

TWICE UPON A TIME: THEMATIC INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN BEETHOVEN'S
STRING QUARTET IN A MINOR, OP. 132 AND SYMPHONY NO. 9 IN D MINOR,
OP. 125

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ABSTRACT

Twice Upon a Time: Thematic Intersections Between Beethoven's String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132 and Symphony no. 9 in D Minor, op. 125 (Under the direction of Mark Evan Bonds)

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, op. 125 displays a number of intertextualities with the String Quartet in A minor, op. 132. These connections likely result from their shared compositional history; the theme of op. 132's finale was probably originally intended as an instrumental alternative to the final movement of the symphony. The similarities indicate that the pieces share a relationship similar to other famous pairs of Beethoven's pieces, such as the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies opp. 67 and 68, while the differences point to how he justified their alternate endings. The differing narrative trajectories of op. 125 and op. 132 sheds light on Beethoven's process of writing satisfactory conclusions to multi-movement cycles, particularly providing insight into the two finales for the Quartet in B-flat, op. 130: the *Grosse Fuge* op. 133, or the published rondo. Further examination reveals trends in Beethoven's compositional thought as heroic style gave way to late style.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Art is never finished, only abandoned.

–Leonardo da Vinci, *Attrib.*

If an idea's worth having once, it's worth having twice.

–Tom Stoppard, *India Ink*

Any creative process almost invariably requires the artist, author, or composer to abandon possibilities that do not fit in the larger scheme of the finished product.

Beethoven, whose extant sketches show a myriad of rejected ideas and themes for nearly every piece, was more reluctant than most to give up alternative ideas, or even to let the possibilities of one theme go unexplored. A complex web of recurring themes, motives, tropes and procedures connects Beethoven's *oeuvre*, a testament to his compositional tastes. His impulse to constantly revise his music occasionally extended beyond publication, perhaps most famously in the case of Ninth Symphony, op. 125, the choral finale of which Beethoven later confessed to have been a mistake to Carl Czerny. If Czerny's story is true, Beethoven in one sense satisfied his desire to find alternative solutions to the problems posed in Ninth with in the String Quartet in A minor, op. 132. The body of op. 132 mimics the Ninth: they share a key structure, a number of the same tropes and stylistic decisions, formal patterns and methods of creating a coherent piece of music rather than a series of unconnected movements. In op. 132, however, Beethoven deploys these compositional procedures in such a way as to produce an entirely different finale - one that Beethoven may have contemplated as an alternative to the choral *An die Freude*.

A comparison of both the points of intersection and points of departure between these two works (op. 132 and op. 125) sheds light on other famous Beethovenian conundrums. The relationship between the Ninth Symphony and op. 132 parallels that of the two extant versions of the String Quartet in B-flat major, op. 130, the version ending in the *Grosse Fuge* and the one ending in the alternative, published finale. The presence of a pair like op. 132 and op. 125 where similar sets of musical events produce differing finales provides an analogy for the problem of op. 130/133. Through the lens of the earlier pair, neither version of op. 130 appears more or less correct than the other; rather, they are simply two separate entities. More generally, comparing op. 132 and the Ninth also reveals key trends in Beethoven's late compositional thought. The differences between the two pieces provide clues as to Beethoven's conceptions of genre and his different strategies of reaching major from minor in the two pieces illustrate the evolution of his heroic style into his late style. Finally, the two different finales reveal Beethoven's evolving sense of what constituted an ending to an integrated multi-movement cycle, and sets of related pieces.

Thematic Biographies

Never one to waste a good tune, Beethoven often reused discarded ideas from older compositions, works without opus numbers, or even his published works, creating pairs and series of related works. Even when he did not explicitly borrow thematic material, he often used compositional procedures across pieces. Not only did Beethoven borrow themes (discarded or not) from earlier compositions, he often used entire compositions as models for future work. Raymond Knapp posits that Beethoven had to compose the Fifth Symphony to work through some of the compositional problems posed

by the programmatic Sixth; he argues that the Sixth Symphony was effectively modeled on the Fifth.¹ William Kinderman has demonstrated that some of the most famous moments in the Ninth come from compositional procedures Beethoven first discovered during his work in the *Missa Solemnis*.² Leilani Lutes estimates that approximately a little over a third of Beethoven's *oeuvre* contains some element of an earlier piece.³ Some of these borrowings and transfers find their final forms in his most famous works. For example, he lifted the theme from the Choral Fantasy, op. 80 from *Gegenleibe* WoO 118, then refashioned it into op. 125's *An die Freude*. The *Alla Danza Tedesca* of the String Quartet in B-flat, op.130 was originally intended for the second movement of op. 132.⁴ For op. 132 itself, Beethoven reused his *Deutscher Tanz*, WoO 8, no. 8 and *Allemande* WoO 81 (which, incidentally, also became the second movement of the piano trio in G, op. 1 no. 2 and the *German Dances for Orchestra*, WoO 13).⁵

The pairing of op. 132 and op. 125 has many precedents in Beethoven's earlier work. Beethoven created several pairs of pieces, often composed almost simultaneously, or at least temporally close together. Usually, one of these pieces will share certain compositional oddities and solutions to formal problems, but have entirely different

1. Raymond Knapp, "A Tale of Two Symphonies: Converging Narratives of Divine Reconciliation in Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53 (2000), 291-343.

2. William Kinderman, "Beethoven's Compositional Models for the Choral Finale of the Ninth Symphony" in *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, ed. William Kinderman (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 160-188.

3. Leilani Kathryn Lutes, "Beethoven's Re-uses of his own Compositions, 1782-1826" (PhD. Diss., University of Southern California, 1975), 389-390.

4. Philip Radcliffe, *Beethoven's String Quartets* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 113; Basil Lam, *Beethoven String Quartets* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1975), 25.

5. Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (New York: Norton, 1979), 202; Bathia Churgin, "Recycling Old Ideas in Beethoven's String Quartet op. 132," in *Essays in Honor of László Somfai on his 70th birthday: Studies in the Sources and the Interpretation of Music*, ed. Laszlo Somfai and Vera Lampert (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 257-264.

atmospheres and affects. In the case of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, Beethoven interwove techniques of thematic formation and cyclic connections between movements. But the Fifth is the epitome of struggle, strife, and triumph while the Sixth is almost entirely placid (save the fourth movement). Other pairs of this type include the Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, op. 123 and the Ninth Symphony and the Choral Fantasy. Beethoven also occasionally imported compositional procedures across genres; Stephen Rumph argues that the first of the Razumovsky quartets, op. 59 no. 1 employs a structure similar to the Symphony no. 3 in E-flat, op. 55, the 'Eroica.'⁶ Also from different genres, op. 125 and op. 132 share the same sorts of similarities (similar compositional procedures and oddities, key structures, movement character and order, etc.) as other pairs of pieces, particularly the procedures used in Fifth and Sixth Symphonies.

Although the Ninth Symphony preceded the late quartets in Beethoven's imagination, he received the actual commission for both in the same month—November of 1822. In response to Beethoven's inquiry on July 6th, Ferdinand Ries sent word of a commission of approximately 500 fl. (50 pounds) for a new symphony for the London Philharmonic Society. He also received a letter requesting up to three string quartets from Prince Nikolaus Galitzin of St. Petersburg for 50 ducats per quartet.⁷ Thus, though sketches for the Ninth begin earlier than 1822, both projects occupied Beethoven's thoughts at the same time. Barry Cooper even posits that, although no sketches for any of the quartets exist before 1824, Beethoven already had some idea of what they would

6. Stephen Rumph, *Beethoven After Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 175-176.

7. Barry Cooper, *Beethoven*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 301.

sound like.⁸ Both projects appear to have simultaneously occupied Beethoven's thoughts, creating a perfect environment for compositional crossover.

