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The integration of lyricism into the symphonies of Mahler: a selective analytical study of the structural impact of the lyric voice

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Abstract

The Integration of Lyricism into the Symphonies of Mahler.
A selective analytical study of the structural impact of the lyric voice.
by
Alexander James Ashton Lewis

This study develops a critical analysis of the first movements of Gustav Mahler's 1st, 2nd, and 9th Symphonies, with the intention of illuminating the nature of the lyric voice's interaction with the necessary structural conditions of a symphonic first movement. Whilst not primarily seeking to construct an exact definition for the term lyricism, the work focuses in particular on those problems encountered by a composer wishing to incorporate extended lyrical passages into a goal-orientated structure, and on the diverse solutions which Mahler discovers. The analytical principles of Heinrich Schenker are adopted in certain instances, but the musical unfolding is also interpreted in a broader sense making clear the lyricism's impact on the overall narrative of the music.

It also makes reference to a selection of Mahler's other works, including the Wayfarer song *Ging heut' morgen übers Feld*, the second song of the *Kindertotenlieder* cycle *Nun seh' ich Wohl, Warum so dunkle Flammen*, and the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

A pertinent historical context is provided. This focuses on the development of lyricism as an important structural feature through selected symphonies of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Joachim Raff, as well as examining Wagner's more dramatic employment of the lyric mode in sections of *Tristan und Isolde,* and in the third act of *Siegfried.*

From these sources it is possible to observe Mahler's debt to those nineteenth-century composers as well as affording an appreciation of his own large-scale structural innovations. In conclusion, this study provides, through the medium of detailed musical analysis, some new insights into Mahler's employment of lyricism. It also suggests avenues for further research into the diverse facets of lyricism as a compositional tool.

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The Integration of Lyricism into the Symphonies of Mahler.
A selective analytical study of the structural impact of the lyric voice.

by

Alexander James Ashton Lewis

Presented for the degree of
M.A.
University of Durham

Department of Music
1999

Declaration.

I confirm that this thesis is entirely the original work of the author and that no part of it has been submitted as part of any other degree or award of the University of Durham or of any other degree awarding institution in the U.K. or overseas.

Alexander J.A.Lewis
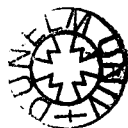
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Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank Dr. Michael Spitzer of the Department of Music, University of Durham for his enthusiasm, support, careful critique and constructive advice throughout the preparation of this thesis.

My interest in musical analysis and in the works of Gustav Mahler in particular have much deeper roots. Here I am greatly indebted to George Eales, Head of Music at Durham Johnston School, Christopher Wintle my analysis tutor, and Donald Mitchell with whom I was privileged to study Mahler as an undergraduate of King's College, University of London.

One essential purpose of musical analysis being to aid the performance of the music itself, I would like to pay tribute also to the conductors and instrumentalists with whom I have enjoyed performing the symphonies which are the subject of this work.

Alex Lewis, September 1999

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PREFACE

Far too often, it seems, the term 'Lyricism' is used carelessly. The musical innovations which took place during the nineteenth century, particularly in a structural sense, have provided the basis for countless valuable publications and research. Yet it appears that few commentators feel wholly comfortable dealing with the issue of lyricism. It is frequently disregarded or, perhaps worse, used as a general term which can offer little enlightenment to the reader.

This apprehension amongst writers is understandable, for the term is naturally ambiguous, its definition being dependent largely on context, and the composer's treatment of musical elements and their purpose on a larger scale.

In my thesis, I aim *not* to sum up with a textbook style definition of *Lyricism*. Indeed I regard it far from feasible in a study of these proportions to impose a definitive set of conditions for the classification of lyrical music, where so many others have failed. I intend, rather, to explore a selection of the features which contribute towards the complexities and ambiguities which render this classification difficult.

In particular, this work focuses on selected symphonic movements and songs of Gustav Mahler - a composer who, unfortunately, is sometimes belittled as a composer of 'lyrical programme symphonies'. I will demonstrate how extra-musical programmes can be tailored to the musical events in many of his works. But a principal intention is to put emphasis on the ways in which the narrative of the musical structure reveals its own, more fundamental stories and issues which often, as is the case in the Ninth Symphony, contradict our common understandings of their agenda.

As a necessary prerequisite to the more complicated lyrical issues which Mahler raises, I have recreated the context of his work by studying the various structural uses of and attitudes towards lyrical passages of the principal symphonists of the Nineteenth-Century. It may come as a surprise to note the absence of any discussion of Bruckner in

my work, but this omission represents my subscription to the view of this man as a composer *sui-generis*. Although Bruckner does form a link between Brahms and Mahler in the development of the symphony, he does not appear to take direct influence from the former, or lend any direct traits to the latter. Consequently, I believe those links which do exist to be far too complex to unpack adequately in a study such as this which is centred primarily around only one element of symphonic structure.

The problems encountered defining the term '*Lyricism*' are understandable, and frequently stem from its association with song. Hence, in the first chapter of this study I will examine the lyric implications of a symphonic movement which is based upon a song, naturally concentrating on the opening movement of Mahler's First Symphony. The common misconception though, which I find particularly alarming, is the view that the late Nineteenth-Century '*lyric style*' is the result of heightened chromaticism in the musical language and greater structural freedom. If this were the case, then could we stomach simply labelling late Wagner as a composer of Lyrical Operas? Although much of the music of *Tristan and Isolde* is highly chromatic, true lyricism is confined only to specific instances where it is used for dramatic effect, and I will demonstrate this in due course. Basically, we cannot feasibly call music lyrical just because it sounds tonally or structurally free.

The point that I am making, then, is that the issue of lyricism is really an issue of time, or rather of timelessness. This is perhaps best understood as a facet of the nineteenth-century cultural revolt against increasing industrial and urban growth, which is transformed into a spiritual quest by Friedrich Schiller's famous phrase,

who no longer can return to Arcadia, forward to Elysium.[1]

In the case of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the setting of Schiller's *Ode to Joy* in the finale celebrates the prospect of arrival in Elysium where "all men become brothers", and the simplistic nature of the theme - the elevation of a rustic folk-like melody to the

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[1] The Works of Friedrich Schiller: *Aesthetical and Philosophical Essays*, ed. Nathan Haskill Dole (New York, 1902), quoted in: Solomon, M. *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: A Search for Order*, 19th Century Music, Vol. 10, No. 1 (summer 1986), p. 9.

highest musical stature - gives a distinctly lyrical quality to much of the movement, escalating to fervour in certain places. This is a special case, however, for in most instances, lyrical passages are introduced into a symphonic structure to represent a perceived image of Elysium - the idyll, or rather a backward projection of arrival there, as is the case in the transition of the opening movement of Beethoven's Ninth and in the trio theme of the Scherzo, both of which motivically prefigure the theme of the finale. In these cases, a sense of timelessness is achieved by their inherent feeling of isolation from the direction of the surrounding music, and my study aims to elucidate the technical conditions and processes which make this feat perceivable.

The above argument is clearly supported by reference to the final song in Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* cycle, "In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus". Much of the song represents a 'Sturm und Drang' scenario, vividly expressive, highly chromatic, and characterised by wild leaps upwards of a seventh in the vocal line followed by chromatic descents. However, this music cannot be described as lyrical due to the extreme restlessness and striving that it embodies. The lyric contrast comes about at the close of the song where a *Wiegenlied* brings the work to a close. In fact, the song is to a large extent a parody of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the opening bass line quoting the coda of the first movement of the Beethoven, and the D major *Wiegenlied* substituting for the *Ode to Joy*, although there is a strong implication that just the eye of the storm is passing, and the mourning for the dead children will soon return. Nevertheless, the structural isolation (from the rest of the entire cycle) displayed in the close of this song exhibits clearly what I believe to be the fundamental characteristic of lyricism.

I : Mahler's First Symphony and the Paradox of a Lyrical 'Walking Song'.

As his most outwardly lyrical work, Mahler's First Symphony, in D major, serves as an excellent vehicle for an initial consideration of what I belive to be the basic lyric principles.

Example 1.1 shows a formal overview of the first movement's exposition.

Example 1.1

Perhaps the most striking feature at the onset of this work is the A natural pedal point which persists throughout the introduction. In particular, interest is drawn to the composer's use of natural harmonics which, apart from the lowest set of basses, spread across the entire string section. On this subject, Mahler explained to Natalie Bauer-Lechner,

> When I heard the A in all registers in Budapest, it sounded
> far too substantial for the shimmering of the air that I had in
> mind. It then occurred to me that I could have all the strings
> play harmonics [......]. Now I had the effect I wanted. [2]

This creates the "unpleasant whistling sound" which Adorno likens to "that emitted by old-fashioned steam engines".[3] In fact, this is Mahler at his most naturalistic, and Adorno continues to describe,

> ...a thin curtain, threadbare but densely woven, it hangs in the
> sky like a pale grey cloud layer, similarly painful to sensitive
> eyes. [4]

Nature is a crucial element within Mahler's music, as was generally the case throughout much of the nineteenth century. However, with Mahler, nature represents much more than a stand against industrialisation, and becomes an important part of the autobiographical nature of his work. In the essay, "Mahler and Nature: Landscape into music", Donald Mitchell reminds us of the composer's need for spiritual serenity in order to produce his work. These demands were realised in Mahler's summer retreats at Maiernigg, on the Wörther See, and from 1908 (following the incidence of the infamous three heavy blows at the latter) at Toblach, now Dobbiaco, in the Italian Dolomites. Aside from composition (perhaps as a preliminary stage in the creative process in the sense that it obviously provided considerable impetus for his compositions), Mahler's other pre-occupation during these months was the active exploration of the local geography on foot, and as Mitchell eloquently points out,

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[2] Gustav Mahler, in: Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler,* London (Faber Music), 1980, (trans. Dika Newlin). p. 160.

[3] Adorno, *Mahler*, Chicago, 1992, (trans. Edmund Jephcott). p. 4.

[4] ibid.

Mahler [......] walked not only with his feet but also with his ears:
a walk for this wholly extraordinary man was as much a
sonorous experience as a matter of physical locomotion. [5]

For the start of his symphonic journey, Mahler creates a 'picture of sound'; possibly the back-cloth to the musical world in which his symphonies co-exist. There is no actual theme here, but a sense of stasis which is slowly transformed in two ways. It is most obviously achieved through the incorporation of natural rhetorical signs, but also, more subtly through gradual motivic development.

The note A natural is established as the primary tone immediately, with E natural set up as an important relation. This falling fourth develops into a sequential fall (reminiscent of the finale of Brahms' Second Symphony [6]), but its purity is corrupted by the intervalic alteration of a perfect fourth to a major third, resulting in the arrival of a Bb on the flute, oboe and bassoon in the second half of bar 9. This creates a tension which has to be resolved upwards through a B natural at the *molto rit* (bar 13) to a C natural (bar 15) in which is embodied the initial fourth, now rising from E to A.

Example 1.2
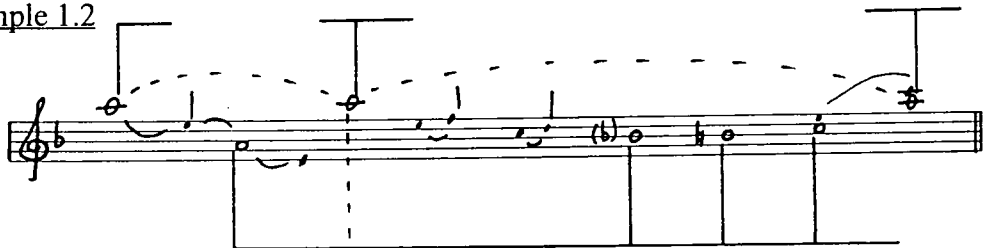
Having isolated this A - Bb - B - C progression, we can witness its operation at key points within the introduction. At the next instance of tension in the music, namely at the diminished seventh chord in the second bar of figure 2, we can pick out the outline of the above pitches presented in reverse (although the B natural is missing), again initiating a calming down. However, the most important recurrence of this note group is its manifestation in the transitional section which starts at the fourth bar of figure 3. The pitches are not only used to create the first bar of this transition, but are displaced horizontally on a larger scale to spell out the sequential ascent of the passage.

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[5] Mitchell, D. *Cradles of the New*, London (Faber), 1995. p. 163.

Example 1.3

Furthermore, in the fifth bar of this section, coinciding with the horn diminution of the opening fourths, the chromaticism is removed, revealing the pitches D - E - F - G, and after the necessary descent - A, which constitutes an expression in the minor mode of the initial ascent of the main theme of the exposition (displayed in Example 1.4).

The development of these pitches is obviously a crucial part of the make up of this section, but the realisation of this should not detract attention from what is going on amongst the fabric of natural signs which make up the musical surface, all of which contribute to the lyrical feel of the introduction. Although not in the autograph, Mahler later added the words *Wie ein Naturlaut* above the opening harmonics which create a sense of space and timelessness, altogether crucial to the feel of this introduction. In the third bar, the falling fourth (traditionally a *natural* interval) which emerges on the piccolo, oboe and clarinet, adds a sense of focus to the dry, textureless sound quality.

Four bars later, when the resultant chain of fourths comes to an abrupt rest on the Bb, the music's cold serenity is punctuated by a fanfare. Although originally intended for

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[6] Johannes Brahms, Symphony 2 in D, Op. 73/IV, bars 234-240

the horns, Mahler's revisions handed this passage to the clarinets, resulting not only in a softer timbre, but as a consequence of the notational transcription of the parts, the clarinets must execute this contrasting gesture in their weak bottom register. In fact, it has been made necessary for the bass clarinet to enter on the final beat of the *Più Mosso* bar to cover the low notes which are unplayable on the standard orchestral clarinet, before executing its own contradictory fanfare.

It is therefore ironic that when this fanfare is transferred onto its characteristic instruments, the trumpet parts should be instructed *In sehr weiter Entfernung aufgestellt* (in the far distance). Despite the increased sense of urgency that these trumpet fanfares project (due to the greater variety of rhythmic elements in use and the *accellerando*), they are still firmly positioned in the background. It is well worth noting that the third trumpet part, which plays a separate fanfare, in the same manner as the bass clarinet, is here marked *In der Ferne*, which implies that the player should be positioned apart from the other trumpeters. This demonstrates the importance of acoustical space in the passage. The use of horn calls and fanfares in symphonic music is traditionally representative of space and distance, but Mahler appears to have pushed this allegory one step further through his presentation of these signs first in secondary clarinet colours, and then in acoustically scattered primary tones.

As a result, when the horns do enter (four bars before figure 2), their imitation of Alpine horns, which should express distance, actually constitutes the most foreground musical element in the symphony so far. A part of this front is no doubt due to the conventional homophony in thirds and sixths between the two horn parts, as opposed to the voicing in the clarinet and trumpet fanfares which was based on the harmonic series. Nevertheless, the urgent trumpet interruptions lend an ironic proximity to the Alpine horns. Combined with extramusical features such as the cuckoo calls in the clarinet and flute parts which occur almost spontaneously, Mahler has created a sound world in which time and space appear almost in confusion, but still manages to retain a sense of balance and background direction.

This musical world is further complicated at the onset of the previously described

transitional section where muted cellos and basses introduce a morbid ostinato which anticipates the funeral of the third movement, but more importantly recalls the coda of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The pedal A still remains, now joined by a *pianissimo* roll on the timpani. The texture thickens, becoming more sinewy as muted horns re-introduce the falling sequence of fourths, which have now taken on an unmistakable heaviness, and which are transformed into a crotchet diminution at the eighth bar of figure 3. This increase in foreground activity, coupled with the progressive rise of the ostinato bass, serve to increase the transitional feel of the passage. The dissipation of the durable pedal point and a subtle change in articulation which results in the metamorphosis of the falling fourth into the innocent cuckoo, bring us to the end of a journey from the hazy stillness of the opening, to the sharp foreground of the song which constitutes the exposition.

Through the combination of the foreground elements of the introduction, and its underlying thematic construction, it is possible for us to view the passage in a programmatic sense. It is obviously early morning (the horn and cuckoo calls being inevitable signs) and the coldness of the string harmonics suggests that there is a mist, or the "shimmering of the air" that Mahler described to Bauer-Lechner [7]. However, these are all cosmetic devices with obvious connotations, which whilst effectively decorating the surface do not provide us with a satisfactory narrative. It is the overemphasis of such features which appears to cause problems in the ongoing debates over the programmatic nature of Mahler's early symphonies, and if we do decide to consider this work in such a way, then concentrating solely on foreground signs and gesture will not suffice.

