toward an unforeseen goal. Schumann ends the short song with a sequence of chords that contain no trace of functional harmony. The final chord, a G major triad, is completely unexpected, because Schumann gives no indication of this eventual goal until an f# appears in the penultimate measure. The progressions employed in “Frage” are unstable and lack any short-term goals, except to increase a feeling of anticipation. This song provocatively captures the meaning of the text, which is essentially one rambling question. The chord progression mimics the sound of the voice as it rises to convey that question. Schumann’s many years of experience as a composer taught him to use

harmony with greater precision and to rely on additional musical techniques for poetic expression. Yet, in general, many of the Op. 35 Kerner Lieder are harmonically simple and use dominant-tonic progressions frequently, as Example 5 shows.

Example 4. “Frage” m. 1-7

Musical score for "Frage" m. 1-7. The score is in 3/4 time, B-flat major, and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff) are shown. The lyrics are: "Wärs't du nicht, heil - ger A - bend_schein! wärs't du nicht, stern - er - hell - te Nacht! du Blü - theuschmuck! du üpp' - ger Hain! und du, Ge - birg' voll". The score includes a *ritard.* marking above the final measure of the vocal line.

Example 5. “Wanderung” m. 1-5

Musical score for "Wanderung" m. 1-5. The score is in 8/8 time, B-flat major, and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (grand staff) are shown. The lyrics are: "Wohl_auf und frisch ge_wan_dert in's un_bekann_te". The score includes a *mf* marking above the vocal line in the second measure.

This comparison of Schumann’s 1828 and 1840 Kerner songs shows his compositional maturation in the genre of the Lied. The philosophy he expressed in the

years closer to the later group of songs in the *Neue Zeitschrift* correspond to his ideas about song composition in 1828, but his compositions now displayed greater confidence and musical refinement. Schumann had learned that it was foolish to expect a song setting to capture perfectly his emotional response to the poem, but that music could still powerfully express the general emotion, or *Stimmung*, of the text.

The differences between the two groups of songs also lend new insight into what Schumann's new method of song composition entailed. He explains in a letter to Clara that he had begun to compose songs "much more directly and melodiously" in 1840, improvising melodies away from the piano.¹⁰¹ In many of the earlier songs it seems that Schumann composed the piano part concurrently, or even before, the vocal melody. The voice often seems merely to state the text in a *parlando* style, while the piano dominates the texture (see the description of "An Anna" on pp. 48-9). As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, most of the later Kerner settings seem to have proceeded from the vocal melody. After composing a satisfactory melody for the text, Schumann then used the piano to complement or respond to the emotional nuances of the vocal part.¹⁰²

The "Year of Song:" Old and New Theories

After composing thirteen songs to texts by Kerner and other poets, Schumann turned exclusively to composition for the piano in the 1830s, but then surprisingly wrote over 100 songs in 1840. Several scholars have attributed the puzzling trajectory of

¹⁰¹ Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 175.

¹⁰² Schumann, when choosing the compositions for one of the *Neue Zeitschrift's* musical supplements, commented to one composer that, "If I were to decide on one for the supplement, it would be the Byron setting rather than the Goethe. In all, I like this particularly interesting work, but frequently it seems to me that the melody suffers. Often one can scarcely see the stream for the overhanging shrubbery." Cited in Turchin, "Schumann's Conversion to Vocal Music," 400.

Schumann as a song composer to a variety of causes. Arguments have been made for the impact of financial issues, the progression of his relationship with Clara Wieck, and his changing conception of the music of the future.¹⁰³ In every case, despite their differing conclusions, scholars always engage a troublesome statement Schumann made in June of 1839, just months before he would open the floodgates of song composition: “All my life I have considered vocal composition inferior to instrumental music – I have never regarded it as great art. But don’t tell anyone about it!”¹⁰⁴ Scholars often use this quote to emphasize how startling and mysterious Schumann’s “conversion” to vocal music really was, but Leon Plantinga cautions that this statement must be read in context. Schumann had just reviewed a set of string quartets by the recipient of the letter, Hirschbach, with great enthusiasm, and so his statement must be seen as an encouragement to Hirschbach to continue his efforts. Schumann had spent the last several years of his life editing a journal primarily focused on improving piano music, courting a concert pianist, and even attempting to become a concert pianist in the early 1830s. As a result, solo piano music held a position of great importance to him.¹⁰⁵

The events surrounding Schumann’s composition of his early Lieder, specifically the Kerner songs, lead me to add yet another possibility to this vibrant debate. The soprano for whom Schumann had written his early songs, Agnes Carus, sang several of the Kerner songs in mid-August, 1828. He had hoped that she would be able to convey the deep emotions he felt in reaction to the poems, because he considered her a sort of

¹⁰³ See Leon Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 179-183; Barbara Turchin, “Schumann’s Conversion to Vocal Music: A Reconsideration,” *Musical Quarterly* 67 (1981): 392-404; Eric Sams, *The Songs of Robert Schumann*, 3-4; Fritz Feldman, “Zur Frage des ‘Liederjahres’ bei Robert Schumann,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 9 (1952): 246-69.

¹⁰⁴ From a letter to Hermann Hirschbach, quoted in Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 183.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 182-3.

muse, but dejectedly reported in his journal that she had failed to interpret the most beautiful passages in the way he had intended.¹⁰⁶ In his letter to Wiedebein, Schumann had expressed very lofty goals for his song composition, and it seems that these goals remained unmet in his early attempts, after which he turned exclusively to piano composition. These piano works, however, are still often a musical reaction to a literary work, and in those with programmatic titles Schumann sought to portray not a concrete extra-musical idea, but rather the *Stimmung* associated with it.¹⁰⁷

Schumann did not abandon music as a vehicle to convey literature, but rather turned his attention to the piano, for three reasons. Firstly, in the early Lieder Schumann clearly had a preference for the piano as an expressive vehicle, over the voice. Perhaps his experiences with Agnes Carus convinced him that the piano alone could better illustrate an extra-musical idea. Secondly, Schumann may have turned to the piano for a reason previously discussed, that he intended to become a concert pianist. Finally, he had more experience with the piano than any other instrument and turned to it to hone his compositional skills. Perhaps his great regard for poetry did not diminish after his

¹⁰⁶ “My songs; they were intended as an actual reproduction of my inner self; but no human being can present something exactly as the genius creates it; even she [Agnes Carus] sang the most beautiful passages badly and didn’t understand me.” Quoted in Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 30. In an endnote for this quote Daverio remarks that a week later Schumann reported that Carus had been able to sing his songs more to his liking.

¹⁰⁷ For example *Papillons*, op.1, which Schumann loosely based on the book *Die Flegeljahre*, by Jean Paul, and *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, inspired by a book of the same name by E.T.A. Hoffmann. Jürgen Thym notes that “...many of Schumann’s piano pieces have programmatic titles or titles which suggest situations, states of the soul, or, as Schumann occasionally puts it, *Stimmungen*...he considers music capable of communicating feelings and emotions which are aroused by extramusical events and objects. The fourth piece of his *Waldszenen* (Forest Scenes), op. 82, does not portray a tabooed spot but rather the *Stimmung* of eeriness which one connotes with such a program.” See Thym, “The Solo Song Settings of Eichendorff’s Poems by Schumann and Wolf” (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1974), 93.

unsatisfying, early attempts, but he wanted to have the musical tools to create settings that he found as powerful as those of Wiedebein before creating more Lieder.¹⁰⁸

His return to song composition in 1839 might be seen not as a contradiction to his obvious favoring of instrumental genres in the previous decade, but rather as a return to a genre that he had left by the wayside for a number of years, coming back to it only when he felt the confidence to do it justice. By 1836 he had begun to review considerable amounts of Lieder in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, and in these reviews Schumann weighs the ability of the composer to convey the emotional nuances, or *Stimmung*, of the text above musical concerns.¹⁰⁹ This aspect of his philosophy of Lieder composition had not changed since 1828, and furthermore, he continued to remain informed about contemporary developments in German poetry.¹¹⁰ He also often attended musical soireés that featured a great deal of vocal music. These various influences reminded him of the possibilities for song composition, and in late 1839, as several other aspects of his life pushed him towards this genre, he began to compose songs once again, this time with overwhelming success.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Schumann was well aware of his compositional shortcomings, as a letter written in response to Wiedebein's response indicates: "I forgot to write to you in my previous letter that I am neither knowledgeable of harmony, general bass, etc., nor counterpoint, but rather am a completely innocent pupil of nature..." "Ich habe wahrscheinlich in meinem vorigen Brief, vergessen, Ihnen zu schreiben, daß ich weder Kenner der Harmonielehre, des Generalbassus etc: noch Contrapunktist, sondern reiner einfältiger Zögling der leitenden Natur bin..." August 3rd letter to Wiedebein from *TB I*, 102.

¹⁰⁹ See reviews summarized in Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 164-171.

¹¹⁰ Supported by the frequent appearance of contemporary poets in his *Tagebücher*. Schumann's first song setting of the "Year of Song" was of an English translation from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, indicating that he was well aware of the craze for Shakespeare that had recently overtaken German romanticism.

¹¹¹ "Sometimes it seems to me as if I were charting out wholly new paths in music!" Quoted by John Daverio in "The Song Cycle: Journeys Through a Romantic Landscape," *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, Rufus Hallmark, ed. (New York: Schirmer, 1996), 289.

Schumann's Return to Kerner

During his ten-year hiatus from song composition, Schumann continued to read Kerner's poetry. He used one of Kerner's poems, "Die Mischung," as the motto for the June 15, 1839 issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift*. His comments on Kerner in the 1828 letter to Wiedebein reveal that he was drawn to the poet's supernatural imagery and felt that Kerner's words were "sounds of the spheres," that is, artistic revelations of higher truth. Schumann's choice of "Die Mischung" as a *Neue Zeitschrift* motto shows that the composer also subscribed to Kerner's philosophy of the poetic process.¹¹² Schumann made statements that easily conform to Kerner's philosophy in his early *Tagebücher*, which often ruminated on the ontology of poetry.¹¹³ The majority of the Kerner texts Schumann set in late 1840 directly mention this subject. Poetry is the chief subject of "Sänger's Trost," "Stille Liebe," and "Trost im Gesang." "Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend" is perhaps one of the most complete poetic statement of Kerner's theory concerning the analogy between nature and the poetic process, and "Stille Thränen" explores the possibility that not only are rain and tears similar, but even interchangeable and each able to affect the pain of nature and man.

Schumann likely also enjoyed the unpolished spontaneity that imbues many of Kerner's poems, resulting from his tendency towards *Gelegenheitsdichtung*. Plantinga summarizes several quotes from Schumann's writings as evidence that "Schumann, like many of his predecessors, tended to identify inspiration with the strong emotions

¹¹² This poem, as well as a discussion of Kerner's philosophy of poetry, is presented in full on pages 27-28. Schumann's quotation of the poem is differently worded, suggesting that he either altered it, or quoted an earlier version than the one presented in Kerner's complete works.

¹¹³ "Rein, wie der Frühlingsthau des Himmels ist die Thräne des Dichters: elegische Wehmut ruht auf seiner bethränkten Wimper u. die Thräne u. die Wehmuth lößt sich lieblich in d. Mollaccorde seiner Lieder auf..." (Truly, like the spring dew of heaven is the tears of the poet: elegiac melancholy rests on his tear-filled lashes and the tears and the melancholy absolve themselves lovingly in the minor strains of his poetry.) Entry from 1827, *TB I*, 79.

accompanying artistic creation: ‘The first conception is always the most natural and the best. Reason errs, but never feeling.’¹¹⁴ This belief would slowly change, as throughout the 1840s Schumann viewed composition increasingly as a rational, systematic craft. Nonetheless, in 1840 he still firmly believed that spontaneity was essential to composition, as reviews from this year indicate.¹¹⁵

Schumann considered setting more of Kerner’s texts in May 1840 and asked Clara in a letter to bring him a copy of Kerner’s poems.¹¹⁶ She presumably brought him the 1834 edition of Kerner’s poetry, because this is the one found in his personal library, currently housed at the *Heinrich Heine Institut*. May, the month of *Dichterliebe* and the Op. 39 *Liederkreis*, could be considered the height of Schumann’s “Year of Song.” That Schumann thought of Kerner’s poetry in his most inspired month implies that he still considered this poet with great regard. However, because he had already planned so many settings of other poets for this month, the Kerner-Lieder would necessarily be delayed until at least July, and by this month, preparations for his wedding overtook composition. Several scholars have argued that the intense romantic feelings aroused in Schumann, as he fought against Friedrich Wieck for his daughter’s hand in marriage, provided a major impetus for the “Year of Song.”¹¹⁷ Because he finally got around to the Kerner-Lieder a few months after the wedding, one might expect these songs to lack the romance of those composed in the midst of his battle with Wieck. Perhaps Schumann delayed setting Kerner’s poems, because the poet seldom wrote about romantic love, and

¹¹⁴ Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic*, 131.

¹¹⁵ In a review of a piano sonata he states, “For the stimulation of the composer’s imagination is such a delicate matter, than once the track is lost, or time intervenes, it is only by a happy coincidence that in a later rare moment it can be recovered. For this reason, a work discontinued and laid aside is seldom completed; it would be preferable for the composer to begin a new one, and give himself over completely to its *Stimmung*.” Ibid., 131.

¹¹⁶ Sams, *The Songs of Robert Schumann*, 166.

¹¹⁷ This theory has recently been summarized in Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 191-5.

therefore might not have appealed to Schumann in the midst of the battle for Clara, when he often sought poetry that expressed his feelings towards her.

Indeed, it does seem that by October 1840 the energy propelling Schumann's "Year of Song" had dwindled. He had truly sung himself to death, as he predicted in a letter to Clara earlier in the year, and composed hardly any songs in this month.¹¹⁸ In the first few weeks of November song composition resumed, but only at a trickling pace. He set single texts of one poet at a time, rather than several texts over just a few days, as had been his practice in the spring. Schumann sought an end to his composition of Lieder, turning his creative hopes to larger, instrumental genres. After attempting a symphony in C minor in October,¹¹⁹ he wrote in the *Ehetegebuch* on November 15th that, "Before then [traveling to Paris with Clara] I would still really like to write a piano concerto and a symphony. I have had enough of songs (over 100) – but it won't be easy for me to stop writing them."¹²⁰ Despite significant evidence that he preferred to continue his sketches of larger, instrumental works, in November Schumann curiously began a set of songs based on texts by Kerner, many of which would eventually become the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe. His symphony finally came together in a flurry of composition in late January 1841, but only after he had composed fourteen Kerner settings and nine Rückert settings for *Liebesfrühling*, Op. 37.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 193.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 221.