As Joseph Kerman has noted, remnants of the Ninth Symphony echo through all of the late quartets, not only op. 132, evidence that while Beethoven had completed op. 125 on paper, he felt the symphony still contained musical possibilities that deserved exploration. After op. 132, the String Quartet in E-flat Major op. 127 (the only piece composed between op. 125 and op. 132) displays the strongest connection to the symphony.⁹ After op. 132, the String Quartet in E-flat Major op. 127 (the only piece composed between op. 125 and op. 132) displays the strongest connection to the symphony.¹⁰ The slow introduction of the first movements all serve to mark the formal divisions of a modified sonata form, the scherzos are all intensely contrapuntal, and all three pieces employ vocal genres: an actual chorus in op. 125, aria-like passages in op. 127, and a chorale and recitative in op. 132. Op. 127, along with op. 132 reveals that Beethoven was not entirely through with the problems posed in op. 125, problems he chose to tackle in the A minor quartet. Unlike the other quartets, the markers of the Ninth are more or less in the same order in quartet and symphony, although the march is, admittedly, misplaced in op 132. Beethoven created a separate movement for it rather

8. Cooper, *Beethoven*, 303.

9. Kerman, 194-196, 226-230.

10. The opus numbers here are misleading; although it was composed before, the publication of op. 132 was delayed until after the publication of the B-flat major quartet (op. 130) and the C-sharp minor quartet (op. 131). Op. 128 "Der Kuss" was a song written in 1822 and sketched as early as 1798, only published in 1825. Op. 129, the Rondo a Capriccio in G ("Rage Over a Lost Penny) was composed in 1795, but published in 1825. Kerman, 224; Bathia Churgin, "Recycling Old Ideas in Beethoven's String Quartet op. 132," in *Essays in Honor of László Somfai on his 70th birthday: Studies in the Sources and the Interpretation of Music*, ed. Laszlo Somfai and Vera Lampert (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 249. Joseph Kerman, et al., "Beethoven, Ludwig van," in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg19> (accessed December 12, 2008).

than incorporating it into the finale as in the Symphony. While all of the late quartets show signs of the compositional procedures of the Ninth, op. 132 stands out as particularly linked.

Beethoven's Creative Process

The connection between the two pieces first came to light in 1887 with Gustav Nottebohm's exhaustive study of Beethoven's sketches. However, as early as 1852, Czerny remarked to Otto Jahn that Beethoven had considered rewriting the finale without a chorus, and that he already had an idea in his head.¹¹ Alexander Wheelock Thayer's biography dismisses the comment on the grounds that the *An die Freude* is so strongly motivically linked to the other movements, but the presence of the *finale instrumentale* in the sketches proved Czerny right. Thayer does note, citing Jahn, that Czerny repeated this anecdote often in public, including the information about the existing alternate idea.

Although scholars have disagreed exactly when Beethoven conceived of his *finale instrumentale*, recent research suggests it was more prominent in Beethoven's thoughts than Nottebohm suggested. Robert Winter believes that Beethoven may never have seriously considered it part as part of the symphony based on the fact that the *An die Freude* theme was so advanced at the time of the sketch. At the same time he did acknowledge that “there can still be no question that Beethoven was wavering in his commitment to Schiller's ode.”¹² Winter's understandable skepticism stems from the fact that, at the time of his argument (published in 1980), the location of Nottebohm's original source remained unknown. The pocket sketchbook with the drafts of the Ninth—

11. Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven Vo. 3*, (Carbondale, IL:Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), 152-153.

12. Robert Winter and Bruce Carr, eds. *Beethoven, Performers, and Critics: The International Beethoven Congress, Detroit, 1977* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 198, 197-198).

Autograph 8/2—went missing during World War II only to resurface in Poland in the mid-1980s.¹³ Still, in spite of their rediscovery, Winter's view that the *finale instrumentale* might not be related to the symphony project has persisted, making its way into Nicolas Cook's handbook on the Ninth Symphony, published in 1993.¹⁴ However, Maynard Solomon, taking his cue from Sieghard Brandenburg and Beethoven's comments to Czerny, believes the theme to be more important than even Nottebohm (who was unaware of Czerny's anecdote) suspected. Given the repeated appearance of an idea for an instrumental finale throughout the sketches, Brandenburg argues that the theme was in Beethoven's mind throughout the entire genesis of the Ninth Symphony.¹⁵ Brandenburg's study, published in 1984, convincingly argues for a strong connection between the finale of op. 132 and the Ninth Symphony.¹⁶

Although the actual documents were lost, scholars have relied on Nottebohm's study and transcriptions of Beethoven's sketchbooks in the absence of the originals. These transcriptions support Czerny; the sketches revealed that the composer contemplated replacing the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony at least three times.¹⁷ Sometime in June or July of 1823, he jotted down a brief theme labeled the “finale instrumentale” on folio 8r of the pocket sketchbook Autograph 8/2 (figure 1a).

13. *The Beethoven Sketchbooks*, 404.

14. Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven, Symphony no. 9* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 17-19.

15. Solomon, 295-296 n11.

16. Sieghard Brandenburg, “Die Skizzen zur Neunten Symphonie” in *Zu Beethoven. II: Aufsätze und Dokumente*, ed. Harry Goldschmidt, (Germany: Neue Musik Berlin, 1984).

17. Maynard Solomon, *Late Beethoven: Music, Thought and Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 217; Nottebohm, 180-181.

Figure 1a. *Finale Instrumentale*, Nottebohm's transcription.



The key, D minor, indicates that Beethoven probably intended this theme for the Ninth Symphony. However, the sketch still displays obvious elements of the finale of op. 132: the 3/4 meter, opening rhythm and melodic line of scale degrees 1-5-3-1 turn that dips to the leading tone, then ascends to scale degree 5, pushes through to scale degree 6 and eventually rests on scale degree 4 all strongly resemble op. 132. Nearly thirty pages of sketches later, another similar theme appears on folios 36v-37r (figure 1b and 1c).

Figure 1b. *Finale Instrumentale*, Nottebohm's transcription (page 1).



Figure 1c. *Finale Instrumentale*, Nottebohm's transcription (page 2).



This version of the *finale instrumentale* seems to be a step away from the op. 132. Although it retains the same rhythmic and melodic shape, the motivic connection has drifted. However, this version marks the first appearance of the three note rhythm that Beethoven interpolated into the rondo of op. 132. The theme also reappears in two different variants in the parallel desk sketchbook Landsberg 8/2 as Beethoven continued

vacillate on the issue of a choir. Although he eventually decided on the Schiller setting, the issue did not vanish from his mind. The *finale instrumentale* remained with him until 1825, when the elements of the *finale instrumentale* resurfaced, now transposed to A minor, as part of the sketches for the finale of op. 132 (figure 2).

Figure 2. String Quartet in A minor, op. 132, movement VI, m. 3-10.



Beethoven shortened the theme and inserted the three quarter note motive into the middle. The ascent to scale degree 5 pushes through to scale degree 7 rather than scale degree 6 and the three quarter notes now break up the rhythmic drive instead of following the repeated pattern, but the composer seems to have derived this theme from the elements of 1823-24's *finale instrumentale*.

Beyond the probable thematic connection, even Beethoven's earliest sketches for the Ninth Symphony show subtle connections to op. 132. Both pieces have double theme and variation third movements based on chorale-like textures. Though the third movement of the Ninth has no overt program, the third movement of the quartet famously bears the inscription “Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lyischen Tonart” (Holy song of thanksgiving to the Deity in the Lydian Mode). On the back of one of the sketches for the Piano Sonata in B-flat, op. 106 “Hammerklavier,” there is a note describing an “Adagio Cantique”

Pious song in a symphony in ancient modes—Lord God we praise Thee—
 alleluia—either alone or as introduction to a fugue. The whole 2nd
 sinfonie might be characterized in this manner in which case the vocal parts
 would enter in the last movement or already in the Adagio. The violins, etc., of
 the orchestra to be increased tenfold in the last movement, in which case the vocal

parts would enter gradually—in the text of the Adagio Greek myth, *Cantique Ecclesiastique*—in the Allegro, fest of Bachus [sic].¹⁸

The parallel to the Heiliger Dankgesang inscription is obvious.¹⁹ This note, dating from 1818 and one of the earliest sketches to connect to the Ninth Symphony, has baffled scholars due to its early appearance in the chronology of the Ninth's composition.

