Meeting Barthes at Fischer-Dieskau's Mill: Co-performance, Linguistic Identity, and a Lied

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In memoriam Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau

I mourned the death of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. The loss of this performer seemed to have fixed in place two gaps that some part of me still wishes to close: one separating me from a person I wish I could have met and another distancing me from a language that will never be fully my own. Yet in both cases the term gap is deceptive. I have listened to Fischer-Dieskau's recordings of Schubert Lieder so frequently that they have become equivalent to the songs themselves. They inspire my vocal and pianistic attempts at performance and co-performance. My love for Lieder in Fischer-Dieskau's performances in

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part led me to study German, a language in which I now enjoy an unsteady fluency.

My remarks here are personal, but they point toward two broader musicological issues I wish to explore in this article. First, they pertain to the experience of engaging with song recordings through co-performance. My involvement with Fischer-Dieskau's Lied recordings, and especially with the rhythmic impulses divided among the language, poetry, vocal line, and piano part, is based in corporeal co-performance. It involves my body and bears traces of the bodies of those artists who produced the recording. Second, my reflections concern how an individual might experience a foreign language, foreign-language poetry, and foreign-language song along a continuum that involves relative degrees of fluency and familiarity and is bound up with the corporeal aspects of speaking and singing.

Despite the central status of Schubert's Lieder within Anglo-American academic music study, no one to date has reflected extensively on the mutual relationship of these two widespread facets involved in listening to Lied recordings. While many scholars invoke co-performance in studies of corporeality and music overall, none have looked at sung poetry at any level of detail in this context.[1] Although numerous studies have considered the sonic effects of poetic devices and of words set to music, they have not fully considered corporeality, the possibility of co-performance, or the role of linguistic identity in these experiences.[2] Considerations of poetic and musical rhythm and

[1] Scholarship in musicology and music theory has extensively explored a range of corporeal and embodied aspects of performing and listening to music. When one considers Anglo-American musicology of the past twenty to twenty-five years, this territory becomes particularly broad; it is difficult to do justice to it in a single footnote. Paul Sanden, "Hearing Glenn Gould's Body: Corporeal Liveness in Recorded Music," *Current Musicology* 88 (2009): 7–34, mentions, for example, the following terms on p. 18: "kinematic empathy" (Neil Todd and P. McAngus, "The Kinematics of Musical Expression," *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 97 [1995]: 1940–49); "bodily hearing" (Andrew Mead, "Bodily Hearing: Physiological Metaphors and Musical Understanding," *Journal of Music Theory* 43 [1999]: 1–19); "the mimetic hypothesis" (Arnie Cox, "The Mimetic Hypothesis and Embodied Musical Meaning," *Musicae Scientae* 5 [2001]: 195–212); and "corporeal signification" (Marc Leman, *Embodied Music Cognition and Mediation Technology* [Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2008]). Sanden also considers Elisabeth LeGuin's foray into "carnal musicology" (LeGuin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006]). Suzanne Cusick pioneered this territory: "On a Lesbian Relationship with Music: A Serious Effort not to Think Straight," in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006; first ed. 1994), 67–83.

[2] Yonatan Malin builds on the work of Harald Krebs, Arnold Feil, Ann Clark Fehn, and Rufus Hallmark, as well as other theorists of poetic and musical rhythm, to perform primarily rhythm-centered hermeneutic accounts of text and music in the Lied: *Songs in Motion: Rhythm and Meter in the German Lied* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Malin speaks of poetic meter and rhythmic features, as well as corresponding musical ones, as

entrainment in Lied analysis have also avoided significant reflections on co-performance, as will be discussed below. Nor has attention been paid to the experience of foreign-language poetry and how this experience might color our analytical, aesthetic, material, or carnal experiences of a Lied's effects in performance. Many of us who are non-native speakers of German marvel at the impressive variety of expressive relationships that exist between music and poetry in Lieder and train students (who often have no experience with German) to do the same. How might our relative fluency or non-fluency and our broader relationship with the language contribute to this ongoing interest in words and music in the Lied?

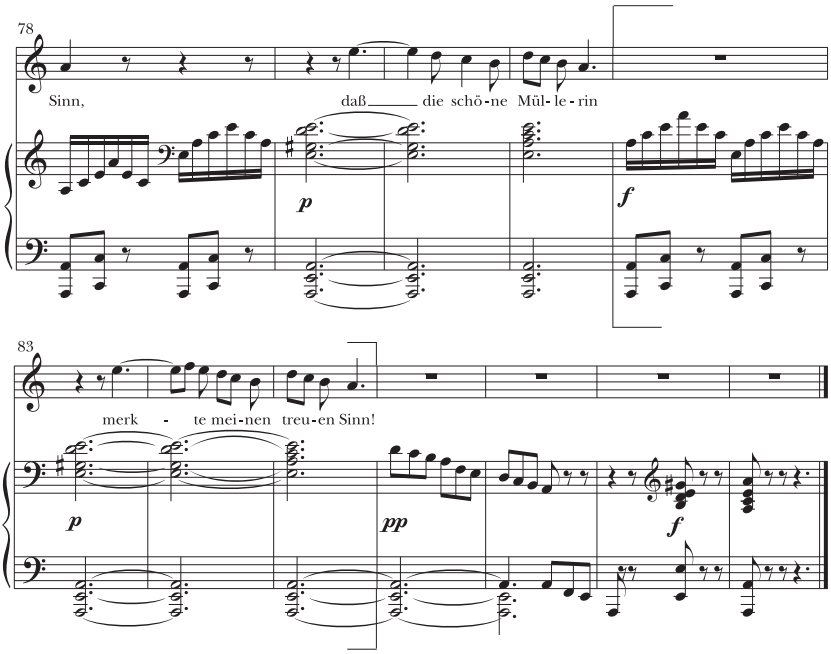
While I could refer to a number of Fischer-Dieskau's Schubert recordings to reflect on this complex of relationships, a few seconds in one recording serve best. The moment occurs between 2:13 and 2:30 on the compact disc reissue of the singer's December 1971 recording of the song with Gerald Moore at the piano for Deutsche Grammophon, when the two artists render measures 82–85 of "Am Feierabend" from *Die schöne Müllerin*.[3] (ex. 1 gives the passage in the original key; ex. 2 gives the poem and an English translation.) In this moment, Fischer-Dieskau—ostensibly as Franz Schubert and Wilhelm Müller's miller—requests for the last time that the miller maid notice his intense, if imagined, physical efforts at the mill and his devotion to her: "dass die schöne Müllerin / *merkte* meinen treuen Sinn" (that the beautiful miller maid / would notice my true love). When Fischer-Dieskau delivers the word "merkte" within this line, its last iteration in Schubert's setting, he highlights the special function of this word in the poem: he dramatizes the miller's desire in the text by imbuing its syllables with a powerful sense of constraint.

Yet my experience of this moment in performance is not constrained by the miller's expression of longing for the unattainable miller maid. Fischer-Dieskau's performance, first, reminds me of the cumulative musical and poetic effects of the previous, frequent, and prominent appearances of "merkte" within the song. More than a dramatic device,

primarily objective phenomena, occasionally appealing to empirical studies in cognition to further ground such claims (see especially the discussion of rhythmic entrainment: pp. 44–47). Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman address the role of poetic rhythm and other sonic poetic aspects, as well as rhythmic complexities in Lieder. Their approach, however, restricts itself to considering these aspects as the means to a straightforward text-music hermeneutic end: providing potential performers a nuanced but unified, dramatic understanding of the meaning of a given Lied setting (in the traditional sense of articulate meaning discussed in this article). See Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman, *Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), esp. 33–50 and 167–90.

[3] Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone, and Gerald Moore, piano, *Franz Schubert: Lieder*, volume 3, Deutsche Grammophon, 437 235 G/X3, 1972, LP (CD reissue 1993).

EXAMPLE 1. Franz Schubert, "Am Feierabend," song 5 of *Die schöne Müllerin*, D. 795, 1823, mm. 78–89



these appearances form a material, rhythmic substrate. The material pleasure these repetitions give me has everything to do with my own long-standing efforts to speak German and with my general admiration of Fischer-Dieskau's voice and persona. Experienced from this perspective, this moment engenders an irresolvable contest between the multiple layers of materiality and semantic meaning in the word. These meanings are brought to life by the singer's bodily involvement in the sung word "merkte" and by my own corporeal, mimetic responses as a co-performing listener with a particular disciplinary, cultural, and linguistic history.

Some aspects of this essay resonate with recent discussions of how the study of art song might move away from traditional text-music hermeneutic approaches, to address instead other important ways in which song may be understood or heard.[4] Jonathan Dunsby, for example, has studied what he terms vocality in art song, a designation that includes any

[4] On approaches to Lied performances and recordings that move past a traditional text-music hermeneutics of largely dramatic meaning, see Jennifer Ronyak (convenor), Colloquy: "Studying the Lied: Hermeneutic Traditions and the Challenge of Performance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67 (2014): 543–81.

EXAMPLE 2.
Wilhelm Müller, "Am Feierabend," from *Die schöne Müllerin*, 1821. Translation modified from Susan Youens, in *Schubert: Die schöne Müllerin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 20.

Hätt' ich tausend	Had I a thousand
Arme zu rühren!	arms to wield!
Könnt' ich brausend	Could I but drive
Die Räder führen!	the rushing wheels!
Könnt ich wehen	Could I but blow
Durch alle Haine!	through all the woods!
Könnt ich drehen	Could I but turn
Alle Steine!	all the stones!
Dass die schöne Müllerin	So that the beautiful miller maid
Merkte meinen treuen Sinn!	would notice my true love!
Ach wie ist mein Arm so schwach!	Oh, how my arms are weak!
Was ich hebe, was ich trage	What I lift, what I carry
Was ich schneide, was ich schlage,	What I cut, what I hit
Jeder Knappe tut mir's nach.	Any apprentice can do too.
Und da sitz' ich in der grossen Runde,	And there I sit in the large circle
Zu der stillen kühlen Feierstunde,	In the quiet, cool leisure hour,
Und der Meister spricht zu allen:	And the master says to us all:
"Euer Werk hat mir gefallen."	"I am pleased with your work."
Und das liebe Mädchen sagt	And the dear maiden
Allen eine gute Nacht.	Bids all a good night.

element in a work that gives it an unmistakable, if still complex, vocal character.[5] This approach usefully broadens vocality to include, for example, a transvocality not dependent on the presence of a human voice. Dunsby redirects traditional analytical tools away from the mere search for traditional hermeneutic findings toward the discovery of various sorts of vocality. But his analyses typically do not foreground individual performance or listening contexts.[6] In a suggestive essay, Lawrence Kramer has taken a more radical step by coining the term

[5] Jonathan Dunsby, *Making Words Sing: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[6] Dunsby has recently discussed vocality more in the context of live and recorded performances; however, the sense that a work-centered analysis may be sufficient to establish vocality is still connected to his use of the term. Despite his discomfort with Lawrence Kramer's concept of songfulness, Dunsby puts Kramer's term in dialogue with vocality in his own consideration of Lied performance. See Dunsby, "The Lied itself," in Jennifer Ronyak (convenor), Colloquy: "Studying the Lied," 570–75. See note 7 on Kramer's songfulness.

songfulness, meaning "a fusion of vocal and musical utterance judged to be both pleasurable and suitable independent of verbal content."[7] In support of this idea, which both questions the limits of a traditional text-music hermeneutics of song and, at times, engages in a reconfigured version of the same, he draws on performance examples described in literature, portrayed in film, and suggested by Schubert's score for *Heidenröslein*. Although these two approaches to rethinking song analysis inform my discussion, my work here does not seek to confirm the presence of either vocality or songfulness. Instead, I describe a listening posture that looks in more detail than Kramer at the relationship between traditionally construed poetic meaning and linguistic and vocal materiality in song performance. More than Dunsby, I question the traditional goals of work-centered analysis.

