Chapter 1

Hafiz between Nations: Song Settings by Daumer/Brahms and Peacock/Beamish

Natasha Loges

Introduction

Consciously 'othered' cultural practices have long allowed musicians and poets to express different national identities to varying extents, without having to relinquish a geographically rooted sense of home. As Steven Vertovec put it, 'Practices and meanings derived from specific geographical and historical points of origin have always been transferred and regrounded.'[1] More specifically, Michael Howard has argued:

> The arts are an important component of transnational relations. They may serve as a reminder of links across borders, as symbols of ties to another place or society, and as a means of promoting a feeling of being part of a transnational community. In addition to such symbolic aspects of the arts, artists themselves may lead transnational lives as they move between locales where their art is appreciated or in demand.[2]

My aim is to examine such transnational links, symbols, and ties through a consideration of the songs 'Wie bist du, meine Königin' by Johannes Brahms (1833–97) and 'Fish' by Sally Beamish (b. 1956). Both are settings of translations of poetry by the Persian poet Hafiz (variously 'Hafis', or 'Hafez'), made respectively by Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800–72) and

[1] Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (London and New York, Routledge, 2009), p. 12.

[2] Michael Carlton Howard, *Transnationalism and Society: An Introduction* (Jefferson, NC and London, McFarland & Co., 2011), p. 255.

Jila Peacock (b. 1948). I hope to offer insights into changing attitudes to Hafiz over time (the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries) and place (Germany, Persia/Iran, and Great Britain). I employ text- and score-based analysis, supplemented by interviews with Peacock and Beamish carried out in early 2019.[3] In these interviews, I probed approaches to translation, text setting, and music, as well as issues of biography and national identity.

Despite the entrenched association with nationhood described in this volume's introduction, song – both compact and mobile – is the ideal genre through which to explore transnationalism. The term 'transnationalism' is most commonly applied to the understanding of behaviours of large groups, governments, and technologies. For Vertovec, it captures 'economic, social and political linkages between peoples, places and institutions crossing nation-state borders and spanning the world'.[4] In contrast to this large-scale approach, my angle can be defined as micro-cultural, focusing on individual responses. The artists discussed below invoke and/or reject aspects of nationhood to forge their own identities. For all of them, transnationalism is a selective, idealised intellectual and cultural practice; it involves neither a full political reaffiliation, nor indeed even a permanent geographical move, but enables them to situate themselves in relation to, and outside, an imagined mainstream nationalism. Brahms and Daumer could expressed their cultural, political, and religious liberalism but within the familiar confines of Germany; Beamish could mentally 'other' herself from within Great Britain; and Peacock, who visited her native Iran after many years in Britain, can affiliate herself with her native country temporarily and selectively.

[3] This essay was also informed by interviews and rehearsal observation of the tenor James Gilchrist, the baritone Roderick Williams and the pianist Andrew West. I am also grateful to the composer Shiva Feshareki, whose mother recorded Hafiz's poetry in Persian for me.

[4] Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, pp. 1 and 4.

This sense of opposition to the mainstream in this process of selective idealisation and self-reinvention recalls Howard's statement: 'Transnationalism is essentially about humans creating boundaries and then crossing them. The creation of these boundaries entails processes of exclusion and inclusion by which membership within what is being bounded is defined, including some and excluding others.'[5] Translating and setting Hafiz allows both poets and composers to define 'Persia' as well as to set a boundary on their perceptions of Germany and Britain. The songs discussed below all represent a deliberate intention on each artist's part to elude the perceived limitations of a single nation.

Approaches to Translation

As translators, Daumer and Peacock both reject literal translation (*verbum verbo*) in favour of a broader fidelity to the overall phrase (*sensus senso*), Daumer in his published prefaces and Peacock in interview.[6] In this, they recall the *belles infidèles*, translations which were enormously popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which 'might bear only a distant resemblance to the original […] Their aesthetic qualities […] were held to be of paramount importance.'[7] This creative approach came increasingly under fire, but in varying ways. Johann Gottfried Herder is also often invoked when it comes to discussions of the renewal of interest in national, particularly folk poetry. Certainly, Herder articulated the link between identity and language and its music in song, and therefore the shaping of distinct nationally-determined communities; the consequences of those ideas in the construction of

[5] Howard, *Transnationalism and Society*, p. 5.

[6] This duality was already articulated by Cicero (46BC) and Horace (c.10BC). See Kirsten Malmkjær and Kevin Windle (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 8.

[7] Malmkjær and Windle (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*, p. 10.

folk music has been explored in a book-length study by Matthew Gelbart.[8] More practically, three approaches to translation are regularly identified: organic (choosing a form that suits the translator's own sense of authenticity), mimetic (replicating original form), and analogic (using a form with comparable cultural function e.g. Chinese five-syllable-line and English iambic pentameter).[9] Baher Mohamed Elgohary in his study of the great Austrian Orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall expresses this trio as a fidelity to 'Inhalt, Form und Klang' (content, form and sound).[10]

Each approach involves a differently-shaped interpretative space for the translator. Indeed, Willard van Orman Quine, writing in 1960, questioned whether fidelity in translation was ever possible, arguing that 'uncertainty is present, to various degrees, in all communicative situations'.[11] While this is a disadvantage in political or legal contexts, such indeterminacy of meaning is advantageous to art because it encourages a continual process of reinterpretation. The translation of poetry (itself only a tiny fragment of translation studies), is particularly resistant to ideas of fidelity.[12] Translations tend to rely more on standard, simple text than the original language; they tend to be 'less lexically varied, more conventional', present 'more patterns that are untypical of the source language', and to underrepresent 'features that are unique to the language'.[13] In translating lyric poetry (which

[8] See Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music': Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[9] Malmkjær and Windle (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*, p. 173.

[10] Baher Mohammed Elgohary, *Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856): Ein Dichter und Vermittler orientalischer Literatur* (Stuttgart, Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1979), p. 34.

[11] Malmkjær and Windle (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*, p. 19.

[12] Malmkjær and Windle (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*, p. 181.