Analysts are also unsure whether this applies to the Ninth Symphony or the unfinished Tenth.²⁰ Whether or not the contents apply to the Tenth Symphony, many aspects of this idea were absorbed into the third and final movements of the Ninth, the Andante Maestoso (m. 595-654) of the finale of op. 125 (a slow movement in an “ancient mode” with religious overtones), as well as the “Heiliger Dankgesang.”

18. Nottebohm, 163; translation from Cook, 13.

19. Cook, 13; Michael Steinberg, “Notes on the Quartets” in *The Beethoven Quartet Companion* ed. Robert Winter and Robert Martin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 143-282, 269; Levy, 30.

20. Barry Cooper, “New Identified Sketches for Beethoven's Tenth Symphony,” *Music & Letters* 66 (1985), 11.

I. CONNECTIONS

Tonal Plan

All of the movements of op. 132 and the Ninth have similar key structures (see table 1).

Table 1. Tonal Plan of opp. 125 ad 132.

	Op. 125	Op. 132
Movement I	exposition i → VI	exposition i → VI
		first recapitulation v → III (VI/v)
	recapitulation i → I	second recapitulation i → I
	coda i	coda i
Movement II	scherzo i	scherzo i
	trio I	trio I
Movement III	theme A VI	theme A VI-Lydian (III implied)
Movement IV (op. 132)	-	I
Movement IV(op. 125)/Movement V (op. 132)	i → I	i → I

In both, the secondary key area of the first movement and the third movement (B-flat in the Ninth Symphony, F major and C major in op. 132, some version of VI in the larger scheme of both works) act as the only obvious alternative key areas throughout two

largely tonally homogeneous pieces. In the first movement, Beethoven used VI as the secondary key area where normally a composer might choose V or III. In op. 132, Beethoven partially compensates for the problem by having two recapitulations, one “incorrect” recapitulation (m. 103) which keeps the same tonal structure as the exposition, but moves the entire apparatus up a fifth, producing a secondary key area of C major, (m. 159, VI of E minor, III of A major). In op. 125, he makes no attempt to address the oddity.

The key structure of the third movements plays out similarly in both pieces, the secondary key area of the first movements reappears after an entirely tonic scherzo as an otherworldly alternative to the strife and struggle of the first. The third movement is in the key of the secondary key area of the first, but while in op. 125, this is a simple B-flat major, the “incorrect” recapitulation in op. 132 makes this moment problematic. Because the second thematic group appeared in two secondary key areas in the first movement of op. 132, writing the third movement in the same key poses a problem to keeping the same tonal trajectory. Beethoven neatly resolves the issue by casting the third movement of op. 132 in the Lydian mode. As many have noted, the Lydian mode pulls inexorably towards the dominant, in this case C major, the secondary key area of the “incorrect” recapitulation, while the tonic remains F, the secondary key area of the exposition.²¹ Beethoven keeps the mold intact. Here again, Beethoven interacts with the same formal template he used in the Ninth Symphony, but the process is more complex.

The finales complete the pattern. Each begins in tonic minor but, *per aspera ad astra*, ends in tonic major. Op. 132 takes proportionally longer to reach major than op.

21. Kevin Korsyn, “J.W.N. Sullivan and the Heiliger Dankgesang: Questions of Meaning in Late Beethoven,” *Beethoven Forum* Vol. 2 Issue 1 (1993), 158 summarizes the various takes on this issue.

125, and the two movements employ two very different sets of formal processes, but the overall trajectory is the same. While the finale of op. 132 is a reasonably straightforward rondo, the finale of op. 125 may be the most formally controversial piece in the history of music. Nevertheless, the formal dissimilarity of the finales does not erase the similar tonal plan of the rest of the works.

$$i/VI(III) \rightarrow (i/I) \rightarrow VI(III) \rightarrow (I) \rightarrow i/I$$

Thematic Connections Between Movements

Opus 125 and Opus 132 have similar thematic structures, particularly in the first three movements. In each, Beethoven deploys similar themes and topical references in like positions, summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Themes and Character.

Movement	Formal Function	Character
I (modified sonata form)	Introduction	Tonally ambiguous, leans towards the dominant
	First key area thematic group	Emerges from texture of the introduction, culminates in a descending, dotted pattern
	Second key area thematic group	Ensemble is out of phase
II (scherzo)	Scherzo	Unison statement that fragments into counterpoint
	Trio	“Musette” style, pastoral
III (double theme and variations)	Theme A	Slow Chorale
	Theme B	Slightly more energetic, more contrapuntal
IV/V (op. 132 only)	Variable	Instrumental recitative, march, vocality, “naïveté”

Each piece begins with a tonally ambiguous introduction that places a problematic emphasis on the dominant. A theme eventually emerges in fragments from the opening music, clearing away the tonic confusion. This theme culminates in a descending dotted pattern. However when the theme comes together in op. 125 (m. 17), it seems to be the

climax, but in op. 132, the dotted pattern (m. 18) signals the theme's disintegration. The first theme never entirely coalesces in op. 132. For the first theme in the second key area, the ensemble seems out of phase with itself. In op. 125, the strings play sharply articulated rising arpeggios while the winds have the much more legato, melodic theme (m. 74). The ensemble divides along timbral lines. Because a string quartet lacks the timbral variation of a full orchestra, Beethoven instead uses meter to split the ensemble. The viola and cello play quick broken triplets while the violins have the more lyrical figure (m. 48). When this theme twice comes back later in the piece (m. 159 and m. 228), the instrumentation changes, but the metrical disparity remains intact.

A similar situation occurs in the scherzo movements. Both second movements begin with a unison statement of the main theme, then fragment into a contrapuntal texture. Although the atmosphere is entirely different: frantic, wild and minor in the Ninth and reserved and nonthreatening in op 132, the procedure is the same. Beethoven probably found this opening in Mozart's String Quartet in A major, K. 464, which served as a model for Beethoven's own quartet in the same key, op. 18 no. 5, strengthening the link between the two genres of symphony and string quartet.²² Each scherzo also takes advantage of the ensemble like the first movements; the Ninth's scherzo explores the possibilities of a large scale fugal exposition while the string quartet's scherzo explores the various combinations of the four voices. The trio of the second movements both evoke the pastoral. Such textures and styles are typical in Beethoven's trios, particularly later in his career: the scherzo of the Seventh Symphony, movement V of the String Quartet in C-sharp minor, op. 131 and movement II of the String Quartet in F Major, op.

22. Jeremy Yudkin, "Beethoven's "Mozart" Quartet" *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 45 (1992), 71-72.

135 all share the same sort of topical references.²³ Nevertheless, the trio of op. 125 (m. 414) parallels that of op. 132 (m. 126) beyond these other examples. Each employs “musette” style (so called in op. 132 by Bathia Churgin and in op. 125 by David Levy) both have simple high melodies, drones, and an accompaniment that consists of running eighth notes.²⁴ Both evoke the simplicity of the pastoral in contrast to the highly contrapuntal and intricate scherzo. The entire second movement stays in the tonic, although op. 125 begins and ends in minor i while all of op. 132 is in major.

The double theme and variations third movements begin with a slow chorale, then moves to a second, more energetic, more contrapuntally complex second theme. The movements have an otherworldly religiosity, particularly in their use of the chorale. Both third movements are set apart from the rest of piece, both by the key—the only movements in both cycles to begin and end in a key other than the overall tonic—and their more homophonic textures. After the first movements' unexpected modulations and fragmentary themes and the second movements' intensely studied contrapuntal work, the Adagios provide a window to another tranquil, heavenly compositional world separate from the rest of the piece.

