

REDISCOVERING BRAHMS'S OTHER PASTORAL SYMPHONY

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Preface

Grappling with Brahms's Third Symphony over the past year has been inspiring, life-affirming and occasionally traumatic, but the richness of this music has only become more obvious. I have been lucky that throughout this journey I have been guided by Martin Ennis, a brilliant Brahms scholar and musical mind. Through our discussions over the past twelve months and the analysis supervisions I enjoyed in my second year, Martin has shaped my scholarly outlook, engendered a fascination with the nineteenth-century repertoire, and given me a fundamental belief in the power of music to give up its secrets. I would like to thank Robert Pascall, who has been incredibly kind in sharing his most recent research, and Robin Holloway who has provided stimulating conversation, cups of tea and figgy rolls, and impromptu two piano Brahms sessions. I must also thank an old friend Simon Litchfield for helping with German translations.

This project first suggested itself after I was lucky enough to conduct the symphony with Clare College's Symphony Orchestra and for this I have Timothy Brown to thank. It was Tim who cajoled and encouraged me to return to performance during a period of adolescent crisis, and ever since has constantly reminded me that as a musicologist, nothing is healthier than to feast on listening, playing and performing. Clare College, as well as providing many close friends, has given me the perfect atmosphere in which to grow musically and academically, and I have been privileged to have spent four years enjoying the Chapel Choir, as well as the countless impromptu conversations and soirees facilitated by the musical community in the college. Finally I have to thank my family for supporting me throughout and providing a refuge from the rigours of university life.

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration or which has been submitted for a previous degree. It is also less than 15,000 words in length.

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Rediscovering Brahms's Other "Pastoral" Symphony

Introduction

"What a work! What a poem! What a harmonious mood pervades the whole! All the movements seem to be of one piece, one beat of the heart, each one a jewel! From start to finish one is wrapped about with the mysterious charm of the woods and forests. I could not tell you which movement I loved most. In the first I was charmed straight away by the gleams of dawning day, as if the rays of the sun were shining through the trees. Everything springs to life, everything breathes good cheer, it is really exquisite! The second is a pure idyll; I can see the worshippers kneeling about the little forest shrine, I hear the babbling brook and the buzz of the insects. There is such a fluttering and a humming all around that one feels oneself snatched up into the joyous web of Nature."¹

Clara Schumann

Clara Schumann's vision of nature, in all its glory, does not, as we might expect, describe Brahms's Second Symphony, which has long been known as his "Pastoral".² Instead it characterises his Third, the symphony which Hans Richter, who conducted the premiere in December 1883, dubbed Brahms's "Eroica".³ In general it seems that scholars have tended to agree with Richter's, and not Clara Schumann's view and it is this tension – between a heroic and a pastoral interpretation – that provides the backdrop for the following discussion. Both of these interpretations are loaded with cultural and musical associations and therefore, after assessing the two in generic and topical terms, we will explore how applicable they might be for Brahms's music. By assembling a wide-ranging and multi-faceted musical investigation of precedents, allusions, topical signifiers and narratives we will construct a "Pastoral" interpretation of Brahms's Third Symphony to complement Clara Schumann's description. In doing so we can also attempt to find a more refined and complete musical definition for the Romantic pastoral and explore more generally the potential for topical readings of Romantic music.

¹ Litzmann 1927: 88 (For full bibliographic details of all works cited please see the Bibliography on Page 59)

² See Brinkmann 1995 for a discussion of the pastoral dialogue surrounding Brahms's Second Symphony, and his reinvention of this symphony as a romantic idyll.

³ Hanslick 1963: 210

The Story so Far – A Heroic Obsession?

Without doubt, attempting to access new musical meanings for canonical music that has been discussed by numerous eminent scholars poses a significant challenge. In the case of Brahms's Third, scholarship is extensive enough to construct a narrative, apparently inspired by Richter's "Eroica" naming, which merits closer scrutiny to see that new, and potentially more satisfactory interpretations are required.

"The first performance of the Symphony in F major (No. 3) took place in Vienna at the Philharmonic concert of December 2, under Hans Richter, who was, according to Hanslick, originally responsible for the name 'the Brahms Eroica,' by which it has occasionally been called. Whether or not the suggestion is happy, a saying of this kind, probably uttered on the impulse of the moment, should not be taken very seriously."⁴

Florence May, 1905

Richter never wrote down his moniker for the Symphony; instead Hanslick provides the earliest source, writing in 1883 that "Hans Richter, in a gracious toast, recently christened the new symphony "Eroica".⁵ A little more than twenty years later, Florence May has no doubt that Richter's interpretation is neither a serious nor considered proposition. Hanslick sees that if you were trying to give Beethovenian names to Brahms's symphonies, we could see his First as the "Appassionata", the Second his "Pastoral", and then the Third might most appropriately be called the "Eroica". However, he also sees obvious limitations as the heroic spirit seems applicable only to the outer movements. In his criticism, Hanslick attempts to ascertain a little more precisely where a heroic aspect might reside: "the 'heroic' element in it has nothing to do with anything military, nor does it lead to any tragic denouement, such as the Funeral March of Beethoven's "Eroica"."⁶ Direct comparisons elude Hanslick and, as he struggles to make sense of Richter's remark, the most specific comment he can produce in forging a relationship between the Third Symphony and the "Eroica" is that "its musical characteristics recall the healthy soundness of Beethoven's second period, never the eccentricities of his last."⁷ However, the limitations Hanslick finds in the comparison have not prevented scholars from continuing to stress the heroic aspect of the work.

⁴ May 1905 Vol. 2: 208

⁵ Hanslick 1963: 210, trans. Henry Pleasants. It is worth remembering that Hanslick, unlike other scholars we will consider, was a good friend of Brahms.

⁶ Ibid: 211

⁷ Ibid: 211

In Kalbeck's and Specht's early twentieth-century readings the heroic still has a strong presence. Kalbeck's account follows a hero throughout, with the heroic protagonist leaving the pastoral behind in the fourth movement,⁸ and Specht follows Richter in calling the Third Brahms's "heroic" symphony, imagining the hero as "no trumpeter...one is rather inclined to imagine him in the person of Bismarck in his student days."⁹ More recently we can see that the opening of Brahms's symphony in particular has acquired a heroic characterization. Keys refers to the "impetuous, even heroic strides" of the first theme¹⁰ and Swafford, also in a biographical context, refers to "strains, anguished and heroic" and a transformation of the opening heroic theme.¹¹ Brodbeck likens the $A\flat$ in the F- $A\flat$ -F opening to the "'sore' C#" of Beethoven's "Eroica"¹² and Michael Musgrave, despite refuting the existence of the legendary *frei-aber-froh* motto proposed by Kalbeck,¹³ does not question Kalbeck's suggestion that the power of this motto allows us to understand the work as a self-portrait, Brahms's "Eroica".¹⁴ Monelle even argues that the opening is heroic because of its "equestrian" dotted rhythm.¹⁵ All these references are cursory, maybe even casual, but they reflect the findings of those who have attempted much more detailed insights into Brahms's music, and who find comparisons much more easily than Hanslick.

Susan McClary, with her reputation for extreme musical interpretations, is a scholar we might least expect to be culpable of reproducing age-old myths or apocryphal namings, especially as she cites the "demystification of Absolute Music"¹⁶ as one of the most important recent developments in musicology. McClary asserts that "most listeners can easily recognize the opening gesture of the symphony as belonging to a family that would also include Richard Strauss's *Don Juan*, Franz Liszt's triumphant *Faust*, or John Williams's *Indiana Jones*."¹⁷ Whether or not we hear these connections – personally I do not find them entirely convincing – McClary's choice of musical relatives is deliberately a world away from Beethoven, Schumann

⁸ Kalbeck 1927, Vol. 3. II.: 386. "The symphony, which began as a pastoral, should end as an Eroica" – (Die Symphonie, welche als Pastorale begann, sollte als Eroika enden." (Trans. Simon Litchfield)

⁹ Specht 1930: 280, trans. Blom

¹⁰ Keys 1989: 112

¹¹ Swafford 1997: 491-2

¹² Brodbeck 2009: 97

¹³ Musgrave 1980

¹⁴ Musgrave 1985: 220

¹⁵ Monelle 2000: 55. This idea is unconvincing because of the hemiola Brahms writes against the triple meter. Monelle's other examples of "equestrian rhythm" tend to be in a lighter 6/8 untroubled by any metric uncertainty.