I certainly cannot speak here about the full range of relationships between North American Anglophone listeners in general and sung poetry in the German Lied or Fischer-Dieskau's performances of the genre. An ethnographic or otherwise more data-rich, empirical approach that sought to find general principles through the comparison of different listeners or different recordings would leave aside the particularity that I hope to capture in this essay.[8] I therefore choose to insist on a personal account, offering what might be termed an autoethnography of my repeated encounters with this single recording.[9] Because I seek to elucidate the intricate knot of embodiment, linguistic materiality, rhythm, and meaning that I have found in my repeated encounters with

[7] Lawrence Kramer, "Beyond Words and Music: An Essay on Songfulness," in *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 53. Dunsby decries the non-analytical approach of Kramer that he sees in this concept, despite the suggestive literary, film, and score-based examples that Kramer brings to bear on the subject. See Dunsby, *Making Words Sing*, 5.

[8] Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook, *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3–14, address the varying extent to which most musicological work is in part empirical; they make a distinction between data-poor environments and data-rich environments. The latter may be subjected to more generalized principles of analysis, following methods more akin to those in the social sciences and the sciences than of the humanities (as typically practiced). In order to preserve the authoethnographic specificity of my argument, I thus do not gather a large data set (e.g., of recordings or listeners) to be analyzed.

[9] A number of scholars have influenced my decision to lay bare personal detail as part of this effort to present a new perspective on linguistic identity and the experience of relating and listening to Lieder. In this note, I would simply like to mention the work of Suzanne Cusick, David Lewin, Andrew Mead, Elizabeth LeGuin, Marion Guck, and Mine Dogantan-Dack; some of this work is cited above and below. I was also heartened to see a lively interplay between the personal and perspectives that go far beyond subjectivity as colloquially understood (outside of music studies) in many of the essays that make up *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010). One additional recent, playful (if also earnest) manifesto invoking the idea of autoethnography directly is Ronald J. Pelias, *A Methodology of the Heart: Evoking Academic and Everyday Life* (Maryland: Altamira Press, 2004).

this recording, my theoretical starting point will be Roland Barthes's work on the intersection of language and music in singing. And given the additional disciplinary and interdisciplinary influence and resonances of Barthes's thoughts on such matters, a secondary goal of my study involves situating my discussion within the wider interdisciplinary discourses to which it inherently belongs. Taking Barthes as my starting point, in the first two sections of this article I provide a theoretical framework for my discussion of the intertwined issues of co-performance and linguistic identity in my encounter with Fischer-Dieskau's performance. More specifically, in the first section I discuss aspects of poststructural thought, affect theory, linguistic memoirs, and translation studies to explore how the continuum of fluency and relative understanding (or misunderstanding) of a language relates to the competing claims of linguistic materiality and meaning on a reader's or listener's attention. In the second section I focus on how scholars in linguistics and music theory have understood the material and meaningful aspects of corporeal linguistic rhythm, perspectives that will be essential to the discussion that follows. In the second half of the article, I employ these ideas in an analysis of my co-performing encounter with Fischer-Dieskau's recording, moving from the poem to Schubert's setting to Fischer-Dieskau's contribution.

Personal, autoethnographic writing enjoys an uneasy acceptance within musicology and music theory, despite several decades of research highlighting the cultural situatedness of scholars and their work. One solution to this discomfort is to retreat from personal statements, even when one's hermeneutic account of a composition or a performance is nevertheless personal.[10] Rather than just acknowledging that personal and cultural factors always have a role to play, only to sweep them back under the rug, here I wish to lay bare the nature and conditions of these relationships so that I may make observations that otherwise would go unmentioned. At some level, my narrative is also about desire; like any desiring subject, I perceive things in the object at hand that are charmed for me in ways that are far from universal. What I do hope will spark

[10] Cook and Clarke address the intricacies of one such case: *Empirical Musicology*, 5. They discuss Marion Guck's account of movement 2 of Mozart's Symphony no. 40, pointing out that it is fictive. Nevertheless, they say, it is empirical in its replicability, because "she describes a way in which she can hear the music, and invites her reader to share her experience." Marion Guck, "Rehabilitating the Incorrigible," in *Theory, Analysis and Meaning in Music*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57–73. Much as Guck elsewhere has written of her personal experience as a pianist co-performer in a way that is in part replicable for other performers, I here choose to include personal reflections in order to invite similar listening approaches in my readers, if not full replication. See also Guck, "Music Loving, or, The Relationship with the Piece," *Music Theory Online* 2, no. 2 (1996), http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.96.2.2/mto.96.2.2.guck.html.

recognition in my readers, however, is my multilayered relationship to the recording, as well as its musical and poetic tradition, that I trace here. As Suzanne Cusick once declared when exploring the role of desire, embodiment, and sexual identity in her own relationship to music, I aim to "speak not from" a state in which "the verisimilitude and credibility of one's topos and thesis are more important than truth," but to relate a co-performing relationship to a recording, a singer, and by extension a repertoire and a language that is both personal and cultural.[11] I hope that my account both provokes extensive self-recognition and serves as an invitation to expand the range of permissible musicological approaches to studying our relationships to music and language.

Linguistic Identity, Materiality, Meanings, and the Body

Barthes's 1972 essay "The Grain of the Voice" has inspired scholars of singing to employ the term "grain" well beyond the limits of Barthes's own discussion; it has similarly prompted other scholars to reexamine Barthes's definition of the grain throughout the essay as a corrective to looser adaptations of the term.[12] I revisit this essay and related texts here not to pursue a definition or use for the grain, but to explore how linguistic identity may be involved in the co-performance of a Lied, especially to the extent that it colors one's embodied involvement with materiality and meaning in a particular language. Barthes's central arguments in the essay champion the materiality-laden grain (geno-song) in the body of the Swiss master of the French mélodie, Charles Panzéra, contrasting this approach to the expressive, over-determined, communicative reign and breath (pheno-song) of Fischer-Dieskau.[13] In juxtaposing Panzéra and Fischer-Dieskau, Barthes describes an opposition between what might be summarized as follows for the purposes of the present essay: 1) linguistic materiality, which I use to mean the corporeal sources, perception, and effects of spoken or sung language taken together (some might also refer

[11] Cusick, "On a Lesbian Relationship with Music," 67. Here Cusick paraphrases the ideas of Luisa Muraro from her *L'ordine simbolico della madre* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1991).

[12] Numerous analysts have applied or reconsidered a Barthesian idea of the grain of the voice, or his terms "pheno-song" and "geno-song" (as well as Kristeva's "phenotext" and "genotext"). Jonathan Dunsby's recent re-examination of Barthes's essay summarizes the thrust of such research while seeking to more precisely construe the grain as an analytical tool for art song. Jonathan Dunsby, "Roland Barthes and the Grain of Panzéra's Voice," *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 134 (2009): 113–32.

[13] Barthes originally published the essay as "Le grain de la voix" in *Musique en jeu* 9 (1972): 57–63; I refer throughout this article to the English translation published in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1985; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 267–77; page numbers refer to the University of California reprint, hereafter cited as "Grain."

to this as pre-articulate language); and 2) expression or meaning, or what some might prefer to call articulate meaning. This second category encompasses those effects of a poem or song that pertain to how it portrays a dramatic situation (very common in the Schubert song cycles), conveys and represents the emotions of a poem's speaker and imagery, or points toward meanings, associations, or emotions more dependent on the idiosyncratic reader or listener than the basic dramatic action of a Lied poem (though this is something that Barthes might not allow his Fischer-Dieskau strawman to provoke).

Beyond its rigid antinomy, Barthes's text touches on a number of more subtle points about materiality, meaning, and corporeality in sung language that are worth reconsidering here. In particular, Barthes reveals in this essay the great extent to which his remarks are conditioned by his own linguistic identity and his personal experiences of the voice of Panzéra, with whom he studied voice.[14] In fact, Barthes's linguistic identity as a native French speaker intertwines with his commitment to structuralist and post-structuralist discourses on language not just in this essay, but at other moments in his writings when he reflects further on how native versus foreign languages inflect the experience of linguistic materiality and meaning. His remarks on these subjects also provide a poignant springboard from which to further discuss the role of linguistic identity in one's experience of first, second, and utterly foreign languages, a topic that has been taken up by other poststructualist thinkers, among them Julia Kristeva. Barthes in some ways forecasts the more recent inquiries of affect theory, as well as semiotic memoirs and translation studies concerning how individuals engage with linguistic materiality and meaning in their first and second languages.

Barthes enjoyed a thorough humanistic education, including rigorous training in classical Latin and Greek (to which he was especially attracted). Despite this experience with ancient languages and general aspects of linguistics, he never learned to speak another living language (his mother tongue was French). He was theoretically and personally sensitive to issues of dialect and social class within his native tongue.[15] This francophone cultural home base suffuses "The Grain of the Voice"

[14] Dunsby mentions Barthes's experiences studying with Panzéra: "Roland Barthes and the Grain of Panzéra's Voice," 121. Dunsby also writes that he "joins with Steven Ungar in seeing Barthes's whole sustained yearning profile towards Romantic song, and here towards Panzéra singing it, as an expression of irreparable loss." See Steven Ungar, *Roland Barthes: The Professor of Desire* (Lincoln, Nebraska, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 75. Richard Klein also indicates that Barthes's own linguistic identity as a French speaker has affected his reflections on the grain: "Stimme verstehen mit und gegen Roland Barthes," *Musik & Ästhetik* 13, no. 51 (2009): 5–16, at 9.

[15] Louis-Jean Calvet, *Roland Barthes: A Biography*, trans. Sarah Wykes (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 21–22, 147–48.

in ways that are far subtler than the stark Franco-German opposition that Barthes promotes. Two passages especially suggest how linguistic identity affects how one hears sung language. The first excerpt concerns Barthes's experience of listening to a "Russian Bass" (singing in an utterly foreign language); it is Barthes's first and prototypical example of the grain:

> Something is there, manifest and persistent (you hear only *that*), which is past (or previous to) the meaning of the words, of their form (the litany), of the melisma, and even of the style of performance: something which is directly the singer's body, brought by one and the same movement to your ear from the depths of the body's cavities, the muscles, the membranes, the cartilage, and the depths of the Slavonic language, as if a single skin lined the performer's inner flesh and the music he sings. . . . That is what the "grain" would be: the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue: perhaps the letter; almost certainly what I have called *signifying*.[16]

Among the many things that Barthes senses in the bass's performance is the special articulation of the Slavonic language in the very structure of the singer's vocal apparatus, the reverberation of language and culture in the particular notes through which this singing occurs, and—more subtly—a sense of linguistic, embodied rhythm that is "past or previous to" any words. Regardless of any real difference in vocal training between French and Russian singers, the observations are all the more vivid since Barthes romanticizes the carnal aspects of the Russian language because they are not his own. Barthes reproduces a simultaneously cultural and corporeal Western stereotype of Slavonic sounds, emphasizing their depth in implied contrast to languages that do not seem to sit so low in the vocal apparatus and therefore do not imply additional notions of depth in the same way.