The march, admittedly not in the same position in op. 132 as in the Ninth, nevertheless comes between two much weightier sections of music, providing dramatic contrast in both compositions. As Kinderman observes, in op. 125, the march links the end of the first major choral section with the orchestral double-fugue. In op. 132, the march links the deeply personal “Heiliger Dankgesang” with the return of the pathos of

23. Churgin, 257.

24. Ibid.; David Benjamin Levy, *Beethoven, The Ninth Symphony*, rev. ed (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2003), 74.

the first movement in the finale, a typical Beethovenian use of a march (see third movement of the Piano Sonata in A Major, op. 101).²⁵ Each march also recalls the rhythmic structure of the first movement; in op. 125, the march picks up the rhythm of the introduction and in op. 132, a variation of the rhythmic contour of the first theme. The march in op. 132 recalls another aspect of the first movement: the bridge passage (m. 40). The crisp little march-like passage in movement I, first appearing in m. 42 that links A minor and F major (and the rest of the various key areas throughout the piece) has the same problematic downbeat; in movement IV it sounds like a pick-up and in movement I, the moment that sounds like a downbeat actually occurs on beat three.²⁶ Although the pitch, rhythmic and formal content are very different, both finales share a certain (in the words of Kerman) “vocal” quality that pervades all of the late quartets.²⁷ The recitative introduction, particularly in op. 132, brings out the vocal quality of both themes, particularly in op. 132 which does not include actual voices and so relies exclusively on generic convention of recitative. Functionally, recitative typically serves as an efficient method of bridging keys and dramatic situations between arias of an opera.²⁸ While many critics, including Kerman and Jurgen Thym, believe the recitative predicts the vocal quality of the finale of op. 132, they fail to define exactly what gives the rondo theme a “vocal quality.” In fact, there is nothing inherently “vocal” about the last movement of op. 132—at least nothing more inherently vocal than any other lyrical Beethoven theme. However, because

25. William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 278.

26. V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing With Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 114.

27. Kerman, 191-222.

28. Jurgen Thym, “The Instrumental Recitative in Beethoven’s Compositions” in *Essays on Music for Charles Warren Fox*, ed. Jerald C. Graue (Rochester, NY: Eastman School of Music), 236-239.

recitative traditionally introduces aria, we hear a vocal quality in the theme. The instrumental recitative of op. 132 therefore has a twofold purpose: to reject the march and to make vocal what would otherwise have been a purely instrumental melody. The instrumental recitative acts in place of a title that turns the theme into an evocation of human voice, hitherto entirely absent in the work. The gesture is musical equivalent of calling a movement “Cavatina” in op. 130 or “Shepherd's song, grateful thanks to the Almighty after the storm” in the Sixth Symphony, op. 68. By invoking vocal genres in the music (rather than just the score), Beethoven introduces human voice into his quartet without the going through the trouble of hiring singers, deliberately recalling the Ninth Symphony.

Both finales also share a character Kerman calls “studied naiveté.”²⁹ In op. 125, this quality comes from the self-conscious folk-like simplicity of the *An die Freude* theme. In op. 132, this “naive” quality results from the open fifth A-E drone in the viola, the broken ostinato of the cello and second violin, and the simple four-square melody in the first violin. While the affect of the themes are opposite, they both play on different aspects of the same tropes. Op. 125 uses a folk-like melody while the texture of op. 132 imitates folk instruments. This texture recalls both the second thematic group in the first movement and the musette-like, ethereal trio from the second, much the same way that Beethoven hinted at the *Freude* theme in previous movements. This “studied naiveté” serves in both cases to unite the movements into a coherent musical structure.

Connecting the Movements

29. Kerman, 195, 202. Kerman discusses this quality in relation to the Ninth, the finale of Haydn's Symphony no. 104, and all of the dance movements of the late works, but it also applies to the finale of op. 132.

Both pieces draw connections between analogous places within movements: elements of the themes in the secondary key area of the first movement resurface in the trio of the second. The secondary key area(s) of the first movement again resurface in the third. Finally, all the elements come together in the finale (see table 3). Again, Beethoven deploys different techniques to satisfy the same template.

Table 3. Connecting the Movements.

Formal Position	Procedure, op. 125	Procedure, op. 132	Key area, op. 125	Key area, op. 132
First movement, second thematic group	First intimation of “Joy” theme	Ostinato accompaniment, lyrical theme, triple division	Exposition: VI	Exposition: VI First recapitulation: III Second recapitulation: I
Second movement, Trio	Second intimation of “Joy” theme, slightly longer	“Musette” style: Ostinato accompaniment, lyrical theme, drone	I	I
Third movement	-	-	VI	VI-Lydian (III implied)
Finale	Realization of “Joy” theme	Ostinato accompaniment, lyrical theme, drone	i → I	i → I

In op. 125, the connections between the movements are largely motivic; the *An die Freude* theme slowly emerges throughout the piece, finally emerging in full in the beginning of the finale. In op. 132, instead of motivic connections, Beethoven uses texture—self-consciously simple themes accompanied by ostinati—to link the movements together. The first three movements of the Ninth all include some hint of the

An die Freude.³⁰ In the first movement of op. 125, the clarinets begin the second thematic group (m. 74), in B-flat despite the key signature, (figure 3) with a tune that strikingly resembles the *An die Freude* theme.

Figure 3. Symphony no. 9, op. 125, movement I, m. 74-76.



This motive floats through the winds before giving way to the broken arpeggios in the strings at m. 80. In the second movement, the trio theme (m. 414) also has a similar melodic contour (figure 4).

Figure 4. Symphony no. 9, op. 125, movement II, m. 414-418.



The key of the third movement, B-flat, hearkens back to the second key area of the first. Then in the final movement, the theme finally emerges fully as the setting of Schiller's poem.

In op. 132, we find similar link the secondary key area of the exposition, through the trio of the second movement to the key area of the third, and into the main body of the last, although the link is not so much thematic as textural. The broken triplet ostinato accompaniment and lyrical line of the second thematic group in the first movement evolves into the musette ostinato in the trio of the second, the key area of the third (here F-Lydian rather than major, though strongly inflected with C major) and finally into the

30. Cooper, *Beethoven*, 313.

texture of the final movement. Even the idea of vocality comes into play; Kofi Agawu continually refers to the second thematic group of the first movement of op. 132 as an “aria,”³¹ recalling Kerman's description of the last movement's vocal qualities, drawing another parallel between the outer ends of the works. These points of intersection between the Ninth Symphony and the A minor quartet imply a connection between these two pieces beyond the fact that they are both the product of the same compositional mind. While Beethoven may not have set to revisit the Ninth's problems and questions when he first began work on op. 132, the finished works speak for themselves. However, while the myriad connections and intertexts between the two pieces speak to their connection in Beethoven's mind, op. 132 is hardly the Ninth Symphony in miniature. While Beethoven backs himself into the same compositional corners as the Ninth, he finds alternative ways out. The connection between the Ninth and op. 132 is not simply one of scale, but of narrative as well. In op. 132, the composer takes several of the events of the Ninth and reverses their results and outcomes. These little reversals account for the entirely different nature of the two finales: formally simple vs. formally complex, vocal vs. instrumental, the varying weights of minor and major tonalities. The points of departure within the individual movements point to the reasons Beethoven could successfully conclude the string quartet with such a different finale.

And Then There Were Two: Movement I

The opening measures of the first movements are particularly parallel in their ambiguity, although that ambiguity results from entirely different compositional procedures. The Ninth Symphony begins with the tonally and misleadingly modally ambiguous open fifth A-E. The horns establish mode only in m. 14 and the first cadence

31. Agawu, 110-126.

on the true tonic D does not occur until m. 21, at which point the open fifth retroactively becomes the dominant. The opening eight measures of op. 132 similarly emphasize A-E and obscure the tonic, but instead of an utter lack of tonal definition, too many pitches present viable tonics. The melodic content points to A minor with the cello's entrance on the figure G# - A - F - E. However, the entrance of the viola and second violin a measure later produce a half cadence. The first violin's entrance a fifth higher even further stresses E, and produces vii-diminished 7th going to I in E major in m. 4. The first unequivocal tonic chord does not appear until m. 6, after yet another cadence on E in m. 5 (see figure 5).

Figure 5. String Quartet in A minor, op. 132, movement I, m. 1-8.