The sense of direction is therefore to be found beneath the surface, in this case in the A - Bb - B - C progression described earlier, and this provides the opportunity to overlay our own programmatic interpretation onto the music, the motif's initial appearance, metamorphosis, and initiation of the song theme accounting for three important stages in the narrative. First, we encounter the desire evoked by a vision of the outside world (bar 9) which is coupled with excitement (in the fanfares). At the fourth bar of figure 3, this

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[7] NBL, p. 160.

desire is acted upon, and the chromatic progression above, which is completed diatonically from D to A, could be interpreted as the protagonist's journey from the inside world of desire, to the reality found outside. At the onset of the exposition (Fourth bar of figure 4) the desire has been fulfilled. I earlier stated that Mahler creates a 'picture of sound' in the introduction. If it is desired to push these pictorialisms to their extremes, we could relate the three stages in this motivic development to Mahler's seeing a mountain from inside his holiday retreat, his leaving the house, and his ascent of the hill, for example. The chromatic ascent from A to C, and the diatonic completion of the scale to the high A, would therefore translate as the man's progression from the internal world to the external, in both a psychological and a real sense. This is expressed below.

Example 1.4

Before we further our discussion to the exposition of the symphonic movement, it is first crucial that we discuss the material's source. The main part of the first movement is based on the second song of Mahler's earliest mature work, the cycle of four songs *Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen* (composed 1883-5 and believed to have been orchestrated in 1893). Much of the music here is folk-derived, and the song, *Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld*, in which a rejected lover finds temporary consolation in a glorious spring morning, is set to what Hans Redlich describes as an "Austrian style walking tune" [8]. Although, he gives us little idea of what constitutes a "walking tune", particularly in the Austrian style, his description seems appropriate when we take into account the words of the text.

Ging heut morgen übers Feld,
Tau noch auf den Gräsern hing;
Sprach zu mir der lustge Fink:
"Ei, du! Gelt? Guten Morgen! Ei gelt? Du!
Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt? schöne Welt!?
Zink! Zink! schön und flink!
Wie mir doch die Welt Gefällt!"

Auch die Glockenblum am Feld
Hat mir lustig, guter Ding
Mit den Glöckchen klinge, klinge.
Ihren Morgengrub geschellt:
"Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt? schöne Welt?
Kling! Kling! Schönes Ding!
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt! Hei-a!"

Und da fing im Sonnenschein
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln an;
Alles, alles, Ton und Farbe gewann im Sonnenschein!
Blum und Vogel, grob und Klein!
Guten Tag, guten Tag! Ist's nicht eine schöne Welt?
Ei du! Gelt? Schöne Welt!?

Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohl an?!   [rep.]
Nein! Nein! Das ist mein, mir nimmer blühen kann!

(see Appendix 1 for English translation).

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[8] Redlich, H. F. *Gustav Mahler : Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen* , introduction to: Eulenberg Miniature Score, 1959, p. vii.

A background level overview of the song is shown below and can be compared with the symphony (Example 1.1)

Example 1.5

As can be seen from a comparison of the above with Ex.1, the song is by no means as harmonically complex as the symphony. The main reason for this is the strophic nature of the song. The first two strophes are tonally identical, and correspond to the repeated exposition in the symphony. However, the fewer thematic elements in the song necessarily result in the more basic tonal structure. Both themes begin in the tonic, with the second theme progressing to the dominant. The third verse is in B major, which corresponds to the modulation to F major in the development of the symphony. Here, a new theme emerges at figure 15 which is actually used as the second theme in the symphony. For the final strophe, we experience a change of tempo and a move to F# major, the key in which the song ends. As a result of these continual modulations, it becomes difficult to construct a conventional Urlinie for the music (to which Example 1.5 bears testament). In the case of the song, ^3 can be located, in the fourth bar of figure 14, as a result of the modulation to B major. However, in the symphony, after its exploration of tonic and dominant, the music progresses not to the key of B, but to E major. As a result, it is impossible to locate ^4 due to the abundance of G#s.

If we return our attention to Mahler's text, it should be observed that it consists of three stanzas of equal length, complemented by a final stanza of just two lines, in which the wayfarer leaves superficiality behind him. The music naturally fits this pattern and Mahler presents us with three strophes of equal weight, followed by a coda.

A foreground graphic analysis is included as an appendix at the end of this paper, and will be discussed now, along with other points of interest which arise from an examination of the song.

The first strophe opens with A natural staccato crotchets on the flutes and piccolo, spanning a single open octave. This is all we hear for the first two and a half bars, at which point the voice enters supported by the harp, and the crotchets continue right up to the end of the tenth bar of the song. The entry of the vocal line outlines the D major tonality on the opening, and initiates a rise up to the fifth degree (the A natural in bar 4). B natural and C# figure as important upper neighbours here, and set in motion a descending sequence in which the notes G natural and F# are the important points of arrival. Already we encounter our first difficulties in regarding this music in Schenkerian terms. The problem here is the result of the D natural pedal point which persists for the first fourteen bars of the piece. Normally, it would be more commonplace to discover pedal points in development sections, or often providing prolongations of the dominant before a return to the tonic, but here, there is an immediate tonic pedal which underlies the thematic *exposition* of the song, similar to the D major pedal which underlies the first theme of Johannes Brahms' Second Symphony. As a result, one experiences an element of doubt in identifying ^4 and ^2, because the absence of any bass arpeggiation means that these degrees of the descending line are not correctly supported. In order to resolve problems such as this, it is normally most effective to consider the function of the 'offending' element. In this case, the pedal point actually plays a crucial role in establishing the atmosphere of the opening, creating a pastoral feel which is essential to the meaning of the song. In other words, it is has taken on an important 'pictorial' role, instead of simply having a functional importance in harmonic terms, and within the context of our discussion of lyricism, one can observe that the lyric mood's total absorption into the music is already interfering with the expected musical structure.

This problem again arises at bar 11 (fig. 9). Following the caesura in bar 8, the melodic line has returned to ^5 through the disruption of the previously described sequence. At

bar 11, the second theme begins on a G natural, which should be tagged ^4. However, the lack of suitable support from the bass again raises doubts. The pedal point still remains, now accentuating the beginning of each bar with a bare fifth, approached by a tritone grace-note. Harmonically, therefore, the G natural is a suspended fourth, which resolves to the 3rd (F#) in the following bar. The musical style has now changed from idyllic pastoralisms to the bucolic, which takes on the form of a crude rustic dance, to which the pedal fifth is indispensable. This passage should therefore be treated in the same way and I have labelled the G natural ^4 on the graph. A further point of interest here, which adds to the rustic nature of the music, is the cello line in bars 12 and 14 which performs the descending progression D - A - F#. Combined with the basic descent F# - E - D in bar 12, this creates a harmonic effect similar to that of natural horn calls.

From bar 15, the music becomes increasingly excited as the upper line climbs chromatically from D natural to A natural. The voice and upper violins are in unison as far as the end of bar 16, at which point, the voice drops out, and increased harmonic movement in the orchestra, and a crescendo to *forte* lead us into A major and the third section of the strophe at bar 19. Here, although the basic progression over the next four bars is V7 - I - V7 - I, a dominant pedal (A natural), has come into operation.

At figure 10 (bar 23), Mahler introduces a complete contrast. The music moves to the subdominant, and the sweeping *forte* of the previous four bars is reduced to a *pianissimo* descent in sequence performed spiccicato by the violins. Two bars later, we are back in the dominant, anticipating the return to D major for the second strophe. However, this return is somewhat delayed, and Mahler makes use of A natural's upper neighbour B as the inner harmonic voices shift up chromatically. A climax is reached, and the violins and violas are left creating a shimmering effect, each oscillating between two given pitches which amalgamated, create a chord of A major 9.

This effect is particularly striking, and to fully understand it, we must remember that within the context of the song cycle, this whole episode is merely a daydream. My personal reading is that at this point in the song, the protagonist's rapture over the

beauty of nature has reached such a level of intoxication that he looses a firm grip on himself and completely forgets where he is. This intoxication is punctured in bar 29 by the trumpet's A natural fanfare (which is doubled on the oboe and triangle), which, although it cannot bring the wayfarer back down to earth, at least brings him one step closer to reality.

It is not until the third bar of the second strophe (bar 32) that we feel confident that the music is back in D major. The oscillating A - b figure (now reduced from semiquavers to quavers) remains in the upper violin part for two principal reasons. First, in a practical sense, it has been necessary for Mahler to retain this figure so as to keep a sense of continuity between the two strophes. If the figure were to drop out completely at bar 30, then the transition between the two would be too abrupt to be incorporated into a dream sequence. Second, this figure serves as an effective replacement to the A natural crotchets which complemented the opening of the song.

Although the second strophe is identical to the first in a structural and a harmonic sense, it is further animated through the thicker blend of orchestral colours used, by the canonic imitation which takes place at a bar's distance between the voice and cellos in the first section of the strophe, and by features such as the A - B natural quaver figure in the upper violins, described above. This is unsurprising behaviour from a man whose disdain for direct repetition is frequently commented upon. For example, in 1899 he said to Natalie Bauer-Lechner,

> In my writing from the very beginning you won't find any more
> repetition from strophe to strophe; for music is governed by
> the law of eternal evolution, eternal development - just as the
> world, even in one and the same spot, is always changing,
> eternally fresh and new.[9]

Of course, this statement is rendered inaccurate by the already mentioned repeated exposition of the symphony, and we should not overlook the fact that when Mahler made this statement in 1899, both the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and the First Symphony had already been composed and performed. However, the context of this

statement is not entirely clear, and this makes it difficult to ascertain whether Mahler is talking about his work to date (in which case it is not entirely true in the terms just discussed), or whether he is projecting the style of future compositions (and in this case, the opening movement of his sixth Symphony spoils his plans!). Realistically, it is unfruitful to become burdened with such speculations, and what we should gain from this statement is the fact that the music being described here does reveal evidence of this perpetual evolution, and the evidence of strophic repetition in the exposition of the First Symphony, is perhaps best expressed as the composer's commitment to sonata form principles.

To continue the analysis of the song, the closing section of the strophe is particularly interesting. At bar 56, there is a departure from the trend set in the previous strophe, taking an abrupt turn and arriving on a 7th chord on a C#. The B natural continues its role as an important note, and in bar 57 it heads a reappearance of the third theme of the first two strophes, which is now employed as a modulatory bridge between strophes two and three. B major is the goal, and by bar 58, it arrives on a dominant chord in second inversion. There is a diminuendo throughout this passage, and by bar 62, the music has arrived at the desired *pianissimo* for the more reflective third strophe.

From figure 14 (bar 64) the music adopts a B major pedal which remains in control for much of the rest of the song. The voice enters and initiates the characteristic ascent to the fifth degree (F#). This is repeated at bar 71, then a new theme appears at bar 75, which assumes a similar rustic flavour to the second theme of the opening strophe, due in particular to the 'bouncing' nature of the accompaniment, and the suspended fourth in the accompaniment. The music now moves to the dominant, ushered in by the IV - V - I progression in F# major which appears in the bass from bar 81. In the two bars following the arrival of F# major, the upper violins rise upwards to establish the fifth degree of this key, which is further emphasised by the vocal line at the words "Guten Tag, Guten Tag!" (bar 85). At bar 91, the vocal part arrives at the fourth degree (B natural), and the descent ^3 - ^2 - ^1, can be traced through the downward sequence in the upper violin part in bars 94 and 95. However, the re-introduction of the C# in the

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[9] NBL, p. 119.

vocal line on the words "Schöne Welt!", displays an unwillingness to depart from the fifth degree of F# major. The reason behind this becomes apparent in the final strophe.

The descending sequence in the first violin at bar 93 is passed down through the strings until it arrives on the cellos where it dissolves through triplets and then crotchets into static, repeated F# crotchets at bar 101. This is transferred onto the flutes two bars later (figure 17) with an added seventh (E natural) below, to begin what is effectively the song's coda. The voice enters with the opening theme in F# major, but instead of rising to a C#, it drops to the third degree, an A#, at bar 105, emphasising the sad reality of the protagonist, with whom happiness will never flower. The importance of the C#, is revealed at the very end of the song. Although the final chord is F# major, it does not provide us with an entirely solid conclusion. Despite the F# and A# which are held on in the flutes and first violins, the final note to be performed is the C# in the harp. In fact, this C# actually represents here ^2 of B major, the key to which the song should really resolve. To support this, we should cast our minds back to the opening of the final strophe, where the F# is joined by an E natural in the flute accompaniment, immediately revealing the instability of F# major in the context of this song. Furthermore, after the presentation of the main theme in F# major at bar 103, it is immediately restated in the 'home' key of B major at bar 108. Besides, the absence of resolution at the end of the song would have been an obvious compositional decision for Mahler. It fits cleanly with the work's narrative in its expression of unfulfilled yearning.

Although Mahler absorbs virtually all of the song material into his symphonic movement, it is in no way acceptable to describe the latter as being a carbon copy. There are crucial differences which exist here in both a compositional and a contextual sense.

The introduction to the symphonic movement plays a specific importance in setting up the fifth degree of the Urlinie, the A natural being the primary tone. A crucial part of the effect of the opening is that we are left with some doubts as to where we are tonally. This is not necessarily to be taken as unusual because tonal instability is a characteristic of a great many symphonic introductions. Haydn is a noteworthy example here, frequently opening symphonies in the tonic minor (no. 98 in Bb and 104 in D being

obvious examples). In Haydn's last Bb major symphony, No. 102, the tonal ambiguity of the opening gesture achieves a similar effect to the opening of Mahler's First. The *tutti* presentation of bars Bb octaves, almost *sotto voce*, or at least *messa di voce*, crescending from nowhere before dissolving away, whilst posessing a portentous tone, also lend that sense of stillness, openness and mystery to the music. The tender utterance which follows in bar 2 of the Haydn confirms Bb major straight away, falling onto the dominant within four bars, but this tonality is further clouded in the gradual build up which takes place from bar 10, passing through Ab and a diminished seventh chord over an E natural before an arpeggiated presentation of the Dominant seventh sets up the first subject of the exposition. Forward observation of Mahler's score reveals that the A natural is operating as the fifth degree of D minor, but I do not feel that this is really discernible audibly at the onset. This doubt is increased by the appearance of the E natural in the falling fourths of the oboe. However, we should realise at this point that whilst there is doubt over the tonality at surface level, these two pitches (A and E) are also used by Beethoven at the start of his Ninth Symphony, which is also in D major.

When the 'walking theme' appears shortly after figure 4 the music is quite obviously in D major, but the listener is still not completely orientated as to the functional significance of the introduction. Although this theme characteristically ascends to the fifth degree (A natural), when we hear the A in the cello line, it is two octaves below the register which has been set up at the opening, and which we would therefore expect to hear it in. It is therefore necessary to look elsewhere to find this A in the obligatory register. In fact, the cuckoo calls, which were originally described as innocent and spontaneous, take on an important role here. Their appearance on the clarinet at figure 5 provides us with the A natural we are looking for, but we should also be aware that the music at this point has actually modulated to the dominant, so the A is actually being heard as the first degree of A major. However, the E that the cuckoo call falls to serves to set up the fifth degree of the dominant, so this fourth interval can now be seen as possessing an important pivotal role in its combining the fifth degrees of the tonic and the dominant.

Example 1.6

It is not until figure 12 than we are able to fully understand the function of the opening. After a repeat of the entire song section, the onset of the development provides us with a reprise of the opening mood. Although the A harmonics reappear in the strings, the memorable sense of space and timelessness has now been stifled. This has been achieved firstly through the greater concentration of musical ideas, but more importantly, the song section's close in the dominant has initiated the tonicisation of the A harmonics. The result is two passages which, whilst appearing relatively similar on paper, contextually present us with two very different listening experiences. It is impossible to perceive where we are during the introduction, but we experience an inevitable familiarity at its reprise, hence there is no *mysterious* openness, but simply an openness from which a considerable part of the opening's character is lost. This differential treatment of the opening material is perhaps unsurprising from a composer who believed that,

> ....just as in nature the entire universe has developed from
> the primeval cell [.....] so also in music should a larger
> structure develop from a single motif. [10]

Here, Mahler was actually talking on the subject of development sections (of which the reprise of the opening is the start), and as a result of this belief, it is a noticeable feature of Mahler's works that music is rarely repeated exactly - only in the expositions of his first and sixth symphonies are repeat signs encountered. The important point here, then, is that this continual development of musical elements enables Mahler to place the

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[10] January 29, 1905, from a conversation with the young Anton Webern, quoted in: Lebrecht, N. *Mahler Remembered* London (Faber) 1987. p. 172.

listener in a string of continually shifting contexts, and at the same time significantly alter the meaning of his musical figures.