At the other end of the language-familiarity continuum, Barthes reflects quite differently on Panzéra's French. Not only is the language Barthes's own, but Panzéra's singing body was known at close range by Barthes (through voice lessons), engendering an intimacy that he could hold onto as he reflected on the singer. In this case, he transforms individual material ingredients of the French language, given voice by Panzéra's particular pronunciation, into objects (or sensations) laden with plural, imaginative meanings:

> Here was the "truth" of language, not its functionality (clarity, expressivity, communication); and the range of the vowels received what was

[16] "Grain," 269–70.

> *signifying* (which is everything that can be voluptuous in meaning): the opposition of *é* and *è* (so necessary in conjugation); the virtually *electronic* purity, I should say, so taut, raised, exposed, tenuous was its sound, of the most French vowel of all, the *ü*.[17]

Barthes's thoroughgoing familiarity with French inflects his experience of materiality in singing very differently from the case of the Russian Bass. His haste to banish the clarity not just of language, but of French in particular, hearkens back to his earlier work on how socio-political and economic privilege were intimately tied to claims concerning the French language's clarity.[18] He instead prefers to recognize in this situation the plural, voluptuous, undisciplined meanings inherent in his notion of signifying. But he can do so in this way only because of his intimate familiarity with these sounds. The words sung are not just material or grain-laden (as in the case of the Russian Bass), but are full of sounds with which Barthes is intimate in both his own body and that of his beloved singer. He thus posits a situation in which these phonemes freely point outward to plural, pleasurable meanings not disciplined by normal syntax, in accordance with his general view that in language signifiers are not wedded to any one signified.

Barthes's two meditations here involve a complex dance of linguistic distance and intimacy. He claims to hear aspects of singing in the Russian Bass that happen simultaneously within and beyond language, all the more so because he is not concerned either with the conventional meaning of the text or even the ritual meaning of the litany. For all the distance that is implied here, there is definitely a material intimacy associated with listening closely to and fantasizing about the body of the singer. Similarly, it is possible that the individual phonemes of Panzéra's French could be even more vivid than they are to Barthes in the ear of an attentive foreign student of French. What is ultimately apparent in the contrast of the Russian Bass and Panzéra, especially in light of the larger Panzéra/Fischer-Dieskau opposition in the essay, is that any reflection on the intertwining of materiality and meaning in sung language inherently bears an important relationship to the combined personal, linguistic, and cultural identity of the analyst, however complex that identity is. In the case of Barthes, this posture also extended to his encounter with the Japanese language, a foreign object to him when spoken or written, on which he rhapsodizes in *Empire of Signs*.[19]

[17] Ibid., 272.

[18] Andy Stafford, *Roland Barthes, Phenomenon and Myth: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 26.

[19] Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), esp. 6–9.

Barthes's colleague Julia Kristeva helps clarify this hard-to-pinpoint aspect of linguistic identity. (Barthes adapted his terms geno- and pheno-song in "The Grain of the Voice" from Kristeva.) Although she studied French from an early age, Kristeva did so in her native Bulgaria; the French language was not the tongue of family, home, and hearth for her. Some of Kristeva's most personal reflections on living in France as a non-native speaker can be found in the opening chapter of her *Strangers to Ourselves*, in which she discusses the concept of the foreigner. Under the heading "The Silence of Polyglots," Kristeva considers her experience of speaking French outside of her native country:

> Not speaking one's mother tongue. Living with resonances and reasoning that are cut off from the body's nocturnal memory, from the bittersweet slumber of childhood. Bearing within oneself . . . that language of the past that withers without ever leaving you. You improve your ability with another instrument, as one expresses oneself with algebra or the violin. You can become a virtuoso with this new device that moreover gives you a new body, just as artificial and sublimated—some say sublime. You have a feeling that the new language is a resurrection: new skin, new sex. But the illusion bursts when you hear, upon listening to a recording, for instance, that the melody of your voice comes back to you as a peculiar sound, out of nowhere, closer to the old spluttering than to today's code. Your awkwardness has its charm they say . . . one nevertheless lets you know that it is irritating just the same. Occasionally, raising the eyebrows or saying "I beg your pardon?" in quick succession lead you to understand that you will "never be a part of it," that it is "not worth it," that there, at least, one is "not taken in. . . ."[20]

The foreigner never fully belongs to the new language, no matter how virtuosic she becomes. Furthermore, the mother tongue becomes subject to a different sense of linguistic distance and an attendant sense of loss. While it is surely true that a related concept of the foreign can appear within one's native language as well (especially when poetic language is an issue), Kristeva reveals a sense of personal frustration at moments when a linguistic and cultural gap is felt.

It is perhaps not surprising that much of Kristeva's signature post-structuralist work on language focuses on issues of corporeality, gaps, and moments of rupture that make meaning (in the most traditional sense) anything but basic or transparent. Her rich claims about language in her other work suggest a way of listening to sung poetry that undermines Barthes's polemical opposition of a meaning-laden performance to a material one. They also easily accommodate the position of a second-

[20] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 15.

language reader or listener. This greater subtlety extends from Kristeva's direct and extended engagement with poetry itself, a literary genre that Barthes did not often address. In her *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), Kristeva outlines two interrelated realms from which linguistic materiality (her genotext) and normal expressive language (her phenotext) emanate: the semiotic (or the chora) and the symbolic (everyday, meaning-laden language), respectively. The semiotic corresponds primarily to pre-linguistic, rhythmic articulations in the body during infancy that nevertheless remain as a substrate of adult language; the symbolic generally corresponds to normal language (bearing articulate meaning).[21] Kristeva makes a powerful point about the operation of poetry through this theoretical framework. "Once the semiotic [the material, corporeal, rhythmic foundation of language] enters the symbolic [the expressive, everyday, rule-laden sphere]," she asserts, "we reach a moment of distortion, a moment of rhetorical figures, rhythms, and alliterations, what is in fact poetic language in all its particularities. This is for me an instance of both subjective crisis and an *amplification of the register of expression* [emphasis mine]."[22] It is almost as if some of the subjective crisis that Kristeva noticed at times in her own experiences as a polyglot foreigner can be seen seeping into this theoretical claim. Kristeva's expression exists in significant part in the struggle between, in plainer terms, conventional meaning in language and linguistic materiality. The contested ground between the two strata of language is to a large degree the point of poetry.

Some recent work in affect theory has sought to go much further than Kristeva (and also Barthes) in these regards by eliminating any foundational binary opposition between linguistic materiality (and the notions of embodiment and rhythm with which it is most strongly associated) and the realm of symbolic communication, expression, or meaning.[23] Yet whether one focuses on French theoretical positions from the

[21] Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller, intr. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 25–30. Kristeva borrows the term symbolic from Lacan. According to him, subjects enter the realm of the symbolic when they are separated from the mother's body through the completion of the Oedipal stage of development. For Kristeva and, indeed, Barthes, operating within everyday, communicative language ensures relative clarity of communication but severely restricts pleasure, or *jouissance*, and thus liberatory practices.

[22] Quoted in Sofie de Smyter, "Michael Ondaatje's *Coming through Slaughter*: Disrupting Boundaries of Self and Language," *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 88 (2007): 682–98, at 684.

[23] With the exception of the combined structuralist and deeply Freudian foundations of Kristeva's work on the semiotic realm of the body, theorists of affect would otherwise be very much at home in the world she describes, in that they focus on movements, forces, bodies, and feeling (as separate from emotion). Affect theorists look to other models to help explain these phenomena; they seek a much wider field in which to find the fundamental influence of forces or intensities in spheres of life. See Gregory J. Seigworth and

1970s or today's more adventurous claims about some of these issues, one common set of concerns about linguistic materiality, meaning, and the role of the body remains a constant. These approaches all recognize a deep interrelationship between the corporeal and the linguistic that has an irreducibly complex and even troubled relationship to meaning or expression as commonly understood, whether in everyday speech, poetic language, or in an otherwise foreign tongue. While it can in no way be claimed that the experience of a foreign language always redoubles an awareness of these issues, it is notable that both Barthes and Kristeva took some inspiration from the complex issues of intimacy and distance that are often involved in encountering, or even living within, a foreign tongue.

Linguistic memoirs and translation studies extend many of Barthes's and Kristeva's concerns about linguistic identity, linguistic materiality, and the place of meaning. A number of evocative literary sources as well as earlier and recent work in translation studies have subtly discussed and tried to capture how travelling between two or more languages inflects both cultural identity and individual selfhood. This body of writing personalizes and particularizes the experiences that linguists have had problems generalizing scientifically. Vladimir Nabokov, Kazuo Ishiguro, Leïla Sebbar, and Eva Hoffman have all reflected extensively in their work on the experience of living between languages and cultures.

Hoffman's autoethnography in particular is worth further attention. She dubs this a "semiotic memoir" of her experiences dealing with "life in a new language" on moving from her native Poland to North America.[24] She arrived first in an anglophone Canadian community as a child, then attended Rice University in Houston, Texas, before settling in New York City. Throughout her account, she tells vivid tales of how the emotional and interpersonal experiences associated with her first encounters with English in Canada, as well as her later encounters with its Texan and New York variants, affected the way in which she related her identity to her new language.

Hoffman describes her early, formative impressions of the connection between signifier-sounds, meaning, and the larger culture as both forbidding and exciting; these impressions continue to permeate her more mature experiences as a sort of residue. For example, she recounts that when she first contemplated the word Canada, on being told that

Melissa Gregg, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); and Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Visual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

[24] Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989).

she would be emigrating from Poland as a child, she felt that the word sounded something like Sahara. It implied a harsh, foreign, even desert-like place as opposed to the comforts of her familiar home.[25] Hoffman here engages in an emotionally charged, almost onomatopoetic false cognate: she searches for a way to relate the foreign word and place to something she can already pronounce and conceive. Once she arrives in anglophone Canada, one of the first words to truly imprint itself on her consciousness is also not particularly welcoming. She takes notice of children on the playground wildly yelling "shuddup," thinking therefore that she "can't imagine wanting to talk their harsh-sounding language."[26] At the same time, she takes what she calls an "irrational liking" to other impractical and literary words as she reads in English.[27] In these cases, Hoffman displays a willingness to play with signifiers in the new language (at least in private reflection), giving them a range of positive, negative, or just peculiarly personal signifieds. This freedom extends from the newfound relationship between signifier and signified: it no longer seems immutable, natural, or even unremarkable, as it may in one's mother tongue.[28]

This linguistic freedom between signifier and signifieds is also, in a somewhat different way, highly characteristic of poetry itself, whether composed in a familiar language or a foreign one. Scholars in poetry and translation studies have remarked on the way that a poem might create its own miniature linguistic world. As George Steiner relates, numerous poets throughout history have pointed out that the singular way in which they use language in a given poem resists translation because poetry always exists as a dense, particular subset of relationships drawn from but not at all identical to the larger language in which it is composed.[29] Rainer Maria Rilke, for example, insisted that this extreme singularity extended even to the most banal particles of language within his poetry, saying that "no word in a poem (I mean here each 'and' or 'the') is identical with the word spelled the same way in everyday usage."[30] More recently, Clive Scott has considered this question as he translated Baudelaire's verse, stating that translators "must also suppose that the poem is a linguistic system within the linguistic system, but that this inner

[25] Ibid., 4.

[26] Ibid., 104–5.

[27] Ibid., 106. Hoffman adds that she takes pleasure in some of these words because she is "pleased to have deduced their meaning."

[28] Ibid.

[29] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 253–56.

