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Joseph von Eichendorff relied upon the sounds of words to create a poetic atmosphere; this is metaphorical rather than literal. Hans Pfitzner rarely used overt text-painting (madrigalism), yet created highly evocative music. This, like the poetry of Eichendorff, is metaphorical interpretation rather than literal depiction; therefore, Pfitzner's Eichendorff settings lend compound illumination to the poetry. "Three Eichendorff Lieder of Hans Pfitzner: A Study of Poetic and Musical Affinity" explores three such settings.

This project is limited to the examination of Pfitzner's setting of three Eichendorff poems: "Der Verspätete Wanderer," "Das Alter," and "In Danzig." To the best of the author's knowledge, each of these poems has received only one other musical setting. Analysis of the music and poetry will be for the purpose of demonstrating the affinity of Pfitzner's and Eichendorff's compositional aims, rather than to formal theoretical ends. Eichendorff's general stylistic traits will be noted, though extensive poetic analysis will be limited to the three poems at hand. Likewise, Pfitzner's general compositional traits will be set forth, and in-depth analysis will be reserved for the three Lieder topical to this study.

Drawing on information gathered from examination of the poetry and Pfitzner's settings thereof, the present study will relate the compositional goals of Eichendorff and Pfitzner to show an affinity between composer and poet. Eichendorff's poetic intentions as interpreted by Pfitzner's music will be elucidated.

THREE EICHENDORFF LIEDER OF HANS PFITZNER:
A STUDY OF MUSICAL AND
POETIC AFFINITY

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem/Objectives

Joseph Karl Benedikt von Eichendorff (1788-1857) relied upon the sounds of words to create a poetic atmosphere; this is metaphorical rather than literal. Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949) rarely used overt text-painting (madrigalism), yet created wonderfully evocative music that augments the given poetic atmosphere. This, as in the poetry of Eichendorff, is metaphorical interpretation rather than literal depiction; therefore, Pfitzner's settings of Eichendorff's poetry lend compound illumination to the poetry. The present study will explore the very aptness of Pfitzner's settings of three Eichendorff poems.

Limitations/Delimitations

The present project is limited to the examination of three Eichendorff poems set by Pfitzner; to the best of the author's knowledge, each of these poems has been set by only one other composer: "In Danzig" by Louis Ferdinand, Prince of Prussia (1907-1994), "Das Alter" by Othmar Schoeck (1886-1957), and "Der Verspätete Wanderer" by Martijn Hooning (b. 1959). Analysis of the music and poetry will be for the purpose of demonstrating the affinity of Pfitzner's and Eichendorff's compositional aims, rather than to formal theoretical ends. Eichendorff's general stylistic traits will be noted, though extensive poetic analysis will be limited to the three poems at hand. Likewise, Pfitzner's general compositional traits will be set forth, and in-depth analysis will be reserved for the three Lieder topical to this study.

Status/Survey of Related Research

A substantial portion of the extant literature—books, dissertations, and articles—dealing with Eichendorff and Pfitzner is published solely in German; it will not serve as a major source of research for the present project. In English or in English translation there

exist books and articles on Hans Pfitzner, largely dealing with his politics (speculation on his support of the Nazi agenda) and his writings on the origins of creativity. Most of the literature dealing with his actual music focuses either on his opera *Palestrina* or on his instrumental works. Richard Mercier's *The Songs of Hans Pfitzner: A Guide and Study* (London: Greenwood Press, 1998) deals specifically with Pfitzner's Lieder; this source briefly introduces each song, and gives translations, basic key information, etc.

Existing dissertations known to me deal with the general idea of textual/musical unity and text setting, poetic atmosphere (*Stimmung*), and musical settings of Eichendorff poetry; the three poems I have chosen are not discussed therein. Literature in English on Eichendorff—whether book, dissertation, or article—deals primarily with the actual poetry, as well as with Eichendorff's context as a poet within the Romantic movement.

Drawing on information gathered from the literature, the present study will relate the compositional processes of Eichendorff and Pfitzner to show an uncanny affinity between composer and poet.

Procedures

I have chosen three poems by Eichendorff that have been set musically by Hans Pfitzner and a single other composer. The poetry will be analyzed, as will Pfitzner's musical settings thereof. Though the settings are occasionally discussed briefly in studies related to either Eichendorff or Pfitzner, a concentrated look at these Lieder seems appropriate. Complete scores of the three Lieder¹ will be included in the appendix, with pertinent musical examples appearing where appropriate within the body of the document. Through discussion of the poetry of Eichendorff and the music of Pfitzner, a remarkable compatibility of the two artists will be elucidated.

¹Sources for the Pfitzner Lieder: Hans Pfitzner, *Drei Sonette, Opus 41* (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1932), "Das Alter" and "Der Verspätete Wanderer"; Jurgen Thym, ed., *100 Years of Eichendorff Songs* (Madison, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, 1983), "In Danzig." See Appendix I for complete scores.

CHAPTER II

PFITZNER AND EICHENDORFF: CREATIVE COMPATIBILITY

The *Ton/Wort* Problem and Hans Pfitzner

The problem of joining *Ton* and *Wort* (sound and word) into a creature whose Gestalt is greater than the sum of its individual parts is primary in any discussion of the German Lied. Perhaps the first consideration is that of which came first, the *Ton* or the *Wort*. In the early days of continuo Lied, there was no definitive answer to this query. Tunes were generally written to accommodate the first verse of a particular poem, but subsequent strophes were usually not considered in the process. Furthermore, the tune written for a particular poem was frequently used for various other poems of compatible meter.

With the reaction by composers against musically-driven 17th century Italian monody, an ideal which would remain central to Lied composition for many years began to evolve: the concept that a poem should dictate its musical setting. Probably reaching its zenith in the songs of Schumann and Wolf, the idea of text-driven composition had become an unquestionable goal for anyone wishing to compose a Lied. However, this trend was not to last indefinitely, and the pendulum began a return swing with the advent of the 20th century. More accurately, composers began to feel a new freedom in forming their own opinions as to how the *Ton/Wort* problem should be addressed.