The persistent half-cadences call into question the opening G#-A, presenting E as a viable alternative tonic area. The motive C-B and its inversion quietly lurks in the background, undermining both A and E, a fact which will play a part later in the piece. This entire introductory passage re-examines the same tonic-dominant confusion that begins the Ninth Symphony. In both pieces, the function of the opening measures, whether introductory or thematic, is unclear. While both passages are in the position of a slow

introduction, they return at odd places, marking the structural divisions of an generally formally strange sonata-form movement. These passages usher in the development and recapitulation both in the case of op. 132 and the Ninth (as well as the second key area in the op. 125 alone). Normally, a composer might bring back the first theme to initiate a transition, bypassing the slow introduction, but Beethoven complicates formal purpose by bringing back the opening music. Each time, he employs the same procedure, using the passage's inherent ambiguity as a launchpad to the next formally important point, particularly at the moment of retransition.

In both the Ninth and op 132 the foundation the introduction provides proves faulty at the recapitulation, albeit with entire contradictory results. The introductory measures of the Ninth Symphony famously return at m. 301, the retransition, but now on D-A instead of A-E. The horns now have an F-sharp, but clarifying the mode only further confuses the structure. Although this point seems like a return, until this moment the piece has been in D minor and the tremolo strings and falling fifths have always functioned as transitional material (outside of the introduction). The music occurs in D major only one other place: the bridge passage, beginning the transition into the second key area in the exposition, m. 36. The combination of tonic arrival and transitional character at the retransition confuses the formal paradigm. Where sonata principles predict some form of the dominant, usually a pedal, Beethoven provides a tonic pedal. Further complicating matters, the passage has many of the characteristics of a typical retransition (pedal point, thinning texture, etc). The passage has the thematic content of the recapitulation, the key of bridge passage, and the character of a retransition. Effectively, Beethoven splices together all three. The introduction seems to overrun the

first theme, which only weakly recapitulates in m. 315, nearly drowned out by the timpani.

In op. 132, the introduction causes a different problem; instead of violently compressing retransition and recapitulation, the slow introduction in op. 132 produces two recapitulations. The first one occurs at m. 111, beginning minor dominant and moving to C major by m. 159, and the second in the expected A minor moving to A major (m. 193 and 223 respectively).³² Robin Wallace reads the F major theme in the exposition and the first recapitulation in E minor as a working out of the F-E dyad from the introduction.³³ Similarly, the C-B half step buried in the introduction predicts the C major instance of the second thematic group in the first recapitulation. The first recapitulation exists in part to work out the tonal issues introduced in the opening. Beethoven reaches E minor using the first violin's entrance from the introduction (the figure D-sharp - E - C - B) as the bass, and harmonizing it as V/V in E. (figure 6, m. 103).

32. For the purpose of this analysis, I refer to this moment as a recapitulation, although there are others ways to describe the form of this movement. See Agawu, 118 for a summary of the most prominent formal analyses. Agawu sums it up best: "The questions of two expositions versus one development, two developments versus one exposition, or one exposition versus two recapitulations need not detain us further, because the issue will never be settled."

33. Robin Wallace, "Background and Expression in the First Movement of Beethoven's op. 132," *Journal of Musicology*, 7 (1989), 10.

Figure 6. String Quartet in A minor, op. 132, movement I, m. 103-106.

The musical score for Figure 6 consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is one flat (F major/D minor) and the time signature is common time (C). The notation shows the following notes for each instrument across the four measures:

Instrument	Measure 103	Measure 104	Measure 105	Measure 106
Violin I	F#	F#	F#	F#
Violin II	F#	F#	F#	F#
Viola	F#	F#	F#	F#
Cello	F#	F#	F#	F#

The strongest melodic pull toward E from the introduction becomes the foundation for E's harmonic justification at the first recapitulation. In order to rectify the problem in the “correct” recapitulation at m. 193, Beethoven must push the entrance of the theme back two measures (m. 195) to finally, permanently establish the falling half-step F-E in the harmonic context of A minor (see figure 7).

Figure 7. String Quartet in A minor, op. 132, movement I, m. 193-196.

The musical score for Figure 7 consists of four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is one flat (F major/D minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The notation shows the following notes for each instrument across the four measures:

Instrument	Measure 193	Measure 194	Measure 195	Measure 196
Violin 1	F#	F#	F#	F#
Violin 2	F#	F#	F#	F#
Viola	F#	F#	F#	F#
Cello	F#	F#	F#	F#

In effect, Beethoven cuts out and elides significant portions of music, just as in the Ninth Symphony. In the Ninth, the opening music overruns the recapitulation, but in op. 132 the recapitulation intrudes upon the introduction in a reversal of the procedure. This is emblematic of the overall relationship between the two pieces: one problem (ambiguous introduction), two alternate solutions (shortened recapitulation, extended recapitulatory procedures), foreshadowing the difference between the two finales.

Dances and Marches: Inner Movements

Although the scherzos share a texture, Beethoven characterizes the dance movements very differently. The opening gesture of the second movements of the Ninth and op. 132—unison statement followed by contrapuntal fragmentation and elaboration—is deliberately nostalgic in op. 132. Beethoven referenced the same gesture from second movement of Mozart's String Quartet in A major, K. 464, which he had already used as a model for previous pieces.³⁴ In the symphony, the presence of a large orchestra and the minor mode obscure the Mozart connection, but when inserted back into its original genre, the link shines through again. Along with the Mozart reference, there are other fragments of Beethoven's previous compositions that pervade this movement: a reused portion of the *Deutscher Tanz*, WoO 8, no. 8 and *Allemande* WoO 81.³⁵ This nostalgic atmosphere complements the formal simplicity and clarity of the finale, while the strange and slightly off-putting quality of the Ninth's own scherzo movement predicts the uneasy opening of the Ninth's finale as well as its energy and drive. There is nothing controlled or complacent about either the scherzo or finale of the Ninth, but the former is sinister and the latter joyful. If the Ninth is Beethoven at his most

34. Yudkin, 71-72.

35. Churgin, 257-264.

futuristic, op. 132 is Beethoven at his most retrospective, recalling not only his own past, but his own musical genealogy.

The differences between the second movements of op. 132 and the Ninth also hold true for larger points of divergence between the two pieces. While the scherzos employ similar textures, they have entirely opposite atmospheres. The scherzo of the Ninth has an uncontrolled and sinister quality, while the second movement of op. 132 is stately, reserved, and nonthreatening. These atmospheric differences effect the pastoral trios that follow. In the Ninth, the shift into the pastoral idiom sets up an axis of the hellish (the scherzo proper) versus the heavenly (the Arcadian trio), foreshadowing the last movement's colossal shift from minor to major. In op. 132, the opposition is more earthly. A stately, cosmopolitan minuet moving to an idyllic, rustic trio is less extreme and does not require the same dramatic push through a hemiola (m. 412-413) as the analogous moment in the Ninth Symphony, just a simple pause. There is no sense of struggle, merely juxtaposition. This also parallels the opposite procedures in the finale of op. 132; the Ninth draws out the discovery of the major mode through an arduous process of recollection and rejection of previous material, but the shift into major in op. 132 appears instant and effortless. Typically for Beethoven, the penultimate movement connects to the finale in both the Ninth and op. 132, but the specific methods of transition represent another significant point of departure. In the Ninth Symphony, the Adagio slowly fades away into silence which the *Schreckensfanfare* immediately shatters.³⁶ The *Schreckensfanfare* gives way to the bass recitative that rejects the motives of the previous movements before stumbling upon the *An die Freude* in m. 77. The quartet omits the terrifying fanfare, instead opting for a stately little march that bridges the last two

36. Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 272.

movements. The differences between these sections of music, both military in nature (fanfare and march), mirror the differences between the openings of the second movements: sinister and wild versus controlled and quaint.

Beethoven's works often include march-like inner movements, but the march in op. 132 stands apart from his others. Marches tend to be either triumphant, bombastic affairs (the last movement of the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies), parodies of the same (op. 101), or funereal (the *Eroica*, op. 55).³⁷ The reserved qualities of the march in op. 132 make its linking function even more interesting. Generally, when Beethoven links slow movements to finales, the music is fraught with tension, for example the pianissimo tremolo that links the last two movements of the Fifth Symphony or the *Schreckensfanfare* and odd recitative that bridge the gap between the slow movement of the Ninth and the *Freude* theme. Although the topos of the march recalls the first movement, the affect recalls the second, and it is this air of simplicity that the recitative rejects and the finale attempts to erase in the string quartet.