¹⁶ McClary 1993: 328

¹⁷ Ibid: 335

and Wagner, the composers often compared with Brahms.¹⁸ However, despite the unusual comparisons, the essence of Brahms's theme for McClary is the bold and vigorous, or "heroic" element. This is confirmed as we continue reading, for where Hanslick struggled to find any interaction with Beethoven's work, McClary sees heroicism not only in the thematic character which she hears to be "like Beethoven's "Eroica", but also in the more fundamental nature of Brahms's musical narrative – "Brahms's narrative unfolding illustrates how heroic behaviour is constituted, but it also revisits and critiques the formal terms of Beethovenian heroicism."¹⁹ For McClary this narrative is part of an emancipation of absolute music which is supposed to be something both new and exciting, particularly in the traditionally conservative field of Brahms scholarship. However, one is left wondering, if it not been for Hanslick, Kalbeck and others continuing to give credence to and reinforcing Richter's original comment, whether the way Brahms "critiques the formal terms of Beethovenian heroicism" would have formed the crux of this narrative reading. Instead of the radical reinvention that McClary is seeking, one senses an elaborate repetition of something rather familiar.

The most detailed and arguably most suspect "Eroica" comparison has come from Raymond Knapp in an essay solely dedicated to allusion and "referential meaning" in Brahms's symphonies. Hanslick has already seen that the two works in question do not really sound alike, surely a significant issue when discussing allusions and references. Because of this problem, Knapp treats the "Eroica" quite differently from any other musical examples, which are all referred to explicitly and compared directly with their Brahmsian counterparts. When it comes to the "Eroica", Knapp's comparisons lose their musical specificity and instead are encapsulated verbally. Instead of musical examples we have generic similarities such as shared "dance-like tunes", "extravagant melodic trajectories" and "triadic theme".²⁰ Knapp realises that none of these similarities are good enough to constitute allusions, so instead justifies himself with the claim that, despite their lack of surface congruence, "they contribute to our sense that Brahms, too, is offering a musical portrayal of heroism."²¹ Brahms obviously failed to title the symphony as such, but Knapp reassures us that, as we could infer heroicism without Beethoven's title, we should not be concerned by the absence of a title in Brahms's case – a statement which seems to underestimate the danger of constructing teleological arguments.

¹⁸ See Knapp 2001, Brown 1983, Brodbeck 1990

¹⁹ McClary 1993: 335

²⁰ Knapp 2001: 152

²¹ Ibid.: 152

In Knapp's case there are issues concerning not only the quality of the allusions but also the motives for choosing them and the conclusions that "discovering" these references allows. Although the strength of some of the comparisons Knapp chooses might be questionable, the main problem really concerns motives. We have already seen that when comparing the "Eroica" and Brahms's Third, the terms were somewhat general, but Knapp does manage to find some specific allusions to the "Eroica" in the third movement of Brahms's Second Symphony as he constructs a "structural web" between the Scherzo of the "Eroica", the Scherzo of Schubert's Ninth Symphony and the Scherzo from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.²² Given that this allusion to the "Eroica" is musically specific, in contrast to the generalities in the Third Symphony, we might expect heroicism to be mentioned. However, Knapp is only interested in the interrelationship of pastoral idioms – maybe we could have predicted this bias, given that it was the Second Symphony which was titled the "Pastoral" by Brahms's friends.²³ Awagu takes a very similar line, seeing the opening theme of the Third Symphony as "heroic" and in the Second Symphony finding "Brahms in a more lyrical, less heroic, but also quite self-aware mode".²⁴ Like Knapp he hears specific links between the "Eroica" and Brahms's Second Symphony, writing that the fugato that opens the development of the first movement recalls the development of Beethoven's first movement. However, just as for Knapp, this allusion does not lead to an inference of heroicism in the Second Symphony; it is still the Third which can be described as heroic. It seems at least possible that these conclusions are informed to a significant extent by the scholarly discourse between Brahms's Third and the "Eroica", initiated by Richter just moments after the work's premiere.

New Paths: Another Look at Brahms's Third Symphony

We have picked one path through the scholarship on Brahms's Third Symphony, and have seen a continuing engagement with one narrative, that of the heroic. However, it was not only Clara Schumann who found that nature imagery – the "rays of the sun", "the babbling brook" and "the mysterious charm of the woods and forests" – provides appropriate descriptors for the work. Although there are no other contemporary responses which echo Clara's sentiment, Richard Specht provides one of the earlier critical insights, and his description of the third movement is extensive in its Romantic vision of nature:

²² Knapp 2001: 185

²³ Brown 1983: 435

²⁴ Agawu 1999: 143

“This wholly romantic woodland melody, spun over with triplets...is one of the twilight tunes sung longingly out of an apprehensive and overflowing heart which, more than anything else, endear Brahms to us. They remind us that his name is derived from *Brams*, the gorse of the Low-German heathlands: we seem to see him with his arms full of twigs with golden blossoms and bronze-green leaves.”²⁵

Harrison, writing a decade after Specht, sees similar scenes: “it is indeed no mere idle conjecture to wonder if Brahms, when writing the Symphony, had in his mind a music-picture of the changing seasons,” its setting being “a romantic autumnal garden”²⁶ and the end of the symphony being a vision of the setting sun.²⁷ Geiringer also hears the autumnal quality that both Harrison and Specht detect: where the Second Symphony “conjures visions of Summer sunshine, his Third Symphony...makes us think of Autumn.”²⁸ A number of other nature metaphors have also featured in writers’ interpretations, with Ray hearing the finale as a “magnificent storm”²⁹ and Geiringer also hearing the final apotheosis in F major as “a rainbow after a thunderstorm”.³⁰ MacDonald is perhaps the most explicit of more recent writers – “the ‘pastoral’ quality...is certainly present, and so is an indefinable sense of inner landscape, partly inhabited by including areas of brooding, solitary space”.³¹ Brinkmann presents a convincing argument placing Brahms’s Second Symphony in the pastoral world and therefore it is interesting to find Kross writing that “the Third Symphony lies nearer to the Second than one might think, particularly in the stamp of its expressive character”,³² and Brinkmann himself also comments on the similarity of the opening of the Finales of both symphonies.³³

The final element of this nature imagery is Avins’s assertion that this symphony was “his Rhenish symphony”,³⁴ a symphony relating to the river Rhine. Biographically the symphony is tied to the Rhine as Brahms wrote the work during the Summer of 1883 while staying in

²⁵ Specht 1930: 280-1, trans. Eric Blom

²⁶ Harrison 1939: 208-10

²⁷ Harrison 1939: 208. “the red ball of the sun dips below the horizon on those unforgettable chords of F”.

²⁸ Geiringer 2006: 94

²⁹ Ray 1984: 75

³⁰ Geiringer 1948: 260

³¹ MacDonald 1990: 304. He is referring in particular to the second movement, but also finds the third movement to contain “another sublimated echo of peasant wind-music”. (Ibid.: 306)

³² Kross 1983: 137

³³ Brinkmann 1995: 220

³⁴ Avins 2001: 601

Wiesbaden, in an apartment with a view of the great river. When discussing Beethoven's inspiration for his "Pastoral" Symphony, Jones mentions Beethoven's love of the countryside and draws a comparison with Brahms.³⁵ Both composers liked to spend their summers composing in the countryside, away from the city, and enjoyed taking long walks. The importance of the countryside as inspiration for Brahms is confirmed by Florence May's recollections of the composer. When she asked Brahms "how can I most quickly improve?" (although May is rather unclear, she is probably referring to her piano playing, or general musicianship) he answered "'you must walk constantly in the forest'...and he meant what he said to be taken quite literally."³⁶ There is evidence that on occasion, as well as generally finding inspiration and solace in nature, Brahms tied particular works to the locale that inspired them – Geiringer notes that after publishing his first symphony, Brahms wrote to Simrock – "on the Wissower Klinken³⁷ a beautiful symphony remains hanging".³⁸ The theme for Brahms's Horn Trio in E♭ was also, according to Dietrich, inspired by a specific countryside location – when in the woods above Baden-Baden, "Brahms showed me the spot where the theme of the first movement of this work came into his mind".³⁹ Given these pointers, it must be possible that just as Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony was inspired by his stay in Baden-Baden, so Brahms's symphony might have been inspired by his stay in Wiesbaden, and given some more detailed exploration, this inspiration might be manifested in the musical substance of the work.