¹²⁰ "Vorher möchte ich so gern noch ein Clavierconcert und eine Symphonie schreiben. Der Lieder habe ich nun genug (über 100) – kann aber nur schwer los." *TB II*, 122.

The Close of 1840: A Busy Season

In addition to his recent marriage and shifting compositional ambitions, several other aspects of Robert Schumann's life in the late months of 1840 provide an important context within which the Op. 35 songs must be situated. November and December were particularly busy months for Schumann, as a composer and as a family man. In the last week of October Schumann set the popular poem by Nikolaus Becker, "Das Rheinlied," for chorus and piano. After a warm reception of the song by friends at Livia Frege's house on the night of Nov. 13th, Robert Friese quickly published the song under the title, "Der deutsche Rhein." It sold very well and Schumann undertook several arrangements of the song in the next few weeks, including a school edition, an arrangement for male chorus, and one for choir and orchestra. Schumann entered this latter arrangement in a local competition for settings of Becker's poem, which took place in the first week of December. Although another composer, Kunze, won, Schumann happily reported that the event had been good publicity for the version published by Friese.¹²¹

The holiday season added to the business surrounding the composition of the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe. Just days before the start of the Christmas holiday, the Schumanns learned that Clara was pregnant with their first child, Marie.¹²² Robert spent the next few weeks busy with holiday concerns. He bought several gifts for Clara and in the days following Christmas Day they attended several social gatherings and concerts.¹²³ Composition of the fourteen Kerner songs occurred around this busy schedule, filled with

¹²¹ Based on entries made by both Clara and Robert in the *Ehetagebuch* in *TB II*, 122, 123, 127, 129, 132; in the *Haushaltbuch*, *TB III* 166-8.

¹²² For the week of December 27th, Robert writes in the *Ehetagebuch*, "It has been eight days since my wife gave me a beautiful hope. May God protect you." "Seit acht Tagen gibt mir mein Weib eine schöne Hoffnung. Gott beschütze dich" *TB II*, 135.

¹²³ *TB II*, 134-8.

holiday engagements, composition and promotion of “Der deutsche Rhein,” and the joy of Christmas and Clara’s pregnancy.

Comments from the *Ehetagebuch* and the *Haushaltbuch* portray Robert as anxious to complete the Kerner songs. Despite the nearing of the holiday festivities, both Clara and Robert frequently indicated that he spent much of his time diligently composing. Robert reports for the week of November 22-29 that it was “a quiet week, passed with composing and much love and kisses.” He spent so much time composing that Clara often felt melancholy because he shared so little time with her.¹²⁴ Schumann seems to have wanted his main project for these two months, the Kerner-Lieder, finished by the end of the year, which would allow him to move on to the Rückert Lieder and then the symphony.¹²⁵ He seems to have achieved this goal: the Kerner-Lieder were apparently completely finished and awaiting publication by the first of January, because not one mention of them is made by him or by Clara in the rest of their journal entries, after Clara’s announcement that her husband had “now completed a volume of twelve songs by Kerner” on January 2nd, 1841.¹²⁶

Schumann seems to have approached the composition of the Kerner-Lieder with less inspiration than he had experienced when composing songs earlier in the year. He worked diligently on the Kerner settings, but spent less time perfecting and arranging them, and never described them with any starry-eyed sentiment in his journals.

Especially absent are any comments where Schumann indicates that his love for Clara

¹²⁴ “Eine stille Woche, die unter Componiren und viel Herzen und Küssen verging... Kläre hat Freude daran gehabt, auch Schmerzen; denn sie muß meine Lieder so oft durch Stillschweigen und Unsichtbarkeit erkaufen.” *TB II*, 127.

¹²⁵ Schumann comments on Dec. 13 that “Many important tasks, as is always the case at the end of the year, force me to hurriedness and brevity today.” “Viele nöthige Arbeiten, wie sie der Jahresschluß immer bringt, zwingen mich zur Eile u. Kürze heute.” *TB II*, 131.

¹²⁶ ... “hat nun ein Heft von 12 Liedern von Koerner [sic] vollendet.” *TB II*, 138.

inspired the songs, a sentiment that he had expressed about some of the songs he had written earlier in the year. For instance, he proclaimed to Clara that, “The Eichendorff cycle is my most Romantic music ever, and contains much of you in it, dear Clara.”¹²⁷ A comment made in a letter written to Zuccalmaglio on December 31st reveals the view Schumann himself took concerning some of these songs, in comparison to *Myrthen*, which he had composed earlier in the year:

“Here, too, are the *Myrthen* and three little songs. Perhaps you can get the latter sung to you by a pair of pretty lips – they sound very well: I heard them the day before yesterday. Of course the *Myrthen* afford a deeper glance into the musical life of my soul...”¹²⁸

Financial Context of the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe

Other scholars have shown that Schumann’s “Year of Song” was partly motivated by the need to prove himself financially dependable to Friedrich Wieck.¹²⁹ Thus financial issues should also be considered with respect to Op. 35. Clara and Robert had first sought permission from Wieck to marry in 1838, but Wieck continually refused their request, citing Robert’s lack of a steady residence and income as his main complaint. Schumann tried various avenues for financial gain, beginning with moving briefly to Vienna in 1838 to establish his music journal. Although he wanted to make a living as a composer, Schumann seriously considered a number of offers from friends to

¹²⁷ Sams, *Songs of Robert Schumann*, 92.

¹²⁸ *Robert Schumann: The life of Robert Schumann as told in his letters*, vol. 1, Mary Herbert trans. (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1890), 268. Schumann did not explicitly name the “three little songs” as settings of Kerner texts, but the date of the letter, which falls just two days after he had composed the last Op. 35 setting, and the fact that he does not give a name to these songs but conversely names the others as from *Myrthen* indicates that these songs had not yet been published.

¹²⁹ Barbara Turchin’s article, “Robert Schumann’s Conversion to Vocal Music: A Reconsideration,” *Musical Quarterly* 67 (1981): 392-404, is my preferred source of information in this portion of the discussion. For similar arguments by other scholars see Norman Currie, “Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz, and their Publishers” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1974), 1-330, and Rufus Hallmark, “Robert Schumann: the poet sings,” *German Lieder in the Nineteenth-Century*, Rufus Hallmark ed. (New York: Schirmer: 1996), 78.

work at other occupations. By 1839 he had composed and published several works for piano, but none of them were well known, and they generally received bad reviews and few performances. Clara, feeling great pressure from her father, suggested in April that they delay their marriage for a year, so that Robert would have sufficient time to prove his financial dependability, which deeply hurt him and caused a temporary rift in their relationship.

Because Schumann had been reviewing songs in the *Neue Zeitschrift* since 1836, he had by 1839 developed a clear understanding of current developments in the genre and its economic possibilities.¹³⁰ Perhaps as early as October 1839, his “Year of Song” had begun. Writing to a friend in May 1840, when he composed some of his most musically and financially successful song cycles, Schumann said that “I have composed a great deal but mostly songs. These compositions (for the voice) especially are finding great interest in Germany, which encourages me much.”¹³¹ Although he quickly discovered the expressive possibilities of song composition, Schumann showed awareness of the genre’s financial viability.

The Op. 35 Liederreihe stands out among the approximately 130 songs Schumann composed in his “Year of Song,” because it was especially motivated by financial concerns. Schumann’s usual process in securing a publisher for a certain work was to sketch or complete it, and then offer it to various publishers. As Norman Currie shows, Schumann strove to create personal relationships with his publishers, and spent a

¹³⁰ “While there were doubtless many factors involved, the possibility exists that the ‘Year of Song’ could have been partly inspired by the greater commercial opportunities for publishing and selling songs instead of symphonies or sonatas.” Currie, “Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz,” 96.

¹³¹ Turchin, “Schumann’s Conversion to Vocal Music,” 404.

good amount of money and time socializing with them.¹³² The expected trail of evidence from letters of savvy courting and social outings with the publisher of choice, is lacking for the publication of the Op. 35 Liederreihe.

Evidence suggests that it was instead the publisher, Christian Klemm, who made the initial move toward the publication of Op. 35, as well as Op. 34.¹³³ Klemm started in 1806 as an instrument seller, but expanded to operate a music lending library and a small publishing house by 1821. The firm published mostly popular genres and dance music until 1838, when Christian Klemm took over the business from his father, Carl August. He wanted to publish some works by major composers, and it is therefore unsurprising that he spent an evening with Schumann and Hieronymous Truhn in his first year as owner of the business.¹³⁴ He may have spoken with Schumann about a possible business agreement at this time, but because Schumann had been composing only bizarre piano pieces and Klemm was not associated with high art music, this is unlikely. Rather, Klemm probably approached Schumann in July 1840, when Schumann rented a grand piano for one month from his instrument warehouse.¹³⁵ By this time, Schumann had published several collections of song through mostly local publishers, and because it was also located in Leipzig, Klemm surely would have been aware of the favorable reception of Schumann's songs. Klemm seized the opportunity to publish the work of a composer in the vanguard, and at the same time make a safe business venture by choosing a genre well-established as successful with the middle-class consumer.

¹³² Currie, "Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz," 95.

¹³³ Pleßke also describes the arrangement between the composer and Klemm with language that suggests the latter party as the initiator: "Er besaß kein besonderes Profil, wenn sich unter den Veröffentlichung auch Lieder von Schumann und Männerchöre von Lortzing befanden." (He did not possess a high profile when he arranged for publication of songs by Schumann and works for male chorus by Lortzing.) See Hans-Martin Pleßke, *Leipzigs Musikverlage einst und jetzt* (Leipzig: Rat der Stadt, 1965), 13.

¹³⁴ Specifically on May 14, 1838, noted in *TB III*, 41.

¹³⁵ *TB III*, 155.

Brief comments in the *Ehetegebuch* on December 13th reveal that Schumann viewed Op. 35 as a primarily financial undertaking:

“I have also been efficiently working – the J. Kerner Cycle is almost finished, and in any case many of them were sent to be printed in the last few days. Do not call me petty if I enter in this journal what I have earned for myself as a composer this year.”¹³⁶

He does not describe the artistic merits of the cycle; in fact, while Clara occasionally comments on the beauty of certain songs in the *Ehetegebuch*, Schumann never reflects on the aesthetic value of the Kerner songs anywhere in the journal. This is the only comment from Robert that makes more than a passing reference to his compositional progress, and rather than extolling the songs’ expressive power or musical genius, he describes the financial success he has achieved as a song composer. Schumann included “Stille Thränen” in the thirteenth musical supplement to the *Neue Zeitschrift* in May of 1841, just after publication of Op. 35 by Klemm. This move also shows the financial motive underscoring the songs, because Schumann viewed the musical supplements not only as an attempt to bring attention to new art, but to provide publicity for new works.¹³⁷

Because Klemm, rather than Schumann, was the initiator, the composer found himself in an unusual position. The publisher had essentially guaranteed publication, but of course probably expected Schumann to produce marketable songs. Although by October, when the business of his marriage slowed, Schumann felt like moving on to composition of larger works, the prospect discussed with Klemm was too good a

¹³⁶ “Auch bin ich fleisig – der J. Kerner’sche Cyklus ist bis auf weniges fertig, und überhaupt manches zum Druck gewandert in den letzten Tagen. Nenne mich nicht kleinlich, wenn ich in das Tagebuch eintrage, was ich mir in diesem Jahr als Componist verdient..” *TB II*, 131.

¹³⁷ In a letter to Breitkopf und Härtel of 1837 Schumann asks, “Would you permit me to announce your publication of the Phantasy pieces in ‘the musical supplement of my journal’? In my opinion the earlier distribution will be useful and at least will get the title before the public.” Quoted and translated in Currie, 69-70.

financial opportunity to turn away. He expresses his confidence that the songs will be quickly published, implying that he has already secured a publisher, in the *Ehetafbuch* entry discussed on pages 66-67. This comment was made on December 13th, before Schumann had drafted all of the songs that the published version would contain. Several of the songs, he writes, have already been sent to the engraver for printing, a process too expensive for a composer to undertake himself. Schumann could not have sent the songs for printing until a publisher had agreed to absorb the expense.

These many circumstances – Schumann’s desire and attempt to make a transition into the composition of new musical genres, his preoccupation with the song, “Der deutsche Rhein,” the business of the Christmas holiday, and the fact that Klemm had guaranteed publication of some of his works – explain the composer’s diligence and sense of urgency while composing the Op. 35 Liederreihe. These events and issues also clarify the chronology of the genesis of the fourteen Kerner songs composed in November and December of 1840, which is the subject of the following chapter.

The Compositional Genesis of the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe

The Poetic Texts

The 1834 volume of Kerner's poetry, *Die Dichtungen*, which Schumann owned and presumably obtained from Clara in May 1840, contains all fourteen poems that he set later in the year.¹³⁸ While sixteen poems by Kerner do appear in Clara and Robert's *Abschriften von Gedichten zur Compositionen*, the composer used just three of them as texts for the Kerner songs of 1840: "Stirb, Lieb' und Freud," "Wanderung," and "Sängers Trost. This suggests that he chose the majority of the poems directly from *Die Dichtungen*.¹³⁹ Kerner's poems are arranged in no discernible order in this edition and do not compose a narrative or cohesive whole of any sort. The edition contains poems from Kerner's earliest days as poet, as well as ones written close to the date of publication.

In contrast to his first attempts at setting Kerner's poetry in 1828, when he chose texts based on emotional appeal, Schumann's choices for Op. 35 reveal that his ability to choose texts with musical potential had greatly matured. Most of the poems set in Op. 35 are relatively brief for Kerner, consisting of four stanzas or less; "Wanderlied" and "An das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes" are the only exceptions.¹⁴⁰ These poems all fall into a very regular, bouncing meter that is conducive to song. The majority are constructed in iambic meter, and Kerner alternates between two different numbers of syllables per line. Schumann seemed quite satisfied with the fourteen poems, leaving them mostly as Kerner had written them. He omitted a stanza of "Wer machte dich so

¹³⁸ Hallmark, *The Genesis of Schumann's Dichterliebe*, 20.

