Narrative Strategies in Gustav Mahler's Balladic *Wunderhorn* Lieder

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ABSTRACT

MOLLY M. BRECKLING: Narrative Strategies in Gustav Mahler's Balladic
Wunderhorn Lieder
(Under the direction of Jon W. Finson)

Between 1887 and 1901, Gustav Mahler composed twenty-four songs set to texts
adapted from poetry in Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano's *Des Knaben
Wunderhorn*, published in 1803. Of these works, eighteen possess the qualities of a
ballad as classically defined by Goethe: poems that progress freely in the epic, lyric,
and dramatic modes, describing a series of events unfolding in time for which one
might portend to the outcome and derive an embedded moral lesson. The stories told
by these ballads range from tales of fantastic child-like wonder, to portraits of
Volkisch simplicity, to visions of horrific wartime violence. This study examines
these songs specifically as ballads, identifying the salient literal and musical
techniques that Mahler utilized to aid in the act of storytelling and attempts to identify
the qualities of the *Wunderhorn* poetry that continued to attract and inspire the
composer over such a long period of time, using analytical techniques from a variety
of sources including Goethe, Carr, Staiger, Bettleheim, and Propp. Chapter one
discusses the complex relationship between Mahler and the poetic anthology and the
nature of ballad poetry itself. Chapter two details the modifications that Mahler made
to the poetry in the anthology and the impact of his alterations on the narrative
process of the resulting texts. Chapter three explores the musical narrative of these
songs and identifies those instances in which the music tells stories that do not
precisely mirror those of the texts. Chapter four situates Mahler's *Wunderhorn*
ballads in a broader context, proposing that the composer utilized these songs as a
form of commentary on his cultural, social, and political environment, offering
opinions on his world in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. The nature of these ballads leaves them
open to a multitude of interpretations, but I view them as one half of an ongoing
dialogue between Mahler and his critics, stories open to Freudian interpretation,
songs about poverty and class relations, ballads about romantic fidelity, and
reflections on the tragedy of war. The wide range of stories that Mahler was able to
tell using this poetry and his music speaks to the universality of the anthology and the
composer's broadly expressive scope.

To my loving husband, Jason, thank you for keeping me honest and giving me a vision of

something worth working for. The mule is finally in the barn.

To my mother, Sarah Dudley, for constantly and steadfastly fielding the question,

"When is she going to be finished?" The answer is "Now."

To my friends and colleagues in musicology, thank you for providing a sounding

board, a place to discuss ideas, an ear to complain to, and always something to make

me laugh.

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In the summer of 1893, Gustav Mahler reportedly told Natalie Bauer-Lechner that "With song you can express so much more in the music than the words directly say. The text is actually a mere indication of the deeper significance to be extracted from it, of the hidden treasure within."[1] In many of his songs, particularly those based on the poetry from Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano's anthology entitled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, that "hidden treasure" lay in Mahler's ballads, which told fanciful folk stories using a combination of words and music. This study identifies the balladic qualities of these songs, examines the stories they tell, and investigates the strategies Mahler utilized to bring them to life through adaptations to the original poetry and musical setting. The act of setting this poetry to music provides layers of narrative potential: in some cases the music serves to support and enhance the story being told by the text; in others, musical cues seem to thwart the process of the story, allowing the musical narrative to take on a life of its own; in still other cases, the music provides additional layers of meaning beyond the information presented by the words alone. Examining these songs through the lens of their stories, told through

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[1] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, trans. Dika Newlin, ed. Peter Franklin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 32.

word and music, allows us to interrogate them in new ways, identifying each poetic and musical nuance as a tool for storytelling, and in the process identifying novel ways of interpreting and understanding these often-overlooked works. As products of the German folk tradition, the poems Mahler selected for these ballads speak to universal themes such as love, death, fantasy, and art. The ubiquity of these ideas reached out to the composer almost one hundred years after they were first published and spoke to him as something that resonated with his own time and place. I suggest that Mahler's textual and musical choices implied a hidden objective, offering embedded commentary on the composer's cultural, social, and political environment.

Mahler turned to the verses in Arnim and Brentano's anthology on several occasions, setting the poetry he described as "blocks of marble which anyone might

	Composed	Orchestrated	Published	Publisher	Poetic Mode
"Um schlimme die Kinder artig zu machen"	1887	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Epic, dramatic
"Ich ging mit Lust durch einen grünen Wald"	1887	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Lyric, epic, dramatic
"Aus! Aus!"	1887	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Dramatic
"Starke Einbildungskraft"	1887	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Dramatic
"Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz"	Summer 1890	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Epic
"Ablösung im Sommer"	Summer 1890	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Lyric (not a ballad)
"Schieden und Meiden"	Summer 1890	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Dramatic
"Nicht Wiedersehen!"	Summer 1890	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Epic, dramatic
"Selbstgefühl!"	Summer 1890	N/A	1892	B. Schott	Lyric (not a ballad)
"Der Schildwache Nachtlied"	28 January 1892	April 1892	1899	Weinberger	Dramatic
"Verlor'ne Müh'"	1 February 1892	April 1892	1899	Weinberger	Dramatic
"Trost im Unglück"	22 February 1892	April 1892	1899	Weinberger	Dramatic
"Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?"	6 February 1892	April 1892	1899	Weinberger	Lyric (not a ballad)
"Das irdische Leben"	April 1892-August 1893	1893	1899	Weinberger	Epic, dramatic
"Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt"	8 July 1893	1 August 1893	1899	Weinberger	Lyric, epic
"Rheinlegendchen"	9 August 1893	10 August 1893	1899	Weinberger	Epic, dramatic
"Lied des Verfolgten im Turm"	July 1898	May 1899	1899	Weinberger	Dramatic
"Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen"	July 1898	July 1898	1899	Weinberger	Epic, dramatic
"Lob des hohen Verstandes"	21-28 June 1896	June 1896	1899	Weinberger	Epic, dramatic
"Revelge"	July 1899	1899	1905	C.F. Kahnt	Epic, dramatic
"Der Tamboursg'sell"	August 1901	1901	1905	C.F. Kahnt	Epic
"Das himmlische Leben" (Finalie, Symph. No. 4)	10 February 1892	12 March 1892	1901	Universal Edition	Lyric (not a ballad)
"Urlicht" (Mvt. IV, Symph. No. 2)	July 1893	19 July 1893	1897	F. Hoffmeister	Lyric (not a ballad)
"Es sungen drei Engel" (Mvt. V, Symph. No. 3)	24 June 1895	8 May 1896	1899	Weinberger	Epic, dramatic

Figure 1.1: Gustav Mahler's Songs to texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

make his own"[2] in 1887–90, 1892–96, and 1899–1901.[3] (See Figure 1.1) Of the

twenty-four *Wunderhorn* songs Mahler composed for non-symphonic setting,

eighteen demonstrate the qualities found in a ballad as defined classically by Goethe

in 1821:

> The ballad has something mysterious, without being mystic. This
> latter quality of a poem lies in its subject matter, the former in its treatment.
> The mysterious quality of a ballad derives from how it is presented. The singer
> has his pregnant subject, his characters, their acts and gestures, so deeply
> sensed, that he does not know how he will bring them forward to the light of
> day. He utilizes, therefore, all three basic poetic modes to begin to express that
> which arouses the power of imagination and occupies the spirit. He can begin
> lyrically, epically, or dramatically, continually changing mode at will, rushing to
> the end or drawing it out. The refrain, the continually recurring final passage,
> gives this poetic art a determinedly lyrical character. One has a welcome friend, a
> very German one, that is understood as the entirely folk-like ballad because the
> spirit of these old times remains the same, both for contemporaries and for those
> who follow, living in the same ways. A selection of this type of verse, moreover,
> displays the whole range of poetry, because here the elements are not yet
> separate but are still united, as in a living, primeval egg (*Ur-Ei*) that need only be
> hatched to launch the most marvelous phenomenon flying into the air on wings
> of gold.[4]

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[2] E. Mary Dargie, *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981), 114.

[3] Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 113–17, 127–29, 139–44.

[4] Quoted in Christian Freitag, *Ballade*, vol. 6 in: *Themen – Texte – Interpretationen*, ed. Hans Gerd Rötzer (Bamberg: C. C. Buchners Verlag, 1986), 36. "Die Ballade hat etwas Mysteriöses, ohne mystisch zu sein. – Diese letzte Eigenschaft eines Gedichtes liegt im Stoffe, jene in der Behandlung. Das Geheimnisvolle der Ballade entspringt aus der Vortragsweise. Der Sänger nämlich hat seinen prägnanten Gegenstand, seine Figuren, deren Taten und Bewegung so tief im Sinne, daβ er nicht weiβ, wie er ihn ans Tageslicht fördern will. Er bedient sich daher aller drei Grundarten der Poesie, um zunächst auszudrücken, was die Einbildungskraft erregen, den Geist beschäftigen soll; er kann lyrisch, episch, dramatisch beginnen und, nach Belieben die Formen wechselnd, fortfahren, zum Ende hineilen oder es weit hinausschieben. Der Refrain, das Wiederkehren ebendesselben Schluβklanges, gibt dieser Dichtart den entschiedenen lyrischen Charakter. – Hat man sich mit ihr vollkommen befreundet, wie es bei uns Deutschen wohl der Fall ist, so sind die Balladen aller Völker verständlich, weil die Geister in gewissen Zeitaltern entweder kontemporan oder sukzessiv bei gleichem Geschäft immer gleichartig verfahren. Übrigens ließe sich an einer Auswahl solcher Gedichte die ganze Poetik gar wohl vortragen, weil hier die Elemente noch nicht getrennt, sondern wie in einem lebendigen *Ur-Ei* zusammen sind, das nur bebrütet werden darf, um als herrlichstes Phänomen auf Goldflügeln in die Lüfte, zu steigen." Translation mine.

Goethe's definition implies a certain flexibility in poems that we might consider ballads: they can move through plot points quickly or slowly, and can adopt a variable combination of poetic modes as he defines them: the epic, the dramatic, and the lyric. The unifying feature of this style of poetry lies in the kind of stories that it tells; these tales offer a moral apothegm which listeners can choose to apply to their own life circumstances, in essence, these stories teach lessons for living a better life. We find the combination of poetic modes in differing combinations in Mahler's ballads as well. Only two of these works utilize any amount of lyrical writing (the opening passage of "Ich ging mit Lust" and the middle of "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt"), while the rest of the ballads feature exclusively epic or dramatic poetry or a combination of the two. While many of the examples include the refrain mentioned by Goethe, others do not, and even the poet himself fails to include refrains in many of his own ballads, thus making a hard and fast definition of the genre elusive.

Mahler's *Wunderhorn* texts lack only one trait of traditional ballads: extensive length. As such, these setting falls into the category of "miniature ballads," a type of brief, pithy vignette ending with a moral lesson described by Jon Finson in his 2002 essay on Schumann's Op. 40.[5] The majority of these songs are quite short, with the longest of Mahler's ballads, "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt," setting only nine stanzas of text—lengthy by the standards of miniature ballads, but less so for some ballads composed by the likes of Loewe and Schubert during the early part of

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[5] "Between *Lied* and *Ballade* – Schumann's Op. 40 and the Tradition of Genre," in *Schumanniana Nova: Festschrift Gerd Nauhaus zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Bernhard R. Appel, Ute Bar, and Matthias Wendt (Sinzig: Studio Verlag, 2002), 265.

the nineteenth century. Finson writes of the length of miniature ballads, "Their brevity demands that they make their point directly and simply."[6]

Combining the classic idea of Goethe and the more modern adaptation from Finson, I view the miniature ballad as a relatively short poem that tells a story with a distinct beginning, middle, and end, using any combination of the epic, dramatic, and lyric poetic modes (excepting the purely lyrical, which being entirely descriptive cannot relay a narrative). The plot can move through time at a variety of rates, depending on the amount of detail required for audience involvement. Using this definition of the miniature ballad as my defining criterion, I limit my examination of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads to eighteen individual songs. (See Figure 1.1) In each of these miniature ballads Mahler uses distinct musical techniques to properly convey the dramatic material in each story. Six settings of texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, however, do not conform to the definition of the ballad, and thus are not included in my argument. The majority of these songs: "Ablösung im Sommer," "Selbstgefühl," and "Das himmlische Leben" (the fourth movement of Mahler's Fourth Symphony) simply describe scenes (i.e., using the poetic device Germans describe as "das lyrische Ich") in a purely lyrical way. The text of "Urlicht" (the fourth movement of the Second Symphony) presents a lyrical prayer petitioning God for deliverance. "Es sungen drei Engel" (movement five from the Third Symphony) is essentially balladic, but as it derives its meaning not only from the text and Mahler's music, but from the context provided by the narrative of the symphony, I have opted to leave it out of this study. The most unusual example of non-balladic setting comes

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[6] Finson, "Between *Lied* and *Ballade*," 257.

to us through "Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?" Mahler created the lyrics for this song by combining stanzas from two separate poems. The first of these poems, bearing the same title as Mahler's song, has three stanzas, the second of which lends the poem the strong emphasis on the epic narration consistent with the ballad; however Mahler omits that stanza and replaces it with text from the second poem, which is essentially lyrical in nature. In this one unusual example, then, Mahler has changed a ballad into a purely lyrical song through his textual manipulation.

The narrative processes found in Mahler's eighteen *Wunderhorn* ballads are almost as variable as the songs themselves. But looking directly at the literary and musical techniques that the composer utilized to bring these stories to life lends them broader significance, carrying them beyond the realm of folk-inspired art song to become stories that offer valuable life lessons.

Literature Review

Among the few studies devoted to Mahler's song composition, only one identifies the majority of the *Wunderhorn* lieder as ballads: Robert Holden's 2000 D.M.A. dissertation from Temple University entitled "The German Narrative Ballad from Loewe to Mahler: The Development of the Genre and Its Use as a Teaching Tool for Communication." Holden's approach is primarily pedagogical: he explores the ballad as a tool for helping young singers learn to emote and communicate during performance. He does not, however, discuss Mahler's poetic and musical manipulations as they relate to the process of storytelling. Renate Hilmar-Voit's 1988 *Im Wunderhorn-Ton: Gustav Mahlers sprachliche Kompositionsmaterial bis 1900*, E.

Mary Dargie's 1981 *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler,* and Carol

Ellen Bruner's 1974 Syracuse University Ph.D. dissertation "The Relationship of

Text and Music in the Lieder of Hugo Wolf and Gustav Mahler" all examine

Mahler's songs through the lens of their texts, primarily the composer's adaptations

of his chosen poetry to facilitate musical setting, but none focuses on the balladic

qualities of this poetry or the resulting songs. Elizabeth Schmierer's 1991 *Die*

Orchesterlieder Gustav Mahlers focuses only on the later *Wunderhorn* songs that

received orchestral treatment in their settings. Her work closely examines questions

of genre as they apply to songs featuring traditional folk texts that are set to orchestral

accompaniment. My study aims to bring the stories told in these fascinating pieces to

light, discussing the various methods the composer engaged to create the works, and

in the process, expose the reasons why Mahler was repeatedly drawn to these texts

during a time when the genre had undergone a major decline among composers.[7]

    Following the example set by Karol Berger, two essential characteristics of

narrative have served to guide my approach to Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads: poetic

mode – how information about the progression of the story is presented to the

audience - and temporal trajectory – how the passage of time in the story relates to

the actual sequence of events being portrayed.[8] Studies by Emil Staiger and David

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[7] The ballads of Brahms, Wolf, Mahler, and Zemlinsky represent a later stage of a musical tradition begun by composers such as Zumsteeg, Loewe, and Schubert and continued by Schumann. Throughout his career Brahms composed sixty-three ballads, the overwhelming majority of which (58) were miniature ballads. Wolf composed sixty ballads with fifty-five smaller in scope. Mahler set only nineteen ballads, nearly all based on poetry from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The number decreases even further with Zemlinsky, whose eight ballads stretch the parameters of the genre almost to the breaking point.

[8] Karol Berger, "Diegesis and Mimesis: The Poetic Modes and the Matters of Artistic Presentation," *Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994), 407–33.

Carr examine these aspects of narrative as they occur in literature and have guided my approach to Mahler's poetic and musical narratives.

The first methodology important in my consideration of narrative appears in Emil Staiger's *Grundbegriffe der Poetik* (1946) translated by Janette C. Hudson and Luanne T. Frank into English as *Basic Concepts of Poetics* in 1991. Staiger's work deals primarily with issues of genre and phenomenology, examining how one's consciousness is translated into the literary work. He views the basic concepts found in literature as "styles of consciousness": the lyric, the epic, and the dramatic, much in the manner of Goethe. Staiger provides the traditional meaning of poetics as, "the essence of the lyric, the epic, and the dramatic fully exemplified in specific models of poems, epic poems, and dramas," but he admits that this definition applies only to the literary works of ancient Greece and Rome, as the basic elements have been combined in too many variations since that time to make such classifications useful.[9] Staiger lays out the essential differences between the modes in pages 177–94. He sees the distinction between these concepts as extensions of human experience: the lyric poem feels, the epic poem sees, and drama thinks. This delineation stems from the actions of the figures in the poem: a lyric poem simply records one's emotional response to a moment in time. Because that moment is by its own nature ephemeral, and lyric poetry must look to the past to recreate the response. Epic poetry records events from the past, but without emotional entanglement. But it sometimes forsakes the teleological progression of events in order to provide as vivid a reproduction of a scene as possible in lyrical interludes. This level of detail gives the reader a sense of

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[9] Emil Staiger, *Basic Concepts of Poetics*, Janette C. Hudson and Luanne T. Frank, trans., Marianne Burkhard and Luanne T. Frank, eds. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 39-40.

"being there," and as such, focuses on the "presentness" of experiences. Drama deals

with issues between characters. It presents problems that must be dealt with, and in so

doing, looks toward a future in which the problem has been resolved. Staiger

eloquently sums up these functions, "Lyric existence remembers, epic existence

presents, dramatic existence projects."(187)

Staiger writes of the role of time in ballad poetry:

> The lyric, the epic, and the dramatic poets concern themselves with the
> same existence, with the stream of the transitory, which flows on endlessly.
> Yet each one interprets it differently. The various views are based in "original
> time." But this time is the existence of man and is the existence of being
> that man as a time-based being "lets be." The three concepts of past, present,
> and future are far from adequate since they obviously contain a traditional
> prejudice against time.[10]

The ballads chosen by Mahler approach the passage of time in various ways. The use

of a narrator to convey events in the epic mode allows a story to progress quickly

from one important event to the next, while dialogue in the dramatic mode is

essentially confined to the actual passage of time. Lyrical writing allows time to slow

down or even stop, as the succession of a story's events is halted to describe a scene

in great detail. In many of the ballads chosen by Mahler a combination of these

approaches create stories that possess a flexible temporal trajectory. In some cases,

Mahler uses musical cues to undermine the temporal trajectory of the text, creating

fascinating moments of temporal friction in his ballads: the listener is left to decide

for themselves how time progresses.

Staiger identifies lyric poetry as the simplest of his three basic concepts in pages

43-96, as it limits itself to recording a mood from the past, without the interruption of

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[10] Staiger, 188, 190.

events or dialogue. The problem with this, of course, is that the moment that inspires the poet disappears as soon as he thinks to set it to paper. The poet requires that the epic and dramatic propel his own actions so that the image can be fully realized before it slips into the ephemera. It is at this moment that the poet employs a device known by Germans as "das lyrische Ich." This concept, first identified by Hegel, allows the poet to extract the inspiring idea from its temporal context, allowing for further meditation and contemplation. Thus, these inspirational moments occur without a context of their own; in and of themselves they have no cause and no effect, and they happen by chance. One cannot force oneself to become inspired; it simply happens. Only when we stop to think about the moment does it achieve itself poetically. This need to reflect, in part, explains the textual repetition that is often heard in lyric poetry. Repetition can also serve to establish the meter, rhyme, and rhythmic schemes of the poetry. These factors hold vital importance in lyric poetry, where the sound of the words is nearly as important as their meaning, and they are crucial to the establishment of the mood. Due to its lack of teleological trajectory, lyric poetry is not inherently balladic. It can, however, be used for an excursus to describe a scene or emotion within a ballad. Mahler's balladic *Wunderhorn* songs make little use of lyrical poetry, adopting it only twice: describing a forest scene in the opening passage of "Ich ging mit Lust" and detailing the fishes' response to the sermon in "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt."

Staiger's lengthy chapter discussing the characteristics of epic poetry (pp. 97-137) primarily draws its examples from the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer. Ideally, a narrator will present the events of an epic poem from a neutral, fixed standpoint.

When events occur that warrant an emotional response, one or more characters from the story will interrupt and present that emotion lyrically or dramatically. This allows the narrator to maintain his emotional distance, or as Staiger puts it, "Not fall prey to a mood."(97) Narrating from a fixed vantage point also allows the storyteller to emphasize the sameness of the environment before and after the events in question. The poetry maintains a regular rhythm in order to further emphasize the neutrality and stability of the narrator. Simply put, "Epic language presents. It points to something. It designates."(104) In so doing, the narrator possesses a certain degree of control over the events that he describes. He can determine how the audience will hear them: how much or how little detail his poem will include. This allows the narrator to manipulate the audience's perception of the passage of time within the story. In epic poetry, the recounting of minute details may outweigh the reaching of goals within the story, allowing stories to branch off into tangential asides that can seem almost labyrinthine in complexity. Of this quality, Staiger writes, "The epic writer does… stop at every step in his progression, and he looks at a stable object from a stable vantage point. Now this; now that: Time passes as the poet perceives one image after another and reveals them to the listener."(116) However the writer chooses to reproduce the events of a story, he cannot escape the fact that those events transpired within the context of time, and that time must somehow be measured by the storyteller in order for the events to be faithfully recreated. This level of detail creates a sense of "presentness" for the audience, making them feel "as if they were really there." Because many of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads feature exclusively or partially epic poetry in their texts, one of the qualities that I identify for each is how

time seems to pass. Often, the text and the music will portray the passage of time in a similar way, but in some cases, these forces work against each other, creating a tension between text and musical setting that adds an additional layer of meaning to the ballad.

Staiger's chapter on dramatic writing (pp. 138-176) deals primarily issues of pathos, which he describes thusly:

> It presupposes resistance, open enmity, or inertia, and it attempts more emphatically to destroy them. From this very different situation all its stylistic characteristics are comprehensible. Pathos is not poured into the listener, rather it is impressed upon or hammered into him. Its sentence structure does not dissolve, dreamlike, as in lyric poetry. Rather the entire course of its utterance is concentrated in single words.[11]

The dramatic writing in Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads occurs when multiple characters engage in dialogue, but Staiger's discussion also includes the soliloquy, where a character's emotional response to a problem becomes so profound that it can no longer be expressed merely in words, but also requires gesture; similar, but more intense than that found in lyric poetry. Staiger views drama as the most complex of his concepts of poetics because rather than simply feeling or seeing objects or events, the characters and audience are required to think about them. Drama implies some kind of problematic situation that requires resolution.

David Carr's 1986 monograph *Time, Narrative, and History* demonstrates how narrative applies not only to the recounting of events, historical or fictional, but to the events themselves. Carr views temporal conceptualization as essential to human existence, not simply because it provides the platform for our lives, but because a sense of the past and a view to the future (what effects our acts will have) guide and

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[11] Staiger, *Basic Concepts*, 141.

influence our actions. He calls our awareness of the past and future "retention" and

"protention." Retention and protention are typically not conscious, active processes,

but rather a kind of vague awareness that everything we do has a precedent and will

somehow impact what will follow. This influence of the past and future places human

experience in the context of a story line with a set beginning, middle, and end. In

other words, it imposes the structure of a narrative into the events of everyday life.

Carr discusses the concept of time as it relates to narrative in page 1-72. Of the power

of these forces on thought and action he writes:

> Before we dismember them analytically, and even before we revise them
> retrospectively, our experiences and our actions constitute narratives for
> us. Their elements and phases are lived through as organized by a grasp
> which spans time, is retrospective and prospective, and which thus seeks
> to escape from the very temporal perspectives of the now which makes
> it possible.[12]

Carr claims, "Narrative is our primary (though not our only) way of organizing our

experience of time."(4) He initially makes the claim that human experience follows a

narrative structure as it applies to simple processes, such as opening a window or

grabbing a utensil. He then expands his theory to involve more complex activities.

These, he claims, are made possible by what he calls the retentive grasp.

> If the structure of complex experiences and actions can be considered a
> replica at a larger scale of the part–whole, beginning-middle-end
> structure of the simple phenomenon, it nevertheless requires a different
> subjective role on the part of the experiencer or agent. The subject is no
> longer immersed in the larger-scale phenomenon through a retentive-
> protentive awareness. Retention and protention are always at work, of
> course, in the immediacy of whatever I am doing. But when the larger-
> scale activity spans a multiplicity of actions or experiences, they must
> be held together by a grasp which attends not only to the object, or
> objective, but also to the disparate and temporally discrete parts of my
> experience or activity that render the object present or constitute my
> engagement with the action.[13]

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[12] David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 69.

The narrative that recreates the story of complex events is comprised of lower level

narratives that tell of all its constituent parts. Narration, according to Carr, is an

account of experiences from the past. This account is always in some way colored by

the narrator's interpretation or point of view on the events. Therefore, it does not

track true existence, but only one person's perception of that existence. The narrative

itself arises from the human need to organize discrete instances of existence into a

coherent, continuous whole, and it derives its structure from our vague awareness of

the past.

The subjective nature of narrative points out its next important component: the

point of view of the figures involved. Because humans, by nature, project meaning

onto events in "real life," both those that they experience and those that they merely

observe, a story can be experienced from three points of view: the storyteller, the

character, and the audience. Carr expands on this idea:

> Central to the analysis of stories and storytelling, apart from the
> temporal unfolding of events, is the relation among the points of view
> on those events belonging to the characters in the story, the teller of the
> story, and the audience to whom he story is told.[14]

What differentiates these figures is the amount of information they have regarding the

events being narrated. Because the events are by necessity in the past, the narrator

possesses the most knowledge, including how the events will unfold and whether or

not the characters' actions will have the effect that they intend. This level of

knowledge makes the role of the narrator an ironic one because they speak from a

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[13] Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 55.

[14] Ibid., 5.

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more informed status. Of this status, Carr writes, "The narrative voice…is the voice of authority, especially in relation to the reader or listener. The latter is in a position of voluntary servitude regarding what will be revealed and when."(58) How the narrator chooses to divulge his knowledge, either directly or indirectly, will impact the way the story is received.

The authority of the narrator also allows him to manipulate the temporal aspects of the story. Detailed description can cause the progression of events to be slowed, and information that is not pertinent to the result can be omitted, allowing the events to progress at a rate faster than real life. Carr explains:

> This apparent freedom from the constraints of time, or at least of following the events, sometimes manifests itself in the disparity between the order of events and the order of their telling. Flashbacks and flashforwards bring home in no uncertain terms the authority of the narrative voice over the characters and audience…Thus the real difference between 'art' and 'life' is not organization versus chaos, but rather the absence in life of that point of view which transforms events into a story by telling them. Narrative requires narration; and this activity is not just a recounting of events but a recounting informed by a certain kind of superior knowledge.[15]

In the case of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads, the trick lies in determining whence that voice of authority emanates: Is it from the poet, the composer, the performer, a fictional figure from the text relaying the observed events through these other channels, or the music itself? As each of these narrative voices possesses their own distinct point of view of the story being told, each can contribute something unique to the ballad. As such, it is to our benefit while studying these songs to envision them as emerging from all of these sources, turning over "narrative control" to the voice that offers the most compelling story at a given moment. In other words, the task of

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[15] Ibid., 58-59.

narrating the story will shift from moment to moment, ensuring that the audience

receives the most pertinent information in the most compelling way possible.

Part of the job of the audience is to anticipate, to think ahead and imagine what

the solution might be. In other words, they, much like the characters, must look to the

future. As discussed by Carr, this type of protention requires that we utilize our

awareness of the past and of the present in order to anticipate how events will unfold,

making all three poetic concepts essentially interrelated. Staiger provides a clear

explanation of why this process is essential:

> But what does not yet exist shall come to exist. And it is toward this
> goal that the inspiring rhythm, vitalized by the tension between the
> present and the future aims. Towards this end, too, move the beats,
> shattering as inescapable demands, and the pauses in which the emptiness
> of that which does not yet exist is revealed so to speak as a vacuum.
> And into this vacuum being is absorbed. Even the grammatical ellipses
> acquire their more precise meaning in this context.[16]

Placing dialogue in the context of a ballad lends the story a sense of immediacy for

the listener. Rather than dry, neutral narration, the emotions of the characters appeal

to those of the audience, increasing their level of engagement in encouraging them to

participate in the process through protention. Mahler's approach to the dramatic

qualities of his *Wunderhorn* ballads tended to vary from one instance to the next. In

certain cases, he used his music to differentiate between characters, and in others he

demonstrated solidarity among characters through the use of similar music.

Regardless of his approach, his aim in setting dramatic texts always focuses on the

clear revelation of the primary storyline.

I look at the narrative processes at work in the *Wunderhorn* poetry and

subsequent ballads using a combination of the devices explored by Staiger and Carr.

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[16] Staiger, *Basic Concepts*, 144–45.

As I examine each ballad, from a textual standpoint and then based on its music, I will point out how Mahler's work impacts the passage of time, the shifts in narrative point of view and address, and how the various poetic modes interact to reveal the events of each particular story. In some cases, we will find that the text and the music correspond in these areas, but in other they do not, providing us with fruitful material for further inquiry. As Staiger points out, the sheer variety of combinations of these poetic characteristics prevent them from comprising a useful categorical or taxonomical system, but, instead, demonstrate the myriad of tools that Mahler had at his disposal for presenting these stories.

Method of Study

Chapter two examines the literature Mahler utilized to create his ballads from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. In the majority of cases, Mahler made extensive revisions to the poems to better suit his musical needs. This chapter identifies those changes and explores their impact on the narrative potential within the stories told by these songs. In addition, a great deal of effort has gone into determining the precise sources that Mahler used as exemplars for his poems, and using several contemporaneous editions, I have been able to construct a new hypothesis of which editions Mahler used for each of his songs.

Ballads represent a unique type of narrative, because they must combine the telling of a story with the confines of poetic meter and rhyme schemes rather than straightforward prose. Otto Holzapfel and Christian Freitag have studied the qualities

of the ballad as they apply to narrative function.[17] Freitag's approach is wide reaching

in scope, and Holzapfel uses specific case studies to examine how narrative functions

in the German ballad tradition.

Chapter three of this dissertation explores Mahler's methods of musical story

telling in his *Wunderhorn* lieder. Ballad poetry tells stories regardless of the music to

which it is set. Mahler's objective for setting these poems to music is to enhance, or

sometimes ironically thwart, the way these stories are told. In order to fully

understand Mahler's approach to musical storytelling, each song's musical

construction is studied in depth to determine the various musical techniques in the

songs that function as narrative devices. No two cases function in precisely the same

way, but Mahler often uses music to distort the temporal progression of a story,

allowing the events to "fast forward" during an instrumental interlude or serving as a

recall device of events past. I compare these musical narratives to the stories told by

the text itself to evaluate Mahler's objectives in choosing these particular poems to

set.

Studies such as those by Carolyn Abbate, Fred Maus, Anthony Newcomb, and

Walther Dürr serve as models for studying the interrelation of text and music and help

to investigate Mahler's methods of setting these texts to music.[18] These works deal

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[17] Flemming G.Anderson, Otto Holzapfel, and Thomas Pettitt, *The Ballad as Narrative: Studies in the Ballad Traditions of England, Scotland, Germany, and Denmark* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1982); Freitag, *Ballade*.

[18] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Fred Maus, "Narrative, Drama, and Emotion in Instrumental Music," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997): 293–303; Anthony Newcomb, "Narrative Archetypes and Mahler's Ninth Symphony," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 118–36; Walther Dürr, *Das deutsche Sololied im 19. Jahrhundert* (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofens Verlag, 1984).

with the narrative potential of music, both vocal and instrumental. The addition of music to a literary narrative can work to clarify the story being told (the most obvious examples being the hallmarks of so-called program music, such as Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* or Dukas' *L'apprenti Sorcier*) or to complicate the story-telling process by adding an additional layer of temporal distortion (Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* would serve as an example of this type). Mahler uses his music to both purposes in his *Wunderhorn* ballads, stretching the narrative borders beyond those of earlier composers. Danuser described this compositional technique as "musical prose," by which musical structures are not confined by tradition, but instead allowed to take their own shape as the narrative requires, comparing musical phrasing and form to the relative freedom of prose over poetry.[19] The earliest ballads are mostly of the first, simpler type, and the later ones occur in both modes. For instance, "Das irdische Leben" marks the passage of time in a in a very deliberate manner to emphasize the many chances the mother had to save her child and the continuing futility of her efforts. A ballad such as "Revelge" distorts the unfolding of events, speeding up and altering the poetic rhythm to further emphasize the grotesque image of a band of soldiers who continue to march even after they have died.

Chapter four of my dissertation looks at different ways that Mahler used his *Wunderhorn* songs to comment on the world around him. Mahler carefully selected poetry and crafted his musical settings in order to create ballads that possessed meanings on many levels. On the surface, many of these songs seem folk-like and childish, but hidden deeper down, Mahler was able to use these songs to critique the

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[19] Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1991), 152–84.

world around him: be it his cultural environment, social issues of the day, or the world of politics.

Many scholars view *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, with its developments in music, art, literature, and science, as the birthplace of cultural modernism. Though we have since granted Mahler a central role in these developments, he was not always well regarded during his own time. His reception speaks to many complex issues at play during this period in history. Mahler used some of his chosen song texts as platforms to express his frustration with his cultural climate, comparing the inattentive fish in "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" to his critics and audience, and in "Lob des hohen Verstandes" comparing his critics to the donkey who is called upon to judge a singing contest between a cuckoo and a nightingale. I am attempting to situate these songs as one side of an ongoing dialogue between Mahler and his critics in which he was able to respond to negative criticism through musical means.

We can explore the cultural meaning in folk poetry and fairy tales like those found in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* through the work done by scholars such as Bruno Bettelheim and Mary-Louise von Franz's application the techniques of psychoanalysis to examine fairy tales as a tool for teaching lessons to the young.[20] While fruitful analyses emerge from several of these poems, we find particularly interesting examples in verse and Mahler's settings for songs such as "Starke Einbildungskraft" and "Verlor'ne Müh'" as they relate to Freud's writings on the joke, as seen in *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious,* and "Wo die schönen

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[20] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Marie-Louise von Franz, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Fairy Tales* (Irving, TX: Spring Publications, 1978).

Trompeten blasen" and "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" as they correspond to Freud's work on dreams and the unconscious, such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. I use Freud's work as an analytical lens through which to interrogate these songs, examining them as products of a *Zeitgeist* in which both Mahler and Freud played an invaluable part.

In order to further contextualize Mahler's ballads, I explore how he uses many of these songs as platforms for social commentary. I will establish the social climate in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna through broader historical studies by William J. McGrath, Carl Schorske, Lawrence Kramer, Karen Painter, and Walter Frisch.[21] This inquiry will also involve discussion of Mahler's social views within his wider social circle as seen in his letters and diaries. For example, regarding the song "Das irdische Leben," Mahler stated, "In life, everything that one most needs for the growth of the spirit and body is withheld – as with the dead child – until it is too late," a commentary that could refer to a society that allows the poor to suffer needlessly, but may disguise a much deeper significance.[22]

Several songs from Mahler's earliest experiments with the *Wunderhorn* deal with issues of romantic fidelity. I examine "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen" and "Ich ging mit Lust" through this lens to shed some light on Mahler's views on women during an early phase in his career.

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[21] William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1974); Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981); Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Karen Painter, ed., *Mahler and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts*, California Studies in 20th-Century Music 3, series ed., Richard Taruskin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[22] Quoted by Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 32.

Mahler's expresses his political views, particularly in regards to anti-militarism, in the *Wunderhorn* ballads as well. Of the song "Der Tamboursg'sell," Bauer-Lechner wrote that Mahler "felt sorry for the world that would have to hear [it] one day, so terribly sad was [its] content."[23] Using "Revelge" and "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" as examples, I explore the connections between Mahler's anti-militaristic views and the philosophical readings he encountered as a student at the University of Vienna.

My study seeks to explore Mahler's many methods of storytelling as seen in his *Wunderhorn* ballads and identify their deeper significance to his *fin-de-siècle* Viennese environment. In so doing, I hope to shed a wider light on these works, highlighting their richness and continued relevance.

Mahler and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*: Issues of History and Genre

In order to begin our examination of Mahler's engagement with the *Wunderhorn*, we must determine when he first encountered the poetry. This in and of itself poses a problem. Scholars have had some difficulty deciding precisely when Mahler first came in contact with the poetry found in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, and this challenge stems, in part, from Mahler's own conflicting accounts on the matter. Henry-Louis de La Grange describes one theory, based on a claim by Guido Adler:

> Mahler accidentally came across Achim von Arnim's and Clemens Brentano's poetic anthology *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* at the Webers' [roughly 1887]. He discovered with delight a naïve medieval universe peopled by soldiers and children, animals and brightly colored saints. A universe filled with humanity, love, and sorrow, *Sehnsucht*, and eternal farewells, but filled also with a fresh humour that enchanted him…From then on, Mahler was never without this

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[23] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 173.

anthology, which was to be the chief source of his inspiration until 1900.[24]
Herta Blaukopf observes that Mahler pursued courses in German literature during his
brief studies at the University of Vienna (intermittently from 1877 until 1880),
suggesting that he may have made acquaintance with the anthology there.[25] Ida
Dehmel records that Mahler told her, "from earliest childhood his relationship to the
book had been particularly close."[26] Mahler wrote to Natalie Bauer-Lechner
regarding his 1878 cantata *Das klagende Lied*, "You will…see that at a time when I
did not even suspect the existence of the *Wunderhorn*, I already lived completely in
its spirit."[27] Donald Mitchell cites letters and documents claiming that Mahler first
encountered the poems while at the conservatory between 1875 and 1880.[28] Amid
these conflicting accounts, the fact remains that Mahler's two major compositions
preceding his *Wunderhorn* lieder (*Das klagende Lied* and the song cycle *Lieder eines
fahrenden Gesellen* from 1883) deal with the same kinds of themes and use strikingly
similar language to that found in the anthology. The truth, most likely, lies
somewhere in the middle, that while Mahler may not have been familiar with the

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[24] Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler*, Volume 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 171. Guido Adler, "Gustav Mahler," *Biographisches Jahrbuch und deutscher Nekrolog* XVI (1911): 30.

[25] Herta Blaukopf, "Mahler an der Universität: Versuch, eine biographische Lücke zu schließen," in *Neue Mahleriana: Essays in Honour of Henry-Louis de La Grange on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Günther Weiß (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997), 1-16; Herta Blaukopf, "The Young Mahler, 1875-1880: Essay in Situational Analysis after Karl R. Popper," in *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-24.

[26] Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, trans. Basil Creighton (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 93.

[27] La Grange, *Mahler,* 1: 285.

[28] Donald Mitchell, *The Wunderhorn Years*, 118.

published collection of poetry, he seems to have had knowledge of the texts as lyrics to familiar folk songs.

The *Wunderhorn* songs, as new songs set to poetry with roots in Germany's Medieval folk past, present an inherent tension between the past, as evidenced in the poems themselves, and the future, shown through Mahler's musical language. His backwards gaze interpreted through a new progressive style reveals a great deal about Mahler as a man and a composer. Steven Beller observes:

> nostalgia's tendency to long for a return not to the actual, but rather to an idealized past, which, in your heart of hearts, you know never existed. It becomes then not the remembrance of things past, certainly not the researching of lost time, but the substitution of memory by a fictionalized, retouched past, of lived experience by wishful thinking… This is especially so when we come to terms, or do not come to terms, with the experience of European Jewry over the last hundred years.[29]

According to Beller, the nostalgia implied by Mahler's use of the *Wunderhorn* poems represents an attempt to assimilate into German (i.e. non-Jewish) culture by claiming membership to an idealized common cultural history.[30]

Mahler referred to his songs based on poems from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* using a number of different genre designations, such as *Gesänge*, *Lieder*, *Humoresken*, and *Balladen*. He failed, however, to clearly specify unique meanings and characteristics for each of these terms, in short, what each genre designation actually meant. Contemporaneous music dictionaries offer us some insight as to the generally accepted meaning of these terms for their time. Oddly, however, German

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[29] Steven Beller, "The World of Yesterday Revisited: Nostalgia, Memory, and the Jews of Fin-de-siècle Vienna," *Jewish Social Studies* 2 (1996): 37.

[30] William J. McGrath, "'Volksseelenpolitik' and Psychological Rebirth: Mahler and Hofmannsthal," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (1973): 61.

music dictionaries experienced a mysterious dearth of publication during the "*Wunderhorn* years," perhaps due to the overwhelming success and thoroughness of Hugo Riemann's 1882 *Musik-Lexikon*. Nonetheless, if we look to dictionaries published before and after the time of Mahler's composition, we can zero in on a generally accepted meaning for these terms, which will contribute to our understanding of what Mahler meant by his use of them.

Heinrich Christoph Koch defines most of these terms in his 1802 *Musikalisches Lexikon*. He defines the "Ballade" as "a very specific and characteristic type of poetry. It is a narration of an event or something adventurous, wonderful, frightening, tragic, comic, or all of these at the same time." The "Gesang" refers to "the combination of poetry and music having as its objective a common representation through mutual understanding." The definition goes on to state, "Because, however, the effect set by the music extends only to feelings and emotions, it can actually only be connected with lyrical types of poetry." Koch does not provide a definition for "Humoreske," as the genre designation was not in common use for music at the time. Finally, he defines the "Lied" as "A lyrical poem combined with a melody that everyone can sing without having to learn the art of singing."[31]

Shortly before Mahler began setting the poetry of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, Friedrich Bremer published his music dictionary in Leipzig. Bremer defined the "Ballade" as "Musical art of a lyrical-epic character, with declaimed presentation. In song composition, it handles mostly historical, romantic-saga type subjects, with simple but fast handling; this also corresponds to the music." He described the "Gesang" as "The musical leading of a melody through the human voice, as is in the

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[31] Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalishes Lexikon* (Reprint of 1802 edition. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001), "Ballade," 211, "Gesang," 662, "Lied," 901–04. Translation mine.

nature of its own unique style (high, low, strength, tone color, etc). The Gesang is

either natural or artistic." He states that the Lied is:

> The name for such a composition for the human voice, in its expression
> and feeling of the inner fusion of word and tone, in living and natural, but
> finding expression in simple, unaffected, non-overly-artistic ways. The
> simplicity of the form is also a substantial characteristic of the Lied. The
> form is itself either strophic or through composed; in the first case of the
> strophes of text are set as the first one, in the second, each strophe has its
> own melody. One differentiates two main types: the Volkslied and the
> Kunstlied. Lieds of both types fell into two types of content: worldly or
> spiritual.[32]

The primary German music dictionary of Mahler's day, *Riemanns Musik-Lexikon*

demonstrates a great deal of the flexibility surrounding the use of these terms,

particularly in his definition of "Ballade," appearing in the 1887 edition of his

dictionary:

> The musical form of the ballad is as variable as the poetic form. The term ballad
> today refers to a recitation of poetry and is in use for a number of poems, but for
> solo songs with piano or orchestral accompaniment, for broad choral settings,
> various solos, the term is used less often (unless a composer chooses to use the
> term). Making the term even more ambiguous is its use in instrumental music;
> we now have piano ballads, violin ballads, orchestra ballads, etc., most of these
> must be considered program music because they are created based on an
> image. But this might nevertheless create difficulties, for Chopin's
> ballads, for example, in determining why he gave them this name. It is to be
> wished that composers would reserve the use of the term ballad in music for only
> those that demonstrate their qualities most highly and for instrumental works
> with a program.[33]

Distinctions between the "Gesang" and the "Lied," according to Riemann, depend on

the expressive potential of the text being set to music. He defines the "Gesang" as:

> Enhanced speech. The smaller the affect is, which the song brings to expression,

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[32] Friedrich Bremer, *Handlexikon der Musik: Eine Encyklopädie der Ganzen Tonkunst* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1882), "Ballade," 37, "Gesang," 229, "Lied," 399-400. Translation mine.

[33] Hugo Riemann, "Ballade," in *Riemanns Musik-Lexikon*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Max Hesse, 1887), 69. Translation mine.

the closer it must be to real speech, through parlando and recitative, in a simple, descriptive way. When the affect is increased, the melody and rhythm are more or less liberated from the words, and the expression becomes purely musical.[34]

The "Lied," on the other hand, possesses a more mutual relationship between music and text. He states the "Lied" refers to, "the combination of lyrical poetry with music, by which the sung word takes the place of the spoken word. The text is enhanced by the musical elements of rhythm and intonation, and the text is arranged rhythmically and melodically."[35] Unfortunately for our purposes, Riemann does not provide a definition of "Humoreske."

In 1911, publisher F.A. Brockhaus released the fifth edition of his *Brockhaus Kleines Konversations-Lexikon*, a large multi-volume general knowledge encyclopedia that had been in print since 1854. Brockhaus provided definitions aimed at a wider audience than simply musicians and music aficionados. He defined "Ballade" as "a folk-like, short, purely lyrical poem of mostly erotic content." The term "Humoreske" referred to "witty description or narration." And the "Gesang" was described as "the rhythmic combination of human voices, usually supported by words."[36]

Following Mahler's *Wunderhorn* period, another significant German music dictionary did not appear until 1923, with Hans Joachim Moser's *Musikalisches Wörterbuch*. Moser defines the "Ballade" as "the musical setting of a short rhyme or strophes for voice and piano. Most are characteristically set either in through-

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[34] Riemann, "Gesang," in *Riemanns Musik-Lexikon*, 326. Translation mine.

[35] Ibid., 562.

[36] *Brockhaus Kleins Konversations-Lexikon*, 5th ed., vol. 1 (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1911), 144, 836, 671.

composed form or strophically." "Lied" refers to "a song with strophic text is either set strophically or with new music from beginning to end (through-composed)."[37]

If German music scholars before and after Mahler's time viewed the ballad as something that told elaborate stories, the Lied as a simple combination of text and song, and the Gesang as musically expressed speech, can we assume that Mahler shared these views? Not necessarily. If we did make that leap, would that tell us any more about how the concept of genre fed into his compositional process? Perhaps not, but we do find that Mahler appeared to understand genre as something elastic that he could manipulate and expand as his creations required rather than a confining descriptive device that established boundaries to govern his musical choices.

Further difficulties in specifying genre as it applies to these works come into play when Mahler begins composing his mature *Wunderhorn* songs in arrangements for voice and piano and for voice and orchestra. Critics, scholars, and composers of the time were engaged in a lively debate regarding the tradition of the German Lied and the emergence of orchestral song.[38] While the differences between Gesang, Lied, Humoreske, and Ballade tend to be based on poetic concerns for the most part, this debate looked at musical qualities as the basis for genre designation.

Mahler's seemingly flexible view is not entirely novel. Returning to Goethe, with whom we began to formulate a concept of what the ballad truly is, we find that even

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[37] Hans Joachim Moser, *Musikalisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1923), "Ballade," 9, "Lied," 69.

[38] Hermann Danuser details the specific issues brought up in this debate in "Der Orchestergesang des Fin de siècle: Eine historische und ästhetische Skizze," *Die Musikforschung* 30 (1977), 425–52. Elizabeth Schmierer expands on the idea to parse out the differences between Lied and Gesang in both piano arrangements and those written for orchestra in *Die Orchesterlieder Gustav Mahlers* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1991), 2-16.

in his time, such terms were not concrete in meaning. Gillian Rodger writes, "The

terms 'Ballade' and 'Romanze' have been fluid even in Bürger's day and Goethe's

use of 'Ballade' and 'Lied' is equally inconsistent and therefore to a large extent

meaningless."[39] It would seem that generic labels were in large part based on the

whim of the poet, and subsequently the composer who set his texts to music. In any

case, whether he referred to them as such or not, examining these songs specifically

as ballads allows us to investigate Mahler's various approaches to the telling of the

stories that he encountered in the *Wunderhorn*. I will expand on this process of

defining the ballad and its importance to Mahler's works in Chapter 2.

Within the field of folklore studies numerous scholars have examined ballad

traditions in various European cultures, particularly England, Ireland, and, of course,

Germany. Modern scholars who study the ballad, such as Hugh Shields, James Porter,

Eleanor R. Long, Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson and Alan Norman Bold, have

concentrated much of their work on the classification of the various international

traditions of ballads using what Porter calls a "type-index," referring essentially to the

subject matter of the story being told.[40] Used correctly, type indexing can provide a

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[39] Gillian Rodger, "Goethe's 'Ur-Ei' in Theory and Practice," *The Modern Language Review* 59 (1964): 227.

[40] Alan Norman Bold, *The Ballad* (London: Methuen, 1979). James Porter, "Principles of Ballad Classification: A Suggestion for Regional Catalogues of Ballad Style," *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* 25 (1980): 11–26; James Porter, "Problems of Ballad Terminology: Scholars' Explanations and Singers' Epistemics," in *Ballad Research: The Stranger in Ballad Narrative and Other Topics. Proceedings of the 15th International Conference of the Kommision für Volksdichtung of the Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore: Dublin and County Clare, Ireland, 26 August–1 September1985*, ed. Hugh Shields (Dublin: Folk Music Society of Ireland, 1986), 185–94.; Eleanor R. Long, "Ballad Classification and the 'Narrative Theme' Concept Together with a Thematic Index to Anglo-Irish-American Balladry," in *Ballad Research: The Stranger in Ballad Narrative and Other Topics. Proceedings of the 15th International Conference of the Kommision für Volksdichtung of the*

focus for examining the kinds of stories that attracted Mahler for their narrative potential. Sherry D. Lee applied this type of classification system to Mahler's music in a 2007 paper, in which she examined the poetic background for Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*. Mahler adapted the libretto for his work from a folk tale published by the Brothers Grimm in 1819, and the story adheres to the type classified by Aarne and Thompson as A.T.-Type 780, "The Singing Bone," in which the remains of a murdered person reveal the nature of their owner's death.[41]

These classifications allow scholars to group like stories together and to trace the changes that stories undergo as they pass through generations and among different communities.[42] Musicologists also use these sorts of groupings to draw connections among Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs, but rather than adopting classification systems developed for use in folklore studies, they tend to classify songs in more general categories based on subject matter and mood. E. Mary Dargie observes five family types of this sort among Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Lieder: songs from the folk song heritage, songs of love, songs of "earthly life" and death, humorous songs, and songs

Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore: Dublin and County Clare, Ireland, 26 August–1 September1985, ed. Hugh Shields (Dublin: Folk Music Society of Ireland, 1986), 197–213; Hugh Shields, "Popular Modes of Narration and the Popular Ballad," in *The Ballad and Oral Literature*, ed. Joseph Harris (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 40–59; James Porter, *Ballads and Boundaries: Narrative Singing in an Intercultural Context. Proceedings of the 23rd International Ballad Conference of the Commission for Folk Poetry, University of California, Los Angeles, June 21–24, 1993* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995. Tom Cheesman, *The Shocking Ballad Picture Show: German Popular Literature and Cultural History* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* 2nd ed., trans. Stith Thompson (Helsinki: Academium Scientarum Fennica, 1961).

[41] Sherry D. Lee, "'Was soll denn euch mein Singen?' Dislocated Sound in Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Québec City, 1–4 November 2007).

[42] Victor Propp discusses the changes stories undergo in an oral tradition in *Morphology of the Folktale* 2nd ed., trans. Laurence Scott, ed. Louis A. Wagner, American Folklore Society Bibliographical and Special Series 9 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

on the childlike mind.[43] Renate Hilmar-Voit adopts a similar organizational scheme. She recognizes seven groupings of Mahler's songs: songs of naïve, childish beliefs; amusing, satirical songs; parables of human shortcomings; humorous love songs; pessimistic love songs; songs of forced separation; and songs of war. The problem that plagues any of these systems lies in the simple question of how these scholars determined which category was best for each song, since many songs could potentially fit into several categories. For example, the song "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" could easily be considered a song of love or a song of death, according to Dargie's classification scheme. In Hilmar-Voit's, the same song could be envisioned as a pessimistic love song, a song of forced separation, a song of war, or even a parable of human shortcomings.[44] Nonetheless, these classification systems depend on a given story's narrative, and as such are useful to the present study, even if scholars do not agree or demonstrate consistency in their identification of tale-types in similar ballads.