It seems that we are staring at the crossroads of two interpretations. On the one hand we have the heroic obsession which has been mentioned and discussed by numerous writers and on the other, a significant number of responses which invoke nature together with the suggestion that the symphony could have been inspired by the Brahms's stay on the banks of the Rhine. However, the capacity for this music to evoke images of nature has not led to a detailed exploration of the pastoral, which is odd, given that the pastoral describes music which invokes, depicts and is inspired by nature and the outdoors. Before investigating the pastoral in detail it is worth considering exactly how the heroic and the pastoral are communicated and identified to uncover their similarities, or differences, and their applicability when it comes to discussing Brahms's Third Symphony.

³⁵ Jones 1995: 18

³⁶ May 1905 Vol. 1: 4

³⁷ Please see Appendix 1 for a nineteenth-century print of the Wissower Klinken.

³⁸ Geiringer 2006: 89. This is Geiringer's translation – "An den Wissower Klinken ist eine schöne Sinfonie hängen geblieben." (Kalbeck 1917: 13)

³⁹ Dietrich and Widmann 2007: 49

The Heroic and the Pastoral: Sound Worlds and Metaphors

Heroicism is, inescapably, a Beethovenian concept and any discussion will inevitably focus on him and a few of his works: Burnham identifies “two symphonies, two piano sonatas, several overtures, a piano concerto”.⁴⁰ The question that has been hiding in much of the discussion above is what does “heroic” music sound like? Burnham’s book is entirely devoted to the question of the heroic in Beethoven but he provides few answers to this question. In fairness to Burnham, this is not his aim; instead, he is interested in the cultural implication of Beethoven’s heroic style, which he suspects forms the foundations of Western musicology as we know it.⁴¹ By piecing together the reception of the “Eroica” throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Burnham unearths the roots of what is essentially a metaphor. From the programmatic interpretations of Oulibicheff, Schering and Bekker to the *Urfinie* of Heinrich Schenker, it seems that the heroic stance originates in the dedication of the “Eroica” to Napoleon and the remarkable story of Beethoven’s deafness told in the Heiligenstadt Testament, rather than necessarily being discernable in the music itself. Burnham’s desire to find an extra-musical interpretation for these works is inspired, fundamentally, by “the feeling that when one listens to Beethoven’s music one is in the presence of something more than music”⁴² but when we look past the metaphor, the hero and the struggle, and move on to musical particulars, talking about heroicism is problematic. Burnham, with self-conscious naivety, mentions “the heart-stopping pauses, crashes, register shifts, and startling harmonies” which are so fundamental to the dramatic effect of the works in question.⁴³ However, Burnham is the first to note that these surface effects do not begin to explain the interaction that we might feel with this music, or, for that matter, comprise a “heroic style”, if indeed there is such thing. We saw earlier that Knapp believes that without the title we would still know the “Eroica” was heroic, but the picture Burnham paints is one where, despite our sense of musical development and idiosyncrasy in these works, the heroic interpretation is inextricably linked with both elements of struggle in Beethoven’s life and the cultural conditions of the time.

Arguably a more successful attempt to account for stylistic changes in Beethoven’s music of this period comes in Broyle’s monograph *The Emergence and Evolution of Beethoven’s Heroic Style* – an attempt to document and explain the way in which Beethoven’s musical language changed in the

⁴⁰ These are Symphonies nos. 3 and 5, the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* piano sonatas, the *Emperor* Piano Concerto and the *Egmont*, *Coriolan* and *Leonore* overtures. (Burnham 1995: xiii)

⁴¹ In particular, Burnham dedicates a chapter to the way in which the heroic works of Beethoven were crucial for the formation of the theories of Marx, Riemann, Réti and Schenker.

⁴² Burnham 1995: 147

⁴³ *Ibid.*: 29

first decade of the nineteenth century. For Broyles the music of this decade is in the “heroic style” by virtue of being written during what has become known as Beethoven’s middle or “heroic” period.⁴⁴ Broyles finds that Beethoven’s separation of sonata and symphony style, inherited from Mozart and Haydn, becomes unsustainable after exhausting classical symphony style in the “Eroica”. To progress after this exhaustion, we see a consolidation of these two styles, with the additional influence of music of the French Revolution. The musical arguments are compelling, but Broyles is the first to admit halfway through his book that he has been using the term “heroic” to describe music of this period “with little explanation or justification.”⁴⁵ At this point, rather than turn to the music, it is the Heiligenstadt Testament and the Romantic ideal of the “heroic man” which come to the fore. When we consider that not all music of this period has a heroic aspect, it seems that the term “heroic” is used as something of a historical convenience. Although Broyles voices the idea of “heroic tone” and Burnham hears the “distinctive voice of the heroic style”,⁴⁶ it appears that the works discussed by Burnham are too diverse to uncover any identifiable unifying characteristics, and Broyles, although more successful in viewing the period as a whole, does not find the heroic element in this music at all. It seems that discerning the heroic in Beethoven has always been reliant on the extra-musical aspects which can be read onto the music, rather than coming from within the music itself.

Although musical heroicism comes to the fore with Beethoven, there are other works that we might look to when trying to construct a “heroic” sound world in the nineteenth century. These might include Richard Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben*, Wagner’s *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, Chopin’s Polonaises, particularly Op. 53, the “Polonaise héroïque” and Berlioz’s *Harold en Italie*. Some of the differences between these works and Beethoven’s, (apart from the “Eroica” itself) are immediately obvious: they all feature narratives about a hero, or possess titles which allude to their heroic nature. Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben* probably makes greatest claim to an explicit musical link with the “Eroica”. It is in the same key, and Strauss wrote to a friend that, as conductors did not particularly enjoy performing the “Eroica”, he was writing a work “to fulfil a pressing need...admittedly without a funeral march, but yet in E♭, with lots of horns, which are always a

⁴⁴ Broyles self-consciously indulges the tripartite division of Beethoven’s career as he sees it to be the most widespread of the various chronological partitions that have been suggested. However, he is aware of the complications that arise when attempting to draw lines within something as evolutionary as musical style, citing various discrepancies and problematic works. (Broyles 1987: 4) Maynard Solomon dedicates a chapter of his *Beethoven Essays* to the question of creative periods in Beethoven reception, concluding that there are four main creative periods; however, the years 1803-1812 are still designated the “middle” period, “with its ‘heroic’ manner”. (Solomon 1988: 124)

⁴⁵ Broyles 1987: 111

⁴⁶ Burnham 1995: 124

yardstick of heroism.”⁴⁷ That said, beyond the striking opening, it would seem that the narrative of the hero takes over, and this indeed has been the main source of debate surrounding the work – Schmid finds contemporary critics mainly concerned with discussing, and contesting the autobiographical nature of Strauss’s work.⁴⁸ However, in general, horns do seem to have some significance for heroes. Siegfried’s horn call, heard in both *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* is from the hunt topic like the famous “Eroica” pre-recapitulation call and the trio of horns in the trio of Beethoven’s third movement.⁴⁹ Another link is that Siegfried also has his funeral march in *Götterdämmerung*, the funeral march being a central part of the “Eroica”’s narrative, and Wagner chooses the same key, C minor.