[30] Rilke, quoted in Steiner, *After Babel*, 254. "*Kein* Wort im Gedicht (ich meine hier jedes 'und' oder 'der,' 'die,' 'das') ist *identische mit dem gleichlautenden Gebrauchs* und Konversationswort."

system creates its own principles of operation."[31] These few remarks make it quite clear that the relative distance or intimacy that an individual reader may have with a poetic text is full of unpredictable variables determined by the native language of the reader, his or her competencies in the foreign language, and his or her attachment to or intimacy with the text at hand.

Rhythm and Corporeality in Poetry and Everyday Language: Written, Spoken, and Sung

The experience of co-performing a Lied involves not only one's linguistic identity—and how that identity is lodged in one's body—but also depends on additional somatic (corporeal) aspects of linguistic and musical rhythm that are alternately tied up with and not dependent on one's linguistic identity. On this point, translation studies, structuralist thought, cognitive linguistics, and music theory all have a great deal to contribute as necessary background to the analysis that I will undertake below.

Translation studies have recognized, for example, an often highly somatic relationship to language in the translator's practice. Douglas Robinson puts it this way:

> Our understanding of language, our use and reuse of language, our language-related choices and decisions are all "somatically marked" . . . we have a *feeling* for words and phrases, registers and styles, either when someone else is speaking or writing, or when we are doing so ourselves, either when we are working in a single language or when we are engineering a transfer from one to another . . . all our decisions about language, including what word or phrase would be best or what would be most "equivalent," are channeled through these feelings.[32]

Robinson describes the nature of a translator's relationship to the languages in which he or she works as "idiosomatic": it is personal and felt deeply within the body, along with or even before any more shareable cultural considerations.[33]

Rhythm plays an important role in any such idiosomatic relationship to a language. Founding structuralist linguist Ferdinand Saussure—and later Kristeva—powerfully theorized the role of rhythm in corporeally grasping linguistic materiality. Saussure's work also is helpful in thinking

[31] Clive Scott, *Translating Baudelaire* (Exeter, U.K.: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 3.

[32] Robinson, cited in Paschalis Nikolaou and Maria-Venetia Kyritsi, introduction to *Translating Selves: Experience and Identity between Languages and Literatures* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 4.

[33] Scott, *Translating Baudelaire,* 3.

about the place of linguistic distance or intimacy in listening to sung poetry. The heightened linguistic materiality often featured in poetry, perhaps conceived of best as a kind of deep, underlying rhythm, held a strange power over Saussure, despite his famous work concerning the arbitrary relationship in language between signifier and signified. In a large-scale project on what he called anagrams, Saussure began searching for the phonemic components of a hidden proper name (or poetic image) governing entire poems from underneath, found most prominently in medieval epic poetry that told of the deeds of a particular hero or god. He would search, for instance, for the phonemic presence of elements like the name Roland (in the *Song of Roland*), or of several of the gods present in the middle-German *Nibelungenlied*. Figure 1 reproduces an image of Saussure's analysis of an epitaph for Fra Filippo Lippi, in which he strives to locate the dissemination of "politianus" and "philippus" throughout the Latin text. In the works he subjected to these phonemic analyses, Saussure suspected that another force, based in the sounds of a language itself, was so operative in poetry that it had an obscure power over his clear system of arbitrary signs.[34] Kristeva found this contradiction in Saussure's output especially striking: "As if denying his own theory of the sign, Saussure discovers the *dissemination* throughout the text of what he believes to be the name of a leader or god. This action of the signifier that we have called 'paragrammatic' breaks up definitively language as an opaque object, opening it up to this double foundation that we mentioned at the beginning: the engendering of the geno-text"—in other words, linguistic materiality in its pre-articulate form.[35]

One need not subscribe anymore to a structuralist or poststructuralist framework to find this odd notion concerning poetry in particular, and linguistic rhythm more generally, arrestingly suggestive. Affect theory has expanded the consideration of rhythm as one of the fundamental processes relating bodies to one another and also relating literary texts to bodies. In more recent work in these areas, notions of contraction and expansion as well as habit, repetition, and other general formulations of rhythmic entrainment of bodies all feature prominently.[36] In linguistics, at

[34] Barthes cordially nods to the anagram project in "The Grain of the Voice": "Such phonetics (Am I alone in hearing it? Am I hearing voices in the voice? But is it not the truth of the voice to be hallucinated? Is not the entire space of the voice an infinite space? No doubt this was the meaning of Saussure's work on anagrams)—such phonetics does not exhaust *signifying* . . . . " "Grain," 272.

[35] Kristeva, "L'engendrement de la formule," in *Sémèiotiké: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 292–93, quoted in John Lechte, *Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge, 1990), 77–78.

[36] Theorists of affect working along lines most provocatively introduced by Gilles Deleuze have been especially keen to extend ideas concerning the rhythmic nature of habit

FIGURE 1. Excerpt from Ferdinand de Saussure, Anagram Notebooks. From Notebook Two (of eleven) in Ange Politien, ms. fr. 3967, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Genève. Reproduced in Jean Starobinski, *Le mot sous les mots: Les anagrams de Ferdinand de Saussure* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971), 140–41.

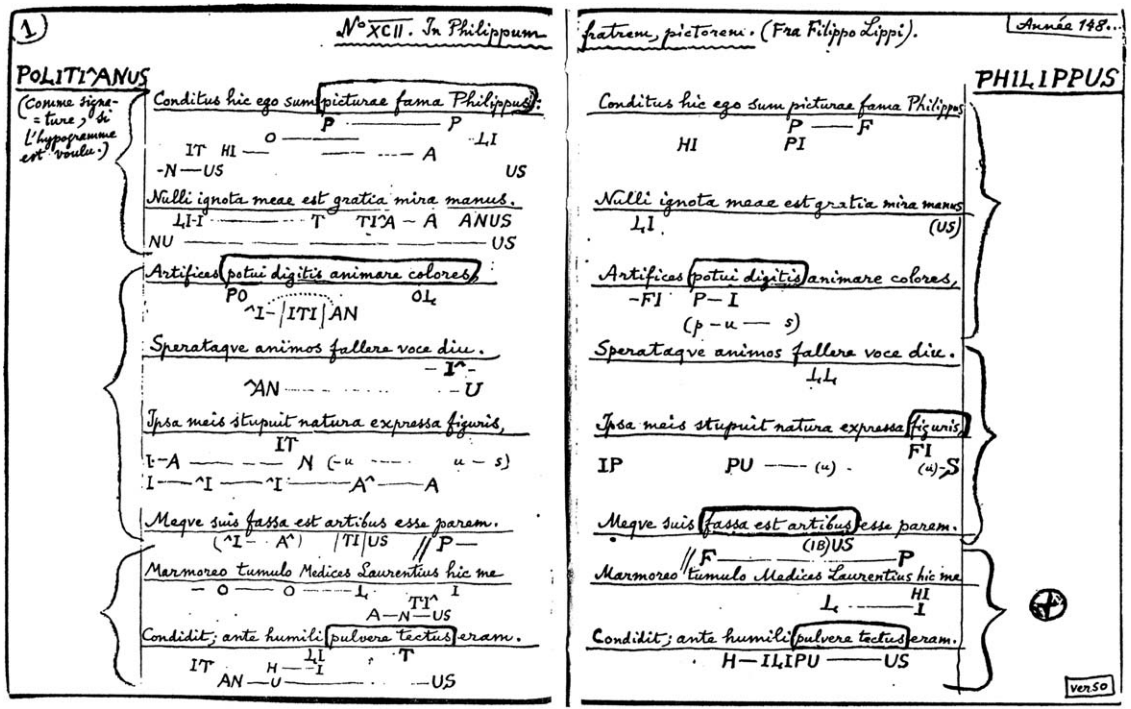


Photo Jean Arlaud, Genève

least one set of scholars has explored the rhythmic nature of individuals' somatic understanding of language in a basic empirical study. Cognitive linguists Heinz Werner and Bernard Kaplan (and to a lesser extent George Lakoff and Mark Johnson) name this process "physiognomic apprehension."[37] Werner and Kaplan describe how individuals reach for corporeal, material (and often decidedly rhythmic) ingredients in words to supplement conventional understanding of their meanings. In several studies, they relayed the testimony of individuals who frequently narrated the process through which they personally granted words an "affective or sensory 'shine.'"[38] Individuals were prone to the process even when explaining words that did not come from a poetic context. For example, one subject testified, concerning the word "hammer," that he heard "two equally sharp syllables which mean for me the repetitiveness of hammering"; another gave a colorful description of the German word "*faul*," meaning rotten, saying that "one dips into the word without finding resistance, like into a rotten fruit."[39] Whether in the search to explain or even merely remember (in the case of a foreign language) the correspondences between words and their meanings (as described in Hoffman's memoir), or in the service of trying to grasp the dense material, affective, emotional, and at times narrative sweep of a whole foreign-language poem, the process described relies on directed embodiment.

For a music-theoretical account of the Lied that adopts a similar approach, it is helpful to revisit David Lewin's landmark 1986 article "Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception." Lewin more flexibly considers the act of perceiving poetry and music from a number of angles in which the perceiver fundamentally acts as a co-performer or co-constructor of the musical or poetic experience. Through this method, Lewin offers competing phenomenological accounts of even very brief and seemingly straightforward passages of music and poetry.[40] Though Lewin's central musical analysis is of Schubert's "Morgengruss," he saves his most striking, nearly autoethnographic reflections on embodied linguistic, poetic perception for a Shakespeare

to the non-human world and the place of human beings within it. For two starting points for this extensive branch of work concerning rhythm in broad terms, see Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, trans. Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); and Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[37] Dorthe Berntsen, "How Is Modernist Poetry 'Embodied'?," *Metaphor and Symbol* 14 (1999): 104–5.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Cited in ibid., 105.

[40] David Lewin, "Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception," *Music Perception* 3 (1986): 327–92.

excerpt unrelated to any musical setting. As a historically distant and poetic text the language is foreign, yet simultaneously it is in Lewin's native English—as opposed to Schubert's German. Lewin argues that by speaking aloud a poetic text and allowing oneself (quite specifically himself, in this case) to gesture in response, an individual may perceive rhythmic, material, and thus expressive aspects of the verse that a non-embodied analysis might not uncover. Lewin scrutinizes a passage from Act II, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, in which Macbeth remarks (after his murder of Duncan):

> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No. This my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red.

Lewin locates the brilliance of the whole passage in the way Shakespeare directs the kinetic rhythm of language in the body of the performer, or the reader who chooses to act as performer. Lewin finds an underlying, hard-to-resist rhythm operative in the passage, culminating on the word "This." At a few moments Lewin's prose even *looks* uncannily like a Saussurian anagram. For example, he starts to notice a condensation of the consonants m, n, d, and their combinations as the passage moves toward its conclusion:

> The wave tosses up the repeated Saxon monosyllabic motif, "My haND," and amplifies it into the polysyllabic Latinate surge, "MultituDiNous seas iNcarNaDiNe," finally echoing off into "Making the greeN oNe reD."[41]

Lewin's kinesthetic experience is completely unified with an unmistakable dramatic—symbolic, expressive, or meaning-suffused *phenotextual*—effect. Nevertheless, he also confesses to the surfeit of pleasure in materiality and personalized "significations" that he extracts from the experiment (somewhat reminiscent of Barthes's reflections on Panzéra's diction). This pleasure easily suggests dimensions not restricted to any reductive dramatic portrayal:

> Hand and blood fuse into one, as action and guilt fuse into one for the character. The contraction of the hand and the blood into the blood-hand creates a tight knot of energy; this energy is later released by the expansion of the texture into the polysyllables of "multitudinous" and

[41] Lewin, "Music Theory," 362. Though Lewin cites Freud in the article (e.g., p. 361, n. 21), he does not occupy himself with structuralism or post-structuralism. By contrast, Kristeva devotes considerable space to phenomenology in *Revolution*.