Hans Pfitzner occupies a place directly in the center of two seemingly disparate streams of thought, each of which recognized the necessity of unity of music and poetic mood (*Stimmung*). He considered himself a musically conservative composer, naming Schumann as a most admired figure in song composition (Pfitzner wrote a biography of Schumann and dedicated a sonnet to him; he also orchestrated six of Schumann's songs and eight of his choral pieces, acting as conductor of the latter).² Pfitzner received most of his musical training at the Frankfurt Conservatory, a bastion of musical conservatism.

²Edward F. Kravitt, *The Lied: Mirror of Late Romanticism* (New Haven, 1996), 32.

In Walter Abendroth's compilation of Pfitzner's own writings, *Hans Pfitzner: Reden–Schriften–Briefe* (Berlin: Luchterhand, 1955), Pfitzner remarks that “It was far better to have studied under [Knorr] than with any one of the wild New Germans.”³

These “New Germans,” however, were to have their affect on the young composer. The idea of composing music for a song before ever seeing the poem—or at least after only a cursory glance thereof—became common practice for Pfitzner. In his own polemical book, *Ober Musikalische Inspiration* (Berlin: A. Fiirsmer, 1940), he describes the compositional process as requiring two streams of thought, one poetic and one musical, which flow simultaneously from independent sources: “There are times...when, from two different springs, the same spirit streams in word and tone together...into one channel like the tones of a perfect interval.” To create such fusion, the music “must come from its own sphere and evoke the same mood as that of the poem; this can occur wholly independently, before knowledge of the poem.”⁴

Whereas his early songs had been attractive in a conservative fashion, Pfitzner's later songs began to take on characteristics of the modern composers whose practices he found so objectionable. Obviously illustrative elements such as the hoof-steps of horses in “Nachtwanderer” (Example 1) gave way to more broadly conceived gestures in the service of *Stimmung*. Beginning with the Opus 9 Eichendorff settings, Pfitzner's songs began to exhibit intense, almost expressionistic dissonance and motivic manipulation bordering on minimalism (“In Danzig”).⁵ A linear rather than vertical texture also became prominent, a practice that both supports the progressive tenets of Pfitzner's despised “New Germans” and conservatively looks backwards to the early days of polyphonic music.⁶

³Kravitt, 27. “Wild New Germans” refers to Arnold Schoenberg and the other innovators of the second Viennese School.

⁴Quoted in John Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner* (Oxford, 1992), 214. Upon inspection, Pfitzner's claim seems untenable; the composer's careful attention to syntax and word stress in his Lied settings is consistently obvious.

⁵Kravitt, 33.

⁶It is interesting the title character of Pfitzner's best-known work, the opera *Palestrina*, was an undisputed master of linear counterpoint.



Example 1. “Nachtwanderer,” mm. 1-3
(Hans Pfitzner. *Sämtliche Lieder mit Klavierbegleitung*. Mainz, Schott: 1983.)

Eichendorff and *Stimmung*

Although Joseph Karl Benedikt von Eichendorff was the quintessential Romantic poet, he both sustained form and feeling of an earlier period (his *Volkslied* heritage) and opened a path for something new. Eichendorff’s efforts to emphasize the sonorous aspect of words over their literal meaning points toward the goals of the coming Symbolist poets, who believed that sounds themselves were more evocative than the literal meaning of words. Perhaps more than any other German poet, Eichendorff is responsible for discovering the existence of the innate musicality of words.⁷

The overriding characteristic of Eichendorff’s genius is his ability to use sounds to create atmosphere—*Stimmung*. It is therefore not surprising that his poetry, unlike that of, say, Rilke, is largely untranslated. The very sounds of the German language—in their particular arrangement by Eichendorff—conjure up more powerful impressions by far than does the actual meaning of the words themselves. Therefore, it could well be that what is needed to make Eichendorff’s poetry accessible to non-German speakers is not a translation into their native tongue, but rather a musical setting.⁸

⁷Liselotte M. Davis, “Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff,” *Dictionary of Literary Biography* edited by James Hardin and Christoph E. Schweitzer, 90 (Detroit, 1980), 62-68.

⁸Egon Schwartz, *Joseph von Eichendorff* (New York, 1972), preface.

CHAPTER III
POEM/LIED ANALYSIS

“Der Verspätete Wanderer”

- 1 Wo aber werd' ich sein im künft'gen Lenze?
2 So frug ich sonst wohl, wenn beim Hüteschwingen
3 Ins Tal wir ließen unser Lied erklingen,
4 Denn jeder Wipfel bot mir frische Kränze.
- 5 Ich wußte nur, daß rings der Frühling glänze,
6 Daß nach dem Meer die Ströme leuchtend gingen,
7 Von fernem Wunderland die Vögel singen,
8 Da hatt' das Morgenrot noch keine Grenze.
- 9 Jetzt aber wirds schon Abend, alle Lieben
10 Sind wandermüde längst zurückgeblieben,
11 Die Nachtluft rauscht durch meine welken Kränze,
12 Und heimwärts rufen mich die Abendglocken,
13 Und in der Einsamkeit frag ich erschrocken:
14 Wo werde ich wohl sein im künft'gen Lenze?

[But where will I be in future springs?
So I ask, as with hat-swinging
In the valley we let our song ring out,
Then every treetop sent me fresh garlands.

I knew only that spring shines all around,
That the streams go sparkling to the sea,
From a distant wonderland the birds sing,
That the sunrise has no boundaries.

But now it already becomes evening, all loves
tired from wandering have long since turned back,
The night breeze rustles through my wilted garlands,
And the evening chimes call me homeward,
And in the loneliness I ask, terrified:
Where will I really be in future springs?]

“Der Verspätete Wanderer” utilizes a common Eichendorffian device; nature is used in a descriptive way to parallel the speaker’s emotional progression. The poem is expository, unwaveringly cast in the first person voice. A dramatic shift of emotional perspective is skillfully accomplished within the sonnet, ranging from casual day-dreaming to horrified self-examination. At the opening of the poem, the speaker is unselfconsciously immersed in a familiar and carefree scene; he questions with joyous anticipation where he may be in future springs. He is obviously active and interactive, as evidenced by hat-swinging, singing, and the receiving of gifts from nature (“Denn jeder Wipfel bot mir frische Kränze/Then every treetop sent me fresh flowers”). Additionally, we know that the speaker is—either actually or figuratively—not alone (“Ins Tal wir ließen unser Lied erklingen/In the valley we let our song ring out”).