¹³⁹ Helma Kaldewey, "Die *Gedichtabschriften* Robert und Clara Schumanns," *Schumann und die Dichter*, Bernhard Appel and Inge Hermstrüwer, eds. (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1991), 89-90.

¹⁴⁰ Schumann altered the first word of the latter poems' title, from "An das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes" to "Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes."

krank?“ and of “Stille Liebe,” shortening each poem from four to three stanzas. In both cases he cut one of the middle verses. Beside these omissions, Schumann altered the Op. 35 poems very little, only making smaller changes such as word substitutions.

Schumann amassed a variety of subjects in the Op. 35 texts, including nature, romantic love, supernatural experiences, and death. Despite the melancholy tone of Kerner’s work and his often strange choice of subject matter, Schumann did not entirely avoid poems that might be considered less accessible to his audiences. “Alte Laute” and “Wer machte dich so krank?” deal with depression and, covertly, with death. In 1840 the supernatural element of Kerner’s poetry, which Schumann had enthusiastically praised to Gottlob Wiedebein a decade earlier, still interested him, manifesting itself in songs such as “Stirb, Lieb und Freud” and “Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes.” The latter poem, as well as “Stille Thränen,” is based upon eccentric philosophies that Kerner developed concerning man’s interaction with nature and the spiritual world. “Stille Thränen” is also unusual because it presents interpretive problems.¹⁴¹ Schumann does avoid a few types of poem that are abundant in *Die Dichtungen*, namely those overtly dealing with death and those written to a specific person as an ode or eulogy. It is understandable that he would avoid poems that mention specific individuals, because the song could potentially lose its sense of universal appeal. Overall, Schumann presented a well-rounded selection of Kerner’s poetry in the twelve texts of the Op. 35 Liederreihe,

¹⁴¹ In this brief poem of two stanzas, Kerner implies three characters, and it is unclear whether he means two personalities of one person, or if there are really three distinct people. The poem also refers to several different points in time, which do not seem to occur in chronological order. Overall, these problems are complicated by ambiguous language and imprecise descriptions of action. For instance, one cannot be sure how to interpret the first line of the poem, “Du bist vom Schlaf erstanden.” Has Kerner purposefully used religious language here, or does he simply mean that the character has awakened from sleep? While symbolism is normally transparent in Kerner’s poetry, one cannot even decide if he has employed symbolism or not in “Stille Thränen.”

revealing many facets of his creative voice while still composing songs that consumers might find enjoyable to sing.

Manuscript and Sketch Sources for Op. 35

Few autographs of Op. 35 survive. Fortunately, the third of the three *Liederbücher* housed in the Musikabteilung of the Berliner Staatsbibliothek provides a nearly complete set of autograph drafts, containing all fourteen Kerner songs that Schumann composed in 1840 on pages 37-65.¹⁴² Schumann began to draft in meticulous detail nearly every solo and part song composed in 1840 in the books, intending to give them to Clara at their wedding later in the year. When he began the first book, Schumann seemed to feel that he would be finished composing songs by the September wedding, but he instead continued to compose in the *Liederbücher* for several months afterward. Thus, he did not present the books to Clara as a wedding gift. The songs were numbered chronologically, and the fourteen Kerner songs are counted as songs 120-133.¹⁴³ As these numbers suggest, Schumann had nearly finished his “Year of Song” by this point, which consisted of 138 compositions, total.

Some researchers believe that preliminary sketches, consisting primarily of a vocal melody, were an integral part of Schumann’s method of composing song. For a few cycles, this can be shown definitively, because such sketches still exist. In his study of *Dichterliebe*, Rufus Hallmark explores the work’s extant vocal sketches

¹⁴² Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, mit Mendelssohn-Archiv; Signature: *Mus.ms.autogr.R.Schumann 16*. Page 45, the second page of “Trost im Gesang,” is missing. I would like to thank the Staatsbibliothek for providing me with high-quality photocopies of the drafts. All discussions of these autographs are based on these photocopies and not examination of the actual source, which was unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁴³ Viktor Ernst Wolff, who undertook a detailed study of the *Liederbücher*, states that these numbers are in Schumann’s hand. Viktor Ernst Wolff, *Robert Schumanns Lieder in ersten und späteren Fassungen* (Berlin: H.S. Hermann, 1913), 12.

(*Melodieskizzen*), which were “complete or nearly complete versions of the vocal lines.”¹⁴⁴ Concerning Schumann’s general approach to composing Lieder, Hallmark writes that, “Schumann tended first to record his melodic ideas and next to transfer them to other music paper, adding the piano part and sometimes emending the melodies.”¹⁴⁵ The vocal sketches for *Dichterliebe* reflect the new compositional process Schumann discovered when he began composing song in 1840. In a letter written in February of that year Schumann writes that many of his songs began as a vocal melody, which he often conceived spontaneously, without the aid of the piano.¹⁴⁶ The vocal sketches of *Dichterliebe* attest to this process, because many of them consist only of the vocal melody. A similar set of vocal sketches exists for *Frauenliebe und Leben*.

Preliminary sketches for the majority of the songs Schumann composed in 1840 have not yet surfaced. Perhaps this is because Schumann apparently wrote such sketches on loose sheets of paper, and did not attempt to preserve them conscientiously, as he did the more complete drafts in the *Liederbücher*.¹⁴⁷ For Op. 35, such sketches do indeed exist of “Stille Liebe” and “Frage.”¹⁴⁸ Despite this lack of concrete evidence, there is reason to believe that Schumann sketched earlier stages of several other Kerner songs before creating the *Liederbuch* drafts. These autographs seem to represent a fairly advanced stage of composition, meaning that prior to creating them, he had already made many substantial compositional decisions. Schumann made all of his alterations to Kerner’s texts before he drafted the songs; he already knew exactly where he would

¹⁴⁴ Rufus Hallmark, “The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*,” *19th-Century Music* (Nov. 1977): 112.

¹⁴⁵ Hallmark, “The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*,” 112.

¹⁴⁶ “Mostly I compose them standing or walking, not at the piano. It is an entirely different kind of music, which does not come first through the fingers, but much more directly and melodiously.” Quoted from a letter of February 24, 1840, to Clara Wieck, translated in Ferris, *Schumann’s Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 175.

¹⁴⁷ Hallmark, “The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*,” 111.

¹⁴⁸ In the Berliner Staatsbibliothek, Stempnik Collection.

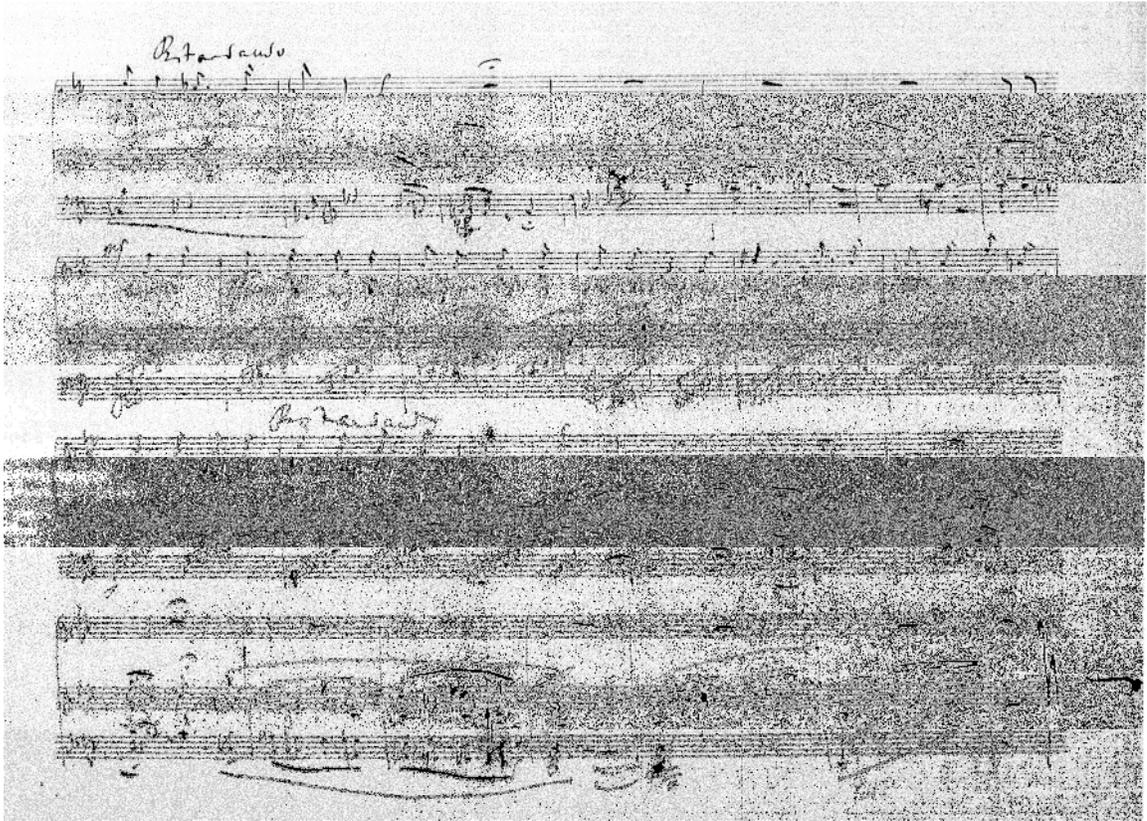
employ text repetition, alter certain words, or omit stanzas. While there is no vocal melody perfectly copied from a previous sketch, the clarity and lack of revision of the melody in the draft for some songs suggests that Schumann likely have conceived the entire vocal part in a separate, earlier sketch.

The *Liederbuch* drafts of “Stille Liebe” and “Frage,” songs for which vocal sketches do exist, accordingly represent a late stage of composition.¹⁴⁹ The vocal melody of “Stille Liebe,” as well as the piano part, is very cleanly written in ink (see Ex. 6). The most significant change was made at m. 10, where Schumann originally set the word, “Lied,” with two eighth notes, but crossed these out and inserted a quarter note instead. Furthermore, Schumann made this alteration in pencil, indicating that this small revision occurred after the initial drafting of the melody in the *Liederbuch*. Otherwise, the first draft of the melody was essentially spotless.¹⁵⁰ “Frage” similarly contains just a few alterations, here in ink, to both the piano and vocal parts in the final measures of the song. Although, according to Hallmark, the early sketches usually contained only the vocal melody, it seems that Schumann must also have sketched, or at least improvised, its piano part.

¹⁴⁹ Turchin lists vocal sketches for “Stille Liebe” and “Frage” in “Robert Schumann’s Song Cycles in the Context of the Early Nineteenth-Century *Liederkreis*,” 415. They are a part of the Stempnik Collection in Berlin. Interestingly, I believed that these two songs out of all the Kerner Lieder were most likely preceded by a vocal sketch, before I came across affirmation in Turchin’s appendix.

¹⁵⁰ One other emendation, in m. 18, is merely that Schumann moved the first note of the phrase further into the measure, because he wanted it to line up better with the end of the piano interlude.

Example 6. “Stille Liebe,” *Lb* autograph, mm. 25-49¹⁵¹



Several other songs, for which vocal sketches have not been discovered, are written just as cleanly in the *Liederbuch* as “Stille Liebe,” and “Frage.” The vocal line of “Lust der Sturmnacht” is written in ink without any initial revision, as is that of “Stille Liebe.” Schumann made only one change, also in pencil, but more significant than the alteration in the other song (see Ex. 7). The opening motive originally outlined an E major triad, but the composer scratched some of these notes out and beside them wrote in a stepwise ascent to b’ in m. 2, at “Tale.” The motive reoccurs twice in the song, and each time the same revision appears, indicating that the original triad-motive had been

¹⁵¹ The measure numbers given for the autograph examples do not necessarily coincide with the measure numbers of the published songs.

firmly established in the preliminary sketch. His use of pencil indicates that this revision was probably not made immediately after he had written the first version in ink, but happened later. Furthermore, this alteration was not substantial enough to cause him to change the phrasing of the text, because he did not need to move the text to accommodate it. He might already have composed the melody in a vocal sketch, deciding on a definitive phrasing of the entire text, and merely copied it into the *Liederbuch*. Then, for a reason currently unknown, he returned to the draft at a later date and refashioned this motive.