[13] Malmkjær and Windle (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*, pp. 86–7.

tends to be at once generic in topic and individualised in expression), Walter Benjamin's idea that single languages complement each other 'like fragments of a broken vessel' is more powerful than striving towards an elusive fidelity.[14]

Identifying Hafiz

Daumer's and Peacock's overlapping but distinct approaches were shaped by their own perceptions of their subject, the medieval Persian poet Hafiz (1315–90). A court poet, he lived in the turbulent era between Genghis Khan and Timur. His pen name means 'one who has learned the Qur'ān by heart', and he is associated with the bardic traditions of Persophone countries in the Middle East and Central Asia. He is cherished for his tolerance, rejection of religious hypocrisy, and his effortless blend of eroticism and spirituality. In 1774, John Richardson compared Hafiz to Anacreon, implying an (admittedly Eurocentric) universalism. Today, however, Hafiz is largely regarded as a national symbol; Bahman Solati calls him the 'the incarnation of the spirit of Iran', declaring that 'to know Persians, one must know Ḥāfiẓ'.[15] Nevertheless, ideas have migrated from Hafiz into Europe for centuries; Parvin Loloi argues that the symbolic concepts he used entered the 'Western poetic consciousness by way of St John of the Cross and Ramon Lull in the sixteenth century, from the writings of the Andalusian philosopher, Ibn Arabie, and this may be the reason why European readers find his imagery so familiar and appealing'.[16]

---

[14] Quoted in Wolfgang Müller-Funk, 'Broken Narratives: Modernism and the Tradition of Rupture', in Wolfgang Müller-Funk and Clemens Ruthner (eds), *Narrative(s) in Conflict* (Berlin and Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2017), p. 12.

[15] Bahman Solati, *The Reception of Hafiz: The Sweet Poetic Language of Ḥāfiẓ in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Persia* (Leiden, Leiden University Press, 2013), p. 21.

[16] Parvin Loloi, 'Foreword', Hafiz et al., *Ten Poems from Hafez* (Lewes, Sylph Editions, 2006).

Hannes Galter has argued that the objectification of 'the Orient' in Europe on one hand enabled the systematic collection and study of objects, but on the other hand dissociated them from their context.[17] This is evident in the work of German poets who never travelled to the countries in question, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who encountered the two-volume *Der Diwan des Mohamen Schemsed-din Hafis* by the scholar and diplomat Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall in summer 1814 and was inspired to write his own *Divan* in the autumn of his life.[18] Hammer-Purgstall, an extraordinarily gifted linguist, knew Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, English, and German, as well as a smattering of Hebrew and Russian. He studied at the Oriental Academy and spent time as a translator in Constantinople, meaning that he had direct contact, if not with Persia itself, then at least with the near East. The next generation of Orient-entranced poets and scholars drew heavily on his extensive writings. Recent authors have praised Hammer-Purgstall's translations; for Elgohary, Hammer strove for utmost faithfulness in both imagery and phrasing as well as rhythm and verse structure.[19] The evaluation of this Arab-European scholar of Hammer's translations of the poet Motannabi evokes a successful transnational duality: 'The German-clad Arab no longer appears in an alienating guise, although he has not lost his Arab identity and individuality.'[20] Importantly, however, Hammer himself described his work as 'free' translations.[21]

---

[17] Hannes D. Galter, '1798 – Als der Orient zum Orient wurde', in Hannes D. Galter and Siegfried Haas (eds), *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Grenzgänger zwischen Orient und Okzident* (Graz, Leykam, 2008), p. 13.

[18] Edwin H. Zeydel, 'Goethe and Hafis', *Monatshefte* 49/6 (1957), pp. 305–7.

[19] Elgohary, *Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall*, pp. 69 and 43.

[20] 'Der deutschumkleidete Araber erscheint in einer nicht mehr brefremdenden Form, obwohl er eine arabische Identität und Individualität nicht verloren hat.' Elgohary, *Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall*, pp. 27–8.

[21] Elgohary, *Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall*, p. 46.

Hafiz appealed to Goethe, Daumer, and others for several reasons. Jeffrey Einboden has argued that German Orientalism 'functioned originally not either as cultural imperialism or cultural relativism, but rather as an exegetical re-grounding of European origins'.[22] Such usages were not limited to Germany, of course; in Chapter 3 of this volume, Philip Ross Bullock argues that 'exotic' literatures such as Hafiz's poetry were also co-opted by Russians in an attempt to forge their own version of German nationalism and separate themselves from the dominant French influence (although there are key differences because of the geographical proximity of Persia to Russia's empire). Said Abdel-Rahim quotes Goethe's description of his Oriental studies in a letter to Christian Voigt as a pilgrimage*:* 'a kind of *hegira,* one flees from this era into distant centuries and places, where one expects something like paradise', a means of mentally escaping the horrors of Napoleonic war.[23] Doubtless for this reason, the translations ignored Hafiz's geopolitical realities in favour of the topics of beauty, wine, love, alcohol, roses, nightingales, spring, breezes and scents, youth, pleasure and parting, devoutness and scepticism, and poetry itself.

Together with this content, the form of the *ghazal* is centrally important (495 of Hafiz's 573 poems are *ghazals*).[24] It typically contains 5-15 *beyts* (paired lines) with a rhyme scheme of AA BA CA DA, etc. The pairs do not typically present a continuous expository

---

[22] Jeffrey Einboden, 'The Genesis of Weltliteratur: Goethe's West-Östlicher Divan and Kerygmatic Pluralism', *Literature and Theology*, 19/3 (2005), 238–50 at 244.

[23] 'eine Art Hegire, man flüchtet aus der Zeit in ferne Jahrhunderte und Gegenden, wo man sich etwas Paradiesähnliches erwartet.' See Said Abdel-Rahim, 'Goethes Hinwendung zum Orient: eine innere Emigration', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 132/2 (1982), pp. 269–88, at pp. 270–71.