In the second quatrain, action and interaction are replaced by observation; the speaker has become objective. Instead of being a natural element of the environment, the speaker has become self-conscious and describes nature as something outside of himself. Ironically, the positive image of a sunrise without boundaries (“Da hatt’ das Morgenrot noch keine Grenze”)—paralleled by the speaker’s own unbridled self-exploration—leads to the demise of his innocence and joy.

Night falls quickly at the opening of the sestet; the companionship cryptically referenced in quatrain one is herein negated just as cryptically (“...alle Lieben Sind wandermüde längst zurückgeblieben/...all loves tired from wandering have long since turned back”). The fresh flowers given by the treetops are now taken away by the night breeze, the speaker is called back from a carefree romp in the valley by evening chimes, and loneliness replaces union with another; in essence, each element of carefree joy presented in the opening quatrain is negated in the sestet. As a self-aware being, the speaker now asks the same question that he initially posed: “Where will I be in future springs?”⁹ However, from his new perspective of self-awareness, he poses the question in

⁹“Wo aber werd’ ich sein im künft’gen Lenze?” in quatrain one, “Wo werde ich wohl sein im künft’gen Lenze?” in the final sestet; the question is the same, but the mood is altered by the use of slightly varied grammar and diction. The initial query is grammatically casual, with the use of filler words (“aber/ but”) and a contracted verb (“werd’/will”); the final query contains no contracted verb, and replaces “aber” with the intensifier “wohl.”

terror. Eichendorff's concept of the roles of Nature, God, and Man is evident here; Nature is the vehicle through which God speaks to Man.¹⁰

Structurally, "Der Verspätete Wanderer" follows a simple and regular plan, basically in the form of an Italian sonnet.¹¹ The rhythmic regularity of the poem seems to support Eichendorff's assertion that the process of gaining self-awareness is regular and normal, perhaps even predictable. Equal time—four lines of eleven syllables each—is devoted to the speaker's experience of being a part of nature (quatrain one) and his observation of nature as a benevolent and comforting force (quatrain two). A run-on ending between lines one and two of the sestet marks the end of the established and regular rhythm; the speaker has become self-conscious, and the comforts of nature's dependable precision are no longer taken for granted. Regular iambic pentameter returns in lines three and four, indicating the return of nature ("Die Nachtluft rauscht durch meine welken Kränze/The night breeze rustles through my wilted garlands") and the naturalness and inevitability of self-discovery ("Und heimwärts rufen mich die Abendglocken/And the evening chimes call me homeward"). Line five of the ending sestet features a remarkably contrasting rhythmic structure; the loneliness and horror of true self-realization is cast in dactylic tetrameter (technically, three dactylic feet and a final trochaic foot).

Along with rhythm, word association is also used effectively in the poem. The rhyme scheme rather obviously relates rhyming end words, which in the two quatrains are images of youth, vibrancy and life: Lenze/Kränze/glänze/Grenze (spring/wreath/shines/boundaries) and Hüteschwingen/erklingen/gingen/singen (hatswinging/sound out/go/sing). End rhymes in the sestet are much more somber: Lieben/zurückgeblieben (loves/turned backwards) and Abendglocken/erschrocken (evening bells/terrified). The reiteration herein of Kränze/Lenze reinforces the theme of the poem—just as the speaker's question has taken on new meaning following his loss of innocence, so do the images that were once a source of pleasure and joy.

¹⁰Lawrence Radner, *Eichendorff: The Spiritual Geometer* (Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Studies, 1970), 11.

¹¹Italian sonnet form is basically defined as fourteen lines of iambic pentameter, in this case rhymed *abba abba ccadda*. The rhyme scheme of the sestet is unusual, most common examples being *cddcdee*, *cde cde*, *ccdde*, or *cdcdcd*. (Millett, 42.)

Mention should be made of Eichendorff's use of related adjacent consonant sounds at the end of the second quatrain; though actual word and image association has been prevalent in support of the poetic theme, this subtle and brief usage of sound color is significant. Functionally speaking, the sounds [d/t/n/s] are all produced in basically the same way; the front of the tongue comes into contact with the alveolar ridge, either with or without voice, and for either a short or extended amount of time. Similarly, the sounds [x/k] are produced when the velum comes into contact with the tongue, either for a short or extended amount of time. The poetic line under consideration here is "Da hatt' das Morgenrot noch keine Grenze" (adjacent related consonants underlined). This alignment of sounds paints a picture of the ultimate statement of all being right in the world; nature is functioning like clockwork, with things all falling into line.

Pfitzner's treatment of "Der Verspätete Wanderer" utilizes a variety of devices that elucidate the themes of Eichendorff's poem. Particularly prevalent is the use of the accompaniment in the role of the natural world and the voice in the role of the speaker of the poem. The duality between self and nature is also presented in the form of third relationships; modulations tend to move—however briefly—by thirds. The fluid use of major and minor third relationships—most obviously in the key presentation of the first and final lines of the poem (mm. 3-5 in G-flat major and mm. 48-50 in E-flat minor, respectively) but present throughout the Lied—reinforces Eichendorff's themes. The inevitability and naturalness of this journey to self-awareness is underscored throughout by prevalent strong cadential patterns.