Example 7. “Lust der Sturmnacht,” *Lb* autograph, mm. 1-3



Similarly to that of “Stille Liebe,” the melody of “Wer machte dich so krank?” is perfectly copied in ink, with just a few revisions in measure 22, near the end of the song. “Alte Laute,” essentially repeats this musical material, and was apparently written directly after “Wer machte.” Surprisingly, more revisions occur in “Alte Laute,” further suggesting that Schumann must have made a thorough sketch before writing the first song. He then proceeded with less care as he rewrote the melody for the latter. Slight differences in stress in the text of “Alte Laute” necessarily caused Schumann to alter the

rhythm of the melody at certain points, and the draft shows that in a few spots Schumann made these changes directly into the *Liederbuch*. Other melodies that the composer likely sketched in their entirety prior to the stage of composition represented by the *Liederbuch* draft are those of “Sängers Trost,” “Stille Thränen,” “Trost im Gesang,” and “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud.” The texture and general content of the piano parts of all of these songs also seem to have been conceived in a preliminary sketch, with no later changes that undermined the original phrasing of the text.¹⁵²

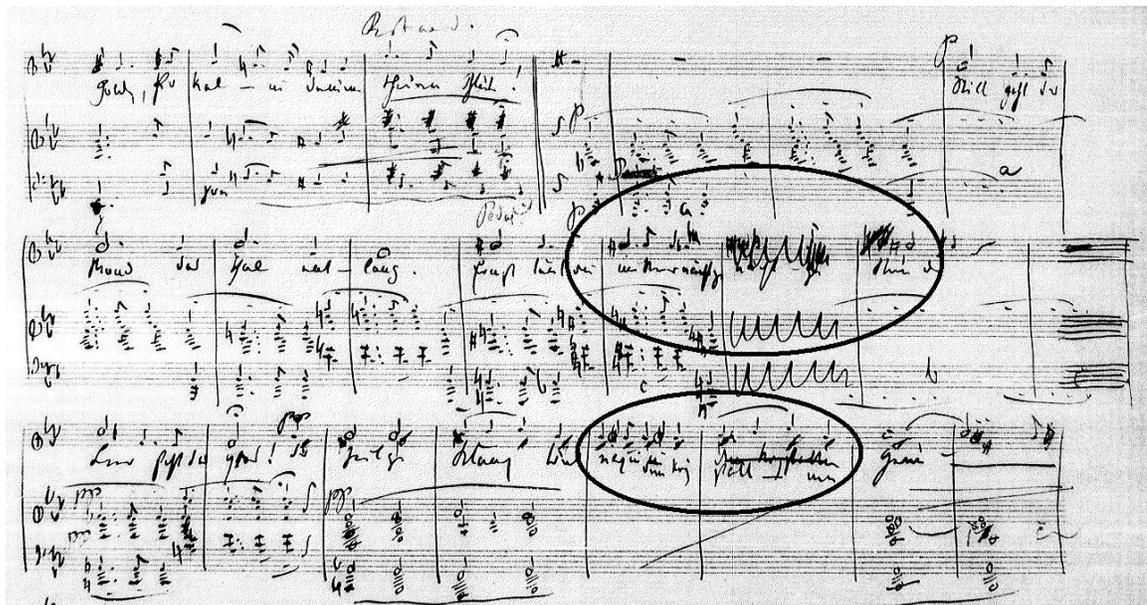
Other drafts of Op. 35 songs manifest a much different genesis, where Schumann probably sketched the melody only to a certain point in the text. Perhaps while sketching these songs he was somehow interrupted or grew impatient before he finished the entire melody. When he picked up composition of the song once more, he might have chosen to work only on the *Liederbuch* draft, rather than to take the time to finish the vocal sketch first.¹⁵³ The draft of “Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes” suggests such a trajectory. The first twenty measures, setting the first two stanzas, bear no revision of the vocal melody, and contain just a few alterations made to the piano part, in pencil (see Ex. 8a). But scribbles gradually trickle into both parts from this point on in the manuscript. The immediate revisions in mm. 21-34, although appearing quite frequently, are not so dramatic that Schumann had to adjust the text, meaning that none of these revisions affect the phrasing (see Ex. 8b). Because even in these hesitant measures it seems that Schumann had already decided how to phrase the text, it is possible that he sketched the

¹⁵² My conclusion agrees with Hallmark’s. He claims that Schumann did not sketch the melody of certain songs before drafting them, because “basic decisions about the phrasing of the song” were recast in the *Liederbuch* draft. See his “The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*,” 122.

¹⁵³ Schumann did leave some of the vocal sketches for *Dichterliebe* unfinished before moving on to a more complex draft, such as that of “Dein Angesicht.” Ibid., 118.

in two places (see circled areas of Ex. 8c). At mm. 46-47 the composer lacked any idea for how to set “Stunde,” so he left two measures devoid of melody and skipped to the next line, “Leer steht das Glas.” Eventually he returned to the stubborn phrase, but found his first attempt so displeasing that he scratched out m. 47 entirely, necessitating the addition of another measure at the end of the second system. Another hesitation occurs in mm. 53-54, where Schumann made two attempts to set “nach in dem kristallinen.” He originally intended to repeat the rhythm of m. 51 in m. 53, but perhaps did not like the resulting stress of “dem” on the downbeat of m. 54.

8c. mm. 36b-58



Similarly, Schumann might have sketched the melody for the first stanza of “Wanderung,” but later in the song some basic phrasing of the text had not been established before work in the *Liederbuch*. Schumann desperately wanted to reiterate immediately “doch bin ich nicht allein” before returning to the opening melody, but at

first only wrote the text in ink, over a pickup and two measures (see Ex. 9). Two attempts were made at a later date, in pencil, to produce the intended repeat, but eventually Schumann crossed the text out entirely, and in still another phase of composition, he simply brought the piano part to a cadence. This phrasing revision suggests that Schumann might have foregone sketching past the first stanza. Certainly he seems not to have sketched the accompaniment, because he made heavy revisions in pencil to what he had initially drafted in ink for the piano part in mm. 11-20.

Example 9. “Wanderung,” *Lb* autograph, mm. 26-31



“Erstes Grün” was also partially sketched. Schumann appears to have considered a form other than strophic, because he seems to have intended new music for the second stanza, but crossed this idea out after only a few measures and then decided to set the song strophically (see Ex. 10). To accomplish this efficiently, he squeezed the text of the following stanzas underneath the melody for the first; the third stanza is written between the piano staves. His indecision concerning basic form in the *Liederbuch* draft of “Erstes Grün” suggests that if he did compose a vocal sketch, it was not as thorough as those made for songs such as “Stille Liebe” and “Wer machte dich so krank?” Such a sketch probably did exist, despite the problems Schumann encountered with form, because overall the melody seems to have been cleanly copied from another source, in which he

had already decided issues of phrasing. “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend” might have undergone a similar process, but it is more likely that Schumann agonized and second-guessed a great deal while composing this setting, because he intended to present this song to Clara for Christmas (see Ex. 12).¹⁵⁴

Example 10. “Erstes Grün,” *Lb* autograph, entire song



Occasionally Schumann used drafts as a *Stichvorlag* (engraver’s copy). This was indicated by a title page at the beginning of the collection of songs and the presence of directions for the engraver.¹⁵⁵ The drafts for Op. 35 do not constitute a fair copy, however, for several reasons. Firstly, Schumann does not crown the set with a title page; in fact, the first of the Kerner-Lieder drafts, “Lust der Sturmnacht,” begins on the same

¹⁵⁴ “3 [sic] neue Lieder (so eben erschiene) Compositionen vom Robert erfreueten mich sehr, ganz besonders aber ein mir componirtes Lied “Waldgegend” von Koerner, [sic]das gewiss zu den schönsten gehört.” From Clara’s *Ehetagebuch* entry for the week of Dec. 28th-Jan.3rd, *TB II*, 135.

¹⁵⁵ *Dichterliebe* meets both requirements, although Hallmark argues that the drafts in the *Liederbuch* differ from the published version so greatly that another *Stichvorlag* must have existed at one time. Rufus Hallmark, *Schumann’s Dichterliebe: A Source Study* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 14, 36.

page as the end of the previous song. Secondly, although Schumann left a few indications in the manuscript that could be construed as directions for engraving, it is more likely that these notes were for his own use. All of these indications are reminders that Schumann probably wrote for himself about compositional decisions that were not apparent in the music alone, such as strophic repeats.

Finally, some of the drafts differ from the published songs to such an extent that Schumann must have given the engraver another copy of the songs, which he wrote after the *Liederbuch* drafts. “Lust der Sturmnacht” is drafted in E minor instead of the published E-flat major, and the original melody in mm. 31-35 of “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud” was drastically altered in the published song (see Ex. 11). Schumann left the piano part unfinished in the *Liederbuch* draft of “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend.” Several attempts at a short transition back to the opening melody, in mm. 38-39, are scratched out and no alternate solution is provided (see Ex. 12). The three-measure postlude does not appear in the draft; Schumann simply stops the piano part where the vocal melody ends, in the middle of m. 26. The disorganization and messiness of this draft and others of Op. 35 in the *Liederbuch* also supports the conclusion that another, later copy of the song collection served as the engraver’s copy.

Example 11. "Stirb, Lieb' und Freud," mm. 31-35

a. Original melody in *Lb* autograph

Handwritten musical score for "Stirb, Lieb' und Freud," mm. 31-35. The score is written in ink on aged paper. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Ich Mägdelein wallt die Hall' entlang, es weiss nicht was es trägt;". The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

b. Published melody

Printed musical score for "Stirb, Lieb' und Freud," mm. 31-35. The score is printed in black ink on white paper. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "das Mägd - lein wallt die Hall' entlang, es weiss nicht was es trägt;". The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 12. "Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend," *Lb* autograph, mm. 15-23

Handwritten musical score for "Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend," mm. 15-23. The score is written in ink on aged paper. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Zu dir, für die ich mich sehnen will, denn du bist die Waldgegend, die ich so lieb habe". The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Further evidence that Schumann made two *Stichvorlage* for Op. 35 is a comment he made in the *Ehstagebuch* on December 13th. He writes that he had already sent some

of the songs to the engraver.¹⁵⁶ The composer had not yet drafted three of the songs (“Erstes Grün,” “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend,” and “Wanderlied”), meaning that this first copy must have been incomplete. At a later date, probably shortly after he had drafted “Wanderlied,” Schumann made another copy for the engraver that at least contained these three additional songs. This copy might have contained the complete set, because these three songs occur in the middle of the final order and not at the end, and Schumann may have wanted a copy that clearly showed the engraver the final order.

The existing autograph material for the Op. 35 Kerner-Lieder suggests that Schumann did make preliminary sketches for all fourteen songs, in which he primarily created the vocal melody and made decisions about phrasing of the text. Some of these sketches were probably very detailed, containing the entire melody as well as some ideas for the piano part, because the drafts for these songs lack any revision significant enough to alter basic phrasing. The *Liederbuch* drafts of other songs demonstrate that although Schumann still began their composition with vocal sketches, he left this stage unfinished, and as a result made some basic compositional decisions as he drafted the songs. Beside these sketches, twelve of which are lost, and the existing *Liederbuch* drafts, two fair copies must have existed at one time for Op. 35.

A Tentative Reconstruction of the Genesis of Op. 35

Now that the stages of composition of the Kerner songs have been established, this chapter proceeds to the specific timeline for the genesis of all fourteen songs. Schumann requested that Clara bring him a copy of Kerner’s poems in May 1840, but

¹⁵⁶ “Auch bin ich fleißig – der J. Kerner’sche Cyklus ist bis auf weniges fertig, und überhaupt manches zum Druck gewandert in den letzten Tagen.” *TB II*, 132.

beyond possibly reading through the volume she provided, picking out some potential material, and making some vocal sketches, Schumann did not work on the Op. 35 settings that summer. In July, when Schumann arranged for the rental of a piano from his firm, Christian Klemm seized the opportunity to approach Schumann about providing his small publishing house with some songs for publication. Schumann agreed, and immediately offered Klemm the *Vier Duette* on texts by various poets, which he had just finished on July 2nd.¹⁵⁷ Although Schumann did compose more songs in the month of July, Klemm did not publish any of these. The reason for this is unknown; Klemm might have wanted a substantial number of songs in one opus number, and for the remainder of the summer Schumann only composed small collections, of six songs or less. The composer may also have had personal reasons for choosing the Kerner-Lieder to send to Klemm over other songs. Schumann may have been in no rush to compose this opus because he recognized that it was unwise to release several of his works into the market at once.¹⁵⁸ The Op. 25 Rückert Lieder had just appeared in September 1840,¹⁵⁹ and perhaps Schumann planned to publish Op. 35 several months later, which would give him plenty of time for their composition.

Whatever the case, the planning and celebration of the wedding prevented him from doing much composing until October. He began the month with various other compositions, all for voice, and by the middle of the month had perhaps taken his first steps away from the genre of song toward the symphony, by attempting to sketch a symphonic movement in C minor. Instead of continuing to work towards a larger instrumental composition, Schumann turned back to song composition in late November,

¹⁵⁷ Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 194.

¹⁵⁸ Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 203.

¹⁵⁹ Turchin, "Schumann's Song Cycles in the Context of the Early Nineteenth-Century *Liederkreis*," 412.

setting fourteen Kerner poems by the end of the year. Both Schumanns describe the composer as hard at work on composition for several weeks, beginning in the the third week of November, giving the impression that for the first few months of their marriage, he had only sporadically composed, dabbling in various genres with no strong sense of direction. Schumann began the Kerner songs on November 20th, with a drive to compose that he had not experienced since July. He drafted six of these songs from November 20th- 25th, probably choosing the poems that inspired him most, because he did not compose them in the order of their appearance in *Die Dichtungen*, which he had received from Clara earlier in the year, nor in the final order. Table 1 shows the title and date of composition for all of the 1840 Kerner Lieder.

Table 1. Dates of Composition for Op. 35 Kerner-Lieder

Song	Date in Liederbuch	Date in Haushaltbuch
Lust der Sturmnacht	11-20-1840*	11-20-1840
Trost im Gesang	11-20-1840	11-21-1840
Stirb, Lieb' und Freud	11-22-1840	11-22-1840
Wanderung	11-23-1840	11-23-1840
Stille Liebe	11-24-1840	11-24-1840
Auf das Trinkglas...	11-25-1840	-
Frage	Nov. 1840	Nov. 1840
Stille Thränen	12-07-1840*	12-07-1840
Wer machte dich so krank?	12-11-1840	12-11-1840
Alte Laute	-	-
Erstes Grün	12-17-1840*	-
Sänger's Trost	12-18-1840	-
Sehnsucht n.d. Waldgegend	-	12-23-1840
Wanderlied	12-29-1840*	-

* These dates were not present on the facsimiles provided by the Berliner Staatsbibliothek, but were supplied by Otto-Joachim Köhler, who viewed the *Liederbuch* in person,. See Köhler, "Schumanns Kerner-Lieder op. 35 : die Datierungen und ihre Aussage zum Problem 'Liederreihe' oder 'Zyklus,'" *Schumann und seine Dichter*, Mattias Wendt ed. (New York: Schott, 1993), 88-89 .

Schumann felt that the six Kerner songs constituted a substantial enough unit to stop drafting in the *Liederbuch*, and happily stated that “a small cycle of poems by Kerner is finished” on November 29th in the *Ehetagebuch*.¹⁶⁰ He immediately sent a letter to Klemm, which, because it is dated November 30th, probably concerned the Kerner songs Schumann had just finished.¹⁶¹ Schumann hoped that the six songs would be enough for Klemm to warrant publication, but the publisher did not agree. “Das Rheinlied” was Schumann’s most popular composition up to that point.¹⁶² Klemm may have wanted to capitalize on this success, feeling confident enough in the marketability of Schumann’s songs to ask for enough Kerner songs to fill two volumes.¹⁶³ Both parties might have agreed on twelve songs after exchanging letters sparked by the one Schumann sent on November 29th.¹⁶⁴

On November 25th Schumann became busy with “Das Rheinlied,” as was reported in the previous chapter, composing several arrangements of it in just two weeks. This effort culminated with Schumann’s participation in a competition at the Leipzig Schützenhaus on December 6th.¹⁶⁵ By this date Schumann had received a response to his letter to Klemm, and although the contents of these letters are unknown, he had doubtless agreed to compose more Kerner songs, because he immediately began to work on more *Liederbuch* drafts the day after the competition. The pace for the eight songs he

¹⁶⁰ *TB II*, 127.