By contrast, *Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld* has nowhere near as extensive an introduction. In a very general sense, introductory passages are normal in Lieder and are crucial for setting the mood of the ensuing song. In this case, all Mahler allows for is a bar and a half of crotchet A naturals which persist as an accompaniment throughout the first theme. It should not be forgotten, however, that this song forms the second part of a fixed cycle, and in this sense, the previous song can possibly be regarded as a substitute for the symphonic introduction. Indeed the first song (*Wenn mein Schatz...*) is in D minor, and also sets up the fifth degree (A natural) as its primary tone - as in the symphony, it is the first that we hear. Whilst it is therefore possible to say that Mahler has employed the tonality of the first *Gesellen* song in the opening of his first symphony (he also takes the cuckoo calls from the song), there are no other feasible parallels that can be drawn. But this is perhaps to be expected, because in the cycle, the second song is consequential of the first - a failed attempt to alleviate the sadness of the first through immersion in nature. In the symphony, the expression of the introduction is deliberately unspecific, so as to remove the superficiality of the happiness associated with the song.

Despite opening with the D major 'walking theme', the exposition of the symphonic movement very quickly departs from the model provided by the song. Although the theme's initially ascends to the fifth degree, its return to ^5 , five bars later, undergoes a sequential rise, outlining the dominant, and arrives in A major at figure 5. Therefore, when the theme is repeated in this key on the trumpet in the fourth bar of figure 5, it leads us momentarily into E major. Sticking to first-movement rules, Mahler introduces his second theme in the dominant at figure. 6, but instead of using the rustic, 'dance theme' which constitutes the second thematic idea in the song, he replaces it with the new theme which appeared in the song's third strophe. This theme, like the opening idea, also leads towards the dominant, and here takes the music firmly into E major at the eleventh bar of figure 6, arriving on a B natural. Whilst this note actually represents ^5 in E, on the larger scale, it should be identified as ^6 of D and has been appropriately flagged on the graph to show its significance as an upper neighbour. ^4 appears

impossible to find due to the concentration on A and E major, which results in an abundance of G#s, and whilst ^3 appears in the first violin at figure 7, it is structurally undermined by the continuation of the E major pedal point. Other graphing problems frequently occur as a result of the contrapuntal writing here which Mahler uses to express instability. It is important to remember that it is often not possible, or indeed worthwhile, to force this music into a pre-supposed plan. One should not experience frustration at its unwillingness to conform but should instead be excited by Mahler's novel invention and freedom of expression.

We move back to A major, and at Fig. 8, the 'dance theme', finally appears in the strings, incorporating the same 4 - 3 suspensions as in the song, but here is presented over a six-four pedal point. The exposition now follows its model faithfully, despite obviously being in A major, and remains in this key until the repeat signs at figure 12 force a return to D major in the repetition. In the fifth bar of figure 9, the exposition is extended through two repetitions of the 'walking theme', performed *fortissimo* by the full orchestra. Figure 11 works on residues from the quaver counterpoint which has adorned the music since the fifth bar of figure 9, and this is dissolved into cuckoo calls, before the A naturals in the upper strings rise up two octaves in preparation for the reprise of the opening mood which forms the developmental onset.

Before we examine the development section, we should highlight a crucial aspect of Mahler's symphonic technique which was noted by Erwin Stein. Namely that,

> His development sections expand, not by sequences, but by variations. Sometimes he shuffles the motifs like a pack of cards, as it were, and makes them yield new melodies. The motifs of the theme reappear, but in a different arrangement.[11]

This is obviously a complex process which deserves closer examination, but Donald Mitchell clearly simplifies it to the general principle of,

> a breaking-down or fragmentation of a theme into its

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[11] Stein, E. *Orpheus in New Guises*, London, 1953, pp. 6-7.

constituent motives, which are then re-presented in ever-
changing chronological sequence and fresh contrapuntal
combinations.[12]

In the context of a discussion of lyrical integration, this fact appears to be of crucial importance. If lyricism is to be totally absorbed into a symphonic structure, as appears to be the case here, the number of concessions the composer has to make to the fundamental structure (as we have already observed through the use of pedal points etc.) leaves a grave danger of the forward drive of the movement becoming stale, and interest being lost. Therefore, this re-shuffling of thematic elements lends a more spontaneous flow to the music which is an acceptable substitute for more traditional techniques such as heavily reworking motives by sequence, a scenario which would puncture the timeless, idyllic setting of this particular work.

Mitchell continues his discussion to refer to the ways in which Mahler employs this principle in the first two movements of his Fourth Symphony, and explains that it is in this work that we experience the composer's technique in its most refined form. However, the true importance of this variation technique lies in its existence and operation even in works where direct song sources constitute the building blocks[13]. In other words, in the First Symphony, Mahler treats a song theme with precisely the same intent as he would later treat his *symphonic* themes, and it is the seamless nature of this song theme as it appears in the guise of a symphonic exposition (a rustic equivalent to the Wagnerian ideal of the unending melody) which enables Mahler to set to work on it so effectively in the development. As is to be expected, this technique exists in a much more basic way in this earlier composition, but its grip on the development section is unmistakable and will be discussed now along with the tonal issues raised, which Mitchell seemingly avoids confronting. In order that Mahler's re-ordering of thematic materials may be displayed clear and concise manner, the following discussion adopts the 'easy to use' diagrammatic methods of Donald Mitchell's survey of the same

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[12] Mitchell, D. *Gustav Mahler Volume II : The Wunderhorn Years*, London (Faber), 1975, p.28.

[13] Although it is true that the overall song source for the Fourth Symphony is *'Das himmlische Leben'* from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which is featured in the final movement of the work, it does not provide prime thematic material for use in the other movements of the symphony, which set up the context for the text of the finale.

passage (see footnote 12).

The development begins at figure 12 with the reprise of the introductory string harmonics, the significance of which has already been explained. An important feature of this passage, however, in the present context, is the introduction of a new theme (theme *d*) in the cellos which begins at the upbeat to the eighth bar after figure 12, and has grown out of the falling fifth heard two and a half bars earlier. At figure 15, the' spell' is broken as the music arrives in D major and a trio of Alpine horns ushers in the main body of the development.

Theme *d* now appears in its major form five bars before figure 16, before we are led into the mid-point of the opening song theme which I have tagged *c* [14].

Example 1.7

The counterpoint in the oboe at this instance provides the descent ^4 - ^3 - ^2 in D major, which can be observed on page 6 of the foreground graph of the symphony. However, this descent is curtailed in the third bar of figure 16, when the bass moves upward on to a D natural, initiating a IV - V - I progression into A major. An A natural pedal comes into operation, above which fragments of the 'walking theme' (theme

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[14] *Despite appearing as the secondary theme in the symphonic exposition, it has been labelled c rather than b in the above diagram, because it actually appears as the *third* thematic element in the original song (see previous description of the song's third strophe).

a)and the "Guten Tag!" motives from the song can be heard. In this passage, we witness a melodic descent to ^3 (C#) at four bars before figure 17, but this is also cut short by the music's jump to Db major. This passage is also controlled by a pedal point, and it should be noted, that the lower string parts are notated in the key of C# major for the initial four bars before converting to their enharmonic equivalent. At figure 18, the key shifts down a major third to Ab, and here we witness a contrapuntal presentation of theme *d* in the woodwind, and a variant of theme *b* in the second violins and violas.

Example 1.8

The rate of harmonic movement speeds up here, adding an indisputable forward drive to the music, and after eight bars, we are presented in the strings with the material which made up what I previously described as the third section of the opening strophe of the song, whilst the theme *b* variant still continues in the woodwind. From this point, we encounter the section of the symphony where the succession of musical events bears most faithfulness to the original song. From figure 19, the music imitates the transitional section between the second and third strophes of the song. Necessarily there are differences of key here (in this case the aim being to reach F major), but the modulation functions in exactly the same way as described earlier, albeit a minor third higher. Once F major has been established at Figure 20, the mood of the third strophe of the song is recalled absolutely, with only minor surface changes such as the canonic imitation here between the woodwind and cellos. In the twelfth bar of figure 20, theme *d* is added to the texture on the French horn, further enriching the feeling of warmth, but at the seventh bar of figure 21, it returns in a new state, bringing about an unexpected mood

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swing. The dynamics suddenly drop to *pianissimo* and a variant of theme *d* in which the initial upward tone has been reduced to a semitone appears in the second violins. The tonality has lapsed to F minor, and the easy warmth of the movement has made way for a more serious side - the serpent in the garden of Eden. There is a tension here which builds gradually, and the surging first violin line which commences at the fifth bar of figure 22, outlining an F minor triad anticipates a great release of tension. This release is attempted at figure 23, but the trumpet fanfares are transfigured by the minor mode, serving only to punctuate the texture as opposed to destroying it. As one might expect, the tension increases further, and comes to a head when the bass reaches an ostinato progression of Eb - Db - C which begins to grind away beneath a chromatic rise from F to A natural, gradually increasing in volume all the while. A natural fanfares on the horns lead to an explosion of trumpet fanfares over a cadential six-four which leads without hesitation back to D major and the recapitulation.

As Donald Mitchell is keen to point out [15], the onset of the recapitulation provides further evidence of Mahler's disdain for representing material in its original order, for this section of the movement kicks off not with the expected 'walking theme' but with the Alpine horns that announced the onset of the thematic reworking in the development. The rest of the recapitulation is centred in the tonic with only occasional episodes departing briefly to the dominant. Nevertheless, the seamlessness of the initial melodic line (figure 27) provides yet another fine example of Mahler's variation principle.

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[15] DM II, p.30.

Example 1.9

The prolongation of D major results in the prolongation of the fifth degree, with ^4 not appearing until the eighth bar of figure 33, and the final ^3 - ^2 - ^1 resolution coming in the closing two measures.

It should now be clear that there are two lyric levels in operation in this movement - the sonata structure itself, which is outwardly serenade-like and fuses what I have described as lyric 'features' into a forward moving, goal-orientated structure, but more importantly it is the lack of direction in the introduction and its reprise which sets it out as being a complete lyric entity and gives it a special quality. It is passages such a this which bear the greatest significance here because they can, as Mahler has shown on a basic level in this movement, be incorporated into and interrupt the governing principles of a work's structure.

At this point, then, it seems necessary to follow the course of the devolopment of structurally significant lyrical sections in the nineteenth-century symphony.

Interlude : The Structural Development of the Lyrical Group in the Nineteenth-Century Symphony.

In his survey of nineteenth-century music, Carl Dahlhaus describes the development of the symphony after Beethoven as being "Circumpolar".[16] By this, he is referring to the fact that the Symphonic style after Beethoven did not advance logically by step, but rather that it progressed by spreading out in different directions from the legacy of Beethoven. From the *Eroica Symphony* onwards, Beethoven succeeded in opening up the form of the symphony as defined by those works of Haydn. The *Eroica*'s radical goal-directed approach to symphonic structure has naturally been well documented. However, what is also of great importance is that due to the wealth and variety of Beethoven's innovations, those nineteenth-century composers who sought to assimilate this man's style into their own symphonies found that it was necessary to concentrate on specific Beethovenian models, hence the concentric growth which Dahlhaus describes. However, one should not overlook the fact that during the nineteenth century, the composer was being increasingly considered as a creative artist. The extra freedoms then being enjoyed by composers would have been likely to result in a more concentric manner of compositional development, even in the absence of the mentor Beethoven.

Nevertheless, we give testament to the genius of Beethoven by comparing those works composed in the latter half of the nineteenth-century with his symphonies, rather than with works which immediately preceded them. In Dahlhaus' opinion, the principal difficulty encountered by composers working in Beethoven's shadow was that of incorporating lyricism, a definitive trait of the *Romantic* period into the monumental, goal-directed standard which had been set.

For a composer such as Franz Schubert, who worked primarily in lyric mode (through Lieder, for example), this problem proved to be one of considerable weight. If we examine the structural architecture of the opening movement of his *Unfinished Symphony* (1822), it

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[16] Dahlhaus, C. 1980, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, (trans. J. Bradford Robinson, 1989) p. 152.

comes immediately to attention that whilst the second group of the symphony conforms to the expected norm, expressing stability and lyric flow, the first theme deviates from standard practice in the sense that it is also lyrical rather than being dynamic. In short, there is no real conflict between the two subjects, no monumental resolution to aim for, so we are left with a sense of impending structural collapse into an almost 'laid back' chain of lyrical expression. Dahlhaus, explains that in order to counter this problem and add an overall direction to the movement Schubert employs the seven-bar introductory motive, which first appeared on the cellos and basses at the very start of the work, at the onset of the development. He then proceeds to base the ensuing section almost entirely upon this theme. Furthermore, Schubert reintroduces this motive in the movement's Coda, and the result is that what started out as a mere introductory motive, is given a structural narrative of its own which transcends the importance of that material which should formally assume the greater significance, and a new dimension is added to the symphonic movement.

However, the problem with this, which Dahlhaus does not appear to realise, lies in the absence of any real integration between these two elements. Although motivic elements from the main part of the exposition (such as the syncopated accompaniment figure from the second group), do make there way into the development section, they remain inert and are merely treated mechanically; and when the Coda arrives it is based exclusively on the introductory material. In other words, what one would normally identify as the main thematic elements of the work, actually appear to exist in isolation from the rest of the larger scale architecture of the movement as a clearly defined lyric plateau. Indeed, this lyric plateau is a beautiful and essential part of the character of the movement, and is even open to subtle thematic manipulation from Schubert, such as at the canonic passage from bar 94. However this would probably be better viewed as an elaboration of the theme rather than as a development of it, and in any case, it does not contribute towards the movement's overall goal. The forward motion of the movement comes from a motive which is apparently unimportant at first but which rescues the symphony's seemingly cyclical plight at the onset of the development, and again at the Coda. Furthermore, this material seems to be incapable of exerting a real grip on the movement for it neither figures in the recapitulation (in effect a second lyric window of near identical proportions to the first) nor shapes its progress in anyway. According to Dahlhaus, Schubert believed his B minor

symphony to have "paved the way to large-scale symphonic form".[17] The final result, by Beethovenian standards, is unconvincing, but the movement does nevertheless display a prudent large-scale control over what is essentially song material and this reveals the man's inherent awareness of the difficulties involved in the incorporation of extensive lyrical static passages into a forward-thinking architecture.

Despite its being two years from completion at the time of Schubert's *Unfinished*, we should now turn our attention to Beethoven's Ninth in order to examine the more sophisticated incorporation of lyrical elements into that symphony. The symphony opens in D minor, but reaches the dominant seventh of Bb at bar 76 on the arrival of a more lyrical utterance, motivically anticipating the 'ode to joy' of the finale, before falling into the key of Bb major, the flattened submediant, for the arrival of the lyrical second group proper. The modulation to this key appears to be particularly surprising for the second group (A minor would have seemed more comfortable), but forward observation of the score shows that from here the progress of the music remains rooted around Bb. The exposition comes to a close with a triumphant tutti using only the notes of the Bb major triad, but suddenly collapses down a semitone onto A minor (the dominant we have been expecting) for the start of the development. What has basically happened in the exposition is that Beethoven has based his second group on a substitute mediant, Bb major, which in this case functions as a large scale upper neighbour to the true dominant which emerges at the start of the development. In fact, this alternative dominant proves to be of considerable importance to the rest of the symphony, for not only is it the key of the lyrical third movement, but it is also employed in a similar way for the 6/8 march in the finale, whose notably stable nature assumes, if not a lyrical, then at least a subordinate role in the overall structure.