"Der Verspätete Wanderer" opens with a jaunty two-bar introduction that firmly establishes both rhythmic pattern and key (I-IV-V chord progression firmly establishes G-flat as tonic). The rhythmically active accompaniment figure is joined by a mostly syllabic vocal line; it is notable that the lyrical nature of the vocal line is in contrast to the jaunty accompanimental figure—the speaker is confidently independent and unselfconscious. The opening question of the poem is posed unabashedly by the voice, with a generally rising melodic line and a final additional rising inflection on "Lenze"; Pfitzner here relies upon the use of agogic accent to maintain the correct syllabic stress (m. 5). A fairly quick harmonic rhythm moves the key center from G-flat to E-flat by line two of the poem (m.7). A run-on connection between lines two and three of Eichendorff's poem

is faithfully reflected in Pfitzner's setting; a short rest is written into the music, yet the descending E-flat major scale remains unbroken, connecting the thought without violating the line division of the poem (mm. 7-10). The final line of this opening quatrain is vigorous, with ever-increasing intervallic leaps within the vocal line; the leap of a major seventh in mm. 13-14 highlights the end rhyme "Kränze/Lenze." Falling pitch on the final unaccented syllable both preserves correct word accent and affirms the line as declamatory, as opposed to the interrogative opening line. The key returns to G-flat by the end of the strophe, neatly packaging the optimism of the opening quatrain.

A three-bar interlude reiterating G-flat major introduces the second quatrain of the poem, which opens enharmonically in F-sharp major (m. 18). A rapid harmonic rhythm propels the music through a variety of distantly-related keys—F-sharp major/D major/D minor/B-flat major/E major/B minor/C-sharp major/F-sharp major—thus creating a sense of uncontrolled falling or loss of balance (mm. 18-28). This musical exploration and instability brilliantly supports Eichendorff's intentions for his speaker in this second quatrain: loss of innocence and burgeoning self-consciousness gained by realizing one's self as being separate from one's surroundings. Pfitzner further strengthens this point by having the voice and accompaniment share melodic and rhythmic material; beginning in measure 19 the piano introduces a rhythmic/melodic motive (eighth-note figuration of disparate pitches) that prevails throughout the remainder of the stanza. This figure seems to be derived from the vocal line in measure 22, though it is varied both by interval and directionally by pitch (ascending/descending); the text related to this chosen material, "In fernem Wunderland" ("In a distant wonderland"), succinctly describes the speaker's journey into a new territory of self-awareness.

Night falls swiftly upon the ending sestet; modulation via remote keys—D minor/Bb minor/C-sharp major—moves the key center from F-sharp major at the end of the second quatrain to F-sharp minor at the beginning of the sestet, all in the space of only two bars. The relationship of accompaniment and voice is here restored to a very sedate version of their relationship in the opening quatrain; a slower tempo, minor key, and greatly reduced pitch and interval range accomplish a transformation of mood (mm. 28-38). Pfitzner is again true to Eichendorff's line divisions, connecting the thought ("Alle Lieben_sind wandermüde längst zurückgeblieben/All loves, tired from wandering have

turned back”) between measures 32 and 33 and yet including a temporal break. Connection is here accomplished harmonically/melodically; the pitch A-flat at the end of bar 32 functions as the seventh degree in a first inversion dominant seventh B-flat chord, whose natural resolution is down a half step to become the third scale degree in a newly tonicized E-flat major (m. 33). Furthermore, Pfitzner helps give the impression of being tired from wandering—“wandermüde”—by drastically paring down the rhythmic figuration beneath the word itself (mm. 33-34). Pfitzner’s doubling of the vocal line in the top voice of the accompaniment at “Die Nachtluft rauscht durch meine welken Kränze” (“The night breeze rustles through my wilted garlands”) supports the speaker’s dualistic realization of self-awareness—of being a separate entity and yet being a part of the natural world. This doubling continues intermittently throughout lines four and five of the sestet, though occasionally rhythmically offset from the voice, and in various voices of the accompaniment (mm. 40-50). A regular cadential pattern of i-V-i (E-flat minor/B-flat major/E-flat minor) builds to an unexpected cadence (E-flat minor to D minor) on the word “erschrocken,” and the initial question of the speaker in the poem’s opening key of G-flat major is restated, though now in the parallel minor key of E-flat minor, and in a more formal grammatical voice (see footnote 8).

“Das Alter”

- 1 Hoch mit den Wolken geht der Vögel Reise,
- 2 Die Erde schläfert, kaum noch Astern prangen,
- 3 Verstummt die Lieder, die so fröhlich klangen,
- 4 Und trüber Winter deckt die weiten Kreise.

- 5 Die Wanduhr pickt, im Zimmer singet leise
- 6 Waldvöglein noch, so du im Herbst gefangen.
- 7 Ein Bilderbuch scheint alles, was vergangen,
- 8 Du blätterst drin, geschützt vor Sturm und Eise.

- 9 So mild ist oft das Alter mir erschienen:
- 10 Wart nur, bald taut es von den Dächern wieder
- 11 Und über Nacht hat sich die Luft gewendet.
- 12 Ans Fenster klopft ein Bote mit frohen Mienen,
- 13 Du trittst erstaunt heraus und kehrst nicht wieder,
- 14 Denn endlich kommt der Lenz, der nimmer endet.

[High with the clouds go the migrating birds,
The earth sleeps, scarcely an aster is showing,
The songs that sounded out so joyously are silenced,
And gloomy winter covers the wide expanse all around.

The wallclock ticks, in the room are singing
The little forest birds that you captured in the autumn.
A picturebook reveals all that has happened,
You are there within its leaves, protected from storm and ice.

Old age has often seemed so gentle to me:
Only wait, soon the roofs will thaw again
And over night the wind has changed.
On the window knocks a messenger with a happy greeting,
You step out surprised and do not turn back,
Because finally has come the spring that never ends.]

Again cast in the form of an Italian sonnet (rhyme scheme: *abba/abba/cdecde*), “Das Alter” is an optimistic albeit nostalgic and bittersweet portrayal of the end of earthly life. In a descriptive narrative style, Eichendorff uses commonplace images as metaphors for inexplicable and fathomless spiritual concepts. The scope of imagery is manipulated throughout the three strophes in such a way as to conjure up the shape and function of an hourglass: wide–narrow–wide.