If we look at another example, and Chopin’s “Polonaise héroïque”, musical heroism manifests itself in quite a different way. Samson sees the musical element of this heroic status coming from a new approach in Chopin’s piano writing, finding more textural extremes but also a delineation of substance and ornamentation not present in his other music.⁵⁰ However, it is difficult to relate these aspects to other heroic music. In fact the polonaises are referred to as “heroic” because they were written in Paris by a composer in exile, Chopin having emigrated due to political unease in Poland, which had been partitioned by its neighbours Prussia, Austria and Russia. It was the Polish national dance, the Polonaise, which took on particular significance: “an expression and affirmation...of national identity...symbolising the national struggle and helping to cement the Polish spirit at a time when the country was without political status.”⁵¹ We see this biographical element with Berlioz as well, who Roger Williams describes as an “Artist-Hero” because he was viewed by his literary circle of friends, including Gautier, Flaubert and Hugo, as an artist who stuck to his personal convictions regardless of his lack of public support.⁵² Bonds sees the quotations of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in *Harold en Italie* as part of a narrative which creates a “*Sinfonia anti-Eroica*”, a “deeply ambivalent” response to Beethoven, where Berlioz’s hero is “withdrawn, contemplative, and isolated from society”.⁵³ Firstly, it is odd that an

⁴⁷ Quoted in Del Mar 1962: 164

⁴⁸ Schmid 1997: 369

⁴⁹ In the Wagner example it is the 6/8 meter and triadic opening which signify the topic. Beethoven’s examples are more complicated, both being in 3/4, but the trio is so fast, that hypermetrically, it could easily be heard in 6/8. For Monelle, the strength of the triadic association with hunting calls, combined with the characteristic appearance in the horn, leaves him in no doubt the main theme of the “Eroica”’s first movement is a hunting theme. (Monelle 2006: 95-100)

⁵⁰ Samson 1994: 104

⁵¹ Ibid.: 104

⁵² Williams 1968: 496

⁵³ Bonds 1992: 424

“anti-Eroica” symphony should feature the rejection of themes not from Beethoven’s “Eroica”, but the Ninth Symphony, and secondly, although there is an interaction with Beethoven, the “anti-hero” that results, correlates with the autobiographical notion of Berlioz as “Artist-Hero”.

Of course this is not a comprehensive study, but the musical trends we have seen – the use of horns, the hunting topic, and the funeral march – are far from universal, and most importantly, in every case there is an extra-musical reason for pursuing the notion of musical heroism. For Berlioz and Chopin the extra-musical element is essentially biographical, resulting in music which reflects the composers’ own struggles. For Strauss and Wagner, whether they themselves are implicated in their heroic narratives or not, we have works which overtly concern heroes and heroic narratives, influenced by cultures of heroism, of which music was only one part.⁵⁴

Just as heroism does not reside exclusively in the musical work, the pastoral does not have musical origins either. It has its beginnings in the poems known as “idylls” of the Greek poet Theocritus, written in the third century B.C..⁵⁵ The link with music is immediate: in the first Idyll the goatherd wants to play his pipe, but fears the anger of the pipe-playing god, Pan. Later in the scene, Thyrsis, another shepherd, sings, opening with the line “Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.”⁵⁶ Monelle offers a musical history of the pastoral looking at characteristic aspects of instrumentation, tempi, time signatures, melodic and harmonic styles, and the way in which they evolved. It is possible to construct a check-list of musical features that we might expect to hear in pastoral music; Ratner and others have noted: “horn calls, drones, birdcalls, representations of running water, and melodies borrowed from or intended to sound like pastoral songs and carols”.⁵⁷ Beethoven’s “Pastoral” Symphony, with its siciliana, drones, birdcalls, storm and yodel-based theme at the opening of the final movement⁵⁸ seems to be in keeping with this heritage, retaining many of the features of the Baroque pastoral and taking inspiration from parts of Haydn’s *Creation* and *The Seasons*.⁵⁹ Berlioz’s version of the pastoral – and we think specifically of the *Scène aux Champs* in *Symphonies Fantastiques* is similarly

⁵⁴ See Chapter 1 in Williams 2004 “Modes of heroism in the early nineteenth century” for a summary of models of heroism which influenced Wagner.

⁵⁵ Although Theocritus is viewed as the father, for Alpers Virgil is just as important for establishing the characteristics of the genre in his *Eclogues*. (Alpers 1996: 137)

⁵⁶ Theocritus and Virgil trans. C. S. Calverley 1908: 4

⁵⁷ Ratner 1985: 281

⁵⁸ There seems to be a specific link between this passage and the Rigi *Ranz des Vaches*. (Hyatt King 1945: 403)

⁵⁹ Jones sees similarities in the use of bird-song, the storm and the idea of a peasants’ chorus, which in Haydn’s case is the wine chorus. (Jones 1995: 11)

uncomplicated, as it is set in Beethoven's Pastoral key F major, and also includes an opening yodel for the oboe and cor anglais, the 6/8 meter of the siciliana and the rolls of distant thunder on the timpani.

It is the next step which has proved more problematic. Since the Renaissance the pastoral has been defined as a specific sound world, with a series of musical signifiers which have reached saturation in these last examples from Beethoven and Berlioz. With the onset of Romanticism we would expect to see some kind of reinvention of a genre that has always been defined explicitly by the way that it sounds. Quite simply, we run out of music which, to a significant extent, sounds like a continuation of this lineage. The rise of programme-music might seem like an obvious place to search for the Romantic pastoral, but Monelle sees a conflict between the individual focus and unique narrative of programme-music and the much broader cultural convention of the topical reference.⁶⁰ He suggests a series of possible directions whilst maintaining a topical outlook, including the "new-siciliana" of Schubert and Mendelssohn, which continues in the music of Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Nielsen. In a search for something more than isolated incidents, he turns to the nineteenth-century focus on the folksong to find a new "rustic" pastoral, taking in music by Schubert, Brahms, Mahler and Strauss. However, to define this "rustic pastoral" Monelle has to decrease the specificity of his signifiers, with music sharing an air of "simplicity" and "innocence".⁶¹ Turning to Brahms, Monelle asks whether the *liedhaft* could be seen a part of the pastoral topic, but he does not find an answer in Brahms's music, but in the writing of Herder, whose view that folksong embodies nature he finds to be essentially pastoral.⁶²

Hatten, who cites Beethoven's "Pastoral" as "the last great model of the characteristic pastoral genre from the Classical era",⁶³ also sees a problem when pursuing the pastoral in the Romantic era. Instead of the pastoral topic, he wants us to see a "pastoral *mode*" which dictates a work's general direction, potentially embracing a number of topics. To define this "mode", Hatten cites the following elements:

“(1) an individual retreating from a complex and less euphoric reality (2) in an attempt to regain lost simplicity, innocence, happiness or the sublime – or to imagine a similarly

⁶⁰ Monelle 2007: 246

⁶¹ Ibid.: 252

⁶² Ibid.: 253

⁶³ Hatten 2003: 151

euphoric present or future idealized state – (3) by inhabiting an idealized space of reflection or serenity that emulates those envisioned qualities (4) and that may also evoke the monumentality of landscape, with its poignant juxtaposition of geological time, historical time and individual memory.”⁶⁴

The complications are obvious as it is less than clear how we apply these conditions to music and they may lack the musical specificity that we require to identify them. If this is the limit of the Romantic pastoral, then it may be too vague to be of interpretative benefit.

By summarising both the heroic and the pastoral and their nineteenth-century histories we have been trying to determine their suitability and relevance as an interpretative window for Brahms's Third Symphony. It seems that we have found an important distinction. The heroic does not have, and never has had, a definitive musical definition. It exists mainly as a metaphor, largely informed by extra musical elements, whether they be narratives, programmes, titlings, or heroic aspects of composers' lives. In the absence of an appropriate titling or description, any attempt to characterize Brahms's Third Symphony as “heroic” would require a pertinent struggle or affliction in his life that we do not have. In contrast, the pastoral has been defined historically as a musical topic, a sound world which has evolved continuously. Admittedly definitions for the topic have been harder to construct for Romantic music, but this only increases the potential consequences of a pastoral exploration of Brahms's symphony. Burnham appreciates that while being fuelled by the heroic “master trope” “we have effectively marginalized works like the ‘Pastoral’ Symphony”⁶⁵ and therefore Brahms's Third Symphony may be an interesting place to redress this balance and expand our understanding of the romantic pastoral beyond Hatten's beginnings.

⁶⁴ Hatten 2003: 153

⁶⁵ Burnham 1995: 154-5

Alluding to what exactly?

Having established the motives for looking at the pastoral in Brahms's Third Symphony, it is worth discussing the methodological approach which has come to dominate Brahms scholarship. Questions of intertextuality and allusion have become hugely important in readings of Brahms's music for a number of reasons. Most fundamentally, our experience of this music suggests that it engages with the past, further encouraged by the composer's oft-quoted anxieties about his own composition, and Brahms's well known desire to learn and uncover old repertoire. The study of Brahms's music in conjunction with other musical texts could also provide answers to questions of musical meaning in the work of a composer who said famously little about the extra-musical associations of his music. This approach has had some success and the discussion below will include comparisons between a number of works by Brahms and others. With this in mind, it is worth considering some of the theoretical issues that frame these comparisons.

