Scoring the World: The Musical Imagery of Orchestration in Gustav Mahler’s Symphonies no. 4 and 5

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Abstract

Gustav Mahler’s comment to Sibelius in 1907 that a symphony must be like the world is one of classical music’s most cited and has functioned as a crucial springboard for interpretations of the composer’s works. However, these have mostly centred on autobiographical, programmatic, or narrative aspects, with a focus on temporally unfolding plots or generic and semiotic connotations. In this study, I use the ‘world’ concept in exploring Mahler’s music as a ‘sound-world’ and its imaginative production through listening, with a particular focus on the often-bypassed features of timbre and orchestration.

This investigation proceeds from the theoretical framework of world-making and narrative, although references to theatre and film are also made. The ‘storyworld’ notion and the related possible worlds theory form the vantage point for examining ‘world’ from various perspectives. Together with the constructional categories of space and temporality, content matters of voice, virtual agency, and gesture are analytically applied to Mahler’s Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, which represent generic worlds of fairy tale and realism, respectively.

The results of the study show that it is Mahler’s rich and shifting orchestral combinations that generate the multitude of different worlds and their continuous interrelationships. By means of spatial and temporal mobility, the listener is actively integrated in the sound-world as an actual agent, perceiving it from alternating positions determined by instrumentation. Through his particular treatment of timbre, Mahler expands the symphonic genre into a sort of intermedial drama in sound, while suggesting other approaches to musical narration based on textual simultaneity and expressive mode. Hearing his symphonies as worlds also permits new means of analysing musical works, making analysis a more dynamic process highlighting the imaginative and structural possibilities of sound.

Keywords: Gustav Mahler, music analysis, orchestration, narratology

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Introduction

In 1907, Gustav Mahler and Jean Sibelius met in Helsinki and had the opportunity to walk together and compare their views of music. When the discussion turned to the meaning of the symphony, Sibelius expressed his admiration for the form’s strictness and the profound logic that creates an inner connection between all its motifs. Mahler objected: ‘Nein, die Symphonie muss sein wie die Welt. Sie muss alles umfassen’ (‘No, the symphony must be like the world. It must contain everything’).¹

Mahler’s comment has been widely cited in the literature, often forming the basis of interpretations of his music in previous research. Connections to ‘world’ have been made in different ways, for example, by interlinking the concept with various symbols or through reading narratives, such as the journey from death to resurrection.

Mahler’s programmes, statements, and song texts have contributed to such analyses, which often touch on both his life and life in general. Furthermore, the music itself contains several unusual characteristics and a rich flora of ‘topics’, referring to aspects of world.

This study applies Mahler’s comment about ‘the world’ in a different way, based on how the actual sounds generate imaginary worlds during listening. Previous directions function partly as a starting point, but the emphasis in this investigation is on the interactive creation of a musical ‘sound-world’. Such an approach has not previously been applied in the field of Mahler research and, through its focus on timbre and the listener, suggests other ways of hearing and analysing not only his oeuvre but musical works overall.

Aims of the study

Mahler’s comment forms the starting point of this investigation, which aims to explore how his symphonic works constitute an imaginative world as experienced through the act of listening. By applying the ‘world’ concept as a theoretical framework, the study attempts to musically explore the multifaceted assemblage of expressive and formative elements suffusing our own lives.

Several aspects of world are examined, largely falling into the two domains of construction and content. As for the former, this includes spatial and temporal dimensions related to structure, shape, and process, whereas the latter concerns the realm of atmosphere and emotions as well as the humanlike presence of characters, voices, and their mediated perspectives. However, in that music is its constituent sounds, these divisional areas are codependent, constantly informing and influencing one another, and should thus not be defined as entities separated from their executing compositional components. Hence, the objective is to look at both the subjects of what and the presentational manners of how that together score the generation of Mahler’s world. All these features spring from the characteristic oppositions of contrast permeating his works, grounded in the wider dichotomy of life and death such as darkness and light, the grotesque and the beautiful, irony and sincerity, dreams and realism, nature and the urban.

While the world concept provides the foundation of this exploration, narrative is included as a subsidiary complement, endowing the mediated universe with necessary elements of organization, temporal unfolding, and discursive distance. To make sense of and fully grasp the aurally imagined cosmos emerging in its entirety, both perspectives are required. Not least, I will use the notion of narrative to illuminate the configuration and processes of world, suggesting other ways of musical narration more centred on features of spatiality and tone. Narrative serves the larger schema of world and its particular illustrative motivations.

The principal lens through which I interpret the conceptual framework of world is Mahler’s timbre and orchestration, devices that can be characterized as a compositional trademark while evoking sensations of horror and sharp critique. Apart from in themselves producing an ever-changing palette of colors and expressive modes, Mahler’s specific sound and innovative use of instruments often function as important structural markers and differentiators of spaces, voices, as well as various kinds of interactive mobility. His original way of managing the orchestra – largely influenced by his life-long career as a conductor – presents a useful lens through which to localize prominent features of musical illustration.

However, my purpose in choosing timbre and orchestration as mediators of an imaginative world reaches beyond that of Mahler’s oeuvre. Despite being apparently ‘fit’ for this study’s ends, from a wider perspective, I want to illuminate and deepen our knowledge of two rather overlooked domains in musicological research – orchestration and musical world-making – and how they might help decrease the gap between reality and all those aurally shimmering evocations of sound. Taking the listening situation as the point of departure

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2 See chapter 2 on Mahler’s sound-world, where I discuss the historical reception of the composer’s orchestration during the fin-de-siècle.
for these directions, I hope to introduce other ways of perceiving and understanding musical works as worlds, creating latitude for different analytical entrances.

**World versus narrative**

This section briefly outlines what I regard as the main problems when applying the term ‘narrative’ solely to music’s capability of story-telling and external representation. I suggest that such analyses could benefit from shifting the focus to the concept of ‘world’, which serves as a more comprehensive interpretive framework with narrative as a subsidiary, complementary attribute. Rethinking the definition and function of narrative in this manner enables the broadening of its traditional application while emphasizing music’s specific ways of storytelling by means of instrumentation.

Since emerging in the 1980s as a derivative phenomenon from literary narratology, then strongly influenced by the directions of European formalism and structuralism, music and narrative have proven to be a debated partnership. Although setting off a range of approaches and definitions as diverse as the models used, such as the identification of agents or actors (Hatten, Cone) and semiotic interpretation of topics (Agawu), the field of musical narrative is generally grounded in the patterned activity of event sequences, plot archetypes, and other reordering practices.

These kinds of successions as embodying narrative generated the very influential attacks of Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Carolyn Abbate, who both altogether rejected music’s potential to be narrative: ‘in itself […] music is not a narrative and [that] any description of its formal structures in terms of narrativity is nothing but superfluous metaphor’.

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9 Nattiez, ‘Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?’, p. 257.
Nattiez’s and Abbate’s critiques lay bare two of the main problems permeating the attempt to fuse music and narratology: the idea of a musical work as being inherently narrative and the foundation of this idea on literary formalistic antecedents. This has resulted in a definition of narrative that is difficult to apply to the musical realm, including chains of causality, the presence of a narrator, and speaking in a past tense.\(^\text{10}\) Today, discussions have eased and the field is more aware of the natural indeterminacies that come with all attempts to impose linguistic specificity on music. Citing Monahan, ‘Most analysts are comfortable with the idea that narrative coherence is as much the listener’s contrivance as an author-intended “given” of the work itself.’\(^\text{11}\) Hence, it is what Nattiez calls the ‘narrative impulse’ – due to the ‘succession of objects’ shared with literature – rather than some internalized or immanent reification of narrative, that explains our instinct to ascribe music with such characteristics. Twenty years after the most intense debate on musical narrative, Byron Almén launched the only existing comprehensive study of the subject to date, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington, 2008). In an attempt to free music from dependence on literary narratology, Almén proposed a medium-specific sibling model, viewing musical narration on music’s own terms. However, his proposed solution of transvaluation as based on the outcome of conflict between two competing agencies, resulting in a number of possible generic archetypes, still very much follows the well-established paradigm of temporal unfolding.

Despite the progress in the complicated symbiosis of music and narrative, I do not find the term ‘narrative’ in its current state sufficient to explain either the diversified components of storytelling *through sound*, or the rich and diversified aspects of Mahler’s symphonic universe. Rather, it remains restricted to mainly linear, structural devices centred on chains of causality and chronology. These are of crucial importance for event- and order-making in all sorts of human practices, but such features alone cannot solely account for how we perceive and make sense of the musical imagination. Moreover, narrative instances in music are only confined to certain, rare moments and therefore cannot be directly equated to narrative.\(^\text{12}\)

In this study, I proceed from the idea of world instead of narrative, the latter forming part of and complementing our understanding of the former. I am thus not abandoning the narrative element altogether – it constitutes one of several


\(^{11}\) Monahan, *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas*, p. 62.

\(^{12}\) Abbate claims musical narration to be ‘a rare and peculiar act’, containing certain moments of narration rather than itself being narrative. See *Unsung Voices*, pp. 19 and 29.
crucial aspects constructing and informing our sense of a mentally perceived universe. However, its inclusion in the overall theoretical framework should here be seen more as an extended reformulation of the existing general directions presented, adapted to the investigation’s orientation of worlds, orchestration, and participating subject. Apart from entailing changed ways of understanding established notions of sequences through time, this focal dislocation exposes previously unacknowledged perspectives on how to understand musical narrative in particular.

I find the world concept more suitable as an all-encompassing analytical umbrella term for several reasons. Above all, its claim to totality offers a wider and more diversified palette of compositional devices crucial to imaginative listening, such as space, moods, and voices, conferring environment and content on structural successions of events. With this also comes the perspective on being – experiencing musical enactment in the present, constructing a theatrical mise-en-scène in living sound. For above all, music simply ‘is’, creating an immersive room, sweeping us up in atmosphere, emotion, and mental image. Defining a musical work as constructing a world consequently allows it to communicate without having to say anything specific or fit into a neatly organized plot; it can thereby act despite a lack of action.

Whereas this aspect of simultaneity enables narration to take place in conjunction with its surrounding elements, emphasizing its particular expressive ways of telling in relation to those surroundings, shifting focus to world also alters the common perception of temporal progression. Instead of stories or plots, narratives approach various kinds of processes, similar to the ones informing our own lives. As in reality, these do not have to be causal, but can proceed by way of, for example, circular, rotational, or oscillating workings. Hence, recognizing pattern-making originating in the real world brings us closer to humanly experienced courses of events while freeing the musical domain from the details of storytelling significant for language.

Including narrative in the larger conceptual framework of world further entails a broader analytic approach more suitable to the specific medium of music, allowing for interconnections with realms of the arts other than literature, such as cinematic techniques and spatial–scenic conceptions of theatre. Such multi-dimensional comparisons are especially relevant in the case of Mahler, who mainly worked as a conductor in opera houses. Due to Adorno’s highly influential novel analogies, these influences, as well as the similarities to film, seem to have been bypassed in favour of staying with the established literary

13 Fred Maus has convincingly demonstrated similarities between music and drama as a perceived series of humanlike actions, although yet again from the vantage point of temporality. See Maus, ‘Music as Drama’, Music Theory Spectrum, Vol. 10, 10th Anniversary Issue (Spring, 1988), pp. 56–73.
direction. Moreover, expanding intermedial comparisons of music could allow exploration of vital elements of its mediation that lack linguistic and referential specificity, deepening our understanding of the particular constructions and telling of sound.

Finally, the world-making practice enables a cognitive approach to how we ourselves imaginatively construct meaning out of the abstract entities of sound. Mirroring a similar shift in literary narratology in the post-classical era, which has paid considerable attention to the notion of storyworld, its application to music can somewhat release us from the discussion of inherent narratives to that of co-creation between listener and musical work. Hence, the worlds we bring forth are those of our own making, something we do as listeners. With the inclusion of an actively integrated, perceiving subject also come new ways of understanding commonly regarded prerequisites of narrative definition. Since the participant takes on the role as a character, there is the provision of an otherwise lacking agential consistency commonly regarded as one of the prerequisites of narration.

Analysing world-making in music: theoretical and methodological considerations

This study’s purpose is to investigate the imaginative creation of world in Mahler’s symphonies, building on theories of world-making and narrative, and aspiring to the fusion and development of the two domains of narratology and sound. Using the concept of ‘world’ as the interpretive framework, it functions as an umbrella term for the exploration of musical worlds and their constituting elements. World is here defined as the totality or whole of the musical work, in line with Mahler’s own apprehension of a symphony as encompassing a world. Hence, the two symphonies analysed here – the Fourth and the Fifth – both inhabit their own universes.

More specifically, the study builds on the term ‘storyworld’ and possible worlds theory, which form part of cognitive narratology as a complement to the more structural aspects of event sequences and plot. Introduced by David Herman as a mental model, storyworld is a kind of world-making practice in which the reader uses textual cues to build representations of the worlds evoked by narratives. I propose a similar but adapted model for the corresponding generation of a musical sound-world created in interaction with the listener. My claim is that the field of musicology could benefit from the same broadening of insights into how we perceive and make sense of artworks, in

14 See David Herman, ‘Storyworld’ in Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory and Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative (Chichester, U.K., 2009), pp. 105–123.
addition to providing a freer and more suitable approach to a medium like music that lacks the specific semantic properties of language.

Possible worlds theory relates to and overlaps with the storyworld concept, enabling the localization of a plurality of different types of worlds.\(^{15}\) Based on the idea of a hierarchical system consisting of an actual world and several other possible ones, I suggest a comparable but slightly modified structure centred on a musical main world. This in turn contains various types of or topics relating to world, such as natural and social worlds.

As a supplement to the theories of world-making, the investigation also includes the element of narrative. Whereas the cognitive mechanics of storyworld permits different perceptive ways of being in the world, the structural devices belonging to narrative are needed as complements in the process of meaning creation.

Hence, the notions of world and narrative are co-creators, informing each other in presenting their own particular perspectives and outlooks on the formation and understanding of world. As a way of telling, narrative contributes to the presentation of and constitutes a lens through which we perceive the world, thereby broadening and developing previous research on musical narrative.

In addition to theory borrowed from literary studies, I also make occasional references to the media of theater and film. Through his experience as an opera conductor, Mahler attained specific conceptions of sound and dramatic thinking that greatly influenced his symphonic writing and its mediation of world. As for the film analogy, early cinema was approximately contemporary with the composer, but that coincidence does not constitute the main point here.\(^{16}\) Rather, I borrow several terms from film theory, such as diegetic and non-diegetic,\(^{17}\) in order to illuminate Mahler’s orchestral treatment, which contains innovations beyond the boundaries of the traditional symphonic genre.\(^{18}\)

\(^{15}\) See Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds’, *The Living Handbook of Narratology* and the other works by Ryan discussed in the next chapter about the theoretical framework of world.

\(^{16}\) Thomas Peattie brings up the rise of early film with the Lumière brothers when discussing pre-cinematic ways of seeing in Mahler. See Peattie, *Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes*, pp. 130–135.

\(^{17}\) The distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic derives from narrative theory and has been used by Claudia Gorbman in her influential study of music’s function in films. See Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington, 1987).

references to media other than literature furthermore present a wider conceptual apparatus that can advance the exploration of how specifically musical worlds are made.

These theoretical approaches will be applied to Mahler’s symphonies by means of musical analysis centred on the aspects of timbre and orchestration. I have chosen to focus on these compositional features because I find that they embody characteristics crucial for the aural imagery of world, apart from drawing attention to a neglected field in musicological research. For example, the atmospheres and expressions we perceive in sound are largely due to the colors and particular tones of the instruments heard, affecting the way the music shapes different timbral spaces and how it speaks to us. The differentiation of parts of the orchestral texture offers the possibility of localizing various voices and their ensuing focalization. Through the method of orchestration analysis, I will argue that several narrative aspects previously regarded as absent from music, such as narrators and a past tense, can be identified by means of this kind of differentiating process as well as enabling other new ways of musical narration.

However, taking the world concept as a point of departure and equating it to multiple entities in the total sound mass also presents a challenge when it comes to determining and distinguishing such a plurality of phenomena. Previous studies of narrative-related topics, such as Cone’s *The Composer’s Voice*, Abbate’s *Unsung Voices*, and Johnson’s *Mahler’s Voices*, confer one type of voice and element (the composer’s persona, a narrator, and so on) on the entire musical texture rather than dissecting all of the composition’s components.

In addition to timbre and orchestration, the analyses will continuously acknowledge other devices of Mahler’s works, even though these first two aspects constitute the study’s primary focus. One such parameter is musical form, which plays a crucial role in the structural organization of sections into different spaces and constructions of world. This is not least due to its inherent aspects of repetition and transformation, which I argue enable the establishment and development of the world and its elements. Other features including melody, gesture, and dynamics are also co-active in a number of mediated topics, such as various voices, temporal processes, and techniques of foregrounding. This feature of multivalence, that is, timbre’s effect and dependency on practically all components of a composition, I discuss further in the forthcoming section specifically addressing the theoretical application of timbre.

First, regarding the question of delimitation, one can argue that historical aspects of modernity, such as fragmentation, and current philosophical directions should be included in any discussion of the concept of world in Mahler’s

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oeuvre. There are a number of reasons for not considering these phenomena here. Just as this examination cannot address all the aspects of world, it also must select among the possible investigational targets. More importantly, though, since the principal focus of this study is the imaginative listening of world as opposed to Mahler’s autobiographical one, musical devices and what they project ought to guide its execution. Surely, different contextual identifications are valuable in our understanding of world from an intellectual perspective. As a listening subject of today, however, I want to concentrate on world as guided by the sounds themselves rather than by history.

Analysing timbre: towards a multifaceted perception of sound

Compared with other musical parameters such as pitch, harmony, and tonal–motive relationships, the so-called secondary ones of timbre and orchestra tion have generally not attracted a similar amount of attention. This relates to both the field of musicology at large as well as analytical practices. The situation seems at odds with the fact that music primarily consists of sounds, heard in the moment and conveying to its listener a vast set of emotions, atmos pheres, and other features that inevitably get lost in the frozen systems of structure. There have been attempts at historical and stylistic surveys such as the writings of Gordon Read (Style and Orchestration, 1979) and Adam Carse (The History of Orchestration, 1925), together with isolated studies of single musical works, but a comprehensive blueprint for a methodology of orches tration analysis is still missing.

There are several reasons for this skewed distribution, reasons going far back in time to various views and value judgments ascribed to the different components of a musical work. While the historical direction and its aesthetics form part of a later chapter on Mahler’s sound-world, in the following I discuss timbre and orchestration more in terms of analytical tools applicable to the study of the composer’s symphonies as imaginative worlds.

In contrast to music’s structural elements, it is inherently difficult to analyse timbre since it cannot be measured or organized in the same systematic manner, for example, along a gradual scale as with pitch or register. As Jens Hesselager put it in his dissertation on sound, this “‘tone’ or ‘sound’ seems strangely ineffable, as if it were only possible to hint at it by means of vague poetic metaphors”.20 Even though we perceive the timbre of a particular instrument as a composite gestalt, it consists of a number of components that con-

stantly change over time in relation to tone, dynamics, and articulation. Timbre is simply not obviously ‘analysis ready’ as compared with other compositional elements. In addition, there is a lack of a tradition of explaining and teaching orchestration in the same manner as, for example, *Harmonielehre* and form. The treatises on instrumentation that flourished in the nineteenth century, with Berlioz’s *Grand traité d’instrumentation et d’orchestration modernes* (Paris, 1843) representing a landmark work, are testimonies to this through their highly practical approach in favour of a more conceptual theoretical framework. Most orchestral manuals follow the same procedure, starting with presentations of individual instruments followed by suggestions of how to combine them, illustrated by examples from the Western Classical literature. This setup mirrors the increased difficulty of classifying instrumental mixes of timbres when reaching beyond their separate, more concrete properties; the possibility of combinations is indeed infinite. Despite aiming for a disposition akin to pedagogical organization, in the end these treatises have to surrender to the inherently personal way in which the orchestral apparatus is operated. The emphasis on orchestration as an art form and creative practice even characterizes its very definition as being ‘the art of combining the sounds of a complex of instruments (an orchestra or other ensemble) to form a satisfactory blend and balance’. This further shines through in the following statement of Walter Piston, author of *Orchestration*: ‘The true art of orchestration is inseparable from the creative act of composing music. The sounds made by the orchestra are the ultimate manifestation of musical ideas germinated in the mind of the composer’.

In spite of the circumstances, there have been several attempts to develop a method for the study of timbre. Most such investigations, however, are con-

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23 Other treatises include the early ones of Jean-Georges Kastner, *Traité général d’instrumentation* ([no place], 1837) and those of François-Auguste Gevaert: *Nouveau traité d’instrumentation* (Paris, 1885) and *Cours méthodique d’orchestration* (Paris, 1890). Later ones, common in the study of orchestration these days, are Walter Piston’s *Orchestration* (New York, 1955), Nikolaj Rimsky-Korsakov, *Principles of Orchestration* (London, 1964), and *The Study of Orchestration* (New York, 2002) by Samuel Adler.
cerned with the physical properties of sound that are of little use when inves-
tigating timbre as a compositional resource or applicable analytical tool.26 Fur-
thermore, representations of these kinds of objective data do not take into ac-
count the listener’s experience of timbre or the semiotic and conventional as-
sociations tied to many instruments.

For the exploration of sound as world, analytical approaches to timbre with
their point of departure in listening and other elements of the composition are
therefore of great relevance. Timbre forms part of orchestration, and they both
cooperate with all other parameters coming together in the concrete sounds
that we hear. This also mirrors Mahler’s own view of timbre as a means of
expression rather than existing as Effekten or mere technique.27 A focus on
timbre in relation to the entire musical work and its components also changes
structural aspects such as form, which in the act of hearing turns into some-
thing dynamic and changeable.

In the following, I present two outlines that I find valuable for the interpre-
tation of timbre and orchestration as world and narrative: Norwegian scholar
Rolf Inge Godøy’s Skisse till en instrumentasjonsanalytisk systematikk
(1993),28 and Sheinbaum’s suggested concept of multivalence.29 The differenti-
tation among various compositional devices that they propose ultimately
comes down to analysing music in terms of all-encompassing sound, which
by extension connects to this investigation’s vantage point of a musical sound-
world.

Starting with Godøy, his model takes differentiation as the point of depar-
ture for the deconstruction of the complex and multidimensional phenomenon
that constitutes the musical production of sound. After a first differentiation,
Godøy highlights three main categories, i.e., timbre, texture, and harmony, all
of which overlap and are mutually dependent.30 Discussing these in turn, I will
briefly sketch the fundamental features. To this, I add a number of components
that I regard as central to the interpretation of a musical, imaginative world.

The vaguest and least tangible category is what in English and French is
denoted timbre, corresponding to the similar German term Klangfarbe
(‘sound-colour’).31 A general definition is that timbre is ‘a term describing the

26 Sheinbaum, Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siècle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies, pp. 5 and
8–9.
27 See chapter 2 and its overview of the permeating ideologies of timbre at Mahler’s time as
well as the outlining of his principles of instrumentation.
28 Rolf Inge Godøy, Skisse till en instrumentasjonsanalytisk systematikk (Department of Musi-
cology, Oslo University, 1993), <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/39063/1/In-
strumentasjonsanalyse.pdf>.
29 Sheinbaum, Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siècle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies, p. 10.
30 Godøy, Skisse till en instrumentasjonsanalytisk systematikk, pp. 3–10.
31 Thomas Erma Møller, Symfonii nr. 4 og 5 av Jean Sibelius. En komparativ analyse av
orkesteringens utforming, Master Thesis, Department of Musicology, University of Oslo
tonal quality of a sound’, which means that different instruments performing the same note at the same loudness produce various timbres. Closely related to timbre is the notion of tone, meaning ‘a quality of a musical sound’. Due to the lack of organizing categories analogous to elements such as pitch, research on timbre has faced challenges in attaining the same kind of coherent results. Isolated studies have been conducted, notably Fred Lerdahl’s *Timbral Hierarchies* (1987), as well as the pioneering work of Roger A. Kendall and Edward C. Carterette in their investigation of sonorous combinations, especially of different wind instruments. Overall, however, the composite synthesis of factors guiding the perception of sound remains problematic to determine. The potential combinations of instruments are enormous, resulting in infinite harmonic and timbral contexts. Add to this the many variations arising from specific playing techniques as well as changes in dynamics and register, and it becomes almost impossible to achieve a comprehensive method of orchestration analysis covering all sets of elements.

A prominent tool in the application of timbre as an analytical parameter has been the spectrograph, which graphically represents the multiple components that constitute a sound. One example of such an approach is Robert Cogan’s *New Images of Musical Sound* (Cambridge, 1984), which visualizes a set of pieces based on their oppositions and gradual processes from one section to a contrasting other. Peter Nitsche, in his work *Klangfarbe und Schwingungsform* (1978), systematizes spectra of a diverse number of orchestral instruments, suggesting a model of tone colour based on eight separable factors such as roughness and brightness. Compared with Cogan’s illustrations of entire orchestral forces, however, Nitsche’s model only takes into account individual instruments in isolation.

While the directions presented here are valuable for understanding the physical constitution of *Klang*, they need to be put in another context to be useful for the objective of this study, more closely connected with other analytical parameters and the listening subject. There are, however, some aspects of this field of research that can function as guidelines or blueprints for a more interpretatively based investigation of orchestration, related to the differentiation of roles and functions in the sound mass as well as the description of timbre.

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36 Sheinbaum, *Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siècle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies*, pp. 8–9.
One such aspect is the blending of timbres. If it is easy to distinguish the separate components constituting a complex of \textit{Klang}, it is heterogeneous, while a difficulty in the sonorous differentiation defines it as homogeneous. This is not only the case with instruments of the same type or group, but can also apply to combinations of different instruments and constellations.\textsuperscript{37} The categorization of mixed and unmixed combinations, of the heterogeneous and homogeneous, gains importance in Riemann’s notion of neutral versus individual timbres and their correspondence to certain instrumental groups. In addition, he ascribes to them particular expressive qualities that I find useful for the localization of various kinds of voices and narrative positions.\textsuperscript{38}

The basis of Riemann’s framework is that the strings of the orchestra, when playing tutti or doubled in a successful, de-individualized blending, attain a neutral timbre evoking an introverted, thinking perspective. This results from the decrease in the instruments’ theatrical potentials to act as individuals in terms of speaking and singing. By contrast, the winds, through their more heterogeneous timbres, take on the role of speakers, underlined by the breathing needed in order to produce sound. Against the homogenous string background, they emerge as anthropomorphic, humanlike figures analogous to virtual agents. As for the trumpets and trombones, they are the prophets of the orchestra, preaching instead of talking.

Riemann’s characterization of the orchestral groups forms a guideline assisting the interpretation of instrumental functions, but it should be noted that his argument stems from both the aesthetic ideals of the classical orchestra as well as specifically the blended string timbre and the unblended woodwind timbre. Depending on how one chooses to use and combine the orchestral apparatus, a number of other blendings and, consequently, expressions and roles are possible. This more contextual output mirrors, in Dahlhaus’s view, the conception that the actual sound of music ‘is nothing but a reservoir of possibilities which are either realized or not realized in the perception of a concrete composition (in the “intentional” musical object)’, conditioned by listening conventions and the aesthetics of the composer.\textsuperscript{39} In my opinion, this implies two things: first, that it is an active decision on the part of the creator as to what combinations (or ideals) to apply and, second and more importantly, that various timbres and instruments can be used for different ends, depending on how one chooses to intermingle them. This particularly applies to Mahler and his ways of often breaking with what normally counts as ‘good’ orchestration in terms of, for example, blending, in favour of more heterogeneous and unusual instrumental combinations drawing attention to themselves by means of

\textsuperscript{37} Erma Møller, \textit{Symfoni nr. 4 og. 5 av Jean Sibelius}, p. 10.


\textsuperscript{39} Hesselager, \textit{Making Sense of Sounds}, p. 32.
sound. As a result, there arise new roles for certain instruments, such as the brass in the Fifth Symphony, which frequently speak, sing, or narrate, even though one can discern some recurring functions such as foregrounded woodwind soloists.

Another feature that the studies of timbre generally illuminate is the importance of metaphors. In methods of multidimensional scaling, for instance, experimental subjects value different timbres in relation to a number of categories such as brilliance/nasality, hardness/softness, and so on, underlining our dependency as humans on conceptual language.\(^{40}\) This further relates to the need for an interlinking with reality in order to make sense of imaginative worlds, discussed in the next chapter on world-making theories. The notion of opposites is also particularly relevant to Mahler’s music, which is characterized by topical contrasts.

Metaphorical labels also form a recurrent thread in several of the best-known treatises on orchestration, Berlioz probably being the prime example. Alongside the technical properties of each instrument, he ascribes to them expressive, emotional, and symbolic connotations, as if they each had a soul and character, even inner states of mind.\(^{41}\) Rimsky-Korsakov broadens the repertoire even further, suggesting tactile associations: ‘It is a difficult matter to define tone quality in words. We must encroach upon the domain of sight, feeling and even taste’.\(^{42}\)

The idea of instruments as personalities or characters in a story, reflecting the minds of real human beings, finds resonance in the, for this investigation, very influential theory of virtual agency, involving both virtual embodiment and enmindment.\(^{43}\)

Despite the higher degree of subjective interpretation, I find metaphorical application to be one of the most fruitful ways of translating the abstract phenomena of sound into more concrete concepts relatable to our own world. This concerns both the characterizations of individual instruments and their roles and functions in the orchestra as well as more suffuse elements such as atmosphere or mood. Thinking in binaries of darkness/light, brightness/depth, and so on, can here provide valuable signposts in the search for tangible perception. In the end, the interpretation of timbre reaching beyond its mere physical properties has to succumb to the use of language.

In addition to metaphors, musical conventions or semiotic connotations provide useful guidance in the analysis of instrumentation. Most of these derive from the existing catalogue of codes inherent in the Western art music

\(^{40}\) Erma Møller, *Symfoni nr. 4 og 5 av Jean Sibelius*, p. 11.
tradition, in which the association of timbre with similar effects in other compositions can give valuable insight into its meaning. In Mahler’s case, these sorts of conventions or norms form important referential markers in that they often constitute the vantage point for a series of sound deformations, i.e., the composer playing with traditional symbols in order to reformulate them.

Interpretive clues might also be attained from programmatic titles and/or explicit/implicit programmes for musical works, even though these naturally cannot be taken as providing any kind of absolute truth. For Mahler, this subject was a complicated and conflicted one, which the section ‘Whose world?’ partly addresses. Even so, the four first symphonies all have programmatic connections and the composer’s scores are unusually rich in providing such hints.

Gudøy’s second category of texture refers to ‘the sound aspects of a musical structure’, applying to both a work’s vertical dimensions as well as its performance characteristics. Despite its intrinsic compositional significance, one cannot speak of any comprehensive body of research work, as illustrated by the short bibliography on Grove Music Online containing only three titles. One of these is used in this study: ‘Texture as a Sign in Classical and Early Romantic Music’ by Janet Levy.

The principal aspect that I find crucial for the textural affiliation with and construction of a musical world is how the various individual parts or voices are distributed and how their subsequent roles function in the sound mass. In this differentiation, elements of foreground and background are significant. Foregrounded parts often have a melodic function, whereas the accompaniment role is ascribed to the background section. Such oscillations have the ability to shift the listener’s focus as to which instruments hold what positions, for example, when a soloist emerges as speaker against a sparse backdrop. In Mahler, however, the simultaneity of equally foregrounded and individualized instrumental parts is the norm rather than the exception, resulting in particular kinds of spatial constructions and interaction among voices.

Another important aspect of texture concerns movement, which is inseparable from the listening experience of music as unfolding in time. This can take place on many levels, from tiny fluctuations on the micro level to wider patterns of motion on the macro scale. From the perspective of world, such a

44 An adjacent term in narratology is Gérard Genette’s ‘paratext’, which constitutes the second of five types of transtextuality. Examples of a text’s paratext are various kinds of titles, forewords, and illustrations. See Genette, Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree (Lincoln and London, 1997), pp. 1–3.
span might correspond to smaller, humanlike gestures of speech or song as well as wider, more activity-emphasized arcs of climax and collapse.\textsuperscript{48}

In addition, I claim that the earlier suggested application of metaphors in the analysis of timbre is also valuable for a textural reading, providing a tool for translating the sensation of being immersed or embodied in a certain spatial milieu or state. This relates both to the notion of embodied cognition and to spatial imagery, building on the experience of our bodies in space in relation to language metaphors such as near and far.\textsuperscript{49} Such a conceptualization is also crucial for the listener’s orientation in musical spaces and their organization of sounds, which will be discussed further in the analyses in relation to Hesselager’s notion of world-sound.\textsuperscript{50} Due to Mahler’s particular differentiation of the orchestral parts, several passages of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies generate these kinds of three-dimensional spaces in which the listener either stands as an observer or dissolves mentally.

Finally, the third category of harmony in relation to orchestration analysis mainly concerns the textural disposition and construction of every single chord, as opposed to the study of chord progressions, which has generally been the focus of traditional harmonic analysis. Other elements worth paying attention to are the presence of consonance/dissonance as well as the chords’ registrational spread.\textsuperscript{51} In addition, I want to emphasize harmonic developments and chord progressions over time, which affect how we perceive the transformational processes of orchestration. For example, Mahler’s harmonies are often unresolved at the ends of sections, having implications for both scene shifts and transportations from one place or world to another.

Through the differentiation of instrumentation into three separate but co-working categories, Godøy’s model presents a useful general outline of orchestration analysis. Furthermore, it defines timbre as one of several elements of a composition, with texture in particular being valuable for this study’s investigation of spatially differentiated constructions of milieu and voices.

A similar way of thinking is reflected in Sheinbaum’s suggestion of a multivalent perspective in the analysis of secondary parameters such as timbre, which is when ‘various factors are compared side by side and can be seen to work against, as well as with one another’.\textsuperscript{52} This kind of procedure becomes especially relevant in relation to a composer like Mahler, whose conception

\begin{footnotes}
\item[51] Erma Møller, \textit{Symfoni nr. 4 og 5 av Jean Sibelius}, p. 15.
\item[52] Sheinbaum, \textit{Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siècle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies}, p. 10.
\end{footnotes}
of orchestration was inextricable from both structural idea and expressive variation.

Looking at instrumental colour as one of many components of the compositional construction, combined with different analytical attitudes, presents a multifaceted framework that also benefits the interpretation of the imaginative world. Since the concept of world involves a number of categories and perspectives encompassing the entire musical work, there is need for the inclusion of several other mechanics in addition to timbre and orchestration.

An important constitutive parameter of multivalence is form, which also constitutes Sheinbaum’s main investigative focus in relation to timbre. From an analytical vantage point in listening, timbre gains greater prominence in the more dynamic conception of form as experienced by hearing through time. In Mahler, changes in instrumentation often function as markers of significant structural events. This, for example, is mirrored in Adorno’s identification of the composer’s material categories of form, explored by Sheinbaum in the last chapter of his dissertation.\(^{53}\) Form is also crucial for the exploration of musical worlds, where I argue that the inherent aspect of repetition enables the establishment and continuity of the world’s various elements, such as spaces and places. In combination with different alterations at recurring formal sections, there in turn arise narrative development and variation. Mahler’s creational motto of constant evolution, in which the modification of sound is of great significance, makes the study of these procedures especially productive.

The dependence of timbre on some or all parameters of a composition suggests that it is instead plausible to think about a musical work in terms of sound. After all, this is what the listener perceives in the act of hearing, when the sounds represent notes in their realized concreteness. This further points towards viewing music more as a kind of composite sound design rather than as comprising separate entities isolated from one another, which opens new directions in the field of music analysis.

Thinking in sounds also seems a natural consequence of this investigation’s point of departure in an imaginative sound-world, serving as a freer and more encompassing concept. This approach in addition enables the study of hitherto quite unexplored dimensions of music, such as spatiality, which in the listening situation gives it palpability and design. Hesselager regards the sound-world as something unique to each composer that constitutes their own, characteristic tone.\(^{54}\) Hence, Mahler’s sound-world is not the same as Debussy’s or Stravinsky’s, even though one can find similar traits and techniques between different artists. Consequently, the particular orchestration of a composer – i.e., the sound – constitutes the main point of departure in the analysis

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of timbre, and should guide the questions and paths one wants to explore rather than a fixed set of rules of what musical sound ultimately ‘is’. Mahler’s specific sound-world thereby forms the basis for the subsequent investigation, in which his salient instrumentation principles function as portals of understanding into its unique construction and tone.

I end this section with a short note on the nature of sound studies and how they relate to attitudes and choices on the part of the analyst. In this kind of interpretative investigation of timbre and orchestration, there is necessarily an element of subjectivity and inexactness. One of the most fascinating things about the musical imagination is precisely the possibility of a multitude of interpretations and analytical perspectives. These should be embraced, not shied away from.

Objects of study

Of the nine works that constitute Mahler’s symphonic oeuvre, this study analyses the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. The main reason for choosing these two particular works concerns their differences in orchestration, style, and absolute–programmatic outline, enabling the exploration of a plurality of sound-worlds as well as their various techniques of mediation.

While the Fourth Symphony forms part of the so-called Wunderhorn symphonies, containing programmatic clues and the presence of a human voice, the Fifth Symphony claims to be absolute music, lacking any singers or inclusion of text. These divergences mirror a larger shift in Mahler’s compositional development, with the Fifth moving towards an extended counterpoint filled with harsher timbres, as opposed to the sparse size of the overall classical design and orchestra of the Fourth. Both works present worlds centred on the same wider set of oppositions characterizing life and death, but molded and expressed in their own particular ways. Because of this multifariousness, I regard them as belonging to the genres of fairy tale and realism, respectively, illustrated by the childlike dream universe of the Fourth and the Fifth’s darkly suffused realm largely built on generic connotations.

The scores I use for both symphonies are from Die Neue Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New Complete Critical Edition), with the Fourth published by Universal Edition (2021) and the Fifth by Edition Peters (2002). Due to Mahler’s many revisions to the Fifth Symphony, it exists in various earlier versions from 1904, 1905, 1911, and 1964. As for the Fourth, it was first published in 1902, and again in 1906 with Mahler’s revisions; in 1963, Universal Edition through Erwin Ratz published a new updated edition including all Mahler’s reworkings.

Notably, it is not possible to cover the entirety of each symphony. As the reader will notice, some movements are more exhaustively analysed, while at other times, the shortest passages attract more attention than longer ones.
Another important source in this study is the documented conversations with Mahler by his acquaintance Natalie Bauer-Lechner (Recollections of Gustav Mahler). Presenting rare insights into Mahler’s instrumental thinking, they are highly valuable for understanding the composer’s conception of sound and its relation to world. Even though the writings come from an intermediary (Bauer-Lechner) and are transcribed verbatim from memory, I find their rich diversity on the subject a basis for exploring the composer’s soundworld and its technical construction.

The same circumstances concern the included statements of Bruno Walter, a German conductor who worked closely with Mahler and also recorded several of the composer’s works. Despite their status as remembrances, observations of Mahler in Walter’s memoirs as well as conveyed descriptions of the symphonies provide helpful clues for the interpretation of both Mahler as conductor and his music as world.

Whose world?

Arguing for an imaginative experience of the symphony as world inevitably evokes questions of affiliation, reception, and perception: Whose world are we speaking of when ascribing it to Mahler’s works? By whom is it experienced? My vantage point in this study is that of the listening subject, of the interactive situation between the musical work and its recipient, in line with the cognitive approach of storyworld. Yet, since this point of departure inexorably also involves the presence of Mahler the composer and that of myself, the analyst, I will here lay out and clarify these positions, which permeate and influence each other in complex ways.

Julian Johnson’s observation of Mahler as ‘a composer who embodies most intensely for our age the idea of a direct and unmediated relationship between experience and expression’ illuminates the popular assumption that Mahler himself – the composer – speaks through his music. When we listen to his songs and symphonies, we hear what he feels, his emotions, his life – his world. This view springs from a nineteenth-century aesthetics of expression, according to which the artwork was seen as the expression of an artist’s idea.

Mahler also invited us to hear his music in this way, leaving behind comments in scores, remarks in letters to friends, providing works with programmes and personally written song texts. In a widely cited statement to

56 See Bruno Walter, Gustav Mahler (Vienna, 1936).
57 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 98.
58 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, pp. 3 and 98.
Bauer-Lechner about the First and Second Symphonies, he openly emphasized the connection between life and work: ‘I have written into them everything that I have experienced and endured’.\(^\text{59}\) Add to this all the extra-musical connotations and self-referential allusions that fill his music and one can understand why it is so often linked to his autobiography. Vera Micznik acknowledges these so-called objective proofs as the reason why we attribute these kinds of characteristics much more to Mahler than to any other composer.\(^\text{60}\)

As a result, narrative interpretations of Mahler’s symphonies have flourished, in most cases either following a biographical direction – such as the work of Richard Specht and Stephen Heffling’s study of Mahler’s Ninth – or attempting to fuse musical analysis with possible inspirational threads tied to his programmes. Examples of the latter include interpreting the First Symphony according to Jean Paul’s novel *Titan* or the Second in relation to Adam Mickiewicz’s poem *Dziady*.\(^\text{61}\) Constantin Floros even claims that there are hidden programmes within all of Mahler’s symphonies, even when there is no published or other known evidence.\(^\text{62}\)

In particular, the dichotomy between absolute music and programme music lies at the heart of deciphering Mahler, one in which he exemplifies a complicated case.\(^\text{63}\) Although endowing his first four symphonies with programmes, he often later withdrew them and was highly ambivalent about the whole concept – witness his speech condemning programmes in 1900. According to Schiedermair, he wished to be promoted as a composer of ‘absolute music’, yet he seemed obliged to supply the public with various signposts so that they could fully appreciate his works.\(^\text{64}\)

While all the materials cited present evidence that gives access to a deeper understanding of Mahler, his music, and his time, it is important to address the status of these ‘proofs’ and how we approach them, especially in relation to the musical work. Vera Micznik identifies the tendency in Mahler research to treat these kinds of sources too literally, seeing them as isolated artefacts bearing definitive answers analogous to truths.\(^\text{65}\)


\(^{62}\) See Floros’s works on Gustav Mahler, especially *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies* (Aldershot, 1993).

\(^{63}\) The entirety of Micznik’s chapter discusses this topic at length.


Authorial intention indeed stands behind and is tacitly ingrained in all creations, but there is a danger in taking it as the final record, embodying some sort of absolute meaning waiting to be discovered. W.K. Wimsatt Jr. and M.C. Beardsley argued that ‘the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art’, endowing the text as the primary source of meaning. Even though Mahler himself regarded his music as a channel for his own experiences and inner emotions, these experiences and emotions should not be used to pin down the music’s expressive content. Dahlhaus formulates a telling statement about the pitfalls of making such ‘basic misconceptions’ about work and creator:

Important as this tone is to the effect of Mahler’s works on a great many listeners, it would be wrong to yield to the temptations of popular aesthetics and explain it from the standpoint of Mahler the man. Biographical curiosity is not an aesthetic concept, and we must be wary of false subjectification, of demeaning a symphony into “musical autobiography” (i.e., of seeing Mahler’s music as a function of his life, rather than vice versa).

Dahlhaus locates ‘equal danger of false objectification’ in the over-interpretation of Mahler’s programmes. Recalling the composer’s own distinction between the programmes as interior and exterior, the latter’s guidance to listeners in terms of signposts cannot serve as a stimulus for composition and the genesis of the work, let alone mirror Mahler the man:

This “hero,” however, [of the First Symphony] is neither Jean Paul’s “Titan”, cited in the program of the First Symphony, nor Mahler himself, but rather the aesthetic subject of the music, a figure belonging to the aesthetic substance of the work itself in the same way as does the “narrator” in a novel or the “lyric ego” in a poem.

Following Vera Micznik, Mahler’s programmes belong to the domain of reception and should not take precedence over our own interpretations, by which we ‘leave the hermeneutic circle open’. Programmes give us some access to a work’s subject matter, but in no way do they present any final answer to the question of what that subject matter is.

One should also bear in mind the contradictory nature of Mahler’s statements on the matter as well as the historical circumstances permeating the polemic discussion of absolute music versus programme music. As both Dahlhaus and Micznik acknowledge, music that was flawed or lacking in musical

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68 Dahlhaus, Nineteenth-Century Music, p. 366.
form was at the time believed to need support from programmes, which, together with the unusual musical characteristics of Mahler’s works overall, probably increased the presumed existence of such, maybe even urging the composer to provide them.  

While this study is not concerned with the reconstruction of Mahler’s world in terms of authorial intention or autobiographical links to his life and childhood — such as musical connections to memories of military wind bands — these kinds of sources are not irrelevant as analytical material. Just as the symphonic programmes form guidelines rather than objective stories, all statements, letters, and other documented evidence assist in the investigation of Mahler’s works as worlds. As long as we are aware of their status as reception rather than production and do not see them as inscriptions of truths, critically treating them in dynamic relations with the music, these materials can provide valuable tools in the interpretative process. Taking the music as the starting point, with other sources informing and shaping it, leads me to two important positions: a focus on Mahler the conductor-creator rather than the private man, and the works as mediating a sound-world perceived by the listener.

In relation to his comment to Sibelius about the symphony as world, Mahler also made a slightly different comment to Natalie Bauer-Lechner, that writing a symphony is the same as ‘constructing a world with all technical means at one’s disposal’.  

The words ‘construct’ and ‘all technical means’ invite a vision of Mahler as a craftsman — a ‘master builder’, to use his own words — who builds a symphonic universe by means of compositional techniques. Considering his parallel career as an opera conductor, this is also in line with him directing and organizing aural art works in a manner similar to theatrical staging.

Hence, what emerges is not Mahler’s world, but a musical construction of world, the composer being the instrument through which the music speaks. Even though mediating aspects of his own life, these become distilled and neutralized through an architecture of sound. Johnson also underlines the idea of construction, which he locates in Mahler’s many uses of artificial voices, as connected to a self-consciousness about the composition as precisely constructed, running parallel to Mahler’s often authentic expression of tone.  

Viewing the symphony as a fabricated product, an ‘as if’, assists in regarding it as a vehicle of imaginative projection.

Additionally, taking the music itself as vantage point acknowledges the plural voices, expressions, and emotions that speak to listeners up to this day,

71 NBL, Recollections, p. 40.  
72 NBL, Recollections, p. 131: ‘Composing is like playing with bricks’.  
73 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 93.
far from Mahler’s lifetime and its historical context. The illustrative and narrative power of his oeuvre communicates on its own, regardless of autobiographical records and accounts. Listeners feel and share the experiences of Mahler mediated through his sound art, yet they make these their own, relating to them in terms of intersubjectivity. The storyworld put forth is not alien, belonging solely to Mahler; rather, its emotional content is recognized as comprising universal entities, with listeners themselves constructing their own unique sentiments out of these basic feelings.

The listening situation I am investigating emanates from the interactive dialogue of subject and sounding object. This means that I envision the music as perceived only aurally, without any view of the orchestra or other devices present in the concert situation. Thus, the references of sounds are not the performing musicians and their embodied agencies, but the sounds themselves, which by breaking free from performance create a world on their own, projecting an imaginary sound-world. As Hesselager distinctively put it, ‘one hears music, but not musicians’.

Expressive content apprehended by listening consequently forms my vantage point, even though the scores function as indispensable resources for the analytical work. I find this particular context to provide the best foundation for how we imaginatively perceive Mahler’s symphonies, allowing the sound entities to speak on their own terms as mentally transformed conceptions outside themselves. By giving the listener an active and participating role in the creation of musical worlds, it follows the cognitively centred direction in line with world-making theories. Despite the physically static placement of this individual, Mahler’s orchestral spatial mobility generates various positions and perspectives from which to discern the surroundings, resulting in the perception of a constantly transforming, fluid soundscape.

More precisely, though, who is this listener? I envisage this person as having some background in Western art music, which is desirable in order to apprehend the general characteristics and cultural codes immanent in that genre. However, due to this study’s focus on expressive and imaginative devices, my hope is that even recipients without any specialized knowledge of classical music theory should be able to gain something of value from the subsequent analytical discussions. This also forms part of the investigation’s larger purpose, that, first and foremost, it is the musical experience and all the evoked images, emotions, and movement that entails that constitutes the vital point of departure, regardless of the attained degree of competence.

75 Hesselager, Making Sense of Sounds, p. 157.
My own position can be found somewhere between these two poles of musical author and listening addressee. From an analyst’s point of view, the objective is to stay as true to the representative features of Mahler’s oeuvre as possible in relation to the larger questions this study seeks to explore. Inevitably, however, the abstractedness of the imaginative world concept will to a greater or lesser degree involve an element of subjectivity. Whereas established symbols such as the horn’s equation with the hunt and nature, or bass instruments scored in the low register in a minor mode as evocative of darkness, can be unanimously agreed upon, I occasionally make other, bolder interpretations that might not appear as obvious, for example, the likening of instruments to narrators.

The readings of Mahler’s music presented here do not claim to represent his own world, neither can they account for all the worlds being born in each listener’s head. The point is instead to suggest a general framework for other ways of hearing both his and other composer’s works and, inside those frames, to precisely encourage the subjective colorings of the imagination.

Previous research

Encompassing a range extending from the wider aspects of history, reception, and philosophical views to more analytically specialized investigations, there are few subjects related to Mahler that have not yet been extensively scrutinized. However, there are no previous attempts to fuse the realm of orchestration with the world-making practice of imaginative listening. The available research considered here centres on the domains of narratology and instrumentation, respectively, as well as specific studies of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies in relation to these fields.

Given the vastness of the existing Mahler literature, it is impossible to present a full account of its many directions here. In the following, I will outline the principal areas relevant to this investigation, intermingling the disciplines of musicology and other, intermedial territories. Nonetheless, among the cornerstones worth mentioning is the unique achievement of Henry-Louis de La Grange, whose Mahler biography remains the most comprehensive work on the composer to date. In addition to the detailed survey of Mahler’s life, succinct musical analyses helpful for this study are also included. A preferentially

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modern, acclaimed volume is Jens Malte Fischer’s *Gustav Mahler* (New Haven, 2011), which puts well-known as well as previously unavailable materials into new illuminating contexts. Other standard biographies are those by Peter Franklin, Kurt Blaukopf, Hermann Danuser, and Kennedy – to name a few.

Apart from Constantin Floros’s *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies* (New Jersey, 1997) the most comprehensive work on Mahler’s symphonic oeuvre to date is probably Paul Bekker’s *Gustav Mahler’s Sinfonien* (Berlin 1921). Donald Mitchell also sets out more of an overview in his *Gustav Mahler: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death – Interpretations and Annotations* (Woodbridge, 2002). Still, Adorno’s seminal *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago, 1992) continues to exert prominent influence on Mahler research. However, there are recent works concerned with similar interdisciplinary approaches, such as Thomas Peattie’s *Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes* (Cambridge, 2015), which, among other things, explores the composer’s connection to theater and opera. Peattie’s study forms a valuable springboard for the understanding of Mahler’s dramatization of sound, and in extension, the construction of musical worlds.

Chapters on individual symphonies and related topics can be located in the many extensive anthologies on Mahler, such as *Mahler Studies, The Cambridge Companion to Mahler, The Mahler Companion, Mahler and His World*, and *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, which together provide a varied entrée to the composer’s art. Of special importance have been Donald Mitchell’s separate essays on the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, which, with their unusual length and expressive insight, present some of the most extensive writings on individual works by Mahler. The only existing volume dedicated solely to the symphonies analysed here is James L. Zychowicz’s *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony* (Oxford, 2000).

Moving on, the subject of narratology crystallizes out of three different branches: music and narrative, Mahler and narrative, and the wider field of narratology and world-making. Together, these orientations form a platform for exploring the concepts of world and narrative in relation to Mahler in a

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78 Originally published in German as *Gustav Mahler: Der fremde Vertraute* (Vienna, 2003).
80 The English edition forms part of a larger three-volume study in German.

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new light, using existing frameworks from various media as a springboard for that intermingling.

As for musical narrative, the works of Nattiez, Abbate, and Kramer represent some key treatments of the topic. In particular, Abbate’s *Unsung Voices* has been highly influential for both the definition and questioning of narrative in music. Fred Maus has also contributed new insights through his articles ‘Music as Narrative’ and ‘Music as drama’, presenting attempts to move away from the traditional analogies with literature. Recently, Byron Almén has published the first attempt to launch a comprehensive study of music and narrative in *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington, 2008), similarly aiming for a more musically adapted conception of narrative.

In terms of Mahler and narrative, most studies focus on finding narratives in individual works or movements, such as Anthony Newcomb’s study of plot archetypes and *Bildungsroman* (‘Narrative Archetypes and Mahler’s Ninth Symphony’) and Vera Micznik’s investigation of the story/discourse dichotomy in the same work (‘Music and Narrative Revisited: Degrees of Narrativity in Beethoven and Mahler’). Larger studies include Seth Monahan’s *Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas* (Oxford, 2015), giving considerable space to the question of Mahlerian narrative, and Robert Samuels’s *Mahler’s Sixth Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* (Cambridge, 1995). Although not solely treating narrative in Mahler, *Mahler’s Voices* by Julian Johnson contains several chapters related to it, such as ‘Ways of Telling’. Through his focus on predominantly expressive and compositional features, Johnson’s study has had a great impact on this investigation’s overall outlook.

Narratology is a huge field comprising various directions and disciplines, so I will only touch upon the most relevant here. Several comprehensive resources cover a vast array of concepts and notions used across disciplines, presenting universal reference tools for the study of narrative in general. One such manual is the online publication *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, based on the *Handbook of Narratology* by Walter de Gruyter (first published in 2009) and constantly updated with new and revised versions. Other valuable collections are *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London, 2008) and *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (Cambridge, 2007), which are available both in print and online. Very influential for narrative theories, and frequently cited in the sources mentioned, are the notions of French literary theorist Gérard Genette, whose works include *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York, 1980) and *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (New

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York, 1988). Another prominent voice is that of Seymour Chatman, also concerned with the realm of cinema.\(^5\)

For this study’s objectives, cognitive narratology as opposed to structuralism presents the main point of departure. As for the notion of storyworld and world-making practice, David Herman provides the most extensive guidance. In addition to his many entries in the universal handbooks, he is the author of *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Chichester, U.K., 2009) and *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln, NB, 2002).\(^6\) Concerning possible worlds theory, the many writings of Marie-Laure Ryan form a recurring source of information.\(^7\) In addition, she has published on the phenomenon of virtual reality, for example, the books *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore, 2001) and *Narrative as Virtual Reality 2: Revisiting Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore, 2015).

Other related works on world-making not specifically tied to the domain of narratology are Eric Hayot’s *On Literary Worlds* (Oxford, 2012), on literature as a world-creating activity, and *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis, 1978) by Nelson Goodman, which I refer to during the course of the analyses.

With regard to timbre and orchestration, most available materials are practical handbooks such as those by Hector Berlioz, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Walter Piston, and François-Auguste Gevaert.\(^8\) Recently, more comprehensive collections have emerged, such as *The Oxford Handbook on Timbre*, edited by Emily Dolan, the acclaimed author of *The Orchestral Revolution: Haydn and the Technologies of Timbre*.\(^9\) In addition, there is *Orchestration: An Anthology of Orchestration* (New York, 2006), edited by Paul Mathews, which traces the history of orchestration from the nineteenth century until today by gathering texts written by composers themselves, including Mahler.

Altug Ünlü’s dissertation about instrumentation, *Gustav Mahlers Klangwelt*,\(^9\) and Peter Jost’s chapter on Mahler’s instrumentation in *Mahler*

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\(^5\) See Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (New York, 1990), and *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (New York, 1978).

\(^6\) See also *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, edited by David Herman (Stanford, 2003).

\(^7\) See references to relevant articles in the following theoretical chapter on world-making.


\(^9\) Altug Ünlü, *Gustav Mahlers Klangwelt: Studien zur Instrumentation* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006).
Handbuch\textsuperscript{91} have provided a useful understanding of the composer’s technical handling of the orchestra and its sounds. Another, older study specifically treating Mahler’s orchestration is Schaefer’s Gustav Mahlers Instrumentation (Dissertation, Düsseldorf) from 1935.

Few investigations attempt to situate timbre in any contextual, meaning-related setting or to discuss its position in relation to other compositional parameters. Two American dissertations, Karen Painter’s The Aesthetics of the Listener: New Concepts of Musical Meaning, Timbre, and Form in the Early Reception of Mahler’s Symphonies 5–7 (Columbia University, 1996) and Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siècle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies (Cornell University, 2002) by John J. Sheinbaum, in their own ways present cultural readings of sound colour from the historical perspective of Mahler’s time. These writings have been indispensable for an understanding of both the composer’s own ideology of orchestration as well as its relationship to current traditional norms. An equally useful document is Jens Hesselager’s Making Sense of Sounds: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Ideas on Instrumentation. Centring on the relationship between sound and interpretation through its most formative period, it is a rare and successful attempt to approach the otherwise pragmatically minded realm of instrumentation from a hermeneutic perspective.

Disposition

This study consists of five chapters, with the first two following this introduction creating an interpretive platform necessary for the musical analyses of the third and fourth. To build a foundational framework for the subsequent exploration of world generation in Mahler’s symphonies, the investigation initially presents several directions and ideologies related to the wider domains of narratology and sound.

The first chapter after this introduction focuses on the theories of world-making, outlining their main points and how to apply them to musical works. I begin with a discussion of world as concept, followed by the more specific notions of storyworld and possible worlds theory. Based on the cognitive approach of worlds as created between reader and text, I argue for a corresponding interaction between listener and sound in the generation of a musical sound-world. The chapter proposes a modified and adapted model for the analysis of musical worlds in Mahler, based on the categories of space, time, characters, voices, and gestures. These categories form a lens through which I

study the contrasting opposites of life and death informing the composer’s oeuvre, crystallizing into a number of world topics.

The second chapter complements the first by centering on features representative of Mahler’s sound-world, stemming from his parallel careers as composer and conductor. The chapter discusses how these dual occupations influenced his apprehension of sound and its relation to various elements of world. Particular attention is paid to Mahler’s defining principles of instrumentation, which were on par with the dominant aesthetics of timbre at the time, approaching a more modern concept of sound design. While working in the opera house, Mahler was deeply involved in stage productions that affected his symphonic writing in terms of setting and spatiality, resulting in a musical thinking colored by theatre. As a result, the composer transformed the generic conventions of the symphony, presenting a mobile drama in sounds constructed as world.

Finally, the third and fourth chapters treat the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies movement by movement, following a disposition of topics relevant to each work. Both analyses explore the wider opposition of life and death from their respective generic positions of fairy tale and realism, aiming for a deeper understanding of Mahler’s different projections of musical imaginary worlds.

The study ends with concluding remarks constituting the fifth chapter, in which the general observations attained throughout the investigation are gathered into a summarizing, reflective discussion.
Setting the scene: foundations for musical world-making

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework of the present investigation of Mahler’s symphonies as worlds. These theories largely stem from the discipline of literary narratology. Applying literary theory may seem contradictory considering the problems of linking music and narrative presented above. However, compared with the visual staging of drama and film, both music and literature share the interactive production of an imaginative world. Literary theories of world-making can therefore function as a useful vantage point for examining how musical sounds generate imagery. Since music lacks the semantic specificity of language, however, it is different from other narrative media. The notions discussed are impossible to apply with exactness to Mahler’s oeuvre, but suggest a blueprint for explaining the construction of musical worlds.

I start with an outline of the concept and definition of ‘world’ and its application in this study. Based on the term ‘storyworld’ and on the possible worlds theory of cognitive narratology, the chapter sketches a model of the localization of musical worlds as created in interaction with the listener. After presenting the notion of sound-world and its plurality of sub-worlds, I go through the constituting categories of space, time, characters, voices, and gestures. These form the basis of the subsequent analyses of Mahler’s Fourth and Fifth Symphonies and their respective mediations on the contrasting topics of life and death.

World as concept

Most of us probably think of the world as synonymous with Earth or, in the wider sense, with the universe. However, searching for ‘world’ in Merriam Webster’s dictionary uncovers no fewer than fourteen different meanings.\[^{92}\] There is the outer, physical world and its living entities, but also worlds in terms of distinctive groups or kingdoms, such as the academic world and the

non-human animal world. In addition, each individual has access to an inner, private world of emotions, mental activity, and imagination. Thus, one finds many different kinds of worlds that exist on various levels, containing their own sets of entities, atmospheres, and so on. The world concept can function as an umbrella term to explore the plurality of worlds as manifested in Mahler’s music.

A useful definition of ‘world’ is as a totality or wholeness, ‘a total environment or surround space’. This totality consists of several sub-worlds, which in turn contain a number of different entities. They are all interconnected in various ways and coexist in one, complete world. In the analyses, I equate this totality with the symphonic work, based on Mahler’s statement that a symphony encompasses a world. In line with cognitive narratology, the emergence of an imaginative universe is a co-creation between reader and text in which both parties are dependent on each other to bring the story to life. A corresponding notion for music would mean that it is not the score that generates a world, but rather its aural performance – the sounds themselves – in contact with the perceiving listener. The score functions more as a blueprint or script of the generated sound-world, made out of the listener’s imagination.

In literary theory, the sensation of being inside a world created by the text is closely interconnected with the phenomenon of immersion. To say that someone is immersed in, for example, a book can be likened to the feeling of engulfment or experiencing oneself as imaginatively embedded in a surrounding environment. Other explanations include the transportation metaphor of Gerrig, and Ryan’s complementary term ‘fictional recentering’.

I argue that Mahler in some cases induces feelings of immersiveness, but that this is only one of many ways to perceive his music. Rather, my investigation more generally explores the various positions of the listener in relation to Mahler’s sound-world, resulting in different ways of being in and perspectives on world.

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94 For the idea of scores as scripts rather than texts, see also Nicholas Cook’s article ‘Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance’, Music Theory Online, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April, 2001).
95 Ryan, Narrative as Virtual Reality, pp. 90–99 and 68.
96 Ryan, Narrative as Virtual Reality, pp. 93–94, and Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative, pp. 119–120. See also Richard Gerrig, Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading (New Haven, 1993), pp. 10–11.
The world-making practice: storyworld and possible worlds theory

In recent decades, post-classical narratology has paid considerable attention to how readers, interlocutors, and film viewers ‘use textual cues to build up representations of the worlds evoked by stories, or storyworlds’.97 This cognitive approach recognizing narrative’s imaginative world-creating potential forms a necessary complement to the earlier focus on plot as a sequence of events.

In its most basic definition, the storyworld is the world in the story. Introduced by David Herman, storyworlds are worlds evoked by narratives in which the characters and their actions are set.98 However, even though the storyworld is about the world of the story, the reader actively participates in the creation of that world. Herman describes storyworlds as ‘mental models’,99 a kind of ‘worldmaking practice’ that enables the reader to map and make sense of narratives.100

In mentally constructing the storyworld, the reader uses knowledge and conceptual understanding from the real world, so no creation of world arises out of nothing. Citing Nelson Goodman, ‘Worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking’.101 As every subject approaches a text with various experiences and ideas of life, the imagined universe coming forth is a highly personal one, resulting in a plurality of possible worlds or world versions.102

‘Worldedness’ is a term describing the connection between the literary world and the real world, the one we are living in.103 This interlinking with reality is required in order for readers to make sense of fictional worlds, as they presume a similarity to their own existence.104

Although we can apply our knowledge of this world to that of the work of art, the latter never becomes an exact replica of the former. Since the imagination simultaneously fills in gaps in the story, the result becomes different for every individual.

97 Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative, p. 106.
98 Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative, pp. 106–107. See also Herman’s definition of ‘storyworld’ in Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory: Readers and the like ‘do not merely reconstruct a sequence of events and a set of existents but also imaginatively (emotionally, viscerally) inhabit a world where things matter […] both for narrative participants and for interpreters of story’.
99 A mental model, together with discourse model, is referred to in Herman, ‘Storyworld’, Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory, as ‘non-linguistic representations of the situation(s) described by a sentence or set of sentences, i.e., a discourse’.
100 Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative, pp. 106–107.
104 Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative, p. 114.
Possible worlds theory or worlds within the story

A concept that both overlaps with and expands on the notion of storyworld is that of possible worlds. Just like storyworlds, this theory presents a cognitive approach to world-making in that it develops the more traditional view of stories as a sequence of events to one in which the virtual, could-be-possible co-exists with the actual, hard facts of the fictional world.

Possible worlds theory (PWT) emerged in the field of literary studies and narratology in the mid-1970s as an adaptation of models originating from modal logic in analytical philosophy.\textsuperscript{105} Modal logic forms part of formal semantics and is concerned with the degree of truth in propositions expressing possibility and necessity.\textsuperscript{106} Possible worlds in narrative have since the advent of this theory been developed and applied in many different ways.\textsuperscript{107} Instead of presenting an account of all of these directions, I have chosen some aspects relevant to this investigation of the musical worlds of Mahler outlined in the next section.

The premise of PWT is that reality is a universe consisting of a number of plural worlds. Rather than representing a sum of what only exists physically, these worlds also include the imaginable, i.e., that which is just a possibility. This universe is structured as a hierarchical solar system, in which one central element functions as the reference point for all the other members of the system. The centre signifies the actual world, the one we are living in, while the others are non-actual, alternative possible worlds. A major concern with this model has been how to define which of all these worlds qualifies as the actual one. From an absolutist view, the actual world is ontologically different from possible ones in claiming an autonomous, physical existence. All other worlds are then the result of some kind of mental activity, for example, dreaming, imagining, and storytelling. From the perspective of modal realism, on the other hand, all possible worlds are actualized in some world, independently of our thinking of them. The actual world then means the one where the speaker is currently located, that is, ‘the world where I am situated’ right now.\textsuperscript{108}

For a world to classify as possible, the principal requirement is a relation of accessibility to the actual one. As Ryan acknowledges, one can understand this definition in various ways, the most common one having to do with the

\textsuperscript{105} See the extensive summary of PWT in Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds’, \textit{LHN}. For a more detailed outline of the various models, see, for example, Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds: Ontological Pluralism in Physics, Narratology, and Narrative’, \textit{Poetics Today}, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 633–674.
\textsuperscript{106} Ryan, ‘From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds: Ontological Pluralism in Physics, Narratology, and Narrative’, p. 644.
\textsuperscript{107} In addition to Ryan, most prominently by scholars such as Eco, Pavel, Dolozel, and Ronen. For an overview of the history of possible worlds theory and its various applications to literature, see Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds’, \textit{LHN}, and Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory’, \textit{Style}, Vol. 26, No. 4, Bibliographical Essays (Winter, 1992), pp. 528–553.
\textsuperscript{108} See Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds’, \textit{LHN}. 
logical laws of possibility. Following this model, propositions count as necessary, possible, impossible, or true, depending on in how many of the different worlds they appear true and false, respectively.\footnote{Ryan, ‘From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds’, pp. 644–645.}

In applying possible worlds theory to literature, Ryan suggests a similar system of the coexistence of multiple worlds.\footnote{Marie-Laure Ryan’s many articles on possible worlds also include ‘From Possible Worlds to Storyworlds: On the Worldness of Narrative’, \textit{Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology}, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan and Alice Bell (Nebraska, 2012), pp. 62–87.} She defines the centre as the ‘textual actual world’ – the world assumed as actual in the narrative – around which a range of possible worlds orbits like satellites, differing from it in distance and degree. According to Ryan, this shared modal structure is a common feature of most narrative universes, helping the reader in the sense-making process of the story. In contrast to the narrative facts of the actual world, possible worlds are those created by the characters through the mental acts of imagining, dreaming, and so on. Hence, possible worlds theory is about the possible world-making taking place inside the world of the literary work. These worlds together form entire private universes of model worlds, such as desires and obligations, wish-worlds, and fantasy-worlds. They each centre on their own epistemic world, based on each character’s view of both the actual world and the private ones of other characters.\footnote{See Ryan, ‘Narrative as Virtual Reality, p. 103; Ryan, ‘From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds’, pp. 644–649; Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds Theory’, 3.2.1. “Narrative Semantics”; Herman, \textit{Basic Elements of Narrative}, pp. 120–122.}

In relation to storyworld, the idea of possible worlds suggests that literary texts do not project only one single world, but rather a universe of many different worlds.\footnote{See Ryan, ‘From Possible Worlds to Storyworlds’, pp. 62–63.} Thus, PWT expands the notion of storyworlds into a wider totality in which its various sub-worlds exist in an interconnected system.

In addition to the existence of possible worlds inside a storyworld, one can also ascribe the aspect of possibility to storyworlds in their entirety. Since these are products of the imagination, the projected worlds are possible in the sense that they ultimately present things that could be rather than are. To clarify, in this study, I am not investigating this aspect of fiction, storyworld being a broader concept than fictional world in that it refers to both fictional and factual stories.\footnote{See Ryan, ‘From Possible Worlds to Storyworlds’, pp. 64–65.} Since my main objective instead concerns how listeners, through imagination, create worlds out of sound, the fictional becomes irrelevant. However, I find the division of genre types in relation to fictional worlds to be useful for the definition of the symphonies’ fairy-tale and realistic generic worlds, albeit applied to the notion of storyworld.

The fictive, possible world of the story varies similarly to our real existence. This degree of distance in terms of possibility serves as a dividing line
for a theory of genre or a typology of fictional worlds, approximately corre-
sponding to realistic versus fantastic texts.\textsuperscript{114} Whereas a story taking place in
Paris may recall the real world in its details, fairy tales and science fiction are
situated at the furthest pole of possibility. This relation to actuality in fictional
worlds is crucial for how we relate to and immerse ourselves in their, appar-
ently, non-existent narrative universes. An imaginative recentring takes place
within ‘the actual world of the fictional system of reality’.\textsuperscript{115} Even though pos-
sible worlds are dominated by their own logic, they must make sense as
worlds.

Musical worlds

Starting from the presented theories of world-making, in this section I outline
how these can be applied to the present study of worlds in Mahler’s sympho-
nies. Based on the relevant parts of these theories that are transferable to mu-
ic, I propose a modified and elaborated model with which to explore a plu-
rality of worlds from various aspects and perspectives.

The notion of storyworld as the result of a cognitive interaction between
text and reader corresponds to that of aurally perceived sounds and listener.
One can equate storyworld to a musical sound-world, which is a spatially de-
defined universe similar to that of a narrative. Sound-world is a concept I borrow
from Jens Hesselager, who developed this useful term from our perception of
world-sound.\textsuperscript{116} However, in contrast to literature, the worlds evoked by
sounds do not tell stories in the same detailed sense, which is why the usage
of storyworld here instead refers to the emergence of an imaginative world
and its multifaceted content.

In the same way as the reader uses knowledge and experiences from the
real world, I argue that similar connections to our environment play a crucial
role in the generation of worlds through listening. This worldedness is even
more important for musical interpretation since it mainly communicates
through emotions, expressions, and so on. Language here becomes a necessary
tool with which to relate to and orient oneself in the sound-world. Especially
relevant are metaphorical concepts, which permeate the experience of spatial-
ity (in terms of binaries of high–low, up–down, etc.) and embodiment, as well
as evocations of timbres in terms of, for example, darkness and light. Tradi-
tionally, musical works have often provided listeners with programmes or ti-
tles signalling atmospheres, images, or even entire narratives. While such

\textsuperscript{114} See Ryan, ‘Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory’, “Genre theory/topology of fictional
worlds”, pp. 536–540; and Ryan, ‘From Possible worlds to Storyworlds’, “Distance”, pp. 65–
68.

\textsuperscript{115} Ryan, ‘From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds’, p. 646.

guides are useful as signposts, in this investigation I am more interested in how textual cues in the manner of soundposts serve as interpretive triggers for the imaginative construction of storyworld. These might be of different kinds, such as established topics and genre connotations, or specific timbres and textural organizations evoking various aspects found in the real world.

Furthermore, storyworld together with the expanded possible worlds theory provides a framework for the exploration of multiple types of worlds in Mahler’s symphonies. As a totality comprising a network of sub-worlds, storyworld is thus comparable to the entire musical work, in this case one symphony. This means that the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies present their own storyworlds, respectively, although both are constructed from the same categories of world. The movements of each symphony relate in various ways to the storyworld of the complete work; sometimes, they present one world within the whole, but mostly they contain several. One world can present many stories and one story can present many worlds. Worlds can also appear to be coming from outside the storyworld, which in Mahler is often manifested through instances of ‘breakthrough’ or marked changes in timbre and texture. The distinction between inside and outside the storyworld corresponds to two types of narrative elements: intradiegetic ones existing within the storyworld, and extradiegetic ones not literally forming part of the storyworld but playing an important role in its presentation. On several occasions in the analyses, I apply the similar terms ‘diegetic’ and ‘non-diegetic’ used in the study of film music, with diegetic music coming from a source within the film’s diegesis – its storyworld – and non-diegetic music, by contrast, not originating from the diegesis.

In looking at all the different sound-worlds that together form the symphonies’ entire sound-worlds, I make a general distinction loosely based on possible worlds theory between what can be termed a main central world and other possible ones. With the main world, I envision the outer physical realm of places, milieus, and events that provide space and locations for its containing entities. This principal realm of the storyworld can be mediated in various ways, most readily as mental images or scenes of the surroundings, but also through acts of narration and speech. As in the system of possible worlds demonstrated by Ryan, the actual world functions as a starting point in relation to possible worlds, which is useful in the differentiation of sound-worlds with deviating timbres. However, I want to specify the main world of the music’s

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storyworld further in terms of thematizing its different worlds into various kinds or topics. Examples of these types of worlds are social worlds, which might include dance milieus or conversations, and natural worlds (e.g., landscapes and natural processes such as storms). Often, these are apprehended as being separated or situated at some distance from each other, creating an imaginatively coherent geography.¹²⁰

As for possible worlds, I interpret them as the inner, private spheres of the story’s characters. While music lacks the ability to precisely delineate the inherent model worlds of wishes, desires, and so on, it offers a rich presence of passages with particular subjective emotiveness, which all these worlds start from. In addition, one finds in Mahler timbres evocative of dreams or other imaginary places that point beyond the borders of the main world. In the symphonies, all these possible worlds are marked by differences in sound and atmosphere, often together with abrupt sectional changes or ruptures. However, in my analyses, I argue that possible worlds also exist without the imaginary activity of characters. Depending on the genre, worlds normally conceived as unattainable in the real world become accessible, such as the place of heaven and Death’s realm in the fairy-tale world of the Fourth Symphony.

A crucial point for my investigation of worlds, both main and possible ones, is the aspect of point of view or focalization, which affects our perception of them. Here, one can speak of worldviews or world versions, resulting in different ways of seeing and being in the world. Some of these are the perspectives of the storyworld’s characters, who ‘cue’ the mediation of world, but many stem from the various positions of the listener in relation to the surrounding sounds. In this sense, I suggest that musical worlds are mostly made by and for the listener, thereby proposing a storyworld in which listeners to a greater degree assume the roles of participating characters or actual agents. This also means that sound-worlds defined as possible can exist without the presence of characters, since the listener becomes the imagining, possible world-making subject.

All the worlds that constitute the entire storyworld coexist and relate to one another in an interconnected system. In contrast to the static satellite structure of PWT, however, the mobile construction of musical worlds through sound suggests a much more fluid spectrum of such systems. In relation to the vantage point of a base or main world, other worlds can attain many shapes and forms. In this investigation I therefore broaden the design by analysing worlds in terms of levels, layers, and oscillations – to name but a few examples. Moreover, studying musical works using a listening approach also means that world structures are continuous processes that change over time. Seth Monahan has proposed the term ‘transsymphonic’ narrative to explain thematic recurrences

¹²⁰ See Ryan, ‘Space’, LHN.
across movements in Mahler’s symphonies. For my purpose of localizing different worlds over an entire work, such re-hearings also present the possibility of re-establishing and developing the same world, which is why I suggest the complementary term ‘transworld narrative’.

Related to this system of worlds is the transportation between them. The analyses investigate the means by which Mahler transports the listener into and out of these worlds, across lesser as well as greater distances. Some examples of such transitions are wide, ascending intervalllic gestures, scalar collapses, thresholds, sudden rests, or even total silences.

This study explores the sound-worlds that form Mahler’s storyworld in terms of a number of different categories: space, time, characters, voices, and gestures. I have chosen these categories based on their fundamental functions in narratology as well as their universal importance for human experience. Just as with the theory of possible worlds, my selection originates from what I have found to be relevant and applicable to music.

Space and time are the constitutive elements of narrative, representing the where and when components of storyworlds. Together with event and action sequences, they are the organizing principles of the imaginative universe’s populating entities, such as characters, objects, and places.

In the musical realm, the closest one gets to the presence of characters in narrative media is the idea of virtual human agents, an idea most prominently developed by Robert Hatten. This theory is not about actual agents but the music’s simulation of the actions, emotions, and reactions of a human agent. The virtual defines something that can imaginatively substitute for the actual; it underlines the imaginative interactive participation of the listener in relation to the music’s sounds, in contrast to the virtually real one of VR technique.

Closely related to virtual human agency and applied in my analyses are Klorman’s theory of multiple agency and Cone’s discussions of agents in his classic work The Composer’s Voice. From these vantage points, I study many different kinds of musical agencies such as performative, narrative, and subjective. In addition, I also suggest agencies specific to Mahler’s compositions, such as world-organizational forces analogous to directors. In general, virtual human agency forms a crucial feature when looking at the perspectives of world in relation to the listener’s position.