The opening quatrain contains expansive imagery of the outdoors—the movement of high clouds, flocks of migratory birds, deep winter that encompasses the entirety of the scene. The second quatrain slims the scope to an intimate indoor scene of wallclock and picturebook; in only four lines Eichendorff manages to move from the vastness of “...die weiten Kreise” (“...the wide expanse”) to the encapsulation of an entire lifetime within the pages of a picturebook (“Ein Bilderbuch”...). The sestet begins as commentary rather than as narrative description. The minimization of scope accomplished so poignantly in the second quatrain begins to pivot in line two: “Wart nur, bald taut es von den Dächern wieder” (“Only wait, soon the roofs will thaw again”). The final four lines of the poem, now narrative, swiftly continue this expansion of scope to one of “endless spring.”

With few notable exceptions, “Das Alter” relies much more upon imagery and metaphor than upon sound colors to support the theme of the poem. Exceptions include the use of repeated [I] in line five (“Im Zimmer singet... /In the room are singing...”) to reveal the regularity of time’s passing—it is undisturbed and unwavering in its advance. Similarly, the highly aspirate nature of line thirteen paints in a rather obvious fashion the movement of death; aspiration is aurally equated to exhaling the final breath of life (“Und über Nacht hat sich die Luft gewendet/And overnight the wind has changed”).

Rhythmically, “Das Alter” has the basic feeling of iambic pentameter, the meter historically associated with “...sustained narrative or dramatic poetry.”¹² Metric variation at line beginnings is common, though line endings are consistently iambic. Additionally, there is a single example of run-on connection between lines five and six, though regular iambic stress (feminine line endings excepted) prevails throughout these two lines, aiding in the syntactic connection thereof (“Die Wanduhr pickt, im Zimmer singet leise_ Waldvöglein noch, so du im Herbst gefangen/The wallclock ticks, in the room sing

¹²Millett, 37.

softly_the little birds that you captured in the fall”). The most striking metric variation of the poem occurs in line ten: “Wart nur, bald taut es von den Dächern wieder/Only wait, soon the roofs will begin to thaw”). This halting of the prevailing iambic motion during the first half of the line effectively highlights the point of dramatic pivot described in the previous paragraph.

Pfitzner’s setting of “Das Alter,” with its “two polyphonic lines over a rhythmic ostinato is sparse to the point of austerity.”¹³ This final song of Hans Pfitzner reveals a distilled compositional style in which the composer set “...astonishingly sensual lyrics in brittle, transparent two- to four-part writing, but at the same time with an extreme scale of expression...”¹⁴ Pfitzner’s Lied begins in the key of E-flat with a rhythmic ostinato in the left hand of the accompaniment, over which soar both the vocal line, chorale-like, and a second independent voice in the right hand of the accompaniment. There is a sense that none of this is really tied together, which, along with the prevailing sparse texture, enhances Eichendorff’s expansive imagery of high flying birds above a wintry earth. The use of appoggiatura/suspension begins at the first mention of a remembrance, very aptly on the stressed syllable of the past-tense verb “klangen/rang out” (m. 14), and continues through the end of the first quatrain.

The second quatrain, following a three-bar modulation to E-flat minor, retains the same scheme of two voices above a rhythmic ostinato, though the pitch space between accompaniment and voices is greatly reduced, as is the dynamic. This narrowing of the aural field corresponds to Eichendorff’s narrowing of the scenic scope, moving from large and boundless outdoor imagery to a world bounded by four walls. Furthermore, the top voice of the accompaniment seems to derive its material from the first statement of the vocal line, “Die Wanduhr pickt,” thereby further minimizing the musical scope and uniting the two formerly independent lines (mm. 20-26)). A meter change to $\frac{3}{4}$ begins a staccato dance of aged brittleness; Pfitzner further enhances Eichendorff’s already effective portrayal of the regularity and inevitability of passing time—the repeated use of

¹³Kravitt, 227.

¹⁴Williamson, 253.

the vowel [I] (“Im Zimmer singet.../In the room sings...”)¹⁵—by setting those same syllables on a single pitch (B-flat) as repeated eighth notes (m.22). A line division in the poem—“...im Zimmer singet leise//Waldvöglein noch.../...in the room sings softly//the little birds”—is intentionally connected by Pfitzner in order to connect subject and verb—“Waldvöglein” back to “singet” (mm. 22-24). Midway through the second quatrain, the thus-far ceaseless left hand rhythmic figuration is transferred, still in eighth note movement, to the right hand of the accompaniment, where it becomes something of a remembrance motive (m.28). This descending eighth note pattern is a series of duplet suspensions whose effect is that of falling teardrops; appropriately, this corresponds to the mention of the picturebook wherein the memories of a lifetime are safely kept. The previously independent top voice of the piano now appears as the middle voice of the accompaniment, and continues to waltz its motive of ticking time (mm. 28-33).

Throughout the course of a four-bar interlude (mm.36-39), the descending eighth note teardrop figure is inverted; the new figuration, in the context of a grand *ritardando*, seems to signal the welling up of something—in this case, a move from narrative voice to direct commentary (“So mild ist oft das Alter mir erschienen/Old age has often seemed so gentle to me,” mm. 40-44). As the poetic narrative is broken by two poetic lines of commentary and instruction, so is the thus-far ceaseless eighth note figuration halted; the speaker returns to tempo and, in a melodic line falling a full octave, makes comment on the topic of old age. A pedal point low F-sharp in the bass of the accompaniment (mm. 44-50) slows forward motion and emphasizes the aspect of anticipatory waiting—“Wart nur, bald taut es von den Dächern wieder/Only wait, soon the roofs will begin to melt.” A *ritardando*, along with a cessation of all note values smaller than a half note in the accompaniment, further slows the idea of movement; the dance that began at the opening of the second quatrain draws almost to a halt in measures 50-53, as the final mortal breath is exhaled—“und über Nacht hat sich die Luft gewendet/and overnight the wind has changed.” Pfitzner takes full advantage of Eichendorff’s sound painting (the fricative nature of the consonants as described in the previous discussion of this poem), and augments the actual meaning of this metaphor by breaking up the poetic phrase with a

¹⁵It is notable that the [I] vowel is derived from the word “pickt” (“ticks”), the verb of the phrase from which the aforementioned recurring musical material is derived.

series of eighth-note rests. With “Ans Fenster klopft ein Bote mit frohen Mienen/On the window knocks a messenger with a happy greeting,” Pfitzner renews the waltz and creates a picture of burgeoning new life and boundless ease as the soul continues its journey: “denn endlich kommt der Lenz, der nimmer endet/then finally comes the spring that never ends.” Pfitzner prefaces this final section of the song with the instruction: “Von hier ab bewegteres Temp: ganze Takte und lebendiger in Ausdruck” (“From here on a faster tempo: increasing each measure and livelier in expression.”) Voices rejoin the accompaniment, several of which share musical material derived from “Die Wanduhr pickt,” and the piece accelerates to a *pianissimo* conclusion.