To start with a definition, Hull sees allusion as a "purposeful, extracompositional reference made by means of a resemblance, usually thematic and local in nature...a stylistic device employed by a composer to direct the attention of a listener to the passage that is alluded to".⁶⁶ Although Rosen considers some allusions to be evident only to the experienced listener, in principle he agrees that Brahms's allusions were consciously created, and designed to be heard.⁶⁷ The principle is sound, but Korsyn, thinking of the relationship between pieces by Brahms and Chopin, outlines some of the difficulties we find when considering intertextual relationships: "are these deliberate allusions or accidental resemblances?...finding such relationships is not difficult...but what meaning should we ascribe to them?"⁶⁸ In order to codify these relationships Reynolds separates quotation from allusion, and suggests that to identify the latter, two musical excerpts must have at least three elements in common – these could be "the rhythmic or intervallic patterns of a motive, the orchestration, a textural association, harmony, counterpoint, dynamics, key and mode, form or formal functions, or genre."⁶⁹ A lot depends on which three you choose – for instance, orchestration, key and dynamics could give a relatively weak connection and just rhythm or intervallic profile alone could give quite a strong association, but in general, we have to agree with Reynolds that the more elements that are present, the more certainty we have that a resemblance is not coincidental.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Hull 1998: 140

⁶⁷ Rosen 1980: 93, 100

⁶⁸ Korsyn 1993: 4

⁶⁹ Reynolds 2003: 32.

⁷⁰ Reynolds does appreciate the particular importance of melody and rhythm. He also finds genre to be particularly important, echoed by Daverio, who stresses how genre-conscious nineteenth-century

This codification, that Reynolds feels to be necessary given the frequency with which allusion is discussed, is based on the desire to ascertain compositional intentionality. To answer Korsyn's question of "what meaning should we ascribe to them?", Reynolds starts by implying that if we can assure that the composer is indeed deliberately using allusion, then there may well be hidden meaning to find. However, because allusions are supposed to be evident, and after one hundred and twenty years of searching there is no agreement about any allusions to explicitly pastoral music in Brahms's Third, it is clear that this cannot be the principal methodological focus in this case. We can use Reynolds's criteria to analyse some allusions that scholars have claimed, but with many examples, determining Brahms's intertextual intentions is not the main aim. The musical syntax of the pastoral topic finds its meaning not just through particular references or allusions from one work to another, but through interrelationships with a large number of works and their musical conventions, which composers may not be aware of when they compose. The topical signifiers which have previously been listed are recognisable despite their individual musical manifestations in each work and the generic similarities we see or hear between these examples we can call resonances. It is impossible to define the power and scope of all the pastoral signifiers below – that would be a book in itself – so these resonances, which may often seem coincidental, are emblematic of the interaction not between Brahms's Third and the work in question, but with the conventions which influenced both.

A Third “Eroica”, or another “Pastoral”?

We have already seen Avins suggest that Brahms’s Third Symphony is his “Rhenish” because it was composed on the Rhine. However, Avins is also alluding to a link between Brahms’s Third and Schumann’s Third Symphony, his “Rhenish”, (the name given by the concertmaster of the first performance) written during his stay in Düsseldorf as the city’s music director, with Clara remembering in her diaries that “we had a beautiful view of the Rhine”.⁷¹ The connection between the two works goes beyond the circumstances of composition – the opening bars of Brahms’s symphony allude to the opening of Schumann’s. The comparison originates with the first performances of Brahms’s symphony – both Ludwig Spiel and Theodor Helm, writing after the premiere in 1883, noticed the similarity between Brahms’s and Schumann’s theme.⁷² The comparison has been reproduced by numerous scholars, including Brodbeck, Musgrave, and Knapp but for the sake of clarity, it is worth seeing them metrically aligned with some labelling of motives to confirm the close relationship of the two excerpts.

Ex. 1: Brahms, Symphony No. 3, bb. 1-4 and Schumann, Symphony No. 3, “Rhenish”, bb. 1-10.

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is Brahms's Symphony No. 3, measures 1-4, in 3/4 time, marked *f passionato*. It features a falling fourth (labeled 'x') and a dotted rhythm (labeled 'y'). The bottom staff is Schumann's Symphony No. 3, measures 1-10, in 3/4 time, marked *f*. It also features a falling fourth (labeled 'x') and a dotted rhythm (labeled 'y'). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The musical similarity is obvious, with both having largely triadic themes and using the same gestures of the falling fourth, *x*, and the dotted rhythm, *y*. Both openings also set off at a similar tempo with hemiolas written against the triple meter, and there is also the similarity of genre and positioning, as both are symphonic openings. Reynolds’s requirement of three elements of similarity is more than fulfilled, and if we were trying to determine intentionality, there is no complication here as there might be with Chopin or Wagner, about whether Brahms knew

⁷¹ Litzmann 1903-8 Vol. 2: 227, trans. Linda Correll Roesner in the preface to the 1986 Eulenberg edition of the score.

⁷² See Brodbeck 2009: 113 for full citations.

Schumann's symphony: as he said himself "the memory of Schumann is sacred to me. That noble, pure artist serves me constantly as a model".⁷³

The correlation seems both convincing and appropriate given the location of composition, but Brodbeck introduces a third work to form an allusional triangle. He places the openings of Brahms's and Schumann's Third Symphonies together with Beethoven's "Eroica", suggesting a common resonance.⁷⁴ He goes further, proposing that Brahms knew that Schumann used the "Eroica" as a model for his "Rhenish", and that he attempted some kind of synthesis in the first movement of his Third Symphony.⁷⁵ Trying to associate the three symphonies is numerically rather neat, but looking at the three excerpts, it is difficult to hear the relationship between the Beethoven on the one hand, and the Brahms and Schumann examples on the other. There is no real similarity of texture, rhythm, or melodic profile; they are all tutti symphonic openings, but even so, there is no real similarity in orchestration or texture.⁷⁶ As Kalbeck originally noticed (and Reynolds and Brinkmann have subsequently mentioned) the opening of the "Eroica" seems much more like Brahms's Second Symphony.⁷⁷

Ex. 2: Brahms, Symphony No. 3, movement 1, bb. 1-4; Beethoven, Symphony No. 3, movement 1, bb. 3-8; Brahms, Symphony No. 2, movement 1, bb. 2-5.

The image displays three musical staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and a tempo marking of *f* *passionato*. It shows the first four measures of Brahms's Symphony No. 3, movement 1. The middle staff is in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major/D minor) and a dynamic marking of *p*. It shows measures 3-8 of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, movement 1. The bottom staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major/B minor) and a dynamic marking of *p*. It shows measures 2-5 of Brahms's Symphony No. 2, movement 1. Brackets labeled 'x', 'y', 'z', 'x'', 'x'', 'y'', 'z'', and 'y' connect specific notes across the three staves to illustrate relationships.

⁷³ Daverio 2002: 157, from a letter to Friedric Heimsoeth, Johannes Brahms. 1907-22: Briefwechsel, 16 vols., Berlin: Deutsche Brahms Gesellschaft, vol. 3, p. 121

⁷⁴ Brodbeck 2009: 97

⁷⁵ Brodbeck 1997: 249

⁷⁶ If one of the works were to sit at the centre, one would imagine it would be the Schumann, rather than the Brahms (as Brodbeck would like), because of the key connection with the Beethoven, and the rhythmic connection with the Brahms.

⁷⁷ Kalbeck Vol. III. 1: 213, Reynolds 2003: 33, Brinkmann 1995: 55

Barry also connects the three composers and makes the link from Beethoven, to Schumann and in turn to Brahms: “Schumann’s symphonies...form an important link between Beethoven’s and those of Brahms”.⁷⁸ More pertinently, “Schumann’s most interesting re-interpretation of the classical symphony must be his Third, most probably modelled on the “Eroica”.⁷⁹ Adopting a more analytical approach, Musgrave also dedicates a significant portion of his essay on Schumann’s “Rhenish” to comparisons with the “Eroica”, focusing on the first movement, and finding similarity in the contour and harmony of the opening themes and in the structure of the development. However, the two most convincing elements are the common key, which we might think to be important, and the use of the horn to open the recapitulation in the first movement, although Beethoven’s “incorrect” recapitulation is surely much more innovative and startling. Musgrave identifies that it is Schumann’s first movement, specifically its character, that dictates the structural direction of the whole symphony, and it is this character, held within the opening themes, which Schumann’s “Rhenish” shares with Brahms’s Third, but, I would argue, not with Beethoven’s “Eroica”.