¹⁶¹ Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumann: Leben und Werk* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 2004), 591. Boetticher lists dates for the two letters Schumann sent to Klemm in a *Briefverzeichnis*, but does not do so for the five letters in the unpublished Berlin “Correspondence” that Schumann received from Klemm. All of these letters are currently unpublished, and were thus unavailable for this study. I only present a theory of what the letters might have concerned.

¹⁶² Currie, “Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz,” 105.

¹⁶³ See p. 113 for more about why Schumann’s songs were often separated into two volumes.

¹⁶⁴ Boetticher reports that several letters from Klemm to Schumann exist in the *Briefverzeichnis*, although he does not provide their dates. Boetticher, *Robert Schumann*, 591.

¹⁶⁵ The various arrangements as well as a description of the contest can be found on page 62.

subsequently composed sharply contrasts with the short burst of constant activity from which the first six songs emerged. Schumann drafted one or two songs consecutively, in sporadic bursts, rather than over a connected span of time. His enthusiasm may have waned at this point, because he had already set the texts he found most inspiring, and felt more of a sense of obligation as he set the later songs.

The sporadic rate of composition also resulted from an apparently different approach to the later set of songs. For the first group Schumann seems to have sketched all of them at one time, and then drafted them likewise. He may have sketched these songs as early as May, when he received Kerner's *Die Dichtungen* from Clara, or just before creating the drafts. In contrast, starting the second week of December Schumann perhaps began to alternate between several days of sketching and then one or two days of drafting his ideas in the surviving manuscript. The later songs appear more disordered, chronologically, than the six songs drafted in late November. After roughly planning or sketching some of the songs, for instance "Frage" and "Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend," Schumann left space in the manuscript to draft these songs at a later date. He sketched and then drafted the later settings in small groups of three or four songs.

Examination of the *Ehetagebuch* entries for December 7th-20th suggests that this was his compositional approach. Schumann reported on December 13th that he had worked industriously on the Kerner songs in the previous week, but according to the dates in the *Liederbuch* he had hardly finished the set.¹⁶⁶ He must have worked assiduously on sketches from earlier stages of composition for the remaining songs, vocal sketches that do not survive today. During the next week, the 14th-20th, Clara indicated that "Robert has worked very hard this week," but she did not report hearing any new

¹⁶⁶ "Auch bin ich fleisig – der J. Kerner'sche Cyklus ist bis auf weniges fertig." *TB II*, 132.

songs.¹⁶⁷ Robert typically seems to have previewed his songs with his wife as soon as he had drafted the vocal and piano part, but never shared any of them with her before he had completed this stage of their composition. Therefore, he probably sketched more than he drafted during this week.

After composing “Stille Thränen” on December 7th, Schumann likely took a break from the *Liederbuch* and turned to vocal sketches for more prospective songs. He may even have had to pick out more texts from *Die Dichtungen*, because he had initially only planned a set of six songs. On the twelfth, after having sketched for three days, he drafted “Wer machte dich so krank?” and, probably, its nearly identical twin, “Alte Laute.” Another four-day break followed during which, once again, Schumann probably returned to basic issues of melody and text declamation in vocal sketches. On the 17th the composer drafted “Erstes Grün” and then “Sängers Trost” on the 18th. The couple describes a busy holiday season beginning on December 20th, leaving Schumann little time to compose, but he managed to complete a rough draft of “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend” on the 23rd. The *Liederbuch* draft of this song is quite messy, especially the piano part. Because this was a Christmas present to Clara, he must have filled in the missing measures in the piano part and recopied the song as a more presentable version before the 25th, but this copy does not survive today.

“Wanderlied:” An Afterthought?

Schumann completed the last of the fourteen Kerner Lieder, “Wanderlied,” on December 29th. This poem is regularly cited as one of Kerner’s best, and Schumann’s setting has appeared in collections of his songs more often than any other from the Op. 35

¹⁶⁷ “Robert arbeitet diese Woche sehr fleißig...” *TB II*, 134.

Liederreihe.¹⁶⁸ Because of this warm reception, one might expect Schumann to have been at his most inspired when he composed this song, but paradoxically, he might have felt completely the opposite. The “most inspired” of the fourteen songs would probably be the first six that Schumann composed in November, whereas he wrote the other eight under a greater sense of obligation in December, as discussed above. “Wanderlied’s” position as the last song perhaps indicates that he put this setting off, feeling the least inspired by this poem.¹⁶⁹

The numbering, done in the composer’s hand, also suggests that Schumann might have composed “Wanderlied” as an afterthought. Schumann apparently numbered these songs in the book after composing them, because the numbers are written in pencil, while it is clear that all of the drafts were written initially in ink.¹⁷⁰ Several of the numbers have been revised, probably due to simple carelessness. Schumann numbered the songs once, but after doing so realized that he had mistakenly started with the number already assigned to the previous song in the book, whereafter he adjusted all of the numbers by one. This numbering occurred before “Wanderlied” was composed, because this is the only number that does not appear to have been corrected. The composer might have numbered the drafts only after he felt that the project had been finished, and if so, he arrived at this conclusion before composing “Wanderlied,” because its number does not bear the revision made to the others.

¹⁶⁸ Richard Miller, *Singing Schumann* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 46. Examples of publications in which “Wanderlied” appears separately from the rest of Op. 35 include Max Friedländer ed., *Sämtliche Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Klavierbegleitung, nach den Handschriften und Erstdrucken, Tiefe Stimme* (New York: C.F. Peters: 1900); Robert Schumann, *Eighteen Songs: In Three Volumes* (New York: Schirmer, 1902); *Bass-Album: 24 Arien und Lieder für eine tiefe Männerstimme* (Frankfurt: Wilhelmiana Verlag, 1956); *Lieder: Eine Auswahl für tiefere Stimmlage und Klavier* (Mainz: Schott, 1967).

¹⁶⁹ Eric Sams describes “Wanderlied” as markedly uninspired and derived from several earlier songs. See Sams, “The Songs of Robert Schumann,” 170.

¹⁷⁰ Schumann revised some of the drafts in pencil, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

The composer received payment for Op. 34 from Klemm on December 24th, 1840.¹⁷¹ This may have been a convenient opportunity for Schumann and Klemm to discuss final details regarding Op. 35. If Schumann and the publisher had not already agreed on a set number of songs for the opus, this was certainly accomplished in this discussion. By December 24th, Schumann had composed all the Kerner songs except for one, “Wanderlied,” the draft of which is distinct from the other thirteen because it is the only one Schumann correctly numbered. He did not write over the number assigned to “Wanderlied” like he evidently did for all the other Kerner songs. This detail suggests that Schumann may have composed this setting as an afterthought.

The publisher may have been aware of the popularity of this text and suggested to Schumann that he include it in the Op. 35 collection. This would explain Schumann’s setting in a popular style. It would surely have evoked feelings of patriotism in his middle-class audience, especially because of “a wave of patriotic fervor sweeping over the German-speaking lands in the wake of a French threat to seize the Rhein in July 1840.”¹⁷² Schumann uses several compositional techniques that his countrymen would associate with a Germanic feeling of freedom, such as “sharply profiled melodic lines, dotted rhythmic patterns” and “rapidly ascending triadic figures evocative of brass fanfares.”¹⁷³ Other elements of “Wanderlied,” although not specifically patriotic, would have still made it easily enjoyed and performed by amateurs.¹⁷⁴ The song clearly has three sections: a strophic A section and a softer B section where Schumann modulates to

¹⁷¹ *TB III*, 671.

¹⁷² Daverio, *Robert Schumann*, 200.

¹⁷³ Daverio discusses these conventions in an essay on patriotism in Schumann’s late choral works. John Daverio, “*Einheit – Freiheit – Vaterland: Imitations of Utopia in Robert Schumann’s Late Choral Music*,” *Music and German National Identity*, Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

¹⁷⁴ Percy Young, *Tragic Muse: The Life and Works of Robert Schumann* (London: Dobson, 1961), 120.

the flattened submediant. The simple vocal line completely lacks chromaticism and features a motive that merely outlines the tonic triad (see Ex. 13a). Tonal ambiguity, which Schumann frequently employs in Op. 35 and other song collections, does not exist in “Wanderlied.” The piano part is truly only accompaniment to the exuberant vocal line. For most of the song the piano merely doubles the voice, and in the few places where the piano surfaces as soloist, Schumann uncharacteristically repeats vocal material. “Wanderlied,” although more sophisticated, bears great resemblance to “Der deutsche Rhein,” the choral song Schumann had written specifically for the *Volk* in late November (see Ex. 13a and b).¹⁷⁵

Example 13. Similarity of “Wanderlied,” op. 35 #3 and “Der deutsche Rhein”

a. “Wanderlied,” mm. 1-8

The image shows a musical score for the song "Wanderlied" (Op. 35 #3) by Robert Schumann. The score is in G major and 2/4 time, marked "Sehr lebhaft". It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Wald-ruft noch, getrieben von Sehnsucht, / In die Ferne, die ich nicht kenne, / Wo die Lüfte hoch und rein sind, / Und die Sonne hell und rein ist." The piano part is primarily accompaniment, doubling the vocal line.

¹⁷⁵ “Das schöne Rheinlied v. Bekker [sic], das ganz Deutschland von sich reden macht, habe ich auch componirt, es erschien vor einigen Tagen. Wie schwer es ist, für das Volk sangbar zu schreiben, hab’ ich daran recht gesehen.” (I have also set the beautiful Rheinlied by Becker, which is the talk of all of Germany, it appeared some days ago. How difficult is to write something that the people (*Volk*) can easily sing, this I have become quite aware of.) Robert Schumann on November 15th, *TB II*, 122.

b. "Der deutsche Rhein," mm. 1-11

Mit Begeisterung.

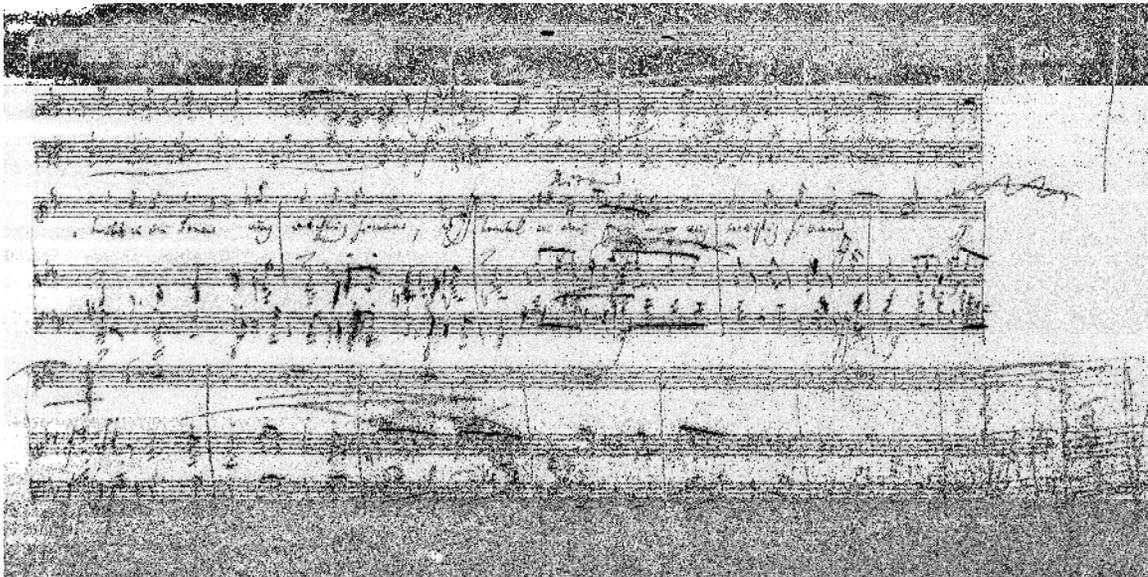
Die sel. len Sa. steht im. den. Bei. an. deutschen. Rhein, ob. sie. wie. glück. ge.

Ra. ben. sich. hei. zur. da. pack. schrei'n. So. lang. er. ru. hig. wal. ken. sein. grünes. Kleid. noch.

The *Liederbuch* reveals that Schumann drafted this song hastily. The lack of corrections in the vocal line shows that he did sketch the song before turning to the manuscript, but several shortcuts reveal some carelessness (see Ex. 9). Because he repeats the opening strophe so many times, he does not write out the piano part under several measures of the text, merely numbering them to correspond with the opening measures of the song. By the last page of the draft, the composer seems particularly determined to finish the song quickly and without using another page of the book. When Schumann reaches the return of the opening stanza at m. 41, he writes out only the first three measures and then leaves out the next five, scribbling an explanatory note at the end of the second system. He starts the next line where new material begins, haphazardly leaving off the one note pickup setting "Es." The piano part contains many revisions that he made while composing on December 29th, because he used pen and not pencil,

especially on the final page. It is as though Schumann wrote much of it quickly and without enough deliberation. He leaves the short piano postlude unfinished, stopping after the third measure of the final system. It appears that he left the rest of the page blank. He had already begun the sketches for his next collection of songs on the following page, the Op. 37 *Liebesfrühling*, before returning to “Wanderlied.” He failed to anticipate how much space the postlude would take up, forcing him to cram it ungracefully onto the final line on the page.

Example 14. “Wanderlied,” *Lb* autograph, mm. 41-end



Final Matters

On December 30th Schumann sent another letter to Klemm, probably notifying the publisher that he had finished Op. 35.¹⁷⁶ Clara confirms that Schumann finished his work on the project by January 2nd, 1841. She also indicates that the opus contained only

¹⁷⁶ Boetticher notes that Schumann sent a letter to Klemm on this date in his *Briefverzeichnis*, in *Robert Schumann: Leben und Werk*, 591.

twelve of the fourteen Kerner songs, meaning that by the end of the year Schumann had already decided to save “Troost im Gesang” and “Sängers Trost” for a later publication.¹⁷⁷ Because neither she nor her husband mentioned this project again in their correspondence or journals, it is likely that he did not spend a significant amount of time revising or re-ordering the songs after the end of the year. Both must have taken place at some point, because the published order greatly differs from that of the *Liederbuch* drafts, and significant changes were made to some of the songs, particularly the key change of “Lust der Sturmnacht” and the altered vocal line of “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud.”