“In Danzig”

- 1 Dunkle Giebel, hohe Fenster,
- 2 Türme tief aus Nebeln sehn.
- 3 Bleiche Statuen wie Gespenster
- 4 Lautlos an den Türen stehn.

- 5 Träumerisch der Mond drauf scheint,
- 6 Dem die Stadt gar wohl gefällt,
- 7 Als läg’ zauberhaft versteinet
- 8 Drunten eine Märchenwelt.

- 9 Ringsher durch das tiefe Lauschen,
- 10 Über alle Häuser weit,
- 11 Nur des Meeres fernes Rauschen.
- 12 Wunderbare Einsamkeit!

- 13 Und der Türmer wie vor Jahren
- 14 singt ein uraltes Lied:
- 15 Wolle Gott den Schiffer wahren,
- 16 Der bei Nacht vorüberzieht.

[Dark gables, high windows,
towers gazing out from mist...
Pale statues like ghosts
soundlessly standing by doors.

Dreamily the moon shines down
on the town it likes so much,
which lies as if magically turned to stone
below, a fairy-world.

Around, through the deep listening,
over all the houses far and wide,
only the distant roar of the sea can be heard.
Wonderful solitude!

And the watchman, as he has for years,
sings an ancient song:
May God protect the sailors
who pass by in the night.]

“In Danzig” comprises four stanzas of four lines each, with lines regularly alternating eight and seven syllables throughout. The poem is basically cast in trochaic tetrameter, though variation in feet per line is prevalent. The rhyme scheme is consistent from stanza to stanza (*abab/cdcd/efef/ghgh*), though rhymes are not carried from verse to verse. Alternation between masculine and feminine line endings is regular. Eichendorff uses imagery and aurally evocative sounds as his primary tools to convey this poem’s themes.

The idea of the juxtaposition and role-reassignment of disparate elements—be it alternating strong and weak line endings and alternating contrasting vowel sounds; the juxtaposition of happy, smiling moons and dead, frozen cities; or things commonplace influencing things supernatural—is carried out on many levels, and deftly accomplishes Eichendorff’s purposes of psychological manipulation. For example, the moon is ostensibly cast in the role of protector—“Träumerisch der Mond drauf scheint, Dem die Stadt gar wohl gefällt/Dreamily the moon shines down on the town it likes so much” and the sea is cast as the sole intruder into a land of absolute stillness: “Ringsher durch das tiefe Lauschen, Über alle Häuser weit, Nur des Meeres fernes Rauschen/Around, through the deep listening, over all the houses far and wide, only the distant roar of the sea can be heard.” This is a deception, as the moon is truly the jailor of the city, and the sea—foreshadowing the watchman’s cry of the final strophe—is shouting a warning to unsuspecting passers by.

“In Danzig” describes a petrified city whose chief inhabitants are indifferent moonlight and intense *Einsamkeit*.¹⁶ Eichendorff uses commonplace things—the moon, windows, houses, the sea, etc.—to portray matters of the soul and the very nature of existence, in this case a city whose inhabitants are subjugated to the point of paralysis. A world of seemingly benign calm and beauty is presented in the opening lines of the poem; one is entranced by the highly evocative images and easily lured into this fascinating and sensually rich environment. Ironically, the vital elements of this seduction are elements of death: darkness, absence of color, silence, and dreams.

¹⁶Danzig, presently known as Gdansk, has a long history of being passed from conqueror to conqueror before, during, and after Eichendorff’s lifetime.

Eichendorff's use of similar or contrasting vowels strengthens the description of this scene, and defines relationships. Descriptors in line one—Dunkle/hohe—utilize dark, rounded vowels ([U–o]) that are close together in color and method of articulation; the objects of these descriptors—Giebel/Fenster—use similarly related, though bright and unrounded, vowels ([i–E]). Primary vowels in line two remain closed and closely related (in order of appearance, [Y–i–e–e]). The appearance of the open vowel [a] in line three is significant; descriptors (Bleiche/Lautlos) and subject (Statuen) are related by the use of [a] as their primary vowel sound. By reserving the use of the blatantly open sound [a] for “Bleiche Statuen...Lautlos” (“Pale statues...soundlessly”), Eichendorff has set the human inhabitants—the prisoners—of Danzig apart from the ruling environment.

Eichendorff continues his emotional manipulation in the second stanza by setting up the moon as protector of the static environment; this soporific benefactor is actually monitoring and condoning the perpetual deadness of the city. In this strophe, more open vowels ([a–E]) predominate; in line five, “Mond,” with its very closed vowel [o], stands out against the frozen landscape. Each poetic line in the second strophe ends in [t]; the regular appearance of this unvoiced aspirate paints a picture of brittleness, ice, and coldness. The voiced continuants [r] and [n] were used in alternation at the end of each line of the first stanza; this makes the repetitive ending [t] of the second stanza all the more significant. Whereas stanza one contains elements of both environment (Giebel, Fenster, Türme) and inhabitants (Statuen), stanza two is completely dominated by the presence of the moon.