For Musgrave, Schumann’s “Rhenish” is a symbolic work which combines the elements that we might naively call the programmatic and the absolute,⁸⁰ later distilled in each of the two German schools. Therefore Beethoven’s “Pastoral” Symphony is an important model, as it combines both elements in a programmatic symphony, and “opened up new vistas of expression and structure”⁸¹ for later composers like Schumann. The most obvious similarity between Beethoven’s “Pastoral” and Schumann’s “Rhenish” is the five-movement form which also causes Kirby to offer a comparison.⁸² In addition, Schumann’s symphony was premiered in Düsseldorf with titles for the movements, just like Beethoven’s “Pastoral”, even if these did not survive in the published version.⁸³ Perhaps more important in terms of links with Beethoven’s symphony, are Schumann’s comments that “here and there a piece of life is mirrored” and “I wanted

⁷⁸ Barry 1977: 34

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 34

⁸⁰ Musgrave uses “large-scale formal structure and integration” and “the role of pre-existent, or otherwise referential material” to elaborate on this simplification. (Musgrave 1996: 121)

⁸¹ Musgrave 1996: 121

⁸² Kirby 1995: 198. Four of the five symphonies written before 1880 with five-movement schemes have titles attached, and therefore programmatic implications. The four with titles are: Beethoven’s “Pastoral” (1808), Schumann’s “Rhenish” (1853), Raff’s “Vaterland” (1864) and Goldmark’s “Rustic Wedding” (1877). Kirby also identifies that symphonies in three movements also tend to be programmatic. (Ibid.: 198)

⁸³ Musgrave 1996: 123. Supported by a number of quotations from Schumann, Musgrave argues that the composer was uncomfortable with guiding his listeners’ experience with labels and titles.

elements of popular music to predominate, and I think I have succeeded”⁸⁴. It seems that Schumann did feel the work, at least to a certain extent, to be a description of the Rhineland and its people. Simple triadic themes do dominate throughout and there is a constant air of rustic simplicity. The following violin figure is a case in point:

Ex. 4: The rustic folk violin. Schumann, Symphony No. 3, Mvt. II, bb. 5-7, vln. I.



The crossing of the string and resonant open G-string leave us in no doubt of the world to which this figure belongs. In this second movement Porter also hears “the *volkstümlich* earthiness of a *Ländler*”⁸⁵ but Musgrave does not make the link between this peasant (or we might say pastoral) music and Beethoven’s “Pastoral” Symphony. This could be because Musgrave is not really concerned with Schumann’s themes, but rather with what he calls “a symphonic ‘plot archetype’”⁸⁶ – the way in which the work functions as a whole structure. In terms of overall dramatic trajectory there is also a striking similarity between Schumann’s “Rhenish” and Beethoven’s “Pastoral”, as both have a fourth movement in the tonic minor, F minor and E \flat minor respectively, which is quite clearly descriptive – a storm for Beethoven, and a vision of Cologne Cathedral for Schumann.⁸⁷ Both then lead into a rousing finale in the major, without a break in Beethoven’s case. The potential for comparison does not escape Musgrave at this point but rather than stressing the similarity, Musgrave sees a fundamental difference – Beethoven’s “Storm” functions as an addition to a four-movement form, following *attacca* from the third movement, and proceeding *attacca* into the finale, whereas Schumann’s fourth movement is a distinct entity which possesses a defined formal structure, unlike the “Storm”. For Musgrave, viewing Schumann’s movement in terms of “transition and preparation”⁸⁸ like Beethoven’s ignores the power of this formal structure. However, surely this difference in formal approach

⁸⁴ Musgrave 1996: 123 quoting Erler 1886: 139, and Taylor 1982: 287

⁸⁵ Porter 1996: 198. Porter defines *Volksstümlichkeit* as combining “the quality of direct, folklike simplicity, in imitation of folksong style, with contemporary overtones of cultural nationalism that specifically evoked the notion of the German folk.” (Ibid.: 13)

⁸⁶ Musgrave 1996: 123

⁸⁷ Although it is often stated that Schumann visited the Cathedral, or even attended the ordination of Cardinal Geissel, there is no evidence to corroborate this fact. In her diary Clara merely states that they enjoyed “the particularly impressive view of the cathedral which on closer inspection surpassed our expectation.” (Litzmann 1903-8 Vol. 2: 227 trans. Linda Correll Roesner in the preface to the 1986 Eulenberg edition of the score.) Nevertheless, the musical characterization, with the solemnity of trombones and learned contrapuntal style, seems quite clear.

⁸⁸ Musgrave 1996: 136

could easily be explained by the depictive qualities of the two passages: a violent, unpredictable storm and the design and order of a gothic architectural monument.

Moving back to Brahms, and the structure of his Third Symphony, it does seem rather unusual when compared with his other three symphonies.

Ex. 5: The key schemes of Brahms's four symphonies.

1 Cm E Ab Cm C

2 D Bm G D

3 F C Cm Fm F

4 Em E C Em

The Third Symphony is clearly a departure when compared to the other three which all rely on third relationships – the Third has a noticeably symmetrical scheme, with its axis on the fifth. Symphonies which start in the major, and have a final movement in the minor are very rare, even if Brahms does move to the major in the final few minutes. Precursors for a scheme like this in the symphonic works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann are hard to come by, and with the minor/major finale, Beethoven's "Pastoral" and Schumann's "Rhenish" do offer the best models.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Haydn's Symphony No. 70 in D major has a Finale in D minor, which resolves to the major, but there is no evidence that it has any particular relevance here.

Ex. 6: The key schemes of Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral", Brahms's Symphony No. 3 and Schumann's Symphony No. 3, "Rhenish".

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different key scheme. The first staff, labeled 'Pastoral', shows a sequence of notes: F (quarter), Bb (quarter), F (quarter), Fm (quarter), and F (quarter). Above the notes are chord labels: F, Bb, F, Fm, and F. A bracket groups the Fm and F notes, with a dashed line underneath. The second staff, labeled '3', shows notes: F (quarter), C (quarter), Cm (quarter), Fm (quarter), and F (quarter). Above the notes are chord labels: F, C, Cm, Fm, and F. A bracket groups the Fm and F notes, with a dashed line underneath. The third staff, labeled 'Rhenish', shows notes: Eb (quarter), C (quarter), Ab (quarter), Ebm (quarter), and Eb (quarter). Above the notes are chord labels: Eb, C, Ab, Ebm, and Eb.

As we can see all three have a turn from tonic minor to major. The similarity with the "Pastoral" is also particularly noticeable because the music from minor to major, although in separate movements, is heard continuously.