[24] For a longer discussion see Ann. C Fehn and Jürgen Thym, 'Repetition as Structure in the German Lied: The Ghazal', *Comparative Literature*, 41/1 (1989), pp. 33–52.

sequence, as we would expect in Western lyrical poetry. Each line is comparatively lengthy; lines of 28 syllables, divided into halves, are common. Such features are often discarded or adapted in translation. For example, the translator Dick Davis regards one of the challenges of translating Hafiz's poetry to be the difficulty of working out how successive lines connect.[25] Furthermore, although the poems can seem deeply personal, they in fact rely on well-established conventions of courtly poetry.[26] Still, there remains ambiguity around the identity of the addressee, who may be the patron, the beloved, or God – that is up to the interpreter.[27] Importantly, Persian pronouns are ungendered; descriptions of beauty tend to be 'ambi-sexual'.[28] If anything, the beloved is likely to be the male adolescent cup-bearer, in common with Latin and Greek poetry: 'Wine and boys are associated together in the figure of the wine-server (*saqi)* or adolescent who serves the wine, who, it is implied, is often also an object of desire to the speaker of a poem.'[29] The Sufi aspect of Hafiz's poetry, of peripheral concern here, is more disputed.[30] Daumer and Peacock each capture some – but not all – of these parameters in their translations, as discussed below.

Hafiz-Daumer-Brahms

Hafiz was crucial to the short-lived fame of Georg Friedrich Daumer, who published seven volumes of poetry, including *Hafis* (1846, rev. 1856), *Mahomed* (1848) and *Hafis. Neue Sammlung* (1852). Daumer dedicated around two-thirds of his 1846 *Hafis* to free translations

[25] Dick Davis et al., *Faces of Love* (New York, Penguin, 2013), p. xxxiv.

[26] Davis et al., *Faces of Love*, p. xviii.

[27] Davis et al., *Faces of Love*, p. xix.

[28] Davis et al., *Faces of Love*, p. xxii.

[29] Davis et al., *Faces of Love*, p. xxvii.

[30] Davis et al., *Faces of Love*, p. xxxvii.

of the Persian poet's writings, giving the remainder over to translations from Turkish, Arabian, Hebrew, Indian, Gipsy ('Zigeunerisch'), modern Greek, Moldavian, Ukrainian, Latvian-Lithuanian, and Estonian. As a translator, he shared the same vaguely articulated aims as most of his contemporaries, namely to render the verse so 'treu, wahrhaft und wesenhaft' ('faithful, truthful, and intrinsic'), while also as 'zwanglos, verständlich und genießbar' ('unstilted, comprehensible, and enjoyable') as possible.[31] Daumer's biographical note on Hafiz states inaccurately that he belonged to a community of dervishes and Sufis, was a revered teacher and practiced asceticism (Davis argues persuasively that he was primarily a court poet, and also for the popularity of fleshly pleasures in the courts).[32] Daumer piggybacked on Hafiz's aversion to religious hypocrisy in order to present his own critical approach to Christianity. However, Daumer – who was fascinated with the feminine – made his translations strongly gendered. Most of the selected poems are written from the perspective of a male lover who abases himself before a female beloved.

The wearing of what Daumer called 'writing masks' was important to him.[33] No accomplished linguist, his attitude to translation was fluid, as he explained in the preface to his 1855 collection *Polydora. Ein weltpoetisches Liederbuch,* from which Brahms drew the texts for his popular *Liebeslieder-Walzer* and *Neue Liebeslieder-Walzer*, as well as six solo and two quartet texts.[34] Daumer did not choose to adhere rigidly to the original meters of the

[31] George Friedrich Daumer, *Hafis. Eine Sammlung persischer Gedichte. Nebst poetischen Zugaben aus verschiedenen Völkern und Ländern* (Hamburg, Hoffmann und Campe, 1846), p. i.

[32] Daumer, *Hafis*, p. ii. See also Davis et al., *Faces of Love*, p. xxix.

[33] 'schriftstellerische Masken'. Karlhans Kluncker, *Georg Friedrich Daumer. Leben und Werk 1800–1875* (Bonn, Bouvier, 1984), p. 96.

[34] The poets Hans Bethge and Afanasy Fet, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this volume, were among several poets inspired by Daumer's translations.

verse because: ‘Translations should be communications, not gaps and barriers; if they repel more than they attract, then they cannot be considered communications, and in this respect, translations. Faithfulness in the commonly understood sense of the word is often unfaithfulness in a higher sense.’[35] When it came to folk poetry, Daumer declared: ‘the form … in which they appear is more or less mine’.[36] Although Brahms, as a good philologist, took the trouble to compare Daumer’s translations with those by other poets, his extensive use of *Polydora* shows that he was satisfied with Daumer’s renditions.[37] The resultant translations have an intriguingly Europeanising effect; rather than reproducing the multisyllabic lines of Persian poetry, Daumer often arranges them in a trochaic tetrameter in which every *fourth* line rhymes, making them almost indistinguishable from the German ‘Vierzeiler’. Furthermore, he generally does not use the identical word, but a rhyming word, distancing the poetry still further from the *ghazal*.

Despite Brahms barely having travelled outside Austro-Germany and Italy, Hafiz evidently intrigued him.[38] He made six solo settings from the *Hafis* collections of 1846 and 1852.

---

[35] ‘Uebersetzungen sollen ja doch Vermittlungen, nicht Klüfte und Scheidewände sein; wenn sie aber mehr abstoßen, als anziehen, so können sie nicht für Vermittlungen und in so fern auch nicht für Uebersetzungen gelten. Treue im gemeinen Sinne des Wortes ist oft Untreue im höheren.’ George Friedrich Daumer, *Polydora, Ein weltpoetisches Liederbuch*, 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main, Literarische Anstalt, 1855), 1, p. xi.

[36] ‘Die Form … in der sie erscheinen, ist mehr oder weniger die meinige.’ Daumer, *Polydora*, p. xiv.

[37] For further details of Brahms’s settings of Daumer, see Natasha Loges, *Brahms and His Poets: A Handbook* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2017), pp. 80–91.

[38] For a detailed discussion of Brahms and nation, see David Brodbeck, *Defining Deutschtum: Political Ideology, German Identity, and Music-Critical Discourse in Liberal Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Table 1. Brahms's Solo Settings from Daumer's *Hafis* Collections

Bitteres zu sagen denkst du	Op. 32 no. 7	September 1864	*Hafis* 1846
So stehn wir	Op. 32 no. 8	September 1864	*Hafis* 1846
Wie bist du, meine Königin	Op. 32 no. 9	September 1864	*Hafis* 1846
Botschaft	Op. 47 no. 1	By 1868	*Hafis* 1852
Liebesglut	Op. 47 no. 2	By 1868	*Hafis* 1846
Wenn du nur zuweilen lächelst	Op. 57 no. 2	By 1867	*Hafis* 1852

In terms of content, this selection echoed themes which were familiar from the medieval poetry of courtly love. However, in formal terms, 'So stehn wir', 'Wie bist du, meine Königin', and 'Liebesglut' are recognisable *ghazals,* with 'Wie bist du, meine Königin' the strictest.[39] This song closes a lengthy opus of settings of poems by Daumer and August von Platen (another popular Orientalist), which explore aspects of love, servitude, and suffering.