> "incarnadine." (I first became aware of these energy profiles by noticing that I was instinctively clenching my fist as I said "This," and unclenching it, gradually splaying the fingers of my hand to their widest possible extent, as I intoned the words, "multitudinous seas incarnadine.")[42]

Lewin poeticizes his "physiognomic apprehension" of Shakespeare's verse in a very traditional way, expanding on the central dramatic situation of Shakespeare's character. But notably, he also emphasizes his enjoyment of the distinct "energy profile" of the passage and its near-instinctual basis: a material effect that depends on traditional meaning and metric/rhythmic structure, but exceeds them both in a performed, corporeal act of reflection consisting of the interplay between contraction and expansion. His reading ultimately moves outward from a poetic attention to hand, blood, action, or guilt to describe the material pleasure of performing poetry. And to the extent that the rhythms of the text control and direct this reading, perhaps the pleasure is also inherently musical. It is also possible to imagine a different result in the mouth and hand of another reader, depending on his or her own complex linguistic and cultural identity.

Saussure's and Lewin's discussions of poetic rhythm join more general linguistic investigations to mark a territory involving embodied, rhythmic experience that is part of language in general and is frequently heightened in music and poetry.[43] When combined with the semiotic reflections of the thinkers cited above and considered in light of various degrees of intimacy and distance with first and second languages, these theoretical positions provide a footing for my exploration of my relationship to Müller's poem, Schubert's song, and Fischer-Dieskau's recording. My account of Fischer-Dieskau's "merkte" wavers between corporeally reflecting on musical elements extremely near to me and on linguistic ones that remain more distant (despite my close study of and experience with them). The next section of this essay charts out the significance of my linguistic identity during a co-performer's experience of the poem, song, and recording.

[42] Lewin, "Music Theory," 363–64.

[43] See note 1 concerning scholarship in musicology and music theory that has extensively explored a range of corporeal and embodied aspects of performing and listening to music. Literary scholars have also begun to address these issues in relation to rhythm and musicality in poetry and literature (albeit separately from the musical performance of poetry). See, for example, Angela Leighton, "Poetry and the Imagining Ear," *Essays in Criticism* 59 (2009): 99–115; and eadem, "On 'The Hearing Ear': Some Sonnets of the Rossettis," *Victorian Poetry* 47 (2009): 505–16.

"Was ich in 'Am Feierabend' merke," Part One: Linguistic Identity and a Relationship with Müller's Poem

Hätt' ich tausend
Arme zu rühren!
Könnt ich brausend
Die Räder führen!
Könnt ich wehen
Durch alle Haine!
Könnt' ich drehen
Alle Steine!
Dass die schöne Müllerin
Merkte meinen treuen Sinn!

In her work of "carnal musicology," *Boccherini's Body*, Elizabeth LeGuin makes the extreme claim that she finds herself in a relationship with the long-dead composer, Luigi Boccherini, through playing and studying his music at the cello:

> Anyone who performs old music or who has written about its history can attest to identifying with composers . . . at its best and sweetest we might call it intimate, implying that it is somehow reciprocal. I will contend two things here: first, that the sense of reciprocity in this process of identification is not entirely wistful or metaphorical, but functions as real relationship; and second, that this relationship is not fantastic, incidental, or inessential to musicology. It can and should be a primary source of knowledge about the performed work of art.[44]

My analysis of my relationship with "Am Feierabend" in Fischer-Dieskau's recorded performance in the next three sections of this article extends and modifies LeGuin's claim. In one sense it pushes her point of view further, in that it includes a personal and carnal perspective on the work of not only a composer, but also of a poet, a performer, and the larger language (German) with which they are associated. Where I break with LeGuin's position is with the suggestion that my relationship with Müller, his fictional miller, Schubert, or Fischer-Dieskau might be at all reciprocal. Instead, I will linger on the opposite scenario: the impossibility of reciprocation is in some small way a part of the series of gaps associated with desire I experience.

The desire that I mention here is not so far removed from the manifest topic of Müller's poem. Were one to go so far as to take up a Saussurian search for a single word that governs Müller's poem, one

[44] LeGuin, *Boccherini's Body*, 14.

possibility would be the verb *merken*: to notice, to mark. In the context of Müller's monodrama, the miller wants to be noticed by the object of his desire, the miller-maid; he feels invisible and inaudible. Before he can at all have her, she must first "touch him; know that he exists," as Barthes recognized in a very different context.[45] Although the miller's beloved ultimately pays insufficient notice, Müller represents the miller's cries of frustrated desire sonically for the reader; and Schubert, as well as those who would perform his song, amplify them further. Even if the miller maid does not hear the young miller, we cannot help but do so. My analysis here will thus be tethered to this general theme of effort, which traditionally would be fully ascribed to the character of the miller within Müller's monodrama. I will not, however, limit my discussion of effort to an account of Müller's, Schubert's, and Fischer-Dieskau's dramatic portrayals of the miller; rather I will move between describing material and meaningful aspects of poetic language, musical rhythm, and vocal corporeality that in part belong fully to the poem, song, and Fischer-Dieskau's voice, and in part depend on my own culturally marked body.[46]

Fischer-Dieskau's last "merkte" and the song in which it occurs launch me into a complex experience of materiality, meanings, and embodiment. While certainly provoked to some degree by the desire of the miller for the maid in Müller's poem, the desire and engagement with effort that I associate with this song have little to do with romantic love gone awry. I initially came to this poem with a limited knowledge of German many years ago, when I was involved in basic diction for singers as well as German courses for beginners. This linguistic memory of coming to love a Lied and a particular recording is nearly impossible to reconstruct; nevertheless, what I can recall requires mention. In line with the sorts of experiences that Hoffman describes, during my early encounters with the recording, with an English translation at the ready, my ears and immediate poetic memory were drawn into contemplation of the closing couplet of the stanza: "Dass die schöne Müllerin / merkte meinen treuen Sinn." Within these lines, the word "merkte" had a sensory shine that outdid the other words in the couplet and, indeed, the entire first stanza of the poem, which Schubert repeats as the closing strophe of his song. Then and now, through my various kinesthetic

[45] Barthes, "Listening," in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991; orig. ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 251.

[46] Klein mentions Barthes's association of the grain of the voice with a sort of hallucination or sense of presence of the body of the singer (even in a recording): "Stimme verstehen mit und gegen Roland Barthes," 7–8. Later he also posits a "narrative des Singens" that, especially in the case of popular voices, is based less in the dramatic or poetic persona that a singer might assume in a given opera or song than in the accumulated personal and cultural history of a given singer (pp. 12–16). Both ideas resonate with the account that I give here.

attempts to hold onto meanings in the foreign language, the word has always seemed inordinately well suited to its meaning: harder, tighter in the mouth than "to notice," or—through a cognate that itself reflects the historical tightness of English and German—more "marked." (Like many individuals who work to acquire a new language, I probably held onto the word in part because the cognate was so easy to remember.) The word's unique qualities—at turns pleasurable and frustrating—did not end at its capabilities of depiction. I enjoyed the new sound as one with a more memorable taste than the others surrounding it—an interest generated by its somatic connection to its general and poetic meaning that went beyond both of these to material pleasure. This taste included and includes a sharp note of frustration, analogous to the miller's but extending well beyond it. What began as a kind of crude cratylism—just trying to connect sounds to meanings in order to understand—eventually ripened into a way of engaging with this poetry and aspects of the German language in general that totters enjoyably between materiality and meaning. I could not and cannot correctly pronounce the German "r" in that word. And even to pronounce those *r*'s correctly, without any detectable accent, would not necessarily be to capture their cultural specificity. (In this respect I see myself in Barthes's rhetoric; when speaking of the similarly distinct "r" within his own French, Barthes dwells at length on its fascinating characteristics, increased by Panzéra's particular diction.)[47] "Merkte" and its components remind me of my linguistic identity, which involves a degree of unbridgeable distance from the German tongue. The language's phonemes and the signifiers that they conjure for me, as a kind of outsider, are unusually predisposed to waver between being simply correlated to their signifieds in my perception and being charmed, sensory objects that far exceed, though do not abandon, their connection to conventional meaning.

But, of course, Müller's poem, through Schubert's setting, in Fischer-Dieskau's determined rendition, have been the full catalysts in establishing the word as a marker for my relationship to this language and its signature romantic vocal repertoire. As is so often the case in poetry, the miller's desire to impress the maid is depicted not only through plain semantic meaning but through the poem's signifier sounds. Müller's poem acts on the body of one reading it (or intoning it along with another performer). The ever-present somatic patterns of constraint and release found in language and music in general are

[47] Panzéra's "r" is indeed a widely disseminated signifier in Barthes's texts on the singer; it might almost be said to break up the texts from underneath in its own way. See, for example, "Grain," 272; and "Music, Voice, Language," in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; orig. ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 282.

intensified throughout Müller's stanza in order to evoke effort; particularly while reading this poem aloud, an individual must kinesthetically sense the qualitatively different placement of phonemes in the vocal apparatus, as well as the larger rhythmic profile in the poem's metrical arrangement. In Müller's poem, these material components all conspire to direct kinesthetic energy to the "merkte" of the final couplet, simultaneously supporting the narrative crux of the stanza and allowing this couplet to point beyond narration, drama, or emotional portrayal to material enjoyment.

"Merkte" is positioned to win the reader's attention for a combination of broad syntactical and phonemic reasons. For example, even with a very rudimentary training in German pronunciation, one might see that the final couplet differs in length, rhyme, and grammatical and phonemic profile from the rest, and thus further sticks out from the rest of the stanza. The large-scale if-then logic of the stanza (or, more literally, "könnt' ich" / "Dass"), whether grasped grammatically or just intuited metrically, also leads one to hasten to this concluding couplet and its material differences from the first eight lines. By contrast, the first three clauses resemble each other closely in sonic and syntactical substance, like variations. And though every word of the closing couplet is important in specifying its meaning, "merkte" stands out both as the start of the last line and for phonemic reasons. Surrounded by more liquid and less percussive sounds in the rest of the couplet, the word is indeed "marked" in a way that has little to do with the miller's desires: it takes up the starting consonant "m" from the just mentioned "Müllerin" (initiating a string of alliterative words), and features the closed vowel "e" with a rather high, "tight" tongue position made more constricted by the "r" that either colors it as that specifically German variant on the schwa or when rolled offers some kinesthetic relief, only to be followed by two more percussive consonants, the unvoiced "k" and the also voiceless "t." It is the only word in the couplet with such a dense consonant cluster.

A reader is also likely to stumble verbally if expecting too easy a metric regularity in the stanza. Here one might posit a veritable spectrum of readers enjoying a variety of degrees of relative ease versus effort in approaching the poetry. A professional actor whose native language is German and who is very familiar with romantic poetry might find the irregularity a fleeting challenge at most; a German school child unfamiliar with such language might stumble prodigiously in comparison; a nonnative speaker could be expected to stumble a bit further still. Although the first couplet appears to set up a potentially strict trochaic dimeter, the two lines are only nearly identical. In actuality, as the miller declares his already faltering desire to be noteworthy and powerful, with

a hyperbolic "thousand arms" to impress the miller maid, he eschews mechanical metrical regularity in favor of a freer excess. The second half of the clause is longer than the first, inefficiently stretching over the three-syllable dactyl "Arme zu" before properly following up with "rühren." A first-time reader, in particular, might be prepared to conclude the clause with a perfect two-foot trochae: the "zu" comes as an artful impediment. In his desperation, the miller repeats altered forms of this stumbling pattern two more times, courageously announcing the expressive goal of all of these imaginings of empowered efforts in lines 9–10. In the final couplet, he perfectly doubles the number of feet in each line, matching them exactly in meter and rhyme.