A Question of Key

Undoubtedly, the link with the "Pastoral" is all the more tempting because it is the specific transition from F minor to F major that is shared. It also seems likely that the desire to attach Schumann's "Rhenish" to Beethoven's "Eroica" is informed to some extent by their shared key of Eb. Rita Steblin has produced the most significant work on key characteristics in the first half of the nineteenth century, and an interesting theme emerges in the work of the theorists she considers. We might think that Beethoven, and his symphonies in particular given their importance and the anxieties they created, would provide a benchmark for defining key characteristics. However, this is not what Steblin finds. The only work by Beethoven that is mentioned with relation to either F or Eb major is *Fidelio*, where Seidel finds the "calmness and comforting peace" of the final song to be typical of F major.⁹⁰ Beethoven does not serve as a common point of reference with examples most commonly taken from Mozart, but also Handel, Weber and Haydn. Seidel is the only theorist to consistently mention Beethoven but he is

⁹⁰ Steblin 1983: 180. Steblin's translation from Carl Ludwig Seidel. 1825-28 Vol. 2: *Charinomos*, 2 vols, Magdeburg: Ferdinand Rubach, pp. 110-13

relatively uninterested in the symphonies. Instead he focuses on the more overtly dramatic works: the music to *Egmont*, two excerpts from *Fidelio* and one from *Christus am Oelberge*.⁹¹

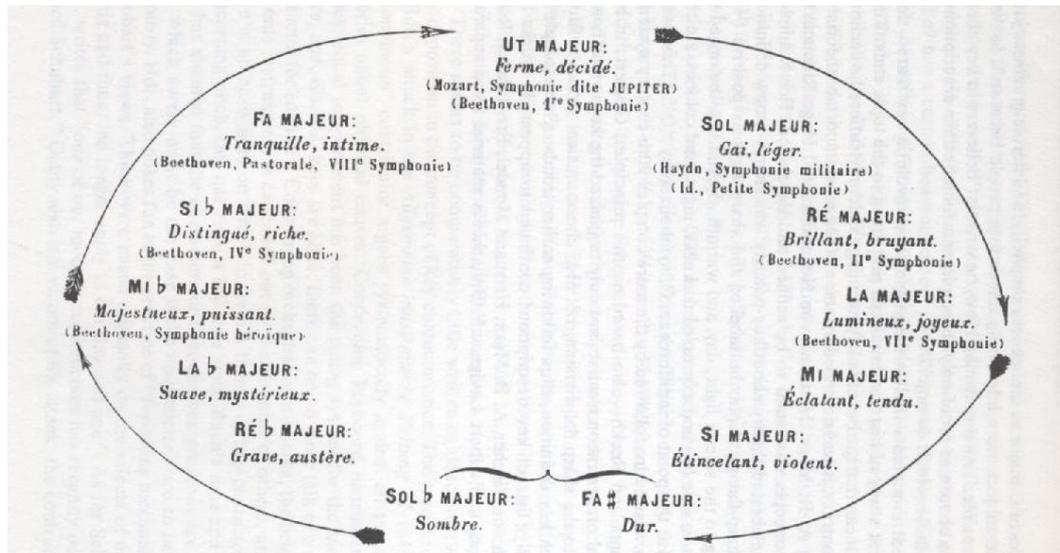
Schumann, as a music theorist himself, did write on the question of key characteristics, but his views mainly tantalise, rather than helping us in this case. He establishes that he does believe in the individual characteristics of different keys, but he writes in relatively general terms: “simpler feelings have simpler keys. The more complex ones prefer to move about in strange keys – those which are heard less frequently”.⁹² Schumann’s most revealing observation follows later: “If it is indeed true that certain stereotype key characteristics developed in the various epochs, then we should assemble treasured classical masterpieces set in the same key and compare their prevailing moods”.⁹³ This “if”, which betrays Schumann’s uncertainty, reflects the prevailing theoretical position, which did not show with any consistency that particular works, or groups of works, were representative of the characteristics of particular keys. It is almost impossible to know what associations E♭ major had for Schumann, but there is little evidence that it was linked to the “Eroica”, or heroicism in general; the only consistent theme that emerges from the nineteenth-century sources is that of religious solemnity.⁹⁴ Steblin only explores the early nineteenth century in detail, but one later example serves as a paradigm for changing attitudes in the second half of the century. Gevaert published a “Diagram” of key characteristics for the major keys in 1863 that was reprinted in 1890. Initially just the usual descriptors were published, but in the 1890 edition many of the keys had acquired a musical example or two which encapsulates the key.

⁹¹ Steblin 1983: 180

⁹² Ibid.: 173 In this context, F major is definitely a “simple” key, but we would have to define E♭ major, by virtue of its frequency, as a simple key as well. Steblin’s translation from, Robert Schumann. 1835: “Charakteristik den Tonleiten”, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, pp. 43-44

⁹³ Ibid.: 173

⁹⁴ Interestingly, Solomon argues for E♭ major as a pastoral key in Beethoven’s Op. 96, or at least “the key in which the idyll is yet to be regained...it appears to stand for a lost or misplaced aspect of Arcadia.”⁹⁴ This idea of E♭ as a pastoral key for Beethoven may also be related to the opening horn call of the *Lebewohl* Piano Sonata, with Rosen reminding us that “in Romantic music [in which he definitely includes Beethoven] these horn calls come from landscape”. (Rosen 1996: 135)

Ex. 7: Gevaert's "Diagram of Key Characteristics"⁹⁵

Tellingly, all seven of Beethoven's major-key symphonies are used as examples in this 1890 edition, with Haydn and Mozart the only other composers mentioned. Brahms's awareness of his position in history as the symphonic successor of Beethoven is well known⁹⁶ and the setting of his first symphony in C minor, famously Beethoven's key, is surely significant given the trials that Brahms had producing his first full-fledged symphonic work. Gevaert's diagram is obviously an isolated example, but it may well show a shift in critical consciousness which became much more Beethoven-oriented throughout the nineteenth century, encouraging the idea that Brahms's choice of F major is significant.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ This is reproduced from Steblin 1981: 186, taken from: Gevaert, François-Auguste. 1890: *Cours méthodique d'orchestration*, Paris and Brussels: Henry Lemoine, p. 103

⁹⁶ See Bonds 1996

⁹⁷ Given the connection of F major with Beethoven's "Pastoral" is it coincidental that Joachim Raff's Third Symphony, "Im Walde" (In The Forest), written in 1869, is also in F major? (It is interesting, although not necessarily relevant, that like Brahms's Third, the symphony was also written in Wiesbaden.)

From One World to Another

“we might even conjecture that the overt references are often there as signals, to call attention to others less obvious, almost undetectable.”⁹⁸

Given the brief methodological discussion above, and the suggestion that a topical outlook might not necessarily concern allusion, it might have seemed odd to have started with an overt and well documented reference to Schumann’s “Rhenish”. However, Rosen suggests a way of interpreting the overt allusion – it could serve as a sign of something deeper and less immediately obvious. If we link Schumann’s “Rhenish” to Beethoven’s “Pastoral”, rather than his “Eroica”, then perhaps the allusion serves as a marker in our search for a pastoral identity for Brahms’s symphony. Indeed, some elements in the symphony fit unproblematically into the pastoral sphere. The second subject of the first movement has often been seen as belonging to the pastoral topic. Harrison finds it “idyllic”, Tovey describes it as a “graceful pastoral theme”, an interpretation which Knapp also agrees with, and Kalbeck describes it as “all innocence, all nature”, also mentioning the “bucolic” fifths in the bass.^{99 100}

Ex. 8: Brahms, Symphony No.3, Mvt. I, bb. 36-40

⁹⁸ Rosen 1980: 94

⁹⁹ Harrison 1938: 213, Tovey 1935: 108, Knapp 2001: 154, Kalbeck 1927 Vol. 3. II: 390 - “ganz Unschuld, ganz Natur”, trans. Litchfield

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.: 390. “der bukolische Quintenbass der Violoncelle und Bratschen”

As we can see there a number of pastoral signifiers, namely the drones in both the lower strings and flute, the open fifth pizzicatos, the intimate orchestration for two solo winds and the lilting triple meter of the siciliano.

More significantly, the entire second movement seems to come from a world of what Tovey describes as “pastoral plainness”.¹⁰¹ Musgrave calls it as a “Brahmsian folksong” and Geiringer hears “passionless, clear, almost objective serenity”, a world of “emotional tranquillity”.¹⁰²

Ex. 9: Brahms, Symphony No. 3, Mvt. II, bb. 1-4

The musical score for Brahms' Symphony No. 3, Movement II, measures 1-4. It features three staves: Clarinet (cls.), Horns (hns.), and Bassoon (bsns.). The top staff (cls.) begins with a melodic line marked *espress.* and *p*. The middle staff (hns.) provides harmonic support, with a *p* marking. The bottom staff (bsns.) features a drone-like accompaniment marked *semplice.* and *p*. The music is in 3/4 time and consists of three measures.

This opening is scored for a woodwind choir, dominated initially by root-position harmonies, the effect lying somewhere between folksong and chorale, with short interjections from the strings between phrases. The simplicity we see in these initial harmonies is echoed in the keys Brahms modulates to. He does not allow himself any of the more exotic tertiary relationships, but limits himself to the dominant, modulating at b. 63. There is a definite plagal flavour to the theme, with two moves from I to IV in first two bars and this subdominant emphasis and general harmonic simplicity are retained in the two further repetitions of the theme. The plagal cadences reappear in the coda at b. 128, this time scored for horns and trombones, underlining their thematic importance. Most importantly, all the elements mentioned: the folksong, the wind-sonorities, the simple harmonies and subdominant emphasis, can be seen as pastoral signifiers.