Table 2. Text and Translation of 'Wie bist du, meine Königin'?

Wie bist du, meine Königin, Durch sanfte Güte wonnevoll! Du lächle nur – Lenzdüfte wehn Durch mein Gemüte wonnevoll!	How blissful, my queen, you are, By reason of your gentle kindness! You merely smile, and springtime fragrance Wafts through my soul blissfully!

[39] I have explored aspects of Brahms's setting of 'Liebesglut' in Natasha Loges, 'Exoticism, Artifice and the Supernatural in the Brahmsian Lied', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review,* 3 (2006), pp. 37–68.

Frisch aufgeblühter Rosen Glanz	Shall I compare the radiance
Vergleich ich ihn dem deinigen?	Of freshly blown roses to yours?
Ach, über alles was da blüht,	Ah! more blissful than all that blooms
Ist deine Blüte, wonnevoll!	Is your blissful bloom!
Durch tote Wüsten wandle hin,	Roam through desert wastes,
Und grüne Schatten breiten sich,	And green shade will spring up –
Ob fürchterliche Schwüle dort	Though fearful sultriness broods
Ohn Ende brüte, wonnevoll.	Endlessly there – blissfully.
Laß mich vergehn in deinem Arm!	Let me perish in your arms!
Es ist in ihm ja selbst der Tod,	Death in your embrace will be –
Ob auch die herbste Todesqual	Though bitterest mortal agony rage
Die Brust durchwüte, wonnevoll.	Through my breast – blissful.[40]

Both the poem and its setting fuse recognisably German and Persian features, as shown below.

Table 3. German and Persian Features in 'Wie bist du, meine Königin'

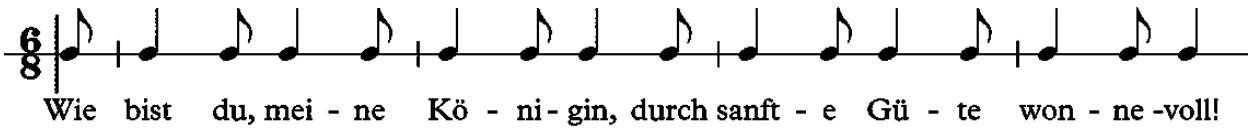
German	Persian
Form of four iambic quatrains	*ghazal* rhyme scheme of, through recurrence of 'wonnevoll'

[40] Translation by Richard Stokes, https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/934 (accessed 16 August 2019).

Invocation of courtly love, e.g. the queen and the idea of suffering	Invocation of roses, perfume and deserts
Gendering of addressee as female	'Foreignness' in musical prosody and phrasing
Brahms's favoured AABA form	Use of 16-syllable double line through enjambment

Brahms's musical prosody attracted much disapproval because it resulted in problematic word stresses.[41] While the melody is amongst his most beautiful, and the form is transparent, the alteration of the prosody amounts to a distortion, almost like a foreigner speaking German. The original poetry suggests straightforward, if inelegant, iambs as follows:

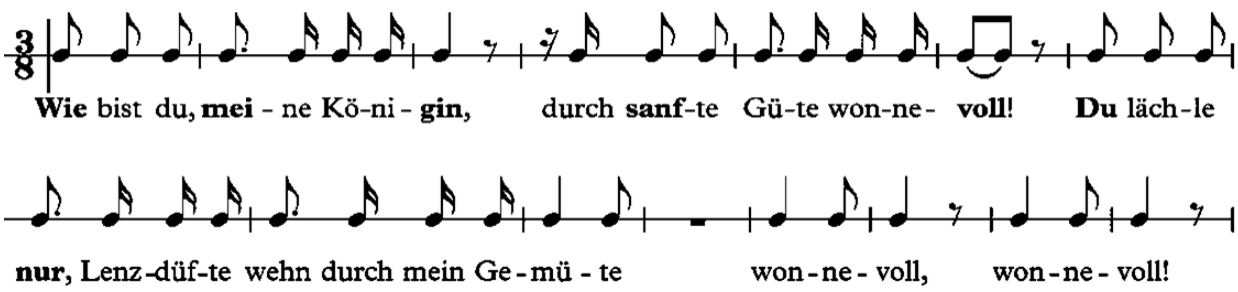
Example 1. Original Prosody of 'Wie bist du, meine Königin', lines 1–2.



The setting results in the following prosody; 'wrongly' accented syllables are in bold below:

Example 2. Brahms's prosodic treatment of 'Wie bist du, meine Königin', lines 1–2.

[41] See, for example, Heather Platt, 'The Lieder of Brahms', in James Parsons (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 185–203 at p. 194.

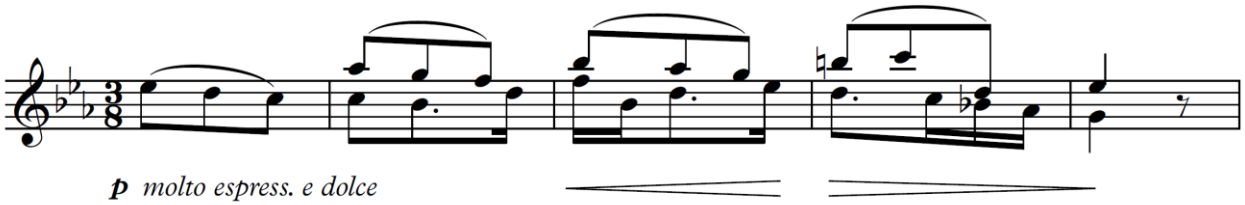


Already by the second line, this imagined foreigner, 'Hafiz', has made a transnational leap, with noticeably tidier – if still irregular – prosody for the rest of the song. Of course, such readings rely on an artificially metronomic performance, and one need only listen to Heinrich Schlusnus's 1935 recording to see how flexibly the prosody might be rendered.[42] Nevertheless, the sense of otherness is never fully dispelled. The irregularity is also reflected in the shifting phrase lengths of between three and six bars, noticeable against the overall, strict AABA form (the final verse is only slightly altered).