Alternate Endings: The Finales

All of the various similarities between the first three movements of the compositions draw into sharp relief the myriad differences between their finales. The famously formally ambiguous finale of the Ninth combines signifiers of sonata form, rondo, concerto, through-composed song, cantata, theme and variations, and opera, among many others.³⁸ Conversely, the finale of op. 132 is a straightforward, formally unproblematic rondo. Both finales end in the parallel major, but the finale of the Ninth

37. Rumph, 10.

38. See James Webster, "The Form of the Finale of Beethoven's 9th Symphony," in *Beethoven Forum* 1 (1992), 32-33, for a chart of the various analyses.

Radcliffe puts it, that the *finale instrumentale* was too “sombre and passionate” a tune for the grandiosity of a symphony, but better suited to the intimacy of a string quartet.³⁹

In the Ninth, the expressive gesture of the beginning of the fourth movement encompasses both *Schreckensfanfare* and the recitative, the former seems to set the stage for the uncertain character of the latter. In perhaps the most striking parallel between the two pieces, both final movements are also introduced with an instrumental recitative that seems to reject the previous music, clearing a space for the main thematic material of the finale. Again, while the pattern is the same, the product is entirely different. In op. 125, the recitative cuts short the so-called *Schreckensfanfare* and the main thematic material from the first three movements before accepting the simple *An die Freude* theme. In op. 132, the recitative does the opposite; it abruptly causes the simple march to short circuit, replacing it with the churning *finale instrumentale*. Kerman and Kinderman call it a reversal of the op. 125's recitative, ushering in a return of the frustration and suffering of the first movement.⁴⁰

39. Radcliffe, 120.

40. Kerman, 262; Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 297.

III. IMPLICATIONS

Twice-Told Tales: Narrative Implications

The relationship between op. 132 and Ninth echoes another set of Beethoven's pieces, the two versions of the String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 130, that with the published final movement and that with op. 133 as the finale. In the case of op. 130, he literally exchanged an intellectual complex and difficult movement for a simple rondo within the same piece, the removal at his publisher's behest of the *Grosse Fuge*, op. 133. The two sets of pieces share the same narrative problem: the same (or similar) sets of musical events lead to two very different, but equally appropriate conclusions. Richard Kramer, prefacing an argument about the two versions of op. 130 had this to say about the definition of the term "narrative" and its relevance to musicology.

By "narrative" is meant emphatically not in the sense in which music plays out some literary program, but rather how, in its discourse, the continuities of music, and its discontinuities, are about some sequence of events that might constitute its "story."⁴¹

This definition of narrative nicely applies to the relationship of Ninth Symphony and op. 132 as well. The two pieces are essentially the same "story" in Kramer's sense of the word, but with two different endings, providing a neat parallel to the relationship between the two versions of op. 130. In this analogy, the original version that concludes with the fugue is to the Ninth as the published version with the rondo finale is to op. 132.

Recognizing this earlier connection between the Ninth symphony and op. 132 provides

41. Richard Kramer, "Between Cavatina and Overture: Opus 130 and the Voices of Narrative" *Beethoven Forum* 1 (1992), 179.

insight into the two versions of op. 130. The two pairs represent different versions of the same procedure; the two finales pick up on different strains of the narrative. The pair of op. 132 and op. 125 shows that Beethoven did not necessarily believe his finales to be the final word on his compositions and one satisfying conclusion does not preclude an entirely different conclusion. No matter how effectively a finale like the Ninth's ties together a piece of music, the presence of resolutions like op. 132 re-open those pieces, providing opportunities for other endings.

The analogy is not perfect; in op. 132, Beethoven altered the events of the Ninth so that they eventually result in different conclusions rather than essentially writing the same piece with a different finale. There are enough differences in musical events between op. 132 and op. 125 to justify the alternate ending. The two versions of op. 130 lack the differences between op. 125 and op. 132, such as the alternate strategies of reworking the introduction in the first movement, the alternate affects of the second, and the reversal of the characters of the march and recitative in the fourth and fifth movements. While no literal textual differences exist in the first five movements of op. 130, the character of the finales themselves retroactively inflect the rest of the quartet, highlighting or ignoring different sets of events to create two separate narratives, maybe even two separate pieces.

To the consternation of many musicologists, performers, and music enthusiasts, the ambiguous legacy of op. 130 casts into doubt the authority of the published version. Critics like Klaus Kropfingier maintain that the without the motivic and thematic closure that the *Grosse Fuge* provides, op. 130 remains incomplete.⁴² Others justify the published finale. For example, Richard Kramer argues that Beethoven did not take orders from his

42. Klaus Kropfingier, "What Remained Unresolved," *The Musical Quarterly* 80 (1996), 451.

publisher or bow to the public taste, particularly later in life and Kerman and Nicholas Marston, argue that fugue stands too much on its own to be part of a larger cycle.⁴³ The *Grosse Fuge* certainly dwarfs the rest of the quartet, but no more than the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony dwarfs the previous three movements. While the fugue works as an autonomous piece in and of itself, as the finale to op. 130 it draws together certain musical strains that run through previous movements. The published finale, however, can also serve as a satisfactory conclusion to the quartet, just different for elements of the quartet. In the absence of a truly unambiguous testament from the composer, we must conclude that both finales are equally historically valid.

Beethoven created an enormously innovative finale for both the Ninth and op. 130 that draws on motivic material both from the earlier movements of the piece, and previous entries in his catalog. Beethoven did not write the early movements with the ending in mind, opening up multiple possibilities for the endgame of the piece, including op. 130—Cooper indicates that Beethoven composed this quartet “as a kind of narrative, rather than a canvas where the overall outline is clear from the start.”⁴⁴ Indeed, by August of 1825, deep into the quartet's composition, he had sketched at least a dozen possibilities for the finale, none apparently very weighty. Eventually, he settled upon material sketched during the composition of an earlier piece; the nascent subject of op. 133 appears amongst the sketches of op. 132, where Beethoven apparently wondered how the introduction of op. 132 would work as a fugue subject (figure 9).⁴⁵

43. Kramer, 165; Nicholas Marston, “The Sense of Ending’: Goal Directedness in Beethoven's Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, ed. Glen Stanley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 98-100.

44. Cooper, *Beethoven*, 330.

45. Nottebohm, 550.

Figure 9. Op. 132 Introduction as Fugue Subject, Nottebohm's Transcription.



As in the case of the Ninth Symphony, the *Grosse Fuge* takes an idea that had previously occupied Beethoven's thoughts and employs a form that exploits multiple possibilities inherent in the theme. The *An die Freude* had been on Beethoven's mind longer and thus required a much more thorough, multi-formal working out than the relatively young subject, which required merely a fugue to exhaust.

Once Beethoven had exploited the potential of these themes that had occupied him for some time, he felt free to explore the narrative possibilities of the other movements. Although the opening of op. 130 does not change in the published version, scholars generally agree the replacement finale modifies the meaning and structure of the quartet. For example, as Marston observed, finishing with the *Grosse Fuge* puts the quartet's center of gravity in the finale; without the fugue, most of the weight shifts to the Cavatina but generally is more evenly distributed.⁴⁶ The fugue trivializes the previous five movements, but without the fugue, some see the entire quartet as a trivial piece.⁴⁷ The fugue not merely overshadows the rest of the quartet, it practically erases it.⁴⁸ Although motivically connected to the previous movements, its entirely dissimilar character and affect drives away their memory. Conversely, the published version of the finale, despite its shorter length, deliberately recalls textures and characters of previous

46. Marston, 100; Barbara R. Barry "Recycling the End of the "Leibquartett": Models, Meaning and Priority in Beethoven's Quartet in B-flat Major, Opus 130," *Journal of Musicology* 3 (1995), 356.

47. Kerman, 322; Marston, 100.

48. Barry, 357.

movements, summing up rather than rejecting. The duple time signature, odd for a rondo, recalls the duple signature of the scherzo, also traditionally a triple time movement. The octave accompaniment and the rhythmic shape of the opening of the finale also recall the scherzo. The triple repeated note in the rondo theme similarly recalls the *Alla Danza* Tedesca (see figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10. String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 130, movement IV, m. 25-33.