By the third stanza, static description has continued too long uninterrupted, and suspicion is aroused; in *Reading Poetry: A Method of Analysis with Selections for Study*, Fred B. Millett asserts: “If relatively few purely descriptive poems of very high quality are discoverable, the reasons are perhaps that the medium of words is less efficient than the medium of painting in the communication of visual experience, and that extended description is very likely to pall on readers unless there is at least a slight admixture of the narrative element, that is, the element of action.”¹⁷ Eichendorff's intentional avoidance of action throughout the first two-thirds of the poem—the moon's dreamy shining has

¹⁷Millett, 14.

been the most vigorous action thus far—manipulates the reader to desire an occurrence, or some sort of activity. From an aural perspective, the use of [f] and its voiced cognate [v] becomes a brilliant device that encourages advancement of the moon’s chosen agenda of detachment and disconnection: tiefe/weit/fernes/wunderbare (deep/far/distant/wonderful). Additionally, each line of stanza three begins with a relatively closed vowel ([I–y–U–U], respectively) and ends aggressively with the ultimately open vowel [a], feminine endings not being considered.

The terror that lay just beneath a placid surface in the third strophe of the poem appears in the final strophe as both terror and salvation; the sea’s distant roar, mentioned nominatively rather than actively in the third strophe, turns out to be the warning and very message of the poem. Eichendorff abandons descriptive elements and makes his point swiftly and without manipulation. The aforementioned juxtaposition of disparate elements is here displayed in the quality of final vowels in alternating lines; the most open vowel [a] appears regularly in alternation with the most closed vowel [i].

Pfitzner’s setting of “In Danzig” intensifies the feeling of isolation and loneliness already dominant in the poetry, giving the impression that Danzig is completely separated from the rest of the universe, its only possible point of connection with humankind being the sea. The opening four bars of music create an atmosphere that pervades the entire song. In *The Songs of Hans Pfitzner*, Richard Mercier remarks: “The ‘slow’ tempo and thick chords low in the piano seem to create an image of this massive ancient city. Ostinato figures in the bass accumulate in our ears as the stones of the ancient walls repeat endlessly before our eyes. Over these relentless ostinati (mm. 16-52) move harmonic progressions which pull hard against our tonal anchor creating great tension and dissonance.”¹⁸

Bars one and two introduce a rhythmic/melodic motive that occurs intermittently throughout the piece (bass line, mm. 1-2). The basic tonality of E-flat minor, which Richard Mercier posits that Pfitzner associated with ‘night fog,’¹⁹ is established. The introduction even contains a quote from the opening of the traditional plainsong “Dies

¹⁸Richard Mercier, *The Songs of Hans Pfitzner* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 3.

¹⁹Ibid., 112.

irae, dies illa” (Day of wrath, day of mourning), a somewhat unnecessary attempt by Pfitzner to enhance an already foreboding atmosphere. The voice enters on the established tonic, but the accompaniment has shifted chromatically to yield highly unsteady footing; the sand is shifting, and Danzig is a dangerous place. Eichendorff’s tightly-controlled vowel sequence—Türme/tief/Nebeln/sehn—is further contained by Pfitzner’s restricted range of pitches for the line, the entire melodic movement of the poetic line spanning only a single whole step (mm. 7-8). A sudden harmonic shift to an innocent first inversion C-major chord sets up a sense of bittersweet reminiscence, culminating at the end of the poetic phrase in a real sense of sadness for the pale statues which stand mute at the doors—“Bleiche Statuen wie Gespenster lautlos an den Türen stehn” (mm. 10-13). Pfitzner’s sudden use of such a weak chord (first inversion) and unencumbered key signature (C-major) at the text “Bleiche Statuen,” in cooperation with the sudden use of open vowels by Eichendorff, portrays not only the vulnerability of the inhabitants of Danzig, but also their separation from the prevailing oppressive environment in the accidental-laden key of E-flat minor.

At the first mention of the moon (m. 18), Pfitzner makes an abrupt shift to sharps in the right hand of the piano and moves its tessitura up a full two octaves. Meanwhile, the upper voice in the left hand incessantly repeats its opening motive, now in the key of E minor, while the bottom voice drops an octave and sustains a pedalpoint pitch E. Pfitzner has effectively pointed up the separation of the moon from the town, and has strengthened Eichendorff’s poetic change of perspective by metaphorically zooming out with the camera lens (mm. 16-17). At the mention of the moon’s awareness of the town (“dem die Stadt gar wohl gefällt”), Pfitzner portrays the relationship of the two entities with the juxtaposition of flats and sharps (mm. 20-22). The “Märchenwelt” (fairy world) is painted by a sustained note in the voice above the support of a diabolical, minimalist music box accompaniment which continues for several measures after the cessation of the vocal line (mm. 27-33). The accompanying left hand ostinato continues to use the piece’s opening motive as if to hold the images of dark gables and high windows ever before our eyes.

As focus is poetically returned to the town (“Ringsher durch das tiefe Lauschen”), Pfitzner initiates an astounding 19-measure left hand ostinato (the most persistent

example in any of his songs),²⁰ now back in the original key of E-flat minor; the octave doubling of the melodic pattern and the institution of consistent eighth notes creates a sense of menace and unyielding, aggressive control (mm. 34-52). Above this murky pattern the voice soars comfortably in a chromatic chorale, and the right hand begins a pointillistic chromatic rhythmic ostinato, random at first, but eventually finding a set pattern of pitches. The “Wunderbares Einsamkeit!” (magnificent loneliness) is outlined by the voice as an E-flat minor triad, as was the “Meeres fernes Rauschen” (sea’s distant roar). The moon’s dominance over the warning cry of the sea is elucidated by its pitch superiority; “Wunderbares Einsamkeit” is positioned a fourth higher in the Eb-minor triad than is “Meeres fernes Rauschen” (mm. 46-47 and mm. 42-43, respectively). The overlaying of the seemingly endless left hand ostinato, the uninterrupted random pointillism of the right hand, and the soaring, slow-moving minor triad in the voice creates an absolutely hypnotic effect for the listener; a sense of complete manipulation at many levels becomes apparent, and one is drawn into the isolationism of utter loneliness (mm. 34-52).

Pfitzner relates the final strophe of the poem to the first by repeating the chorale tune and rhythm. A “powerful invocation of the watchman’s song” ends the poem, and Pfitzner punctuates it with three final statements of the bass ostinato (m. 53-end).²¹ The scene is thus returned to the state of lurking indifference established at the beginning of the song.

²⁰Mercier, 19.