There are other devices by which Brahms creates a sense of national differences, for instance through repetition. Normally quite free with repeating sections of text, he limits himself in this song to repeating, consistently, the one word which articulates the *ghazal* form: 'wonnevoll'. The word is also temporally separated in each line, as if to underscore its formal and expressive significance, and repeatedly anticipated and echoed in the accompaniment. Perhaps most elegantly, Brahms evokes a transnational self through voicing. In the piano introduction, the right hand's two lines are split between a metronomically regular, mostly conjunct top line which in turn emphasises the 'foreignness' of a highly irregular, more disjunct lower line. It is up to the pianist which line to privilege in each iteration of this passage.

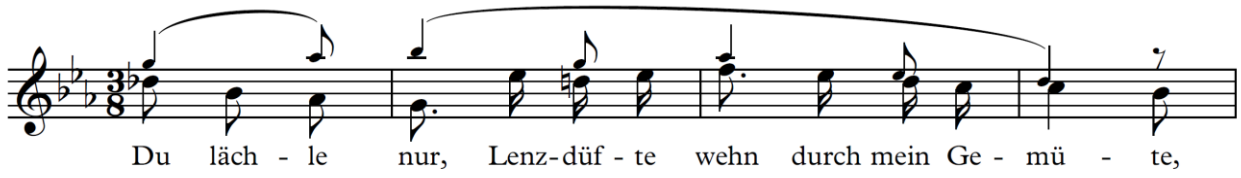
[42] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd0LgQB55r8 (accessed 19 August 2019).

Example 3. Brahms, 'Wie bist du, meine Königin', bars 1–5, piano right hand.



Similarly, at several points, the accompaniment remains rhythmically regular while the voice occupies the 'foreign' role, enabling a harmonious, mutually beneficial co-existence of the two national characters. In the example below, the rhythm is notated in small note-heads. Again, the musicians may privilege the voices as they choose.

Example 4. Brahms, 'Wie bist du, meine Königin', bars 12–15, voice and right-hand top voice



Despite all this, however, the form of the song is recognisably Brahmsian, as found in numerous other songs. In other words, these transnational explorations are undertaken from a place of structural safety and familiarity, the differences never fully overwhelming the song's German identity. Brahms, like Daumer and Goethe, practised a selective, idealised cultural and intellectual transnationalism. 'Un-German' poetry allowed Brahms to present a range of relationships to other nations, but always rooted in the familiar sonic Austro-German world of piano-accompanied song in the vernacular.[43] The full range of Brahms's 'un-German'

[43] For a consideration of Brahms's settings from Eastern Europe, see, for example, Natasha Loges, 'Singing Lieder with a Foreign Accent: Brahms's Slavic Songs', *Indiana Theory Review*, 26 (2005), pp. 73–103.

gestures recall Vertovic's definition of transnationalism as a 'a shorthand for several processes of cultural interpenetration and blending', or a 'fluidity of constructed styles…and everyday practices'.[44] Furthermore, Brahms's biographer Max Kalbeck – an accomplished translator himself – praised Brahms for being able to take on national identities without compromising his essential German nature: 'No composer better understood the characteristic details of foreign melodic styles, no one became such an enthusiastic musical cosmopolitan, and yet no one has denied his German soul as little as [Brahms].'[45]

Hafiz-Peacock-Beamish

Matthew Riley has pointed out that 1848–1914 were climactic years for composers to draw on cultural heritage to compose their nations.[46] Today, in different political circumstances, such explicitly patriotic aims are problematic for the educated middle class into which Brahms so successfully integrated. Yet, cultural transnationalism is constructed through a process of rejection and selection which is virtually unchanged from Brahms's and Daumer's day. This is evident in the approach of Iranian-born Jila Peacock to Hafiz, through her calligraphy and her translations, four of which were set as solo songs by the British composer Sally Beamish in 2007 as *Four Songs from Hafez (2007) for Tenor and Piano,* commissioned by Leeds Lieder+ for Mark Padmore.[47]

[44] Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, p. 7.

[45] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, 4 vols (Berlin, Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1912–21), 1, p. 229.

[46] Matthew Riley and Anthony D. Smith, *Nation and Classical Music: From Handel to Copland* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2016), p. 3.

[47] Scottish Music Centre, 2007. The songs were premiered by Mark Padmore and Roger Vignoles on 12 October 2007. Later performances include one on 20 August 2015, Edinburgh International Festival Queen's Hall Series by tenor James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook; and a performance on 26 February 2019 at Milton Court, London, by baritone Roderick Williams and Andrew West.

The painter and printmaker Jila Peacock's *Ten Poems of Hafez* is a handmade book with a print run of fifty copies which was exhibited at various locations including the British Museum (London), the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), and the International Finance Centre (Dubai). Produced by the Glasgow Print Studio in 2004, it consists of ten silkscreens with calligraphic renderings of poems by Hafiz, on Japanese paper. It was subsequently republished in a black-and-white version by Sylph Editions in 2006. Beamish set 'Nightingale', 'Peacock', 'Fish', and 'Hoopoe' as solo songs, as well as other poems in different instrumentations.

There are several crucial differences between Daumer's and Peacock's approaches. Firstly, Peacock made her verbal translation to 'accompany her beautiful calligraphy' (see Figure 1 below).[48] Therefore, two stages of 'translation' take place – firstly, into figurative calligraphy, and secondly, into English: 'I … found that those who saw my first shape poems were curious to understand what the poems actually meant. This compelled me to embark on the much more ambitious, and frankly daunting project, of making translations from the originals.'[49] Thus, the pictures, unarguably Persian-looking to European eyes, coexist alongside the straightforward English words. Peacock selected poems which incorporate images of birds and animals, drawing on their rich allegorical significance. The fish, for example, represents the soul which is tossed about in the ocean of the world. She also maintained the neutral gender of the Persian third person pronoun *Oo*.

While Peacock's approach to calligraphy cannot be considered in depth here, it is worth noting that she used the nast'aliq script: 'This type of script, above all other Islamic hands, encourages the most complex rhythms and asymmetries, with its natural tendency towards

[48] Loloi, foreword, *Ten Poems from Hafez*.