Figure 11. String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 130, movement VI, m. 3-6.



The rondo finale alludes and references the previous movements in immediately audible, obvious ways, effectively drawing together the quartet instead of overwhelming it like the *Grosse Fuge*. Instead of rewriting the entirety of op. 130 to suit the new finale as he had in the case of the Ninth and op. 132, Beethoven simply picks up different threads of the narrative in the new rondo finale, effectively creating a new sequence of events out of the same raw material.

The relationship between the Ninth and op. 132 takes this idea one step further, taking the same events but changing the point of view. Metaphorically speaking, the string quartet depicts the events of the symphony from ground level, from a different angle. Similarly, in the case of the Ninth and op. 132, the enormous finale of the former is nearly as long the first three movements combined, so the dramatic weight of the

symphony falls in the finale, which rejects the previous movements, doing explicitly what the fugue does implicitly by ignoring them. Conversely, in op. 132 the weight of the quartet falls in the third movement, the Heiliger Dankgesang (analogous to the Cavatina), but the general course of events flows more evenly. Like the published finale of op. 130, the finale of op. 132 audibly recalls textures, rhythms and atmospheres of all of the previous movements rather than the explicit rejection that occurs in the Ninth Symphony.

Beethoven employs similar procedures in both the Ninth and *Grosse Fuge* to dissociate them from the rest of the piece. The most obvious procedure is that of the *Schreckensfanfare* in the Ninth, which translates into the Overatura of the fugue. According to Kramer, the Overatura serves the same function as the *Schreckensfanfare* - shocking the listener out of the calm, expressive atmosphere of the Cavatina the way the fanfare suddenly erupts from the tranquil slow movement of the Ninth, severing the movement from its predecessors.⁴⁹ Each rehearses themes from the rest of the piece, although to differing ends. The Ninth is retrospective, recalling and rejecting the themes of the previous movements before moving on; the Fugue rehearses future themes. By predicting rather than reminiscing, Beethoven directs attention forward in order to clear away the previous music.⁵⁰ The finales of op. 132 and the later version of op. 130 are both antithetical to their alternates in similar ways: rondos, formally simple and relatively light. They also, far more audibly than their predecessors, draw upon textures, tropes, motives, etc. of the previous movements in order to sum up rather than reject.

In any given piece, the finale invariably informs and inflects the perception of the opening movements. The vast difference in character between the two possible finales of

49. Kramer, 184.

50. Kerman, 278.

op. 130 means that substituting one for the other changes the piece so drastically that they become two different musical narratives, despite the shared opus number. The *finale instrumentale* was so different from the *An die Freude* that Beethoven needed to completely reexamine his procedures and processes in order to produce the alternate ending. The difference in the *Grosse Fuge* and the published finale did not require a revision of the previous movements, but replacing one with the other retroactively makes certain aspects of the previous movements appear inevitable. Seeming inevitability in any fictional narrative—musical or otherwise—is invariably retroactive. One cannot cast events as inevitable until they have actually happened; until then the process remains merely prediction.

Finale Forms: Rondo vs. Variation/Fugue

Pieces with traveling themes like the pair op. 132 and op. 125 reveal that Beethoven consistently deployed forms like fugue and variations for finales that drew together loose ends from previously composed material (i.e. tunes that had been on his mind for years), freeing up space in his mind for the same lead-ups to produce different sorts of finales. Beethoven famously pushed at the boundaries of the multi-movement cycle, particularly in his middle and later works. In these cycles, he uses finales to draw together themes (both musical and extramusical) from the entire work, creating what might be better termed “conclusions” than simply “finales.” It makes sense then, that it would be in finales of large cycle compositions where Beethoven would put to rest the tunes that stayed with him throughout parts of his career. His propensity for reworking the same tune in different contexts throughout his *oeuvre* resulted in some of his most memorable finales. In many of the cases where Beethoven carried a theme or an

important motive from one composition to another, the final occurrence of the theme appears in one of his best known works, oftentimes a work with a triumphant finale that satisfactorily explores the possibilities of theme.

With the exception of the “fate” motive, most of these reworked themes and fragments find their final form in either variation or fugue movements, which provided the composer an opportunity to work through these tunes until he was satisfied he had explored their limits. In sonata forms, the dramatic drive comes from modulation; the composer must dramatically establish an alternative key area in the exposition, then in the recapitulation convincingly fake a modulation so that the second thematic group occurs in the correct key area. The transitional passages are altered in sonata structures, but in order to establish key areas successfully, the themes and motives themselves must remain recognizable and stable, precluding excessive thematic alternation on a surface level. In variation and fugue forms, the modulations are painless (fugue) or practically nonexistent (variation), but the forms allow composer's thematic creativity to shine through.

Variation and fugue share a common procedure: thorough examination of a single theme or motive. Through variation sets, Beethoven could explore the various characters possible within themes and through fugue, Beethoven could exploit contrapuntal potential. The theme that began as part of the ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*, op. 43 became the starting point for not only a set of piano variations, op. 35, a set of contradanses, WoO 14, but the variation finale of the *Eroica*, op. 55. The finale of the Ninth combines both fugue and variation procedures at various points, exploring both the contrapuntal and characteristic possibilities of the *Gegenliebe/An die Freude* theme. Once

he stretched themes to their limits exploring them with variation or fugal techniques, Beethoven finally put the themes to rest.

The finale of op. 132 and other rondos go through an entirely different process. Rondo themes recur unvaried, or varied only minimally for the sake of variety. The idea behind the recurring fugue or variation subject's recurrence is modification and transformation, the idea of a recurring rondo theme is familiarity. The transition from minor to major is thus no longer a slow laborious process spanning many different versions of the theme, but a simple evaporation of pathos. The *finale instrumentale* represented unfinished business for Beethoven, but not to the same extent as the *An die Freude*, and therefore did not require the same laborious process of discovery and transcendence as the finale of the Ninth.

Instead of rejecting the previous movements, the rondo theme of op. 132 recalls the texture of the second movement trio and pathos of the first and third movements; in op. 132 only the fourth movement seems to play no part in the finale. The march is the only element the recitative that links the finale and the rest of the quartet rejects. Instead of reviewing material and accepting only some of it, the composer found a hermetically sealed theme that a rondo requires that recalls and combines various aspects of the rest of the piece. Whereas the elements of the Ninth symphony that are not the *An die Freude* are rejected and left behind, op. 132's finale takes the raw material from the body of the piece and transforms most of it wholesale using the rondo theme. The difference in form also explains the relative ease with which the *finale instrumentale* turns from minor to major in the last moments of op. 132. The formally strange Ninth runs through a lengthy process of review and rejection before finding the major mode, and the return of the

Scheckensfanfare introduces a truncated repetition of the process with voices added. The recitative provides no easy way for the composer to convincingly switch mode quickly. Rondos, conversely, often modulate very quickly, moving from statements of the rondo theme to middle sections with a minimum of compositional effort. Beethoven takes advantage of this particular practice in op. 132; he introduces the final instance of the rondo theme in op. 132 with a typically quick modal shift that appears effortless in context. The entire process of finding the major mode is reduced to three measures (m. 295-297). The relative weight of minor vs. major in the *An die Freude* and *finale instrumentale* is reversed.

Some of Beethoven's most famous music comes from this process of integration and transformation through fugue and variation such as he employed in the Ninth Symphony. Scott Burnham, echoing Carl Dahlhaus, has limited Beethoven's heroic output to a handful of works, three of which (the Third, Fifth, and Ninth Symphonies) incorporate previously composed material.⁵¹ The prevalence of reused material in the finales of Beethoven's 'heroic' works suggests that Beethoven often felt the need to conquer (to use the traditional narrative) his own work. The triumph inherent in these works represents the apotheosis of these themes he lived with for so long. The Ninth Symphony's finale is much more so than these other materials because he had lived with some version of the *An die Freude* theme for much longer than in the other cases.