My work will utilize none of these classification schemes directly, but instead will group songs together in different ways designed to suit the aims of each particular chapter. First, in the following chapter, I will examine the songs individually in chronological order while discussing the poetic qualities of the song. For Chapter 3, I have grouped the songs according to musical form. And in the final chapter, I examine songs according to their function as critiques of Mahler's cultural, social, and political environments. I will divide two of the three broader types of

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[43] Dargie, *Music and Poetry*, 9-10.

[44] Renate Hilmar-Voit, *Im Wunderhorn-Ton: Gustav Mahlers sprachliches Kompositionsmaterial bis 1900* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1988), 8.

criticism further into two subtypes, creating five distinct areas of subject matter: cultural commentary directed at Mahler's critics, Freudian explorations of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads, Mahler's views on poverty and class relations, romantic fidelity as it plays out in the ballads, and *Wunderhorn* ballads as expressions of anti-militarism. While conceivably I could manipulate my interpretations of each of the *Wunderhorn* ballads in order to "shoe-horn" them into a given category, I have chosen instead to focus my final chapter on the examples that best demonstrate these types of critique, and as such, will only be exploring specific examples.

My study of Mahler's miniature ballads based on the poetry of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* examines the composer's techniques used to convey stories that pass through time as narrated by a detached, third-person observer or acted out in dialogue form. This approach contributes a new perspective to scholarly understanding of these frequently overlooked works. By viewing these ballads not simply as art songs, but as stories told through song, we broaden our understanding of the narrative potential of lieder in general and also that of the symphonies that these works so heavily influenced. We can see from the poems that Mahler chose to set from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* that he believed them to be capable of telling stories that he could relate to himself and to his audience. While a few scholars have identified these songs as ballads, no one has stopped to inquire what being a ballad truly means to the works themselves. The simple fact that Mahler chose to set these poems to music implies that his music is a vital part of the storytelling process, as he himself once stated,

"One can often add a great deal, and can deepen and widen the meaning of the text through music."[45]

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[45] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 58–9.

Chapter 2

Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Lieder: Literary Strategies

Mahler's fascination with the poems of Ludwig Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano's anthology *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte Deutsche Sprache* has long occupied scholars, its most obvious reflection in his twenty-four lieder based on this poetry, composed over a period of thirteen years. Among the *Wunderhorn* lieder, the miniature ballads, which comprise an overwhelming majority of these songs, tell stories simultaneously simple and elaborate, comical and tragic, mundane and fantastic, innocent and risqué. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* was a three-volume anthology[1] containing 723 poems in all. It is clear from his writings and his poetic choices that Mahler knew the *Wunderhorn* anthology intimately, but what compelled the composer to select those specific poems to set to music? He selected these poems not only for their stories and their potential for musical setting, but also for the narratives that resonated with his own life experience.

Mahler selected twenty-six poems for musical setting from the poetic anthology,

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[1] Mohr und Zimmer in Heidelberg and J. C. B. Mohr in Frankfurt simultaneously published the first edition of volume one in 1806 using the same typesetting. The second and third volumes appeared separately in 1808 in Heidelberg, but in Frankfurt, Mohr released the two volumes together in one binding with an added small volume of Kinderlieder. My thanks to the University Library at Texas A & M for the interlibrary loan of their first edition out of Heidelberg.

resulting in twenty-four lieder, eighteen of which are ballads. The poems he selected

range in scope from brief poems (the shortest, "Starke Einbildungskraft," runs only

twelve lines) to somewhat longer (the longest, but still miniature by ballad standards,

"Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt," has fifty-four lines) all relating a type of

brief, pithy vignette described by Jon Finson.[2] The spirit of the *Wunderhorn* poetry

permeated all areas of Mahler's composition, leading Donald Mitchell to qualify the

works written between 1880 and 1901 as products of "The *Wunderhorn* Years."[3] The

depth of Mahler's extended relationship with the *Wunderhorn* lies in part in the many

parallels he was able to draw between the kaleidoscope of worlds seen through Arnim

and Brentano's glimpses of an idealized vision of Germany's folkloric past and his

own environment. Further complicating Mahler's relationship with these ballads is

their very nature as "folk poetry" and the fluidity of their texts taken from an oral

tradition. Given the mutability of its oral tradition, Mahler felt comfortable altering

Wunderhorn verse for his own musical and narrative purposes. In some cases, his

adaptations manipulated the verse to the point where Mahler's version differs greatly

from that of the original *Wunderhorn* poem. This chapter examines those alterations

and how they impact the meaning of the poetry.

　　Due to the long, convoluted history of many of these poems before they came to

Mahler as song texts, it will serve us well to briefly examine the history of the

anthology, the classification of these specific poems as ballads, and the issues

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[2] "Between *Lied* and *Ballade* – Schumann's Op. 40 and the Tradition of Genre," in *Schumanniana Nova: Festschrift Gerd Nauhaus zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Bernhard R. Appel, Ute Bar, and Matthias Weni (Sinsig: Studio Verlag, 2002), 265.

[3] Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years: Chronicles and Commentaries*, 2d edition (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005).

clouding our knowledge of precisely what version of the poems Mahler saw as exemplars before examining specific texts. Then as we encounter each poem (in the order that they were published), we can look specifically at the modifications that Mahler made to the poem in order to create his song text and how the resulting lyrics serve the narrative process, telling stories that feature a sequence of events transpiring over time.

Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder

The creation and reception of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* had auspicious beginnings, and it stands to reason that by the time Mahler encountered the anthology, it had become known as a preeminent collection of German folk poetry. Clemens Brentano, the older of the two folklorists who assembled folk-song texts and edited the anthology, was born in Ehrenbreitstein, now part of Koblenz, near Cologne, to a family of Italian descent on September 9, 1778. As a young man, he became involved in the Romantic literary scenes in Jena, Göttingen, and Heidelberg. Ludwig Achim von Arnim, the more active of the two *Wunderhorn* collectors, was born in Berlin on January 26, 1781 into Prussian nobility. He began his studies in law and natural science before he eventually devoted himself to his love of literature. Arnim and Brentano met in Göttingen in 1801, and in Heidelberg they began their collaboration on the collection of folk poetry entitled *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.[4] Mohr and Zimmer of Heidelberg published the first edition of the first volume of the anthology in 1806,

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[4] Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler: Volume One* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 759; Heinz Rölleke, "Nachwort," in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder gesammelt von Achim von Arnim und Clemens Brentano*, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2003), 1195–96.

and Arnim and Brentano dedicated the volume to Goethe. The remainder of the

collection in volumes two and three and a collection of *Kinderlieder* followed in

1808, also published by Mohr and Zimmer. By the time Mahler began composing his

Wunderhorn lieder, the anthology had already seen numerous reprints and editions,

and it continues to be published in new editions today, most recently in 2003 in a

volume edited by Heinz Rölleke, who has studied the anthology and its use by Mahler

extensively.[5] It has yet to be definitively determined what edition(s) Mahler used to

create his songs, and later in this chapter I will discuss this issue more fully.

 Des Knaben Wunderhorn was not the first such anthology of German folk poetry.

The ballad in Germany has its roots in the traditions of the *Bänkelsänger*, poets and

singers active since the sixteenth century who travelled among towns and spread

news and gossip by way of public singing performances atop wooden crates or

benches and the distribution of broadsides, known in German as *fliegende Blätter*.[6] In

1765, the ballad tradition began to be recorded in England with the publication of

Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.[7] This anthology inspired Johann

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[5] Heinz Rölleke is the leading modern-day authority on *Des Knaben Wunderhorn.* His critical edition of the anthology was published in 1987 by Reclam in Stuttgart and remains the only critical edition still in print. An abbreviated edition of his work, published by Insel Verlag, appeared in 2003. In addition, he has published numerous articles and essays about the anthology and Mahler's work with it, including: "'Kriegslieder' Achim von Arnims Imitation eines Fliegenden Blattes im Jahre 1806," *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, ed. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, 17 (1971): 73-80; "Gustav Mahlers 'Wunderhorn' Lieder: Textgrundlagen und Textauswahl," *Jahrbuch des freien deutschen Hochstifts* (1981): 370–78; "'Des Knaben Wunderhorn' und seine Stellung zu Volks- und Kirchenlied," *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie*, eds. Konrad Ameln, Waldtraut Ingeborg Sauer-Geppert, Alexander Völker, 28 (1984), 27-38; "'Felsblöcke, aus denen jeder das Seine formen darf:' Gustav Mahlers Rezeption der Kasseler Literatur: 'Des Knaben Wunderhorn' und Grimms 'Märchen,'" *Gustav Mahler: Jahre der Entscheidung in Kassel 1883-1885*, eds. Louis Kolitz, Hans Joachim Schaefer, Heinz Rölleke, Andrea Linnebach (Kassel: Weber & Wiedemayer, 1990), 96-103.

[6] Tom Cheesman, *The Shocking Ballad Picture Show: German Popular Literature and Cultural History* (Oxford: Berg, 1994). Cheesman examines the traditions of the "picture singers" who brought news and gossip from town to town, the stories told through their songs, paintings and their *fliegende Blätter*, and the impact of this folk tradition on poets such as Goethe.

Gottfried Herder, who published the first volume of German folk poetry, *Stimmen der Völker*, in 1779.[8] The success of this volume had two major consequences: it inspired Arnim and Brentano's collection, and it also began a vogue for folk poetry in Germany that resulted in a new poetic genre known as the *Kunstballade*, in which so-called classic poets, such as Goethe and Bürger began writing art poetry that imitated folkloric content. Whereas the ballads of the *Bänkelsänger* and those collected by Herder arose from the tradition of folk songs, the writers of the *Kunstballaden* simply created texts, which did not receive musical treatment until they were set by composers. This shift began to blur the distinctions between the art and folk tradition and that between poem and song text, and explains, in part, why Arnim and Brentano included some authored verse and failed to provide melodies for the texts. Nonetheless, the tradition of the *Kunstballade* extended throughout the nineteenth century, through works by poets such as Heine and Mörike, and beyond, with ballads by Brecht.

The poems in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* represent folk songs and stories from throughout the German-speaking lands, stretching from Switzerland to Swabia. Works such as this and other manifestations of the German folk movement of the early nineteenth century promoted the ideals of Pan-Germanism, which aimed to unify the German-speaking nation-states into one large country, united by a common folk culture. Arnim wrote of the need for an anthology such as this:

> Only because of this linguistic separation and the disregard of the poetry's better qualities is there in large part a lack of folk poetry in Newer Germany. Only where the people lack education through books, do folk songs originate and come

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[7] Rölleke, "Nachwort," 1193.

[8] Ibid., 1193.

to us, unpublished and unwritten, simply floating through the air, like a white crow.[9]

All of the anthologies of folk poetry that emerged during the nineteenth century served to fan the flames of Pan-German nationalism. Edward F. Kravitt writes that these ballads were thought to be "the most genuine artistic expression of the earliest Germans… communal and…intrinsically Germanic."[10] And following several political uprisings resulting from the Napoleonic Wars, these poems allowed, "the discouraged and frustrated Germans [to turn] toward the people, who seemed to represent the only hope for reunification after the country had been betrayed by the lack of patriotism of its princes."[11] Many members of the educated middle class particularly resented the return to autocratic rule stemming from the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15, and the simmering hostility boiled over in the failed revolution in 1848.[12] Mahler himself would later become involved in the Pan-Germanist campaign through his involvement as a university student with a politically active reading group known as the Pernerstorfer Circle.[13] Led by the writings of Schopenhauer, Wagner,

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[9] The image of the white crow is a seemingly impossible instance that refutes one's previous assumptions; that is, one only needs to see one white crow to disprove that all crows are black. Arnim is telling his readers that the existence of any remnant of great folk poetry from the illiterate peasant communities is evidence enough to prove that the tradition exists. Ludwig Achim von Arnim, "Von Volksliedern," in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2003), 420. "Nur wegen dieser Sprachtrennung in dieser Nichtachtung des besseren poetischen Teiles vom Volke mangelt dem neueren Deutschlande großenteils Volkspoesie, nur wo es ungelehrter wird, wenigstens überwiegender in besondrer Bildung der allgemeinen durch Bücher, da entsteht manches Volkslied, das ungedruckt und ungeschrieben zu uns durch die Lüfte dringt, wie eine weiße Krähe." My thanks to Dr. Annegret Fauser and Shelley Hay for their assistance with this translation.

[10] Edward F. Kravitt, *The Lied: Mirror of Late Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 124.

[11] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 759.

[12] J. M. Roberts, *The Penguin History of Europe* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 400–04.

[13] Other members of the circle included its namesake, the journalist and politician Engelbert Pernerstorfer, poet and journalist Siegfried Lipiner, professor Max von Gruber, composer Hugo Wolf,

and Nietzsche, the circle rebelled against liberalism and cosmopolitanism in preference for "freedom through contact with nature, defined as the landscape of the *Volk*."[14]

The poems in *Wunderhorn* are a hodge-podge of texts collected from oral traditions and from previously published sources, and in some cases, the poems were *Kunstballaden* newly composed by the editors themselves in the style of traditional folk poetry. Henry-Louis de La Grange writes of Brentano travelling about, "questioning old people of all classes, peasants, servants, nurses, artisans, and schoolmasters and writing down the poems that still lived in their memory."[15] Arnim and Brentano recognized that many of these poems were in fact, lyrics from folk songs printed on *fliegende Blätter* (literally, fliers), or passed through generations among the people he interviewed, but the editors made no effort to preserve the melodies of these songs, and in many cases, they have since been lost. Few of the poems in the anthology escaped the collectors' hands without some degree of orthographic modification, typically just a question of spelling, removal or standardization of dialects, and modernization. Some critics saw this tampering as an abominable act of editorial artifice inimical to the collection of historical texts, while others, such as Goethe, recognized that when recording the artifacts of an oral tradition, as the *Wunderhorn* texts were widely believed to be, no one particular

historian and politician Heinrich Friedjung, historian and poet Richard von Kralik, and politician Victor Adler. The circle is discussed extensively in William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). I will discuss Mahler's involvement with the Pernerstorfer Circle and its impact on the *Wunderhorn* ballads in Chapter 4.

[14] George L. Mosse, "The Influence of the *Völkisch* Idea on German Jewry," in *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute*, ed. Max Kreutzberger (New York: F. Ungar Pub., 1967), 84.

[15] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 759.

variation of a text holds primacy over any other. Goethe wrote of the anthology's authenticity:

> These songs were then carried over time, in their own sonic element from ear to ear and mouth to mouth, they gradually returned, living and glorified, to the folk, with whom they got their start, so to speak…Who knows what a song must endure as it goes through the mouths of the people, and not only the uneducated! Why is he who records it, in that last instance, not also granted that certain right?[16]

Arnim and Brentano's sources and adaptations to the *Wunderhorn* poetry have been detailed extensively by Karl Bode[17] and Ferdinand Reiser.[18]

Des Knaben Wunderhorn represented an idealized conception of a folk culture, modernized for easy consumption by a nineteenth-century German-speaking society, and promoting a specific, Pan-Germanist agenda. We should remember that at no time did Arnim and Brentano actively seek to have their work recognized as an accurate historical representation of Germanic folk traditions, claiming the collection had been "collected from the lips of the people, from books and from manuscripts, *arranged and completed*."[19] While it was widely debated by critics of the anthology

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[16] Quoted in Hoffmann von August Heinrich Fallersleben, "Zur Geschichte des Wunderhorns," *Weimarisches Jahrbuch für Deutsche Sprache, Literatur und Kunst* II (1855): 263–5. "Würden dann diese Lieder, nach und nach, in ihrem eigenen Ton- und Klang-element von Ohr zu Ohr, von Mund zu Mund getragen, kehrten sie, allmälig, belebt und verherrlicht, zum Volke zurück, von dem sie zum Theil gewissermaβen ausgegangen… Wer weiβ nicht, was ein Lied auszustehen hat, wenn es durch den Mund des Volkes, und nicht etwa nur des ungebildeten, eine Weile durchgeht! Warum soll der, der es in letzter Instanz aufzeichnet, mit andern zusammenstellt, nicht auch ein gewisses Recht daran haben."

[17] Karl Bode, *Die Bearbeitung der Vorlagen Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, *Palaestra: Untersuchungen und Texte aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie*, eds. Alois Brandl, Gustav Roethe, Erich Schmidt, no. 76 (1909).

[18] Ferdinand Reiser, *"Des Knaben Wunderhorn" und seine Quellen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Volksliedes und der Romantik* (Dortmund: Fr. Wilh. Ruhfus, 1908; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1983).

upon its original publication, it is unlikely that if Mahler was aware of the "inauthentic" nature of these poems that it made much of an impact on his decision to set them, some seventy-five years later. Mahler's interest laid in the musical potential of the poems rather than their historical significance. In fact, nineteenth-century composers seemed to prefer the adapted versions of these folk songs, since they contained more "emotive character" than their seemingly authentic brethren.[20]

Defining the Ballad as Used by Mahler

Because eighteen of Mahler's twenty-four *Wunderhorn* songs tell stories in the style of miniature ballads,[21] it stands to reason that some quality of this type of poetry appealed to the composer. Before we can fully accept these songs as ballads, we must determine what a ballad is (or, at least what it was to the composer) before we can establish whether or not Mahler's songs fit the criteria. But simply defining the term "ballad" becomes a tricky endeavor. "Ballads are awkward things," literary scholar David Buchan writes:

> Few literary genres give so much pleasure to so many kinds of people and yet pose such refractory problems for the scholar and the critic. These tales of marvel, love and butchery, told in a style strikingly distinct from that of most poetry, appeal to a diverse audience, but yet provoke questions which have never been satisfactorily answered.[22]

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[19] Fallersleben, "Zur Geschichte des Wunderhorns," 262. As quoted and translated by Jon W. Finson, "The Reception of Gustav Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Lieder," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 94. Emphasis mine.

[20] Kravitt, *The Lied*, 124.

[21] The concept of the miniature ballad was first articulated by Jon W. Finson in his essay "Between *Lied* and *Ballade* – Schumann's Op. 40 and the Tradition of Genre." As mentioned in the introduction, these poems conform to all of the requisite characteristics of a ballad except their length, and as such require a great deal of directness in order to convey information quickly and simply.

[22] David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk* (London: Routledge, 1972), 1.

Stated simply, ballads relate tales. But they are not merely diegetic, as Goethe

observes in his classic definition, introduced in Chapter 1, describing the ballad as a

poetic form in which information can be relayed to the listener using "all three basic

poetic modes:" the epic, dramatic, and lyric. Goethe also points out that the poetic

flexibility offered by ballads allows the poet (or singer) to "rush to the end or draw it

out," based on the amount of detail he/she chooses to reveal.[23] Most ballads combine

these lyric, epic, and dramatic elements, pairing dialogue (dramatic action) with

narrative distance (epic neutrality) or with lyrical forms of verse. Some, however,

function purely dramatically, with a text comprised entirely of dialogue, while other

poems dwell purely in the epic, featuring only narration. But because the primary

defining characteristic of the ballad is that it tells a story transpiring in time; we could

not consider a purely lyric poem a ballad. Adorno observed the same epic qualities of

poetry in Mahler's musical output, writing "Like the storyteller, Mahler's music

never says the same thing twice in the same way: in this way subjectivity plays a

part."[24] Perhaps this underlying similarity in tone and point of view can in part

explain Mahler's enduring appreciation for these poems.

The arching structure of the ballad, with its introduction, middle, and conclusion,

allows the listener to portend, to recognize that an outcome is imminent and to try and

imagine what might occur before it is revealed.[25] Poets and composers alike take

advantage of this characteristic by creating endings intended to surprise the audience.

[23] Quoted in Christian Freitag, *Ballade*, vol. 6 in: *Themen – Texte – Interpretationen*, ed. Hans Gerd Rötzer (Bamberg: C.C. Buchners Verlag, 1986), 36.

[24] Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 76.

[25] David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 46–51.

This technique is particularly effective in ballads that tell stories of gruesome or supernatural events. Examples among Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads are "Das irdische Leben," in which the child, who has waited patiently for her mother to finish baking her bread, is pronounced dead by the narrator just when the baking is complete, and "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," in which the male protagonist reveals in the final lines that he is, in fact, a ghost come to invite his young beloved maiden to join him in death. The presenter of a ballad (in this case, the poet aided by the composer) is able to determine the length of the story based on the amount of detail presented. A ballad can relate a story in so much detail that the events pass at roughly the same rate of speed as they unfolded in the "real time," or they can move rapidly through a great deal of activity in a short time. In either case, the temporal element of the story affects the listener's ability to portend accurately and their engagement with the outcome.

We know that Mahler regarded at least one of his *Wunderhorn* settings as
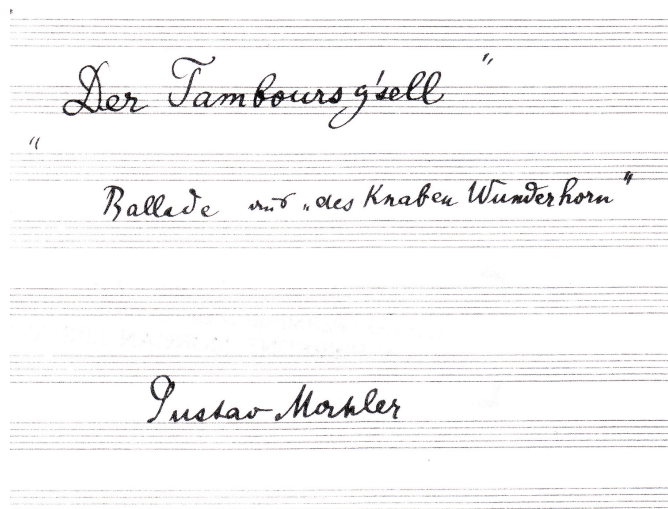
Figure 2.1: Title Page, "Der Tamboursg'sell," orchestral manuscript
Robert Lehman Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, NY

balladic, because he uses the term on the cover of his autograph for this song, "Der

Tamboursg'sell," (see Figure 2.1). Mahler uses the term *Humoresken*, a designation

that his own art typically reserved for instrumental music, such as Schumann's Op.

20, to refer to those of his *Wunderhorn* lieder that were first published in 1898.

Mahler derives his understanding of the term from literature, as seen in the works of

Jean Paul, Wilhelm Busch, Christian Morgenstern, and Adolf Stern. These literary

works and the songs Mahler modeled on them portray a sense of the wry and ironic,

typically implying a moral.[26] One might find this attitude portrayed through clever,

comic elements, such as "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" or grim, tragic

stories, such as that told by "Das irdische Leben." Often the stories impart a sequence

of impossible events, such as those in "Lob des hohen Verstandes." Mahler even uses

the term for non-balladic songs with lyrical texts, such as "Wer hat dies Liedlein

erdacht?" Mahler's views on humor in art stem from the writings of Jean Paul,[27] who

wrote in his *Vorschule der Ästhetik*:

> The understanding and the object-world know only finitude. In the
> Romantic we find only the infinite contrast between the ideas (or
> reason) and all finitude itself. But suppose just this finitude were
> imputed as *subjective* contrast to the idea of *objective* contrast, and
> instead of the sublime as an implied infinity, now produced a
> finitude applied to the infinite, and thus simply infinity of contrast,
> that is a negative infinity. Then we should have humor or the romantic
> comic.[28]

Romantics derived humor from an individual's inability to comprehend his/her own

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[26] Paul Fleming, *The Pleasures of Abandonment: Jean Paul and the Life of Humor* (Würzburg: Königshauseen & Neumann, 2006), 19-20.

[27] Günter Schnitzler, "Gustav Mahler und die Romantik in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*," *Musik-Konzepte* 136 (April, 2007): 41.

[28] Jean Paul Richter, "Course VII. On Humorous Poetry," in *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School of Aesthetics*, trans. Margaret R. Hale (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 88.

limitations compared to the vastness of the sublime. In 1892, Mahler wrote to his sister Justine regarding his "Humoresken," "They are stranger still than the former ones, they are all 'humor,' in the best and truest sense of the word; something for which only a few exceptional men are created."[29] Ultimately, we know, however, that he understood the term "*Humoreske*" to be related to the ballad because in the summer of 1899, Mahler and Natalie Bauer Lechner were speaking about the famed ballad composer Karl Loewe, when the composer said, "He would have understood my Humouresques, for in fact, he is the precursor of this form of writing."[30]

So, while Mahler was not exactly consistent in his use of genre designations for the *Wunderhorn* songs, many of them possess the characteristics that he seemed to associate with the ballad: a distinctive narrative trajectory with a beginning, a middle, and a moral ending, portrayed through epic and or dramatic means. Using these criteria to measure Mahler's poetic and musical story-telling process reveals qualities of these song that have long been overlooked.

Mahler's Sources for his *Wunderhorn* Texts

One of the greatest mysteries in terms of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* lieder concerns the precise identification of his poetic sources. Before we can explore the changes that Mahler made to his poetic texts, we must know what he had to begin with, in essence precisely what Mahler saw that inspired him to set these specific ballads to music. Without this information, we cannot accurately gauge the degree of manipulation that

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[29] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 250.

[30] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, trans. Dika Newlin, ed. Peter Franklin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 130.

his changes made to the poetry. By the time Mahler composed his first *Wunderhorn*

songs, the anthology had appeared in four different editions throughout Germany and

Austria, as well as being excerpted in numerous other poetic publications. Many

scholars have grappled with determining which printed texts Mahler used to create

the lyrics for his songs.[31] The composer's tendency to adapt his poetry freely for his

own musical and narrative aims further complicates this issue. We know that Mahler

owned at least six copies of the *Wunderhorn* anthology throughout his life, including

at least one first edition, but when he acquired the various editions unknown, and

unfortunately, none of his personal copies has survived, eliminating any conclusive

final proof as to his sources for a given text.[32] Heinz Rölleke and Renate Hilmar-Voit

have determined that Mahler most likely used a volume published in Leipzig in 1879

edited by Friedrich Bremer, an 1883 edition published in Berlin and edited by Robert

Boxberger, and a first edition presented to him by Anna von Mildenburg in 1895,[33]

about which he wrote to her, "You cannot imagine what joy I have found with this

attractive book. It is so beautiful, that its contents are almost new to me."[34] The

primary differences between the first editions and those edited by Bremer and

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[31] Fritz Egon Pamer, "Gustav Mahlers Lieder," *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft: Beihefte der Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich* 16 (1929): 116–38; Ernst Klusen, "Die Liedertexte Gustav Mahlers," *Sudetendeutsche Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 6 (1933): 178–84; Anne Wadmann, "Gustav Mahler en *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*," *Levende Talen* 53 (1966): 681–99; Peter Hamm, "'Von Euch ich Urlaub nimm'…' Zu den von Gustav Mahler vortonen Texten," *Akzente* 24 (1977): 159–67; Kurt von Ficher, "Gustav Mahlers Umgang mit Wunderhorntexten," *Melos/NZ* 2 (1978): 103–07; Rölleke, "Gustav Mahlers *Wunderhorn* Lieder," 370–78.

[32] Peter Revers, *Mahlers Lieder: Ein musikalischer Werkführer* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2000), 77. In an 1892 letter to his sister Justine, Mahler states that he owns "no fewer than 3 copies" of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Stephen McClatchie, ed. *The Mahler Family Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 153.

[33] Rölleke, "Textgrundlagen und Textauswahl," 370–78.

[34] Hilmar-Voit, *Im Wunderhorn-Ton: Gustav Mahlers sprachliches Kompositionmaterial bis 1900* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1988), 20. "Welche Freude ich mit dem reizenden Buche habe, können Sie sich gar nicht denken. So schön ist es, daβ sein Inhalt beinahe neu ist."

Boxberger concern changes in orthography, dialect, and punctuation rather than major differences in the story told by the poetry itself. For my analyses, I have compared these factors in Mahler's texts (as listed in the critical edition located in the complete works) to those found in the first edition, the Bremer edition, the Boxberger edition, and a modern edition, published in 2003 and edited by Rölleke.

Using spelling and punctuation as criteria, none of Mahler's texts appears to have come directly from the first edition, leading me to believe that his comments to Anna von Mildenburg indicate that he valued his first edition(s) more as an treasured *objet d'art* than as a tool for working out song texts. By comparing these three editions to the texts Mahler set, I have concluded that the overwhelming majority of Mahler's texts most likely originated from the Boxberger edition, and that only for his final two *Wunderhorn* songs, "Revelge" and "Der Tamboursg'sell," did Mahler use the Bremer edition.

Once we have established the precise poetic materials Mahler had at his disposal, we can then consider how they conveyed information to the functioned poetically. Ballads can unfold in several poetic modes: they can be epic, dramatic, a combination of the two, or either of the two combined with lyric writing. For his *Wunderhorn* lieder, Mahler primarily chose ballad poetry that does not dwell in purely descriptive interludes (the lyrical mode), though the protagonist in "Ich ging mit Lust" opens his tale with a lyrical statement and a lengthy, somewhat lyrical passage occurs in the middle of "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt." For the most part, however, Mahler opted for *Wunderhorn* verse that functioned purely in the epic and dramatic modes, choosing five texts consisting entirely of narrated text (the epic mode) ("Zu

Straβburg auf der Schanz," "Scheiden und Meiden," "Rheinlegendchen," "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt," and "Der Tamboursg'sell"), seven that consist strictly of dialogue (the dramatic mode) ("Aus! Aus!," "Starke Einbildungskraft," "Nicht Wiedersehen," "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," "Verlorne Müh'!," "Trost im Unglück," and "Das Lied des Verfolgten im Turm"), and six that combine the epic and dramatic modes ("Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen," "Ich ging mit Lust," "Das irdische Leben," "Lob des hohen Verstands," "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," and "Revelge").

Mahler's Textual Changes

Mahler's statement regarding the nature of folk poetry, as recalled by Alma Mahler, forms the bedrock of much of the existing research into the composer's poetic license:

> It always seems barbaric to me when musicians undertake the setting to music of completely beautiful poetry. These [the *Wunderhorn* texts] are not completed texts, but blocks of stone that anyone might make his own.[35]

Mahler never failed to make these poems truly his own. Among the twenty-four songs that Mahler composed using *Wunderhorn* poetry as texts, he did not use a single poem exactly as it appeared in any of the printed sources available to him. This flexible approach to the poems which Arnim and Brentano had already felt justified in "adapting and completing" demonstrates that the composer viewed his versions of the poems as just another link in the morphological chain traveled by any product of

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[35] Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Erinnerungen und Briefe*, Donald Mitchell, ed., (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1971), 120. "Es käme ihm auch immer wie Barbarei vor, wenn Musiker es unternehmen, vollendet schöne Gedichte in Musik zu setzen. Seien keine vollendeten Gedichte, sondern Felsblöcke, aus denen jeder das Seine formen dürfe."

an orally transmitted folk tradition, in which a poem changes gradually over time as it passes from person to person.[36] We do not find this kind of poetic liberty in any of Mahler's other song composition, so clearly he saw in the *Wunderhorn* a kind of freedom that non-folk poetry did not offer. All the *Wunderhorn* songs' lyrics, not just those of the ballads, were created through varying degrees of omission, repetition, substitution or addition of words, but the manipulations made to the balladic poems served not only Mahler's musical needs, but those of story-telling.

We have a concrete example of how Mahler went about adapting his texts. The sketch for "Der Tamboursg'sell"[37] is a two-page document that simply lays out the harmonic progression, the repeated drum cadence, and, to a small degree, the melodic contour of the song.[38] On the first page of the sketch, the text is written above the melody in the same black ink as the music; on the second page, the text is scribbled in pencil and then erased. Below the music on the second page, Mahler wrote out the text for the second half of the song in ink. The text located below the music is copied out in the same format as it appears in the Arnim and Brentano anthology (the Bremer edition), but in the penciled and erased text found with the melodic draft above on the same page, Mahler freely adds and omits numerous repeated phrases. Had he taken the time to notate his textual changes on paper, they surely would have appeared on this document. Their absence strongly suggests that the changes were made "on the fly" during the compositional process. This seemingly spontaneous process of adding

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[36] Fallersleben, "Zur Geschichte des Wunderhorns," 262.

[37] Not the autograph, which features the label "Ballade aus des Knaben Wunderhorn," see figure 2.1.

[38] This sketch is part of the Robert Owen Lehman Collection held at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

or omitting textual repetitions tells us a great deal about Mahler's innate sense of musical, theatrical, and poetic timing in that he does not allow the story to drag with the inclusion of the additional stanzas.

Mahler's adjustments to "Das irdische Leben," as displayed in his orchestral manuscript, also support the idea that his poetic alterations were an inclusive part of the compositional process.[39] This twenty-page document shows two notable pieces of evidence of textual changes that fall in meaningful places. The first of these appears at the first instance of Mahler's text modification. He omitted the first and fifth stanzas from the original *Wunderhorn* poem, entitled "Verspätung." Since the poem itself is quite repetitive, the first place that Mahler's changes becomes evident does not appear until the final line of the first stanza, where he replaces the line "Morgen wollen wir **säen** geschwind" with the text of the second stanza, "Morgen wollen wir **ernten** geschwind." The manuscript paper on which the word "ernten" is written shows visible evidence of a previous erasure.[40] Mahler appears to have erased the word "säen" and replaced it with "ernten," demonstrating that he made the change while working on the manuscript for "Das irdische Leben," rather than as a distinctly separate activity. The point at which the omitted fifth stanza would have occurred also shows evidence of a change of heart. The thirteenth and fourteenth pages of the twenty-page manuscript appear on a completely foreign, unidentified brand of manuscript paper, but are surrounded both before and after by a more standardized

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[39] This manuscript is part of the Mary Flagler Cary Collection held at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

[40] All of the instances where ink appears to have been erased on Mahler's manuscripts are evident as the paper below has a more rough appearance and feel. Mahler's common practice for the erasure of ink consisted of using a knife or sharp blade to simply scrape the ink off of the paper. Several of the manuscripts also show small reddish brown droplet shapes near points of erasure, which may indicate places where Mahler cut himself with the blade.

type of paper (marked B.C. No. 6, sized 34 x 27 cm. with twenty staves), as though the original material appearing on pages 13 and 14 were removed and replaced by something different. The inserted paper is slightly smaller in size (33.5 x 25 cm. with eighteen staves) and has aged to a different color than those that surround it. The text and music written on the unusual paper marks the place in the music where Mahler set the final stanza, which would have immediately followed the omitted fifth stanza. Since many of Mahler manuscripts include entire pages that are crossed out and re-written, the absence of the page that this new paper replaces is quite remarkable. It may very well be that Mahler originally composed music for the fifth stanza from Arnim and Brentano's anthology and later removed it entirely, in order to avoid the opportunity for performance of a verse that he did not want included in the song. Again, in his omission of two stanzas from a poem that is inherently repetitive, Mahler propels the story forward and demonstrates his awareness of musical timing.

As Mahler left none of his *Wunderhorn* texts completely unchanged in transforming them from what he found in the anthology to his song texts, I will discuss his changes individually on a song-by-song basis. I have chosen to approach the ballads in chronological order, as this will demonstrate that in many cases, Mahler's textual adaptations became bolder and more extensive as his intimacy with the anthology grew over the years. The changes Mahler made to these songs range from minor, such as small bits of text repetition or rearranging of words within a sentence, to quite extensive, for example, including entire stanzas of poetry that he authored himself and added to his song lyric. Some of these alterations greatly change the meaning of the story told by Mahler's song. As I discuss each song individually,

the poem found in the appropriate edition of the anthology will appear beside Mahler's text. I indicate the few instances where Mahler's texts in the piano and voice versions of the songs differ from those in the orchestral arrangements using parentheses for the texts as they appear in the orchestral versions of the song in question. In the vast majority of cases, we find that the resulting song lyric has been adapted to better serve the story being told, while other changes simply serve Mahler's musical settings.

"Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen"

Mahler's first attempt at telling *Wunderhorn* stories in the form of miniature ballads appears in "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen." The poem on which it is based, "Um die Kinder still und artig machen" first appeared in print in 1777 in volume I B of the collection *Eyn feyner kleyner Almanach vol schönerr echterr liblicherr Volkslieder, lustiger Reyen vnndt Mordgeschichte, gesungen von Gabriel Wunderlich, weyl. Benckelsangernn zu Dessaw, herausgegeben von Daniel Seuberlich, schustern tzu Ritzmück ann der Elbe* (hereafter "Feiner Almanach").[41]

Mahler's manipulation of this poem has several consequences for the poetic structure of the text and our interpretation of its meaning. Most obviously seen by simply looking at the texts side-by-side, Mahler has transformed the four stanzas of four lines each that appear in the poetic anthology (the Boxberger edition) into three stanzas of varying lengths (the first contains eight lines, the second, nine, and the third, ten). Despite this irregular stanzaic structure, Mahler adds to each verse a six-syllable repeated phrase ("Kukukuk, kukukuk," "und niemand, und niemand," and

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[41] Bode, "Bearbeitung der Vorlagen," 45, 268–69; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 225.

Um die Kinder still und artig zu machen (Boxberger)	Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen (As set by Mahler)
Es kam ein Herr zum Schlöβli Auf einem schönen Röβli; Da lugt die Frau zum Fenster aus Und sagt: „Der Mann ist nicht zu Haus, Und Niemand heim als Kinder Und's Mädchen auf der Winden." Der Herr auf seinem Röβli Sagt zu der Frau im Schlöβli.	Es kam ein Herr zum Schlösseli auf einem schönen Röss'li, kukukuk, kukukuk! Da lugt die Frau zum Fenster aus und sagt: „der Mann ist nicht zu Haus, und niemand, und niemand, und niemand heim als meine Kind'; und's Mädchen, und's Mädchen ist auf der Wäschewind!" Der Herr auf seinem Rösseli sagt zu der Frau im Schlösseli: Kukukuk, kukukuk!

„Sind's gute Kind, sind's böse Kind?
Ach, liebe Frau, ach sagt geschwind!"
Die Frau, die sagt: „Sehr böse Kind;
Sie folgen Muttern nicht geschwind."
	„Sind's gute Kind', sind's böse Kind'?
	Ach, liebe Frau, ach sagt geschwind,"
	kukukuk, kukukuk!
	„In meiner Tasch' für folgsam Kind'
	da hab ich manche Angebind", kukukuk,
	    kukukuk!
	
	Die Frau, die sagt: „sehr böse Kind'!
	Sie folgen Muttern nicht geschwind,
	Sind böse, sind böse!"
	Die Frau, die sagt: „sind böse Kind!
	Sie folgen der Mutter nicht
	    geschwind!"

Da sagt der Herr: „So reit ich heim; Dergleichen Kinder brauch ich kein." Und reit auf seinem Röβli Weit, weit entweg vom Schlöβli.	Da sagt der Herr: „so reit' ich heim, dergleichen Kinder brauch ich kein'!" Kukukuk, kukukuk! Und reit' auf seinem Rösseli weit, weit entweg vom Schösseli! Kukukuk, Kukukuk!

"sind böse, sind böse") which lends a consistency and strophic feel to his three verses.

Regularity of rhythm is also maintained by his expansion of the contracted words

"Schlöβli" and "Röβli" to three syllables in "Schlösseli" and "Rösseli." The folk

nature of the original poem lends a certain degree of irregularity to the essentially

iambic tetrameter poetic meter, and Mahler's changes serve to straighten out many of these anomalies. The stanzaic manipulation and added material also vastly alter the original poem's AABB rhyme scheme, providing each stanza with several rhymed pairs separated by animal sounds or repeated phrases.

Viewed in the light of Goethe's poetic modes, "Um schlimme Kinder" combines both the epic and the dramatic. The story is narrated by an outside source, providing the audience with an essentially neutral viewpoint on the events that unfold. The cuckoo and his interjections of "Kukukuk!" which occur on six different occasions throughout the song can be seen either as a mimetic insertion of an additional character in the dialogue or as a diegetic musical commentary translated into nonsense syllables. The words spoken by the woman and the rider are clearly indicated both through narrative prompting ("Die Frau, die sagt," "Da sagt der Herr") and with quotation marks; however, this is an unusual instance where Mahler does not provide different musical material for each of his characters. Rather, the song maintains a simple, nearly strophic, folk-like sound throughout.

The poem, in either version, tells a simple story of an encounter between a rider and the lady of a castle that he encounters on his journey. Upon learning from the lady that her children as misbehaved, he tells her that he will ride on, as he "can give nothing to such children." The brief encounter plays out in real time as the personas converse with interjections from a third person narrator who presents the arrival of the rider, the speakers in the dialogue, and the rider's departure. Mahler's added phrases, however, allude to something else taking place. The cuckoo calls heard throughout the ballad establish the rustic scene of the exchange but also serve to

broaden the landscape, causing the listener to portend, wondering if something else is happening below the surface. The cuckoo himself represents an additional voice, and what his interjections convey will become clear when I explore its possible levels of meaning in Chapter 4.

We can learn a great deal about this, and in fact, all of these poems, by looking at the ways various scholars in folklore and musicology have identified it in terms of tale type, in other words, what kind of story is being told by the poem. Folklore scholars view "Um schlimme Kinder" as both a lesson for the children and a message for their mother, referring to "Um schlimme Kinder" as a story of intemperate zeal in truth telling, punishment of ungrateful or ill-mannered children, refused acts of generosity, and a semi-historical tale of a mother and a hero.[42] Musicologists who have studied and categorized the *Wunderhorn* songs, Renate Hilmar-Voit and E. Mary Dargie, see the story as more of a lesson for children, labeling the story as one of cheerful mockery and a story for the childlike mind.[43] Clearly, the story can mean different things to different people, but the most important question we must try to answer is what the story meant for Mahler and why he chose to set it to music. He makes this clearer through musical cues, which I will discuss in Chapter 3, and in

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[42] Excessive truth telling comprises tale type J551and punishment of naughty children is type Q281.1 in Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature: a Classification of Narrative Elements in Folk Tales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955); stories of refused acts of generosity make up tale type D.c.1 in Eleanor R. Long, "Ballad Classification and the 'Narrative Theme' Concept Together with a Thematic Index to Anglo-Irish-American Balladry," in *Ballad Research: The Stranger in Ballad Narrative and Other Topics. Proceedings of the 15th International Conference of the Kommision für Volksdichtung of the Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore: Dublin and County Clare, Ireland, 26 August–1 September 1985*, ed. Hugh Shields (Dublin: Folk Music Society of Ireland, 1986); David Buchan views the story as a semi-historical tale of a hero and a mother in *The Ballad and the Folk*.

[43] Hilmar-Voit labels cheerful mockery as the second type of Mahlerian *Wunderhorn* story; Dargie's label of songs for the childlike mind comprise her fifth category in *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981).

Chapter 4, pulling the textual and musical clues together into a new theory behind the meaning of the song.

"Ich ging mit Lust"

"Ich ging mit Lust" provides an example in which Mahler's changes to the original text alter the story a great deal. "Waldvöglein," as this poem was initially titled, first appeared in print in Arnim and Brentano's collection, and its similarity to several other orally-transmitted poems have led scholars to believe that it was primarily manufactured by the editors by cobbling together various bits of verse.[44]

"Ich ging mit Lust" appears among the first *Wunderhorn* lieder composed by Mahler. The composer deleted a significant portion of the poem, and he also added a completely new stanza at the end. His manipulations lengthen the original five cinquains to four irregular stanzas of six (the first, second and fourth) or seven lines. These stanzas become even more irregular through the repetition of texts, which adds nine syllables to the first stanza, thirteen syllables to the second, and eleven to the third. The poem moves in an irregular iambic tetrameter maintained until the final two lines of each stanza, which Mahler either lengthens (as in the second stanza) or shortens (as in the first and final stanzas). His added lines also slightly vary the ABCCB rhyme structure with a fifth line that is sometimes paired with the line preceding it and sometimes with the line that follows.

   "Ich ging mit Lust" tells the story of a young man who visits his sweetheart during the night. The original poem clearly lays out which text belongs to the protagonist, which to his sweetheart, and which to the third-person narrator, but

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[44] Bode, "Bearbeitung der Vorlagen," 638–9; Reiser, "Seine Quellen," 521–22.

Waldvöglein (Boxberger)

Ich ging mit Lust durch einen grünen
   Wald;
Ich hört die Vöglein singen.
Sie sangen so jung, sie sangen so alt,
Die kleinen Waldvöglein in dem
   Wald.
Wie gern hört ich sie singen!

Nun sing, nun sing, Frau Nachtigall!
Sing Du's bei meinen Feinsliebchen:
„Komm schier, komm schier, wenn's
   finster ist,
Wenn Niemand auf der Gassen ist!
Herein will ich Dich lassen."

Der Tag verging, die Nacht brach an;
Er kam zu Feinslieb gegangen.
Er klopft so leis wohl an den Ring:
„Ei, schläfst Du, oder wachst Du,
   Kind?
Ich hab so lang gestanden." -

„Daβ Du so lang gestanden hast,
Ich hab noch nicht geschlafen.
Ich dacht als frei in meinem Sinn:
Wo ist mein Herzallerliebster hin,
Wo mag er so lang bleiben?"-

„Wo ich so lang geblieben bin,
Das darf ich Dir wohl sagen:
Beim Bier und auch beim rothen
   Wein,
Bei einem schwarzbraunen
   Mädelein,
Hätt Deiner bald vergessen!"

Ich ging mit Lust (Mahler setting)

Ich ging mit Lust durch einen grünen
   Wald,
ich hört die Vöglein singen.
Sie sangen so jung, sie sangen so alt,
die kleinen Waldvöglein im grünen
   Wald, im grünen Wald!
Wie gern hört' ich sie singen, ja singen!

Nun sing', nun sing', nun sing', Frau
   Nachtigall!
Sing' du's bei meinem Feinsliebchen:
Komm' schier, komm' schier wenn's
   finster ist,
wenn niemand auf der Gasse ist,
dann komm' zu mir, dann komm' zu
   mir!
Herein will ich dich lassen, ja lassen!

Der Tag verging, die Nacht brach an,
er kam zu Feinsliebchen,
Feinsliebchen gegangen!
Er klopft so leis' wohl an den Ring,
ei, schläfst du oder wachst, mein Kind?
Ich hab' so lang' gestanden,
Ich hab' so lang' gestanden!

Es schaut der Mond durch's
   Fensterlein
zum holden süβen Lieben,
die Nachtigall sang die ganze Nacht.

Du schlafselig' Mägdelein, nimm dich
  in Acht,
nimm dich in Acht!
Wo ist dein Herzliebster geblieben?

Mahler blurs the narrative point of view through the omission of quotation marks and shifting verb tenses. The past tense returns as the narration is taken over by a third party, who relays the man's arrival at the home of the young lady. Upon his arrival, the story changes from a simple recounting of a tale to a mystery about what a lover might be up to when he is out of sight, creating space for the listener to imagine their own potential outcome. The passage of time throughout both the poem and the song text remains elusive, as the opening stanza provides one of the rare instances of Mahler's setting text in the lyric mode from this collection. Before the story can get underway, the scene is set, and only when the narrator takes over the story in the third stanza does time become a concrete factor, "The day passed, the night came," and the action begins. At this point, the listener begins to understand the importance of the passage of time to the story, as the young man lies about his activities while his sweetheart had been forced to sit waiting for his arrival. The temporal ambiguity of the opening serves as a plot device; the lad is being vague on purpose in an attempt to cover up his whereabouts.

Eleanor Long classifies this type of story as an erotic encounter (type A.a.) and Hilmar-Voit and Dargie see "Ich ging mit Lust" as a kind of pessimistic love song. But what the song truly offers its audience is a moral lesson, particularly one for young women, which Mahler clarifies in his final line (which he added to the original poem), "Be cautious, sleepy maiden! Where is your lover staying?" Much like the

example seen in "Um schlimme Kinder," this song offers a number of potential interpretations, but Mahler's musical choices help to clarify his position on the subject, as we will see in Chapter 3, and in Chapter 4, I will discuss my theory on the meaning behind the ballad.

"Aus! Aus!"

Mahler's manipulations to this poem transform a somewhat sad story of lovers being separated by a war into an almost comical scene where a couple is making a melodramatic show of their faithfulness (all the while knowing that neither has any intention of keeping their word). Bettina von Arnim (sister of Clemens Brentano and wife of Achim von Arnim) collected and modified "Abschied für Immer" for its eventual inclusion in the anthology. Her version paints a much rosier picture than the traditional folksong in which the lovers say their final goodbyes, holding no hope (or desire, really) for a reunion.[45]

Mahler's revisions left a song text that bears only a passing similarity to the *Wunderhorn* poem. Through rearranging the lines and adding numerous instances of repeated text (particularly exclamations of excitement or despair), Mahler transforms the opening two five-line stanzas of the poem into a three-line stanza and a six-line stanza that includes a kind of refrain constructed from the opening lines. In all, Mahler adds eleven lines of newly created text and omits sixteen lines from the poem.

Both the poem and the song text present a story of lovers being parted by war. While the soldier can barely contain his excitement, the maiden has given up hope that they will be reunited and vows to go into a convent. The story is relayed entirely

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[45] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 630–31, Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 503–05.

Abschied für Immer (Boxberger)

Heute marschieren wir,
Morgen marschieren wir
Zu dem hohen Thor hinaus;
Ei, Du wacker schwarzbraun
   Mägdlein,
Unsre Lieb ist noch nicht aus.
Reist Du schon fort?
Reist Du denn schon fort?
Kommst Du niemals wieder heim?
Und wenn Du kommst in ein
   fremdes Ländchen,
Liebster Schatz, vergiß nicht mein!

Trink Du ein Gläschen Wein
Zur Gesundheit mein und Dein!
Kauf mir einen Strauß an hut,
Nimm mein Tüchlein in die Tasche,
Deine Thränlein mit abwasch!

Es kommt die Lerche,
Es kommt der Storch,
Es kommt die Sonne ans Firmament.
In das Kloster will ich gehn,
Weil ich mein Schätzchen nicht
   mehr thu sehen,
Weil nicht wiederkommt mein
   Schatz.

„Dorten sind zwei Turteltäubchen,
Sitzen auf dem dürren Aft;
Wo sich zwei Verliebte scheiden,
Da verwelket Laub und Gras.
Was batt mich ein schöner Garten,
Wenn ich nichts darinnen hab?

Aus! Aus! (As set by Mahler)

„Heute marschieren wir! Juchhe,
   juchhe, im grünen Mai!
Morgen marschieren wir zu dem hohen
   Thor hinaus,
zum hohen Thor hinaus! Aus!"

„Reis’st du denn schon fort? je-je!
Mein Liebster! Kommst niemals wieder
   heim?
Je! Je! Mein Liebster!"
Heute marschieren wir juchhe, juchhe,
   im grünen Mai!
Ei, du schwarzbraun’s Mägdelein,
uns’re Lieb’ ist noch nicht aus, die Lieb’
   ist noch nicht aus, aus!

Trink’ du ein Gläschen Wein
zur Gesundheit dein und mein!
Siehst du diesen Strauß am Hut?
Jetzo heißt’s marschieren gut!
Nimm das Tüchlein aus der Tasch’,
deine Thränlein mit abwasch’!
Heute marschieren wir, juchhe, juchhe,
   im grünen Mai!
morgen marschieren wir, juchhe, im
   grünen Mai!"

„Ich will in’s Kloster geh’n,
weil mein Schatz davon geht!
Wo geht’s denn hin, mein Schatz?
Gehst du fort, heut’ schon fort?
Und kommst nimmer wieder?
Ach! Wie wird’s traurig sein hier in
   dem Städtchen!
Wie bald vergißt du mein!
Ich armes Mädchen!"