Müller's attention to vowel and consonant choice also does a great deal to support this overall trajectory. In the first eight lines, in which the miller fantasizes about having great strength, Müller tosses around the tongues of his readers, even where vowels are concerned. He requires one forming the words in the mouth to move drastically from high, arguably more constrained "i" tongue-position vowels to lower, open "a" tongue-position vowels, only to swing rapidly back again. Lines 1–2 begin with such a sequence: "Hätt' ich," to "tausend" and "Arme," then back nearly immediately to "rühren." This rapid alteration characterizes the first eight lines of the poem. On top of this vowel-based careening of the tongue, Müller adds what is perhaps the most characteristic sonic feature of the stanza's first eight lines: he modifies each conditional opening modal verb (first "hätte," then "könnte" in the following three lines) so that the final "e" is dropped. The technique belongs to everyday colloquial German practice, but here it dramatizes constraint by compressing the word into the space of one syllable, forcing the reader to close the word with the percussive stop "t" and to follow it immediately with the equally clipped syllable "ich." The miller's confession of the object of his desire has a completely different profile. In the luxuriant length of the four-foot lines (9–10), the miller finally returns to a more regular pace of formal speech: the adjective "schöne" restores the missing "e" of the previous eight lines, and even the more fraught "merkte" is not truncated as it participates in the metric purity of the closing couplet. Furthermore, the vowels here stay more closely related to one another in tongue position than before, and, with the exception of the word "merkte," as already described, the other words in this passage focus on consonant families that make excessive force in pronunciation relatively difficult to achieve. The fleeting "D" of "Dass" and the "tr" of "treuen" only allow moderately percussive attacks. And though the sibilants "sch" and "s" could conceivably be performed with some explosive force, when given a concentrated shot of breath, the frequent, relatively gentle "n," "m," and "l" cajole these two other consonants into relative civility.

These observations on Müller's sonic poetic devices do not necessarily need to be explained via my linguistic identity: indeed I have just explained them as fully objective structural components of the poem, and I suspect that a native German speaker would recognize and appreciate many of the same carefully crafted poetic devices. But I do mean to propose that these devices are likely to have a very different significatory power for readers with very different cultural, subcultural, and personal backgrounds. For me, the stanza's vowels, consonants, larger metrical patterns, and syntax do far more than hammer home the miller's manifest desire to be noticed. They script a wild, effortful embodiment of contractions and expansions within the vocal apparatus that threatens to exhaust me, in a concentrated version of an exhausting day speaking the language full-time, even as it is a source of aesthetic and linguistic pleasure tied to my larger relationship with the German tongue in many other texts and contexts.

My view of "merkte" certainly finds some of its roots in a stereotypical anglophone North-American fascination with the harsh, guttural, or even ugly aspects of German and other Northern European languages and the ghoulish medieval curses and mythologies to which these sounds are wedded. In a subdiscipline-specific approximation of Gadamer's notion of historically effected consciousness, it may also be that my affection for Johann Gottfried Herder's no-longer scientifically tenable, yet poetic, assignment of particular poetic traits to national languages pushes me even further in this direction. At the very least, I am certain my sense of the language in general (having in part originated in poetry like Müller's) is now also anchored in a decidedly Lied-based poetic perception of such sounds whenever they appear. From this listening position, Müller's musical use of the word in this stanza now careens away from merely expressing the miller's own desire to be noticed by the maid. Instead, it grants the word a sensory shine, much like Hoffman's Sahara-like Canada, when I hear the song and, occasionally, elsewhere. My appreciation of Müller's poem, my way of perceiving the larger corpus of Lied poetry and, indeed, my perception of German when spoken or sung are thus perforated with the personalized linguistic gap that I experience as a non-native speaker.

"Was ich in 'Am Feierabend' merke," Part Two: Linguistic Rhythm and the Corporeal Experience of Schubert's Setting

Traditionally, many song analyses have proceeded as if a devotee of a well-known Lied can fully hear its poem alone and apart from its setting. In truth, however, I came to this way of hearing "merkte" via Schubert's setting, much as I would suspect that many other Lied analysts

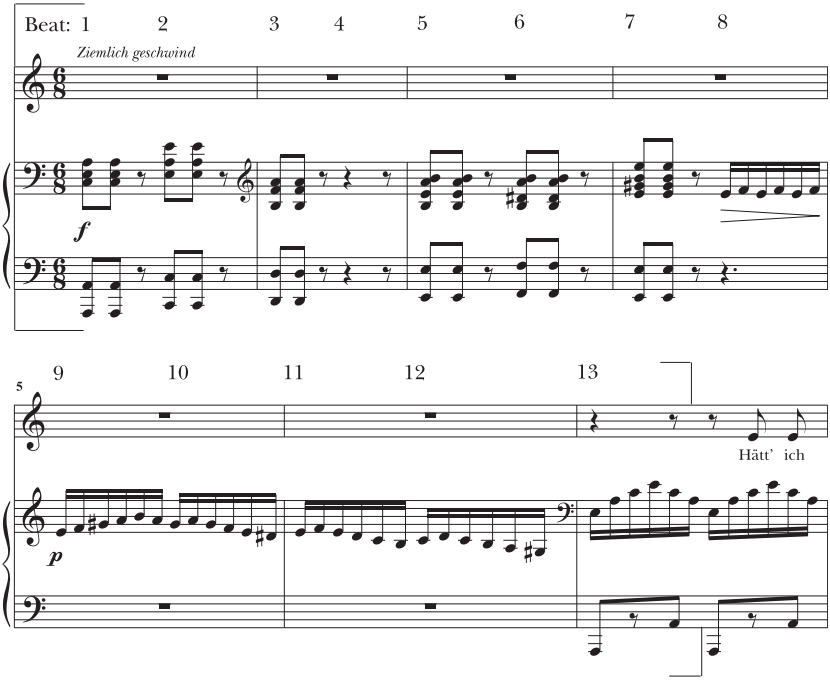
come to this body of poetry; the contours of Schubert's song are thus almost impossible to excise from my ears or voice as I perform or coperform the poem. Following Müller closely, Schubert sensed that the word was to be "marked," and he intensifies the central material, syntactical, and rhythmic position of priority that "merkte" already takes in Müller's stanza at almost every turn. In a way that suggestively recalls Saussure's anagrams, as well as the lasting preoccupation with "condensation," "expansion," and related concepts in theories of embodiment in poetry and music found in work such as Lewin's, Schubert condenses kinesthetic energy in the direction of the word. By the close of the song it is the most repeated term, featuring a yet more highlighted first syllable.

Schubert magnifies the effect of Müller's "merkte" through several coordinated techniques. Most simply, he repeats the word beyond Müller's usage by 1) reusing the stanza to close an ABA' song form; and 2) using the closing couplet in its entirety twice at the end of the A section (mm. 16–24) and three times in the final A' section of the song (mm. 68–85). More pointedly, in the final three repetitions of the closing couplet, Schubert places the first syllable of "merkte" in positions of increasing kinesthetic emphasis, a gesture that he accomplishes through metric, rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and textural devices. The last of these differs significantly from any previous setting of the word in the song, leaving the most indelible mark on "merkte."

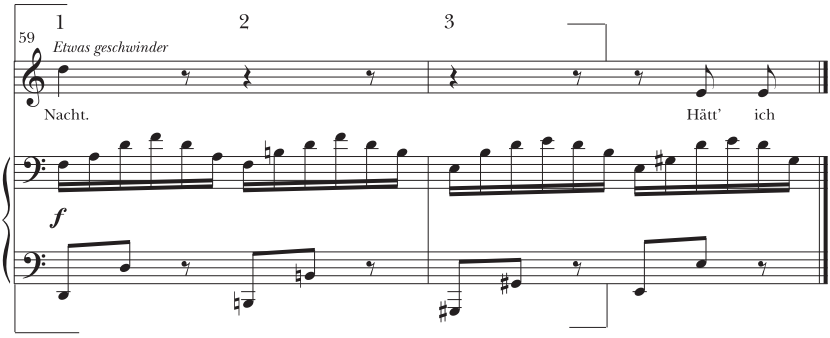
Schubert sets the stage for these increasing points of condensation on "merkte" from the moment he introduces the return of the first stanza, establishing the onset of an A' section in an ABA' song form (m. 59). The music immediately contracts at three levels simultaneously in comparison with the A section (exx. 3a and 3b compare the openings of A and A'). The introductory material now takes only three beats (assigning the beat to the dotted quarter note, ex. 3b) before the voice enters (contracting the earlier version in ex. 3a). The harmonic rhythm is equally constrained and focused, and the piano's left-hand octave leaps now rush to complete themselves on the first and second eighth notes of the dotted quarter-note beat, making the earlier eighth-note rest seem luxuriously relaxed in retrospect (ex. 3b).

These levels of condensation herald a more notable metric contraction to come. (Exx. 4a and 4b compare the closing passages of the A section with the analogous passage of the A' section.) At the syntactical and expressive (as well as the linguistically kinesthetic) crux of the stanza, Schubert makes a decisive alteration to the music as it appeared in the A version. Erasing the beat of rest that he had employed in the second dotted quarter-note beat of measure 15, Schubert presses ahead immediately on beat two of measure 68, entering into his striking recomposition of the injunction to notice (ex. 4b). Schubert's previous settings

EXAMPLE 3A. Thirteen-beat piano introduction, mm. 1–7



EXAMPLE 3B. Three-beat piano introduction (A' section), mm. 59–60



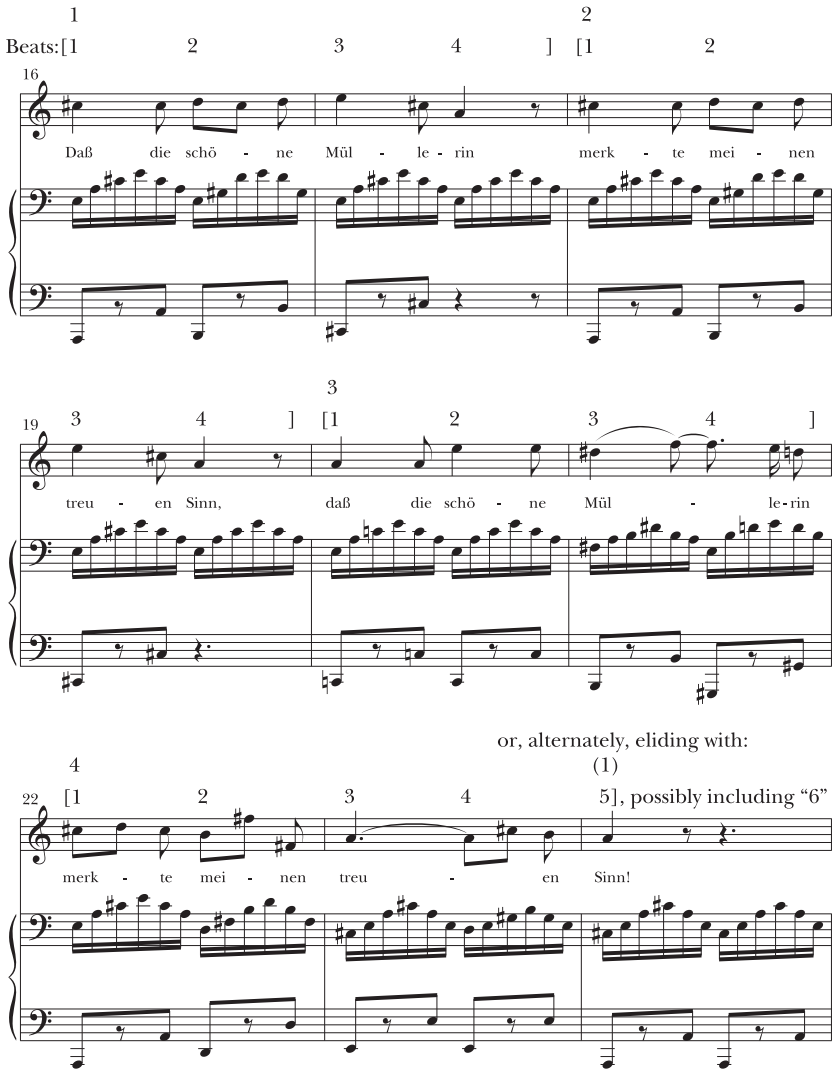
of the final couplet were exercises in expansion, with repetitions designed for indulging lyrically in the couplet. In this A' section, by contrast, Schubert also gives the listener an extended ending, but this one