Example 1.10
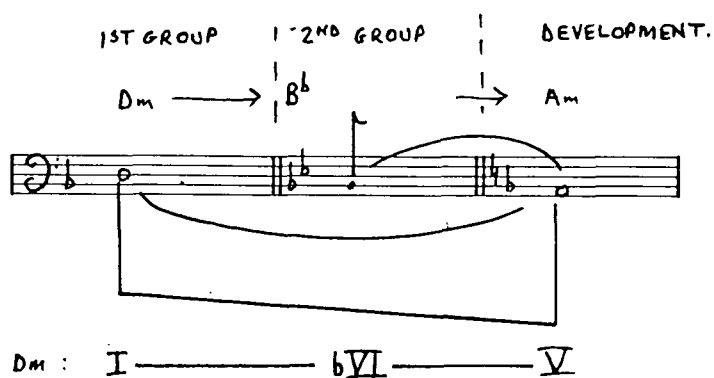
Here, we are witnessing a very different process from the Schubert. Rather than

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[17] ibid. p.153 .

isolating the lyrical sections and constructing a symphonic framework around them, Beethoven employs the second group as a stepping stone to take him onto the dominant, thereby heightening the forward push of the music. Furthermore, he does not safeguard lyrical sections from attack, and the result is that material which is antithetical in nature frequently enters into the equation and forces the music in different directions. For example, at bar 105, a new sharply rhythmic martial theme rudely attempts to halt the second group's lyric unfolding. Its two-bar intervention is a failure at first and is followed by two bars of lyrical simplicity in Bb on the clarinets and bassoons, but at bar 109 the martial theme tries again, this time moving to the flattened supertonic. Its second intervention effectively sets up a dialogue between the two contrasted styles, and the lyrical material must follow, now deflected towards B major. The result is that the lyrical material is now reassessed as a sophisticated component of the movement which is capable of finding solutions to dynamic opposition by opening up new corridors for the unfolding of the music. Indeed, this is a very different sort of lyricism from that experienced in the *Unfinished Symphony*. Far from being contemplative and an overall hindrance to the progression of the movement, it here, by means of its opposition and invention, assumes a crucial role in driving the movement towards its goal.

What is also of particular significance is that during the course of the second group, mainly as a consequence of this unexpected modulation, Beethoven employs considerable thematic working in order to regain the tonality of Bb major. This feature of the exposition gives it a developmental quality which would not have been so easy to achieve if the second group had been grounded in the dominant. Furthermore, this also supports Dahlhaus' argument that

> the problem of large-scale symphonic form lay in reconciling
> monumentality with subtlety of thematic elaboration.[18]

In order to achieve this, the composer must clearly define what they regard as the important theme in the movement. Beethoven's innovative principle which appeared at

its ripest in his fifth and seventh symphonies was to dispense with the traditional

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[18] ibid. p. 158.

concept of a theme (ie. the initial dynamic melody) and give its role to a repeated rhythmic figuration which had the effect of binding the movement together whilst at the same time allowing considerable scope for the necessary thematic elaboration without allowing the movement to lose momentum. This principle was picked up on by Robert Schumann in his First Symphony, but his efforts fell far short of the mark set by Beethoven, because of the fact that he added a lyrical aspect to his motto theme. In other words, Schumann not only retains the theme's rhythmic values, but also maintains the fixed set of pitches from the motive's initial utterance as a trumpet and horn fanfare at the opening of the symphony. As a consequence, the plasticity of the motto theme is severely diminished. It effectively binds the whole movement together, but due to its fixed pitches, any thematic elaboration which takes place can only do so mechanically and by sequence. In fact, Schumann's only means of rescuing us from the monotony which he is creating is to introduce an entirely new theme (bar 150) in the development, which lies above a string accompaniment which repeatedly states the opening gesture. As a result, when the recapitulation arrives, it does so with an air of superfluity since the music has never strayed any distance from the opening idea.

This example of Schumann again exemplifies the structural dilemmas faced by composers trying to assimilate lyricism into their symphonies. Almost thirty years later, the avoidance of large-scale lyric stasis in sonata movements was still not always being satisfactorily achieved, especially by composers such as Joachim Raff (1822-82) who regarded his own music as a fusion of the past and present in an attempt to

> …combine contrapuntal techniques with the structural tendencies
> of the sonata movement in composition, whilst still respecting the
> 'new German' predilection for programmes.[19]

If this is correct, then when Raff embarked on his Third programme Symphony, "Im Walde" (Op. 153, 1869), he should have been fully aware of the difficulties that had faced Schumann in his First, yet his own solution to the problem proved to be even less effective. In order to sidestep the monotony and lack of direction in Schumann's Symphony, Raff brings into play a further four motivic elements. Sadly, this renders Schumann's original premise, albeit a failure in his case, completely inactive in the Raff

Symphony. Furthermore, Raff's continual mechanical treatment of each of his motives in turn has an even more destructive effect on the forward motion and credibility of his sonata form - the motives do not change shape or assume any specific function but are merely intertwined or overlapped in their various combinations. The work does contain a great wealth of pastoral topoi and these prove to be the more successful part of the movement, adhering to the composer's original programmatic premise. Particularly effective are the horn signals at the opening which pass through a variety of 'colour keys' due to the use of a pedal point. These signals recur at key structural moments, clearly marking out the start of the development and recapitulation sections. However, due to their lack of integration into the thematic elaboration the overall direction of the work is weakened and to me this lack of drive renders the composer's tone painting somewhat cold and lifeless.

The crucial point here seems to be that a composer wishing to incorporate lyrical elements into his work must do so with the utmost regard for the overall sense of direction which the sonata structure implies. In Raff's case, his patchwork of lyrical utterances saturates the structure and obscures the goal. In short, the effect is lost. With Mahler's First Symphony, my explanation of the large-scale structure and direction of the first movement demonstrated that within this framework it was possible for him to rely extensively on musical materials of a lyrical nature, but with the Raff, the absence of this framework renders the lyric voice, despite its apparent omnipresence, less meaningful.

This idea of lyricism being an *effect* will be examined further in the following chapter where I deal with Mahler's exploitation of lyricism as a dramatic means on a grander scale. For the moment, though, continuing the theme of the difficulty of effectively incorporating lyricism into a sonata movement without damaging its course, it is necessary to examine the contribution of Johannes Brahms. Brahms, widely regarded as the next great symphonist after Beethoven, provides an excellent and wholly essential study in the present field.

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[19] Leuchtmann, H. in: <u>New Grove</u>, vol. 15, p. 534.

Brahms's early concept of the sonata movement owed much to the "three key exposition" that Schubert's music had brought to the fore. However, in his later works, most notably in the symphonies, it became apparent that Brahms was preoccupied with maintaining this overall structure whilst at the same time attempting to add an increased drive and forward motion to the music. In the case of Schubert, the formal sections of his movements often stood out boldly, in primary colours as it were - a feature of his style which appears to have been read by many commentators, such as Dahlhaus, as a flaw (see previous discussion on his 'Unfinished' Symphony). Indeed, this bold demarcation can hamper the movement's overall cohesion and direction, but as I have already explained, Schubert is able, as a result, to establish a dialectic between these elements which is both beautiful and compelling.

With Brahms, who sidelined the grand symphonic style until late in his life, having by that time gained a comprehensive knowledge of the music of his predecessors, the desire to obscure these formal junctures and establish a continual forward flow reigned supreme. In performance this characteristic of his style has been recognised by great Brahms interpreters such as Felix Weingartner, Wilhelm Furtwängler, and more recently Herbert von Karajan who have all chosen to dispense with the repeated expositions in the composer's first movements. Broadly speaking, the composer maintained this forward motion in two ways; through considerable reliance on the 'motive' in order to create his thematic components, and second, by what David Epstein describes as harmonic and rhythmic ambiguity[20], which will be explored later.

As a necessary condition of these means, it would be expected that the lyrical content of the music will be restricted, or at least treated in a different way. The untouchable repose of the lyric plateau, often in an isolated key, that we experience in Schubert movements, surely cannot exist within a structure such as this where progression is the predominant force. The following discussion will therefore focus in particular on the incorporation of the lyrical into the highly progressive world in which the opening movements of Brahms's first two symphonies exist.

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[20] Epstien, D. *Beyond Orpheus: Studies in Musical Structure*, 1979, pp.67, 162-175.

The opening of Brahms's First Symphony in C minor is surely the epitome of this 'forward thinking' approach. The pounding, repeated quavers on the timpani and double basses at the onset represent no solid establishment of the C minor tonality, but rather a forged attempt to drive through the chaos of the opening bars, in a vain attempt to find stability. In fact, although the symphony begins with open C naturals spanning four octaves, the music immediately deviates from the home tonality on the second beat of the first bar, initiating a near chromatic descent in the woodwind from C down to G natural on the final quaver of bar 2 (only B natural is excluded). This is contradicted in the strings (bar the viola) which perform a simultaneous ascent (although in different rhythmic values) from C natural through to G natural, which is arrived upon at the final semiquaver of bar 2 (in this case, E natural and F# are missing).

Example 1.11

This contrary motion chromatic gesture not only thwarts the establishment of the tonic at the onset of the symphony, but also provides us with what has been described as a musical wedge which is violently driven into the movement's structure and permeates almost every thematic occurrence throughout the movement.

When the first group arrives, after the sustained introduction, the initial subject appears as the antethet to the opening chromaticism - the arpeggio. It restlessly thrusts up in C minor, at the fifth bar of the allegro, and its reliance on accented upbeats and chromatic inflections completely undermine any sense of stability that we may have been

expecting. The transition to the second group begins at bar 97 when the music moves into Bb, the dominant of the relative major. This transition gradually transforms the pointillistic rhythms of bar 97 into their legato variant for the second group. As a result, when the music falls onto the relative major at bar 121, the lyrical mood we would expect is apparent. The markings *espressivo* and *dolce* which appear over the woodwind and string parts respectively, and the more extensive slurring all provide a suitable contrast to the opening gestures of the exposition. However, this does not really feel like a second subject, and the principal reason for this is that it contains no new thematic material. The chromatic rise in the woodwind, which is most responsible for the change of mood, in fact refers back to the chromaticisms of the introduction, and this lies above a statement in the cellos which is simply a repetition of the opening theme of the exposition, now in Eb major. The effect of all this is that the second group feels as if it has been too well prepared, and as a result, its own voice sounds choked. In other words, Brahms has not created a true second 'subject' but rather a second tonality and a second 'mood'.

If we attempt to map the exposition onto a Schubertian model, with the intent of finding strong correlations between the two, then we will be clearly disappointed at the lack of a clearly definable second subject in the Brahms. But bearing in mind the original premise of a strong forward motion, then Brahms's achievements here are quite remarkable. If we do seek a high definition between musical statements, then they rarely come any stronger than the unexpected plunge into Eb minor (bar 161, *ff*) at the commencement of the second section of the second group. However, the lack of departure from the motivic building blocks and overall rhythmic drive in the lyrical passage of the second group results in the switch-over to more aggressive material at bar 161 being accomplished with surprising fluidity. If the lyrical section had been based upon new thematic material, then Brahms would have experienced considerable difficulty in preventing bar 161 from sounding comical. In the event, this has not presented itself as a problem, for at bar 161 the rhythmic drive remains in place and we can pick out the chromatic ascent on the upbeat of each of the proceeding bars, which was present in the previous section, and all stems back to the symphony's opening. This opening gambit has effectively acted as a kernel, initiating the growth of the movement, and the unifying quality that

results causes the music to drive forwards in a truly telescopic manner. Even, the principal theme of the exposition's antithetical relationship to the opening material reveals a genuine closeness that aids the exposition's progressive thrust.

In a similar way, Brahms's Second Symphony, in D major, opens with, and is largely based upon the antethet of the First Symphony's kernel, and yet tackles the same agenda of reusing motivic elements in order to create a strong sense of continuity and of forward motion. In this case, there are essentially two motivic elements in operation; the rocking D - C# - D figure which appears in the first bar, and the elaborated D major triad which appears as a horn call in the second bar. The influence, in terms of pitch and rhythm, which these figures have on the material of the remainder of the movement, and indeed, much of the rest of Symphony, need not be described in detail here, but are clearly tabulated in Epstein's study.[21] One crucially important feature which should be pointed out, though, is the fact that the D major triad is of great structural significance in that it provides an outline for the tonal plan of the exposition in the sense that the first group is in D major, whereas the second group begins in F# minor, before closing in the dominant - A major.

David Epstein's study explains how forward motion in the Second Symphony is maintained through the composer's use of harmony, rhythm and structural downbeats. Perhaps the most immediately noticeable feature of the symphony is the fact that the tonic is not properly established until bar 44, being preceded by what is in effect a large scale dominant pedal. Epstein explains bar 44 as being a large-scale structural downbeat which follows a sustained upbeat - essentially the exposition opens with a perfect cadence at background level. Part of his argument appears to be that strong downbeats such as this tend to fragment the movement, and this contradicts the smooth forward progression that Brahms is seeking. It is therefore fitting that only two major structural downbeats exist in the movement; bar 44, where the tonic is first established, and at bar 477 where D major is re-established for the closing section of the coda. Similar junctures do not occur at other structural waypoints due to the action of what Epstein terms 'musical ambiguities', meaning that the ensuing passages are not necessarily

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[21] Epstein, pp. 169-171.

harmonically stable, or they do not begin with a clear-cut downbeat. In fact, these issues are present in the opening bars of the movement, before the tonic has even asserted itself. As a result of the move from I to V in the first two bars, its feels as if the second bar functions as an upbeat, but this is compounded by the appearance of the triad motive in the horns in bar two. Epstein's conclusion is that Brahms is immediately playing with our musical instincts and that we should probably therefore regard the second bar of the symphony as the downbeat with the D major of bar 1 only fulfilling the role of a localised tonic.

The effect of such procedures on the lyrical subjects is particularly interesting. In the Second Symphony, Brahms's incorporation of lyricism reaches a higher degree of sophistication than in the First, and it appears that he now has the confidence to employ 'proper' lyric melodies into the exposition. In this case, he quotes his own *Wiegenlied*. However, despite appearing in F# minor, it appears unable to properly exert itself and tends to imply its relations in the opening triad, D and A major, rather than properly establish its own tonality, making its existence within a closed system and inability to assume the role of an untouchable passage of repose apparent. This is an example of the tonal ambiguity to which Epstein refers. Furthermore, when the song theme reappears in the dominant at bar 156, its individuality is further dulled. For a start, its beginning is actually tied over to the previous bar which significantly weakens its 'downbeat impact', and further evidence of deliberate tonal ambiguity can be witnessed in the dominant's placement in 6 – 3 position.

In fact, the only instance in the movement where we can witness clear cut, unobscured lyricism is in the eight bars which follow on from bar 477 in the coda, after the second structural D major downbeat. Here, a simple melody, based upon the horn call and clearly outlining the D major triad is presented in the first violins. More significantly, this is coupled with the figure from bar 1, now acting as an accompaniment and overlaid simultaneously – the ambiguity caused by the bars difference between the two elements at the opening of the symphony is now eliminated. Furthermore, not even the syncopations in the second violins and violas (rhythmic elements which completely obscured the meter between bars 137 and 152 in the exposition) can disguise the

downbeats – due to the removal of the tie between the last quaver of each two bar section and the first quaver of the next. In this eight-bar phrase, all the ambiguities which were presented before the first structural downbeat of bar 44, and which were manifested within the fabric of the rest of the movement, are cast aside, significantly following the only other solid structural pillar in the work. However, on the surface, this appears no great peroration, it is given to us as a bonus, almost arrogantly, and clearly spells out the simple point that this is the first time that the music has been able to stand still. Indeed, the movement does not stop here but progresses for a further forty bars, and when the triad motive makes its final call (bar 413, hns, tpts), it follows so much offbeat activity, that its appearance sounds rather pedestrian, and it does not initiate any great monumental closing of the movement.

It would therefore appear that one of Brahms' principal objectives in these two works is the avoidance of the clear-cut structural divisions which seem to compound the fluidity of instances such as the already discussed opening movement of Schumann's First Symphony. Indeed, the irregular, almost hyperactive, phrase structure of the exposition of Brahms's First can be regarded as a single-minded attempt to avoid the neat eight-bar phrases which characterise Schumann's counterpart. In the Second Symphony, Brahms makes use of a greater range of motivic means, resulting in more highly characterised subject groups, but obscures their starting points through the 'ambiguities' which are documented above. In the event, lyricism obtains a greater presence in the Second Symphony, and remarkably achieves control over the other, more dynamic elements in this work's Coda.

It is this elevation of lyricism, from a pervasive overall mood, or a subsidiary subject group which inherently poses so many structural perils for the composer, to a major point of arrival and resolution which is of crucial importance to this discussion. In other words, what we experience in the closing section of the coda of Brahms's Second (bar 477) is a lyric climax. The lyrical qualities of the opening horn call, which were impeded through insecurities in the hypermeter, and harmonisation in the 'wrong' key, are here fully exploited. This is a far more significant resolution than the recapitulation of the second group in the tonic. It has dramatic quality and this technique assumes a

significant role in much of Mahler's music.