Was batt mich die schönste Rose,
Was batt mich ein jung frisch Leben,
Wenn ich's nicht der Lieb ergeb?"

Morgen marschieren wir, juchhe,
    juchhe, im grünen Mai!
Tröst' dich, mein lieber Schatz, im Mai
    blüh'n gar viel Blümelein!
Die Lieb' ist noch nicht aus! Aus! Aus!
Aus! Aus!"

in the dramatic mode through dialogue between the young man and woman with interjections of the refrain calling the soldiers and his compatriots to battle. While maintaining a constant eye on events of the future, the story passes in real time as the lovers discuss how the pending war will affect their relationship. The poem maintains a relatively constant dactylic tetrameter, which Mahler manipulates with added words and repeated phrases. His alterations modify the poem's rhyme scheme of AABCB into a configuration that changes with each successive verse. Mahler's addition of the young man's exclamation "juchhe," as a term often heard in Alpine yodeling, provides a geographical context for the action.

The story presented by Mahler's text maintains the hope that the parting lovers may yet one day be reunited, replacing the line "Weil nicht wiederkommt mein Schatz" ("Because my love will not return") with "Tröst dich, mein lieber Schatz, im Mai blüh'n gar viel Blümelein! Die Lieb' ist noch nicht aus!" ("Take comfort, my love, in May many flowers bloom! Our love is not yet over!") However, his excessive repetitions of text lend the song text a certain sense of irony, leaving the listeners with the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they will take the lovers at their word or attribute their emotional farewell to youthful optimism. The entire story

occurs within the dramatic mode with a glance toward the future, beginning with the

initial call to arms, and ending with the dialogue between the departing soldier and

his distraught lover, and Mahler's deletion of the lines "Es kommt die Lerche,/ Es

kommt der Storch,/ Es kommt die Sonne ans Firmament." (The lark arrives, the stork

arrives, the sun arises in the firmament), markers of the arrival of Spring, serve to

speed along the action by eliminating an indication that the months have passed and

compressing the dialogue into a much closer representation of real time.

The same folklore classifications that qualify several other of Mahler's songs

regarding lovers separated by war (forced separation and tragic romance) label "Aus!

Aus!" Scholars who have studied these works make little distinction between this

song and others of lovers who are torn apart. Hilmar-Voit calls "Aus! Aus!" a

pessimistic love song, and Dargie, simply a love song. These labels, however, ignore

the subtle differences between this and other poems like it. Eight of Mahler's

Wunderhorn ballads tell stories of couples divided by war. Clearly, the composer

identified unique qualities among these poems, as he chose to set so many of these

stories to music.[46]

"Starke Einbildungskraft"

"Hast gesagt du willst mich nehmen" first gained attention as a *Gassenhauer*, or street

song, under the title "Ein Schlüsslein, ein Häfelein." These songs were sung by

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[46] Mahler set nine distinct poems regarding the separation of lovers by war: "Aus! Aus!," "Scheiden und Meiden," "Nicht Widersehen," "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," "Trost im Unglück," "Bildchen," "Unbeschreibliche Freude," "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm," and "Revelge." :Bildchen" and "Unbeschreibliche Freude" were combined to create the text for "Wo die schönen Trompten blasen." There seems to be no particular biographical data that would explain his attraction to these texts beyond his childhood near the barracks in Iglau, which instilled in him a love for military music. Perhaps by combining the military environment with the stories of doomed romance he felt more justified in his attraction to the poems, having never served in the military himself.

Starke Einbildungskraft (Boxberger)	**Starke Einbildungskraft (as set by Mahler)**
Mädchen	*Mädchen*
Hast gesagt, Du willst mich nehmen,	Hast gesagt, du willst mich nehmen,
Sobald der Sommer kommt : I :	sobald der Sommer kommt!
Der Sommer ist gekommen,	Der Sommer ist gekommen, ja
Du hast mich nicht genommen;	kommen,
Geh, Bubele, geh, nehm mich!	du hast mich nicht genommen, ja
Gelt, ja, Du nimmst mich noch?	nommen!
	Geh', Büble, geh'! Geh', nehm' mich!
	Geh', Büble, geh'! Geh' nehm' mich!
	Gelt ja? Gelt ja? Gelt ja,
	du nimmst mich noch?
Bube	*Bube*
Wie soll ich Dich denn nehmen,	Wie soll ich dich denn nehmen,
Und wenn ich Dich schon hab? : I :	die weil ich dich schon hab'?
Denn wenn ich halt an Dich gedenk,	Und wenn ich halt an dich gedenk',
Denn wenn ich halt an Dich gedenk,	und wenn ich halt an dich gedenk',
So mein ich, so mein ich,	so mein' ich, so mein' ich, so mein'
Ich mein, ich wär bei Dir.	ich alleweile: ich wär' schon bei dir!

itinerant musicians and often sold to the public on the broadsides. Among Arnim's estate, Ludwig Erk found a copy of the broadside containing this song, on which he dated his purchase in Jena in 1802.[47]

Mahler does very little to change the text of this short, comic song. The added repetitions of text stated by the maiden demonstrate her frustration and her attempt to beg and plead a proposal out of her lover, while his text remains direct and to the point. The simple dialogue between lovers stays entirely in the dramatic mode because a narrative interlude would prolong the inevitable and spoil the punch line.

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[47] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 448–50; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 244–45.

The dialogue plays out in real time, but refers to events of the past to set the scene ("You told me you would take me when the Summer came. The Summer has come."). The text consists entirely of dialogue without a third-person narrative voice. The immediacy of the text allows the listener to imagine that they are peering in on an intimate moment between two lovers, giving them a more vested interest in the outcome and causing the desire to take sides in the conflict and portend to the outcome. Mahler also speeds along the drama by omitting the repeat of the first two lines spoken by each character, as indicated in the poem. Ignoring these brief sections of omitted and repeated text, Mahler maintains the *Langzeilenvers*, a line of four feet with two final accents alternating with a line of three accented feet followed by a silent foot, of the original poem, as well as the ABCCDE rhyme structure.

Folklorists view this story as one of "girl acting as wooer" and one of "a violated promise."[48] Musicologists have labeled it as a cheerful love song and a humorous song. While all of these descriptors are accurate and the concept of a violated promise perhaps comes the closest to the moral message of the song, these labels still do not quite capture the full meaning and humor of the story. At just over one minute in length, "Starke Einbildungskraft" is the most miniature of Mahler's miniature ballads, but in its brevity it delivers both a serious lesson and a bit of witty banter. I will discuss this song as a joke like those described in Freud's *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* in Chapter 4.

"Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz"

Brentano collected "Der Schweizer" from a broadside that Erk located among

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[48] The violated promise story appears in type D.b.1. of the Long system.

Der Schweizer (Boxberger)

Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz,
Da ging mein Trauern an;
Das Alphorn hört ich drüben wohl
　anstimmen,
Ins Vaterland muβt ich hinüber
　schwimmen;
Das ging nicht an.

Ein Stunde in der Nacht
Sie haben mich gebracht;
Sie führten mich gleich vor des
　Hauptmanns Haus.
Ach Gott, sie fischten mich im
　Strome auf;
Mit mir ist's aus.

Früh Morgen um zehn Uhr
Stellt man mich vor das Regiment;
Ich soll da bitten um Pardon,
Und ich bekomm doch meinen Lohn;
Das weiβ ich schon.

Ihr Brüder allzumal,
Heut seht Ihr mich zum letztenmal.
Der Hirtenbub ist doch nur Schuld
　daran,
Das Alphorn hat mir solches angethan;
Das klag ich an.

Ihr Brüder alle Drei,
Was ich Euch bitt: erschieβt mich
　gleich;
Verschont mein junges Leben nicht,
Schieβt zu, daβ das Blut ‚rausspritzt!
Das bitt ich Euch.

Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz

Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz',
da ging mein Trauern an!
Das Alphorn hört' ich drüben wohl
　anstimmen,
in's Vaterland muβt' ich hinüber
　schwimmen,
das ging ja nicht an, das ging ja nicht an!
　anstimmen,
in's Vaterland muβt' ich hinüber
　schwimmen,
das ging ja nicht an, das ging ja nicht an!

Ein' Stund' in der Nacht
sie haben mich gebracht;
sie führten mich gleich vor des
Hauptmann's Haus!
Ach Gott! Sie fischten mich im Strome
　auf!
Mit mir ist es aus,
mit mir ist es aus!

Früh morgens um zehn Uhr
stellt man mich vor's Regiment!
Ich soll da bitten um Pardon, um Pardon!
Und ich bekomm' doch meinen Lohn,
und ich bekomm' doch meinen Lohn!
Das weiβ ich schon, das weiβ ich schon!

Ihr Brüder all'zumal, ihr Brüder
　all'zumal,
heut' seht ihr mich zum letzten mal;
heut' seht ihr mich zum letzten mal!
Der Hirtenbub' ist nur schuld daran!
Das Alphorn hat mir's angethan,
das hat mir's angethan!
Das klag' ich an, das klag' ich an!

O Himmelskönig, Herr!
Nimm Du meine arme Seele dahin,
Nimm sie zu Dir in den Himmel ein,
Laß sie ewig bei Dir sein,
Und vergiß nicht mein!

Arnim's estate, but his version of the poem differs quite dramatically from its source. Rather than suffering from intense homesickness, the soldier in the folksong leaves because he does not support the cause for which he has been called to fight. This soldier lacks the innocence and sympathetic nature of Brentano's deserter. Of course, it cannot be understated that this change also reflects Arnim and Brentano's commitment to the Pan-Germanist cause.[49]

Mahler omitted the final two cinquains of the poem, which admittedly contained a somewhat graphic representation of the soldier's end. His other poetic changes, in the form of repetitions, contractions, and removal of unnecessary words, primarily serve to destabilize the poetic rhythm, allowing his music, rather than the words, to control the flow of ideas. Mahler's version of the poem removes the violent image of the soldier's execution, shortens the duration of the action, and leaves open the smallest glimmer of a possibility that the soldier may be released and once again see his beloved Straßburg. This is one of many instances where Mahler omits text and in so doing, opens up avenues of interpretive ambiguity and allows the listener to portend, though in this case, their curiosity is not satisfied.

Neither the *Wunderhorn* poem nor Mahler's adaptation possesses a regular rhythmic or rhyming structure. The meter in both versions of the texts alternate between a couplet of tetrameter with a silent foot, a couplet of pentameter, and an

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[49] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 318–21; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 207–08.

isolated line of dimeter, and the pattern of 44552 appears in four of the six stanzas in the poem and two of the four stanzas of the song text. In terms of rhyme, no one stanza is structured identically to any other, though generally, the scheme falls in an aabba pattern. This irregularity likely results from the text's folk history.

The protagonist narrates the story directly to the audience, telling his story as if to serve as a warning to others. Only in the final stanza does his address change to his fellow soldiers. The direct address gives the emotional power of the soldier's story more urgency than had it been narrated by a third-person party. In the verses that Mahler omitted the soldier directly addresses the firing squad and God, and eliminating these verses provides the audience a more direct connection to the soldier, not allowing time and emotional distance to diminish the sympathy that his plight has aroused, though one might argue that the eliminated pleas for a swift execution also lend the soldier a certain degree of sympathy. Despite the specific temporal references (he tells us his capture took place at one o'clock in the morning), the passage of time in the story is elusive; one cannot tell how long the soldier has been awaiting his pending execution, only that he will face the regiment "tomorrow morning at ten o'clock." One could easily imagine either that the soldier has had a long time to think about his actions prior to telling his tale, or that all of these events had taken place within the course of one night.

In any event, the soldier's fate seems clear, and folklorists categorize this story in terms of the boy's eventual execution, as a man in the gallows (even though he will face a firing squad), a death as punishment, a death by legal execution, and a romantic tragedy. Hilmar-Voit and Dargie identify this story as one of war and one of earthly

life and death. The temporal and narrative ambiguity of Mahler's text translates into the musical language, which I will discuss in Chapter 3.

"Scheiden und Meiden"

Before Brentano discovered the folksong "Es ritten drei Reiter" in 1803, it had already enjoyed a full and varied past. The song had appeared in the "Feyner Almanach" in 1777, the 1784 collection of Anselm Elwert entitled *Ungedrukte Reste alten Gesanges nebst Stücken neuerer Dichtkunst* (hereafter "Elwert") and Friedrich Nicolai's 1777 "Almanach" (hereafter "Nicolai Almanach"). Yet despite this extensive publication history, Arnim and Bretano labeled the origins of the poem as "oral" rather than identifying the previously published sources. This kind of inaccuracy, whether intentional or accidental, began much of the controversy that surrounded the authenticity of the *Wunderhorn* anthology shortly after its release.[50] Mahler primarily changed the poem by adding numerous instances of repeated text, which disrupt the regularity of the poetic verses. A sizeable textual omission also blurs the distinction between geographical and mortal separation in "Scheiden und Meiden." The discarded text clearly states that the three riders who left the village were a metaphor for the departure of life, in other words, their leaving brings death. In Mahler's version of the text, it is not clear who the three riders really are and what their departure means to the people of the town. Rather than the harbingers of death, these riders might simply be sounding a call to arms and directing the men riding off to battle, in which case they may return. Even Mahler's change of the line which became the song's title, "Scheiden und Lassen" (parting and leaving) became

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[50] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 312–13; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 223.

Drei Reiter am Thor (Boxberger)

Es ritten drei Reiter zum Tor hinaus;
Ade!
Feins Liebchen schaute zum Fenster
   hinaus,
Ade!
Und wenn es denn soll geschieden sein,
So reich mir Dein goldenes Ringelein!
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, Scheiden und Lassen thut weh.

Und der uns scheidet, das ist der Tod;
Ade!
Er scheidet so manches Jungfräulein
   roth,
Ade!
Und wär doch geworden der liebe Leib
Der Liebe ein süßer Zeitvertreib!
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, Scheiden und Lassen thut weh.

Es scheidet das Kind wohl in der Wiegn;
Ade!
Wenn werd ich mein Schätzel doch
   kriegn?
Ade!
Und ist es nicht morgen, ach, wär es
   doch heut!
Es macht uns Allbeiden gar große Freud.
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, Scheiden und Lassen thut weh.

Scheiden und Meiden

Es ritten drei Reiter zum Thore hinaus!
Ade! Ade!
Fein's Liebchen, das schaute zum
   Fenster hinaus!
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Und wenn es denn soll geschieden sein,
so reich mir dein goldenes Ringelein!
Ade! Ade!
Ja Scheiden und Meiden tut weh, tut
   weh!
Ja Scheiden und Meiden tut weh, tut
   weh! Ade! Ade! Ade!

Es scheidet das Kind schon in der
   Wieg'!
Ade! Ade!
Wann werd' ich mein Schätzel wohl
   kriegen?!
Ade! Ade!
Und ist es nicht morgen,
ach, wär' es doch heut'!
Es machte uns Beiden wohl große
   Freud'!
Ade! Ade! Ade! Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, Scheiden und Meiden tut weh,
   tut weh!
Ja Scheiden und Meiden tut weh,
   tut weh! Ade!

"Scheiden und Meiden" (parting and avoiding), implies a less permanent, or at least,

more voluntary arrangement (and provides an aesthetically pleasing internal rhyme).

The original poem and the text that Mahler created from it make no direct mention of military imagery. Mahler's musical treatment, on the other hand, leaves no question that the song should be heard as a call to arms. I will detail these militaristic musical elements in Chapter 3.

Both the poem and the song text feature several shifts in narrative address and temporal placement. The story begins in the hands of a narrator who informs us of the arrival of the three riders who have come and are leaving the village. Within two lines, the story has shifted to the present tense through the words of the young man, informing his sweetheart that he must leave. The central stanza of the poem, which Mahler omitted from his song text, still belongs to the young man as he speaks of the things he will miss while he is away and his fear that he may not return. We hear from the maiden in the final stanza (though this is not directly indicated in the text itself, but only through Mahler's music), who is now looking to the future and the uncertainty of her situation. In Mahler's version of the text, it seems that some time has passed between the first and second verses, as the maiden's words are much more contemplative and pragmatic than those of the soldier in the first stanza. Rather than calling excitedly in the chaotic moments before departing, she has seen enough to speak thoughtfully on the matter ("When will I have my darling? It is not tomorrow, but if only it were to be today, that would make us both very happy."). She also tells of a child in its cradle, to whom, presumably, she has since given birth. We can only assume that the soldier is the father. The stanza that Mahler deleted contextualizes this statement and tells us that death (in the form of the three riders) even take children from the cradle. Mahler's deletion leaves the mention of the child somewhat

obscured as to its meaning. Mahler's musical cues, as seen in Chapter 3, do little to clarify the situation, leaving open a great deal of unresolved space in which the audience can portend their own outcome.

According to folklore studies, this story tells a tale of enforced departures or tragic romance.[51] Hilmar-Voit and Dargie place "Scheiden und Meiden" in the same category (pessimistic love songs) as "Ich ging mit Lust."

"Nicht Wiedersehen!"

Arnim and Brentano do not label the origin of "Nicht Wiedersehen!," but as Bode clearly states "All of these themes are traditional." The poem began its life as a folksong out of the Altrheinland area, near Wiesbaden.[52]

Mahler's most substantial change to this tragic text is the addition of a refrain stating, "Ade! Ade! Mein herzallerliebster Schatz, mein herzallerliebster Schatz!" (Farewell, farewell, my heart's most beloved, my heart's most beloved!). Mahler created the refrain out of the opening line of the poem and repeats it three times during the course of the song, each time seeming more tragic than the last. Mahler also manipulates the text on a smaller level in "Nicht Wiedersehen." The fourth stanza features numerous instances where Mahler changed words in small ways, such as contracting "gehen" to "geh'n" and changing the accent of "alleweil" to "all'weile." These small changes work to stabilize the poetic rhythm and allow the song to flow within the rhythmic structure of a funeral march. His final change

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[51] Enforced departures are tale type C.b. according to Long. Tragic romance, as viewed by Buchan has been mentioned previously.

[52] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 368; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 526.

Nicht wiedersehen (Boxberger)	**Nicht wiedersehen (as set by Mahler)**

„Nun ade, mein allerherzliebster Schatz!
Jetzt muβ ich wohl scheiden von Dir
Bis auf den andern Sommer;
Dann komm ich wieder zu Dir." -
	Und nun ade, mein herzallerliebster
	    Schatz!
	Jetzt muβ ich wohl scheiden von dir,
	    von dir,
	bis auf den andern Sommer;
	dann komm' ich wieder zu dir!
	Ade, Ade, mein herzallerliebster
	    Schatz,
	mein herzallerliebster Schatz!

Und als der junge Knab heimkam, Von seiner Liebsten fing er an: „Wo ist meine Herzallerliebste, Die ich verlassen hab?" -	Und als der junge Knab' heimkam, von seiner Liebsten fing er an: „Wo ist meine Herzallerliebste, die ich verlassen hab'?"
„Auf dem Kirchhof liegt sie begraben, Heut ist's der dritte Tag; Das Trauern und das Weinen Hat sie zum Tod gebracht." -	„Auf dem Kirchhof liegt sie begraben, heut' ist's der dritte Tag! Das Trauern und das Weinen hat sie zum Tod gebracht!" Ade, ade, mein herzallerliebster Schatz, mein herzallerliebster Schatz!
„Jetzt will ich auf den Kirchhof gehen, Will suchen meiner Liebsten Grab, Will ihr alleweil rufen, Bis daβ sie mir Antwort giebt.	Jetzt will ich auf den Kirchhof geh'n, will suchen meiner Liebsten Grab, will ihr all'weile rufen, ja rufen, bis daβ sie mir Antwort gab!
Ei, Du mein allerherzliebster Schatz, Mach auf Dein tiefes Grab! Du hörst kein Glöcklein läuten, Du hörst kein Vöglein pfeifen, Du siehst weder Sonn noch Mond!"	Ei du, mein allerherzliebster Schatz, mach' auf dein tiefes Grab! Du hörst kein Glöcklein läuten, du hörst kein Vöglein pfeifen, du siehst weder Sonne noch Mond! Ade, ade, mein herzallerliebster Schatz, mein herzallerliebster Schatz! Ade!

utilized a change in dialect in order to perfect a rhyme at the end of the third stanza,

using the word "gab" in place of "giebt." An unusual aspect of the stanzaic rhythm

appears in the original poem; while the first four stanzas fall in regular quatrains, the

final stanza adds an additional line, giving added weight and emphasis on the tragedy that befalls the young couple. Mahler keeps the extra line and follows it with an additional repetition of his constructed refrain.

The address of the song shifts between dialogue between the young man directed at both his sweetheart and the townsfolk and narration by a third party in the past tense. This narrative shift not only aids in the progression of the story but affects the way time progresses and flows for the characters. At the beginning of the text, we find the young man saying his farewells to his sweetheart. A brief switch from the dramatic to the epic mode (a mere two lines in the second stanza) allows the time that the young man has been away to pass in an instant; no sooner has he said goodbye, but he has returned. From this point forward, his address shifts to dialogue and directed address as he learns of his beloved's death, and then he goes to speak to his sweetheart at her graveside. This sudden shift of poetic mode and address allow the story to progress much more quickly, and upon the young man's arrival, the passage of time returns to normal, as he learns of his lover's tragic death and vows to seek out her grave. Time passes briskly again between the young man's proclamation and the final stanza in which he addresses his sweetheart's grave directly. It is not clear whether this is his first visit to her gravesite or if he has been visiting for some time, but his observations about the life experiences that she will miss indicate that he has given her death a great deal of thought and agonized consideration.

The *Wunderhorn* poem on which Mahler based his text lacks a regular rhyme scheme but sticks to a metrical structure of iambic tetrameter. Mahler's changes to the poem create a bit more irregularity in the metrical scheme and attempt to a small

degree to form a perfect rather than imperfect rhyme scheme, changing the line "Bis

daβ sie mir Antwort giebt" to "Antwort gab" to rhyme with "meiner Liebsten Grab."

The addition of Mahler's refrain serves to emphasize the tragedy as we learn that the

farewells that began as a brief parting will become the lover's final exchange.

This simple story of love and grief has been identified by folklorists Thompson

and Long as a story of death from love and a broken heart and as a sympathetic death

or suicide.[53] Hilmar-Voit classifies it as a song of forced separation, and Dargie as a

song of love.

"Der Schildwache Nachtlied"

"Ich kann und mag nicht fröhlich sein" was collected by Elwert in 1782, but his song

does not contain the military undertones found in the *Wunderhorn* version. In

Elwert's version of the song, the guard keeps watch over the town and speaks to his

sweetheart until the arrival of three hunters. Arnim and Brentano label this song as

coming from an oral transmission.[54]

The story revolves around a night watchman standing guard throughout the night.

As he sits alone in the darkness, his thoughts begin to wander, and he drifts off to

sleep, dreaming of his beloved. The story floats alternately between his present

moment and his dream.[55] Though both are presented in present tense, they seem to

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[53] Death from a broken heart is tale type F 104.1.1 according to Thompson, the sympathetic death or suicide is type G.a. according to Long.

[54] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 484–85; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 240–42.

[55] In and of itself, the text does not necessarily indicate that the watchman is dreaming and could just as convincingly be having a conversation with his beloved; Mahler's musical setting, however, which I will discuss in Chapter 3, eliminates all doubt the she appears only in the guard's dreams

Der Schildwache Nachtlied (Boxberger)	Der Schildwache Nachtlied (as set by Mahler)
„Ich kann und mag nicht fröhlich sein. Wenn alle Leute schlafen, So muß ich wachen, Muß traurig sein."-	Ich kann und mag nicht fröhlich sein! Wenn alle Leute schlafen! so muß ich wachen! Ja, wachen! Muß traurig sein!
„Ach, Knabe, Du sollst nicht traurig sein! Will Deiner warten Im Rosengarten, Im grünen Klee." -	Lieb' (Ach) Knabe, du mußt nicht traurig sein! Will deiner warten im Rosengarten! Im grünen Klee! im grünen Klee!
„Zum grünen Klee da komm ich nicht; Zum Waffengarten Voll Helleparten Bin ich gestellt." -	Zum grünen Klee da komm (geh') ich nicht! Zum Waffengarten! Voll Helleparten! Bin ich gestellt! Bin ich gestellt!
„Stehst Du im Feld, so helf Dir Gott! An Gottes Segen Ist Alles gelegen, Wer's glauben thut." -	Stehst du im Feld, so helf' dir Gott! An Gottes Segen ist Alles gelegen! Wer's glauben tut! wer's glauben tut!
„Wer's glauben thut, ist weit davon; Er ist ein König, Er ist ein Kaiser, Er führt den Krieg."	Wer's glauben tut, ist weit davon! Er ist ein König! Er ist ein Kaiser! Ein Kaiser! Er führt den Krieg!
Halt! Wer da? – Rund! Wer sang zur Stund? - Verlorne Feldwacht Sang es um Mitternacht. - Bleib mir vom Leib!	Halt! Wer da!! Rund'!? Bleib' mir vom Leib! Wer sang es hier? Wer sang zur Stund'? Verlorne Feldwacht sang es um Mitternacht! Mitternacht! Mitternacht!

Feldwacht! |

portray events spaced out over a longer period of time. Just as in dreams, time has little concrete meaning in this story. With each successive re-awakening, the watchman becomes increasingly frustrated with his situation, and his loyalty to his duty begins to waver, indicating that this series of events takes place over more than a single night. The final stanza carries unusual narrative implications because at this moment another figure enters the scene. This new character may be interpreted as another night watchman, who upon hearing the protagonist singing aloud into the night, calls out to determine the source of the voice, or given the lack of quotation marks and switch to past tense, may be a third-person narrative voice. In any case, this intrusion returns the protagonist to his present moment, and reorients all of the preceding dialogue in this past, shifting the audience's attention away from the guard's specific actions to the potential outcome that may develop due to his wandering attention. The opening statement in the original poem spoken by this mysterious figure also features an unusual line, "Halt! Wer da? – Rund! Wer sang zur Stund?" The internal rhyme found in this line is inconsistent with any other line in the poem. It is possible that Arnim and Brentano combined what they heard as two distinct lines into one in order to maintain the regularity of the quatrains in the poem, though in "Nicht Wiedersehen," as discussed earlier, the final stanza has one more line than those that follow. Regardless of the reasoning, Mahler eliminated the question by separating the two lines and inserting two original lines of text ("Bleib' mir vom Leib!/Wer sang es hier?") in between them.

Mahler's other additions to the text, short repeated phrases that appear in every stanza, help not only to regularize the poetic rhythm, but also highlight the gradual

shift in the protagonist as he changes from the loyal, ardent servant of the army

(telling the lover in his dream "Zum grünen Klee da komm ich nicht! Zum

Waffengarten! Voll Helleparten! Bin ich gestellt! Bin ich gestellt!") to a bitter

and faithless man ("Wer's glauben tut, ist weit davon! Er ist ein Konig! Er ist ein

Kaiser! Ein Kaiser! Er führt den Krieg!")[56]

Despite the dream-like quality to the story, folklorists view it as a relatively

straightforward situation involving the fulfillment of ideological commitments.[57]

Hilmar-Voit and Dargie see this respectively as a song of war and one of earthly life

and death. Mahler's musical setting of this song adds a great deal to my

interpretation, and the resulting analysis will appear in Chapter 4.

"Verlor'ne Müh'!"

Arnim obtained a broadside of this Swabian folksong dating from around 1790 that

remained in his collection until after his death. Fellow folksong scholar Ludwig Erk

documented Arnim's estate after his death and in so doing has left us an invaluable

record pertaining to Arnim and Brentano's *Wunderhorn* sources.[58] Erk's work has

allowed later folklore scholars, such as Karl Bode and Ferdinand Reiser to determine

the origins of the poems in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, whether they were genuine folk

songs, previously published material, or newly composed poems by Arnim and

Brentano.

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[56] "To the green clover I will not go. To the field of battle, in the brightest part, I am placed." "Those who believe are far off! He is a king! He is a Kaiser! He leads the war!"

[57] This type of story is type E.e.2. in Long's system.

[58] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 375; Reisler, *Seine Quellen*, 230–31.

Verlorene Mühe (Boxberger)	**Verlorne Müh'! (as set by Mahler)**
Sie	*Sie:*
Büble, wir wollen auße gehe,	Büble, wir –
Wollen unsre Lämmer besehe.	Büble, wir wollen auße gehe!
Komm, liebs Büberle,	Auße gehe!
Komm, ich bitt!	Wollen wir? Wollen wir?
	Unsere Lämmer besehe?
	Komm'! (Gelt!) Komm'!
	Komm', lieb's Büberle,
	komm', ich bitt'!
Er	*Er:*
Närrisches Dinterle,	Närrisches Dinterle,
Ich geh Dir holt nit.	ich geh (mach) dir holt (halt) nit!
Sie	*Sie:*
Willst vielleicht ä Bissel nasche?	Willst vielleicht?
Hol Dir was aus meiner Tasche!	Willst vielleicht ä (a) bissel nasche?
Hol, liebs Bübele,	Bissel nasche?
Hol, ich bitt!	Willst vielleicht?
	Willst vielleicht?
	Hol' dir was aus miener Tasch'!
	Hol' dir was!
	Hol' dir was!
	Hol'! Hol'!
	Hol' lieb's Büberle,
	hol', ich bitt'!
Er	*Er:*
Närrisches Dinterle,	Närrisches Dinterle,
Ich nasch Dir holt nit.	ich nasch' dir holt (halt) nit! Nit!
Sie	
Thut vielleicht der Durst Dich plage?	
Komm, will Dich zum Brunne trage;	
Trink, liebs Büberle,	
Trink, ich bitt!	
Er	
Närrisches Dinterle,	
Es dürst mich holt nit.	

.

Sie
Thut vielleicht der Schlaf Dich drücke?
Schlaf, ich jag Dir fort die Mücke;
Schlaf, liebes Büberle,
Schlaf, ich bitt!

Er
Narrisches Dinterle,
Mich schläfert's holt nit.

Sie
Gelt, ich soll mein Herz Dir schenke,
Immer willst an mich gedenke?
Nimm's liebe Büberle,
Nimm's, ich bitt!

Sie
Gelt, ich soll –
gelt, ich soll mein Herz dir schenke,
Herz dir schenke!?
Gelt, ich soll?
Gelt, ich soll?
Immer willst an mich gedenke!?
(gedenken.)
Immer!? Immer!? Immer!?
Nimm's! Nimm's!
Nimm's! Lieb's Büberle!
Nimm's, ich bitt'!

Er
Närrisches Dinterle,
Ich mag es holt nit.

Er
Närrisches Dinterle,
ich mag es holt (halt) nit! Nit!

Much like "Das irdische Leben," which I will discuss shortly, this lengthy poem was shortened by Mahler by the omission of two stanzas. In each stanza, the maiden tries offering something different in hopes of winning over the man she loves, and in each stanza, she is flatly refused. In the sections that were removed, the maiden offers the lad a drink from the well and to fight off mosquitoes while he takes a nap. The poetic rhythm of the original, comprised of dactylic phrases in tetrameter and dimeter, remained much intact through Mahler's manipulation, which simply adds brief repeated phrases. The repeated phrases do little to disrupt the rhyme scheme of AABCBC; in Mahler's version, the scheme is simply expanded to

ABBAABCCDEFEF to fit into the form and rhythm of the *Ländler*, a traditional German folk dance, similar to a waltz.

In the tradition of folklore studies, this story is classified by Thompson as a tale of girl as wooer, and by Long as a story of a failed offer of seduction and courtship.[59] Hilmar-Voit and Dargie view the story as one of cheerful love and as a humorous song.[60] None of these classifications really get at the heart of the moral message portrayed in this story.

"Verlor'ne Müh'!" in neither its Arnim and Brentano version nor Mahler's version of the story makes use of a third-person narrative figure; the characters deliver all of the text dramatically. The dialogue between the love-struck maid and the young man who wants nothing to do with her takes place in the present tense. How much time passes between each of the maiden's attempts to woo the boy remains unclear. Mahler speeds along the action by omitting two stanzas, since to prolong the situation would diminish its tension and suspense. The gradual expansion of the maiden's entreaties try the patience of the young man to the breaking point, so the elimination of these two stanzas provides a level of added realism. The first of these stanzas consists of a mere eight lines. By the second, she requires eleven lines to offer him "a little snack from her pocket." Her final attempt fills ten lines, two of which are single words repeated over and over, and dissolves into simple begging.

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[59] Tale type T55 in the Thompson system deals with the girl as wooer scenario, type D.1.a of the Long system refers to the refused offer of courtship and seduction.

[60] Humorous song are the fourth type of *Wunderhorn* poem set by Mahler according to Dargie.

"Trost im Unglück"

"Geh du nur hin, ich hab mein Teil" appeared on a broadside that Arnim collected in 1804. In the original, less pessimistic folksong, the maiden agrees to wait one year for her lover to return, but clearly states that three years is too long.[61]

The song tells a story of a pair of lovers who are about to be separated by war. Both partners downplay their feelings, claiming "I only loved you out of foolishness, Without you I will be fine." The characters speak the text dramatically, but while sometimes they speak directly to one another as dialogue, he delivers the opening passage to a general audience, and without a direct audience for his remarks. The chaos that accompanies a call to arms reflects itself in the temporal aspects of this story. A number of events occur within a short period of time, and while they both have their eyes on the future, both characters remain solidly grounded in their present moment.

Mahler omits the refrain from stanzas two, three, and five. This serves several purposes: avoiding a sense of strophic monotony, destabilizing the stanzaic rhythm to better reflect the chaotic scene in which these lovers are taking part, and moving the story along more rapidly so as to heighten the suspense of the audience. Mahler's other textual changes add emphasis through the repetition of short phrases. His adaptations do not disrupt the iambic tetrameter and ABAB/CDEF rhyme scheme.

Folklore studies characterize this as a story of a departure for war and as a tragic romantic story between a hero and heroine.[62] Hilmar-Voit calls it a pessimistic song

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[61] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 307–08; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 230.

[62] The departure and search for adventure is tale type C.c. according to Long; the tragic romantic story is a tale type found in Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk*.

Geh Du nur hin, ich hab mein Theil (Boxberger)	**Trost im Unglück (as set by Mahler)**

Husar

Wohlan, die Zeit ist kommen,	Wohlan! Die Zeit ist kommen!
Mein Pferd, das muβ gesattelt sein;	Mein Pferd, das muβ gesattelt sein!
Ich hab mir's vorgenommen,	Ich hab' mir's vorgenommen,
Geritten muβ es sein.	geritten muβ es sein!
Geh Du nur hin, ich hab mein Theil!	Geh' du nur hin!
Ich lieb Dich nur aus Narrethei.	Ich hab' mein Teil!
Ohne Dich kann ich wohl leben,	Ich lieb' dich nur aus Narretei!
Ohne Dich kann ich schon sein.	Ohn' dich kann ich wohl leben,
	ja leben!
	Ohn' dich kann ich wohl sein!

So setz ich mich aufs Pferdchen	So setz' ich mich auf's Pferdchen,
Und trink ein Gläschen kühlen Wein	und trink' ein Gläschen kühlen Wein,
Und schwör bei meinem Bärtchen,	und schwör's bei meinem Bärtchen:
Du ewig treu zu sein.	dir ewig treu zu sein!
Geh Du nur hin u. s. w.	

Mädchen

Du glaubst, Du bist der Schönste	Du glaubst, du bist der Schönste
Wohl auf der ganzen weiten Welt,	wohl auf der ganzen weiten Welt,
Und auch der Angenehmste, -	und auch der Angenehmste!
Ist aber weit gefehlt!	Ist aber weit, weit gefehlt!
Geh Du nur hin u. s. w.	

In meines Vaters Garten	In meines Vaters Garten
Wächst eine schöne Blume drin;	wächst eine Blume drin:
So lang will ich noch warten,	so lang' will ich noch warten,
Bis die noch gröβer ist.	bis die noch gröβer ist.
Geh Du nur hin u. s. w.	Und geh' du nur hin!
	Ich hab' mein Teil!
	Ich lieb' dich nur aus Narretei!
	Ohn' dich kann ich wohl leben,
	ohn' dich kann ich wohl sein!

Beide

Du denkst, ich werd Dich nehmen;	Du denkst (glaubst), ich werd' dich
Ich hab's noch nicht im Sinn.	nehmen!
Ich muβ mich Deiner schämen,	Das hab' ich lang' noch nicht im Sinn!
Wenn ich in Gesellschaft bin.	Ich muβ mich deiner schämen,
Geh Du nur hin, ich hab mein Theil!	ich muβ mich deiner schämen,
u.s.w.	wenn ich in Gesellschaft bin!

of love, and Dargie a simply a song of love.[63] What seems clear, however, is that while the characters in this story claim to each other that their romance will continue, both possess the awareness that their union was a temporary one.

"Das irdische Leben"

"Verspätung" was printed shortly before it appeared in *Wunderhorn* in 1808 in Leo Freiherrn von Seckendorf's *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1808* and stemmed from a children's game song collected near the Erzgebirge Mountain Range.[64] In the instances of the most repetitive *Wunderhorn* texts, such as "Das irdische Leben," Mahler removed several poetic stanzas to reduce monotony and propel the story forward more quickly. Mahler told Natalie Bauer-Lechner of his dislike for redundancy, "Repetition is a lie. A work of art must evolve perpetually, like life. If it doesn't, hypocrisy and theatricality set in."[65] This aversion to redundant material can also in part explain why Mahler avoids purely strophic musical forms, a point I will discuss at length in Chapter 3.

This epic tale portrayed by a narrator includes dramatic dialogue between the mother and her child. The dialogue takes place in the present tense, but the narrative interludes in the past tense allow time to propel quickly from one phase of the baking process to the next. As each step of the bread preparation is completed, the narrator sets up another interchange between the child and her mother, "And when the grain

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[63] The story of the pessimistic song of love is the fifth type of *Wunderhorn* story according to Hilmar-Voit, love stories are the second type according to Dargie.

[64] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 276–77; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 470.

[65] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 147.

Verspätung (Boxberger)	Das irdische Leben (as set by Mahler)
Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich! Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich. - „Warte nur, mein liebes Kind! Morgen wollen wir säen geschwind."	
Und als das Korn gesäet war, Rief das Kind noch immerdar: Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich! Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich. - „Warte nur, mein liebes Kind! Morgen wollen wir ernten geschwind."	„Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich! Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich!" „Warte nur! Warte nur, mein liebes Kind! Morgen wollen wir ernten geschwind!"

Und als das Korn geerntet war,
Rief das Kind noch immerdar:
Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich!
Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich. -
„Warte nur, mein liebes Kind!
Morgen wollen wir dreschen
geschwind."
	Und als das Korn geerntet war,
	rief das Kind noch immerdar:
	„Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich!
	Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich!"
	„Warte nur! Warte nur, mein liebes
	  Kind!
	Morgen wollen wir dreschen
	  geschwind!"

Und als das Korn gedroschen war, Rief das Kind noch immerdar: Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich! Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich. - „Warte nur, mein liebes Kind! Morgen wollen wir mahlen geschwind."	Und als das Korn gedroschen war, rief das Kind noch immerdar: „Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich! Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich!" „Warte nur! Warte nur, mein liebes Kind! Morgen wollen wir backen geschwind!"
Und als das Korn gemahlen war, Rief das Kind noch immerdar: Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich! Gieb mir Brod, sonst sterbe ich. - „Warte nur, mein liebes Kind! Morgen wollen wir backen geschwind." Und als das Brod gebacken war, Lag das Kind schon auf der Bahr.	Und als das Brot gebacken war, lag das Kind auf der Totenbahr!

was harvested, once again, the child cried out…" The temporal proximity of the events described in Mahler's story creates a more cohesive narrative trajectory by way of the deleted stanzas. A listener can imagine a mother ignoring her child's repeated pleas for food during the time it takes to harvest, mill, and bake grain into bread. This situation would not be possible for the time between sowing and harvesting the grain. It also heightens the tension as the audience portends as to whether the child will receive her bread or starve while waiting.

Mahler's alterations to the text do not change the poetic meter, which alternates between iambic, dactylic and trochaic tetrameter, or the rhyme scheme, which occurs in rhymed pairs, one for each of the three personas characterized in the story. The speaker changes in "Das irdische Leben" with every two lines of text. The mother and child address each other and the narrator addresses the audience. The constant shifting of narrative voice feels as unsettling as the subject matter itself. Quite reminiscent of Goethe's "Der Erlkönig," the continual change of person examines the tragic circumstances from three points of view, repeatedly ratcheting up the tension until the inevitable conclusion.

Folklore tale types deal with this story in very different ways. The Thompson system deals not with the death of the child, but with the time of her life that was extended as her mother recited to her the process of baking bread. The Long system blames the mother for the child's death, calling the story one of accidental death due to the hazards of personal decision-making. Buchan's system primarily examines the character types involved in a given story, so for him, this is a story of tragedy

involving a mother and daughter.[66] Hilmar-Voit considers "Das irdische Leben" a

story of human shortcomings (blaming the mother for the loss of the child) and

Dargie a song of Earthly life and death (which makes her death seem like more a part

of the larger, natural order of the world). Since Mahler initially planned for this song

to be the second movement of his Fourth Symphony with another, "Das himmlische

Leben," as the final movement, we can safely assume the idea of earthly life and

death figured heavily is his own conception of the song.[67]

"Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt"

Based on a poem written by Abraham of St. Clara as part of his 1686–95 history of

Judas Escariot, the story of St. Anthony's miraculous sermon to the fishes is

transformed into a mockery by Arnim and Brentano. The *Wunderhorn* fish do not

receive the gift of religious transformation as they do in Abraham's tale, rather they

only appear out of curiosity to observe the strange man who preaches to them, and

when he has finished, they go about their business, exactly as they were before.

Mahler told Natalie Bauer-Lechner about his attraction to the story of "Antonius":

> St. Anthony preaches to the fishes; his words are immediately translated
> into their thoroughly tipsy-sounding language, and they all come swimming
> up to him – a glittering shoal of them: eels and carp, and the pike with their
> pointed heads. I swear, while I was composing I really kept imagining that I saw
> them sticking their stiff immovable necks out of the water, and gazing up
> at St. Anthony with their stupid faces – I had to laugh out loud! And look at
> the congregation swimming away as soon as the sermon's over. Not one of
> them is one iota the wiser for it, even though the Saint has performed for them!
> But only a few people will understand my satire on mankind. [68]

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[66] K555.1.2 in Thompson, G.c.1. in Long.

[67] Mitchell, *The Wunderhorn Years*, 139.

[68] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, 32–3.

Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt (Boxberger)

Antonius zur Predig
Die Kirche findt ledig;
Er geht zu den Flüssen
Und predigt den Fischen.
  Sie schlagn mit den Schwänzen,
  Im Sonnenschein glänzen.

Die Karpfen mit Rogen
Sind all hierher zogen,
Habn d'Mäuler aufrissen,
Sich Zuhörens beflissen.
  Kein Predig niemalen
  Den Karpfen so gfallen.

Spitzgoschete Hechte,
Die immerzu fechten,
Sind eilend herschwommen,
Zu hören den Frommen.
  Kein Predig niemalen
  Den Hechten so gfallen.

Auch jene Phantasten,
So immer beim Fasten,
Die Stockfisch ich meine,
Zur Predig erscheinen.
  Kein Predig niemalen
  Dem Stockfisch so gfallen.

Gut Aalen und Hausen,
Die Vornehme schmausen,
Die selber sich bequemen,
Die Predig vernehmen.
  Kein Predig niemalen
  Den Aalen so gfallen.

Auch Krebsen, Schildkroten,
Sonst langsame Boten,
Steigen eilend vom Grund,
Zu hören diesen Mund.
  Kein Predig niemalen

Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt (Mahler setting)

Antonius zur Predigt
die Kirche find't ledig!
Er geht zu den Flüssen
und predigt den Fischen!
  Sie schlag'n mit den Schwänzen!
  Im Sonnenschein glänzen,
  Im Sonnenschein, Sonnenschein
    glänzen,
  sie glänzen, sie glänzen, glänzen.

Die Karpfen mit Rogen
sind all' hierher zogen;
hab'n d'Mäuler aufrissen,
sich Zuhör'n's beflissen.
  Kein Predigt niemalen
  den Fischen so g'fallen!

Spitzgoschete Hechte,
die immerzu fechten
sind eilends herschwommen,
zu hören den Frommen!

Auch jene Phantasten,
die immerzu fasten,
Die Stockfisch ich meine,
zur Predigt erscheinen!
  Kein Predigt niemalen
  den Stockfisch so g'fallen!

Gut' Aale und Hausen
die Vornehme schmausen,
die selbst sich bequemen,
die Predigt vernehmen.

Auch Krebse, Schildkroten,
sonst langsame Boten,
steigen eilig vom Grund,
zu hören diesen Mund!
  Kein Predigt niemalen

Den Krebsen so gfallen.	den Krebsen so g'fallen!
Fisch große, Fisch kleine,	Fisch' große, Fisch' kleine!
Vornehm und gemeine,	Vornehm' und Gemeine!
Erheben die Köpfe	Erheben die Köpfe
Wie verständge Geschöpfe:	wie verständ'ge Geschöpfe!
Auf Gottes Begehren	Auf Gottes Begehren
Antonium anhören.	Die Predigt anhören!
Die Predig geendet,	Die Predigt geendet,
Ein jedes sich wendet:	ein Jeder sich wendet!
Die Hechte bleiben Diebe,	Die Hechte bleiben Diebe,
Dir Aale viel lieben.	die Aale viel lieben,
Die Predig hat gfallen,	die Predigt hat g'fallen,
Sie bleiben wie alle.	sie bleiben wie Allen!
Die Krebs gehn zurücke,	Die Krebs' geh'n zurücke,
Die Stockfisch bleiben dicke,	die Stockfisch' bleib'n dicke,
Die Karpfen viel fressen,	die Karpfen viel fressen
Die Predig vergessen.	die Predigt vergessen, vergessen!
Die Predig hat gfallen,	Die Predigt hat g'fallen,
Sie bleiben wie alle.	sie bleiben wie Allen!
	Die Predigt hat g'fallen, hat
	g'fallen!

Mahler made few changes to the *Wunderhorn* poem while creating his song text. The most important change is the standardization of some of the rhythms. This regularizes the poem's roughly dactylic dimeter throughout the song text. His changes do not disrupt the rhyme scheme of AABBCC either, though he does take a somewhat liberal approach to the refrain that consistently occurs in the poem. In verses one and nine, Mahler freely repeats words and phrases from the refrain, and in verses three and five the refrain does not appear at all. This flexibility allows the story to ebb and flow like the water in the river and the song text to develop beyond a simple strophic setting.

Mahler allowed the epic mode of poetry used in this poem to set a scene. The opening and closing verses, set in past tense, tell of St. Anthony going to the river and the

results of his endeavor, creating a kind of action-based narrative frame that moves in the present tense in a close approximation of real time. Mahler's free repetition in the refrain occurs during the action of these framing opening and closing stanzas. The verses in between describe the fishes' response to the sermon in incredible detail, using lyrical verse to temporarily suspend the story, and his elimination of the refrain in verses three and five propels the descriptive section in the middle forward, allowing it to move more fluidly than in the *Wunderhorn* poem. Time seems to stop while the narrator painstakingly recreates the images of swirling water and fish heads popping above the surface, allowing the listener to imagine the curious fish in much the same way Mahler described to Bauer-Lechner. The descriptive section in the middle of the poem prolongs the time it takes to reach the apothegm the ends in the story, increasing the suspense as one wonders how the fish will respond. The opening stanza and lengthy lyrical passage lead the listener to believe that St. Anthony has performed a miracle with his feat of communicating with the fish, but in the end, we learn that they have ignored him just as his human congregation did. The epic mode of the poem allows for the mocking qualities of the poem. A more dramatic telling of the story, say, from the viewpoint of Antonius or even the fish, would have seemed more pathetic than humorous.

   Folklorists have identified this type of story as a parody sermon, a scene in which animals are tamed by the holiness of a saint, and a metaphorical religious narrative.[69] Hilmar-Voit and Dargie refer to the story as a tale of human shortcomings and a

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[69] The parody sermon is tale type 1824 accondring to Antti Aarne, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, trans. Stith Thompson, *FF Communications* 184, ed. Martti Haavio (Helsinki: Academia Scientarium Fennica, 1961); animals tamed by saints appear in tale type B 771.1 in the Thompson system, the metaphorical religious narrative is tale type L.e. in the Long system.

humorous song.[70] Magnar Breivik has proposed that this song is little more than an indictment of religious institutions.[71] I will examine the religious implications of Mahler's setting in Chapter 4.

"Rheinlegendchen"

Frau Auguste von Pattburg shared this folksong, common to the areas of Swabia, the Mosel River, the Rhine, and Nassau, with Arnim and Brentano for their collection. Bode and Reiser have both determined that the poem had already been edited by her hands before it reached them, as evidenced by the inconsistent poetic language between the first two and the remaining stanzas.[72] The protagonist directly narrates the story in "Rheinlegendchen." She opens and closes the story by speaking of her current circumstances, which much like in "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt," creates a kind of narrative frame in which she places the imagined chain of event that she believes will result in a reunion (albeit, a temporary one) with her sweetheart. Within the imagined story, a brief moment of narrated dialogue ("Der König tät fragen," "Da tät mein Schatz sagen") between the king and the sweetheart occurs, but they are kept firmly within the mode of the narration.

Mahler makes a few minor adjustments (primarily the use of contractions and shifting accents) to the text in order to instill a more consistent meter to the text,

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[70] Tales of human shortcomings are the third story type found in Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs according to Hilmar-Voit, *Im Wunderhorn-Ton;* Humorous songs are the fourth type according to Dargie, *Music and Poetry*.

[71] Magnar Breivik, "A Sermon for Fishes in A Secular Age: On the Scherzo Movement of Mahler's Second Symphony" in *Voicing the Ineffable: Musical Representations of Religious Experience*, ed. Siglind Bruhn (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2002), 47-70.

[72] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 595–96; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 543–44.

Rheinischer Bundesring (Boxberger)	Rheinlegendchen (as set by Mahler)
Bald gras ich am Neckar,	Bald gras' ich am Neckar,
Bald gras ich am Rhein;	bald gras' ich am Rhein;
Bald hab ich ein Schätzel,	bald hab' ich ein Schätzel,
Bald bin ich allein.	bald bin ich allein!
Was hilft mir das Grasen,	Was hilft mir das Grasen,
Wann die Sichel nicht schneidt?	wenn d'Sichel nicht schneid't;
Was hilft mir ein Schätzel,	was hilft mir ein Schätzel,
Wenn's bei mir nicht bleibt?	wenn's bei mir nicht bleibt!
So soll ich dann grasen	So soll ich denn grasen
Am Neckar, am Rhein,	am Neckar, am Rhein;
So werf ich mein goldiges	so werf' ich mein goldenes
Ringlein hinein.	Ringlein hinein!
Es fließet im Neckar	Es fließet im Neckar
Und fließet im Rhein,	und fließet im Rhein,
Soll schwimmen hinunter	soll schwimmen hinunter
Ins tiefe Meer nein.	in's Meer tief hinein!
Und schwimmt es, das Ringlein,	Und schwimmt es, das Ringlein,
So frißt es ein Fisch;	so frißt es ein Fisch!
Das Fischlein soll kommen	Das Fischlein soll kommen
Auf's König sein Tisch.	auf's König's sein Tisch!
Der König thät fragen,	Der König tät fragen,
Wem's Ringlein soll sein?	wem's Ringlein sollt' sein?
Da thät mein Schatz sagen:	Da tät mein Schatz sagen:
Das Ringlein g'hört mein.	„Das Ringlein g'hört mein!"
Mein Schätzlein thät springen	Mein Schätzlein tät springen
Berg auf und Berg ein,	Berg auf und Berg ein,
That mir wiedrum bringen	tät mir wied'rum bringen
Das Goldringlein fein.	das Goldringlein fein! (mein!)
Kannst grasen am Neckar,	Kannst grasen am Neckar,
Kannst grasen am Rhein;	kannst grasen am Rhein!
Wirf Du mir nur immer	Wirf du mir nur immer
Dein Ringlein hinein!	dein Ringlein hinein!

which conforms to dactylic dimeter. Beyond that, he made very few changes to the

poem, originally entitled "Rheinischer Bundesring." Both texts use an essentially

ABAB rhyme scheme. The first three verses do more to set the scene than to progress the action of the song, until the final lines of the third, in which the maiden throws her ring into the river. At this point, the story changes from a relaying of actual circumstance and events to an imagined story of the path the ring will have to travel in order to reach her beloved; in a sense, the narrator portends the outcome of her own story. The maiden distinguishes this section from her real life events through the use of the subjunctive, and it is not until her beloved has returned her ring to her that she returns to the present tense. Throughout the ring's journey, the listener can portend along with her; where will the ring turn up? How will it reach her beloved? Will he be able to return to her? Of course, any number of potential outcomes could occur, and since the entire scene is imaginary, we will never know the true outcome of the events, but if only for the moment, "Rheinlegendchen" offers the listener a bit of whimsical fantasy. The moral of the story tells us that if we are only willing to take a chance and believe, the most extraordinary things can happen.