condenses energy onto the call to notice. Beginning with the omission of an expected rest (as in the A section version) on beat two of measure 68, the phrase rushes ahead using several devices (ex. 4b). Previously, each trochaic foot of the first half of the couplet ("Dass die schöne Müllerin") occupied a full beat, beginning on beat one of the hypermeasure starting in bar 16 (ex. 4a). In the A' iteration, Müller's syllables are squeezed into a tight space indeed: the first poetic foot ("Dass die") receives only the second two eighth notes of the pick-up beat to the hypermeasure beginning on measure 69 (ex. 4b). Schubert also abandons both of the earlier musical options that accompanied the word "Müllerin" (ex. 4a); instead, the final syllable "rin" now lands on the first beat of measure 70, firmly pushing the previous hypermetrical pattern askew, displacing the text with respect to an otherwise regular pattern of four-beat hypermeasures comprising two normal bars each time (ex. 4b). This change sets up the entrance of "merkte" on beat two of measure 70 (initiating a passage of relative hypermetrical confusion: ex. 4b).

Though it would seem that the first syllable of "merkte" would be deemphasized on this weak beat of the measure, Schubert overrides this expectation. The singer now leaps to a G^5 (G^4 when sung by a tenor in the original key), the highest pitch in the song and one only used previously at a *pianissimo* dynamic. Here, the singer is asked to leap to the note at *forte*; if we were in doubt as to Schubert's instructions, the piano supports this intensification through a sudden thickening of texture (deep octaves in the left hand and denser figuration in the right) that also brings the listener's attention to a more minute rhythmic level by accenting each eighth-note pulse. Schubert's repetition of this entire phrase nearly verbatim (mm. 73–77) thus has a double "lengthening" and "shortening" effect for the A' section. We certainly hear the phrase again (and, indeed, the phrase even contains word repetition on "meinen" and a metric elongation on the cadential "treuen"), but it invokes rushing and constraint (not expansiveness) through the metrical, rhythmic, and melodic profile just described.

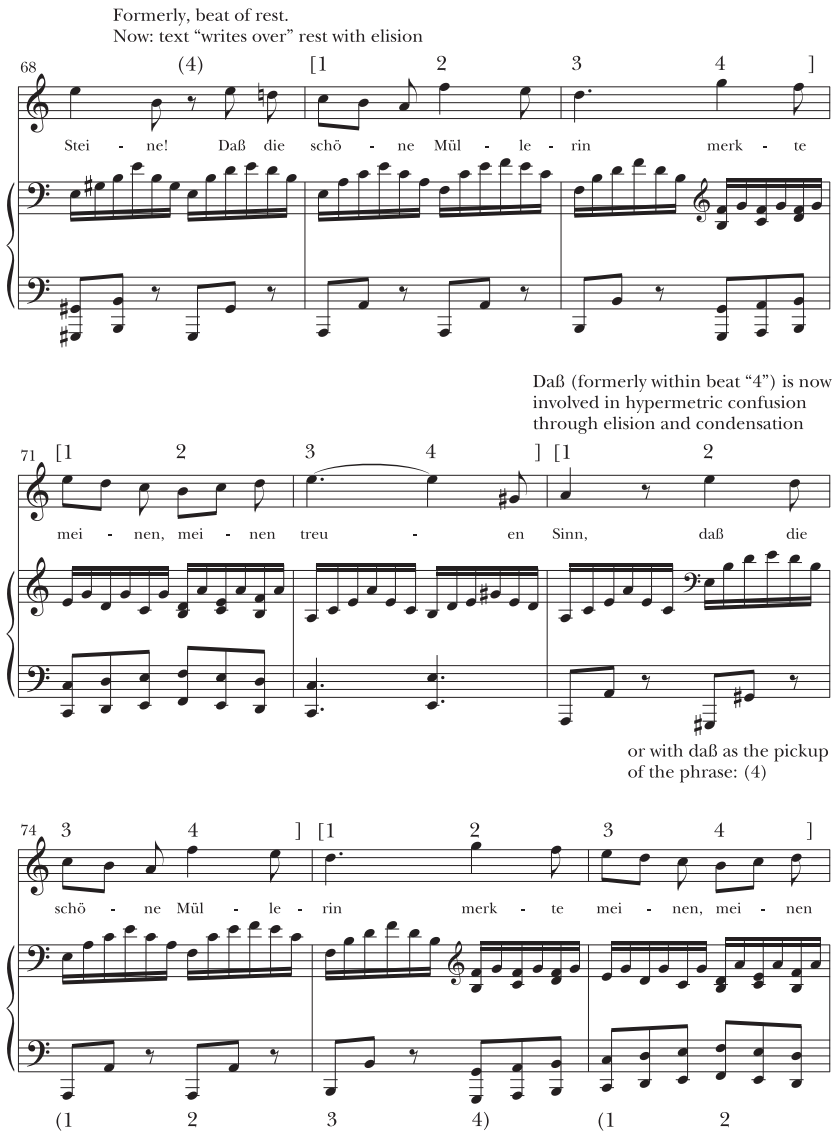
By this point in the song, we have heard "merkte" four times, sung in three different ways. The last repetition eclipses these in intensity, both through its suddenly different character and its privileged position within the last vocal phrase of the song (ex. 5). On the page, at least, metric contraction and intensity here seem to finally cede the floor to a more lyrical expansiveness. Now Schubert treats us to three (or nearly three) full beats of rest before the voice enters with each half of the couplet for the last time. But the rapid and frequent changes in dynamics, rhythm, and harmonic tension within these new phrases undercut this sensation. The pianist's interjections are central to this effect. In

EXAMPLE 4A. Original composition of final couplet ("Dass die schöne Müllerin/ Merkte meinen treuen Sinn") in A section, mm. 16–24



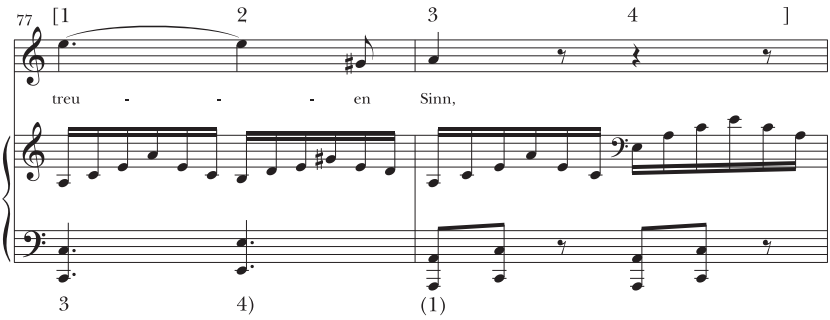
measures 78 and, especially, 82, Schubert's score gives the pianist one of the few opportunities in the song to play the violent wheel-figuration without any need to sound under the singer's voice, especially with

EXAMPLE 4B. Schubert's recomposition of the close of the A section in the A' section, mm. 68–78



respect to the left-hand octaves. The accompaniment then quickly shifts to a hushed dominant-seventh harmony, but one than tensely demands its resolution by sitting above a tonic pedal. In fact, the tense care with

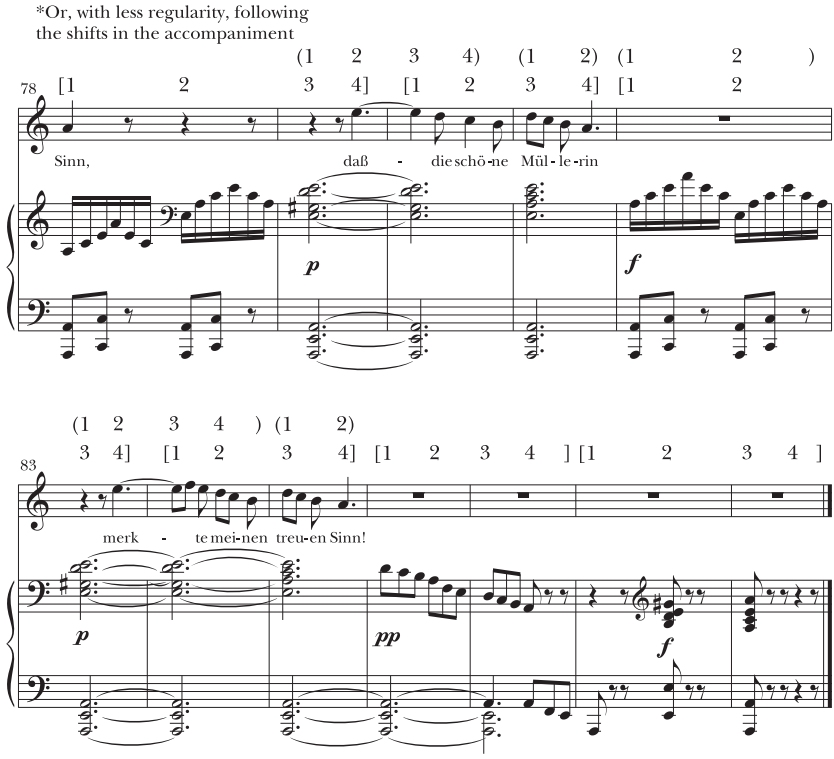
EXAMPLE 4B. (*Continued*)



which Gerald Moore approaches the suddenly quiet chord feels a great deal like the tense control needed to attempt "merkte," from the carnal perspective of a co-performer. The phrase structure also again breaks with any very simple hypermetrical pulse (see alternate numberings in ex. 5). Against this multidimensional tension, Schubert sets each half of the final couplet in a nearly identical fashion. But even here, we are to notice the word "merkte." Although the word begins, like "dass" before it (m. 79), on beat two of measure 83 on E^5 (E^4 for male voice), Schubert adds a minor-second neighbor-note decoration that gives it a special status relative to its surroundings. The phrase squeezes out a last drop of ornamental musical tension from the word before the song subsides into resolution.