II : Lyricism's Monumental Resurrection : Mahler's Second Symphony.

This chapter deals with the specialised treatment offered to lyrical material in Mahler's Second Symphony (the 'Resurrection Symphony'), and in particular focuses on its treatment as a dramatic effect, following techniques borrowed from Wagner.

However, before embarking on a detailed discussion of the music, and attempting to unlock its meaning and significance, it is first of all necessary to deal with the often confusing issue of the work's programme. Indeed, the programmatic aspect of Mahler's music, particularly in the *Wunderhorn* Symphonies, is an area of discussion that persistently arises in critical interpretations of these works. Whilst in the case of the First Symphony, the narrative provided by the words of the song *Ging heut' morgen übers Feld*, proved important in our understanding of the lyrical meaning of the first movement, in the case of the Second, Mahler's own ambivalence towards the genre of program music makes this field particularly troublesome. It is therefore necessary to attempt to clear up any confusions and misunderstandings that exist as a result.

In his memoirs, the Czech composer Josef Bohuslav Foerster describes a visit to Mahler's house in Hamburg in 1893. During the course of his visit, Mahler performed one of his scores at the piano, and Foerster recalls,

> The piece that I had heard was called 'Todtenfeier': I saw
> the title on the handwritten score. Today it is known to everyone
> as the first Allegro of Mahler's Second Symphony. It was
> initially intended as a symphonic poem, not as part of a cyclical
> work.[22]

Mahler regularly performed his compositions to friends and colleagues, and as a result there exists a confusing mass of recorded information which must be critically sifted through in order to piece together the genesis of the Second Symphony.

Although Foerster claims that 'Todtenfeier' was originally intended as a self contained symphonic poem, it seems likely that this is a misconception. In fact, as Donald

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[22] in: Lebrecht, N. *Mahler Remembered*, London (Faber), 1987, pp.72-79.

Mitchell points out, the original manuscript for 'Totdenfeier' is also headed *Symphonie in C-moll / I Satz.*[23] Therefore, there can be no real doubt that in 1888 when Mahler launched into the composition of this new project, he envisaged Todtenfeier as being the first movement of a grand symphony. Whilst this seems straightforward enough, the real problems are caused by the sequence of events and recorded comments that Mahler made during the following six years in which he was struggling to complete the work. Whilst Stephen Hefling's comment that,

> .....it seems certain that in launching into his new symphony
> with as powerful and tragic a first movement as 'Todtenfeier'
> [......] Mahler must have had some inkling of the overall dramatic
> course that the work as a whole would take.[24]

is plausible for its likelihood, surely one would also expect the doubts and anxieties experienced by Mahler in its composition to be borne out of his total lack of any inkling as to what should follow this opening movement. Indeed, Mitchell explains that Mahler lacked an "original conception" - a crucial part of the creative process, and reminds us that opening a symphony with a funeral rite is "always a risky business" - in a narrative sense, death eliminates any obvious ways of progression. For a composer who firmly believed that as in nature, a symphony should grow and flower, the predominant theme of mortality in the opening movement would have been a major obstacle to overcome. Mahler encountered a similar situation later on in his Fifth Symphony which also opens with a funeral march. In this case, the more mature composer was to substitute the expected lyric or dance movement which would normally follow, with an alternative first movement, of the same proportions but in which he substitutes the opening's propensity towards dissolution with a breakthrough (Durchbruch) in the form of a brass chorale. This has the effect of opening the way forward towards the rest of the work. In the Second Symphony, Mahler had perhaps not yet acquired such a visionary technique. In the end he settled for inserting a five minute silence between the first and second movements to provide time for reflection, but perhaps also to play down the almost ironic contrast between the two movements.

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[23] Mitchell, D. *Gustav Mahler. Vol. II. The Wunderhorn Years*, London (Faber), 1975, p.162.

[24] Hefling, S. *Mahler's 'Todtenfeier' and the Problem of Program Music,* in: *Nineteenth-Century Music,* vol. 12, 1988, p. 29.

There should therefore be no doubt that Mahler experienced repeated crises of confidence during these six years and he must have wondered if he was ever going to complete the work. At one point he actually crossed out the symphonic designation on the MS! But his sheer perseverance with the overcoming of this problem shows his commitment to creating a symphony from 'Todtenfeier'. The man possessed the means and the ability to have abandoned the whole project and embarked on a new symphony, leaving 'Todtenfeier' in its self-contained state, but his unwillingness to do this highlights, to me, that he never actually wished 'Todtenfeier' to stand on its own if this eventuality could be avoided.

An important question which should be posed here is whether we should view these facts as being evidence of Mahler's unwillingness to compose programme music, or whether they simply represent the actions of a man who was desperate to compose a symphony? Either way, they cannot help us understand the paradox of a man who denounced Strauss and Liszt, and was

> ....hypersensitive about being dubbed a 'programmatic'
> composer instead of an 'absolute' composer, regarding himself
> as the antithesis of Richard Strauss.[25]

whilst simultaneously providing written programmes for his first three symphonies. In the case of the Second, Mahler had to be pressed by the composer Max Marschalk to provide a written programme. He eventually yielded, but not before admitting in a letter to Marschalk,

> I should regard my work as having completely failed, if I found it
> necessary to give people like yourself [a fellow composer] even
> an indication as to its mood sequence. In my conception of the
> work, I was in no way concerned with the detailed setting forth
> of an event, but much rather of a feeling.[26]

In his programme (1896) Mahler explained the opening movement as the funeral ceremony for the hero of his D major symphony, who is taken to the grave, and in the

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[25] Kennedy, M. *Mahler*, London (Dent), 1990, p.120.

[26] in: Cooke, D. *Gustav Mahler, an Introduction to his Music*, London (Faber), 1980, p.53.

following movements, his life is viewed "from a higher standpoint, through a pure mirror". The important point in Mahler's statement to Marschalk, then, is that his music expresses the feelings and emotions surrounding an extramusical event, and in Deryke Cooke's estimation, Mahler must have expected us to experience the symphony not as absolute, but in the sense that music expresses feelings which cannot be adequately translated into language.

However, this does not really make our understanding of the programmatic nature of the symphony any clearer, for surely all music expresses feelings and degrees of emotion, of which the effect is lost when they are expressed as language. More importantly, the recent work of Stephen Hefling has thrown this whole idea into disarray with his discovery of the apparently strong relationship between the first movement of Mahler's symphony and Adam Mickiewicz's dramatic epic *Dzaidy* (trans. Todtenfeier).This had appeared in German, courtesy of Mahler's close poet / philosopher friend Siegfried Lipiner very shortly before Mahler began to compose his 'Todtenfeier'. In his study, Hefling draws our attention to the striking parallels that lie between the structure of *Dzaidy* and Mahler's music, explaining that

> Structurally, it [Mahler's 'Todtenfeier'] is a tripartite sonata form
> [....] but each of the principal divisions is punctuated by strokes
> of the tam-tam, which calls to mind the chiming clock that
> marks the three passing hours in Mickiewicz's drama.[27]

Whilst it not unusual for the opening movement of a symphony to be cast as a sonata form, Hefling makes the structural connotations between the two works even firmer with his observation that the development section of the symphonic movement is actually split into two sections. These correspond with the sense of calm experienced by Gustav in the first part of the second hour of the poem, and the ensuing blind frenzy which culminates in his suicide. Hefling's discussion continues to demonstrate that actual gestures and musical progressions in the music can be made to map onto the discourse of the Gustav poem. For example, the combination of tremolos and the brusque gesture in the lower strings at the start of the work characterize the panic experienced by the children at Gustav's unexpected arrival, and the dissonant stabbing

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[27] Hefling, p.32.

chords containing all the notes of the C minor scale at the end of the development (bars 325-29) coincide with Gustav's suicide.

In light of Hefling's comprehensive account, a description of the movement in this programmatic sense is unnecessary. So, to return to our original discussion of the programmatic nature of the music, it should be noted that the main parallels between these two works exist in a structural sense, and whilst Mahler appears to have vividly achieved the varied moods of the poem, he has not attempted to express specific characters in music. Indeed, Mickiewicz's poem has perhaps inadvertently provided a suitable model for a sonata structure through the protagonist's oscillation between calm and madness, as it is musical dynamism which generates such a musical form. In other words, Mahler may well have been mainly interested in the musical possibilities which are offered by the structure of the poem, rather than wishing to directly translate its content into music. After all, the movement does function perfectly well in its own terms, and knowledge of *Dzaidy* does not appear necessary for its appreciation, whereas it would be plausible to argue that the music which Richard Strauss composed for *Till Eulenspiegel* would not make much sense, or at least could not be fully appreciated, without an understanding of the protagonist's merry pranks.

Having dealt with the troublesome issue of the programmatic implications of the first movement, it is now timely to consider the actual music of the first movement, and the ways in which Mahler was able to overcome his problem of continuation. Following the opening movement of his First Symphony, which is essentially lyrical, the opening movement of the Second is particularly significant as it represents Mahler's first attempt at a Beethovenian sonata movement. After the brusque introductory passage, the principal theme (marked *Haupthema* on the original MS) is presented on the oboe at bar 18, and as we would expect, it constitutes one of the principal motivic elements of the movement. However, what is perhaps more interesting, and of greater significance to the work as a whole is the lyrical second subject which first appears at bar 48. The music abruptly modulates from the foreboding C minor into the ethereal-sounding key of E major. We are thus presented with two dynamically charged elements which, whilst necessarily being the symphonic norm, eventually display an inability to cooperate in

the expected manner. In saying this I am obviously referring to the first movement principle of tonal resolution in the recapitulation. For whilst the extreme dynamism presented through the Juxtaposition of C minor and E major (C major would be more expected for the second group) leaves Mahler with the opportunity to prepare for a particularly satisfying resolution, he appears to completely sidestep this temptation, and persists with the firmly rooted E major theme in the recapitulation. In his Ninth Symphony Mahler was to tackle a similar agenda, and in the case of that work, the thematic dynamism created a battleground in which the antethetical materials display an inability to find a positive resolution. They rather cancel each other out in a negative way, through what is in effect a musical, or structural, collapse. By the end of the opening movement of the Ninth a type of resolution is forged in which the dynamic elements, whilst still functioning independently, adopt characteristics which give them the sophistication to co-exist in such close quarters. The Ninth Symphony will be discussed in greater detail later. Whilst the Second Symphony quickly establishes extreme dynamism as a major feature, the following discussion will demonstrate the way in which Mahler prefigures the Ninth Symphony's abandonment of traditional structural resolution, by allowing the dynamic E major song theme to function as an untouchable refrain.

Mahler marked the E major theme *Gesang* in the MS, and what we are presented with is a lyrical apparition which sidesteps the grim progress of the previous bars and gives us the musical opposition which is necessary for the continuation of a sonata form movement. The step by step rising gesture of this theme is also in keeping with the *Resurrection* title of the symphony, with the ascent giving a feel of transfiguration. What is particularly significant about this E major *Gesang* material is its employment at principal structural junctures in the movement. The development section commences at figure 7 with a restatement of the *Gesang* material in C major, but within twelve bars there is a definite shift to E major, with a new theme appearing on the Cor Anglais, which Mahler labelled *Meeresstille*. This draws connections with the Goethe poem of the same title which was famously set to music by both Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn. There is certainly a deep stillness in the music here. Mahler employs pastoral topoi such as a bare fifth pedal in the cellos and distant horn chorales to send us

for a short while back into the carefree world of the First Symphony. The Gesang theme makes a reappearance (now in F major) as a flute solo at figure 13, and the change of mood which it initiates through the recollection of *Meeresstille* brings the first section of the development to a close.

The final *Gesang* episode comes about at the close of the recapitulation and has the effect of ushering in the Coda. Here, the material is back in E major and this passage represents the most extended *Meeresstille* mood so far, with a new closing theme appearing at figure 23, all over an E major pedal, and still with distant Alpine horns in the background. *Meeresstille* gradually dies away as it is passed down from the violas to the cellos, coupled with a *diminuendo* to *pppp*. All that remains is an E natural tremolo in the upper violins, which falls to the note Eb and thereby duplicates the flat-side tendency of which disrupted the *Gesang's* initial appearance by deflecting its E major opening to Eb minor at the tenth bar of figure 3. In fact, this tremolo takes on a special significance for whilst it is effectivly a large scale reduction of the overall trend of the *Gesang* theme, it also recalls the tremolo opening of the movement and the stormy quality of the first group, acting therefore as a unifying strand, connecting the *Meeresstille* of the exposition's close with the darker mood of the Coda, which commences with an ostinato in the cellos, basses and lower harp tones which is similar to the ostinato from the Coda of the opening movent of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

However, having isolated this material as possessing a structural significance within the symphonic movement, we encounter problems when it is attempted to fit it into the formal categories which are predicated by a sonata form structure. Whilst the *Gesang* material provides a suitable opposition to the material foregrounded so far in the movement in terms of tonality, gesture and dynamics, and, even though lyricism is regarded as a common trait of the second group, what we are presented with here cannot be adequately viewed as a second subject. The most noticeable contrast exhibited is the abrupt shift to E major (particularly unexpected within the key of C minor where we are expecting the modulation to be to Eb major) which occurs with the onset of the *Gesang*. Although this is preceded by a five-bar transitional section (starting at figure 2) it does not prepare this shift in any way. Whilst the transition provides a change of texture from

the heavy march rhythms which immediately preceded it, and introduces the upper appoggiatura gesture which characterises the *Gesang* melody, the tonality of the transition remains rooted in C minor. As a result, the shift to E major takes on the quality of an apparition which adds further effect to the ascending ressurection motive with which the *Gesang* opens. What is perhaps even more significant is that this section does not really lead the music anywhere new, for after only fifteen bars, it leads us back into C minor for a reprise of the opening section at figure 4. In other words, it seems as if the second group has not yet arrived, meaning that the *Gesang* would be better viewed as a self contained episode, untouched by the surrounding music and having minimal bearing on the music around it.

This is not quite the case however, for as mentioned earlier, the *Gesang* is introduced by means of a five-bar transitional passage. The principal characteristics of the *Gesang* are the rising 'resurrection' motive which appears in its first two bars, and the total reliance on upper neighbour appoggiaturas which the theme displays as it progresses.

Example 2.1

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This appoggiatura gesture is prepared in the upper woodwind instruments in the transitional passage (from figure 2) and the triplet figuration in the cello and bass parts, which has been extracted from the seventh bar of the movement, remains in place underpinning most of the *Gesang*. But whilst it is therefore safe to say that the overall gesture of the *Gesang* is prefigured in the transitional passage, it is the poorly prepared modulation from a minor key, to the major tonality of its major third that makes this material stand aside from the general progression of things. Indeed the flat-side shift to the key of Eb in the tenth bar of figure 3, which according to Hefling's study makes the *Gesang* section analogous with Gustav's song of both the joys *and* the bitter sorrows of love, reveals in a structuralist sense the instability of this E major plateau, and the large scale structure's inability to support this tonality.

If we continue by following the course of the rest of the exposition, it should be observed that the initial abrupt return to the opening material is followed by a brief chorale performed by the brass (figure 5) which ironically reminds us of the triumphant chorale figure from the finale of his D major symphony. [28] Following this, the music returns to its unstable state and moves towards the dominant minor, but just when we are expecting the arrival of a proper second subject, the cellos and basses fall onto a near quotation of the ostinato figure of the coda of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Progress is halted by the dissolution of foreground material and the resultant sense of closure which culminates with the three strokes of the tam-tam.

In order to prove that the E major theme is not properly assimilated into the expected sonata structure it is necessary to look to the recapitulation. Here we would expect the second group to reappear in the home key. In reality, the five bar transitional passage remains unaltered and we are once again confronted with the unprepared shift to E major. The *Gesang* does appear to possess the potential to forge a modulation back to the tonic, reaching A major after just two bars, but this is thwarted by the arrival of an E major pedal at figure 23 which effectively locks the passage in that key. It is simply left to dissolve into an E natural tremolo which falls to an Eb in order to start off the coda.

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[28] Gustav Mahler, *Symphony 1 in D*, finale, 4th bar after fig. 33 (Dover score pp. 132-33).