Intimately bound up with human agency are the categories of voices and gestures, which also play a prominent part in this exploration of virtual human

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121 Seth Monahan, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 87.
122 Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative, p. 128.
124 See Robert Hatten, A Theory of Virtual Human Agency (Indiana, 2018).
125 Hatten, A Theory of Virtual Human Agency, pp. 1–2.
agents in music. However, I take these aspects further by proposing ‘disem-
bodied’ voices existing outside the storyworld that do not necessarily have to represent humanlike agents, inducing the effects of, for example, cinematic voice-over narration. In the same way, gestures can function as analogies of several phenomena found in the world beyond expressions and speech, for example, processes over time, collapses, and the like.

The categories presented constitute a lens through which I examine the contrasts and specifics of Mahler’s sound-world. As a creative director, he collects materials from the real world that migrate into an imaginative work of art. Recalling Goodman’s definition of worldmaking, new worlds arise out of existing ones. Mahler’s world materials consist of, for example, emotions, moods, and places, but they all centre on a diversity of binaries with a vantage point in the fundamental dichotomy of life and death. From this nucleus, the music presents variations on topics such as darkness and light, the grotesque and the beautiful, irony/humour and sincerity, dreams and realism, nature and the urban. These world topics are constantly in play in the symphonies and reworked into spectra of shifting nuances so that, in Mahler, one can speak of a discourse on world.

In my view, these topics derived from reality illustrate what Mahler himself envisioned as the act of creation – that to compose is like playing with bricks that have lain there since one’s early years. The stones, always the same, are then used to construct different and continuously new buildings of sound.\footnote{\textit{Composing is like playing with bricks, continually making new buildings from the same old stones. But the stones have lain there since one’s youth, which is the only time for gathering and hoarding them. They are all ready and shaped for use from that time}. Mahler in NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 131.}

In the next chapter, I look at several prominent aspects of Mahler’s instrumentation that form crucial compositional elements of this world-building procedure.
Mahler’s sound-world: merging drama and tone

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework of world-making in narratology and its suggested application to music. The focus now shifts to the specific features characterizing Mahler’s sound-world, concentrating on the composer’s instrumentation practices. These form a springboard for exploring his music as worlds generated by means of sound.

Although instrumentation was of special concern in Mahler’s symphonic composing, his knowledge of and interest in the topic was also closely connected to his chief occupation as a conductor. These parallel careers influenced both his unique conception of sound and, by extension, various features of world. In relation to instrumentation, Mahler himself emphasized the importance of factors such as clarity, singability, and variation. These are crucial for understanding his compositional thinking, and I will address them in the following.

Just as defining is Mahler’s experience from the opera house, where observations of the orchestra’s acoustic possibilities in combination with scenic aspects of drama and spatiality influenced his way of creating music. By integrating these theatrical elements with the traditional form of the symphony, Mahler broke and modified common generic boundaries. As I will show in the ensuing analyses, this resulted in a kind of musical staging or mise-en-scène, mediated through a telling in scenes defined by spatial mobility.

One must also understand Mahler’s view of instrumentation in relation to his own time and the prevailing judgement of what was valuable in a musical artwork. Mahler regarded timbre as an important means of clear and unambiguous expression, on par with other aspects of composition. This position stood in contrast to contemporary views of timbre as subordinated to pitch and other structural parameters, pointing towards a more modern conception approaching the art of sound design.

Historical implications: timbre during the fin-de-siècle

As discussed in the introductory part on theory and method, the aspects of timbre and orchestration have traditionally attracted less attention than other, structural compositional elements such as form, pitch, and harmony. This goes
for musicological research both in general and specifically with reference to Mahler, whose particular sound is typically treated as a secondary feature instead of itself being the principal object of attention. In Mahler’s case, that is especially remarkable since instrumentation forms one of the most prominent characteristics of his music, already noticed by the critics of his time.

There are many reasons for this prevailing situation. As previously mentioned, it is particularly difficult to study and there are fewer analytical tools with which to do so, and we lack applicable rules and pedagogical traditions. However, the circumstances also mirror and can be traced back to historical contexts of reception and their specific value judgements about orchestration, opinions that might still be influential.

During the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, the dominant aesthetics viewed timbre as lower in the hierarchy than other compositional elements. This is, for example, reflected in the definition of instrumentation as a secondary parameter compared with the primary ones of form, harmony, and pitch. Because of its associations with sensuality and surface, sound was deemed an external feature of the musical work, functioning as ‘clothes’ for music’s essential substance and inner meaning.\(^\text{128}\)

A further illustration of the lesser status of instrumentation can be found in several dichotomies prevalent in Mahler’s time, such as the opposition between absolute music and programme music. In the former, there was the treasuring of a neutral, evened-out timbre, in contrast to the latter’s romantic ideal of employing the instruments in a more individual way, evoking narrative and extra-musical qualities.\(^\text{129}\) For some of Mahler’s critics, the attribution of programmatic meaning to his oeuvre was a way of diminishing its novel features, including its orchestration.\(^\text{130}\) Another analogy concerned with timbre that was applied during the nineteenth century was the differentiation between musical ‘drawing’ and musical ‘painting’. Whereas drawing referred to the abstract musical structure, built of pitches and durations, the painting comprised the instrumental colouring of that structure – i.e., the orchestration. Hesselager ascribes to musical drawing a subsidiary function to musical painting, since it illustrates only some of the work’s dimensions.\(^\text{131}\) In contrast to established norms, he regards the full, orchestrated version of the painting as more complete, enabling the hearing of all elements, such as dynamics and articulation. This interpretation indicates that it is the actual sound of music, and not its constructive skeleton, that represents the concrete totality. Moreo-

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\(^{130}\) Painter, *The Aesthetics of the Listener*, p. 16.

ver, I would claim that it signals orchestral design as a force in necessary dialogue with the other compositional components, further underlying the validity of multivalence in both analysis and listening.

Significant in the metaphorical drawing–painting antithesis are the roles of the piano and symphony orchestra, respectively. Whereas timbre is virtually insignificant in the piano reduction of a work, in its full realized performance, instrumental differentiations become essential. In relation to Mahler and his reception, the piano as a standard instrument in bourgeois homes had quite a defining function considering that, for many listeners, it presented their first contact with music later experienced in the concert hall. By learning piano arrangements of symphonic works before hearing them in concert, timbre became mainly associated with specific performances, reinforcing it as something interchangeable outside the musical core. As will become evident in the next section on Mahler and timbre, the composer had quite a different view of the relationship between the piano and orchestration, and consequently between structure and tone colour.

Mahler’s life and career coincided with the turbulent fin-de-siècle era, when timbre gained increased importance as a musical parameter, while simultaneously becoming further charged with negative connotations. The musical development in this period is of special interest considering that Mahler composed the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies during the years 1899–1902. In Austro-German culture, the so-called emancipation of timbre at the turn of the century was especially unpopular, since it threatened the important status of the symphony as absolute music, despite the fact that timbre was a central feature of musical modernism.

At a time when society was moving towards collapse and decadence, tensions connected to wider cultural issues played out in music and its reception, especially in the perception of timbre. Some of the fears characterizing the fin-de-siècle were the degradation of order, femininity, and the outsider. Because of his spectacular orchestration and conducting technique as well as his prominent position as a Jew on Vienna’s cultural scene, Mahler became especially vulnerable to these tensions.

The foregrounding of timbre also meant a new mode of listening for symphonic concertgoers and critics alike. To avoid acknowledging the uncomfortable aspect of physical, bodily sensations believed to induce passivity in the

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135 John Sheinbaum, *Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siecle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies* (Cornell University, 2002), pp. 21–43. Karen Painter further discusses the relationship between femininity and timbre in her Ph.D. thesis. Critics at the time degraded timbre by feminizing it, regarding it as synonymous to cosmetics, jewellery, and dressing-up. See pp. 130–137.
136 Sheinbaum, *Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siecle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies*, especially pp. 36–41.
listener, critics turned to a number of common tropes such as *Effekten* and visual metaphors of colour.\textsuperscript{137} By doing so, critics could direct attention towards an object rather than the subjective, uncontrollable feelings of the individual listener.

Against this background, it should come as no surprise that Mahler’s distinctive instrumentation received significant attention, albeit mostly for negative reasons. He was praised as a technically skilled, virtuoso orchestrator, but the conservatives labelled this as a sign of thematic weakness. Since orchestration belonged to the physical realm of technique, it was considered lower than the spiritual and intellectual realm.\textsuperscript{138}

Mahler’s emphasis on orchestration overthrew the prevailing hierarchy of pitch as primary and timbre as secondary, then seen as mutually exclusive modes of expression. Paradoxically, this was not how he seemed to approach the dichotomy himself. In contrast to the opinion of his critics, he was in fact putting the idea of the work first, only that the means for doing so was by an unusual application of variety of tone.

### Mahler and timbre

This section examines Mahler’s own conception of instrumentation and the specific principles that define it. These principles are significant not only for understanding the composer’s creational process, but also for interlinking his music with various elements of world. It is significant that Mahler also mentions world in different senses in connection with many of his statements related to orchestration. The principles discussed here are similar to some of the *Maximen* initially presented by Altug Ünlü in his dissertation on Mahler’s *Klangwelt: Deutlichkeit, Gesanglichkeit, Primat der Melodie, Tonglanz* and *Wechsel und Gegensätzlichkeit*.\textsuperscript{139} My main objective, however, is the implications of those for Mahler’s sound as world and for the means by which his compositional techniques generate and develop that world.

Despite the strong reactions to and apparent originality of his orchestration, we actually know very little about Mahler’s own view of the matter. Unlike many other contemporary composers, he did not keep a diary or convey his musical thoughts through written prose.\textsuperscript{140} Apart from the extensive recollections of Bauer-Lechner, any comments related to instrumental thinking only

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\textsuperscript{138} Painter, *The Aesthetics of the Listener*, p. 98.


\textsuperscript{140} Gustav Mahler, ‘Statements on Orchestration’, *Orchestration: An Anthology of Writings*, pp. 47–52. See also p. 45.
occasionally appear in Mahler’s letters and correspondence. Mahler’s statements in relation to orchestration nevertheless crystallize into a number of decisive points, despite the sparse documentation.

One of the composer’s most recurring mottos concerning instrumentation concerns the elements of clarity and layers of voices. In connection to a performance of Carmen, which he praised for its ‘wonderful orchestration’, he told Bauer-Lechner:

The most important thing in composition is clarity of line [der reine Satz] – that is, every voice should be an independent melody, just as in the vocal quartet, which should set the standard here. In the string ensemble, the texture is transparent enough in its own right. This becomes less and less true as the orchestra grows bigger, but the need for a similar clarity must remain. Just as the plant’s most perfect forms, the flower and the thousand branches of the tree, are developed from the pattern of the simple leaf – just as the human head is nothing but a vertebra – so must the laws of pure vocal polyphony [der reinen Führung des Vokalsatzes] be observed even in the most complex orchestral texture.\[^{141}\]

Hence, in contrast to the opinions of his critics, for Mahler timbre was not a superficial, exterior device but rather a composite means to achieve exactness in what he wanted to say. Far from having the function of colour or dressing-up, it served as a medium of expression: ‘Instrumentation is not there for the sake of sound-effects, but to bring out clearly what one wants to say’.\[^{142}\] He even warned young composers against succumbing to the ‘dangerous ground’ of ‘mood-music’.\[^{143}\] Mahler’s reformulation of substantial idea and instrumentation into a single coherent unit disrupted their alleged roles as exclusive parameters at the time. The claim that ‘what one writes always seemed to me more important than what it is scored for’\[^{144}\] simultaneously underlines the value of thematic material in relation to orchestration.

It seems that Mahler himself was aware of the novelty of his conception of sound, considering these words: ‘Where I think I am ahead of other composers, both past and present […] is in the matter of what one might call clarity [Deutlichkeit]. I demand that everything must be heard exactly as it sounds in my inner ear. To achieve this, I exploit all available means to the utmost. Each instrument must be used only in the appropriate place, and according to its own individual qualities’.\[^{145}\]

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141 NBL, Recollections, p. 75.
142 NBL, Recollections, p. 178.
143 In a letter to Max Marschalk, offering advice to a young composer. Gustav Mahler, ‘Statements on Orchestration’, Orchestration: An Anthology of Writings, p. 48.
144 In a letter to Max Marschalk (4 December 1896). Cited in Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 40.
145 NBL, Recollections, p. 68.
There is also reason to believe that this concept of independent voices, in addition to the vocal quartet, found inspiration in the organization and distinctiveness of sounds in the real world. A detailed remark in Bauer-Lechner captures Mahler’s unusual understanding of polyphony:

Mahler told us at table that, on the woodland path to Klagenfurt with W. (who had come to settle the repertoire [of the Opera]) he was much disturbed by a barrel-organ, whose noise seemed not to bother W. in the least. ‘But when a second one began to play, W. expressed horror at the caterwauling – which now, however, was beginning to amuse me. And when, into the bargain, a military band struck up in the distance, he covered up his ears, protesting vigorously – whereas I was listening with such delight that I wouldn’t move from the spot’. When Rosé expressed surprise at this, Mahler said, ‘If you like my symphonies, you must like that too!’ The following Sunday, we went on the same walk with Mahler. At the fête on the Kreuzberg, an even worse witches’ sabbath was in progress. Not only were innumerable barrel-organs blaring out from merry-go-rounds, swings, shooting-galleries and puppet shows, but a military band and a men’s choral society had established themselves there as well. All these groups, in the same forest clearing, were creating an incredible musical pandemonium without paying the slightest attention to each other. Mahler exclaimed: ‘You hear? That’s polyphony, and that’s where I get it from! Even when I was quite a small child, in the woods at Iglau, this sort of thing used to move me strangely, and impressed itself upon me. For it’s all the same whether heard in a din like this or in the singing of thousands of birds; in the howling of the storm, the lapping of the waves, or the crackling of the fire. Just in this way – from quite different directions – must the themes appear; and they must be just as different from each other in rhythm and melodic character (everything else is merely many-voiced writing, homophony in disguise). The only difference is that the artist orders and unites them all into one concordant and harmonious whole’.146

Apart from underlining the importance of all themes’ independence from one another, the above quotation introduces many of the concepts in Mahler’s music that are relatable to perceptions of world. This primarily concerns the dimension of spatiality resulting from multi-directional sound and the simultaneous presence of heterogeneous materials, with Mahler, in addition to timbre, highlighting the instrumental parts by means of dynamics and a rhythmic Eigenprofil.147 In relation to this passage, Thomas Peattie speaks of ‘environmental sound’, arguing that the composer makes no distinction between sounds of nature and noise (‘Lärm’).148 These passages describing the sound of Mahler’s surroundings indeed play a crucial role in my interpretation, and I regard them as marking particular places and settings in the musical sound-

146 NBL, Recollections, pp. 155–156.
148 See Peattie, Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes, pp. 54–55.
world where timbre in combination with spatial construction often produce a
defining territorial atmosphere.

Mahler’s striving for clarity and pure texture demanded a precision of tone
reflected in the carefully detailed performance directions in his scores. As
Johnson observes, these not only relate to tone colour but also concern partic-
ular modes of attack and articulation, such as different forms of hitting or
striking.\textsuperscript{149} Often, Mahler attains a certain expression by exaggerating the tone,
as though heated from within:

If I want to produce a soft, subdued sound, I don’t give it to an instrument
which produces it easily, but rather to one which can get it only by effort and
under pressure – often only by forcing itself and exceeding its natural range. I
often make the basses and bassoon squeak on the highest notes, while my flutes
huffs and puffs down below.\textsuperscript{150}

This exaggeration is also at work in the attainment of brutal, physical sound
on the concert stage, illustrated by the instrumental players’ visible move-
ments, as when brass and winds are asked to play with ‘bells up’ (‘Schalltrichter auf’). Mahler exploits sonority in its materiality, aiming for
effects beyond the purely beautiful, which shows in his many grotesque dis-
tortions of sound.

The composer once admitted his concerns about succeeding in precise scor-
ing to Bauer-Lechner:

You wouldn’t believe how anxiously and carefully I proceed in my composi-
tions. In fact, I have worked out quite a new orchestral technique – the direct
result of my long experience. For instance, when the musical meaning requires
consecutive notes to be played disconnectedly, I don’t leave this up to the com-
mon sense of the players.\textsuperscript{151}

Nor did this accuracy in achieving the right expression apply only to his end-
less revisions of his own works, but was also extended to reorchestrations of
masterworks familiar to Mahler through a lifelong career as a conductor. The
best-known example might be his re-scorings of Beethoven’s symphonies,\textsuperscript{152}
which faced harsh criticism.\textsuperscript{153} Tellingly, in these \textit{Retuschen} is that they – com-
pared with other conductors’ – are largely concerned with dynamics and in-
strumentation.\textsuperscript{154} If one adds to this Herta Blaukopf’s claim that Mahler almost

\textsuperscript{149} Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{150} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{151} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, pp. 45–46.
\textsuperscript{152} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{153} Sheinbaum, \textit{Timbre, Form, and Fin-de-Siècle Refractions in Mahler’s Symphonies}, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{154} David Picket, ‘Arrangements and Retuschen: Mahler and Werktreue’, \textit{The Cambridge Com-
never intervened in the compositional structure of a work.\textsuperscript{155} it becomes clear that for him, it was all about the tone.

That the act of composition was inextricable from instrumental thinking especially shines through in relation to Mahler’s perception of the piano–orchestra dichotomy. In a letter to Marschalk offering advice on composition, he writes: ‘Next, you must shake off the \textit{pianist}! None of this is a movement for an \textit{orchestra} – it is conceived for the piano – and then rearranged for orchestra without getting free of the trammels of that \textit{instrument}.\textsuperscript{156} Similarly, he replied to a musician claiming that he could orchestrate a song in two hours:

\begin{quote}
And in such a change in medium, everything would in fact have to be created anew! It would not work simply to score the piano part for instruments to which it did not correspond, just as a translation of poetry from a foreign language only works if a free rendering, not literal rendition, is given.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

These statements suggest that Mahler saw a profound interconnection between composition and orchestration, i.e., between structure and sound. By violating the standard procedure of \textit{first} composing at the piano and \textit{then} orchestrating, he simultaneously dismissed the prevailing concept of pitch as superior to timbre.\textsuperscript{158} Hence, proceeding neither by drawing nor by painting as colouring, Mahler’s way of creating is through a kind of coalescence of the two, approaching the more modern concept of sound design. Instead of taking the piano as the point of departure, in his letter to Marschalk he emphasizes the old masters’ origins of the \textit{violin} and the \textit{voice}.\textsuperscript{159} In my view, this points to the guiding principle of his own instrumentation, which derives from chamber music but is transferred to the independent lines of the orchestral apparatus.\textsuperscript{160} Consequently, what emerges is a compositional method differing from the ideals at the time, when what one wanted to say was closely tied up with \textit{Klang}.

The point of departure in the voice and violin leads to another crucial principle of Mahler’s instrumentation. When discussing a performance of Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony, he thought that a ‘sustained melodic line’ was missing. He then explained to Bauer-Lechner that ‘the melodic [gesanglichen] and the rhythmic passages which make up the whole must be clearly shaped at all

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\footnote{155}{Herta Blaukopf, ‘Mahler as Conductor in the Opera House and Concert Hall’, \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Mahler}, pp. 165–177, p. 176.}
\footnote{156}{Gustav Mahler, ‘Statements on Orchestration’, \textit{Orchestration: An Anthology of Writings}, p. 49.}
\footnote{157}{Cited in Painter, \textit{The Aesthetics of the Listener}, p. 92.}
\footnote{158}{Painter, \textit{The Aesthetics of the Listener}, p. 92.}
\footnote{159}{Gustav Mahler, ‘Statements on Orchestration’, \textit{Orchestration: An Anthology of Writings}, p. 49.}
\footnote{160}{‘The larger the orchestra, and the more complicated the texture, then the more important it becomes that each voice be an independent line’. NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 75.}
\end{footnotes}
times’. The concept of *Gesanglichkeit* or ‘singability’ relates both to Mahler’s earlier expressed striving for clarity and the importance of contour, as well as to the *Primat der Melodie*. All these features have importance for my interpretation of virtual human agents and their various expressions through different kinds of voices. Mahler frequently exploits the presence of actual song through the human voice, but it is remarkable how his aspiration for lyrical melody can apply to any instrument: ‘In my work, the bassoon, the bass tuba, even the kettle-drum must be tuneful!’

In his advice to Marschalk, Mahler highlighted ‘Variety and contrast! That is, as it always was, the secret of effectiveness!’ This dictum illustrates all the ever-evolving and constant shifts that run through Mahler’s music, in which timbre often plays a significant role. It has implications both for the expressive plurality of his works as worlds, and for their overarching compositional techniques.

Mahler was highly conscious of the expansion of the orchestra and its meaning for the art of orchestration. He saw in the rise of modernism a need for a wider palette of emotions in order for the composer to mediate his ideas. With a larger orchestral apparatus there also came new possibilities to convey great thoughts. Consequently, compared with earlier eras when interpretation came down to the performers rather than the composer, this evolution of sound in Mahler’s opinion also resulted in a greater risk of misinterpretation, partly explaining his notorious attention to scoring.

For Mahler, the increased expressive range was synonymous with a modulation from more ‘basic’ emotions to a fuller scale also encompassing nuances and transitions of these:

> [...] from now on the *fundamentals* are no longer mood – that is to say, mere sadness, etc. – but also the transition from one to the other – conflicts – physical nature and its effect on us – humour and poetic ideas – all these become objects of musical imitation.

The third point in his summary of paradigms conveyed to Marschalk suggests the translation of this widened spectrum of emotions into an extended orchestral palette, here likened to the colours of the rainbow:

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161 NBL, *Recollections*, p. 44–45.
162 NBL, *Recollections*, p. 75.
165 Gustav Mahler, ‘Statements on Orchestration’, *Orchestration: An Anthology of Writings*, pp. 51–52: ‘We moderns need such a great apparatus in order to express our ideas, whether they be great or small.’
First – because we are compelled, in order to protect ourselves from false interpretation, to distribute the various colours of our rainbow over various palettes; secondly, because our eye is learning to distinguish more and more colors in the rainbow, and ever more delicate and subtle modulation; thirdly, because in order to be heard by many in our overlarge concert halls and opera-houses we also have to make a loud noise.\(^{167}\)

Apart from emphasizing the concept of expressive variation, Mahler’s statements couple the broader scale of emotions with those of orchestral colours, again underlining timbre’s significance for the mediation of the composer’s idea. By arguing for emotive expansion, Mahler also defied the prevailing epistemological model of the time, which held that a symphony should unfold in a ‘logical’ manner and only include emotions seen as psychologically necessary.\(^{168}\) Together with some of his contemporaries, the composer instead favoured an epistemological model of imagination and the unconscious.\(^{169}\) In addition to emotions, this also included gestures and various kinds of human utterances, mirroring a desire for expressive completeness unique to music:

> When one wants to make music, one cannot want to paint, write poetry, or describe. But the music one makes is always the entire person (thus thinking, breathing, feeling, etc.).\(^{170}\)

Analogous to the view of the symphony as encompassing an entire world, it should also include all possible utterances. This mirrors my analytical discussion of the mediation of thoughts, sighs, and other types of humanlike manifestations in addition to those of speech.

Mahler’s concept of variation has been codified in what Adorno later termed the ‘variant technique’.\(^{171}\) This compositional method differs from that of the traditional variation form of other composers, such as the notion of ‘developing variations’ applied by Arnold Schoenberg to the music of Brahms.\(^{172}\) According to Adorno, Mahler’s variant distinguishes itself from Schoenberg’s principle as ‘a technical formula for the epic and novel-like element of the always different yet identical figures’; analogous to ‘gestalts’, the composer’s themes constantly change but without losing their recognizability as themes, similar to characters in a novel.\(^{173}\) Adorno’s analysis of Mahler’s technique

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\(^{167}\) Gustav Mahler, ‘Statements on Orchestration’, Orchestration: An Anthology of Writings, p. 52.
\(^{168}\) Painter, The Aesthetics of the Listener, p. 44.
\(^{169}\) Painter, The Aesthetics of the Listener, p. 51.
\(^{171}\) See Adorno, Mahler, Chapter 5 ‘Variant and Form’, especially p. 86.
\(^{173}\) Adorno, Mahler, pp. 72 and 86–88.
mirrors the composer’s own principle of thematic treatment as explained to Marschalk:

Themes – these must be clear and plastic, so that they can be clearly recognized at any stage of modification or development – and then varied presentation, holding the attention above all through the logical development of the inner idea, but also by the genuine opposition of contrasting motives.\(^{174}\)

I find the variant technique highly illustrative of the constant modification in Mahler’s music, acknowledging its telling narrative aspect. For the exploration of sound-worlds, however, I claim that the technique gains its value in combination with timbre and other expressive means not stemming from thematic–motivic material. Whereas variation enables the mediation of procedures and the development of the world and its elements, changes in orchestration, such as different positions of instruments, play an equally important part in that unfolding and its shifting nuances.

In addition, there is reason to believe that Mahler himself ascribed another kind of meaning to the concept of variation, considering that his inspiration seemed to stem from precisely the evolution of world and life rather than the novel. He mentioned this several times in passing to Bauer-Lechner, always in connection with the quest for no repetition:

[He repeats individual stanzas], whereas I have come to recognize a perpetual evolution of the song’s content – in other words, through-composition [das Durchkomponieren] – as the true principle of music. In my writing, from the very first, you won’t find any more repetition from strophe to strophe; for music is governed by the law of eternal evolution, eternal development – just as the world, even in one and the same spot, is always changing, eternally fresh and new. But of course this development must be progressive, or I don’t give a damn for it!\(^{175}\) (On the ballad composer Löwe)

For each repetition is already a lie. A work of art must evolve perpetually [immer weiter entwickeln], like life. If it doesn’t, hypocrisy and theatricality set in.\(^{176}\) (In connection to a discussion of Schubert)

That’s why the chordal progressions are so difficult, particularly in view of my principle that there should be no repetition, but only evolution.\(^{177}\) (On the Fifth Symphony)

Mahler’s statements imply that, for him, variation and avoidance of repetition were much more than a mere technical formula. Rather, it was a principle of

\(^{175}\) NBL, *Recollections*, p. 130.
\(^{176}\) NBL, *Recollections*, p. 147.
\(^{177}\) NBL, *Recollections*, p. 172.
world process not tied solely to the components of themes, but to the composition in general, encompassing all its constitutive parameters. In the eternal transformation of these world cycles, where nothing ever stays the same, there also lies a prerequisite for constant orchestral transformation through the manipulation of sound.

The aspect of contrast partly overlaps with variation, but in Mahler one can locate numerous instances of abrupt shifts or deviations often characterized by change of tone. From small spaces of intimate, chamber-like dialogues, the music swells to volumes almost exploding with physical intensity. To describe this variety of independent instrumental constellations, Donald Mitchell speaks of Mahler’s orchestra as a plural of collective ones. Oftentimes, these individual sounds gain their effect precisely due to the difference from what has preceded and what follows in terms of timbre and texture. The shifts are thus what distinguishes their meanings, such as in the instances of what I in the analyses refer to as particular ‘in-between’ spaces. Close to deviations lies the concept of heterogeneity, which also characterizes Mahler’s sound-world. Just as his music mirrors the world as variegated, it also aims for a collection of disparate materials, in addition to timbre including a wide array of genres and styles.

Mahler’s specific techniques of through-composition and constant evolution also affect formal structure. In Steinbach am Attersee, while working on the Third Symphony, he exclaimed:

My calling it a symphony is really inaccurate, for it doesn’t keep to the traditional form in any way. But, to me ‘symphony’ means constructing a world with all the technical means at one’s disposal. The eternally new and changing content determines its own form. In this sense, I must forever learn anew how to forge new means of expression for myself – however completely I may have mastered technical problems, as I think I may now claim to have done.

This comment suggests that, in following the concept of the eternally changing as opposed to traditional forms, the term ‘symphony’ gains an altogether different meaning. Tellingly, Bauer-Lechner has put Mahler’s naming of the symphony in quotation marks. By proceeding from a compositional principle of world procedures, writing a symphony also becomes similar to constructing a world. Due to the unique ‘forging’ of those procedures, that world consequently has to be differently composed with every new work. As a result, this also changes the notion of form, following the course of the world rather than those of established moulds.

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In this section, I have discussed some of the significant principles of Mahler’s instrumentation and their influence on his way of composing. In approaching timbre in interrelation with other parameters such as line, texture, and form, Mahler’s idea of sound approaches a more modern view compared with the ideologies of the fin-de-siècle era. An important part of his compositional design derives from the experience of conducting in the opera house, where the scenic aspects of spatiality and dramaturgy influenced his conception of sound and subsequently the creation of musical worlds.

Director of world: Mahler the opera conductor

Mahler’s orchestration and specific sound are mostly associated with his art of composing. However, one finds a significant source for both his treatment of timbre and his particular ways of setting music in his parallel, successful career as opera conductor. Whereas the biographical facts are well documented, less so are the ways in which Mahler transformed the dramatic aspects of the stage into the design of his symphonies.180

By hearing music in the theatre, Mahler accumulated a deep understanding of the orchestra’s acoustic sound possibilities. This experience partly accounts for his constant striving for clarity and precision of tone. His frequent involvement in stage productions laid the ground for the inherent theatricality or mis-en-scène of his music, consequently affecting his conception of the symphonic genre. As I will demonstrate in the analyses, this is apparent both in the various constructions of scenic telling and the use of sounds as props, and in terms of speech and narrative positions. Specifically, the notion of spatiality in terms of off-stage voices and territories outside the area of the stage was highly influential for the expansive structures of Mahler’s works. Thomas Peattie has extensively explored this topic in his study of the composer’s incorporation of theatrical devices in the symphony.181 During the course of the investigation, I expand the category of space in relation to world, arguing that Mahler’s dynamic and instrumental differentiation generates mobile scenes and transports that affect the listener’s perception of the sound-world. For this study’s objective of exploring Mahler’s construction and ideas of world, the influence of dramatic thinking is crucial.

During his early student years, Mahler worked in small provincial theatres and was exposed to the repertoire of operas and operettas but also to those of Singspiele – fairy tales with songs – and plays. For example, while at his appointment in Kassel, he was involved in writing incidental music for a play (Der Trompeter von Säkkingen, 1884), constructing a series of narratively

180 Peattie, Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes, p. 22, and Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 174.
181 See Peattie, Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes.
linked *tableaux vivants*. Johnson suggests that Mahler later absorbed this tableau form into his dictionary of hybrid genres and formal strategies. In the analysis, I argue that the tableau form also manifests itself in the manner of mobile sound images, framed in the manner of portraits. The daily exposure to a diverse set of theatrical genres, mixing the different expressions of instrumental music, song, and speech, provided Mahler with experience that was later significant for his fusion of dramatic and autonomous forms. Even though the composer borrowed many elements from life outside the boundaries of performance institutions, such a collage of diverse art forms beyond the musical domain clearly echoes in the intermedial telling of his symphonies.

Following positions in Prague, Leipzig, and Hamburg (1891–1897), Mahler became increasingly involved in all aspects of stage production. In a letter of recommendation to the Vienna Court Opera, Count Albert Apponyi wrote:

Mahler is not merely – like some famous conductors I could name – an orchestral musician, but with all the works he produces he dominates the stage, the action, the expressions and movements of actors and chorus, with supreme control, so that a performance prepared by him attains artistic perfection in every dimension. His eye ranges over the entire production, the decor, the machinery, the lighting. I have never met such a well-balanced and all-round artistic personality.

Mahler finally had the authoritative power to realize his large-scale scenic visions when he attained the prestigious directorship of the Vienna Court Opera (1887–1907). Close collaboration with stage designer Alfred Roller formed an important component, culminating in celebrated productions of Wagner’s music dramas. The latter had a crucial influence on Mahler in terms of the interpretation of *Gesamtkunstwerke*, which implies thinking in line with the totality of world. As Bruno Walter retells it, the composer now had both the control and freedom to constantly intermediate between orchestra and stage, and thus sound and drama:

However engrossed he was in the musical work with singers and players during a stage rehearsal with orchestra, the eagle-eyed dramatist in him was watching:

nothing escaped him on the stage, in interpretation, lights, costume – everything was under his watchful eye.188

Mahler was not simply an opera conductor in the usual sense, but also a multi-tasking director of all aspects of scenic drama: ‘[…] he was in one and the same person Director and Conductor; interpreter of the music through the staging [Szene], interpreter of the staging through the music’.189 The dual role of conductor–director finds an analogy in the composer–director constructing his symphonic works, the theatrical organization of mise-en-scène transformed into a similar organization of world, albeit sculptured in sounds. This, for example, is evident in Mahler’s generation of corresponding musical settings, in which elements of décor, lightning, and the reshuffling of scenes are transformed into a sort of aural, imaginary staging. The task of structuring his symphonic works consequently comes down to the instruments themselves, as I will argue is the case with the fanfares, calls, and other signals of simulated off-stage voices assigned to the brass. Mahler the composer transmutes the function of director and creator of world to the orchestra itself, which in the act of listening performs the written play or sound script. The accounts of his engagements further imply a holistic view of music and telling as one, as well as a mindset grounded in multi-component, dramatic thinking rather than abstract autonomy, absorbed into the fabrication of his compositions.

The practical experience that Mahler gained from the opera house is also revealed in his constant aiming for exactness. He was as involved with the singers as he was with the staging, not only demanding musical accuracy but also that voice and gesture should convey dramatic expression. ‘Accuracy [Korrektheit] is the soul of an artistic performance’, he said in a piano rehearsal with singer Anna von Mildenburg, who stated that ‘Through him [i.e., Mahler] the smallest note attained importance and became a powerful aid in my difficult task’.190 This further strengthens the earlier discussed interdependence of tone and utterance, affirming that clarity or accuracy does not just stem from distinct contrapuntal lines but really is all about attaining the precise statement.

Mahler’s way of physically relating to music through expressive gestures was also part of his conducting style, vividly captured in Otto Böhlé’s famous silhouettes. Attached to his animated quasi-manic articulation, contemporary reports claim that ‘his baton painted every nuance in the air’, simultaneously

189 Recollected by Ferdinand Pfohl at the Hamburg Opera. Cited in Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 181.
striving for perfection. The observation of a critic that the conductor had ‘the theatre in his blood’ might not seem entirely inaccurate.191

The conductor Mahler’s preoccupation with opera and theatre is intimately linked to Mahler the composer’s conception of timbre. I would specifically like to underline one important aspect tied to the conditions of his working environment. According to Herta Blaukopf, Mahler first became a true concert conductor when he was working for the New York Philharmonic Society (1909–1911).192 Even though this period covers a time after the composition of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, the following statement by Mahler reveals how working in the theatre consistently formed his way of hearing and thinking about sound:

I am glad to be able to enjoy this for once in my life (apart from the fact that I keep on finding it very instructive, for the technique of the theatre is totally different, and I am convinced that many of my previous inadequacies in instrumentation arose from my being accustomed to hearing music in the totally different acoustic conditions of the theatre). Why did neither Germany nor Austria offer me this?193

At heart, Mahler was thus a theatre conductor and not a concert one, and that clearly influenced his instrumentation. Apart from the principle of clarity, this can also explain the constant revision of his symphonies: he had not yet learnt how to handle orchestration for a concert hall and therefore was constantly seeking to master it. According to Blaukopf, Mahler was a lifelong learner also in terms of orchestral technique. Conducting his own works meant that he could successively hear in full what he had put down on paper, before first performances, and consequently the final versions of his symphonies emerged through constant re-examination.194

Despite a lifelong preoccupation with opera, Mahler never wrote one himself. During his student years, he initiated several projects but none of them was completed. Various reasons for this gap in his oeuvre have been suggested, among others a preference for absolute music and for the symphony as representing a higher art form.195 Rather than a conscious decision to abandon any composition in the genre, it was suggestively all about Mahler’s musical thinking being at odds with the overt execution of drama, instead belonging in the pure, imaginative mediation of expressive sound. Indications that

this might be the case are found in Johnson’s discussion of the early *Das klage
gende Lied*, written as a symphonic composition created out of opera, mirroring
the composer’s interest in fairy tales and indicative of scene painting and
theatrical narrative. The same claim is valid for the first two symphonies,
which followed on Mahler’s completion of an opera by Weber.¹⁹⁶ In fact, all
his scores include theatrical indications, derived from his knowledge of the
operas of, first and foremost, Wagner, but also Mozart, Beethoven, and Ross-

The main influence of the operatic realm on Mahler’s composing was about
more than superficial genre conventions. Rather, it concerned the conception
of the symphony as abstract theatre in sounds, i.e., transferring the dramatic
and scenic to a musical sound-world.¹⁹⁸ Johnson, for example, argues that
Mahler’s music has internalized operatic ways of telling, in terms of rhetoric,
structure, and tone. Resulting from Mahler’s involvement in stage produc-
tions, the symphonies construct a sort of *Inszenierung* – that is, they stage their
musical drama.¹⁹⁹ The abrupt sectional divisions, often marked by change of
texture and timbre, play a vital part in the presentational setting and ordering
of the musical events. They also explain the peculiarity of the composer’s dis-
continuous forms and the difficulty of analysing them. Together with the ap-
plication of hybrid genres in Mahler’s symphonic works, what emerges is a
multifaceted patchwork in tones put forth as theatrical mise-en-scène. With
the reworking of dramatic features into pure sound, there also comes a trans-
gression of their original meanings and functions. For example, when off-
stage voices that in the theatre were positioned behind the stage are moved
into musical materials, those spaces are spatially expanded as utterances and
places situated outside the world of the symphony. This consequently pro-
duces effects that endow these instruments with new roles in relation to the
surrounding sound-world, as is the case with the directorial parts of the brass.
The same phenomenon concerns the aspect of voice in general, whose strong
presence in opera and drama likely influenced Mahler’s frequent incorpora-
tion of it in his oeuvre. When migrated into the symphony, voice is trans-
formed from the actual voices of human characters to virtual, instrumental
ones, where gesture and expression – i.e., the exactness of what one wants to
say – become especially important. This is reflected in Mahler’s richness of
speech types, mixing modes of the epic, lyrical, and dramatic. In addition, I
argue that the composer also uses the brass in ways analogous to narrative,

¹⁹⁷ Peattie, *Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes*, p. 38.
¹⁹⁸ Peattie, *Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes*, p. 38.
diegetic positions in drama, which in relation to the surrounding sounds, however, gain different, more mobile functions resulting in a fluid presentation of world.

Contemporary critics recognized both the theatricality of Mahler’s symphonies and their indebtedness to opera. Analogies to ‘a play’ (‘Theaterstück’), ‘imaginary stage play’ (‘imaginäres Theaterstück’), ‘theatre music’ (‘Bühnenmusik’), and ‘textless opera’ (‘textlose Oper’) are some examples of comments. As with timbre, this was mostly subject to harsh criticism and again regarded as breaking the protocol of symphonic construction, now connected to emotional range and rapid change. Prague critic Rudolf Freiherr Procházka even wanted to exclude the Seventh Symphony from the symphonic realm due to its emotional intensity, contending that it forged a new genre, ‘the theatrical symphony’. Defying logical development, analogies with theatre and opera emphasized a too diverse and unnecessary succession of emotions, breaking the psychological paradigm of the symphonic work.

Some were more empathetic to the theatrical influence on Mahler’s symphonies, such as Max Kalbeck in his review of the Fifth Symphony:

In Mahler’s earlier works it was always the orchestra that decisively inspired his imagination – however, not the orchestra of the concert hall, which inspired the great masters of instrumental music, but rather that of the theatre […] Opera and music drama not only colored Mahler’s orchestra but also led him to deploy the human voice as a narrative instrument. So too did they invade the form of his symphonies, tearing it to pieces. Opera reformers transplanted the overloaded symphonic orchestra from the concert hall to the theater and turned it into the docile instrument of their poetic revelations. Mahler in turn led this opera orchestra from the theater to the concert hall, assigning it the mission of envoicing his musical intentions with unprecedented clarity.

However, perhaps the most insightful comment comes from Adorno, who already referred to the opening of the First Symphony as a curtain followed by a fanfare:

That Mahler, who spent his life in the opera and whose symphonic impulse runs parallel to that of opera in so many ways, wrote no operas may be explained by the transfiguration of the objective into the inner world of images. His symphony is opera assoluta. Like the opera, Mahler’s novelistic symphonies rise up from passion and flow back into it; passages of fulfillment such as

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201 Peattie, Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes, p. 39.
203 Cited in Peattie, Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes, p. 39.
204 See Adorno, Mahler, Chapter 1 ‘Curtain and Fanfare’, pp. 4–5.
are found in his works are better known to opera and the novel than to otherwise absolute music.\textsuperscript{205}

The formulation ‘transfiguration [...] into the inner world of images’ highlights the imaginary aspect of Mahler’s theatricality, and that it, like timbre, already resonated with the listeners of his time. Pierre Boulez extends this way of listening to Mahler’s symphonies by comparing them to ‘meeting-places of the imaginary theatre, the imaginary novel and the imaginary poem’.\textsuperscript{206}

Adorno’s observation raises the question of genre: Are Mahler’s works really \textit{opera assoluta}? Or rather, as Peattie put it, a kind of ‘abstract theatre’, opera purified of action?\textsuperscript{207} Regardless as to what one chooses to call them, Mahler reinvented the symphony as it was then known by giving it a theatrical form, ‘tearing it to pieces’ and creating compositional structures that are hard to define. The double occupations of composer and conductor helped shape Mahler’s basic symphonic conception, resulting in constant tension between that and operatic models, between programme and absolute music. This tension also permeates his historical position between the Austro-German tradition and being the central figure of early modernism. Through musical theatricality, Mahler ‘revitalized’ the fading genre of the symphony.\textsuperscript{208}

The tension between autonomous and theatrical forms presents one of the great challenges in defining Mahler’s oeuvre from a generic perspective. His music is still in dialogue with tonality and standard formal schemata, but its inherent imaginative theatricality simultaneously breaks the conventions of ‘absolute’ music, leaving a gap between what is familiar and what is unknown.

In this study, I explore Mahler’s symphonies, and their transformative mediation, as worlds expressed through sound. While the associations of theatre and opera discussed here are valuable for the investigation, their release through music creates latitude for other kinds of genre denotations, approaching a sort of intermedial telling in which elements from literature or analogies with film also coexist.

Just as in relation to his principles of composition, Mahler’s comment equating symphonic writing to world construction has a bearing on the theatrical elements of his music. The dramatic structure and telling genre hybrids and voices thereby become technical means with which the composer built and developed this world in the manner of a director. Through their translation

\textsuperscript{205} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{206} Cited in Peattie, \textit{Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes}, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{208} Peattie, \textit{Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes}, pp. 23 and 31–32.
into sound, however, the generated musical worlds create their own multifaceted genre, serving no pre-set formula apart from the principle of eternal evolution.
The fairy tale of the Fourth: a possible world of dreams

In a letter to Nina Spiegler of 18 August 1900, Mahler described the Fourth Symphony as ‘so basically different from my other symphonies’.\textsuperscript{209} Every new work demanded that he ‘explore new paths’ and ‘learn afresh’, thereby remaining ‘eternally a beginner!’\textsuperscript{210} Still, the last symphony of the so-called Wunderhorn tetralogy in several ways distinguishes itself from both the earlier and later symphonies in Mahler’s oeuvre. As Johnson observes, it does not easily fit into any of the chronological groups traditionally associated with them.\textsuperscript{211}

A crucial feature defining the special position of the Fourth concerns its instrumentation. By Mahler’s standards, it is remarkable for its modest orchestral apparatus. In addition to strings and percussion, the woodwind section comprises just four flutes, three oboes, three clarinets, and three bassoons. As for the brass section, it comprises only four horns and three trumpets, omitting trombones and tuba. Furthermore, the work exploits a retrospective classicist style unusual for Mahler, and is comparatively short. Lasting less than an hour, it is, as the composer noted, no longer than the first movement of the Third Symphony.\textsuperscript{212} Only the Finale, by being an orchestral song, deviates from the otherwise traditional scheme of sonata-allegro, scherzo, and slow andante movements.

The reduced instrumentation correlates with a new orchestral technique employed by Mahler that he referred to as Feinmalerei or Miniaturnalerei.\textsuperscript{213} Compared with the al fresco technique of the earlier symphonies, this entails purer timbres with clear contours in contrast to the previously dominant thicker textures and mixtures of tone colours.\textsuperscript{214}

Defined by clarity, economy, and transparency, the orchestration of the Fourth attains a chamber-music-like character in which each player gains the

\textsuperscript{209} Cited in Floros, The Symphonies, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{210} Floros, The Symphonies, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{211} Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{212} NBL, Recollections, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{213} See Peter Jost, ‘Mahler Orchesterklang’, Mahler Handbuch, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{214} Jost, ‘Mahlers Orkesterklang’, p. 120, and Zychowicz, Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, p. 15.
role of a soloist. Mahler once stated that its scoring closely resembled that of a string quartet, in line with his instrumentation principles emphasizing clarity of line. Mahler also commented that ‘the inadequacy of the players [for the première] was all the more noticeable because of the subtlety of the instrumental parts’, illustrating the difficulty experienced by orchestras in playing the work because of its fine sonorities.

As I will show in the analysis of the Fourth Symphony, these traits defining the work’s instrumentation are highly important for its mediation of both categories and topics of world.

In analytical studies, the Fourth has often been associated with ideas of an idealized childhood, nostalgia, and naïveté. This resonates most clearly with the plain and classically oriented musical material of the first movement, which appears to look back to an earlier style and era. Mahler himself described the first theme as ‘childlike, simple and entirely non-self-conscious’. Adorno found in the symphony a merging of ‘non-existing children’s songs’, its image-world being that of childhood. A more central interpretational issue, however, concerns the strong position attributed to the Finale in establishing the meaning of the whole work. Based on the Wunderhorn song Das himmlische Leben (1892), it tells of heavenly joys as perceived from a child’s perspective, illustrated by Mahler’s instructions in the score that the female soprano should employ a childlike voice. The final movement in this way summarizes and epitomizes the symphony as a naïve depiction of life in heaven or life after death.

It is certainly plausible to claim that these subjects form prominent topics of the work, something that also gains support from Mahler’s own statements. However, these features cannot alone account for the content and narrative of the entire symphony. It is too simple a reduction to link together the opening themes with the sung textual message of the Finale, overlooking all the discontinuous and distorted sections evolving in between. The first movement’s grotesque sound transformations, the fiddling Death steering the Scherzo, and the sorrowful contrasting variations of the Adagio are only a few of many such examples. In addition, aspects of the childlike and heavenly constitute only a few of a larger number of varied topics and perspectives permeating the work.

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219 NBL, Recollections, p. 179.
220 Adorno, Mahler, pp. 55 and 53.
As Mahler himself was keen to point out, there are undeniable thematic and motivic connections between the first three movements and the Finale. In the following analysis, however, I demonstrate how the different instrumental treatments of these connections generate meanings other than those related to the song, and how various timbres project alternating versions of the same basic material.

In this chapter, I explore the Fourth Symphony from the vantage point of storyworld in terms of a possible world as imaginatively constructed by the listener. While the entire symphonic work creates a totality by way of one, all-encompassing storyworld, each movement presents its own storyworld as part of this totality. Based on Mahler’s world topics forming contrasts among the wider oppositions of life and death, I study how the movements present these topics in different ways and from various perspectives. Through Mahler’s diverse mixture of styles, timbres, and structures, there arises a multitude of nuances of the same topics within the storyworld, resulting in each movement representing its own world version and narrative of it. The Fourth not only constructs worlds per se, but also mediates ways of understanding and seeing the world.

More precisely, I start from the conception of the Fourth Symphony as a fairy-tale world, a conception that derives both from Adorno’s label of the work and from its characteristic traits similar to those of the fairy tale genre, as defined by narratology. In this world, there are light as well as dark topics, and all movements compose their own stories and figurations of them.

As for the first and second movements, they present the fairy-tale world from a childlike perspective marked by humour and magical features. The dark element emerges in the grotesque deformation of instrumentation, resulting in, for example, nightmare sequences and the appearance of the figure of Death.

Considering the third movement, it produces a shift in the symphony by means of expression and manner of presentation. Here, the fairy-tale world is narrated from the perspective of a virtual subject, with the contrasts of darkness and light reflected in its experienced shifting moods. This is the movement in the symphony most evocative of dreams and the ethereal, generated by particular sonorous timbres serving as cues for both the spatially and mentally higher world of the spheres.

Because of its sung text about heavenly life, the Finale has generally been viewed as defining the subject matter of the Fourth. However, I interpret the singer’s voice as an exterior, ironic voice-over narration of a quite ordinary, lonely rural landscape where darkness persists.

As a whole, the symphony is therefore not a story about life in heaven, or even life after death, but rather depicts a continuous world process in which

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221 See NBL, Recollections, p. 178, and the letter to Georg Göhler discussed later in this section.
the topical worlds of landscape and dreams gradually break out, finally to be confined in the higher, shimmering realm of the spheres. Since this process reaches its final point at the end of the third movement, I regard that movement and not the Finale as representing the dream of another, better world, turning the song into a small spire on the rest of the work’s magnificent edifice of sound.

By focusing on the Fourth’s vast range of timbres and sound-worlds instead of interpreting a programme, a multi-faceted storyworld emerges that is varied and fluid and in which the listener occupies a number of different positions.

Before presenting each movement in turn, I develop the concept of fairy-tale world in relation to the programmatic interpretations of the Fourth. In contrast to the common view of the symphony as in its entirety depicting life in heaven, I wish to broaden and nuance that view by focusing on Mahler’s orchestration and all the different worlds it generates.

The Fourth, a programmatic symphony? Towards a wondrous world of dreams

In contrast to the three preceding symphonies from the Wunderhorn era, there exists no public or printed, detailed programme for the Fourth. In October 1900, shortly before the work’s completion, Mahler declared his intention to abandon all programmes.222 This meant that he was embarking on a new path in conveying the meanings of his works to the public, and some early critics of the symphony indeed felt frustrated by this sudden absence of any explanatory musical guide that could make it comprehensible.223 However, as addressed in the introduction of this study, in Mahler’s case the relation between absolute and programme music is highly ambivalent. Despite his claim to have abandoned programme music, the composer provided statements and clues that point unmistakably towards narrative concerns. This is also the case with the Fourth Symphony, where his remarks have served to underline the topic of heavenly life so prominent in the programmatic readings presented by analysts. In the following, I emphasize what I regard as certain misconceptions regarding both Mahler’s own comments about the work and the interpretations of scholars, arguing for a conception of world rather than a narrative programme.

The principal objective in the estimation of the Fourth’s subject matter has been its sung Finale. In addition to providing a text that invites extra-musical readings, it also forms the point of departure for the entire symphonic design,

222 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 112.
presenting crucial thematic interconnections to the preceding movements. These circumstances make it appropriate to regard *Das himmlische Leben* as illustrative of the symphony’s overall content, an ultimate destination towards which the work strives.

Donald Mitchell, for example, claims that the immanent programme of the work is not ‘revealed’ or ‘disgorged’ until the Finale, even though the goal reached is ‘less a programmatic destination than the achievement of a state of mind, [that] idea of “innocence”’.224 His argument stems from Adorno’s comment that the Fourth has ‘swallowed the program’, a crucial utterance to which I will return. To a certain extent, I agree with Mitchell that the song in a way ‘clarifies and justifies all that has preceded it’, symbolizing a ‘fulfilment’ of sorts.225 However, I am dubious about assigning such comprehensive importance to the last movement simply because it is the only one providing a text. To claim that what hitherto has been ‘a shade inexplicable’226 is suddenly explained in relation to the song in my view overlooks the vast array of independent themes and timbres used by Mahler, reaching beyond the topic of the heavenly and what they generate synchronically rather than diachronically. What is more, Mitchell does not clearly specify in what ways the Finale would illuminate, for example, the ‘eccentric’ introduction of sleigh bells.

Constantin Floros goes even further in his specification of a programme, determining the work’s subject to be the eschatological concerns of life after death.227 Somewhat ironically, this firm statement follows directly upon a passage accounting for Mahler’s famous exclamation, releasing his symphonies from any programmatic connection whatsoever:

> In spite of these solemn protestations, the Fourth is the exact opposite of what is commonly considered to be absolute music. The work is based on a philosophical program that Mahler did not officially reveal but nonetheless shared in conversations with friends. It is not an exaggeration to say that a full understanding of the Symphony is impossible without the knowledge of the program.228

Floros’s argument becomes even more absurd in relation to the contrary accounts of Bauer-Lechner and Walter, which he simply interprets as proof of Mahler’s refusal to disclose the programme to the public.229 Apart from illustrating Floros’s insistent searches for hidden programmes in Mahler’s symphonic oeuvre overall, the statement also points towards a persistent desire to

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224 Mitchell, ““Swallowing the Programme””, *The Mahler Companion*, p. 194.
225 Mitchell, ““Swallowing the Programme””, p. 198.
226 Mitchell, for example, mentions the opening bars of the sleigh bells, the ‘chirruping flutes’ and the like; see ““Swallowing the Programme””, p. 198.
228 Floros, *The Symphonies*, p. 113.
tie this ‘full understanding’ of the work to its Finale, viewing ‘The Heavenly Life’ as synonymous with ‘Life after Death’. I instead find a more adequate title to be ‘Life and Death’, encompassing the symphony’s topics in broader and more general terms.

There is no doubt that Das himmlische Leben was a particularly creative source for Mahler. Apart from its crucial function in the Fourth Symphony, no fewer than five movements of the Third evolved from it. In the summer of 1895, the composer even considered letting the song conclude the Third Symphony instead, although he was uncertain whether to give it the title ‘What the Child Tells Me’.²³⁰ Because of the song’s explosive ramifications, also mirroring the overall importance of song in Mahler’s output, he ascribed it with ‘a very special, all-encompassing meaning’.²³¹ In a letter of 8 February 1911 responding to Georg Göhler’s analysis of the symphony, he was also keen to emphasize the thematic relationships between the Finale and the three other movements:

One thing seems to me to be missing: did you overlook the thematic relationships that are so extremely important both in themselves and in relation to the idea of the whole work? Each of the first three movements is thematically most closely and most significantly related to the last.²³²

However, in Mahler’s case there is a notable distinction in localizing thematic connections per se and their difference from one another in terms of, for example, timbre and texture. Even though built from the same motifs or building blocks, each time he orchestrates these thematic connections in new ways that change either their configuration or subject matter altogether, which I claim leads to a breakout process of worlds. Consequently, the attentive listener will note that the interlocking themes of the first three movements present themselves in a manner that is more evocative of the ethereal and dreamlike than that of the Finale. Rather than ascribing a function of totalitarian narrative to the Fourth, I propose that its thematic affiliations be regarded as variations of several topics of world, the heavenly forming one of these.

Instead of focusing on the textual meaning and architectonic structure of the Fourth, it is worth paying attention to some other comments that Mahler made about the work. More closely related to its atmosphere and expression, these point towards a perception of world rather than a single, narrative arc. According to his wife Alma, Mahler once told her that the Fourth ‘was like an old picture painted on a golden background [my italics]’,²³³ echoed in

²³⁰ Floros, The Symphonies, p. 110.
²³¹ Floros, The Symphonies, p. 110.
²³² Cited in Mitchell, “Swallowing the Programme”, The Mahler Companion, p. 188.
Adorno’s description that ‘to it the golden book of song is the book of life’.\footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 55.} In my opinion, these observations relate to the many shimmering timbres and the magical tone suffusing much of the symphony, associated with something dreamy and otherworldly. According to Bauer-Lechner, what Mahler supposedly admired in the \textit{Wunderhorn} poem of the Finale in the first place was its ‘imaginativeness’ that ‘turns everything upside down’ and invalidates causality.\footnote{Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, p. 110.} The claim of the Fourth to encompass such an unrealistic place as compared with a teleological chain of connections does not seem too far-fetched. Additionally, in a letter to music historian Ludwig Schiedermaier, Bruno Walter wrote that the song ‘transported [Mahler] into an exceedingly cheerful, distant, wondrous sphere […] indeed a world of his own’.\footnote{Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, p. 114.} This approach is also along the lines of the proposition regarding Mahler’s construction of world, which applies in particular to the world of the Fourth. To see the work as a product of the imagination for which the composer deliberately uses stylistic and other markers in order to \textit{self-consciously} – like a master builder – create an imaginative, make-believe universe frees us from the more causal chain of narrative programme. The musical materials are means for storytelling and world-making rather than ends in themselves, Mahler in that sense using them for plastic instead of fixed figuration.

Broadening the programmatic concept to that of world also enables the fuller inclusion of all the compositional features that imply expressions and topics beyond those of heaven and the childlike. Linking the work to the previous \textit{Wunderhorn} symphonies, Johnson recognizes in it the same plural voices and heterogeneity of materials, with the classical forming one of many such voices.\footnote{Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 107.} That the music, in addition to its general brightness, contains horrific and distorted passages also shines through in Mahler’s description of the work:

> What I had in mind here was extraordinarily difficult to bring off. Think of the undifferentiated blue of the sky, which is harder to capture than any changing and contrasting shades. This is the basic tone of the whole work. Only once does it become overcast and uncannily awesome [spukhaft schauerlich] – but it is not the sky itself which grows dark, for it shines eternally blue. It is only that it seems suddenly sinister to us – just as on the most beautiful day, in a forest flooded with sunshine, one is often overcome by a shudder of Panic dread. The Scherzo is so mystical, confused and uncanny that it will make your hair stand on end. But you’ll soon see, in the following Adagio – where everything sorts itself out – that it wasn’t meant so seriously after all.\footnote{NBL, \textit{Recollections}, pp. 151–152.}
The duality of moods is further developed by the following statement, also expressed to Bauer-Lechner:

They [i.e., the first three movements] breathe the serenity of a higher world, one unfamiliar to us, which has something awe-inspiring and frightening about it. In the last movement (“Das himmlische Leben”) the child – who, though in a chrysalis-state, nevertheless already belongs to this higher world – explains what it all means.\(^{239}\)

Mahler thus downplays the Fourth’s gruesomeness in favour of the general tone of the ‘undifferentiated blue of the sky’. Rather than a dominance of the latter over the former, I regard the symphony’s main timbral design as the alternation between the various expressions of these, with there being considerable contrast as well as nuances of colours associated with the eternal blue. This results in a wider range of topics beyond heaven, topics existing beside those of death and the grotesque. Furthermore, and important to emphasize, Mahler’s conception of the eternal blue is not analogous to heaven, but to a shading of the skies: it approaches the shimmering tone of the music of the spheres defining the higher world of the symphony. Just as with the constant variations and nuances of his other topics, heaven can thus refer to things other than a place analogous to the heavenly life.

In addition, the higher, unfamiliar world of which Mahler speaks does not automatically need to be heaven, which also proves to be contradictory, considering the incorporation of the eerie and horrifying. If it is, at least it goes against the traditional conception of such a place. Mahler once described the Finale as ‘the tapering, topmost spire of the edifice’ of the Fourth.\(^{240}\) Although slightly questionable, it is easy to interpret this statement in line with the general view of the Finale as the ultimate, thematically interlinked goal towards which the entire work strives as well as a literally higher realm analogous to heaven. This, for example, shines through in Floros’s mistranslation of Mahler’s words as ‘the top of the Symphony’s pyramidal structure’, which refers to another kind of construction than the composer’s description of an elegant building.\(^{241}\) By considering the Finale’s orchestral sound in relation to the other movements, however, a quite different interpretation of Mahler’s description arises. As I will demonstrate in the following analysis, the final song is more of an ironic, voice-over narration of a storyworld painted in predominantly rural and subdued tone colours. Instead, it is the Adagio that depicts heaven as the dreamlike state we imagine it to be, ending with an intensifying

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\(^{239}\) NBL, *Recollections*, p. 178. See also Floros’s translation in *The Symphonies*, p. 113: ‘It contains the cheerfulness of a higher and, to us, an unfamiliar world that holds for us something eerie and horrifying. In the final movement (“The Heavenly Life”), although already belonging to this higher world, the child explains how everything is meant to be’.

\(^{240}\) NBL, *Recollections*, p. 151.

increase in shimmering soundscapes. This is the symphony’s highest sphere, situated within a whole, higher world in which there is simultaneously room for the ‘lower’ themes of death and the horrific. In this context, we might do better to address the original title of the Wunderhorn text on which Mahler based Das himmlische Leben, namely ‘Der Himmel hängt voll Geigen’.\(^\text{242}\)

Considering that all the passages in the Fourth evocative of the dreamlike or ethereal are suffused with the special sonority of highly scored violins, there is reason to mark the wording here. That this instrumentation is not characteristic of the Finale points further towards a conception of the symphony’s last movement as not being the utopian landscape it claims to be, contradicting general opinions. In relation to Mahler’s statement, the topmost spire representing the Finale might thus be interpreted as a small garnish on the magnificent edifice of the other three movements. This reformulates the song as a source of the unified process of the rest of the symphony, rather than presenting the narrative and thematic endpoint towards which the other movements strive.

Moving from a conception of narrative and a heavenly trajectory towards perceiving the Fourth as an imaginary world, mediating different types and views of worlds enables the inclusion of both the various thematic subjects and their altering projections. Focusing on sound-worlds and letting them guide the music’s way of telling, instead of focusing on a programme, permits a freer and broader approach to interpreting the work. This is in my opinion what Adorno hints at in his comment that the Fourth has ‘swallowed the program’ and the characters are its monuments;\(^\text{243}\) the music’s rich orchestration speaks for itself, its expressions and timbres alone guiding us in the listening experience of what it is all about.

The world as fairy tale

My vantage point for defining the higher, unfamiliar world that Mahler spoke of as a fairy-tale world stems from several characteristic traits of the Fourth Symphony associated with this particular genre. In line with this study’s objectives, these traits predominantly concern timbre, orchestration, and the set of world topics they evoke; in addition, aspects of, for example, style and form assist in the generation of a fairy-tale world. Furthermore, looking at the work from a genre perspective also entails the possibility of exploring a certain type

\(^{242}\) Zychowicz, Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, p. 9.

\(^{243}\) ‘Even the Fourth, with its overflowing intentions, is not, however, program music […] The composition has swallowed the program; the characters are its monuments’. Adorno, Mahler, p. 58.
of storyworld, as well as having a comparative reference point for the very different, more realism-oriented world of the Fifth Symphony.

As outlined in the section on possible worlds, the storyworld varies as our real world does, with the degree of distance in terms of possibility generating a spectrum corresponding to various genres. On this spectrum, the fairy-tale genre is placed in the most remote area, belonging to the domain of fantastic texts. This means that the Fourth is not only a possible world in the sense that the listener in contact with the music imaginatively constructs this world, but also a world where in the broadest sense *everything is possible*. Some examples of such features are the presence of Death as a walking figure and the transportation into dream worlds or those of the spheres. Compared with the genre of realism, the fairy tale contains phenomena beyond the normal, albeit still creating its own system in making sense as a world.

Mahler’s initial conception of the Fourth Symphony was as a ‘Symphonie Humoreske’.

As he confided to Bauer-Lechner: ‘I only wanted to write a symphonic Humoresque, and out of it came a symphony of the normal dimensions’.

Among the earliest autograph materials for the Fourth one finds a plan for a work of six movements, all with programmatic titles (see Table 1).

Three of these are songs with texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, following each of the instrumental movements. James Zychowicz detects in each of the instrumental–song movement pairs a related concept, mirroring the duality of harsh reality and the anticipated joys of the life hereafter: 1) a portrait of the world, 2) the intervention of God and, 3) the life hereafter.

Table 1: German and English versions of the plan for the symphony.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symphonie Nr IV</th>
<th>(Humoreske)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nro I. Die Welt als ewige Jetztzeit – G-dur</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nro II. Das Irdische Leben – Es-moll</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nro III. Caritas – H-dur (Adagio)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nro IV. Morgenglocken – F-dur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nro V. Die Welt ohne Schwere – D-dur (Scherzo)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nro V. Das himmlische Leben! – G-dur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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244 Zychowicz, *Mahler’s Fourth Symphony*, p. 47.
Symphony No. 4
(Humoresque)

No. 1. The world as eternal now – G major
No. 2. Earthly life – E flat minor
No. 3. Love – B major (Adagio)
No. 4. Morning bells – F major
No. 5. The world without burdens – D major (Scherzo)
No. 6. Heavenly life! – G major

As we know from how the Fourth finally turned out, Mahler eventually abandoned this concept. Paul Bekker claims that the composer was working on the Third Symphony at the same time, which might explain Mahler’s occasional thoughts of letting Das himmlische Leben end that symphony instead of the Fourth. In addition, ‘Morgenglocken’ refers to the setting of ‘Es sungen drei Engel’, which eventually became the fifth movement of the Third Symphony.249 Except for Das himmlische Leben, only the first movement was realised in its final form.250 With the title ‘The world as eternal now’ and Zychowicz’s suggested concept of the world as portrait, the first movement presents useful applicable connections to the exploration of worlds in the Fourth. Whereas Zychowicz’s interpretation stems from the mood and subject of the first pair of movements, however, my use of the portrait analogy concerns the presentation of the sound-world in relation to the listener, specifically as manifested in the exposition. As for the Scherzo movement called ‘The world without burdens’, it is possible that it later became the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony, which is why it is also relevant to the ensuing analysis of this work.251

Despite Mahler’s abandonment of the ‘Symphonie Humoreske’, the plan conveys elements characterizing the Fourth in terms of humour and the importance of the folk tale collection Des Knaben Wunderhorn. In fact, Mahler liked to give his Wunderhorn songs the generic title of Humoresken.252

Humour is just one of several aspects of the symphony resonating with the childlike, fantastical world permeating Des Knaben Wunderhorn, which is why it is plausible to regard it as a blueprint for the work’s projected sound-world. There lies over the Fourth a magical, shimmering tone, evocative of Alma’s description of the work as painted on a golden background. Mahler’s use of pure, transparent tone colours is vital for the special, sonorous timbres

249 Zychowicz, Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, p. 49.
250 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 111.
251 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 111.
252 NBL, Recollections, p. 215.
associated with the ethereal that form an important defining topic. As in many folk tales, however, this world contains not only light but also dark elements, in Mahler often conveyed in terms of grotesque deformation. This mirrors the wider use of contrasts in the composer’s oeuvre, which also permeates the world of fairy tale.

In defining the Fourth’s overall atmosphere and tone, the concept of fairy tale forms a useful point of departure for exploring a plurality of worlds and topics in the work and how these are mediated through sound. Although all four movements form part of the same, total fairy-tale world of the symphony, they present this world in different ways and from various perspectives, which entails an exploration of the shifting nuances and versions of each world topic.

**First movement: the fairy-tale world of the child**

The first movement presents the symphony’s fairy-tale world from a childlike perspective, centring on the contrasting topics of darkness and light. In this dichotomy, dreams constitute a prominent subject, both as an inner world of refuge and as two alternating worlds of a dream sequence. The orchestral apparatus, instrumentation, form, and classical style function as vantage points for Mahler’s distortion and reshaping of the music into grotesque and magical features, such as the generation of fantastic and often childish instruments.

The movement’s storyworld revolves around a main world that forms the point of departure for all the other worlds and their subsequent modification. This structure is similar to Ryan’s model of possible worlds, in which one actual world forms the basis of the other, possible ones in the system. The different worlds of this movement largely correspond to the sonata form’s various sections of exposition, development, and recapitulation, each forming its own construction and process. Mahler scores them in ways that result in shifting manners of presentation, which affect the listener’s position in the sound-world and consequently also their perception of world.

The main world represented by the exposition concerns the scenic, portrait-like display of various elements of world, such as characters, settings, and song. In the development, this main world is transformed into an episodic dream sequence in which a nightmare-like horror world alternates and intermingles with a more paradisical, luminous one. That this event has had an effect on the main world and its structure shines through in the recapitulation, which presents a fusion of elements from the exposition and development. Through the erasure of theatrical juxtaposition, the world shrinks from a spread-out totality into a more spatially static one, with the exception of the features of landscape and inner dream world. These form the start of a breakout process of worlds that proliferate during the course of the symphony, ultimately generating the world of the third movement. As a whole, one can
interpret the first movement as a narrative in which one particular episode influences the present world, just as in our own lives. In terms of topics, it also depicts a refuge from the world’s darkness, which too permeates the seemingly carefree, fairy-tale existence of children.

There are important thematic–motivic connections in this movement to the Finale, such as the returning sleigh bell episode and elements tied to the song’s introduction. Seth Monahan has explained such thematic recurrences between two different movements in Mahler as one of three types of transsymphonic narrative, implying narratives running through entire symphonies. This presents one of two narrative levels in multi-movement works, the other referring to self-contained narratives within separate movements. Previous scholars have used these links as signs that the symphony is presenting a narrative about life in heaven. However, as the following analysis will demonstrate, the differing timbres and textures of the interconnections point towards a much more varied mediation of topics not necessarily related to heaven, suggesting a diverse set of worlds. Among these, the inner world of dreams also forms part of the symphony’s breakout process of worlds, which takes into account, for example, spatial progress. Thematic interlinking also takes place between different movements of the Fifth Symphony, in which I suggest the reversed process of break-in worlds.

The following analysis proceeds section by section, following the formal design of exposition, development, and recapitulation. Within these divisions, however, I let the sound-worlds and their specific topics guide the disposition of parts.

‘Once upon a time…’: the sleigh bells as musical cue

The Fourth Symphony begins with an unusual sound, evoking a sense of tense expectation. What stirs the listener’s attention is not the mobile semiquavers in low woodwinds reminiscent of a humming choir, but the repetitive accompaniment of sleigh bells that shadows the insistent rhythmic figuration of the flutes in staccato. Already in the first bar, Mahler takes us to another time and place through the incorporation of this particular instrument in the symphonic discourse. In the following, I suggest that the sleigh bells, through various reference points, function as cue for several world-building elements, evoking a childlike, fairy-tale setting. In addition, they are of significant structural importance as a recentring reference point both for the main world of the move-

ment and its subsequent transformations. Since the instrument and corresponding motif also appear in the Finale, this further implies connections across the symphony as a whole.

The sleigh bells are an unlikely kind of bell to import into the realms of art music, quite similar to the authentic cowbells that Mahler later used in his Sixth Symphony. As concrete objects coming from the real world outside the musical work, they represent a non-symphonic intrusion into the symphonic.\textsuperscript{255} The extent of their rarity is illuminated by the fact that Mahler himself had to provide these ‘little bells’, normally used in ballets for their fairy-tale aspect, to the orchestra in advance when conducting a performance of the Fourth (Berlin, December 1901).\textsuperscript{256} This influence from the theatrical domain suggests one of several possible interpretations of how the sleigh bells cue the listener to a particular kind of world. Analogous to scenic props, they form part of the mise-en-scène and thereby function as marker of setting. In narratology, setting is one of the different levels of spaces in relation to the story-world, and defined as ‘the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place’.\textsuperscript{257}

In contrast to the cowbells, sleigh bells have more than one contextual use and therefore imply different kinds of settings. The first is in the form of a children’s toy, which resonates with the many readings of the subsequent first theme as childlike and naïve. It joins a wider arsenal of instruments that, because of Mahler’s modification of timbre, sound like toys, for example, the trumpet in the last episode of the development (bar 212), which produces a squeaky, dull non-echoing tone. Sometimes this even results in new sorts of instruments evoking both the childlike and fairy tale – Adorno notably spoke of the four flutes in the development as a ‘dream ocarina’.\textsuperscript{258} The pairing of sleigh bells with a toy instrument creates associations with a child’s playroom, but could as well evoke a memory or nostalgic recollection. Regardless of the exact location, the object and its tone cue the domain of a child’s world and, through that tone, simultaneously mediate a childlike way of telling.

The other referential meaning of the sleigh bells is their connection to actual sleighs. In fact, Mahler has designed the musical materials in a way that invites such an evocation. He combines a steady, repetitive rhythm of staccato open fifths with sparse instrumentation free of strings, resulting in a harsh and non-sonorous timbre. In terms of setting, this implies a cold, wintry outside environment. Also tied to the illustration of sleigh bells is their traditional functional use in warning, which Mahler exploits in the subsequent transformation of world, both in this movement’s development and in the Finale. A

\textsuperscript{255} Knapp, ‘Suffering Children’, p. 235.
\textsuperscript{256} Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{257} Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Space’, \textit{LHN}.
\textsuperscript{258} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 53.
final connotation concerns the aspect of movement, since the reproduction of a sleigh bell sound simultaneously suggests a sleigh in motion. The resulting setting thus becomes a mobile one, similar to a tableau vivant or a moving picture in sounds. This resonates with both the tableau form of theatrical plays as well as Zychowicz’s suggested concept for the first movement as ‘a portrait of the world’, which I will argue is particularly illustrative of the exposition’s manner of presentation.

A somewhat unexpected reference point for the sleigh bells suggested by Mahler himself is that of a jester’s cap, given what he told Bauer-Lechner: ‘The first begins characteristically enough, with the bells of the Fool’s Cap [mit der Schellenkappe]’.²⁵⁹ More than a specific setting, the statement indicates that humour frequently permeates the presentation of the Fourth Symphony as a whole. From this perspective, the sleigh bells provide a lens through which the world appears as absurd and laughable.

Whereas sound forms part of the musical settings derived from the sleigh bells as props, this instrument also functions as a cue by its timbre alone. Being unusual in the context of the symphony, the sleigh bells come across as strange and foreign. Together with soft flutes and clarinets, the implied minor mode and eventual diminuendo, the sleigh bells generate an ambiance of mystery and uncanniness, as though promising unusual happenings. By evoking something magical and enchanted, they suggest the atmosphere of a fairy-tale world – images of Christmas and Santa Claus involuntarily come to mind. The sound together with the direct start of the movement express an ‘as if’ that resonates with Adorno’s comment on the music as being composed within quotation marks and mediating a ‘once upon a time’.²⁶⁰ It is important to point out, however, that Adorno more specifically refers to the use of sonata form, whereas I argue that this effect also stems from timbre and its sense of pointing backwards.

Atmosphere is a complex concept that converges with a number of related terms, such as affect, mood, feeling, emotion, ambiance, and Stimmung,²⁶¹ and I will not go into a discussion that covers all these meanings. In the context of worlds, the primary focus is how atmosphere relates to and defines features of space and place, rather than the complicated issues of how it interrelates with individualised subjects. One useful definition of atmosphere is as ‘an environmental and situational whole, a feeling, in other words that is out there, in the

²⁵⁹ NBL, Recollections, p. 182.
²⁶⁰ Adorno, Mahler, p. 96.
world’. The sounds of the sleigh bells generate a fairy-tale atmosphere that fills the surroundings of the storyworld and give it a certain setting.

The sleigh bells’ cueing of various elements of world related to setting, manner of presentation, and atmosphere shows the diversity of their associations. Rather than arguing for the priority of one of these, I want to emphasize the combination of references, since all represent some of the main characteristics of the movement’s storyworld. The result resembles a fairy-tale milieu mediated with humour and childlikeness, fused together by the sleigh bells’ manifold markings through object and sound.

Another reason for this interpretation has to do with the sleigh bells’ structural function as a recurring theme in both the first movement and the Finale. In the former, they constitute the recentring point for and framing of the exposition’s main world and later the basis of its subsequent transformations. Sometimes they are also modified in order to reframe the setting, giving it a new perspective. Reframing is a cinematic term referring to the decomposition of an already composed, established space, which is then recomposed with a different focus or object of attention. As such, it manifests a simultaneous process of composition and decomposition, which forms one of Nelson Goodman’s ways of world-making. For the study of the development of musical worlds’ entities over time, I find reframing to be a useful tool with which to describe the various changed mediations of these, even though music does not employ camera movement as films do.

As a vantage point for the movement’s storyworld, the sleigh bells gather several important elements that set the scene for its organization and temporal progress. In the development and Finale, Mahler’s modification of the instrument’s tempo and tone results in an increased sensation of danger and tension analogous to the bells’ warning function, which serves as a means of generating and recentring into other worlds. This deviates from other kinds of ‘churchlike’ bells in Mahler, such as in the Second Symphony, which draw on their ritualistic aspect both as a call to the collective and as an invocation of deity. Since the recurrences are perceived in relation to the introductory instance of sleigh bells, they gain their meaning from what has come before. Thus, there is a simultaneous flashback and anticipation of earlier and future inputs between the two movements, presenting an example of Monahan’s transsymphonic narrative.

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262 Music as Atmosphere, p. 4.
264 Goodman, Ways of Worldmaking, pp. 7–10.
265 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 69.
266 Monahan, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 87.
Themes and characters: defining musical entities

Before proceeding to the analysis of the movement’s exposition, I will briefly discuss a concept crucial to my reading of that part as forming an entity of world consisting of various elements. This concerns and builds upon Adorno’s comment about the Fourth as being ‘[the extreme example] of character symphony [...] Its totality, entirely broken, is produced by the need for characterization, the whole being character as much as its elements’. In the following, I show how these characters manifest themselves as independent entities of world by means of formal structure, texture, and instrumentation, corresponding to the exposition’s set of distinct themes.

Throughout his study, Adorno speaks of characters in Mahler in different contexts. One of his most often-quoted observations is probably the likening of the composer’s themes to characters in a novel, recognizable as ‘developing themes that retain their essence unchanged’, yet affected by the passing of time. This resonates with Mahler’s own principle of his themes as having to be clear and plastic, in combination with the aim of constant variation. I interpret Adorno’s phrasing as relating to the aspects of the identification, development, and subsequent effect of the characters by the music, suggesting that Mahler applies a discourse similar to novelistic construction. This echoes Adorno’s other literary analogy of Mahler’s symphonic form as novel, presenting music in the way of narration rather than narrating per se: ‘It is not that music wants to narrate, but that the composer wants to make music in the way that others narrate’.