[49] Except where indicated, all quotations of Peacock are taken from interviews carried out in early 2019.

the layering or tiering of words and phrases, its swooping lines, its constant switching from razor-thin to fat, thick strokes, its full-bottomed curves and its powerful momentum – the very image of rapid thought.'[50] Within established practices, master calligraphers have considerable freedom, like elite performers, resulting in infinite ways to present written language, and raising comparable issues of subjective interpretation and evaluation (everyone may not agree that Peacock's calligraphy is 'good' or 'correct'). Peacock does not work from an outline but builds up the shape without privileging any particular text. 'The wonderful thing about Arabic is that because the words can be read iconically, you can change the shape without losing the legibility of the word … I started just playing around with that.' For Robert Hillenbrand, the resultant book 'evokes the quintessentially Islamic medium of lustre pottery or glass, whose fitful iridescence suggests the glint of such precious materials as silver and gold'.[51]

Within Peacock's visual representation of 'Fish' (see Fig.1 below), the lines are relatively easy to follow and Hafiz's name is clearly legible (I have circled it in black below). The textured Japanese paper beautifully evokes water, but the fish's shape also recalls a curved drinking horn.

Figure 1. 'Fish', Jila Peacock, reproduced with kind permission of the artist.

[50] Robert Hillenbrand, 'Figural Calligraphy in the Muslim World', in *Ten Poems from Hafez*, p. 15.

[51] For a fuller discussion, see ibid., pp. 9–17.

A richly complex approach to translation and nation emerged from discussion with Peacock. The overwhelming impression was a desire to rekindle her relationship with her Iranian heritage through this work, effectively to ‘re-nationalise’ herself. Peacock’s love for Hafiz stems from a changing sense of identity and nationhood. Although her first written language was Persian, her mother tongue is English. Peacock’s mother is English; her father was an Iranian doctor from Mashhad in North-East Iran, near the Turkmenistan border. During his reign, Reza Shah sought to grow a professional middle class, so Peacock’s father came to London to study medicine on scholarship in 1931 or 1932. The family returned to Tehran in 1948, where Peacock and her sister were born. They left when she was ten years old. Peacock was educated at Lewes Grammar School and subsequently became a doctor. She then studied painting and film at St Martins, eventually moving to Scotland in 1990 with her family. A lecture in 2000 inspired her to reconnect with her Iranian heritage. Like Daumer, Peacock

regards herself as an 'outsider' and sees this as an advantage, defining herself both alongside and against nation: 'I've always found that the place that I am is a positive place because you can always see from the outside.' For Peacock, Hafiz represents Persian culture 'at a time when a bridge of understanding between East and West is so important'.[52] She described Hafiz as having become a 'sort of invisible, personal friend, as he has for so many of his readers throughout the centuries.'[53]

When it comes to the English text, the same contradictions between intention and result emerged as with Daumer; Peacock described her poems as 'almost direct translations from Hafez's originals', but abandoned key formal features of the *ghazal* such as the repeated rhyme. She was keen to eradicate herself from the translation as far as possible: 'any form of people feeling they could add something through their input was thrilling, as far as I was concerned. I am not dictating anything.' But, naturally, many decisions had to be made. For example, in the second couplet of 'Fish', she translated the word *Mustaheb* ('religious police'), as 'rescue'. In the last couplet, she translated *May-e Alast* as 'the wine of the day of creation', but it can also mean 'the wine of the day of judgement'.

Similar themes of identity and nation emerged in discussion with Sally Beamish. Like Goethe, Daumer and Brahms, she responded to the spiritual or philosophical otherness in the poetry, but this hinged more on its non-Western identity than on specific Persian qualities. However, Beamish interpreted the recurring themes of longing and separation as reflecting a universal human need for connection (she associated this with her own Quaker faith). Intriguingly the extensive background information on Hafiz and Persia which Peacock supplied was a potential hindrance because of a sense of cultural distancing, or, worse, the risk of cultural appropriation. As she put it, 'I felt these poems weren't for me because I'm

[52] Hafiz et al., *Ten Poems from Hafez*, p. 3.

[53] See preface, *Ten Poems from Hafez*.

not Persian [but] once I'd started [setting them] I couldn't stop.' The qualities Beamish perceived in the poems, as 'unpretentious', 'direct', and 'selfless' gave her artistic freedom, for example (like Brahms), to reorder or omit couplets, which felt less permissible to her when setting verses by Shelley or Yeats. One might recall Brahms's oft-quoted observation in 1876 that he could not set Goethe's verses because they were too complete for music to add anything.[54] Indeed, while Beamish felt she 'gave the words freedom', by effectively eradicating Hafiz's art, in fact the poetry freed her (at least partially) from various self-imposed compositional processes, such as the generation of musical material through the use of note squares, her normal practice at the time.

And yet, for Beamish, the songs are not without place: 'hearing Jila talking about the scented gardens and roses and nightingales definitely went into it'. The recurring themes of separation or longing resonated with the sense of displacement she experienced during her move from England to Scotland.

Table 4. 'Fish', Jila Peacock

When my beloved offers the cup Graven idols are crushed, And those who gaze into that intoxicating eye Call ecstatically for rescue. I plunge into the ocean [water] like a fish Craving the beloved's book,

[54] George Henschel, *Personal Recollections of Johannes Brahms* (New York, AMS Press, 1987), p. 45.

I fall pleading at those feet

In hope of a helping hand.