Despite the evident 'short shrift' given to the *Gesang* theme due to Mahler's unwillingness to confirm it into the expected sonata structure, it nevertheless assumes a crucial role in the unfolding of the movement. As described earlier, after the surprisingly brief exposition, the development section opens with a restatement of the *Gesang* theme in C major before shifting to E major (a more logical progression this time) at figure 8 for the *Meeresstille* episode. What is significant, though, is the fact that although the theme is used as a tool to set the development in motion, it maintains its sense of isolation, for the musical elements contained within it are not actually developed in any way. The theme simply reasserts its existence, provoking a continuation of the calm and reflective mood, which is eventually infiltrated by a dirge-like bass accompaniment (5th bar after figure 9). It is only from this point onwards that we are able to witness the developmental processes in operation. A similar thing can be said of the *Gesang* theme's next appearance, now in F major, on the flute at figure 13. In this case, the change of mood that it immediately brings about functions as an uncorrupted mid-point between the two halves of the development

Earlier, I drew attention to the five-minute pause which Mahler instructs in the score between the first and second movements of the symphony. Although this pause is frequently ignored by conductors, it is given extra significance by the fact that from the scherzo onwards, the remaining movements all lead directly into each other. The result of this is that the ländler-based Andante appears to stand apart from the rest of the symphony as a separate episode. What is particularly noticeable here, is that whilst Mahler formally heads movements 3, 4, and 5 in the score, they do not necessarily comply with the musical junctures that we hear as listeners. The initial juncture that comes to attention is the so called 'scream of terror' which appears towards the end of the third movement, echoing the *Schreckensfanfare* which announces the finale of Beethoven's Ninth. It should be noted that the final movement of the work opens with this very same gesture, in other words, it picks up again at the point where the scherzo left off, creating a jump forward in the musical continuum. Each of these cries of anguish is followed by a sense of great calm, recalling the *Meeresstille* episodes of the opening movement. However, between these two pillars of sound, there stands (apart

from the necessary return to scherzo material in order to formally round that movement off) an independent song movement - the 'Urlicht' from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Now we experience contrast, *not* through Mahler's employment of song-like material, but through the insertion of an actual song whose sense of stillness is achieved from its structural isolation from the rest of the symphony. In other words, the 'Urlicht' movement represents a large-scale realisation of the *Gesang* theme in the opening movement. Just as in the case of the *Gesang*, narrative time has been made to stand still.

However, there are other important discoveries to be made concerning the 'Urlicht' movement. So far our discussion has focused on the lyrical aspects of Mahler's music and their impact on the works structure. In the 'Urlicht' movement, we notice two types of lyricism in operation. That which pervades much of the movement is a chorale or hymn-like style in which the movement opens. At figure 3, there is a significant change in the orchestral timbre, but the most important change in the lyrical style of the movement comes at figure 5 with the modulation to Db major. Here, the contralto assumes a more intensely lyrical style which is achieved through its rising chromatically by sequence, and also helped by the *sfpp* markings at the opening of each bar which lend an urgency to the music. This more intensely lyrical material proves to be of considerable importance in the final movement of the symphony.

As I have already mentioned, the finale of the work opens abruptly with the 'scream of terror' which protruded so violently into the third movement. After this, we encounter a return to the *Meeresstille* material, as was the case in the third movement. The finale begins with a lengthy patchwork of differentiated characters, and following distant horn calls at figure 3, there is a chorale melody based on the 'Dies Irae' which appears in the fourth bar of figure 4. The flowing pizzicato accompaniment is a reference to a Bruckner-style chorale, and although only the chorale melody is presented here, it is soon to be harmonically realised at figure 10. What is particularly important, however, is the fact that these two passages are separated by a section of extreme lyricism, similar in character to that passage described in the 'Urlicht' and also making considerable use of upper neighbour appoggiaturas, similar to the lyricism witnessed in the *Gesang* sections of the first movement. As this material becomes more intense and frantic after

figure 8, it develops into an increasingly chromaticised gesture which makes it more akin to the Db major section of the 'Úrlicht'.

Example 2.2

There are three further occurrences of this material in the finale, which will now be considered. After the great march section, which forms the centrepiece of the movement, eventually subsides, we encounter a second appearance of this section at figure 25, first on the trombone and then on the cellos accompanied by grotesque offstage fanfares. This passage becomes so impassioned that it spirals totally out of control. The movement's only hope of continuation, therefore, is through rupture and rebuilding, and this is achieved by a final encounter with the 'scream of terror' and the, by now, complementary *Meeresstille* episode which follows, closing in Db - the key as in the 'Urlicht'. There is a feeling that the music has travelled full circle, and following the 'great call' announced by a complex series of offstage fanfares on trumpets and horns, the choral conclusion can get underway.

However, the peroration is not able to pass totally without incident, and is interrupted at figure 39, when the contralto solo sings *"O glaube, Mein Herz O glaube"*, doubled by the Cor Anglais, before the solo soprano takes over at figure 41 and points the way back to the chorale style. A final appearance of the lyrical material, which quotes most directly from the 'Urlicht' appears on the horns and then in canon between the two solo voices from figure 45.

Example 2.3

This final insertion into a through-composed passage, of lyrical material which previously stood apart throughout the symphony, at least offers a sort of assimilation which admittedly seemed unlikely before. However, the main trend throughout the symphony has been that of the most lyrical passages functioning almost as untouchable refrains or episodes within the larger structure, with those such passages in the finale having been extracted from the 'Urlicht' which is in itself an untouched piece of lyrical expression as I have described earlier. The fact that the important bars from the 'Urlicht', which I have described above as being of 'extreme lyricism', re-appear in the closing pages of the finale should not, however, be regarded as a structural goal to which the whole symphony has been driven towards. Moreover, the tremolos from the previously-described lyrical sections of the finale return here in the cellos, and we experience more of a sense of regression back to the more simplistic lyricism of the *Meeresstille* in the five bars before figure 46, which to me represents a heightening of this material's structural isolation rather than an incorporation of it.

This supplanting of lyrical material already exhibited in the symphony into the finale represents for me one of the crucial issues in the work. The most significant example is the resurfacing of the first movement's *Gesang* theme after the resurrection chorale in

the finale, which will be discussed shortly. This is essentially a dramatic effect, and a thorough understanding of its significance cannot be gained without first highlighting the debt, in dramatic terms, that Mahler owed to Wagner.

In the first scene of Act III of Siegfried, Wagner achieves a heightened level of musical synthesis represented through the thematic / motivic density of the surface material, and the incorporation of strong chromaticism into his late nineteenth-century harmonic language. Of particular significance here is Wagner's evident preference for a harmonic structure built upon thirds rather than fifths, in this case placing considerable emphasis on the conflicts between the mediant and submediant (and their flattened forms) of his ultimate goal-tonality. Fifth relationships do exist however, with Act III constituting a large-scale perfect cadence from G to C. Indeed, as Patrick McCreless readily points out,

> A further ramification of Wagner's new tonal and formal synthesis
> after Tristan is that an act no longer consists of a succession of
> closed tonal units [.....] but rather turns as a whole upon the polarity
> of two structural harmonies.[29]

However, this overall fall from G to C is accomplished on such a large scale that it is not realistically discernible, or considered to be of great worth here. In fact, McCreless pursued this idea further claiming that Act III of Siegfried is modelled on what he terms a 'Symphonic Structure', consisting of five movements, each linked by transitions. I do not question the accuracy of McCreless' work, but do have doubts about the value of viewing the final act of the opera in this way. For, surely, many of Wagner's innovations are borne out of the absence of a predicated structure and are more closely related to the narrative of the drama. Besides, McCreless fails to explain exactly what the conditions of this 'Symphonic framework' are, and his comparison therefore seems inadequate. More fruitful would be a detailed study considering the structural and dramatic implications of the third-related keys mentioned earlier, and the motivic development throughout the course of the first scene. Anthony Newcomb's account provides such insights.[30]

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[29] McCreless, P. *Wagner's Siegfried: Its Drama, History, and Music.* 1982, p. 188.
[30] Newcomb, A. *The Birth of Music.* in: Nineteenth-Century Music, Vol. 5, no.1, 1981, pp. 58-64.

The Prelude to the Third Act is immediately gripping after the more relaxed 'forest murmurs' of Act 2, conveying an image of the Wanderer (Wotan) galloping through the storm to the foot of the rocky mountain where Erda lies asleep. Aside from its pictorial value, the Prelude also initiates the Ab - A natural tension, which along with the tension between the flattened and natural forms of the sixth degree of G (Eb - E) are crucial to the harmonic language of the scene. The Ab appears in the chord of the flattened second, in 6/5 position, at bar 39, but is immediately shifted up to A major in the following bar, this process then being repeated in bars 42 and 43. Furthermore, at bar 51, we hear the motif of Alberich's servitude from the third scene of *Das Rheingold*, and the chord presented here will be of crucial importance in the complex harmonic language which supports Wotan's initial statement. Finally, at bar 60, the mood of the music changes to represent Erda, through the use of the 'magic-sleep chords' from the final scene of *Die Walküre*.

Newcomb demonstrates that the true complexity of the tension between the natural and flattened forms of the second and sixth degrees of G is most apparent in the tonally functional sections which Wotan presents at the beginning and at the close of the scene. When Wotan begins his opening period in bar 74, *"Wache, Wala! Wala! Erwach'!"*, a thematic gesture in the orchestra (referred to as Wotan's refrain) sets up the principal thematic element of the scene.

Example 2.4

Despite kicking off in G minor, the harmony abruptly progresses onto the flattened second at bar 75, once again lending importance to the pitch Ab. At bar 76, we arrive on what is effectively the augmented sixth of G minor, but is more accurately expressed as the dominant ninth of Ab due to the harmonic prolongation of that key which is now taking place. The music then shifts sideways at bar 77, onto the Neapolitan chord taken

from bar 51 of the prelude, which is achieved by means of the Eb in the previous bar rising to an E natural, bringing the tension between the natural and flattened forms of the sixth degree of G to the fore. Two bars later (b. 79) the dominant of Ab (ie. Eb) is finally resolved as an augmented sixth, which leads to the dominant seventh of G minor in bar 81 to close the antecedent of the period. In fact, it is surprising to notice that despite the harmonic complexities presented here, the music is still taking on a traditional sixteen-bar period form, and the ensuing eight-bar consequent follows a similar pattern to that of the antecedent before achieving its way back to G minor in bar 89.

Example 2.5

In order to fully appreciate the harmonic and structural complexities and innovations

present in this scene, it is worth taking a moment to step back in time to the opening of the second scene of *Das Rheingold*. Here, Db major is unexpectedly fallen into via a half cadence from Eb major, which might be better described as a double perfect cadence (the missing connecting fifth, Ab, is actually presented in a tremolo in the Cello and double bass parts. Warren Darcy clearly observes that the opening of scene two is cast in the typically classical prelude – scene – aria design.[31] Tonally speaking, the section functions tightly as a closed system, conforming to the typical plan, I – V // I – IV – V – I. The prelude, which presents the Valhalla motive in the form of a brass choir, progresses from the tonic to the dominant (Ab major), passing through chord III at bar 9. Fricka is the first to speak, attempting to wake Wotan from his sleep with a diminished seventh chord over A natural (bar 21) which initiates the start of the scene. From this point, the Ab dominant is prolonged until Wotan finally comes round at the start of his aria (bar 36) which returns to the tonic, again approached by a half cadence from Eb. The remainder of Wotan's aria is straightforward closing with a perfect cadence underlying a 4^ -3^ -2^ -1^ descent which begins in the bass trumpet at bar 50.

As we are seeing, Wagner progresses from this relatively clear-cut, functional style in Act III of Siegfried. Here, a contrast to Wotan's 'harmonically functional' style comes about with Erda's entry and the onset of the central dialogue section.[32] This could be dubbed the 'contrasting lyrical section'. In this case, Wotan is not the sleeper but the waker, and it is worthwhile noting the composer's more extended treatment of Erda's 'half-asleep' state in this scene. The tonal language here is clearly non-functional, in places verging on atonal (whole-tone scales are also present in the lead in to Erda's second speech, bars 187-189), and it is precisely because of the absence of any teleological harmonic language and forward thrust that this passage achieves its lyric definition. In our study of lyric sections in sonata-governed movements in the earlier half of the nineteenth century, it sufficed to use 'stability' as a defining trait of lyricism, but in the case of Erda's speech, greater accuracy of definition is required. Whilst this

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[31] Darcy, W. *Wagner's Das Rheingold*, Oxford, 1993.
[32] Newcomb views the scene in the form of an A B A or 'arch shaped' structure, comprising of 1) the prelude and Wotan's refrain [including the establishment of two clearly defined musico-drammatic characters], 2) the central dialogue [during which these characters undergo development and modification], and 3) the return of Wotan's firmly functional language [recapitulation and peroration - 'world inheritance' motif].

passage cannot be described as harmonically stable, the common ground that it shares with those lyrical passages of Schubert and Brahms is its sense of timelessness. This is achieved in a negative sense, through its *lack* of goal-directed harmony, in the same way that the G major song which initiates the second group of the *Unfinished* Symphony achieves introspectivity through its *isolation* from the stronger direction of the first group. This sense of timelessness is particularly effective at Erda's first utterance in Act III of Siegfried, owing to her arousal from a state of dreaming.

As the central dialogue unfolds, the strong contrasts between the protagonists' musical styles are necessarily modified. Some of the edge is removed from Wotan's forward-moving tonal language, whereas Erda does become more harmonically stable and directed. At bar 198, she moves into E major and following an interjection from Wotan, and a half step fall in tonality, continues in Eb from the upbeat to bar 228, further outlining the Eb - E tension. These two tonal plateaus carry extra weight in a timeless sense due the fact that during their course, Erda speaks retrospectively of the Norns, in the E major section, and of Brünnhilde in the Eb major passage.

In his study, Newcomb clearly demonstrates Wagner's subtle motivic transformations throughout the scene, which strongly contribute towards the build-up towards, and arrival of, the 'world inheritance' theme.[33] These motivic connections appear most clearly in the orchestral passage which precedes Erda's second tonal passage. Briefly summarised, Wotan's refrain reappears at bar 216, but is transformed into the Ring motive four bars later, before slipping into Eb and the Valhalla motive at bar 226. Newcomb points out that the final link in this motivic chain comes about with the arrival of the World Inheritance motive which makes its first appearance in the entire Ring Cycle at bar 374. However, the World Inheritance is not simply prepared thematically, but gains most of its arresting power as an eventual harmonic realisation of Ab major. It is clearly approached through Wotan's $\hat{5}$ -$\hat{4}$ -$\hat{3}$ -$\hat{2}$ -$\hat{1}$ descent from bar 372, and the underlying perfect cadence between bars 373 and 374, which finally allows Eb to function as the dominant of Ab.

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[33] Ibid. p.62.

This coupling of harmonic and thematic preparation, leading to a breakthrough of monumental character had considerable impact on Mahler, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the Mahler's 'Resurrection Theme' closely resembles Wagner's World Inheritance motive.

Example 2.6

The point of comparison here is figure 33 in the finale of Mahler's Second Symphony (Dover Score p.335). Directly following the hushed resurrection chorale, the above theme is reached conventionally through a perfect cadence into Gb major, and is presented *piano* as a trumpet solo. In a similar way to the Wagner, this motive has been anticipated earlier in the symphony, most notably in the opening movement, to which it is projected backward, and thus appears as early as figure 3 (p. 176) in the guise of the 'E major *Gesang*'. Significantly, the *Gesang* assumes a lyric character and a more episodic nature as a result of the distant relation of E major from the opening movement's C minor trajectory, but its recurrence (in a modified form) in the finale of the work, at figure 33, the movement's coda, gives it a monumental character, tastefully executed in delicate *p* and *ppp* colours, and it becomes the principal thematic element of the symphony's closure. Basically, as a result of his adoption of Wagnerian thematic development techniques, Mahler has been able to redress what started out as an isolated, lyrical interlude as the peroration which it is now clear that the entire work has been moving towards. What follows in the rousing final pages of the score represents a celebration of the *Gesang* theme's newly found structural identity and significance.

Returning to our original study of the tonal structure of the scene, then, it is particularly significant that the 'world inheritance' theme, which is now realised as the principal harmonic and motivic objective of the scene should cadence so decisively in Ab major. To briefly summarise the remainder of the scene, a further important point of arrival is E major at bar 385, where the inheritance and Valhalla motives are combined, at this is followed by weaker cadences in D (bar. 417), and later to G. However, evidence of the large-scale importance of the modulation to the flattened second at bar 374 can be seen in the re-establishment of that key at the onset of scene two.