Folklore scholars have a number of different perspectives for classifying "Rheinlegendchen." Some classification schemes deal with the prospect of finding a ring inside a fish, others with the fulfillment of obligations to both romantic relationships and relationships determined by status, and finally, stories involving a hero, a heroine, and a king.[73] Hilmar-Voit sees this as a cheerful love song, and Dargie as part of the folk-song heritage.[74]

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[73] Aarne's tale types 736A and 930D both deal with finding a ring in a fish; Thompson's B548.2.1 and N211.1 also deal with rings and fish; Long's E.a.2 refers to the fulfillment of romantic obligations and E.c.2 deal with fulfillment of obligations required by status relationships.

[74] Cheerful love songs make up the fourth type of *Wunderhorn* poem according to Hilmar-Voit; songs from the folk-song heritage comprise the first type according to Dargie.

"Lob des hohen Verstandes"

"Wettstreits des Kukuks mit der Nachtigall" first appeared in print in 1807 in

Nuremburg in a publication edited by Berhard Joseph Docen known as *Docens*

Miscellaneen zur Geschichte der teutschen Literatur bearing only the inscription

"1580" above the poem. Portions of the folksong also appeared in Herder's 1778

collection (unbeknownst to Docen).[75] In this seemingly innocent tale of a singing

contest between a cuckoo and a nightingale, Mahler found a "priceless piece of satire

on criticism."[76] Mahler alters the *Wunderhorn* poem in minor ways. He preserves the

poetic meter (two lines of iambic tetrameter followed by a line of with two accented

syllables at the end) and the rhyme scheme (AABCCB), actually improving the

rhyme by changing a word ("Ohren groβ" was originally rhymed with "desto baβ."

Mahler changes "baβ" to "bos."). He omits two brief lines describing the cuckoo's

contest performance, "Und thät die Noten brechen; er lacht auch drein nach seiner

Art" (And he arpeggiated the notes. He also laughed according to his kind).

Interestingly, however, it appears that Mahler did not initially plan to omit the text.

The two missing lines appear (as one of the few spots that is fully composed with

accompaniment) in a sketch that primarily maps out the vocal melody and small bits

of accompaniment. The sketch is held as part of the Moldenhauer Archives collection

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[75] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 47, 264; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 419.

[76] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 58.

Wettstreit des Kuckucks mit der

Nachtigall (Boxberger)

Einsmals in einem tiefen Thal
Der Kuckuk und die Nachtigall
Thäten ein Wett anschlagen,
Zu singen um das Meisterstück:
„Gewinn es Kunst, gewinn es Glück,
Dank soll er davon tragen."

Der Kuckuk sprach: „So dir's gefällt,
Ich hab zur Sach ein Richter wählt,"
Und thät den Esel nennen.
„Denn weil er hat zwei Ohren groβ,
So kann er hören desto baβ,
Und was recht ist, erkennen."

Sie flogen vor den Richter bald.
Wie ihm die Sache ward erzählt,
Schuf er, sie sollten singen.
Die Nachtigall sang lieblich aus;
Er Esel sprach: „Du machst mir's kraus,
Ich kann's in Kopf nicht bringen."

Der Kuckuk drauf anfing geschwind:
Kuckuk! Sein sang durch Terz, Quart,
   Quint
Und thät die Noten brechen;
Er lacht auch drein nach seiner Art.
Dem Esel gefiel's, er sagt: „Nun wart,
Ein Urtheil will ich sprechen:

Wohl sungen hast Du, Nachtigall;
Aber, Kuckuk, Du singst gut Choral
Und hältst den Takt fein innen.
Das sprech ich nach mein hohn
   Verstand,
Und kostet's gleich ein ganzes Land,
So laβ ich Dich's gewinnen."

Lob des hohen Verstandes (as set by Mahler)

Einstmals in einem tiefen Tal
Kukuk und Nachtigall
täten ein' Wett' anschlagen:
Zu singen um das Meisterstück,
gewinn' es Kunst, gewinn' es Glück:
Dank soll er davon tragen.

Der Kukuk sprach: „So dir's gefällt,
hab' ich den Richter wählt."
Und tät gleich den Esel ernennen.
„Denn weil er hat zwei Ohren groβ,
Ohren groβ, Ohren groβ,
so kann er hören desto bos!
Und, was recht ist, kennen!"

Sie flogen vor den Richter bald.
Wie dem die Sache ward erzählt,
schuf er, sie sollten singen.
Die Nachtigall sang lieblich aus!
Der Esel sprach: "Du machst mir's
   kraus!
Du machst mir's kraus! Ija! Ija!
Ich kann's in Kopf nicht bringen!"

Der Kukuk drauf fing an geschwind
sein Sang durch Terz und Quart und
   Quint.
Dem Esel g'fiels, er sprach nur:
„Wart! Wart! Wart!
Dein Urteil will ich sprechen,
   ja sprechen.

Wohl sungen hast du, Nachtigall!
Aber Kukuk, singst gut Choral!
   Gut Choral,
Und hältst den Takt fein innen,
   fein innen!
Das sprech' ich nach mein' hoh'n
   Verstand!

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> Hoh'n Verstand! Hoh'n Verstand!
> Und kost' es gleich ein ganzes Land,
> so laβ ich's dich gewinnen,
>   gewinnen!"
> Kukuk! Kukuk! Ija!

held at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich.[77] (See Figure 2.2)

A third-person narrator presents the majority of the text in "Lob des hohen

Verstandes" and its poetic source, leaving only four instances of dialogue, two for the

cuckoo and two for the donkey. Intriguingly, the nightingale does not receive the

opportunity to speak directly, and in fact, only emerges through musical means rather

than verbal ones. As an essentially narrated story, the plot unfolds in the past tense,

lending a certain fairy-tale quality from the outset, beginning with the phrase

"Einstmals in einem tiefen Tal" (Once upon a time in a deep valley…). This allows

the time during which the birds fly to find the donkey to pass in an instant, propelling

the story forward and increasing the listener's engagement as well as their ability to

portend. Mahler's manipulation of the poem does not disrupt this narrative flow,

barring a few repeated phrases and the omitted sentences mentioned earlier, Mahler's

story progresses at much the same rate as the *Wunderhorn* poem.

The poem from which Mahler drew his lyrics features a somewhat regular rhythmic

pattern, which Mahler follows at the beginning of the song. This does not remain the

case, however. Beginning with the first hint that something droll and humorous is

taking place, the cuckoo's comment that the donkey's large ears allow him to hear

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[77] Günther Wieβ, Sigrid von Moisy, Hartmut Schaefer, *Gustav Mahler Briefe und Musikautographen aus den Moldenhauer-Archiven in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek* (Munich: Kulturstiftung der Länder Freistaat Bayern and Bayern Landesstitfung Bundesministerium des Innern, 2003), 108–09.

Figure 2.2: Sketch of "Lob des hohen Verstands" (Moldenhauer Archives, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich)

the best, making him a suitable candidate to judge the contest, Mahler begins to unravel the regularity of the rhythm using repeated phrases and animal sounds. The more outrageous the story becomes, the more peculiarly the stanzaic rhythm follows. Mahler morphs the six-line stanzas from the poem into verses of seven, nine, four, and eight lines each.

Mahler also manipulates the dramatic qualities of the poem. In the first stanza of the poem, the cuckoo delivers the line "Gewinn' es Kunst, gewinn' es Glück, Dank soll er davon tragen"[78] as a way to coax the nightingale into participating in the contest. One might also interpret this line as coming from the nightingale as a

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[78] "Whether the winner has art or luck, he should receive thanks."

warning that the cuckoo should not challenge her because she assumes she will be the winner. Instead, Mahler assigns those words to the narrator, as a general comment. He also blurs the line between narrator and character at the very end. The final statement, "Kukuk! Kukuk! Ija!" should, one would think, come from the cuckoo and the donkey, but the lack of quotation marks in the song text renders the narrative point of view of this line ambiguous.

Folklore scholars classify this poem as a story of a contest in singing or as premeditated verbal combat.[79] Hilmar-Voit and Dargie refer to "Lob des hohen Verstands" as the same story types as found with "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt," the tale of human shortcomings and the humorous song. My interpretation will appear in Chapter 4.

"Lied des Verfolgten im Turm"

Arnim and Brentano constructed this text by carefully intertwining two completely different folk songs: the first, taken from a broadside from southern Prussia, tells the story of a captive soldier who vows that despite his grim circumstances, his thoughts will remain free, the second, a simple common folksong about the many joys of summertime.[80]

The dialogue between the prisoner and the maiden comprises the entire text because a third-person narrator would intrude on the implied intimacy. While the characters speak all of the dialogue in the present tense, the words explain that the

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[79] The singing contest is tale type H503.1 according to Thompson; the premeditated verbal combat scenario is tale type B.a. according to Long.

[80] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 625–26; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 530–31.

Lied des Verfolgten im Thurm
(Boxberger ed.)

Der Gefangene
Die Gedanken sind frei;
Wer kann sie errathen?
Sie rauschen vorbei
Wie nächtliche Schatten.
Kein Mensch kann sie wissen,
Kein Jäger sie schießen.
Es bleibet dabei,
Die Gedanken sind frei.

Das Mädchen
Im Sommer ist gut lustig sein
Auf hohen wilden Haiden;
Dort findet man grün Plätzelein.
Mein herzverliebtes Schätzelein,
Von Dir mag ich nicht scheiden.

Der Gefangene
Und sperrt man mich ein
Im finstern Kerker,
Dies alles sind nur
Vergebliche Werke;
Denn meine Gedanken
Zerreißen die Schranken
Und Mauern entzwei.
Die Gedanken sind frei.

Das Mädchen
Im Sommer ist gut lustig sein
Auf hohen wilden Bergen.
Man ist da ewig ganz allein;
Man hört da gar kein Kindergeschrei.
Die Luft mag Einem da werden.

Der Gefangene
Und weil Du so klagst,
Der Lieb ich entsage,
Und ist es gewagt,

Lied des Verfolgten im Turm
(Mahler setting)

Der Gefangene
Die Gedanken sind frei,
wer kann sie erraten;
sie rauschen vorbei
wie nächtliche Schatten,
kein Mensch kann sie wissen,
kein Jäger sie schießen;
es bleibet dabei, es bleibet dabei:
die Gedanken sind frei!

Das Mädchen
Im Sommer ist gut lustig sein,
auf hohen, wilden Haiden (Bergen).
Dort findet man grün' Plätzelein,
mein Herz verliebtes Schätzelein,
von dir, von dir mag ich nicht scheiden!

Der Gefangene
Und sperrt man mich ein
in finstere Kerker,
dies Alles sind nur, dies Alles sind nur
vergebliche Werke;
denn meine Gedanken
zerrießen die Schranken
und Mauern entzwei,
die Gedanken sind frei!
Die Gedanken sind frei!

Das Mädchen
Im Sommer ist gut lustig sein, gut lustig
  sein
auf hohen, wilden Bergen.
Man ist da ewig ganz allein
auf hohen, wilden Bergen,
man hört da gar kein Kindergeschrei,
  kein Kindergeschrei.
Die Luft mag einem da werden,
ja, die Luft mag einem werden.

Der Gefangene
Und weil du so klagst,
der Lieb' ich entsage,
und ist es gewagt, und ist es gewagt,

So kann mich nichts plagen,
So kann ich im Herzen
Stets lachen, bald scherzen.
Es bleibet dabei,
Die Gedanken sind frei.

Der Gefangene
So sei es, wie es will,
Und wenn es sich schicket,
Nur Alles in der Still!
Und was mich erquicket,
Mein Wunsch und Begehren,
Niemand kann's mir wehren.
Es bleibet dabei,
Die Gedanken sind frei.

Das Mädchen
Mein Schatz, Du singst so fröhlich hier
Wie's Vöglein in dem Grase.
Ich steh so traurig bei Kerkerthür;
Wär ich doch todt, wär ich bei Dir!
Ach, muß ich denn immer klagen?

Der Gefangene
Und weil Du so klagst,
Der Lieb ich entsage,
Und ist es gewagt,
So kann mich nichts plagen,
So kann ich im Herzen
Stets lachen, bald scherzen.
Es bleibet dabei,
Die Gedanken sind frei.

so kann mich nichts plagen!
So kann ich im Herzen
stets lachen und scherzen;
es bleibet dabei, es bleibet dabei:
Die Gedanken sind frei!

Der Gefangene
So sei's wie es will!
Und wenn es sich schicket,
nur Alles, Alles sei in der Stille,
nur All's in der Still', All's in der Still'!
Mein Wunsch und Begehren,
Niemand kann's wehren!
Es bleibt dabei,
die Gedanken sind frei, die Gedanken
    sind frei!

Das Mädchen
Mein Schatz, du singst so fröhlich hier,
wie's Vögelein im Grase;
ich steh' so traurig bei Kerkertür,
wär ich doch tot, wär ich bei dir,
ach muß, ach muß ich immer denn
    klagen?

Der Gefangene
Und weil du so klagst,
der Lieb' ich entsage,
und ist es gewagt, und ist es gewagt,
so kann mich Nichts plagen!
So kann ich im Herzen
stets lachen und scherzen;
es bleibet dabei, es bleibet dabei:
Die Gedanken sind frei!
Die Gedanken sind frei!

story is spread out over a substantial period of time; long enough for the maiden's

cheerful optimism to give in to lonely despair. Removed from the dramatic

environment, the maiden's text resembles a lyrical interlude until her third stanza, but

in conjunction with the prisoner's text, the lyrical and the dramatic begin to merge.

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Mahler's small textual changes to the lyrics of the orchestral version of the song

include changing the location where the maiden likes to be during the summer from

the heaths to the mountains. Perhaps this change reflects Vahrn, the summer retreat in

the mountains of Northern Italy (then, still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire)

where Mahler composed the lied, or, of course, it could simply be taken from the text

found in the following verse. He also deleted a line given by the prisoner, "Und was

mich erquicket," (And I became refreshed), as he discusses how he will not allow his

captivity to effect his thoughts. Mahler's changes maintain the poetic meters of the

two discrete sections of the text; the prisoner's text fell in an iambic dimeter, and the

maiden's in iambic tetrameter. Mahler also preserves the rhyme schemes:

ABABCCDD for the prisoner's stanzas and ABAAB for the maiden's.

 The stanzaic rhythm of the poem clearly delineates which statements emanate

from the prisoner and which from his sweetheart. The prisoner's stanzas sound

completely regular, comprised of eight lines of five and six syllables each. The

maiden also speaks in regular rhythm; her somewhat lyrical stanzas include five lines

of seven and eight syllables each. Mahler disrupts a good bit of this regularity by way

of repetition of short phrases and contraction and expansion of small words (e.g. "So

sei es" becomes "So sei's" and "im Finstern" becomes "in Finstere."). This allows the

maiden's second verse to expand dramatically, as she discusses the many wonders

that her prisoner cannot experience, before she gives up hope, finally addressing him

directly, in her final verse. The prisoner's verses stay relatively regular, though

several repetitions of the phrase "nur All's in der Still" as he contemplates the silence

of his prison cell replace the omitted phrase about his refreshment.

Thompson and Long classify this story purely in terms of the subject of captivity.[81] Hilmar-Voit labels "Lied des Verfolgten im Thurm" as a war song and Dargie, a song of earthly life and death.[82] The most intriguing characteristic of this song is the inversion of emotional states. The prisoner, though confined by tower walls, remains free of spirit and mind, while his beloved, who may freely roam the countryside at will, is trapped by her love of the prisoner.

"Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen"

In much the same way Arnim and Brentano constructed "Das Lied des Verfolgten im Turm," Mahler created his lyrics for "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" using two similar but separate poems from the *Wunderhorn*. "Bildchen" belonged to the oral tradition prior to Arnim's editing process, in which he added the eighth and ninth stanzas.[83] Jakob Grimm donated "Unbeschreibliche Freude" for use in the *Wunderhorn* anthology in 1806. Grimm had made some slight modifications to the wording of the text after discovering it through his fieldwork.[84]

"Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" is a particularly complex example of Mahler's textual alterations, and portions of the text have been omitted from both original poems. Both poems tell the story of a young man who has gone off to war and the sweetheart he left behind. Both poems also entertain the possibility that the

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[81] Thompson's tale type R41 deals with prisoners held in towers, and type Q433 with imprisonment in general; Long's type F.a. deals with the ordeals of captivity and isolation.

[82] War songs make up Hilmar-Voit's seventh type of *Wunderhorn* song.

[83] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 612; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 515.

[84] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 178; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 516.

Unbeschreibliche Freude (Boxberger)	**Bildchen (Boxberger)**	**Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen (Mahler setting)**
	Auf dieser Welt hab ich keine Freud: Ich hab einen Schatz, und der ist weit; Er ist so weit, er ist nicht hier. Ach, wenn ich bei meim Schätzchen wär!	
	Ich kann nicht sitzen und kann nicht stehn, Ich muβ zu meinem Schätzchen gehn; Zu meinem Schatz da muβ ich gehn, Und sollt ich vor dem Fenster stehn.	
Wer ist denn drauβen und klopfet an, Der mich so leise wecken kann? „Das ist der Herzallerliebste Dein. Steh auf und laβ mich zu Dir ein!"	„Wer ist denn drauβen, wer klopfet an, Der mich so leis aufwecken kann?" - „Es ist der Herzallerliebste Dein; Steh auf, steh auf und laβ mich ‚rein!" -	Wer ist denn drauβen und wer klopfet an, der mich so leise, so leise wecken kann? Das ist der Herzallerliebste dein, steh' auf und laβ mich zu dir ein!
	„Ich steh nicht auf, laβ Dich nicht 'rein, Bis meine Eltern zu Bette sein. Wenn meine Eltern zu Bette sein, So steh ich auf und laβ Dich 'rein." -	
	„Was soll ich hier nun Länger stehn? Ich seh die Morgenröth aufgehn, Die Morgenröth, zwei helle Stern; Bei meinem Schatz da wär ich gern."	Was soll ich hier nun länger steh'n? Ich seh' die Morgenröt' aufgeh'n, die Morgenröt', zwei helle Stern'. Bei meinem Schatz da wär ich gern'! Bei meinem Herzallerlieble!

Das Mädchen stand auf und ließ
   ihn ein
Mit seinem schneeweißen Hemdelein,
Mit seinen schneeweißen Beinen.
Das Mädchen fing an zu weinen.

„Ach, weine nicht, Du Liebste mein!
Aufs Jahr sollt Du mein eigen sein;
Mein eigen sollt Du werden,
O Liebe auf grüner Erden!"

Ich wollt, daß alle Felder wären Papier
Und alle Studenten schrieben hier;
Sie schreiben ja hier die liebe lange
   Nacht,
Sie schrieben uns Beiden die Liebe
   doch nicht ab.

Da stand sie auf und ließ ihn ein;
Sie heißt ihn auch willkommen sein.
Sie reicht ihm die schneeweiße Hand;
Da fängt sie auch zu weinen an.

„Wein nicht, wein nicht, mein
   Engelein!
Aufs Jahr sollst Du mein eigen sein.
Mein eigen sollst Du werden gewiß;
Sonst Keine es auf Erden ist.

Ich zieh in Krieg auf grüne Haid;
Grüne Haid die liegt von hier so weit.
Allwo die schönen Trompeten blasen,
Da ist mein Haus von grünem Rasen.

Ein Bildchen laß ich malen mir;
Auf meinem Herzen trag ich's hier.
Darauf sollst Du gemalet sein,
Daß ich niemal vergesse Dein."

Das Mädchen stand auf und ließ ihn ein,
sie heißt ihn auch willkommen sein.
Willkommen trauter (lieber) Knabe
   mein!
So lang hast du gestanden!
Sie reicht' ihm auch die schneeweise
   Hand.
Von ferne sang die Nachtigall,
da fängt sie auch zu weinen an!
(Das Mädchen fing zu weinen an!)

Ach weine nicht, du Liebste mein,
ach weine nicht, du Liebste mein!
Auf's Jahr sollst du mein Eigen sein.
Mein Eigen sollst du werden gewiß,
wie's Keine sonst auf Erden ist!
O Lieb auf grüner Erden.

Ich zieh' in Krieg auf grüne Haid;
die grüne Haide, die ist so weit!
Allwo dort die schönen Trompeten
   blasen,
da ist mein Haus,
mein Haus von grünen Rasen!

soldier will does return alive, but instead visits his beloved as a spirit, in what David

Buchan calls a "revenant ballad."[85] Bauer-Lechner recorded Mahler's only known

reference to "Trompeten" in a journal entry for January 14, 1900, the day the song

had its Viennese premiere performance:

> About the song "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," a quarrel again arose
> between Lipiner and Gustav: the former maintained that the soldier was dead
> and appears to his beloved only as a ghost—a view which the Spieglers[86] also
> agree with—whereas Gustav inflexibly and thoroughly asserted that he still
> lives and that his death comes to him only in battle. (And also, in his words,
> Goethe appears to be of this [Lipiner's] opinion.)[87]

The exemplar poems that Mahler used to construct the text for "Wo die schönen

Trompeten blasen" blend the poetic modes to different degrees. "Bildchen" functions

almost exclusively as a dialogue in its nine stanzas, but for the sixth stanza, which is

presented by a narrator. "Unbeschreibliche Freude" is comprised of only four stanzas,

three of which are dialogue, and one of which is narrated. Interestingly, the narrated

passages in both poems present the same information, as the maiden welcomes her

lover inside and then begins to cry. Mahler extends and breaks up the narrated

passage, adding an extra line that does not appear in either of the source poems ("Von

ferne sang die Nachtigall"), and placing a verbalized welcome from the maiden in the

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[85] David Buchan, "Tale-Role Analysis and Child's Supernatural Ballads, " in *The Ballad and Oral Tradition*, ed. Joseph Harris (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 64.

[86] Siegfried Lipiner, writer and friend of Mahler. Albert Spiegler, another of Mahler's friends.

[87] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Mahleriana* [partly unpublished journals], 14 January, 1900, Collection of Le Bibliothèque Gustav Mahler, Paris. "Uber das Lied "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," entspann sich zwischen Lipiner und G. wieder ein Streit: Jener behauptete, der Krieger sei tot und erscheine dem Liebchen nur als Geist – welcher Auffassung auch Spieglers sich anschlossen – während G. steif und fest behauptete, er lebe noch und weise auf den kommenden Tod in der Schlacht nur hin. (Und auch Goethe scheint mir in seinen Worten dieser [Lipiners] Meinung zu sein.)" I am grateful to the Bibliothèque Gustav Mahler, in particular Alena Parthonnaud, for making this material available to me.

middle. The seemingly small change provides more emphasis on the role of the narrator as a provider of vital information.

Mahler also alters the stanzaic structure in his song text. Both *Wunderhorn* poems move in four-line stanzas, written in rhymed pairs. Mahler's stanzas are less regular, including 9, 7, 6, and 5 lines, which for the most part continue to move in rhymed pairs. "Bildchen" moves in a relatively strict iambic tetrameter, and "Unbeschreibliche Freude" is in an irregular iambic tetrameter.

The events in all three version of the story take place during the course of one night, though Mahler's combination of texts extends the temporal boundaries of either of the exemplar poems, and the intrusion of the narrator tells the audience that the events have occurred in the past, though the dialogue remains in the present tense. The brief narrated moment pulls the listener out of the moment and gives them a more distant perspective on the events, adding a level of meaning that I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 4. Suddenly, we are no longer merely peeking in on an intimate moment between two lovers, but observing a pivotal moment in their lives.

Folklorists have an entire category devoted to songs in which the dead are shown in encounters with the living. These are alternatively called stories in which the dead groom carries off the bride, the friendly return of the dead lover, the dead predicting further death, erotic and informative encounters, and supernatural revenant stories between a hero and heroine.[88] Hilmar-Voit and Dargie have identified the more earthly aspects of the song, labeling it as a song of war and a love song. What makes

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[88] The tale type in which the dead groom carries off his bride corresponds to tale type 356 in Aarne's system; the friendly return of the dead lover is type E310 and the dead predicting death is type E545.2 in Thompson's system, erotic and informative encounters comprise types A.a. and A.c. according to Long, and the supernatural revenant story is a type suggested by Buchan.

this song so difficult to qualify is the numerous factors that come into play in the story. "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" is one of the most complex of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads, but it is also among the most beautiful.

"Revelge"

The process that brought this poem from the oral tradition to the printed one is very unclear. Arnim and Brentano claim they collected it straight from the mouths of the *Volk*, but various parts of the text had been in circulation as broadsides since at least 1745. Bode believes the final product was created combining a text published by an unknown source known simply as "Eisendern," fragments located by Arnim, and a manuscript in Bettina von Arnim's hand.[89]

By comparing the spelling and punctuation found in Mahler's lyric compared to the poem as shown in the first edition and two contemporaneous editions, we can determine that "Revelge" and the final *Wunderhorn* song, "Der Tamboursg'sell" were most likely composed using the Bremer edition, first published in 1879 in Leipzig, rather than the Boxberger edition, which Mahler appears to have relied upon up until this point. What led Mahler to change from one edition to another is unclear, but given the number of copies of the anthology he owned over the years (at least six can be confirmed),[90] it may simply be that by the time he resumed composing *Wunderhorn* songs after the hiatus following "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," that he had misplaced his previously

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[89] Bode, *Bearbeitung der Vorlagen*, 579–84; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 213–14.

[90] Revers, *Mahlers Lieder,* 77.

Rewelge (Bremer ed.)	Revelge (as set by Mahler)
Des Morgens zwischen drein und vieren Da müssen wir Soldaten marschieren Das Gäßlein auf und ab; Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala, Mein Schätzel, sieht herab!	Des Morgens zwischen drei'n und vieren, da müssen wir Soldaten marschieren Das Gäßlein auf und ab, Trallali, Trallaley, Trallalera, mein Schätzel sieht herab!
"Ach, Bruder, jetzt bin ich geschossen, Die Kugel hat mich schwer getroffen, Trag mich in mein Quartier, Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala, Es ist nicht weit von hier."	Ach Bruder, jetzt bin ich geschossen, Die Kugel hat mich schwere, schwer getroffen, trag' mich in mein Quartier, Trallali, Trallaley, Trallalera, es ist nicht weit von hier!

"Ach Bruder, ich kann Dich nicht tragen,
Die Feinde haben uns geschlagen,
Helf dir der liebe Gott;
Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala,
Ich muß marschieren in Tod."
	Ach Bruder, ach Bruder, ich kann dich
	    nicht tragen,
	die Feinde haben uns geschlagen,
	helf' dir der liebe Gott,
	helf' dir der liebe Gott!
	Trallai, Trallaley, Trallali, Trallaley,
	    Trallalera,
	ich muß, ich muß marschieren bis in'
	    Tod!

"Ach, Brüder, ihr geht ja vorüber, Als wär es mit mir schon vorüber, Ihr Lumpenfeind seid da; Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala, Ihr tretet mir zu nah.	Ach Brüder, ach Brüder, ihr geht ja mir vorüber, als wär's mit mir vorbei, als wär's mit mir schon vorbei! (als wär's mit mir vorbei!) Trallali, Trallaley, Trallali, Trallaley, trallalera, ihr tretet mir zu nah! Ihr tretet mir zu nah!
Ich muß wohl meine Trommel rühren, Sonst werde ich mich ganz verlieren; Die Brüder dick gesäet, Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala, Sie liegen wie gemäht."	Ich muß wohl meine Trommel rühren, ich muß meine Trommel wohl rühren, Trallali, Trallaley, Trallali, Trallaley, sonst werd' ich mich verlieren. Trallali, Trallaley, Trallala. Die Brüder, dick gesät, Die Brüder, dick gesät, Sie liegen wie gemäht.

Er schlägt die Trommel auf und nieder,   Er schlägt die Trommel auf und nieder,
Er wecket seine stillen Brüder,   er wecket seine stillen Brüder,
Sie schlagen ihren Feind,   Trallali, Trallaley, Trallali, Trallaley,
Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala,   sie schlagen und sie schlagen
Ein Schrecken schlägt den Feind.   ihren Feind, Feind, Feind,
                                           Trallali, Trallaley, Trallalerallala,
                                           ein Schrecken schlägt den Feind,
                                           Ein Schrecken schlägt den Feind!

Er schlägt die Trommel auf und nieder   Er schlägt die Trommel auf und nieder,
Sie find vorm Nachtquartier schon   da sind sie vor dem Nachtquartier schon
     wieder,   wieder,
Ins Gäßlein hell hinaus,   Trallali, Trallaley, Trallali, Trallaley,
Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala,   Trallalera,
Sie ziehn vor Schätzels Haus.   sie ziehen vor Schätzeleins Haus, trallali.

Da stehen Morgens die Gebeine   Des Morgens stehen da die Gebeine
In Reih und Glied wie Leichensteine,   in Reih' und Glied, sie steh'n wie
Die Trommel steht voran,   Leichensteine
Tralali, Tralalei, Tralala,   in Reih', in Reih' und Glied.
Daβ sie ihn sehen kann.   Die Trommel steht voran,
                                           die Trommel steht voran,
                                           daβ sie ihn sehen kann,
                                           Trallali, Trallaley, Trallali, Trallaley,
                                                Trallalera,
                                           daβ sie ihn sehen kann!

used copy.[91] Mahler made very few changes to this text in creating the lyrics for this

macabre comment on the tragedy of war. His most notable alteration is the gradual

expansion of the refrain, "Trallali, trallaley, trallalera" in six of the eight stanzas and the

repetition of lines, this begins with the revelation that the soldiers are continuing their

march, even in death. After that moment, each time it is heard, the verses become

increasingly long and drawn out by way of lengthened refrains and more and more

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[91] Rölleke and Hilmar-Voit have argued that Mahler used the Boxberger, the Bremer, and the first editions of *Wunderhorn* to create his song texts. I agree that the Boxberger and Bremer editions were used, but I believe that Mahler's first edition was viewed as more a collectible *objet d'art* than a tool for working out song texts. Rölleke, "Textgrundlagen und Textauswahl," 370–78. Ludwig Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alten deutchen Lieder*, ed. Friedrich Bremer (Leipzig: P.Reclam, 1879).

repeated words. The imbalance caused by this lengthening also lends to the overall gradual expansion of the stanzas, as if the size of the verses themselves represented the ever-growing legions of the marching dead. The tightly organized cinquains with their AABCB rhyme scheme from the *Wunderhorn* poem become as large as eight lines with no consistent rhyming pattern. Each verse combines a couplet in iambic tetrameter and one with a silent foot at the end of each line in both versions of the text.

The poetic modes found in "Revelge" break the song neatly into two sections. The first five stanzas function dramatically as the soldiers speak to one another: first all of them together, then in dialogue between the injured soldier and his comrade, then the drummer boy, as the horror of their situation slowly unfolds. Once the drummer boy takes charge and begins to lead his platoon of dead soldiers on the march, the story is handed over to a narrator, who vividly describes the skeletal soldiers rising from the ground to march and the fear they strike in the hearts of the enemy until they finally reach the home of the drummer boy's beloved. The "tralali" refrain remains during the narrated section, becoming increasingly more distorted as it begins to resemble, not in small part, the decaying bodies that pass by.

The temporal qualities of this story exist in a state that is open to interpretation. At first, the story seems to be happening roughly in real time and is presented in present tense through the soldiers' dialogue, but as the numbers of fallen soldiers begins to mount, the time seems to slow, until the narrator interrupts in stanza six to describe the eerie aftermath of the battle (though still in present tense), showing through narrative reflection that the events have already taken place in the past. The events that unfold: the preparation and marching off to battle, the battle itself, and the

aftermath where the drummer leads the dead troops to the home of his sweetheart, all occur within a natural succession within at least the course of a day, but the repetitive nature of the stanzas seem to extend the story over a longer period of time, giving the impression that the march to the sweetheart's home becomes a nightly affair that is repeated time and again. The interruption of the narrator shifts the focus away from the protagonist introduced earlier in the story and broadens it to encompass all of the soldiers who have lost their lives in this battle. The speakers at various moments throughout the dialogue in verses one through five are also difficult to pinpoint. We know that there is a drummer and at least one other soldier, but how many figures take part in the dialogue is open to interpretation, leaving Mahler the opportunity to identify his characters through musical means.

Folklore scholars deal with stories like that told in "Revelge" in a number of ways. It can be classified as a song in which slain warriors rise to continue fighting, a sleeping army awakens to defeat enemies, death in physical combat, and a revenant ballad of comrades.[92] Hilmar-Voit and Dargie tend to ignore the supernatural qualities of the song, labeling it as a song of war and a song of earthly life and death.

"Der Tamboursg'sell"

"Tamboursgesell" remained almost untouched by Arnim and Brentano's editing process. Only a few small wording changes alter their version of the poem from that found on the broadside on which they found it and which remained in Arnim's

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[92] Thompson's tale type E155.1 deals with soldiers rising from the dead to fight and type E502 deals with the sleeping army; Long's type G.b. deals with death in physical combat.

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collection at the time of his death.[93]

This is another poem to which Mahler made few changes, only deleting some repetition and adding some of his own. These changes appear on a piano sketch on which Mahler worked out the drum cadence, the harmonic flow, and to some degree, the melody of the song, providing us with an unusual view of the compositional process mid-stream. The final stanzas of the poem are scrawled on the bottom of the second page of the sketch and the words are also penciled in above the text. The penciled words differ in terms of added and omitted repetitions from the text which is written at the bottom of the same page. This sketch reveals a great deal regarding Mahler's practice of text alteration as it corresponded to the act of song composition. (See Figure 2.3) The placement of words and erasures on the sketch seem to indicate that any alterations the composer chose to make to his song texts were completed as part of the compositional act rather than as a discrete activity. "Der Tamboursg'sell" was the last *Wunderhorn* poem set by Mahler; after this, he turned to the poems of Friedrich Rückert. Carl Schorske has proposed that the death of the drummer boy marked the end of Mahler's association with the innocence of an idealized folk tradition, and paved the way for the pessimism and tragedy found in Mahler's settings of *Kindertotenlieder*.[94]

In order to set the scene for the drummer boy's impending execution, Mahler regularized portions of the poetic rhythm that moves along at a the beat of a drum cadence through the use of contractions (e.g. "das i gehör daran" becomes "das i

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[93] Bode, "Bearbeitung des Vorlage," 275; Reiser, *Seine Quellen*, 219.

[94] Carl E. Schorske, "Mahler and Klimt: Social Experience and Artistic Evolution," *Daedelus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 47.

g'hör d'ran") and some added repetitions of text. However, he also omitted some

Figure 2.3: Page 2, "Der Tamboursg'sell," piano sketch
(Mary Cary Flagler Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, NY)

Tambursgesell (Bremer)	Tamboursg'sell (As set by Mahler)
Ich armer Tambursgesell,	Ich armer Tamboursg'sell!
Man führt mich aus dem Gewölb,	Man führt mich aus dem G'wölb,
Ja aus dem Gewölb,	man führt aus dem G'wölb!
Wär ich ein Tambur blieben,	Wär ich ein Tambour blieben,
Dürft ich nicht gefangen liegen,	dürft ich nicht gefangen liegen!
Nicht gefangen liegen.	
O Galgen, du hohes Haus,	O Galgen, du hohes Haus!
Du siehst so furchtbar aus,	du siehst so furchtbar aus!
So furchtbar aus,	Ich schau dich nicht mehr an
Ich schau dich nicht mehr an,	ich schau dich nicht mehr an!
Weil i weiβ, i gehör daran,	Weil i weiβ, das i g'hör d'ran
Daβ i gehör daran.	weil i weiβ, das i g'hör d'ran!
Wenn Soldaten vorbeimarschieren,	Wenn Soldaten vorbeimarschier'n,
Bei mir nit einquartieren,	bei mir nit einquartier'n.
Nit einquartieren,	Wenn sie fragen, wer i g'wesen bin:
Wann sie fragen, wer i g'wesen bin:	Tampour von der Leibkompanie,
Tampur von der Leib=Kompanie,	Tampour von der Leibkompanie!
Von der Leib=Kompanie.	
Gute Nacht, ihr Marmelstein,	Gute Nacht, ihr Marmelstein!
Ihr Berg und Hügelein,	Ihr Berg' und Hügelein!
Und Hügelein,	Gute Nacht, ihr Offizier,
Gute Nacht, ihr Offizier,	Korporal und Musketier!
Korporal und Musketier,	
Und Musketier!	
Gute Nacht, ihr Offizier,	Gute Nacht!
Korporal und Grenadier,	Gute Nacht ihr Offizier!
Und Grenadier.	Korporal und Grenadier!
Ich schrei mit heller Stimm,	Ich schrei mit heller Stimm:
Von euch ich Urlaub nimm,	von Euch ich Urlaub nimm!
Ja Urlaub nimm!	Von Euch ich Urlaub nimm!
	Gute Nacht,
	Gute Nacht!

repeated text that was included in the original poem. Mahler replaces these short

repeated phrases that appeared in each of the poem's five stanzas with repetition of

different phrases, shifting the emphasis from the drummer boy's current situation to

the things that he believes he will miss the most.

The first three verses in both versions of the text move in an iambic tetrameter and give way to dactylic tetrameter while he is saying his goodbyes in the fourth and fifth stanzas. Mahler also maintains the AAABB rhyme scheme of the *Wunderhorn* poem.

The doomed drummer boy narrates his entire story directly, but his address changes several times throughout his tale. In his opening stanza, the boy seems to be speaking to no one in particular as he simply bemoans his fate, then he begins to call out to various places and people that he will not see again, engaging in apostrophe and taking the opportunity to say his goodbyes even though those to whom he wishes to speak are not actually present and even inanimate objects, such as stones, mountains, and hills, as if prolonging the process of saying his goodbyes to anything and everything might somehow stall his impending doom.[95] The nature of the story makes it difficult to determine precisely how much time is passing during the course of the story. We are hearing the drummer boy's thoughts during his final night before his execution, but he does not reveal the nature of his crime or how long he has been held captive, and this blurs the temporal center of the story, making it almost lyrical in nature. He recalls being led to the gallows and his thoughts on seeing them, but only his final words are spoken in real time.

In the folklore tradition, stories of young men being executed during military service are somewhat common. Mahler even set a poem that tells a similar story, "Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz," roughly a decade before composing "Der

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[95] Rufus Hallmark, "The Literary and Musical Rhetoric of Apostrophe in *Winterreise*," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Quebec City, Quebec, November 2, 2007. My appreciation to Dr. Hallmark for sharing his paper with me.

Tamboursg'sell." What makes the story of this drummer boy particularly poignant is that he is only a child. Given that the cause of his punishment has not been specified, one is forced to wonder what crime would be heinous as to justify the execution of a child. Folklorists consider this type of story to be one of the man in the gallows, death as punishment, death by legal execution, and a semi-historical tale of a hero and a villain.[96] Mahler scholars Hilmar-Voit and Dargie view "Der Tamboursg'sell" in the same categories as they do "Revelge," a song of war and a tale of earthly life and death. This song also holds the distinction of being the only one of the *Wunderhorn* ballads to be explicitly labeled by Mahler as a ballad.[97] He referred to many of the earlier *Wunderhorn* songs as *Humoresken*, and the drollness of those songs is absent in "Revelge" and "Der Tamboursg'sell."

The twenty-six poems from Arnim and Bretano's classic anthology *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* that Gustav Mahler chose to set to music, resulting in twenty-four songs, eighteen of which possess the qualities of miniature ballads, cover a veritable kaleidoscopic array of environments, characters, and situations. The extent to which Mahler altered the poems varies greatly. In some examples he changes only a few small bits of punctuation, leaving the narrative and temporal qualities of the story intact, in others he turns the entire story on its head. His manipulations, for the most part, preserve the narrative characteristics of his source poems, but in the most

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[96] The man in the gallows makes up tale type 366 in Aarne's system, Thompson labels this story as type Q411, death as punishment, Long calls it type G.d. death by legal execution, and the semi historical tale of a hero and a villain emerges from Buchan's system.

[97] On the cover sheet of Mahler's orchestral manuscript for the piece, Mahler has written: "Der Tamboursg'sell"/**Ballade** aus "des Knaben Wunderhorn"/Gustav Mahler. This manuscript is part of the Robert Owen Lehmann Collection on loan to the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, NY.

interesting cases, these aspects of the stories begin to blur, making it unclear who is speaking and to whom the words are addressed. Examples of this type of textual alteration occur in "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen," "Ich ging mit Lust," "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," "Lob des hohen Verstandes," and "Revelge." Such narrative ambiguity allows the listener to make their own interpretations and opens the door to multiple levels of meaning. In many of the cases where Mahler's changes were extensive, his alterations also affect the temporal progression of his stories, sometimes shortening the course of the story; as seen in "Aus! Aus!, "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz," "Verlorne Müh'," "Das irdische Leben," and "Lob des hohen Verstandse;" occasionally lengthening the action, as seen most readily in "Ich ging mit Lust," "Scheiden und Meiden," and "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen;" and sometimes leaving the temporal progression of the story open to interpretation, as in "Revelge" and "Der Tamboursg'sell."

The most important quality of all of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads lies in the stories that they tell, and he possessed an unmatched skill in constructing his own familiar yet uniquely "Mahlerian" stories. With the resurgence of popularity that his music has undergone in the latter part of the twentieth century, Mahler's reworkings of these poems have become seen by many as the definitive versions in the public consciousness, but it is important to remember that Mahler's song texts were not the starting point or even the finishing point for the stories of the *Wunderhorn*. His songs represent yet one more link in the development that any artifact from a folk tradition will undergo.

Often, Mahler made his changes to the poems of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, be

they minor alterations in punctuation, repetition of words and phrases, or extensive

revision, to service the music. In all cases, these textual changes allow the music to

have an equal hand in the narrative process. The musical narratives, which I will

discuss in Chapter Three, stem directly from the words and the stories they tell.

Mahler once observed to Bauer-Lechner, "Have you noticed that, with me, the

melody always grows out of the words? The words, so to speak, generate the melody,

never vice versa."[98] Mahler used his music to manipulate time, person, poetic mode,

and meter, but the basis of these manipulations started in his alterations of the ballad

texts. In order to fully understand Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads we must view

Mahler's texts in conjunction with his musical treatment of the poems to determine

what kind of stories he is trying to tell and how he is telling them.

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[98] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 50.

Chapter 3

Musical Narrative Trajectories in Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Ballads

In the *Wunderhorn* lieder Mahler used tools that were already familiar to his audience
– folk-like melodies, common musical tropes, simple diatonic harmonies, and
mimetic gestures – to create something quite extraordinary. With these elements he
could convince his listeners that they were hearing something innocent and naïve. But
once his audience stripped away the comforting veneer supplied by these familiar
elements, they would find that Mahler had manipulated these tropes in complex ways,
and in doing so, he presented a dilemma: either to take the songs at face value, or
look a little more deeply, at a level of sophistication that challenged established
norms, assumptions, and values. A fascinating friction lies between the old and
familiar and the new and innovative in these works. This liminal space refers to a
glorified folkloric past that is not as enchanting as it is made to seem and points to an
environment in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna that depends on musical *trompe l'oeil*.

Much of this deceptive complexity stems from Mahler's unusual approach to
narrative. In lexical communication, such as poetry, narrative trajectories are usually
clear from the outset. The reader knows which words are spoken by an objective,
detached narrator and which text emerges as dialogue from the dramatic situation
unfolding within the story. A song composer can impart this information more

directly by allowing the musical narrative to mirror the spoken text. For example, in a dialogue, each speaker might be given a unique musical element, such as a varying instrumentation, pitch range, tempo, or key, to distinguish one character from another; and in an epic poem, the music elevates with the action to reflect the rising tensions of the story. While some of these techniques appear occasionally in Mahler's ballads, he does not always opt for this direct approach. Instead, he frequently allows his music to play an independent character, one that weaves in and out of the story, regardless of the narrative voices present in the text. Sometimes the music serves as a narrator, sometimes as a character, sometimes it merely supports the poetry. This fluidity brings to the musical work a unique narrative interaction that neither text nor music can provide alone, not unlike the function of a *Leitmotif* in a Wagnerian opera. We learn things about the characters in the stories that they do not know about themselves.

This chapter explores the various techniques that Mahler uses with his music to contribute to the process of storytelling in his miniature ballads based on poetry from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. To that end, I will approach these songs by way of their musical form. What will become evident with each example is that Mahler used song form as a type of narrative device, setting stories that progressed at similar rates or with similar plots with the same kinds of formal structures. This use of song form as a method of story-telling is not entirely new – the most obvious example being Schubert's "Der Erlkönig," where the boy's reactions, and the accompanying music, increase in dynamic intensity and pitch as the story unfolds – however, I believe the consistency of this approach and the methodical use of song form as device within the

entire body of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads is quite extraordinary. Mahler' near

contemporaries, Brahms and Wolf, approached musical form from opposite ends, but

obtained similar results. Brahms' songs spanned his entire career and ranged from

simple harmonizations of pre-existing folk melodies to lush *Kunstlied*. In all of these

works, musical expression holds primacy over the text, and while Brahms does not

confine his works to the formal parameters found in his poems, he does not use song

form as a narrative device, so much as an expressive one.[1] Wolf, on the other hand,

viewed the expression of his texts "by repeating their sound and meaning in the form

of music," as his primary goal.[2] Both composers, while true to their own

compositional goals, failed to recognize the narrative potential of song form as

successfully as Mahler, who used structure and form as a subtle method of enhancing

the essence of the story. As I examine each of the *Wunderhorn* ballads, I will point

out salient musical features that contribute to the story and determine how Mahler's

musical treatment of the events of the ballad allow them to occur through time and

how his musical approach to the characters in these stories contribute to the narrative

process. In the end, we will see that Mahler possessed a large palette of musical

gestures that he could combine in myriad ways to create stories that extended far

beyond those told by the texts alone. Mahler's methods of musical storytelling

demand this close level of scrutiny due to their purposeful combination of old,

universal stories with modern, experimental composition. This juxtaposition of the

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[1] Virginia Hancock, "Johannes Brahms: Volkslied/Kunstlied," in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed., Rufus Hallmark, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 144.

[2] Lawrence Kramer, "Hugo Wolf: Subjectivity in the Fin-de-siècle Lied," in *German Lieder in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed., Rufus Hallmark, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 239.

old with the new resounds with Mahler's modernist aesthetic and the universality of folk stories.

The simple process of a composer setting ballads from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* to music creates certain expectations on the part of the listener. German speakers were familiar with these texts not merely as poems but as the lyrics to well-known folk songs, not unlike "Barbara Allen" or "Greensleeves" for English speakers. As such, the average contemporaneous listener might reasonably have expected Mahler to simply create elaborate harmonizations for familiar melodies. This had been done before, and did not lie beyond the realm of activities for a reputable composer. Brahms had previously composed several volumes, consisting of eighty songs in all,[3] of these simply harmonized folksongs in versions for solo singer or for choir (see

Example 3.1: Brahms: "Schwesterlein" from woo. 33 *49 deutsche Volkslieder*

Example 3.1). Mahler, however, chose a different route than that of his predecessor. Rather than utilizing the pre-existing tunes for his texts, he created new melodies and elaborated on them with intricate accompaniments. While many of Mahler's melodies maintain the essential folkloric qualities that one would anticipate, none are entirely

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[3] Hancock, "Brahms," 142.

drawn from folk-like styles. Of course, political and cultural circumstances throughout the nineteenth century had blurred considerably the distinctions between genuine folk music and works that were later written in the style of the folk, the so-called *Kunstballaden*.[4] But the traditional characteristics often associated with folksong melodies include step- or third-wise motion, narrow pitch ranges, modal coloring, hemiola, irregular meter, and word painting.[5] German scholars and composers refer to this adoption of folk-like elements in composition as "*Volkston*." Elizabeth Schmierer identifies that contrasts of simplicity and complexity provide "specific meaning for the concept of [these type of] songs."[6]

Mahler also thwarts the expectations of his listener through his fondness for balladic type poetry. Typically, the traditional ballad "is concise and… organized in stanzas, frequently with a refrain."[7] While the *Kunstballaden* composed by Schubert, Schumann, and others avoided this restrictiveness by using newly written poetry that emulated the style of the *Volk*, Mahler used a literary genre possessing a long tradition, which, as such, carried certain expectations. The repetitious poetic structure of the traditional ballad typically elicited a strophic, somewhat monotonous, musical setting. Mahler never used strictly strophic composition, but, even in the most repetitive settings, allowed his vocal melodies and accompaniments to develop freely

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[4] Philip V. Bohlman writes of the complex history of the German folk song, "German folk song has never been just German. Imagined during the late eighteenth-century *Aufklärung*, the German Enlightenment, and invented during the romanticism of the early nineteenth century, German folk song became a visible player in the struggle to construct German nationalism." "Landscape–Region–Nation–Reich: German Folk Song in the Nexus of National Identity," in *Music & German National Identity*, Celia Applegate & Pamela Potter, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 108.

[5] Hancock, "Brahms," 144.

[6] Elizabeth Schmierer, *Die Orchesterlieder Gustav Mahlers*, Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft 38, series ed., Friedhelm Krummacher & Heinrich W. Schwab (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1991), 118.

[7] Fritz Bose, "German Folk Ballads," *Midwest Folklore* 7 (1957): 207.

to highlight the dramatic needs of the story, and he adjusted the text, if need be, to suit his creative vision. Each of these examples will serve to demonstrate the various techniques, from the smallest ornamental gesture to broad formal structures that Mahler used to aid in the listener's perception of the unfolding of events over the canvas of time. Adorno and Danuser have commented on the tendency in Mahler's music to expand beyond formulaic music, moving in a fashion more akin to epic poetry or prose than regularly metered, simply structured lyric poetry.[8] This sense of freedom allows the composer to select musical form not based on poetic structures, but instead to best tell the story at hand.

This chapter will examine each of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads individually to identify the salient musical features that he uses to portray the essential elements of the story: narrative point of view, poetic mode, and the passage of time. I have organized the chapter to group songs based on the song form selected because, as we will see, Mahler uses song form as an integral part of the telling of the story, and the songs that share a structure also tend to share similar plot content.