Latecomers and Heroic Returns

The difference in the minor to major shift between the Ninth and op. 132 exemplifies a larger trend in the differences between Beethoven's heroic and late styles. A sense of overcoming strife has often been noted as one of the hallmarks of Beethoven's

51. Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), xiii.

heroic pieces, particularly when he depicts a struggle to attain major mode in a minor mode piece. Later in life, Beethoven's minor to major pieces become less about the struggle that characterizes the colossal modal shift in the finale of Ninth Symphony and other heroic works. Rather, his later work begins to resemble the sudden and effortless shift in the finale of op. 132. Genre, too, plays a role in this evolution of Beethoven's compositional thought. The massive performing forces of a symphony orchestra cannot convincingly effect these rapid atmospheric changes as quickly as chamber ensemble, both because of the general notion of what a symphony meant to Beethoven's audience and because of the sheer amount of sound and dramatic force a full orchestra produces.

While the Ninth Symphony may not chronologically fall within the boundaries of the heroic period, it bears markers of the heroic style, even though Burnham and others tellingly find the Ninth only problematically heroic, if they find it heroic at all. Its composition well into edge of the late period (beginning at the earliest around 1813), its chronological distance from the Heiligenstadt Testament of 1802 (generally seen as the biographical impetus behind the heroic style), and the proliferation of counterpoint and fugal techniques so commonly associated with late style has caused many scholars to place it as the first “late piece.” Others are more cautious, citing the minor to major shift as a return to *per astra ad aspera* narrative that defines the heroic style of his middle period, similar to the Fifth Symphony, op. 67. There are other minor to major pieces in Beethoven's output, however, that do not go through such a struggle, notably the String Quartet in F minor, op. 95, and op. 132, neither of which are ever classified as heroic. Heroic shifts must involve something to struggle against, to overcome.

With this definition, the Ninth satisfies that aspect at least of heroic style. In the Ninth, the finale must clear away the strangeness and uncertainty of the other movements, particularly the first two, a task Beethoven accomplishes with the bass recitative, slow build up of the *An die Freude* in its opening variations, and then simply the sheer length of the finale. Beethoven may have thought the *finale instrumentale* not equal to the task of producing such a complete, unambiguous triumphal shift, particularly in its final form (the version that ended up in op. 132), with its odd ending on scale degree 4 and lopsided phrase structure.

While both op. 132 and op. 95 move from minor to major in their finales, they lack an immensely important element: the struggle that constitutes so much of the Beethoven Hero mythos. The major coda that follows the haunting rondo finale of op. 95 (m. 133) is incongruous, it shares no thematic or motivic material with the rest of the quartet and ignores the trajectory of the work.⁵² The cheerful coda almost mocks the rest of the “serioso” quartet. Beethoven took a related but subtly different course in op. 132. Although op. 132 contains a similar proportion of minor and major music as op. 95, it has an entirely opposite effect. The cello that instigates the modal transfer in m. 295 does so with a melody highly motivically connected to the rondo theme and the coda maintains the same contrapuntal saturation and texture of the previous 294 measures, merely effortlessly shifting the mode. The effect is “too easy” to be heroic; nothing is overcome, merely left behind. The historically problematic reception of the rest of the late quartets, particularly op. 135 and the later version of op. 130 and their suddenly light and angst-free finales (even without the modal shift), attests to the importance of the “overcoming

52. Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 293.

conflict” narrative that pervades Beethoven reception.⁵³ The seeming lack of effort to reach the finales in these pieces has caused critics read both as either late (opp. 130, 132 and 135) or proto-late (op. 95) works.

Burnham confers heroic status on an extraordinarily small number of Beethoven's pieces. Notably, despite Beethoven's ability to successfully compose in many genres, his heroic pieces (even the ones Burnham finds only peripherally heroic) are limited to either large ensembles (two symphonies, some overtures and one piano concerto) or solo performances (two piano sonatas).⁵⁴ Symphonies were ideologically equipped to successfully convey the magnitude of these heroic musical struggles. Beethoven's innovation lay in harnessing the sense of universality and grandiosity inherent in the symphonic genre and applying that to an individual's narrative, while still keeping the actual hero ambiguous.⁵⁵ The programmatic titles of the overtures usually align with similarly heroically charged plots, and the solo sonatas can be read as both the creation and performance of the Hero, and so easily conform to heroic parameters. The piano concerto successfully blends two of these paradigms—the heroic soloist is given the backdrop of a full orchestra. Interestingly, Burnham cites no pieces for chamber ensemble as heroic. The generally accepted ethos of a chamber ensemble as a set of friends in rational conversation tends to preclude the triumphing champion model.⁵⁶ String quartets were a private genre, and heroic struggle is almost by definition public.

53. Krista Marta Knittel, “‘Late,’ Last and Least: On Being Beethoven's Quartet in F Major, op. 135” *Music & Letters* 81 (2006), 16-17.

54. Burnham, xiii.

55. Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 67-68.

56. Bonds, 64-65.

This difference in genre reception might also point to Beethoven's reasons for abandoning the unfinished Tenth Symphony, possibly indicating that op. 132 represents a better match for the Ninth as a pair, in the vein of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies. In his studies of the sketch material for the Tenth, Barry Cooper concluded that the unfinished work was meant to be far a more personal, introspective work than the bombastic Ninth:

The Tenth Symphony seems to unfold as if the Ninth had never existed. Unlike the first movement of the Ninth Symphony, which readily evokes images of either cosmic grandeur or primordial chaos, the Tenth is intimate and personal. Whereas the finale of the Ninth Symphony speaks of an 'us' in the plural, of '*alle Menschen*,' the whole world, and even the stars and beyond, Beethoven's comment on the Tenth Symphony refers to '*mich*,' the artist himself, the individual personality, the lone voice of Florestan, the antithesis of the all-embracing Ninth Symphony. This personal, autobiographical approach may explain why Beethoven's retrospection in the Tenth Symphony embodies his own earlier works so conspicuously, rather than turning to that of earlier composers as he did elsewhere in his late works.⁵⁷

Beethoven may have realized that the symphony no longer easily lent itself to personal/autobiographical expression, either because he had abandoned the heroic paradigm or because the symphony now had too many communal associations. Instead of pouring those ideas into a symphony, Beethoven turned to the smaller, more socially privatized string quartet, generically unsuited to heroics, but more appropriate for introspection. Instead of another symphony, Beethoven may have decided that a string quartet incorporating fragments originally intended for a symphony served his expressive purposes better. Thus was born op. 132.

Just as struggle and triumph mark heroic style of the Ninth, the lack of the same pervades late style of op. 132, although each eventually achieves the same transcendent endgame. By 1825, Beethoven turned from heroic musical narrative and found alternative

57. Barry Cooper, "Subthematicism and Metaphor in Beethoven's Symphony," *Ad Parnassum: A Journal of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Instrumental Music* 1 (2003), 21.

ways to end a piece satisfactorily. While bombast and exertion characterize the endings of heroic symphonies, ease and lightness mark those of the late quartets. The finale movements of opp. 132, 135 and the published version of op. 130 (with the rondo finale) all exemplify this tendency. Beethoven's revision of op. 130 and the connection between op. 125 and op. 132 until their respective finales is almost an admission that struggle and intentional difficulty might be unnecessary. It also explains the shift in genre focus; it is difficult to convincingly lift the amount of pathos a full orchestra can generate in the effortless manner of the late quartets, hence the difference in finales between the Ninth and op. 132. Perhaps Beethoven had to compose out the struggle of the Ninth, to clear away the theme that had stayed with him for nearly thirty years, before he could produce a set of musical events that justified his *finale instrumentale*.

Conclusion

Beethoven often reexamined his own output, mining his compositions for unexplored compositional possibilities. In op. 125, he explored how he might justify voices entering the previously instrument-only genre of a symphony. In op. 132, he explored how the same procedures with significant alternations both in genre and form that produced voices could produce an entirely instrumental work, possibly to correct the mistake of inserting a chorus in a symphony. Beethoven's determination to explore every facet of certain themes and compositional procedures produced an intricate web of intertextualities; his method of modeling and reapproaching old compositions in new genres and idioms created a peculiar web of interrelated works. The *finale instrumentale* is just one in a long series of clues that Beethoven left to help navigate this web.

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