Further examples of the dramatic influences which Mahler gained from Wagner can be viewed in the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*. This is commonly regarded as a 'lyric' piece due to its densely chromatic surface, a facet of the so-called lyricism which I earlier criticised. What gives the music special importance and makes it valuable to our discussion is its libidinal character, on which point Kramer draws attention to Wagner's own programme note to the prelude in which desire is described as,

....forever renewing itself, craving and languishing.[34]

Lawrence Kramer's discussion of the prelude is a prime text in this area, the main points of which will be summarised below, after which I will attempt to demonstrate how some important features of the prelude, in particular the creation of a sense of timelessness through interruption and conflict, are transferred into the ever popular Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

Kramer explains that on a general level, this sense of desire is achieved through melodic motion in semitones (the highly chromatic surface to which I have already referred), a strong sense of ambiguity in the underlying harmonies, and the overabundance of appogiaturas which frequently 'resolve' to create further instabilities. On a large scale, it is the operation of a process that culminates in what Kramer terms the *Lust-trope* that controls this important feature of the music. This occurs where,

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[34] taken from, Kramer, L. *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900.* University of California Press, 1990. p. 147.

> Two illocutionary forces overlap, one suggesting the fulfillment
> of desire, the other suggesting a deferral of fulfillment. For
> Wagner, this typically involves a passage that reaches a climactic
> melodic cadence at the same time as it defaults on a full harmonic cadence.[35]

The opening pages of the prelude are used by Wagner to establish this trope. The melodic and harmonic relationship here is naturally ambiguous although Kramer points out that the music appears to be centered around A minor. Essentially there are three sequentially rising four bar statements in which a single melodic line on the cellos is answered by rich woodwind harmonies (the Desire motive). Each of these answering phrases comes to rest, by means of a chromatic lower neighbour appoggiatura in the upper voice, on the dominant seventh chords of A (bar. 3), C (bar 7) and E (bar. 11). The following diagram represents my own graphic model of the opening seventeen bars of the Prelude, based upon Kramer's account of the unfolding of the A minor triad, and naturally bears close resemblance to his own graphic reading.[36]

Example 2.7

[AFTER L.KRAMER]

The third appearance of the Desire motive (bars 10 and 11), in which Wagner arrives on

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[35] Ibid. p.148.

[36] Ibid. p.156.

the dominant seventh of E, is prolonged first by a two-bar re-statement an octave higher, and then by extracting the appoggiaturas which resolve upwards to its fifth degree (E# - F# motion) which are presented in bars 14 and 15. In bar sixteen, B 7 resolves to E 7, anticipating a routine II - V - I cadence in A major. However, the realisation of this is obstructed. On the downbeat to bar 17, the violins, which are performing the melodic line in octaves, reach a fortissimo B natural which functions as an upper appoggiatura to A natural, resolving to the latter pitch in the second half of that bar. On the arrival of this upper neighbour, however, the accompanying harmonies plunge to an F major chord. Kramer does not have to point out that this harmonic deflection to the flattened submediant of A has a deeply satisfying feel about it, but makes a special point of the fact that the cadence is deliberately deceptive claiming,

> what counts as a fulfillment is actually a rapturous occasion of unfulfillment.[37]

In other words, what has actually happened here is that whilst the melodic line has been crafted so that it provides a sense of closure in its own sense, it is forcefully contradicted by the underlying harmonic progression which abruptly cadences from E 7 to F, despite previously implying a resolution in fifths. This is the true nature of the *Lust-trope*, and it lies at the core of our understanding of the lyric nature of the music here. As a result of the existing melodic and harmonic conflict, the forward motion of the music seems unsteady and sporadic because of the latter's inability to assert a proper grip or control on the 'free' nature of the melodic writing. This creates an intense sense of lyricism in the melody, and the harmonic control, which is unconvincing in a traditionally functional sense, lends a more complex feel of 'still' lyric time to the musical surface.

It is also interesting to observe how this *Lust-trope* and, in particular, the issue of interruption affect the opera on a much larger scale. Following Kramer's discussion, the actual occurrence of the B natural pitted against F major in bar 17 proves to be an important structural element in the large scale narrative of the opera. Probably the finest example of interruption in the work comes at the end of Act 2, Scene ii, which surely by no coincidence is the mid-point of the opera. It is at this point where we encounter one

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[37] Ibid. p.149.

of the work's most lyrically timeless moments . However, at the end of Tristan and Isolde's idyll, the B major cadence, or rather consummation, that the music seeks is brutally disrupted by the high scream of Brangane's arrival. Nevertheless, the realisation of this cadence is fulfilled at the end of the opera in the 'Transfiguration' scene (commonly known as the *Liebestod*). Here, the B major cadence is allowed to be accomplished without interruption, closing the work in B major and thus marking a strong connection and sense of balance with the melodic B natural which was the goal in the initial Desire motive in the second and third bars of the Prelude. Furthermore, Wagner makes this point clear to us through his restatement of the motive from bars 2 and 3 at pitch five bars from the very end - the oboes and Cor Anglais executing the chromatic ascent from G# to B natural, and dwelling momentarily on the latter pitch before completing their ascent by step through C# to the mediant pitch of B major.

The above paragraph deliberately provides the briefest possible exposition of the three major occurrences of the *Lust-trope*, so that their appearance in Wagner's opera may be compared to what I believe to be the most important lyric features of the Adagietto movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

In Mahler's celebrated Adagietto, we also witness the effect of harmonic interruption on the melodic direction. In this case, at the end of the movement's middle section, the return to F major is abrupt and counters the direction of the upper line, creating the effect of an unprepared return the timelessness of the movement's opening. This will be discussed in due course, but it should be stressed that as a preliminary to discussing the Adagietto, it is worthwhile to take a look at the second song in the *Kindertotenlieder* cycle, "*Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen*". This is particularly important in this case because of its complex and sometimes deliberately misleading harmonisation which is strongly reminiscent of the style of the *Tristan* Prelude. Both the song and the Adagietto were composed during the years 1901 - 1902, and whilst their chronology is uncertain at the present moment, making it impossible to claim with any certainty that the song prefigures the Adagietto, the motivic links between the two should still be brought to the fore. In particular, the closing bars of *Kindertotenlieder* No. 2 present a clear quotation of the opening theme of the Adagietto.

Example 2.8

What is of special importance in this discussion is the dense harmonic support lent to this figure in the song, which as mentioned already, gives it a Tristanesque flavour. The appearance of this figure, which we shall henceforth call the *Adagietto* motive, at the onset of the song is a case in point. If we consider the opening four bars of the song, immediate difficulty is experienced in classifying the harmony in bar 2. At first glance, bearing in mind the abundance of appoggiaturas, it is tempting to consider the D natural in the melodic line as a subsidiary to the Eb, to which it is drawn in the second half of the bar. In this case, the *pizzicato* G natural in the bass part completes the chord as Eb major in 6 - 3 position. However, the presence of the G natural in the bass parts, coupled with the Bb in the viola, means that the harmony could equally be viewed as G minor in root position, especially as the other pitch present in bar 2 is C# which has an equally weak control on both of these tonalities. Kofi Agawu, is confronted with this problem in his study of *Kindertotenlieder* No. 2, and suggests that the confusion we encounter here is the result of the overlapping of two neighbour note motions, the resolution of the first being obscured by the presence of another appoggiaturic motion[38]. In other words, the passage should be viewed in G minor, with the confusing C# and Eb in bar2 being regarded as simultaneous lower and upper neighbours respectively, which resolve to the

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[38] Agawu, V. Kofi, *The Musical Language of Kindertotenlieder No. 2*, Journal of Musicology, Vol II, No.1 (winter 1983), pp. 81-93.

fifth degree of G minor in bar 3. However, this resolution coincides with the arrival of the pitch A natural in the melodic line which resolves upwards to Bb on the second half of bar 4. The second resolution here is relatively straightforward, but it is its occurrence on top of the initial 'double' resolution that gives this passage its complex harmonic nature. What is actually happening is that harmonic verticalities are being corrupted by Mahler's excessive employment of appoggiaturas, which are the important melodic features here. The specific sonorities that we hear are being governed by the complex voice-leading and the actual harmonies, which provide function on a larger scale are projected forward, or spread horizontally by the contrapuntal nature of the harmony. It could be argued that this process shares similar ground with the unfolding of the A minor triad in the Tristan Prelude. Certainly, the theme of interruption is presented here in the overlapping of neighbour-note resolutions.

In the fifth bar of the song, the Adagietto motive is picked up by the voice which uses the first three notes to kick off a four-bar phrase which, as conscientious Mahlerians will point out, is taken from the third movement of Mahler's Fourth Symphony.[39] The vocal ascent reaches the pitch Eb, which is a background chromatic neighbour to 3^ of the melodic structure. In fact, as Agawu's study confirms, there does not appear to be a descent through a third, fifth or octave, as we would expect. Rather, the Eb/E natural is prolonged through the song, falling to 2^ - the lower neighbour note D natural - at bar 36, but reasserting 3^ at bar 62. As a result, the melodic motion on a large scale seems restricted and directionless. This is countered on a closer structural level by three lyric moments which, are easily recognisable and commence at bars 33, 28, and 65. These passages stand out because they represent the only moments in the song where the harmonic language is clear cut and functional, each being centered around a cadential 6-4 which is approached by a German sixth. The most striking occurrence, is the central of these sections (see from bar 38 in the score) which culminates in a shift to D major (bar 41). This is essentially the musical climax of the song. The lyrical mode of the opening, constantly interrupted and impeded, here momentarily finds a purer form of lyrical expression as a result of the harmonic stability. I feel that this represents a temporary projection of the D major *Wiegenlied*, the superficial sense of consolation which closes

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[39] See Oboe, three bars before Fig. 3 in Gustav Mahler, Symphony No. 4 in G major, Movement III.

the final song of the cycle, and which I have already discussed.

A further feature that makes these three 'miniature' interludes stand out can be witnessed on a textural level. It is fitting that the precise moment of the occurrence of stability should coincide with a shift in orchestration from the dense woodwind colour which characterises much of the song, to a much brighter and more open string texture with flowing, arpeggiated harp accompaniment. The advent of this particular shade of the orchestral palette provides a fine opportunity to turn our discussion back to this song's counterpart in the Fifth Symphony.

In the Adagietto, Mahler makes the lyric voice which defined the 'miniature' interludes prominent from the start, and its juxtaposition with the hectic world of counterpoint which defines the Scherzo movement makes the sense of stillness and timelessness all the more prominent. Here we are sharing the same sound world as the Rückert song *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, which expresses a mood of isolation from the world. Mahler slowly builds up the F major tonality in the first two bars using only the dominant and mediant pitches before the upper voice enters with the 'genuine' *Adagietto motive* emphasising the lower neigbour appoggiatura before resolving to a solid F major chord on the second beat of bar 3. In bar 5, the melodic line reaches ^5 and from here there follows a normative linear descent to ^2 in bar 9. From here, the opening 'verse' is restated, elaborated and prolonged, reaching a climax on the third beat of bar 30. Eventually, the stable F major plateau begins a transformation, starting at the transition section (bar 39) where we move towards Gb major, arriving in that key at bar 47. Of particular significance here is Mahler's allusion to the *gaze-motive* from Tristan, which first surfaces in bar 50 of the Mahler and at bar 45 in Wagner's Prelude, and is to play an important pivotal role in the forthcoming modulations.[40]

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[40]According to Constantin Floros, (*Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 1985, Scolar Press, pp. 154-5) Mahler sent the manuscript of the movement to Alma in place of a letter, aware that as a fine musician and composer herself, she would understand it as a declaration of his love.

Example 2.9

This figure is most prominent in bars 58 and 59 where it instigates a modulation to E major. The music stays in E for just three bars, before the *gaze* figure pushes us towards a nine-bar passage in D major. However, despite the key signatures, the music does not sound as if it is firmly rooted in these keys due to the presence of the fifth in the bass in each case. In fact, the D major passage sounds more akin to a dominant preparation for that key. The A natural functions as a pedal point in the bass throughout. At bar 71, the rise to the leading note of D major convinces us that the music is about to cadence into D major proper, but most significantly, the bass counters this, moving chromatically down to G natural and then to F. It therefore appears that Mahler has prepared for a II - V - I cadence but has denied us its full realisation by cadencing into F at bar 72 (the onset of the recapitulation) and robbing the D natural in bar 72 of its right to function as the tonic, casting it instead at the sixth degree of F major. This sense of preparation and interruption is strongly connected with the features I described in our discussion of the Tristan Prelude, and in a similar way, the arrival on a 'false' cadence, actually provides a most sublime sense of fulfillment with the D natural, once aware it is undermined, sliding down over two octaves to a C, expressing in the simplest way the dissolution of the *gaze-motive* and its inherent forward motion.

III : Mahler's Ninth Symphony: An Isolated Lyrical World.

The previous section considered the ways in which Mahler modified the expected sonata structure in the opening movement of his Resurrection Symphony, by tricking us into regarding the contrasting lyrical material, which assumed the role of an untouchable E major plateau, as being the second subject of the symphony, and how these seemingly isolated and ineffective moments are given large-scale significance and a sense of monumentality in the unfolding of the work's conclusion. In that discussion, I drew attention to some similarities that this work shares with the treatment of subject material in Mahler's Ninth Symphony, and the opening movement of this work will be discussed presently.

The important point that I intend to elaborate here, though, can be perhaps better introduced by briefly returning to Mahler's First Symphony. The crucial factor of that discussion was Mahler's creation of a large-scale lyric mood, or an extended lyrical world. My point in dealing with the opening movement of the Ninth Symphony, is the fact that it too represents lyricism on a large scale. However, the significant difference here is that unlike the First Symphony, lyricism is not simply pasted over the sonata framework as a pastoral or bucolic tone, but rather has been absorbed into the music on a much deeper level. The opening movement of the Ninth *can* be viewed as a sonata form, and is often regarded in such a way by commentators, presumably as a matter of convenience, but I feel that this type of generalisation under emphasises the most important features of the music. The course of the music is more easily grasped if viewed as a series of climaxes and collapses, from which point a rebuilding process initiates a further climax, and so on. As a result, the movement assumes a strophic nature and this makes it outwardly song like. This strophic structure, and the lack of certainty as to the movement's overall goal which it promotes, is crucial to creating the sense of timelessness which is the prime feature in our definition of lyricism.

The musical dualities which Mahler sets up at the onset of the Ninth Symphony are the

most graspable musical elements of the work. Conflicts and contrasts are indeed fundamental aspects of the Classical style and, to be more specific, it is musical dynamism, conflict and resolution which represent the basic framework of the sonata form movement. However, as Julian Johnson is keen to point out, the dualities found in Mahler's late style exist in a very different sense. Instead of generating the musical form, they

> ....tend to be preserved more nakedly. Their opposition articulates
> a permanent state of affairs that has to be constantly
> reapproached.[41]

Mahler's intensification of these dualities as the symphony progresses significantly diminishes the possibility of synthesis or resolution. Whilst it is therefore difficult to prove that the form of the movement is generated from this dynamism in a Beethovenian sense, what we can say is that as a result of the heightened resistance of the dualities to resolution, a strophic form develops in which a structural goal is naturally avoided. The large-scale result is that the music creates a structural barrier for itself, for our innate expectations cannot be formally realised, a state of affairs which Johnson terms as "structural rupture".

This has a significant effect on the musical narrative. The traditional view of the narrative in Mahler's Ninth Symphony, is autobiographical - the all too frequently cited farewell to life. Not only is this view of wholly limited use in our quest to understand the musical language of the symphony, but it also appears to be based upon a misconception. Close studies of Mahler biographies, particularly that of Henri Louis De La Grange, reveal that the composer was actually in surprisingly high spirits when he came to compose his Ninth, and showed considerable optimism about the future. According to Anthony Newcomb, the narrative quality in Mahler's late music comes about most through the intersection of the formal paradigm, the recurrence and transformation of thematic elements, and most importantly, what he terms the "plot archetype"[42], drawing our attention to the romantic plot of the *circular or spiritual*

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[41] Johnson, J. *The Status of the Subject in Mahler's Ninth Symphony*, Nineteenth-Century Music, Vol. XVIII/2, Autumn 1994, p. 109.