MODIFIED STROPHIC MUSICAL SETTINGS

Formal structure contributes a great deal to how a story unfolds through music. In traditional ballads, strophic settings occur almost exclusively, and modified strophic forms commonly appear in musical settings of *Kunstballaden*, most famously, Schubert's setting of Goethe's "Der Erlkönig." This regularly recurring musical pattern maintains consistency within a ballad and, in the case of epic ballads, provides

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[8] Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 76; and Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1991), 152–84.

a sense of the gradual passage of time as the music takes a backseat to the text and the words allow the story to progress with each successive verse. Of his eighteen balladic *Wunderhorn* lieder, Mahler utilized a variation of strophic formal structure for six. This includes paired verse forms, groups of two contrasting verses appearing repeatedly in tandem, which appear in two of Mahler's modified strophic ballads. In the cases of the least change from one verse to the next, the settings are allowed to maintain a naïve, folk-like character in form. The more complex examples of Mahler's modified strophic forms use the similarity of each verse to ground the passage of time in the story, while the musical elaboration that takes place within each successive stanza allows for the building of drama as the story unfolds and marks the passage of time, allowing the listener to recall previous events, recognize that the circumstances portrayed by the music have changed, and to see the events in a different light.[9]

Mahler's aversion to purely strophic form can be deduced from a comment he made to Natalie Bauer-Lechner (quoted in part in Chapter 2) regarding the chamber works of Schubert:

> How easily he takes things when it comes to developing his ideas! Six sequences follow one after the other, and then comes still another one in a new key. No elaboration, no artistically finished development of his original idea! Instead, he repeats himself so much that you could cut out half the piece without doing it any harm. For each repetition is already a lie. A work of art must evolve perpetually, like life. If it doesn't hypocrisy and theatricality set in.[10]

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[9] Karol Berger, "Diegesis and Mimesis: The Poetic Modes and the Matter of Artistic Presentation," *The Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994): 424–25; Carolyn Abbate, "What the Sorcerer Said," *Unsung Voices* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 55.

[10] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trans. Dika Newlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 147.

Given this view, we can easily see the development of Mahler's views toward the

value of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* as a source for art-song texts. The examples that

Mahler chose to set in the most repetitious of modified strophic settings are the songs

believed to be the first ("Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen") and fourth ("Starke

Einbildungskraft") that he composed, and the more complex examples of his

experimentations with strophic forms do not appear until his later settings, which

were composed in orchestral arrangements.

"Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen"

While Mahler's setting of the song originally known as "Um die Kinder still und artig

zu machen" maintains an entirely folk-like character, his melody bears no

resemblance to the original folk melody, collected by Christoph Friedrich Nicolai for

volume one of his 1777 anthology *Eyn feyner Almanach vol schönerr echterr*

liblicherr Volkslieder. A vague similarity, however, can be seen between the eighth

note passage in the second and fourth measures of the folk melody and the bass line

of Mahler's piano introduction.[11] Comparing Mahler's compositions to the melodies

that were originally associated with these texts can prove to be a helpful exercise as

we look for similarities between the two that may indicate the influence of the

traditional melodies on his compositions.

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[11] Karl Bode, *Die Bearbeitung der Vorlagen in* Des Knaben Wunderhorn, *Palaestra: Untersuchenen und Texte aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie* 76, Alois Brandl, Gustav Roethe, Erich Schmidt, eds. (Berlin: Mayer and Müller, 1909), 268.

Example 3.2: "Um die Kinder still und artig zu machen" folk melody[12]

Example 3.3: "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen" Mahler mm. 1-3

As we will recall from Chapter 2, Mahler constructed the text for "Um schlimme

Kinder" by transforming four regular, four-line verses into three poetic stanzas of

varying lengths. He returns a sense of poetic regularity through his musical treatment

of these three stanzas by breaking them up into two nearly identical musical verses in

E Major,[13] both performed in the same bouncing staccato declamatory style. The only

melodic difference between the two appears in measures 8 and 27. (See Examples 3.4

and 3.5) In the second verse, Mahler removes a lower neighbor inflection, altering the

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[12] Erich Stockmann, ed., Des Knaben Wunderhorn *in den Weisen seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), 82.

[13] Mahler published all of his *Wunderhorn* songs simultaneously in high and low keys. When I specify the key of a particular song, I will use the key that is indicated in the manuscript sources I have examined. In the case of earliest songs (those composed with only piano accompaniment), the manuscripts are held in the Mahler-Rosé Collection at the University of Western Ontario in London, ON. I extend my great appreciation to the staff of the library, in particular, Monica Fazekas, for making these materials available to me.

Ex. 3.4: "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen" mm.6-8

Ex. 3.5: "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen" mm. 25-27

tonal trajectory of the first beat of the second complete measure. Harmonically, the

verses differ due to an overall thickening of the accompanimental texture throughout

the song. (See Example 3.6 and 3.7) In the beginning, the piano only plays three notes

at a time, but by the end, it broadens to thick chords of up to six pitches using

chromatic passing tones in the right hand of the piano accompaniment to create some

of the most dissonant writing in the song (for example, the minor second between the

vocal line and the treble line of the piano on the second eighth beat of the word

"böse") as the accompaniment musically comments on what the woman calls her

"very bad children," allowing the piano line to momentarily assume the role of non-

Example 3.6: "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen" mm. 3-5

Example 3.7: "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen" mm. 26–8

verbal narrator. The listener that recalls the accompaniment to the first verse may see this as an indication that the drama is about to intensify as they hear the story play out in the second verse.

Mahler uses the interval of the descending perfect fourth to symbolize an important (though physically absent) figure in the story of the rider and the *Hausfrau*, the cuckoo bird. This interval appears in the opening measure of the introduction and recurs no less than forty-three times throughout the course of the song's forty-one measures. Several things are unusual about the prevalence of this interval. Cuckoo calls are traditionally notated using two pitches at the interval of a descending minor third, as Mahler does in his other songs that utilize the call of the cuckoo (such as "Lob des hohen Verstandes," which will be discussed later in this chapter), but here it is transformed into a three-note motive of a descending perfect fourth and minor third. (See Examples 3.8 a and b) Cuckoo calls occur in the lyrics to "Um schlimme

Example 3.8 a and b: Cuckoo calls from "Lob des hohen Verstandes" m. 126 and

"Um schlimme Kinder" mm. 5-6

Kinder" three times in each verse, but in one of these instances it is not set with the

unusual, by this time, established sonic signifier of the cuckoo call, but instead a

Example 3.9: Unusual cuckoo call. "Um schlimme Kinder" mm. 33-34

descending major second and minor third, giving the new motive a more ominous

tone. (See Example 3.9) The three-note motive associated with all but this unusual

cuckoo calls accompanies portions of dialogue spoken by the housewife as well (in

the first verse, the motive appears with the words "'*und niemand, und niemand, und

niemand* heim als meine Kind', '*und Mädchen und's Mädchen ist auf* der

Wäschenwind'" and in the second verse to the text "'*sind böse, sind böse,' die Frau*,

die sagt, 'sind böse Kind! *Sie folgen, sie folgen der Mutter* nicht geschwind!'"). This

shift draws attention to the cuckoo call and its significance in the story of the rider

and the housewife, which I will examine in Chapter 4.

One finds another unusual quality in "Um schlimme Kinder" when looking at its rhythmic and metrical qualities. The song, written in common time, begins with an eighth note pick-up measure, played as two sixteenth notes. (See Example 3.3) A piano introduction with accents on the fourth and eighth eighth-note beats follows, shifting the accent of the entire song ahead of where it would be expected by an eighth note. Rather than emphasizing eighth beats one and five, the accompaniment jumps the gun, accenting four and eight, giving the impression of over-eagerness. This feeling remains throughout the entire song.

Both verses end in a somewhat peculiar way as well. The vocal line traces a descending arpeggiated tonic chord, but it never reaches the tonic pitch. The thought remains to be completed by the accompaniment, which promptly picks up the figure and brings it to conclusion. This could be an indication that the rider and the woman have better things to do and cannot be bothered to wait for their story to end properly. The simple, matter-of-fact attitudes reflected by this musical treatment is in keeping with earlier *Kunstballaden* just as Brahms' "Vergebliches Ständchen."

The modified strophic form that Mahler uses in his setting of "Um schlimme Kinder" contributes to the deliberate simplicity (especially by comparison to his other settings) and folk-like character of his miniature ballad. The scene between the rider and the woman seems to move very quickly with its brisk tempo and march-like rhythms. The brief interchange does not allow for elaborate drama to ensue, and the essentially strophic setting reflects a sense of relative inaction before and after the encounter. The circumstances of both characters seem little changed by their

conversation, and as such, the music changes very little in terms of structure, melody, or key, showing little passage of time.

"Starke Einbildungskraft"

The well-known "Starke Einbildungskraft" appeared in numerous collections published at the turn of the nineteenth century.[14] Mahler maintained the *Volkston* character in what is essentially a strophic setting in B flat Major, although differences between the stanzas occur, beginning with the third phrase of each verse: the extended pleading of the maiden in the first verse is shortened by two measures by

Example 3.10: "Starke Einbildungskraft" mm. 4-7

Example 3.11: "Starke Einbildungskraft" mm. 13-16

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[14] Bode, *Die Bearbeitung in Vorlagen*, 449.

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way of varied levels of textual repetition (which, as noted in Chapter 2, were added

by Maher). (See Examples 3.10 and 3.11)[15] The expansion of the music in her verse

demonstrates the maiden's desire to cling to what is obviously a relationship with no

future, while the young man's rushed, abrupt verse, which follows the maiden's with

only an eighth note pause, exemplifies his desire to move on quickly, as if he had

been waiting for some time for this conversation to occur and had already prepared

his argument, allowing him to make a rapid exit. The young man's melody also

features a slightly higher tessitura (as seen on his word "dich" in Example 3.11) and

somewhat thicker accompaniment, demonstrating his annoyance with his situation.

Mahler also creates a much more stagnant melody than that heard in the original folk

melody. (See Example 3.12) Mahler's melody more accurately intimates the

monotony of a romance that has worn out its welcome. Very similar to the original

melody, however, is the melodic line of Mahler's piano introduction. (See Example

3.13) The dotted rhythms, the simple I-IV-V tonalities, and the lilting dance-like

tempos create a very similar sonic environment in these songs. Another method

Mahler uses to illustrate the impending conclusion of this relationship is the song's

brevity; at just over one minute in length, this is the most miniature of Mahler's

miniature ballads. The events play out in very short order, almost too short to allow

the listener to grasp the situation and weigh in with their own retentive/protentive

ideas before the final apothegm is revealed.

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[15] The manuscript for "Starke Einbildungskraft" is in the key of B flat Major, but the first edition was published in C Major and A Major. My examples are based on the C Major setting.

Example 3.12: "Starke Einbildungskraft" folk melody[16]

Example 3.13: "Starke Einbildungskraft" Mahler's piano introduction

Mahler includes an unusual sonic effect in measure 10, between the maiden's

Example 3.14: "Starke Einbildungskraft" mm. 9-11

repeated pleas, "Gelt, ja?" The effect, two accented eighth notes with descending

grace notes gives the impression of a bird call. (See Example 3.14) This mimetic

gesture momentarily allows the accompaniment to extend beyond its background role

and participate in the story, assuming a role of commentator, and stretching the

dramatic mode into the epic. The inclusion of bird song, personified by the piano,

lends the support of the world of nature to the maiden's cause, as if to say, "After this

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[16] Stockmann, Wunderhorn *in den Weisen seiner Zeit*, 84.

much time has passed, it is only appropriate for you to be married." The transition

between the verses also offers a peculiar instance, the final measures of the first verse

seem to be setting up a modulation to the dominant, but just when that change seems

about to occur, the second verse begins back in the tonic, just as the song had begun.

It seems as if, even in the tonal center of the song, the maiden's hopes of marriage to

her sweetheart are being thwarted.

"Der Schildwache Nachtlied"

Anyone who has ever been forced to work overnight while seemingly everyone else

sleeps will understand the circumstances that Mahler has illustrated musically in "Der

Schildwache Nachtlied." Natalie Bauer-Lechner wrote that Mahler salvaged the

origins of this song from an abandoned attempt at an opera Mahler planned to write to

a libretto by Captain Karl Weber, with whom he worked on the reconstruction of the

latter's grandfather's incomplete opera *Die drei Pintos*.[17] The song's reported

operatic origin may have served as the catalyst Mahler needed to begin composing

Wunderhorn songs with orchestral accompaniment. The watchman, at first filled with

dutiful enthusiasm, finds it difficult to stay awake, and he drifts into sweet dreams of

his beloved, only to be instantly snapped awake to begin the cycle anew. Mahler

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[17] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 171.

narrates the story musically by creating two distinctive musical environments: the

Example 3.15: "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" mm. 1-4 (accompaniment)

sentry's actual surroundings in the guard tower, created with steady 4/4 time,

declamatory vocal lines, diatonic and triadic harmonies, fanfares, and drum cadences;

(See Example 3.15) and the dream world of his sweetheart with its soft woodwinds

and harp, legato melodies backed by harmony based on lushly chromatic dissonances,

flexible meter, and slow tempo. (See Example 3.16) And as it happens in real life, the

waking world gives way to the world of dreams gradually, through a three-measure

transition where the martial sound world with its trumpets and drums dissipates into a

soundscape accompanied by soft woodwinds, strings and a harp, as the tempo

gradually slows and the dynamic level lowers. (See Example 3.17) Even

Example 3.16: "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" mm. 17-21

Example 3.17: "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" mm. 10-12

Example 3.18: "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" mm. 28-31

the vocal melody in this short passage with its long pitch followed by an octave

descent could be interpreted as the musicalization of a yawn. But each time the

watchman falls asleep he finds himself jolted awake with 2 abrupt notes on the

timpani and low strings, as the reality of military life returns instantly. (See Example 3.18)

A new element appears the third time the watchman emerges from his dreams at measure 63. Reality abruptly returns with the same crashing timpani and low strings as heard earlier, but after only three measures, the key changes from B flat Major to G Major, and we hear a steady cadence from the snare drum, a thinning of the texture and a fanfare figure in the horns and trumpet which signal a shift in the watchman's
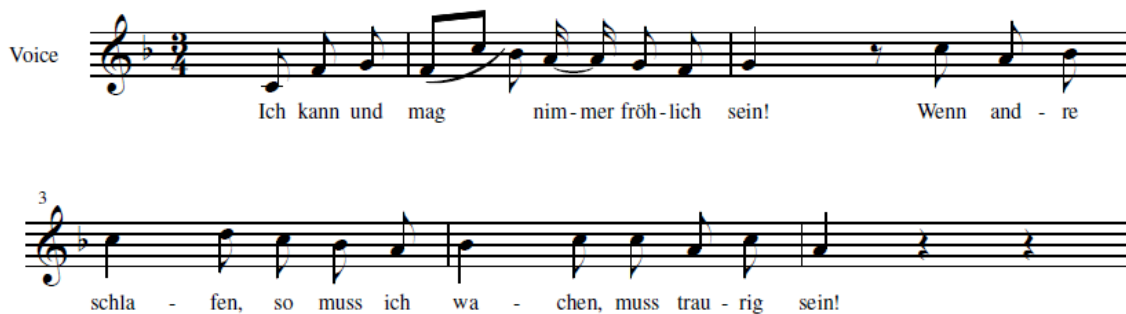

Example 3.19: "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" mm. 66-68

attitude toward his position. (See Example 3.19) His frustration boils over into this overly exaggerated militaristic, almost ceremonial passage in which the watchman

blames God for his unfortunate predicament. The listener who observes this gradual change over time is forced to wonder whether the guard will give into temptation, abandoning his post in order to join his sweetheart

The first of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs to be written in versions for both piano and orchestral accompaniment, "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" also varies from its folksong predecessor more than any of the earlier songs. Unusual, particularly in that the theme of the text deals with militaristic subject matter, is the 3/4 meter attributed to the folksong, first collected by Elwert in 1782 in Stuttgart.[18] Mahler plays with

Example 3.20: "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" original folk melody[19]

triple meter during the dream sequences he writes into the song, which stretch lazily between triple and duple meter, (as seen in Example 3.16) as opposed to the waking passages, which remain strictly duple.

Measures 77-87 of the song, in which the watchman is overheard by what one might interpret as another guard, features a large, sweeping crescendo and decrescendo covering eight measures. During this passage, the vocal line holds a long, sustained high d on the word "Rund'!" This section of prolonged tension (and

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[18] Bode, "Die Bearbeitung in Vorlagen," 484.

[19] Stockmann, Wunderhorn *in den Weisen seiner Zeit*, 48.

the most extensive changes Mahler made to the text) brings with it the contrast between our watchman, who has begun to question his loyalty to the cause, and the other, unseen watchman calling out into the darkness, who in his eagerness to perform admirably, behaves as though the unidentified voice he hears in the night might be his enemy. The power behind this gesture immediately cues the listener that something has changed and paints the guard's inattentiveness as potentially problematic. The music provides the narrative element, informing the listener that the events have become far more serious than a story of a sleepy guard dreaming about his beloved.

Mahler's music seems to compress the temporal qualities of the song. The lyrics imply that a substantial amount of time passes between each sleeping and waking incident, at least enough time for the sentry to begin to lose faith in his cause. On the other hand, Mahler's musical gestures that represent the guard's drifting to sleep and waking suggest a more concentrated sequence of events. This narrowed focus intensifies the dramatic shift in the guard's attitude and increases the dramatic elements.

"Verlor'ne Müh'!"

Before the singer has uttered a word, the instrumental introduction of "Verlor'ne Müh'!" has informed the listener a great deal, providing the initial narration prior to the entry of the dramatic text. The opening four measures feature the sustained dominant pitch in the oboe offset by accented notes in the horn and the triangle. These tones combine to emulate the sounding of the chimes of a clock tower and a

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pastoral horn. Through the use of these stereotypical instruments we find that it is early in the day, that the story takes place in an outdoor, rural setting, and that it likely involves *Völkisch* characters. The tonic chord of A Major does not appear until measure seven, upon which the voice enters and the ballad at last gets fully underway. The music continues in a rhythmic pattern associated with the folk dance called the *Ländler*, which features a lilting, lyrical triple meter in which the foot is traditionally stomped on the first beat of the measure, creating a distinctive accent, similar to that

Example 3.21: "Verlor'ne Müh'!" mm. 11-13

of a waltz. Mahler highlights this rhythm in mm. 12-13 of the vocal line with a pattern that recurs throughout the song. (see Example 3.21) The blatant use of the folk dance also adds to the pastoral setting of the song;[20] however, this dance rhythm is repeatedly distorted by the young man in the story, who takes no interest in the girl's advances. Once he has rejected her, the tempo accelerates and the accompaniment motive heard in mm. 33-40 shifts the accent ahead by an eighth beat, demonstrating how unexpected this situation was to the maiden. The young man storms off, and she is forced to scramble to come up with a new plan to win his heart. (see Example 3.22) However, as soon as she is able to formulate her new tactic, the tempo returns to that

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[20] Byron Almén writes of the use of folk elements in music, "An idealized Volk…both participates in society and is close to nature. This is, of course, a common nineteenth-century reaction to the dehumanization of urban society: the call to return to a social structure centered on the naïve yet spiritually attuned rural peasant." "The Sacrificed Hero: Creative Mythopoesis in Mahler's Wunderhorn Symphonies," in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearson (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2006), 144.

Example 3.22: "Verlor'ne Müh'!" mm. 33-40 (piano arrangement)

of the beginning, normality is restored, and her process of wooing begins again.

Each of the maiden's three verses begins with an identical ascending passage that scales the interval of a minor tenth. This repetition and eventual variation of the primary motive in each verse following brief instrumental interludes indicate that the maiden is spacing out her approaches to the young man over time. She uses the time allotted by the interlude to plan a new strategy, but rather than returning to seek him out again immediately, she waits until the moment is right. The similarity of the music also informs us that while she believes she is trying something new with each successive verse, her tactics are all essentially the same, and each is doomed to failure. The passing of time between verses also explains the change in the young man's musical language. After her first approach, the similarity between the boy's response to the musical language used by the maiden suggest that he is trying to be polite. The rising pitch and wider range of his later responses, however, show

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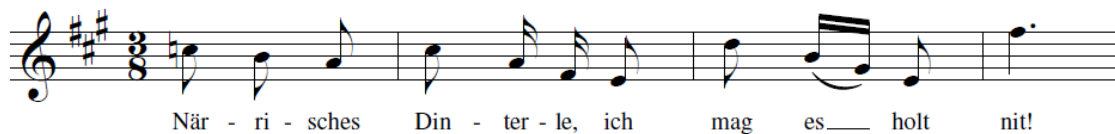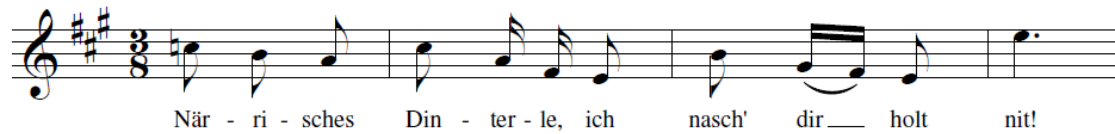
Examples 3.23 a, b, & c: "Verlor'ne Müh'" mm. 30-33, 65-68, and 102–05

increasing irritation. (See Examples 3.23 a, b, & c) As noted in Chapter 2, Mahler

omitted two verses from the *Wunderhorn* poem. This allows the escalation of the

young man's annoyance to seem more natural. We must assume, however, that the

young man has been anticipating her advances because he requires no time at all to

ponder his replies to the maiden. His responses begin on the downbeat of the measure

immediately following her stanza in every instance. In fact, the faster rhythmic

motion of the first measures of his second and third replies (as seen in Examples 3.21
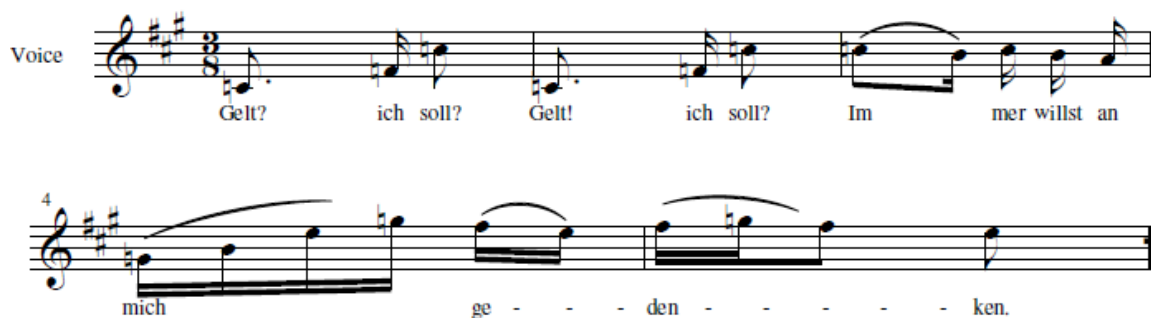
Example 3.24: "Verlor'ne Müh'" mm. 82–6

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b and c), make these statements seem even more rushed, as if he could not even wait for her to finish speaking before turning her down.

Mahler distorts the *Volkston* in his song through the use of extensive chromaticism in the vocal melodies. (See Example 3.24) The accompaniment, at first, remains essentially consonant and supportive of the slippery melody, except during the moment when the maiden impresses upon the young man to accept her advances toward the end of her first stanza. (See Example 3.25) The dissonance of these passages creates a brief moment of suspense and expectation as both the maiden

Example 3.25: "Verlor'ne Müh'" mm. 26–9

and the listener await her intended's response to her pleas. Later verses show the maiden's increased frustration through added dissonance and non-functional chromatic harmony. Verse two builds tension through the repeated alternation of C natural Major and G natural augmented chords, and verse three hovers for seven measures on an F natural Major chord before finally returning to A Major in measure 89, only to begin a highly dissonant passage in which the maiden makes her final plea for the young man's love.(See Example 3.26)
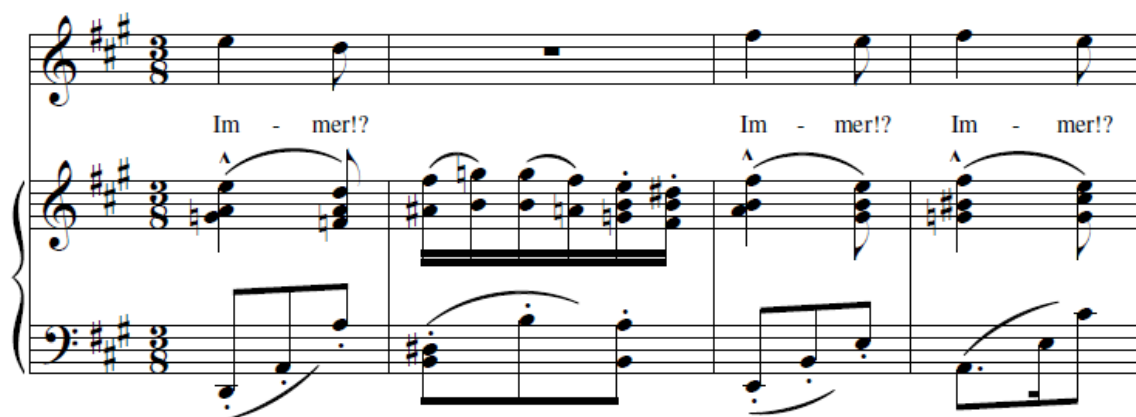
Example 3.26: "Verlor'ne Müh'" mm. 90-93

As a partner dance, the *Ländler* has a long-standing tradition in its association

with peasant courtship. The dance was utilized in folk-inspired art songs recalling

Example 3.27: Brahms: "Vergebliches Ständchen" mm. 2-6

failed attempts at wooing before Mahler. The most notable example is Brahms'

"Vergebliches Ständchen," Op. 84, no. 4. (See Example 3.27) Mahler's case is

unusual, however, in that here it is a young lady trying to win over a young man. We

hear the maiden's increased motivation in the second verse, which is extended

through text repetition, through her change in pitch, which lowers toward the end of

the verse, and then her desperation in the final verse that lowers in pitch even further

as if she is trying lower her voice to match his. Her final exclamation, marked *immer*

kläglicher (more and more wretchedly), brings the drama to an almost comic level as she makes her final, somewhat pathetic plea with words repeated to the point of absurdity. All the while, the young man's responses to the maiden consistently rise in pitch while his tone remains cool and detached as he becomes increasingly emphatic and irritated, ending finally with his sustained statement "Nit!," held on a high g sharp for over two measures, which possesses the finality to close the matter for good. Again we find that the modified strophic form presents a story where, despite the young lady's best efforts, circumstances change very little from beginning to end.

"Das irdische Leben"

Mahler's use of formal structure to help convey his story finds its ideal representative in "Das irdische Leben." Essentially strophic in form, Mahler uses subtle changes in pitch, harmony and phrasing to portray the growing tension of the situation. The *moto perpetuo* heard in the accompaniment maintains a certain temporal stasis throughout
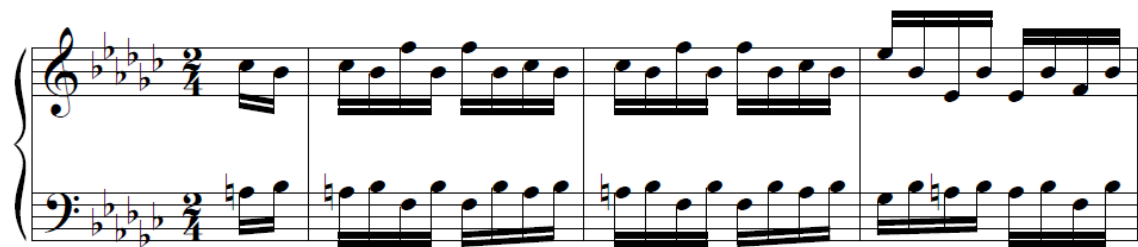
Example 3.28: "Das irdische Leben" mm. 1-3)

the song. (See Example 3.28) This has been interpreted by some scholars as representative of the motion of the mother's gristmill constantly turning in order to complete the task of baking bread.[21] One might also view the constant circular motion

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[21] William E. Lake, "Hermeneutic Music Structures in 'Das irdische Leben' by Gustav Mahler," *In Theory Only* 12/7 (November, 1994): 4.

as a metaphor for the monotony and cyclical nature of peasant life in which any accomplishment is overshadowed by the immediate need to begin work anew. Mahler told Natalie Bauer-Lechner of his own views of the song:

> I feel that human life is symbolized by the child's crying for bread and the answer of the mother, consoling it with promises again and again. In life, everything that one most needs for the growth of spirit and body is withheld – as with the dead child – until it is too late. And I believe that this is characteristically and frighteningly expressed in the uncanny notes of the accompaniment, which bluster past as in a storm; in the child's anguished cry of fear, and the slow, monotonous responses of the mother – of fate, which is in no particular hurry to satisfy our cries for bread.[22]

The only breaks in the E flat minor *moto perpetuo* (not including measures 27-32 which I will discussed shortly) occur in the final three measures, when it is too late. But the child is not the only one made to wait for sustenance. In the first three verses, Mahler separates the narrator's transitional passage from the preceding line of the mother by six measures. In the final verse, that six measure interlude is extended to sixteen measures. Even the listener is forced to wait for satisfaction. Theodor Adorno wrote of the universality of this song:

> ["Das irdische Leben"] look[s] on the dead as children. The hope of the unrealized, which settles like a ray of holiness about those who die early, is not extinguished even for grown-ups. Mahler's music brings food to the mouth that is no more, watches over the sleep of those who shall never wake.[23]

The changing vocal lines of each of the three speakers in the drama demonstrate the heightening drama of the ballad. As the child's hunger becomes increasingly critical, the melodies of both the child and the narrator rise in pitch and increase in range, (See Examples 3.29 a and b) while that of the mother remains essentially the

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[22] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 32.

[23] Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, Edmund Jephcott, trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 29.

same. One could conceivably interpret this in one of two ways: either the mother is trying to placate her daughter with her calming lack of motion, or in her haste to

Example 3.29 a and b: "Das irdische Leben" mm. 7-14 and 75-82

complete the task of baking, she has ironically neglected to notice the severity of her child's need for food. Mahler's previously mentioned statements to Bauer-Lechner seem to indicate the latter. In a manner similar to that observed in "Verlor'ne Müh'!," Mahler omitted several stanzas from the poem that he set for "Das irdische Leben." Much like in the previous example, this serves to keep the tensions from rising to an unrealistic level. Details on these textual modification appear in Chapter 2.

Harmonic qualities also add to the frenetic nature of this situation. The only

Example 3.30: "Das irdische Leben" mm. 132–35

definitive cadence that occurs in the entire song appears at the final pitch; only after the child has died can her mother cease her endless work. (See Example 3.30) Each speaker in the story has their own pitch center: the child is the only figure who sings over the tonic chord, the mother maintains an unceasing instability by singing around the dominant, and the narrator ratchets up the tension with each successive verse with increasing amounts of chromaticism.

Mahler uses the unique musical language of the child to reveal the story's tragic apothegm in the final verse. The opening line of this verse features a melody identical to that sung by the child in the beginning of the song, only now it is the narrator who speaks, telling us that the bread is finally ready, but it is too late. The child can no longer deliver the melody herself, and once again, it is not her mother that comes to her aid, but the narrator. The shift in narrative point of view leaves the listener with an uncanny feeling, emphasizing the tragedy of what has occurred.

Similarities abound between "Das irdische Leben" and another ballad portraying the death of a child, Schubert's "Erlkönig," based on a *Kunstballade* by Goethe. Mahler adopts several techniques similar to those used by Schubert to convey his

story. Both songs use modified strophic form in which the voices of the dying

children continually rise to reflect the increasing drama while the parents' melodies

Example 3.31: Schubert: "Erlkönig" mm.1-3

remain relatively stable as they concentrate on the task at hand. Schubert also uses a

moto perpetuo in "Erlkönig" that represents the sound of the father's horse galloping

through the night. (See Example 3.31) Key differences between the songs stem from

the amount of time the stories encompass: Mahler's story plays out over several days,

whereas Schubert's child meets his end within hours. But in both cases, the temporal

qualities of the stories are substantial enough and the events heart-rendering enough

to ensure that the listener will become sufficiently engrossed in the story to attempt to

portend whether the tales will end happily or in tragedy. The participation of the third

person narrator differs in these ballads as well: Schubert's narrator merely sets the

scene in the beginning and delivers the grim apothegm at the end, but Mahler's

narrator propels the story forward throughout. Both stories present a similar moral:

parents who become so caught up in the task of caring for their children that they

forget to listen can often lose what matters the most.

The lyrics tell us that the time that elapses from the beginning to the end of "Das

irdische Leben" fills that which would occur between the harvesting of grain until the

baking of bread. The frantic but lyrical speech of the child and the flat, declamatory

statements from her mother are necessarily trapped in real time, but the intrusion of

an instrumental interlude (first heard in mm. 27-32) allows time to accelerate to the

next phase in the bread-making process in each successive verse. This segment

provides the only moment prior to the child's death at the end where the *moto*

perpetuo ceases to be a constant presence. This allows time to pass at a rate

independent from that of the dramatic action. No longer confined by the regular

Example 3.32: "Das irdische Leben" mm. 27-32

motion of the gristmill, the story can propel to the next phase of baking. The lyrical

phrases presented by the third person narrator also help to move time forward and

inform us that the previous task has been completed, "und als das Korn [geerntet]

war, rief das Kind noch immerdar," but the child has still not been fed. An interlude

also separates the child's request for food and her mother's admonishment to wait,

but the *marcato* markings over these pitches and the return of the *moto perpetuo*

motive in the bass suggest a sense of agitation and impatience on the part of both the child and the mother that would not allow any further time to pass.[24] These interludes provide the opportunity for Mahler to introduce another narrative voice in the form of

Example 3.33: "Das irdische Leben" mm. 15-18 piano arrangement

his accompaniment. The short melodic statements surround every instance of the mother's response to her child, and comment both on the child's cries and the mother's replies, and seem to imply a sense of frustration that the text does not directly indicate, as if a distant, not-entirely-human voice were trying desperately to tell the mother that she must hurry to feed her starving child.

"Lied des Verfolgten im Turm"

Nearly all of the *Wunderhorn* songs with military themes that Mahler composed prior to "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" tell the story of lovers who are separated by the tragedy of war; this song does that as well, but utilizes a different technique. Previous songs afforded each of the characters distinct sonic space with a unique

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[24] These markings appear in the critical edition of the piano/vocal arrangements of "Das irdische Leben." The critical edition and manuscript of the orchestral setting (held in the Mary Flagler Cary Collection at the Pierpont Morgan Library) omits the articulation markings. The manuscript of the piano/vocal arrangement was most recently in the possession of musicologist Dika Newlin and since her recent passing is currently unavailable. I express my thanks to Dr. Sabine Feisst for her information regarding the location of the manuscript.

musical language in which they could express their point of view regarding the situation, but the soldier and the maiden in this tale are only separated by the wall of the prison tower.[25] As such, their distinct sonic spaces are not so distant and one sound world has a tendency to bleed into another. Mahler constructed his setting using three paired verses, one in two segments presented by each of the two characters in turn, and one partial verse given by the prisoner alone. His world is

Example 3.34: "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" mm. 99-101

defined by declamatory melodies, martial rhythms, the requisite militaristic brass and drums, essentially diatonic harmony in D minor, and strictly duple meter. (See Example 3.34) Her world is more lyrical, with soft woodwinds and strings and a meter that flexibly shifts between 6/8 and 9/8. She frequently adopts the descending chromatic scale heard in the prisoner's melody as well, as if this device were a signifier of their unity. (See the second measure of Example 3.35) Musical overlap

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[25] Assuming, of course, that both figures are actually present. Elizabeth Schmierer argues that the woman in this dialogue is merely a figment of the prisoner's imagination. Schmierer, *Orchesterlieder*, 136.

occurs at the moments where the speaker changes, blurring the passage of time and narrative focus. The end of the prisoner's passages give way prematurely to the gentler world of the maiden, and her statements are often interrupted by muted fanfares and his signature descending chromatic scales, indicating the intrusion of his world into her own. While the text of the story seems to indicate that the interchange between the prisoner and the maiden takes place over a substantial period of time, the lack of distinct boundaries for each character's musical statements adds a level of continuity that belies practicality, making audience protention difficult, as we cannot

Example 3.35: "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" mm. 11-14

easily determine a temporal context for the events. In this ballad, a change in narrative perspective does not necessarily require a complete separation of musical material. The first entry of the maiden overlaps a trumpet fanfare played with a quick decrescendo as if to make the military world disappear from the soldier's thoughts quickly when he hears the voice of the maiden. The static nature of the

accompaniment lends to this section a feeling of tension, as if something is not quite right with the situation.

Mahler's use of key tells the listener a great deal about the mindset of the characters in this story. The prisoner's verses are almost exclusively in D minor, with

Example 3.36: "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" mm. 88-95

the exception of his penultimate verse, which changes to C Major. This verse tells of the prisoner's acceptance of his situation, as he claims "So sei's, wie es will! Und wenn es sich schicket, nur Alles sei in der Stille!" ("So may it be, just as it is. And when one is reconciled, only then is all peaceful.") On the other hand, the maiden doesn't seem to know how to deal with her feelings, as her verses shift from G Major to B flat Major, to F Major, finally dissolving into a melody that pulls toward the

prisoner's D minor, as if the eventual union of their keys might allow them to finally

be together. But her melody cannot find the required harmonic support, so instead it

eventually slips back into F Major, losing hope on their relationship just as she has.

(See Example 3.36)

   Mahler sets each stanza of the poem separately and divides them with a

descending chromatic passage in the violin, similar to that which appears throughout

the prisoner's melodies, which simultaneously serves as a divisional device and a

reminder that war is still waging all around them. (See Example 3.37) When the

Example 3.37: "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" mm. 25-28 Violin line

soldier returns, he brings the muted brass instruments that help to define his world

with him. But as the song continues, the distance suggested by the mute on the

trumpets begins to diminish: as the war draws ever closer, the soldier may be doomed

to remain captive indefinitely (in fact, the details of his sentence are never revealed),

yet he remains undaunted, saying, "Thoughts are free!"

Mahler allowed this complex song to develop far beyond its *Wunderhorn* folksong

prototype, but he maintained the use of arpeggiated chords to express the main

message of his song, similar to those in the first utterance heard in the folksong

shown in Example 3.38. The folk melody maintains a quality that could conceivably

express the ideas of both the soldier and the maiden, but Mahler allows his music to

relate more closely to each figure as a separate individuals.

Example 3.38: "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" folk melody

The modified strophic form Mahler chose for "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm" emphasizes the stoicism displayed by the prisoner who refuses to allow his thoughts and emotions to become downtrodden by his captivity. The maiden's much more adaptive musical language shows that she herself cannot share in his optimism. As the story unfolds, the maiden becomes increasingly oppressed by their circumstances, as if she were the prisoner and her lover were free.

We have seen six examples of Mahler's use of modified strophic form in his setting of miniature ballads from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* composed over a period of roughly ten years. The stories told by these ballads vary greatly, from the death of the child in "Das irdische Leben" to the unsuccessful wooing in "Verlor'ne Müh'!," but they all share the use of strophic form as a marker of "sameness." In some of these cases, such as "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm," the ability to not be swayed by unfortunate situations appears as a sign of strength. Other instances, such as the refusal to marry seen in "Starke Einbildungskraft," indicate that a young woman's

best efforts may still come up short. The idea that circumstances and situations remain as they have always been is the hallmark of these stories.

TERNARY FORM MUSICAL SETTINGS

The use of ternary form in the musical setting of a ballad brings with it certain challenges to the process of storytelling. The most prominent of these difficulties lies in the inherent qualities of the story and that of arched forms. The very nature of a story implies that the characters' actions and experiences alter their environment so that their circumstances change in the process, by the end of the story the world is somehow different. The structure of ternary form requires that the music of the beginning and that which returns after a contrasting section share a significant amount of musical material, implying that the world is more or less the same as before. Mahler deals with this difficulty in various ways, typically allowing for his changes in musical material to account for contrasting aspects within the story rather than setting the scene before and after the action. In some cases he allows the changes in musical material to account for shifts in narrative function, so that one section presents dialogue and another narrated story events. In other cases, different characters are given unique musical material to represent their specific point of view of the events. Rarely, but significantly, in some cases Mahler utilizes arch form as a plot device, to demonstrate that even after a series of events has occurred, that the world is not so different after all.

"Ich ging mit Lust"

From the opening passage, Mahler's treatment of the poem "Ich ging mit Lust" defies

expectations. The text ("Happily, I went through the forest. I heard the birds

singing.") would seem to indicate a song that would progress at a lively tempo, to

represent the protagonists' cheerful stroll, perhaps with a vocal line that in some way

imitates the bird song to which the text refers, not unlike the tempo marking of *Mäßig

geschwind* (moderately quickly) that is found with the original folk melody. (See

Example 3.39) Mahler's music, however, is marked *Träumerisch, durchaus zart*,

Example 3.39: "Ich ging mit Lust" folk melody

(dreamily, softly throughout) and the bird songs are kept strictly in the

accompaniment. The vocal line instead features large, sweeping, arpeggiated chords

covering intervals as large as a major fourteenth that remain sustained at a low

dynamic with very little by way of elaboration in the accompaniment. (See Example

3.40) In between each phrase of the vocal line, a short piano interlude of two to four

measures imitates the voices of the local birds. (See Example 3.41) These alternating

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ideas seem completely unrelated, despite the connection made through the text. It sounds as though the bird song is interrupting the narrative created by the man in the woods, forcing itself to be heard even if from a distance (it is always *pp*), and its

Example 3.40: "Ich ging mit Lust" mm. 1-6

Example 3.41: "Ich ging mit Lust" mm. 6-8

stubbornness is rewarded; the bird song motive recurs nine times throughout the course of the song, emerging from the dreamlike state to serve as the song's (and the young man's) link to reality.

But after the first two verses of the AABA' form, something changes. The key shifts from D major to G major, an Alberti bass pattern appears in the accompaniment, and the tempo slows even more. The narrative has shifted, it is no longer the young man who speaks, but rather, a narrator, who temporally reorients the story by stating that the day has ended, and finally, after his lengthy sojourn in the forest, the young man has arrived at the home of his beloved. The young man is only heard to speak directly once more (in measures 71-79) at which time the Alberti bass pattern immediately ends, as he calls out to his sweetheart, asking to be let inside. Then the narrator is allowed to return, and the A section, previously associated with the young man's journey, also returns, shifting our attention back to those events. We find that the change in speaker has altered the music to a degree, the Alberti bass associated with the detached narrative stance remains, and the bird song, previously only heard in between phrases uttered by the young man, is allowed to continue along with the narrator's words rather than only in between sung phrases, making the accompaniment much more active than that heard in the first two verses. This forms a link between the human narrator and the bird song, giving the animal added importance as a significant narrative voice. Measures 95-97 feature a triplet grace note figure in the left hand of the piano line that creates an almost martial sound. This figure clearly announces the arrival of the moral of the story, "Stay alert, young maiden! Where is your lover staying?" This figure and the text that accompanies it inform the listener that the lover's reunion may not be an entirely happy one, suddenly casting everything that has proceeded it in a different light, and causing us to wonder, "Just what has that young man been doing in the forest all day long?"

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Only after hearing everything is the listener able to understand how time has functioned within the story. The slow, dreamy opening section, with its lyrical description of the beauties of the forest, suspends time, allowing the listener to take in the detail and imagine the lovely wood in their own mind. The intrusion of the narrator returns the listener to the moment of the action, the young man's arrival at the home of his beloved. The moment where circumstances become most complex is when the narrator continues to tell the story using the music from the opening, and this, as noted in Chapter 2, is where Mahler has most extensively altered the story, changing the ending from and admission of the young man's wrong-doing to merely casting suspicion on him. The return of the musical material from the A section combined with the narrator's final statement of warning brings the listener's attention back to the lengthy lyrical passage and clouds the reliability of the young man's story. We find that the temporal and narrative elements serve as a plot device to create false notions about the outcome of the story that will not be shown to be erroneous until the narrator's final statement. I will discuss the young man's deceit in more detail in Chapter 4.

"Scheiden und Meiden"

Mahler greatly enhanced his story through musical means in "Scheiden und Meiden." The poem itself simply speaks of a couple in the process of parting, but Mahler's musical techniques transform the ballad into a tale of lovers separated by war, creating a visceral experience for the listener. The opening four measures of the piano introduction simulate the approach of three men on horseback blowing trumpets in

order to call out the young men to prepare for battle with a high pitched trill in the right hand of the accompaniment, emulating a bell used to get the attention of the village. Mahler's mimetic technique of creating the sounds of galloping horses bears a strong similarity to that created by Schubert in "Erlkönig;" (See Examples 3.42 and 3.43) both use triplets in the bass, but while Schubert's accompaniment clearly shows that his rider does not pause or wait for anything while attempting to rush his dying child to a doctor, Mahler's horses are more erratic, anxiously preparing to slow down

Example 3.42: Schubert "Der Erlkönig" mm. 1-3
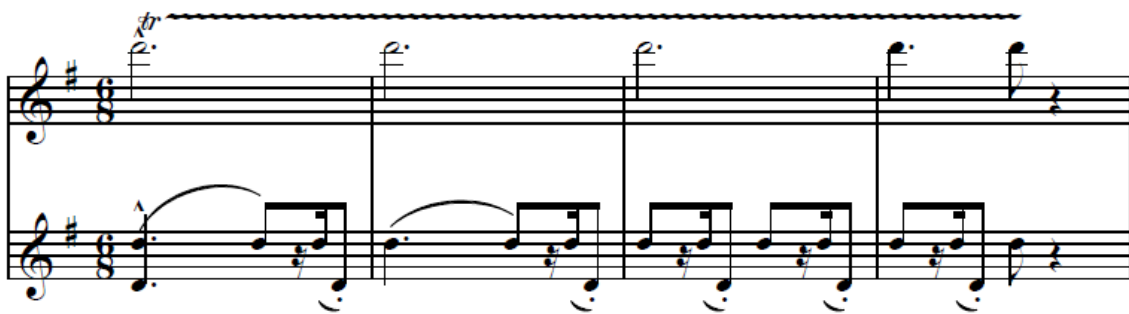
Example 3.43: "Scheiden und Meiden" mm. 1-4

to inform the young men of the village of the impending battle in which they must participate. Mahler marks the accompaniment in mm. 5-18 *wie Trompetenmusik*, evidence that he had begun to think of his earliest *Wunderhorn* songs as works requiring the expanded timbral palette offered by the orchestra. Mahler's use of

rhythm bears a strong resemblance to that found in the original folk melody. (See Example 3.44)

Mahler over exaggerates the farewells between the soldier and his sweetheart. The word "Ade!" is repeated twenty-one times within the short song, and while some of these seem to be genuine, the melodramatic ritardando and exaggerated crescendo

Example 3.44: "Es ritten drei Reiter" folk melody

at measures 26-28 seem somewhat artificial. The change in meter appearing at measure 19 sets up a musical dichotomy between triple- and duple-metered sound worlds. The triplet figures tends to more closely ally with the idea of fighting and riding off into war, while the duplet figures are associated with the people who are left behind. Mahler exposes this conflict more broadly in measure 35 when the vocal line remains in 2/4 while the accompaniment returns to 6/8 (in the manuscript this is even more complex, as the vocal line and the right hand of the piano remain in 2/4 while the left hand moves back to 6/8). We can hear the struggle of the young men serving in wartime playing out in this musical tension. While the good soldier knows that he must perform his duty, his thoughts are with those he leaves behind. This

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section also represents the passing of several months in the space of nine short measures, showing that life is going on for those the battlefront and for those at home.

The martial themes from the beginning of the song return in measure 58, indicating that no matter what takes place elsewhere, a soldier's first duty lies with nation and cause. Despite this serious message, the whole mood of the song remains somewhat tongue in cheek. The tempo marking *Lustig* (merrily) contradicts with the issues being faced by the characters in the song, and the listener walks away feeling as though the music and the words don't quite match up, almost as if Mahler himself were standing nearby with a wink and a smile.

"Trost im Unglück"

Another song telling the tale of lovers being separated by war, "Trost im Unglück" has a somewhat different approach than Mahler's previous tellings of this familiar tale. We hear three distinctive characters presented: the soldier, his sweetheart, and the personified voice of patriotic duty. Patriotism sets the stage from the start with distant but accented downbeats in the strings, clarinets, and bassoons emulating approaching horses, and a snare drum and trumpet fanfare that calls the men to arms. When the voice enters in measure 12, the soldier's rhythm is erratic with syncopated phrases that demonstrate his lack of discipline, particularly in comparison to the steady march rhythms that we must imagine he will soon have to keep in marching. (See Example 3.46)

The character personified by the orchestra takes it upon itself to comment on the lover's exchange by way of several sequences of loudly accented ascending intervals

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appearing in measures 8-10, 41–2, 49-51, 82–3, 91–3, and 97–9. These sequences surround moments when the soldier and the maiden are contemplating the future of their relationship. These moments strike the listener as a knowing chuckle coming from the voice of experience, having seen many couples forced into the same circumstances.

Mahler's piece bears a strong similarity to its folk song predecessor in its

Example 3.45: "Trost im Unglück" Folk melody

Example 3.46: "Trost im Unglück" vocal melody mm. 12-18

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melodic use of arpeggiated chords. (See Examples 3.45 and 3.46) This is due to the prevalence of the fanfare motive, typically comprised of similarly arpeggiated chords, associated with a call to arms. (See Example 3.47) While Dika Newlin suggests that Mahler's use of these instances of militaristic brass writing are merely the result of Bruckner's influence on Mahler's compositional style,[26] the more widely understood implication of a fanfare as a "display of power and authority, icon of the military and hunting worlds, [which] ushers in the Biblical apocalypse"[27] fits more closely with the military context of the text. Standard military usage of the trumpet fanfare calls for the sequence to be repeated three times, and this practice appears frequently in the usage of the fanfare in artistic settings, such as Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*.[28] Mahler plays with this expectation at the end of the
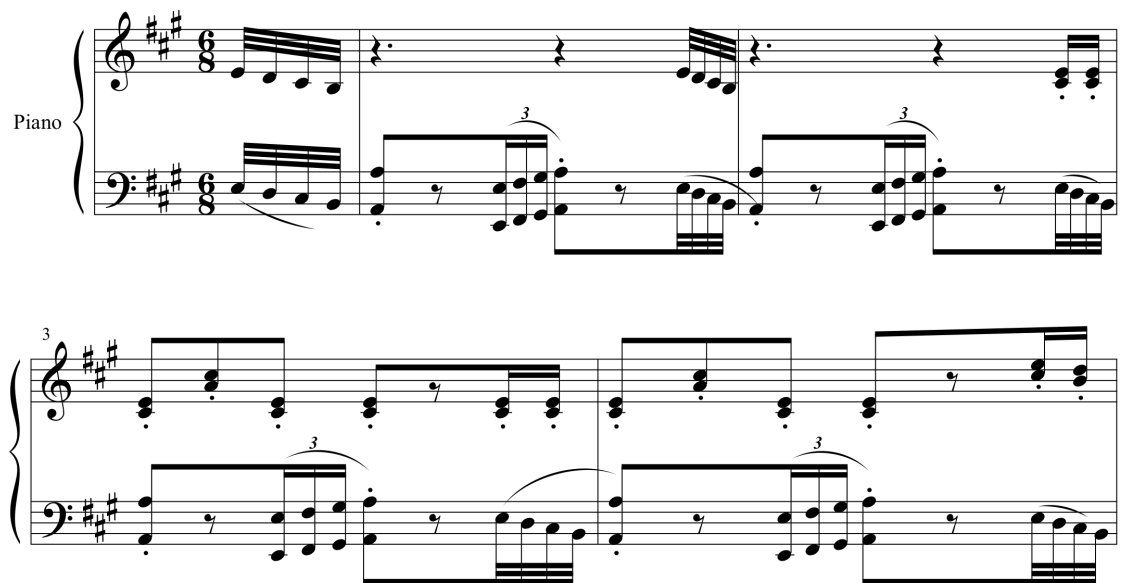
Example 3.47: "Trost im Unglück" mm. 1-4

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[26] Dika Newlin, *Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 125.

[27] Almén, "The Sacrificed Hero," 143.

[28] Caldwell Titcomb, "Baroque Court and Military Trumpets and Kettledrums: Technique and Music," *The Galpin Society Journal* 9 (1956): 71.

soldier's opening stanza. At this point, we have already heard three fanfare-like

passages from the trumpets, and then Mahler inserts a fourth. This leads the informed

listener to believe that another stanza from the soldier will follow, but instead, his

sweetheart begins to speak and with her entry in measure 53, the music changes

drastically. The melodies become smoother and more step-wise, and the texture

lightens dramatically as the martial qualities of the previous section give way to a

calmer, more feminine sensibility. When she finally informs the soldier that his

faithfulness will not be required during his deployment, the drum cadence associated

with patriotic duty signals the return of the A section. It seems that both characters

knew from the start that romance was not in the cards during wartime.