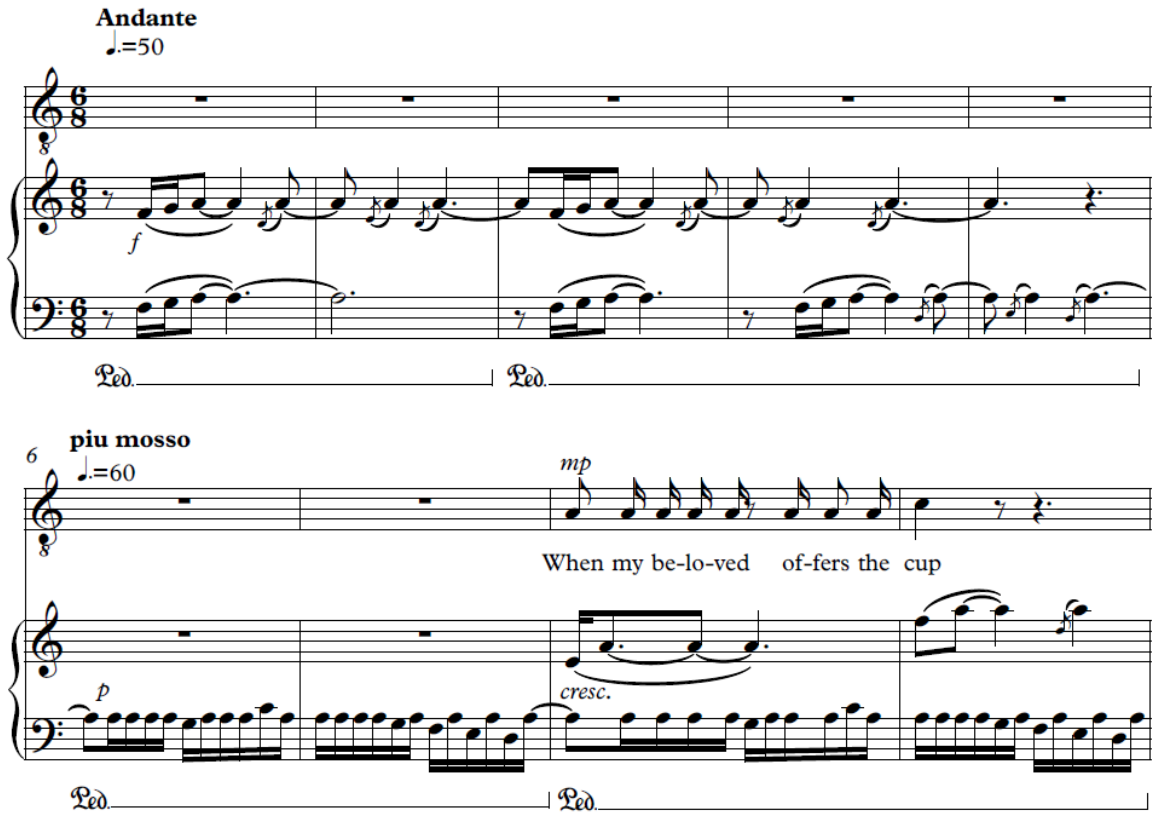
O happy the heart who like Hafez

Has tasted the wine of creation.

Peacock's translation of 'Fish' employs no rhyme scheme or consistent syllabic pattern. However, some characteristic features are retained: Hafiz is clearly evoked in the final couplet; and the pairs of lines have no narrative connection, in that the beloved is both the cup-bearer, and a fisherman, and the lover both the drinker and the fish who is caught. Beamish was influenced by the Hafiz settings of Anoosh Jahanshani, a classical Iranian musician.[55] This has resulted in a transnational blend of distinct musical elements. Beamish evoked the following features of Jahanshani's setting: minor modal improvisation around the dominant pitch of a (in Helmholtz notation); the use of rapid repetition to sustain notes (recalling Jahanshahi's guitar-like setar); octaves between the left and right hands; and a close relationship between accompaniment and voice, with frequent overlaps in range (see Example 5 below). The written 6/8 metre is often concealed, recalling Brahms's love of metric play in 'Wie bist du, meine Königin'.

Example 5. Sally Beamish, 'Fish', bars 1–9.

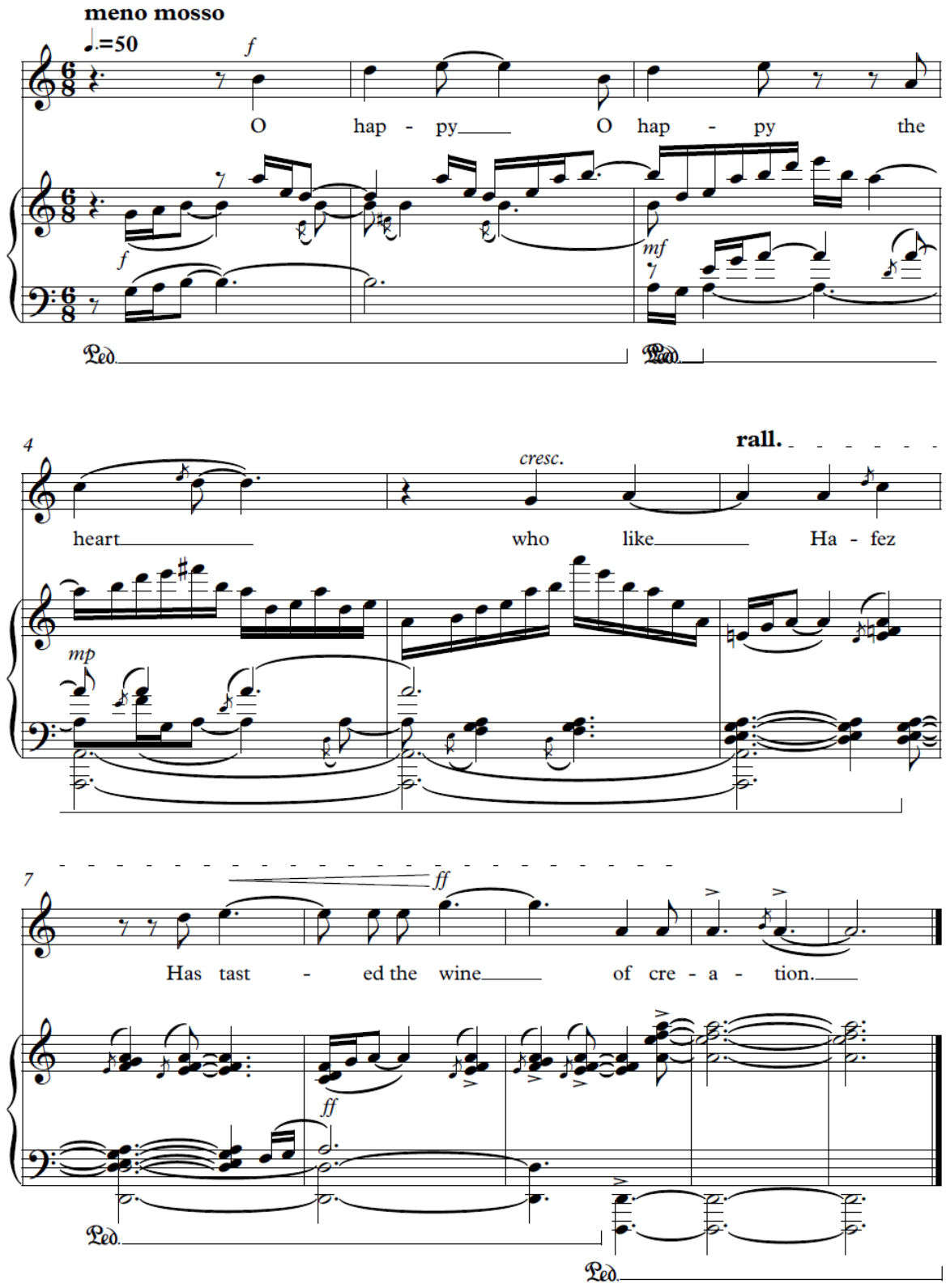
[55] For a sample of Jahanshahi's performance with an introduction in English, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWFs8ohzP7o (accessed 20 August 2019). For his settings of Peacock's animal poems, see https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_nD_OVmVKuRrQpQrGAdx-u334Rvy1fvUog (accessed 8 September 2019).