Klemm compensated Schumann quite well for Op. 35, indicating the enthusiasm with which the publisher considered the venture’s financial prospects. Schumann received payment on April 24th, 1841, and Op. 35 appeared on the market in early May.¹⁷⁸ As discussed earlier, the composer released one of the songs, “Stille Thränen,” in a musical supplement that accompanied the May 7th, 1841 issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift* (see p. 67).

The genesis of the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe resulted from more than just Schumann’s creative impulses. The composer sketched and drafted the songs around other events in his life, namely his marriage to Clara in September, the composition and publicity for “Der deutsche Rhein” in late November through early December, and the Christmas season. Although early sketches of Op. 35 songs, besides those of “Stille Liebe” and “Frage,” do not currently exist, the advanced stage of the drafts in the *Liederbuch*, as well as accounts of Schumann’s compositional activity in the

¹⁷⁷ “Robert hat aber wieder ein sehr schönes Wanderlied von Koerner [sic] componirt, und hat nun ein Heft von 12 Liedern von Koerner vollendet.” (Robert has composed another very beautiful Wanderlied by Kerner, and has now finished a volume of twelve songs by Kerner.) *TB II*, 138.

¹⁷⁸ Schumann records a payment of 54 Thaler. *TB III*, 671.

Ehetaagebuch, show that they probably did exist at one time. The fair copy also does not survive, but it seems that Schumann made at least two different final copies for engraving: one on approximately December 13th, and another a few weeks later. His relationship with Klemm put him in a position that he had not yet encountered in his “Year of Song” – composer of a set of songs at the request of a publisher (see pp. 65-68). Schumann may have sacrificed artistic freedom for financial gain, because Klemm’s opinions seem to have weighed into some of his decisions, such as the inclusion of “Wanderlied” and the number of songs in the final publication.

Song Order and Organic Unity in Op. 35

Is Op. 35 Organically Unified?

The question of organicism has been a central issue in research on the German romantic song cycle for the past century. By the 1840s, German scholars had begun to state that the greatness of the German master composers rested in their ability to unify large instrumental works around a single key. At the turn of the twentieth century other scholars hoped that multi-movement vocal works might also display the same unity. Heinrich Schenker attempted to apply his theories to *Dichterliebe*, giving up before he had finished an analysis of the first song.¹⁷⁹ The search for organic unity in Schumann's song cycles persisted throughout the twentieth century, but scholars widened the definition of what could qualify as organicism in song, because many of even the "great" cycles lacked harmonic closure. In 1982, David Neumeyer observed that:

"Thus, for the song cycle and other expanded vocal works (including opera?), we need to add to Schenker's harmonic-tonal and voice-leading model as expressed in the *Ursatz* the narrative or dramatic criteria, and from this develop a broader analytic system which can treat these two as co-equal determinants."¹⁸⁰

Shortly after poetic unity emerged as a major issue in scholarship on Schumann's song cycles, theorists and historians grappled with the definition of the term "song cycle," arguing over the extent of musical and poetic cohesion that was necessary if one was to bestow this label on a collection of songs under one opus number, meaning that it

¹⁷⁹ David Neumeyer summarizes this history of theorists' treatment of organic unity in the song cycle in "Organic Structure and the Song Cycle: Another Look at Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 4 (Spr. 1982): 95-102.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

represented an organic whole.¹⁸¹ Studies of this kind have continued into the twenty-first-century and have concentrated chiefly on three indicators: key relationships, motivic relationships and any narrative thread that runs through the texts.¹⁸²

Three scholars have commented on the Op. 35 Kerner-Lieder with respect to organicism, and all emphasize poetic narrative over musical cohesion. Barbara Turchin places the song collection in the tradition of the *Wanderlieder* Cycle, a type of formal organization first used by composer Conrad Kreutzer in his setting of Uhland's *Neun Wanderlieder*.¹⁸³ The main character of the Kerner-Lieder begins his journey after losing his beloved to the church in the second song, "Stirb, Lieb' und Freud." The next three songs present the poet as an optimistic wanderer, welcomed by the countryside, but a tone of discontent and loneliness increasingly dominates songs eight through twelve. In "Stille Liebe," the eighth, the poet cannot rid himself of feelings for his beloved, so he turns to nature in the hope that she might heal his broken heart. Surprisingly, he is disappointed by nature in the final song and concludes that only death will bring peace.¹⁸⁴ Turchin believes that the failure of many scholars and performers to discern this narrative structure has led to the neglect of one of Schumann's great song cycles.

In truth, it is Turchin who misunderstands Op. 35. She assumes that because two of the songs deal with wandering (traveling away from home) all of the poems might be

¹⁸¹ See John Daverio, "The Song Cycle: Journeys Through a Romantic Landscape," *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, Rufus Hallmark, ed. (New York: Schirmer, 1996), 279-312.

¹⁸² In a summary of the work done on Schumann's Op. 39 *Eichendorff Liederkreis*, Ferris comments "Commentators have sought to explain the cycle as an integrated musical whole that is unified by a web of motivic relationships and a symmetrical arrangement of keys. They have described the text of the cycle as an ordered sequence of moods, bound together by the reoccurring use of landscape, time of day, and imagery, that leads up to the ecstatic fulfillment depicted in the last song." See Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 26.

¹⁸³ Barbara Turchin, "The Nineteenth-Century *Wanderlieder* Cycle," *The Journal of Musicology* 5:4 (1987): 498-525.

¹⁸⁴ Turchin, "*Wanderlieder* Cycle," 515.

unified around this idea.¹⁸⁵ The narrative she constructs conspicuously fails to name all of the songs, which suggests that some of them do not fit the story. This is indeed the case. For instance, “Stille Thränen” receives no specific part in the narrative, and the reason for this is simple. This jubilant song interrupts the supposed emotional descent toward depression that begins two songs earlier. Turchin also excludes “Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes,” the sixth song, because it is another glaring contradiction to her narrative. Why would Schumann include a poem about a spiritual experience with a friend’s ghost in the middle of an attempt to portray increasing loneliness and separation?

Of the nineteen cycles Turchin presents in a table of exemplary *Wanderlieder* cycles, Schumann’s Op. 35 is the only one that lacks any reference to wandering in its title.¹⁸⁶ The prototype cycle, Kreutzer’s *Neun Wanderlieder*, follows a simple trajectory of departure, absence, and return; during the journey, the poet undergoes a process of self-realization and personal reassessment.¹⁸⁷ While Turchin applies this model to several other cycles by various composers with great success, it simply does not accommodate Op. 35.

Hans Udo-Kreuels extracts a complex, psychological narrative from the ordered poems of Op. 35.¹⁸⁸ His analysis is laden with Freudian terminology and archetypes, conveniently allowing him to bypass the apparent disparity among the subjects of the poems and to turn instead to symbols, that he takes out of their context. The storm of the

¹⁸⁵ “In reality, Schumann’s selection and arrangement of Kerner’s poems reveal a tale that runs parallel to the wandering cycles of Uhland, Müller, and Marsano.” *Ibid.*, 515.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 512.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 499-500.

¹⁸⁸ Hans-Udo Kreuels, Kreuels, *Schumanns Kerner-Lieder: Interpretation und Analyse sämtlicher Lieder Robert Schumanns nach Gedichten von Justinus Kerner mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liederreihe op. 35* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2003).

first song is symbolic of the repressed sexual guilt of the poet, which is released in “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud,” where morality separates the poet from his object of amorous love. Sexual symbolism pervades his description of many other poems, even those that seem to be merely about nature. To supplant his feeling of deprivation, the poet withdraws into nature and seeks pleasure in “Natureuphorie,” which “Erstes Grün” portrays. Kreuels labels “Auf das Trinkglas” a cipher for the six remaining Lieder, which indicates that the last half of the cycle does not concern events in reality, but rather dreamlike constructions of the poet’s subconscious, in which the events of the first five Lieder resonate.¹⁸⁹

In the introduction to his study, Kreuels states that this inner logic is found in both Kerner’s poems and Schumann’s musical interpretation of them.¹⁹⁰ Although he does acknowledge some relevant details from Kerner’s life, his literary analysis proceeds mostly in a historical vacuum. Because Kerner tended to write poetry as a direct response to personal events, biographical details are especially helpful in understanding any symbolism that might be present in his work. For many of the poems, Kreuels’s interpretation of Kerner’s symbolism does not align with the meaning the poet himself attributed to these symbols in letters and other poems.

Kreuels states that his narrative is apparent in the music as well as the poetry, but he fails to show this, because he analyzes the music of each song separately, and rarely points out reoccurring structural, melodic, or harmonic elements. In his discussions of the interdependency of the poems, he concentrates on possible poetic correlations rather than specific examples of musical unity. These problems emerge in his analysis of the pivotal song in his psychological narrative, “Auf das Trinkglas.” He supports his

¹⁸⁹ Kreuels, *Schumanns Kerner-Lieder*, 133-4.

¹⁹⁰ “The Op. 35 *Liederreihe* will be illuminated in its musical and literary (!) logic...” Ibid., 10.

conclusion that this song is a cipher for the remaining Lieder only in literary terms, with no mention of Schumann's musical interpretation.¹⁹¹ Kreuels must show how "Auf das Trinkglas," can be *heard* as a musical cycle, but his lengthy analysis of Schumann's musical setting makes no reference to other songs.

Both scholars' arguments present problems, but even more problematic is the lack of consideration given to historical context. Turchin and Kreuels concentrate on the final order of the songs, without exploring the possible organic connections between the songs in their initial order in the *Liederbuch*. Hans-Joachim Köhler is the only scholar to have published an exegesis of the Op. 35 Liederreihe that takes into account the genesis of the work. He attempts to find a "secret, hidden relationship or a determinable psychological plot," which sounds very similar to Kreuels's perspective. (The latter author based his research on Köhler's shorter study.) Even though Köhler claims to present his potential narrative within the historical context of Schumann's compositional process, his approach only differs from Kreuels's, because he subjects the songs in the order of the *Liederbuch* to his psychological assessment.

Schumann's Compositional Method: Song Groups

The published order of the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe, which Schumann never revised after the first printing, differs greatly from the order of the songs in the third *Liederbuch*. Despite the efforts described above, convincing logic has not emerged to explain the individual orders or the choices made in the re-ordering that occurred between the drafts and the published work. No evidence suggests that Schumann planned an order reflecting a narrative or an intricate relationship among the songs, such as exists

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 49-62.

in abundance for *Dichterliebe*.¹⁹² Unlike the documents existing for that cycle, there are no extant lists of possible orderings or key schemes for Op. 35. Despite this lack of evidence, comparisons of the dates of composition to the first ordering, as well as comparison of the initial and published orderings, reveal that a loose relationship existed among the songs throughout the genesis of the composition.

Comparison of the order of the drafts (see Table 1) to that of the published order (see Table 2) demonstrates that Schumann established groups of songs in the *Liederbuch* order, and that all reordering preserved these groups. Each contained three or four songs, as follows:

Table 1. Four song groups, reflecting the drafted order

<u>Group 1</u>	Lust der Sturmnacht Stirb, Lieb' und Freud Trost im Gesang
<u>Group 2</u>	Wanderung Stille Liebe Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes
<u>Group 3</u>	Stille Thränen Frage Wer machte dich so krank Alte Laute
<u>Group 4</u>	Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend Erstes Grün Sängers Trost Wanderlied

The drafted order was rearranged through a hierarchical process. First, the groups of songs were reordered. Group 4 was moved in front of Groups 2 and 3, resulting in the

¹⁹² These sources are summarized in Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 175.

published order of groups 1-4-2-3. On a more detailed level, several songs within these groups were rearranged or excised. In Group 1, “Troost im Gesang” was excluded while the order remained unchanged. In Group 2, “Wanderung” and “Auf das Trinkglas” switched places, and another pair of songs, “Stille Thränen” and “Frage,” were similarly switched in Group 3. The songs of Group 4 experienced the most change, as “Sängers Trost” was dropped and the other three songs all switched places. Several changes were made between the drafted and published orderings, but never resulted in the destruction of the groups of three or four songs.

Table 2. Four song groups, in published order

<u>Group 1</u>	Lust der Sturmnacht Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud
<u>Group 4</u>	Wanderlied Erstes Grün Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend
<u>Group 2</u>	Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes Wanderung Stille Liebe
<u>Group 3</u>	Frage Stille Thränen Wer machte dich so krank Alte Laute

Schumann established this grouping early in the composition of Op. 35, and it explains the slight discrepancies between the chronological order of the songs and their order in the *Liederbuch* (see Table 3).

Table 3. Chronological and Drafted Order

Chronological Order	Order of the Drafts in the <i>Liederbuch</i>
1 Lust der Sturmnacht	1 Lust der Sturmnacht
2 Trost im Gesang	3 Stirb, Lieb' und Freud
3 Stirb, Lieb' und Freud	2 Trost im Gesang
4 Wanderung	4 Wanderung
5 Stille Liebe	6 Auf das Trinkglas...
6 Auf das Trinkglas...	5 Stille Liebe
7 Frage	8 Stille Thränen
8 Stille Thränen	7 Frage
9 Wer machte dich so krank?	9 Wer machte
10 Alte Laute	10 Alte Laute
11 Erstes Grün	13 Sehnsucht
12 Sängers Trost	11 Erstes Grün
13 Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend	12 Sängers Trost
14 Wanderlied	14 Wanderlied

As this table shows, Schumann altered the chronological order by flipping several pairs of songs within the groups outlined above, namely songs 2-3, 5-6, and 7-8. The last group experienced the greatest disruption, resulting in the displacement of three songs, 11-12-13. Schumann inserted “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend” in front of “Erstes Grün,” causing it and the next song to move down one space in the order. Each of these four instances of reordering occurs within the groups, never between them.