Concerning the particular case of the Fourth Symphony, Adorno in my view approaches the topic of characters from another vantage point, more concerned with the characterization of the music itself than with the similarity of the themes to novelistic personae:

Instead, Mahler’s medium is that of objective characterization. Each theme, over and above its mere arrangement of notes, has its distinct being, almost beyond invention. If the motives of program music await the labels of the textbooks and commentaries, Mahler’s themes each bear their own names in themselves, without nomenclature.

I find Adorno’s term of ‘objective characterization’ very useful in attempting to define what makes the themes of the exposition so distinctive and evocative of features outside themselves. Compared with the Fifth Symphony, the Fourth is rarely in need of any genre connotations to form textual cues but rather generates these by means of other compositional features. Primarily,
this has to do with the sparse instrumentation and its condensed, chamber-like texture, which Adorno claims becomes a means of the instrumental art of characterization and consequently its diminutive image-world of childhood.\footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, pp. 52–53.} However, stylistic play and the constant abrupt structural shifts are also significant factors, for example, in my argument concerning the exposition’s portrait-like presentation of world. The combination of all these aspects results in the music ‘characterizing’ by sound alone, that its entities are so specific and prominent that they independently mediate the fairy-tale, childlike emerging world.

In this context, Adorno’s view of the Fourth as having swallowed the programme and the characters as being its monuments becomes slightly more tangible. The programme, as it were, resides in the composition itself, speaking through characterization, its entirety being broken because of the strong and defined differentiation between the themes, their sound-worlds, and their detachedness from one another.

Having outlined the relevant function of characterization in the first movement, the analysis now looks at the themes of the exposition.

**Exposition: building a storyworld**

The opening sleigh bells form the start of the movement’s exposition, which consists of seven further themes, as stated by Mahler.\footnote{NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 178.} These are all very different from one another in expression and instrumentation, and clearly marked by stark juxtaposition. Both features are important for the content, presentation, and structure of what I interpret as the main world of the movement’s storyworld. A crucial aspect for its mediation, further explored in the analysis, is the previously outlined concept of the world as portrait. This concerns both the distant viewpoint of the listener in relation to the music as well as the framing effects of the themes due to their reciprocal deviation and condensed, chamber-like texture. The formal distribution of themes in the exposition is as follows:\footnote{The analysis is based on that of Floros, to which I have made some modifications; see \textit{The Symphonies}, p. 117.}

- Sleigh bell motif: bars 1–3
- Theme I: bars 3–7
- Theme II: bars 7–9
- Magical horn: bars 9–11
- Themes I & II: bars 11–21
- Theme II: bars 21–25
Themes I & II: bars 25–31
Theme III: bars 32–37
Theme IV: bars 38–46
Theme V: bars 47–57
Theme VI: bars 58–72
Sleigh bell motif: bars 72–76
Theme I: bars 76–80
Theme I & II: bars 80–90
Theme VII: bars 91–101

Based on my interpretation of world elements based on timbre, however, I have made certain changes in relation to the identification of themes I and II and their subsequent interaction. In addition, there is the insertion of what I interpret as a magical horn sounding from within the fairy-tale world.

In line with Adorno’s objective characterization, each theme forms its own distinct being with a particular character. I argue that these characters represent various elements of world, such as characterization, song, and places, mediated or told in their own specific ways. The abrupt changes between the themes imply the influence of the scene changes of the theatre, but also remind us of cinematic montage. When musically transmuted and freed from the frames of both film and drama, however, the differing themes come across as being spread out in a vast, imaginary space. This generates a totality corresponding to a storyworld, containing its own set of world-building components. Because of the chamber music writing generating tight, spatial frames around the themes, here one can speak of a miniature world, which further reflects the childlike perspective as well as Adorno’s image-world of childhood.

The movement’s form also has implications for aspects of the exposition’s world. On the surface, it is a classical sonata form, but as usual, Mahler challenges the conventions and makes a number of deviations from the norm. In addition to the exposition being exceptionally short for a Mahler symphony, contributing to the perception of each theme’s distinctiveness, the expositional design affects the temporal process of world. Between the sixth and seventh themes, Mahler has inserted a false recapitulation, which results in a re-beginning recalling circular activity, as though everything has started again from the vantage point of the sleigh bells. Furthermore, the seventh and last theme differs from the others by suggesting an inner world and point of stasis that interrupts the repetitive procedure, presenting the start of what I term a breakout process of worlds.

Adorno likens the exposition to a presentation of dramatis personae, whose musical story is later told in the development.\footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 95.} This literary analogy can in a similar way be adapted to the concept of world, with the exposition undergoing various elements of its existence before being modified into new ones. In terms of the entire movement, the exposition thus functions as a reference point for the other versions of worlds. I therefore define the exposition as the main world of the storyworld, forming its own coherent totality of different yet kindred timbres. However, this main world contains one possible world represented by the seventh theme’s inner dream world, which breaks the ongoing course of the world as well as its portrait-like presentation in favour of an immersive, temporally suspended space.

\textbf{Characterizing temperaments of adult and child: themes I and II}

This analysis starts with a discussion of themes I and II and their suggested characterization of two opposing, humanlike temperaments evocative of the figures of child and adult. Whereas music does not have a descriptive ability analogous to that of literary composition, in the following I demonstrate how Mahler’s scoring presents a musical figuration through the mediation of a particular behaviour or agency. The relevant sequence encompasses bars 3–31, starting with an initial presentation of each theme, after which the themes are combined and varied in different ways, suggesting the interaction and development of the characters, especially that of the child.

The first theme enters through a crescendo in bar 3, simultaneously as the sleigh bell motif fades out in a diminuendo (see example 4.1.1). This overlapping gesture attained by dynamic differentiation recalls the cinematic technique of dissolve, which is a type of transition in which one sequence fades into another. The effect is consequently one of a similar shift in focus and scene, here to the next element of world presented by theme I. Compared with the previous sleigh bell motif, it differs notably in terms of style, texture, and timbre. The anacrusis figure initiated by the first violins appears cautious and tentative due to the performance direction of \textit{etwas zurückgehalten}, as though literally holding back. Sliding into the G in bar 4 through a glissando before landing on a B, simultaneously as the dynamics recede to \textit{pp}, generates a sensation of unreality and humour, seemingly telling the listener that this is not to be taken seriously. The resulting lingering pause and mediation of an ‘as if’ permeate the continuation of the theme and colours its many classical markers, such as the elegant melody, filled with ornamentation and grace notes, and the homogenous string accompaniment.
Example 4.1.1: bars 1–7
In addition, the first theme appears out of place because of its marked contrast to the sound of the sleigh bells, whose fairy-tale atmosphere suffuses the classical style with a shimmer of something unworldly. The overlapping meeting of themes strengthens this effect, making the different timbres irrevocably merge. Mahler thus makes familiar material unfamiliar, and simultaneously enables the fairy-tale ambiance to continue to characterize the world of the story.

The first theme is the one in the symphony most associated with idealized childhood. Partly, that is due to the naïve simplicity of its materials, with the first violins’ melody being accompanied only by lower strings playing pizzicato, forming a stripped-down, condensed texture approaching chamber music. Other interpretations view this as the classical style pointing backwards to an earlier style and era. These interpretations seem plausible through their apt characterization of the music, but they do not really address how the aspects of child, naïveté, and nostalgia are mediated as narration. I propose that the theme’s expression instead evokes a childlike temperament, in which the plainness, carefreeness, and innocent longing remind us of significant traits of children. Mahler’s statement about this theme also seems to point towards a

behaviour or way of being: ‘childlike, simple and entirely non-self-conscious’.

In narratology, the notion of characterization is explained as ‘ascribing information to an agent in the text so as to provide a character in the storyworld with a certain property or properties’. Description, however, is inapplicable to music, which is why here one can instead speak of a mode of figuration through the expression of agency, i.e., that someone behaves and acts in a certain performative way. As such, this manner of telling by showing resonates with the mostly mimetic modes of film and drama, in which the story and its characters are directly enacted. The musical characterization of a childlike character in this case results from the cooperation of all compositional elements, including timbre, texture, and style. Although the theme only lasts four bars, there arises a consistency of agency that later serves to recentre the listening in the characterization of child every time it returns.

The scoring of the first theme also results in a specific manner of presentation, which in turn affects the position of the listener. Because of the cool, classical elegance of the string sound in combination with the unreal atmosphere, there emerges a perceived distance from the music, analogous to looking at the world from the outside rather than being inside it. In addition, the compact texture with its tight spatial frames presents this world as framed, which consequently resonates with the concept of a portrait of the world, as previously discussed. Spatial frames are the smallest unit among the different levels of narrative space, formulated as ‘the immediate surroundings of actual events, the various locations shown by the narrative discourse or by the image’. All these features turn the listener into an observer of the characterization of character in the storyworld, constructed as a tableau vivant and thereby continuing the tableau form initiated by the sleigh bells.

Against classical practice, the first theme closes on the tonic after just four bars (bar 7) and gives way to yet another theme deviating in expression and timbre. There is thus a new shift in focus and scene, but this time as an abrupt juxtaposition instead of overlapping. Apart from marking an imaginative distance between the two themes, the alteration also frames the latter vertically, continuing to depict the world as portrait. The second theme begins with distinct staccato notes in clarinets and bassoons, after which follows an ascending gesture in lower strings (see example 4.1.2). Just as with the first theme, Mahler’s scoring eschews traditional classical markers, here, for example, through the distorting effect of heavy double basses. The darker timbre of the lower instrumental registers together with the harsh accents evoke the character of

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277 As translated in Floros, *The Symphonies*, p. 117. See also NBL, *Recollections*, p. 162: ‘the scoring of that childishly simple and quite unselfconscious theme’.

278 See Fotis Jannidis, ‘Character’, ‘Characterization’, *LHN*.

279 Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Space’, *LHN*. The other, ensuing levels are setting, story space, narrative- or storyworld, and narrative universe.

severe authority and confidence, to which the strings’ counterpoint adds something learned and sophisticated. In relation to the childlike temperament, this could recall an adult figure, which the music again mediates by means of all concurrent elements. Just like the former, the characterization emerges as a framed portrait of the world, observed from a distance by the listener. The same tight spatial frames enclose the chamber-like texture, in addition to an alienated classical style. From the perspective of a fairy-tale setting, the stereotypical figurations of both themes recall stock or archetypical characters, here introduced in the manner of Adorno’s dramatis personae.

Example 4.1.2: bars 5–9

Floros regards the second theme as lasting from bars 8 to 17, but already towards the end of bar 9 there is an additional deviance from formal norms that indicates a temporary pause from the mediating mode of characterization. Instead of presenting an expected reprise of the first theme, all strings disappear in favour of an extension phrase in solo horn. As Johnson notes, this is at odds with the classical style in terms of orchestration, phrasing, and ornamentation. The resulting strained, slightly distorted tone, stripped bare except for long notes in clarinets and bassoons, has an aura of something strange and unworldly. This resonates with the fairy-tale atmosphere of the storyworld as well as that of Des Knaben Wunderhorn, suggesting a particular, possibly

281 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 117.
282 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 110.
magical horn. It joins the many other instruments in the movement that Mahler gives an enchanted or childlike timbre so that they turn into new, fairy-tale ones. The musical sounds are thus re-embodied as coming from an instrumental performer, but in this case from a virtual performer playing inside the storyworld. This interpretation of performative agency differs from that of Hatten, who refers to an actual musician performing a musical work. In marking an object characterizing the fairy-tale world, the solo horn functions as a cue while simultaneously assuring its continuity during the sequence of characterization.

After the horn’s short intrusion, Mahler merges the elements of the first and second themes in a number of ways and combinations. If their initial instances were presentations similar to the introduction of characters in a novel, what follows is two larger phases that imply these themes’ development and reciprocal interaction. This process is possible partly due to Mahler’s formal decision to initiate a reiteration of the themes (bars 18–31) directly after their first appearances. In this way, there is a deepening as well as continuation of the characterization, illustrating the characters’ progress through time.

The first of the phases begins in bar 11 through a relocalization to string timbre in the form of an inversion of the bass phrase of the second theme, now scored for violins. Despite this derivation, clearly marked by accentuated syncopations, I suggest that the violins’ association with the first theme mirrors the following passage (bars 11–17). That comes partly as an effect of their previous silence from that theme up to now in the movement. A fusion of the first and second themes is also suggested by the instrumental and textural disposition of the section. String timbre led by the first violins alternates between steady horn accompaniment and later also a characteristic ascending gesture in the lower strings (bar 16). In addition, the triads of the earlier extension phrase in the fairy-tale horn figure appear in the oboes and clarinets, where they gain a comic instead of distorted quality. The earlier separated temperaments now merge in a sequence of two opposing sound planes, evocative of some sort of interaction between the characters of adult and child.

The second phase presents a return to the materials of bars 4–17, starting at the anacrusis of bar 18 (Fig. 1). Monahan regards this as a second subrotation of what he terms the basic ideas of P1 and P2, which correspond to the first and second themes as outlined by Floros. The subrotation resonates with Adorno’s concept of ‘variant technique’ in Mahler, and here enables the direct continuity of character development.

Characteristically for this movement up to this point, in bar 17, the first violins initiate the anacrusis of the first theme before the ascending strings

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284 See Monahan, ‘A Play Within a Play’ in Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 13, Figure 5.2.
have reached the goal of their arc, ignoring the norm to reach a close. Compared with its introductory appearance, here the first theme comes across as practically the same. This presents an example of Adorno’s analogy of Mahler’s themes to characters in a novel because of their unchanged (yet developed) essence, as well as the composer’s principle that his themes should remain recognizable throughout.\textsuperscript{285} By turn, there is the addition of further motifs, such as the syncopated gestures of clarinets and bassoons anticipating the Finale’s opening clarinet figure. In the cellos, there is the emergence of a canonic counterpoint marked \textit{ohne Ausdruck}, whose learned gesture implies an academic tone.\textsuperscript{286} Its mixture with the first theme suggests an effect of the adult temperament of the second theme, possibly resulting from the previous interaction, for example, as maturity or the beginning of adulthood in the previously innocent child. Consequently, this entails a change in the character’s behaviour compared with the initial presentation, the earlier separated themes now being fused together. By contrast, the ensuing instance of the second theme (bar 21), although slightly varied, does not contain any elements of the first theme. This implies that the adult character does not develop in the same manner as that of the child.

A final intermingling of the first and second themes takes place in bars 25–31. With cellos and basses now primarily moving stepwise against the occasionally repetitive horn background, there is a further sense of sophistication. The extension phrases with triads earlier ascribed to winds have been transferred to the first violin melody, lending it a sense of continuity that was lacking in the previously separated sound planes from bar 11. Simultaneously, this means that the comic touch of the phrase moves into the temperament of the child, as do the horn staccatos representative of the adult temperament. It is plausible to interpret this passage as the further personal development of the child character. As a reflection of that, deviations from the classical norm increase, especially in terms of prominent dissonances, more unstable harmony, and marked accents. Together, these features could imply some sort of struggle or problem for the character, indicating the increasing challenges of adulthood.

In this sequence, Mahler’s way of composing has, overall, presented the characterization of two different temperaments belonging to the characters of adult and child. Initially separated as agencies operating in individual scenes, through subsequent variations and fusions of the themes, a process of interaction and development has crystallized. This mediates a musical mode of characterization also defined by constant change and growth – as with characters in other narrative media. In addition to their two subrotations here, the first and second themes return in a false recapitulation or second exposition in bars

\textsuperscript{285} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{286} Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 110.
72–90. Apart from the sleigh bell motif, only these of the total of seven themes are recycled in the exposition. This consistency and development of their respective characterizations establish them as permanent, virtual agents in the storyworld. Because of the music’s set of directly following variations, Mahler’s concept of ‘eternal evolution’ in analogy with the world here becomes a means for evolving the same, world-building elements.

**Expansion of world: themes III–VI**

In its first 31 bars, the exposition has presented a short introduction with sleigh bells followed by the first two of seven themes. As I have showed, these suggest the mediation of different elements of the storyworld. The introduction sets the vantage point for the main world and its later transformations by functioning as cue for several characteristic features such as setting, atmosphere, and style. The two themes in turn express two distinct humanlike temperaments illustrating the characters of adult and child, conveyed by means of characterization. These elements of world – the reference point and characters – construct and establish its most fundamental components, thereby having value for the sense-making of the story.

In this section, I look more closely at the third to sixth themes, before the return of the sleigh bells and their re-beginning of the cyclic process of world. Like the previous themes, they illustrate various elements of the main world, concerned with event, aspects of song, and landscape. Through Mahler’s modification of musical materials, he presents them in a way that preserves the childlike, humorous, and fairy-tale characteristics of the storyworld. By means of the continuous structural marking of the differing themes in the manner of *Inszenierung*, the themes maintain their shape as framed, portrait-like scenes perceived as spread out through a vast imaginative expanse. Compared with the first and second themes, however, the subsequent themes expand the main world into further spaces and places.

**Theme III: carnival event**

The third theme appears somewhat unprepared when it suddenly enters at the anacrusis of Fig. 2 (bar 32), simultaneously cutting off the ongoing triadic figures of the intermingled first and second themes. This six-bar-long passage is commonly regarded as a transition to the fourth theme (bar 38), despite lacking several classical features such as a process of tonal modulation. As a result, the theme arrives too early, contributing to another sudden scene shift.

This abrupt start in combination with the new *frisch* tempo creates the effect of an event taking place somewhere other than the previous themes. In its most basic sense, ‘event’ refers to a change of state in the represented world, simultaneously implying temporality as part of the sequentiality of the story.  

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287 Peter Hühn, ‘Event and eventfulness’, *LHN*. See also Herbert Grabes, ‘Sequentiality’, *LHN*.
Having been silent for two bars, the group of three clarinets leaves the rest of
the winds behind and takes charge of a celebratory, bouncy melody to the ac-
companiment of actively moving semiquavers in the strings. Their raucous,
slightly squeaky timbre resulting from the high register produces a strained,
humorous expression that colours the rest of the texture. Johnson has charac-
terized the peculiarity of individual woodwind orchestral voices as one of
Mahler’s ways to portray carnival humour, and the tone of the clarinets here
can be said to approach such an evocation.\footnote{Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 126.} Humour also traces back to the
composer’s early sketch for the Fourth as a ‘Symphonie Humoreske’ as well
as the world of \textit{Des Knaben Wunderhorn}. Together with the festive atmos-
phere and spiritual motion of the expanded orchestra that follows upon the
clarinets, the third theme as a whole suggests some kind of joyful activity suf-
fused by the carnivalesque. In relation to the concept of the world as portrait,
it comes across as a kind of tableau vivant, with the distance of the classical
style keeping the listener in the position of an exterior observer, as in the the-
atre.

\textit{Themes IV and V: the world as depicted through song}
The fourth and fifth themes (bars 38–57) are variations of what in sonata form
corresponds to the secondary section. After a short pause, the music transitions
into a broad, extended melody marked \textit{breit gesungen}. Scored for a group of
cellos and then a solo oboe, it presents a prime example of the songlike quality
of \textit{Gesanglichkeit} guiding Mahler’s compositional principles. Johnson men-
tions these particular instruments, together with the solo violin, solo horn, and
English horn, as prominent among the composer’s ‘singing’ voices mediating
a songful or lyrical character.\footnote{Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 18.} Mahler further underlines the intended vocal-
ity by giving the players directions of \textit{Ton!} and \textit{espressivo}.

The variations here exploit the songlike in different ways due to a constant
change in instrumentation and texture, resulting in alternating elements and
mediations of world. The first instance of the melody initiating the fourth
theme (bar 38) finds the cellos accompanied by strings in lower register and
sparse bassoons. As a small group constituting the by now characteristic
chamber-like condensed texture, the mere imitation of singing turns into the
formation of an actual song, in which the broadness and simple straightforward-
ness of the melody conveys a carefree childlikeness. Adorno spoke of the
variations in terms of secondary themes as ‘an instrumental song far too self-
sufficient for a sonata as such’.\footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 95.} This statement partly derives from the opinion
that their marked contrast to the principal themes undermines the unfold-

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\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 126.}
\item \footnote{Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 18.}
\item \footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 95.}
\end{itemize}
ing of sonata form. However, the view of the Fourth Symphony as the shuffling together of nonexistent children’s songs might find its most direct analogy here. By itself moulding into an actual child’s song, from the perspective of storyworld, the first melodic instance in cellos thus become a song virtually performed in that world. Simultaneously, as an expressive performance it becomes a way of telling about that same world. Song thereby represents both an element of the fairy-tale world and its childlike narration. One can liken its function to that of non-diegetic music in accompanying or commenting upon the world of the story. Recalling the definitions of Gorbman, non-diegetic music comes from outside the film’s diegesis or storyworld. This means that it falls to the listener to construct the scene of which the song tells, completing the imaginative image.

The conception of song changes when the melody of the fourth theme is shortly transferred to a solo oboe (bar 42). As a clear foreground against the sparse background of a few winds and lower strings playing pizzicato, its songlike quality functions more as an imitation of human speech acted out in some surrounding milieu. This entails a shift from a non-diegetic to a diegetic position, meaning that song is now heard as utterance inside the storyworld, similar to source music in film. Hatten claims that the lyrical mode implies the expression of a particular human agent of individual subjectivity and forms one of several cues for virtual embodiment.\footnote{Hatten, A Theory of Virtual Agency, pp. 69–70.} The oboe takes the role of virtual agent, presenting one of the few instances in the movement where Mahler lets instrumental soloists emerge into prominence. Normally, this kind of lyrical expression by a single instrument gives rise to a sense of identification in the listener, but here there is a brevity and distance due to the classical style that I argue reduces that effect. Later in the movement’s recapitulation, the solo oboe returns with a stronger expression of lyricism and subjectivity in the return of the seventh theme (bars 323–339), where it takes on a voice resonating more in the listener.

The fifth theme, starting at the anacrusis of bar 47, presents a variation of the initial cello melody, albeit with an expanded orchestral accompaniment that gradually erases the song qua song and subsequently also the entire section of variations. As the orchestra grows in fullness, the previously condensed texture that evoked an actual children’s song begins to blur, increasing the neutrality of the timbre. When the melody reaches the first violins in bar 52, the song is transformed into a theme merely imitating the songlike. This development illustrates how the chamber-like composition of the Fourth forms an important contribution to its evocations of images and elements of world. Towards the end (from bar 54), the orchestral parts further increase so that also the spatial frames appear to widen, serving as the final dissolve of the scene.
As a whole, then, the fourth and fifth themes, by means of techniques of variation in combination with instrumental alteration of songlike melody, produce a shifting representation of the storyworld, making it crystallize into various elements of altering spaces. Like the many, slightly changed returns of the first and second themes, this results in a nuanced narration deepening the configuration of world.

**Theme VI: landscape**

The sixth theme presents the exposition’s first closing section (Fig. 4, bar 58), entering upon a caesura that cuts off the music’s stagnating diminuendo. Despite demonstrating the expected tonic chord, it differs significantly in character and style from what has preceded, urging Adorno to define it more as a third theme in relation to sonata form. The bare texture of oboe and bassoon initially proposes an expansive pastoral landscape setting. Together with the change in tempo (*Plötzlich langsam und bedächtig*) and sudden decrease in number of orchestral parts, it seems far removed from the rest of the storyworld. In the following, I suggest that this section depicts landscape as a fairy-tale place presented by means of humour, unfolding in three variations, i.e., bars 58–62, 63–66, and 67–71.

Landscape and nature have been recurring topics in Mahler’s symphonies ever since the often-discussed opening of the First Symphony with its veiled, mystical atmosphere and clarinet cuckoo calls. These topics also suffuse the world materials found in the Fourth and Fifth, in which landscape or other associations with nature frequently appear in several movements. Because of Mahler’s constant musical transformations, these often undergo a process of change over time, either from a vantage point in the same theme or motif or as topical unfolding. For the investigation of various elements of world and their temporal development, it is worth looking more closely at this subject from a broader perspective.

On the surface, the present landscape setting resonates with traditional conventions of style and instrumentation. However, Mahler adds several peculiarities to its presentation so that it appears unfamiliar and estranged. For example, the woodwinds’ introductory staccato accents lend the figuration a comic touch in dialogue with the *Wunderhorn* atmosphere, as does the varied answer in the strings. Humour also colours bars 60–61 of the first variation, in which the accents intermingle with consistent triad figures in an expanded texture of woodwinds and horn.

Another peculiarity is the strange intercutting gestures that interrupt the flow of the first and second variations in bars 62 and 66 (see example 4.1.3). Since they are marked *forte* in contrast to the predominantly *piano* dynamics of the surrounding materials, they are perceived as intrusions from outside the

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landscape domain. This effect increases through their motivic resemblance to the first and second themes and through their changed and expanded instrumentation. The first intercut also contains a change of time signature to $\frac{3}{4}$ and the second ends with a caesura, further underlining their deviance from the surrounding music. In addition to preserving the comic presentation, they suggest that it is the characters from before that are trying to break into the frames of the landscape scene from another part of the storyworld. Helpful in describing this phenomenon is Chion’s concept of off-screen sound, whose source is invisible or acousmatic.\textsuperscript{293} Acousmatic sound has a long history and was used by French composer Pierre Schaeffer to describe the listening experience of musique concrète.\textsuperscript{294} For pinpointing the effect of the intrusions as positioned outside the image of the framed landscape, however, I find Chion’s cinematic reference particularly illuminating. One can also use an analogy closer to Mahler’s work in the theatre by likening these instances to the use of off-stage voices, here transmuted into the symphonic work. In the listening situation, the framing element of both cinema and theatre arises out of the musical composition itself, simulating a spatial outside. At other times in this study, I discuss external agents or voices as coming from outside the totality of the storyworld. In narratology, these correspond to extradiegetic elements not literally forming part of the storyworld, in contrast to intradiegetic ones that exist within the storyworld.\textsuperscript{295}

\textit{Example 4.1.3: bars 60–68}

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\textsuperscript{293} Michel Chion, \textit{Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen} (New York, 1994), p. 73.


Mahler’s comical deformation of the traditional pastoral setting turns it into a sort of fairy-tale landscape, situated at a distance inaccessible to the inhabitants of the storyworld. Convention functions as a cue or reference point for the subsequent transformation, similarly to the variations depicting the elements of characters and song. Landscape as topic returns several times during the course of the Fourth Symphony and thus is important for its development in relation to the other worlds of the work. In this movement, the sixth theme reappears again in the recapitulation (bars 283–297), and in the second and third movements, landscape plays a prominent part as well. Overall, the sections mediating landscape become further and further removed from the main
world, forming part of a breakout process while simultaneously marking deeper levels of virtual subjectivity.

The third variation (from bar 67) initiates a process whereby the timbre systematically darkens through a gradual lowering of instrumental registers (see example 4.1.4). Starting in clarinets, bass clarinet, and, briefly in the English horn, the texture is stripped down for the bassoon and cellos, passing through the double basses until finally landing in a solo bass (bar 72). Simultaneously, Mahler decreases the dynamics and steers the music towards a minor mode. Together, these features perform a change of ‘lighting’ similar to that of the theatre stage. The purpose of this procedure becomes clear when, in bar 72, there is a return to the sleigh bells of the opening. They form the start of a second exposition or false exposition repeat and present us with several concerns regarding the interpretation of world.
Example 4.1.4: bars 65–73
Recentering of world and the break-out of dreams: the sleigh bells again and theme VII

All works of art are made of and dependent on form, and music probably more so than any other medium. An inherent aspect of most musical forms is the phenomenon of repetition, a unique yet fundamental cornerstone of musical works that is impossible to ignore. This phenomenon might appear counter-productive for the mediation of worlds or some kind of narrative activity, but in fact, I argue that the repetitive feature of music enables the continuity of worlds and their various constitutive elements. Due to the lack of language and visual references, repetition becomes one of music’s means to establish and sustain recurring aspects of its content. From the listener’s perspective, it also gives necessary structure in the orientation of pure sound materials.

Repetition is especially crucial for revisiting the same worlds within a storyworld. As was discussed in the chapter on world-making, the metaphor of transportation and Ryan’s ‘fictional recentering’ explain the imaginative, immersive transportation of the reader into a literary story. Ryan’s term ‘recentering’ also refers to such transportation between worlds inside the world of the story, providing a modifiable tool for defining how the listener alternates between different worlds within a musical composition.296

I propose that this kind of recentering also takes place with the return to the same kind of world or place within the storyworld, which is what happens when the sleigh bells restart the second exposition in bar 72. This initially

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296 See Herman, Basic Elements of Narrative, p. 120.
begins as a repeat of the first exposition, but after slight variations of the opening and the subsequent first and second themes, the music interrupts the expected continuation and is instead transformed into the new material of the seventh theme.\(^\text{297}\)

Mahler initiates the recentring of the sleigh bells through a technique similar to the theatrical darkening of stage lighting, so that the landscape setting is transformed into the fairy-tale milieu of the opening. As a reference point for the main world, it also presents a recentring back to the node of that world, implying that its course has now come full circle and that we are back where it all started. This is a way to bring order to a world so full of differing elements and create a sense of home and restful gathering.

When the sleigh bells give way to a largely unchanged version of the first and second themes (bars 77–90), there is the sensation that the course of the main world has started anew. One can liken this to a cyclical procedure, like those taking place in the real world. By Mahler’s ordering of the themes in this way through a second exposition, there arises a particular process of world. Ordering represents another of Nelson Goodman’s ways of world-making and here also has a temporal effect.\(^\text{298}\)

However, the seventh and last theme of the second exposition (bars 91–101) breaks that process by introducing a new sound-world altering the dimensions of space and time (see example 4.1.5). As the tempo stagnates (see Fig. 7, bar 91), the previously intensely working strings are transformed into a drawn-out carpet of interweaving lines, in which the cellos are particularly prominent with their glissandos spanning wide intervals. Long pedals in the bassoons and extended phrases in the woodwinds underline the evocation of spatial expansion, as though the world’s frames swelled into a more voluminous sphere. This also affects the sensation of temporal suspension and detachment from the immediate surroundings. Suspension (Suspension) represents one of Adorno’s suggested genres of Mahler’s idea of form, in addition to breakthrough (Durchbruch) and fulfilment (Erfüllung).\(^\text{299}\) The seventh theme’s deviation from the rest of the music is reflected in his likening of the composer’s suspensions to sedimented episodes. However, one also finds useful tools in narratology for the explanation of this feature. Duration forms one of the highly influential categories of Gérard Genette, the others being order and frequency.\(^\text{300}\) It means speed in relation to the length of events and the text devoted to them, commonly referred to as story and discourse time. Genette outlines four types of duration, i.e., scene, summary, ellipsis, and pause, which present various kinds of story–discourse relations. Up to this point, the themes

\(^{297}\) See Monahan, ‘A Play Within a Play’, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 151.
\(^{298}\) Goodman, Ways of Worldmaking, pp. 12–14.
\(^{299}\) Adorno, Mahler, p. 41.
have predominantly come across as scenes, belonging to the showing mode analogous to drama as opposed to the summary mode of telling.\textsuperscript{301} With the seventh theme and its spatio–temporal expansion, however, that manner of presentation is broken, simultaneously also dissolving the previous ones’ portrait-like distance and framing. Whereas one could be tempted to use the pause category to describe the mode evoked here, a ‘descriptive dwelling on a point in time in which action does not move forward’, I find a more suitable term in a newly added, fifth category called ‘stretch’.\textsuperscript{302} This is when text time exceeds event time, as in filmic slow motion, which captures the music’s sense of enlargement and languorous rest.

\textsuperscript{301} Martin Löschnigg, ‘Summary and Scene’, \textit{Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory}.
Example 4.15: bars 90–101
The spatio–temporal effects produce a sensation of withdrawing from the outside world into an interior sphere suggestive of dreams and longing. Together with the expressive and languishing tone, the music evokes a high degree of virtual subjectivity, opening an emotional room in which to dwell. Simultaneously, there is a recentering from the main world into that of another, possible one. But to whom does this inner world belong? When no character is available in novels to whom to attribute the consciousness described by the text, the reader identifies with the story-internal position, imaginatively transporting the self into the scene of events. Since, in a corresponding way, there is no virtual agent musically present as a character here, I suggest that the listener takes that position, immersed in the embedding field of sounds. This differs from the previous portrait-like mediation of world externally observed by the listener, who here for the first time in the movement imaginatively enters inside its previously enclosed frames. In addition, the immersive inner world of the seventh theme forms the start of what I call a breakout process of world

303 Ryan, Narrative As Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media, p. 133.
permeating the entire course of the symphony, finally reaching the higher, ethereal worlds of the spheres characterizing the third movement. For now, the seventh theme also functions as a direct transition into the subsequent dream sequence of the development, an inner world of dreams giving rise to other dreams similarly produced by mental activity.

Deformation of world: the development as dream sequence
The peaceful state of the inner, possible world concluding the exposition ends abruptly with a return to the opening sleigh bells. Gone is the previous shimmer of a fairy-tale atmosphere in favour of a number of distortions that strikingly alter the bells’ timbre and thematic substance. This shocking awakening forms the start of the development section (bars 102–238), in which the main world is transformed into a dream sequence by means of deformation. Deformation represents one of Goodman’s ways of world-making and is here done from the vantage point of the sleigh bell motif, which later also functions as a cue to change the basic atmosphere of some of the containing episodes.304

In the following, I analyse the development as a coherent dream sequence alternating between different kinds of dream worlds characterized by darkness and light, one as a horrific nightmare world and the other as a more luminous, paradisical one. As smaller entities within the totality of the dream sequence, they gain the status of sub-worlds within the framework of the dream world. During the course of the development, the contrastive worlds are intermingled in various ways, with themes or motifs from one type of world being either distorted or illuminated into another one.

One significant reason for viewing the development as forming part of another world than the exposition’s main world concerns the prominent disruption between the two sections, observed by several researchers and critics. The sense of these sections as constituting separate entities from each other, for example, shines through in Mitchell’s definition of the development as ‘virtually self-contained’.305 Others have leaned towards more vivid descriptions, such as Knapp in his vision of the exposition’s closing theme as ‘a lullaby leading to an uneasy sleep besieged by nightmare’.306 Adorno’s comment that, with the development, the movement ‘truly begins as a story’ also underlines it as a self-sufficient part in relation to the contrasting ideas of the exposition’s dramatis personae.307

The differences also lie in several aspects of compositional elements, which construct the basis for how the development creates and presents the dream

305 Mitchell, “‘Swallowing the Programme’”, The Mahler Companion, p. 213.
307 Adorno, Mahler, p. 96.
sequence and its various sub-worlds. While the exposition constructed a multifaceted totality of world through diverse themes scenically structured as in framed portraits, the development is made of a series of discontinuous episodes rotating between the same set of materials. The previous uniform texture here gives way to a fragmentary one, filled with heterogeneous, often solo voices. Especially salient is the motivic and timbral distortion permeating most of the music. Both material from the exposition as well as new themes and instruments are reshaped so that there arises a horrific, eerie atmosphere approaching the grotesque.

Characteristic of the development is the construction of worlds through sounds, both light and dark worlds, and the resulting position of the listener that this entails. Mahler’s way of working with timbre and texture transforms actual sounds into virtual sounds of the storyworld, often as ambient or territorial sounds such as noise or certain instruments, for example, a kind of horror bell. These sounds define the different worlds and make the listener into an observer of the orientation of their surroundings. This marks a shift from the exposition and its presentation of classical materials as if perceived from a portrait-like distance. In general, the development endows the listener with a more engaged role as an actual agent within the storyworld, notably in the light kind of worlds that the characters of the exposition cannot reach. They remain restricted to the domains of darkness, swallowed or erased by their collapses.

The sound-worlds and their evocations of dream-like elements of darkness and light constitute the main reason for my interpretation of the development as a dream sequence. In addition, the episodic and discontinuous structure mirrors the common sequential experience of dreams – through transformations of sound, the world constantly recreates itself. As such, the development represents an independent series of episodes taking place inside the storyworld. This mirrors the technique of dream sequences used in films, which often present some kind of interlude or independent part of the principal narrative. Since dreams are the product of mental activity, I suggest that the development arises out of the final, inner dream world of the exposition, leading into a new kind of dream world.

The subsequent analysis of the various sub-worlds of the dream sequence follows a division into episodes, as fitting for the topic in question, as follows: episode 1 (bars 102–124), episode 2 (125–144), episode 3 (145–154), episode 4 (155–166), episode 5 (167–208), and episode 6 (209–238). The sections rely on the topics of the light world and dark world, respectively, which is why some treat several episodes.

**The first episode: reframing the sleigh bells**
The return of the opening sleigh bells at Fig. 8 (bar 102) that initiates the first episode takes off with a jolt (see example 4.1.6). This sensation of abruptness is partly attributable to the perceived contrast to the sense of closure and the
subsequent fading out of the last part of the exposition, making the returned opening tempo come across as faster than before. Knapp ascribes to the sleigh bells the effects of ‘devastating estrangement’ and ‘extreme re-awakening’ from the security of the seventh theme, while Johnson speaks of ‘an unprepared restart’ and ‘theatrical event’. In addition, Mahler’s use of the sleigh bells evokes their inherent function of warning, which here serves as a cue to mediate a sensation of danger and unforeseen, dramatic happenings. This is also reflected in the instrumental shift of the initial staccato quaver notes from the flutes to clarinets, giving the timbre a less soft tone imbued with harshness. The associations with sleigh bells as functional objects thus form a vantage point for a musical transformation into the narrative element of an event.

Example 4.1.6: bars 102–110

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The modified sleigh bells mark the beginning of several other changes compared with their previous instances. The expected materials of the first and second themes have been distorted into interwoven, eerie-sounding fragments,
which Monahan defines as the ‘nightmare topos’. A solo violin appears in bar 103 with a brittle version of the second theme’s ascending syncopated figure, which later induces a menacing effect in the horns (bar 106) and cellos and double basses (bars 112–113). Now scored in the minor, the triadic phrases in winds and brass convey an anxious rather than comic impression.

These deviations permeate the entire first episode (bars 102–124), giving it a spooky and even horrific character. Through the twisted transformation of materials from the main world, Mahler creates an entirely different sound-world suggestive of a nightmare setting. Thus, the earlier instances of the sleigh bells serve as a reference point for the listener’s perception of their modified repetition as generating a new kind of world. This time, the sense of imaginative recentring is a tool for the transformed generation of rather than a return to the same world. This further illustrates how form becomes something dynamic and changeable during the act of listening, emphasizing those slight variations that become nullified in the static formal scheme.

Mahler’s way of making another world out of the main world recalls Goodman’s definition of world-making as the remaking of existing worlds. In particular, this remaking arises out of deformation. That the composer also uses the sleigh bells with their function as a unifying reference point further points towards their importance as the vantage point for the creation of other worlds in this movement.

The modification of the sleigh bells and their subsequent themes not only results in a different kind of world with a different atmosphere, but also generates a change in perspective through the addition of the solo violin. Entering just one bar into the development (bar 103), it distinguishes itself both as a new feature in this setting and through its particular timbre. Starting as a variation of the second theme’s ascending, syncopated gesture, here in the minor mode and chromatically inflected, it is soon transformed into high, drawn-out notes on the violins’ E string. The tone achieves a quality of brittleness that, together with the crescendo–diminuendo swells and spooky ambiance of the surrounding sounds, gives its part a character of intimate fear and anxiety. This expressiveness and the violin’s foregrounding as solo instrument unite into an imitation of the human voice, speaking to us amidst sonorous chaos. Equally, however, the effect is due to the previous silence of the solo violin in the movement, which, from a broader perspective stems from customs of orchestral practice. Since the norm has traditionally been the omnipresence of tutti strings, collectively producing a neutral timbre, a solo violin attains an individuality that stands out against the evenness of mixed sound. As a result, the solo string timbre evokes associations of a deeply personal, intimately

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309 Monahan, ‘A Play Within a Play’, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 158.
speaking voice. Compared with the more direct mediation of speech characteristic of a woodwind soloist, it approaches an internalized manner of communicating analogous to inner thoughts and emotive reflection.\footnote{310 See Hesselaeger, \textit{Making Sense of Sounds}, pp. 76–79.}

The analogy of the solo violin to a particularly expressive voice suggests the simulation of human agency and its definition as a virtual human agent. Here, the interior quality is marked not only by timbre alone, but also through the statement’s phrasing in long, extended tones, which strike emotionally deeper than more mobile, virtuoso figures. There is thus the mediation of a virtual subjectivity with which the listener identifies, absorbing the inner voice of the solo violin and making it into one’s own.

These considerations affect the focalization of the nightmare sequence so that it is perceived from the subjective perspective of the virtual agent of the solo violin. Focalization stands for ‘the perspectival restriction and orientation of narrative information relative to somebody’s (usually, a character’s) perception, imagination, knowledge, or point of view’. Genette differentiates between three different modes of focalization, i.e., zero, internal, and external, respectively representing the perspectives of omniscience, focal character, and outside view.\footnote{311 See Manfred Jahn, ‘Focalization’, \textit{Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory}.} In relation to this, the solo violin could be considered a marker of internal focalization, cueing the point of view of the setting. This results in the listener seeing and feeling the event with and through the instrument, which becomes a lens through which the storyworld emerges.

Whereas other narrative media have techniques of, for example, description (literature) or camera shots (cinema), here musical perspective arises out of the simultaneous presentation of parts symbolizing a surrounding milieu and virtual agent. Since the focus shift makes a crucial difference in the sleigh bell setting compared with its previous shape, one can also speak of an effect analogous to reframing. The solo violin then suggestively represents the inner, fearful voice of child, which later returns with a similar expression in the landscape section of the recapitulation. The perspective of the setting also becomes a childlike one, mirroring that of the first movement’s overall storyworld. In relation to the previous presentation of a child character in the exposition, the solo violin might impersonate the character’s interior voice, adding to its earlier depiction by way of behaviour and temperament. As a mark of this interconnection, the first theme also returns briefly later in the episode at the anacrusis of Fig. 9 (bar 116). However, it is soon swept away by a collapse, which erases both character and the first sub-world of the dream sequence.

\textbf{The second episode: a childlike paradise}

After the abrupt collapse, the music never becomes completely silent, but largely disappears in a diminuendo to a brief, low, murmuring carpet of tiny

\textbf{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{310} See Hesselaeger, \textit{Making Sense of Sounds}, pp. 76–79.}}

\textbf{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{311} See Manfred Jahn, ‘Focalization’, \textit{Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory}.}}
semiquaver movements (bar 124). This forms the transition to the second episode (bar 125), when the cello trills and bass accompaniment undergo a key change from G to A major, being transformed into a new, more luminous sound-world characterized by a bright flute timbre (see example 4.1.7). It is as though the dream sequence briefly falls to pieces and then is reborn out of the remains, similar to the gesture of a wave ebbing before ascending again. Through the reduction of the present world to virtual background noise, Mahler’s transformation of sound enables this world to be remoulded into a new one, simultaneously presenting a shift in the dream sequence from a sub-world of darkness to one of light.

*Example 4.1.7: bars 124–133*

The new theme in four flutes that enters in bar 126 is referred to by Floros and Monahan as ‘the paradise theme’ due to its anticipation of materials in the
Both researchers associate this theme with different instances in the final movement, which nonetheless contain the same thematic substance. Floros defines the paradise theme as the phrase sung to the words *Wir genießen die himmlischen Freuden* (‘We savor the heavenly joys’) in bars 12–14, whereas Monahan cites the opening clarinet melody that, however, also accompanies the phrase mentioned by Floros. Monahan further demonstrates how the theme is also derived from several previous ones in the movement, from the transition of the third theme through themes four and five (sonata form’s secondary section) to the seventh theme’s inner dream world. These connections are interesting in their manifestation of Mahler’s intricate way of constantly developing and varying his compositional materials. However, as my analyses have aimed to show, all themes with links with the Finale display those links very differently in terms of timbre and texture, inviting evocations other than that of a heavenly life. This suggests a rethinking of motivic cells more as consistent elements used for various ends, analogous to Mahler’s analogy of playing with bricks, rather than forming equations with the same semantic meaning.

Floros normally goes farthest in such interlinking, and the paradise theme is no exception. He claims that, in the development, Mahler transforms it into a typical pastorale by means of sustained bass notes in cellos and double basses that provide the background for the unison flutes, bass clarinet, and bassoon. In my opinion, the timbre of this passage makes it much more multifaceted in terms of interpretation. The soft yet bright sound of the group of four flutes comes across as palely luminous, evoking an aura of dreaminess. Their melody appears naively carefree, Monahan likening it to ‘a merry tune’ and Knapp to ‘the mocking [new] theme’. Adorno referred to the instruments as generating the effect of a ‘dream ocarina’, claiming that ‘such must have been children’s instruments that no one ever heard’. His statement suggests that Mahler’s treatment of sound turns the flutes into a completely new instrument, belonging to the world of children. Together with the plain, song-like phrase resembling a child’s tune, it is plausible to define it as a childlike, fairy-tale instrument. As such, four flutes are transformed into the sound resulting from the performance of one virtual player, again suggesting an instance of performative agency taking place inside the storyworld.

This viewpoint modifies the conception of the theme as illustrating the pastoral and anticipating paradise and heaven. If it does so, it is another kind of

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314 Floros, *The Symphonies*, p. 120.
paradisiacal landscape featured as radiant, childlike, and existing in dreams. The recreation of a childlike paradise instead of a more traditionally serene, idyllic one also illustrates the humorous element characterizing the fairy-tale world's mediation. Consequently, this episode presents a world of light, opposing the previous dark nightmare one. In the sparse accompaniment, the frequent cello trills produce a buzzing, murmuring sound, replacing the earlier horror atmosphere with a background noise of peaceful humming. In contrast to the nightmare, which cued a childlike perspective on world, here the dream ocarina addresses the listener alone, since no virtual agent is musically present. The luminous dream world thus presents itself to and for the listener, who takes on the available part of character and interacts with the surroundings of that world.

This episode has presented the world of the dream sequence by means of virtual sounds, both in terms of those coming from instruments in the story-world and as a sort of background noise. Sound as sound also characterizes the following three episodes, albeit as situated in a nightmare world when the topic of light again is reversed to that of darkness.

Episodes 3–5: among the horror sounds of nightmare
At Fig. 11 (bar 142), the music again abates in a wave-like gesture, though only lasting three bars and rising into what becomes the next, third episode (bars 145–154, see example 4.1.8). In the following, the worlds of darkness and light meet when Mahler combines distorted versions of the paradise theme with elements of the nightmare materials. Monahan describes this conflictive union as a combinatorial space of chaos and conflict, resulting in corrupted paradise music.\(^\text{317}\) I prefer to regard it as the dark horror world suffusing or overtaking the luminous one, resulting in an even eerier realm. That Mahler exploits the paradise theme in a grotesque treatment exemplifies how he often lets topics associated with a higher world turn into those connected with the lower. This reflects a worldview in which there are no clear opposites, and even the most glorified subject can prove dreary.

\(^\text{317}\) See Monahan, ‘A Play Within a Play’, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, pp. 158 (Figure 5.4) and 163 (Figure 5.6).
Example 4.1.8: bars 144–153
Significant in this version of the nightmare world, encompassing episodes 3–5, is how Mahler orchestrates an imaginative space of what can be termed environmental sounds. This is similar to Chion’s definition of ambient or territorial sound on screen, i.e., sounds that embed a space and characterize its
particular locale. In contrast to film, music obviously cannot precisely pinpoint the exact source or type of those sounds. However, their expression and timbre contribute to the generation of an atmosphere suggesting a certain kind of surrounding, in this case a horrific and spooky one.

The third episode with the first distorted variant of the paradise theme starts in the woodwinds in bar 145, where, by means of short, ascending gestures in an uncomfortably high register, it approaches the contour and expression of screaming. Instructed to play with bells up (Schalltrichter auf), the forced, accented tones of the clarinet and oboes produce a strained and shrieking timbre. As the theme is performed in unison, it becomes plausible to adopt the notion of multiple agency, as opposed to that of a virtual subject. In his study of Mozart’s chamber works, Klorman applies the multiple-agency concept in relation to interaction among individual players in chamber music, which is a topic that I discuss further when analysing the element of conversation in the Fifth’s Scherzo. Concerning the woodwinds’ statement, however, I want to formulate multiple agency as a shared utterance analogous to a choir. This resonates with Cone’s concept of a multiple persona, but in accordance with Klorman, I view the players as individual agents in contrast to a persona of the composer. The differing timbres of the woodwind instruments underline such a differentiation, coming together as a group yet constituting separate virtual human agents. This suggests multiple agency in collective terms, which is why, primarily during the course of the Fifth Symphony, I refer to several unison gestures as a collective humanlike agency.

In bar 148, there is a deep, twisted version of the paradise theme in the bassoons and lower strings, evoking a menacing effect. Simultaneously, the woodwinds and horns continue with an inverted figure of the second theme, which continues the scream motif. Muted trumpets (bars 150 and 153–154) echo a series of three accented notes, and by playing mf and thus pressing the tone, produce sounds of horror and eeriness. Monahan aptly refers to these notes as the theme’s ‘severed head’, underlining their evocations of dread.

All these sounds generate a mixture of atmosphere, tension, and voices that together form cues for a setting suggesting some kind of horror milieu (see example 4.1.8). Due to their juxtaposition and fragmentary nature, one perceives them as various components spread out in space, emanating from different directions. This reflects Mahler’s conception of polyphony as heterogeneous, multidirectional sound heard en plein air. Compared with sounds heard in the real world, though – which Hesselager calls ‘world-sound’ – the listener

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318 Chion, Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen, p. 75.
319 See Klorman, Mozart’s Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works.
320 See Cone, The Composer’s Voice, pp. 103–104.
cannot identify their exact causes in terms of determinate objects. However, the music’s sound-world provides a similar spatio–temporal orientation of its sounds, which function as aural landmarks in terms of, for example, distance and proximity, foreground and background, and so on. This further relates to the phenomenon of spatial imagery, in which we similarly apprehend our bodies as situated in space by means of language metaphors. By applying concepts relatable to reality, the listener consequently becomes an observer imaginatively situated at the scene of events, albeit through interlinking with sounds instead of words. There is a sensation of spatial surround sound similar to three-dimensionality, resulting in an expansion of musical space.

In what I view as episodes four and five (bars 155–166 and bars 167–208), the nightmare world continues its recycling of the distorted paradise theme and modified materials of the exposition. Researchers divide these episodes in different ways. Monahan regards the first as part of the previous, third episode, while both he and Floros separate the fifth episode into two parts, the second of these starting in bar 188 and bar 185, respectively. My own differentiation has to do with each episode’s changing of the horror world’s basic atmosphere, marked by a transformative recentring of the sleigh bell motif. The sleigh bells are not physically present here, but Mahler reworks their characteristic quaver rhythm into other instrumental variants. Bell sounds as such also define the continuation of the nightmare, now as a kind of spooky bell again created from the composer’s deformation of timbre.

The start of the fourth episode (bar 155, Fig. 12) mirrors the materials from the development’s beginning, with the sleigh bell rhythm in flutes and the ascending gesture of the second theme in the oboe. A clarinet accompanies them with the characteristic, whirling semiquaver passage. This recentring takes place at the same time as a key change to E-flat minor, which creates the effect of entering a new phase of the dream sequence with a slightly altered world atmosphere. Among the familiar menacing base figures and chromatically inflected scream gestures in the winds, the previous three-note sequence has been endowed with a change of timbre, affecting its role in the sound-world. The addition to the trumpets of flutes and cymbals produce a soft but simultaneously harsh, percussive sound, approaching the gesture and tone of bells. In the surrounding horror context, one can liken these to nightmarish horror bells ringing out the permeating sense of fear, adding to the continuous definition of setting.

323 Ryan, ‘Space’, LHN.
The fifth episode (Fig. 13, bar 167) also coincides with a key change, now to F minor, and presents yet another variant of the sleigh bell motif. The lighter timbre of the initial instrumental combination of flutes, triangle, harp, and oboe for a moment sweeps away the scary atmosphere in favour of a more magical, glittering touch impinged on by something mysterious. As well, the descending scale figures of the woodwinds in bar 171 briefly resonate with the world’s previously comic presentation. Quickly, however, the ambiance of uneasiness and darkness again permeates the sound-world, now even more fragmented and distorted, illustrated by, for example, the col legno strikes in the violins (see, e.g., bar 185). In the wake of the orchestra’s summoning gestures tinged with angst (from bar 196), the bell sounds re-emerge in a new version with harp harmonics, cymbals, and high woodwinds (bars 200, 202, and 204, see example 4.1.9). Amid this sonic chaos, the first theme comes back (Fig. 15, bar 192) in an attempt to reach its former status as character, but is instead grotesquely remoulded into screams of anguish. Finally, it is transformed into the dream sequence’s sixth and final episode, where the contrast of darkness and light meet one last time. Just as in the first episode, there is a sort of demolition of the childlike character, which might suggestively symbolize its disappearance into or swallowing by the nightmare, similar to what happens in a real dream.

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325 Monahan, ‘A Play Within a Play’, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 22.
The sixth episode: luminous sounds and the dream’s awakening
Compared with the previous episodes in which the nightmare motifs suffused those of paradise, in the sixth episode (bars 209–238) there is a reversal of means when the former are taken up into and illuminated by the world of the
latter. The dark horror world here re-emerges into one of luminous light, one
contrastive subject again being remoulded into another. This luminosity pri-
marily crystallizes as virtual fairy-tale sounds, with the childlike aspect being
mirrored in Mahler’s choice to let a trumpet perform the paradise theme in the
manner and tone of a toy.

In bar 209, the accumulated tension of chromatically inflected gestures fi-
nally turns into a very brilliant C major passage described by Adorno as an
‘intentionally infantile, noisily cheerful field’. Adorno’s comment captures
the music’s evocation of mediating sounds similar to noise, actual sounds be-
ing transformed into virtual sounds of the storyworld. The timbre of the glock-
enspiel and triangle give these a quality of magic glitter, in which the orches-
tral tutti-transformed motifs of the nightmare world come together with those
of the paradise theme. In addition, the third theme of the exposition appears
as a counterpoint in the horns and woodwinds, adding to the celebratory ex-
pression of the vibrating soundscape.

Yet, one last shadow awaits before the dream sequence reaches its end.
Through a rushing crescendo, the music reaches a massive climax (bars 221–
224) on a harsh **fff** dissonance. To the sounds of foreboding timpani rolls, two
trumpets now quote the shortened, distorted version of the paradise theme in
their upper and lower ranges. This forms the beginning of the *kleiner Appell*
(a small signal or ‘little call to muster’), a solemn fanfare in the trumpets and
horns that is a premonition of the opening of the Fifth Symphony’s funeral
march (see bar 224, example 4.1.10). Mahler apparently also saw connections
to the last movement of the Second Symphony, a companion piece to the Fifth:
‘When the confusion and crowding of the troops, who started out in orderly
ranks, becomes too great, a command from the captain recalls them at once to
the old formation under his flag’. In the context of the toy trumpet per-
former, Mahler’s statement implies a toy as a member of a toy troop, further
underlining both the childlike aspect and the fantastic element of the fairy-tale
world.

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328 NBL, *Recollections*, p. 154. See also the slightly different translation in Floros, *The Sym-
phonies*, p. 122: ‘When the confusion and the pushing and shoving of the troops, who had
moved out in orderly fashion, becomes too much, a signal by the commander immediately gath-
ers them to the accustomed order under his banner’. 
Following orchestral parts receding by means of a diminuendo, the fanfare gains the function of signalling the end of the episode and of the entire dream sequence. The trumpets make the dream world literally die, which reflects the fanfare’s connection to the Fifth’s funeral march with its topics of death and sorrow. In the manner of directors, one can say that they make the world disappear when it starts to get too much out of hand. Mahler’s use of military signals runs as a continuous thread throughout his oeuvre, and throughout this investigation I discuss their meaning in various contexts related to world. By placing a gesture with its origins in the call for order and summoning in crucial formal positions, Mahler’s application of it generates new functions, here as a signal of world destruction. Compared with the Fifth Symphony, this becomes a sort of reversal of means, in that here the fanfare gives way to silence as
opposed to a calling forth of episodes. In the Second Symphony, the call instead followed *upon* silence and was thus a sort of reawakening or rebuilding of world after it had fallen apart.

The abyss of the dream sequence gives way to the disillusioned start of the recapitulation (Fig. 18, bar 239), following upon a fermata that further marks its separation and deviance from the preceding world. This entails a return to the main world, which nevertheless displays several changes resulting from the happenings of the dream.

Revisiting the main world: the (repetitive) function of recapitulation

After the dying away of the development, there is a sensation of confusion. This has nothing to do with the musical material, which belongs to the expected string-dominated first theme of the exposition. Rather, it concerns the contrast to the just completed dream sequence and its horrific sounds, generating a kind of shock from the return of the elegant, classically oriented style from before. Knapp refers to the start of the recapitulation as creating disorientation similar to that following the awakening from a disturbing dream – an apt definition considering the development’s subject matter. However, there is also something strange with the phrase itself, which starts unprepared in the middle of its restatement. Mahler has in fact already sneaked in its beginning in bar 234 during the fade-out of the development, so that in bar 239 it simply takes up where it left off (see example 4.1.11). Apart from playing with sonata form, the splitting of the first theme’s phrase illuminates the dream sequence’s self-sufficiency as a separate entity or parenthesis in the storyworld. When the recapitulation initiates a closing instead of a reprise, the sensation is thus that the story takes off where it ended in the exposition.

In sonata form, the recapitulation represents the third and last main section, which has the function of restating the thematic materials of the first section. Whereas the recapitulation is not a literal repetition of the exposition, as Rosen underlines, being more of a reinterpretation, still there is the repetitive aspect of revisiting music previously heard. As I suggested when discussing the recurring sleigh bells, repetition can establish the consistency of features in a musical storyworld, similar to the recentring of imaginative transportation. In terms of such a large unit as the recapitulation, it specifically means a recentring to the main world of the story. However, Mahler inserts a number of crucial deviations from the exposition version that imply various changes to the recapitulation’s structure and manner of presentation, making the same world appear quite new. This indicates an effect of the dream sequence on the main world and that the boundaries between them have become blurred.

The recapitulation follows the same order of themes as in the exposition, with the addition of a short coda towards the end (bars 340–349). Mahler already starts modifying the themes in the second bar (bar 240), where instead of the usual characterization theme of the child, there are two instances of the paradise theme: one in the first violins and one in the solo trumpet. These insertions from the dream sequence continue to suffuse much of the section, as when, after a series of variations, the materials of the first and second themes turn into the third, transitional theme (Fig. 19, bar 251). In an expanded instrumental version of its previous statement, it grandiosely merges with the trumpet’s paradise theme together with reminiscences of the glittering noise field of the development’s sixth episode. The enlarged orchestra moves through the fourth, fifth, and sixth themes, which, as before, are transformed into the sleigh bell motif (bar 298). Here we encounter the darker elements of the dream sequence, in which fragmented, chromatically inflected phrases permeate the strings’ struggle to reach the established characterization themes.

The intermingling of both luminous and horrific elements from the development with those of the exposition shows that the happenings of the dream sequence have altered the main world. Previous events thus have a global effect on the storyworld, which Mahler clearly makes audible. This illustrates his novelistic way of working, in which ‘what happens must always take specific account of what happened before’.

Another notable divergence from the exposition is the lost scenic, framed presentation of the themes. Now scored for larger orchestral settings without the characteristic juxtaposing shifts, timbre does not characterize these themes in the same way as the previously more compressed textures. This is specifically notable for the fourth and fifth themes, where the children’s song has been diluted into a much more neutral timbre. In terms of spatiality, the changes mean that the world has shrunk from a vast, expansive totality into a fixed one where everything takes place in the same confined space.

However, two themes resist the scenic demolition: the landscape setting (theme six) and the inner dream world (theme seven). In relation to the other themes, this results in their forming spaces further removed from the rest of the main world. The topics of landscape and dreams continue to distance themselves from their surroundings during the course of the symphony, which is why I regard the process starting here as a break-out of worlds. Furthermore, these topics differ from the rest of the recapitulation by their markings of virtual subjectivity, which also increase in the subsequent movements. In the landscape milieu, this is reflected in the emergence of a solo violin out of the now more string-dominated sound (see bar 288). The fragile tone of the two glissando gestures in the high register expresses a tentative vulnerability re-

onating with childlike fear. The association is important here since the elements of the dream sequence have swept away the characterization themes, turning the main world into a deserted place without the presence of human-like agents. In this context, the scared utterance of the solo violin, which also cued the perspective of the beginning of the dream sequence, becomes analogous to the child’s refuge from frightening events that have now also invaded the main world.

The last instance of the inner, possible world of the seventh theme (bars 323–339, see example 4.1.12) presents an expansion in both space and virtual subjective presence. The first violins extend the version of the exposition with an ascending gesture reaching into a high register, generating a shimmering sound that, together with the second violins (bar 330), seems to float in an ethereal sphere. This sonorous timbre evocative of something radiant anticipates the third movement, where the world of dreams is ultimately transformed into sheer, atmospheric sound. The low double bass pedal assists in the creation of a broader space that directs the previously earth-bound inner world upwards. In bar 331, the first theme finally appears with its principal motif in the solo oboe, which turns it into a more songful version approaching the speech of a virtual subject. The choice of instrumentation here foreshadows the third movement, where the oboe plays the role of protagonist in the oscillation between dream state and dark despair.
Example 4.1.12: bars 323–339
As the string carpet dies away, a solo horn plays a variant of the theme that emerges into a recitative-like statement. Against the violins’ long $ppp$ notes, its louder foregrounding achieves the effect of sounding further away from the dream, performing a call of reawakening. As I will discuss more extensively in the analysis of the second movement, this generates a simulation of distant sound from within the symphonic work, turning the horn’s utterance into an off-screen or non-diegetic voice heard from outside the storyworld’s spatial frames.

In the coda starting in bar 340, the first theme makes its final entrance and, as in the post-dream sequence, there is a sensation of disorientation when the three crotchets slowly work their way up to a fermata. The resulting surreal atmosphere is reflected in Adorno’s observation that these notes are reminiscent of ‘a long backward look that asks: Is all that then true?’ Gradually, the music increases in speed ($poco a poco stringendo$), leaving the fairy-tale ambience behind and closing the movement in a celebratory character in the manner of a short, punctuated epilogue.

**Escaping darkness: the shifting worlds of sonata form and topical break-outs**

This part looks at the first movement of the Fourth Symphony from the vantage point of storyworld, showing how the sonata form with its different parts of exposition, development, and recapitulation mediate various kinds of worlds through different manners of presentation. As a result, the listener experiences these worlds from alternating positions and perspectives, making the storyworld emerge in constantly changing shapes, sizes, and distances.

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In the exposition, the storyworld’s main world materializes as a diverse, childlike miniature one, where its differing themes depict a range of world elements mediated as framed, portrait-like scenes. Through their juxtaposition and concentrated chamber-music texture, they form an expansive totality creating an imaginatively coherent geography. These features in combination with the distance arising from the elegant, classical style make the listener into an external observer analogous to someone looking at portraits, here presented as moving tableaux of the world. There is an expansion of the perspective of the theatre and its tableau form into an imaginary stage constructed as images of sound, whose spatially enclosed frames generate a temporally unfolding, yet enlarged musical play in scenes.

The development produces another, possible world derived from the main world by forming an episodic dream sequence alternating between a number of sub-worlds characterized by the topics of either darkness or light. These constantly intertwine and are even remade out of each other, mirroring the inherent contrasts at work in Mahler’s oeuvre. Through various compositional means, aspects of the childlike and fairy tale also continue to permeate the dream worlds, for example, cueing the solo violin’s fearful, inner voice and the arsenal of toy or magical instruments. Notably, the first theme from the exposition representing the character of the child appears in the nightmare episodes, but is there eroded or swept away, whereas the light episodes of luminous sounds present themselves to the listener alone.

The dream sequence and its various worlds are specifically marked by the presence of virtual sounds, for example, noise, screams, and new kinds of instruments such as the dream ocarina and horror bells. These sounds define the setting and surroundings of the worlds, endowing them with both atmosphere and spatial construction. In addition, they provide a spatio–temporal orientation for the listener who, unlike in the exposition’s portrait–like presentation, here becomes an observer standing in the sound-world as opposed to viewing it from a distance.

As for the recapitulation, it presents a recentring back to the main world but with several significant changes resulting from the dream sequence. One can thus speak of a global effect on the storyworld, with Mahler’s way of scoring making this musically obvious. Through the enlarged texture and more neutral, diluted timbre, the world has lost its previous compressed scenic presentation and characterization, showing the importance of these features in the sequencing and evocation of its constituent elements.

In the storyworld of the first movement, dreams have a significant place in terms of possible worlds, reflecting darkness as well as light. Especially prominent not only in this movement but also in the entire symphony are the inner, longing worlds of dreams that break the circular process of the main world. These produce immersive, resting spaces where time momentarily stops, inviting the listener to be recentred into the very heart of the storyworld. In addition, they form the start of a spatial breakout process whereby dreams begin
to be transformed into something more ethereal and atmospheric, which also anticipates the development of the third movement. A similar procedure is reflected in the landscape topic, which moves from static, enclosed portrait to a place further removed where the inner voice of the child seeks refuge after the horrific events of the dream sequence.

From a narrative perspective, one can liken the first movement to a story about one particular event that changes the world, similar to happenings in our own lives. On a smaller scale, Mahler’s constant variations and how these are developed through timbre also give rise to narration and the deepening of individual worlds and their constituent components, such as the alteration of atmosphere in the development or evolution of elements forming the main world. However, it is also about longing in which dreams and landscape present an escape from what is dark and cruel in the world, suffusing also the fairy-tale world of the child.

Scherzo: a fantastic portrayal of death

The second movement of the Fourth Symphony is a Scherzo, in which the topic of death constitutes the principal idea of the subject matter. This partly stems from Mahler’s original title of and comments on the movement indicating such connections, but above all derives from the solo violin part that, through its fiddle-like playing, evokes an impersonation of Death. At the very start of the Scherzo, Death enters the fairy-tale world and colours it with an ominous and scary atmosphere, inducing a shocking effect in the listener following upon the surreal, post-dream ending of the Allegro.

In the following section, I present an interpretation of the Scherzo based on timbre and orchestration, with death forming one of several world topics in the movement’s fairy-tale storyworld. These topics build on the same ones characterising the first movement, such as horror, darkness, dreams, and nature. The childlike and humorous manner of presentation of world persists, but the aspect of humour plays an even more prominent role in this movement, especially in the figuration of death. As Mahler himself commented to Bauer-Lechner, ‘There’s a lot of laughter in my Fourth – at the beginning of the second movement!’

The different world topics of the Scherzo derive from its many varied sound-worlds, which construct what can be understood as sub-worlds in the storyworld. The analyses investigate the techniques used in presenting these worlds, with a particular focus on their spatial dimension. I will show how Mahler’s dynamic treatment of instrumentation generates effects of spatial distance and mobility, which result in differing kinds of focalization of and

333 NBL, *Recollections*, p. 179.
perspectives on world. These effects are important both for the presentation within the separate sub-worlds, and for the relationships among them; I suggest that the brass instruments function as means of transportation in the creation of imaginary traversing through space.

Spatial distance and mobility form some of the elements studied by Thomas Peattie in his investigation of Mahler’s application of theatrical elements in the treatment of symphonic space. I expand this argument by demonstrating how the composer produces such effects beyond the conventional use of off-stage voices and sound from afar. In the listening situation, Mahler’s dynamic spatial deployment gives rise to other ways of perceiving his music that advances the theatrical genre, making it more of a mobile drama in sounds.

Another salient feature of this movement concerns its display of several, parallel narratives taking place on different levels. This technique partly arises from Mahler’s principle of constant variation, but as I will argue, the dimension of spatiality plays an equally vital role in the emergence of narratives both within and among worlds. The topic of death in various ways relates to these processes, albeit in a more complex and multifaceted manner than its common, singular connection to the solo violin. Mahler used an interesting analogy when speaking of the movement that might illustrate the delicate framework underlying its many emerging threads:

The Scherzo is made of nothing but cobwebs – or, it’s like one of those very delicately worked woollen shawls which fit into a nutshell, but when spread-out seem never-ending – revealing the most marvellous design knitted out of strands as fine as hair.

The disposition of this movement differs from that of the Allegro first movement because of its different formal design and world structure. Overall, this analysis of the Scherzo consists of two larger parts: one overriding, more structurally concerned part, and one more detailed part. The first presents the various world topics of the movement and how they are defined in terms of different sound- and sub-worlds, as well as the organization among them as steered by the particular functions of the horns. In the analyses, I go through each of the sub-worlds one by one, although they occasionally intrude on one another due to the links among them.


World topics: death and beyond

The interpretation of the Scherzo as depicting Death playing the violin springs from several different sources. When conducting the Fourth in Amsterdam in 1904, in the printed programme Mahler had provided the second movement with the title Scherzo: In gemächlicher Bewegung (Totentanz). Although this title later appeared in neither the autograph nor the first edition, there are claims that, in conversations with friends and acquaintances, the composer talked about the Scherzo as a ‘dance of death’.336 Other references more specifically tie death to the role of the solo violin in guiding the dance. Mahler supposedly asked Walter to forward the following description of the movement: ‘The Second movement might be called Freund Hein spielt zum Tanz auf [‘Friend death is striking up the dance’]. Death fiddles rather strangely; his playing sends us up to heaven. Again, this is only one of several possible descriptions’.337 A similar retelling comes from Alphons Diepenbrock: ‘It is Death who strikes up the dance and wants to lure the souls into his kingdom’.338 Mahler’s instructions in the printed first edition that the solo violin should play ‘wie eine Fidel’ (‘like a fiddle’) underlines the connection between the instrument and the figure of Death. To achieve this result, he altered the violin sound by using a one-tone-higher scordatura tuning, so that it would sound screeching and rough, ‘as if Death were fiddling away’ (‘wie wenn der Tod aufspielt’).339 Diepenbrock claims that the scordatura was a means by which Mahler intended to achieve ‘a shrill and frightening effect’.340

Considering that the Fourth Symphony lacks a programme in the traditional sense, it is not surprising that these pieces of evidence have gained significance. However, the concept of Death the fiddler is too simplistic and limited, both in itself and in relation to the movement as a whole. The available source material forms a useful vantage point for the musical exploration of the subject of death, but can be broadened and further problematized. Since most of the relevant documentation springs from several different intermediaries and not directly from Mahler himself, one cannot know with exactness that it represents his own view and wording of the matter. What is more, the Scherzo contains several other parts in addition to that of the solo violin representing Death, with contrasting timbres and expressions associated with quite different topics. This illustrates the problem of relying solely on source material and bypassing the evocative functions of orchestration, which accounts for the reading of the entire Fourth.

338 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 115.
339 NBL, Recollections, p. 162.
I suggest that the various topics localizable in the movement can be linked to different places and states of a fairy-tale world, with death forming one of these – representing the dark and horrific – rather than the only one. In building on some of the same topics encountered in the first movement, they also deepen and develop the symphony’s total storyworld.

Taking the plurality of timbres as a point of departure also generates a more multi-faceted and complex configuration of death going beyond its connection with the solo violin. Death has a prominent thematic role in Mahler’s music and constantly appears in various, often contradictory ways. By exploring death more generally throughout the movement, it can be understood on a deeper level illuminating its many disguises.

The multitude of orchestral expressions form the basis of my interpretation of the various sound-worlds and, subsequently, the worlds of the Scherzo, outlined in the next section.

The worlds of the Scherzo

As previously demonstrated in the theoretical section ‘Musical worlds’, the symphony’s entire sound-world contains several smaller ones that can be understood as various sub-worlds of the storyworld. In the Scherzo, I propose that the music’s differing timbres and expressions constitute a number of such sound-worlds, which in turn function as cues for a set of world topics.

The differentiation of sound-worlds has connections to the movement’s form, both as individual constituent entities and as processes through time. I therefore start this section with a presentation of my suggested formal outline, after which follows an overview of the various sound-worlds and their corresponding sub-worlds.

Formal design

There are several different interpretations of the Scherzo’s form, most of which support the main division of the movement into scherzo and trio, alternatively into scherzo with double trio. Within that superficial structure, however, the sectional division varies.

For the investigation of musical worlds, I have chosen to build on a scheme similar to that of Raymond Knapp. Although he does not take the concept of world as his point of departure, his differentiation of parts proceeds from changes in character and affect analogous to my apprehension of sound-worlds. This approach also takes into account the perception of listening, making form into something more fluid and dynamic than a static diagram.

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A crucial aspect of this formal outline that differs from those of other analysts is my interpretation of the horn calls that serve as transitions between parts. Because I interpret them as means of transportation or portals into and among the different worlds of the movement, I regard them as independent instances in relation to the other parts, operating outside the storyworld.

The formal scheme of the movement is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Sound-worlds and transports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calling forth</td>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>Horn call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scherzo</td>
<td>4–33</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34–45</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46–63</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling forth</td>
<td>63–68</td>
<td>Horn call and start of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portal</td>
<td>68–70</td>
<td>Horn and clarinet call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trio</td>
<td>71–101</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fading out/transport through space</td>
<td>102–109</td>
<td>Horns plus strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling back/remaking of world</td>
<td>109–111</td>
<td>Horn call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scherzo</td>
<td>112–144</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>145–156</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>157–184</td>
<td>A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>185–199</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal</td>
<td>200–202</td>
<td>Trumpet signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trio</td>
<td>203–245</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport/death of world</td>
<td>246–253</td>
<td>Fading out strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendence</td>
<td>254–273</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport/calling forth</td>
<td>274–280</td>
<td>Fading out strings plus horn call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scherzo and coda</td>
<td>281–364</td>
<td>A + B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As can be read in the table, each part of the form with related sections differs every time it occurs. This illustrates Mahler’s desire for no repetition and endless development, with constant modification of instrumentation being particularly prominent. Because of the Scherzo’s many repeats of the same limited number of parts, these features gain specific importance through their generation of several interior processes. Mahler’s way of letting themes from one part or section successively appear in another also generates intra-sectional transfers, often mirroring a contrasting procedure in some other part.

These circumstances form the basis of the system of parallel narratives taking place on several levels in the movement.343 Also related to this development is Mahler’s principle of eternal change analogous to the world, which, from the viewpoint of sound-worlds, constitutes a fruitful analytical condition.344

**Sound-worlds as sub-worlds within the story**

As illustrated by the formal outline, division according to alterations of timbre and expression results in four distinctive parts: A, B, C, and D. After D, there is a mixture of A and B that I call A+B because of their intermingling into one, modified world.

The parts constitute their own sound-worlds, which function as cues or evocations of particular topics of world. As such, they give rise to various types of sub-worlds within the total storyworld. It is important to underline that these sub-worlds should not be understood as worlds in the geographical sense, but as spaces, places, and states that the listener imaginatively visits.

The first kind of sound-world (A) comprises the C minor sequences of the Scherzo parts, presenting the theme of the solo violin impersonating Death. He enters the fairy-tale world and suffuses it with darkness and a horrific atmosphere, making it plausible to regard it as Death’s world. Since the C minor sequences form the point of departure or reference point for all the other sound-worlds, Death’s world simultaneously represents the main world of the storyworld.

The second sound-world (B) refers to the C major episodes situated between the C minor sequences. Its contrasting timbre of brightness and the ethereal generates associations with a kind of dream world. Because of the implied distance of this world from the position of the listener, I view it as a remote vision.

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344 See the quotations discussed in the section on ‘Mahler and Timbre’, for example: ‘for music is governed by the law of eternal evolution, eternal development – just as the world, even in one and the same spot, is always changing, eternally fresh and new’ in NBL, *Recollections*, p. 130.
The trios of the Scherzo (C) contain elements evocative of the pastoral, but through Mahler’s use of instrumentation and texture, a particular kind of natural world emerges. The horn and trumpet function as portals into these worlds, which are perceived as situated at an even greater distance.

Finally, there is the D major breakthrough passage (D) that constitutes one additional sound-world. Mahler mixes voices from the natural world with dreamy and ethereal timbres. These features, combined with a lack of a foundation in the lower instrumental parts, generate a sensation of distance upwards, where the listener floats in a state high above, both spatially and mentally.

The different sound-worlds form a totality that constitutes the movement’s entire sound-world. This creates an interlinked system defined by both the types of worlds and the relationship between them. In the Scherzo, the element of distance and transportation is an important characterizing feature that I explore further in the analyses. The various positions of the sound-worlds affect the perception of the listener, who is transferred along them in a vast imaginative space.

**Director of worlds: the various functions of the horn**

An instrument of vital importance for the organization and presentation of the Scherzo’s worlds is the horn, and to some degree the trumpet. Like the parallel narratives, it operates on several different levels in relation to the storyworld, moving along a scale of inside and outside placement. In the same way as the variation of the violin timbre is crucial for the creation of the separate, different worlds, the horns attain their specific functions and roles due to Mahler’s alteration of their tone and textural position. This affects the perspective of world so that it appears in constantly changing shapes to the listener.

Mahler’s manner of using the horns in the movement enables an exploration of how music can structure and mediate a storyworld through other, alternating narrative means. Even though I argue that the horns in some places do exercise the function of narrators, their mobile, chameleon-like interlinking of the world instead approaches the authorial role of a director. This is especially interesting considering the connection to Mahler’s own profession as opera director, a role that he here channels through the horns.