However, just as with Brahms, Beamish soon exploits a more recognisably European compositional framework. Beamish's declaration that the accompaniment is 'simple', like Jahanshahi's, is soon undone by the continuous, fiendishly irregular left-hand semiquaver passagework. Furthermore, the song's harmonic and textural range expands alongside its form [A]BCB'A'. By bar 16, the tonal centre has dropped by a fifth, replacing the drone a with d; it drops another fifth to G in bar 22, and so forth. In bar 44, Beamish repeats the opening text, set to the opening material, but transposed up a semitone, marked *pp*, i.e. nearly identical but slightly, unsettlingly different. The opening rising third motif returns in bar 66 after a hiatus, transposed up a tone. At this point, Beamish creates two verses of unequal length by repeating the opening text, before restoring the opening tonality of D minor at the climactic words 'O happy the heart who like Hafez/ Has tasted the wine of creation', a final peroration in bars 66–76. But the opening material has been transformed; the plangent fifths

and fourths have thickened into clusters; the tightly centred, repeated semiquavers have folded out into arpeggios across the full range; the edgy, nervous semiquavers in the melody are replaced by spacious crotchets. Only the ghost of Jahanshahi's sound world remains; Hafiz is fully reinvented.

Example 6. Sally Beamish, 'Fish', bars 66–76.


meno mosso
♩.=50
f
O hap - py O hap - py the
mf
Ped.
4
cresc.
rall.
heart who like Ha - fez
mp
7
ff
Has tast - ed the wine of cre - a - tion.
ff
Ped.
Ped.

Conclusion

These two examples show that Vertovec's 'economic, social and political' transnational linkages can be usefully expanded to embrace cultural artefacts like music and literature, and that they can be transformative. Daumer's poetry offered Brahms a heady mixture of exoticism, eroticism and philosophy; for one commentator, the Op. 32 songs signal the point at which Brahms left behind Biedermeier values.[56] In these songs, Brahms challenged the German folk song model he had so vehemently championed to Clara Schumann in 1860, just a few years earlier.[57] The heightened emotional world of the poems inspired a new compositional style, drawing on both familiar and 'othered' features. Similarly, Beamish and Peacock selected the parameters by which their poem/song could be both familiar and 'othered'. Selective transnationalism becomes, then, a means of expanding one's artistic range, while not entirely suppressing and alienating the familiar self. Performance adds another level of agency, since it enables musical features to be selectively layered to denote 'home', 'away', or something in between. These compromises perhaps acknowledge that extreme difference is rarely positively received; Brahms's friend Theodor Billroth wrote to the critic Eduard Hanslick from Alexandria, March 1886: 'No matter how colourful and interesting in a vulgar sense the Orient may be, with its palm trees, bananas and tamarisks, its dark blue sea, I would still prefer any average Italian city like Perugia, Orvieto, Siena. There I find aesthetic and cultural connections everywhere, links to my imagination! One can speak of no such thing here.'[58] Connection, whether formal, harmonic, motivic or imagined, is

[56] Hans Joachim Moser, *Das deutsche Lied seit Mozart*, 2 vols (Berlin, Atlantis Verlag, 1937), 1, p. 223.

[57] Letter from Brahms to Clara Schumann, 27 January 1860, Hamburg. Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann-Johannes Brahms. Briefe aus den Jahren 1853–1896*, 2 vols (Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1927), 1, p. 294.

[58] 'So bunt und interessant im vulgären Sinne der Orient mit seinen Palmen, Bananen, Tamarisken, seinem dunkelblauen Meer ist, so ist mir doch eigentlich jede mittlere italienische Stadt, wie Perugia, Orvieto, Siena, lieber. Dort finde ich überall geistige, kulturelle Anknüpfungspunkte, Beziehungen zu meiner Phantasie! Hier ist

central to the communicativeness of these songs. As Beamish argues, ‘we all have the same concerns, which is connection … I wanted to emphasise the sameness of everybody’.

In these songs, transnationalism becomes a means of liberating oneself from the limitations (real or imagined) of monoculturalism. In both cases, however, musical form functions as an anchor to the familiar national self, while aspects of the musical surface can express the ‘other’, for example temporary inflections of prosody, or developments of an atypical gesture in the accompaniment. But even then, those features are assimilated; Brahms imperceptibly smooths out his irregular rhythms, leaving only the delightful memory of difference, rather than its continual disturbance. Similarly, Beamish’s Iranian-inspired accompaniment texture, which might become monotonous, is soon subjected to a full range of compositional procedures which eventually embrace the entire piano range, rather than remaining limited to the setar’s narrower compass.[59] Hafiz never vanishes entirely, but he is overlaid with the spirits of his recreators.

---

von alledem nicht die Rede.’ Eduard Hanslick, *Aus meinem Leben*, 2 ed., 2 vols (Berlin, Allgemeiner Verein für deutsche Litteratur, 1894), 2, p. 330.

[59] See Jean During and Alastair Dick, ‘Setār’, (*Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, 2001).