[42] Newcomb, A. *Narrative archetypes and Mahler's Ninth Symphony*, in: Scher, S. (Ed.) *Music and Text; critical esquires*, Cambridge, 1992. pp. 118-136.

quest. M. H. Abrams provides us with a clearer understanding of this paradigm when he explains that

> Much of English [and German] Romantic literature is a literature
> of movement in which the protagonist is a compulsive wanderer
> [......] Cain or the wandering Jew. Especially common, however,
> is the story form of the pilgrimage and quest - the journey in
> search of an unknown or inexpressible something which gradually
> leads the wanderer back to his point of origin.[43]

Whist the concept of the Wandering Jew strikes a biographical note (in lieu of Mahler's celebrated words "I am thrice homeless........as a Jew throughout the world"), what is of greater significance here is the fact that the first movement of the Ninth Symphony also displays continual return to a point of origin. Abrams continues by drawing our attention to the Christian allegory of the journey of life, but explains that in this case, the wandering Christian is converted into a hero whose quest represents an education in experience which starts out as

> a fall from unity into division and into a conflict of contraries which
> in turn compel the movement back toward a higher integration,[44]

and which culminates at

> a stage of integrity, power and freedom in which the protagonist
> finally learns who he is, what he was born for and the purpose of
> what he has endured along the way.[45]

The fact that Mahler's symphony appears analogous with these conditions not only represents a new design in symphonic conception, but also provides the musical world with an alternative answer to those questions ' What did you live for? Why did you suffer? Is it all only a vast, terrifying joke?' which were posed in the opening movement of his *Resurrection* Symphony.

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[43] Abrams, M. H. *Natural Supernaturalism: tradition and revolution in Romantic Literature*, Norton, New York, 1971, p. 193.

[44] ibid. p. 193.

[45] ibid. p. 194.

In order to fully understand the correlation between Mahler's Ninth Symphony and the concept of the 'circular' plot which Abrams describes, it is necessary to consider the musical surface in greater detail. The two opposing elements are the D major 'song' which first appears in bar 7, and the secondary material which appears in D minor at bar 29. The major - minor fluctuation exhibited here obviously represents a primary opposition, but it should also be clear that other features inherent in these themes makes them into absolute antithetical gestures. For a start, the 'song' theme is purely diatonic, without a single inflection in either the melodic line or the accompanying harmonies, and it is rhythmically straightforward, whereas the D minor material is saturated with chromaticism and rhythmically unstable. Also, whilst the 'song' begins *piano* and generally falls to *pianissimo*, its opposition starts off *forte* and then sees a series of crescendos from *piano* to *forte* and sudden falls back to the quiet dynamic.

Towards the close of the 'song' material, its purity is corrupted by the appearance of a Bb in the second violin line (bar 26), and it is this movement to the flattened submediant which is responsible for the deterioration of the pure D major. Later in the movement, there is further evidence of this technique in the unstable sections, with the bass slipping to Bb and then down another major third onto Gb, a feat which Newcomb describes as

> ...the primary symbol of alienation and loss of centre in most of
> the piece [....], the quiet subversion of the diatonic purity [....]
> especially by introducing notes from other keys, a major third
> below, rapidly takes one onto the flat keys, traditionally regarded
> as "dark". [46]

As a result of the crisis which is created through the impossibility of reconciliation, the conflict of the two themes is brought to the foreground in bar 43, with the trumpet fanfare which is widely regarded as providing the strongest opposition to the D major song. Following this, at bar 47, the song reasserts itself with a much greater presence than before, and although it manages to hold out against an attack from its neighbouring flat-side keys (bars 54 - 64), it is significantly weakened in the event, and soon subsides to be juxtaposed with more antithetical material. Once again, this leads to a confrontation, only this time the result is collapse, and what follows is a transitional

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[46] Newcomb, p.122.

passage (bar 108) which has the task of reconstituting the bare thematic residues. The fanfare which brings about this collapse is described by David Holbrook as the "hate theme,"[47] and it appears to share similarities with the *Schreckensfanfare* which announces the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In the case of Beethoven, this destructive gesture leaves us with a cello recitative which anxiously searches for a plausible means of continuation. This is punctuated by what are essentially residues of previously heard music (in this case, the preceding three symphonic movements) and after the third interruption, we witness the evolution of the *An die Freude* theme which is to form the basis for most of the ensuing movement. There follow four song strophes, of which the fourth, scored for full orchestra continues in a jubilant manner until it is unexpectedly cut short by the reappearance of the fanfare, whose disruption dissolves the music back into fragments, this time to be reconstituted by means of the Baritone solo.

This process of interruption, destruction and rebuilding in Beethoven can certainly be overlaid with some success onto the opening movement of Mahler's Ninth, and whilst Newcomb's explanation of the transitional section's place in the narrative as

The protagonist rebuilding a life undone by ruinous experience,[48]

is plausible on its own level, the true nature and significance of these transitional sections is rather more complicated. In order to fully grasp this, it is first necessary to get to grips with the issue of subjectivity in the symphony.

The subject and object are naturally difficult to discern within a musical context, and undertaking the task of labelling musical components as being subjective or objective would not only prove to be fraut with problems, but would also be severely open to interpretation. On the most general level, it is possible to argue that due to objectivity's association with law and regulation, the formal requirements of a particular piece of music must therefore contain a degree of objectivity, and in this sense one is able to classify the freer sections, such as transitions and the development section for example,

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[47] Holbrook, D. *Gustav Mahler and The Courage To Be*, London, 1975, p. 126.

[48] Newcomb, p. 122.

as being an expression of the composer's subjectivity. However, the problems associated with this type of reading should already be apparent, in the sense that passages which appear free in design also have formal requirements, such as the development's obligation to establish a dominant pedal before recapitulation can take place.

Julian Johnson is quick to point out that in mid-period Beethoven, the narrative of the music is unfolded through the narrative of the subject, and we would thus expect points of rearrival and reaffirmation to heighten the significance and definition of the subject, and therefore our understanding of the narrative. Lawrence Kramer also explains that

> Beethoven believed music should have a strong subject - object polarity, with emphasis on the forcefulness of the subject.[49]

and his discussion of the finale of Beethoven's Quartet in Bb, op. 18, no. 6 points directly to the dialectical clash which results from this polarisation. This has come about due to the interplay of the subjective adagio which is fragmented and harmonically problematical and the objective allegro which is in a straightforward dance style.

However, in Mahler's Ninth Symphony, things are quite different. For whilst Mahler creates a desire for synthesis and resolution through the establishment of two highly differentiated themes, he simultaneously deconstructs the formal paradigm through which these desires can be realised. It could therefore, be argued that Mahler has transcended objectivity in this symphony, although this does not make our task any simpler for as Johnson argues,

> Mahler maintains the rhetoric of musical dialectics, but
> undermines their conditions and this causes problems in the
> subjective identity.[50]

Johnson goes on to explain that the avoidance of closure, on which the subject's definition is dependent, represents Mahler's quest for alternative means of defining the

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[49] Kramer, L. *Music as Cultural Practise*, pp. 26 -27.

[50] Johnson, p. 115.

subjectivity as opposed to the music being a negativisation of the subject.

Returning now to the discussion of the transitional sections of the music, those which come about after each successive collapse, we should treat seriously the fact that each transition represents not only the dissolution of the material already encountered, but also its reconstitution. In other words, the work should not just be seen as a strophic structure, but should rather be regarded as cyclic in the sense that when the two thematic elements return, they still remain opposed and this again leads to rupture. Johnson points us in the direction of Friedrich Nietzsche's model of aesthetic theory put across in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), and this appears to map roughly onto the large-scale musical processes in operation here. Because of the transition's cyclic function it should be considered a pivotal point in the musical discourse. It is analogous with the raw energy that Nietzsche terms the Dionysian, from which individuality can be extracted and into which it can of course be melted back down. A further significance of these sections is that they can be viewed as lying between the movement's poles, ie. they are preceded by the D minor material, but build their way back to D major.

The first such appearance of this 'limbo material', as Johnson puts it, comes in bar 243 following a fermata in the previous bar. Here, we are confronted with what could be termed a crude patchwork of past thematic elements: the falling second of the 'song' theme in the horns, the 'terror fanfare' on muted trombones, the rocking sextuplet accompanying figurations, and the fragments of the material from the second subject group of the opening. Coupled with this is the underlying bass progression of D - Bb through to Gb, the descent through major thirds described earlier as one of the principal destructive elements in the symphony. By the time we reach the fermata over the bar line at the end of bar 253, the musical surface has become increasingly dissipated and we have reached the bottom of this Dionysian trough. The *schattenhaft* passage which follows naturally has the job of rebuilding D major. It starts off in Eb minor (the relative minor of Gb) and the first violin part forges a gradual chromatic ascent over the next eleven bars from Bb to F# (bar 265) and from here we return to D with a variant of the 'song' presented on two solo violins.

All of this can be viewed in a similar way if we consider the music alongside Julia Kristeva's poststructuralist theory, which is concerned with how the subject can be constructed through language. Her model is similar to that of Nietzsche only she terms the raw energies from which the subject is initially created the *semiotic chora*. Perhaps the most novel theme to be picked up from this is the connection she makes with the maternal. Whilst we have so far considered the static transitional passages in the first movement as representing both endings and re-beginnings, the cyclic quality that they lend to the work cancels this out, or at least pushes them onto a higher plane upon which they should continually return as what Johnson describes as

> ...the re-creative "womb" that absorbs the death of the musical
> subject and produces its rebirth.[51]

Indeed, as Johnson continues to observe, the maternal connection can be clearly witnessed in the music. This is apparent not just in the form of maternally evocative musical signs, such as those which are experienced in the D major 'song' passages (ie. the use of warm orchestral colours, the rocking figurations in the accompaniment, the gently unfolding harmony and the self contained, unpolluted purity of D major which all evoke a condition of primeval existence) but most strikingly in the language of the musical discourse, in which surging conflict is reabsorbed into the maternal womb.

This sense of infancy is to prove of crucial importance as we now turn our discussion back to our original premise that musical narrative is analogous with the plot of the 'circular or spiritual quest'. If we are to concentrate our attention on the reprise of the D major song at bar 347 (generally regarded as being the start of the recapitulation), it should be observed that after ten bars (from bar 358), the pitches E# (F natural), A# (Bb) and Eb, are incorporated into the D major tonality. Newcomb explains that whilst these are the very pitches which had previously sought to corrupt the 'song', their destructive quality is here diminished through their presentation as passing appoggiaturas to stable tonal degrees. In other words, a seemingly impossible integration has at last occurred, making the tagging of this passage as the recapitulation seem doubly appropriate, and in the narrative sense, the ability of the song to withstand these tonal stresses exudes a sense of maturity and sophistication. However despite this

feeling of reconciliation, it should not be forgotten that the nature of the music has so far been defined by the avoidance of closure in the face of two dynamic elements whose existence, in a classical sense, is dependant on that condition. Mahler does not change this state of play here, and following what can be best described as a cadenza for solo flute and the principal horn, we encounter a final reprise of the D major song, which does not constitute a resolution to the movement but more of a musical evaporation which leaves in its wake an openness and an unrestricted way forward. It was at the beginning of this final section that Mahler wrote "lebewol!" on the original manuscript,- not a farewell to life, but a farewell to primal innocence.

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[51] ibid. p. 117.

CONCLUSION

The present study began with an analytical discussion of Mahler's First Symphony and has explored the impact that lengthy passages of lyricism had on a sonata form structure. It has promoted the need to contextualise Mahler's extended treatment of lyricism, through surveying the struggle which nineteenth-century symphonists seem all to have experienced in integrating lyricism successfully into their works. This proved to be a valuable exercise, not only providing a necessary historical context but also helping to decode the 'spiritual' implications of these works and their significance to a larger-scale conception of Mahler's musical reasoning. Furthermore, the contrasting attitudes of other symphonists to the structural integration of lyricism, has informed my reading of Mahler's Second Symphony, which is more Beethovenian than his First. They also enabled me to fully appreciate the less conventional approach to an opening movement which Mahler adopts in his Ninth Symphony.

Admittedly, the main bulk of my study rests upon the assimilation of lyricism into the opening movements of symphonies. However, directing the focus of attention toward these has been particularly valuable because first movements tend to be predicated on a more rigid set of rules and conditions than are subsequent ones. Also, in the case of Mahler, celebrated as a composer of 'character movements', lyricism tends to be presented more nakedly in the inner movements, and a study of these would not necessarily have produced enough emphasis on structural issues, which are of particular interest to myself, and crucial to a study of this kind.

Exploration of the whole range of Mahler's symphonic composition in the course of selecting the major focus of this study, and particularly of the inner movements of the symphonies, has suggested many windows for future research. This could profitably be directed towards the role of lyricism within the 'character movements' and would undoubtedly illuminate further its impact on the direction of symphonic writing as a whole.

It is axiomatic that the fuller understanding of a composer of such complex musical personality as Mahler, demands similar analytical treatment of the wealth of music which lie beyond the scope of a study on this scale. However, the value of a selective study such as this rests in its attention to detail and its capacity to contribute new perspectives to an eclectic goal. In an attempt to resolve its principal elements, they can now be revisited.

It should first be stressed that the opening movement of Mahler's Ninth Symphony represents the purest form of lyrical expression encountered in this study. Of particular significance here is the movement's correlation with the plot archetype of the 'Spiritual Quest'. This is essentially the same journey that was expressed in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and was the agenda grappled with by many nineteenth-century composers - the search for Elysium. In the case of Mahler's Second Symphony, this realisation of Utopia was achieved through death and resurrection, with the lyrical episodes throughout the work's course representing windows through which a perceived image of Utopia is experienced. Also, in this symphony, although the treatment of lyricism is more obviously derived from the nineteenth-century symphonic tradition than is the case with the other two works, the realisation of the lyrical *Gesang* as the structural goal of the entire work is of considerably more importance and owes debts to dramatic traits in Wagner.

However, the two other symphonies which have been considered in depth here, namely Mahler's First and Ninth are different. If they are to be considered as part of the 'spiritual quest', which I believe they should be, then they can not be regarded as narratives of journeys and arrivals, as is the case in the Resurrection Symphony, but rather as symphonic explorations through one of the 'lyrical windows' of that work.

In the case of the First Symphony, the background structure gives it an objectivity which hinders the absolute freedom of the lyricism, and renders the movement as a perceived impression of what Utopia may be like. In its simplest form it represents a happy day in the protagonist's journey through life.

The Ninth Symphony is more complex and therefore a more rigorous challenge to research. I believe the first movement is best understood as a *study* in lyricism. The absence of large-scale structural control gives two dynamic lyrical elements free reign. Each element's inability to supersede the other leads to a lyrical climax where these contradictory elements are integrated. Ironically, though, this is no great peroration. It merely represents the apex of a concave musical utterance, where lyricism appears at its most concentrated, and thus by its own nature, is most isolated. The lyrical debris surrounding it in the movement bears the greatest testament to this.

My principal intention in this study was not to give a clear definition of *lyricism*, although I believe the above paragraph comes close to decoding its true nature. What has been accomplished here is an analytical exploration of Mahler's solutions to the problems he encountered in assimilating lyricism into a selection of his works, and the large-scale implications this has had on my personal interpretation of them.

On a more practical level though, lyricism simply provides an effect. Its timeless quality is capable of deflecting the forward drive of a piece and producing an abrupt contrast or new direction. When explored on its own it can unleash immense power. When carefully integrated into a structure it can assume monumentality. To a composer, it provides the key to a deeper musical dimension.

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APPENDIX 1.

English Translation of Mahler's Poem, *Ging heut' morgen übers Feld.*

As I walked this morning through the fields,
dew still hung upon the grass,
the merry finch called to me.
"Hey, you there!-
Good Morning!-
Is this not a splendid day?
Tweet, tweet!
Fine and Bright!
O how I love this World!"

And the bluebells in the field
told me merry and cheerful things,
with their bells, ting-a-ling
ting-a-ling,
rang out their morning greeting:
"Is this not a splendid day?
ding-a-ling,
wondrous thing!
O how I love this World"
Heia!"

And everything in the sunshine,
began to glitter;
everything awoke to shape and colour,
in the sunshine!
Flower and bird, large and small!
"Good day! Good Day!"
Is this not a splendid world?
Hey, you there!?
"Lovely day!"

Will my joy now bloom too?
No, no!
I know well that happiness will never return again!

Alex J. A. Lewis.