On the most overarching level, the horns function as means of transportation or portals into and among most of the movement’s worlds. This phenomenon is crucial for the perception of the worlds as being situated at a distance from one another, defining their total world structure. By Mahler’s placement of the horn’s traditional function of calling at these particular formal instances, there arises new contextual meaning out of old conventions. As I will show, it also reshapes the notion of off-stage voice when heard as pure sound in the situation of listening.
Another way that the horns control the unfolding of worlds is by functioning as a brake or stopper, for example, towards the end of the dream worlds where they simultaneously bring them closer to the listener. This underlines the horn’s particular function as the awakener from dreams, glimpsed in the first movement’s ending and further established in the third movement.

Beyond its more organizational, interlinking role, the horn also has roles that place it closer to the storyworld as the voice and mediator of focalization. In the C minor dance sequences of Death, it exercises an increasing commentary function analogous to narration as an effect of the disjunction with the other orchestral parts, thereby changing the perspective of world. The disjunctive effect also characterizes the episodes of the natural world, but here the horn’s part has a singing quality that instead defines it as one of several voices inside the storyworld.

The horn thus plays different roles in the various worlds of the story, turning it into a mobile agent affecting their representation as well as the listener’s perception of them.

Death’s world

The analytical part of this section starts with a discussion of Death’s world, which constitutes the first of the movement’s sub-worlds as well as the main world of the fairy-tale story. I will examine three particular aspects of world that illuminate some of the representative features of Mahler’s instrumental application. The first concerns the generation of atmosphere established at the very start of the movement when Death enters the fairy-tale world. The second focuses on the characterization of Death as mediated through the solo violin, in terms of both virtual agency and timbre. As for the third and last aspect, it is about the presentation of Death’s world and the mobile perspectives of focalization that result from Mahler’s technique of foregrounding.

The sections discussed here are the four recurring C minor episodes of the Scherzo parts up until the breakthrough representing the higher state of transcendence. Since the ensuing episodes primarily contain changes resulting from the effects of the transcendence, they are treated in a later, separate section.

The entrance and atmosphere of Death

The solo horn call that opens the movement sounds estranged and foreboding, far away from the stable, positive ending of the Allegro (see example 4.2.1). Its lingering on the interval of a minor second marked by accentuated swells together with the uncertainty in key and direction of the harmonically ambiguous position in G minor generate an ominous, menacing atmosphere. During the course of just three bars, there is a shift to a new part of the storyworld.
In bar 3, the horn is joined by high-pitched oboes and bassoon on staccato notes that are quickly rounded off with short trills. Because of the sonority of an augmented triad (d-f♯-Bb), divided between horn, bassoon, and oboes, that does not resolve properly, these instruments too appear unstable and disoriented, evoking a sensation of mocking. The same harmonic non-resolution characterizes the following, circulating notes of flutes and clarinets (bars 4–7), which in their high register come across as anxious and fragile. In addition,
all these fragmented woodwind inputs are rhythmically out of sync with the horn, further increasing the perception of perturbed alienation. The atmosphere here prolongs that of the beginning of the movement, but spatially expands it due to the addition and textural disposition of instruments.

In relation to this passage (bars 4–7), the opening solo horn exercises two functions: as a caller announcing a new scene in the fairy-tale world, and as simultaneously mediating or preparing the atmosphere of that scene. Through Mahler’s placement of the traditional gesture of calling in this particular formal position, the horn’s associations with hunting in nature are transformed into a role that structures and generates world. Since the timbre evokes the same kind of foreboding, eerie atmosphere to come, one can also speak of an anticipatory calling forth of a particular, analogous type of scene or event. Compared with the first movement, it is significant that Mahler lets the horn call open this movement, which further marks a transportation from or restart of the world just left.

However, the solo horn’s function changes with the entrance of other instruments starting in bar 3. Whereas its first appearance placed it outside the storyworld because of its role as herald, now it cooperates in the generation of scenic atmosphere, suggestively existing inside the storyworld. This presents one example of the horn’s many chameleon transformations from one position to another, here moving from that of non-diegetic to diegetic. What is more, it creates an effect of the solo horn call as an off-stage voice from within the music, but in relation to the imaginary ‘stage’ of the storyworld. There thus arises an outside imaginary space signalling distance from the inside scene, a convention Mahler used in the theatre but that, in listening to pure sounds, recreates those spaces inside the symphonic work.

The atmosphere suffusing the scene of bars 4–7 is different from that of the opening of the first movement, where the sound and associations of the sleigh bells primarily worked as a marker of setting and fairy-tale ambiance. In this case, the ominous, fragmented, and anxious atmosphere does more than just spatially permeate the world, evoking a sense of discomfort in the listener. It also points forward towards something to come, namely, the entrance of the solo violin personifying Death in bar 7. The atmosphere of Death is in the world before we perceive him, the source of the foreboding ambiance. One can liken this situation to how we relate to sounds in the real world, which Hesselager discusses in his definition of world-sound, forming a notion corresponding to the music’s sound-world.345 This means that we orient ourselves to and identify sounds whose sources we cannot see, such as the buzzing of an insect or the noise of a car. Here of course a listener cannot define the source of the atmosphere as Death, but I argue that the same phenomenon of Death as positioned somewhere outside the frame of the scene, in some other

345 Hesselager, Making Sense of Sounds, pp. 155–156.
place in the storyworld, is at play. Rather than evoking a sense of place as the sleigh bells do, here atmosphere refers to a mode of world that extends its space but also simultaneously points beyond that space.

When the solo violin enters the stage (bar 7), it emits an even more estranged sound (see example 4.2.1). The one-tone-higher scordatura tuning generates a harshness in timbre that, in combination with the instrument’s sudden appearance before the horn and winds have reached closure, causes quite a shocking effect in the listener. As Mahler himself told Bauer-Lechner, ‘The Scherzo is so mystical, confused and uncanny that it will make your hair stand on end’. The frequent crescendo swells between forte and piano increase the sensation of intrusiveness, as does the tension between the elegant melody and its unexpectedly chromatically inflected notes. As in the nightmare sequence of the first movement’s development, Mahler applies the technique of grotesque deformation to illustrate the dark element of the fairy-tale world, but now a different nuance of it. In that sense, there is a sense of continuity in his manner of figuration through timbre. Since the listener perceives Death as coming from outside the previous atmospheric scene into the main world, defined by his permeating presence and ambiance, I call this Death’s world.

Through Mahler’s ordering of the horn call, atmospheric scene, and entrance of the solo violin tuned scordatura, the Scherzo’s introduction builds a new sound-world associated with the horrific topic of Death. One can see these three units as a sort of chain reaction, each one anticipating or pointing forward to the next.

The characterization of Death
As initially discussed, the available documentation of the Scherzo implies that Death is a fiddle player performing a dance of death. In the following, I aim to deepen and problematize this view, concerning both Death as a character in the fairy-tale world and his musical characterization. There exists a general view that Mahler’s oeuvre depicts life and death, but the nuances and varied manners of presentation that this entails are a bypassed aspect that I wish to emphasize, interlinking it with the mediation of world.

Understanding the solo violin as impersonating Death suggests several features to consider in connection with virtual agency, such as playing style, instrument, and timbre. Compared with the humanlike gestures of singing or speech, the fast finger-work of the solo violin’s folk music part evokes a performative quality of play. The difference becomes even more apparent when recalling the long-held notes of the solo violin in the first movement’s development, which resulted in a more intimate, personal voice. Hesselager illus-

346 NBL, Recollections, p. 152.
trates this divergence by comparing the solo-string passages of Haydn’s symphonies to an image of a musician taking part in a communal activity. One can liken the violin here to a performative agent, implying the invisible performer of Death. This adds an extra dimension of virtual agency, in which the sounds of the instruments are re-embodied into those emanating from a virtual performer.

In addition to scoring a particular manner of playing, Mahler stages the performance of Death by transforming the violin into a fiddle, regarded as Death’s instrument. The scordatura tuning and harsh tone function as cues for the listener, linking the violin to a fiddle and subsequently to Death. Deformations of timbre consequently work as means for Mahler to realize his direction for the solo violin to play ‘wie ein Fidel’.

Establishing the solo violin or fiddle as the mediating performative agency also has to do with the earlier-discussed special qualities of the solo violin timbre and with the instrument’s consistent presence throughout the movement. While the solo violin stands out in relation to the other, often omnipresent strings, the different sound resulting from the scordatura tuning attracts even more attention as a rare effect. This is especially the case in the Scherzo, where it regularly intermingles with normal string sound in the world of Death.

Together with the outcomes of timbre, the violin also signals agency through its role as soloist. Cone argues that when an instrument is individualized or clearly characterized in this way, it attains the function of unitary agent. If this position continues through a whole movement or work, as in the Scherzo, the agent becomes permanent (as opposed to temporary) and thus approaches the character of protagonist. If instrument and theme are correlated, as in Death and his dance sequences, the interlinking becomes particularly strong.

Death as a fiddle-playing character and the way he plays convey a particular characterization of death. Two possible sources of inspiration for Mahler in the creation of the Scherzo are Arnold Böcklin’s painting Self Portrait with Fiddling Death (1872) and a series of forty-one woodcuts by Hans Holbein the Younger (ca. 1497–1543). Despite various degrees of evidentiary strength, they provide illustrations of death that are close to Mahler’s musical figuration and presentation of it.

347 Hesselager, Making Sense of Sounds, p. 79.
349 Cone, The Composer’s Voice, pp. 89 and 91.
Starting with the Böcklin painting, it seems more likely an influence than Holbein’s woodcuts, despite the weaker documentation emerging from a supposed comment by Alma Mahler. At least we know that Mahler admired the works of Böcklin, whose works were well-known at the time.\textsuperscript{351}

In Böcklin’s painting, death is a skull-like figure with a toothy grin, his bony hand playing a fiddle with a single string directly into the artist’s ear from behind. Considering Mahler’s early subtitle for the Scherzo (i.e., \textit{Totentanz}) as well as the choice of instrument, there is a clear connection between the painting and the movement. More interesting than these merely affirmative, superficial associations, however, is the childlike image of death that mocks the highly serious painter.\textsuperscript{352} Just as in the painting, death in the Scherzo takes on the agency of a walking, caricature figure that simultaneously evokes humour and fear. This mixture of parodic darkness shines through in the solo violin’s manner of playing, in which the distorted timbre’s menacing swells together with the twisted, chromatically inflected yet elegant folk melody give the music a ghostly alluring character. The dualistic properties of Böcklin’s Death are transformed into instrumental expression so that he projects his own character and characterization.

But who is the figure of Death more precisely? To Walter, Mahler supposedly spoke of Death as ‘Freund Hein spielt zum Tanz auf’. The definition of \textit{Freund Hein} differs among cultures, especially concerning the adult–child dichotomy. In English writings, \textit{Freund Hein} or Friend Death specifically targets children in the manner of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, while in Germanic culture, he personifies death from a universal perspective, dealing with adults and children alike. Knapp suggests that the Scherzo mediates an aura of fantasy evocative of childish seduction, and considering that Mahler himself experienced the grief of losing several children, this interpretation appears plausible from a biographical perspective.\textsuperscript{353}

The darkly comic and childlike portrayal of Death makes him into a sort of fairy-tale figure reminiscent of the humorous folk tales of \textit{Des Knaben Wunderhorn}, presenting one of several possible characterizations of death. From a broader perspective, this illustrates the ambivalence and duality with which Mahler often constructs his topics, with humour here becoming a means to dismantle the frightening. It also demonstrates the relationship between Death’s various forms and the different worlds he appears in. For example, the Fifth Symphony portrays death in a more realistic manner so that it is depicted as raw anxiety.

The Böcklin painting and Holbein’s woodcuts furthermore resonate with aspects of the Scherzo’s technique of presenting Death. As I will show in the

\textsuperscript{351} Knapp, ‘Suffering Children’, p. 253.
\textsuperscript{352} Knapp, ‘Suffering Children’, pp. 253 and 256–257.
\textsuperscript{353} Knapp, ‘Suffering Children’, p. 257.
next section, as in images, elements of fore- and background are crucial in the mediation of Death in his world, with Mahler’s scoring making him alternate between these positions.

Holbein’s woodcuts present a stronger connection to the Scherzo, in view of the conductor Willem Mengelberg’s note on his score reading “Totentanz Holbein: Der Tod führt uns”. The series consists of shifting representations of a skeletal Death, who takes on various disguises depending on the broad range of humans whom he visits and cheerfully mocks. Central to the Todtentanz tradition and parodically depicting death, these images form apparent points of congruence with Mahler’s music. Their main relevance, however, concerns the episodic manner of presentation that can be traced to several levels of the Scherzo. First, there is the ever-evolving structure of the sections constituting Death’s world, in which he continuously gains a new position in relation to the scene, just as in one of Holbein’s woodcuts. This organization of separate, episodic units forming an ongoing narrative also characterizes the other worlds. Second, there is the presentation of Death throughout the movement as a whole illustrating various shapes of and attitudes to him in addition to the fiddle-player. These circumstances suggest that there is reason to recall Holbein’s original title of the woodcuts: Bilder des Todes.354

**Moving between inside and outside: the presentation of Death’s world**

Aspects of fore- and background and episodic representation constitute prominent elements in the presentation of Death’s world, which forms the topic of the current section. In the following, I explore how Mahler’s way of dynamically foregrounding instruments generates different types of focalization and their effects on the listener’s spatial perception of world. This enables an investigation of what narratology refers to as the textualization of space, meaning the various techniques of space presentation that are transferable to the musical domain in terms of texture.355 Since the separate sections comprising Death’s world reappear several times with varied repetition, there is also a temporal dimension of presentation informing the spatial one. The alteration of sections with those of the movement’s other worlds also results in parallel narrative processes influencing and having an effect on one another.

The sections discussed here encompass all the C minor passages of sound-world A up until the breakthrough moment of transcendence, in order to illustrate the entire trajectory and development of world. The reader will notice that some passages of the sections are discussed in relation to the dream world due to their transitional functions.

Shortly after the entrance of the solo violin, the group of winds producing the foreboding atmosphere of death recedes, punctuated by an accentuated

[^355]: Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Space’, *LHN*. 
horn stop (bar 8). They give way to a sparse string accompaniment starting with muted solo viola and cello (bar 8) that are later transformed into tutti parts also including the second violins (see example 4.2.2) Soft quavers in piano from timpani and double basses playing pizzicato sporadically underline the performance, with additional utterances from some of the winds.

Example 4.2.2: bars 8–23
Against this texture, the solo violin has a clear foreground position, underlined by crescendo or forte marks at its decisive three-note anacrusis (see bars 7 and 10). All the other instruments are marked with lower dynamic levels of pp (strings) and p (winds), indicating their function as background. Due to the strings’ asynchronous placement in relation to the solo violin, they also come across as being spread out in the background, situated at various distances from one another and Death. Additionally, the wraparound dynamics and accents in bars 18–21 suggest that, alternatively, they move closer to the position of Freund Hein. This makes the otherwise static backdrop into a moving, expanded one, and considering the soloists’ similar fast-moving, chromatically inflected playing style, they also approach the role of mobile, virtual performers participating in Death’s dance.

Genette delineated three types of focalization: zero, internal, and external focalization. The foregrounding of Death here, together with the alternating positions of background players, recalls a type of external focalization, which is analogous to the outside view of what would be visible to a camera. Through Mahler’s particular workings of instrumentation, a mobile scene or image arises with a closer focus on Death and a spatially extended background. This endows a three-dimensional depth lacking in the portrait-like, more two-dimensional presentation of the first movement’s exposition.

The foregrounding effect of death becomes even stronger because of the sparse texture of the passage. In a way similar to the first movement’s exposition, the spatial frames here emerge as tight, which generates the sensation of looking at a small, concentrated space of world. Consequently, the listener also perceives this space – and the figure of Death – as being closer. From the perspective of characterization, Death’s positioning also marks him as in control of the other players and as the leader of the dance.

The external focalization continues throughout this first part of Death’s world, but with continuous shifts between foreground and background and, consequently, in spatial presentation. The foregrounding of Death disappears with the entrance of a small wind group at the anacrusis of bar 23. Their playing style recalls that of an actual wind band playing virtually inside the story-world, continuing the performative agency. With this shift in instrumentation, the music also attains a more comic character in line with the fairy-tale world’s atmosphere. The staccato notes in bassoon and oboes are more markedly short than when scored for strings, and the clarinet and solo viola that emerge later appear further estranged due to the sudden appearance of triangle accompaniment. Since the entire group of players come together as one unified entity here, there is an annulment of the boundary dividing foreground and background, and they materialize in equal focus. The shift from the earlier dance of death to the wind band also represents a reframing of the scene, so that there

is another object of attention within Death’s world. The heterogeneity of the solo viola and solo clarinet parts (from bar 27) further changes the focus: both are simultaneously featured with the same dynamics of forte, so that they are equally foregrounded against the subdued background. This generates an effect of their playing side by side, expanding the space sideways. By continuing the folk music style theme, they pursue the performance event of the scene as two players stepping forward as soloists out of the group, before giving way to Death’s final appearance as the main focal point.

Because of all these shifts in focus, a spatial mobility runs both within and throughout the scene, which the listener externally perceives in different shapes and from various framing points.

The second section of Death’s world (bar 46) begins right after the first dream episode with a version of the woodwind motifs from the opening, re-centring the listener back into his world and characteristic atmosphere. This time, Mahler presents notable changes in texture and instrumental foregrounding that result in another type of focalization and, consequently, spatial perception of world.

The string orchestra has now expanded in numbers and volume, dominating the passage except for later accompaniment support from a few wind players and the timpani. The sectional division of upper strings into muted and unmuted, together with the consistent rhythmic irregularity of the parts, generates a spatial expansion so that the earlier intimate space of soloist performers instead approaches a collective, more diffusely spread out background group.

A central change concerns the scoring for the solo violin, which now presents only fragmented passages of its theme. The full statement instead initially appears in the upper first violins, so that there is a fluid mixture between the normal violin timbre and the changed scordatura tuning (see example 4.2.3). Marked ff at its anacrusis entrances against the lower dynamics of the rest of the strings, the solo violin moves to the foreground every time it enters, with increased effect due to the differences of timbre.
Example 4.2.3: bars 49 – 56

The relationship between the solo violin and the rest of the strings presents yet another example of how to musically mediate the aspect of focalization. By variously foregrounding the solo violin, Mahler produces the effect of cinematic zooming in, which simultaneously evokes a sensation in the listener of imaginatively moving closer. Using Genette’s terms, internal focalization is information presented by the narrator from the perspective of a focal character. In this case, however, we might do better to use a cinematic analogy, with the equivalent of internal focalization being the point of view shot. In theories of film music, this kind of internal focalization concerning what a character sees or hears is termed ‘surface’, while the focalization illustrating a character’s inner mental state is termed ‘depth’. The point of-view shot usually consists of two shots: one of the character looking at something off screen, and the other of the object looked at. As with a mobile camera lens, the dynamic foregrounding of Death suggests a similar close-up of a character, whereas the background orchestra then becomes the object that he sees. Consequently, the listener perceives the dance from the perspective of Death, who is absent from the scene at that time. Due to the oscillation between foreground and background, there is a constant alternation of point-of-view shot and focus of at-

357 Patrick Keating, ‘Point of View (Cinematic)’, Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.
tention, which simultaneously steers the listener alternately closer to and further away from the world. In terms of spatial presentation, this produces an effect of shrinking and expansion, so that the world appears wider at the moments of background focus. The demonstration of interior focalization in this part compared with the former also signals that Death has lost some of his authority in the world and as leader of the dance, now predominantly represented by the other strings and perceived from a distance.

The orchestral means of signalling internal focalization here differs from those of the first movement’s development, where the simultaneous display of solo violin and surroundings mediated an inner, subjective point of view of the world. This demonstrates the flexibility of the term when applied to music and its many possible intermedial references.

The two sections of the second Scherzo part (A2 and A3) present yet another type of focalization. Starting at Fig. 5 (bar 115, see example 4.2.4), the first section initially reuses the sparser texture of string soloists from the beginning before expanding into divisional and tutti parts starting in bar 126. The solo violin is again foregrounded and mainly in charge of its theme, indicating that Death has regained his previous authority. An important addition overthrowing this position, however, is the prominent soloist part of the horn and, to a lesser degree, the trumpet, which stand in contrast to the rest of the orchestra in terms of texture as well as expression. Both perform counter-melodies that clash with and sound in opposition to the other instrumental parts, amplified by Mahler’s performance direction of *hervortretend* for the horn and the strained, intrusive tone arising from the *forte* muted trumpet (see, e.g., bars 126 and 158). Together with the authorial character of the brass timbre, the instruments resemble voices commenting on the scene and approach the function of narrators narrating about Death’s world. The horn’s instruction to play *lustig* also ascribes to it a particular kind of telling, mediating the humorous manner of presentation defining the movement’s fairy-tale world.
Example 4.2.4: bars 112–127
The authoritative narration taking place in disjunction with the orchestra’s other parts generates a perception of distance from the sound-world com-
mented upon, as though the horn and trumpet were positioned above the storyworld. This makes it plausible to refer to Genette’s third and last term, ‘zero focalization’, in which narrated events are told from an omniscient, unrestricted point of view. Another useful analogy is to the unseen voice-over speaker in film, who does not form part of the world of the screen but operates outside its frames. This further resonates with the instruments’ organizational function as directors in the movement, here manifested in their attempt to bring order to the increasing chaos of the dance (see from bar 126). As for the horn, its chameleon ability to switch between different roles and levels in the storyworld is evident in the alternation of this external authority, manifested through forte passages in high register, and a background, internal position attained occasionally in the lower register in piano.

Even though the horn and trumpet narrate the scene by means of voice, their oppositional positions result in the listener perceiving the rest of the orchestra – and thus Death’s world – from their vantage point, subsequently seeing the world from a distance. This process continues in the final section of Death’s world (from bar 157) right before the transcendence, as does his increasing undermining. Initially, this appears through a more stripped down and shortened version of the usual introductory establishment of Death’s atmosphere. Upon the horn call, the accompaniment figure now quickly follows in muted trumpet, so that they together abolish atmospheric tuning and turn it into commenting control. As the orchestral players and rhythmically disjunctive parts increase, an even greater chaos of voices emerges defined by harsh timbre, shining through, for example, in the shrill flute and piccolo passages in bars 166–169. This spatially expands the world further, making it harder to survey from the continual vantage point of the horn and trumpet and consequently the listener. Because of this sprawling turmoil, Death disappears in the sound mass and recedes into the background, illustrated by the sharing of his theme with the first violins. This development puts an end to the overall narrative throughout Death’s world about his de-focalization and loss of control of what from the beginning was his world, but that now has spiralled out into fragmented, rebellious cacophony.

Parallel to the narrative of Death runs another one about seeing the same world from different perspectives, far or near, and from various focal positions. The mobility of spatial presentation this creates also makes the listener into a mobile agent imaginatively moving along with these constant shifts. This represents a development from the first movement’s tableau images perceived from a static, exterior viewpoint. Mahler’s way of episodically varying the dynamic foregrounding of instruments further results in the generation of a continuous process of alternating spatial distance.

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358 Distance forms a prominent notion in Abbate’s definition of narrative voices, which I discuss further with regard to this symphony’s Finale.
The development in the sections representing Death’s world also in various ways mirrors the development taking place in the other worlds, which becomes more and more palpable as the presence of these worlds increases the longer the movement goes on. In the dream-world episodes forming the next topic of discussion, Death successively establishes his presence following the undermining in his own episodes. Again, elements of closeness and distance constitute key elements of the episodes’ presentation, but now resulting in another kind of spatial mobility than that characterizing Death’s world.

Dream worlds: visions from afar
As outlined in the definition of the Scherzo’s worlds, the C major sections (B: bars 34–45, 145–156, and 185–199) inserted between those of Death’s world distinguish themselves by a differing sound-world. Leaving behind the harsh and menacing timbre of the solo violin and its chaotic surroundings, the music is now transformed into a brighter, surreal string tone generating an atmosphere evocative of dreams. The dream sections appear three times during the movement up to the moment of transcendence, forming their own, interior process of world. As in the dream sequence of the first movement’s development, they approach the structure of episodes suggestive of real dreams.

The first dream episode (B) starts with a sudden switch to a C major chord (bar 34), when the gesture’s abruptness together with the change of key alter the basic atmosphere of world (see example 4.2.5). Against the pedal notes of clarinet and horns, the first and second violins supported by the violas present a semiquaver passage reminiscent of the former dance tune, but less rhythmically and chromatically deviating. Muted and with soft dynamics in the high register on the E string, the violins attain a timbre of thin, delicate brightness suffused with an ethereal quality. The inclusion of short, high notes on the harp, which has so far been silent in the movement, adds to this ambiance. Because of the strings’ exposure in the sparse texture, together with the lack of supporting lower parts, there is the sensation of something floating high above without contact with the ground.
I suggest that timbre and instrumental disposition here function as a cue for the dreamlike and unworldly. Because of the contrast to the solo violin tuned scordatura, this evocation has an even stronger effect. The softer dynamics produce an effect of perceiving the dreaminess from a spatial distance in relation to the vantage point of the listener. The combination of airy atmosphere
and frontal remoteness suggests the topic of dream in the sense of a distant vision. As for the ethereal, it continues to form a crucial element of Mahler’s dream worlds, proposing a simultaneous transition to a higher state of mind.

Since dream visions are the product of mental imagery, this vision appears as an inner, possible world that can be understood as a sub-world of the movement’s storyworld. In literature, this kind of activity takes place inside the minds of the characters, but since no virtual agent is available here, that role falls to the listener, who then becomes the one experiencing the vision by identifying with the story-internal position. The structural framing of this first dream episode also indicates that it forms a parenthesis within the narrative process of Death’s world. By starting in the middle of the fiddle dance without preparation, it creates a rift in the main world and its temporal course. This is also shown in the absence of the introductory horn call in the following second section of Death’s world, indicating that that world does not need any calling forth anew since it just continues where it left off, having been there all along.

The dream vision as parenthesis also suggests that the listener perceives it from the vantage point of the main world representing the world of Death. In that context, the introductory, low pedal notes function as a ground-like connection forming the point of departure from which the distanced vision emerges.

A sudden end punctuates the world of dreams, as a group of three horns perform long stopped notes with accentuated sfp swells (bars 43–45, see example 4.2.6). This gesture generates an effect of brake or stop, presenting one of the horns’ controlling functions of world in the movement. Simultaneously, the dynamic swells and their brutal timbre mediate a sensation of coming closer to the position of the listener, working as transportation back to the main world of Death.

359 See Ryan, Narrative as Virtual Reality, p. 133.
At each recurrence, the sections of the dream world lose their ethereal brightness in favour of incorporating elements of Death’s world. Concurrently, there is a perceived decrease in distance as the vision starts to break out of its parenthetical frames. There is also a formal difference resulting from the third
dream section’s insertion as an additional episode between Death’s world and the second trio.

In the second section, B1, starting at Fig. 6 (bar 145), the short high notes are now in the solo violin, a feature that Knapp argues implies that Freund Hein is still present. While this is a plausible interpretation of the instrument’s connection to the figure of Death, his intrusion into the dream vision resonates more clearly in the presence of themes from his own world. Low horns and bassoons recall the opening call of the movement with menacing effect (bars 153–154, see example 4.2.7), and the trills found in the upper winds echo the estranged element of the pre-tuning of Death’s atmosphere, even though they here have a milder, more comic character. However, this figuration of Death differs from that in his own world. Whereas Death was there embodied as a virtual agent through the solo violin, the present motifs instead signal a foreboding of him or that he has taken on a disembodied shape, his presence suffused in space.

Example 4.2.7: bars 153–156

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Death’s nascent transfer into the dream world is one of several features signalling that the dream world is coming closer to the listener. For example, apart from the presence of Death, the more piercing quality of the solo violin’s short high notes indicates a sharper and thus closer version of the vision. This increase in proximity also appears in the dissolution of some of the elements earlier framing the episode parenthetically, integrating it more into the world of Death. The diminuendo of the pedal notes, now scored in a higher register, at the start entails a weaker grounding and connection to the vantage point of the main world. As the horns’ stopping gestures are now being replaced by muted trumpets with weaker dynamics (bars 154–156), the ending additionally does not produce as powerful a sensation of enclosure as before. This is further illustrated by the horn, which initiates the return to Death’s world before the dream section has ended (see bar 156).

In the third section, B2 (Fig. 8, bar 185), horn calls and shrill woodwinds from the very start signal the increased presence of Death. Whereas the horns’ low register still induces a menacing and foreboding effect, the wind trills present an even more comic character than earlier due to the higher flute register and the addition of piccolos. This makes Death appear a little less frightening, showing his parodic side and forming part of the movement’s ambivalent yet humorous manner of presentation.

As for the parenthesis, it finally evaporates as the dream vision closes in on the listener and the main world. The initial pedal notes are now in unmuted trumpets, which produce a different timbre more evocative of signal than stable ground. As a result, the sense of contrast between sections diminishes and functions more as an agile transition. Towards the end, the strings merge into Death’s world, shrinking into a violin solo that resembles a performance, literally taking up and playing away the world – the gesture evokes something possible in fairy tales. The dream world has finally reached the position of Death, integrated into his own world as it disappears into the sound of the violin. Simultaneously, the listener is transported out of the inner world of dreams and back to the outer one, shifting from one sub-world to another.

The sections constituting the dream world mirror the process in Death’s own world, where his presence and degree of control successively diminishes. As in fairy-tale stories, he assumes another disguise and takes charge of a different world, which he finally conquers. The parallel narratives that this generates illustrate how Mahler, as in a novel or drama, interlinks separate strands and shows their reciprocal effects on one another. What is more, he uses the violin timbre as a unifying means to reform the dark topic of world into a contrasting, dreamy one. Because of the violin sound’s connection to the figure of Death, this transformation or redressing also suggests another perspective on death as dream vision, manifesting the ambivalence in Mahler’s portrayal of him.

In the dream world, the development in terms of spatial distance is the opposite compared with Death’s world: in the latter, the listener successively
moves further and further away from the world through Mahler’s shifts of focalization, whereas in the former, the visions come closer and closer with each episode. This suggests an expansion of Mahler’s other, better-known distancing techniques, concerning both the use of off-stage voices and distant sound from within the symphony. Peattie discusses how Mahler creates illusions of spatial distance by assigning instruments of the orchestra to play ‘wie aus der Ferne’ (‘as if from a distance’). Here, the music manifests such effects from within the symphonic work but without indications to do so, and that comes from hearing it in terms of pure sound and without a view of the orchestra, which is the situation Peattie starts from. Moreover, it does so on two levels: as an immediate effect of dynamic means and as a process whereby distance is modified over time. This also endows the element of spatial distance with an implied mobility, presenting the development of Mahler’s technique of off-stage distant sound as coming closer.

Apart from the more acute processes occurring between worlds in this movement, the topic of dreams also forms a continuous process starting in the first movement, running through the symphonic work as a whole. Whereas the listener in the first movement was placed inside the dreams, either immersed in or surrounded by sounds, here the dreams manifest themselves at a distance from the listener as in a vision. One can interpret this process as the dreams having broken out of the interior into the exterior, even though they still represent a product of mental imagery. In the Scherzo, Mahler scores forth a new nuance and shape of the topic of dreams, just as Death constituted another aspect of the element of horror and darkness conveyed as nightmare in the Allegro.

Pastoral idylls remade: the natural worlds of the trios

Through their slower tempo, key change, and alterations of timbre, the two trios of the movement present yet another structural shift and, subsequently, another sound-world (C). In the following analysis of this nature world, the focus is on the elements of voices and virtual subjective agency and their crucial role in the presentation. As in the other sub-worlds, I explore the techniques of spatial distance and mobility, which form key elements of both the framing and design of world.

Trio 1: among nature’s voices

Following on the second section of Death’s world, there is a decisive attempt to remake that same world. The double bassoon and horns perform a darker

362 See, for example, Peattie’s discussion of Mahler’s different positioning of off-stage fanfares in the First Symphony, in *Mahler’s Symphonic Landscapes*, p. 30.
version of the opening call from the movement’s start (bar 63), soon joined by the familiar staccato notes and trills in the woodwinds. However, instead of an expected return to the fiddle dance theme, two clarinets and a solo horn (bar 68) disrupt this process through a calling gesture marking the transition to a new space (see example 4.2.8). While the calling figure in itself would signal the emergence of world, the specific combination of the two instruments’ timbres makes it into a particular means of transportation. The wide registral spread between the horn’s high register and the clarinets’ lower one produces an estranged, quasi-magical tone evoking a vast, voluminous space. This creates a sensation of opening that I interpret as a portal, moving the listener into the first trio (bar 71). Because of the trio’s divergence as a new sound-world, the portal also marks it as a sub-world situated at a great distance. Johnson has discussed Mahler’s nature passages in terms of self-contained episodes, and this feature adds a spatial dimension to the temporal, narrative one.363

Initially, the trio contains features that, on the surface, evoke an idyllic pastoral setting. The pedal notes in the bassoons that overlap Death’s world and the portal gesture function as a preparation for and transition into this topic, as they later appear in the horns (bar 72). In the woodwinds, the clarinets and bassoons form part of a trill-dominated texture that echoes the comic figuration of the first movement’s landscape scene, especially through the first clarinet’s performance direction of *lustig*. While these elements work as cues for a conventional topic, they are simply a point of departure for transforming that convention into another kind of nature forming part of the same realm. The traditional symbols of the pastoral thus mainly serve as a means of recentring the listener in a particular milieu and place, which Mahler then develops further.
The central aspect of this remaking has to do with how Mahler foregrounds and displays the various instrumental parts. Before retreating *pp* into the pastoral background, the solo clarinet opening the section in its first bar enters *ff* against the lower dynamics of the bassoon and double bassoon. This anticipates the instrument’s later role as a voice erupting out of the sound mass and is just the first of several such effects. In bar 84, the solo horn initiates a soft, fanfare-like call heard against the tender string line that quietly entered several bars earlier and started to increase in focus (see example 4.2.9). As the dynamics of the horn falter (*pp*, bar 87), the strings rise in register and, with the markings of *singend* and *espressivo*, begin to assert their role as songful melodic foreground. Simultaneously, the clarinet returns with the trill figure, which variously expands into a choir of three clarinets. In these instances (bars 90 and 93), Mahler distributes the dynamics differently for each part, so that the first stays *p*, the second, through a crescendo, performs *ff Schalltr. auf*, and the third performs *ff*. This makes the group of clarinets into not just a collective agential outburst of voice, but also into separately differentiating voices heard from various distances and degrees, all the time with the first violins’ sweet timbre as background.
Mahler’s layering of instrumental parts with differing timbres, textures, and dynamics generates a space where several virtual agents operate at the same time. While they at first present themselves as separate entities overlapping and alternating with each other (e.g., strings and horns), their increased simultaneity evokes a spatially expanded, three-dimensional construction. This
process culminates starting in Fig. 4 (bar 94), where the music increases in intensity as the first and second violins grow into a highly expressive melody coloured by *glissandi*. As a counterpart, marked with the slightly higher dynamics of *p* in order to be heard against the strings, the solo horn now has a different melody more evocative of song. This makes its previous, traditional fanfare figure into a speech gesture of voice, again demonstrating the instrument’s constant change of agency throughout the movement.

Based on the pastoral topic evoked from the start of the trio, each of the three instrumental groups – clarinets, horn, and strings – suggests specific functions related to such an environment. As voices occasionally erupting out from the sound mass, the clarinets and horn resemble voices of animals in nature. Mahler frequently uses the marking *Naturlaut*, and he himself likened his music to the sounds of nature: ‘Always and everywhere there is the very sound of Nature’, he wrote when discussing the Third Symphony in a letter to Martner.³⁶⁴ Less discussed is the spatial dimension of these sounds and their symbolic value as more than just mere *Naturbild* in the conventional sense. As dynamically differentiated within themselves and against the rest of the orchestra, the clarinets and horn mirror the disparate sounds of real nature localized in various places. Peattie does recognize these spatial features in Mahler, but only in relation to off-stage voices and distant sound. Interestingly, in the opening of the First Symphony, the composer already uses a choir of three clarinets with asymmetrical parts to depict the sound of the cuckoo and, in the later development of this passage (from Fig. 12), lets the piccolo, flute, and clarinet variously emerge as separate, individually defined voices. The same differentiation of woodwind instruments, through shifting dynamics, appears in the beginning of the Third Symphony’s third movement, originally entitled ‘What the Forest Tells Me’. Here, piccolos, oboe, and clarinet initiate a speech-like conversation, with the clarinet choir that soon emerges producing a strained, voluminous timbre due to their high register in diverging parts.

This distorted tone is also characteristic of the clarinets of the trio, and touches upon the very *nature* of Mahler’s *Naturlaut*. Especially given the marking of *lustig*, the clarinets do not convey animal sounds in any beautiful sense but more as the voices of strange, unfamiliar creatures. Although the horn, in contrast, performs a more songlike melody, its presence as a voice of nature, rather than its traditional hunting call role, gives it a similarly estranged tone. In the context of the fairy-tale world, the instruments could resemble creatures found in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, and several of the songs Mahler set from that collection contain the presence of animals and birds. As Johnson observes, these are in no manner beautiful in terms of pastoral idyll but often grotesque and satirical.³⁶⁵ Mahler himself, for example, spoke of how ‘every

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animal noise’ in nature was pregnant with meaning, with the use of ‘noise’ being telling: ‘We probably derive all our basic rhythms and themes [Urrhythmen und -themen] from Nature, which offers them to us, pregnant with meaning, in every animal noise’.\textsuperscript{366} This mirrors the composer’s fusion of the sounds of nature and those of noise, there being no clear boundaries between what is regarded as beautiful and ugly in the world’s generation of polyphony. One can speak of the sounds of nature here as ‘ambient’ or ‘territorial’ sound, to use Chion’s cinematic terms, defining not only the particular locale of nature but also a nature of a particular, fairy-tale genre.\textsuperscript{367}

If the woodwinds illustrate the surrounding sounds of nature, the violins propose another kind of virtual agency. The lyric character of their melody together with Mahler’s markings of singend and espressivo and increasing glissandi also mediate a sensation of voice but more in terms of one emanating from a virtual human being. This again resonates with Hatten’s coupling of the lyrical mode with individual subjectivity and its cue of virtual embodiment.\textsuperscript{368} As discussed throughout the analyses, strings have traditionally been associated with an interior quality of timbre compared with the woodwinds’ more external one, especially in relation to the solo string timbre. However, while in connection with the first movement’s development I described the solo violin as an inner, subjective voice, the expansion into the tutti violins and, consequently, the dilution of timbre here instead suggests voice in terms of inner subjective presence. Consequently, the listener identifies with this position and becomes spatially integrated in the wondrous natural world and its peculiar voices.

Out of the cue of pastoral idyll, the trio generates a natural, spatially mobile world that envelops the listener within its surroundings. The conventional symbol of place becomes a spatial, territorial experience of place as compared with a mere superficial one. This also mirrors an expansion of the topic of nature from the first movement, where landscape was statically portrayed as an empty, expansive background without the presence of humanlike beings. By involving the listener in a dialogue with nature’s voices, Mahler’s scoring virtually humanizes nature, letting the external landscape be transformed into an inwardness perceived in an enclosed natural milieu.

Considering the development in the other worlds of the movement, the integration of a virtual subjectivity in a far-away natural place also gains relevance in terms of broader significance. At this stage of the first trio, Death has not yet broken into the dream world from his own, but nature is still regarded as a realm of safety for the virtual subject from Death’s increasing menace.

\textsuperscript{366} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{367} Chion, \textit{Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen}, p. 75.
\textsuperscript{368} Hatten, \textit{A Theory of Virtual Agency}, pp. 69–70.
This mirrors the notion of *locus amoenus*, a literary topic deriving from Aristotle’s discussion in the *Poetics* of ‘a safe pastoral space, beyond the limits of the city’. However, Mahler’s nature does not mediate the common character of such a place as beautiful or paradisiacal, but as presence in and communication with the voices of its natural, realistic environment.

The drawn-out ending of the trio further establishes the world of nature as remotely situated. Starting in bar 102, Mahler treats the orchestral apparatus so that it mediates an effect of spatial distance evocative of a slow, cinematic fading-out (see example 4.2.10). As the strings die out in a gradual diminuendo, a group of horns enter with lines of long notes ending in accented stops. A similar pattern then echoes in the woodwinds, before the solo horn again plays its familiar call signalling the return to Death’s world. Mahler’s careful attention to dynamics especially shows in his handling of the cellos and double basses, which move from *pp*, via a two-part *morenho nur die Hälfte*, to *pppp*, and finally to just the first stands playing. Together with the drawn-out notes of brass and woodwinds, the impression is similar to a zooming-out effect in film, as though the listener were moving away from the natural world back to the position of the main world. Now the horns again demonstrate their function as organizers, here in the sense of transporters between sub-worlds. Simultaneously, their stopping notes produce a menacing tone foretelling the atmosphere of Death. Just as with the technique displayed in the dream worlds, the generation of this from within the orchestra, freed from the stage of the theatre, expands space so that spatial distance also becomes a process moving through space.

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Trio 2: nature as withdrawal
The second trio (Fig. 9, bar 203) follows upon the abolition of the dream world through its disappearance into the solo violin. This moment presents a particular point in the overall process of the movement’s sub-worlds, since it marks the end of the processes having taken place so far in both Death’s world and
that of dreams. The changes resulting from these circumstances mirror the altered design of and entrance into the reiteration of the natural world, which now arises through a signal in the trumpet.

Like the calling figure performed earlier by the horn and clarinet, the trumpet signal derives from functions found in real life. At the end of the first movement’s development section, the trumpet signalled the destruction of the dream sequence world. In this context, placed right before the new formal segment of the trio, the trumpet’s gesture and authoritarian tone are transformed into a signal of world as opposed to the traditional military role. This differs from the earlier portal in the way the signal assembles the world rather than serving as a means of transportation to it. However, Mahler preserves a degree of strangeness in the trumpet’s timbre by directing it to play schmetternd, maintaining the fairy-tale sound-world. Since the signal implies physical distance, it also calls forth the natural world from afar, underlining that world’s removed placement. Compared with the portal gesture, the gesture of assembly draws towards rather than transports away, which generates the sense that this instance of the natural world is situated closer to the listener. In light of the preceding happenings in the other sub-worlds, one can understand this as expressing an increasing need for the experiencing subject to take refuge in the safety of nature following the demolition of the dream world.

In this part of the natural world, there is a continuation of the previous world’s pleasant character, slightly comic trill motifs, and pastoral woodwind sound. The main difference concerns the increased presence of the strings, which affects their role of virtual subjectivity as well as their relation to the other orchestral parts earlier representing nature’s voices. Now they come in much earlier than before (bar 204), starting as mere background but soon foregrounded with a sweet-sounding melody. The solo horn that enters in the same bar is at first clearly foregrounded with its songlike counterpart, but quickly fades away in the sound mass as the strings grow in numbers and parts (bar 206). A solo clarinet stays mainly in the background with agile, accompaniment figures until the familiar choir of voices appears in bars 228 and 231–233. However, at that point the first violins have initiated a prominent theme sul D with harp and strings, a texture that makes the earlier eruptive utterances of the clarinets seem less foregrounded than in the first trio. Through the introduction of a solo violin in bar 234, as the surrounding parts decrease, the mere virtual subjective presence is enhanced into an intensely beautiful, interior voice, which in turn is transformed into a soli string choir (see example 4.2.11). This last stage of the second trio encloses the spatial frames of the natural world within a small, intimate room resembling an inner conversation approaching the act of meditation. The virtual subject – and the listener – has finally withdrawn into an inner world in nature, moving from mere outside presence via inner voice to inwardness.
The increasing focus on the story’s virtual subject and that subject’s ultimate immersion in nature underline nature’s role as a place of safety and integration where one can lose oneself. This forms one of two relations that Mahler be-
lieved Man to have with Nature: ‘He [i.e., Man] may find himself in a harmonious and happy relationship with Nature, or alternatively in painful and hostile opposition to her’. Since the string timbre forms a crucial means to convey this relation, it presents another remaking of that timbre characterizing the other sub-worlds. In the context of Death, it could also represent an attitude towards him in terms of escape, making the natural world somewhere he cannot reach.

Landscape as refuge from the world’s horrific elements also defined its portrayal in the first movement, where the solo violin’s short utterance in terms of a childish, fearful voice mediated its need for refuge following the nightmare episode. At this second instance of the movement’s landscape setting, it was also further away from the rest of the main world, which also anticipated the development in the Scherzo of nature as a far-away place. As such, the second movement builds on the Fourth’s consistent topics of landscape and nature, in terms of both break-out process and the integration of virtual subjectivity. Analogous to the dream topic, it also mediates another nuance or version of nature by using other means of timbre and texture.

The moment of transcendence and after

The second trio closes with a more intimately scored fade-out process than the first one, as the solo strings merge into tutti parts (bar 246), performing the dynamically decreasing low-register lines from before. Without the addition of long woodwind notes, the effect is more of a darkening, extinguishing procedure than one of spatial distance. Consequently, the natural world withers or dies out, but as I will show, it still bears important interlinks to what follows.

From the nothingness of the dissolving process, the music suddenly bursts into the silence with a radiant D major chord (Fig. 11, bar 254, see example 4.2.12). The final sound-world of the movement appears as a breakthrough that arises from the ashes of the natural world, creating a rift in the musical fabric. Constituting one of Adorno’s genres of Mahler’s ideas of form, the breakthrough recurs throughout the composer’s oeuvre, generating various effects related to the concept of world. In the Fifth Symphony, I argue that the breakthrough has the effect of breaking into the music as if from an outside world, whereas here it appears to break into it from below, as in the act of rising. With a timbre defined by high glissandi strings, harp accompaniment, and horn pedals at a slow tempo, this passage has ethereal and heavenly associations. Mahler’s scoring of the first and second violins in octaves with wide registral space down to the lower strings produces a particularly full, radiant

sound, demonstrating what Ünlü refers to as Mahler’s *Tonglantz*.\(^{371}\) This also produces in the listener a sensation of being imaginatively transported further above, into a sort of higher, meditative state and world cued by the sonority and texture.

*Example 4.2.12: bars 251–259*

Against this background, Knapp’s description of the section as an ‘extended moment of transcendence’ appears justified.\(^{372}\) However, there are features that problematize the sound-world as an experience of transcendence in the traditional sense. From the first bar, the woodwinds already perform motifs marked by trills resonating with the natural world. Later, in bar 262, the voices

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\(^{371}\) Ünlü lists *Tonglantz* as one of Mahler’s *Maximen*. See *Gustav Mahlers Klangwelt*, pp. 3 and 25–27.

\(^{372}\) Knapp, *‘Suffering Children’*, p. 261.
of clarinets return at the same time as the violins play their characteristic melody from the same world (bars 262–273). Formally, Mahler has displaced elements that should have come in the second trio, but that the insertion of the solo strings delayed. While this turns the D major passage into a closure or extended episode of the trio, more importantly, it defines transcendence as a state involving aspects of nature. The inwardness taking place in the final stages of the natural world thus anticipates this later withdrawal into a higher world, where the subject enters into a sort of inner nature defined by something ethereal.

Johnson argues that in the basic opposition in Mahler’s music between irdische and himmlische Leben, musical signs of the natural also become symbols of the heavenly.\(^373\) In this case, however, the heavenly does not so much manifest itself as place, but as an imaginative, liberating state of mind marked by an ethereal quality. The ethereal also points forward to the third movement’s dream worlds, which present nature in terms of a mental landscape. It is therefore no coincidence that the moment of transcendence in addition contains a tone of the dreamlike: the sonority of high strings, harp, and long pedal notes resulting in a suspension of time produces a surreal effect that in Mahler often lies on the boundary between dream and the ethereal. Moreover, it is a sonority foreshadowing the third movement’s ‘music of the spheres [sphärish],’\(^374\) to which the intensifying levels of dreams ultimately lead, serving as a transition to the highest point in terms of both spatiality and state of mind.

Rather than a religious state, transcendence thus becomes a mixture of nature, dream, and the ethereal, in which the virtual subject dissolves. As in the transformation of the pastoral idylls into a spatially mobile place in nature, Mahler depicts a transcendence that deviates from convention.

Concerning the use of string timbre, it again suggests a particular attitude to or disguising of Death, this time as a sort of emancipation or final acceptance. Regardless of how one chooses to interpret the instance of transcendence, it has a visible effect on what follows.

As the transcendence fades out, the familiar horn call signals the transportation back to Death’s world. Muted and assigned to perform hervortretend, it has a more surreal and subdued tone, as though the atmosphere of the higher world has not yet lifted. This foreshadows the many changes in the remainder of the movement, presenting differing figurations of both the character of Death and the design of world. When the restatement of Death’s world starts at the anacrusis of bar 281, it is surprisingly in the key of G major, turning the previously ominous atmosphere of the winds into something soft and careful.

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Moreover, when the solo violin enters, it is tuned normally and without tritones, directed to play *grazioso* and *espressivo*. The earlier marked *p–f* swells now centre on *p* and *pp*, so that the crescendo effects are not as defined as before. In addition, the accompanying string choir is gone in favour of the woodwinds, which make Death, as a solo string player, appear lonely and unsupported in the orchestral texture. The slower tempo of *gehalten* also endows the previously energetic folk music style with a loss of pulse and sense of stagnation, which further contributes to the depletion of the setting.

These features strongly affect the characterization of Death, who appears emptied of his tense, mesmerizing playing and horrific aura. It is as though a veil has lifted and revealed Death as something pitiful and pathetic. The disappearance of string performers in the dance also takes away his authoritative control, as does the decreased foregrounding resulting from the changed dynamics. By deforming the tone of the solo violin and the surrounding musical materials, Mahler stages a stripping-bare of Death.

Although the scordatura tuning of the violin soon returns in bar 298, along with supporting strings (some of them soloists), it does not attain its former prominent position. As Knapp notes, the diabolical side of *Freund Hein* remains a mere shadowy presence.\(^{375}\) Since a large part of his theme now resides in the woodwinds, the music gains another lighter and less dangerous character, remote from the horrific tone attained through distorted string timbre. This is especially evident in the high registers of flutes and oboe appearing from bar 302.

The shape of death also differs in the subsequent dream episode starting in bar 314, where the trill motifs in the woodwinds induce an airy effect, more pleasantly comic than menacing (see example 4.2.13). Knapp argues that the trills and the inverted dynamics here (compare the *pianissimo–forte* arrival in bars 185–191 to the *forte–pianissimo* one in bars 315–321) link them more to the two trios than to *Freund Hein*. This entails a migration of nature elements in favour of those of death, which is also mirrored in Mahler’s choice of three piccolo flutes here, which give the music a softness reminiscent of bird song. Furthermore, it couples nature with the dreamlike, building on the increasing merging of these topics. Also gone are the horn swells at the end, previously anticipating and transporting the listener back to Death’s world.

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\(^{375}\) Knapp, ‘Suffering Children’, p. 263.
Consequently, the emancipation following in the wake of the transcendence – and the preceding parts of the natural world – has abolished Death as a dangerous figure in the fairy-tale world. In a childlike manner, he has lost his power and humour has finally won over darkness.

The after-workings of the transcendence also have an overall, global effect on the fairy-tale world. This recalls the changes of world following upon the dream sequence in the first movement and further demonstrates how Mahler, in a novelistic manner, musically scores notable outcomes of a particular event. In the Scherzo, one of these changes is manifested in the relation between Death’s world and the dream episode. The entrance into the latter no longer marks a sense of boundary and spatial distance from the former due to the altered instrumentation in the preceding bars. Because of the absence of the solo violin scordatura, there is no longer an equal sense of shift in timbre and dynamics when the muted strings enter. The substitution of woodwinds also makes the transition smoother, as does the harp’s anticipatory entrance (bar 313) in a warmer, less piercing register. As previously noted, the horn swells marking the end of the dream episode are no longer present; instead, the music evaporates into a coda, initiated by a rhythmically precise timpani figure.

The disintegration of the once separate sub-worlds of Death’s world and the dream episode generates a new world, where Death is no longer in charge and the dreamlike has a place beyond mere distant vision. In that sense, the main world of the fairy tale, which was earlier defined by the horrific topic of death, is Death’s world no more, but a dilution of the movement’s various world elements. As the Scherzo draws to an end, the texture becomes more and more fragmented, finally dying away in rests of the horn call motif in low clarinets, cellos, and double basses. This illustrates death in a double sense – both Death as a character and the death of the movement’s storyworld, which gradually falls to pieces. In the manner of a characteristic Mahlerian joke, high woodwinds end with a final, cheeky utterance revealing the parody of it all.

Expanding the storyworld: spatial mobility and multi-narratives

In this movement, I analyse Mahler’s music in terms of sound-worlds with a particular focus on the spatial dimension. The investigation shows that Mahler’s treatment of instrumentation generates various effects of spatial distance.
and mobility, both within and among the different worlds. The implications of distance might refer to spatial position, such as in the dream worlds situated somewhere in front and transcendence as placed higher above. At other times, it is about ways of seeing the world, such as in the presentation of Death’s world, or physical distance between nature’s animal voices. By means of the portal and signal functions of the brass, there also arises an implied distance from the worlds they lead to or call forth. This imaginary transportation arises by other means in the instances of motion through space, such as in the fading-out passages of the natural worlds. The aspect of spatial mobility manifests itself differently in the shifting mobility happening inside the worlds, for example, in the variously foregrounded and differentiated natural voices or altering focalizations of Death’s world.

Mahler’s formal placement and the functional range of the brass instruments, especially the horn, are vital for producing this continuous spatial differentiation. Primarily, it is his careful deployment of dynamics – together with heterogeneity of parts and timbre – that constructs a refined creation of musical space.

The particular techniques of spatial presentation in this movement have an effect on its storyworld, resulting in an increase in size compared with the first movement. The imaginary distance between the sub-worlds and their respective movements creates an expansive space in which the listener either is transported or perceives the transportation of worlds. This makes the storyworld into something more fluid and mobile and the listener into a fellow-traveller in its continuous modification. In parallel, there is also the further development of Mahler’s theatrical influences, in which the first movement’s telling through scenic shifts or transformable spatial frames here approaches an extended universe of mobile worlds analogous to an expanded film. One can say that the Scherzo dissolves the sound-worlds from their roots or boundaries so that they move through time and space.

The parallel narratives of worlds that arise from Mahler’s spatial deployment also induce expansion in terms of narrative technique, as well as demonstrating how narratives in music might be about continuous processes of worlds, apparent as much in spatial as in temporal aspects. Moreover, that the spatial process of one world has an effect on another illustrates how spatio–temporal dimensions influence each other in their organizational construction of storyworld. If the parallel procedures throughout the world represent interior narratives, there is also the narrative on the level of the entire movement. This is a story about death, but not in the traditional sense of plot or the common interpretation of death as a diabolical fiddle player. As I have aimed to show in the analyses, the primary narrative is instead about the various shapes of and attitudes towards death, which demonstrates Mahler’s way of depicting a topic from various perspectives. Like the processes throughout the individual sub-worlds, the story of death also presents such a continuous process. It is plausible to tie death’s character to the violin timbre as opposed to the violin.
as an instrument, which simply forms one of several manifestations. Through this dramatization of sound, Mahler makes timbre itself into a means of telling.

In light of the intricate system of sub-worlds and their parallel processes, the function of the horn and trumpet as organizers of these multiple strands of cobweb – to paraphrase Mahler – becomes more logical. For the listener to make sense of all the connections and shifts in the movement, the brass are there as a guide, analogous to a narrator. Yet, their role is something other than that of a narrator in the literary sense. Rather than providing information or telling a story, they transport and recentre the listener to all the storyworld’s different places, states, and perspectives. In that sense, they are similar to directors of the world, having the ability to attain the different positions needed in order to mediate and bring that world together. One can say that Mahler transfers his own occupation as a director–creator of worlds in the theatre onto instrumental agents, orchestrating the imaginary world of sounds. This is further reflected in the sense that, by ordering the storyworld, the brass instruments also make the world – to refer to one of Goodman’s ways of world-making. A certain ordering is already established in the formal mould of the Scherzo, but because of the sections’ many repetitions and Mahler’s alternating spatial deployment, something is needed to structure the overall process.

Finally, the Scherzo also illustrates the development of the storyworld’s topics. While it contains fewer types of worlds than the first movement, by contrast, there is an increased presence of dreams and nature, primarily anticipating the former’s more prominent role in the upcoming third movement. The nuances and variations with which Mahler presents the similar types of world topics in the Scherzo make it plausible to define it as another version or variant of the first movement’s fairy-tale storyworld – and of the entire symphony’s storyworld. Mahler thus remakes the world out of another, building it up anew in a different shape and form. As a result, this brings forward an additional experience of world for the listener.

On the smallest scale, this remaking comes down to Mahler’s compositional method of ‘playing with bricks’ and the construction of new edifices out of the same elements. In the Scherzo, he uses different means of style, form, texture, and timbre to create new sound-worlds and consequently storyworld.

Adagio: thresholds into the shimmering world of spheres

The third movement’s restful introduction is far from the fragmentary ending and ghostlike atmosphere of the Scherzo. Against a sonorous string texture, a
serene melody in the cellos slowly unfolds, conveying a floating, somnolent state of dreams.

In the context of the Fourth Symphony as a whole, the Adagio marks an important shift in expression and manner of presentation. Whereas the fairy-tale world up to this point in the first and second movements has been mediated from a childlike perspective marked by humour, here it emerges from the sincere viewpoint of a virtual subject. This subject is depicted as a complete persona in the manner of a protagonist, with the solo oboe representing its outer expression and the violin timbre its inner one. In the following analysis, I show how the virtual subject experiences the storyworld through various moods and perspectives that mirror the world topics of light and darkness characterizing the symphony’s fairy-tale world.

A prominent feature of this movement is the presence of dream worlds and their gradual transformation into worlds situated higher up in the atmosphere. In connection with the Adagio, Mahler spoke of the music of the spheres, which I suggest features particularly shimmering, ethereal string timbres functioning as topical cues. These worlds simultaneously mediate a higher state of mind, imaginatively moving the listener upwards both spatially and mentally. As a means of transportation through the successively increasing spatial levels, Mahler uses glissando figures that I interpret as thresholds. The subject matter of dreams, the atmospheric, and their sound-worlds are important for the wider interpretation of the symphony as being about heavenly life, especially in relation to the ensuing Finale.

Here Mahler uses variation form, which I argue functions as a narrative technique or means of telling in terms of the division, transformation, and perspective of world. This generates various temporal processes in the form of phases, cycles, and waves, but also layers or levels of world, such as in the gradually higher transition up into the spheres. As the analysis will demonstrate, changes in these categories often correlate with one another.

The question of subject: cheerful in heaven?

Based on the available documentation of the Fourth’s Symphony’s subject matter, the third movement is concerned with life in heaven. As Walter explained in a letter to Schiedermair on Mahler’s request, ‘With these rather detailed reservations, let me tell you that the first three movements of the Fourth Symphony could describe a heavenly life’.376 Because of the third movement’s position in the work as a whole, it attains particular significance in relation to Walter’s mediated comments about the Scherzo and the Finale. Recalling his alleged forwarding of Mahler’s explanation of the symphony, Walter notes that, in the second movement, ‘Death fiddles rather strangely; his playing

sends us up to heaven’, and in the fourth movement, ‘If someone wonders what all this is about, a child answers [...]’ That is ‘The Heavenly Life’.

This implies that the Adagio acts as a sort of bridge or transition between the movements, with the topic of heaven seeming to be especially poignant.

As I have already argued, the heavenly represents just one of several topics generated by the symphony’s different timbres and sound-worlds. In addition, it is much more nuanced and complex than the unproblematic image of a cheerful, heavenly life. Concerning the third movement, the statements provided by Walter are rather contradictory: if the three first movements all describe heavenly life, then why is Death playing us up to heaven in the second movement if we are already there? Moreover, the claim made by several analysts that the gates to heaven do not open until the end of the third movement is equally incompatible with the alleged comprehensive heavenly setting.

A similar obscurity is found in the more specific descriptions of the third movement. In the letter to Schiedermair, Walter describes its subject as follows:

*Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht* (“St. Ursula Stands by Laughing”) could be the title of the third movement. The most serious of the saints is laughing, so cheerful is this life. Actually, she only smiles – a smile, as Mahler told me, like the ones on monuments of old knights or prelates (seen when walking through old churches), with their hands folded over their chests and the faint, peaceful smile of the departed who has found calm bliss. Solemn rest and serious, gentle cheerfulness characterize this movement, but it also contains deep, painful contrasts, like reminiscences of earthly life. At times cheerfulness grows into vacuity.

During conversations about the Fourth Symphony, Mahler himself spoke with Bauer-Lechner about St Ursula, a saint who appears in the text of the Finale (‘He also said that it bore the features of St Ursula [of whom the fourth movement, “Das Himmlische Leben”, sings]’). In her, he also saw the features of his mother’s face:

Another time, he called the Andante ‘das Lächeln der heiligen Ursula’ ['St Ursula’s smile’], and said that in it, his mother’s face, recalled from childhood, had hovered before his mind’s eye: sad and yet laughing, as if through tears. For she, too, had suffered endlessly, but had always resolved everything in love and forgiveness.

Despite these utterances, however, Mahler confessed to Bauer-Lechner that he actually knew nothing about the saint:

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And when I asked him whether he knew anything about the saint and was familiar with her legend, he answered: 'No; otherwise I should never have been able, or been in the mood, to paint such a clear and splendid picture of her in my imagination.'

Both the fact that the sources come from intermediaries and Mahler’s underlining of his imagined St Ursula point out the uncertainty suffusing the third movement’s narrative. What is more, apart from the presence of a saint, there are no indications of any heavenly connections.

Nevertheless, the statements touch on significant aspects of the music’s expression and of the thematic contrasts that characterize the movement. Mahler once said that, in the Adagio, ‘Never was there a richer mixture of colours’. These contrastive expressions are crucial for my investigation of world topics in this movement in terms of light and darkness. Such opposites also echo in Mahler’s own description of the Adagio: ‘A divinely serene, yet profoundly sad melody runs through it, that can only have you laughing and crying at the same time’.

The topics of darkness and light manifest themselves as different moods and expressions in the fairy-tale world, mostly experienced through a virtual subject or virtual subjectivity with which the listener identifies. Mahler’s friend Alphons Diepenbrock touches upon the concept of mood when claiming that, in the Fourth, the composer treated ‘the emotions of the soul freed from all earthly bonds’. The first movement expresses a childlike, happy mood, which through the second movement’s transition reaches the highest, ecstatic mood of the third movement.

In terms of light, ‘solemn rest’, ‘cheerfulness’, and ‘vivacity’ in various ways present some of the moods encountered in the movement, with solemn rest in my view forming a vantage point for immersion in a dream state. The aspect of beauty also appears, often in connection with the passages that evoke the intensifying levels of dreams and the ethereal. Bauer-Lechner said that Mahler ‘calls it his most beautiful Andante – in fact, the best thing he has done so far.’

Concerning the topics of darkness, they represent the ‘deep, painful contrasts’ described by Walter, generating moods of sorrow and depression. However, instead of forming ‘reminiscences of earthly life’, I argue that these topics are articulated in other sparser surroundings of the storyworld. Nevertheless, they can be said to have something of an earthly quality as compared with

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381 NBL, Recollections, p. 152.
382 NBL, Recollections, p. 153.
383 NBL, Recollections, p. 152.
384 Cited in Floros, The Symphonies, p. 115.
385 NBL, Recollections, p. 152.
the ethereal ones that come across as situated further above in space. This reflects the wider oppositions in Mahler’s oeuvre between the heavenly and earthly spheres, between *das himmlische* and *das irdische Leben*. Like the second movement’s transcendence, however, it is not about heaven as place but as a higher mental state, here reflected through the radiant tones of the atmosphere, of heaven as sky.

The atmosphere together with dreams form prominent categories among the topics of light. Mahler once said to Bauer-Lechner about the Adagio that ‘the final dying-away is like the music of the spheres [sphärisch] – the atmosphere almost that of the Catholic Church.’ The composer’s statement forms a vantage point for my interpretation of these spheres as a particular sonorous space or higher world that opens up for the actual agent of the listener, presenting what can be likened to atmospheric sound.

Compared with the rest of the symphony, the Adagio is timbrally the most evocative of dreams and the ethereal, affecting the subject of heaven in relation to the work as a whole and to the Finale in particular. By presenting shimmering sound-worlds that are more illustrative of something higher than those of the Finale, the third movement seems to present the *dream* of heaven in terms of another, better world as opposed to the rural musical setting of the last movement’s text.

### Variation form as world-making and narrative technique

The movement consists of a number of variations on two contrasting themes, forming a set of double variations along the lines of the slow movement of Beethoven’s Ninth. The two themes with their different characters correspond to my interpretation of light and dark world topics, the first commencing with the slowly unfolding, divinely serene melody of which Mahler spoke. Concerning the second, it contains the ‘painful contrasts’ in minor expressing a more sombre mood. Both themes have several motifs in common, found in melody as well as accompaniment, which are reworked in each variation.

According to La Grange, the form of this movement is one of the hardest to analyse among Mahler’s works. Although appearing to be ‘crystal clear’ at first, its structure is so complex that no one has yet succeeded in breaking it down. With that said, La Grange, just like Stefan and Floros, presents a formal design in which the variations on two themes constitute a five-part structure (A–B–A1–B1–A2) with coda. However, La Grange claims that calling it

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variations on two themes is inaccurate, since the second theme is only amplified and not genuinely varied when returning.\textsuperscript{390}

I too depart from a similar kind of five-part structure in my analyses, but one based on different worlds and moods. Since the A parts are more thoroughly varied than the B parts, they present a wider range of expression, extending from dream states to those of cheerfulness and boisterousness. As La Grange notes, the B parts are amplified rather than varied on their returns, but they still contain crucial modifications of instrumentation that form the basis for a change of narrative modes and perspectives of the same events. The various ways in which the A and B parts are treated also result in differing processes and techniques of recentring.

Inside each part, I also make divisions into smaller units following the different phases, layers, and levels of world, often correlating with changes in expression and perspective, resulting in various kinds of arcs and shapes. As for the coda, I have placed its start earlier than have the other analysts since I suggest that the end of the last and second A variation transports us to the realm of dreams and, subsequently, to the spheres due to alterations of timbre.

The following formal outline illustrates this movement’s set of worlds, moods, and constructive units.

\textsuperscript{390} La Grange, \textit{Mahler}, Vol. 2, p. 766.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Worlds and moods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
<td>1–61</td>
<td>Layers and perspectives of dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>1–16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>17–24</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>25–36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 5</td>
<td>51–61</td>
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<tr>
<td>B:</td>
<td>62–106</td>
<td>Dark world and mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>62–75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>76–92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transformation of space</td>
<td>93–97</td>
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<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>97–106</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>107–178</td>
<td>Cheerful, interior mood in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>179–221</td>
<td>Dark world and mood</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1:</td>
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<td>Boisterous, exterior depiction of world</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tableaux 1</td>
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<td>Tableaux 2</td>
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<td>Tableaux 3</td>
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<td>Tableaux 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coda:</td>
<td>283–353</td>
<td>Gradual transition into the spheres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horn transport</td>
<td>283–287</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intensifying dream state</td>
<td>288–314</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Portal/opening</td>
<td>315–325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher world of the spheres</td>
<td>326–353</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difficulty in finding a convincing way to analyse the form of the third movement is partly attributable to how Mahler uses the variation form. Rather than variations on a theme, his variations are often variations of a previous variation. According to La Grange, this is an evolutive process observable in all Mahler’s works from the Fourth Symphony onwards.391

This variation technique also seems to be how Mahler himself defined the traditional variation form. As Bauer-Lechner acknowledges, these variations were the first real ones that Mahler had ever written, ‘that is, the first to be

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completely transformed as he thinks variations should be’. In the Adagio, Mahler claimed they were varied to such an extent that they became something completely new:

Indeed, the thousand little fragments of the picture are frequently subject to such kaleidoscopic rearrangement that it’s impossible to recognize it again. It’s as if we saw a rainbow suddenly disintegrate into a thousand million dancing, ever-changing droplets, and its entire arc waver and dissolve. This is particularly true of the variations of the Andante.

This complete reworking of the variations especially concerns the A parts, which are continuously transformed into other features of world. In addition, the composer’s comment points back to both his description of the movement’s rich mixture of colours and to his likening of the widened palette of the orchestra to the colours of the rainbow.

Mahler’s vision of the variation form mirrors his overriding compositional dictum of eternal development analogous to the world. In line with his basic principle that there should be no repetition, only evolution, variations should also follow the same fundamental law. As I argued in the section on ‘Mahler and timbre’, this applies not only to the themes but also to the music as such, including all its parameters and especially timbre.

Regarding the composer’s motto, I suggest that Mahler’s application of the variation form in the Adagio serves as a means for the transformation of worlds and as narrative technique. Since this principle guides the process both between and inside the variations, there are several levels at which these procedures take place. Johnson considers the cyclic aspect of variations to be a way of telling; I also explore the waves and phases of variations, as forming crucial gestural arcs throughout the movement.

Variation A: the shifting layers and perspectives of dream
The first A variation starts with a slowly unfolding cantilena theme in G major running through the cellos, evoking a sense of elegant calm (see example 4.3.1). The strings-only texture consisting of two cello and two viola parts and softly accompanying pizzicato in the double basses generates a particularly sonorous sound-world.

392 NBL, Recollections, p. 152.
393 NBL, Recollections, p. 152.
394 See citations in the section ‘Mahler and timbre’.
395 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 216.
Example 4.3.1: bars 1–16

These initial 16 bars constitute the first of what I interpret as five different phases or layers of a dream state in the fairy-tale world, comprising the entire first A variation. Taken together, the phases can also be understood as comprising a unified dream sequence. Through Mahler’s gradual changes of timbre and texture, there arise various shifts in the intensity and subjective perspective of this dream state. As a whole, the variation attains the gestural shape of an arc, reaching an intensifying peak before decreasing in an extended abatement. Floros views the entire first A variation as a bar form arrangement encompassing the following sections: *Stollen* (bars 1–16), *Stollen* (bars 17–36), *Abgesang* (bars 37–50), and *Appendix* (bars 51–61).\(^{396}\) My own division into phases of a dream state differs concerning the second *Stollen*, which I divide into two phases (bars 17–24 and 25–36).

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Phase 1: falling asleep
The gentle musical character of the first phase not only illustrates the marking *Ruhevoll* (‘restful’), but also creates associations with the epithet ‘solemn rest’ mentioned in Walter’s comments. The divineness attained by the slow melody and sonorous string timbre resonates with the ‘divinely serene melody’ of which Mahler spoke. Something ceremonial also defines the double bass part, which, in addition to giving the texture homogeneity, is called by Floros ‘the bell motif’ due to its similarity to the bell motif in Wagner’s *Parsifal*. As a whole, the first phase evokes a solemn, formal rest that with its languid, rocking tempo becomes reminiscent of a lullaby. Johnson identifies similar features in the music, noting the double basses’ ‘hymn-like quality’ and ‘a vocal religiosity’ in the ‘chorale-like texture’ of the strings. These traits form part of Johnson’s interpretation of the third movement as ‘one of Mahler’s most sustained evocations of an idyllic landscape’.

The components of rest, solemnity, and landscape are crucial for my interpretation of the first phase as the beginning of a dream state. The sensation of resting can be likened to the act of falling asleep, slowly leaving the wakeful state behind. Mahler once said that he was inspired by ‘a vision of a tombstone on which was carved an image of the departed, with folded arms, in eternal sleep’. There is also a feeling of floating weightlessly in the gently unfolding texture of the parts that reminds one of being dissolved, as in meditation, when time is momentarily suspended. This relates to what Hatten calls ‘virtual enmindment’ as contrasted to ‘virtual embodiment’, not so much in terms of intentionality on the part of a virtual agent but as a particular kind of imaginary positioning in the sound-world, in this case that of dreaming. Following possible worlds theory, the mental act of dreaming counts as possible world-making on the part of a character. The virtual enmindment of the music here encompasses the entire texture rather than a virtual agent in terms of a soloist. In this immersive space, the actual agent of the listener becomes incorporated, taking on the role of experiencing subject.

Consequently, I regard this phase not as a landscape in terms of idyll, but as a mental landscape of dreams. The floating texture generated by the string parts creates associations not so much with a physical place as with a more ‘moving’ one, visited in the mind. The solemn character of this dream landscape endows it with something ethereal that is suggestive of the heavenly, but more in terms of a particular mood than in terms of heaven as a place. The coalition of elements of dream, nature, and the otherworldly thereby builds on

the same fusion of topics that represented transcendence in the second movement, forming continuity in terms of subject matter.

**Phase 2: inner expression of a virtual subject**

The second phase (bars 17–24) presents a variation of the first phase’s theme, now contrapuntally combined with a distinctive counter-melody in the second violins. This counter-melody generates a transformed setting of the dream landscape through its emergence as foreground against the rest of the string texture. The effect becomes even stronger due to the addition of the second violins as an extra string part that, through their new timbre, marks a decisive focal shift in the sound mass.

The songful, melodic line of the violins suggests a virtual voice, but what kind of voice? While the contour and expressive tone resonate with a ‘verbal’ speech-like utterance communicating human emotion, the collective unison playing generates a different sort of voice from that of a soloist. Since the line becomes amplified or diluted due to its performance by several players, the voice loses the concreteness of virtual embodiment and instead becomes an inner, mental voice of the mind. This recalls Cone’s definitions of unitary and implicit virtual agents. In the context of the dream landscape, the voice of the second violins suggests the inner world or presence of a virtual agent inside that environment, cueing the listener into its perspective. Using the violins to mark human presence further builds on Mahler’s use of them in the natural world of the Scherzo as a refuge from the darker elements of the storyworld.

**Phase 3: the virtual subject’s outer expression and its dissolving**

As the third phase begins, there is yet another variation of the cantilena theme. The counter-melody earlier placed in the second violins now appears in a solo oboe (bar 25), with the four initial bars presenting a literal repeat of the former’s statement (see example 4.3.2). Simultaneously, the first violins are added to the texture one octave higher than the second violins, expanding the register and making the timbre more ethereal than landscape-like. These changes in instrumentation present a new shift in both the perspective and design of the dream landscape, and just like the second violins earlier, the first violins and oboe come into particular focus because of their previous silence.

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Example 4.3.2: bars 24–30

Even though the oboe performs a songlike melody similar to that of the second violins, the melody emerges as a different kind of voice due to the alteration of instrument and tone. Through the timbre of a solo wind player, the diluted line of the strings becomes more concrete and embodied, making the oboe into a virtual agent speaking with an exterior voice. This is enhanced by the oboe’s placement in the foreground, which forms another of Hatten’s cues of virtual embodiment. As previously discussed, the lyrical mode also implies a certain type of human agent, namely, that of an individual subject expressing itself. The solo oboe thus emerges particularly strongly as a virtual subject, with which the listener identifies so that one too becomes imaginatively embodied in the oboe, speaking with it inside the dream landscape. Its lyrical speech also becomes a subjective, narrating voice mediating a particular way of telling. Moreover, because of the oboe’s connection to the second violins in terms of melodic line, both instruments suggest the expression of the same virtual subject, with the violins representing its inner world and the oboe its external utterance. This connection continues in the following first B variation (bars 62–106), where there is a more extended alternation of oboe and violin motifs.

While the solo oboe cues a new perspective on the dream state, the variation of the rest of the texture alters its spatial and temporal dimension. The first violins’ higher register transforms the dream landscape into something brighter and more radiant, which suggests a deeper, more intense level of the dream. As the previously mobile lines of the rest of the strings are transformed

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into longer notes in the lower register, there is simultaneously a suspension of
time and spatial expansion, widening the spatial frames of the dream world. This
sonorously vast space presents an immersive environment in which the
virtual subject of the solo oboe, together with the listener, becomes embedded.

However, the third phase presents a further shift in focus when in bar 29, the
solo oboe’s statement suddenly leaps from d” to e’, simultaneously as the
first violins rise in register to the melodic foreground. As the oboe disappears
in the next bar, it is as though the virtual subject dissolves into the increasing
shimmering sound-world of the violins, presenting an even more intense
dreaming in which one loses oneself. The high violin pedal in bar 31 generates
an even more transparent texture, spanning a wider space down to the chorale-
like motifs of horns and bassoons in the lower register. Through their evoca-
tion of something hymn-like, they suffuse the dream state with the solemn
character from the start of the first phase.

**Phase 4: intensifying layers of dream**
The third phase’s intensifying process culminates in bar 37, which forms the
start of the fourth phase (see example 4.3.3). Compared with the variations of
the earlier phases, it presents new melodic material: on the basis of bar form,
this is the Abgesang passage, counting as B compared with the similar A parts
of the two previous Stollen.
All the wind forces now disappear in favour of a very particular, sonorously shimmering sound-world. Mahler divides the string choir into multiple divided parts spread out over several octaves, which generates a richly packaged yet voluminous timbre. Johnson calls this instance ‘one of Mahler’s most
striking evocations of space’. The attained brittle and sparkling tone of the violins creates associations with the sounds of the atmosphere, anticipating the movement’s ending, likened by Mahler to ‘the music of the spheres’. The caesura markings in combination with the spatial expansion of register also produce an upheaval of time analogous to simply being in sheer space, where all forward motion is momentarily encapsulated.