As with many of these ballads depicting a couple's final moments together

before he is called off to war, the events in "Trost im Unglück" unfold rapidly while

at the same time referring to the past of their time together and looking to the future

as the couple attempts to determine what fate has in store for them and their

relationship. This allows the listener to gain a context for the story and engrosses

them in the action, increasing the suspense and inviting them to portend as to how the

lovers will proceed.

"Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt"

Serving as the basis for the scherzo movement of Mahler's Second Symphony, "Des

Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" has enjoyed a somewhat broader reception than

many of the other *Wunderhorn* Lieder.[29] Bearing a strong resemblance to a flute and

clarinet passage in Smetana's tone poem *Vltava,* the flowing sixteenth notes passages
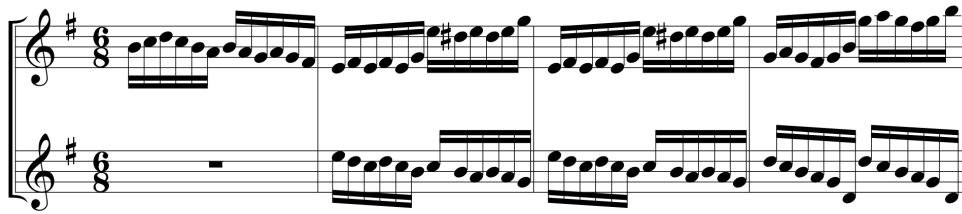
Example 3.48: Smetana: *Vltava* mm. 15-18

Example 3.49: "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" mm. 16-24

passed between the clarinets, flutes, oboes, and violins create the same musical image

of a flowing river. (See Examples 3.48 and 3.49) Mahler cleverly paints the scene

before the singer even enters with the staccato eighth notes in the low winds and bass

and the triangle and birch brush marking the surfacing of the fishes' heads from the

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[29] One primary example of this scholarly attention can be found in Magnar Breivik, "A Sermon for the Fishes in a Secular Age: On the Scherzo Movement of Mahler's Second Symphony," in *Voicing the Ineffable: Musical Representations of Religious Experience*, Siglind Bruhn, ed. (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2002), 47-70.

water. Mahler maintains the dance-like rhythm heard throughout in part through his small changes to the poetic rhythm, noted in Chapter 2.

Mahler depicts the futility of Antonius' sermon in measures 52-62 and again in measures 87-98. During these brief passages, the instruments that have previously portrayed the river, the flute, clarinet, oboe, and violin, begin a modal section that sounds distinctly like a Jewish peasant melody, marked with the performance

Example 3.50: "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" mm. 52-57

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directive *mit Humor* (humorously). (See Example 3.50) The irony of this foreignness

appearing in a song about a Christian clergyman cannot be overlooked, as it indicates

the impossible task that Antonius has set before himself. The fish are no more likely

to learn and benefit from the sermon than the humans who have failed to attend his

service. As Byron Almén describes this situation:

> Fish have several symbolic connotations in Western culture…Activity below
> the threshold of consciousness partaking of primordial chaos and lack of
> differentiation [leads to] the great gulf between morality and ethics…
> [between] human and nature. St. Anthony's failure to radically alter the
> behavior of his listeners is an indictment of the religious system itself.[30]

Yet the regal sounding passage appearing in measures 71-75 horn line, indicates

Example 3.51: "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" mm. 71-75

that at least Antonius himself believes that his words have changed the fish for the

better. Mahler allows both the text and his music reveal the end of the tale.

Mahler utilizes arch form in "Antonius" for two distinct purposes. The structure

distinguishes the action of the opening stanzas (Antonius walking to the river) from a

lengthy lyrical description of the fishes' response to the sermon. In fact, having heard

the music of the first verse repeated three times in a row, it begins to seem to the

listener that the song might actually be strophic in form. Suddenly, however, at

measure 107 the music changes drastically, becoming softer and more legato, leading

one to believe that a miraculous transformation has actually taken place, and the fish

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[30] Byron Almén, "The Sacrificed Hero," 159.

will be forever changed by the saint's words. This lengthy descriptive section holds

the listener in suspense as they wait to learn whether the fish will prove any more

receptive to Antonius' sermon than his human congregation. Unfortunately, we know

this to be impossible, and in measure 132 the initial musical material with its

bouncing rhythms and sounds of flowing water returns, and by the end of the song,

when the fishes simply swim away, completely unaffected, the music fades off into

the distance, and we learn that nothing has changed, fish will be fish, people will be

people, and Antonius will be lonely. The return of the musical language heard at the

beginning of the song serves to underline the apothegm of this final stanza, as the lack

of musical change emphasizes Antonius' inability to impact the salvation of the fish.

"Rheinlegendchen"

Upon first hearing, "Rheinlegendchen" strikes the listener as a simple, dance-based

folk-inspired song; however, great complexity is hidden below the surface.[31] The

orchestral introduction begins to display the inherent tensions that plague the

protagonist from the outset. Through the opening pitch, a single pitch from the horn

held for eight measures, we quickly learn of the pastoral setting of the story. A poor

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[31] Elizabeth Schmierer identifies the dance as having a "typical Ländler rhythm" (der typische Ländlerrhythmus) and a "waltz effect" (Walzerfolge). The triple meter and accent on the first beat heard in "Rheinlegendchen" conforms to both dances, but the lack of arpeggiations and first beat accents (such as those identified in "Verlor'ne Müh'!") frequently heard in the Ländler aligns this more closely with the waltz. Schmierer, *Orchesterlieder*, 107.

young woman spends her days cutting grass and dreaming of her beloved, who has

Example 3.52: "Rheinlegendchen" mm. 10-14

gone away to work for the king. The dance that was once an enjoyed leisure activity

for the both of them has become distorted and non-functional, as demonstrated by

dramatic ritardandos in measures 2 and 15-16, while strong accents on the first beats

of measures 3-9 try valiantly to restore the offset rhythm. Mahler's alterations to the

text, as seen in Chapter 2, also serve to regularize the rhythm of the dance. A

sixteenth note melody passed between the flute, clarinet and oboe also establishes a

pastoral topos through its emulation of bird song. (See Example 3.52) When the

voice of the protagonist enters in measure 16, the vocal line is considerably more

erratic than what one would expect in a folk song.[32] Large leaps of major and minor

sevenths betray the complexity of an artistic rather than a folk nature. The singer is

also made to offset the rhythm through large ascending intervals that naturally accent

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[32] Henry-Louis de La Grange has observed the similarity between this melody and that of the Minuet of Schubert's Piano Sonata in G, D. 894. "Music About Music in Mahler: Reminiscences, Allusions or Quotations?" in *Mahler Studies*, Stephen Hefling, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 152.

the second beat of the measure rather than the first. The
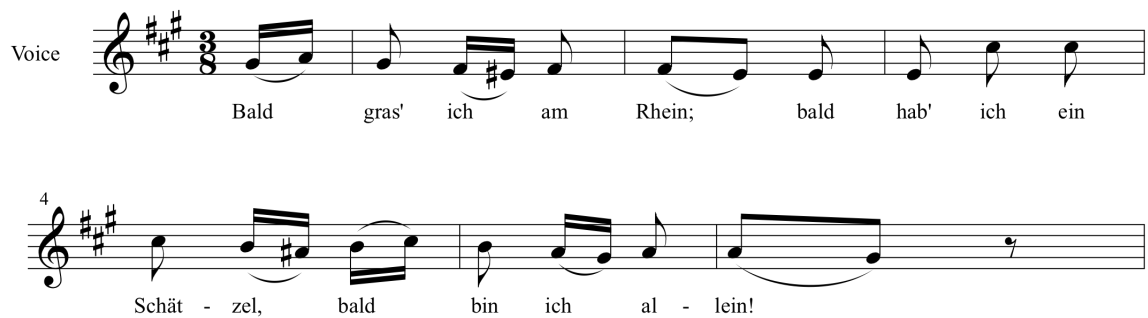
Example 3.53: "Rheinlegendchen" mm. 18-24

singer must also contend with snaking, chromatic melodies that belie the folk nature

of the song. (See Example 3.53)

The ternary form Mahler chooses to set the poem creates distinct geographical

spaces for the girl and her beloved.[33] The music of the female protagonist, who

remains between the Neckar and the Rhine,[34] dwells strictly in a major key, but while

the girl imagines her ring travelling through the rivers to the ocean, from the fish to

the king's table, and finally to her beloved, the music changes drastically. As soon as

the ring reaches the sea, the key changes to minor, and the rhythmic and melodic

qualities that established the maiden's home disappear and are replaced with a slower

tempo and more sustained pitches and pedal tones. This new section creates an

entirely new soundscape used to indicate events taking place off in the distance (even

though those events are confined to the imagination of the young woman). The

musical landscape created by the opening section does not recur until the girl

imagines her beloved, having identified the ring that the king has found inside of his

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[33] Zoltan Roman writes extensively about the formal structures found in Mahler's songs. "Structure as a Factor in the Genesis of Gustav Mahler's Songs," in *Gustav Mahler*, Hermann Danuser, ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt, 1992), 82-95.

[34] The point where the Neckar and the Rhine meet is near Mannheim.

dinner, has begun his trip back to her. Once he returns, the dance rhythm can freely move forward without distortion or interference, as will their love.

The fact that so many of the events portrayed in "Rheinlegendchen" do not actually occur outside of the young woman's imagination blurs the temporal qualities of the song. This does not, however, diminish the potential for listener protention, as one cannot help but be caught up in the maiden's fantastic story and hope that the ring's miraculous voyage will result in the couple's eventual reunion. While the entire story of "Rheinlegendchen" is narrated by the young girl, Mahler allows the change in musical material to separate real time and space from that of fantasy. This transforms a potentially sad story about separated lovers into a romantic tale filled with innocent whimsy.

"Lob des hohen Verstandes"

This light and amusing story of a cuckoo, a nightingale, and a donkey allows the accompaniment to contribute a great deal more of the narrative qualities of the story than the words of the characters involved. Mahler integrates the natural calls of the animals into the music, but more often than not, they appear in the accompaniment rather than the vocal line. The clarinet and bassoon create the sound of the cuckoo. The flute, oboe and triangle represent the song of the nightingale. The sound of the donkey bray comes from the clarinet, bassoon and horn. Mahler uses these instrumental associations with the characters of the story to play with the listener's expectations regarding the outcome of the singing contest between the cuckoo and the nightingale. A flute melody, not unlike that which was earlier associated with the

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nightingale, plays while the donkey tells the birds that he is ready to render his decision. This leads one to believe that the nightingale will be victorious, but alas, the donkey chooses the cuckoo as the victor.

That Mahler would find himself drawn to set this poem to music should come as no surprise, given his statements regarding the musical nature of animal sounds. He once told Natalie Bauer-Lechner:

> We probably derive all our basic rhythms and themes from Nature,
> which offers them to us, pregnant with meaning, in every animal
> noise. Indeed Man, and the artist in particular, takes all his forms
> from the world around him – transforming and expanding them,
> of course.[35]

As a child, Mahler developed a keen interest in bird song, and he once stated that birds were "the first composers." Going on to say:

> Already as a child I used to listen to these songs that start off like
> conscious melody and rhythm and then degenerate into inarticulate
> chirping, as though some four-footed creature suddenly sat up on
> its hind legs and then fell back into its natural position.[36]

And yet, despite Mahler's fascination with bird song and the frequency with which he had used cuckoo calls in the past, he writes the cuckoo's contest winning song as one that does not resemble that of a cuckoo, but more that of a donkey. We hear this donkey-like bray in the large descending leaps in the bass line and the jerking,

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[35] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 96.

[36] Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler* 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 629.

Example 3.54: "Lob des hohen Verstandes" mm. 86-90

spasmodic effect in the vocal line created by the paired sixteenth notes pushing the line forward to the strong beats. (See Example 3.54)

It soon becomes clear that Mahler recognized the humorous qualities of the song. As he told Bauer-Lechner in the Summer of 1898, "You will laugh when you hear it," and small musical cues inform the audience of the jocular nature of the song. Those who see it performed live will witness the performance direction at measure 12 requiring the clarinets to "Schallrichter in die Höhe!" (Point the bell upward), and everyone will hear the exaggerated trills which occur in measures 25-26 and 52. (See Example 3.55)

The story is presented in the style of a fairy tale, even beginning with the phrase "Einstmals in einem tiefen Tal" (Once upon a time in a deep valley). As such, the

Example 3.55: "Lob des hohen Verstandes" mm. 25–6

bright, cheerful sound of the opening section resembles that of a festive folk dance

with its staccato melody and syncopated rhythm. This music is associated with the

distance of a third person narrator. At measure 56, the musical language begins to

change as the singing contest begins. This contrasting section presents the various

songs sung by each of the birds in the accompaniment. The nightingale's entry,

played by the flutes, appears in Example 3.56.

Example 3.56: "Lob des hohen Verstandes" mm. 65-69

The song of the cuckoo, on the other hand, occurs throughout the song, beginning in

measure 7, and reappears three more times.
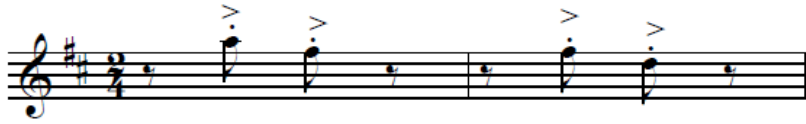
Example 3.57: "Lob des hohen Verstandes" mm. 6-7

Mahler's use of the accompaniment, rather than the vocalist, to serve as the

voices of the birds has a disorienting effect. We expect the hear the words of the

nightingale sound like that bird's beautiful song, the song sung by the cuckoo for the

contest to possess the characteristics of a cuckoo call, but neither birds' contest entry

fulfills that expectation. Denying the listener the satisfaction of fulfillment adds to the

absurdity of the situation and lends itself to the true meaning of the song, which I will

discuss in the next chapter.

Mahler's use of ternary form serves much the same narrative purpose as his strophic

compositions, to indicate a similarity in situation before and after a contrasting event.

"Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" tells a story of characters who are completely

unfazed by their witnessing of a miraculous event. "Rheinlegendchen" uses the

contrasting middle section to tell a story within a story, beginning and ending in the

same place. The circumstances impacting the characters in these cases seem quite

different, but the lack of change, whether it is symbolic of futility or a long-sought

homecoming, cannot be more ideally set to music.

BAR FORM AND VARIATIONS OF BAR FORM

The nature of bar form tends to imply a substantial change mid-story, so that the final

segment of the music differs markedly from that which came before. Dating back to

the Medieval songs of the *Minnesingers*, the form traditionally consists of two A

sections, known as the *Stollen*, followed by a contrasting B section, which typically is

twice the length of the *Stollen*, called the *Abgesang*. Mahler, however, in two

instances inserted an additional *Stollen*, creating a form that lies ambiguously

between traditional bar form and a strophic form with an added coda. Mahler utilized

bar form or variations of it for three of his *Wunderhorn* ballad, and the circumstances

that confront the characters in these three stories are remarkably similar. All three

protagonists are facing a tremendous loss, and once their circumstances have played

out, their lives will never be the same.

"Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz"

This song contains specific performance indications and sonic hints that Mahler was

already thinking of his earliest *Wunderhorn* songs as works with orchestral

accompaniment. The opening pitches feature the marking "Wie eine Schalmei"

("Like a shawm"), but the dynamic markings of piano and pianissimo contrast with

the notoriously loud instrument that the music is to emulate. These conflicting

directives establish from the outset a protagonist grappling with a situation off in the

distance. His mind is elsewhere, as is the Alphorn that has caused him such internal

conflict. We soon learn from the text that the young soldier is homesick and the

sounds of the distant horn have only intensified his longing. However, triplets heard

in measures 2 and 8 also lend a certain fanfare-like quality to the situation, (See

Example 3.58: "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz" mm. 1-3

Example 3.58) showing the conflict between duty to country and longing for home

with which the soldier is struggling. This, in a way, creates a sense of two competing

sonic worlds, one based in the present, and one lost in dreams of a far-off time and

place. At measure 15, Mahler adds a low trill to the accompaniment with the

Example 3.59: "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz" mm. 14-16

instruction "In allen diesen tiefen Trillern ist mit Hilfe des Pedals der Klang

gedämpfter Trommeln nachzunahmen." (Use the pedals in all the low trills to emulate

the sound of a muted drum). (See Example 3.59) This effect instantly brings to mind

the drum rolls heard at an execution, and the listener instantly learns that the soldier's

attempt to desert and his later plea for a pardon will not be successful; we are

witnessing the final moments before his sentence will be carried out.

The musical structure extends traditional bar form, using three slightly varied *Stollen* sections (the first comprised of ten measures and the second and third of eight) and a lengthy *Abgesang* section (twenty measures), each of which closes with a kind of varied refrain, (See Example 3.60) creating a form that neither conforms

Example 3.60: "Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz" mm. 12-14 (refrain)

precisely to bar form, due to the added *Stollen*, or to strophic form, due to the length of what could be interpreted as a coda. The first of the refrains appears in Example 3.60, and the others alternate pitch ranges: moving from B flat to E flat in the second verse, returning to B flat in the third, and back to E flat in the final section. The first verse contains a brief passage of lyrical music (See Example 3.61) that contrasts with the martial motives heard at the beginning of the song. In this lyrical passage, the soldier becomes lost in remembrance of the past as he tells of his loneliness and how the sound of the Alphorn led him to abandon his duty. The second verse is the most cohesive and rooted in the reality of the soldier's unfortunate situation, maintaining the militaristic motives. The third verse rises slightly in pitch, ratcheting up the tension felt by the doomed young man, before eventually returning, by way of the

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Example 3.61: "Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz" mm. 7-10

refrain, to the pitch center heard in the beginning. The B section changes keys and enters into some uncharted territory before reprising the refrain heard in the A sections, returning the key to G minor as the story comes to a close.

The musical landscape changes most dramatically to begin the B section at measure 39 when the soldier stops simply narrating his story and shifts his address to his fellow soldiers. The key changes from G minor to C Major and the drum roll and fanfare motives become more invasive, taking a more active role in the narration and telling the soldier and his friends that his end is near. As the prisoner's moments become increasingly precious, the temporal characteristics of the narrative become more urgent. Suddenly, events seem to occur much more quickly. As the soldier tells his friends that he will not see them again, Mahler inserts a melody in mm. 38-42 that is vaguely reminiscent of "La Marseillaise" (see examples 3.62 and 3.63), the anthem associated with the soldier's home, by way of the use of sequences, repeated pitches,

Example 3.62: "Marseillaise" mm. 5-9

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Example 3.63: "**Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz" mm. 38-42**

and dotted rhythms.[37] Mahler omits the final stanza of the poem, in which the soldier

addresses his firing squad and speaks one final prayer before dying. In measures 48-

51, we hear the shawm theme one last time, telling us that the time has come for the

soldier to face the firing squad. This final call of the Alphorn signals the coming of

morning combined with the omission of text serves to move the story forward and

focus our attention away from the young man's self pity toward the events about to

take place. A series of three ascending grace notes followed by a staccato eighth note

Example 3.64: "Zu Straβburg auf der Schanz" m. 61

musically simulates the shots of the firing squad in the final measure (not unlike the

beheading heard in the fourth movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*). (see

Example 3.64) The final instance of the Alphorn heard at the execution also functions

very similarly to Berlioz's *idée fixe*, when the prisoner to be executed hears the theme

representing that which he loves most (in this case, his homeland rather than a

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[37] A similar use of a tune alluding to the "Marseillaise" appears in Schumann's song "Die beide Grenadiere." Hilmar-Voit, Renate, *Im Wunderhorn-Ton: Gustav Mahlers sprachliches Kompositionsmaterial bis 1900* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1988), 228.

woman) in his final moment. Finally, we hear that the soldier's final hopes for a pardon have gone unanswered as the piece ends on the subdominant, providing no opportunity for a last minute stay.[38] Duty to country triumphs over one man's selfishness.

"Nicht Wiedersehen"

The first of Mahler's military songs to take seriously the sorrows facing lovers separated by war, "Nicht Wiedersehen!" makes the anguish experienced by this young soldier obvious from the first notes of the introduction, a lonely melody that echoes the tragedy to come. (See Example 3.65) Mahler's melody bears a striking

Example 3.65: "Nicht Wiedersehen" mm. 1-4

similarity to that of the original folk melody with one major exception: the folk tune is in a major key while Mahler's is in minor. (Compare the vocal melody in Example 3.65 to that in 3.66) From the very outset, the slow, quiet introduction informs the listener that all is not well, and in measure 3, when the soldier addresses his love for the first time, a low-pitched descending fourth appears in the piano. This motive

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[38] Newlin, *Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg*, 127.

Example 3.66: "Nicht Wiedersehen" folk melody[39]

recurs five times more throughout the song and soon becomes associated with the

maiden's death, gradually taking on the symbol of church bells ringing to signal her

burial (which we eventually learn from the text, took place only three days before the

soldier's return). Mahler makes the association with church bells clear in the score

where he marks the motive "Wie fernes Glockenläuten" ("Like distant clock

chimes"). A brief respite from the sorrow takes the form of an epic narrated section in

Example 3.67: "Nicht Wiedersehen" mm. 16-20

mm. 16-20, here we learn that the soldier has returned and immediately looks to find

his love, only to learn that she has died. This section has a lighter accompaniment and

lacks the dragging tempo found in the earlier parts of the song, providing a detached,

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[39] Anton Böhm and Franz Burkhart, eds., *Fahrend Volk: 250 deutsche Volkslieder mit Lautenbegleitung* (Vienna: Volksbundverlag, 1923), 146.

more neutral point of observation. This brief passage also contracts the time that the soldier has been away into an instant, allowing the accompaniment to assume the role of narrator and to compress time. Only an eighth rest separates the soldier's final words before parting and the narrator's announcement that he has returned. If not for the lightening of the texture and the return of the church bell theme, it would be easy to overlook the fact that a year has passed by in the story so quickly.

The bar form in "Nicht Wiedersehen" is much more conventional than that found in "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz." Comprised of two A sections and a B section, each containing a refrain (with text adapted by Mahler from the opening lines of the poem). Mahler's A sections are nearly identical, excepting the addition of pitches in the left hand of the piano an octave below the rest. At this point, the young man and the audience learn that the young woman has died, and these low pitches lend a sense of heaviness and sorrow to the scene. These low pitches remain throughout the entire verse, while the young man learns of his love's death and subsequently vows to wait by her graveside until she "gives him an answer," presumably to his proposal of marriage, though that never becomes clear, allowing the listener to continue to imagine "what might have been" even after the song has ended. A significant change in the mood of the music occurs at measure 52, the beginning of the B section, when the key changes from minor to major. The soldier has gone to the graveyard to address his beloved directly. The shift from C minor to its relative major brings a sense of comfort, as though even under the dreadful circumstances, the soldier is relieved to at last be reunited with his beloved. He asks her to "open her deep grave" so she can hear the church bells and the singing birds. During this passage, the

descending fourth motive heard earlier in the song continues relentlessly, as if the

accompaniment is speaking directly to the young man, trying to convey to him the

Example 3.68: "Nicht Wiedersehen" mm. 55-59

fruitlessness of his pleas. (See Example 3.68) Finally he realizes that what is done can

not be undone, and he says his final goodbyes to his love, the tragedy of reality

reveals itself, and the final refrain returns to c minor.

"Der Tamboursg'sell"

Mahler's last *Wunderhorn* setting, "Der Tamboursg'sell," displays his compositional

style at its apex. Natalie Bauer-Lechner wrote of the seemingly instantaneous

inspiration of the song:

> It occurred to him literally between one step and the next – that is, just as he
> was walking out of the dining room. He sketched it immediately in the
> dark ante-room, and ran with it to the spring – his favorite place, which
> often gives him aural inspiration. Here he had the music completed very
> quickly. But now he saw that it was no symphonic theme – such as he
> had been after – but a song! And he thought of "Der Tamboursg'sell."
> He tried to recall the words; they seemed made for the melody. When he
> in fact compared the tune and the text up in the summer-house, not a word
> was missing, not a note was needed; they fitted perfectly![40]

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[40] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 173. The sketch to which Bauer-Lechner refers is held in the Robert
Owen Lehman Collection at the Pierpont Morgan Library. The two-page document shows clear

This anecdote contradicts Mahler's earlier statement, made to Bauer-Lechner in 1896, that "the melody always grows out of the words," [41] indicating a different compositional technique from his earlier ballads. This change in approach to the act of composing *Wunderhorn* songs may account for Donald Mitchell's observation that "'Revelge' and 'Der Tamboursg'sell' in a sense reverse the established relationship in Mahler's works between song and symphony."[42] That is to say, that in these two examples, the songs grew out of musical ideas initially intended for symphonic use rather than musical inspiration emerging purely from the text.

From the start, the song possesses a level of drama that the other songs lack. The lone muted drum rolls come as if out of a dream or a forgotten past, then the horns and low-pitched woodwinds playing minor chords fill out the scenario as that of an execution. The unusual instrumentation lends to the dark, solemn atmosphere. Mahler's string section includes only cellos and contrabass; violins and violas are omitted. The lack of higher pitches results in a sense of emptiness in the scene, a kind of musical representation of the compassion missing in the story. The mood is not unlike that heard in the fourth movement of Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* (especially so in measures 33-49 when a countermelody in the bassoons and horns emulates the act of marching to the scaffold as seen in Example 3.69). Mahler had

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evidence of the rushed activity that she describes, and with the exception of a few minor rhythms, a modulation, and some lengthy instrumental interludes, closely resembles the finished product.

[41] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 50.

[42] Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 139.

Example 3.69: "Der Tamboursg'sell" mm. 33-36

told the story of a young man awaiting his execution before, with his early

Wunderhorn setting of "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz," but here Mahler adds weight

to this grave situation with touches such as the addition of contrabassoon and bass

clarinet, creating a dark sense of foreboding.

Marked "Mit naivem Vortrag, ohne Sentimentalität" ("With naïve presentation,

without sentimentality"), the vocal melody remains simple and lyrical throughout.

This delivery emphasizes the innocence of the drummer boy and underscores the

brutality of war in which the execution of a child is considered as acceptable

punishment for his crime (which is never actually specified).

Mahler utilizes a variation on typical bar form in "Der Tamboursg'sell," similar

to that used in "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz," using three varied *Stollen* sections (of

twenty-two, twenty-three, and nineteen measures) followed by a lengthy *Abgesang*

section (of fifty-five measures). The mood changes drastically at measure 91, the

beginning of the B section, as the drummer boy begins to address specific individuals

and objects (even though they are not physically present – engaging in the rhetorical

act of apostrophe), as if the truth of what awaits him has finally sunken in.[43] The key

changes from D minor to C minor, and the lowering of the pitch adds weight to the

scene. The tempo slows and the low woodwinds, brass, and strings sustain long

pitches over which the English horn begins its mournful song associated with the

drummer boy's goodbyes. This melancholy mood remains throughout the rest of the

song. It is only in this section that the boy truly realizes how little time he has left,

what fate has in store for him, and what he is about to lose.

Mahler lends strong symbolic reference to the oboe and English horn and their

associations with the drummer boy's former life. When the boy speaks of his life

before his capture, claiming his former identity as "Tambour von der

Leibkompanie!," the oboe proudly supports his melody in G Major, and when he says

goodbye to the soldiers he is leaving behind, he is preceded by a pitiable melody in

Example 3.70: "Der Tamboursg'sell" mm. 102-110

the English horn marked "sehr klagend" ("very sorrowful") (See Example 3.70).

Much of this section features conflicting expression marks between the vocal and

instrumental melodies: a marking of "mit Gefühl" ("with feeling") appears above the

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[43] Rufus Hallmark, "The Literary and Musical Rhetoric of Apostrophe in *Winterreise*" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Quebec City, Quebec, 1-4 November 2007).

voice at measure 110, while at the same point the clarinet and bassoon

countermelodies are marked "<u>ohne</u> Ausdruck" ("without expression") and the strings

Example 3.71: "Der Tamboursg'sell" mm. 110-114

"ausdruckslos" ("expressionless"). (See Example 3.71) This allows the boy's

profoundly emotional response to the situation to remain separate and distinct from

that of the world around him, serving as a commentary on how callous and unfeeling

the outside world can be during wartime, when the impending execution of a child

does not stir even the slightest pity.

Mahler uses chromatic harmony to great effect throughout the song as a marker

of the drummer boy's fear and regret. (See Example 3.72) The first example of

Example 3.72: "Der Tamboursg'sell" mm. 22-26

chromatic pitches occurs when the boy states "Wär ich ein Tambour blieben, dürft ich nicht gefangen liegen" (If I had remained a drummer boy, I may not be imprisoned), expressing his wish that things could be different. Further chromaticism appears when the boy looks out upon the gallows and during his final goodbyes, moments when his fear would naturally be at its highest. The rest of the song remains relatively diatonic, as though the chromatic pitches represented his emotions getting the better of him and diatonic pitches symbolized emotional control.

"Der Tamboursg'sell" represents an unusual example of a ballad in that the story told lacks a temporal grounding. Neither the text nor Mahler's music provide much indication of how much time has passed from beginning to end. We can assume, given the drastic change in musical sound at the beginning of the B section, that the morning of his hanging has arrived, but how long he has been forced to await his execution remains unstated. Ironically, the only example of his *Wunderhorn* Lieder that Mahler explicitly identified as a ballad lacks the hallmark characteristic of the genre, that of a story passing through time with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Mahler's three examples of ballads that assume a bar or bar-like form all tell stories of young men whose lives are dramatically changed by events that occur. The asymmetrical structure of a bar form creates an ideal vehicle for such stories, as once death has entered the lives of these characters – whether in the form of an impending execution, as seen in both "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz" and "Der Tamboursg'sell," or that of the soldier's beloved in "Nicht Wiedersehen," their respective worlds can never be the same.

RONDO AND FREE FORM SONGS

Rondo form and free form songs offer unique approaches to musical storytelling. Both formal types allow the music to grow and expand dramatically along with the storyline. The key difference between these two formal practices in terms of narrative potential stems from the recurring refrain heard in rondo. Composers of rondo form songs can use this theme as a reminder to the characters within the song and to the audience of some important outside factor that will impact them based on how they choose to respond to their environment and circumstances. Small recurring passes can also serve this purpose in free form songs, but typically, these structures lack the formal regularity seen in rondos.

"Aus! Aus!"

Contrary to the many examples of military music found throughout Mahler's association with the *Wunderhorn*, "Aus! Aus!" views the forced parting of these lovers as a purely ironic affair. While written in 2/4, the martial, militaristic quality that one might expect is alternated with passages that do not quite fit into a march cadence due to their overly emotional qualities. The enthusiasm of the soldier and the intense mourning of the lover that he leaves behind are over exaggerated to the point of ridiculousness, seen most readily in the soldier's frequent outbursts of a yodel (added by Mahler, "juchhe!"). We see that Mahler does not take the situation seriously through his marking above the first utterance from the devastated maiden at measure 11, "kläglich (mit Parodie)" ("sorrowfully with parody"). This excessive

expression spills over into the middle sections of the ABACADA rondo form, where the mood alters melodramatically as the lovers share their parting words. The melody

Example 3.73: "Aus! Aus!" mm. 49-52

drips with cloying chromatic inflections that overemphasize the emotions expressed. (See Example 3.73) Despite what the couple tells each other, the listener knows they are hearing an act: the maiden will not join a convent, and the soldier knows that their love has reached its end.

This element of parody becomes most clear at the very end of the song. The singer repeats the word "aus!" five times that are each marked with accented off beats, an accelerando and increasing dynamics. The overly acted farewells have dissolved into absurdity.

Based on the text alone, one cannot definitively determine how many speakers appear in the song, significantly blurring the narrative point of view: we know that the soldier and his sweetheart are saying their farewells, but amid the chaos of such a parting, who repeats the phrase "Heute marschieren wir! Juchhe, juchhe, im grünen Mai!" (Tomorrow we march! Hooray! In green May!) could be interpreted in multiple ways. One might assume that the young soldier delivers this information himself or

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Example 3.74: "Aus! Aus! mm. 19-28

that the statement comes from a third party who calls the soldier and his comrades to arms and leads them off to battle. Mahler allows musical cues to take the narrative reins and clarify the situation in several places. The second occurrence of this text continues in the same musical vein to say "Ei, du schwarzbraun's Mägdelein, unsre Lieb' ist noch nicht aus" (Oh, you brown-haired maiden, our love is not yet over). The continuation of the musical language of the A section into this passage clearly intended for the soldier to address his beloved tells us that he speaks the preceding text. Similarly, the end of the soldier's statement heard in the C section gradually builds in intensity and changes key to smoothly transition into the third occurrence of the refrain-like section. Conversely, the passages spoken by the maiden vary

Example 3.75: "Aus! Aus!" mm. 11-18

considerably from those which come before and after by way of chromaticism, grace

notes, more lyrical melodies, and trill figures as seen in examples 3.73 and 3.75. This

sets up one distinctive musical style for the maiden and essentially two separate sonic

spaces for the soldier, which change depending on who he is addressing at the time:

in one, the highly militaristic, declamatory sections, he can celebrate the excitement

of going into battle, and in the other, section C, we hear a calmer, more lyrical

passage as he speaks to his love (though this passage eventually breaks down and

gives way again to his enthusiasm, which he can barely contain, and the return of his

militaristic sonic space). The narrative clarity provided by the music informs that

listener that the young man either seems to be feeling very conflicted emotions about

his impending departure or that he is not being entirely honest with the young

woman. This allows us to become more intrigued by the circumstances that unfold and encourages us to portend to the outcome.

Mahler uses key to indicate changes in narrative address and intention between each successive section of the rondo. The song begins in E flat major and returns to that key for each instance of the A section. The B section, where the maiden learns that her beloved will be leaving, shifts melodramatically to C minor. The C section, beginning in measure 29, when the soldier addresses the maiden directly, assuring her that their love will continue even after his departure, moves awkwardly from E flat major to B major, perhaps a musical marker of the discomfort one feels when trying to assure someone of facts they themselves do not believe to be true. The abrupt change in key instantly pulls the listener into a different sonic space, but the speaker and his addressee remain the same, as the soldier encourages his sweetheart to view his departure more optimistically, stating "Trink' du ein Gläschen Wein zur Gesundheit dein und mein!" (Drink a little glass of wine to my health and yours!) Just as suddenly as the key changes to B major, after only eight measures, the key shifts back to E flat major, though, strangely, Mahler does not alter the key signature and instead uses accidentals for another thirty measures.

Mahler musically traces the frenetic nature of the scene, where young men from throughout the village are rapidly gathering their belongings and rushing to say farewell to their loved ones before charging into battle. The song pushes relentlessly forward from beginning to end with no instrumental interludes or relaxed passages. While the overly emotional portions of the song delivered from the viewpoint of the maiden can be performed at a slower tempo to emphasize their pathetic nature, they

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are not marked as such, and the rhythm's underlying motion remains constant. The final three measures of the song are marked *accelerando*, as a musical representation of the final opportunity for the lovers to rush to say goodbye as he rides away.

"Revelge"

The first of Mahler's last two *Wunderhorn* settings, "Revelge" establishes its militaristic scenario from the very start with its strong marching rhythms in the strings and drum and fanfare-esque trumpet passages, but by measure 3 we can already see that something is not right with this group of soldiers. A chromatic descending passage played by the woodwinds establishes an eerie foreboding of what

Example 3.76: "Revelge" mm. 3-6

follows (see Example 3.76).

Despite the simple strophic structure of the poem that Mahler chose, he adopts a much freer form for the resulting ballad. The song begins as do many other examples of Mahler's military-inspired songs, with two repeated verses (though the key of the second verse begins in G minor, rather than the D minor that began the ballad), but

Example 3.77 a, b, and c: "Revelge" mm. 13-15, 40-44, and 104-106

the formal structure undergoes a gradual morphing that resembles the progressive

distortion of the bodies of the soldiers who refuse to stop marching long after their

hearts have stopped beating. The refrain "Tralali, tralaley, tralala" occurs regularly

after each stanza, but it, too, slowly changes into something beyond itself, morphing

and changing with each successive hearing, until it can no longer be contained to the end of the verse, but rather appears sporadically, breaking down into progressively smaller pieces and then growing into a monstrous image of its former self. Examples 3.77 a, b, and c show three instances of the refrain. Mahler accomplished the gradual morphing of the verses in part through his modifications of the text, detailed in Chapter 2. The first hearing of the refrain appears in measures 13-15, as shown in example 3.77 a. Here we see the refrain in its simplest state. By measures 40-44, when it is revealed that the soldiers will continue to march even in death, the refrain begins to fragment, as shown by the separation between the words and the refrain's expansion from two and one half measures to four measures, as seen in example 3.77 b. Example 3.77 c shows the refrain in its morphed state, where even the words have undergone a transformation. By this time, short fragments of the refrain appear in seemingly random, unexpected places. The grisly image of decaying bodies marching from the battlefield into the town finds its musical equivalent in the gradual mutation of their battle cry.

The first dramatic shift from what initially seems like an essentially strophic structure occurs in measures 29-32. The marching rhythms of the strings and brass

Example 3.78: "Revelge" mm. 29-32

give way to a woodwind melody with anthem-like qualities. But this kinder, gentler music is soon surpassed by the line with "Ich muß marschieren bis in' Tod," as the

lines between life and death and battle and home front start to break down into a macabre march of death (See Example 3.79). We also find in this section the invasion

Example 3.79: "Revelge" mm. 44-48

of the refrain into the middle of verses, as the legions of the dead pile up, their song expands beyond its original boundaries.

Upon the revelation that the soldiers are continuing the battle, even after death, Mahler does something unusual. At measure 47 the key changes from G minor to G Major. The shift is unsettling, given the information that has just been revealed, but as the section continues, and the victims of the battle still multiply in number, the return of the refrain in measure 59 brings back G minor. The uneasy balance between minor and major keys continues until the next major event of the song.

The strong militaristic tendencies heard in the opening measures of the song return with a vengeance in measure 89. At this point the narrative perspective also shifts from the drummer boy and his comrades to a third person narrator. We learn of the drummer boy's new duty and hear it in action, as he plays his drums to waken the dead soldiers so that they can take their ranks and fight another night. The narrator's melody takes on a much more forceful, commanding tone, due to the addition of

multiple *sforzandi* and expression markings such as "geschrieen" ("shouted or screamed"), this lends contrast between his voice and those of the child who plays the drums and the young, frightened but nonetheless dutiful soldiers. This epic passage also allows the time to pass for the drummer boy to grow into his new role and to amass a group of soldiers who will join him in his nightly recreation of the battle scene. While the time that passes up until this point is relatively compressed, for the dead time has no meaning, and so the nightly ritual which we now see of deceased soldiers waking to march has no temporal context.

Donald Mitchell writes that the expansive nature of "Revelge" and its sister song "Der Tamboursg'sell" successfully reversed the relationship between song and symphony on which Mahler relied for his previous *Wunderhorn* settings. Rather than basing a symphonic movement on a pre-existing song, these songs, in their expansiveness and independence of orchestral writing, took their inspiration from ideas initially intended as instrumental music.[44]

"Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen"

The last of the *Wunderhorn* songs to be composed for 1898 publication, "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" displays some of Mahler's most sophisticated Lieder compositional techniques, in part due to Mahler's creation of the text from two distinct poems, as detailed in Chapter 2. It is for that reason that I have chosen to discuss it after "Revelge," which was composed later. Mahler utilizes a flexible, through-composed structure for the story of a young woman's late night visit from her beloved soldier. "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" is made up of three basic

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[44] Mitchell, *The Wunderhorn Years*, 139.

sound worlds: the militaristic sound world that begins the song, the contrasting *Ländler* section, and the relaxed, duple meter middle section in which the maiden greets her beloved soldier. The first two of these sections recur with different degrees of variation. One could argue that the form of the song resembles that of a rondo, but the variation among the repeated sections have led me to classify the song as through-composed, yet even that seems to not be an adequate description for the expansive, dramatic scope of the song, leaving a work that expands beyond all previous notions of what an art song can and should be. The declamatory, almost recitative-like passages in contrast with the lyrical portions of dialogue lend the song a cantata-like feel, creating a kind of scena.

Marked *Verträumt, leise* (Dreamily, quiet), the opening bars feature a muted passage in the horns played *pp*. The thirty-second-note motive in the first three measures of the passage shown in Example 3.80 (identical to the opening four measures of the song) mimetically represents a knock upon the door, which then evolves into a trumpet fanfare in the trumpet at the fifth measure of the example. This tells the listener that a war is taking place, but it is far off in the distance, as are the young female protagonist's thoughts. While the fanfares provide a glimpse into the

Example 3.80: "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" mm. 15-20

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young woman's mindset, I do not believe that she actually hears them, due to her preoccupation with the knocking. Her hesitance to open the door and welcome her lover inside indicates that she does not suspect that her lover is at the door, creating a distinction between the music that can be heard by the maiden (diegetic music) and that which she cannot (exegetic or mimetic music).[45] This physical and emotional distance remains until measure 19, when the trumpet plays a fanfare at a louder dynamic. Suddenly the war comes closer to home.

Strangely, the militaristic music heard in this opening sequence goes on to accompany the opening words, sung in a lyrical manner by the female protagonist. The maiden's attention has been divided between her duties at home and her concern for her beloved, who is off at war. She asks "Wer ist denn draußen, und wer klopfet an?" (Who is that outside, and who is knocking?), but before she can even say the

Example 3.81: "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" mm. 21-24

words, the clarinet has answered her question with its own version of the fanfare. (See Example 3.81) Only when the soldier appears at her door and begins to speak does the militaristic music give way to the romantic *Ländler*-inspired theme that symbolizes their love. At this point, the meter changes from duple to triple, the key shifts from D minor to D Major, the notes become more sustained, and the winds give

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[45] Carolyn Abbate discusses the significance of audible and inaudible music in *Unsung Voices*, 124–25 and Karol Berger explores similar concepts in "Diegesis and Mimesis," 407–33.

way to the strings (see Example 3.82). This reversal points out the mental

preoccupations of the protagonists. The maiden, physically at home, thinks only of

her beloved soldier, and thus her musical space is filled with masculine, militaristic

Example 3.82: "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" mm. 36-43

imagery. The soldier's concern is not on the battlefield, but with his sweetheart, and

as such, his melodies take the form of the gentle, romantic, *Ländler*. The narrator in

the story serves to transition to story back and forth between the disparate sonic

spaces of the two protagonists, bringing back the declamatory rhythm and returning

to the key of D minor, associated with the militaristic music of the opening and

serving as a reminder to the audience that the young man is first and foremost a soldier.

Mahler separates physical locations and past and present events through musical means, much as he had done in "Rheinlegendchen," only in this case, he uses instrumentation to create two sound worlds. The winds represent the war and events that take place in some other, far-off imagined space in the past, which by its very nature is an idealized one,[46] whereas the strings accompany events taking place in the time and place of the moment being narrated, that is, the maiden's home and her conversation with the soldier. This is how we learn that the maiden is not entirely mentally present in the moment, her thoughts are elsewhere, and she acts as though in a dream. Likewise, only at the end of the song, when the soldier speaks in a somewhat declamatory fashion of his military responsibilities, does his musical language take on the military tropes of the march-like duple meter and brass fanfare,

Example 3.83: "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" mm. 169-173

previously only heard in the distance of the maiden's thoughts and the passages spoken by the narrator. (See Example 3.83) This points the audience's attention to the

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[46] Julian Johnson, *Mahler's Voices: Expression and Irony in the Songs and Symphonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 70.

words he speaks and lends them added importance, while at the same time emphasizing that fact they these thoughts dwell on remembrance rather than the present moment.

As was noted in the previous chapter, Mahler created the text for "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" by combining two separate poems from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*: "Bildchen" and "Unbescreibliche Freude." But in addition to these alterations, he also added one line, which occurs after the maiden has welcomed her beloved solider into her home. The line reads "von Ferne sang die Nachtigall" (in the distance a nightingale sang). Mahler has already established through his use of contrasting timbres that the battlefield is identified with wind instruments. Upon the

Example 3.84: "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" mm. 5-8

mention of the song of the nightingale, an oboe enters, playing not the song of a nightingale, but a melody first heard in measure 5 (see Example 3.84). The song that we hear holds a message, lending the oboe passage a narrative significance that comments on the nightingale's song's meaning. I will discuss the exact nature of her message in Chapter 4.

While the actual events taking place in the story occur during a single night, the remembrances and moments lost in thought of distant locations seem to stretch the story over a longer temporal frame. Mahler contributes to this sense of being somehow suspended in time through expression markings such as "sehr gehalten"

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("very full, content") and "etwas zurürckhaltend" ("somewhat held back") and

instrumental interludes that seem to imply a sense of temporal stasis. (See Example
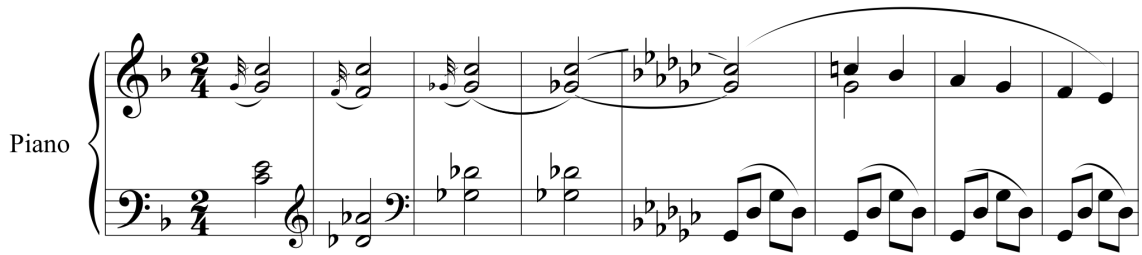
Example 3.85: "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" mm. 84-91

3.85) The tension caused by the tri-tone in measure 86 is held until measure 88, but is

then allowed to simply melt away over the gentle rocking motion that begins in the

bass line in measure 88. Mahler uses these techniques to create a temporal illusion;

time is stretched and the events of a night seem as though they might go on forever.

The stories that Mahler chose to convey using rondo and through-composed

forms feature a kind of complexity that stretches beyond his other settings. Whether

the contrast of musical material is used to indicate a character's conflicted emotions,

as seen in "Aus! Aus!" or to separate time and space or live and death, as in "Wo die

schönen Trompten blasen" and "Revelge," the elaborate stories told by these ballads

fit perfectly with their musical framework.

The musical language of Mahler's ballads based on the poetry of *Des Knaben*

Wunderhorn serves to convey stories in three primary ways: first, Mahler uses

musical means to define characters and narrative voice; second, his music often

portrays a character of its own, providing information to the listener that cannot be

gleaned from simply reading the text; and third, by controlling the passage of time.

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No two songs utilize these techniques in precisely the same way, which is why these ballads provide such a rich listening experience. From the simplest examples, like "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen," to the most complex, such as "Revelge" or "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," Mahler's musical story-telling propels these stories far beyond their folk origins to true works of art showing great depth, universal truth, and subtle nuance.

The songs share a strategic process, created by Mahler, that uses music to clarify and portray specific elements on the stories being told: such as the physical and temporal context, issues of narrative point of view, and the logical sequence of events. Mahler chose texts that tell their stories with varying degrees of clarity, but in all cases, his musical choices serve to make those stories more visceral for the listener. In many cases, Mahler uses contrasting musical soundscapes to distinguish between characters, times, and/or places. Typically, each unique person, place, or time would have its own distinct musical language, defined by key, meter, rhythm, or gesture. In the later songs, these variations also typically included changes in instrumentation. When this variation does not occur, the choice highlights similarities in characters or situations and lends the song a sense of rustic simplicity in keeping with the texts' *Volk* origins. These techniques helped to guide the listener through the story and to highlight the drama contained within. In all cases, the musical choices help to bring the story to life, the words and music work together, with no one element taking prevalence over the other.

Mahler also used his music to control the passage of time in his ballads. In cases such as "Das irdische Leben" the seemingly monotonous circular motion in the

accompaniment during the verses represented the endless cycle of work faced by the mother and her child, and only during the instrumental interludes could time progress at an accelerated rate. In "Der Tamboursg'sell" the listener is allowed to peek in on an isolated moment in time, which is made to expand outward by the young boy's reminiscences, allowing time to stretch. Some songs combine these effects, such as "Ich ging mit Lust," where the first half of the song functions lyrically in nature, as the young man stops time to describe every detail of his surroundings before the narrator interjects, suddenly propelling the story forward by several hours to that evening.

Mahler utilized multiple formal structures in order to tell his stories, and while it would seem logical that these forms would be mandated by the poems he chose, this is rarely the case. As discussed in Chapter 2, he often altered the structure of his poems in order to better fit the musical scheme he had in mind, so his ballads emerged from a complex process of simultaneous manipulation of pre-existing material and creation of new musical ideas. Very little evidence of how precisely this process was accomplished has survived, but the manuscripts that do show evidence of textual changes (primarily "Das irdische Leben" and "Der Tamboursg'sell") shed some light on how Mahler worked to create his *Wunderhorn* ballads. Most often, the formal structure Mahler chose appears to be that which carries the most meaning for the story at hand and provides an additional level of symbolic commentary on the story's events. Mahler uses strophic forms to show the lack of change in the monotonous daily lives for the characters in "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen," "Starke Einbildungskraft," "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," "Verlor'ne Müh'!" "Das

irdische Leben," and "Das Lied Verfolgten im Turm." He chooses free-form structure

and rondo form to show the complexities of the stories in "Aus! Aus!," "Revelge,"

and "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen." He demonstrates the return of normalcy

after an unusual event using ternary forms such as "Ich ging mit Lust," "Scheiden und

Meiden," "Trost im Unglück," "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt," and

"Rheinlegendchen." He shows how tragedy can create drastic changes to the lives of

the characters of bar form songs, such as those in "Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz,"

"Nicht Wiedersehen," and "Der Tamboursg'sell." In each case, the musical form

shapes the story and reveals things about the situations and the characters beyond

what is said in mere words.

It is the synthesis of words and music that make the *Wunderhorn* ballads unlike

any other songs. Mahler's careful attention to the slightest detail allowed these songs

to bring out stories to which anyone could relate. In many cases, he also used them to

observe his environment. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the creation of these ballads as a

kind of social, cultural, and political commentary. We will see that many of these

ballads possess layers of meaning that extend far deeper than simple peasant songs.

Chapter 4

Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Ballads as Critical Commentary

In the summer of 1901, shortly after completing the last of his *Wunderhorn* lieder,

Mahler wrote, "O heavens, what kind of a face will [the public] make at this chaos

that is *forever giving birth to a new world*, which in the next moment collapses, to

these primordial-world-sounds, to this roaring, howling, tossing sea, to these dancing

stars?"[1] Mahler recognizes in this statement that the world around him is changing

drastically but that not everyone will be open and accepting of what lies ahead. His

sentiment resonated with the words of novelist Robert Musil, written in the early

1930s about the *fin-de-siécle* Viennese culture:

> People who were not born then will find it difficult to believe, but the fact
> is that even then time was moving faster than a cavalry camel…But in
> those days, *no one knew what it was moving towards*. Nor could anyone
> quite distinguish between what was above and what was below, between
> what was moving forward and what backward.[2]

These accounts speak to the uncertainty and disorientation inherent in a culture

stepping boldly into the forefront of the twentieth century. The pioneers in this

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[1] Vladimir Karbusicky, *Gustav Mahler und seine Umwelt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche
Buchgesellschaft, 1978), 1; quoted and translated in Carl Schorske, *Thinking With History:
Explorations in the Passage to Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 184.
Emphasis mine.

[2] Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Eithone Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London:
Coward-McCann, 1953), 8. Emphasis mine.

journey, such as Mahler and Musil, faced the future bravely and unapologetically while others resisted change.