The presence of the four distinct groups at all stages of composition might have resulted from Schumann’s compositional process. He frequently composed songs in spurts of a few at a time, sketching and drafting them in small groups that he felt shared a certain similarity.¹⁹³ The genesis of Op. 35 reflects this method, but in this case Schumann uniquely maintained the initial groupings throughout its genesis, even in the

¹⁹³ Ferris notes that these groups contained some sort of similarity, because Schumann regularly drafted songs in an order that differed from how he found them in the literary source. Ferris, *Schumann’s Eichendorff Liederkreis* 181.

published order. A report by Clara in the *Ehetagbuch* indicates that the composer thought of the first three songs as a complete group, rather than as a part of the total of six that he had composed during that week in November. Her husband previewed the first three songs for her on the night of the 22nd, the day he finished drafting them. Clara, remembering the songs in their manuscript and not chronological order, wrote: “Robert has once again composed three magnificent songs. The texts are by Justinus Kerner: ‘Lust der Sturmnacht,’ ‘Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud,’ and ‘Trost im Gesang.’”¹⁹⁴ Thus, Schumann looked at the songs of the Op. 35 *Liederreihe* differently than those of other large song collections. He did not work toward a conception of the cycle as a whole as in the genesis of *Dichterliebe*, but he also did not accord the songs as much independence as those of the Op. 39 *Liederkreis* and the Op. 25 *Myrthen*.¹⁹⁵

The strongest evidence that the song groups had determined significance to Schumann is the presence of a unique tonal coherence within each group, as shown in Table 4. The scheme of Group 1 is symmetrical, Eb-Ab-Eb. Group 2 could be considered an authentic cadence in Eb major. The first two songs are in Bb, and the third is in Eb. A linear trajectory, rising from F-Ab seems present in the songs of Group 3. Finally, the key signatures of the four songs in Group 4 are all derived from Bb major. The first two songs occur in the relative minor, conveying their overtly melancholy *Stimmung*, while Schumann uses the major key for the two happier songs that follow. These four key

¹⁹⁴ “Robert hat wieder 3 herrliche Lieder componirt. Die Texte sind von Justinus Kerner: “Lust der S.” “Stirb” “und “Trost.” Er fast die Texte so schön auf, so tief ergreift er sie, wie ich es bei keinem anderen Componisten kenne, es hat keiner das Gemüth wie er.” Nov. 22, 1840, *TB II*, 126.

¹⁹⁵ Ferris states that for the song collections that seem to have the strongest unity, including *Dichterliebe*, “The drafts appear in the exact order of publication, and they are clearly separated off as a unit, complete with a title page.” He mistakenly assigns Op. 35 to another category that also includes *Myrthen*, in which “There is no discernible relationship between the order of the drafts and the published order of the songs, but they still appear in the same section of the notebook.” Ferris, *Schumann’s Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 174.

schemes are markedly different from one another, each guided by different harmonic movement and based on a different tonal center. This harmonic distinction confirms that Schumann considered the songs in the envisioned four groups. Because the songs of each group share a tonal organization, this further suggests that these divisions resulted from Schumann's compositional process.

Table 4. Drafted and Published Order, with Key Signatures

Order of the drafts	Key	Published order	Key
1 Lust der Sturmnacht	eb→Eb	1 Lust der Sturmnacht	eb→Eb
2 Stirb, Lieb' und Freud	Ab→(f)	2 Stirb, Lieb' und Freud	Ab→(f)
3 Trost im Gesang	Eb	14 Wanderlied	Bb
4 Wanderung	Bb	12 Erstes Grün	g→G
5 Auf das Trinkglas	Eb	11 Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend	g
6 Stille Liebe	Eb	5 Auf das Trinkglas	Eb
7 Stille Thränen	F	4 Wanderung	Bb
8 Frage	Eb→G	6 Stille Liebe	Eb
9 Wer machte dich so krank?	Ab	8 Frage	Eb→G
10 Alte Laute	Ab	7 Stille Thränen	F
11 Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend	g	9 Wer machte dich so krank?	Ab
12 Erstes Grün	g→G	10 Alte Laute	Ab
13 Sängers Trost	Bb		
14 Wanderlied	Bb		

Despite these tonal relationships, the order of the *Liederbuch* drafts does not facilitate a recognizable, literary organization. Schumann does not seem to have employed a narrative structure of any kind, or chosen songs that radiate from central

themes or emotions.¹⁹⁶ There are possible similarities among the poems of isolated groups. In the first group, all three poems present a solitary figure at odds with the world around him in some way. They could also be construed as a short narrative, in which the poet feels elated in the first poem, “Lust der Sturmnacht,” experiences the loss of his beloved and happiness in “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud,” and then leaves his grief behind as he takes to the open road in “Trost im Gesang.” The texts of Group 3 deal with exchanges between man and nature that affect man in some way. Kerner describes the influence of nature upon man at the psychological level, which is measurably positive in songs 9, 10, and 11, but in song 12 nature cannot improve the poet’s mental state. The four songs in Group 4 center on nature, but this is an unremarkable similarity because Kerner wrote large amounts of *Naturlyrik*. Moreover, “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend,” and “Erstes Grün,” composed on consecutive days, share the same key, g minor, and in both the poet laments the misery he feels when estranged from nature. The songs of Group 2 are completely disjointed, because in each poem the poet describes a totally different situation and emotion. “Wanderung” concerns a stereotypical, romantic wanderer, “Auf das Trinkglas...” describes a nighttime brush with the supernatural, and “Stille Liebe” is one of Kerner’s rare poems about romantic love.

Similarities exist among certain songs, but none of these relationships are particularly powerful or transcend broad characteristics of Kerner’s poetry, such as the prevalence of nature themes, melancholy *Weltschmerz*, and expression of psychological states. The presence of definite song groupings potentially signifies that the composer conceived of the songs within some sort of narrative early in the genesis of Op. 35, but a

¹⁹⁶ Turchin discusses this latter method of organization in “Schumann’s Song Cycles: The Cycle Within the Song,” *19th Century Music* 8:3 (1985): 231.

lack of specific relationships among the songs weakens this theory. Furthermore, there seems to be no narrative process that spans all fourteen Kerner-Lieder. Given these observations, it seems that Schumann did not draft the songs into the *Liederbuch* with a particular narrative order in mind.

David Ferris suggests that cohesion exists among the songs of the Op. 39 *Liederkreis* at the local level, among small groups of adjacent songs, in which Schumann presents and then expands on a compositional problem. The songs do not necessarily share motivic connections, but rather similarities in their respective large-scale, musical structure. For instance, he proposes that the first three of the Eichendorff songs that Schumann drafted “begin by establishing their tonics through typical and even generic tonal progressions,” while in the next three songs the composer “avoids a strong initial tonic harmony and establishes the tonality gradually.”¹⁹⁷ Schumann chose and set Eichendorff’s poems in a way similar to Kerner’s, selecting poems from a large collection and setting them in an order different from that of the literary source. Because the song groups of Op. 35 seem to have emerged from Schumann’s compositional process, it is reasonable to expect that Ferris’s theory would apply to this song collection as well. Among the songs of each group, Schumann might have purposefully used similar musical structures or harmonic language.

Such structural connections, however, do not seem present. Tonal and poetic relationships suggest agreement between some consecutive sets of songs, for instance “Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend” and “Erstes Grün,” belonging to Group 4. However, their structure is dissimilar in several ways. While Schumann employed simple strophic form in “Erstes Grün,” “Sehnsucht” follows a more complex ternary form, within which

¹⁹⁷ Ferris, *Schumann’s Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 189.

the composer presents several variations of the melody found in the opening phrase. Harmonic progressions in “Erstes Grün” are based on dominant-tonic harmony, and although Schumann alternates between g minor and G major, he never abandons this tonic. In “Sehnsucht” he ventures into F major and uses chromaticism throughout the song, and generally uses harmony to a much greater extent in this song as a vehicle to express the text.

In all groups except Group 3 connections in tonal structure, form, and prevalent motives are absent. A definite musical thread firmly ties together the latter three of this group, “Frage,” “Wer machte dich so krank?” and “Alte Laute” (see Ex. 15). The first song, “Frage,” which was briefly discussed in Chapter Three, begins on the apparent tonic, Eb major, but never returns to it. A tonic is entirely absent throughout the song, almost as though it is merely a passageway or a transitory section of a sonata-allegro movement. Unexpectedly, the song stops on a G major chord, but even this harmony is not approached through a cadence. “Wer machte dich so krank?” starts with this harmony, creating a definite link with “Frage.” “Wer machte” and “Alte Laute” essentially form one song, because Schumann recycles the music of the first poem nearly note-for-note in “Alte Laute,” as though the texts are two strophes of the same poem.

Example 15. Musical continuity among the songs of Group 3

a. "Frage," closing measures

Musical score for the closing measures of the song "Frage". The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Adagio." and the dynamics are "p" (piano) and "ritard." (ritardando). The lyrics are: "Was ... schwebst du ... über ... die ... Luft".

b. "Wer machte dich so krank?" opening measures

Musical score for the opening measures of the song "Wer machte dich so krank?". The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Langsam, leise." and the dynamics are "p" (piano). The lyrics are: "Hörst du so krank ge - worden, wie bist es denn ge -".

c. "Alte Laute," opening measures

Musical score for the opening measures of the song "Alte Laute". The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Noch langsamer und leiser." and the dynamics are "p" (piano) and "pp" (pianissimo). The lyrics are: "Hörst du den Vo - gel sin - gen?".

The Final Ordering: Good Marketing Sense

The reordering of the Op. 35 songs for publication leaves little room for organic unity, firstly because it was such a drastic alteration. Of the fourteen songs, the composer omits two entirely, and only the first two songs retain their original position. Schumann

may have considered the original order meaningful, regardless of the apparent evidence, but that he so decisively altered this order dispels the possibility that it remained so. While the earliest order was not governed by an encompassing narrative or another organizational principle, it at least had some aesthetic balance. In addition to the tonal coherence existing within each song group, the fourteen songs in the original order, considered as a whole, present a general rise in key, from Eb to Bb. This original order generates a dynamic sense of motion that is fairly conducive to a performance of the entire opus. It begins joyfully and ends similarly with “Wanderlied,” which has always been the most popular of the twelve songs. In between, the songs progress from the initial elation toward melancholy. After the lowest emotional point of the opus, the thoroughly depressed “Alte Laute,” the following poems outline a gradual return to the original state of happiness, as nature surmounts the poet’s despondency, and warms his heart.

The published version did not maintain this pleasing emotional journey. The collection of songs still begins with “Lust der Sturmnacht,” but now ends with the hopeless pair of “Alte Laute” and “Wer machte dich so krank?” The tenth song, “Stille Thränen,” is often cited as the high point of the collection. After a triumphant piano postlude, the hopeless, idling “Wer machte dich so krank?” sounds comparatively uninteresting. The final song, “Alte Laute,” repeats the music of the previous song, but in an even slower, quieter manner. Modern singers often omit the last two Lieder of Op. 35, ending powerfully on “Stille Thränen.”¹⁹⁸ Stephen Walsh concludes that the final

¹⁹⁸ Michael Mentzel, who has studied and performed many German Romantic Lieder, offered these insights into the vocal community’s attitude toward the Op. 35 Liederreihe. Miller decides that, “Better options would seem to be either omitting #11 and #12 altogether (although sweet, they belong to the category of

two songs only find meaning as an epilogue.¹⁹⁹ This new order also does not solve the lack of musical relationships within the song groups. From the standpoint of theorist and performer, Schumann's final order of the Op. 35 Liederreihe makes little sense.

As has been the case many times along the path of Op. 35's genesis, the published order of the songs may have resulted from a combination of artistic and marketing concerns. Scholars such as Turchin, Köhler, and Kreuels view Op. 35 and other song collections by Schumann through twentieth-century performance tradition and theoretical systems, such as Schenkerian analysis. But others have attacked the assumption that the nineteenth-century song composers themselves, their critics, or their audiences, expected a set of songs under one opus to constitute an organic whole. Critics were mostly interested in the variety of moods of the poetry and the composer's success in conveying it.²⁰⁰ Lieder were seldom performed in public concert halls until the middle of the nineteenth-century, and performers never presented an entire song cycle until the last few decades of the century, when critics began to voice the opinion that song cycles be performed in their entirety. In 1840, organicism had not yet touched concert programs, which frequently consisted of several excerpts or movements of various pieces.²⁰¹

The Lied was almost exclusively a private genre, performed by amateurs for their own enjoyment or perhaps in front of a small, familiar, uncritical audience.

less distinguished Schumann Lieder) or pausing appropriately after *Stille Thränen*, then concluding with them. See Richard Miller, *Singing Schumann*, 55.

¹⁹⁹ "The cycle ends with two poems, 'Wer machte dich so krank?' and 'Alte Laute,' spatchcocked into one strophic song in the character of an envoi – a visionary farewell to the pain and exhaustion of this world and hopefully a glimpse into the next. The feeling here is very much that of an epilogue, and it is hard to imagine the songs making much effect out of context." Stephen Walsh, *The Lieder of Schumann* (Washington, D.C.: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 69.

²⁰⁰ Ferris, *Schumann's Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 13, and Turchin, "Schumann's Song Cycles in the Context of the Early Nineteenth-Century *Liederkreis*," 220-222.

²⁰¹ Edward Kravitt, "The Lied in 19th-Century Concert Life," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 18, no. 2 (1965): 207-218.

Compositions for one or just a few performers, such as Lieder, were not marketed to the public performer or connoisseur of high art, but in response to a booming demand for *Hausmusik*, music appealing to the lay middle class. It was “music for performance at home – as opposed to concert music, which is public, and salon music, which is semi-private,” defined by German national traits such as “seriousness, simplicity, and *Volkstümlichkeit*.”²⁰²

To the middle-class consumer, music critics, and even the public performer, organic unity played a negligible role in their evaluation of a collection of Lieder. These groups likely had a profound influence on business-savvy composers like Schumann and publishers like Klemm, as they made decisions concerning a song collection’s contents, format, order, title, and appearance. This is not to say that Schumann did not value organic unity, or that his songs exclude it, but rather that he sometimes considered marketing concerns with equal or even greater importance than aesthetic concerns about organization.

Schumann was thoroughly familiar with contemporary performance practice, because his wife maintained a career as a concert pianist throughout their marriage, and the couple attended several public concerts a week. If performers, audiences, critics or the middle-class consumer might have found the final order of Op. 35 distasteful, he surely would have known of the possibility and rearranged the songs to meet their expectations. Simply put, motivic connections, narrative progression, and encompassing key schemes were not as important to Schumann as a great deal of the scholarship on his songs assumes.

²⁰² Anthony Newcomb, “Schumann and the Marketplace,” 272.