Since the virtual subject of the oboe has previously been dissolved into the dream’s sound-world, this higher, atmospheric space is only available to the actual agent of the listener, who in turn becomes the one immersed in its timbral environment. At this moment, the imaginative distance between the listener and the storyworld is almost eliminated, resulting in complete spatio–temporal immersion. After a series of enclosing perspectives, the listener is taken to the heart of the storyworld, illustrating the mobile function of imaginative distance as a variable parameter in narrative. This position further underlines the ethereal tone of the music as the transcendence into something higher, anticipating the varied recurrence of this phase of the dream state later in the movement, where it functions as a transition into the gradual transportation up into the spheres.

Successively, this highest point of the dream state begins to decline, as the upper strings decline in register and the bassoons and violas perform what Floros identifies as ‘the eternity motif’ in a lower register. As a symbol of the heavenly, the eternity motif would seem to define the most ethereal moment of the dream. However, I find that the decrease in shimmering sonority and an overall broader and lower timbre instead suggest a subordinate degree in space compared with the beginning of the phase. Mahler’s use of the eternity motif in this way implies that it is not the semiotic motif of heaven but rather a radiant sonority reminiscent of the pure atmospheric sound that comprises the highest reachable state.

**Phase 5: out-phasing and awakening**

The fifth phase (bars 51–61), corresponding to the bar form’s Appendix, reduces the orchestral forces and presents a sort of fading-out of the dream state encompassing the first A variation. As the strings are transformed into long chordal notes, the bell motif reappears in the harp, cellos, and double basses, further endowing it with the idiomatic sound of actual bells. This upheaval of the music into pure sound and harmony continues in bar 55, where there is an alternation of tone colour between the woodwinds and muted lower strings together with harp harmonics. Rudolf Stephan spoke of *Klangfarbenmelodie*...

406 Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, p. 130.
here, and in relation to the dream state one can interpret this as the contours of the dream finally fading away by dissolving into harmony. This again suspends time, a process anticipated in the violins’ caesura markings (see bars 52 and 54). Two bars before Fig. 2 (bar 62), a long horn pedal enters, which forms a transition into the next variation B (see example 3.4). In the previous movements of the symphony, the horn has served various such functions of transportation to another space or world in the storyworld. Now it gains the role of awakener from the dream state, imaginatively moving the listener from one world to another.

The first A variation has presented a dream sequence with the total gestural shape of an arc, divided into smaller temporal units of phases. One can thereby speak of a kind of sequencing of world, which unfolds in parts that come together in a totality of process. This process presents an intensification of both the dream state and the virtual subject’s expression and presence, extending from introductory virtual enmindment via interior voice to exterior speech. Finally, the virtual subject dissolves completely in the increasingly ethereal and atmospheric sound-world, illustrating the disappearance into something higher, spatially as well as mentally. Consequently, the ensuing peak of the dream state allows latitude for the actual agent of the listener, who imaginatively moves upwards into the increasingly shimmering and brighter space. By illustrating various focal shifts unfolding alongside its successive phases, the dream sequence presents a narrative about alternating layers of world that correlate with subjective experience, showing how a change of one element has an effect on another. This arises out of Mahler’s consistent marked shifts in instrumentation, which in combination with the variation form functions as a tool to remould both world and agential perception. Through the representation of various expressions of a virtual subject mediated inside the inner world of the mental act of dreaming, there is also a development of complexity in relation to the depiction of dream worlds in the previous movements.

**B variations: cycles of darkness**

The long horn pedal putting an end to the dream functions as an act of awakening and recentering into the other contrasting theme forming the next B variation. In this section, I discuss both the movement’s B variations B and B1, and how they mediate the darker topics of the storyworld. These emerge both as a deserted waste world and in terms of a sombre mood primarily expressed by the virtual, composite subject of the oboe and violins from the previous dream sequence. Central to the two variations is a recurring wave-like emotional gesture, which, as in the dream, consists of a number of constitutive phases so that there again arises a division of the world into smaller units. By

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408 Floros, *The Symphonies*, pp. 127, 70 and 76.
wave, I refer to the shape attained through gradual intensification reaching a climactic high point followed by collapse and abatement. As the ensuing analysis will show, this wave is experienced and told by various agencies and voices from different temporal positions, resulting from Mahler’s colouring of line and continuous alteration of instrumentation.

**Variation B: emotional storms and actorial continuity**

The first B variation consists of three variations or parts as outlined by La Grange and Floros.409 The first two (bars 62–75 and 76–92) both culminate in the wave-like gesture, the second more intense and extended than the first. As for the third (bars 93–106), it presents a sort of coda based on the bass motif that, in the A variation, was defined by Floros as ‘the bell motif’. He again recognizes in the parts a structure similar to bar form, and therefore calls the third one an *Abgesang*. I regard these parts as various phases similar to those of the dream state, but more in terms of the different stages of a virtually experienced emotional drama.

The first variation starting in bar 62 forms a considerable contrast to the sound and character of the dream sequence (see example 4.3.4). A solo oboe performs a variant of the opening melody from the A variation, but with an expression far from its previous lyrical singing mode. Marked *klagend* and *sehr ausdrucksvoll*, the E minor statement in stepwise motion evokes an intensely lamenting voice. The sparse accompaniment consists of a transformed version of the double basses’ bell motif in solo bassoon, now shaped as staccato quavers with regular pauses. Two horns are assigned a long pedal and a chromatic minor line, respectively, adding to the sombre atmosphere.

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By varying elements from the A variation, Mahler creates a new texture and timbre that alter the setting of world and mood. The recasting of the solo oboe’s musical material makes it into a sort of double voice, representing the same virtual subject as in the dream state but now expressing itself through a different kind of voice. As for the varied bell motif, it gains a fragmented design that, in combination with the single horn lines, suggests an empty deserted space. This setting mirrors the oboe’s lamenting speech, whose utterance appears as a lonely call by an alienated human figure.

The variation form thus becomes a means to transform the sonorous world of the dream state into one characterized by misery and darkness, experienced by the same virtual subject. Apart from demonstrating Mahler’s way of making one topic into its opposite, it illuminates the problem of assigning a fixed semiotic meaning to the recurring bell motif, which in this context has associations with something completely different from the sound of bells. The contrast indeed suggests the painful dark contrasts mentioned in Walter’s description of the movement. However, in my view they do not represent reminiscences of earthly life but rather a dark mood and place, which nevertheless might be said to have an earthly, grounded quality as compared with the more ethereal one of the intensifying layers of dream approaching the sound of the spheres. Since the dream presented the mental act producing an inner, possible
world, the setting of the beginning of the B variation approaches that of an outer world encountered after awakening.

The solo oboe’s lament forms the start of a series of shifts between its virtual subject’s outer and inner expressions in relation to the surrounding world, culminating in the first wave-like collapse. At the end of bar 66, the first violins double and then take over the oboe’s melody (see example 4.3.5). Marked *singend* and with frequent glissandos over increasingly larger intervals, this instrumental group also evokes the gestures and expression of humanlike speech, which together with the withheld notes followed by caesuras recall sighing figures. Similarly to the second violins in the dream state, the first violins emerge as an inner voice of the oboe, but this time through Mahler’s colouring of the melodic line.\footnote{See Peter Jost, ‘Mahlers Orchesterklang’, *Mahler Handbuch*, pp. 120–121.} The element of colouring makes the contours and change of timbres stand out more clearly, especially when – as here – they appear throughout a composite phrase. The virtual subject of the oboe thus moves from external speech in the outer world to interior speech in its inner world, shifting from virtual embodiment to virtual enmindment. This inner world as represented by the violins is amplified by the surrounding long chordal notes, making the previous accompaniment of the outer environment into that of the inner mind. By representing the interior mood of the virtual subject of the solo oboe, this is similar to how film music can represent subjectivity through internal focalization (depth), referring to a character’s inner mental states. This type of focalization differs from the other type of internal focalization (surface), which concerns what a character sees or hears.\footnote{Joakim Tillman, ‘Solo Instruments and Internal Focalization in Dario Marianelli’s *Pride & Prejudice* and *Atonement*’, *Contemporary Film Music: Investigating Cinema Narratives and Composition*, edited by Lindsay Coleman and Joakim Tillman (London, 2017), pp. 155–186, p. 156.}
The connection between the solo oboe and the first violins is further established through colouring of line by the oboe taking over the melody in bar 71, then holding a long e’ in bar 72 simultaneously as the first violins enter with a quick rising semiquaver figure. This initiates a series of falling gestures accompanied by chromatic lines in the woodwinds, finally landing on a long G String tone in ff following a long glissando downwards. The same gesture is echoed twice in the horns (bar 75), first by two horns in f and then by the other two in ff (see example 4.3.6). I characterize these downward leaps as ‘the plunge motif’, illustrating a collapse following upon the short climactic build-up. Because of the highly expressive timbre and connection of the first violins to the inner world of the oboe, it is plausible to interpret this collapse as a virtual subjective one in the form of an intensifying emotional wave. One can describe it as if the entire texture and timbre of the music expressed a virtual emotion experienced by some virtual agent, in this case, the virtual subject of the solo oboe.412

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Example 4.3.6: bars 75–76

As a whole, the first variation might itself also be understood as a wave-like process, reflecting the expressive emotional arc of the storyworld’s virtual subject. The alternation of the solo oboe and first violins cue the scene for the final, wave-like collapse and thereby together present the entire experiencing virtual subject.

Moving on, the second variation is a variation of the first one and presents a similar wave-like intensifying gesture ending in collapse. It is thus both a transformation of the first variation as well as a restaging of the earlier emotional arc, which is why one can speak of a sort of cyclic process. This time, however, the emotional arc is preceded by a slightly different instrumentation that presents it from a changed perspective.

Again, the solo oboe initiates the lamenting melody in minor against the fragmentary background of the quaver motif, now scored for harp and cellos. Soon, its melody is doubled and overtaken not by the first violins but by two flutes, which together with the clarinets momentarily modulate into major. At Fig. 3 (bar 81) a new, more heterogeneous texture interrupts the flow of the music (see example 4.3.7). As the tempo suddenly goes from ritardando to a tempo, different motivic material emerges, with a solo horn (to perform warm) and the first violins simultaneously playing two distinctive counter-motifs. These features generate a brief sensation of rupture lasting for three bars (81–83) before returning to the previous sense of flow in bar 84. In representing a marked shift in the level of discourse that breaks its unmarked flow, the passage conforms to Hatten’s definition of narrative agency, gaining the effect of coming from outside the frames of the storyworld.413 This distancing or disjunctive effect presents a different technique from the emergence of narrators in juxtaposition with the simultaneously surrounding orchestral parts.

413 Hatten, A Theory of Virtual Agency, p. 203.
The interruptive marking functions to cue the perspective of the subsequent climactic build-up and collapse, changing it from being subjectively experienced by the virtual subject of the solo oboe to being objectively told by an external narrative voice. The build-up process still happens in the first violins through a phrase with ascending intervals stopping on long notes with caesuras, but through the **forte** dynamics and marked accents, the music resonates more with a gradual, heavy struggle than with the previous singing voice. Mahler’s reworking of the same intervallic gestures thus produces a different emotional expression. The subsequent collapse is much more intense than in the first variation, starting with a massive climax in bar 89 (see example 4.3.8) where Mahler uses the orchestra’s full forces, adding the brass that were previously silent in order to gain maximum effect. Apart from the ghastly timbre attained by the instrumentation, the textural asymmetry of the parts, including ‘the plunge motif’, produces a sensation of chaos and disorder. In bar 91, the collapse abates on a long D minor chord, upon which viola and cellos perform a sonorous, ascending–descending melody dying away in a morendo that, through the minor key and sonorous tone, evokes sensations of sorrow and deep depression.
Example 4.3.8: bars 84–97
The process and gesture of this expressive wave recall that of a powerful storm ending in wreckage and a wasted landscape. Instead of a natural landscape, however, the wave approaches that of an emotional storm ending in despair, making it plausible to speak about the aftermath an interiorized landscape of a virtual human agent. As contrasted to the first, shorter arc, this arc presenting
the virtual experience of emotion by means of a virtual agent is told by an exterior narrative agent and not by the virtual subject itself.

The third variation continues from the abatement of the second with what in my view can be likened to a transformative process of space. Following the decrease in dynamics and in the number of players, the quaver motif gradually moves higher in register and in the orchestral instruments. Starting in the doubles basses (pizz.) and harp, it moves through the lower strings and woodwinds until finally reaching first flute and second violins (bar 97). The reworking of the motif through its changes of timbres serves as an imaginative recentering for the listener from a vast, fragmentary space in the wake of the collapse to a more intimate, inner one. In bar 99, a solo violin performs a pp melody on the E string that, through its fragile tone and glissandos against the sparse texture, emerges as an interior, subjective voice speaking in this small space (see example 4.3.9). Its humanlike emotive expression gains its quality partly from the initial canon with the first flute (bars 98–100), whose intervallic distance from the violin of a second (bar 99) produces an effect of strident, clashing sound. According to Floros, the accompanying chromatically falling line of the horn is symbolic of deepest mourning, but I would instead describe it as an addition to the ambiance of misery by means of voice rather than as a symbol.\footnote{Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, p. 127.}

Concerning the previous connection of the violin sound to the solo oboe, the solo violin has the implied function of inner voice relative to the solo oboe’s outer voice in their complete persona of virtual subject, thereby approaching a somewhat interiorized, reflective agency.

\textit{Example 4.3.9: bars 98–106}

Just as in the previous movements of the symphony, the solo violin’s appearance can be understood as a retreat into safety following a horrifying event, in
this case after the experience of emotional chaos. By diminishing the story-world’s spatial frames and setting, Mahler’s instrumental modification generates a place for the virtual subject’s inward reflection.

Four bars before the end of the third variation, the solo violin ends with two sigh-like gestures, directly echoed by the violas, which signal both the end of the virtual subject’s speech as well as the fragmentary dissolution of the dark mood and world.

To summarize, the first B variation depicts what can be likened to some sort of emotional drama or crisis experienced by a virtual subject, impersonated by the solo oboe and violins, which together form the complete virtual subject as representations of its outer and inner expressions and, consequently, outer and inner worlds. In his study of virtual human agency, Hatten discusses the concept of actorial continuity, i.e., the persistence of a virtual agent through time by taking on a role in a dramatic trajectory. The transformative inference from this shift from agency to actorial level he calls ‘fictionalizing’, making the virtual agent into a protagonist or antagonist of a story. As a means to sustain this kind of agential identity, Hatten explores, for example, tonal and thematic evolution and developing variation.

As a complement to Hatten’s methods of making a virtual agent persist through a coherent discourse, I suggest that this can be achieved by means of timbre, instrumentation, and colouring of line, which function as cues as to the experience of virtual expression and emotion. Also worth mentioning is that, throughout his study, Hatten almost exclusively refers to examples from the piano literature, which makes his theory of virtual agency rather complex as well as exclusive of the wider role played by timbre in the mediation of agents.

In this variation, actorial continuity arises from the composite virtual subject of the solo oboe and violins, which are analogous to a protagonist in the storyworld – a ‘permanent agent’, to use Cone’s term. Rather than a fictionalized dramatic trajectory, the mediated virtual experience is that of a recurring emotionally dark mood, which, as in the real world, is experienced several times but always in a slightly different way and from different agential perspectives. Through Mahler’s use of the variation form, this experience attains a cyclical way of telling through various phases, in which gesture functions as a crucial illustrative category. The wave of emotional climax and collapse serves as a node for a before and an after, whereas the third variation attains the status of an epilogue to the two preceding waves.

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415 Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency*, p. 84.
The representation of the same virtual subject in both this mood of darkness and that mood of dreams also suggests an actorial continuity between the different worlds of the story. Mahler’s way of varying instrumental timbre and expression endows the same subject with various ways of telling, giving it a set of shifting voice modes (lyrical, lamenting, etc.) also found in actual human agents. This further demonstrates how different worlds provoke changing experiences, entailing expressive reactions in the same human being.

**Variation B1: breaking the waves – changes of perspective and temporal compression**

Variation B1 continues to depict the cyclic procedure of the recurring wave-like gesture and its virtually experienced dark mood in a similarly dark world. Floros claims this to be a very free variation of its antecedent B variation, with significant changes such as new keys (G, C-sharp, and F-sharp minor instead of E and D minor), the rearrangement of thematic material, and altered instrumentation.\(^{418}\) I agree, considering the many modifications made by Mahler, but am more interested in how all these features transform the ambiance, the design of the emotional waves, and their narrative perspectives. As a result, the previous division into three phases is broken and a more intensely extended, continuous one arises. Compared with the first B variation, this one presents a development away from the perspective of a single virtual subject in favour of other agential ones, mirroring that of the entire movement.

Variation B1 takes off following a change of mood already prepared for towards the end of variation A1. After a series of plunge-like motifs in the violas, which form part of an increasingly fragmentary texture, a solo horn appears that initiates the drawn-out solo line functioning as a transition into the darker place and mood of variation B1 (see example 4.3.10). Already in bar 175, however, the solo oboe enters with its *klagend* voice, moving alongside the horn part into the next variation. The solo oboe’s participation in the transition and the recentring of a more sombre mood before variation A1 has finished indicate that the shift in the storyworld is not from the act of dreaming, but rather a gradual removal into another setting suffused by the same mood. I discuss this argument further in the sections treating variations of A1 and A2.

\(^{418}\) Floros, *The Symphonies*, p. 128.
The lamenting oboe takes the listener back to the sparse and empty world from before. This time, however, the oboe immediately gets company from two other solo instruments: the horn, which persists from variation A, and the English horn, also given the performance direction of klagend. Presenting three
individual *Hauptstimmen* with equally important roles, the soloists emerge as virtual agents engaged in conversation analogous to that of chamber music.\(^{419}\)

The conversational aspect resonates in Mahler’s scoring of the oboe and English horn in a sort of canon, making them appear to be reciprocally listening to and waiting for each other, recalling reciprocal interaction in real life. This kind of effect is also found in a passage for woodwind players in the Adagio of the Sixth Symphony (one bar after Fig. 47), where the English horn and two clarinets communicate in a similar manner with independent lines shaped as songful speech. In bars 183–188, the chromatic falling line previously placed in the B variation already appears in the solo horn, adding the sensation of mourning to the sombre expression of the players.

The mediation of dialogue between virtual agents, expressing and sharing the dark mood through their own individual voices, shifts the focus from the solo oboe as a single experiencing and speaking virtual subject. This cueing of change of perspective further resonates in the altered instrumentation of the subsequent ‘struggle motif’, which is now scored for cellos instead of violins. The build-up to the larger second wave of variation B has thus been brought forward, perceived as much more intense due to the fuller and richer sound of the cellos, underlined by long low-register notes in the rest of the orchestra. The virtual emotions expressed likely foster the actorial continuity of the virtual agents of the woodwind players.

At Fig. 7 (bar 192), a change of key to C-sharp minor correlates with an intensifying climactic accumulation, which I regard as a continuation of the emotional wave. As the key change slightly alters the basic ambiance, there is an implication that, this time, the same gestural process is being experienced differently.

At the moment of collapse (bar 195), Mahler now brings together motifs that in the B variation were heard in succession (see example 4.3.11). Squeezed in during a shorter time span, this assemblage consequently generates an effect of temporal compression in relation to the events of the previous variation. The temporal dimension becomes even more complex when the sorrowful string motif is extended and then transformed into the struggle motif, gluing the two former separate waves together. As a disjunctive counterpart, the solo horn emerges in *forte* swells, making it stand out as a narrative voice against the virtual emotional struggle. In addition to being temporally compressed, there is also a parallel commenting upon the ongoing temporal process, told by a narrating agency rather than the virtual subject experiencing that process.

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\(^{419}\) See Klorman’s *Mozart’s Music of Friends*, especially pp. 34–36.
Example 4.3.11: bars 195–201

In bars 202–204, there is immediately a new shift in agency and time (see example 4.3.12). Through a sudden refurbishing of texture and timbre along with a decrease in dynamics to *piano*, a marked discourse emerges that disrupts the musical flow. A solo trumpet (unmuted) takes over the horn motif from bar 81, against which the first violins, one measure later, perform their
motif from the same bar. The abrupt disappearance of the rest of the orchestra, leaving only accompaniment from a sparse group of winds, in combination with the thinner, more fragile tone, gives this instance a sense of reminiscence – like a voice from the past saying ‘this happened then’. Carolyn Abbate has claimed that music, unlike literary narrative, ‘seems not to “have a past tense”’, but the disjunctive effect of these bars in relation to their surroundings together with their timbre do generate the temporal sound of such a voice mode. This anticipates the emergence of what, in the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony, I call memory or ‘in-between’ spaces, which produce a sensation of reminiscence or looking back.

Example 4.3.12: bars 202–207

Because of the divergent insertion, entailing a return to the struggle motif, now in the violins, the subsequent process of collapse suggests that the emotional

420 Abbate, Unsung Voices, p. 52, and Nattiez, ‘Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?’, p. 244.
wave has taken place in the past. This implies two distinct temporal layers, since the passage in question unfolds in the present.

Towards the end of the collapse (bar 212) leading to abatement, the first violins echo the solo violin melody from variation B. The abolition of the inner voice of the virtual subject is reflected in the subsequent, sigh-like figures of the solo oboe and English horn, further marking the emotional wave as one experienced from the perspective of these virtual agents. As the variation finally ends in a static, drawn-out morendo, there is a sensation of vacuum and chordal ambivalence that moves the musical character away from a dark mood towards a lighter openness. This marks a preparation for the seamless transition into variation A2 and its contrasting light topic of cheerfulness. There is also a gradual removal of the previously separate moods and worlds that recalls the transition between variation A1 and B1.

The dark topic of world illustrated by the B variations presents a change and development in the fairy-tale world compared with that of the other movements. While in the first and second movements, darkness was mediated as an exterior event or appearance in the form of a nightmare or death figure, the darkness of the Adagio emerges as an inner, emotional drama resonating in the listener through the expressive, subjective telling of the virtual subject. This inner darkness is reflected through both exterior speech and inner state of mind, which simultaneously mirror the empty, fragmentary surroundings. In this way, the virtual subject also conveys to the listener a certain view of the world – its world version, so to speak. This different subjective portrayal of darkness arises largely from speech gestures in combination with tone, merging into a way of telling. The figures of sighs and plunge motifs ending the sections similarly become means to mediate humanlike evocations of catastrophe and despair. In contrast to the grotesque deformation of timbre defining the previous movements, the highlighting of the expressiveness of tone serves as a cue for the topic of darkness.

In the B variations, the variation form generates narrative on different levels in combination with the altered instrumentation. First, as a variation on the A variation, their dark place is made out of its contrastive dream state, so that one can speak of a remaking of world into its opposite. Through the repetition of the recurring emotional wave, a cyclic process arises that unfolds in phases, generating a sequencing of world. Within the complete wave shape of each B variation, the construction of smaller waves forms the phases, resulting in several gestural processes within a single large one. As in the real world, these are slightly different each time, varying in length and intensity, reflecting how the same general emotion is constantly re-experienced. That each phase illustrates the emotional wave from various narrative positions and temporal dimensions also changes the listener’s perspective of it. Through the gradual moving away from the present experience of the virtual subject to a more temporally compressed and past one, there is a distancing from its subjective narrative perspective to a more objective one.
In this section, I move on to variations A1 and A2, which present the light topics of the fairy-tale world. Since these differ more from the first variation A than does B1 in relation to B, they result in transformations that gradually move from the opening dream state to moods of cheerfulness and vivacity. As I will show, these are mediated both as inner and outer reflections of world that, through their loss of dreamy timbre and ethereal, shimmering features, do not suggest the cheerfulness of a heavenly life, but rather the carefree life of a fairy-tale world. However, this status is not consistent, occasionally shifting to moments of darkness.

**Variation A1: interior mood of light in the world**

The return to A1 (Fig. 4, bar 107) functions as an imaginative recentring back to a light mood, following the seamless modification from the previous, fragmentary ending of B. However, this time Mahler varies the theme in ways that do not provide an immersive, dreamlike space for the listener to dissolve in. First, the tempo *Anmutig bewegt* (‘graceful, lively’) takes away the slowly unfolding sense of rest, giving the music more flow and speed. Johnson, for example, hears the variation as a flowing one reminiscent of the tone of Schubert. The first two bars starting the cello phrase are also shortened, ending with an accentuated crotchet note followed by a pause, which also abolish the floating lines of dreaminess. As an accompaniment, two clarinets in the low register perform a lively counter-motif dominated by quavers that de-lyricizes the tone and renders a more engine-like moving undercurrent.

The same kind of condensed phrasing permeates the scoring of the solo oboe (see bar 123), whose earlier songful, lyrical expression as a result appears weak and stripped down, as though Mahler had cooled or emptied its tone of the previously more subjectively speaking utterance. In combination with the oboe being very quickly, after only four bars, joined by other woodwind parts and with the active finger-work of the second violins, this positions the oboe as more of a virtual agent operating in the background than a central virtual subject. Throughout the rest of the variation, it only appears as a piano background part for brief periods, further taking away its role as an experiencing and telling voice.

As a whole, the variation reminds one of a prosperous, enjoyable dance tune, illustrating a virtual mood of cheerfulness and delight. Through constant varied markings of *fliessend*, the flow of the music gradually accelerates, reaching a peak of intensity in bars 157–158. Mahler also gave instructions at the beginning of the variation to increase the tempo during its course (*Im Anfang sehr gemässigt, im Verlaufe der Variation allmählich etwas bewegter*).
An unmuted solo trumpet appears against a background of altered, pared-down texture (Fig. 5, bar 137), evoking a tone of reminiscence and a backward glance of nostalgia. Since the variation is no longer marked by the intensifying shifts signalling different phases of the dream state, it also forms a more continuous character in which smaller changes flow into each other rather than being clearly separated.

The gradual phasing-out of the solo oboe as an experiencing virtual subject runs parallel to the decrease in the dreamlike and atmospheric timbre and texture. As the virtual subject disappears, the world also comes down from the higher layer of the dream state to a sense of cheerfulness at being in the world. I interpret this transformation of the dream state’s ethereal features as a world situated somewhere lower than the dream, which is gently cheerful but not in a manner implying a life in heaven. Rather, it could suggest the lighter mood of fairy-tales, where the world emerges as carefree and unproblematic. Instead of being tied to the particular virtual subject of the oboe, the feeling emerges as more general and virtually subjective, unrepresentative of any specific agent in the storyworld.

However, Mahler complicates the topic of light by letting the variation end with a transformation into the darker, sombre mood of the B variation. This implies that light is never a constant in the world, not even in fairy-tales, but runs as a parallel contrast. In terms of the division of variations, the transition from one mood to another within and not only among them means that one world and state of mind might blend and intersect with another, blurring any definite boundaries.

Variation A2: exterior mood of light of the world

The second A variation (A2) again starts with a recentring back to the main theme of variation A (bar 222). This time, the music initially resonates more with the expression of the opening, where the cello melody emerges as floating and lyrical. However, the change of the time signature from $\frac{4}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ generates a speeded-up version of the theme that, together with a less sonorous string tone and low counter-motifs in the clarinets, quickly deprives the theme of its previous resting calmness and dreamy aura. In fact, it is simply a vantage point for a number of highly differentiating variations, each of which presents considerable changes in tempo and character. According to Mahler’s instructions, the tempo changes should occur ‘suddenly and surprisingly’.

The first of these variations (bars 238–262) begins after a short mini-interlude of one bar in $\frac{4}{4}$ and is in the tempo of Allegretto subito in $\frac{3}{4}$. Due to the change of tempo, the waltz-like tune of the first violins appears to increase in speed, while simultaneously being marked as a new timbre. Starting in bar

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422 ‘Ohne die geringste Vermittlung plötzlich das neue Tempo’.
247, a solo clarinet performs short motifs accentuated by trills, which gives the dance a more twisted, band-like style reminiscent of Klezmer.

Via a new one-bar tempo change in $\frac{7}{8}$ (bar 262), there is a transition to the second variation *Allegro subito* (bars 263–277), also with an altered tempo of $\frac{3}{4}$. As the key changes to E major, there is a sudden expansion of orchestral texture and a greater rhythmic asymmetry. Rapid scalar, semiquaver figures in the woodwinds together with the triangle sound give a magical ambiance to the increasingly boisterous musical character reminiscent of a fairy tale. Towards the end of the variation, a momentary shadow passes by means of increasing chromatic inflection in the strings, against which punctuating, menacing horn stops are heard. La Grange refers to this change of atmosphere as a nightmarish vision later cut short by the entrance of the horns in bar 283.423

The third and final variation *Allegro molto*, also in $\frac{3}{4}$, consists of only five bars and presents a return to the key of G major, *Wieder mit plötzlichem Übergange*. The accelerating tempo contains multiple chromatic scale figures that, in combination with the crescendo, create a rushing, forward-running effect. The addition of the glockenspiel, like the triangle sound, suffuses the timbre with a touch of magic, again suggesting a fairy-tale atmosphere. Just as the music seems to be at its breaking point in terms of speed, via a transition of one bar in $\frac{3}{4}$, its spinning motion is stopped by a horn choir at bar 283 (Fig. 11). This is the start of what I call the transition into the inner world of dreams and later the higher world of the spheres, discussed in the next section.

The different A2 variations bring to mind a sequence of various tableaux, edited or cut together in the manner of montage technique in films.424 Mahler’s one-bar tempo changes between the variations function as a signal to mark these transitions, while simultaneously gluing them together. The dance styles and the vivacious, increasingly boisterous character further suggest that these tableaux could depict the cheerful mood of the outer world, mirroring a sort of ongoing, increasing hustle and bustle suggestive of everyday city life. This also illustrates an intensifying development from the earlier mood of cheerfulness to vivacity, as well as from an exterior depiction of world as contrasted to the interior depiction of being in the world. Consequently, the music has passed to an additional lower level or layer of world, moving from inside to outside.

In addition to the montage technique, Mahler’s constant manipulations of tempo suggest cinematic analogies in terms of fast-forward technique as well. This generates a compression of time similar to the narrative technique of summary,425 which creates a view of the world as spiralling out of control,

425 As contrasted with scene in Genette’s model, see Monika Fludernik, ‘Time in Narrative’ in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. 
‘like a spinning wheel gaining speed’. Therefore, the horns are needed as transporters away from the approaching catastrophe.

The light moods of variations A1 and A2 present a gradual development from the initial dream state of A, moving from an inner virtually subjective feeling of cheerfulness in the world to the world as exteriorly boisterous and noisy. These variations do not recall the moods of heavenly life, but rather those of a carefree, quite naïve existence in a fairy-tale world.

In their entirety, all the A variations depict a process of desubjectification following the subsequent undermining of the virtual subject of the solo oboe, which has less prominence in each succeeding variation until, in the fast-forward tableaux of the world, it has disappeared completely. Key to this procedure is Mahler’s constant reformation of the main theme, which serves as a point of recentring for the subsequent intensifying changes of the variations.

One can thus interpret the sequence of A variations as different layers of discourse on the topic of light, presenting their nuances through a series of downward moving levels, from the higher world of dreams to the lower, earthly ones of the fairy-tale world.

Coda: music of the spheres or atmospheric sound

With the entrance of the horn choir (Andante subito, bar 283), there is a shift in the storyworld to the most intense layer of dreams that, through a sequence of increasing spatial levels, leads up to a higher world representing the music of the spheres. Therefore, I interpret this moment until the end of the movement as the coda, since it encompasses a new, unifying sound-world. An important feature concerns the transportable function of the threshold, which is crucial for the interlinking of the various stages of intensification in higher levels of world further up in the atmosphere.

The elegiac, solemn phrase (bars 283–287, see example 4.3.13) performed by the group of four horns following upon a stopping fermata represents a relocation from the boisterous world of the fairy tale to a recentring back in the dream state of the first A variation. Johnson claims that these horn calls ‘redefine musical space’. I would instead suggest that they function as a threshold to the world of dreams, now through reversed means as the horns lead from a state of being awake to a dream state instead of the reverse. The horns’ chorale-like texture has an otherworldly quality that illuminates Mahler’s way of intermingling dreams with something hymn-like, and the simultaneous slowing tempo in combination with a long string pedal creates a ceremonial sense of anticipation.

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Example 4.3.13: bars 283–298

The horn passage leads to a varied form of the Abgesang (bars 288–305) of the first A variation, which I regarded as the most intense, the spatially and mentally highest state of the dream. This time around, the music is even more
atmospheric and shimmering, presenting the most poignant moment of the entire movement in terms of timbral beauty. The strings-only texture, with violins in the high register at the top, vibrates with an intensely bright and ethereal tone gained from Mahler’s markings of Ton! (see example 4.3.13). Their expression gains speed from a new counter-motif in the violas, whose melodic foreground shifts with the other parts before striving upwards together with the second violins, resulting in a multi-faceted carpet of sound running free.

The direct transition from the horns into this intensifying dream layer suggests that the listener gets there without the preparatory levels of falling asleep into dreaming, making it plausible to speak of this instance as a direct transition into a sound-world approaching that of the spheres. In addition, there is no cueing of any virtual agent, meaning that the higher world above emerges as one only available to the actual agent of the listener.

Following its emotive climax, in bar 296 the music slows down, merging into longer notes, with horns and bassoon entering with ascending gestures that Floros referred to as the eternity motif evocative of heaven. La Grange likens this passage to ‘a state of static bliss’.428 Just as earlier, though, the timbre is lower and thus less evocative of something ethereal than the previous, shimmering string tone. The violins, now divided into multiple parts, perform rising glissando figures that can be defined as further, preparatory thresholds into the later, higher levels of space up into the spheres. Marked by caesuras and suffused with temporal stasis, these figures culminate in bar 303 (flies-send), where the simultaneous change of key and overall increase in high register in the strings generate a very particular sonorous effect evocative of the sounds of the atmosphere. This feature is a premonition of the final thresholds appearing at the end of the movement.

In the wake of these thresholds, the music lies still on a sort of plateau. Suddenly, however, through a wide intervalllic leap in the strings followed by Mahler’s marking of a Luftpause!, the music erupts into a grandiose fff tutti (see example 4.3.14). Divided strings in multiple arpeggio figurations give way to a fanfare-like utterance in the brass (bar 318), accompanied by a bell-like motif in the timpani and double basses. Because of the key change to E major and the anticipation of the main theme of the Finale, which Floros called ‘the heavenly music’, the common interpretation of this passage is that it finally opens the gates to heaven.429 La Grange, for example, describes the transition as follows: ‘[Mahler] takes his listeners through the wide open gates of the only heaven accessible to humans, that of childhood and popular imagery’.430 Apart from my earlier-mentioned reservations about this view, given the contradictions suffusing the available documentation of the symphony,

428 La Grange, Mahler, Vol. 2, p. 768.
429 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 128.
430 La Grange, Mahler, Vol. 2, p. 768.
there is reason to regard the passage differently given what comes next in the movement. In addition, it illustrates the problem with Floros’s manner of only looking at the motifs, without including timbre and topical context, when interpreting the music.

Example 4.3.14: bars 309–315

The modulation into E major and sudden tutti orchestra generate the effect of a sudden ‘breakthrough’, creating a rift or hole in the musical fabric as though coming from outside the frames of the storyworld. Rather than opening the gates to heaven, I view this as a portal that opens into another world and space. Following the earlier static plateau, this rift enables access to positions located
even higher. The intensifying dream state thereby worked as a first transition into the increasing thresholds up to the subsequent spatial levels of world.

After a loss of energy and fading string lines, the final ascents into the spheres start at Fig. 13 (bar 326, see example 4.3.15). Marked *sehr zart und innig*, the first violins perform the eternity motif to long notes in the bassoons, horns, and cellos. La Grange claims that this motif represents the ultimate ascent into heaven.\(^\text{431}\) Whereas the motif refers to a symbol of heaven, the fragile and brittle tone of the violins instead evokes sheer space reminiscent of the atmosphere. Their series of ascending lines sequentially rise in register, as though moving further up into the sky. In bar 332 (*nicht schleppen*), the violins perform the last ascending gesture, increasing in intervallic distance simultaneously as the key modulates to C major. This instance presents the last of the series of intensifying thresholds, simultaneously transporting the listener towards the highest spatial levels. The timbre achieved through the combination of high flutes and strings resonates with atmospheric sound, gaining a whining quality rather than defining a distinct tone. Through harp arpeggios and warm supporting string lines, a new key change into G major takes place in bar 338.

Example 4.3.15: bars 324–353
At this point, the strings are transformed into a multiply divided texture on long notes in a high register, generating a shimmering, surreal orchestral prism evoking a sense of soaring somewhere above. Following rising lines of the
eternity motifs present in the dream state, now scored for harp and double basses, the violins finally dissolve into a packed texture of harmonics, with the loss of a sense of movement suspending time. Starting in bar 349, the music fades away in a ppp morendo, with the flute and violin timbre becoming lines of pure harmony, their whistling, ethereal sound-world representing the ultimate reach into the atmosphere and dissolving the music into sheer sound.

The ending of the movement readily mirrors Mahler’s statement to Bauer-Lechner about the analogy to the music of the spheres and the atmosphere of the Catholic Church. The final successive transportation of the listener through intensifying levels towards this world of the spheres in my view represents a process of immersion in a realm furthest above in space, defined by atmospheric sound. This world is not heaven as place, but one where time and space dissolve into a state of sonorous being, freed from all earthly bonds. Mahler’s likening of the ending to the atmosphere of the Catholic Church instead points towards an ethereal quality or ambiance suffusing this space, where the ascending eternity motifs function more as means of transportation to that atmosphere than as symbols of heaven. The ethereal also suggests a parallel transition to a higher state of mind, where the increasingly interior layers mirror those of spatial levels.

Since it is free of any representation of virtual agents, this vibrating sonorous space of the spheres and the mind is only accessible to the actual agent of the listener, which suggests that it is out of reach of the characters of the storyworld. Through the portal function and the transportable means of the threshold, it proceeds from its common status as an inner, possible world only available through the mental act of imagination. Here, in the fairy-tale story, that world opens up to us an outer immersive space vibrating like a shimmering soundscape existing only in dreams.

The fairy tale of a virtual subject: multi-construction of world and the power of dreams

In the third movement, the presentation of the world moves from the scenic and mobile into an interiorized kind of telling, analogous to a novel. The virtual subject of the solo oboe functions as the drama’s protagonist virtually experiencing the world, through both exterior and interior expression and by means of different kinds of speech. As such, its agency becomes complete and diversified, sustaining actorial continuity throughout the movement. Compared with the humorous and comical mediation of the Allegro and Scherzo,

See Floros, The Symphonies, p. 129.
NBL, Recollections, p. 153.
the voice of the Adagio addresses the listener with sincerity and directness, seeing the world through varied emotional perception.

The storyworld in this movement emerges as more complex in terms of construction due to its many layers and levels of worlds as well as its perspectives on the virtual subject. By means of the variation form and marked instrumental changes, the world becomes dissected or sequenced into several, smaller units resulting in phases and cycles. The changes in layers of worlds and agential positions often correlate, as in the dream sequence’s intensifying states that simultaneously illustrate an increase in the presence and expression of the virtual subject. In the worlds of darkness, the process is a reversed one, with the virtual subject successively losing its position as narrator and cue of perspective. The gradual changes in levels also show in the continuous processes between variations, most prominently in the transformation of dreams to the lower levels of interior cheerfulness and exterior boisterousness of world.

As in the previous movements, the storyworld of the third movement centres on the oscillation between the topics of darkness and light. Through the variation form, their respective worlds and moods are even remade from each other, which resonate with the reciprocal transformation of dark and light episodes in the first movement’s nightmare sequence.

 Illustrated by the gradual replacement of the moods of one world with those of the other, darkness and light as opposites do not really resolve at this movement. They remain unmediated, and the only thing that can break their constant alternation, or the catastrophic spinning out of control of the world, is the transportation through horn calls, portals, or thresholds into the world of dreams and subsequently the spheres situated higher above.

These worlds are marked by particular, sonorous shimmering timbres functioning as topical cues. Mahler exploits the division of multiple strings in a high register to generate gradual intensifying levels of sound-worlds, with evocations of the dreamlike successively moving towards those of the ethereal and atmospheric. Defined by spatial expansion and consequently temporal suspension, these worlds construct spaces framed as independent sections of the storyworld, cueing or positioning the listener in the deeply embedded state of immersion.

Rather than as places in heaven, the worlds of dream and the spheres are characterized by an ethereal quality, underlining their importance as higher, inner possible worlds of the imagination. This is further demonstrated by Mahler’s use of symbols and motifs associated with heaven, such as the eternity motif at lower spatial levels in the successive chain of intensification.

As sonority at the end of the movement dissolves into pure, atmospheric sound, Mahler has taken the listener to the highest state possible in terms of upwards spatial movement. In contrast to heaven as place, one can interpret this as transportation up into the uppermost, bluest parts of the sky, which was
the wording Mahler himself chose to describe the uniform mood of the movement. And these are realms into which the characters of the fairy-tale story-world cannot reach; only the actual agent of the listener has the access and imaginative power to create the possible worlds springing from the state of dreaming.

Finale: heavenly life or empty landscape?

The song of the Finale, with its text depicting life in heaven, has been an important feature in interpreting the meaning of both the last movement and the symphony as a whole. In the following analysis, I take a different approach, claiming that the childlike female singer generates a voice-over narration due to her disjunction and distance from the musical illustration of the text. By means of timbre and textual divergence, together with the incorporation of darker elements of world, Mahler through irony and humour mediates heaven not as a paradisiacal place, but as an empty, quite ordinary rural landscape in the fairy-tale story-world. Instead, the third movement’s evocation of a shimmering, sonorous realm of the spheres represents the spatially and mentally highest world, accessible only to the actual agent of the listener through the transitory state of dreaming. Mahler is thus saying that heaven as we think of it is actually does not exist, more than as a dream.

Given the monumental endings of Mahler’s earlier symphonies, with the initially Langsam last movement of the Third as a possible exception, choosing a slow, sparsely orchestrated song to conclude the Fourth might seem a strange move. Even at the time of its composition (1899–1900), it was ‘an original and daring idea’ to close a symphony with a ‘simple Lied’. But then, the song from 1892 constituted the source from which the entire symphonic work sprang.

The Wunderhorn song Das himmlische Leben had long been one of Mahler’s favourites and resulted in no fewer than five symphonic movements. As the composer himself underlined, there are important thematic links between the Finale and the three movements of the Fourth preceding it. Since the symphony lacks a programme, this, together with the provision of a text, has given the last movement considerable importance concerning its narrative and subject matter. Floros probably goes furthest here, suggesting that ‘yet the song – in retrospect, one might say – reveals the deeper meaning of the entire Symphony’, being the life after death.

434 La Grange, Mahler, Vol. 2, p. 768.
436 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 131.
However, in line with the movement’s ironic depiction of heaven, the thematic links throughout the work invite a different interpretation, here understood in relation to timbre and sound-worlds. Since the third movement ends with the opening to the higher world of the spheres, it is plausible to consider it the final point in the symphony’s overall process of worlds. This also makes sense considering that the song served as the basic source for the other movements; thus, it also constitutes the thematic core of the narrative encompassing those three movements. In Floros’s words, Mahler called the Finale ‘the top of the Symphony’s pyramidal structure’, which forms another easy way of regarding it as the highest state of heavenly life. However, according to Bauer-Lechner, Mahler actually called it ‘the tapering, topmost spire of the edifice of this Fourth Symphony’, which instead implies the uppermost part of an elegant building. As I will argue, this topmost spire might refer to a level of the work’s overall storyworld and development of worlds. In relation to the other movements, the storyworld in the Finale is notably smaller in terms of size and topics, presenting a shrunken design of a world having lost its ethereal dreaminess.

For this study’s investigation of world, the Finale raises certain specific questions related to the particular categories it inhabits. The presence here of an actual human agent in the singing soloist, with an actual voice mediating a text, presents new areas to explore in relation to voice, agency, and storyworld. As well, there is the relationship between text and music, which generates different means of conveying the storyworld and its narrative of heaven. In addition to song and text, other important parts of the movement further problematize these aspects, such as the sleigh bell interludes deriving from the first movement.

Finally, as the last movement of the Fourth Symphony, the Finale plays a particular role in our understanding of the entire work, both concerning a consistent view of it and as part of the symphony’s overall storyworld and narrative.

Form as an element of storyworld

The form of this movement is strophic durchkomponiert. Broadly, it consists of an introduction and ending, with four different sung verses and interludes incorporating the sleigh bell motifs from the first movement. The verses end with a chorale-like phrase that Floros regards as part of the song structure, while La Grange interprets both the chorale and the sleigh bell interludes as

437 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 131.
438 NBL, Recollections, p. 151.
two parts of a refrain.\textsuperscript{440} Fischer simply identifies four verses and a coda, the beginning of each new verse accompanied by ‘shrill laughter by way of an ironic commentary’, i.e., the sleigh bell interludes.\textsuperscript{441} There is also a longer interlude related to the introduction before the fourth verse, recognized by La Grange as the start of the coda.

My interpretation of this movement is based on its various parts’ connection to a topic or element of its storyworld. Here, the division of the chorale and the sleigh bell interludes is important, since they respectively represent a divine vocal evocation or utterance and a dark, dangerous place. The chorale ends with long notes in the orchestra that I view as a means of transportation into the realm of the sleigh bells.

The form of the movement’s storyworld is consequently as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Elements of storyworld</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1–11</td>
<td>Pastoral landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 1</td>
<td>12–35</td>
<td>Pastoral landscape, boisterousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorale</td>
<td>36–38</td>
<td>Evocation/voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long note</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Means of transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interlude Sleigh-bells</td>
<td>40–56</td>
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<td>Verse 2</td>
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<td>Chorale</td>
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<td>Long note</td>
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<td>Means of transportation</td>
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<td>Interlude Sleigh Bells</td>
<td>76–79</td>
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<td>Verse 3</td>
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<td>Chorale</td>
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<td>Evocation/voice</td>
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<td>Long notes</td>
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<td>Means of transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interlude Sleigh Bells</td>
<td>115–121</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td>122–141</td>
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<td>Verse 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending</td>
<td>175–184</td>
<td>Fading away/dissolving of world</td>
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</table>

Singer and song: narrating from the outside

The incorporation of Das himmlische Leben into the final movement of the Fourth winds up Mahler’s Wunderhorn period, defined by continuous borrowings and reworkings of his early songs. This practice mirrors a wider interrelation between song and symphony that permeates the composer’s output, and
that has crucial implications for the idea of voice. Not only does Mahler’s entire oeuvre consist mainly of these two genres, but they also inform and influence each other in multiple ways, with the dimensions of the human and instrumental voice constantly intertwining.\textsuperscript{442}

As noted throughout my analysis of the Fourth Symphony, the aspect of songfulness or vocality plays a defining role in the perception of Mahler’s instruments as virtual agents embodying humanlike voices and gestures. Frequently, they are marked with performance directions such as singend, gesangvoll, sehr gesangvoll, ausdrucksvoll, espressivo, and so on. This reflects Mahler’s maxim of Gesanglichkeit and the point of departure in composing for the voice rather than the piano. The vocal quality gains further prominence in combination with the composer’s other principles of Deutlichkeit and clarity of line, with the Primat der Melodie generating clearly foregrounded instrumental parts. Close to vocality, and a further important link between song and symphony, is the speech-like element of Mahler’s orchestration. Adorno draws attention to the ‘language-like’ (‘Sprachähnlichkeit’) element running through the composer’s music, claiming that ‘extreme proximity to language is one of the roots of Mahler’s symbiosis of song and symphony, in which nothing changed even in the instrumental middle symphonies’.\textsuperscript{443} According to Adorno, both song and symphony come together in their mutual mediation of ‘speech gestures’. Through the means of tone, gesture, and the songlike, Mahler achieves a vast range of speech types in which the instruments express themselves with particular ways of telling that further resonate with the qualities of timbre found in actual human voices.

So far, this study has examined several different kinds of agents and voices. These have been either soloists, unison groups of players, or particular, disjunctive timbres and textures suggesting narrative agencies. As particularly explored in the third movement, the entire musical discourse might also convey the voice or virtual emotions of a virtual human subject, recentring into the inner world of that agent. The voices looked at have expressed themselves in manifold ways and by means of diversified gestures: lyrical singing lines, lamenting speech, authoritative calls, and sigh-like utterances form some of the various means of communication.

In the Finale, however, the investigation moves from an exploration of purely instrumental voices to that of an actual human voice, performing an actual song with a text of actual words. This presents a new way of under-

\textsuperscript{442} See Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{443} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 22, and Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 19. See also pp. 34–35 in the German version of Adorno, \textit{Mahler: Eine musikalische Physiognomik} (Frankfurt am Main, 1960).
standing the concept of voice and virtual human agents in relation to the storyworld, and how music and text together interact in its construction and narrative.

The first aspect that comes to mind concerning song is the act of performance, whether it be in a classical concert, in an opera, or Lieder in a private salon. Although instrumentalists in these contexts also have roles as performers, they still form part of the collective of the orchestra. By contrast, against this group, a singer signals more of a deliberate act as a musician communicating directly through spoken words, conveyed by an actual human being. This performative aspect is also the common vantage point in music analysis, in which the orchestra is seen as supporting, accompanying background for the foregrounded singer. For example, Kangas likens the Finale to a lullaby sang by a mother to make her child fall asleep.\(^4^{44}\)

From the points of departure of listening and storyworld, however, the boundaries between singer and musical accompaniment are blurred and reformulated. Just as the act of listening takes away the visual view of instrumentalists and disembodies them into pure sound, from which the listener then reembodies them into virtual agents, so I claim is also the case with a singer. This means that the soloist and accompaniment play equal parts in the totality of the storyworld, dissolving the function of traditional foreground and background. As I will show in the following analysis, the disjunction between singer, music, and text results in the singer functioning as an exterior voice-over to the storyworld’s surroundings represented by the music. The latter’s depiction of a rustically coloured, trudging pastoral landscape opposes itself to the heavenly paradise implied by the text, problematizing the general view of the Finale as being about life in heaven.

In her influential and frequently cited study *Unsung Voices*, Carolyn Abbate speaks specifically of distance as distinguishing a narrative musical voice, claiming that a musical voice ‘sounds unlike the music that constitutes its encircling milieu’.\(^4^{45}\) Even though Abbate mainly focuses on opera, as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, distance and disjunction are also useful terms as regards instrumental music, particularly in Mahler’s music with its constant juxtaposition of heterogeneous orchestral parts. In the case of the Finale’s singer, these concepts become even more relevant due to the element of performed song. Despite not being deliberately composed as a ‘phenomenal’ performance\(^4^{46}\) with a staged audience, I find similarities between Abbate’s description of Lakmé’s singing of ‘The Bell Song’ and the

\(^{44}\) Kangas, ‘Classical Style, Childhood and Nostalgia in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony’, p. 233.

\(^{45}\) Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 29; see also chapter four about the narrative voice in Mahler’s Second Symphony, pp. 119–155. Abbate specifically discusses the contrasting, ‘Gesang’ theme of the first movement (bars 48ff.) performed by the first violins. Hesselager analyses the same passage, with reference to Abbate, in *Making Sense of Sounds*, pp. 165–170.

\(^{46}\) Abbate’s term, see *Unsung Voices*, p. 5.
performative act of the singer of the Finale. Abbate describes the music produced by Lakmé’s voice as an open, declarative act of narrative telling, *working against the story she narrates*, which mirrors the song’s divergence from the musical surroundings of the last movement’s storyworld.

This distance between sung performance and orchestra, between what is told and what is musically illustrated, gains further significance due to the tone of the singer’s voice. As noted in the score, Mahler’s instructions say: ‘Singstimme mit kindlich heiterem Ausdruck; durchaus ohne Parodie!’, meaning that the soloist’s part is *to be sung with childlike expression, entirely without parody*.\(^{448}\) According to Johnson and Fischer, this reveals a fear on the composer’s part of being misunderstood, of the Finale perhaps coming across as a parody following the three earlier, more inauthentic movements.\(^{449}\) Paradoxically, Mahler’s contemporaries nevertheless saw his naïve imitation of folk style and traditional spirit as ‘something false, affected and even shocking’.\(^{450}\)

Whatever the reasons for Mahler’s direction to the singer to sing with this particular kind of voice, it affects both the movement’s position in relation to the storyworld and the depiction of heaven. Julian Johnson claims that the underlying reason for this new, non-ordinary tone is Mahler’s attempt to give voice to a subject beyond the threshold of heaven: ‘But how to embody a transcendent voice, to realize in sounding musical materials what, by definition, must exceed the nature of what has been heard thus far?’\(^{451}\) However, by endowing the singer with childlike, naïve expression instead of a more conventionally lyrical one, Mahler defamiliarizes rather than increases any heavenly implications.

In addition to the opposition of the actual human voice to the music that it appears to reflect, the estranged tone of the singer further distances it from the orchestra. The childlike naïve tone can be likened to a stylistic recasting on Mahler’s part, i.e., scoring a particular speech type to an actor in a drama. In this way, underlining the lack of parody signals the authenticity of this tone and its function as a way of telling. Whereas Kangas, for example, regards the Finale’s lullaby as mediating the adult mother’s version of a child’s perspective,\(^{452}\) I regard the female’s childlike voice as adapted to children in the manner of the fairy-tale genre. This resonates with the way a storyteller exaggerates or uses a simpler language in order to reach the target audience of a particular genre.

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\(^{447}\) Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 6.


\(^{452}\) Kangas, ‘Classical Style, Childhood and Nostalgia in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony’, p. 234.
The divergence of the actual human voice and the singer’s tone has the effect of an agent placed outside the storyworld as an extra-diegetic voice. Johnson claims that there is an aspect of extraterritoriality to the singer’s childlike, naïve voice, as if it emerged from outside the work.453 This exteriority to the storyworld also disembodies the singer, producing a reversed effect compared with the virtually embodied actors of instruments. Since the singer as an actual human voice is already embodied, one can say that the listener is cued to the virtual de-embodiment instead of the virtual re-embodiment of the performers. Given these features, the function of the female singer becomes analogous to a voice-over narration in film, when an unseen speaker is situated in space and time other than the simultaneously shown images on the screen.454 As if from a distance, she tells about what goes on inside the spatial frames of the storyworld. Voice-over narrators can be divided into those who inhabit the narrative world and those who speak from outside of it. I will later claim that, in the movement’s chorale-like instances, the singer becomes virtually embodied in the storyworld, her voice melting together with the accompanying music and emerging as a speaker from the inside.

The music–text relation
In contrast to the previous movements, the Finale presents a sung text that functions as an additional cue to the interpretation of the storyworld’s content and narrative. By examining the interrelation between the text and the music, it is possible to detect similarities and divergences, resulting in a composite clue to the meaning of Mahler’s text. As I will demonstrate, it is this text–music relation that results in the storyworld’s narrative of heaven. In that the music represents the storyworld of which the external singer tells, it gives further dimensions to the overall signification, itself often suggesting different kinds of places and scenes than does the text. As the last movement of the symphony, the narrative that emerges from this meeting also gains significance for the narrative of the work as a whole, in terms of both the subject of heaven and the process of worlds.

_Das himmlische Leben_ from _Des Knaben Wunderhorn_ is originally a folk song from Bavaria entitled ‘Der Himmel hängt voller Geigen’ (‘Heaven is Filled with Violins’). According to habit, Mahler made alterations to the text, omitting four lines from the fourth stanza and combining the third and fourth verses, resulting in four verses instead of five.455 This is Mahler’s text in its entirety:456

453 Johnson, _Mahler’s Voices_, p. 115.
455 Floros, _The Symphonies_, pp. 129–130.
456 The vocal text is found in _Neue Kritische Gesamtausgabe_ (Universal Edition, 2021) of the Fourth Symphony, p. 159.
Verse 1:
We enjoy the heavenly pleasures,
So can dispense with earthly things!
No worldly turmoil
Is to be heard in heaven!
Everything lives in gentlest repose!
We lead an angelic life!
We are, however, at times quite merry!
We dance and jump,
We skip and sing!
Saint Peter in heaven looks on!

Verse 2:
Saint John drains the blood of the little lamb!
Herod, the butcher looks out for it!
We lead a patient,
Innocent, patient,
A lovable lamb to its death!
Saint Luke slaughters the ox
Without giving it thought or mind!
Wine costs not a penny
In heaven’s cellars!
The angels, they bake the bread!

Verse 3:
Tasty herbs of every kind
Grow in heaven’s gardens,
Good asparagus, beans
And whatever we desire,
Whole dishfuls are ready for us.
Good apples, good pears and good grapes!
The gardeners, they let you have anything!
Do you want roebuck or hare?
In the middle of the street
They come running to us!
Should, per chance, a day of fasting occur,
All the fish immediately swim up to us with joy,
There’s Saint Peter already running
With his net and bait
To the heavenly fishpond!
Saint Martha must be the cook!
Verse 4:
No music on earth
Can compare with ours.
Eleven thousand maidens
Are bold enough to dance!
Even Saint Ursula herself laughs at the sight.
No music on earth
Can compare with ours.
Cecilia with her relatives
Are excellent court musicians!
The angelic voices
Delight the senses!
So that everything for joy awakens.

In the prelude (bars 1–11), serving as an introduction to the song, the music trudges forward at a comfortable tempo analogous to the rocking motion of a lullaby (see example 4.4.1). To the accompaniment of subdued harp, lower strings, and horn pedal, a solo clarinet presents the main ‘heavenly’ theme in E major encountered throughout the symphony, followed by triadic and syncopated figures in oboes and flutes. The slow tempo, woodwind sound, and sparse texture create associations with a sleepy pastoral landscape, cueing the setting of the storyworld.
Example 4.4.1: bars 1–5

The first part of the first verse (bars 12–24) sees a continuation of the same musical pastoral character. As the singer describes the joys and restfulness of heavenly life by means of melodic simplicity, pp triangle strikes are the only sign of any celestial, magic aura permeating the otherwise dragging pace of the sparse orchestration. In bar 25 starting the second part, there is an increase in tempo, and the livelier, rapid semiquaver figures that emerged towards the
end of the first part now come to the fore. In addition to flute and piccolo, these gestures appear in a solo violin, which here attains a more performative quality than in its previous role as inner voice. The instruments’ intensely moving parts here illustrate the change of textual content to bubbling boisterousness, as in the phrase ‘We dance and jump, we skip and sing!’

The second verse (bars 57–75) is in E minor and casts a dark shadow over the seemingly carefree heavenly existence, the singer telling about the horrible slaughter of animals taking place therein. The angelic figure Saint John ‘drains the blood of the little lamb’ and Saint Luke ‘slaughters the ox, without giving it thought or mind!’ The music illustrates the atmosphere of the song by continuing with the anxiously moving semiquaver figures, starting in the low clarinets and later reappearing in the solo violin. In addition, there are continuous chromatic, sigh-like figures in the woodwinds and brass, first in a solo oboe (sehr hervortretend), then in bass clarinets, horns, and double basses (bar 67), ominously accompanying the word ‘slachten’. Against the textual content, the figures resemble lonely voices of angst erupting from the otherwise sparse surroundings.

The third verse (bars 80–114) centres on heaven’s bountiful supply of food – apples, pears, and grapes, or even roebuck or hare – all are available, ready to be cooked by Saint Martha. Consisting of two verses of text, this verse is longer than the rest, beginning with the theme of the first verse but then developing independently.457 Here, the music is increasingly in conflict with what the text says. Starting abruptly in bar 80 after the rushing sleigh bell interlude with a return to Tempo 1, there is first a return to the pastoral setting of the introduction, the ‘heavenly’ theme now encountered in a solo oboe. Starting in bar 91 (‘Good apples…’, and so on), however, there is a marked change of atmosphere and orchestration (see example 4.4.2). Through an expansion of texture, staccato horns, chromatic asymmetric figures in the winds, and continuous tempo changes in each bar, anxiousness suffuses the earlier peaceful ambiance. The offer of roebuck and hare intersects with the anxious chromatic semiquaver figures from before, now even faster and more disparate. Because of the divergence between text and music, the singer’s words mediate a sense of irony rather than the paradisiacal existence they aspire to. Consequently, the storyworld represented by the music does not reflect the textual narrative.

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457 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 130.
Example 4.4.2: bars 91–97
The fourth verse follows upon a return to the initial tempo and rural setting of the movement (from Fig. 12, bar 122), functioning as a recenring from the sleigh bell interlude. Muted strings, mellow harp accompaniment, and frequently repeated minims with grace notes in the English horn generate a quite subdued sound-world that, in combination with the slowly unfolding triadic and syncopated motifs, endows the rural landscape with a sense of saturated
laziness. If this is the landscape of heaven, it is one of sleepiness and temporal stagnation.

As the music continues in this atmosphere, the last verse (bars 142–174) sings about the celebration of heavenly music, superior to earthly music (‘No music on earth can compare with ours’). Except for the presence of harp, however, there are no particular associations with heaven. Rather, the ordinariness of the pastoral setting provides quite a strange contrast to the suggested celestial music sounding in the higher world above.

As the movement finally dies away in a postlude (bars 175–184, see example 4.4.3), the music appears to lose energy and forward direction, as if heaven’s inhabitants had fallen into a coma following the previous revelling in food. In the last bars, the harp goes down into its low register, echoing a series of sonorous crotchets that ultimately dissolve in a morendo.
Although throughout the movement the music often superficially mirrors the text, there are several contradictions between text and music and, consequently, in the depiction of heavenly life. The lazy pastoral setting evoked by the storyworld seems an ordinary choice for an illustration of heaven as a paradisiacal place and an unearthly music never heard. As Adorno states, ‘it
paints paradise in rustic anthropomorphous colors to give notice that it does not exist.\footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 56.} The complete stagnation towards the end also signals a sort of final decline of world, sleeping itself away. Furthermore, the figuration of landscape here is the plainest one in relation to those presented earlier in the symphony. Whereas the second and third movements presented another kind of virtual subjective presence in contact with nature or ethereal dreams, the landscape of the Finale emerges as deserted and resigned. Through the constantly slow, repetitive unfolding, it is as though the meaninglessness of the repetitive similarity of world shines through. In relation to the recently encountered shimmering, dreamlike timbre of the Adagio, the rustic timbre of the Finale appears even more non-celestial, with the third movement in the ‘rear-view mirror’ promising a vision of something that it could not fulfil.

Both music and text also mediate an element of darkness suffusing the heavenly life, which gains further irony through the childlike, naïve tone of the female singer. Despite singing about the heavenly joys, she cannot hide the brutality of the second verse. Most scholars look past this divergence from a paradisiacal setting, but Jens Fischer draws attention to the murder and brutality happening there. He claims that the singer is actually singing about the Massacre of the Innocents, although transferred to a heavenly context with animal victims instead of humans.\footnote{Fischer, \textit{Mahler}, p. 338.} Hence, what appears as a celestial tale is actually a hidden testimony to the darkness of life, Mahler telling us about humanity and reality as opposed to idealistic utopia. The saints and biblical figures mentioned in the text, although said to lead an angelic life, despite their childlike innocence are actually no different from earth’s inhabitants. As Fischer observes, they are responsible for killing, not eating manna, nectar, or any other food associated with heaven, but rather innocent animals, illustrated by the second verse describing the slaughter of the lamb. In fact, ‘this heaven is a slaughterhouse’. Irrespective of whether one takes Fischer’s interpretation literally, it indicates the presence of darkness permeating the music as well as text.

This darkness is reflected in the angst-ridden cries erupting from the deserted setting of the music’s storyworld, as in the quick chromatic figures mirroring a repetitive, circulating anxiousness.

A dark sense of irony also results from the occasional divergence between music and text, such as in the third verse’s description of the supply of food. The suddenly harsher orchestration at this point underlines the dishonesty and tragedy immanent in the people’s way of living: ‘With all the brutal irony at his command, Mahler has given musical expression to the bad joke of the \textit{Wunderhorn} song, ‘Der Himmel hängt voll Geigen’’.\footnote{Fischer, \textit{Mahler}, p. 338.}
Finally, the many saints in the text despite their heavenly epithets come across as quite anonymous, which further distances the text’s narrative from the storyworld. As in the other movements, there are no instances of subjective immersion or persistent virtual agents, except for the temporary utterances of cries. This results in an effect of distance in which the listener instead perceives the storyworld as an outside, exterior image or scene rather than a world to dwell in and interact with.

The interludes: chorale and sleigh bells

As outlined in the section about the movement’s form, the slow chorale and the ensuing sleigh bell interludes represent significant changes to the storyworld important for the narrative of heaven. Both separately mediate a divine and dark topic of world, but by their disjunction from one another, they also mediate aspects of humour and irony significant for the kind of heavenly depiction that arises from the movement. As such, they add to the meaning derived from the passages dealing with the interrelation of music and text.

The chorale ends all the sung verses except the last one. Each of the three times it appears, Mahler scores it with a different orchestration, generating different timbral cues.

The first chorale passage follows the first verse in bars 36–39 (see example 4.4.4) to the singer’s words ‘Sanct Peter im Himmel sieht zu!’, plötzlich zurückhaltend. With a new tempo of $\frac{4}{4}$, it presents an expressive and textural shift from the previous boisterousness of the rapid figurations. The triads moving in parallel motion scored for flutes in the middle register, two muted horns, two low open horns, and harp in octaves, according to Samuel Adler, produce ‘a heavenly quality’.$^{461}$ An archaic character defines the sparse melodic line that, in combination with the noble timbre, evokes something divine and hymn-like, particularly through the ceremonial tone of the horns.

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In contrast to the earlier part of the verse, this instance brings together the singer’s voice with the surrounding music, displacing the sleepy and bouncy landscape setting with a smaller, intimate space. As a result, the voice of the singer appears to come from inside the storyworld as a divine evocation of
heaven or God, making the earlier disembodied agent into a virtually embodied one. The fact that the evocation is made suggests that the landscape presented is not analogous to the world of heaven, or at least that there is a longing for something else, more serene.

The same heavenly quality permeates the second instance of the chorale (bars 73–74), accompanying the words ‘die Englein die backen das Brot’. However, due to the altered instrumentation of piccolo and muted pp strings in addition to the harp octaves, the timbre increases the radiant tone. Consequently, the association or cue becomes more one of something illuminating, like a piercing light, which suggests a gradual decline from the previous hymn-like evocation.

The last instance of the chorale (bars 106–111) is an extended version consisting of two repeated phrases instead of one. First, there is an instrumental combination of low horns, trumpet, and horn, followed by flutes, clarinets, and muted doubles basses in the low register. The gradual darkening of timbre here could be interpreted as mirroring that suffusing the heavenly life, as well as an additional decline from the initial noble and divine tone to an earthlier one, distancing the singer even more from the evocation of heaven.

The chorales are followed by long sustained notes in various instrumental constellations that lead into the interludes based on the sleigh bell motif from the first movement. Because of the accelerating tempo compared with the slower one of the chorale each time these interludes occur, their entrance generates a startling, shocking effect. The tempo changes of the chorale and the sleigh bell motif mirror each other throughout the movement. The first time, they are marked plötzlich zurückhaltend (‘suddenly slower’) and plötzlich frisch bewegt (‘suddenly sprightly and animated’), the second time wieder zurückhaltend (‘slower again’) and wieder lebhaft (‘somewhat slower again’), and the third time wieder plötzlich zurückhaltend (‘once again suddenly slower’) and wieder lebhaft (‘lively once again’). This implies an intention on Mahler’s part concerning both the significance of each part as a particular event and their interdependence on each other for that effect.

In addition to the speeded-up tempo, the sleigh bell interludes are now coloured with a grotesque timbre through the addition of shrill and screeching fortissimo figures in the winds. This recalls an amplified version of the nightmare world of the first movement’s dream sequence, in which the increasing tempo and distortion of timbre were means to deform the initial more fairy-tale atmosphere. Mahler’s explicit instruction that the tempo must be faster than in the related passages of the first movement also suggests a different
intended effect on his part.\textsuperscript{462} The first instance of the Finale (bars 40–56) presents the most expanded orchestral setting, with a mixture of semiquaver and descending glissando figures evoking ghastly, horrific screams (see example 4.4.5). The second instance (bars 76–79) consists of only four bars, but still conveys the similar accentuated distortions. The third instance (bars 115–21) keeps the dynamics more constant, but in turn generates a more abrupt effect due to Mahler’s marking of \textit{Luftpause}! Although each part differs in length and instrumental disposition, they are all framed as events due to their sudden entrances and endings, which all equally abruptly are transformed into the subsequent verses of the song. Most estranged are these transitions into the third and fourth verses, both of which illustrate the pastoral landscape setting.

\textsuperscript{462} See bar 40 in score: ‘Hier muss dieses Tempo bewegter genommen werden als an den entsprechenden Stellen im ersten Satze’ (‘Here this tempo must be quicker than in the corresponding passages of the first movement’).
Example 4.4.5: bars 40–43

The hurrying tempo of the sleigh bells is associated with their warning function, which, together with the distortion of timbre, implies that something dangerous is happening. In this way, Mahler’s manipulation functions as a cue for
the storyworld’s darker elements. Knapp argues that the sleigh bell interludes intrude into the child’s slumber as nightmares or as reality checks.463

The cueing of the sleigh bells, however, also relates to their place in the first movement, implying a thematic recurrence suggestive of Monahan’s concept of transsymphonic narrative.464 While this is one way of interpreting the recurrence of the bells, I want to suggest that they represent a recentring into another darker place and time of the storyworld. The long notes preceding each of the sleigh bell interludes, in muted strings and/or brass and winds, function as a transport into the events, suggesting that they take place somewhere else. Through the Luftpause! of the third instance, there is a further marking of a shift to another place due to its generation of a crack or hole. Yet, the increasing tempo and the relation to the first movement also have the effect of a flashback or memory, similarly implying a change in the temporal dimension by pointing backwards.465

As an interrupting element of darkness, the sleigh bell interludes also convey a sense of irony and humour in relation to the idealistic depiction of heavenly life. This humour differs in kind from the first movement’s association of the sleigh bells with a toy or a fool’s cap, and instead concerns their disjunction from the rest of the movement. Fischer regards the interludes as an ironic commentary since the sleigh bells are now combined with the shrill fortissimo of grinning piccolos and flutes, and with screeching clarinets ‘that expose the apparent gentility of this congenial life in heaven for what it actually is, a travesty of life on earth’.466 Thus, heaven presents no protection from what is dark and uncomfortable in life; rather, as I have aimed to show in this analysis, it is quite as ordinary as any other place. In relation to the sleigh bells, then, heaven is not an illustration of das himmlische Leben as opposed to das irdische Leben, reality checks or reminiscences of earthly life – these elements both form part of the same storyworld.

There is also a sense of irony in that the sleigh bells follow directly upon the divine chorales, as well as leading into the song verses about life in heaven. The disjunction between the heavenly light and darkness resonates with Mahler’s way of juxtaposing contrasts and showing their intertwining with each other.

Where are we now? Heaven as theme of the Finale

As this analysis aims to show, the Finale of the Fourth Symphony does not mediate the paradisiacal life of heaven as is so widely claimed. By dissecting

464 See Monahan, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 87.
465 Monahan, Mahler’s Symphonic Sonatas, p. 87.
466 Fischer, Mahler, p. 338.
song, text, and music, I have illuminated how Mahler, by means of timbre, texture, and structural arrangement, constructs diverging, separate entities of a storyworld that together form quite an ordinary, lonely rustic world often suffused with elements of darkness. Contrasts thus define all worlds, and not even heaven escapes from that. The exception concerns the instances of the chorales, which present the movement’s most serene orchestration and particular moments when the otherwise external voice-over of the female singer is recentred into the storyworld as a sincere, evocative voice. Heaven thereby appears as something unattainable, situated far from the surrounding world.

This makes the narrative of heaven into an ironic, humorous tale, but also one suffused with sadness. This echoes Adorno, who claims that ‘entirely broken is the end of the song of heavenly joys’; consequently, he takes a predominately pessimistic view of the work as a whole:

Mahler’s theology, again like Kafka’s, is gnostic, his fairy-tale symphony as sad as the late works. If it dies away after the words of promise “that all shall awake to joy,” no one knows whether it does not fall asleep forever. The phantasmagoria of the transcendent landscape is at once posited by it and negated. Joy remains unattainable, and no transcendence is left but that of yearning.

This sense of yearning also resonates with Kangas’s view of the Finale’s paradise as situated in ‘the irretrievable past of nostalgia’, depicted as the idealized, nonexistent past.

However, out of the context of storyworld I want to suggest another kind of narrative, one that reaches its final goal at the end of the third movement instead of the Finale. In the higher spheres of dreams, the listener comes the closest one can get to heaven, which exists more as the eternal blue of the skies that Mahler spoke of rather than as a carefree and boisterous place. This makes it plausible to reformulate the song ‘Der Himmel hängt voll Geigen’ as one characterized by the particular sonorous sound-world of sheer violins.

The development of worlds running through the symphony calls for a similar re-evaluation of Mahler’s statement about the Finale as representing the top spire of the work’s edifice. Concerning its depiction of a distant, confined, and sparse world, it simply represents an additional decoration on the elegant building formed by the structure of the other three movements. Considering that the song of the Finale constituted the source from which the rest of the symphony was composed, it could very well form the starting point of the storyworld’s trajectory as opposed to its ending. Simultaneously, its positioning enables a message of irony and humour, as well as a depiction of how the

467 Adorno, Mahler, p. 57.
468 Adorno, Mahler, p. 57.
469 Kangas, ‘Classical Style, Childhood and Nostalgia in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony’, p. 234.
imagination of dreams, of that which is just a possible world, exerts a power that transforms and exceeds reality.

Storyworld versions of darkness and light: intermedial development and the story of timbres

The analysis in this chapter applies the notion of storyworld and possible worlds theory to the Fourth Symphony and its various movements, from the vantage point that the entire work represents a generic fairy-tale world. Based on a set of different world topics grounded in the contrast of darkness and light, it investigates Mahler’s many shifting sound-worlds and the resulting types, shapes, and perspectives of world that these entail. Depending on the design and instrumentation of these sound-worlds, the listener takes various positions that lead to alternate ways of seeing and being in the storyworld, often by means of cueing virtual agents and voices.

Within the framework of the symphony’s total storyworld, each movement depicts this storyworld in its own distinctive way. All the movements treat the opposite topics of darkness and light, but present and construct these through particular compositional methods and orchestration. In that sense, the entire Fourth might be understood as a collection of folk tales in the manner of Des Knaben Wunderhorn, in which the movements each have their own story, perspective, and version deriving from the same, shared storyworld. As such, they are created and remade from one another and their common world materials, mirroring a development of increasing complexity in terms of manner of presentation and intermedial techniques.

The first movement presents the most extensive world through its many separate scenes and world elements, which arise either from sudden shifts of timbre and texture or through transformations of sound, such as in the dream sequence. Mahler’s way of remoulding the classical style’s musical materials forms a crucial tool for the depiction of the fairy-tale world as alternatively magical and dark. This largely concerns the generation of objects or phenomena evocative of fairy tales for children, analogous to props on a theatre stage or in a film: the sleigh bells, the dream ocarina and the children’s song all constitute examples of such features. In the same way, the deformation of timbre serves the production of the grotesque, with the sounds themselves mediating the element of darkness. This is reflected in the sleigh bells’ cueing of nightmare, and in the horror trumpet and bells, which are texturally organized as surround sounds encompassing the listener and defining the setting of world. The mise-en-scène of sound as virtual sounds also works the other way round, with the glockenspiel and celesta giving rise to magical, glittering noise representing the topic of light. Thinking for the stage in terms of scenes and props also distinguishes the figuration of the storyworld from the perspective of the child, with the plain instrumentation and compressed texture creating a
miniature world framed as in portraits. Mahler’s scoring illustrates the transmutation of his experience as a theatre director, and lighting, décor, and other constitutive components manifest themselves in the dramatizing of sound, organized into a series of images of sound analogous to musical tableaux vivants.

The second movement’s version of the storyworld is also a childlike, humorous one, but not so much in terms of theatrical props as through the presence of fairy-tale figures and voices. Here Death is materialized as a strolling fiddle player and the sounds of nature emerge as peculiar animals. As well, the manner of presentation represents a development from the first movement, as its miniature, more static world breaks free from its framed boundaries and becomes something spatially expansive and mobile. Instead of a sequence of heterogeneous elements of world, the second movement invites the listener on an imaginative journey between various sub-worlds situated in a vast space. This suggests an expansion of the storyworld in addition to a gradual removal from the theatrical domain to embrace techniques of mobility reminiscent of film, techniques that, by means of the transporters and portals of the brass, enable the traversing of time and space.

In the third movement, the fairy-tale world emerges from the perspective of a virtual subject, with darkness and light crystallizing as various moods and expressions in relation to the world. From this viewpoint, the horrific lies in the inner emotional storms rather than the outer dangers as perceived by the child. As in a novel, the listener gains access to a character’s interior mind and consciousness, which become a lens of virtual subjectivity that colours one’s view of the world. Consequently, the fairy-tale world in this movement becomes more complex in its figuration, channelled through the variegated utterances of the virtual subject. This mirrors a parallel construction of the world in various units, such as phases, cycles, layers, and levels, and changes in these often correlate with those of agential positions. Through Mahler’s marked instrumentation and use of the variation form, there arises a sequencing of the world deepening and expanding its architecture.