The approach of modernist aesthetics changed the way people viewed everything. While some resisted modernism in the arts, viewing it either with skepticism and fear or as a product of the perceived connection between modernity and Jewishness, others embraced it.[3] Freud's theories forever changed how people understood themselves, their actions, and their relationships. Changing social mores altered how people behaved towards those less fortunate and within romantic relationships. Political tensions focused attention on issues of militarism and wartime violence. Examining Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads as products of these changing cultural, social, and political values opens up new avenues of inquiry regarding the meaning of the songs and provides a richer context for studying and enjoying them. My approach to these songs using these particular devices does not imply a categorization system, such as the type indexes used by folklorists to study stories, but, rather, demonstrates some of the many ways we might approach the ballads to increase our understanding of them. As such, rather than force my interpretation of each and every ballad into an interpretive scheme, I am proposing that we view these ballads as something more than simple *Kunstballaden*, but as a platform of critique of the world around him. In so doing, I have chosen to present only a few of the ballads as examples of how these songs may be viewed as commentary, leaving the door open for future explorations in the area.

German ballads, such as those found in the *Wunderhorn* anthology, share a

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[3] K.M. Knittel, "'Ein hypermoderner Dirigent': Mahler and Anti-Semitism in *Fin-de-siècle* Vienna," *19th Century Music* 18 (1995): 265.

common feature with many other folk genres (such as folk songs, fairy tales, and the like), in that they end with a moral lesson, a primary message that the poet (and eventually the composer who uses musical techniques to further emphasize the idea) wishes to convey to his audience. Mahler adopted many of these apothegms outright, and in some instances, he added nuances and elements through his musical setting and textual adaptation that manipulate those morals and update them to address his current circumstances. Mahler's methods of manipulating the *Wunderhorn* poetry and his musical settings all served one common purpose: to tell stories. As ballads, these stories offered didactic guidance that the composer made relevant in new ways to his own generation through his compositions. His miniature ballads from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* all offer commentary on Mahler's world, and, when seen as a type of a mirror of his time, we find that they can tell us a great deal about the composer and his relationship with his own environment

The following examples demonstrate a sampling of the myriad ways we can examine Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads as critical products of their age. My selections are by no means conclusive, but merely serve to show some of the many ways in which we can view these songs. To illustrate the interpretive flexibility of these avenues of inquiry, I have chosen one song, "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," which I will interpret in two very different ways: first as a cultural expression of its time by way of a Freudian dream analysis and then as a kind of political anti-militaristic commentary. We will discover that the lessons embedded in these ballads can speak to people from of all walks of life.

Mahler's Cultural Environment: Critics and Audiences

Throughout the so-called *Wunderhorn* Years, Mahler maintained an ambivalent

relationship with his critics. The most brutal attacks he endured came from critics

who commented on performances of his own works, not just the songs, but the

symphonies as well, rather than those he conducted, but his conducting style was not

above criticism either. His negative critics tended to fall into two camps: those who

disliked Mahler's work due to its unapologetic modernity, and those whose views

stemmed not from any particular quality of the music itself, but simply from the fact

that Mahler was Jewish. Mahler chose to confront these critics in song. Two of the

Wunderhorn ballads tell stories dealing with unfair criticism. "Lob des hohen

Verstandes" addresses those critics who took issue with Mahler's Secessionist,

modernist tendencies, while "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" examines how

religious bigotry can cloud critical judgment.

　　Older critics and audiences alike simply did not understand Mahler's music, and

as such, accused the composer of creating incomprehensible noise, a common

response when new artistic movements appear on the horizon. In the spring of 1901,

Mahler complained of the public's unwillingness to work to understand his music in a

letter to his long-time friend, musicologist Guido Adler, saying:

> It's not just a question of conquering a summit previously unknown, but of
> tracing, step by step, a new pathway to it, whereas *the audience and the "judges"*
> *come rushing in all of a sudden and want to see everything immediately, without*
> *realizing that their shortsightedness prevents them from seeing anything more*
> *than the nearest bush*…They then utter harsh criticism, nothing satisfies them,
> everything must be otherwise; although it might never even have occurred to
> them that such a path is possible, they are determined to make us responsible for
> the fact that nature is thus and not otherwise.[4]

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[4] Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler* vol. 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1973), 617.
Emphasis mine.

Mahler's music demanded time, energy, and thoughtful contemplation from its

listeners, and this was something his more conservative critics and audiences were

not willing to give. In his letters, he often refers to "the stupidity of the critics," his

"very mean-spirited opponents," and his critics' "shallowness and

incomprehension."[5]

Mahler had good reason to be frustrated. Critics such as the esteemed Eduard

Hanslick struggled to appreciate some of Mahler's compositional practices, reviewing

the premiere of several *Wunderhorn* lieder:

> In the songs we heard yesterday, he proclaims himself an enemy of the
> conventional and the customary… These new songs are difficult to classify:
> neither Lied nor aria, nor dramatic scene, they possess something of all of these
> forms. More than anything, their form recalls that of Berlioz's songs with
> orchestral accompaniment. Mahler, one in the forefront of modernism, shows a
> desire, as often happens, to seek refuge in the opposite extreme, in naivety, in
> unremitting sentiment, in the terse, even awkward language of the old folk song.
> However, it would have been contrary to his nature to have treated these poems
> in the simple, undemanding manner of earlier composers. Although a folk-like
> character is retained in the vocal line, this is underlaid by a sumptuous
> accompaniment, alert in its sprightliness and vivid modulation, which Mahler
> gives, not to the piano, but to the orchestra. For folk songs, this is an
> uncommonly large and indeed refined ensemble: three flutes, piccolo, three
> clarinets, bass clarinet, *cor anglais*, four horns, two harps. It is impossible to
> ignore the fact that there is a contradiction, a dichotomy between the concept of
> the 'folk song' and this artful, superabundant orchestral accompaniment.[6]

Hanslick uses this review to address an important debate brewing among composers,

critics, and music scholars regarding genre as it pertained to the orchestral song.

Traditional figures, such as Hanslick, Rudolf Louis, and Siegmund von Hausseger,

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[5] Gustav Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, Henry Louis de La Grange, trans., Anthony
Beaumont, ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 261; Gustav Mahler, *Gustav Mahler &
Richard Strauss: Correspondence 1888-1911*, Edmund Jephcott, trans., Herta Blaukopf, ed.,
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 40; La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 661.

[6] Quoted in Jon Finson, "The Reception of Gustav Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Lieder," *The Journal of
Musicology* 5 (1987): 102.

felt that the Lied possessed certain characteristics that were not compatible with orchestral setting: piano accompaniment, simple poetry, and an intimate performance context. Orchestrating songs required larger performance spaces, and instantly destroyed the intimacy found in the salon. Composers, particularly Mahler, and other progressive thinkers of the day felt that fusing the lied with an orchestral accompaniment allowed for greater expressive capabilities and sought to maintain the connection to tradition by categorizing the works as lieder.[7] Hanslick's argument lies not with the music itself, but the use of traditional folk poetry in combination with what he perceived to be a modernist musical technique. While contradiction is a common theme in Mahler's songs, it is clear that Hanslick has not completely accepted the complex nature and meaning behind the *Wunderhorn* lieder. Hanslick identifies Mahler's songs as being "in the forefront of modernism," and yet while he recognizes many positive attributes in the songs (the "sumptuous accompaniment," the "vivid modulation," and the "refined ensemble"), other qualities seem to disturb him, such as the "difficult to classify" genre of the works and the "contradiction" and "dichotomy" he saw in the juxtaposition of folk-like melodies with orchestral accompaniment. The famed critic all but admits that he simply does not fully accept the meaning implied by Mahler's combination of seemingly contradictory styles in the songs. Ironically, Hanslick believed himself to be a champion of new music, writing in 1894 (a mere six years before his Mahler review):

> Indeed our age…cannot do without the new, through which our blood
> courses. Poems and musical works of the classical periods of art might
> still live on in the bright light of day, but only modern music reveals
> those colors that correspond to the magical light of sunrise and sunset. I

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[7] Hermann Danuser, "Der Orchestergesang des Fin de siècle: Eine historische und ästhetische Skizze," *Die Musikforschung* 30 (1977), 425–31.

consider it the critic's responsibility to avoid discouraging productivity, to acknowledge those works of our time that are truly felt and unaffectedly entertaining, and not to disparage such works contemptuously in favor of a vanishing "golden age."[8]

This lack of comprehension and acceptance of Mahler's new style seem to be at the heart of much of the backlash against modernism in general and Mahler in the specific.

Mahler had been contending with this type of criticism long before he arrived in Vienna in 1897. On December 12, 1892, the Berlin Philharmonic with Amalie Joachim performed "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" and "Verlor'ne Müh'!" Of this performance, Arno Kleffel of the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* failed to even recognize the musical qualities of Maher's work:

> Never before have I heard anything so unsatisfactory, so distorted, so sad as these two songs… A wasteland, nothing but mannered, insignificant phrases, not a single blossom or green leaf. Judging by the depression that reigned afterward in the auditorium, it was easy to deduce that the public is unwilling to accept such tasteless gifts.[9]

Mahler did not attend this performance, as he was conducting in Hamburg the same evening, but he received a copy of the review that he then sent to his siblings, writing, "Now, dear children, to amuse you I send you… two little accounts by the Minoses of Berlin," referring to the Berlin critics as Minos, one of the cruel judges of the underworld found in Greek mythology.[10] His response shows not frustration or despair, but rather amusement. Mahler recognized that his music said something new

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[8] Eduard Hanslick, *Aus meinem Leben* (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für Deutsche Literatur, 1894), 308. Quoted in and translated by Kevin C. Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History: Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna*, AMS Studies in Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 72–3.

[9] Quoted and translated by La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 263.

[10] Ibid., 264.

that a casual audience simply would not be able to grasp.

It was not only critics and audiences who struggled to understand Mahler's music, alas. In autumn 1892, Amelie Joachim suggested to Hans von Bülow that some of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* lieder be included in the program for his upcoming performance in Hamburg. Mahler anxiously sent him the music, hoping that he would at last find an ally for his compositions with the esteemed conductor. Instead, he received a letter on October 25 stating:

> My numerous attempts (not superficial) to comprehend, and to feel, the special style of the songs that you so kindly sent me have turned out to be so futile that, with regard to the composer as well as the performer, I feel unable to accept the responsibility of their performance at the 7 November Concert.[11]

Mahler's contemporaries recognized his music had a style that went beyond those of his predecessors; he was blatantly called a modernist in reviews and discussions of his work. On 20 November 1900, the day after Mahler conducted his First Symphony at the Vienna Philharmonic, a feuilleton appeared in the *Neue freie Presse* discussing modernism in music. The author of the essay, Max Burchhard, describes modernism as a movement that distances itself from the beauty of sound and leans toward the sounds of nature. He mentions the use of military music, church music, patriotic national music, and dance music. The appearance of these precise styles of music in Mahler's symphony indicate that Burchhard pointed this article directly at him, though Mahler's name appears nowhere in the essay. Indirectly speaking, this review reveals that at least some looked at Mahler's modernism in a

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[11] Stephen McClatchie, ed., *The Mahler Family Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 191.

positive light.[12]

Composed over the course of a week in late June 1896, Mahler used the song "Lob des hohen Verstandes" to address his relationship to critics who failed to grasp the modernist elements of his work. The ballad tells the story of a cuckoo that challenges a nightingale to a singing contest. Since the nightingale is renowned for the beauty of its song, and the cuckoo's call is associated with humor and even insanity, one would assume from the outset that the former would be the obvious winner. However, the cuckoo suggests, "because he has two big ears, so he can hear the best," that they seek out the donkey to serve as judge.[13] The donkey, a creature not normally known for its discernment, cannot comprehend the intricacies of the song of the nightingale (he exclaims, "You're confusing me! I cannot get it into my head!"), and so he declares the cuckoo to be the victor, claiming he sings "a good chorale and keeps well in time."[14] In this miniature ballad, the stupidity of the judge has cost the nightingale its rightful victory, and we learn that circumstance can sometimes rob the more worthy competitor of his proper spoils.

Assuming this ballad to be an attack on his critics, one might see Mahler associating himself with the poor nightingale, whose music is simply too advanced to be easily understood by intellectually limited critics (represented here by the donkey). We know that Mahler viewed the donkey as a symbol of critical ignorance by his statement, made soon after the composition of "Lob des hohen Verstandes,"

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[12] Max Burchhard, "Feuilleton: Der Begriff des Modernen in der Kunst," *Neue freie Presse* 13019 (20 November 1900): 1-3.

[13] "Denn weil er hat zwei Ohren groß, so kann er hören desto bos!"

[14] "Du machst mir's kraus! Ich kann's in Kopf nicht bringen!" "Aber Kukuk singst gut Choral und hältst den Takt fein innen!"

regarding the critics of the *Blumenstücke* movement of his Second Symphony (commonly viewed as some of his most accessible symphonic writing), "They have devoured it *as donkeys eat hay*, without even guessing at its real meaning and true form."[15] Once we imagine Mahler's critics as donkeys who unwisely malign his works simply because they cannot comprehend them, "Lob des hohen Verstandes" has successfully conveyed its message. Felix von Bonin discusses the literary symbolism attributed to the figure of the donkey, "The donkey is a symbol of bad principles. He is the 'bad horse,' stubborn, dumb, and lazy."[16] The cheerful dance tune that Mahler chose to accompany his tale ironically serves the same purpose; those who simply appreciate the ballad as a pretty folk song with funny animal sounds have entirely missed the point.

Mahler also used the song to take a poke at some of his more critically successful composer colleagues. As discussed in Chapter 3, the melody of the song presented by the cuckoo as part of the singing contest emulates the call of the donkey rather than typical cuckoo song, which, rather, appears in the accompaniment. The cuckoo's natural call does not appear in the vocal line until the final line of the song, after the contest has ended and the cuckoo has been announced as the victor. Through this melodic setting, Mahler subtly calls to task composers who would alter their own musical style in order to garner favor with the critics. What would possess the cuckoo to set up this elaborate plan to humiliate the nightingale? In the French literary tradition, the cuckoo is associated with feelings of jealousy, such as what a mediocre

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[15] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, Dika Newlin, trans., Peter Franklin, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 118. Emphasis mine.

[16] Felix von Bonin, "Esel," *Kleines Handlexikon der Märchensymbolic* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 2001), 39.

composer might feel toward Mahler's innovative works.[17] And by placing such

composers in the role of the seemingly foolish, but actually quite conniving cuckoo,

Mahler has taken the opportunity to strike back at his competition.

The song also held a message for Mahler's audience. He wrote in a sarcastic tone

of his work's reception, showing that he would never alter his style to the whims of

his audience:

> If, one day, one of my works should finally come to be heard and
> understood, (I've already been fighting against shallowness and
> incomprehension and experiencing all the disappointments, nay
> misery of a pioneer for fifteen years), and particularly in Vienna,
> where, after all, people have an instinctive conception of my personality,
> this should no more bother you or make you distrust my work than does
> the incomprehension and hostility. The important thing is never to let
> oneself be guided by the opinion of one's contemporaries and in both
> one's life and one's work, to continue steadfastly on one's way without
> letting oneself be either defeated by failure or diverted by applause.[18]

The decadent society of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna was exceedingly proud of its cultural

history, and the rising middle class clamored to display their long-sought

sophistication by emulating the aristocracy and publicly demonstrating their interest

in the arts. Mere attendance at the opera and the concert hall, did not, however, ensure

comprehension of the works performed. At the same time that more and more people

were attending musical performances, the development of the new modernist

aesthetic was producing music much more complex and difficult to understand. Carl

E. Schorske describes the incongruity between Mahler's artistic vision (in this quote

referencing Mahler's decisions made as conductor) and audience expectations:

In his interpretation of others' works, as in his own composing, Mahler

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[17] Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 268.

[18] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 661.

drastically widened the emotional range of music, increasing the demands on audiences and musicians alike. He transformed performing traditions with experimentation, rescoring, and new instrumental balance.[19]

Theodor Helm reported on the 14 January 1900 concert of the Vienna Philharmonic in which Mahler premiered several of his *Wunderhorn* songs, "Mahler's purpose was to draw attention to himself as composer. The fashion-conscious public responded with applause insatiably. Instead of truly significant orchestral works, one was forced to accept contrivances of truly refined *secessionist* orchestration."[20] One might almost view the scenario as one from "The Emperor's New Clothes," in which the middle class had to risk exposing their "vulgar, peasant roots" by admitting that they did not fully grasp the music performed before them. And so, while the seats remained full and the audience attentive, the true message behind Mahler's music failed to be grasped by the majority of his audience.

Of course, Mahler did not want to make the ballad's message *too* clear, as after all, he did want the song to be successful in performances and sheet music sales. Initially, Mahler had intended to title the song "Lob der Kritik" (In Praise of the Critic), but he later changed it in order to lessen its harshness. Much of the song's critical success (from critics who, no doubt, would never envision themselves in the role of the donkey) was likely due to his title change to "Lob des hohen Verstandes" (In Praise of Higher Intellect), which, while being bitterly ironic, is also a good deal more subtle.

Much of the criticism against Mahler and his music also stemmed from anti-

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[19] Carl E. Schorske, "Mahler and Klimt: Social Experience and Artistic Evolution," *Daedulus* 111 (1982): 46.

[20] Theodor Helm, "Theater, Kunst, und Literatur," *Deutsche Zeitung* (15 January 1900): 3.

Semitic tendencies, rampant throughout the German-speaking lands. Not surprisingly,

the impact of Mahler's Jewishness on his work and its reception has seen a great deal

of scholarly attention.[21] Scholars have not discussed, however, the possibility that

Mahler may have used the song "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" as a

response to the anti-Semitic press.

> In December 1901, William Ritter wrote of Mahler and his Fourth Symphony:

> Perhaps this Jewish heritage is in fact responsible for his nervous predisposition toward an often epileptical musical form of expression, and for his stubborn tenacity to fixed beliefs, whether ridiculous or sublime; for his indomitable urge to impose, at any price, his most exorbitant demands, as well as his need for beauty; his wish to prove the opposition wrong by any means, to force hate, to disgorge admiration, and for the power with which he exploits luxury, opulence and the odd and unexpected to the full; then there is his harmonious control and infallible balance in composition, which conjures up the perfect balance of a credit and debit account, and evokes expert banking operations; and finally there is that very special note of concupiscence whose affiliations with the *Song of Songs* and, at a later date, the banks of the blue Danube are evident.[22]

This critique calls upon nearly all of the pervading stereotypes that *fin-de-siècle*

German-speaking society had conjured up in reference to the Jewish population:

nervousness; jerking, spasmodic movement; stubbornness; financial greediness and

underhandedness; disagreeable personality; and just a general unpleasantness toward

"proper Germans." In spite of his views, eventually Ritter found himself strangely

drawn to the symphony. He wrote:

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[21] K. M. Knittel, "'Polemik im Concertsaal': Mahler, Beethoven, and the Viennese Critics," *19th Century Music* 24 (2006): 289-321; Anthony Beaumont, "Mahler und die Juden," *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 59/6 (2004): 15-22; Talia Pecker Berio, "Mahler's Jewish Parable," in *Mahler and his World*, Karen Painter, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 87-110; Susan M. Filler, "Mahler as a Jew in the Literature," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 18/4 (2000): 62-78; Vladimír Karbusicky, "Gustav Mahlers musikalisches Judentum," *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 16 (1999): 179-207; K. M. Knittel, "'Ein hypermoderner Dirigent,'" 257–76.

[22] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 655. The comment regarding the Blue Danube may refer to the famous waltz "On the Beautiful Blue Danube" by Johann Strauss, Jr., indicating both Strauss' Jewish descent and the work's popularity among the middle class.

> You rebel against this music. You reject it with all your wisdom, all
> your experience and all your convictions…but you're fighting against
> your own pleasure…you're trying to be virtuous…at bottom…there's
> nothing you like better. You're defeated. Whether you will or no, you
> admire it! It was bound to happen that you, an anti-Semite, should be
> bowled over by admiration for something Jewish![23]

Ritter represents a somewhat unusual example among Mahler's anti-Semitic critics in

that he was eventually able to look past his religious biases. He did what Guido Adler

hoped that all men would one day be able to do, "In considering these questions,

those passions that have been so pathologically aroused in our time may play no

role."[24] Most anti-Semitic critics, sadly, were not so open-minded.

Several factors played into the rise of anti-Semitic sentiment common in

German-speaking areas, particularly Vienna during the final decades of the nineteenth

century. Fearing financial disaster after the bank crisis of 1873 and the Panic of 1893,

Viennese Burgers began to worry about their lack of economic security. With the

abundant stereotypes associating Jews with greed and suspicious financial practices

dating back to the Middle Ages, the Jewish population of Vienna became an easy

target for their frustrations. Of course, the results of this bigoted attitude amongst the

Viennese and other German-speaking populations would find a stronghold in the

political arena and eventually leave its scars across Europe in the coming century, but

for now, it simply proved a barrier to social acceptance and career success sought by

Mahler and other artistic Jews of his day.

The composer was keenly aware of the impact his Jewish heritage had on his

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[23] William Ritter, *Études d'Art Étranger* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911), 271. Quoted and translated by La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 651–52.

[24] Guido Adler, *Richard Wagner: Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität zu Wien* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1904), 189. Quoted and translated in Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History*, 187.

career. In late 1894, Mahler wrote to Dr. Friedrich Löhr, "Being Jewish prevents me, as it is in the world today, from receiving employment at any court theater."[25] Since he had long striven to achieve a post at the Vienna Court Opera House, on 23 February 1897, Mahler had himself baptized Catholic in Hamburg. Of this choice, he wrote, "I do not hide the truth…when I say that this action, which I took from an instinct of self-preservation and which I was fully disposed to take, cost me a great deal."[26] Furthermore, he had reason to doubt that the gesture would have its intended effect, giving Mahler acceptance and belonging in the artistic world of Vienna. He wrote regarding Leo Blech's career-motivated baptism, "It won't work, unfortunately, even if he has been baptized as you say. For the anti-Semites, I still count as a Jew despite my baptism, and more than one Jew is more than the Vienna Court Opera can bear."[27]

Mahler, however was not above his own brand of anti-Semitism. Leon Botstein writes of a hierarchy among the various Jewish populations within Vienna, "Bohemian Jews [such as Mahler] in particular avoided the most Jewish district of the city, the second district, Leopoldstadt. They were rather more affluent than other Jews and, like Mahler's father, quite Germanophilic, and oriented towards German culture."[28] We witness Mahler's superior attitude toward the Eastern European Jewish immigrants known as the "Ostjuden" in this letter to his sister Justi:

[25] Alma Maria Mahler, ed., *Gustav Mahler Briefe: 1879-1911* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1978), 102.

[26] Michael Steinberg, "Jewish Identity and Intellectuality in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Suggestions for a Historical Discourse," *New German Critique* 43 (1988): 24.

[27] K. M. Knittel, "'Ein hypermoderner Dirigent,'" 267.

[28] Leon Botstein, "Gustav Mahler's Vienna," in *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 18.

> I forbid everyone to associate with Frl. Lourié in any way, and ask you to reject her brusquely, if there's no other way. Under no circumstances visit her, and if she comes, be cool and dismissive toward her. *She is a quite common Russian Jew*, who, by the way, behaved towards me in such a pushy and indecent manner, that I was obliged to snub her directly.[29]

So, while he clearly saw Christian society's views of his religious heritage as an obstacle to his success, Mahler's own attitudes were not entirely without prejudice. In time, Mahler's bold and innovative conducting style won over some of the anti-Semitic critics who had chastised his decisions at the podium, but those who commented on his compositions would take a while longer to come around.

The anti-Semitic press campaign in Vienna began almost as soon as it was announced that Mahler was coming to the Court Opera. Numerous newspapers and journals in Vienna at the time had anti-Semitic leanings, including *Deutsche Zeitung*, *Deutsches Volksblatt*, *Östdeutsche Rundschau*, and *Kikeriki*.[30] The overwhelming majority of the critics in these journals chose to remain anonymous, but critics such as Theodor Helm (who, in time, became a friend and ally of Mahler's), Camillo Horn, Maximillian Muntz, and Hans Puchstein made their affiliations with the papers well known.[31] Often, rather than expose their own biases by attacking Mahler's Jewishness outright, anti-Semitic critics criticized the music itself, with the unwritten understanding that their views had more to do with the religion of the composer than the musical qualities of the work. A review of the premiere of several of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* lieder, given by the Philharmonic (then led by Mahler), addressed

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[29] Stephen McClatchie, ed. *Family Letters,* 158, emphasis mine.

[30] Sandra McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna 1896-1897: Critically Moving Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 21–2.

[31] Ibid., 22-30.

directly to the composer, demonstrates the negative views of these critics toward

these songs. "Disregarding one of your own rules, you have given lieder of a popular

nature at the Philharmonic concerts. Forgive us, O hallowed masters of the *German*

lied, that we even call them lieder!"[32] Helm wrote that the *Wunderhorn* lieder were

"subtly orchestrated in the manner of the Secession, yet their melodic invention was

anything but original."[33] Muntz completely dismissed any positive response Mahler's

work might receive, chalking up successful performances not to the quality of the

work, but to the "almost wholly Jewish audience" and the "shameless enthusiasm on

the part of young Israel."[34]

If we view the song as a commentary on the anti-Semitic music press, Mahler

could be seen to express his frustration with the religious bigotry of critics and

audiences in "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt." The song tells the story of St.

Anthony, who finding no one in his church, decides to preach his sermon by the river

to the fish. The fish are fascinated by Anthony's appearance and seem to be taking in

his every word, ("No sermon ever pleased the fish so") but when the preaching ends,

they return to their sinful ways ("The sermon has pleased them, but they remain the

same as before.").[35]

Upon composing "Antonius," Mahler discussed the song with his confidant,

Natalie Bauer-Lechner, saying, "Not one of [the fish] is one iota the wiser for it, even

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[32] La Grange, *Mahler,* 1: 549.

[33] Quoted and translated in La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 553–54.

[34] Ibid., 507.

[35] "Kein Predigt niemalen, den Fischen so g'fallen." "Die Predigt hat g'fallen. Sie blieben wie alle."

though the Saint has performed for them!"[36] Mahler provided us with the opportunity

to view the ballad as more than a story of a lonely priest with this comment. Anti-

Semitic critics would hear Mahler's music, but because their bigotry prevented them

from really listening, they could not appreciate what the composer had to say. They

left the concert hall just as they had entered it, filled with bias and prejudice.

Interestingly, according to this interpretation, Mahler has cast himself as the Catholic

saint who fails to win over the critics, who flock to the concert hall and delight in

each negative moment as proof that Viennese society as a whole concurs with their

bigoted ideals.

Mahler demonstrates this tension with the introduction of a theme that

demonstrates strong similarity to those heard in Jewish peasant music, heard twice, at

mm. 52-62, and 87-98 (See Example 4.1). This theme appears
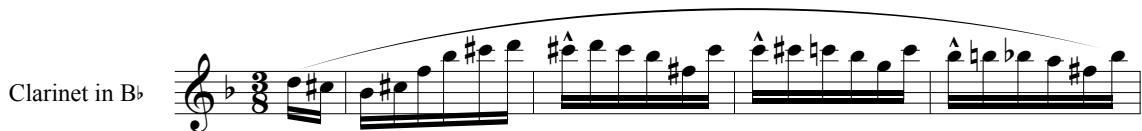
Example 4.1: "Des Antonius von Padua Fischepredigt" mm. 48-52

as interlude between descriptions of the fish giving rapt attention to the sermon. The

melody shows a strong influence from the Klezmer tradition, through its melodic use

of the clarinet, modal melody emphasizing the augmented second, dance rhythms,

and snaking chromatic passages.[37] The juxtaposition of this intentionally Jewish-

sounding passage with text discussing the actions of a Catholic saint points to issues

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[36] Quoted by Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 33.

[37] Walter Zev Feldman, "Jewish Music: Non-Liturgical Music: Instrumental Music: Klezmer," In *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib. unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/41322pg4 (accessed January 20, 2010).

of religious difference. The anti-Semitic press, unable to recognize the incongruity of the music with the text, demonstrate that they have arrived on the scene with the preconceived notion that they will not allow themselves to be moved or changed by the sermon, they are only there to be seen by the gathering crowd and to be entertained by whatever unfolds. Mahler tells us through his seamless combination of a Catholic-based story and Jewish music that perhaps these two populations are not so different after all, but his anti-Semitic critics would hear nothing of it, for their biases and bigotry will not allow them to see past Mahler's religious heritage.

In his essay discussing the relationship of the ballad to the scherzo of Mahler's Second Symphony, Magnar Breivik considers "Antonius" to be an indictment of religious institutions as a whole, claiming, "The ancient legend of human apostasy is musically transformed and transfigured into a *fin-de-siècle* image of antireligious experience – into a contemporary sermon on secularization and disbelief."[38] While I do not agree entirely with Breivik's conclusion, I do think that Mahler is making an important observation regarding religion in *fin-de-siècle* Viennese society, particularly as it impacted his career and the reception of his music. Mahler's message is simple: unfounded prejudices can prevent someone from experiencing something truly worthwhile. A critic who refused to listen to Mahler's music, but instead eagerly awaited any indication of a negative reaction which could later be exaggerated into a terrible review, missed the opportunity to hear something new and innovative which offered a great lesson to the very critics who would never hear it, but instead left the concert hall much like Antonius' fish, ignorant and in exactly the

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[38] Magnar Breivik, "A Sermon for Fishes in a Secular Age: On the Scherzo Movement of Mahler's Second Symphony," in *Voicing the Ineffable: Musical Representations of Religious Experience*, Siglind Bruhn, ed. (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2002), 69.

same state as when they entered.

Mahler's music tended to have a polarizing effect on his critics: most remained either unwaveringly enthusiastic or violently opposed to his works. The composer, for the most part, did not take the writings of these negative critics to heart, seeing their reviews as the results either of a lack of comprehension or of religious bigotry. His light-hearted attitude on this matter appears in "Lob des hohen Verstandes" and "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt," perhaps two of the most amusing examples of Mahler's *Humoresken*. Mahler is often quoted as saying "My time will come."[39] Given these two responses to those who seem to believe (for whatever reason) that the time has not yet arrived, it seems that Mahler is willing to wait.

Mahler's Cultural Environment: Songs with a Freudian Twist

Musicologists and psychoanalysts alike have devoted a great deal of time, energy, and ink to the meeting that took place between Gustav Mahler and Sigmund Freud on an afternoon in August, 1910 in Leyden, Holland.[40] This is quite natural, given the rarity with which scholars can examine shared moments between figures of such magnitude in their respective fields. Of course, by the time this meeting took place, Mahler had long since finished setting the poems of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*; however, according to a letter written by Freud to his friend and biographer Ernest Jones,

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[39] "Meine Zeit wird Kommen." Georg Borchardt, Constantin Floros, Thomas Schäfer, Hans Christoph Worbs, *Gustav Mahler: "Meine Zeit wird Kommen": Aspekte der Mahler-Rezeption* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 1996).

[40] Notable examples include: Theodor Reik, *Variations Psychanalytiques sur un Theme de Gustav Mahler* (Paris: DeNoël, 1953); William J. McGrath, "Mahler and Freud: The Dream of the Stately House," in *Beiträge '79-81: Gustav Mahler Kolloquium 1979*, ed. Rudolf Klein (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1981), 40-51; and Peter Ostwald, "Gustav Mahler from the Viewpoint of Psychoanalysis," in *Des Gustav-Mahler-Fest Hamburg 1989: Bericht über den Internationalen Gustav-Mahler-Kongreß*, ed. Matthias Theodor Vogt (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1991), 89-96.

"although Mahler had had no previous contact with psychoanalysis Freud said that he had never met anyone who seemed to understand it so swiftly."[41] This may be explained by that fact that several of Mahler's acquaintances, moreover, including Bruno Walter, had sought out treatment from Freud, and discussed it with Mahler.[42] Given this, it seems quite reasonable, and can reveal a great deal, to examine some of the *Wunderhorn* songs using Freud's theories as an interpretive window. I do not imply that Mahler's compositions were directly influenced by Freud's theories, but rather that examining the songs as products as their age (i.e. the same time as the birth of psychoanalysis) can allow us to interpret the events in these songs in new and fruitful ways. Freud's theories made up a large part of the *Zeitgeist* in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, and as such, their influence could be felt in all areas of the arts at this time. While I would not argue that Mahler composed these songs as a direct response to Freudian thought, to discount the intermingling of ideas from all fields of the arts and sciences that took place in this unique place and time would rob us of a valuable hermeneutic tool.

During the period that Mahler was composing songs to the texts of *Des Knaben*

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[41] McGrath, "Mahler and Freud," 40.

[42] Henry-Louis de la Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3, Vienna: Triumph and Disillusion (1904–1907)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 348. We know that Walter discussed his treatment with Mahler, as it was through Mahler's assistance that the conductor was able to receive funding to travel to Sicily, as was recommended by Freud as the cure for Walter's chronic arm pain. Walter describes his treatment, "I was attacked by an arm ailment. Medical science called it a professional cramp, but it looked deucedly like incipient paralysis. I went from one prominent doctor to another,… and finally decided to call on Professor Sigmund Freud. The consultation took a course I had not foreseen. Instead of questioning me about sexual aberrations in infancy, as my layman's ignorance had led me to expect, Freud examined my arm briefly. I told him my story, feeling certain that he would be professionally interested in a possible connection between my actual physical affliction and a wrong I had suffered more than a year before. Instead, he asked me if I had ever been to Sicily. When I replied that I had not, he said that it was very beautiful, and more Greek than Greece itself. In short, I was to leave that very evening, forget all about my arm and the Opera, and do nothing for a few weeks but use my eyes. I did as I was told." Bruno Walter, *Theme and Variations: An Autobiography*, James A. Galston, trans. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), 164–65.

Wunderhorn, Freud published his first three major works: *Studies on Hysteria* (*Studien über Hysterie*, 1895), *The Interpretation of Dreams* (*Die Traumdeutung*, 1899), and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (*Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens*, 1901). The first and last of the above-mentioned texts offer little to my discussion of Mahler's ballads, but using *The Interpretation of Dreams* to examine "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" and "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" can shed a great deal of light on the actions of the characters in the stories. One of Freud's later works, *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (*Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten*, 1905), also holds interest for the study of Mahler's ballads by token of his own genre designation for many of them, *Humoresken*. I will employ this work to examine one of Mahler's early songs, a story revolving around a pun, "Starke Einbildungskraft" and a later ballad with a similar moral, "Verlor'ne Müh'!"

Many scholars, both in music and psychology, have taken Mahler's passing acquaintance with Freud to be a free ticket to attempt their own psychoanalyses on the composer.[43] This practice holds many dangers, and any indication that one can uncover the innermost secrets of a subject who is no longer alive should not be taken seriously. However, as long as it remains clearly an exercise intended to enlighten one's understanding of the work, rather than a diagnostic discussion of a dead subject's emotional state, one can pose many fascinating theories regarding the compositional process by interrogating Mahler's music in this way. We can learn to view the songs in new ways. The purpose of stories such as those found in the *Wunderhorn* is to provide lessons for young people, just as parents use fairy tales to

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[43] This practice, termed "necropsychiatry" by Dika Newlin, is defined by her as "The raping of the minds and spirits of great men and women of the past in the name of 'science.'" Dika Newlin, "'The Mahler's Brother Syndrome:' Necropsychiatry and the Artist," *Musical Quarterly* 66 (1980): 297.

inform their children today.[44] To update our understanding of these stories provide

them with a timeless quality, allowing audiences from generations living long after

the poems were set to paper to learn from the stories. In these analyses, I will strive to

psychoanalytically examine the actions and emotions of the fictional characters who

populate the poems of Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* as a way to broaden our

understanding of these works.

"Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" tells a story of love and death in a time of

war. The opening of the song describes an encounter between two lovers that occurs

in the middle of the night. The maiden awakens to a knock on the door, and finds her

sweetheart, who she believed to be away fighting, standing before her. She lets him

inside, and they embrace. Suddenly, the maiden begins to cry, and the soldier

consoles her saying "In a year you will be mine. I go to war on the green heath, to my

house of the green turf."[45] The ghost of the dead solider has come to inform his

beloved that they will be reunited soon, as her death is also imminent.

Mahler clarifies the death of the soldier through a line of text that he added to the

poetry when creating his text. Immediately before the maiden begins to weep, we

learn that "In the distance, a nightingale sang."[46] This line did not appear in either of

the poems "Bildchen" or "Unbeschreibliche Freude" that Mahler used to construct his

song lyric. Instead, he added the line himself. But what does it mean? Nightingales

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[44] Bruno Bettleheim and Marie-Luise von Franz study the use of folk songs and fairy tales as tools for passing on life lessons to the young through the lens of psychoanalysis. Bruno Bettleheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Marie-Luise von Franz, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Fairy Tales* (Irving, TX: Spring, 1978).

[45] "Aufs Jahr sollst du mein eigen sein. Ich zieh in Krieg auf grüner Heid. Da ist mein Haus, von grünem Rasen."

[46] "Von ferne sang die Nachtigall."

appear in thirty-five of the 723 *Wunderhorn* poems.[47] In most of these instances, the

poems call upon them for their beautiful voices. In many of those poems, the voice of

the nightingale seems to possess an almost ethereal quality, as if the bird could sing

with the voice of the angels.[48] In "Trompeten," the nightingale song, even from the

distance, has the power to bring the maiden to tears. The maiden instinctively knows

that the song of the nightingale has brought the news of her lover's death on the

battlefield. European folktales and Romantic poetry have long used the nightingale to

symbolize the "the bringer of a gentle death," and his song to represent the damned

soul.[49] Thus John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" refers to the nightingale song as

"thy sweet requiem."[50] This symbol is a familiar one in the German art song tradition

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[47] "Frau Nachtigall," "Cedroris Klage," "Schall der Nacht," "Grosse Wasche," "Käuzlein," "Frühlingsblumen," "Maria auf der Reise," "Der lustige Geselle," "Variation," "Hochzeit Lied auf Kaiser Leopoldus und Claudia Felix," "Antwort Mariä auf den Gruss der Engel," "Wettstreits der Kuckuck mit der Nachtigall" (which Mahler used for the text in "Lob des hohen Verstandes"), Der Schäfers Tageszelten," "Frühlingserwartung," "Wechselgesang," "Ständchen," "Wächter hüt zum Trutz," "Wiederhall," "Warnung," "Waldvöglein" (which Mahler used for the text in "Ich ging mit Lust"), "Liebeswünsche," "Sommerleid," "Die hohe Unterhandlerin," "Ablösung" (which Mahler used for the text in "Ablösung im Sommer"), "Mailied," "Jahrezeiten," "Der verwandelte Einsiedler," "Sonnenblicke," "Eine heilige Familie," "Erziehung durch Natur," "Das Federspiel," "Die zwei Hirten in der Christnacht," and "Mondliedchen."

[48] For example, "Als wie ein himmlische Nachtigall/ Ich das Magnifikat tu singen," (Like a heavenly nightingale, I sang the Magnificat.) from "Maria auf der Reise" (I 375). Arnim and Brentano, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder*, ed. Heinz Rölleke (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2003), 353.

[49] Oswald A. Erich and Richard Beitl, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1955), 547–8. See also: Maria Leach, ed., *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1972), 792–3; Anthony S. Mercatante, *Zoo of the Gods: Animals in Myth, Legend and Fable* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 163. The nightingale's connection to death is seen in the Greek myth of Philomela as well as Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Nightingale." A medieval story explains the quality of the nightingale's song in that she keeps awake at night by pressing her breast against a thorn. Her mournful tone describes her pain. Lawrence Kramer refers to the extensive references to nightingales in the Romantic art song tradition in *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121, 144-5.

[50] John Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale," in *The Poetical Works and Other Writings of John Keats,* ed. H. Buxton Forman (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), 145-51.

as well, for example, appearing in Brahms's "Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht."

Mahler repeatedly wrote about the song of nightingales in letters to his wife Alma and to Natalie Bauer-Lechner, referring to "die Stimme des Totenvögels" (the voice of the death birds): "The great reverie sounds, the trumpets of the apocalypse call; in the middle of a grey silence, we hear a nightingale in the distance—a last tremulous echo of earthly life!"[51]

Freud interprets a dream of his own that bears strong similarities to the scenario in "Trompeten," writing, "I had gone to the Brücke's laboratory at night, and, in response to a gentle knock on the door, I opened it to (the late) Professor Fleischl."[52] He goes on to explain that in the context of the dream, Professor Fleischl was not dead, and only when the dreaming Freud thought about his waking life did he remember that the figure who stood before him was not a living man, but a revenant. Freud and Ernst Fleischl von Marxow worked together at the Vienna Physiological Institute between 1876 and 1882, where they became friends. Freud explains the complicated relationship he had with his colleague, "I had been the first to recommend the use of cocaine, in 1885, and this recommendation had brought serious reproaches down on me. The misuse of that drug had hastened the death of a dear friend of mine. This had been in 1895."[53] The feelings of guilt that Freud felt regarding the death of his friend haunted him throughout his life (he wrote of

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[51] Constantin Floros, Gustav *Mahler II: Mahler und die Symphonik des 19. Jahrhunderts in neuer Deutung* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1985), 207.

[52] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, James Strachey, trans. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), 421.

[53] Ibid., 111.

dreaming that he was Brutus to Fleischl's Caesar),[54] but through his dream, he was

able to discover, "People of that kind [the dead] only existed as long as one liked and

could be got rid of if someone else wished it."[55]

According to folklore studies, figures who come back from the dead (known as

revenant visitors) seek out the living (the visited) for a number of reasons: to remove

wicked spells, to uphold or oppose their partner in some quest, or, as in the case in

"Trompeten," to provide information.[56] Just as Freud learned a valuable fact about

dreams from his encounter with Fleischl, the maiden learned of her lover's death and

her own impending demise through her visit.

Strangely, however, we learn indirectly that Mahler did not apparently agree with

the interpretation of the song that his own manipulations of the two source poems in

creating his final song text seem to make most obvious. As noted in Chapter 2,

Natalie Bauer-Lechner wrote in her unpublished diaries regarding the premiere of the

song:

> About the song "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," a quarrel again
> arose between Lipiner[57] and Gustav: the former maintained that the
> soldier was dead and appears to his beloved only as a ghost—a view
> which the Spieglers[58] also agrees with—whereas Gustav inflexibly and
> thoroughly asserted that he still lives and that his death comes to him
> only in battle. (And also, in his words, Goethe appears to be of this
> [Lipiner's] opinion.)[59]

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[54] Freud, *Interpretation*, 424.

[55] Ibid., 421.

[56] David Buchan, "Talerole Analysis and Child's Supernatural Ballads," *The Ballad and Oral Tradition*, Joseph Harris, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 65–7.

[57] Siegfried Lipiner, writer and friend of Mahler.

[58] Albert Spiegler, another of Mahler's friends.

[59] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Mahleriana* [partly unpublished journals], 14 January, 1900, Collection of Le Bibliothèque Gustav Mahler, Paris. "Über das Lied 'Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,' entspann

The most peculiar aspect of Bauer-Lechner's statement concerns Mahler's

interpretation of the meaning of the text, specifically whether the soldier at the door is

alive or a ghost. Mahler removed text that would seem to support his own position,

and in so doing, he seems to be contradicting himself. Mahler's omission of this

passage adds to the ambiguity of the final song text. Both original poems end with

plans that are revealed by the soldier to the maiden to ensure that their love endures

beyond the war. Had Mahler ended his song with one or both of these ideas, the

image of a young man who has not yet gone to war and hopes to return safely to

resume his romance would emerge much more clearly. Instead, Mahler's song ends

with the image of a soldier and "[sein] Haus von grünen Rasen," ([His] house of

green turf,) which could easily be interpreted as a reference to his grave.[60] Mahler

plants musical and textual imagery that supports one interpretation and then verbally

supports another in his conversation with friends regarding the meaning of the song.

The statement recorded by Bauer-Lechner, however, may simply serve as one of the

many examples of Mahler purposely misleading listeners regarding the meaning of

his music. In any case, Mahler has opened the door to multiple hermeneutic

possibilities with this song.

Simply reading the poem "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" gives no indication that

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sich zwischen Lipiner und G. wieder ein Streit: Jener behauptete, der Krieger sei tot und erscheine dem Liebchen nur als Geist – welcher Aufassung auch Spieglers sich anschlossen – während G. steif und fest behauptete, er lebe noch und weise auf den kommenden Tod in der Schlacht nur hin. (Und auch Goethe scheint mir in seinen Worten dieser (Lipiners) Meinung zu sein.)" I am grateful to the Bibliothèque Gustav Mahler, in particular Alena Parthonnaud, for making this material available to me.

[60] I further discuss the incongruities of Mahler's interpretation of "Trompeten" with musical and literary evidence in my article: Molly M. Breckling, "Tears From a Nightingale: Analytical Duality in Gustav Mahler's 'Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,'" *Music Research Forum* 19 (2004): 49-70.

the conversation taking place in the poem is anything more than two people

discussing the fate of their romance during wartime. Mahler's setting, on the other

hand, blurs the boundaries between the waking realm and the world of dreams. As

discussed in Chapter 3, Mahler accomplishes this by assigning each of the characters

in the dialogue with their own unique musical soundscape and then gradually

blending the guard's world into that of the maiden as if he were falling asleep and

beginning to dream. Then as "real life" once again makes its presence felt, the sentry

instantly jolts awake (bringing with him a sudden return to his own militaristic

musical environment) to begin the cycle all over again.

This interpretation of a night watchman who cannot stay awake during his shift,

and repeatedly falls asleep to dream of his beloved conforms precisely to one of

Freud's central theories regarding dreams, wish fulfillment:

> Dreams are not to be likened to the unregulated sounds that rise from a
> musical instrument struck by the blow of some external force instead
> of by a player's hand; they are not meaningless, they are not absurd;
> they do not imply that one portion of our store of ideas is asleep while
> another portion is beginning to awake. On the contrary, they are
> psychical phenomena of complete validity – fulfillments of wishes; they
> can be inserted into the chain of intelligible waking mental acts; they are
> constructed by a highly complicated activity of the mind.[61]

The sentry sits alone at his post, watching and waiting silently for night to end. When

fatigue and boredom get the better of him, he drifts off to sleep. Foremost in his mind

in these instances is his loneliness, so naturally, his dreaming mind turns to the person

he most wishes to see, and his sweetheart (appearing in the dream) tries to tempt him

into abandoning his post for a late night rendezvous. His dream provides him with the

companionship and adventure that he so craves, and even gives him a chance to prove

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[61] Freud, *Interpretation*, 122.

his loyalty to the cause, as he struggles to decide whether to remain at his post or to join his sweetheart, making him, for the moment, more than just a name, rank, and serial number, but a vital part of the war effort. Freud describes a similar dream of prolonged loneliness and intense longing for human contact that he collected from a patient:

> A young woman had been cut off from society for weeks on end while she nursed her child through an infectious illness. After the child's recovery, she had a dream of being at a party at which, among others, she met Alphonse Daudet, Paul Bourget, and Marcel Prévost; they were all most affable to her and highly amusing. All of the authors resembled their portraits, except Marcel Prévost, of whom she had never seen a picture; and he looked like… the disinfection officer who had fumigated the sick-room the day before and who had been her first visitor for so long. Thus it seems possible to give a complete translation of the dream: "It's about time for something more amusing than this perpetual sick-nursing."[62]

One can clearly picture the young mother, passing the fretful hours while her sick child sleeps by reading one French novel after another, simply to take her mind off of her worries. She longs for the company of others and witty conversation, but for the time being, she must settle for living vicariously through her books. That the author Prévost in her dream should bear the face of the first person she had seen in so long speaks to the depth of her feelings of isolation, much like the sentry in Mahler's ballad. Both figures dream of what they long for the most. We learn from this story the importance of human companionship.

Freud's 1905 work, *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* traces the psychic mechanism behind jokes and their role in human relationships. Mahler referred to many of his *Wunderhorn* lieder as *Humoresken*, drawing his concept of

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[62] Freud, *Interpretation*, 126.

humor from the writings of Jean Paul, as one that contrasts with a "tragic…

intensification of emotions" through irony, whimsy, and drollery.[63] We find Mahler

taking this concept even further in his setting of "Starke Einbildungskraft," which

features a text built upon a pun.

Among Mahler's first *Wunderhorn* settings, "Starke Einbildungskraft" tells the

story of a young woman seeking a proposal from her sweetheart. She asks him, "You

said that you would take me as soon as summer came. Summer is here, but you have

not yet taken me. Take me! Won't you take me?" The young man responds, "Why

should I take you when I already have you? When I think of you it seems that I have

had you the whole time."[64] The humor of the situation stems from the use of the verb

nehmen, meaning to take. Just as in English, the verb can mean to take in marriage, as

used by the young woman, or to take to bed, as used by the young man.[65] Freud refers

to this type of pun as a joke of multiple use or the same word carrying double

meaning, better known as the *double entendre*. Of this joke technique he writes:

> Now there are very many examples of this kind of double meaning, and
> in them all the effect of the joke particularly depends on the sexual sense. For
> this group we may reserve the designation *double entendre*. If we compare this
> *double entendre* with other examples of double meaning, we're struck by a
> difference which is not entirely unimportant for technique. [If] the one sense of
> the word was just as accessible to our understanding as the other; it would really
> be difficult for us to tell whether the sexual or the non-sexual meaning of the

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[63] Jean Paul Richter, "Course VII. On Humorous Poetry," in *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School of Aesthetics*, trans. Margaret R. Hale (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 88.

[64] "Hast gesagt, du willst mich nehmen, So bald der Sommer kommt! Der Sommer ist gekommen, Du hast mich nicht genommen. Geh' nehm' mich! Gelt, ja du nimmst mich noch?" "Wie soll ich dich denn nehmen, Dieweil ich doch schon hab'? Und wenn ich halt an dich gedenk' So mein' ich alle weile: Ich wär' schon bei dir!"

[65] My thanks to German scholars Shelley Hay and Jennifer Bienert for their insight regarding the usage associated with the verb "nehmen."

word was the more current and familiar.[66]

Freud spends a great deal of energy attempting to determine the exact nature of the joke and our response to it. In the end, he finds:

> Pleasure in the joke seemed to come from savings in expenditure on inhibition, comic pleasure from savings in the imagining of ideas (when charged with energy), and humorous pleasure from savings in expenditure of feeling. In all three methods of operation in our psychical apparatus, the pleasure comes from a saving; all three concur in representing methods for regaining from the activity of the psyche a pleasure which in fact was lost only with the development of that activity.[67]

Simply put, the clever juxtaposition of similar ideas used in novel ways creates humor. We find amusement in the young man's adoption of the word *nehmen* and his quick ability to transform its meaning into something completely different from that intended by the girl. The insistent repetition of the word also adds to the humor of the situation. The maiden uses various forms of the verb no less than four times in her six lines of text. The recurrence of the word allows her question to dissolve into begging and pleading. The young man uses the verb *nehmen* only once, but in his hands, it has instantly become something very different. This shift in meaning forms the essence of the joke. If the young man were to reply to his sweetheart's requests for a marriage proposal by saying, for example, "We have slept together so often, I do not feel it is in my interest to marry you," he would have said essentially the same thing, but the cleverness of his message would have been lost. His quick-witted reply would have turned nasty and hurtful, and the song would lose its ability to gently serve as a lesson

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[66] Sigmund Freud, *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious*, Joyce Crick, trans. (New York: Penguin Books 2002), 30.

[67] Ibid., 226.

to young women who would engage in pre-marital relations first and worry about their reputations later.

Freud refers to these kinds of jokes that use sex as a subject of humor as "bawdry," which he describes as "deliberately emphasizing sexual facts and relations by talking about them."[68] The purpose of this type of joke is seduction: to show the joker's state of arousal and inspire a similar feeling in the audience. This, however, can be perceived far more aggressively, as Freud writes:

> Bawdry is like an act of unclothing the person of different sex at whom
> it is directed. By voicing the obscene words it forces the person
> attacked to imagine the particular part of the body or the act involved
> and shows them that the aggressor himself is imagining it. There is
> no doubt that the pleasure in gazing on what is sexual revealed in its
> nakedness is the original motive of bawdy talk.[69]

So we find that in using humor to diffuse the maiden's pressings for marriage, the young man is simply saying that sex is all he wants from her, and all he will give to her. We often use jokes as a way to avoid uncomfortable conversation, but in this case, the young man has told us everything we need to know.