Using not just repetition, but deft rhythmic and registral shifts, Schubert therefore turns Müller's "merkte" into a pulsing refrain. While the refrain can certainly be explained as a dramatic device supporting the miller's monologue, I would argue that the rhythmic power of this refrain cannot be fully contained by the miller's stated emotions, even if they were, at first, the primary inspiration for this compositional design. Instead, much like something emanating from the realm of Kristeva's semiotic, Schubert's "merkte," in dialogue with the most pounding moments of the pianist's mill, has the potential to engender a "crisis of expression," where the point of the musico-poetic synthesis is no longer drama but material enjoyment. Given my relationship to the German language, especially as used in this song, I do not appreciate the increasing condensation of energy on "merkte" primarily as a dramatic device. Instead, its significance is primarily a material one, made all the more pleasurable because of the foreign taste that colors an arguably more universal and satisfying sense of rhythmic drive.

EXAMPLE 5. Final setting of "Merkte meinen treuen Sinn" in close of A' section, mm. 78–89



"Was ich in 'Am Feierabend' merke": Distance, Intimacy, and Fischer-Dieskau's Asymptotic Voice

Many of the demands that Müller's poem and Schubert's setting place on a performer's—and to a related extent, a corporeally involved co-performer's—body are fixed: a speaker's or singer's mouth *must* move in certain correct ways to articulate the sounds of "merkte"; the rest of a singer's vocal apparatus must rely on a limited range of techniques to successfully reach the high G^5 (G^4) in measure 70; pianists must move between the wild jumping motions of measure 78 to the carefully controlled chords of measures 79–80 with great finesse and contrast to successfully interpret the song. Yet we might posit that an Anglophone mouth would move differently, and with a different kind of attention, than that of any native German when approaching these passages to speak or sing. Different professional singers could furthermore produce

a kaleidoscopic variety of sounds, colors, and nuances in these same limited moments; that variety extends to every accompanist as well.

While he may overplay Fischer-Dieskau's position as a "phenosinger" committed to the clarity of articulate, dramatic meaning, Barthes would have been right to apply his claim to Fischer-Dieskau's performance as Müller's miller in this song. Listening to his recording of "Am Feierabend," I do not disagree that Fischer-Dieskau sings with an attention to semantic and dramatic meaning that could be difficult to set aside in favor of taking a more material listening posture. He makes us want to understand those words and to identify with his miller. But what I hear in Fischer-Dieskau's diction and singing does not end at an enactment of the miller's desire, or of romantic desire in general. Instead, I hear a more multilayered call to "notice," to "mark": to reflect on the work of "merkte" in the song, the sense of kinesthetic condensation particular to the word itself, Müller's use of it, Schubert's magnification of that usage, my relationship to it, and Fischer-Dieskau's intimacy with it.

When Fischer-Dieskau approaches the final three repetitions of "merkte" in the A' section, all of the elements that I have described dance together. This conclusion should come as no surprise: more than either Müller's poem or Schubert's setting, his recording led me to the sensations and reflections that have driven the entirety of this poetic and musical analysis. Fischer-Dieskau imbues the stressed syllable "merk," at the melodic high point of the phrases (in mm. 70 and 75) with great tension and physical excess as he almost yells the two exclamations (ex. 4b). Because he is a baritone (and even though he sings the song in the lower-than-original key of G minor), these climaxes also lie high in his voice, intensifying the effect (he sings an F^4). In addition to the strident attack on the vowel, he curls the rolled "r" with pronounced energy and color. He is expressive here in every conventional sense; yet the physical energies condensed onto the focused syllable of "merk" easily suggest more than an emotional interpretation.

When Fischer-Dieskau returns to the word for the last time, in measure 83, he seems to know its pleasures are fleeting. Providing a subtle variation on the marked constraint on the first syllable, Fischer-Dieskau presses weightily into the D^4 (E^5 in the original key score, ex. 5), also deciding in favor of the "r" as German schwa, relishing the syllable and making the upper-neighbor F (he sings E♭) seem an unbearably necessary consequence of his actions, while showcasing the material power of the syllable one final time. This last "merkte" is almost naked. The voice carries not just the charmed word but also the pressed upper neighbor so powerfully that it might as well be purely a cappella (despite the actual presence of the quiet dominant harmony in the piano, held over the

tense tonic pedal). For me, the impossibilities of distance are here most apparent, despite how clearly the syllables and the voice are presented to my ear. I can replay these few measures, hold them in my aural memory, sing them in imitation while at the piano, and yet never approximate their beauty or aesthetic authority.

Considering the special attention already given to the word (and especially the stressed syllable) by Müller and Schubert, Fischer-Dieskau's choices in this recording can come across as necessary. In truth they are not: Fischer-Dieskau's other recordings of this cycle belie this impression, and different performers will always find at least somewhat different ways to approach the same words and passages in a song. A quick comparison with recordings by a number of prominent tenors reveals that Fischer-Dieskau's "merkte" in this recording is hardly universal or definitive.[48] Yet for the purposes of my arguments here, to a large extent any comparison that I might make with any additional recordings by Fischer-Dieskau or other singers would be beside the point. As I suspect is often the case when one particular recording cements a longstanding relationship to a performer and a song, it is now impossible for me to separate my formative experiences with this song, Schubert's Lied output, romantic German poetry, and indeed learning or speaking German from Fischer-Dieskau's voice in this recording. In this respect, my analysis has been a musicological tale of how one's aural image of not just a musical genre—but of a foreign language intimately coupled to it—may involve or even start in an idealized, native, and accomplished asymptotic voice.

Epilogue: On Linguistic (and Other) Identities and the Love of the Foreign

One last confession: the above-cited Eva Hoffman, whose primary reflections on identity are linguistic, also happens to be a classically trained pianist. For her, as for me, much of the desire and frustration involved with experience in a second language has to do with avoiding errors—with not missing any notes, in familiar pianistic fashion. I would also speculate—though this must remain at the level of unconfirmed

[48] In contrast to this approach, many comparative analyses of recordings (including those of Lieder) describe more general expressive trends as well as changes in historical performing practices. For an overview, see Nicholas Cook, "Methods for Analyzing Recordings," in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 221–45. See also, in the same volume, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Recordings and Histories of Performance Style," 246–62; as well as idem, "Performance Style in Elena Gerhardt's Schubert Song Recordings," in *Musicæ Scientiæ: The Journal of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music*, special issue, ed. Jukka Louhivuori, Towards a Musicology of Recordings, 14 (2010): 57–84; and idem, "Sound and Meaning in Recordings of Schubert's *Die junge Nonne*," *Musicæ scientiæ: The Journal of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music* 11 (2007): 209–36.

suspicion—that the sense of imitating an asymptotic, fluent voice is not far from her aesthetic sense. As Hoffman puts it: "It's as important to me to speak well as to play a piece of music without mistakes. . . . [Some degree of] that authority—in whatever dialect, in whatever variant of the mainstream language—seems to me to be something we all desire."[49] I mention this commonality so as to return to the question of which aspects of my account and analysis are personal, which are more widely cultural, and which (if any) are universally applicable. The particularity of my account, however resonant with influential and diverse strains in interdisciplinary discussions of co-performance, linguistic identity, materiality, meanings, corporeality, and rhythm, precludes any final decisions in this matter. It is my hope, however, that even the most intensely personal aspects of this endeavor will challenge readers to think anew about their own corporeally, culturally, and especially linguistically conditioned ways of approaching sung poetry, as well as the variety of experience involved in our North American engagement with the German Lied in analysis and performance.

My love of the Lied repertoire is in essence a love of the foreign, despite my sustained intimacy with many pertinent aspects of this music and the culture from which it originates. Barthes, too, had a great deal to say on this matter, so much so that he devoted what was probably the last essay of his career to the topic. In "One Always Fails in Speaking of What One Loves," Barthes discusses Stendhal's love affair with Italy: initially a foreigner, he passionately elevated seemingly random details of Italian life to the status of desired objects. At one point, Barthes makes a parallel between his own passion for Japan, which he thought of as completely foreign to him, and Stendhal's Italy:

> I once knew someone who loved Japan the way Stendhal loved Italy; and I recognized the same passion in him by the fact that he loved, among other things, the red-painted fireplugs in the Tokyo streets, just as Stendhal was mad for the cornstalks of the "luxuriant" Milanese campagna, for the sound of the Duomo's eight bells . . . or for the pan-fried cutlets that reminded him of Milan.[50]

Barthes calls this the "erotic promotion of what is commonly taken for an insignificant detail": my "merkte" might just as well be his fire-plugs.[51] It is in part a kind of reverse discrimination, where the enchanting effects of poetic German are elevated above everyday and even poetic American English. And like Barthes's description of Stendhal, I was unable for

[49] Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*, 122–24.

[50] Roland Barthes, "One Always Fails in Speaking of What One Loves," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 297.

[51] Ibid.

a long time to speak cogently of my perception of these signifier-sounds in this beloved context, able only to say "I love it," and to keep saying so.[52]

Barthes thematized his own experience of this kind of love in his *Empire of Signs*, where he writes about his own, essentially fictive and personal Japan. Not being able to speak or read a word of Japanese, Barthes delighted "in the interstice, delivered from any fulfilled meaning"—in a kind of extensive, suspended experience of pleasurable signifiers.[53] As much as I at times identify with this position, I have instead worked to describe a very different interstice, where meaning and, in fact, the desire to understand plays as much if not more of a role in the personal and cultural experience of foreign-language song than any more undetermined set of signifiers. Despite its insistence on corporeality, personal particularity, and the delight in sung signifier-sounds apart from their assigned communicative meanings, my reading ultimately takes a significant cue from precisely the commitment to meaning that Barthes decried in Fischer-Dieskau's performances so long before I ever encountered them. Perhaps after all, I depart once and for all from Barthes in favor of the German singer, seeking not just to luxuriate in but also to bridge the inevitable gaps: between linguistic materiality and meaning, between poetic language and everyday speech, and between my voice and the voice inscribed in those authoritative recordings.

ABSTRACT

Scholars have traditionally analyzed Lieder from a perspective of relative objectivity, despite a longstanding recognition of the situated character of hermeneutic work within musicology and music theory. This research essentially suppresses the personal aspects that may condition it: for example, a scholar's background in performance and tendency toward co-performance, or repeated encounters with a song, recording, and a specific singer's voice. There has been one additional omission resulting from this tendency to project objectivity in Anglo-American scholarship. Native Anglophones have neglected to explore how our varied but pervasive roles as second-language readers or speakers inflect the way that we hear and write about German song.

[52] Barthes, "The Romantic Song," in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; orig. ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 286. "What is there to say about what one loves except, *I love it*, and to keep on saying it?"

[53] Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, 9.

In response to these lacunae, this article offers a close reading of the song "Am Feierabend" from Franz Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* (D. 795) in relationship to a 1971 recording by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore. I examine the role that my linguistic identity—as an Anglophone who enjoys an unsteady fluency in German—plays in an essentially co-performing understanding of the song's poem, musical details, and the particular vocal decisions of Fischer-Dieskau. Beginning in conversation with Roland Barthes's "The Grain of the Voice," the essay introduces perspectives from literary theorists, linguists, musicologists, and music theorists to clarify the issues of materiality, meaning, linguistic identity, and rhythm that correspond to the experience of sung German poetry that the analysis traces. The analysis then focuses on the prominence of the German word "merkte" in Müller's poem, Schubert's setting, and Fischer-Dieskau's rendering of the song. This account reevaluates traditional analytical practices concerning song, as well as past scholarship on Barthes's claims within the "Grain" essay, by focusing on the issues of identity, linguistic materiality, meaning, and the love of the foreign in listening to Lieder.

Keywords: Lied, Schubert, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Roland Barthes, co-performance, linguistic materiality