The Finale, generally viewed as a depiction of the heavenly life, in my interpretation more closely resembles a children’s tale told by means of voice-over narration. Despite the childish, naïve tone of the female singer and the text’s seemingly positive message, the music’s illustration of the storyworld as a deserted, quite ordinary landscape containing elements of darkness does not conform to the image of a paradisiacal place in heaven. Here, humour and irony arise out of the interaction of song, text, and music, depleting the storyworld in terms of both worlds and their content, the tale and the symphony finally dozes off to sleep.

Throughout all movements of the Fourth Symphony, the contrasting darkness and light run side by side, often generated or made from each other. Mahler’s music depicts a world where one topic is never constant, but always en-
compasses its opposite. This shows, for example, in the violin timbre illustrating both the scary figure of Death and the lyrical, inner voice of the virtual subject, as well as in the dark mood of the third movement transformed from the dream state.

The contrasts of life are also reflected in the dream and natural worlds, which form recurrent topics of world in all four movements and have a particular significance for the symphony’s fairy-tale world in its entirety. Resulting from Mahler’s varied orchestral combinations, there arises a richly nuanced range of world types, encompassing nightmares and dreams as visions, outer landscape settings and those of inner darkness. Among these, the inner dream worlds have specific importance in terms of their function as inner, possible worlds representing an escape from the world’s course. Constructed as particularly sonorous spaces, they imaginatively transport the listener into the very heart of the storyworld, making one into an actual, participating character. Landscape and nature also represent realms of refuge from the world, encompassing places of safety from its recurring horrific elements for both listener and the story’s virtual subject. Throughout the comical fairy-tale landscape, among nature’s voices far away or in the wasted surroundings following upon emotional storms, a solo violin expresses this humanlike presence and voice as childlike fear, sorrowful utterance, or lyrical sweetness.

The dream and natural worlds interrupt the storyworld’s ongoing processes, gradually breaking free from their bounds and spatially expanding into their own separate realms where time momentarily stops. As such, they spur the development of breakout worlds permeating the symphony as a broader, topical narrative.

However, these worlds simply form a transition into those of the spheres highest in space, marked by a shimmering sound-world suffused with an ethereal, otherworldly quality. The construction of atmospheric sound transports the listener away from the world below as well as into a higher state of mind, where one dissolves into sheer harmony. This also mirrors the larger narrative of the Fourth Symphony in relation to the heavenly life, the timbres of the work telling another story than its thematic and motivic connections. Thus, it is not about heaven as place, but about the dream of something higher and sonorously beautiful, about a longing to break free from the world and ascend into the spheres where the sounds of the atmosphere radiate in brighter colours than any sound heard on earth.

For the listener to reach all the way into the highest possible world, and for the fairy-tale world to make sense as a world, Mahler’s application of the horns and trumpets functions as a means of transportation into places and spaces that otherwise would not be accessible. As directors, they assist in the building and organization of world, moving the listener among all its diversity.
Mahler’s Fifth Symphony: a raw realism of life and death

The trumpet fanfare opening the Fifth Symphony not only marks the start of a new symphonic work but also presents a significant contrast to the sound-world of the Fourth Symphony. This concerns aspects of timbre and orchestration and of style and expression. Compared with the Fourth’s smaller, more chamber-like setting, in the Fifth, Mahler returns to the larger orchestras defining the Second and Third Symphonies. The Fifth also distinguishes itself by means of brilliant sound, virtuosic orchestral writing, and thick textures dominated by the brass section, which, apart from the horns and trumpets, was absent from the Fourth. From the solo roles of instruments and pure, transparent sonorities, attention now shifts to scoring for various group constellations defined by a more brutal, harsher sound. As I will show in this chapter, these prominent features result in the making of other types of worlds and a more complex kind of scenic construction, along with a richer set of narrative voices.

From a broader perspective, the Fifth Symphony marks a great shift in Mahler’s entire symphonic output. In contrast to the four first Wunderhorn symphonies, it initiates the period of middle symphonies (5–7), all of which are purely instrumental and in addition lack any kind of explicit programme, song texts, or arrangements of pre-existing songs. This period further entailed the start of a new orchestration technique aimed more towards counterpoint and polyphony. During 1901, when Mahler had allegedly begun working on the Fifth, he was very much occupied with the works of Bach, which likely influenced the change in direction. He once observed to Bauer-Lechner that “the master of polyphony, and of polyphony alone, is Bach”. Another time, upon playing a Bach cantata, he praised the composer’s art, stating that “in Bach, all the seeds of music are found, as the world is contained in God. It’s the greatest polyphony that ever existed!”

470 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 135.
471 NBL, Recollections, p. 116.
472 NBL, Recollections, pp. 165–166.
However, Mahler struggled with the new style of the Fifth, which posed great problems for his orchestration technique. Even for a composer who extensively revised his scores, the volume and extent of the revisions made to the Fifth Symphony stand out, resulting in no fewer than three versions in addition to the first.\textsuperscript{473} In a letter to Georg Göhler, dated 8 February 1911, Mahler admitted the challenges he had faced. Notably, he again likens himself to ‘a beginner’ in relation to orchestration, echoing his claim of having to ‘learn afresh’ with every new work:

The Fifth is finished – I had to reorchestrate it almost completely. It is hard to believe that at the time I could have written again like a beginner, as though I had completely forgotten the routine of the first four symphonies. A completely new style demanded a new technique.\textsuperscript{474}

Conversations with Bauer-Lechner about the Fifth further reflect the complexity of the creative process. Since her transcriptions end in 1902, the same year that Mahler married Alma Schindler, we have very little information about the symphony and only about its third Scherzo movement. Speaking for the first time about the work, the composer confided that:

The movement is extremely difficult to work out because of its structure, and because of the utmost artistic skill demanded by the complex inter-relationships of all its details. The apparent confusion must, as in a Gothic cathedral, be resolved into the highest order and harmony.\textsuperscript{475}

On 5 August, Mahler said of the same movement:

You can’t imagine how hard I am finding it, and how endless it seems because of the obstacles and problems I am faced with. They arise from the simplicity of its themes, which are built solely on the tonic and dominant. Nobody else nowadays would dare to do it. That’s why the chordal progressions are so difficult, particularly in view of my principle that there should be no repetition, but only evolution. The individual parts are so hard to play that they really call for accomplished soloists. Because of my thorough knowledge of the orchestra and its instruments the boldest passages and rhythms suddenly came to me!\textsuperscript{476}

As will become clear during the course of the analysis, the contrapuntal style characterizing the Fifth has particular importance for the wider display of narrating voices in the brass, which I claim are crucial for the telling and mediation of world.

\textsuperscript{473} Mahler’s revisions of the Fifth Symphony are a huge subject in its own right; see, for example, Sander Wilkens, \textit{Gustav Mahlers Fünfte Symphonie: Quellen und Instrumentationsprozess} (Frankfurt, 1989).
\textsuperscript{474} Cited in Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, pp. 136–136.
\textsuperscript{475} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{476} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 172.
In this chapter, I turn to the exploration of storyworld in the Fifth Symphony, but now from a vantage point in the genre of realism as opposed to that of fairy tale. As with the Fourth, however, the work centres on the same world topics of life and death with all their contrastive opposites, grounded in darkness and light. Whereas the movements of the Fourth Symphony presented different versions of the same storyworld, those of the Fifth instead mediate different types of world, which together form the total storyworld of the entire work. In contrast to the Fourth, the Fifth is not so much about a multitude of worlds encompassing possible worlds of dreams and the fantastic, but rather presents worlds in terms of realistic settings and places relatable to topics in our own world, such as those of nature and society. All these are spread out in the storyworld forming an imaginative, coherent geography in the same manner as the exposition of the Fourth Symphony’s Allegro, but mapping the entire musical work as opposed to a singular movement. Since they present an outer physical realm serving as a vantage point for divergences in timbre and other significant parameters evoking possible worlds, I regard them as constituting the main world of the storyworld. In line with the realistic genre, the possible worlds of the Fifth are mostly scored as something unattainable, such as the heavenly vision of the chorale or the inner subjective world erased by the collective. Whereas in the Fourth, possible worlds broke out of the storyworld, in this symphony, they gradually break into the world, simultaneously losing their status as other possible worlds.

In cueing the storyworld’s various world topics and their settings, genre connotations play an important part, with Mahler reworking traditional genres into something other than their original reference points, leading to subsequent transformations. Often, these form the point of departure of a scenic way of telling by means of several smaller narrative units, presenting what can be likened to a sequentialization or division of world.

The five movements of the Fifth Symphony are divided into three parts in accordance with Mahler’s own division of the work; I interpret each part as representing a specific topic or kind of world in the storyworld.

Part I comprises the first and second movements, which together depict the moods and settings of a dark world, unified by a harsh, brass-dominated timbre as well as several world-building blocks. Throughout this part, various aspects of darkness are mediated, with the break-in world of the chorale and several other divergences from the main world symbolizing the topic of light in an otherwise sombre place.

In relation to the second movement, the first presents a prologue or backstory to its subsequent construction of the storyworld as an outer physical realm of space. Set in the past, the first movement stages an episodic telling initiated by a solo trumpet assuming the role of organizing narrator, with a funeral setting forming the point of departure of its various mediated perspec-
tives and related emotions and atmospheres. In addition to the trumpet, different constellations and positions of the brass instruments analogous to drama are responsible for setting forth the storyworld to the listener.

The second movement transforms the building blocks of the episodic backstory into a world of the present, which alternates between two contrastive spaces: one filled with action and the other forming a place in nature. The constant circulation and modification of these sub-spaces illustrates a meaninglessness illustrative of darkness. This is broken up by a number of intrusions of other possible worlds, with the chorale entering as a break-in world resembling a vision from heaven. Even though this vision quickly disappears, it has global effects on the storyworld’s main world, which is not the same afterwards.

Part II centres on the social topic of world, treating the collective aspects of dance and conversation. Through Mahler’s transformations of established genres such as the Ländler and waltz, death and darkness permeate these settings that on the surface depict man in the full light of day. As for the conversations, they too are tinged with a sense of melancholy, taking place in small, intimate spaces perceived as virtual interior rooms. An important component of the mediation of storyworld in this movement is the spatial dimension, both regarding the telling through longer scenes and regarding the shifting sizes of spaces and the type of social interaction this entails.

Finally, Part III consists of the Adagietto and the Rondo-Finale, which in various ways relate to the world topic of society. Since the two movements differ notably in timbre and expression, I regard the Adagietto as an inner, subjective world and the Rondo as a collective one defined by lazy tardiness and ongoing, rotating. Both the Adagietto and the chorale from the second movement are integrated in the Finale and taken up by its collective, thereby losing their properties as other possible worlds.

In contrast to the common interpretations of the Finale as a jubilant, affirmative ending of the symphony, I suggest that it reflects a quite ordinary world defined by temporal movement rather than spatiality and place, where the collective erases the virtual subject and does not offer the hope of something other and better beyond this world. This summarizes the Fifth Symphony not as a journey from darkness to light, but as various topics or types of world all permeated with these opposites, where the refuge lies in the transient presence of those inner shimmering spaces and visions from afar.

Narrative concerns: from programmes to moods and types of world

Just like the Fourth Symphony, the Fifth lacks an explicit programme that can provide clues suggestive of some kind of narrative. In contrast to the former, however, the latter, in line with the new period and style, does not contain any
texts, song movements, or arrangements of song, in addition to far fewer and less detailed documentation of the utterances of Mahler or his acquaintances. Since Bauer-Lechner’s writings, as mentioned, end around 1902, there only exist statements from the composer about the Scherzo, which was the first completed movement of the symphony in 1901. Bruno Walter’s claim in his memoirs that no conversations with Mahler or aspects of the music implied any extra-musical influence further underlines the work’s status as absolute music: This was ‘music – passionate, wild, pathetic, sweeping, solemn, gentle, full of all emotions of the human heart, yet “only” music. No trace of any metaphysical question enters into its purely musical course’.477 It is also worth recalling that the Fifth followed Mahler’s public utterance shortly before the Fourth’s completion about the abandonment of all programmes, upon which he embarked on a new path freed from any such implications.

Despite these circumstances, there have been several attempts at programmatic interpretations by analysts. Donald Mitchell, for example, claims that the programme that was swallowed by the Fourth resurfaces in a new guise in the Fifth, but this time as ‘an eventful but wordless narrative’. This narrative, according to Mitchell, is generated solely by Mahler’s manipulation of musical materials, with ideas playing roles in ‘the drama without their ever having been named’.478 I find it a rough simplification that the symphonies should centre on the same suggested programme, as their timbres and expression are far too different, in addition to being built of quite disparate structures. What they share, however, is the consequent transformation and variation of various world topics, which permeate the music without having ties to any regular programme.

As is his custom, Floros claims that the Fifth Symphony, like all of Mahler’s works, ‘makes a statement’ based on ‘an inner program that is kept secret’.479 Among several things pointing to this, he mentions the number of movements and the division into parts, their characters, and the thematic interconnections between the first and second movements as well as between the fourth and fifth. A crucial aspect that is often noted in terms of the symphony’s narrative is the marked contrast between the opening dark funeral march and the joyful, boisterous Rondo-Finale. This trajectory urged Floros to suggest the device of per aspera ad astra as well as the idea of transcendence and overcoming suffering.

As I argued in the discussion of the Fourth’s possible programme, I similarly claim that it is reductive to consider the symphony’s narrative as extend-

479 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 141.
ing unbroken from the beginning to the end of the work, given the many alterations of timbres and expressions during the course of that trajectory. In addition, as my analysis of the Finale suggests, the movement only depicts affirmative triumph on the surface: Mahler, by means of humour and irony, shows us a world that just endlessly goes on, dissolving the subject into its empty collective.

Instead of potential programmes, there is another aspect that I find valuable for understanding and interpreting the Fifth Symphony as storyworld. In conversations with Bauer-Lechner, Mahler said that ‘it will be a regularly constructed symphony in four movements, each of which exists for itself and is self-contained, linked to the others solely by a related mood’. Ultimately, the work was cast in the form of five movements, not four, and these movements could not be said to be connected by a similar mood. However, Mahler divided the Fifth into a three-part structure that relates to mood in other ways, and as I will demonstrate in the following, this structure also relates to the concept of a generically realistic storyworld consisting of various types of world.

The world as realism: parts as different topics of world
Mahler’s tripartite division is as follows: Part I – movements 1 and 2; Part II – movement 3 (Scherzo); and Part III – movements 4 and 5 (Adagietto and Rondo-Finale). I view each of the parts as mediating a particular type of world, representing various topics of the symphony’s total storyworld. As outlined in the theoretical chapter on worlds, one way of defining worlds is as distinctive groups, such as the animal kingdom or academia. In the analysis of musical worlds in Mahler, however, I find the vantage point of topics to be a useful way of thematizing worlds as of different kinds or types, which has hitherto been the case with, for example, natural and dream worlds.

The first part encompasses a dark type of world due to the sombre mood common to the first two movements. These are also united by thematic–motivic connections that I argue function as world-building blocks in their respective construction of episodic background story and subsequent enactment.

The second part (the Scherzo) represents the social topic of world, featuring thematic elements of dance milieus as well as conversations between virtual human agents.

The third part presents what I regard as two different types of worlds following the shifting timbres and expressions of the Adagietto and the Rondo, which form an inner subjective world and an outer collective world, respectively. However, since the Adagietto is later thematically integrated in the

Rondo, these contrastive worlds meet in a process whereby the former’s world dissolves into the latter’s. The shared topic of the two worlds can be described as that of society, albeit in a contrastive sense as opposites of subjective and objective and their inescapable interaction.

In terms of narrative, this structure is analogous to a novel’s parts or chapters, which, although presenting separate sections of the overall story, relate to one another as a totality. From the outset of the storyworld, the various parts of the Fifth Symphony represent topics of world situated at some distance from one another, coming together as extended realms in terms of places and spaces.

These topics are all relatable to reality, topics such as funerals, dance floors, and social interaction, including the possible worlds appearing within the parts, such as the unattainability of heaven as a vision and inner subjective contemplation. A crucial means in this figuration is Mahler’s rich use in the Fifth of a diversified set of genres that, through their connotations, function as cues for the construction of realistic settings and worlds. These also are consistent tools in the transformation and expansion of their initial meanings into other types of scenes and elements.

The connection to features of the real world makes it plausible to interpret the Fifth Symphony as belonging to the genre of realism. According to the degree of distance in terms of possibility that functions as a dividing line between various genres in narratology, realistic genres are closest to our own existence, versus fairy tales, which come across as being the farthest away.

Like Mahler’s work in general, the Fifth centres on the opposites of life and death, but death in particular forms a prominent subject in its topical output. For example, the first movement revolves around a funeral march event, and in the Scherzo, the sophisticated and elegant waltz is deformed into a dance of death, evoking the rattle of bones. In addition, darkness permeates a great deal of the symphony’s design, such as the entirety of Part I. Compared with the Fourth, death is not fantastically portrayed as a figure, but rather as realistic in the sense of settings and emotions signalling angst and despair.

Although this study does not start from Mahler’s autobiographical circumstances in analysing world, it is worth mentioning that his work was particularly concerned with the issue of death in the summer of 1901. One can partly trace this to the composer’s near-mortal illness in February the same year, which likely affected his creation. Mahler was extremely productive, and in addition to the first three movements of the Fifth composed several other works with connections to the Trauermarsch: Der Tambours’sell from Des Knaben Wunderhorn: a number of songs to poems of Rückert and two or three
of the Kindertotenlieder. Considering that death and darkness constitute the principal topic of Part I and suffuse a great deal of the Scherzo, death presents itself as one of the work’s continuous realistic elements.

On thematic recurrences and worlds
Another feature that the Fifth Symphony shares with the Fourth is the existence of thematic connections between various movements throughout the work. This concerns the first and second movements of Part I, the second and fifth movements, and the fourth and fifth movements constituting Part III.

Researchers explain such recurrences in different ways. As presented in his analysis of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement, Monahan uses the concept of transsymphonic narrative, which forms one of three types of narrative threads. He specifically mentions the first two and the last two movements of the Fifth as illustrating this phenomenon. Donald Mitchell, however, calls the interlinking of the two pairs of movements ‘inter-quotation’, even referring to the entire work as Mahler’s ‘quotation’ symphony. He argues that this is a novel process in the composer’s oeuvre and one peculiar to the Fifth. A similar point is made by Adorno, claiming that Mahler’s construction of entire symphonies – given their vast scope – had to be built on ‘the principle of correspondence’.

From the vantage point of world, I position myself somewhat differently regarding the various thematic recurrences, depending on their timbre in combination with other aspects such as spatial and temporal dimensions. As for the connection between the first and second movements, I regard the returning funeral march as a kind of memory space, presenting another possible world pointing backwards. Concerning music of the chorale and Adagietto, which appear in the Finale from the second and fourth movements, respectively, I discuss them more extensively in the analysis of the last movement. There I make an argument in relation to Mitchell’s and Monahan’s concepts, suggesting that Ryan’s fictional recentring provides a more suitable notion than quotation, and that instead of applying the transsymphonic narrative concept to the Fifth Symphony, it is plausible to use the notion of transworld processes. This implies a process between worlds of separated movements, with one world breaking into another so that there arises the successive development of ‘break-in worlds’. I find such a concept to be a freeing analytical tool, also

482 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 139. See also Mitchell’s discussion of connections between the Trauermarsch and Der Tamboursgr ‘sell in particular; Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, The Mahler Companion, pp. 236–246.


taking into account the elements of timbre and spatiality, which are notably lacking in the mentioned sources.

Part I: A dark and sombre world

The first and second movements, constituting the symphony’s Part I, share several elements that form the basis of their interconnection in relation to storyworld. Both are characterized by a similar dark mood permeated with harsh timbres, displaying various nuances of the topic of darkness, such as the funeral march, tragedy, angst, sorrow, and grief. However, there is an instance of what one might call a topic of light in the form of the chorale, which returns several times during the second movement and later in the Finale. Throughout the first part, the brass instruments play prominent recurring roles as virtual narrative agents and characters, both as soloists but mostly in terms of group constellations evoking the choric speeches of drama. These are crucial for the presentation of the sound-world and its mediation to the listener.

In addition, there are also significant thematic–motivic connections between the movements, such as the interpolation of the death march and several resurfacing elements from the trios of the first movement in the second. This affects the formal designs of both movements, with the first functioning as an exposition to the second’s development. That Mahler called the second movement the ‘Hauptsatz’ of Part I indicates that he himself envisioned a similar division, although this label only appeared in his full-score manuscript.⁴⁸⁵

I interpret these thematic and motivic links as constituting shared world-building blocks that together construct the dark type of storyworld featured in Part I. Whereas the world in the first movement emerges through an episodic way of telling, the second movement transforms this world into an outer physical one of spaces and places. Temporally, this makes the former into a sort of past prologue or backstory to the latter’s subsequent enactment in the present. The various sound designs and structures of the movements result in the topic of darkness being presented differently, illustrating the nuances that distinguish the subject matter of Mahler’s music.

First movement: Trauermarsch or episodes of darkness

The form of the first movement is constructed in the manner of separate, independent sections analogous to various episodes that relate to one another through their evocations of different aspects of darkness, such as sorrow and despair. The core of this interrelation is the recurring funeral march of the

main sections that serves as the event to which the two contrasting trios react. In all of the episodes, the brass have significant narrative functions as virtual agents, especially the solo trumpet but also various constellations of trombones and horns.

The different episodes are linked together by a recurring trumpet fanfare that opens the movement, which I argue represents the role of the narrator in terms of a storytelling and organizing force. Furthermore, the trumpet plays a sort of chameleon role, for example, by stepping in as a virtual character in the episode of the first trio. This structure of episodic narration affects the temporal perspective so that the formal sections are perceived as having taken place in the past, making the movement into a prologue of previously occurring events for subsequent enactment in the second movement.

This particular form and its ensuing narrative structure make the storyworld emerge through the act of telling of events, forming the background for their mediation by the various positions of narrators. These narrators operate on several different levels mostly connected to dramatic speech modes, with the brass agents conveying their worldversions of the story. This particularly concerns the funeral march episode, which is recounted three times from alternating perspectives. Consequently, the listener perceives the storyworld through the eyes of these agents, and Mahler’s mobile application of the diegetic elements of theatre generates a constantly changing way of seeing the world and its aspects of darkness.

Curtains up! Introducing story-teller and storyworld

The solo trumpet fanfare in C-sharp minor opening the Fifth Symphony possesses an expressive directness, as if it urgently needs to tell something. Its rhythmic contour of accented triplets, marked by crescendo swells leading to long *sforzando* notes, conveys an authoritative, summoning voice that demands to be listened to. As Adorno notes in the chapter on ‘Novel’ in his Mahler study, the composer’s gesture is that of the epic, seeming to say: ‘Listen, I am going to play something such as you have never heard’.  

In this movement, the fanfare forms one of several allusions to military music, including evocation of military drums and the recurring funeral march. As I will show in the analysis, the fanfare serves as an organizer and teller of the storyworld, functioning as a cue for the starting and ending of its narrative position. In addition, the literal quality of the trumpet fanfare as a signal or call suggests a theatrical narrative that resonates with my interpretation of the movement’s storyworld in relation to theatre and drama.  

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of tableaux scenes and spatiality, generating expansions of and movements through space. This analysis looks at other features evocative of the theatre, such as the effect of curtain openings as portals into the storyworld’s episodes in the manner of acts. In addition to the investigation of an extended, more fragmentary scenic telling, a prominent target concerns theatrical positions and speech modes, putting the focus on dramatic narration as voice.

However, the theatre is only one of several generic ways of world-making and of telling that this movement alludes to, such as the cinematic technique of reframing and the literary epic mode of narration. One can thus speak of hybrid or transgeneric forms of media that together result in the musically mediated storyworld. In the following, I present a short note on the initiating fanfare and subsequent curtain-opening effect, which throughout the movement serve as means to start, end, and transform its various episodes.

Starting with the fanfare, it together with, for example, horn calls and the summoning bells, forms part of Mahler’s rich usage of various gestures of calling. Kofi Agawu lists the fanfare as one of the composer’s most widely used topics. Taken from its function in the real world as a signal of the announcement and gathering of troops, it alludes to the realm of the military. Notably, Mahler himself gives directions in the score that ‘The upbeat triplets of this theme [i.e., the fanfare] should always be executed somewhat hurriedly (quasi accel.), in the manner of military fanfares’. In fact, the trumpet fanfare is strikingly similar to the Generalmarsch of the Austrian Army.

The frequent presence of signals and other military references in Mahler’s music is often regarded as reflecting his childhood experiences in Iglau. As the composer’s friend Guido Adler retells it, ‘Morning and evening calls, assembly and drill motifs were in him transformed into sound-images that were solidified around the figure of the old German foot-soldier’. Less explored are the functions these attain when migrated from reality into the abstract sound-world of the symphony, and how Mahler’s specific use of them generates new meaning in the context of listening. As Adorno rightly observes, ‘The peculiar preponderance of march music in Mahler calls for a better explanation than the notion that he was fixated on childhood impressions’.

Like the horn calls in the second movement of the Fourth, the trumpet fanfare has a significant formal position affecting its role in the organization and construction of storyworld, albeit in relation to other narrative units rather than

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492 Cited in Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 296.
separate sub-worlds. Throughout the movement, the fanfare returns as a transition to every new formal section, always slightly varied in tone and entrance, arguably forming independent episodes. In relation to these episodes, the solo trumpet attains the role of a binding link or organizer of the otherwise freely floating parts, sounding from the distance as a collective call to assemble them into a temporal sequence of events. Simultaneously, it becomes a narrator as mediator of the episodes, providing presentation and initial context to their subsequent unfolding. In addition, the trumpet also appears as a narrating virtual agent or character in several of the episodes themselves, endowing it with the multi-functional, chameleon attributes defining the horns of the Fourth’s second movement.

Directly after the twelve-bar trumpet fanfare follows what I regard as the first curtain-opening portal, which represents the initial transportation into the movement’s storyworld. As a soloist operating between formal parts, the instrument has the effect of an off-stage voice analogous to being placed outside the storyworld, as with, for example, the horn of the Fourth’s Scherzo. However, through its role as a narrator mediating or telling about the framed episodes, it is instead about an opening into the told story evoking the storyworld, instead of an exterior act of calling forth that world.

The curtain opening stems from the sudden addition of other orchestral parts in bar 13 (the horns and second trumpet come in a bit earlier, in the second half of bar 12), producing a massive A major ff chord that, due to the contrast to the solo trumpet, has a startling effect. String tremolo, bass drum roll, and brass supported by bassoons are transformed into a rhythmic accompaniment to the fanfare’s continuing phrase, providing harmony and scalar movement. More than evoking a space or place of world, the background texture has the function of initiation, of cutting a rift in the manner of a breakthrough into the earlier enclosed musical fabric. In addition, the brassy sound and bass drum roll are associated with the military and preparations for war, which further lends the music a sense of anticipation, in this context, of the first act of a drama or play about to begin. The sequence of fanfare and curtain represents a reversal of Adorno’s description of the First Symphony as ‘Curtain and Fanfare’, acknowledging the theatrical quality of Mahler’s music. Henceforth in the movement, they appear several times simultaneously, presenting one of the ways in which the trumpet provides transportation into the storyworld’s episodes.

The curtain sequence ends with what I call a cue signalling the end of the trumpet as narrator, as in bar 20 it disappears into the sound mass of the rest of the orchestra’s triplet rhythms (see example 5.1.1). Mahler notably lets it join a group of three other trumpets, which in addition are assigned forte versus the dominant ff dynamics. At the same time, starting in bar 19, the snare drum initiates a long roll that increases the military reference to summoning the troops. Together with the march-like rhythms, this provides a transition into the first episode of the movement illustrating a funeral setting, starting
with the procession in bar 23. The passage functions both to dissolve the trumpet’s foregrounding role as narrator and to transform it into an element of the military music, which in turn serves as a preparatory act for the ensuing first episode, the curtain having finally been drawn.

Example 5.1.1: bars 16–21
Formal outline and narrative structure: the trumpet as narrator of episodes

My interpretation of the trumpet as a caller-forth and narrator of a number of episodes is tied up with the movement’s formal design. Mahler’s symphonic oeuvre does not easily fit into standard formal models, and this is also the case with the Trauermarsch.⁴⁹⁴ Most analysts share the view that the movement alternates between sections containing the funeral march and two contrasting sections, commonly referred to as trios. Floros, for example, follows this structure in his division into main sections and trios, ending with a coda.⁴⁹⁵ A similar outline is reflected in Edward Murphy’s schema of ABABA, although he does not characterize the B sections as trios. Nadine Sine, however, recognizes in the movement the larger structures of sonata form with exposition, recapitulation, and development.⁴⁹⁶

Yet, there are aspects of the music that make it problematic to apply any of these forms. To begin with, as Murphy and Mitchell have pointed out, the trios are not really trios in the common sense due to their effect of shock rather than the usual provision of relaxation.⁴⁹⁷ Despite sharing elements of motifs and gestures, they are so different in character from each other that one is doubtful as to whether to group them together at all. As stated earlier, the trios also present crucial connections to the second movement by introducing some of its basic themes and motifs. Concerning the main sections of the march, they are constantly varied with altered outcomes and additions so that they ultimately become something other than the initial funeral march setting. Having no subsequent development section, the march instead develops through Mahler’s use of Adorno’s suggested ‘variant technique’. In addition, as with the solo horn of the Fourth’s second movement, I want to divide the recurring trumpet fanfare into separate formal sections depending on its transitory and organizational role. The common practice has otherwise been to group the fanfare with the subsequent main sections, but that blurs rather than clarifies the already complex formal construction.

These eccentricities of Mahler’s that result in deviations from traditional formal models come down to his particular treatment of the musical material. As La Grange notes, the movement does not follow the procedure of sonata form, but instead develops its themes from group cells and motifs. This resonates with Adorno’s claim that, in approaching the form of the novel, Mahler’s compositions proceed from a technique beginning from the bottom and then

⁴⁹⁵ Floros, The Symphonies, pp. 142–143.
moving up, rather than a top–down composition technique using predetermined forms.\textsuperscript{498} The epic concept, he contends, explains some of the peculiarities of, for example, the form, such as asymmetry and irregularity.\textsuperscript{499}

Both La Grange and Adorno’s observations suggest a conception of form arising out of the specific musical materials rather than the other way round, pointing towards a compositional method in which idea and content dominate preconceived structural schemes. However, as I have aimed to show throughout this thesis, Mahler’s form and its subsequent way of telling also display similarities to narrative media other than literature, media such as drama and film. These formal divergences permit interpretations of hybrid forms going beyond the musical domain, leading to new and unusual structures. This is manifested, for example, in the first movement’s function as exposition to the second one’s development, which makes the various sections appear more in the manner of static, reciprocally independent parts providing background material for the subsequent ‘Hauptsatz’.

The specific construction of the movement makes it plausible to regard its different formal sections as separate episodes framed by the recurring solo trumpet fanfare. Thus, the episodes comprise the parts that together constitute the totality of the storyworld. Instead of the earlier concept of sub-worlds, one can speak of several sub-episodes, narrated by the agencies of trumpet and other brass instruments. As a result, the storyworld is evoked by the episodes rather than directly mediated by them. This episodic structure also constitutes a narrative technique, consisting of bounded, coherent sequences of narrative units that together form larger narrative structures – the storyworld of the entire movement. Based on this conception, my formal outline of the movement is as follows, with each episode divided into smaller units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Storyworld function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1–12</td>
<td>Trumpet fanfare/narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13–22</td>
<td>Curtain opening and cue out trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main section</td>
<td>23–60</td>
<td>Episode: funeral setting (first version presented by horns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23–34</td>
<td>Funeral procession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34–53</td>
<td>Non-diegetic ‘song’ music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53–60</td>
<td>Funeral procession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{498} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, pp. 61–62.
\textsuperscript{499} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 67.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>60–82</th>
<th>Trumpet fanfare/narrator and curtain, cue in and out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main section</td>
<td>83–152</td>
<td>Episode: funeral setting (second version presented by trombones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83–88</td>
<td></td>
<td>Funeral procession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88–120</td>
<td></td>
<td>Procession, non-diegetic music and multiple agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120–131</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wind band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132–152</td>
<td></td>
<td>Procession and non-diegetic music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>152–154</td>
<td>Trumpet fanfare/narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasting section/’Trio’ 1</td>
<td>155–232</td>
<td>Episode: event of chaos and anxiety ending in collapse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155–172</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173–194</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195–232</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>232–256</td>
<td>Trumpet fanfare/narrator and curtain (overlapping with trio 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main section</td>
<td>257–316</td>
<td>Episode: funeral setting (third version presented by solo tuba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>257–262</td>
<td></td>
<td>Procession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>262–278</td>
<td></td>
<td>Military wind band (parody)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278–316</td>
<td></td>
<td>Humour, sorrow and songful voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>316–322</td>
<td>Timpani-fanfare/military drum signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasting section/’Trio’ 2</td>
<td>323–390</td>
<td>Episode: setting of sorrow and grief ending in collapse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>376–392</td>
<td>Trumpet fanfare/narrator, in and out from trio 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>393–415</td>
<td>Epilogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be read from the formal outline, I liken the different episodes to various events and emotions related to the topic of darkness that characterizes the storyworld of both the first and second movements. The main sections of the march present a funeral setting retold several times through the alternating perspectives of the virtual agents of the brass, resulting in different world versions of the same event. Concerning the contrasting sections or trios, they mediate two separate episodes defined by chaotic anxiety and sorrow, respectively. In terms of portraying nuances of darkness, one can regard the episodes as relating or reacting to the funeral setting and its element of death. This interpretation is enriched by the reappearance of the same virtual agents represented by the brass, albeit in other narrative positions.

In relation to these episodes, the trumpet fanfare is the organizing force that transports the listener between and into them. Traditionally, the fanfare is associated with the human realm, with a person performing the fanfare as a signal heard from afar. In the listening situation, however, this actual human performer disappears and the fanfare is transformed into a virtual voice, its rhythm and tone mediating the gesture of the epic mentioned by Adorno. The trumpet consequently not only calls forth, but also seems to tell in a particular speaking mode. This is why I suggest that the trumpet functions as a narrator of the episodes. In its simplest definition, a narrator is ‘the agency or “instance” that tells or transmits everything […] in a narrative to a narratee’.  

Another definition of the term is ‘the inner-textual (textually encoded) highest-level speech position from which the current narrative discourse as a whole originates’. In this movement, the trumpet functions precisely as this kind of reference point for and transmitter of the framed episodes, controlling their structure and unfolding. By producing the narrative, it also situates the episodes as having occurred in the past, forming another primary function of the narrator. Whereas the listener cannot know what the trumpet says in the manner of a verbal narrator, the trumpet mediates a certain speech mode suggestive of the epic. By means of its decisive rhythm and brassy timbre, the trumpet fanfare attains an authoritative voice distanced from the events of which it tells, mediating a more objective perspective as compared with the lyrical, subjective voice of a virtual ‘I’. Instead of perceiving the effect of virtual embodiment and identification significant of the virtual ‘I’, the trumpet calls to as opposed to speaks or feels with the listener.

As many musicologists have pointed out, music does not narrate in the same way as does literature. Byron Almén’s outline of a theory of musical narrative even rules out the necessity of a narrator altogether, meaning that

501 Uri Margolin, ‘Narrator’, LHN.
one is not required for the listener to make sense of the coherence of events. My argument does not treat the trumpet as a narrator analogous to a literary narrator, but calls attention to how its formal position and speech mode invite the function of a musical narrator.

A funeral setting reframed: the different perspectives of brass

In the movement, the main section of the march appears three times, first twice directly after each other and then one more time after the first trio or contrasting section. In each instance, Mahler transforms the march in various ways as regards instrumentation, variation, and length, resulting in the retelling and continuous modification of the same funeral episode. As I will show, the different narrative positions of the brass function as cues for the alternating perspectives of the episode, which is presented through a sort of hybrid intermedial form using dramatic and cinematic techniques. By means of an extended scenic telling, various elements of the funeral march emerge either successively or simultaneously and, by means of their transformation, gradually change the initial, sombre figuration of death into something humorous.

In between the sections, the trumpet appears with various versions of the fanfare together with the curtain-opening effect, which affects or colours its way of telling.

The first episode: perspective of horns

I interpret the first episode of the funeral event as starting in bar 23, right after the cue signalling the trumpet’s exit as narrator and the simultaneous curtain effect derived from the anticipatory military music. The lower strings and winds, with the cellos and double basses each divided into two parts, perform a chromatically descending ostinato motif marked by trills. The dark timbre and march rhythm resonate with the heaviness of the performance direction pesante, which in this context evokes associations with the walking steps of a funeral procession. Most analysts do not view this passage (bars 23–33) as an independent section, but group it with either the previous music or with what comes up to the new theme in bar 34. That the march alludes to a funeral setting marks it as the opening of the first episode’s initial scene. In contrast to the sleigh bells starting the Fourth Symphony, this setting is not cued by an object, but through generic connotations associated with a real-life event. Simultaneously, it becomes a means of portraying the topic of death from a realistic perspective as opposed to the fiddle-playing figure of the Fourth’s fairy-tale world. Throughout this episode, various elements of the funeral setting are presented, told from the perspective of a group of horns analogous to the narrating chorus in classical Greek drama.

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502 See Almén, A Theory of Musical Narrative.
Apart from cueing a particular setting, the march in Mahler also functions as a way of telling, even though it might be considered an anti-narrative rather than narrative form.\textsuperscript{503} As Adorno notes, the march presents a collective form of walking, suggesting a directional movement towards a specific goal.\textsuperscript{503} The processional quality affects how the scene comes across to the listener, who becomes a static observer watching the external, dynamic procession of the march. Johnson likens this to something passing by a spectator with a fixed viewpoint, implying theatrical origins.\textsuperscript{505} The funeral march thus appears scenically staged, with a collective of humans or actors performing the rhythmic walk.

The analogy to drama becomes even stronger when a group of six horns performs a lamenting figure resembling a call or cry (bars 24–27, see example 5.1.2). As a unison collective, they evoke the chorus in classical Greek drama commenting on the events on the stage. Typically, narrative in drama is presented directly as mimesis (imitation, ‘showing’) with no overt mediator, but it can also contain various diegetic (‘telling’) elements, choric speeches being one of these.\textsuperscript{506} As with the trumpet fanfare, the message of the chorus remains unknown, but again their gesture and tone mediate a certain mode of speaking, with the authority of the horns’ timbre suggesting an objective attitude.\textsuperscript{507} Following the previous cue ending the trumpet’s function as narrator, the horns take over the narrating perspective of events, cueing a new point of view. Analogous to the commenting chorus in drama, it is as if the horns are telling about the scene from the side, simultaneously as the rhythmically moving procession is in centre stage, narrating in parallel, so to speak.

\textit{Example 5.1.2: bars 24–27}

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\end{center}

After the horns’ choric speech, the scene depicting the march procession continues by way of mimetic illustration, but now with a significant rhythmic figure in trombones on chordal notes (see example 5.1.3). Scored for the brass in this way, it gains a particular heaviness illustrating the weight of the marching. This motif continues in the movement as a recurring feature, as well as forming part of the second movement’s most important building blocks. Over long

\textsuperscript{503} Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{505} Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{506} See Roy Summer, ‘Drama and Narrative’, \textit{Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory}.
\textsuperscript{507} Levy, ‘Texture as a Sign’, p. 507.
underlying notes, the tam-tam – a common symbol of death here evoking a foreboding, slightly eerie atmosphere – is sounded. In bar 33, the music comes to a halt, suggesting the stop of the funeral march procession.

*Example 5.1.3: bars 27–31*

In bar 34, there is a shift to a new element and focus of the scene, as the brassy timbre gives way to a string-dominated texture supported by clarinets and bassoons (see example 5.1.4). Simultaneously, there is also a change of character from the march-like rhythm to an elegiac, softer one. Because of these differences, Murphy distinguishes this part as a separate march from the previous one (bars 1–33). Rather than a new march, however, the melody of the violins and cellos in the register of the human voice resonates as in a song, which, through Mahler’s changing combinations of string instruments, results in a particularly sonorous, richly nuanced tone. According to Donald Mitchell, this song recalls the song that the doomed drummer sings in *Der Tambourg’sell*, which also has connections to death and the military.

*Example 5.1.4: bars 28–42*

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The shift of the music from a march-like rhythm to an expressive song alters the presentation of the funeral setting. Whereas the march illustrated the walking, moving procession of the event, the song instead mediates the sorrowful atmosphere and associated emotions. The song becomes a sort of background music for the scene in a manner similar to non-diegetic music in film, constituting the source from which the listener constructs the accompanying image of the storyworld. By alternating the focus and depicted element of the same scene, it is again relevant to apply the cinematic term ‘reframing’ that I used for the development of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement. Another approach is to view the non-diegetic song as one world-building element constructing the totality of the scene. This resonates with Emilio Audissino’s neoformalistic approach to the relationship between music and film, in which the former represents one of the latter’s interconnected expressive devices. Apart from offering a method for examining those instances in which my analysis proposes cinematic functions such as non-diegetic music, the idea of smaller microelements as cooperating to form larger macro-configurations might also work as a blueprint for a multi-conceptual coalition of an imaginative world. The fact that Audissino’s model starts from the perception of an active receiver (i.e., viewer) rather than a communicating sender makes it even more compatible with this investigation’s principal starting points, whose departure point is the idea of sound-worlds as created by the perceiving listener in contact with the music.

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510 Emilio Audissino, *Film/Music Analysis: A Film Studies Approach* (Cham, 2017).
Simultaneously, the shift from external dramatic staging to complementary cinematic music presents a hybrid or transgeneric use of media.

Before the return to the framed element of the externally perceived rhythmic procession in bar 53, there is yet again a shift to a new scenic device when a foregrounded cello part (bars 50–53) alone continues the melodic line as the rest of the strings fade back to harmonic support. Its breaking out from the orchestra in this way transforms the accompanying song into more of a humanlike, inner voice. Because of the unison cellos as a group and the context of the funeral march as a collective event, this voice implies an expression of the collective, multiple agency participating in the event. The final reframing of the scene’s presentation suggestively displays the interior thoughts and emotions permeating it.

As the procession comes to a halt in bar 60, the fanfare theme and curtain effect return, marking the end of the first episode. There is now a reversal of means compared with the previous fanfare instance, as the solo trumpet is cued back as a narrator by gradually emerging from the triplet rhythms of the orchestra. The start of the fanfare is the same as before, but from here onwards its continuation is always slightly different, so that one can speak of four different versions. In combination with the changed harmonic support colouring the trumpet’s tone, this implies that it does not say exactly the same thing as before. The recurring start of the fanfare functions as a sort of recentring back to the trumpet’s narrative position, serving as a means to reform the familiar in a manner similar to the A variations in the third movement of the Fourth Symphony. The curtain-opening portal in turn indicates that a new act is about to begin— that is, the next episode of the funeral event— and transports the listener from the previous episode into the timeframe of this one. Characteristically, before the second version is under way, the trumpet is cued out (bars 79–82) by dissolving into the sound mass of the rest of the orchestra.

**The second episode: perspectives of trombones**

The second episode of the funeral setting (bars 83–152) contains several changes compared with the first one in terms of perspective and presentation. From now on, the episodes become both longer and more extensively varied, affecting the development of the initial, more sombre experience of death. During a slightly shorter section of the *pesante* march procession (bars 83–88), the lamenting calling figure this time resides in two trombones, suggesting a different group constellation of narrative speech and the subsequent cuing of perspective. The use of a duo is interesting since it conforms neither to a larger group analogous to a chorus nor to a virtual subject as a character, but represents something in between. As the number of instruments decreases, however, the narration suggests a less objective telling. One can liken this to the trombones still presenting a multiple agency standing on the side of the march procession as in drama, but approaching a more personal utterance.
After this instance of altered commentary, the rest of the episode also unfolds differently concerning the content and constitution of the scene’s framed elements. The elegiac character permeating the song (from bar 88) now emerges as a little more mellow due to the broader and thicker string texture, with the first and second violins assigned to the G string and the addition of counter-parts in the violas and cellos. A softer, lighter timbre also results from the doubling of the oboe and clarinet with the first violins (bar 96). In addition to this altered expression of the non-diegetic music, there is the accompaniment of the heavy brass rhythm from the procession, the figure of the trombones transmuted into six horns. As a result, the simultaneity of the earlier separately framed elements of rhythmic walk and non-diegetic music coalesce into a synchronous entity. This generates a more complete scene or image in which the song accompanies the moving funeral procession. As an additional element, the cello part continues the melody as the song is given to the winds, with persistent brass rhythms (bar 104) below. The inclusion of the collective human voice adds to the number of elements portrayed by the scene, which simultaneously gives rise to hybridity of media. Mahler’s fusion of several textural layers marked by motivic and instrumental Eigenprofil builds a scene out of multiple components or world-building elements in the manner of Audissino’s expressive devices.

Out of the previous cue to the perspective of the trombones, one can interpret these changes in terms of scenic construction: they tell of a different experience of the funeral setting, mirroring how the same setting is never reported in exactly the same way by different agents. This kind of retelling of what happened once resonates with the repetitive mode belonging to Genette’s category of frequency (the others being order and duration), which describes ‘the relationship between the number of occurrences in the story and the number of occurrences narrated’. Furthermore, it implies the previously suggested situating of the episodes of the first movement as having taken place in the past.

This version of the funeral event also contains an additional section (bars 120–154) with a new theme derived from the first, elegiac melody, which introduces an element of the scene reframed by means of transformation. Whereas Floros defines the theme as constituting the third part of the main section, it is worth underlining, like Monahan, that it also forms an example of Mahler’s variants. Scored for woodwinds with a configuration of solo flute, solo oboe, clarinets in sixths, and bassoons in thirds, the altered timbre and modulation to the major key of A flat endows the earlier, elegiac melody

511 Michael Scheffel et al., ‘Time’, LHN.
512 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 142.
with a completely different character (see example 5.1.5). Hitherto deprioritized in the movement in favour of brass and strings, Mahler marks this modification by foregrounding the instrumental group of winds, making the theme into a sort of wind band music played by virtual performers. There is a thus a shift to another world-building element of the scene, moving from staged procession and suffusing emotions to accompanying performance. Simultaneously, the topic of death associated with the funeral event is transformed into something lightweight and humorous, suggesting a different approach to handling the realm of darkness and tragedy. The subsequent changed, softer tone of the song at its return in the major (bar 132) suggests that the reframing has also altered or coloured the emotions and atmosphere connected to the scene of the rhythmic procession. However, as usual in Mahler, this appears to be only temporary, as the melody of the violins becomes increasingly chromatically inflected and marked by menacing horn stops.

Example 5.1.5: bars 119–125

The third episode: perspectives of tuba

The third and final episode of the funeral event (bars 257–316) builds on the development of the scene’s elements and perspective. As in the second episode, humour continues to be a prominent feature, as is the more nuanced illustration of sorrow and grief. In contrast to the two previous episodes, however, this one follows upon the first contrasting trio, in addition to using a different type of entrance from the earlier curtain-opening effect characterized by anticipating military music.

The trumpet fanfare now overlaps with the ending of the first trio, where it in bar 232 enters before the two other trumpets have finished their phrase (see example 5.1.6). This suggests that the narrator impersonated by the solo trumpet appears inside the episode and, from there, transports the story into the next episode. The accompaniment of chromatically moving tremolo notes in
the low strings generates a foreboding, ominous atmosphere, while simultaneously serving to phase out the first trio. Suddenly, however, the fanfare evaporates into a chorale-like passage (bar 247) characterized by grandiose brass chords. At this moment, Mahler adds another trumpet to the fanfare, and the chorale cues out the narrator trumpet, whose melody ends up in the trombones (bars 251–252). The genre of the chorale in general recurs frequently in Mahler’s works, playing a significant role in both the second and fifth movements of the Fifth Symphony, where it returns several times. Here, it inflects the subsequent triplets with a strictly elegant, majestic quality rather than the previous military one, symbolized by the absence of the long bass drum roll.
Example 5.1.6: bars 228–238
The initial transition into the episode points towards two things: that this episode, like the others, is not temporally and spatially separated by a new act, and that the chorale’s juxtaposition with the subsequent procession has a marked effect. The resulting contrast mirrors Mahler’s way of scoring opposite topics beside each other, but also becomes a means of expressing the irony resulting from the contrast between the religious and godly and the topic of death related to the funeral event.

Another alteration is that the lamenting motif now resides in a solo tuba, representing a development from the objective telling of the horn choir via the
trombone duo to a more subjective telling perceived as virtually embodied by a dramatic character. This gradual shift simultaneously draws the listener closer and closer to the mediated perspective of the scene.

Through yet another modification into a new variant of the march theme, in bar 262 the elegiac song is stripped down into a scoring for woodwinds with sparse accompaniment of brass rhythms and double basses (see example 5.1.7). This produces a sensation of stasis, and the lack of the more expressive, vibrant tone of the strings makes the music recall that of a military wind band, illustrated by the underlying bass drum. As Mitchell observes, the sonority is associated with ceremonial funeral processions.\textsuperscript{514} One can say that Mahler further reframes the scene by staging a literal funeral band, suggestively performing alongside the rhythmic procession going on somewhere outside the present frame of the scene. In addition to giving rise to a new element of the event via transformation, this represents yet another recasting of death as something humorous, as told by the virtual agent of the tuba.

\textsuperscript{514} Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, \textit{The Mahler Companion}, p. 251.
Henceforth in the episode, humour and sorrow run side by side, illustrating the nuances of the topic of death initiated in the second episode. In bar 278, the trumpet materializes into the event doubled by an unmuted solo viola, at first evoking a sonorously melancholic human voice. Later, however, when the trumpet continues the melody alone (from bar 287), its timbre clashes with the highly scored, multiple woodwind parts and deep brass rhythms, making it a shrill and comic feature. Before the episode dies out in decreasing dynamics (from bar 313), the variant introduced in the second episode generating a wind band functioning as diegetic, is transformed into a warm, songful voice.
given to cellos and bassoons in sixths amplified by winds. As a cheeky addition, ascending gestures up to high accented notes in the woodwinds seem to question the sincerity of it all.

**Summary of the funeral march event: shifting scenic presentations and perspectives**

The three analysed episodes display a number of complex and simultaneous shifts on several levels, concerning both the construction of scenes and their various world-building elements, as well as the transformational presentation and perspectives of narrative agencies. In addition, these converge in a sort of hybrid media form of external theatre, interior voices, and cinematic elements.

These features suggest a way of telling defined by longer scenes in which the storyworld emerges by means of various fragments and their different combinations. Rather than a static image of the episode, there is continuous development by showing alternating and smaller units or devices, with the listener first having the entire picture when the episode has reached the end. This is similar to one of two basic narrative strategies to present spatial information: the tour as opposed to the map.\(^{515}\) Whereas the map strategy displays space from a panoramic, God’s eye point of view, the tour mediates space dynamically from a mobile point of view, similar to an apartment described room by room. The march genre and its connection to the real-life setting of the funeral becomes a referential vantage point and cue for modification into new versions and elements of the same scene, simultaneously as it in parallel illustrates various nuances and approaches to the dark topic of death associated with the event. One can say that the episodes and their respective reiterations are remade out of one another, generating alternating stories about a slightly differently constructed world and scene. This constant development generally results from the change of smaller orchestras or instrumental combinations, as well as Mahler’s marking of different instruments with independent motifs, generating, for example, the simultaneity of several of the scene’s constituting elements. Mitchell, for example, speaks about Mahler’s orchestra as a collective of orchestras.\(^{516}\)

Through the diegetic dramatic instances functioning as cues for perspective, there arise divergent versions of the scene, so that the listener gets a presentation of world versions or a kind of multi-version narrative. As in drama, however, there is no access to the inner, subjective worlds, only the mourning voice of the multiple agency of the collective.

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\(^{515}\) Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Space’, *LHN*.

\(^{516}\) Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, *The Mahler Companion*, p. 269.
Dramatic events as nuances of darkness: on Mahler’s ‘trios’

As previously outlined, the two sections normally defined as trios do not really conform to the traditional trio function of offering simple contrast, instead evoking shock rather than relaxation.\(^{517}\) Each does so in its own, specific way, the first through abrupt turbulence and chaos, the second by means of a subdued string timbre in the wake of the fanfare resounding in the timpani.

Despite their differences in character, however, the trios share musical materials both with each other and with the funeral episodes, as well as introducing themes and motifs that form important building blocks of the second movement. As Mitchell points out, the first trio develops elements from the trumpet fanfare and march sections, while simultaneously introducing an ascending theme that returns in the second trio and later in the ensuing Allegro.\(^{518}\) Because of these interconnections, both trios play expository and developmental roles. Just as the funeral episodes were remade out of each other, one can ascribe a similar relationship to the trios, in addition to their also being interlinked to the fanfare and march. Rather than being based on the variant technique, however, this remaking is done more in the manner of architecture, in which the structure is built from the same constitutive materials.

Out of these bricks, two different episodes emerge that in various ways relate to the funeral event and its topics of death and darkness. Mitchell argues that the trios present eruptions of protest against the implications of the march, attempting to fight its representation of sorrow, grief, and mourning.\(^{519}\) My claim is that they instead illustrate emotional reactions to the funeral event, the first as stormy angst and the other as sorrow, thereby also mediating various nuances and shades of darkness. Because of their ordering between the funeral episodes, the first trio after the first two episodes and the second trio after the third, these reactions are suggested to take place at different times in the storyworld’s narrative, related to their respective preceding versions of the funeral episode.

Both episodes follow the same structure of three phases ending in climax and collapse, presenting a division into smaller narrative units or segments within the larger one. As I will show, important for each episode’s mediation of storyworld and its nuances of darkness is the construction of a background setting of atmosphere and its relation to the changing positions and speeches of the brass. These instruments function as a set of virtual agents in different group constellations analogous to dramatic roles on stage, steering the listener into alternate views of the perceived sound-world. In contrast to the funeral episodes, no genre connotations function as cues of setting and scene; instead,
timbre alone, although in relation to the funeral event, cues the mood of the sounds. Trio 1: a sound-world of chaos and the dramatic positions of brass

The B-flat trumpet (third part) fanfare (bars 152–154) following upon the morendo of the second funeral episode comes across as fragile and exposed. Marked **pp** and the only instrument playing, the trumpet’s subdued solo tone evokes a slightly eerie, ominous feeling, as if something is about to happen. Through these change of features, there is an alteration of speech that, by means of expression, points forward to what comes next in the story. This foreboding fulfills its promise when the fanfare is cut short after only three bars by a wide intervallic leap (flutes, oboes, and violas), leading into the massive, stormy outburst of full orchestral forces forming the start of the first trio. Because of the sharp contrast to the solo trumpet, the episode has the effect of an event. Compared with the curtain-openings and overlaps of the funeral episodes, this one re-centres the listener into its world directly and abruptly, analogous to a cinematic cut.

The episode is divided into three phases, leading up to an intensifying final climax and collapse. Throughout it runs a sound-world suggesting a setting of chaos, angst, and despair, related to the topic of darkness. The various positions and expressions of the virtual agents of the brass continuously alter the shape and perspective of this sound-world, which consequently affects the position of the listener. Most prominently this concerns the part of the trumpet, which here steps in as a character inside the storyworld, but also horn groups and the trombones assist in creating this perception of world.

The first phase (bars 155–172) opens with heavy, accented minims in lower woodwinds and strings, their regular pumping beats supported by trombone chords from the funeral event (see example 5.1.8). To this agitated rhythm, a chromatically descending line in the first violins subsequently leads into triplets together with the second violins. In this action-filled turmoil of sound, the B-flat trumpet appears not with its established fanfare but with a new motif, expressing anguish and pain. Worth noting is that it is now the first trumpet that is performing, which, however, is not perceived by the listener, making the two different instruments into one and the same. Mahler often divides a continuous part among different voices of the same instrumental group in this way, for example, between first and second violins and the horns. As with the colouring of line, this makes the figures more clearly audible as units.\(^{520}\) The simulation of the two trumpets as one also suggests that the present trumpet is the same narrating one from before. This means that it now operates inside the storyworld of its own retelling, and simultaneously goes from the role of narrator to that of character.

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\(^{520}\) See Jost, ‘Mahlers Orkesterklang’, *Mahler Handbuch*, p. 120.
The trumpet’s role as soloist within the active chaos evoked by the other simultaneous parts, which all compete against each other in \textit{ff}, also places it inside the turmoil of the scene, as if amidst a surrounding storm. The gesture and tone of the phrase form an urgent, demanding call suffused with desperation, appearing to be directed outwards from the surrounding turmoil, as compared with lyrical, virtually embodied voices. As the only one there to achieve this directed call, the listener becomes the addressee of the trumpet, with address
denoting ‘vocative formulations that identify the reader directly’. Direct audience address is also one of the diegetic narrative elements of drama, which mirrors the external viewpoint of the listener in relation to the trumpet’s address. Standing inside the scene, it is as if the trumpet speaks from the actual scene of events saying, ‘Look, I was here’. However, the surrounding sounds do not emerge as staged through their evocation of the emotions of angst and despair, but instead reflect an interior state of mind, in this case, suggestively that of the virtual agent of the trumpet. There is again a mixture of genres generating a sort of hybrid scenic presentation.

In bar 165, there is a change of the trumpet’s position in relation to the sound-world as it is transformed into an ascending–descending figure marked by triplets. Simultaneously, the texture thins out, after which the heavy rhythms and actively moving strings give way to a foregrounded counter-part in the first violins (to be performed leidenschaftlich), presenting a reversed direction to the trumpet’s gesture. This results in the trumpet appearing to speak against the first violins instead of to the listener, as if commenting on the surrounding action. Consequently, the listener perceives the scene from the position and perspective of the trumpet, whose commenting upon the emotional chaos it perceives also implies a sort of self-conscious or metanarrative.

The second phase (bars 173–194) restarts the heavy rhythmic beat with increasing intensity, simultaneously forming the beginning of a series of alterations in the positioning of the brass. In the context of setting, one can liken this to a second wave or rush of the emotional turmoil. This time, the trumpet performs a variant of the fanfare theme (bar 180), which, through its higher register in ff (d’’, sounding c’’’), more closely resembles a call or cry sounding within the surrounding setting. Its desperate tone is mirrored in the intense chromatic descending lines of the violins (from bar 184). The trumpet’s changed way of speaking transforms its direction from out towards the audience or listener to its surroundings instead, resulting in an external but unaddressed viewpoint of the scene. Furthermore, this transforms the trumpet’s speech from narrating or diegetic to mimetic, direct speech, as in the discourse of characters. In bar 189, a group of six horns takes over the foregrounding role from the trumpet fanfare, hurriedly (precipitato) performing an ascending figure marked by triplets that evoke the commenting chorus of drama or multiple agency. Their appearance in this emotional setting, however, makes them leave the static position of the stage and come in more as fluid narrators in the sense of disembodied voices.

The third phase (bars 195–232) or last wave of angst recalls the first, starting with the directed trumpet call sounding out of the chaos, marked f sehr herveortretend in order to be heard against the dominant ff dynamics. This time, however, the violins transform into the ascending theme (bar 203), so

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crucial for the second movement, consisting of rising triplet figures (see example 5.1.9). Mitchell regards this theme as a sign of the trio’s aspiration to escape the pain of the funeral march,522 and indeed this represents the only instance in the episode evoking something of a light in an otherwise dark storyworld.

*Example 5.1.9: bars 203–206*

What then follows is an increasing shift in foregrounded brass instruments: two horns and cellos take over the centre from the violins (bar 207), after which the trumpet (bar 211) struggles to be heard against the strings’ increasingly higher chromatic figures. Moving towards the ultimate climax (bar 222), this presents the start of both the cuing out of the trumpet as narrator and the falling-apart of the episode. In bar 215, there is the addition of a second trumpet, which, in combination with the music’s intensification, makes the trumpet character drown or disappear into the surrounding chaos. From the high point in bar 222, the violins and flutes descend through a chromatically falling line, simultaneously as the texture dramatically thins out. Against this process of falling apart, the two trumpets perform a descending call, rapidly followed by an urgent statement in six horns (bar 225), giving way to the two trumpets again (bar 229), now muted. All these shifts both blur the mediated perspective of the storyworld as well as disrupt the regularity of its temporal unfolding. They thereby function as a way of producing the collapse of the episode, the gestural waves of angst, and the trumpet’s position as focal character. However, as the sound-world breaks down, there is need for the fanfare of the first trumpet to stop the episode and transport the listener out of it and into the third episode of the funeral event. Starting its phrase before the two other trumpets have ended theirs (bar 232), the trumpet demonstrates its authority and organizing force as narrator. Simultaneously, it also switches role from that of character inside the episode to narrating about it, which further represents a shift from the retold past into the present tense.

**Trio 2: an atmospheric background of sorrow and its voices**

The second trio (bars 323–390) also presents an episode connected to the virtual emotions of darkness tied to the funeral event. Instead of the surrounding

turmoil of angst portrayed by the first trio, the setting is a more subdued background suggesting moods of sorrow and grief. In combination with the different positioning of the brass, this presents a different kind of world construction as well as new ways for the listener to perceive the sound-world.

The start of the second trio is preceded by the familiar fanfare theme, although not in the trumpet but on timpani (bars 316–322, see example 5.1.10). This transmutes the military means of transportation into the episode from the previous ones of curtain opening and calling forth, to an evocation of a military drum signal functioning as an anticipating gesture of summoning. Sounding first $p$ and then $pp$, it is as though the fanfare disappears into the distance, signalling its cue out as transporter.

*Example 5.1.10: bars 316–322*

The start of the episode shocks the listener with its hitherto unheard sound-world in the movement, consisting of a strings-only texture that forms a remarkable contrast to the massive orchestral chaos of the first trio (see example 5.1.11). Since the omnipresence of strings was the norm in terms of orchestration, using only strings could in itself be considered a timbral effect. Mitchell defines the string orchestra of the second trio as forming one of Mahler’s many independent instrumental constellations that together make up an entire collective of orchestras. One can thus say that Mahler marks the episode by using a particular type of timbre that heightens its presentation as an independent unit in the storyworld’s narrative structure. However, looking at Mahler’s revisions of the second trio, this was not the case from the start, regarding both the opening strings and the later foregrounded brass. Mitchell identifies these changes as reflecting Mahler’s overall principle of striving for clarity and transparency of sound, urging him to clean up his often-overloaded textures. The result is a pure string sonority that not only defines the second trio, but also the sonority of strings and harp in the Adagietto. In the string parts, one also finds several of the motifs forming the basis of the second movement’s second theme, such as the triplet figure in the second violins and the rising gesture of a ninth in the violas.

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Like the previous trio, this one unfolds in three phases, ending with a climax and collapse. As well, the brass instruments play prominent roles as mediating agents of the episode, but in other ways and by different speech modes.

While the initial phase (323–336) of the string orchestra establishes an atmospheric background permeating the episode, the second phase (bars 337–356) introduces the marked foregrounding of a solo horn part. Starting with the ascending theme also important in the second movement, Mahler endows the instrument with a songful, recitative-like melody normally not conceived for horns, making it into a virtual agent speaking with a direct, mimetic voice. As a foreground voice relative to the background setting, it speaks inside a storyworld coloured by a mood, reflecting its tone. As in the third movement of the Fourth Symphony, world and mood are thus correlated and affect each other. Notably here, Mahler took away the entire woodwind section originally forming part of the texture, resulting in the marked clarity of the horn part that otherwise would not have been the case.

The underlining of the second phase by foregrounding the horn further mirrors Mahler’s motivic instrumentation, which means the heightening of the motifs that make up a melody or a theme. A prominent example of this is evident in the transition to the third phase (bars 353–356), where three levels of instrumentation (i.e., woodwinds, brass, and strings) have their own motivic profiles in simultaneous combination; moreover, they relate to the group of motifs that start and end the second movement.
A new motivic marking signals the third phase (bars 357–376) and a modified perspective, where two trombones alternate in a sort of duet. They perform a variation of the horn’s part, evoking a similarly songlike voice, achieved by their elegant timbre in a high register. Again, this is far from traditional scoring for an orchestra. Although the melody shifts between the two instruments through a sort of overlapping (see bars 359 and 363), this is not perceived in the listening act, with the occasional unison instead emerging as the amplification of an otherwise single voice. It is thus plausible to understand one trombone to be speaking as a virtual agent against the atmospheric background. Through Mahler’s transformation of the brass instruments in this way, they become the mediators of the episode presented to the listener.

Just like the first trio, the build-up to the climax (klagend, Fig. 18, bar 369) presents a gradual phasing out of the virtual agent of the trombone and the entire episode, achieved by the addition of two horns (bars 367–368). The subsequent collapse is a drawn-out process similar to a fade-out, gathering the entire orchestral forces, receding into long, static notes that vibrate through the string tremolo. This instance (from bar 377) is normally defined as the start of the coda. However, I regard it as a phasing out of the second episode as well as of the entire movement. The overlapping of the trumpet fanfare (bar 376) signals its narrative intrusion in a similar manner as at the end of the first trio, stepping into the episode’s storyworld in order to end it and transport the listener out of there.

**Summary of the trios: the brass as mediators of external sound theatre**

As opposed to the reframing of elements constituting the world of the funeral setting, in the two contrasting trios, the virtual agents of the brass through their changing positions tell about that world and frame the listener in it. They do so in relation to a sound-world permeated with moods connected to the darkness of this event, either inside, towards, or in front of it. It is not so much about the setting or stage-like mise-en-scène of these episodes as about a suffusing atmosphere establishing the expressive tone of the scene. Through Mahler’s application of the brass instruments in ways reminiscent of drama, they leave their static positions on the stage and become mobile in relation to the sound-worlds about which they narrate. This generates another, more fluid sort of theatre in sound, in which the stage comprises the shifting spatial constructions of the musical world.

These effects stem from Mahler’s prominent scoring for the brass, giving them passages not normally scored for this instrumental group. In contrast, one can compare their frequent foregrounding with that of the woodwinds, which throughout the movement mostly function as orchestral doublings. Whereas in the first trio, the brass instruments have virtuosic passages of shifting speech modes, in the second trio, they have songlike voices reminiscent of recitative. Although many of these ways of speaking arise from soloists, the
various constellations of, for example, duo trombones and horn groups, present various narrating agencies as a changing range of diegetic positions, extending from virtual subjects to those of multiple, collective agencies.

In these episodes of sound theatre, however, the listener remains an external spectator, viewing the drama from the outside but still seeing it from various mobile perspectives and positions. While the subjective possible worlds of the brass agents remain unreachable, they in turn mediate their world versions through their shifting speech modes, which like actors present a multitude of different roles in the unfolding musical drama.

Epilogue: zooming out

Two bars before Fig. 19 (bar 393, schwer), the orchestral accompaniment suddenly disappears, leaving the solo trumpet performing the recurring fanfare as the only player in an otherwise empty texture. This marks the end of the second episode and the trumpet’s transition into a narration external to the episodes. At the same time, the short passage leads into what I view as the movement’s epilogue (bars 393–415). Against long chordal notes marked by caesuras, fragments of the fanfare resound, now in the third B-flat trumpet but still understood as representing the same agent as the previously performing F trumpet. Against the low tremolo of the bass drum, Mahler constructs his common feature of staging music as if sounding from a distance and traversing through space. Two fragmented signals of the fanfare sound on a muted F trumpet, decreasing in dynamics from p to pp, upon which the first flute echoes the motif in ppp (see example 5.1.12). This effect can be traced to what Hesselager calls ‘registral shifts’, in which changes in dynamics of different timbres can move them from foreground to background and vice versa.525 As the signal disappears, again recalling the distant signals of the military, there is an effect of spatial expansion that can be interpreted in two different ways, each functioning as a way of closing the storyworld. The first starts from the listener as a static observer, perceiving the sound as disappearing farther and farther away through space. This suggests that the world is bigger than the current scenic frames imply, analogous to the space behind the theatre or the sounds being heard but not seen on the movie screen. As the trumpet fades away, it simultaneously enlarges the space of the storyworld, moving beyond its boundaries. From a narrative perspective, this technique also becomes a way to cue the narrator out of the story by letting it dissolve, ending the tale and leaving the listener behind.

Another viewpoint is to regard the process the other way round, which implies that the manner of zooming out instead cues the mobile listener out of the storyworld. This represents a reversed means of phasing out the listener and thereby concluding the story.
Second movement: the darkness of circulation and a vision from heaven

The second movement forms part of the dark storyworld comprising Part I, but transports the listener from the first movement’s episodic telling of past events into spaces and worlds of the present. The shared topics of darkness, angst, and sorrow are here transformed from background story to a presentation of the world as outer, surrounding place. This shift is mirrored in the movement’s lack of any narrative or organizing agency analogous to the trumpet, starting or enacting directly. Because of the different construction of sound-worlds, the listener becomes more integrated in this movement than in the distance characterizing the narrative of the first movement.

World-building blocks

In the remaking of world, the aforementioned thematic and motivic interconnections between the movements play a crucial part. This mainly concerns the materials from the first movement’s two trios, but also involves interpolations of the funeral march. These can be considered various building blocks used to construct and develop the storyworld, with Mahler’s manner of scoring the second movement giving them new functions and meanings. His statement that ‘composing is like building with bricks’ here works on two levels: as world construction and as continuous depiction of the topic of darkness. First, there is the ascending intervallic gesture of a ninth presented at the anacrusis of the first trio and in the accompaniment of the second trio of the first movement. Mitchell underlines its importance by assigning it the status of ‘an intervallic leading motive’. Throughout the movement, the motif attains several different functions depending on its instrumentation and textural position, variously as a crying gesture, voice of nature, and means of transportation into new spaces and worlds. Out of the violins’ wild chromatic passages from the first trio, one finds asymmetric descending scalar figures in the woodwinds illustrating destructive collapses or transitional corridors. On a more general level, the violins and the overall turbulent atmosphere of trio 1 represent a sort of blueprint for the first of the second movement’s two principal themes. Finally, also derived from the trios are the accompanying triplets and ascending theme, mainly figuring in the sections that I view as treating topics of nature.

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526 NBL, Recollections, p. 131.
Formal design of world

The unusual outline of the second movement gives it a special formal status, as mentioned previously, more in the manner of a development in relation to the first movement’s exposition. This design is also mirrored in Mahler’s initial definition of the second movement as the ‘Hauptsatz’ of Part I. Despite these circumstances, most analysts ascribe it sonata form – such as Paul Bekker, who spoke of an ‘ingeniously organized sonata form’. In his entourage follows Floros, who even points out that the movement is indeed scored in normal sonata form, despite his later observations of certain ‘peculiarities’ that ‘do not necessarily correspond to traditional sonata form’. As a response to Floros, Mitchell claims that ‘to summon up a sonata scheme [in this context] is – grotesquely – to prevent us from hearing what Mahler was really up to’. Instead, he suggests a form based on discontinuity consisting of the different categories of interruptions, quotations, ascent/collapse, and cut-off. These entities are important for this analysis as well, but due to the storyworld premise, they are interpreted differently and as parts of various spaces and worlds. For example, I regard the descending scalar figures of Mitchell’s cut-off as collapses and world destruction.

It is true that the movement contains two contrasting themes analogous to those of sonata form, one active and violent and the other calmer and elegiac. These are then varied and reworked in line with development and recapitulation. A sonata form structure for the movement would consequently look like this: exposition (bars 1–140), development (bars 141–322), recapitulation (bars 322–351), and coda (bars 520–576).

However, the two theme complexes are so extensively repeated and transformed that the formal boundaries during the course of the movement come across as increasingly blurred. This is reinforced by Mitchell’s observed discontinuity of the music, with the thematic parts appearing in various lengths and with significant, abrupt endings and transitions. The result is a constant cyclical process without any clear direction that becomes especially evident in the listening situation. In addition, there are instances of intrusions of the first movement’s death march, but also of other marches and the chorale, disrupting the musical fabric in a kind of breakthrough that further affects the unfolding of the two themes. An interesting fact is that Mahler in his autograph manuscript full score put repeat signs after what would be termed the exposition part, but soon deleted them. On one hand, this illustrates the composer’s

528 Floros, The Symphonies, p. 145.
530 Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, The Mahler Companion, p. 286.
principle of shunning all repetition and letting the music continuously evolve like the world; on the other hand, it also suggests that he aimed for a different kind of form than the sonata form defined by a temporal process of cyclicality marked by outside effects. As Adorno so aptly observed, the changes inherent in the movement constitute its form.\footnote{Adorno, Mahler, p. 10.}

I interpret the two contrasting themes as the storyworld’s two principal spaces, which, through their continuity and their role as vantage points on the other worlds in the movement, attain the status of main world. Similar to the differentiation of sub-worlds constituting a storyworld, these can be termed sub-spaces belonging to the same main world. By means of different characters, they generate a turbulent, mobile action space and a place in nature, respectively, both centring the listener in various positions. Through Mahler’s many variations inside and between the themes, the spaces constantly change, disappear, diminish, and blend with each other, as in an eternally evolving process of world. Concerning the marches and the chorale, they present other possible worlds in relation to the main world, forming spatio-temporal divergences concerned with memory, parallelism, and the heavenly, attained by the transportable means of the intervallic gesture. In detouring from or into the main world, these worlds change the storyworld, visibly shown in the music as a global effect. As in the first movement, the virtual agents of various brass constellations play prominent roles in the mediation of world and its presentation to the listener.
I start the analysis by discussing the two contrasting themes constituting the principal spaces of the storyworld’s main world. Comprising only two alternating realms, its spatial dimensions are not very large, but are extensively varied. Through Mahler’s construction of these realms out of thematic–motivic materials from the first movement, they are here remade into spaces of world related to the same dark elements. Because of the composer’s treatment of texture and timbre, the respective spaces present different spatial compositions and voices, which affect the listener’s perception of them.

The two spaces are first analysed separately, after which I turn to their subsequent transformative trajectories defined by various kinds of modifications, shortenings, and mixtures. These illustrate ways of making, destroying, and fusing spaces of worlds together, but also illustrate the process of circularity and how that is manifested as an effect on the main world. In addition, this

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Dual spaces: the cyclical process of the main world

The two spaces are first analysed separately, after which I turn to their subsequent transformative trajectories defined by various kinds of modifications, shortenings, and mixtures. These illustrate ways of making, destroying, and fusing spaces of worlds together, but also illustrate the process of circularity and how that is manifested as an effect on the main world. In addition, this
mirrors the topic of darkness by mediating an endlessly transforming meaninglessness, reflected by the melancholy and despair expressed in the two subspaces.

**Action or multi-sound space: first theme**

The short, scalar motif in A minor that initiates the movement incorporates an air of ominous expectation. To be performed *Stürmisch bewegt, mit grösster Vehemenz*, the dark timbre generated by low cellos, double basses, bassoons, and double bassoon in unison directly guides the listener into a menacing atmosphere, signalling frightening anticipation (see example 5.2.1). A short, abrupt diminished seventh chord in four trumpets (*ff*) and violins (*fff*) answers their figure on the first beat of bar 2, as if confirming the sense of anxiety. Their instance forms the start of a series of increasingly rhythmic repudiations, with the chord interruptions entering on a different beat every time, further decentred by the addition of trombones and violas on the first beat of bars 5–6. This generates a textural and temporal asymmetry that defines the entire section, where space is textualized as a broad, multicomponent locus where many things are simultaneously happening in various locations. In combination with the dark, edgy timbre, this space and its actions suggest that it is a threatening and violent one. In just a few bars, Mahler’s scoring establishes a sort of preparatory introduction for what is to come, similar to the atmospheric foreboding presented at the start of the Fourth Symphony’s second movement before the entrance of the figure of Death. The last feature before the stormy outburst in bar 9 is the sudden appearance of a woodwind choir of flutes, oboes, and clarinets. Supported only by accented trombone chords, they perform a series of intervallic gestures of ascending ninths. Because of their high, uncomfortable register, they produce a strained tone sounding exposed due to the sudden loss of forceful orchestral support. In the context of what is to come, the speech gestures resonate with angst-ridden cries erupting from a collective of multiple agents expressing anticipated fear. This also marks the presence of some humanlike agency at the scene of events.
After the establishment of an introductory space and atmosphere evocative of darkness, the violins initiate the main theme consisting of rapid, scalar passage work alternating downwards and upwards. Together with the wind choir, the first violins reach the high F in bar 9 via an expanded interval of a compound 535

535 According to Mahler’s notation in the score, ‘Anmerkung für den Dirigenten: Geigen so vehement als möglich!’ (‘Note to the conductor: Violins as forceful as possible!’).
perfect fourth, implying a final outcry as chaos is unleashed. As Mitchell observes, this anacrusis gesture as well as the theme traces back to the turbulent chromaticism of the first movement’s first trio.\textsuperscript{536} However, the violins form only one part of the overall texture, which suggests another kind of spatial presentation. Compared with the whirling turmoil of anxiety in trio 1, the textural rhythmic asymmetry, displayed along with forceful trombone chords and chromatic figures in the lower winds and strings, constructs a sort of three-dimensional action space. In this context, the violins provide an ongoing, constructive activity for the rest of the displaced sounds. A particular feature is how Mahler’s way of using the horn group makes them resemble real-world sounds. Introduced at the very start (bars 9–10) with a figure of short crotchets preceded by grace notes, these gestures reappear in bars 18–20 and 23–27 to great effect (see example 5.2.2). By marking the exaggerated landing beat of the crotchet following upon the triplets with trombones, timpani, and later cymbals, there arises a sound analogous to a hard physical blow. Johnson draws attention to the obvious violence attained by various forms of hitting and striking in Mahler, but here the violence simultaneously arises from timbre itself.\textsuperscript{537}

\textsuperscript{536} Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, \textit{The Mahler Companion}, p. 290.
\textsuperscript{537} Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 38.
In this first part of the first theme (bars 9–30), texture and timbre construct dark surroundings of menacing environmental sounds that resonate with Mahler’s original conception of polyphony as multidirectional sound. By making the music into a three-dimensional space in which the active mobility of

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538 See quotation in the chapter on Mahler’s sound-world.
sounds is contained, space consequently becomes static. This affects the position of the listener who, in contrast to the exterior placement of the first trio, now gains the role of an observer, being able to overlook the scene with a sort of panoramic view. In spatial theories of narratology, this is similar to a sort of map view of the scene as opposed to the tour view of the funeral march event.\(^{539}\) Whereas we, unlike in the world-sound cannot identify the causes of the sounds, they are, as I argued regarding the nightmare episode of the Fourth’s first movement, perceived in terms of spatial imagery in relation to our bodies by means of conceptual language. This entails locations of sounds similar to those heard in real life, albeit defined by means of approximate position and character. Out of the material and atmosphere of trio 1, there is a remaking or spatialization into a new construction of world.