²¹Williamson, 242.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Eichendorff was less experimental with forms than many of his contemporaries. His subject matter is fairly conventional: nature, hunting, the military, drinking, love, the lot being frequently infused with religious overtones. His work is the culmination of a great tradition of German poetry.²² Eichendorff's greatness came through masterful manipulation of existing poetic elements, and not through innovation.

Pfitzner was a self-proclaimed musically conservative composer who professed Brahms and Schumann as major influences. However, his compositional style and methods belie a progressive artist who strove to suggest the mysteries of nature through mood (*Stimmung*) rather than through representation. He endeavored his entire life to preserve the traditional hallmarks of the German Lied: "...lyricism, careful musical organization, and, above all, evocative mood."²³

The union of Eichendorff's words and Pfitzner's music is a mutually supportive one where compromise on either side seems unnecessary. On the contrary, Eichendorff's atmospheric words are somehow reinforced by the music into poetic landscapes. Likewise, Pfitzner seems to find Eichendorff's words a creative vehicle rather than a limiting structure. His nineteen Eichendorff songs exemplify the union of *Ton* and *Wort* on a level beyond mere appropriate text setting; they are a fusion of the abstract matter between the line (or between the notes) and exert their power on the vast canvas of evocation and interpretation.

²²Schwartz, 80.

²³Kravitt, 29.

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APPENDIX. LIEDER

Der verspätete Wanderer

Hans Pfitzner, Op. 41 Nr. 2

Beweglich, heiter (♩ = etwa 100)

mf (*fröhlich*)

Wo a-ber werd ich sein im künft'-gen Len - ze?

6

mf

So frug ich sonst wohl, wenn beim Hü - teschwin - gen ins Tal wir

10

ließen unser Lied er - klin - gen, denn je - der Wip - fel bot mir fri - sche

14

rit. - - allmählich lang-

Krän - ze. Ich

18 samer - - - - - im langsameren Tempo bleiben

(phantastisch)

wuß-te nur, daß rings der Frühling glän - ze, daß nach dem Meer die

dim. *espr.* *(phantastisch)* *espr.*

21

Ströme leuch-tend gin - gen, von fer-nem Wun-der-land die Vö - gel sin - gen,

24

cresc. - - - f

da hat's das Mor - gen - rot noch kei - ne Gren - ze.

cresc. - - - f

dim. - - rit. - -

28

langsam bleiben

Jetzt a - ber wird schon A - bend, al - le Lie - ben

p

33

sind wan - der - mü - de längst zu - rück - geblie - ben, die Nacht - luft rauscht durch meine

pp

38

rit. **noch langsamer** *pp*

wel-ken Krän - ze, und heim-wärts ru - fen mich die A - -

rit. molto - *pp*

8va b.....

43

rit. - - - *rit.* - -

- bend-glo - cken, und in der Ein - samkeit frag ich er-schro - cken:

rit. - - *rit.* - -

48

Sehr langsam

Wo wer-de ich wohl sein im künft'gen Len-ze?

d.7. Okt. 1921

Das Alter

Hans Pfitzner, Op.41 Nr.3

Gemächlich (♩ = etwa 76) *poco f*

Hoch mit den Wol-ken geht der

6

Vö - gel Rei - - se, die Er - de schlä - - fert, kaum noch

10

A - stern pran - gen, ver - stummt die Lie - der, die so fröh - lich

14

klan - gen, und trü - ber Win - ter deckt die wei - ten Krei - se.

18

(leise)
Die Wand - uhr pickt,

22

im Zim - mer sin - get lei - se Wald - vög - lein noch, so du im Herbst ge -

26

fan - gen. Ein Bil - derbuch scheint al - les, was ver - gan - gen, du

32

sehr ruhig

blät - terst drin, ge - schützt vor Sturm und Ei - se.

37

rit. *a tempo*

So mild ist

42

espr. p *pp*

oft das Al - ter mir er - schie - nen: Wart nur, bald taut es

48

rit. *ruhig* *pp* *rit.* *ruhig* *ppp*

von den Dä - chern wie - der und ü - ber Nacht hat sich die Luft ge-

53

(Von hier ab bewegteres Tempo: „ganze Takte“ und lebendiger im Ausdruck)

mf
 wen-det. *espr.* *p cresc.* *mf*
 Ans Fen - ster klopft ein Bo - te mit frohen Mie - nen, du

60

p
 trittst er - staunt her - aus _____ und kehrst nicht

66

p *mf* *espr.* *p*
 wie - der, denn end - lich kommt der Lenz, _____ der nim - mer

73

en - - - det.
pp
8va h... *8va h...* loco
 4.7. Dez. 1931

In Danzig

Hans Pfitzner, Op. 22 Nr. 1

Langsam

pp (Verschiebung) deutlich *Mittelstimme deutlich!*

5 *mf*
Dunk-le Gie - bel, ho - he Fenster, Tür-me, tief aus Ne-bel'n sehn.

(ohne Verschiebung) *p* *mf* *pp* *deutlich*

10 *pp*
Bleiche Sta - tuen wie Ge-spen-ster laut-los an den Tü - ren stehn.

15 *pp*
Träu - me-risch der Mond drauf schei-net,

pp (immer deutlich linke Hand) *Verschiebung*

20

dem die Stadt gar wohl ge-fällt, als läg'

24

zau - ber-haft ver - stei - net drun - ten ei-ne Mär -

28

- chen - welt.

32

Sehr ruhig *p*
Rings - her

legatissimo un poco ritard. *p (ohne Verschiebung) immer sehr gebunden und*

36

durch das tie - fe Lau - - - - - schen ü - ber al - le Häu - ser

deutlich

40

weit, - - - - - nur des Mee - - - - - res fer - nes

44

Rau - - - - - schen. Wun - - - - - der - ba - re

48

Ein - - - - - sam - keit!

kurz

53 *f cresc.*

Und der Tür - mer, wie vor Jah - ren sin - get ein ur - - al - tes

mf cresc.

57

Lied. Wol - le Gott den Schif - fer wah - ren, der bei Nacht vor -

rit. *kurz* *f* *p*

61

- ü - - - ber - zieht.

pp