A similar set of circumstances confronts the couple in "Verlor'ne Müh'!" in this case, the young woman does not seek a husband, but rather, a sexual partner. She uses a string of lightly veiled euphemisms in her attempts to seduce her uninterested target, "Should we go look at our lambs?" "Would you like a little snack from my pocket?" "Shall I give you my heart?"[70] But, to no avail, the young man does not accept her offers. This ballad neatly reverses to gender roles found in "Starke Einbildungskraft,"

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[68] Freud, *The Joke*, 92.

[69] Ibid., 93.

[70] "Wollen wir unsere Lämmer besehe?" "Willst vielleicht ä bissel nasche? Hol' dir was aus meiner Tasch'!" "Gelt, ich soll mein Herz dir schenke?"

in that the female is now essentially the one using disguised speech to engage in seduction. This is unusual, as Freud notes, equating bawdy speech with exhibitionism:

> The libido for looking and touching is of two kinds in everyone, active and passive, masculine and feminine, and develops in the one or the other direction according to which sexual character is predominant. In women, the passive inclination to exhibitionism is most invariably eclipsed by the magnificent reactive feat of sexual modesty.[71]

So while the maidens in "Starke Einbildungskraft" and "Verlor'ne Müh'!" both appear to be chasing after men who do not want them, their approaches and the responses they receive make their circumstances completely opposite.

One might wonder why Mahler would write a song with such a specific message for young women. The answer to that may lie in his family. Mahler's parents died in 1889, leaving the composer, as the oldest surviving son, in charge of the upbringing of his younger brothers and sisters. This duty can be traced in Mahler's letters home to his sisters Justine and Emma and his brothers Otto and Alois. From the start, Mahler assumes control over his family, particularly his oldest sister, Justine. His letters to her are filled with mandates regarding who they may visit and how they should conduct themselves: "I would like you to limit your dealings with other Iglauers, to the bare essentials – In any case, I absolutely forbid Emma to come into the slightest contact with absolutely anyone from there."[72] During the *Wunderhorn* years, Mahler served as the primary guardian for Justine and Emma, just as his own conducting career required increasing dedication. Songs such as "Starke Einbildungskraft" and "Verlor'ne Müh'!" allowed Mahler to simultaneously work on

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[71] Freud, *The Joke*, 93.

[72] McClatchie, *Family Letters*, 73.

his composition while also providing lessons for his young sisters regarding their behavior in society.

Mahler's use of these songs to pass on lessons to his siblings presents nothing new. Folk tales and fairy stories have long remained part of their respective cultures because of the lessons they convey to their audience. Bruno Bettelheim writes of "Sleeping Beauty" as an admonishment against a rush toward sexual maturity, "The parents' long wait for a child which finally arrives conveys that there us no need to hurry toward sex; it loses none of its reward if one has to wait a long time for it."[73] Mahler's choice of poems telling stories of girls who throw themselves at men (regardless of their motives or results) serves the same purpose: to encourage proper behavior from his sisters.

Countless studies have examined the culture of Vienna at the *fin-de-siècle*.[74] That particular time and place holds a special fascination for scholars due to the proximity of figures in music, art, literature, architecture, and science who all contributed to the creation of modernist aesthetics. While no amount of scholarly research will allow us to fully experience life as it was in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century, we can examine cultural artifacts as small windows into another time and place. Mahler's songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* tell us a great deal about the culture that they helped to comprise because they comment on that very culture, as Adorno put it,

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[73] Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 231.

[74] Examples include: Nicholas Cook, *The Schenker Project: Culture Race and Music Theory in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Christian Brandstätter, ed., *Vienna 1900: Art, Life, and Culture* (New York: Vendrome Press, 2006); Steven Bellar, ed., *Rethinking Vienna 1900* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001); Jacques le Rider, *Modernity and the Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York: Continuum Books, 1993); and Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).

"They recite themselves," reflecting on an environment in which they take part.[75] The ballads lay open the relationship between composer and critic and can be interpreted using the pervading psychological theories, which in turn helped to make up the *Zeitgeist* of the day, all while using poetry that had been part of the German folk tradition for centuries.

Mahler's Social Criticism: Commentary on Poverty

Mahler held explicit views regarding poverty and class relations. Great contradiction lies within these views, however. During his years at the university he became very interested in issues of social equality, and he reportedly often reached out to help the poor, as we see in this instance, discussed by La Grange:

> One Sunday morning (Feb. 1896), the day before the concert, he went on a solitary walk in the direction of Schöneberg. As he was passing under the railway bridge that crossed the river, he saw an old man with an emaciated face stagger under a heavy burden and lean against a wall. The man was talking to himself and Mahler thought he was drunk, until he heard him murmur "God help me!" and noticed he was about to faint from exhaustion. Mahler approached, lifted the burden, and helped the old man, who explained his troubles. He had been ill in the hospital for several months and had just been discharged as cured. No longer in possession of a livelihood or shelter, he was searching for some simple work that would enable him to keep alive. Deeply moved by the sad story, so much in variance with the lively, happy atmosphere of the Sunday morning, Mahler gave the old man all the money he had with him, returned to the hotel, and cried like a child while relating the story to Natalie.[76]

However, he also often expressed negative opinions about the very people he strove to assist; commenting on a well-known anecdote known as "Der Müller von Sans

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[75] Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 76.

[76] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 354.

Souci" about Frederick the Great, whose summer retreats were disrupted by the sound

of a nearby windmill , Mahler told Bauer-Lechner:

> It's all well and good that the peasant's rights are protected in spite of the
> King, but there's another side to the story. Let the miller and his mill be
> protected on their own ground – if only the millwheels didn't clatter so,
> thereby overstepping their boundaries most shamelessly and creating
> immeasurable havoc in the territory of someone else's mind.[77]

This insensitive rant actually stems more from Mahler's intolerance of noise than a

lack of patience with the peasant class, but we can nonetheless see how callous

Mahler could be toward those who were forced to work for a living. His views toward

the poor also appeared in a letter Mahler wrote to his sister Justine in order to reassure

her that he would not become ill during the 1892 cholera epidemic in Hamburg. He

wrote:

> Don't forget that the epidemic strikes mainly that portion of the populace
> that *does not have the intelligence and the means to protect themselves
> from it*. Whoever lives healthily and openly, keeps on a strict diet, and has
> enough money to enjoy only the best and the purest has nothing to fear. The
> inhabitants of the stinking "old city," full of narrow streets and bad sewers,
> near the harbor are affected by the cholera, thus, about half an hour away
> from my house, which lies on the healthiest part of town.[78]

Mahler's implication that the poor are unintelligent and unhealthy, as contrasted to

those with "enough money to enjoy only the best and purest" indicates quite clearly

that perhaps his views on poverty are not as idealistic and straightforward as they

might seem.

Mahler grew up in a strictly petite bourgeois home. His father made and sold

liquor and ran a small pub and inn in Iglau.[79] While not particularly wealthy, the

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[77] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 36–7.

[78] McClatchie, *Family Letters*, 183. Emphasis mine.

family was not impoverished either. Fellow Moravian Jew Stephan Zweig discussed

the views toward financial success in families like Mahler's:

> It is generally accepted that getting rich is the only and typical goal of
> the Jew. Nothing could be further from the truth. Riches are to him
> merely a steppingstone, a means to the true end, and in so sense the
> real goal. The real determination of the Jew is to rise to a higher
> cultural plane in the intellectual world. This elevation of the intellectual
> to the highest rank is common to all classes; the poorest beggar who
> drags his pack through wind and rain will try to single out at least one
> son to study, no matter how great a sacrifice, and it is counted a title of
> honor for the entire family to have someone in their midst, a professor,
> a scientist or a musician, who plays a role in the intellectual world, as if
> through his achievements he ennobled them all.[80]

This attitude explains precisely what inspired Mahler's parents to send their oldest

surviving son to Vienna to study at the conservatory at the age of fifteen. While

studying at the conservatory, Mahler had to petition for decreased tuition during his

second and third year and had to supplement the funds sent by his parents by teaching

piano lessons.[81] So throughout his life he maintained a keen awareness of his

financial situation and those of his family, particularly that of his sister Justine, to

whom he frequently wrote about the family's finances, for example in April, 1892

(after his parents had died and he assumed control of the household):

> Just tell yourself cheerfully what's what, and consider how one can manage
> with what one has, how to establish a limit – or more precisely stay within
> the limits of one's circumstances – without gnawing hunger pangs, or
> becoming mindless for lack of spiritual utterances, or without declining
> into the brutal bourgeoisie by oppressing all the serving and working classes.[82]

While Mahler's financial status placed him firmly within the realms of the

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[79] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 10-11.

[80] Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday: An Autobiography* (New York: Viking Press, 1943), 11.

[81] Herta Blaukopf, "The Young Mahler, 1875-1880: Essay in Situational Analysis After Karl R. Popper," in *Mahler Studies*, Stephen Hefling, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.

[82] McClatchie, *Family Letters,* 164.

bourgeoisie, he rebelled against that with which they were associated: social climbing, rudeness, and a lack of sophistication. Mahler clearly viewed himself as a man of higher sensibility.

Pre-dating Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* by eight years, "Das irdische Leben" tells the story of a child who starves to death while waiting for her mother to finish baking bread. Mahler describes to Natalie Bauer-Lechner his attraction to this poem, originally entitled "Verspätung":

> The text only suggests the deeper meaning, the treasure that must be searched for. Thus, I picture as a symbol of human life the child's cry for bread and the mother's attempt to console [her] with promises. I named the song "Das irdische Leben" for precisely that reason. What I wished to express is that the necessities for one's physical and spiritual growth are long delayed, and finally come too late, as they do for the dead child.[83]

Mahler tells us through this description that life denies us all, not merely of bread and the other necessities of physical life, but of the nutrients needed for metaphysical growth and development. Destiny insists that we "only wait, only wait, my dear child" (as the mother tells the child in the song) to achieve our own spiritual potential.[84] Given this interpretation, we all can relate to the dying child.

Of course, on the surface, this song simply appears as a commentary on the struggles of the poor and the tragedy allowed to occur by our own blindness toward their suffering. In this light, we can see ourselves in the mother, constantly pushing the begging child away (as she repeatedly cries, "Mother, I'm hungry! Give me bread or I will die!"),[85] so task oriented that we fail to notice that we are killing the very

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[83] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 32.

[84] "Warte nur, warte nur, mein liebes Kind."

[85] Mutter, ach Mutter, es hungert mich! Gib mir Brot, sonst sterbe ich!"

thing we struggle to help.

Both interpretations of the story told by "Das irdische Leben" hold valuable lessons for society. That Mahler viewed the poem as a platform for discussing metaphysical growth rather than financial poverty throws a tantalizing curveball toward the stereotype of the financially obsessed Jew, dismissed previously by Stephan Zweig.

Mahler's Social Criticism: Commentary on Romantic Fidelity

We can ascertain Mahler's views on romance and romantic fidelity by reading the letters he wrote to the women with whom he was romantically involved, most specifically Anna von Mildenburg and his wife Alma.[86] The desperate tone and intense emotion that the composer poured into his words paint the picture of a man who takes romantic fidelity quite seriously. Not surprisingly, two of his *Wunderhorn* ballads deal with that very subject, but in both cases, that layer of meaning lies below the surface.

While the exact chronology of the earliest of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs is unclear, evidence presented by La Grange and Mitchell supports that Mahler began to compose them shortly after encountering the anthology in the home of Captain Karl von Weber and his family in Leipzig in 1887.[87] Mahler made acquaintance with the family when they asked him to complete the orchestration of sketches of the opera

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[86] Gustav Mahler, *"Mein lieber Trotzkopf, meine süße Mohn blume:" Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, Franz Willnauer, ed. (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 2006); Gustav Mahler, *Letters to His Wife*; Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, Donald Mitchell, ed., Basil Creighton, trans. (London: J. Murray, 1973).

[87] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 171; Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: Wunderhorn Years* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 117–19.

Die drei Pintos left incomplete by the Captain's grandfather, Carl Maria von Weber.

Over the course of several months, Mahler worked diligently on the sketches in

between rehearsals and performances at the Neues Stadttheater, and spent a great deal

of time in the home of the Webers. "Um schlimme Kinder" is among several songs

that Mahler wrote for the Weber's three children, but a closer look at the song reveals

a great deal more.

"Um schlimme Kinder" tells a simple story: a rider approaches a castle and

speaks to the woman of the house, who states that her husband is away and that her

children and housekeeper are busy elsewhere. The rider asks if the children are well

behaved, and she replies that they are "very naughty children. They do not listen to

their mother."[88] The rider replies, "Then I will ride home. I have nothing to give such

children."[89] On the surface, "Um schlimme Kinder" appears to be a song that

admonishes children to behave properly toward their parents, which makes sense,

given for whom they were composed; however, Mahler cleverly disguised a secret

meaning within the text. Scattered throughout the poem Mahler inserted an

onomatopoetic cuckoo call. Musically, this reinforces the folk-like and child-friendly

veneer of the song, but it also carries a private message. During the time Mahler spent

with the Weber family, he engaged in a romantic affair with Frau Weber. English

composer Ethel Smyth describes the romance:

> In spite of his ugliness he had demoniacal charm. [Mahler], a tyrannical
> lover, never hesitated to compromise his mistress. Things were getting
> critical, when one day, traveling to Dresden in the company of strangers,
> [Capt.] Weber suddenly burst out laughing, drew a revolver and began
> taking William Tell-like shots at the headrests between the seats. He was

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[88] "Sehr böse Kind! Sie folgen Mutter nicht geschwind."

[89] "So reit' ich Heim, Dergleichen Kinder brauch' ich kein'!"

overpowered, the train brought to a standstill, they took him to the police station raving mad – thence to an asylum. Always considered rather queer in the Army, the Mahler business had broken his brain. I afterwards heard that his wife in an agony of remorse refused to see her lover again.[90]

La Grange assures us that Smyth's account is somewhat exaggerated and that Capt. Weber did not live out his days in an asylum, in fact, he was among those who recommended Mahler to conduct his First Symphony at the Gewandhaus concerts a few months after the incident on the train. In any event, we learn that a liaison did in fact take place between Mahler and his patron's wife and that the composer did not do a particularly good job of keeping it a secret.

What does this have to do with a children's song? It comes back to the cuckoo call that Mahler added to the text. In German medieval literature, the cuckoo was a common symbol of female infidelity, as described in a dictionary of literary symbols, "It also seemed symbolic of adultery, especially by a married woman who deceives her husband. The word 'cuckold' comes from cuckoo and refers only to the husband."[91] Mahler would have known about this motif from his studies of medieval literature while at the University of Vienna.[92] Mahler described animal sounds as "pregnant with meaning" to Natalie Bauer-Lechner.[93] Whether Frau Weber or her husband recognized the significance of the cuckoo is unclear, but the symbolism certainly explains the presence of its distinctive call, which when taken out of this context strikes the listener as contrived and unnecessary.

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[90] La Grange, *Mahler*, 1: 172.

[91] Michael Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 48.

[92] Herta Blaukopf, "The Young Mahler," 17–19.

[93] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 81.

So, for whom was the moral message of "Um schlimme Kinder" intended: the Weber children or their mother? I would argue both. This song, like many of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* settings, offers multiple layers of meaning. The listener is free to understand these songs in whatever ways make the most sense to them. This almost post-modern approach to composition comes across as quite startling coming from a composer active at the earliest stages of the modernist period.

In "Ich ging mit Lust," a young man spends the day walking merrily through the woods while his lover waits for him at home. When he finally arrives, the maiden begins to wonder where he has been for all that time. In the final line of the song the narrator poses the question, "Where is *your* beloved staying?"[94] In the original poem it is revealed that the maiden's suspicion is not without just cause, as the lad tells his love, "With beer, wine, and a dark-haired maiden, I was quickly forgetting you."[95] Mahler, however, omits this line, leaving the only definitive thoughts of disloyalty in the minds of the maiden and the narrator.

Mahler's changes to the poetry impact the meaning in this song a great deal. In the stanzas Mahler chose to omit, the maiden has the opportunity to confront her lover with her knowledge that he is lying about his whereabouts while he was away, to which he responds by confessing to his dalliance. As a result, the conclusions of the Arnim and Brentano poem and Mahler's lyric are quite different. While both texts imply that the maiden's lover misbehaves when he strays from her side, Mahler's revisions serve more as a warning to any young girl than as a blatant admission of

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[94] "Wo ist dein Herzliebster geblieben?"

[95] Beim Bier und auch beim roten Wein, Bei einem schwarzbraunem Mädelein, Hätt deiner bald vergessen."

guilt from a particular young man.

Musically, the opening two verses reveal Mahler's views on the matter of the young man's fidelity. While the words speak of a cheerful walk through the forest with birds happily singing, the music progresses not at a walking speed, but at a slow, measured tempo, such as one might hear in the recitation of a well-rehearsed lie. The young man also hints at his dishonesty through his over-exaggeration of the details. The first stanza lyrically recalls his environment and his enjoyment of the idyllic forest scene, then the second stanza suddenly shifts from past tense to present, as the young man melodramatically summons the birds to sing for his fair maiden (while the music remains the same, indicating that the man's intentions have not changed). The gesture smacks of a diversion tactic undertaken by the young man in order to draw the maiden's attention from his previous whereabouts and activities and focus her on the present moment. And it would seem to have worked, it not for the narrator's final question, "Where is your lover staying?" designed to re-instill the seeds of doubt among the two lovers.

"Um schlimme Kinder" and "Ich ging mit Lust" approach the subject of romantic infidelity from opposing sides: in the first example we hear the story of the unfaithful act itself, and in the second we hear the aftermath. That both of these songs approach the topic in such a lively, almost comical way can only be due to Mahler's youthful brashness. Roughly twenty years after the composition of these songs, Mahler found himself playing the role of the cuckold, and his response to his wife's adultery was anything but lively and cheerful. It appears that Mahler himself missed the lesson of these songs: that faith in a lover is important, but, when given too much leeway, that

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faith can easily be abused.

Mahler's Political Commentary: Anti-Militarist Sentiment

The soldiers depicted in Mahler's ballads "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" and

"Revelge" reflect very different wartime experiences; however, both stories certainly

point to the tragedy and futility of war. During his engagement with the poetry of *Des*

Knaben Wunderhorn, roughly half of the ballads that Mahler chose to set deal with

miltaristic themes. By comparison, only about 10% of the poems found in Arnim and

Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* present wartime scenarios. Given this

incongruity, we can see that some intangible quality must have attracted Mahler to

these stories. Scholars such as Donald Mitchell, Elizabeth Schmierer, Peter Franklin,

Stefan Hanheide, and Albrecht von Massow have devoted a great deal of study to

Mahler's militaristic music, particularly that associated with the *Wunderhorn*.[96] Many

of these works deal with issues of representation of soldiers and the sweethearts they

leave behind, depictions of army life, or the relationship that these songs have with

Mahler's *Wunderhorn* symphonies, but beyond some brief speculation, the question

of what attracted Mahler to these texts has remained.

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[96] Alberto Rizzuti, *Sognatori, utopisti e diertori nei Lieder 'militari' di Gustav Mahler* (Torino: Passigli Editori, 1990); Stefan Hanheide, "Das Schicksal des Soldaten in Gustav Mahlers Liedern nach *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*", *Osnabrücker Jahrbuch Frieden und Wissenschaft* 1 (1994): 105–18; Donald Mitchell, "The Last Two 'Wunderhorn' Songs: 'Revelge' and 'Der Tamboursg'sell,'" *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 232–35; Peter Franklin, "A Soldier's Sweetheart's Mother's Tale? Mahler's Gendered Musical Discourse," in *Mahler and His World*, ed. Karen Painter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 111–25; Isabelle Werck, "Images de l'Armée et de la Guerre dans la Musique de Gustav Mahler," *Revue Musicale de Suisse Romande* 56 (2003): 32-40; Kordula Kraus, "Der Soldat und das Mädchen: Zu ihrer Darstellung in Gustav Mahlers *Wunderhorn*-Liedern," *Musica Austriaca* 23 (2004): 81-97; Albrecht von Massow, "Romantik als Gesellschaftkritik: Mahlers Soldatenlieder," in *Von Volkston und Romantik: Des Knaben Wunderhorn in der Musik*, ed. Antje Tumat and Internationalen Musikfestival Heidelberger Frühling (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008), 141–56.

We may also find a paradox in the composer's partiality for these texts because, contrary to the pleasant memories Mahler associated with military music (He reportedly told Natalie Bauer-Lechner of the music he heard at the barracks near his childhood home in Iglau[97] that "Even as a boy, I was thrilled by it!"),[98] he did not choose one poem that paints the military life in a positive light. This is striking given that roughly half of the military poems found in the poetic anthology explore the positive aspects of military service, such as camaraderie among soldiers and the sense of fighting for a divine purpose.[99] Many of Mahler's military songs explore the pains of separation that occur when a young man is called off to war, as heard in "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," and others deal more explicitly with the horrors that await the men on the battlefield. We find this latter type of story in "Revelge." What, then, altered Mahler's youthful perception of the military as something "thrilling" to something painful and horrific? We must answer this question before we can examine two specific examples that show how Mahler expressed anti-militaristic attitudes. Part of the answer to this question lies in Mahler's political engagement as a young man at the University of Vienna.

A lack of documentary evidence regarding Mahler's political activities as a young man have made piecing together a conclusive chain of events and consequences difficult. We do, however, know where Mahler was during most of his university career and with whom he was associating. Weaving together Mahler's

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[97] Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Early Years* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 1. The military barracks in Iglau also claim another significant figure for music historians in that Karl van Beethoven, nephew of the great composer was stationed there in the late 1820s.

[98] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 46.

[99] Stefan Hanheide, "Das Schicksal des Soldaten," 109.

history with those of his activist friends from the time has allowed scholars to
extrapolate a picture of Mahler's engagement with anti-militarism, socialist politics,
and pan-Germanism during the late 1870s and early 1880s. The ideals that Mahler
developed during these early years would continue to impact his choice of
Wunderhorn poetry and his techniques for setting those poems to music over the next
twenty years.

At the age of eighteen, while studying at both the Vienna Conservatory and the
University of Vienna, Mahler became involved with a group of politically minded
students known as the Pernerstorfer Circle.[100] The rosters of the Circle boasted future
politicians such as Engelbert Pernerstorfer, Victor Adler, and Heinrich Friedjung and
aestheticians such as Richard von Kralik, Siegfried Lipiner, and Mahler's colleague at
the conservatory, Hugo Wolf. William J. McGrath provides a small glimpse of some
of the group's activity:

> An obscure Austrian historian has recorded in his memoirs a description
> of what must have been one of the most remarkable scenes in the cultural
> life of nineteenth-century Vienna. He recalled a student political meeting in
> which Victor Adler and Heinrich Friedjung joined other young politicians in
> singing *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* while Gustav Mahler assisted
> with a passionate piano accompaniment to the tune of *O du Deutschland, ich
> muss marschieren.*[101]

Active within the administration of larger, more visible activist student groups, such
as the Leseverein der deutschen Studenten Wiens, the Circle believed that a
governmental system based on the values of social equality, pan-Germanism, and

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[100] William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Vienna* (New Haven, CT: Yale
University Press, 1974). McGrath traces the entire history of the Pernerstorfer Circle and its
subsequent political and philosophical movements.

[101] William J. McGrath, "Student Radicalism in Vienna," *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (1967):
183. Quoted from Richard von Kralik, "Geschichte und Gestalten – Victor Adler und Pernerstorfer,"
Collected Papers, Vienna State Library, Ms. I. N. 106.071, f. 2.

populist leadership that engaged political passions would best serve the Austrian people. Circle member Max Gruber described his frustration with the existing Empire:

> Inflamed…national feeling, [a] glowing hatred of the Habsburg-Lothringens overflowed into me, hatred of this dynasty which was Germany's misfortune, hatred of their state which had to be shattered if the nation were to be united…Torn loose from everything existing around me, separated from my beloved father in all these things, robbed of any support, I stood on a surface which shook volcanically. With a passionate longing for order and law I was confronted only by the chaos of a world of presumptions and realities collapsing into ruins, ordained for destruction.[102]

One might easily dismiss this extreme sentiment as youthful rebellion and adolescent anger had the Circle not produced figures such as the founder of Austria's Social Democrat party, Victor Adler and others who continued to promote the causes of the Circle throughout their careers.

Student groups such as the Pernerstorfer Circle and the Leseverein constantly had to contend with the rule at the University of Vienna requiring that all university organizations be nonpolitical.[103] This rule put the very *raison d'être* of these groups at odds with the institutions that supported them and would contribute to future conflicts with university administration and governmental interference. Mahler began his association with the Pernerstorfer Circle in 1878, shortly before the government dissolved the Leseverein, which still counted many members of the Circle among its members.[104] The government's declaration, calling the Leseverein "a danger to the state" only served to fan the flames of student activism in Vienna, but several key

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[102] McGrath, *Dionysian Art*, 20. Quoted from Max Gruber, "Kleine Mitteilungen," *Münchener medizinische Wochenschrift* 70 (Aug. 3, 1923): 1038.

[103] McGrath, *Dionysian Art*, 34.

[104] Ibid., 82.

members of the Circle, many of whom had reached the end of their student careers,

left behind political agitation and turned their interest to their various professional

arenas and their center of activities to the coffeehouse. Mahler, however, remained

intermittently enrolled at the University of Vienna studying history, philosophy,

literature, and art, with seemingly no particular practical course of study in mind.[105]

His continued, if sporadic contact with the university allowed him to observe first

hand the creation and dissolution of several other student political organizations,

lending in part to his general ambivalence toward government, which would remain

with him throughout his life.

In 1880, Mahler returned to Vienna after a brief hiatus from his university studies

and again took up his acquaintance with the Pernerstorfer Circle, who at this time had

begun to split into two distinct groups. William McGrath discusses the perspectives

of each:

> The aesthetes – Kralik, Lipiner, and Mahler – attempted to use the artistic symbol
> as a vehicle for attaining a metaphysical community of will transcending ordinary
> reality, while the activists – Pernerstorfer, Friedjung, and Adler – employed
> artistic symbolism to activate mass feeling and bring into being a community of
> will in the real world of politics.[106]

The more politically active members eventually began to focus the ideals of the pan-

Germanist agenda into one of extreme cultural nativism. These members tended to be

the Catholics among the Pernerstorfer Circle who viewed religion rather than

language and culture as a marker of racial identity and as such "Germanism." An

honorary member of this sect was Karl Lueger, who went on to form the anti-Semitic

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[105] Herta Blaukopf, "The Young Mahler," 18–9.

[106] McGrath, *Dionysian Art*, 246.

Christian Democratic Party in Vienna. The party used the Catholic Viennese population's fear of economic disaster (which had lingered since the Bank Crisis of 1873 and the Panic of 1893) and stereotypes of the greedy, conniving Jew as bait with which to lure voters using anti-Semitic rhetoric. The ideals of the Circle promoting equality and acceptance gradually became poisoned by bigotry and hatred.[107] The remaining (and predominantly Jewish) members of the Circle primarily sought refuge in the aesthetic and philosophical values of the group and lived according to the values outlined the readings of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Wagner (including vegetarianism, which Mahler followed ardently until his departure form the Circle in 1883). These figures viewed language and common cultural history as markers of German identity and worked toward a nationalist state united by the common culture as personified by the *Volk*. This group, moreover, held to the principles of socialism: solidarity with the working man, providing economic assistance to those in need, and a greater sense of equality among members of the community.

In 1883, Mahler officially resigned his membership with the Pernerstorfer Circle and abandoned his outward pan-Germanist activism. His interest in philosophy remained, and his attraction to the poems of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, which were themselves collected in the spirit of an earlier rash of pan-Germanist sentiment, demonstrates Mahler's continued loyalty to the ideal, if not its practical application.[108] But regardless of Mahler's brief brush with political engagement, the questions pertaining to his views on militarism, as seen through his choices of *Wunderhorn* poetry, remain to be fully answered. Given the connections already

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[107] Allen Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1973), 50.

[108] Finson, "The Reception of *Wunderhorn* Lieder," 101.

illustrated between Mahler's political involvement and the philosophical writings of

Wagner, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer (in order of importance to Mahler's

philosophy), it seems likely that any writings from these figures that contain anti-

militarist rhetoric would hold some answers.

Wagner's views on war had a tendency to change over time depending on his

current circumstances and political alliances. He recorded an early instance of anti-

militaristic sentiment in his autobiography. Discussing his circumstances when the

1848 Revolutions broke out in Dresden, he wrote:

> During my hasty return to Friedrichstadt I recognized that this portion of the
> town had been almost entirely cut off from the inner city by the occupation of the
> Prussian troops; I saw in my mind's eye our own suburb occupied, and the
> consequences of a state of military siege in their most repulsive light. …While
> the larks were soaring to dizzy heights above my head, and singing in the furrows
> of the fields, the light and heavy artillery did not cease to thunder down the
> streets of Dresden. The noise of this shooting, which had continued
> uninterruptedly for several days, had hammered itself so indelibly upon my
> nerves, that it continued to re-echo for a long time in my brain.[109]

Some years later, in 1873 he wrote an essay entitled "On State and Religion" in

response to inquiries from his patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria, about his views on

violence and militarism in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War (which his hatred

of the French had led him to initially support with great fervor). He wrote the

following:

> This fact that one's own quiet can be ensured by nothing but violence and
> injustice to the world without, must naturally make one's quiet seem always
> problematic in itself: thereby leaving a door forever open to violence and'
> injustice within one's own State too. The measures and acts which show us
> violently disposed towards the outer world, can never stay without a violent
> reaction on ourselves. When modern state and political optimists speak of a state
> of International Law, in which the [European] States stand nowadays toward one
> another, one need only point to the necessity of maintaining and constantly

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[109] Richard Wagner, *My Life*, Andrew Gray, trans., (Middlesex: Echo Library, 1992), 327.

increasing our enormous standing armies, to convince them, on the contrary, of the actual lawlessness of that state. Since it does not occur to me to attempt to show how matters could be otherwise, I merely record the fact that we are living in a perpetual state of war, with intervals of armistice, and that the inner condition of the State itself is not so utterly unlike this state of things as to pass muster for its diametric opposite.

In this essay Wagner opposes war and militaristic pursuits; rather than bringing peace, violence only begets more violence. History has somewhat skewed our understanding of Wagner. Modern interpretations of his writings must take into consideration their association with German militarism that took place long after the writer's death. When considering how Mahler would have viewed the writings of Wagner, we can surmise that the younger composer would have been drawn to the writings that expressed values that resonated with his own youthful idealism.

Friedrich Nietzsche's views on militarism also have suffered from misinterpretation due to their association with Hitler and Nazism during the twentieth century. Nietzsche's assertions that mankind is predestined to be violent, power-seeking creatures can easily be interpreted as condoning warfare; however, his later admonition that man strive to become the *Übermensch* (superman) gives mere humans the ability to develop beyond our violent tendencies.[110] As Nietzsche gradually developed his theory over the course of many works, we see a relatively consistent perspective with concerns of war and violence. In his first major work, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), he wrote:

> If we imagine that the whole incalculable sum of energy used up for this world tendency had been used not in the service of knowledge but practical, i.e. egoistic aims of individuals and peoples, then we realize that in that case universal wars of annihilation and continual migrations of people would probably have

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[110] Walter A. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 307.

weakened the instinctive lust for life to such an extent that suicide would have become a general custom and individuals might have experienced the final remnant of a sense of duty.[111]

Six years later, in his book *Human, All Too Human*, the philosopher quipped, "Against war it may be said that it makes the victor stupid and the vanquished revengeful."[112] And finally, in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), Nietzsche wrote, "How poisonous, how crafty, how bad, does every long war make one!"[113]

The third writer who ranked highly among the aesthetes of the Pernerstorfer Circle and may have had an influence on Mahler's anti-militaristic thinking was Arthur Schopenhauer. On several occasions in his final work, *Parerga and Paralipomena: Counsels and Maxims*, the philosopher turns to the subject of war and violence:

> All princes were no doubt in fact originally victorious commanders, and for a long time ruled as such. Having acquired standing armies, they regarded the people as a means of feeding themselves and their soldiers, that is to say as a herd which one looks after so that it may provide wool, milk, and meat. This is based on the fact that, by nature and from the first, it is not justice which rules on earth but force.

Later, "History shows us the life of nations and finds nothing to narrate but wars and tumults; the peaceful years appear only as occasional brief pauses and interludes." And, finally, "Are not almost all wars expeditions of plunder?"[114]

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[111] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writing of Nietzsche*, Walter A. Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 96.

[112] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, R.J. Hollingdale, trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 163.

[113] Nietzsche, *Basic Writings*, 26.

[114] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena: Counsels and Maxims*, E.F. Payne trans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 248, 292, 455.

While we know little about Mahler's specific activities during this time with regards to politics, the writings to which he was introduced during his involvement with the Pernerstorfer Circle do express anti-militaristic sentiment. Because Mahler had not experienced first-hand any military violence and held positive memories of the soldiers he knew from the barracks in Iglau as a child, his engagement with the new philosophical ideals that he encountered as a student Vienna provide a logical explanation for the negative perspective of militarism that we see in the *Wunderhorn* ballads, even as he maintained a fascination with military subject matter.

Rather than expressing his anti-militaristic views through wordy philosophical rhetoric discussing the evils of war, Mahler chose to paint more descriptive images by focusing in on specific instances, in this case, folk stories, that vividly illustrated his more general ideas. The soldiers depicted in Mahler's "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" and "Revelge" share many obvious traits: their stories occur in the midst of wartime, they both have left sweethearts behind, and those sweethearts are at the core of their motives for the stories that unfold. Both men also occupy a psychological and metaphorical space in which events unfold that lie beyond reality: whether it is the night watchman's dreams showing his beloved who has come to see him, or the soldiers who continue to communicate, rise, march, and even fight long after death has taken them. What differentiates these two men is their response to their environments.

The guard depicted in "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" finds himself slowly losing his faith in the cause that has brought him to war in the first place. From the start, we see that the sentry does not view his position in a positive light, judging by his

opening statement, "I can not and may not be merry, while everyone is asleep, I must keep watch, and be mournful." The fanfare style motive heard in the horns establishes the militaristic scene from the outset, showing that while he is not happy about his position, he is still loyal to his cause. In fact, his reply to the fantasy maiden's proposal that they meet in the rose garden for a late night rendezvous, "I will not come. I have been posted to the weapon field," suggests that even in the second verse, he is still loyal to his cause. Musically, this verse includes thicker accompaniment; as the sentry finds his duty increasingly oppressive and confining, the music, as representative of his military responsibilities, becomes an increasingly greater presence. The guard's final exclamation, "He is a king! He is an emperor! He leads the war!"[115] shows his frustration rising at last to the surface. The ironic musical accompaniment exaggerates the militaristic tropes of an anthem-like theme complete with drum rolls and trumpet fanfares during this last section in a style that seems sarcastic and embittered, particularly in contrast with the soft, shimmering interludes sung by the soldier's imagined sweetheart.

While the soldier remains, for the time being, at his post, we would not be surprised to find him as the protagonist for one of Mahler's ballads about military desertion ("Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz" and "Der Tamboursg'sell") in the very near future. But, alas, with the entry of a second guard who overhears the first speaking into the night, we find that there is no shortage of willing and able soldiers. The arrival of this second soldier in the final stanza brings the composer's point home most poignantly, even if one soldier is driven to distraction and possible desertion by

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[115] "Ich kann und mag nicht fröhlich sein, Wenn alle Leute schlafen, So muß ich wachen, Muß traurig sein." "Zum grünen Klee, da komm ich nicht, Zu Waffengarten, Voll Helleparten, Bin ich gestellt." "Er ist ein König! Er ist ein Kaiser! Er führt den Krieg!"

his lonely and sad guard duty, there is always another young man to take his place. And the watchman should consider himself fortunate for the second soldier's arrival, which no doubt dissuaded him from leaving his post. Mahler shows us that the political causes of battle, whatever they may be, are frequently considered more valuable than the lives and emotional health of a nation's young men.

The soldiers in Mahler's "Revelge" possess a stronger sense of loyalty than the lone watchman from "Der Schildwache Nachtlied." These young men come to their deaths by a devotion to an obviously lost cause. The drummer boy asks to be carried along with the uninjured soldiers, stating "It is not far from here," but his comrade tells him "I cannot carry you, the enemy has struck us!"[116] The response immediately follows a brief anthem-like interlude (see Example 4.2) demonstrating a moment when the comrade stops to decide whether his friend is more important than his duty,

Example 4.2: "Revelge" mm. 29-32

and his reply shows that duty wins out. The statement itself brings with it a softer dynamic that shows great emotion, as if choosing to move on had brought the drummer boy's comrade great pain. Yet, the drummer boy continues to play and contribute to the campaign until his death, and even after he is gone, "He plays the drum up and down, He wakes his silent brothers, They beat their enemy, A terror beats their enemy."[117] By this point, the drum has become a constant feature of the

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[116] "Es ist nicht weit von hier!" "Ich kann dich nicht tragen,/ die Fremde haben uns geschlagen!"

accompaniment, which plays very softly behind the vocal line marked *sehr laut* (very loud), giving the impression of distance between the narrator and the battle itself. Mahler's representation of his soldiers becomes increasingly more grotesque with each successive verse, as we hear in his manipulation of the song's refrain "Tralali, tralaley, tralalera!" which begins to slowly morph and change, through fragmentation and irregular repetition, in the third stanza, when we learn that even in death, the soldiers continue to march. The young drummer's loyalty to his sweetheart and the hope that he will see her once again play a role in his desire to continue his service even after death, as he leads the ranks into formation below her window. Unlike the sentry in "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," however, this young man is so patriotic that it would never occur to him to surrender his duty, even if he must perform it in death.

The final image of the song, "In the morning there stand the bones, In rank and file like tombstones, The drummer stands in front, so she can see him," reveals the grisly outcome of the battle.[118] The loyalty to their cause and their loved ones have not only led to their untimely deaths but resulted in this gruesome scene that would haunt its observers forever. "Revelge" vividly demonstrates that ongoing loyalty to a lost cause and resorting to violence to support such a cause claim victims beyond those who surrender their lives in support of circumstances that are not meant to be.

Through his composition of the ballads "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" and "Revelge" Mahler paints two very distinct pictures of his political views. Given what we know about his involvement in the Pernerstorfer Circle as a young man in Vienna,

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[117] "Er schlägt die Trommel auf und nieder, rührt' Er weket seine stillen Brüder, Sie schlagen ihren Feind, ein Schrecken schlägt den Feind."

[118] "Des Morgen stehen da die Gebeine, In Reih und Glied sie stehn wie Leichenstein, Die Trommel steht voran, Daß sie ihn sehen kann."

it is clear that for a brief time during his youth political activism held a certain fascination for the composer. While outside circumstances, such as the increased anti-Semitic sentiment among pan-Germanists led to Mahler's rejection of politics in general, this involvement led the young composer to his interest in the writings of Wagner, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer, who at various times through their careers expressed anti-militaristic views such as those clearly demonstrated by Mahler's choices in military-themed *Wunderhorn* poetry. Given his general ambivalence toward politics, Mahler left little direct evidence pertaining to his specific views, but the sheer quantity of military themes explored by Mahler during the *Wunderhorn* years clearly shows that on some level, he had maintained the idealistic views that he had developed during his years at the university.

While I have only closely examined a few select examples in this chapter, the commentary embedded in these songs demonstrate that Mahler chose his poetry very carefully, looking not only for texts that spoke to him or those that could be enhanced by musical setting, but stories that provided lessons on how to live in a society that sat on the brink of modernity. His keen eye for poetry that he could mold to his own will allowed him to use his music to create stories and morals that the originators of the poems never dreamed. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that, more often than not, his advice went unheeded, sometimes (as noted in the examples of "Um schlimme Kinder" and "Ich ging mit Lust"), even by Mahler himself. But, nonetheless, the wisdom passed down through the poems of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* continues to be relevant, even today.

Epilogue

Mahler's treatment of the balladic poems of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* served far more than simply musical purposes. Every step of perfecting these songs, from the smallest textual alteration to the grandest musical gesture, worked toward the act of storytelling. And the textual and musical narratives of those stories themselves offered more than simple aesthetic enjoyment, they provided cultural, social, and political commentary as well as didactic guidance and moral lessons for the people with whom Mahler lived and associated. Yet, they can reach further than Mahler's own place and time. That the origins of these poems stemmed not from Mahler's own age, but from a collection of poems with medieval roots (and some later adaptations of them that were still created decades before the composer was born), speaks to the universality of the types of issues that the composer chose to confront. Concepts such as war, poverty, romantic fidelity, dreams, jokes, religious bigotry, and the appreciation of art certainly did not begin in the latter half of the nineteenth century, nor did they end when the twentieth century began. These lessons and the songs that convey them have a certain sense of universality that, I would argue, lies at the heart of what attracted Mahler to these texts in the first place.

After he composed "Der Tamboursg'sell" in 1901, Mahler's choices in songs texts took a dramatic shift. The poet Friedrich Rückert would provide the texts for his next ten songs, including the five songs from the cycle *Kindertotenlieder*, and his last songs adopt translations of Chinese poetry in the cycle *Das Lied von der Erde*. Mahler did not allow himself the same level of freedom with the texts in these later songs as he had with the *Wunderhorn* texts, viewing them as products of an artistic

tradition rather than part of what Victor Propp calls the morphological chain, the gradual changes that occur to an artifact (typically one of folklore) that is transmitted as part of an oral tradition, as Mahler did the poems in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.[119] They also lack much of the innocence and naivety that one hears in the *Wunderhorn* ballads. It is not my purpose to speculate as to what might have brought about this change in Mahler's musical style as reflected in his songs, but it may not be entirely coincidental that in 1901, the same year he ceased his *Wunderhorn* composition, Mahler suffered a nearly fatal hemorrhage and met his future wife Alma. One could certainly imagine a shift away from the childlike nature of the *Wunderhorn* poetry as an expression of newly found maturity and readiness for marriage.

Thus we find in Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads an unprecedented set of circumstances in which a composer draws musical inspiration from a text, but affords himself such a level of freedom with both text and music that in some cases ("Ich ging mit Lust," "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen," "Scheiden und Meiden," "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," and "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" come immediately to mind) the resulting story can be seen to change radically from its source. Mahler never again approached his poetry as liberally as he did with the *Wunderhorn*, and as such, these ballads represent a unique case. These songs provide the only example of Mahler approaching someone else's poetry as if it were his own, adapting and changing the text for his own purposes. I know of no other example of a composer viewing poetry not written by himself or herself with such an extreme level

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[119] Victor Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* 2nd ed., trans. Laurence Scott, ed. Louis A. Wagner, American Folklore Society Bibliographical and Special Series 9 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

of freedom. It might seem obvious to attribute Mahler's textual changes to musical necessity, but more often his alterations serve narratological aims as well. The simplest of musical gestures can take on the most profound meanings when viewed as aspects of storytelling. The simple addition of a onomatopoetic cuckoo call in "Um schlimme Kinder" seems on the surface to be little more than a charming bit of *Volkisch* kitsch, but on a deeper level it disguises a hidden message to a forbidden lover. Mahler transforms "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" through sweeping musical gestures from a simple dialogue between two lovers during wartime to an elaborate dream suitable for Freudian analysis. Textual changes and musical cues alter the confession of an unfaithful lover in "Ich ging mit Lust" to a somewhat ambiguous admonishment for young women just entering the age of romantic involvement. The song of a nightingale reveals to the young maiden in "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen" that she has not been reunited with her beloved soldier, but, rather, his ghost has come to her to warn her of her own impending doom. Seemingly minor changes have enormous hermeneutic consequences in these songs and open countless doors to interpretation, but as is always the case with ballads, however one interprets these songs, a moral lesson is not far below the surface.

After the composer's death, however, these songs and the guidance they provide, as with much of Mahler's work, fell dramatically out of favor. Numerous factors played into this fall, including political, religious, and cultural ones, as Peter Franklin explains:

> By the 1920s, tensions that had marked the reception of his music
> during Mahler's lifetime were ever more explicitly politicized and
> polarized in a Europe soon to witness the rise of fascism. On the one
> hand he was a composer whose ethnic origins supposedly prevented

him from achieving the Germanic 'greatness' to which his symphonies aspired; on the other his achievement was construed, in perhaps no less partisan a fashion, as consisting in his modern, ironizing approach to that very 'greatness' of aspiration.[120]

Taken out of their *fin-de-siècle* Viennese context, the folk-like qualities abundant in Mahler's *Wunderhorn* ballads sometimes appeared to be mere kitsch. The primary exception to this occurred at the Concertgebouw Orchestra out of Amsterdam, where Willem Mengelberg continued to champion his works with performances of his songs and symphonies throughout the 1920s-1940s.[121] Innovations in recording technology greatly impacted twentieth-century reception of Mahler's work. Donald Mitchell writes of listening to the Ninth Symphony and *Das Lied von der Erde* on 78 rpm discs recorded in the late 1930s by Bruno Walter. As the Walter recording of the aforementioned symphony lasts over 70 minutes, and one side of a 78 rpm record lasts only about three minutes, this had to be a frustrating exercise.[122] The 1948 invention of the 33 1/3 rpm long-playing record combined with the 1957 advent of stereophonic recording allowed audiences to experience Mahler in a whole new, much more life-like way. We also have to thank conductor Leonard Bernstein and scholar Theodor Adorno for their roles as key factors in the Mahler revival of the 1960s.[123] This gradual return to public awareness can be observed in the number of

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[120] Peter Franklin, "Socio-Political Landscapes: Reception and Biography," in *A Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 8.

[121] José A. Bowen, et al. "Mengelberg." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/18402pg1 (accessed March 31, 2010).

[122] Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 3.

[123] Leon Botstein, "Whose Gustav Mahler? Reception, Interpretation, and History," in *Mahler and His World*, ed. Karen Painter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 2.

recordings of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* that have been issued or re-issued over the

past seventy years, according to WorldCat (see Example 4.3). The recordings

represented in the chart consist of approximately 273 unique recordings produced all

Recordings of Des Knaben Wunderhorn 1940s-2000s
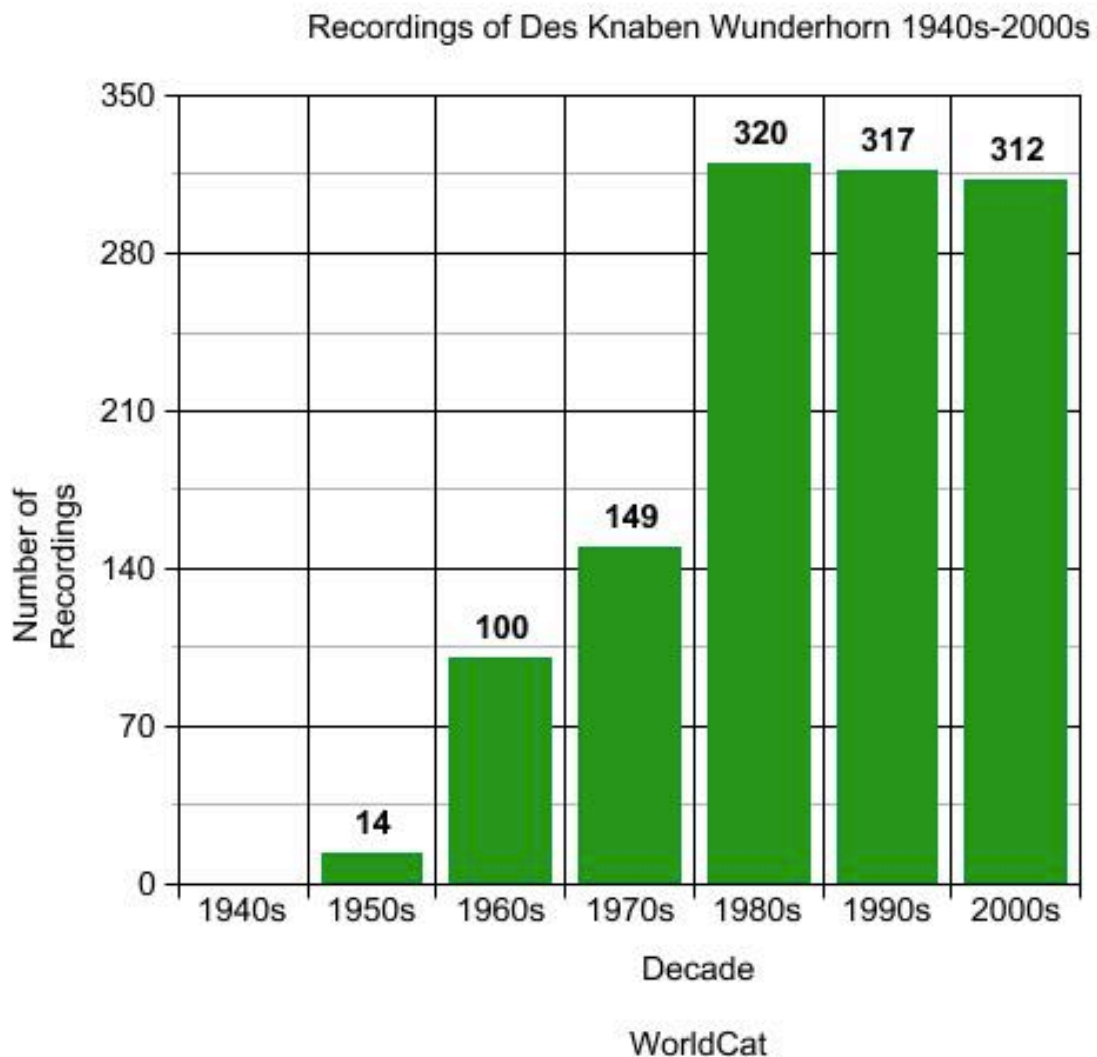
Example 4.3: Number of recordings of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* issued or re-issued,
1940-2010

over the world. Many of these replicate song recitals presented by famous singers

(and not-so famous singers) appearing with orchestras or pianists, others are studio

recordings, and still others represent recordings of Mahler's symphonies that included

Wunderhorn songs. The large disparity between unique recordings and recordings appearing on the chart stems from re-issues, singers recording the same material with different accompanists (which were difficult to distinguish in WorldCat), and the use of individual songs on later compilations. The chart shows a steep incline in interest in Mahler's songs beginning in the 1970s and 1980s. Recordings peaked in the 1980s and have remained essentially stable since then.

Song recitals from the past forty years reveal a more gradual increase in interest in the *Wunderhorn* songs. According to the newspaper search engine LexisNexis, English-speaking newspapers in the United States, England, Canada, and Australia reviewed 6 song recitals featuring songs from the *Wunderhorn* in the 1970s. By the 1980s that number had increased to 46. In the 1990s, Mahler's *Wunderhorn* was reviewed in recital 74 times, and by the first decade of the twenty-first century, that number had increased to 103. This fails to account for performances in non-English-speaking nations or recital environments that would not receive the attention of newspapers, but nonetheless, the steady rise does indicate that Mahler's *Wunderhorn* lieder continue to receive increasing attention from performers.

Of course, attending recitals and purchasing music on CD has started to become somewhat passé in our modern, instant-gratification-obsessed society (ironically, the polar opposite of the attitudes espoused in the *Wunderhorn*). And for the Mahler listeners who must have their songs right there and right then, they can turn to iTunes. Twelve separate albums of songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* appear on iTunes, and one can choose from 471 individual tracks.

We now have more ways than ever to hear and to come to appreciate the lessons found in Mahler's ballads based on the poetry found in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The composer once told Natalie Bauer-Lechner, "With songs… you can express so much more than the words directly say. The text is actually a mere indication of the deeper significance to be extracted from it, of hidden treasure within."[124]

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[124] Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 32.

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