As the horns’ hitting sounds increase in frequency, through a crescendo in trumpets (bar 27), the music attains a sort of climax, upon which a quick scalar descent leads to one final blow in the form of a massive \(sf\) chord. Marking the end of the section’s first part, this hurrying compression of temporal progression will mark the rest of the movement as a way of making spaces of the storyworld fall apart.

The second part of the section (bars 31–64) is transformed into a rocking, more regular accompaniment that reduces the three-dimensionality of space in favour of the successive foregrounding of various constellations of brass instruments. Sound effects similar to hits persist to some degree, attained through violin \(sf\) accents together with \(sf\) horn stops. The urgently pressing trombone chords towards the end (starting in bar 60) partly mediate the heaviness of the blows, as well as presenting another recurring feature – and building brick – from the first trio and funeral event. The brass instances also link to the first movement, so that one can speak of transportation between the movements due to their shared storyworld and topic of darkness. In bar 43, an ascending triplet motif sounds in the trumpets (see example 5.2.3), instantly followed by a variation for horns and trumpets together, supported by woodwinds. As the music increases in intensity, a choir of six stopped horns culminates in a fanfare-like figure. Their amplified announcing, preaching tone attained through gesture and tone recalls a predication, in the manner of messengers in Greek drama arriving to deliver information.\(^{540}\) This metaphor lies close to Riemann’s characterization of the brass as ‘the prophets and high-priests of the orchestra’.\(^{541}\) Considering the brass’s established connection to the storyworld through their figuration in the first movement’s backstory, it is plausible to liken their presence in this movement to an entrance into the present of the storyworld with the aim of telling or reporting something. Since

\(^{539}\) Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Space’, \(LHN\).


\(^{541}\) Hesselager, \textit{Making Sense of Sounds}, p. 33.
this kind of speech presupposes an attentive audience, the listener becomes the addressee of the announcements, albeit as a passive, statically placed agent.

*Example 5.2.3: bars 43–46*

The second part also reaches a climactic high point (bar 65), where the stop on long notes on a dissonant chord in the high register resembles hitting a wall or a terrifying scream. This forms the starting point of the section’s ultimate collapse (see example 5.2.4), consisting of asymmetric descending scalar figures in the woodwinds marked by stops of muted brass. Together with the forward-pressing effect of *sehr drängend* and the decreasing dynamics, they illustrate the destruction of the storyworld’s action space, which falls apart like a house of cards. This is further reflected symbolically in the tritone motif in the trumpets and the woodwinds’ inferno figures. The demolition of world also functions as a way of leaving the present space and transporting the listener to the next.

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Example 5.2.4: bars 63–73
Simultaneously, the destruction of world is also the destruction of virtual human agency. Accompanying the winds are two subsequent ascending gestures in the violas and second violins, the latter in at weaker dynamic level than the former so that they too disappear like a fading echo. Scored for these strings, these gestures recall the contours of human sighs, underlined by the instruments’ sonorous timbre and inward quality. Performing in unison, the violas and second violins mediate a sort of collective agency that traces back to the woodwind cries at the beginning of the section, suggesting that they have been present in the space all along, albeit not focalized. Together with the world,
that agency finally falls apart, symbolizing darkness also in the form of human despair. Thus again, there is a correlation between inner mood and outer world, the one reflected in the other.

**Intrusive voices of nature: second theme and space**

The timpani roll initiated at the climax (bar 65) is the only instrument left in the wake of the collapse, functioning as a barely audible, one-bar transition to the second theme (bars 74–140). The realm of the military thereby continues to exert influence as a means of transportation, albeit in a more subdued way analogous to the timpani fanfare preceding the second trio of the first movement. Out of the silence following the destruction of the action space, a different kind of sound-world announces itself (see example 5.2.5). The raw brutality characterizing the heavy brass timbre now gives way to a soft but cautious woodwind choir. Their sound appears even more out of place due to the key change to F minor without any harmonic preparation and due to the altered tempo (*bedeutend langsamer*, ‘significantly slower’). All these sudden shifts together produce the effect of an imaginary recentring, transporting the listener into a space situated somewhere else in the storyworld than the action space. In the following, I argue that this is a place situated in nature inhabited by intrusive voices, in which a virtual subject finds itself and expresses its melancholic lament. Mahler’s experimentation with surround sound continues, but the focus is predominantly on the shifting foregrounding of the virtual subject and nature, into which the listener is incorporated. This entails a deeper sense of spatial immersion as well as a mobile oscillation between inner and outer worlds, which run side by side in a continuously varying degree of focal depth.
The motifs initiating the section are familiar from the second trio’s accompaniment, consisting of the triplet figure and the ascending, intervallic gesture of a ninth. Mahler acknowledges their interlinking by assigning the designation ‘im Tempo des ersten Satzes „Trauermarsch’”. Through the altered instrumentation from strings to woodwinds, however, the motifs are transformed into a new setting of what I regard as a place in nature. In this way,
there is a spatialization of the earlier atmospheric background, in a way similar to that of the action space from the motifs of the first trio. This remaking arises from Mahler’s particular treatment of timbre and texture, but also from the woodwinds’ more heterogeneous tone colour in relation to one another compared with the strings’ homogeneity.

Texturally, the motifs are spread among the various woodwind parts so that they appear as voices from different places in space analogous to those of the action space. This surround sound effect further arises out of Mahler’s way of dynamically differentiating the parts, generating the sensation of echoes. The strained tone produced by the clarinet in its high register (bars 74–75) and the group of three oboes performing a compressed, nasal-sounding F minor chord (bars 75–76) also endow these voices with a tone of disturbing intrusiveness. Constant sf–p dynamics by means of diminuendo add to both the quality of timbre and echo effects. Together, the instruments recall a group of fragmentary animal voices emerging in an empty space, coming forth alternately and creating cacophony through the repeated triplets or calling gestures of the ascending ninth. As such, these animal voices differ in kind from those of the fairy-tale nature world in the Fourth Symphony’s Scherzo, there presented in the manner of a lustig, comic character sounding inside a safe and harmonious, enclosed space.

After the initial cueing of a natural setting, there follows yet another motif derived from the second trio, as the cellos enter (bar 78) with a variant of the first violin theme. Their elegiac melody and lamenting tone clearly resonate with the voice of a virtual human agent, illustrated by Mahler’s performance direction of molto cantando. The sonority of a unison group of cellos assumes a more humanlike voice than that of other strings, such as the violins. As Berlioz wrote in his famous treatise on instrumentation:

Violoncellos, in a group of eight or ten, are essentially melodic instruments; their tone on the upper strings is one of the most expressive in the entire orchestra. Nothing is so melancholy, nothing so suitable to rendering tender, languishing melodies, as a mass of violoncellos playing unisono on the highest string.\footnote{Hector Berlioz and Richard Strauss, \textit{Treatise on Instrumentation} (New York, 1991), p. 82.}

Compared with the presence of virtual agency expressed by the more timbrally diluted unison violins in the Fourth Symphony’s Scherzo, this is also a voice mode mediating a sense of melancholy and inward contemplation. Recalling Mahler’s statement about the two relations between Man and Nature, the alienation here suggests a ‘painful and hostile opposition’ in contrast to happy harmony.\footnote{NBL, \textit{Recollections}, pp. 96–97.}

Further reflected in the persistent, intrusive surrounding animal
voices, this voice mode illustrates the composer’s nuances in the representation of the same topic, where nature emerges as a lonely place mirroring the darkness experienced by the virtual subject. Through identification with the speech and mood of this voice, the listener becomes integrated in the natural place, experiencing the simultaneously surrounding sounds from the position of an agent instead of an observer as before.

What follows is an alternation between more or less foregrounding the sounds of nature and the expression of the virtual subject, between exterior and interior space so that one can speak of simultaneous worlds. Through Mahler’s technique of the colouring of line, an actorial continuity of the virtual subject presented by the cellos persists through various instruments, gradually increasing in focus. In bar 87, the melodic line travels to the clarinets (marked *espress.* and *etwas hervortretend*), simultaneously as the cellos decrease in dynamics to *pp* and the higher woodwind parts momentary disappear. As the animal voices reappear in bar 89, the melodic line shifts again between the cellos and clarinets before being gradually overtaken by the violins (from bar 93). From now on, the motifs of the woodwinds begin to thin out, leaving the triplets and ascending gestures behind as the melody finally reaches the first violins (bar 98). Their gradual increase in register expands the spatial frames of the strings, foregrounded against the background of motifs now more sparsely distributed in the lower register of the woodwinds. This process illustrates a deeper and deeper withdrawal into the inner world of the virtual subject, which, through the colouring of line, gives voice and expression to many shifting nuances. The retreating of the natural sounds into a more obscure and less intrusive background suggests that the inner world presents an escape from their persistent presence.

However, nature subsequently comes back into focus, building up tension through the triplets’ initial *sf* accents towards the emergence of a new voice sounding from two horns (bar 109). By giving them the cello melody from the beginning, Mahler transforms the instrument’s traditional function of calling into that of an expressive, humanlike voice in nature as compared with calls performed by humans. The melody nevertheless gets drowned out by the accompaniment figures in the winds and pizzicato violins, suffused with an estranged atmosphere attained by the occasional instances of triangle. This further reflects how, in contrast to the world of nature in the Fourth Symphony’s second movement, the sounds of nature disturb and overrule the voice of the subject.

At Fig. 7 (bar 117), there is an abrupt change in timbre when the music abandons the higher register and is transformed into the ascent theme from trio 1. Scored for violins starting on the G string together with cellos, Mahler creates a new sound-world permeated with a deep, melancholic sonority in which the strings again expand into a foregrounded inner world. With the accompaniment figures now placed in the lower wind register and the brass, the voices of nature again recede into the background.
Towards the end of the section, there is a process of dynamic and textural intensification signalling the beginning of the natural place’s dissolution. As a part of this, both the voice of the virtual human subject and those of nature appear increasingly out of sync with each other, particularly evident in the strained timbre of the high-register oboe triplets together with the second violins’ pizzicato. Underlined by crescendo brass swells, the music finally reaches the descending scalar motifs, again illustrating how the world falls apart on the brink of catastrophe.

In contrast to the action space, the natural place presents a more dynamic spatial unfolding, with the listener gaining access to the different spaces of the outer surroundings and the inner, possible worlds, as well as to various focal degrees of these, making them exist in parallel in different degrees of sharpness. Simultaneously, the natural place presents a way of being in and perceiving nature, in which the virtual subject experiences alienation from its voices. Instead of embodying a place to rest and dwell in, nature invites inward reflection, melancholy, and lamentation, resulting in a withdrawal from nature and the surrounding, dark world.

Circular processes: spatial and temporal compression of world
This time, the descending scalar figures do not lead to the collapse and consequently destruction of world, but proceed directly back to the first theme of the action space. The effect becomes one of a rearranging the theatre stage’s mise-en-scène, with the changing of setting being visible to the spectator. Another analogy is that of a transitional corridor, separating the spatial frames of the natural space from those of the action one. In narratology, these frames might be fuzzy or clear-cut, the hallway between different rooms in a house being one example of the latter. The corridor between the two spaces invites an analogy of such a clear-cut boundary, serving as a means of transportation.

Recentring back to an already visited space in the storyworld, I view the return of the first theme more as a continuation than a restart in terms of development, which is the common view of this shift. As I previously argued in the analysis of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement, the repetition of sections is necessary for the musical establishment of recurring features of world, which due to the medium’s lack of language, would otherwise be impossible.

In the following, I discuss the continuous alternation between the main world’s sub-spaces, lasting from bars 146–265 up to the intrusion of the other possible worlds. Their interchange presents a cyclical process permeated with what I call spatial and temporal compression, which also affects the contained virtual agents and consequently the perspective of the listener. As I will show, this development becomes a means of mediating the darkness of the storyworld.

545 Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Space’, LHN.
The first reiteration of the first theme (bars 146–174) presents a stripped-down orchestral texture in which the earlier asymmetrical instrumental parts as a result tend towards a more linear, straightforward rhythmic division, illustrated by the designation Streng im Takt. This suggests a decrease in the previously three-dimensional surround sound space and, consequently, in the action of the scene, making the world into an even more deserted place. The effect is also partly due to the change in timbre, which has lost some of its physicality and violence. For example, this shows in the absence of the horns’ blows or hits and in their instruction to perform with ‘Bells up!’ instead of gestopft, generating a more open, immediate brass sound, appropriate for passages in which refinement of tone is not called for.

The decrease in spatiality continues from bar 157, where unison cellos, double basses, bassoons, and double bassoon perform a variant of the trumpet motif (see Fig. 3, bar 43), transforming three-dimensionality into a more two-dimensional, linear course of events. This spatial compression mirrors a similar one taking place in the temporal dimension. Against the sole background of the low instruments, the solo trumpet performs yet another variant of the motif, followed by a quick succession of call-like statements in a group of six unmuted horns and a short utterance marked by the ascending triplet in two trombones. The compressed shortness of the section (bars 157–174) generates an effect analogous to the fast-forward technique in films, making the scene unfold more rapidly. However, the temporal manipulation can also be ascribed to the announcing, proclaiming speech of the brass agents, which, because of their fast sequence, approach what in narratology is termed summary. Summary represents the opposite of scene, referring to the mode of telling in contrast to that of showing. Whereas summary in the manner of ‘a concentrated report of events of the narrator’ cannot be mediated by the brass’s speeches, this fast-forwarding of their successive, message-like gestures generates the temporal effect of summary.546

The compression process also serves as a means to lead the music into the subsequent climax and collapse (from bar 175). Presenting the longest version of the scalar, asymmetrical descent in the movement, again containing the symbol of inferno figures underlined by tritones in the brass, this time it comes across more as a draining than a collapse of world. The ascending gestures in the strings consequently more closely resemble humanlike struggling attempts to rise again or remain in this world, which, however, die out into nothingness. There is again a simultaneous reflection of human and world destruction, illustrating how the darkness of world affects human beings, and vice versa.

The natural place of the second theme (bars 189–253) is also temporally shortened and defined by an increasing cacophony of various simultaneous

voices, thickening space into a crowded and condensed area. Like the action space, it moves towards a reversal into chaos resulting from this development.

Before the start of that process, however, the cellos emerge with a lamenting monody consisting of a sole, melodic line (see example 5.2.6). By emerging from this dark emptiness, it is as if they reconstitute the humanlike expression of voice inside the action space and not inside the natural one. Marked klagend and filled with glissandos resonating with speech gestures, the cellos’ slowly unfolding arc assimilates a recitative-like contemplation of inwardness, reflecting the dark emptiness of the world. This presents a momentary temporal pause or suspension of the story-time and its increasing compression, in which the virtual human subject gains space for interior meditation.

Example 5.2.6: bars 189–206

Gradually, however, the motifs from the natural place re-emerge (bar 214), remade out of the action space in contrast to being placed at a further distance, as before. Consequently, the main world has shrunk, and the earlier separated realms start to merge. This time, the texture presents several simultaneous, competing sounds and parts, which affect the spatial design of nature and its voices. The melody of the cellos now directly resides in the horns, simultaneously as the ascending gesture and triplet motifs emerge in the flutes and violins, as well as in the languishing cellos. Notably, a solo violin doubles the first flute’s ascending gesture, mediating the exposed, fragile inner voice earlier found in Mahler’s landscape portrayal. Rather than a place for safety, however, here that voice enters into a sort of cacophony with the other voices, culminating starting in bar 218 as muted trumpets also join with the triplet motif, producing an eerie as well as disturbing effect. There is a sense of spatial thickness or condensation because of all these voices, i.e., those of nature intruding on the virtual subject. This is further apparent starting in bar 222, when the strings’ ascending theme does not spatially expand into an inner world, but continues to be disturbed by the flutes (bars 224–226), whose high-pitched timbre clashes with the deeper, sonorous one.
As the texture and consequently the simultaneous sounds decrease, the cello and bass parts are suddenly transformed into the trumpet motif from Fig. 3 (bar 43), generating a dark atmosphere suffusing the ongoing lyrical melody (Fig. 13, bar 230, see example 5.2.7). The motif is directly echoed in two stopped horns, evoking a sense of eeriness. This appearance of themes from the action space suggests that there is yet again a merging of the two spaces and further shrinking of the main world. Apart from the horrific mood casting a shadow over the natural place, there is also an effect of emptiness resulting from the disappearance of the surrounding voices. Against the background of an intensifying chromatic build-up in the strings, there is a succession of calling brass figures (bars 242–253) in various constellations of horns, trombones and tuba, trumpets, horns, and then trumpets again. One can liken their statements to a series of compressed announcements, which culminate in a return to the theme of the action space (bar 254). They thus function as callers or announcers of yet another spatial reformation, which also signals the end of the natural place as its motifs do not return in the movement in the instruments evoking its particular setting.
The final section of the action space is the shortest up to this point, consisting of only twelve bars (bars 254–265). It is not really an action space any more, but presents a spare, stripped down texture suggestive of a lonely, sparse environment. The brass statements now appear in a sort of imitation that, in addition to increasing the earlier temporal compression of fast-forward and summary, also puts these statements into conversation with each other rather than
calling out to an audience. Their cacophony of voices is suggestive of an argument, as though finally reaching out to each other since there is no one left in the deserted world to listen to them.

What finally stops the endless alternations and remakings of the main world’s sub-spaces is the interpolation of the death march from the first movement, followed by another interpolation of the march and subsequently the chorale. Adorno notes the necessity of these instances in order to break the otherwise never-ending procedure, claiming that the vision of the chorale ultimately saves the movement from circularity. But this circularity, I argue, is also a means of mediating the darkness of the storyworld, where the constant collapsing and merging of space illustrate a sense of the meaninglessness of the course of the world, which struggles to survive but gets nowhere. This is further reflected in the resulting upheaval of a linear sense of temporality, aptly captured by Adorno’s statement that the movement has neither history nor direction, its energy seeming to flow backwards.\textsuperscript{547} Circularity becomes a way of musically depicting a world process, which can also be identified on a smaller scale as several cycles, each consisting of the two themes. Their unfolding occurs in phases, each different from the previous one, but they never escape from these ongoing cycles themselves. Consequently, they are in need of outside events like the chorale that affects the world and breaks its course. Mahler’s manner of extensively varying the two themes in this way up to a climactic, defining point erases the sense of clear formal structure in the traditional sense, instead making form into a process that also constitutes its narrative.

Darkness also shows in the development of spatial and temporal compression defining the modification of the separate sub-spaces. Whereas the former either strips down the world to a deserted, empty place as in the action space or makes it into a crowded cacophony of voices in nature, the latter works as both a narrative technique and a way of mediating the aspiring catastrophe or chaos of the world. The technique of fast-forward and summary generates the increasing disorder of the brass agents and thereby also serves as a particular depiction of the world and the voices that tell about it.

In this dark world, there is no room for the virtual subject, which does not even have a place in the nature that earlier offered safety and harmony. Consequently, it moves inwards rather than outwards, where it drowns in the intrusive \textit{Naturlauts} and is ultimately phased out.

\textbf{Mahler the editor: on the marches as possible worlds}

Towards the end of the circular process of the two sub-spaces (from bar 261), there is a series of ascending gestures in the violins answered by echoes of

\textsuperscript{547} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, pp. 10–11.
flutes, oboes, and muted trumpet. These lead not to an expected new collapse or return to the second theme, but to a reintroduction of the funeral march (bar 120 ff.) from the first movement, after which follows another new march in A-flat major.

These two march sections belong to what I regard as a series of other possible worlds that diverge from the main world by generating spatio–temporal dimensions erupting out of or into its spatial frames. Apart from changes in key, tempo, and style, Mahler marks these worlds by shifts of timbre, prepared by the series of ascending gestures that I argue serve as a gradual means of transportation. In this section, I discuss the two marches and in the next, I proceed to the chorale, which presents a particular kind of possible world through its connections to the heavenly, as well as its several occurrences in both this and the final movement of the symphony.

One can liken the successive, ascending gestures increasing in intervallic distance and preceding the funeral march as a process of transportation to a new space and world. Their intensifying gestures or leaps reminiscent of human-like sighs suggest that some sort of struggle defines this transport, as compared with, for example, the more direct portals discussed in the Fourth Symphony’s second movement. As the final intervallic gesture of a ninth proceeds into the funeral march (bar 266), there is a simultaneous change of key (B-sharp major), tempo (*plötzlich wieder bedeutend langsamer*, ‘suddenly much slower again’), and style (march music). As with the second theme, Mahler underlines the connection to the first movement by in addition giving it the *Tempo des ersten Satzes Trauermarsch*.

That this is a shift to a new space is reflected in how Mahler makes the interruption graphically apparent by mid-bar dotted lines drawn vertically through the score. As for the march itself, it derives from what, in the first movement, I interpreted as the transformed woodwind band from the elegiac, melodic song. Here, the scoring is also for winds but with a more dominant string colour, which consequently makes the music more expressive and emotional than that of the earlier virtually performing band. This change of tone becomes even more palpable because of the significant reduction of the previously foregrounded brass instruments. Mitchell interprets the march section here as a quotation, but due to these altered cues of setting, I regard it more as a recentring backwards towards the emotions connected to the funeral event rather than towards the event itself. This transport back in time implies memory, which, as a mental act of imagining, presents another possible world. It can be seen as a sort of memory space, a room of the past in which the listener is directed backwards from the here and now of the main world. These interlinkings of space and time demonstrate their dimensional co-dependency and how they inform and influence each other.

Towards the end of the section (from bar 284), to the accompaniment of the triplet motifs and intervallic figure from the second trio, first violins culminate in a series of preparatory ascending gestures, marked by caesuras and transporting the listener into the second march (bars 288–315, see example 5.2.8). Again, there is a change of key (A-flat major) and tempo (*più mosso subito, aber immer noch nicht so schnell wie zu Anfang*, ‘suddenly more quickly, but still not as fast as at the beginning’), but this march is different in kind from the funeral march. First, it presents new material not previously heard in the movement, sounding oddly out of place with the rest of the music. Together with its quirky and energetic character, this generates an abrupt shift into its sound-world, as though the listener entered into a space to the side of the memory space. Mitchell describes the effect of the funeral march as follows: ‘It is as if a door had shut on one orchestra, and opened on another, in another room where the “Trauermarsch” is still in progress’. In my view, it is instead this march that has such an effect, but as a room in the manner of a space in another possible world situated in parallel with the main world. The static quality of the march contributes to this sensation, that we are stuck in this place in terms of a sort of waiting room, where time is momentarily paused or suspended. This is another way of telling by means of the march compared with the more mobile one of the funeral setting.

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The two marches discussed in this section present spatio–temporal deviations back from and to the side of the main world, forming escape rooms allowing evasion of its dark circularity. By producing these shifts in space and time, one can liken Mahler’s way of working here to that of an editor, cutting in and
copying/pasting the marches into the musical fabric so that they generate new worlds and meanings. While these sections themselves break the cyclical process, they in turn prepare the way for the larger impact made by the subsequent appearance of the chorale.

A vision from heaven: the break-in world of the chorale

Just like the marches, the first short version of the chorale emerges from the transporting series of ascending gestures, following a gradual intensification of the march music in the high registers of winds and strings. The tendency towards chaos is deflected through landing on a sudden high point (pesante, plötzlich anhaltend, bar 316) by means of the intervallic gesture of an eleventh. Together with changes in key (A major) and a slower tempo, there is a marked alteration in timbre by means of the brass, which have notably been silent for several bars. Their majestically sounding triads, with timpani and triangle accompaniment and rising figures in the strings and winds, seem to present an ultimate escape from the main world’s darkness. Only a few bars later (bar 322, Fig. 18), however, there is an abrupt return to that world by means of the familiar scalar descent. Mahler again uses the vertical mid-bar dotted line to signal this moment. The transportation means of ascending gestures here suggests an upwards direction, an attempt to reach something situated higher above, yet impossible to reach.

The first moment of the chorale anticipates its longer, often discussed second appearance in the movement, but as I discuss in the next section, this brief instance, together with the marches, already has noticeable effects on the storyworld’s main world.

As with marches, chorales have a special place in Mahler’s musical output and are found in most of his symphonies except for the Fourth, Ninth, and Tenth. Floros notes that Mahler’s chorales appear to be his own inventions, showing no signs of borrowings from Gregorian or Protestant church music. More interesting in this context than the degree to which the chorale resembles its original function, however, is how Mahler, at its second appearance, makes it enter the work as an intrusion from the outside. This effect is analogous to Durchbruch or ‘breakthrough’, presenting the first of Adorno’s categories in his conception of Mahler’s material idea of form. Moreover, the concept of breakthrough can be linked to that of world, both as in itself comprising a world and as the effect it has on the surrounding storyworld. Sheinbaum makes a valuable claim regarding this point, stating that ‘the breakthrough allows a piece to resemble the natural world more closely’, capturing the entire

550 Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler and the Symphony of the 19th Century* (Frankfurt am Main, 2014), pp. 91–95.
world as infinite as opposed to the finite totality of the work.\textsuperscript{552} This reflects my following argument that the chorale constitutes another possible world coming from outside the main world, breaking into its frames and consequently also affecting its spaces and temporal unfolding. Hence, as a totality comprising a number of worlds, the storyworld also encompasses possible worlds existing outside its vantage point of main world.

As Sheinbaum observes, passages of breakthrough in Mahler are defined by markings of instrumental colour that set them apart from the rest of the movement.\textsuperscript{553} Similar to the breakthrough in the first movement of the First Symphony, that of the second movement (bars 464–519) in the Fifth characteristically uses massed brass with fanfare topics together with a chorale-like melody. As a sudden decrescendo follows the by now familiar intervallic ascending gestures, trumpets and trombones sound the first sub-phrase of the chorale (bars 464–70) simultaneously as the rest of the orchestra drops out (see example 5.2.9). As Sheinbaum notes, there is no neat overlap, there being ‘a sonic break’ between the orchestra’s disappearance and the entrance of the brass. The marking of the passage by timbre gains further effect because the brass instruments were silent for 27 bars before the chorale, in addition to the open, purely melodic sound of the unmuted trumpets. Adorno too draws attention to this constructive instrumentation of Mahler’s, stating that the breakthrough only gains its power because of the brass’s previous silence.\textsuperscript{554} Another important feature of this instrumentation is the addition of the harp, which enters here for the first time in the entire movement with distinctive \textit{fff} glissando figures. As with the previous shorter chorale instance, the strings provide an actively working accompaniment that contributes to the ceremonial and celebratory character of the passage. In addition to the features of timbre, the suddenly slower tempo (\textit{plötzlich etwas anhalten}) and new key of D major help to signal the sense of a sonic event.

\textsuperscript{552} Sheinbaum, ‘Adorno’s Mahler and the Timbral Outsider’, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{553} Sheinbaum, ‘Adorno’s Mahler and the Timbral Outsider’, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{554} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 119.
Because of the chorale’s function as a breakthrough coming from outside the previously dark and stormy surroundings, I interpret it as another world breaking into the main world. The generic connotations of the chorale suggest that this world has connections to the sacred and the sublime, but as a result of Mahler’s way of scoring it, the chorale instead gains the quality of something coming into the work from above. When Mahler commented on the D major chord of the breakthrough passage of the finale of the First Symphony, he said
that it ‘had to sound as though it had fallen from heaven’.\textsuperscript{555} A similar analogy can be made for the chorale of the Fifth, defining it as a world coming from heaven. Adorno follows Mahler’s own metaphor by likening the chorale to a vision, having ‘the phantasmagoric quality of a celestial appearance’.\textsuperscript{556} Whereas the chorale as a genre functions as a cue or reference point for the topic of heaven, its musical illustration as a vision in the form of another possible world coming from above is attributable to its breakthrough effect as well as the contrast created to the darkness of the main world. As such, it presents the only light in an otherwise meaningless existence, resonating in the chorale’s heralding fanfares and triumphant character. Although some cues relate to timbre, such as the presence of harp figures in the chorale, it presents a different manner of mediating the heavenly than the shimmering string sonority in the third movement of the Fourth.

In the manner of a vision, after reaching a climactic ‘highpoint’ (bar 500, marked \textit{Höhepunkt} in the score), the chorale fades away in the manner of a drawn-out diminuendo in which the orchestral parts successively disappear. Mahler’s technique of scoring sound as though it traverses a distance, simultaneously decreasing in volume, here works both in defining the world as a vision and as a way of destroying or cuing out that world. Abruptly, in bar 520, the music falls back into the ominous atmosphere of the first theme.

Because of the chorale’s reappearance in the Finale in the same key of D major, then integrated in the movement’s tonic and mood, its function in the second movement is normally seen as anticipating its subsequent affirmative message. Mitchell, for example, argues that the tonic major of the chorale is ‘unveiled as the goal after which Part I has been remorselessly seeking’.\textsuperscript{557} This view reflects the tendency of analysts to try to explain the function of the breakthrough of the chorale within familiar formal types related to tonal relationships. As Sheinbaum rightly observes, the chorale is an unpredictable structural moment of the form,\textsuperscript{558} which is also apparent in its function as a break-in world. Instead of forming a goal towards which both the second movement and the entire symphony strive, it represents an unforeseen event that has an effect on the world and its cyclical process. The chorale thus forms part of the movement’s narrative but as something that changes the music rather than the other way round. This illustrates Adorno’s claim that vision and form determine each other.\textsuperscript{559} Moreover, if one looks at the chorale from this perspective over the course of the entire symphony, its successive integration into the surrounding music defines it as a gradual process of break-in, starting in the second movement. As I will show in the analysis of the Finale, at the

\textsuperscript{555} Sheinbaum, ‘Adorno’s Mahler and the Timbral Outsider’, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{556} See Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, pp. 11–12.
\textsuperscript{557} Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, \textit{The Mahler Companion}, p. 293.
\textsuperscript{558} Sheinbaum, ‘Adorno’s Mahler and the Timbral Outsider’, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{559} Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 11.
last instance of the chorale, although superficially appearing to conform to jubilant affirmation, Mahler’s orchestration of it presents it as a sort of ironic joke.

In the next section, I outline how the music forming the main world displays the significant effects of both appearances of the chorale in the movement. As a global effect on the storyworld, it enters from the outside as another possible world, disturbing its course from that moment on.

After the chorales: global effects on the storyworld

The global effects on the storyworld’s main world manifest themselves directly after the first instance of the chorale, which by a collapse (Fig. 18, bar 322) leads back to the main theme of the action space. However, the music struggles to regain its previous state and spatial dimensionality, with the repeated ascending intervallic gesture now functioning as a successive means of achieving that former structure. After several frantic repeats of the gesture in the violins and woodwinds, the music, via a brutal diminished-seventh chord in stopped horns, finally succeeds in its attempts to restart the descending figure initiating the theme (bar 333). Compared with the introductory section, this part is even more rhythmically disjunctive, with the irregular horn blows and asymmetrical texture again generating a sense of multi-sound chaos, intensified by the stormy, constructive activity of the violins. Simultaneously, it appears as though the music has lost its former energy because of the reduced physicality of the brass timbre, presenting a somewhat temporally compressed version of its former self. Just as Mahler can ‘heat up’ or exaggerate tone from within, he can also empty it or pare it down, here achieving that effect through the recentring to an earlier visited space. In the wake of the chorale, these changes can be interpreted as the main world being shattered, both spatially and temporally, losing several of its former characteristic features.

Another difference from before the chorale is that motifs from the place in nature have migrated to the brass, following the transition of the first theme to its second part (Fig. 20, bar 352). Through this re-instrumentation, the previous voices and sounds of nature are transformed into a much nastier and more menacing atmosphere by means of the horns’ ascending, swelling gestures and the quavers of the trumpets, whose muted timbre generates a ghostly, eerie tone. It is as though the main world tries to rebuild itself using the building blocks of the nature setting, which again are starting to merge with one another in order to survive as world. Ultimately, everything culminates at Wuchtig (‘weighty’, bar 428), where the brass mediates a temporally suspended sensation of horror and darkness, produced by the succession of ff and accented sf chords followed by descending gestures in trombones and tuba.

In unexpected contrast, however, the second instance of the chorale materializes shortly after this collapse, as a break-in world from heaven. The same emptiness and temporal compression define the return to the main theme (bar
520), which again tries to rebuild itself as a world through the ascending intervallic gesture. Compared with the previous appearance of the first chorale, several aspects of the texture and constituting materials are gone, as though this second chorale has finally shattered the main world and left it in a fragmentary state.

Finally, the former action space dies away in a diminuendo, in which a lonely muted trumpet echoes a final signal (bar 554) as it disappears in the distance through decreasing dynamics. This gesture and technique suggest that the trumpet narrator from the first movement, also present in this one, has stepped into the storyworld to put an end to Part I, exerting the same double effects of spatial expansion as before.

However, the movement does not end here, but has one final epilogue to present. At Fig. 33 (bar 557), there is a striking shift in sound erupting from the combination of string harmonics, harp, and short woodwind notes (see example 5.2.10). The instrumentation evokes a surreal, shimmering timbre that, in relation to the resurfacing harp, at this point suggests that it is a last vision of the chorale that appears. Simultaneously, the main theme resonates in lower strings as a dark shadow, but the fragmentary presence of the chorale implies that it also has broken into the world of darkness and not only globally affected its main world.
As a last echo, an overlapping sequence of the ascending intervallic gesture sounds in solo viola, cello, and tuba, illustrating the humanlike collapse that takes place in parallel with that of the storyworld (see example 5.2.11). A long pause follows the last bar (folgt lange Pause), signalling the final ending of the dark world encompassing Part I.
Example 5.2.11: bars 571–576
Among the variable topics of darkness: the remouldable storyworld of Part I

The first part of the Fifth Symphony depicts a dark type of world in its storyworld, constituted and shared by the first and second movements. These mediate the topic of darkness by different means and with various nuances, generated by their respective constructions of form, timbre, as well as spatial and temporal dimensions. This implies a topical narrative running throughout the same kind of world, in contrast to the Fourth Symphony’s plural narratives moving between worlds and across all the work’s movements.

As for the first movement, it scores the world through episodes conveyed by a solo trumpet fanfare that takes on the role of narrator and organizer of the formally disparate sections. This position makes the story into something having taken place in the past, retold in the manner of a prologue to the happenings of the second movement. The world thus emerges through narration by means of voice, rather than as existing in the here and now.

The episodes centre partly on a recurring funeral scene and partly on two contrasting trios that illustrate various emotions and moods related to the event of death. This makes it plausible to speak of nuances or aspects of darkness, which, just like death, has many forms and expressions. The nucleus of these interconnections is the initial funeral march serving as a cue for both the setting and the subsequent reactions of affect. In addition, the funeral march becomes a vantage point for the transformation of the funeral scene into diverse elements and their altering compositions.

By letting the scenes unfold in units, element by element, Mahler’s scoring frames various world-building elements that all display a small part of the entire image, always with a new focus analogous to the reframing technique of film. This brings about in the listener a view of the world as if looking through binoculars or a kaleidoscope, where one sees fragments of something larger that simultaneously exists beyond the field of vision. In addition, the constant transformations generate a richly nuanced depiction of death, moving from sorrowful to increasingly humorous by means of the features of a diegetic wind band. All these shifting experiences of the funeral scene and its constitutive elements spring from the perspectives of the brass instruments, which, through their various constellations at the start of each episode, function as cues for the focalization of the respective reiterations. As a result, different world versions present themselves to the listener, mirroring the real world where no one perceives the same event in exactly the same way.

Concerning the reactions to the funeral event represented by the two contrasting trios, they convey the storyworld by other means, with the soundworlds of each section becoming the cues for a background setting connected to moods and atmospheres evocative of angst, grief, and sorrow. In relation to this setting permeating the world, alternating groups of brass instruments suggest narrative dramatic positions generating changing, mobile perspectives on
the sound-world and, consequently, on how it impinges on the listener. This expands the markings of perspective into a direct connection with the surroundings, as opposed to the funeral event’s static markings positioned before the scenic display. Through the brass instruments’ speaking in the manner of virtual agents, such as calls or commentary, their particular voices make the setting appear as surroundings, narrated upon, or as backdrop. Since their utterances also reflect the atmosphere of the surrounding world, there is a correlation between humanlike expression and the environment. Just as in the funeral scenes, the world versions of the brass form the lens through which the storyworld emerges. The listener thereby remains an external observer seeing the events from a distance, although from a mobile viewpoint versus the static, portrait-like presentation of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement. Hence, whereas spatial mobility in terms of distance expanded Mahler’s experience of the theatre, here that spatial mobility manifests itself in terms of perspectives and voices, making the sound-world into something remouldable and changeable.

The second movement reshapes several of the motifs from the first movement into an outer world unfolding in the present, suggesting a remaking of world out of a number of building blocks. Like a master builder, to use his own words, Mahler creates new structures out of the same architectural elements. Whereas in the first movement, darkness evolved into nuances with a vantage point in a genre’s connotation and related event, here it generally arises from spatial and temporal constructions. This leads to that the listener becomes integrated in the sound-world in other ways, more in terms of being situated in a world as space and place rather than watching it emerge scenically.

In the two circulating sub-spaces of the main world, sound heard as sounds in space produces a three-dimensionality in which the listeners orient themselves; these sounds are either hits and other menacing physical sounds or the intrusive voices of nature. Except for virtual sounds and their atmosphere, these places emerge as sparse and deserted, where the collective or virtual subject expresses feelings of melancholy and despair. A sensation of chaos always on the brink of catastrophe also persists, characterized by compressed choirs of voices that subsequently evaporate as the worlds collapse and die. In addition, one finds a mediation of darkness in the endless circulatory process operating between the limited number of spaces, evoking a sense of meaninglessness in the world’s decline and constant attempts to rebuild itself.

However, there exists a small glimpse of light through the intrusion of possible worlds, which, like the dream worlds in the Fourth Symphony, finally break the course of the world. In the dark world of Part I, though, light only presents itself as a vision, unable to resist the destructive forces of collapse. This also reflects the genre of realism, in which the chorale-like funeral march cues the establishment and then transformation of well-known musical conventions.
Part II: a social world

Following the long pause ending Part I, the sudden sound of horn calls leads into the next movement of the Fifth Symphony, a Scherzo that also constitutes Part II. This part represents what I regard as a social type or topic of world in the work’s storyworld, manifesting itself by various dance milieus, on one hand, and various conversations among voices, on the other. In the movement, the generic connotations of waltz and Ländler function as cues for realistic settings of dance scenes, simultaneously as they illustrate the opposite realms of the country and city, which Mahler humorously plays with. Through the composer’s constant transformation, both dances are developed and changed into other features, such as the reworking of the waltz into a kind of death dance.

A prominent category of world for my interpretation of this movement is the dimension of spatiality. This shows in the scenically extended division into units of outer and inner spaces, as well as in terms of size, manifested through the expansion and shrinking into wide and small spaces. Both these aspects are important for the presentation of world and its illustration of social interaction.

Despite forming an independent part of the symphony, like Part I, the Scherzo centres on the world topics of darkness and light. In that sense, its storyworld is not completely detached from the dark world and mood of the first and second movements. Like a new chapter in a novel or dramatic act, it continues to depict these contrasts, but with point of departure in another topic and set in different surroundings, suggestively at some distance from the dark realm of Part I.

Prelude

The Scherzo is the first movement of the Fifth Symphony that Mahler completed. As previously discussed, it was already included in a preliminary plan of the Fourth Symphony, then with the title ‘Die Welt Ohne Schwere, D-dur [D major] (Scherzo)’. There are various suggestions as to its interpretation, all of which are relevant to the following analysis of world. Donald Mitchell, for example, translates the title as ‘The World without Cares’, while Zychowicz presents an adjacent view by translating it as ‘The World without Burdens’. The expression without ‘cares’ or ‘burdens’ resonates with the carefree, unproblematic, and shadow-less sensation that Mahler alludes to in a conversation with Bauer-Lechner about the movement in the summer of 1901:

560 Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, The Mahler Companion, p. 301.
There is nothing romantic or mystical about it; it is simply the expression of incredible energy [unerhörter Kraft]. It is a human being in the full light of day, in the prime of his life. It is scored accordingly: no harp or English horn.\textsuperscript{562} In relation to world topics, the composer’s statement alludes to light, which in the movement is most directly mirrored in the character of the Ländler theme. Floros, however – or rather his translator, Vernon Wicker – presents a slightly different reading of the title, decoding it as ‘The World without Gravity’.\textsuperscript{563} As Mitchell recognizes, this translation ‘accommodates the idea of a weightlessness of spirit and at the same time, of material things, “Gravity” in its scientific sense’.\textsuperscript{564} Since it is known that Mahler had an interest in the physical sciences, this might well be a plausible reading.\textsuperscript{565} In my opinion, the concept of lack of gravity might also refer to the many rotational, circling processes that appear throughout the movement, especially in the fugato passages. These are vital for the generation of a background space as well as its later subsequent expansions, serving as a means of generating new worlds and settings. In addition, Mahler’s expression ‘unerhörter Kraft’ evokes energy and force, which I find to permeate the rotations with their often raw, harsh timbre. Something similar is further echoed in the composer’s comparison of the movement to a comet’s tail, as told to Bauer-Lechner.\textsuperscript{566}

From a broader perspective, Mahler’s early title and its interpretations mirror the common tendency to regard the Scherzo as in sharp contrast to the different expression and mood of Part I.\textsuperscript{567} One can assume that one reason for this is the positive and energetic style of the opening Ländler dance. Another is that the movement’s principal tonality of D major is the same as that of the Finale and is thus the entire symphony’s goal, which Mitchell therefore regards as ‘a premature affirmation’.\textsuperscript{568} As I have argued during the course of this study, I regard tonality more as contributing to a kind of basic atmosphere than as evidence of early conclusion. Tonality, and particularly its alternations between major and minor, is vital for Mahler’s constant expressive changes, but more so as just that than as a tonal scheme in terms of musical narrative. While there are undeniably parts of the Scherzo that mediate expressions and moods far from the despair of Part I, the topic of light – as elsewhere in Mahler’s oeuvre – is tied up with that of darkness. These contrasts, for example, show in the large number of melancholic and nervous passages, as well as in

\textsuperscript{562} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{563} Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{564} Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, \textit{Mahler Companion}, p. 301.
\textsuperscript{566} NBL, \textit{Recollections}, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{567} See, for example, Mitchell’s discussion of Derek Cooke’s view of this matter, in \textit{Mahler Companion}, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, pp. 301–302.
\textsuperscript{568} Mitchell, \textit{The Mahler Companion}, p. 301.
the references to angst and fear of death. The topic of death also permeates the deformation of the waltz, which becomes a veritable dance of death suffused with collective screams. In Mitchell’s defence, he recognizes the importance of these divergences, although still in relation to tonality.\footnote{Mitchell, \textit{Mahler Companion}, p. 302.}

One possible reason for the differences between Mahler’s view of the movement and its ultimate design is that, at this stage, he did not have a clear plan of how the music would eventually sound. For example, the English horn indeed shows up in the movement, despite the composer’s earlier claim that it would not be included. Still, I do not find this a strong enough basis for the ultimate presence of opposite expressions, considering that these permeate the composer’s compositional language in general.

Concerning the movement’s form, it particularly illustrates Mahler’s new style of the Fifth Symphony more centred on counterpoint. In line with this, Adorno perceives in it ‘the novelty of the development-scherzo’.\footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 102.} The concept of development also signifies the composer’s principle of constant variation, further illustrated by the following remark about the Scherzo: ‘It is kneaded through and through till not a grain of the mixture remains unmixed and unchanged. Every note is charged with life, and the whole thing whirls around in a giddy dance’.\footnote{NBL, \textit{Recollections}, pp. 172–173.} In the movement, this is a particular feature of the constant transformations of new spaces out of the same material, discussed in the section ‘Small and wide spaces’. That the Scherzo indeed has a unique design shines through in the recurring difficulties, characterizing the analysis of practically all symphonic movements examined here, of fitting it into traditional formal moulds. One such example is Floros’s attempt at describing it as ‘a scherzo with two different trios […] as well as some features of sonata movement’, despite initially recognizing the music’s divergence from a scherzo in the traditional sense.\footnote{Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, pp. 149 and 151.} Due to enormous length of the movement, I have chosen a selection of coherent parts that most pointedly address the topics and questions of world that this investigation seeks to explore.

The Ländler theme: narration from the dance floor

This section focuses on the first main section of the scherzo part (bars 1–135) based on the Ländler theme. In the following, I explore how it mediates a longer coherent scene taking place in a dance setting, alternating between exterior and interior spaces and worlds. The basis of these alternations is the many asymmetrical, abrupt changes in the music’s structure and character, concerning both the irregularity of the Ländler’s meter and phrases as well as...
the interpolations of contrasting contrapuntal fugato passages. The difficulty of finding a traditional formal pattern for the section is mirrored in Floros’s statement that ‘strangely enough the main sections consist of seven periods of different lengths’. However, it is precisely these shifts and discrepancies that generate a scenic telling distributed among several smaller units, where what happens in one space has an effect on another. Mahler’s discontinuous form, in combination with instrumental variation, gives rise to a sequencing of the unfolding setting and its worlds. Important for the narration of the Ländler scene and its mediated perspective is the horn group and the solo obligato horn in particular. I start the analysis with a short presentation of the horns’ entrance and various functions in the movement.

**Calling up to a dance: the multiple functions of horns**

The Scherzo starts with a calling, fanfare-like gesture in a group of four horns, directly followed by the obligato horn that initiates the Ländler theme (bar 3, see example 5.3.1). Both these constellations of collective and solo are important for the organization and telling of world in this movement, where they attain various shifting roles and functions that continuously change both the spatial dimensions and aspects of focalization. While the brass section as a whole played this part in the symphony’s Part I, here it is specifically assigned to the horns.

**Example 5.3.1: bars 1–6**

![Example 5.3.1: bars 1–6](attachment:example.png)

In terms of presenting a new part of the symphony, the horn group serves as a cue or means of transportation for the recentring of the listener into a different setting and place. This is necessary compared with the start of the second movement, which, since it formed part of the established dark world of the first movement, was not in need of any kind of summoning or initiating agency to mark the transition to a new kind of world. During the course of this study, I have explored Mahler’s use of fanfares and calls as a means of organizing or directing the storyworld, such as in the case of the horn in the Fourth Symphony’s Scherzo and the trumpet in this symphony’s first movement. In this case, however, these gestures are additionally performed in unison, giving them a slightly different effect. Janet Levy in her study of texture as sign claims that ‘few other textures [than unisons] call as much attention to themselves’ and are so laden with referential connotations. In unison passages,

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there is ‘an aura of authoritative control’ contrary to the sense of human individuality, resonating, for example, with situations of ritual and ceremony. As a similar unified crowd, their power marked by the performance direction stark, the horn group of the introduction initiates the transportation to and opening of a new chapter in the storyworld. Throughout the movement, they exercise their directorial function of control and authority by alternatively stopping and calling forth the dance scene. As with previous examples in these analyses, Mahler’s formal placement of them between sections or shifts is what produces this role.

The unison utterance also suggests a collective or multiple agency analogous to the chorus in ancient Greek dramas. In contrast to the first movement, however, the brass does not narrate from the side, but attains a more mobile, fluid position in blowing forth the scene and its world. They do so by way of an intermediary voice − the solo obbligato horn that overlaps with the horn group’s last note (bar 3) on a p crescendo, taking over the principal melody. This is attained through Mahler’s dynamic differentiation, which simultaneously also serves as a cue out and in for the horn group and the solo horn, respectively. Similar to the overlapping of the sleigh bells and the subsequent first theme of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement, the effect recalls the dissolve transition in films, functioning as a means to shift focus in the musical sound mass. Because of this technique, in the act of listening one perceives the obbligato horn as one of the horns of the group and not as a different kind of horn coming in. Continuing the parallels to drama, in ancient Greek tragedy, the chorus often had a leader called the coryphaeus who led the chorus in a solo–response dialogue. Even though the Scherzo’s introduction presents an inverse of these functions, one can interpret the solo obbligato horn as a sort of group leader, stepping out of the group and taking a position on the scene of events as a narrator. Thus, the horn chorus ‘blows forth’ the movement’s part, setting, and narrating agency. Throughout the movement, the obbligato horn acts as a permanent virtual agent in the manner of a protagonist, alternating between positions of narrator, character, and as a more organizational generator of spatial expansion and dialogues. Mitchell draws attention to the instrument’s prominent part by likening it to a concertante role.

Following its breakout from the horn chorus, during the course of the Ländler theme the obbligato horn occupies a particular parallel position in relation to the rest of the orchestra that has significance for its role as narrator of the scene. Up to the fugato passage (Fig. 2, bar 40), it has two crucial instances, before giving way to other horn constellations starting in bar 27. During the first instance (bars 4–9), it is in focus with the melodic line, mediating both the lively character of the Ländler as well as illustrating Mahler’s description

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of ‘a human being in the full light of day, in the prime of his life’. The other parts of accompanying woodwinds, sparse string pizzicato, and triangle do not interfere with the horn part, yet their different rhythmic profiles and timbres are heard as going on in parallel. This effect is strengthened by the solo horn’s occasional _fp_, which in bar 8 functions as a dynamic cue out for its first instance. Thus, the horn enters and exits the sound mass somewhere between disjunction and homogeneity. In the second instance (bars 15–26, see example 5.3.2), the solo horn again plays its theme but now together with a variant of it on first violins, marked _keck!_ (‘cheeky’) and _ff_ in relation to the violins’ _f_ in order to be clearly heard. Yet, there is the same effect of shifting parallelism, for example, in bar 18 where the horn has _fp_ simultaneously as the violins play _sf_ with the addition of other string parts.
Apart from the deep concern for clarity, Mahler’s scoring illustrates his method of dynamic differentiation, which, in combination with articulation and a rhythmic Eigenprofil, enables the highlighting of a particular instrument.⁵⁷⁷ That this takes place in several parts at the same time, with the horn

gradually going into and out of focus, positions it neither in dialogue nor in complete disjunction with the other parts. It is analogous to a virtual agent increasing and decreasing the focus on the surrounding dance, alternately narrating from the scene of the events and at other times disappearing into the background. This diverges from the audience address in drama, since the horn appears to be telling about the dance while forming part of it. As such, this relates to the literary approach of letting a character tell about an ongoing event. The horn narrates the exterior dance scene, but from its own perspective analogous to interior focalization. Consequently, the instrument narrativizes, that is, presents the Ländler theme in the form of a narrative, cuing it into the setting of a rustic dance milieu. As a result, the Ländler is not presented just as a Ländler, but as a scene in which a Ländler takes place.\(^{578}\)

**Rotation without gravity: interior voices and space**

In bars 37–39, the orchestral forces have shrunk to only horns and strings, which now gradually disappear by means of diminuendo. This functions as a dynamic fade-out analogous to a cinematic fade-out, which simultaneously prepares for the shift to the subsequent fugato passage (from bar 40). There is thus a cue out for the exterior space of the dance scene to a cue in for what I will call an interior space representing the inner world of a virtual agent.

As the violas start the repetitive fugato-like theme on crotchets, there is an abrupt emptying of the texture decreasing the spatial frames of world (see example 5.3.3). As with the brass in the chorale breakthrough of the second movement, Mahler has let the violas be silent for a few bars, which heightens the effect of their entrance and timbre. In addition, the insertion of contrapuntal material appears strangely at odds with the previous dance material of the Ländler, heightened by the change to a minor key. All these modifications present an imaginative recentring into a smaller scenic unit of the entire Ländler dance scene.

*Example 5.3.3: bars 39–42*

\[\text{Example 5.3.3: bars 39–42}\]

Whereas the tighter spatial frames suggest a smaller, more intimate space, the inward tone of the viola timbre in turn marks this space as an interior one, with its constant rotational figuration functioning as a circling, rotating background. The process of rotation forms another analogy to the concept of a

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\(^{578}\) Johnson, *Mahler’s Voices*, p. 103.
world without gravity, here in terms of circulating movement lacking a basis. Against this contrapuntal figure, a group of A clarinets performs a three-part counter-theme in canon, each starting one bar later than the other (see example 5.3.4). The gradual increase in the number of instruments together with the dissonance emerging from the wrap-around texture of a whole-tone step generates a multiplying effect. In combination with the clarinets’ squeaky and strained tone in the high register, they emerge as anxious and elusive voices. With reference to the inward, rotating space, I suggest that these voices might illustrate those of an inner mind in the manner of thoughts that subsequently grow in intensity and volume. Thus, the viola and clarinet parts together construct an inner mental space also representing an inner world suffused with darkness. In both literature and film, there is the concept of thought and consciousness representation, which I argue in this case is musically realized by means of texture and timbre in conjunction with divisions of background and foreground. The inner space mediates no virtual agent, but suggestively it is the obbligato horn following its narrative position in the dance scene. This interior focalization differs from that one in terms of its mediation of thinking as opposed to narration through seeing. Simultaneously, the listener assumes the empty position of virtual agent and ‘becomes’ the virtual subject of the inner world, consequently coming closer to the storyworld in relation to the variable parameter of immersion.

Example 5.3.4: bars 40–46

Spatial alternation and its effect
Just as the break-in world of the chorale had global effects on the storyworld’s main world in the second movement, the more anxious mood of the inner world changes the subsequent perception of the dance scene. This forms the

start of a series of spatial shifts within the scene, which from now on alternates between interior and exterior.

When the Ländler theme returns at the anacrusis of bar 48 (see example 5.3.5), it is notably deformed, lacking its previous energy and accompanying, glittering triangle sound. By means of accented stops and chromatic inflection, the violins reflect a sense of struggle or conflict, coloured by the harsh and crude timbre of an undertow of low winds and strings. This implies that the dance scene is now seen through the eyes of the virtual agent having experienced the inner thoughts, again shifting the type of inner focalization to the concept of the one who sees, to surface rather than depth. A similar deformation of the Ländler theme following the fugato passage occurs later in the movement (from bar 531), where a stripped-down string texture in piano presents a dance that has lost all its energy, as though the music had been emptied from within.

Example 5.3.5: bars 47–53

Between this passage and the next fugato section several spatial shifts take place in succession. As several instrumental parts suddenly drop out, the obligato horn returns (bar 57) against the subdued violins. Its instance lasts fewer than three bars and emerges as out of place due to the sudden ending of the previous phrase and the orchestral reduction. This signals a marked cue back to the horn as a narrator of the dance unfolding in parallel. Yet again,
there is an abrupt ending of the phrase simultaneously as the texture and timbre are transformed into a woodwind choir in the high register, accompanied by string pizzicato and triangle (bar 60). The effect generates a reduction of the spatial frames and a switch of character, suggesting a different space than that of the Ländler within the dance scene. Rapidly, though, the music expands into the larger orchestra of the Ländler theme with its obbligato horn part (bar 66), expanding the spatial frames and resetting the horn as a narrating, focalized agent.

In the second fugato section (bar 83), the rotating figure has expanded to also include violins, in what functions as a round or canon. The intimate clarinet voices now sound in authoritative trumpets, lending the inner voices a more preaching or exhorting manner of speaking analogous to Riemann’s metaphor. The spatial expansion and different kind of voices resulting from these changes anticipate the later transformation of this inner world into an outer one, where the interior thoughts take on the voices of virtual agents in conversation.

After another deformation of the Ländler theme, for the first time in this movement with the menacing presence of trombones and tubas, the section presents one more important shift in focalization when a horn group enters in bar 99. Marked hervortretend (‘emphasized’) and dynamically prominent in forte against the strings’ piano, the horns come to the fore in a parallel position similar to that earlier held the obbligato horn in the dance. In relation to the internal focalization of seeing following the fugato section’s inner world of a virtual agent, their function means that they narrate the scene perceived by a different agent, analogous to a chorus commenting on a point of view shot.

This is further complicated when the four horns decrease to one (bar 103), in the act of listening to what is perceived as the leader of the chorus (i.e., the solo obbligato horn), suggesting a sort of metanarrative reflecting on its own perspective. In Part I, such rapid focal shifts towards the end of sections mostly served as a way of destroying worlds, reflecting the overall darkness of the storyworld. Here, the literal movement of the dance becomes a tool with which to end the section and consequently the dance scene.

This process takes place starting from Fig. 5 (bar 121), when the Ländler theme is transformed into fast scale figures alternating between first and second violins. As this activity increases in intensity and risks getting out of hand, just as in a whirling dance, the horn group steps in (bar 131) and signals a stop to the Ländler and its dance setting. Again, this illustrates Mahler’s way of fast-forwarding the music towards the end of sections, suggesting an analogy to the world’s chaos as well as the derailing rotation of the dance. The concept of rotation also alludes to Mahler’s statements about energy and a world without gravity, applied to the realistic procedures of dance.

In its entirety, the Ländler theme presents one long scene comprising smaller spaces or narrative units, which alternate between outer dance floor and inner mental thoughts. Told through the interior focalization of the solo
horn, the listener is invited into its perception of world, being transported into the scene of events and seeing and feeling it with the character.

From sloppy elegance to death dance: the waltz and its deformation

The horn choir’s stop of the Ländler dance simultaneously marks the transportation into the other main dance style of the movement, namely the waltz (see example 5.3.6). Merging from four horns to two and then one (bars 131–135), the horns put forward a similar gradual, dynamically differentiated presentation of what can be termed the soloist leader of the choir, in the listening act apprehended as the obbligato horn even though it is a normal horn. The solo horn’s long held G, together with the bassoons, presents a similar overlap with the first violins, which, through a crescendo, initiate the melody of the waltz. This has the simultaneous effect of cuing out and cuing in, meaning that the transporting horn gives way to the violins and consequently a new setting. The resulting imaginary recentring implies that the waltz takes place in a different space and place than the Ländler, which further underlines their contrastive relationship in terms of generic dance styles.

Example 5.3.6: bars 131–138

In the following, I discuss how, during the course of the movement, the waltz becomes subject to a number of deformations, Mahler exploiting its traditional generic connotations in order to destroy and transform the meanings originally attached to them. It is exactly in this play between convention and recreation
that the continuous kneading of materials is possible. Vera Micznik formulates this correlation as follows: ‘while Mahler’s materials defy absolute generic commitments, their behaviour is dependent on the recognition of their generic models’. Hence, as in the case of the funeral march in the first movement, genre and its connotations function as a cue or reference point for subsequent remakings.

Already in the first section of the waltz (bars 136–173), commonly described as trio 1, Mahler calls for a manner of playing that deviates from standard models. While strictly elegant on the surface, Johnson draws attention to a sloppiness in the execution of the melody, making the waltz sound lazy and tired. This is partly attributable to the glissando figures, but there is also a further detailed note in the score: ‘Conductor: in this motif the quaver should be played somewhat hurriedly, i.e., carelessly, throughout, in whichever instrumental part it occurs’, followed by a musical example showing how the quaver rest in performance should be extended to a dotted quaver. Mahler was thus in search for a particular effect of the waltz melody, hence the need for a detailed instruction about expression.

This sloppy and lazy performance style forms one of several features that characterize the presentation of the waltz. The reduction of orchestral forces to strings and a few wind players in relation to the Ländler tightens the spatial frames, suggesting closer camera work. Together with the tiredness and the slow tempo, time appears to move more slowly than in the previous energetic, whirling dance. Spatially, the listener comes closer to the waltz scene, but is not invited into its world by any virtual agents or narrators, remaining an external observer. As the waltz is a dance for the ballrooms of the city, Mahler’s scoring makes its urban social space into a small, enclosed one, where its elegance is ridiculed. This can be contrasted to the wider and more dynamic space of the rustic Ländler scene, making the ‘sophisticated’ waltz into an object of humour and irony. As with the Ländler, the waltz functions as cue of setting resulting from Mahler’s transformation of it, drawing attention to its generic connotations and subsequent remaking.

The first waltz section is fairly short in duration and might be described as an initial point of reference for its subsequent deformations. At Fig. 7 (bar 174), a canon of solo trumpet (keck!), trombone, and obbligato horn (keck!) transports the listener back to the setting of the Ländler scene, again implying a distance between the two spaces.

The next appearance of the waltz takes place at the beginning of the development (bars 429–489), where it receives more elaborated treatment. Out of

581 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 147.
582 ‘Anmerkung für den Dirigenten: In diesem Motiv ist das Achtel stets etwas flüchtig = nachlässigg auszuführen, in welches Instrument es auch gelegt ist; also ungefähr so: [example]’.
the silence following the preceding obbligato horn solo, the pizzicato accompaniment from the conversation among strings (see discussion below) re-emerges. Instead of continuing that theme, however, the first violins embark on the waltz theme from the first trio, here in F minor. Despite a tentative start, there seems to be a return to its previous character, but a series of descending accented figures in trumpets, horns, and trombones (bars 445–447) abruptly punctuates the expected trajectory. Again, it is the brass instruments that play the role of the directors of crucial formal and expressive shifts. Their gestures throw cellos and double basses into the fugato material from the Ländler scene, which, by means of their low timbre and the performance direction of roh!, endow the contrapuntal crotchets with a menacing, crude sound. To forceful timpani blows, they alternate with shrill, ascending gestures in high woodwinds that, together with the simultaneous dissonant horn notes, suggest collective cries expressing angst and fear. This anticipates the small climax reached in bar 462 by means of woodwind trills, violin tremolo, and accompanying rhythm from glockenspiel and cymbals. In the same manner as in the second movement, a motif from an earlier separate space is transformed into the present one, with trombones, tuba, and double basses exposing the Ländler theme to menacing darkness.

Against extended chromaticism in the strings and bassoons, the addition of a whip (Holtklapper) establishes the waltz as a dance of death – Mitchell referring to it as ‘the horrible rattle of bones’.583 Maybe Micznik’s statement that ‘in many Mahlerian scherzi the dances rebelliously refuse to comply with the traditional labels they have been assigned’ finds its strongest proof here.584 The whip’s persistent rhythmic figuration together with trumpets eerily sound in the triple time of the waltz, resulting in a new instance of collective screams in high and distorted woodwinds (see example 5.3.7). Ultimately, a sudden caesura puts an end to the intensifying chaos, the music stopping as though it had hit a wall (bar 489).

Example 5.3.7: bars 472–483
In this first deformation, the sophisticated waltz is not only remade into a grotesque death dance, but also spatially expands the previously enclosed scene to a much wider one, breaking the frames of the social setting of the ballroom. The collective cries from the winds also mark a multiple agency reacting to the horror of the dance, as opposed to the tired waltz playing from before, seemingly empty of any humanlike presence.
Two shorter returns of the waltz section mediate this sensation of death as fear rather than death as dance. The first time (bars 563–578) it appears as a climax of the Ländler scene, whose whirling scalar figures end in dissonant brass notes that stop the rotation of the dance and transform it into a chromatically inflected version of the waltz. An effect of this development shows in the subsequent return of the fugato material (from 596) from the second trio. The high register of the strings’ (especially first violins) densely packed crotchet texture generates an intensifying rotational background against which muted trumpets and woodwinds perform descending gestures analogous to humanlike cries. Mahler again exploits muted trumpets during the later kräftig passage (bars 633–699) that mixes the waltz with motifs from the Ländler, then as mediators of an eerie, ominous atmosphere (see from bar 648).

By transforming a genre associated with elegance and ballrooms into a grotesque death dance, Mahler presents a reversal of tradition and illustrates how death is present everywhere, even as a flipside of the most elevated. Simultaneously, the deformations mediate the dark element of the social world, where the dance settings become a means of portraying the collective and their reactions to this darkness. In the modification of the waltz into death and angst, one also finds Mahler’s well-known irony in dealing with what is dark and horrifying in the world. As Mitchell puts it: ‘It was surely Mahler who, in the Scherzo of this Fifth Symphony, was the first to deploy the waltz as an ironic icon, subjecting it to all manner of distortion and consistent reversal or contradiction of its traditional meanings?’

The irony in my view lies not so much in the depiction of death, but rather in the grotesque transformation of its opposite. Just as the passages of the Ländler theme evoked the sensation of a human being in the full light of day, just as pure and honest are the expressions of human death, angst, and fear.

Yet, what might form the most ironic treatment of the waltz does not present itself until the end of the movement. In the coda (bars 764–819), shrill cries in high, strained registers of the woodwinds – associated with the whistling sound of the opening of the First Symphony – articulate a final mocking of tradition. Whereas the music on the surface suggests an energetic and light mood, these humanlike cries contradict the seemingly carefree existence. Having endlessly kneaded the waltz until it is beyond recognition, one can say that Adorno’s conception of Mahler’s novel development-scherzo here finds its strongest illustration.

586 Adorno, Mahler, p. 102.
Small and wide spaces: on conversation and voice

Up to this point, the analysis has looked at the movement’s topic of the social world in relation to dance genres and how these have functioned as settings of various spatial shifts, perspectives, and transformations. Both the Ländler and the waltz have reflected a darkness of world in the form of inner thoughts and fear of death, perceived by different types of virtual human agencies. This further depicts the dance settings as places of the collective, whose experiences have visible effect on their surroundings.

In this section, I explore another aspect of the social world related to conversation and voice. These elements are defined by humanlike speech gestures positioned in small and wide spaces, which is why the dimension of spatiality again represents a prominent category of world. In the studied passages, the composition approaches a chamber-music-like texture, in which the instrumental group of the woodwinds plays a significant role in the construction of interacting voices.

The analysis encompasses one long section (bars 201–428) extending from the fugato theme of the second Ländler scene to the first deformation of the waltz into a death dance. I divide this section into two consecutive parts. The first (bars 201–277) is about the previous inner world’s expansion into an outer one filled with voices of virtual agents, finally collapsing into a sort of death angst. The collapse leads into a new, dreamy sphere, where the solo obbligato horn calls forth a series of conversations taking place in wider as well as smaller spaces, the latter in the form of inner, intimate rooms. This sequence constitutes the second part (bars 278–428), concerned with transformations of spatial size in terms of expansion as well as shrinking.

Part I: spatial expansion of world and voice

The first part starts from a vantage point in the fugato material that emerges from the Ländler theme (bar 201). This time, it takes off in the first violins, followed by the gradual addition of string parts. Marked fff and instructed to perform wild!, there is an increased sense of textural volume and amplification compared with the previous sole viola line, highlighted by the accentuated effect of each part’s entrance. What was earlier an inward, intimate space consequently expands into a new, larger one in which the quaver motif serves as a rotating, intensifying force. This again makes it plausible to draw connections to the concept of rotation without basis or gravity, as well as to the stark energy of Kraft that subsequently arises from the accentuated string timbre. The generated spatial expansion acts as imaginative transportation out of the inner world of the virtual agent into an outer one, simultaneously also leaving the setting of the dance scene behind.

Following a further intensifying wave through the shift to F minor (bar 217), two new motifs are presented in two trumpets (bars 222–226, see example 5.3.8). Floros describes one as rhythmically concise, the other approaching
a sigh, forming the basis of a songlike model from which Mahler elaborates several subsequent versions. I regard these motifs as humanlike speech gestures, with the first resonating with a call or utterance and the other with a sighing figure. Through Mahler’s continuous reworkings of expression and tone, reflecting his mottos of Gesanglichkeit and clarity, they become plastic tools for the generation of a series of different voices and speech modes. The previously interior, mental space of thoughts has thus been transformed into an exterior one marked by the physical speech of virtual human agents, presenting an expansive remaking of both world and voice.

Example 5.3.8: bars 222–228

After their initial presentation in trumpets, the motifs appear in a stream of various instrumental constellations that, together with the constant variation, generate an effect of differing agential voices. With the trumpets, Mahler already makes sure to clearly outline the motifs by first giving each to one of them in turn. Both motifs are also marked by dynamics that highlight the analogy to speech: the first, calling-like one with an ff diminuendo and the other, sighing figure with p followed by a crescendo–diminuendo. After sounding in a choir of woodwinds evocative of collective cries, increased in power by performing Schallrichter auf (‘Bells up!’) in ff, the calling motif moves to the first violins (bar 236), where it is contrasted with the sighing-like motif in the English horn, clarinets, and bassoons.

All these successive utterances in different instruments, each individualized for a short period before retreating into the background, produce the effect of a number of temporary agents momentarily stepping forth to speak. As

587 See Floros, The Symphonies, pp. 151–152.
Cone states, orchestral music abounds in such temporary virtual agents attaining temporary personalization. In this case, however, their consecutive appearance makes them into a choir of voices in conversation with one another, sometimes as individual agencies like the trumpet but mostly in a sort of multiple agency, either as a collective voice, like the woodwinds, or as a simultaneously speaking one, like the violins and woodwinds. During the course of this study, I have primarily referred to multiple agency in the former sense, such as in the call-like utterances of woodwinds and the emotive expression of cellos in the funeral march event. As for the latter, it more closely approaches the element of conversation or social interaction studied by Klorman. Reformulating the metaphor of conversation inherent in chamber music, Klorman presents multiple agency as a composition ‘embodying multiple, independent characters – often represented by the individual instruments – who engage in a seemingly spontaneous interaction involving the exchange of roles and/or musical ideas’. In this passage, Mahler’s underlining of the contrapuntal parts with marked speech gestures results in an assemblage of agents that alternate in a total multiple agency of both individuals and groups. Significant here is how the composer’s variation of the two foundational motifs in combination with alternating instrumentation and tone results in no temporary agent saying the same thing, but rather expresses its own world version.

In bar 241, there is an abrupt shift transforming the music’s spatial and temporal dimensions. Together with a new tempo (langsamer) and key, there is a sudden decrease in texture and alternation of timbre, in which the chaotic fugato background and multiple voice choir give way to a group of four horns accompanied by a quaver motif in high, softly playing woodwinds. The effect tightens the spatial frames into a smaller, more intimate space, which in turn generates a temporal looking back or reminiscence analogous to the memory space discussed in the second movement. In the horn group’s variation of the sighing motif, now transformed into a songlike version, the timbre consequently emerges as nostalgic and distant, as though it spoke in a past tense. A similar tone arises from the sound of muted trumpet, performing the calling-like figure as counterpoint and thereby engaging in conversation with the horns, together forming a multiple agency speaking in the same tense. Notably, the trumpet’s utterance gives way to a varied statement of the sighing motif in another, unmuted trumpet (bar 247), demonstrating Mahler’s way of clearly delineating the contours of voice.

Just as sudden as the transformation into a more intimate space, it disappears by means of a new change of texture and timbre (bar 251). This manner of framing a spatially enclosed area anticipates the ‘in-between’ effect discussed in relation to the ‘woodwind reminiscences’ appearing later in the

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movement. The motivic and rhythmic Eigenprofil of the various instrumental groups, in combination with their asymmetrical textural parts, especially in the brass, produces a spatial sensation of chaos reminiscent of the start of the second movement. Frequent accents of sf and ff decrescendos add to this anxious turbulence, which, by means of textural intensification, finally culminates in the collapse at Fig. 10 (bar 270, see example 5.3.9). Initiated by a sole calling figure in trumpets, there follows the passage for echoing horns widely discussed in the Mahler literature. This effect comes from the composer’s overlapping of the four horn parts by means of texture and dynamic differentiation, with each instrument starting one bar after the next in ff, simultaneously as the previous one goes down to p. The accompanying tremolo strings, also carefully dynamically deployed, add further volume and force to the massive outburst of sound. Johnson argues that the horn echoes here ‘produce the effect of sounds heard across the wide physical space of mountain valleys’.\textsuperscript{590} Whereas I agree in terms of the physicality of sound heard in an outdoor space, the preceding intensifying climax suggests that the collapse might also express a form of death angst, similar to the one mediated by the collective cries of the waltz dance. Darkness thus materializes as something jointly experienced by humanlike agents, their previous melancholic voices culminating in a multiple breakdown.

\textsuperscript{590} Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 56.
In addition, the horn echoes generate a further spatial expansion of world that leads into the next part treating the aspect of conversation. The transition into this new space is signalled by the entrance of the solo obbligato horn, which overlaps with the final horn echo so that it appears to emerge as a member of the horn group. Again, this is an example of the coryphaeus stepping forth and taking the lead in the task of directing the storyworld.
Part II: vast and intimate spaces of voice

The second part begins with the solo horn’s call into the wide, enlarged space (bar 278), giving the listener a sort of panoramic view of the surroundings. As discussed in relation to the funeral episode scenes in the first movement, this exemplifies the map strategy of spatial presentation, i.e., space looked upon by an observer from an elevated point of view. In contrast to the previously enclosed spaces leading up to the collapse, space is now foreseeable and seemingly extends beyond the frames of the musical work.

Furthermore, the horn call also initiates a subsequent dialogue with the cellos (up to bar 307), reminiscent of a conversation taking place *en plein air*. The recitative-like contour of their melodies, underlined by markings of rit. and *verklingend* fermatas towards the end of each statement, mirrors that of humanlike speech. Enacted between the single virtual agent of the horn and the multiple agency of the cellos, the former gains the role of the leader of the interaction with the latter’s group, illustrated by the harmonic support and added sonorous volume of other instruments. Because of the spatial expansion established at the start of this passage, there arises a sense of spatial distance between the two different agencies, further marked by their distinctive timbres in relation to each other. This especially emerges through Mahler’s detailed scoring for the solo horn, which by performing *Schalltrichter auf!*, attains a fuller sound as if heard in an open space, but also through the cellos’ amplified unison tone. The echo effect produced by a muted (*gestopft*) horn overlapping with and then repeating the obbligato horn’s statement (see bar 303) also suggests spatial vastness.

The ending phrases of the conversation in wide spaces (bars 300–307, see example 5.3.10) are coloured by a dreamy atmosphere, resulting from the increasingly stagnating horn timbre together with the sound carpet of low strings on long notes. Even though this ambiance permeates the entire passage, it becomes particularly prominent here. Since the final utterance of the solo horn leads into the new, smaller spaces of intimate rooms (bars 308–418), it functions as a dream-like transport to another time and place in the movement’s storyworld. The instrument thereby continues its role as a portal or means of transport into the realm of dreams. Simultaneously, it marks a shift from outdoor to indoor space, recentring the aspect of conversation from one of distance to one of closeness and reciprocity. One can liken what follows to a series of intimate rooms, contained within a varied set of humanlike agents engaged in speech. This makes the element of dream more into one of memory or of refuge in distant times, with the initial atmosphere of the horn call colouring the ensuing sequence in a manner similar to the sleigh bells in the opening of the Fourth Symphony. The melancholic expression of the woodwind voices, however, suggests the dream as sorrowful, nostalgic longing for the past, as opposed to the inner worlds of the act of dreaming or the intensifying levels of ethereal transcendence.
The first room starts on a fermata in Fig. 11 (bar 308, see example 5.3.11) and emerges by means of a prominent shift in timbre, with four solo string players engaging in a pizzicato episode reminiscent of dialogue. As in chamber music, the setting has associations with various individual agents interacting with one another, the first violin (bar 310) and viola part (bar 313) emerging as foregrounded speaking voices while the others are listening. Another interpretation is of virtually performing street musicians, underlined by the sparse scoring also evoking something plain and sorrowful. This sense of melancholy shines through in Adorno’s likening of the passage to ‘the archetype of the shadowy’ in Mahler, also a result of the emptiness generated by the shrinking of the spatial frames.\footnote{Adorno, \textit{Mahler}, p. 103.}

Example 5.3.11: bars 308–316
After a short statement in a solo bassoon, the solo string parts are transformed into tutti (bar 320), forming a delicate background to the series of solo woodwind and brass instances that follows. These continue to vary and develop the motifs attained from the songlike model, which, however, crystallize into a more individual and intimate kind of speech than before. In the following, one discerns Mahler’s model of the vocal quartet of independent lines transmuted into orchestral form, with the clearly outlined, songful parts continuing in the chamber-music-like scoring of the pizzicato strings. Throughout the Fifth Symphony, the woodwinds have played quite a restrained role in relation to the instrumental groups of strings and brass, mainly doubling other parts or expressing crying-like gestures of the collective. Because of this, their prominence as soloists here gains a particularly strong effect by presenting a hitherto absent sound-world in the work.

The stagnating (poco rit.) bassoon prepares for the ensuing virtual agents in the form of woodwind instruments. A solo oboe (bar 329) timidly (schüchtern) in pp expresses its lament, according to Adorno having ‘the ineffability of a voice venturing as a living being among shades’.592 The solo clarinet that takes over the melodic statement in bar 337 virtually embodies a new agent with a different kind of voice, and the simultaneous change of key into A-flat major also suggests a transformation into another room with a slightly altered basic atmosphere. Starting in bar 344, the texture expands with more parts and simultaneous motifs, starting in the first violins and obbligato horn, and later joined by the cellos (bar 353), recalling the earlier conversation across a wide space. Solo voices then appear in quick succession, passing through the solo oboe (bar 364) and solo trumpet (bar 368), after which there is again an increase in motifs and parts, simultaneously widening the previously small room.