In this context, the reordering and final format of the Op. 35 Liederreihe becomes clear. The twelve songs are divided into two volumes, consisting of five and seven songs respectively.²⁰³ This uneven bisection leaves the four original groups intact, demonstrating that Schumann viewed his groupings with enough aesthetic significance to override a possible marketing concern. A brief glimpse into music printing helps to clarify the contents of the volumes. Nineteenth-century publishers often spread multi-movement works among several volumes, or printed the most popular excerpts separately, because the average consumer might have been quite interested in the music, but simply could not absorb the high costs of music printing at the time. By selling the most popular arias from a successful opera, for instance, a publisher could reach an otherwise excluded consumer, benefiting both parties.²⁰⁴ It is logical that publishers would also divide fairly sizable collections of songs into multiple volumes, because although many lower and middle class consumers might not be able to buy the entire opus, they could purchase a favorite volume. Schumann's publishers produced many of his song cycles, such as *Dichterliebe*, the Op. 39 *Liederkreis*, and *Myrthen* as sets of volumes.

It is surely no coincidence that the most economically viable songs were fairly evenly distributed among the two volumes. The first contained "Erstes Grün," which was successful enough to warrant an individual selling in 1844, and "Wanderlied," which may have been motivated by financial promise and was subsequently published more often as

²⁰³ Köhler, "Schumann's Kerner-Lieder, Op. 35," 89. In 1844, Klemm published a second edition of Op. 35, in which No.6 was moved to the end of volume one, creating two volumes of equivalent length.

²⁰⁴ Hans Lenneberg, "Music Publishing and Dissemination in the Early Nineteenth Century: Some Vignettes," *Journal of Musicology* II/2 (1983): 178. Although this article does not specifically pertain to publications of Lieder, it does comment on issues that affected the publication of all genres in the first half of the nineteenth century.

a an individual song than the other eleven.²⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the second volume boasted “Stille Liebe,” also published alone in 1844, and “Stille Thränen,” which Schumann gave to the *Neue Zeitschrift* readers as the first taste of Op. 35 in a musical supplement for the journal in early May of 1841. In 1843 Schumann included one song from each volume, “Erstes Grün” and “Stille Liebe,” in an album of selected songs presented to Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient.²⁰⁶ Klemm may have advised Schumann to place potentially popular songs, which might catch a consumer’s attention, in both volumes.

However, Schumann also needed to consider the buyer who could afford all twelve songs. Volume one contains fairly palatable songs, while the second volume contains all of the most idiosyncratic songs, namely “Auf das Trinkglas,” “Wer machte dich so krank?” and “Alte Laute.” The composer may have purposefully placed the more accessible songs at the beginning of the Liederreihe, in the first volume, because this was the volume a consumer considering the whole cycle would probably look through as they decided whether or not to make a purchase. Such an arrangement makes for an anti-climatic performance, but allowed Schumann to keep the more eccentric songs, while softening the cycle’s superficial appearance.

As was discussed earlier, Schumann flipped pairs of songs in the manuscript, and then again in the final order (see pp. 101-104). He might simply have felt dissatisfied with the first order, but he may have alternately reorganized the four groups to place the most popular songs in strategic positions, and secondarily, to provide variety and local contrast, which critics valued. The entire process of rearranging the final order may have comprised several rational steps. After assigning the potentially popular songs to the two

²⁰⁵ Kurt Hofman, *Die Erstdrucke der Werke von Robert Schumann* (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 1977), 82-83.

²⁰⁶ Robert and Clara Schumann, *Liederalbum: für Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient*, Angelika Horstmann, ed. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1994) n.p.

volumes, which acted as anchor points, Schumann shifted the four groups accordingly, arriving at the order 1-4-2-3. Then within each group, he readjusted the order to highlight certain songs and maximize local contrast. For instance, he may have moved “Wanderlied” to the head of Group 4 because of its potential popularity, and also because it provided stronger contrast to “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud” than the similarly melancholy “Erstes Grün.” By switching “Auf das Trinkglas” and “Wanderung,” Schumann achieved a greater sense of contrast between songs 5 and 6. This new arrangement also places the latter song, which deals with journeying through nature, in between two songs of contrasting subject matter. To avoid placing two weighty songs with similar titles, “Stille Liebe” and “Stille Thränen,” right next to each other, Schumann inserted “Frage” in between them.²⁰⁷

Because financial concerns seem to have motivated several changes in its structure, it is possible that the publisher may have had a role in the printed order of Op. 35. In his letters and journals, Schumann seems to view the song collection primarily as a financial gain rather than an artistic creation, and issues of marketing explain much of the rearranging that occurred between the draft and final ordering. His letters and journals suggest that he spent little or no time revising or rearranging Op. 35, and was anxious to finish the project by the end of the year, immediately after drafting the final song. There is no evidence that Schumann ever had a particular order in mind before the song collection’s publication in May 1841, outside of the four song groups. As a result,

²⁰⁷ Miller comments on many of Schumann’s success in providing striking local contrasts in Op. 35: “There could be no greater contrast in style and interpretation than that between *Wanderlied*, #3, and *Erstes Grün*, #4, of the Kerner Lieder. Set side by side, they attest to the scope of Schumann’s ability to successfully set widely ranging poetic stimuli...*Wanderlied* is best heard in contrast to *Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud* and *Erstes Grün*...The *haut-relief* of *Wanderung*, while creating an atmospheric turnabout from the lugubrious colors of *Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes*, is placed next to the *bas-relief* of *Stille Liebe*, #8, which follows it...*Frage*, #9, exists chiefly to separate the remarkable *Stille Liebe* from *Stille Thränen*... Richard Miller, *Singing Schumann* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 45-55.

he may have had few reservations about Klemm ordering the songs according marketing strategy. At the very least, it seems reasonable that while Schumann made the ordering decisions, Klemm made recommendations, such as dividing the twelve songs into two groups, distributing potentially popular songs in both, and moving the popular songs to the front of the order and the less accessible songs to the end. It is also possible that it was Klemm who decided on the final order, although it seems that Schumann still approved of this rearrangement, because he never changed the order in a later edition.

The published order of the Op. 35 *Liederreihe* disrupted possible tonal relationships at the local level, instead consisting of a seemingly random progression of keys. Because tonality is an essential part of organicism, Turchin, Kreuels, and Köhler all attempt to make sense of this progression in their studies of the work. They follow the lead of other scholars, who have postulated that Schumann conceived of an intricate tonal plan for some of his song cycles, namely *Dichterliebe* and the Op. 39 *Liederkreis*. Rufus Hallmark even believes that “It seems unlikely that he would have begun to sketch songs randomly without regard for their order and key relations,”²⁰⁸ yet the genesis of Op. 35 seems to lack such a preconception. Firstly, Schumann leaves no sketches on the manuscript copy of a key scheme, as he did for *Dichterliebe*. Most indicative of Schumann’s lack of planning in the early stages of composition is that “Lust der Sturmnacht” was originally drafted in E minor, while every other song is in a flat key. At least when he composed this first song, Schumann had not yet thought about the side of the circle of fifths into which his chosen keys would fall. Perhaps by the composition of the second song, “Stirb, Lieb’ und Freud,” he had decided to favor flat keys. Once again,

²⁰⁸ Hallmark, “The Sketches for *Dichterliebe*,” 125.

however, if Schumann had created some sort of key scheme as he composed the Kerner songs, he destroyed this order in the final publication.

Turchin, Köhler, and Kreuels point to one area of the song collection as evidence for a coherent tonal scheme in Op. 35, the authentic cadence created by the final G major chord of “Frage” and the C major chord that begins “Stille Thränen.”²⁰⁹ However, all three fail to consider Schumann’s compositional process, and therefore mistakenly assume that he planned this cadence. As reviewed earlier, in the manuscript copy Schumann placed “Stille Thränen” before “Frage,” and thus the bridge occurred between “Frage,” which ends on a G major chord, and “Wer machte dich so krank?” which begins on a G major chord. The cadence between “Frage” and “Stille Thränen” that results from the published order cannot be entirely discounted, because Schumann was surely aware of the relationships among the songs, but it also cannot be presented as evidence of a planned tonal architecture.

Furthermore, such tonal connections may be inconsequential, because the ear does not perceive these relationships. The silence between songs and the drastic change in texture that usually occurs when the next song begins, eradicates the impression of aural connection. Ferris argues that:

“Each time a song ends in one key and the next begins in a different key, we receive a number of aural cues that encourage us to listen in terms of a completely new tonal context, which has no relationship to the key of the previous song... When the next song begins the change to a new key is accompanied by the introduction of entirely new thematic material and usually by dramatic changes in other parameters...”²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ See Turchin, “*Wanderlieder* cycle,” 517; Köhler, “Schumanns Kerner-Lieder op. 35,” 89; and Kreuels, *Schumanns Kerner-Lieder*,” 94.

²¹⁰ Ferris, *Schumann’s Eichendorff Liederkreis*, 32.

The contrasting textures of “Frage” and “Stille Thränen” de-emphasize the cadence that occurs between them. The first song is characterized by tonal ambiguity and a fairly sparse piano part, while “Stille Thränen” opens on a strong C major chord in a greatly thickened chordal texture.

For over a century, scholars have attempted to show that Schumann’s conception of the song cycle was strongly organic, but the majority of his song opuses fail to fit this mold. The Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe seems to fall into this latter category. The final order of its songs seems frustratingly random, but an understanding of the work’s compositional genesis and of how a music publisher might have marketed it to the middle-class consumer provides some clarity.

Conclusion

My research shows that from a historical perspective, organic unity is hardly relevant to the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe. Instead, financial and personal issues greatly influenced Schumann as he composed the work. The only significant, logical feature of the final order of the songs is Schumann's four self-contained groups of songs. A possible tonal plan and general narrative may have existed in the order of the drafts in the *Liederbuch*, but the composer did not find these elements of musical unity particularly necessary in the end, because both of them were effectively destroyed in the publication.

Scholars have argued for over a century that Schumann and his contemporaries composed and reviewed collections of songs with the assumption that musical unity was essential to a successful song cycle. However, they have had great difficulty making the majority of his song collections conform to this expectation. Authors such as Turchin, Kreuels, and Köhler found little fruit at the end of their search for logic and unity in Op. 35, but only because they looked exclusively for aesthetic meaning, namely organic unity among the songs in the final ordering.

The financial side of Schumann's "Year of Song" has been established by several other scholars, as reviewed in Chapter Three. The genesis of the Op. 35 Kerner-Liederreihe, as it has been described in this study, provides us with a case study of how financial concerns could dominate Schumann's compositional method. Many of his choices originated from his relationship with the publisher of Op. 35, C.A. Klemm, who, in July 1840, might have requested songs from Schumann, whom he considered a trend-setting composer of music that would appeal to the amateur middle class. Although

Schumann wanted to begin composing in genres besides song by October of that year, he agreed to take on the project, which he seemed to envision as a relatively short collection of songs. After composing six songs, he declared that he had finished the project in the *Ehetagebuch* and sent a letter to the publisher that perhaps contained the same news. Klemm, however, wanted a larger set, and so Schumann returned to the project after finishing his work with “Der deutsche Rhein,” in the second week of December. The publisher may have also suggested that Schumann set “Wanderlied,” because it was Kerner’s most popular poem, and contained patriotic imagery that the middle-class would find appealing. The final order of the twelve songs may have been the area where the publisher had the greatest influence. The songs were divided between two volumes, which would allow poorer consumers to buy just half of the songs instead of all twelve. More accessible songs were moved to the front to attract consumers considering buying the whole opus, while the more bizarre songs drifted to the back; the songs that would prove the most popular were evenly distributed among the two volumes to make both attractive. This order, which lacks an artistic logic, makes a great deal of sense from the publisher’s perspective.

One of the decisions that Schumann made with the least concern for the financial viability of the work was his choice of poetry. Kerner wrote his poetry primarily for his own benefit, and had little concern for how others would perceive his work or how well collections of his poetry might sell. He was truly a *Gelegenheitsdichter*, in the definition of the term given by Goethe, an artist who wrote poetry when his emotions moved him to do so. He wrote for the moment, when he felt most inspired, and then seems often to have revised the resulting poem little or not at all before publishing it. As a result,

Kerner's poems lacked tightly-constructed forms, which made them particularly difficult for a composer to set to music. He often discusses highly personal subjects that, out of context, seem quite bizarre. Schumann might have done better to use more of Becker's texts, because he had such success with his song-setting of Becker's poem, "Der deutsche Rhein." Yet Schumann chose Kerner's poetry exclusively for a song collection that he hoped would reap substantial financial benefits. Perhaps the idiosyncratic qualities of Kerner's poetry, which had attracted him as a young composer, continued to impress him in 1840.

Scholars of Romantic music often give the financial aspect of composition little to no attention in their research, forgetting that being a composer is an occupation, as well as an artistic calling. This study shows that publishing concerns may have had previously unconsidered effects on compositions created after printed music became affordable for the middle class. This seems particularly true for composers who earned a large portion of their income from music sales. Perhaps the research might give greater attention to the financial issues surrounding a certain piece, when they come across a compositional puzzle that seems to have no answer in the music itself.

In the context of the genesis of Op. 35, Schumann appears more obligated than inspired, more average than heroic, because he may not have composed this work for purely artistic reasons. He has been taken off his pedestal in a sense, and in the genre for which we currently revere him most: song composition. The "Year of Song" has become nearly mythological; scholars never tire of revering the composer's phenomenal ability to have produced well over one hundred songs, many of which still dominate vocal repertoire, in just a year. We picture the composer feverishly overcome by melody

for short stretches of time, producing *Dichterliebe* in one week in May and the Op. 39 *Liederkreis* in another. These deceptively simple songs contain beauty that theorists have sought to explain for over a century. Yet, we have ignored song collections like Op. 35, which Schumann composed sporadically over two months, probably at the request of a publisher who would pay him well for his work. While he still worked diligently, and even feverishly, on the Kerner songs in the last two months of 1840, he was tired of composing song and anxious to begin composing large, instrumental work. These songs certainly have artistic merit, but it does seem that the inspiration of May had faded into obligation by November. In reality, despite the popularity of scholarship on Schumann's songs, few of his songs have received as much attention as those touted as the "great" cycles. Perhaps the genesis of these other song collections, like the one postulated in this study for Op. 35, was not a fairy tale, but a story of a composer struggling to balance fiscal obligation and artistic vision.

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