The distribution of the melodic line from one instrument to another in succession invites two different interpretations. In Cone’s view, this creates what he calls a simulated virtual agent, anticipating the technique of Klangfarbenmelodie.593 As I understand Cone, the stream of temporal agents together forms one simulated virtual agent, as though incorporating one voice with constantly alternating tone and timbre. All these voices resonate in the listener, gradually forming a sort of complete persona emerging over time. This partly mirrors my interpretation of the solo oboe and violins as forming a similar kind of composite agent in the Fourth Symphony’s Adagio, emerging by means of Hatten’s notion of actorial continuity. The mixture of plural voices expressed by one individual agent suggests the many varied expressions and speech types that reside in all human beings, Mahler’s orchestration thereby mediating the complexity and richness of the virtual subject.

592 Adorno, Mahler, p. 103.
593 Cone, The Composer’s Voice, p. 103.
However, I also find it plausible to regard the entire passage as a conversation between different individual agents coming together in a sort of multiple agency. This works both in the manner of interaction, between successive solo voices, as well as in simultaneity, when several parts and motifs coalesce. As a diversity of various speech types, this recalls Bakhtin’s concept of the multivoiced and polyphonic novel of Dostoyevsky, speaking in variegated style, dialect, and tone. This defines society, and subsequently the social world, as marked by interchangeable communication. Gathered in the small spaces of intimate rooms, these voices become particularly prominent and also vulnerable, as though sharing thoughts and emotions from deep within.

The metaphor of conversation thereby becomes twofold, referring both to one complete, subjective persona as well as to plural, interacting voices. Either way, the voices speak to the listener in their own, distinct ways, each having its own individual contour and sound.

At Fig. 13 (bar 389), there is recourse to a new room reminding one of the memory space from bar 241. By means of an abrupt change in timbre from woodwinds to only a solo trumpet and muted quavers in the first violins, a surreal atmosphere arises that, in combination with the trumpet’s tone of reminiscence, suggests a past tense of looking back.

The ending of the series of intimate rooms features the by now well-known increasingly fragmentary nature of the instrumental parts, most readily in the sudden outburst of a solo trombone (bar 406). In order to stop this process and at the same time signal the transport away from the dreamy space of voices, the obbligato horn in bar 418 reappears with its previous, recitative-like statement. First, it sounds together with the third horn and cellos, progressively widening the space, then as a soloist, with the surrounding fermatas framing its phrase as a resonating call leading out into the ensuing waltz theme starting in bar 429. As in the recapitulation of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement, there is initially a sense of confusion, evoking a sense of dizziness in the listener as the dance tenaciously tries to recall its tune.

Woodwind reminiscences

In this section, I discuss two passages in the movement that give rise to a particular effect of reminiscence or looking back, generating what I regard as ‘memory spaces’. These feature solo woodwind voices and build partly on the previous section treating the aspect of conversation. In this case, however, small, intimate spaces appearing to point backwards emerge through a particular technique of being intersected between larger, markedly different spaces.

The first passage (bars 614–621, see example 5.3.12) follows an intense version of the fugato material, ending with swelling, sighing figures in horns.

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In connection with the double bar line, there is an abrupt shift in tempo (*Das Tempo unmerklich etwas einhaltend*), key (A minor), and dynamics (to *pp*). Additionally, the instrumentation appears in a completely new guise, presenting a mobile, sequence-like melody in a solo oboe, accompanied by a quaver figure in clarinets. Notably, the woodwinds – oboes and clarinets in particular – have been silent for several bars, and in their latest appearance were scored in the high register and at high dynamic levels. The same circumstances account for the counter-motifs in trombones and tuba, which enter in the wake of the disappearance of the strings.

*Example 5.3.12: bars 614–621*

Throughout this study, Mahler’s marking of new motivic profiles by the modification of timbre has been a recurring topic of discussion in relation to the concept of world. Here the result is a recourse to an enclosed space created by all the mentioned changes taken together. In particular, however, the woodwinds’ *tone* produces a sensation of looking backwards analogous to the muted solo trumpet, albeit in a more subdued and less surreal manner. Concerning the connection of the types of both space and voice to the series of intimate conversation rooms, it also seems to point towards that specific...
realm. As such, it presents a sort of imaginative recentring to another time and place, similar to the act of memory.

In bar 622, the woodwinds disappear as the strings take on the accompaniment figure against a more brass-dominated sound, the texture gradually expanding and leaving the small space behind. As intersected after and before significant orchestral alternations, there is what I regard as an in-between effect in which modified spatio–temporal dimensions are generated from the passage’s specific positioning. This is similar to the insertion of the narrating agency of the trumpet and violins during the emotional wave of the Fourth Symphony’s third movement.

The second passage (bars 745–751) also creates an in-between space with a tone of reminiscence suggestive of memory, but by slightly different means. This time, the solo obbligato horn blows forth and away the intimate room, suffused with a dreamy atmosphere that suggests an additional transport into a more surreal realm. It is as though the small world of the solo clarinet in quavers and the sparse pizzicato string accompaniment suggest somewhere that never really existed, simultaneously as their tone, as in the first passage, points backwards to the sequence of conversation between voices.

Both in themselves and in relation to the earlier intimate rooms in the movement producing this particular direction backwards, the memory spaces generate a sort of temporal double effect working on different levels. These special places, on one hand, induce a recentring back to a specific realm of the storyworld that, on the other hand, presented a sort of memory in the sense of dreamy nostalgic longing. Entering these spaces thereby entails access to the past in several ways, with the rooms, as in a Russian doll, constantly opening doors to new ones.

In the wider context of the movement, the passages discussed also represent a refuge from the increasingly expanding texture and development of the dance motifs constituting the here and now of the storyworlds. Just as dream worlds or nature in the Fourth Symphony occupy this position, here the relocation into enclosed memory spaces defined by the voice provides such an escape. As such, they present possible worlds only accessible through the act of looking back, reflected in the pervasive tone of melancholy.

Shaping the collective: space as reflection of world

This part depicts a social type of world, with a focus on various dance milieus and on the aspects of conversation and voice. Whereas Part I presented the storyworld as a dark, deserted place, the storyworld of Part II moves into interior surroundings and worlds, to the open dance floors and the small, enclosed rooms where intimate dialogue takes place. Spatiality defines the construction, settings, and interaction of world, serving as a sort of leading category in its making and mediation.
Just as the social topic implies, the movement’s different spaces in their own ways mediate the collective in terms of activities happening in unison and between virtual human agents, like a group of individuals coming together. The collective also becomes a means to give expression to the world’s darkness, with cries of anxiety reflecting the derailment of the dances and multiple agencies together collapsing in a vibrating fear of death. Death thus continues to permeate the storyworld, but more in terms of angst or even longing for death, through inner emotions felt by society rather than tied to a particular event, as was the case in the first movement. Mahler’s deformation of the waltz into a death dance again illustrates his penchant for making something serious and sophisticated into humour and irony, in the same way as the sorrowful song of the funeral march was transformed into twitchy wind band music.

The social world unfolds through a scenic way of telling, characterized by breaking into various spatial units. In the dance scenes, generic connotations function as cues for the dance settings and their subsequent transformations. However, in contrast to Part I where the sequencing of world was about either framing elements or foregrounding, the subsequent modification concerns a division into wide and small versus outer and inner spaces, with the listener following the scene as in a novel from the perspectives of virtual agents. In the initial Ländler scene, the solo horn becomes the lens through which the surroundings present themselves to the listener, feeling and experiencing the world in the same way. Notably, Mahler’s scoring also shows how the mood of the virtual agent affects the view of the world, making the dance appear in a different light. The same correlation between world and humanlike expression is reflected in the screams of the collective in relation to the death dance as well as in the misery expressed by the voices engaged in conversation.

Spatiality also characterizes the construction of large and enclosed settings constituting the parts of conversation, albeit in other forms. Compared with the more static spatial shifts in the Ländler scene, space becomes a mobile tool with which to expand or shrink the world, taking the listener into vast, unforeseeable surroundings as well as into tiny contained ones. Consequently, this also makes the world into something plastic and remouldable, used to frame and define its various realms of social interaction.

Likewise, the element of voice is constantly changeable through its presence and variation in a number of different instruments, with timbre and tone encompassing both a complete humanlike persona and several individual ones. This is mirrored in the rich nuances of voice present in humanlike beings and society at large, and in how dialogue brings all of them together in either single or collective interplay. Voice in the Scherzo also manifests itself through a particular, melancholic tone evoking a past tense or looking back, generating temporal withdrawal into already visited spaces.

In these interactions, the solo horn gains the role of conversation leader, blowing forth and away the spaces in which communication takes place. It
itself becomes a participant, but simultaneously the director of the design, keeping order among the greatly differing voices inhabiting the social world.

In addition to the horn, the process of rotation becomes a means to both generate and reform new spaces and worlds, extending from small interior to large exterior ones. It represents a sort of world force or Kraft presenting the initial alternatively endpoint for these modifications.

Like the entire Fifth Symphony, the social world illustrates the contrasting topics of darkness and light and how they inform life and what it means to be human. One can experience great joy in the whirling rotations of the dance, as a human being in the full light of day, but also experience melancholy and desperation, expressed through speech gestures and tone. In this movement, however, Mahler lets the virtual agents share that burden as a collective: they are not alone with their world pain as were those inhabiting the world of Part I. It is also here, in the shared enclosed rooms of memory, that there exists momentary escape from darkness. As a substitute for the dream worlds of the Fourth Symphony’s fairy-tale world, the dreams of memory invite the listener into a space of refuge where it is possible to reach out to the many other voices that share the eternally shifting experience of world.

**Part III: an inner world made collective**

We have now reached the symphony’s third and last part, consisting of the Adagietto and the Rondo-Finale. This division is due to the thematic and motivic interconnections between the movements, with the former re-emerging and subsequently being integrated in the latter. The interlinking of themes in the fourth and fifth movements is not unique to Part III of the symphony, but was also the case in Part I, in which, for example, the funeral march of the first movement returned and was further elaborated in the second movement. However, whereas those relations were largely built on the application of shared building blocks in the creation of the same storyworld, I interpret the relation between the Adagietto and the Rondo differently. Their thematic interrelations notwithstanding, I find them too different in timbre and character to occupy the same world in the manner of Part I, whose movements came together through a common mood and atmosphere. While the Adagietto presents a lyrical song-without-words sonority of strings and harps, the Rondo-Finale is an energetic, boisterous display of the art of counterpoint, representing an inner, subjective possible world and an outer, collective one, respectively. When thematic portions of the Adagietto later return and dissolve into the Rondo, these two initially separated worlds are fused together into a single new storyworld. As I will show, this process of integration of a different world from outside that of the movement might be explained as a gradual break-in, which becomes evident in Mahler’s successive change of timbre. The same interpretation concerns the reappearance of the chorale from the second movement,
which here returns towards the end of the Finale. As a complement to Mitch-
ell’s term ‘quotation’ and Monahan’s transsymphonic narrative to explain
these thematic recurrences, I therefore suggest the concept of ‘transworld pro-
cesses’, which can serve as an encompassing tool for the development of
worlds during the course of an entire symphony’s storyworld.

Because of the chorale’s integration towards the end of the Finale, the
movement has traditionally been viewed as an affirmative ending resolving
the symphony’s initially dark mood. However, the break-in processes of both
the chorale and the Adagietto result in a loss of their previous timbres of vision
and lyrical subjectivity, respectively, and consequently status as possible
worlds. This further reflects my general interpretation of the Rondo as a world
of society defined by endless movement and collective work, in which the
collective superficially provides fellowship but ultimately erases the virtual
subject in its constant, rotating process of labour.

Hence, as in the Finale of the Fourth Symphony, the world is not as utopian
as it seems to be, which Mahler likewise mediates by means of humour and
irony, especially in the scoring of the chorale.

The Adagietto: an inner world of song

The Adagietto occupies a unique position in Mahler’s entire oeuvre. Due to
its use in Luchino Visconti’s film Death in Venice (1971), itself inspired by
the artist’s life, it has emerged as his most popular composition. This further
illustrates the resulting view of the movement as a stand-alone piece independ-
ent of its symphonic context, mirrored, for example, in its inclusion on records
of variously curated ‘classics’. Adorno seemed to sense this development, stat-
ing that the Adagietto ‘borders on genre prettiness through its ingratiating
sound’.595 Indeed, even during Mahler’s lifetime, it already appeared to be the
movement of the Fifth Symphony that pleased audi-
cences the most.596

Situated between the polyphonic Scherzo and the boisterous Rondo-Finale,
the Adagietto also formally influences the entire symphonic work because of
its marked difference in timbre and atmosphere. Scored for harp and strings
only, it presents, as Adorno acknowledges, a contrast to the overall sound of
the Fifth, in which the wind instruments have been prominent up to this
point.597 In addition, the strings-only sonority in itself mediates a timbral ef-
fect. Hesselager mentions the Adagiett
 o as an example of how unmixed string
timbre by its divergence from mixed instrumental colour might be regarded as

595 Adorno, Mahler, p. 136.
596 Floros cites Strauss, who in a letter to Mahler in 1905 wrote: ‘It serves you right that pre-
cisely that movement was liked the most by the audience’. In Floros, The Symphonies, p. 141.
597 Adorno, Mahler, p. 119.
If one is to believe Donald Mitchell, the string and harp orchestra here also relates to the first movement’s second trio, which produced a similar sonic impact.\footnote{Mitchell, \textit{The Mahler Companion}, p. 267.}

As I will show in the following analysis, the Adagietto’s function as an independent movement has implications for my interpretation of it as world, both in relation to the symphony’s storyworld but also concerning the cinematic aspect. This can in turn be derived from the music’s songlike features, which are crucial for the listener’s identification with a virtual subject immersed in a sound-world suggesting the atmosphere of an inner world. Song can also be understood to define the movement as a whole in terms of a non-diegetic film score, constituting one of several devices that construct a world, similar to Audissino’s expressive, world-building elements. In addition, I suggest that the cinematic feature also results from the meeting between the virtual subject and the surrounding atmosphere, generating imaginative images reminiscent of film. This makes it plausible to view the Adagietto as a sort of double world, presenting an inner world but in addition generating new possible worlds through the virtual subject’s dissolution into the surroundings of sounds.

The idea of the Adagietto as song runs as a recurring thread through the Mahler literature; for example, both Floros and Adorno speak of the movement as a song without words.\footnote{Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, pp. 140, 154–155, and Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, pp. 19, 31.} From a broader perspective, this connects back to some notes made by the Dutch conductor Wilhelm Mengelberg in his score, claiming that Mahler conceived the movement as a love song for Alma not long after he had met her in November 1901.\footnote{Mengelberg’s account considering his role as intermediary source as well as his being a dear friend and admirer of Mahler.} However, due to the Adagietto’s similarities to the Rückert song \textit{Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen}, composed in the same year but whose subject is notably different, de la Grange doubts that interpretation. There are also reasons to question the degree of truth in Mengelberg’s account considering his role as intermediary source as well as his being a dear friend and admirer of Mahler.

Regardless of the biographical circumstances, the movement is in many ways reminiscent of song. Throughout this investigation, I have explored the connection between symphony and song and the various humanlike voices this has generated, in the form of both the actual human voice and instrumental ones. In the Adagietto, the concept of song and voice permeates the entire music in a manner suggestive of a lyrical Lieder.\footnote{Johnson, \textit{Mahler’s Voices}, p. 19.}

Most directly, the analogy to song resonates with the lyrical string melody running through the movement. It first presents itself in the \textit{espressivo} line of

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first violins starting on the anacrusis of bar 3 (see example 5.4.1). Adorno’s reference to Mahler’s ‘speech gestures’ illuminates its language-like communication as a speaking voice. As Johnson observes, as in several other of his orchestral slow movements, Mahler initially presents the melodic material within the range of the human singing voice and, through a combination of mostly strings, imitates the tone of the human voice. This register pertains when the cellos restate the theme (bar 10) at exactly the same pitch, further amplifying it with sonorous fullness. The closely spaced string section of the introduction accompanying the instrumental voice underlines and contributes to this rich sonority, defined by Johnson as Mahler’s ‘Adagio voice’. The presence of an absent singer also finds connotations in the harp accompaniment, whose opening arpeggio figures to long viola and cello notes almost function as a prelude to the speaker’s entrance virtually embodied by the violins. In addition, the frequently employed caesuras or commas, analogous to breathing pauses in speech, together with performance directions such as seelenvoll (‘soulful’), intensify the references to a humanlike utterance.

Example 5.4.1: bars 1–4

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604 Adorno, Mahler, p. 22.
605 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 30.
606 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 29.
607 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 33.
The songful, lyrical melody might be understood as the expression of a virtual human subject, with the modification of the string sound suggesting various nuances of its tone. As listeners, we identify with this strongly emotional voice, which resonates inside us so that one ‘becomes’ the virtual subject of the music. While the melodic line functions as a cue for this identification, the surrounding sound-world presents an immersive space suffused with an atmosphere suggestive of an inner world into which the subject is invited to dissolve. Mahler’s frequent performance directions relate to a particularly emotional mood, in addition to seeelenvoll illustrated by mit Empfindung (‘with emotion’) and mit innigster Empfindung (‘with deepest emotion’). In combination with the string sound, this deep emotion becomes one directed inwards.

The immersion of the virtual subject in the surrounding atmosphere takes place by means of a successive spatial expansion. The gradual tuning-in process of the opening functions as a direct marker of ambience, in which the slow tempo in combination with string and harp timbre cues the listener into an otherworldly sound-world previously not encountered in the symphonic work. If these first bars set the scene for the establishment of a humanlike voice in that space, the subsequent expansion of orchestral texture towards fliessend (bars 30–31) enlarges it into a wider, more flowing state. While Johnson regards these patterns in Mahler’s slow movements as the solo line being ‘absorbed into, and expanded by, a larger collective [voice]’, I instead interpret them as a virtual subject being further taken up or immersed in the encompassing mood of its inner world.

During the course of the movement, the character of the music momentarily shifts from its songfulness so that one can speak of changes in the state of the virtual subject. These depend on specific alterations of timbre scored in the lower or higher registers of the humanlike voice established at the beginning. By way of a short anacrusis in the second violins (bars 17–18), a more sombre and harsher tone emerges, bringing to the fore lowly scored violas and cellos (see example 5.4.2). This can be interpreted as a return to a darker mood, in which the lower register resonates more with a virtual subjective state, rather than a voice of a virtual subject. While here, Mahler omits the first violins – in bar 47, they are the ones directing the melodic line leading up to an exposed state in the high register (bar 52), above the sole accompaniment of the second violins and violas (see example 5.4.3). The effect of this gradual omission of instruments evokes a kind of floating, ethereal quality, losing the sensation of grounding in the cellos and double basses. I interpret this as a recentring into a higher, even more immersive state, where again the divergence from the humanlike voice register generates that shift. Hence, the initial scoring of the songlike melody in the register of the human voice establishes a virtual human subject that then is sustained throughout the movement by means of Hatten’s

608 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 30.
concept of actorial continuity. However, by means of divergences from that register through changes of timbre, other states of virtual subjectivity and its inner world can be attained.

*Example 5.4.2: bars 16–22*
Example 5.4.3: bars 45–55

I now turn to two other possible interpretations of the Adagietto as world, influenced by film. If one separates the virtual subject expressed by the lyrical melody and the surrounding sound-world, it means that the meeting between this subject and the pervasive emotional atmosphere generates a state of inner contemplation that gives rise to images analogous to an interior cinema. Thus, the immersion of the virtual subject in the inner world also produces new possible worlds – a mental imagining – suggesting a kind of double world, or a multiplying process of worlds.
Finally, the cinematic aspect also concerns the movement as in itself being a song in terms of non-diegetic music, which, like the elegiac song in the funeral setting of the first movement, functions as accompaniment to the setting. In a similar way, the song here functions as one of several elements that construct the world, where it falls upon the listener to create the images or scenes that together make up the totality of world. It is also possible to regard the Adagietto as containing a cinematic component, as forming part of a number of possible, imaginative worlds in contrast to only that depicted in *Death in Venice*.

The Rondo-Finale: jubilant affirmation or musical joke?

Because of its contrasting character in relation to the rest of the symphony together with the inclusion of the chorale in D major, the Finale has generally been viewed as a jubilant ending, a victory of light over the previous darkness.

As I will show, however, the movement presents a sense of affirmative triumph only on the surface, whereas the chorale and also the Adagietto in fact lose their properties as possible worlds when integrated in the movement’s storyworld.

This storyworld presents the main world as a societal collective, defined by lazy tardiness, on the one hand, and ongoing work, on the other. However, there is no real sense of place or immersive space for the listener to centre into, only a world as an ongoing, rotating process, analogous to a technical machine. Thus, there is an erosion of world in which temporal rather than spatial dimensions prevail. Both the chorale and the Adagietto are taken up by this world, but thereby go from vision to the secularization and dissolution, respectively, of the inner world of the virtual subject. Consequently, even though the collective invites the listener to a unified community, it simultaneously demolishes that which is other and holds promises of something else – what is light and dreamy and better than the present state of world.

As in the Finale of the Fourth Symphony, I argue that the timbres and texture of the last movement of the Fifth do not actually mediate the work’s goal, but instead depict a quite ordinary world, here in terms of slow-motion laziness or endless labour. This simultaneously becomes a means of portraying the world’s meaninglessness, as a spinning wheel that never stops. Listening to the Finale’s sound, it presents the least quality of world in the symphony, manifesting the importance of timbre and texture in the making and perception of imaginary worlds. Through his usual sense of humour and irony, Mahler transforms what is from the outside a celebratory, conventional ending of a symphonic work into a story about life, this time in the manner of controlling composer and conductor.
Structural considerations: form and thematic material

Mahler called the Finale a Rondo, employing this term for the first time to describe one of his symphonic movements. However, the form does not conform to classical rondo models, which again illustrates how the composer’s work constantly resists traditional formal design because of its many divergences from the norm.

Analysts have proposed several different interpretations of the movement’s form. Floros interprets it as a Rondo with sonata traits that contains a number of fugal sections, yet ends up giving it a regular sonata form consisting of introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda. La Grange, however, argues that the movement is in none of these forms. It is neither a Rondo, because the main theme appears less frequently than the fugal passages, nor a sonata, due to the independence of the themes and the abrupt transitions. In addition, the contrasting theme C appears first in the development and then steadily becomes more and more important within it. Carolyn Baxendale describes the sonata–rondo relationship in the Finale as a complex one, shaped by more than one formal archetype and giving rise to several self-contained sections.

What unites all of these views is the localization of three independent themes, by La Grange and Baxendale called themes A, B, and C. They all have different characters and are central to my analysis of the movement based on worlds, which is why I proceed from this fundamental structure. In addition, the introduction section and the chorale also form significant parts for the overall division of storyworld.

Concerning the various worlds of the movement, I define the A and B themes as belonging to the main world, which forms the world topic of society. Whereas the first A theme presents homophonic, melodic episodes scored for strings and woodwinds, the B theme consists of contrapuntal, fugato material appearing in the lower strings. These contrasts are significant for my interpretation of the themes as representing two opposing sides of society, one of tardy laziness and the other as ongoing, collective work. As for the third theme, C, it consists of thematic material from the Adagietto and stages, as mentioned, a successive break-in process of world, in which the previous inner subjective world, each time it appears, becomes further integrated in the collective main world.

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The introduction is based on one of Mahler’s Wunderhorn songs, *Lob des hohen Verstandes*, which I argue is remade into several voices of nature mediating irony and humour.

Finally, the chorale in this movement presents itself as fully incorporated into the movement and thus part of its storyworld. However, as I will show, it gains the function of a break-in world in contrast to its previous appearance as a vision of another, possible world in the second movement.

The quotation principle at work? On recurring themes as break-in worlds

In this section, I will discuss the Finale’s three thematic recurrences in terms of what I regard as processes of break-in worlds, which are worlds coming from outside the storyworld of the movement. The first of these, the introduction, originates from Mahler’s Wunderhorn song *Lob des hohen Verstandes* and originates from outside the symphony. Concerning the other two, they are the theme taken from the Adagietto and the chorale of the second movement. Before looking at these more closely and analysing their subsequent transformations, I will briefly readdress some other opinions on how to define such thematic reappearances.

As presented in this chapter’s introduction, there are various views of how to define recurring thematic material, such as that in the Fifth Symphony. Mitchell regards it as a principle of quotation, while from Monahan’s perspective it conforms to that of transsymphonic narrative. As for Kinderman, he uses the term quotation in passing, but at other times simply talks about thematic and motivic connections. In *Grove Music Online*, quotation is defined as ‘the incorporation of a relatively brief segment of existing music in another work, in a manner akin to quotation in speech or literature, or a segment of existing music so incorporated in a later work’.613 According to this position, quotation in a strict manner arrives from outside the piece in which it occurs, ‘distinct from other forms of borrowing in that the borrowed material is presented exactly or nearly so’. What thus seems to determine whether or not something is a quotation is how close it is – melodically, texturally, or rhythmically – to the original statement. One type of quotation mentioned is that of vocal music incorporated in instrumental works, a practice that Mahler used to the utmost degree, probably more than any other composer.

This is the case with the Finale’s introduction (see example 5.5.1), signalling the transition from the dying string sonority of the previous movement with a confident horn call, the instrument and gesture again serving as a means of transportation to a new realm of the storyworld. Extending over a span of

23 bars, the section is a literal quotation from the Wunderhorn song *Lob des hohen Verstandes*. Mitchell translates this as ‘In praise of lofty intellect’, Floros as ‘In praise of high understanding’. The song being about a competition between a nightingale and a cuckoo, judged by a donkey who chooses the cuckoo, Mitchell views the introduction as Mahler’s comment on his critics, ‘daring the donkeys to fault his [i.e., Mahler’s] contrapuntal art – and half expecting them to do just that, at the same time’. Since a song comes with a text, in this case also from a work of Mahler’s own, Mitchell’s interpretation is logical. From a narrative perspective, what emerges is a kind of meta-telling in which the opinion of the composer himself dissolves in and colours the musical statements. In a way, this is an instance in which the composer overtly acknowledges his own presence in the sound-world, making his role as controlling author – and conductor – heard.

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Example 5.5.1: bars 1–23
While the connection to the Wunderhorn song is obvious, I want to linger on the instrumentation and texture of the introduction, which in my opinion permit a slightly different interpretation connected to world. The motifs are distributed among the horn, performing majestic, calling figures, the bassoon, performing short, dotted notes, and a more lyrical part alternating between oboe and clarinet. There are three types of voices, with the bassoon incarnating the more confident and sassy character of satire. Listening more closely, it is also precisely the bassoon motif in bars 3–5 that corresponds note for note with the beginning of the song. This fact, combined with the bassoon timbre’s prevalence in mediating comic characters, in my view locates the song reference to that instrument in particular, also suffusing it with a humorous touch. In the context of the song, one can interpret the different voices as coming from animals in nature, speaking in various tones and timbres and coming together as a virtual natural agency. In this way, there is a remaking of world from one work to another, with Mahler building using the building blocks of his own oeuvre. Throughout this study, nature has been a consistent topic in the exploration of world, and here it emerges in the more humorous and ironic manner of Des Knaben Wunderhorn. In addition, the introduction contains the whole thematic content of the movement and thus lends a further comic touch to both the present scene and what follows.

The irony of the opening in particular is reflected in the ending, where the final coda takes the song quotation through contrapuntal reworking, urging Mitchell to also regard that part as a ‘satirical shaft aimed at his [i.e., Mahler’s] critics’.615 The motifs are now centred in the brass sections, namely, in the

615 Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, The Mahler Companion, p. 320.
horns and trombones in ff, with actively working strings and whistling woodwinds. Nine bars before the end, however, the frenetic quavers are abruptly stopped by long brass notes, followed by sudden descending scalar figures in the woodwinds, all ending with distinct chords in the strings. Resembling some kind of celebratory circus music, the coda can indeed be seen as a last, critical shot in relation to the song, but also as a parodic or humorous answer to the traditional serenity of the previously presented chorale.

Concerning the Adagietto and the chorale, they present worlds from previous movements in the symphony, coming from outside the storyworld of the Finale. Yet, they form part of the entire storyworld of the Fifth Symphony, having represented possible worlds. Recalling the instance of the chorale in the second movement, in my interpretation, it appeared there as a breakthrough coming from outside the dark main world in the manner of a heavenly vision. As for the Adagietto, it symbolized an inner world of a virtual subject, or alternatively an independent song analogous to non-diegetic film music. Because of their recurrences, there is a temporal dimension to consider, giving rise to different kinds of transworld processes that I regard as break-ins into the storyworld of the Finale.

Starting with the Adagietto theme, it appears three times, i.e., in bars 191–252, 373–414, and 623–686, the last time forming a springboard to the D major chorale. Recalling the formal scheme, they form the grazioso passages of the movement – its second section – and more specifically derive from the upward-striving, melodic material of the lively middle section of the fourth movement (bars 50–60).

As Kinderman observes, ‘Mahler takes care to remind the listener of the Adagietto when he first recalls its thematic material in the Finale’. In the anacrusis of bar 191 (see example 5.5.2), it gently appears out of the decreasing activity of the previous fugal section, the orchestral setting changing to only strings. Whereas the character, register, and instrumentation resemble that of the Adagietto’s beginning, the tempo is new. This is Adorno’s reference to the fast-forward technique later discussed and a feature that somewhat robs the music of its earlier floating, otherworldly atmosphere, amplified by more animated lines in the accompanying parts. Compared with its reference part in the fourth movement, the theme here appears to be shallower, crowned with slightly aggressive sforzando accents in bar 223. It does not seem irrelevant to recall Kinderman’s question: ‘Is the sublime, reflective, lyric theme from the Adagietto transformed or even parodied here, or is it rather liberated from constraints, revealing some more fundamental essence?’.

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Should we see this first appearance of the Adagietto theme as a quotation? While it displays several features qualifying it as quotation, melodic replication probably being the most significant, I want to propose a different term more in line with the concept of world, which is Ryan’s fictional recentring. Since the Adagietto has already presented itself as an inner world, its reappearance in the Rondo entails a return to an earlier established space. However, it forms a transformation from a private, inside space to a collective, societal space, as illustrated by the subsequent process of integration into the
musical fabric. With that said, musical form, due to its lack of semantic specificity, is obliged to use repetitive sections to a greater or lesser degree in order to mark that kind of re-establishment. Thus, Mahler ‘has’ to apply the similar techniques of quotation to signal and connect a sub-world to the storyworld of the Finale. Notably, as soon as this recentring has been signalled, he gradually brings in bassoons and other woodwind instruments.

On its second appearance, at the anacrusis of bar 373 (see example 5.5.3), the music comes more directly out of the fugal part at the same dynamic level of ff. The strings are now in a higher register, more reminiscent of the original middle section, increasing the sonority’s radiance while being in polyphonic dialogue with the woodwinds from the start. Kinderman argues that this time the Adagietto theme is further integrated with the Rondo’s material and consequently into its sound-world, which, for example, shows in the transition to D major. Kinderman, “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen”: Mahler’s Rückert Setting and the Aesthetics of Integration in the Fifth Symphony, p. 253.
Example 5.5.3: bars 368–379
In its third and final presentation, the theme appears even more consumed by the larger orchestra, where the addition of woodwind phrases with eccentric trills gives it a more joyful and somewhat parodic character. The interleaved sections are so smoothly connected that the Adagietto’s emergence in bar 623 (see example 5.5.4) is not immediately apprehended.
By means of changes in timbre in combination with the increased tempo, the Adagietto has successively been integrated into the surrounding music and thereby into the storyworld of the Finale. Simultaneously, however, it has also lost its previous songfulness and sound of an inner, subjective world and has also dissolved as world. One can interpret this development as a gradual break-in process of world, in which one world merges into the other, ultimately forming a new one.
In order to understand the chorale passage of the Finale (bars 711–748, see example 5.5.5), there is a need to refer to its first appearance in the second movement (bars 464–519). When revisited in the Finale, the transition to the chorale is smooth, with the instrumentation of the brass setting and string figures already established. Compared with its earlier rupture, the passage is now fully integrated in the musical fabric, completely lacking the uncanniness of the second movement. One could speak of a secularization of the affirmative brass chorale, bringing it down from its earlier vision-like sphere to one connected with earth, forming a natural part of the storyworld of the final movement.
Example 5.5.5: bars 707–718
Regarding the two different spaces of the chorale in the second and last movements, respectively, the first appearance, due to its formal rupture and timbre, represented a place outside the main world, which is why I viewed it as vision in the form of a possible world. When it reappears for the second time in the Finale, what was earlier something outside the storyworld now forms part of it. The traditional generic connotations of the chorale with the heavenly and unreachable have thereby become something else, illustrating Mahler’s way
of transforming or distorting established genres and styles. This remoulding is often characterized by parody or sense of humour, exemplified by both the secularization of the chorale and its subsequent appearance in the very different style of the satirically permeated coda.

It is thus plausible to define Mahler’s transformative reworkings of the Adagietto and the chorale as transworld processes, migrating from being one type of world to forming part of another. I find this concept of transworld process to be freer and more dynamic than the concepts of Mitchell and Monahan. Quotation, in my view, bypasses the modification of timbre in relation to the surrounding music defining the reappearances of themes. One can instead look at quotation as a way of recentring the listener within an already established space and world, rather than as a regular quotation. This permits a method of establishing and developing elements of the storyworld in music by means of its repetitive form, which due to music’s lack of the semantic specificity of language, would otherwise not be possible. The transsymphonic narrative concept captures the temporal process of anticipation and flashback/reminiscence in the themes, but changing narrative into process recognizes how these themes might be said to narrate, also reflecting the procedures of the real world.

Technical anticipations: fast-forward and slow motion

In the Finale, one can localize certain effects of temporal manipulations that I argue function as means of portraying certain aspects of the storyworld. This affects the mediation of the different worlds, but also shows the intrusion of Mahler the composer into the music, stepping in as controlling conductor.

One of the novel features [formal ideas] that Adorno recognized in the Finale was ‘the musical quick-motion picture’. However, there are various opinions about which instance in the music this observation relates to. Floros interprets this ‘fast-motion’ technique as referring to the variation by diminution of the chorale in bars 72–75, ‘robbed of all its weight and dignity’, while Mitchell regards it as constituting the speeded-up version of the Adagietto. In my view, the target of Adorno’s description is most likely the Adagietto theme. By forming a prominent melodic entity together with the changed tempo in relation to the earlier movement, Mahler clearly signals its importance, compared with the four-bar-long, barely audible fragment of the chorale referred to by Floros. As illustrated in the analysis of the Adagietto, the temporal manipulation assisted in producing the changed, stripped-down

619 See Adorno, Mahler, p. 136. Mitchell’s translation of Adorno’s ‘kompositorischen Zeitraffers’ is the slightly more specific ‘quick-motion movie music’; see Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, The Mahler Companion, p. 322.
621 Mitchell, ‘Eternity or Nothingness?’, The Mahler Companion, p. 322.
version subsequently integrated in the Finale. The fast-forward technique in this case becomes part of the process of remaking worlds, transforming the former inner world into an outer, collective one.

Along with the fast-forwarding technique, I also find passages of its opposite in this movement: the technique of slow motion. As with that of fast-forwarding, it can, from a narrative perspective, be likened to Gérard Genette’s category of duration, in addition to order and frequency. As outlined earlier in the study, speed encompasses the four aspects of ellipsis, summary, scene, and pause, with a recently added category of stretch, which for this investigation permit various forms of temporal world-making.622 Adapted to music, these are largely concerned with rhythmic manipulations, often coming abruptly out of a differently organized texture. One such example is the last bars before the recapitulation at Fig. 21 (bar 497), where the brass parts enter into a sort of canon. The motifs of the trumpets and first and second trombones are echoed on the second beat by the horns and third trombone, altering the sensation of tempo against the continuing ascending scale passages of the violins and violas. The slow-motion impression somehow continues at Fig. 21, with the rondo theme now appearing in the form of triplets, in combination with change in tempo plötzlich wieder wie zu Anfang.

Mitchell regards Mahler’s reintroduction of the triplets in the Rondo as signifying the aspiration foreshadowed in Part I, referring to them as ‘a mini-celebration of all the aspiring music that heretofore has met with defeat’.623 However, in relation to the temporal suspension of the triplets attained by slow motion, the effect instead becomes one of irony rather than aspiration, as though the anticipated goal expressed by the music cannot be attained.

As will be shown in the analysis of the next section treating the main world of the movement, it is possible to detect similar effects of slow-motion and fast-forward techniques in the contrasting themes of A and B. In relation to the collective, societal topic of world, this becomes a means of mediating a sensation of lazy tardiness and rotating, ongoing work, respectively.

The movement also contains several unprepared stops, such as in bars 329 and 333, which I would also like to include in the domain of technique. Since no virtual agency can be found in the music assigned with these stops, it appears as though they are directed from outside its world. Considering the other meta-telling present in the introduction and ending, resulting from the integration of the Wunderhorn song, I find it plausible to suggest that it is Mahler himself who steps in and controls the music’s temporal unfolding. In view of his double roles as composer and conductor, he acknowledges his function as

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both author of the work and organizing controller in the manner of world di-
rector, reflecting the positions he assigns to the brass that produce the sudden
outbursts in minim.

Collective vs. subjective worlds, labour vs. solitude
I now turn to a discussion of the movement’s main world, which is defined by
a mediation of the collective, on one hand, as ongoing, circulating work and,
on the other, as a sort of lazy tardiness. These different aspects of the main
world’s societal realm are illustrated by the contrasting themes A and B and
their respective, varied textures and timbres. Concerning theme A, it presents
a homogenous, melodious texture orchestrated for strings and woodwinds. At
its first appearance (bars 24–55, see example 5.5.6), the theme is transformed
out of the introduction and is then dominated by the winds, with the melody
first presented in the horn, after which it is taken over by woodwinds and cel-
os. While the melody superficially conveys optimism and forward motion,
the long forte diminuendo notes in cellos and bassoons, together with a similar
marking in the third horn, generate the effect of a blocking, slow-motion-like
tardiness. This is also reflected in the darker, harsher sound colour of the par-
ticipating lower instruments. Even if, at the theme’s second instance (bars
136–166), the stopping effect of the pedal notes decreases as the orchestra
grows into further melodic fullness, the persistent dynamics continue to sus-
pend the music, whose homogeneity suggestively represents the collective of
a unified society. The last time the theme appears is as a variation in the pre-
viously discussed slow-motion passage (Fig. 21, bar 495), containing the tri-
plets from Part I of the symphony. In addition to underlining the sense of la-
ziness by means of temporal manipulation, the sense of irony tied to the aspi-
ration of the triplets also colours the representation of the collective, which
becomes frozen in its forward striving. The tenacious tardiness reflected by
these passages somewhat mirrors that of the depiction of heaven in the Finale
of the Fourth Symphony, underlined by a quite ordinary, uniform timbre.
As for the B theme, it consists of the recurring fugal sections that most strongly seem to resist the formal label of Rondo. In relation to the slower A theme, its first entrance in bar 56 (see example 5.5.7) appears abrupt and unprepared, generating the temporal effect of fast-forwarding. Johnson traces a collective voice in these fugal parts, the counterpart in the movement foregrounding ‘the
idea of music as work, as constructive activity’. It is true that the intensely working unison figures, initiated in lower strings, emerge as collective, but more in terms of collective activity than as collective voice. The continuous repetitive gestures, increasingly amplified with the addition of parts, approach a process of labour, of work exerted by virtual human agents. It can be described as a sort of multiple agency, but as agency in doing something, and not as voice, which the anti-speech and non-songlike movements appear to oppose. From a broader perspective, the ongoing fugal material also suggests an endless, multiplying rotation, a meaninglessness also localized in the second movement but now disguised by means of its joyful, energetic character.

Example 5.5.7: bars 51–63

As was the case with the chorale, and indeed with all genres applied in the Fifth Symphony, the fugue’s mediation of agential work depends on Mahler’s treatment and reworking of already established generic connotations. Apart from their heterogeneous intermingling in his oeuvre, they form cues or reference points for subsequent development, with sound being key to the constant kneading of themes and expressions. This method has been frequently observed throughout the analysis of the symphony, such as in the transformation of the waltz in the Scherzo and the funeral march of the first movement. As Baxendale observes, the fugue initiating theme B at bar 56 ‘does not convey any sense of monumental dignity, but has a breathless and impatient quality’. Traditionally regarded as a learned, serious style, the fugue here instead comes across as constant, energetic activity. Baxendale notes in the fugue’s loss of its associated monumentality a similar generic reworking as in Mahler’s secularizing of the traditional function of the chorale.

The main world as collective can also be studied in relation to the contrasting subjectivity represented by the inner, break-in world of the Adagietto.

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Both Johnson and Kinderman address the connection between these two opposite poles, albeit in different ways. Whereas Johnson regards the collective, constructed voice in the Finale as an antithesis to the authentic, subjective voice of the Adagietto, Kinderman argues that the Adagietto is successively integrated in the collective of the movement, rejecting loneliness in favour of belonging to the group or larger society.\footnote{Johnson, \textit{Mahler's Voices}, p. 116, and Kinderman, “‘Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen’: Mahler’s Rückert Setting and the Aesthetics of Integration in the Fifth Symphony”, pp. 247–268.} As was shown in the analysis of the Adagietto’s reappearances, this integration process manifested itself in the continuous, transformative changes of timbre, style, and tempo, finally fully suffused with the surrounding sound and thus the collective.

In contrast to Kinderman, however, I do not interpret the migration into the collective here as a refuge from loneliness. Rather, this process robs the Adagietto of its sound-world, generating an inner, private world. When taken up by the Finale, that world dissolves, and so does the virtual subject embodied in that world. When integrated into the societal storyworld, it is subsumed into the ongoing, rotating process of work – or retarding laziness – and thereby loses its access to the possible worlds of the imagination. As in the finale of the Fourth Symphony, this world is preceded by a more dreamlike, shimmering world that is left in favour of a superficially happy place, but that is precisely surface.

Adorno’s affirmation critique and the fulfilment of the chorale

Due to the Finale’s great contrast in character to the rest of the symphony, especially the darkness and funeral march of Part I, opinions regarding its value have varied greatly. Suffused with ‘a cheerfulness that rises to boisterousness’,\footnote{Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, p. 155.} its energy and consistent major mode have led critics to speak of a resounding ‘will of life’, ‘crowning affirmation of life’, ‘busy optimism [of the fugal rondo]’, as well as a ‘musical declaration of joy’.\footnote{See sources in Floros, \textit{The Symphonies}, p. 156.} An important reason for this view of the Finale concerns the final fulfilment of the movement’s chorale passage, which, in its first appearance in the second movement, was denied or destroyed by a subsequent return to the dark main theme and its dying ending. Now, following anticipation earlier in the movement, it announces itself in complete form right before the end of the movement, which closes with an abrupt coda.

One influential negative voice, however, was Adorno’s. Although recognizing some forward-thinking, innovative devices such as ‘fast motion’ remi-
niscent of film technique, Adorno found it hard to accept the dominant optimism of the movement, finding it too lightweight in relation to the first three movements:

Mahler was a bad yes-man. His voice breaks like Nietzsche’s when he proclaims values, when he himself practices this disgusting concept of ‘overcoming’, pounced on by musical analysts. He makes music as though joy ruled the world. His vainly jubilant movements unmask jubilation. 630

I concur with Mitchell’s opinion of Adorno’s critique as being ‘an ideological rather than a musical argument’, 631 deeply tied to Adorno’s praising of negativity and the brokenness that he saw as the core of experience for thoughtful Mahler. The relevant question for this analysis is not whether Mahler succeeded in his unusual mediation of affirmation, but how this trajectory can be interpreted in terms of narrative and world. Moreover, the movement is not as naively concerned with unproblematic affirmation as Adorno wants to project. As both Mitchell and Kinderman have observed, humour and irony are present in many instances in the finale, among others, in the treatment of the chorale, which loses its traditional connotation of the heavenly. 632 In addition, the subsequent coda is markedly different in style from the previously majestic sound, with bombastic brass figures, rapid descending scalar figures, and abrupt string stops, assigning it a cheeky answer to the seemingly unproblematic affirmation of the joy of life. Johnson, who calls the end of the symphony ‘a musical joke’, observes the chorale’s falsehood. 633

The seemingly affirmative character and ending of the Finale in many ways reflects that of the Fourth Symphony. Just as heaven was not the utopian place it seemed to be, the chorale only superficially celebrates a sense of victory. This depends partly on the humour and irony reflected by the ensuing coda, but also, as I have shown, partly on its integration into the surrounding sound-world of the music and thereby its function as possible world of a heavenly vision. When it loses its status as a break-in world, it simultaneously loses its promise of something else, of something better existing outside the main world.

The same superficial integration and loss of world resonate in the progressive integration of the Adagietto, with the virtual subject joining the collective but thereby also dissolving into ongoing, rotating work and slow tardiness. The storyworld of the Finale presents no real sense of place or immersive space to rest in, only world as process and movement.

630 Adorno, Mahler, pp. 136–137.
633 Johnson, Mahler’s Voices, p. 118.
In relation to the superficial triumph of the Fifth Symphony’s ending, the Adagietto becomes the light in the utter meaninglessness that stands steadily by itself as a world of emotive and soulful refuge. Of all the topics encountered in the symphony’s storyworld, from the darkness of Part I, via the distorted dance settings, to society, it is in this inner world that the virtual subject and the listener are invited to immerse and reach into the heart of the spatio–temporal dimensions of the storyworld.

This generally shows how timbre and orchestration might tell us something else about musical narratives and worlds, in addition to tonal relationships, harmony, and keys. If we listen closely to Mahler’s sound, and to how he in the manner of a sound designer sculpts his works, another image of what he wants to tell us about the world emerges.

The topical narratives of the Fifth: between shifting agential perspectives of world

This chapter analyses the Fifth Symphony as a storyworld belonging to the genre of realism, with each of the work’s three parts forming one particular type or topic of world, all coming together in a unified totality. As for Part I, it depicts a dark world, followed by the social world of Part II. Concerning Part III, its two movements constitute two separate worlds, one inner and subjective and one outer and collective, both of which mediate the topic of society. Each part containing more than one movement is united by processes and connections between them, in Part I in terms of shared building blocks of world and in Part III as the break-in of the Adagietto into the Rondo. The parts do not, as in the Fourth, present a version of the entire storyworld of the symphony, but rather separate, spread-out realms and stories that as a whole create a coherent imaginative geography of world. In that sense, they are similar to chapters or acts of a novel or play, each adding something to the overall world and narrative. Through their evolving mediation of certain kinds of worlds, they present what one can refer to as topical narratives, forming independent, self-coherent realms but simultaneously contributing to the trajectory of the entire work. As a result, there arise plural narratives on several levels, which are concerned with the configuration of worlds rather than plots.

Starting with the dark world of Part I, the first and second movements mediate this shared topic differently. As for the first movement, it presents a story from the past by means of episodes called forth and told by a solo trumpet in the manner of narrator. This means that the storyworld re-emerges and is showed to the listener through the act of telling, existing only in memory. From a vantage point in a funeral event evoking death, various nuances of darkness related to this setting unfold, experienced through the changing perspectives of the virtual agents of the brass. The listener perceives the storyworld from the particular viewpoints of these instruments, from either the
more static display of scenic units or the mobile positions in relation to sound-worlds. In the second movement, darkness evolves into current places and ways of being in the world. Through Mahler’s spatial construction of surround sounds, there arises a menacing and melancholic atmosphere permeating an otherwise deserted environment. The listener gains access to these worlds either as an observer standing in the storyworld or by means of identification with a virtual subject experiencing darkness in terms of melancholy and lament. Compared with the exterior viewpoint of the first movement, the second more poignantly makes the listener co-experience the world and its misery. In addition to spatiality, temporality also reveals darkness by means of an ongoing circulating process that shrinks and distorts the main world’s already limited size as defined by two sub-spaces. What breaks this endless activity is the emergence of possible worlds such as marches but mainly the chorale, which shatters the storyworld into anxiety and further chaos. Yet, as in realism, light in terms of heaven remains a vision in the dark, although appearing as a final, surreal eruption of sound.

The social world of Part II consists only of one movement, but in turn displays two prominent social elements: dance and conversation among voices. Even though light as joy of life permeates most of the rustic country dance of the Ländler, darkness manifests itself as angst and palpable fear of death, having an effect on the music. It does so through distorting the waltz, but most clearly in the expression of collective cries or miserable voices. In line with the social topic, these emotions are shared among humanlike beings, also forming a retreat into the intimate rooms of memory. Space defines the settings of this movement and captures the sensations of vastness and enclosure characterizing its different elements, in addition to constituting the principal unit of which the world is built. As such, it recreates for the listener real life’s perception of outdoor and indoor, exterior and interior, and how these notions map out social spaces.

Part III treats the topic of society and its two opposites of subjective inner world and outer collective world represented by the Adagietto and Rondo-Finale, respectively. These initially separate realms come together via a process of integration, whereby the former is successively taken up into the latter’s affinity, leaving loneliness behind. However, this community provides no emancipation or joy, but turns out to be cyclical meaninglessness in the form of ongoing work. When deprived of its otherworldly, shimmering timbre of inner contemplation, the Adagietto and consequently the virtual subject inhabiting its sound-world disappear through erosion into ordinariness. The same goes for the chorale integrated from the second movement of Part II, which indeed now forms part of the storyworld but simultaneously has lost its former status as possible world, offering the promise of something better.
Scoring the world: Mahler’s multifaceted construction of sound

In the Fifth Symphony’s depiction of a storyworld in the genre of realism, generic connotations and their connections to elements of the real world form the basis of the cues to settings and their subsequent transformations. Through Mahler’s rich usage of military signals, marches, dances, chorales, and fugue, there arises a sort of theatrical staging that provides a vantage point for the scene of events. However, more than the genres per se, it is how Mahler deforms or dramatizes them through sound that reciprocally makes them into cues. By drawing attention to established conventions in terms of their divergence from the expected, the composer actualizes their function as referring to phenomena outside the music – that is, he narrativizes them. This differs from the method in the Fourth Symphony of organizing a mise-en-scène by means of musical objects or props as opposed to realistically referential and subsequently developed settings.

The topics of darkness and light also adhere to what can be considered a realistic figuration. Compared with the Fourth Symphony, darkness does not reside in nightmares or dangerous figures such as Death, but is more about darkness as emotions such as melancholy and loneliness. This shows, for example, in the lamenting of the cellos in the second movement’s nature world and the anxious speeches of the brass in the first movement’s first trio. Death emerges as palpable angst or fear, finding its way even into the seemingly joyous setting of dance. A sense of chaos in the storyworld of the Fifth Symphony permeates its basic atmosphere, illustrated by the destruction and collapse of worlds and their preceding derailment. The cyclical process of meaninglessness, mediated through either circularity between worlds, the movements of dance, or those of labour, conveys the relentless eternity of the world’s course. As in the Fourth, there is barely any recourse to the inner worlds of dreams or to the ethereal, radiant spaces up in the spheres. Light instead manifests itself as distant, temporary visions that momentarily erupt before disappearing again, alternatively in the melancholic rooms of past, unattainable memories. The exception is the contemplative world of the Adagietto, in which the virtual subject finally dissolves into a world of its own. As later taken up into the Rondo-Finale, however, that world also does not last, merely being an evasive interlude in the storyworld evocative of a dream.
What characterizes the Fifth as another feature of realism is the continuous presence of the collective and its visible effects in terms of events in the storyworld. The settings and places such as the funeral events, dance salons, and conversation rooms in themselves imply collective activity, but Mahler’s scoring also suggests a multiple agency in the scenes, such as the cellos mediating the participation of humans in the funeral march. These agents also express themselves together, mostly in terms of cries and anxiety sounding from a group of winds. In addition, the many constellations of the brass cooperate in unison, functioning as cues for the listener’s perspectives and views of the world. It is about the experience of being in and perceiving the storyworld as a collective, which mirrors the shared interaction among humans in real life.

The way of telling by means of longer scenes in this work expands the shorter and more differentiated ones of the Fourth Symphony. Through Mahler’s many abrupt shifts within sections, often attained through changes in timbre, texture, and style, the world becomes dissected into smaller units. In comparison with the Fourth’s multitude of worlds and spaces, here narration primarily works inside rather than between entities. The dimensions of both temporality and spatiality are crucial for this technique, generating continuous development and mobile alteration between several spaces within the larger one of the entire scene. The wider telling across the entire Fifth Symphony also contrasts with the Fourth, in which thematic connections are not gradually transformed into different worlds but successively break into the storyworld through the transportation across worlds of disparate movements. These processes of break-in of the Adagietto and the chorale are illustrated by means of timbre, which by diverging from the surroundings marks them as other worlds, but consequently makes them disappear when scoring is more in line with the rest of the music. There is an elusiveness to the possible worlds of the Fifth Symphony, reaching inward in contrast to the Fourth’s procedure of break-out, of reaching outward.

Another development concerns the musical influences of drama and theatre. Whereas the Fourth Symphony was an exploration of spatial expansion in terms of mapping distance or off-stage voices, Mahler’s scoring in the Fifth adds the dimension of diegetic narrative positions through his particular application of the brass. In addition, the integration of these dramatic voices into the sound-world of the symphony generates a more mobile experience for the listener who, via the brass’s shifting perspectives, gains interchanging views of what in the theatre would be a static stage. The brass’s functions in the symphony in many ways derive from the specific orchestration technique of the work, in which the rich counterpoint and massive sound enable their overriding role as directors of the storyworld. Compared with the more heterogeneous and purer tone colours of the Fourth Symphony, the release of the brass in addition permits the telling of a sound-world with a generally more homogeneous timbre scored for larger textures.
There is furthermore a widening and release of the scenic frames, which expand beyond the static position of the stage into mobile tools for the generation of the storyworld’s spaces. This entails both a reframing of various elements of a broken scene, such as in the funeral event, and a change of size, as in the alternately small and wide spaces of the Scherzo. Compared with the portrait-like frames of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement viewed by the listener from a distance, the framing of world-building elements gives a closer, kaleidoscopic vision of the world analogous to the shifting camera work of cinema. In addition to seeing, spatial mobility in the Fifth draws the listener into its spaces, which is the case with the different scenic units of the Ländler theme in the Scherzo. Space thus both shrinks and expands the world, making it appear close or near, presenting to the listener a variable building of sound never constructed in exactly the same way.

As for the larger narrative of the Fifth Symphony, its Finale, like that of the Fourth, depicts the most banal and homogenous world in terms of timbre. Both movements mediate irony and humour in relation to the heavenly topic and what one thinks is the promise of another, better, and brighter world. They do so by different means, related to their respective genres and overall narratives. In the Fourth Symphony, the finale concerned heaven as place, whereas in the Fifth, heaven is tied up with the generic connotation of chorale in the form of a vision. However, just as heaven in the former turned out to be no paradisiacal world high above, the chorale in the latter loses its status as a possible world, being transformed and disappearing into the collective’s endless work. The parodic endings of the respective works seem to tell us that they are in fact not triumphant affirmations, as generally understood. Rather, the preceding movements of the Adagio and the Adagietto form the most beautiful and shimmering worlds of the symphonies’ universes. They are spaces in which to immerse oneself, either into inner spaces of our dreams or high up in the spheres, where the rest of the world disappears and time is disrupted.

This study sets out to explore how Mahler’s Fourth and Fifth Symphonies create imaginative worlds as experienced through listening. Using the composer’s comment to Sibelius as a point of departure, it applies world as a conceptual framework for the exploration of a musical sound-world, with a particular focus on the aspects of timbre and orchestration. The investigation differs from other predominantly narrative studies in musicology by casting light on how sound itself, rather than elements such as plot archetypes or semiotic associations, functions as the generative means of world-making. By highlighting features connected to intersubjective perception and expressive devices, the ambition is to demonstrate other ways of hearing music, giving the listener a more active and crucial position while foregrounding the often bypassed realm of timbre and instrumentation.

Throughout the study, I look at the concept of world from many different angles and perspectives in terms of construction, type, process, and the various positions that determine its form. With a vantage point in the categories of
space, time, virtual agency, voice, and gesture, the aim is to outline the multi-
faceted totality of Mahler’s sound-world and its particular configurative ways
of telling.

What emerges as crucial for the presentation of both world and narrative
are the constantly changing settings and functions of Mahler’s orchestration.
No instrument, either individually or as a group, has a fixed or predetermined
role in line with traditional conventions, but rather is continuously trans-
formed with regard to timbre and textural position. Within the framework of
the entire orchestra, each symphony displays a number of constellations with
variations in size (especially the tutti–chamber antithesis), instrumental play-
ers, and voice. Often, these contrastive shifts attain their particular effect in
relation to one another, which also results from Mahler’s ordering and struc-
turing of them. Such examples are the ‘in-between’ memory spaces of wood-
woods in the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony or the sudden massive outburst
of the first movement’s first trio following the lonely solo trumpet in the same
work. Even a whole movement, the Adagietto’s sonority of strings and harp,
attains its special features because of its markedness in relation to its surround-
ings.

Mahler’s creation of a collective of orchestras out of the unified symphonic
one results in a plurality of different sound-worlds, which become means to
illustrate the expressive variety of the world and its constitutive elements.
Timbre thereby becomes a plastic and mouldable material intimately con-
nected to the idea but also to the work’s structure, in which the diverse sections
of sound become parts of the composition’s total organization. Using Mahler’s
own analogy to a master builder, these entities comprise world-building bricks
to play with in the creative construction of musical worlds. How the disparate
sound-worlds and their individual components are put together results in many
types of worlds as well as temporal processes and narratives, consequently
also determining the form.

Mahler’s orchestration practice is thus not so much about what ‘sounds
good’ in terms of blending or consequent thinking in instrumental groups; ra-
ther, these all participate on equal terms and with a broad range of parts. His
way of scoring instead approaches a sort of sound design, in which the com-
poser, in the manner of a sound artist, shapes or sculpts the orchestral units,
which are then forged together into a composite artwork. Through their med-
ation of exterior features, sound does not become an end in itself but an effect
for the illustration of something else, similar to sound effects in film but with
the difference that the sounds themselves constitute the generated world.

Despite the rich variety of orchestral combinations, however, it is possible
to outline some general observations in Mahler’s handling of them and their
specific functions or cues in relation to this study’s interpretation of world.

The brass have a special prominence, with Mahler’s innovative use of them
resulting in a rich set of roles primarily relatable to various kinds of speech
and organization of world. This arises both from the composer’s way of letting
the instruments come to the front with clearly marked, humanlike voices, and also from his reinvention of traditional conventions. Especially in the Fifth Symphony, horns and trumpets (at times also trombones) constantly emerge as either soloists or group constellations, and in addition to their standard repertory of calls and fanfares, they also sing, lament, or participate in dialogue. Through the placement of these speech gestures in relation to the surrounding sounds, the brass cues the mediated perspectives of world, colouring it with their world versions. By means of Mahler’s application of diegetic, narrative functions analogous to drama, the instruments in the manner of choirs and actors tell the storyworld to the listener, either statically on the side or from more fluid, mobile positions that consequently also change the sound-world’s construction.

The brass’s marked role as narrators is further reflected in their organizational and structuring function in the storyworld. This results from Mahler’s way of placing the instruments’ traditional gestures of fanfares, signals, and calls between formal sections so that new meaning arises out of old conventions. The effect becomes similar to off-stage voices sounding from behind the theatre stage, but with the difference that these voices now come from inside the symphonic work, appearing to exist outside the storyworld but with the authority to steer its unfolding. This act of superior control is also manifested in a chameleon-like ability to occasionally enter into the storyworld and take on other types of roles, such as characters, as in the case of the trumpet in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony. The brass’s mobile interlinking of world ultimately makes it plausible to define them as directors, with Mahler transferring his own profession onto these particular instruments in order to create a composite drama in sounds. Through his specific scoring technique, they variously call forth, stop, transport to, or even destroy worlds, such as when the trumpet signals the end of the Fourth Symphony’s development comprising a dream sequence. Of certain importance is the horn’s relation to the world of dreams and the spheres, where its surreal tone contributes to the function of portal into and out of these possible realms. Because of the diversity of Mahler’s musical materials, there is a need for a structural force linking all the disparate parts of the world together into a totality, which, by extension, also enables the listener to move across its vast geography.

The expressive and functional range of the brass is also mirrored in Mahler’s scoring of them in ways approaching sound effects. This shows, for example, in the muted trumpet’s eerie tone forming part of the nightmare horror milieu in the Fourth Symphony’s dream sequence, as well as in the hits or blows articulated by the horns in the action space of the Fifth’s second movement. Just as these instruments might evoke darkness, they can also generate the opposite, reflected in a particular nostalgic and dreamy timbre found in the solo trumpet and solo horn, respectively. In this way they also steer the direction of the world backwards and away, towards those possible spaces only reachable through memory or imagination.
Concerning the woodwinds, they emerge more sparsely than the brass, especially in the Fifth Symphony. When they do achieve prominence, however, their expression encompasses a contrastive range of humanlike agency, moving between intimate vulnerability and grotesque screaming. These opposites often correspond to the embodiment of a virtual subject and the multiple agency of the collective, respectively, and are both characterized by an exaggeration of tone in one or the other direction. For the virtual subject, it is about a songful, clearly foregrounded lyrical voice that most readily emerges in the solo oboe, which presents a sort of protagonist role throughout the Fourth Symphony’s third movement. By recurrently emerging in the inner worlds of dreams, this instrument marks a particular space for subjective speech and subsequent dissolving, gaining its effect partly because of its sparse use apart from these instances. However, the oboe can also lament and mediate the darker expression of pain, illustrated in the same movement’s depiction of a more sombre place and mood. The voice of the subject thereby emerges as twofold in the manner of a double voice, reflecting the shifting emotions that constitute all human beings. Other examples are the intimate, chamber-music-like conversations among individuals in the Scherzo’s series of small rooms, whose enclosed settings enhance the instruments’ songful, melancholic lines that would otherwise have been lost in a more expanded texture. Mahler’s exploiting of the heterogeneous timbre of the woodwinds marks them as both separate, virtual agents as well as a single, composite persona, demonstrating the multifariousness and complexity of voice on several levels. As opposed to the subject, the expression of the collective exposes a grotesque and distorted tone, attained by Mahler’s scoring of the instruments in high, uncomfortable registers. This occurs in the nightmarish screams in the development of the Fourth Symphony’s first movement, but most markedly in the many similar entrances of multiple agency in the Fifth, where they serve to mirror their equally dark surroundings. Even though both symphonies display different kinds of orchestration, there is the presence of a humanlike agency that is reflected in and interacts with the world.

In addition, the woodwinds often evoke a mocking or ironic mode of expression, especially in the transformation of generic connotations, such as in the Scherzo’s waltz and the funeral march turned wind band in the Fifth. Mahler’s way of using humour to deal with the world’s darkness involves several elements of the composition, but the application of the woodwind timbre to capture this topic musically is especially notable.

The same foregrounding of the lyrical as contrasted with its opposite to an extent also characterizes the strings. In relation to their omniscient presence, it is remarkable how Mahler is keen to save their expressive foregrounding for certain sonorously marked moments mostly following other contrastive passages. In many of those cases, the strings work to give amplified voice to inner, emotional worlds, often in the sonorous register of the actual human voice, such as in the Adagietto of the Fifth. At other times, however, they
provide a humanlike presence that integrates the listener into the world’s places and settings, simultaneously also cueing the subjective perspective of world.

In the Fifth Symphony, the cellos are particularly prominent in marking such a presence, for example, at the scene of the first movement’s funeral event and in the second movement’s nature place and its voices.

At certain moments in the symphonies, Mahler contrasts the wider, diluted string sound with the more exposed and fragile one of a solo violin. This instrument not only distinguishes itself by means of a special individual timbre but also functions as an expression of the inner voice of the music’s virtual subject. In the Fourth Symphony, it frequently emerges in the wake of horrific and dark events in the storyworld, seeking refuge in either outer or inner landscapes following, for example, the nightmare experience of the dream sequence and the third movement’s extended wave of emotional storms.

Sonorities that could easily be bypassed for being what Riemann would term ‘neutral’ gain affective meaning due to Mahler’s particular ways of employing them. Conversely, the composer also robs the strings of their subjectivity in favour of a more objective kind of world construction. A type of chromatic, intensively working figuration especially concerns the violins, most readily in the Fifth Symphony, such as in the first movement’s first trio and the first theme of the second movement. Their high register in these passages contributes to the sensation of chaos or event, producing an unfolding of action. Often, this motion forms part of a wider gesture illustrative of a narrative arc, reaching towards climax and collapse. There are also, however, instances in which the strings are constructive more in terms of a working collective, as in the Fifth’s Rondo-Finale, or in terms of ongoing inner processes in line with the Scherzo of the same work.

Finally, Mahler’s use of multiple strings generates another particular kind of sonority, widely spaced and in high register. These are the shimmering possible worlds of intensifying dreams and the spheres, immersing the listener within a spatially and mentally higher floating state, soaring above the ground. Timbre thereby functions as cue for the ethereal and that which exists beyond the boundaries of the ordinary world, moving us to places not otherwise reachable.

This analysis of world in Mahler builds on the notion of storyworld and possible worlds theory from cognitive narratology. As mental models embracing the totality of the work of art, they present a fruitful vantage point from which to understand the imaginary creation of musical worlds through listening, complementing and coexisting with the more temporally defined structures of narrative. With the theories of world-making as an overarching umbrella term, this investigation studies a number of different kinds of worlds based on the system of actual and possible worlds. I suggest a modified and adapted model more suitable for the localization of sound-worlds in music with a focus on aspects of orchestration. From the distinction of a main world
functioning as base point for several possible ones, the study explores various topics of world, such as nature, society, and inner mental worlds, for example, dreams.

These all form part of a complex and interchanging network in which different worlds constantly alternate and interact with one another. An example is telling in long scenes, when there is oscillation between outer and inner worlds, or in transportations across various sub-worlds located at a distance from one another. It can also be about more extended processes of world break-outs and break-ins, resulting in expansions and shrinking, for example, with the dream worlds in the Fourth Symphony and the chorale recurring throughout the Fifth. Worlds can even be made out of each other, often from their opposites, which is the case in the dream sequence of the Fourth Symphony. As a result, the total form and shape of the sound-world is constantly moulded through sounds. This entails that the musical worlds become larger than the work itself and its enclosing spatial frames.

As the analyses of this investigation show, Mahler’s world structures are not fixed: they take on many forms, moulded by his particular handling of sound. This is also true when it comes to his construction of world and its division into smaller units. The symphonies manifest these units by means of layers of dreams, spatial levels moving upwards in the atmosphere, and temporal sections divided into phases, cycles, etc.

Within this structural framework, the sound-worlds manifest themselves through various cues. They emerge by the combination of timbre, texture, and genre manipulation but also from the transportation into and out of them. In either case, they emerge as especially marked in relation to what has come before. The basis for localizing all the different worlds within the storyworld of both the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies is their respective genres of fairy tale and realism, but from these vantage points, both in their own way present what can be called topical narratives of world. Despite their differences, both works explore the opposites of life and death, darkness and light, with Mahler’s varied orchestration becoming a means to illustrate these nuances. In this way, one can speak of a discourse of world that is not so much about plot as it is about varying and developing the same consistent topics.

Transportation between all these worlds is central both to linking them together into a totality, and to imaginatively moving the listener between them and giving them access. Mahler uses various compositional features to enable this. Sometimes, worlds enter abruptly as a sudden interpolation or cut, often resulting from lack of harmonic resolution, change of key, and change of tempo. A more successive preparation is the sequence of ascending gestures leaping into another kind of world, as in the thresholds leading up to the higher realm of the spheres and the chorale vision further above. Instruments themselves, such as the horn in the Fourth Symphony’s Scherzo, can also function as transportable portals over an implied spatial and temporal distance. Finally,
worlds can fall apart through collapses of scalar descent, destroyed in order to be rebuilt anew.

Mahler’s orchestration also affects the world-building categories of space and time. He treats the instruments in a manner that results in spatial expansion, in terms of both dimension and size. This results in various types of listening positions, with Mahler’s endowment of spatial mobility actively shifting us into changing perceptions, as either observers or participants. For example, in the first movement of the Fourth Symphony, the scenic spaces of the exposition emerge as static portraits, whereas in the Scherzo of the same symphony, that distance was decreased by variously dynamically foregrounding the solo violin representing Death. Later in the movement’s nature world, multiple voices are simultaneously highlighted so that space expands into three-dimensionality and integrates the listener into its environment. Mahler’s oscillation between these kinds of foregrounding generates a spatial fluidity similar to zooming techniques in cinema.

In narratology, space often refers to a sense of place. While this is sometimes the case in Mahler’s music, in the case of landscapes or urban realms, this is more in terms of cueing a particular setting, either by means of genre conventions such as dance styles, or through a combination of timbre and texture.

In many cases, he organizes the musical parts so that they emerge as surround sound or spread-out noises, according to which listeners orient themselves. Their placement in this way generates a sensation of being an observer in a three-dimensional space, rather than belonging to a particular place. Since these sounds, for example, in the first theme’s action scene of the Fifth Symphony’s second movement and the nightmare world of the first movement of the Fourth, are combined with certain expressive timbres, it is more about being in an atmospheric space evoking a particular milieu.

At other times, Mahler conjures up spaces that surround or immerse the listener, most prominently in the inner worlds of dreams and those of the spheres. In contrast to a sensation of embodied position, this instead approaches a sort of mental dissolve. These are spaces for the listener to dwell in and escape the world’s darkness and misery.

As influenced by the practice of theatre and opera, Mahler’s symphonies evoke a space that widens or comes from outside the storyworld. When migrated from the concert platform and perceived only through sound, this generates a spatial expansion beyond the implied frames of the stage. Thus, when Mahler in the ending of the Fifth Symphony’s first movement lets the solo trumpet dynamically decrease as if heard from a distance, there is a sensation that the space of the current world extends or stretches beyond that of the listener, to domains that we cannot ‘see’. By means of transitions into worlds, spaces emerge that appear to be situated in various changed positions in relation to their surroundings. Such examples are the inserted march section of the Fifth’s second movement, which presents a shift to a parallel space, or that of
the chorale in the same movement, which breaks into the music from above. Hence, space in Mahler is characterized by a mobility concerning fluidity, proportion, and position.

A particular spatial treatment produces certain temporal effects, challenging the notion of the linear perception of musical time, while the course of time simultaneously affects space. Music can only unfold in the present, but Mahler applies orchestral means so that other tenses of past and future also emerge. The key to this procedure is partly the many occurrences of the same themes, both in separate movements and over the course of an entire symphony, in combination with their constant divergence from what came before. Hence, they simultaneously anticipate and look back while situated in the present, such as the chorale in the Fifth Symphony, just as with the spaces gaining their meaning from their interrelationships among themselves. However, in addition to the simultaneity of tenses of these varied repetitions, I instead want to regard these patterns as \textit{processes} of different kinds, constantly reformed by time. Seeing Mahler’s composition in this way also invites a closer analogy to processes of and in the world, which can take many shapes and forms. Whereas the chorale presents a gradual overall process of break-in into the world of the Fifth and the inner dream world of the Fourth a process of break-out, there are also a number of localizable sequences proceeding inside separate worlds. For example, the second movement of the Fifth presents a cyclic process between the two sub-spaces of the main world, with each theme representing varied phases of development. Rotations, retelling, layering, and distancing are other unfolding procedures illustrating the world’s course.

Sometimes timbre and texture alone are able to evoke a sense of the past or looking-back. By creating small, intimate rooms intersected \textit{between} larger ones, Mahler’s orchestration generates a certain type of reminiscence forming particular memory spaces. In the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony, muted trumpets together with thin string lines and woodwinds, particularly oboes and clarinets, in chamber-music-like settings are prominent examples of this effect. Similar in-between spaces are found in the dark, emotional wave of the Fourth’s Adagio, which cues the continuing gesture into another tense.

Certain events also change the world, which shows in time’s visible effect on them. Rather than varied continuous processes, these are often larger incidents that, just as in our own life, bear large consequences. In Mahler’s symphonies, such effects are often caused by the breakthrough, as in the moment of transcendence in the Fourth Symphony’s Scherzo, the portals opening to the spheres, and the chorale’s destruction and later assimilation of world. In that sense, they are similar to the global effects on storyworlds, and in addition also break the ongoing course of the world.

Mahler’s music shows the same flexibility with time as with space, again suggesting an analogy to a sound engineer able to manipulate music by technical means. This includes both temporal stretching-out or suspension, as well as a kind of compression reminiscent of summary and fast-forward technique.
Whereas suspension characterizes spaces of refuge such as dreams, temporal compression becomes a means to mediate the world’s darkness and consequently destruction.

A crucial part of Mahler’s sound-world revolves around its many plural voices. As the analyses show, those voices come in forms along a spectrum extending from disembodied outside, via ways of speaking and telling inside, to the marking of a virtual subjectivity with which the listener identifies. The horn call as transport or portal, the solo trumpet’s speech from a surrounded turmoil, and the solo oboe and cellos’ humanlike agencies are just a few examples from this range. All these various positions make the world appear from different perspectives and told by means of expressive modes (dramatic, epic, lyric, etc.), consequently affecting its shape and spatial construction. In music, textural placement and tone can thereby function as guidance to the listener’s perception of world.

Many of these voices cue some sort of virtual human agency, through speech, gesture, or mere presence. The main key here is their imitation of singing in combination with clearly foregrounded, often solo instruments that frequently also interact and even clash with one another. However, at times Mahler also makes the instruments into virtual performers, re-embodying them into their original state before their dissection into pure sounds.

The vast existence and positioning of virtual agents raise questions related to narration and characters. During the course of a movement or even an entire work, there is a plurality of voices with constantly changing expressions and functions, providing a fluent set of agents. In addition, the many functions of one single instrument give a further dimension to this multifariousness. Some of the symphonies’ movements, however, provide a single recurring protagonist (e.g., the solo oboe in the Fourth Symphony), creating something approaching the consistency of a character.

Even though there are some permanent agents in the manner of characters, at most times there are not. In those instances, the listener takes the position of an actual agent, either by means of immersion within an inner possible world such as that of dreams, or as an observer in a vast space. In addition to being steered into certain perspectives by the instruments, there exist voids where we ourselves as subjects imaginatively embody those positions. This is one of the most marked differences between music and other narrative media: the interactive part of the listener due to the lack of constant characters and narrators. Musical voices mostly speak to or for the listener, functioning as a lens through which the expressions and perspectives of the world emerge.

Through a focus on voices in relation to the surrounding sounds, there arise other approaches to viewing musical narration in comparison with other media. This investigation demonstrates that music’s way of telling is self-reliant and does not need to be analysed from a vantage point in literature, as has previously been done. Rather, it materializes as an interchanging drama in sounds, characterized by a fluid mobility between time and space.
Neither do musical narratives have to be about stories in the manner of plots. As Mahler’s music illustrates, these can instead take the shape of processes analogous to the world. This is crystallized by means of his constant variations over time, in which sound functions as a means to depict the small, but yet significant changes similar to those of our own lives. In a corresponding way, these processes also proceed towards a decisive event that subsequently has effects on the world and its experiencing subject. With a focus on expression and ways of seeing the world, the need to find chains of causality or sequences of events also decreases in favour of perception and the sensation of being.

Mahler’s treatment of the orchestra consequently challenges the symphony as a genre. By incorporating theatrical elements into musical form, he dramatizes worlds through sounds, resulting in another type of intermedial experience with a mobile presentation approaching the cinematic. When the frames of the stage are broken and transmuted into pure tones, there is a spatial expansion in which only the imagination sets the limits on its end. Immersing oneself in Mahler’s musical worlds becomes similar to walking around in an enormous cathedral or edifice that constantly rebuilds itself, with new rooms that open up endlessly. A sound-world emerges, taking the listener as a co-passage on a journey directed by the instruments’ multifaceted voices. This way of approaching the musical work opens up domains beyond the traditional concepts of programme music and autobiographical readings. But then Mahler himself also defined the writing of a symphony quite differently: it meant constructing a world with all technical means at one’s disposal.

If we try to analyse Mahler’s oeuvre from the vantage point of world, it invites us to new ways of hearing and interpreting not only his music but also musical works in general. By thinking in terms of a sound-world, other aspects of a composition invisible in the score emerge, such as spatiality, simultaneously as it provides listeners with an interactive part in the musical experience and makes them into actual agents alongside the virtual ones of the instruments. A focus on timbre and orchestration in addition affects the traditional structural parameters of form, in which established notions of repetition and division into sections attain different functions when analysed in relation to the concept of world. I also claim that such an analytical method is valuable for its connection to features and experiences from our own life, thereby benefiting our perception of music.

And perhaps this way of hearing in sounds can also offer insights or reveal something about the world. If we listen closely to Mahler’s unique sound, how he scores the world, we can see it shimmering in all of the rainbow’s colours, emerging as a multifaceted and complex palette where no element holds one static meaning. What is beautiful might also become grotesque, heaven is not the place we think it is, and nature is vast and comforting yet disturbing and fragile. Just as in the real world, opposites exist side by side and death is always the shadow looming over life. Only in the landscapes of dreams is the
world as it promises to be, with Mahler painting it as an ethereal, floating space where time is no more.
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