Given the importance of these two excerpts, and the ease with which they can be assimilated into the pastoral topic, it is surprising that no one has looked for pastoral signifiers throughout the symphony as a whole. It is true that in general symphonies are not defined by their second

¹⁰¹ Tovey 1935: 108

¹⁰² Musgrave 1985: 219, Geiringer 1948: 260

subjects and second movements, but there has been a tendency for scholars to focus principally on the outer movements when discussing the Third Symphony – a bias with some history. It was Hanslick who originally complained that the middle movements of Brahms's First and Third symphonies were “too small scaled, in content as well as in extent, for the imposing movements which adjoin them.”¹⁰³ Brinkmann is right to describe inner movements in Romantic symphonies as “character pieces” but this does not mean they are of lesser importance.¹⁰⁴ On the contrary, rather than understand middle movements as characterful or stylised filling between the real symphonic dialogue in the outer movements, perhaps we should be looking to this characterized music to betray the real character of the symphony.

¹⁰³ Hanslick 1950: 212

¹⁰⁴ Brinkmann 1995: 144

Is that a Shepherd I hear? – Juchezers and Yodels

“One attempts in vain to shape the opening heroically, for, as Brahms himself said, it is
a precise transcription of the Berchtesgaden Yodel”¹⁰⁵

Walter Blume

Brahms said and wrote very little about his own compositions; Brown describes him as “almost reclusive”,¹⁰⁶ and on the occasions when he did elaborate, he was often misleading. When describing his Second Symphony to Simrock, Brahms wrote that the score was his most melancholy, and should appear with a black border, seemingly contradicting the key of D major, and spirited finale.¹⁰⁷ Even more overtly, he also told Elizabeth von Herzogenberg to “strike the chord of F minor several times in succession, first in the treble, then in the bass (*ff* and *pp*) and you will gradually gain a vivid impression of my ‘latest’ [the Second Symphony].”¹⁰⁸ Despite these reservations, Walter Blume’s quotation is the only report we have of Brahms saying anything about the origins or potential extra-musical associations of his Third Symphony, and it is totally at odds with the interpretations we have seen. Admittedly, it is difficult to know exactly how we should treat this comment; could it be another Brahmsian red herring? We do know that Brahms visited Berchtesgaden in the summers of 1867, 1878, 1880 and 1894, the middle two visits just a few years before the Third Symphony was written. It is possible that Brahms heard a tune, and remembered it for use later. He had set a precedent for this in his First Symphony; the alphorn call in the finale was composed in 1868, eight years before the symphony’s completion, not a quotation as far as we know, but an idiomatic call inspired by those he had heard when on holiday in the alps.¹⁰⁹

The first task is to attempt to find the yodel in question, if it exists, and Robert Pascall, inspired by Blume’s remark, unearthed five “Juchezers”, a poorly defined relative of the yodel, which bear a resemblance to Brahms’s opening theme.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Blume 1933: 55, trans. Robert Pascall 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Brown 1983: 438

¹⁰⁷ Brinkmann 1995: 13

¹⁰⁸ Kalbeck 2009: 27-28.

¹⁰⁹ Pascall 2009

¹¹⁰ Pascall, speaking in Cambridge in 2009, described a Juchez as “a kind of joyous melodic shout across the mountains”. We know it must be different in some way from a yodel, as they are differentiated in Pommer’s collection of “Jodler und Juchez”. (Pommer 1902). We can see from the “Juchezers” below that they do not feature the characteristic rising melodic intervals of the fourth, sixth and octave that we associate with the yodel. (Wise 2007: par. 12)

Ex. 10a-e: The five Juchezers Pascall found which share a thematic resonance with the opening theme from Brahms's Third Symphony.¹¹¹

a
Ju - hu - hu - u - !

b
Ju - hu - hu - hu - i !

c
Ju - hu - hu - hu - hu - hu - i !

d
Ju - ju - ju - ju - ju - hu - hu - hu - hu - i !

e
Ju - hu - hu - hu - hu - hu - i !

As a reminder, we should include the opening of Brahms's symphony, transposed from F into C for the sake of comparison, and without the rhythm which we have seen to be borrowed from Schumann.

¹¹¹ Pascall located Ex. 10a in 252 *Jodler und Juchezers*, collected by Josef Pommer, [Vienna] 1893, p. 204. Exs. 10b-e were also found by Pascall in "Das Liederbuch des Hofschaffers Linerl", (private collection, Berchtesgaden), p. 4. They are reproduced in the Vorwort to the Third Symphony in the Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke, Serie I: Orchesterwerke, Bd. 3, Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2005

Ex. 11: Brahms, Symphony, No. 3, bb. 3-4, a homorythmic reduction transposed into C major and Ex. 10c.

f *passionato*

Ju - hu - hu - hu - hu - hu - i !

When transposed, Brahms’s theme does look very much like Ex. 10c, and more generally, all five Juchezerers end with falling fourths. Looking beyond pitch to gesture, the slurs between Brahms’s falling fourths mirror the lines joining the closing fourths in Ex. 10b and d, which were presumably an indication of some *portamento* or other melodic embellishment. The *f* *passionato* marking also correlates with the definition of the Juchezer as a “joyous melodic shout across the mountains”.

The search for a pastoral interpretation makes the suggestion that the main theme is based on a yodel extremely tempting. The yodel has always been linked to the pastoral topic as it is the song of the shepherd, and right from the birth of the pastoral itself, with Theocritus’s first idyll, the shepherd is a musician, either piping or singing. Hyatt King finds the *Ranz des Vaches*, which he defines as “a melody which for centuries has been sung, or played on the Alphorn, to summon the cows from the lofty pastures above the tree-line in the Alps”¹¹², in the transition into the final movement of Beethoven’s “Pastoral” and in the opening and close of the third movement of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* – the most important early nineteenth-century pastoral works.¹¹³ It is easy to get carried away, and Pascall urges caution because we know that Brahms visited Berchtesgaden both before and after he wrote the Third Symphony. As far as Pascall is concerned, we can never know whether Brahms noted the similarity after he wrote the piece, or

¹¹² Hyatt King 1945: 397

¹¹³ Admittedly there is an ambiguity here, between the *Ranz des Vaches* either as a sung yodel or a call of the alphorn. The original programme note for *Symphonie Fantastique* does specify that the shepherds’ play the *Ranz* but with Beethoven the title is “Hirtengesang”, or Shepherds’ Song. It must be possible that the same melodies, or at least very similar ones, were both sung and played and Monelle believes that alphorn tunes are influenced by the *Jodel* rather than the other way round. (Monelle 2006: 101)

indeed if it did inspire the symphony’s opening theme – “we have reached the limits of knowledge on this topic”.¹¹⁴ However, further musical exploration of the pastoral and the potential musical implications of this Juchezer could create a scenario which would suggest that the Juchezer was part of Brahms’s creative process.

Firstly, another Juchezer, and one which strikes a remarkable resemblance to Brahms’s. Strauss’s *Eine Alpensinfonie* quite explicitly paints a picture of nature, relying on certain pastoral signifiers, not least the narrative of the approaching storm. The scene of the mountain pasture, “Auf der Alm”, contains such familiar pastoral sounds as the call of birds, the clanging of the cowbell, a yodelling motif, perhaps even the bleating of sheep with flutter-tonguing winds, and, most importantly for us, a Juchezer.¹¹⁵

Ex. 12: The Juchezer motif from “Auf der Alm” in Strauss’s *Eine Alpensinfonie* and Brahms’s “Juchezer”.

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is a single line of music in G major, 2/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* and a tempo marking of 'W.W.' (Allegretto). The melody starts on G4, moves to A4, then B4, and then descends through A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2. There are three bracketed sections labeled *x'*, each containing a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. The dynamics change from *ff* to *dim.* and finally to *p*. The bottom staff is also in G major, 2/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and a tempo marking of *passionato*. The melody starts on G4, moves to A4, then B4, and then descends through A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2. There is one bracketed section labeled *x*, containing a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note.

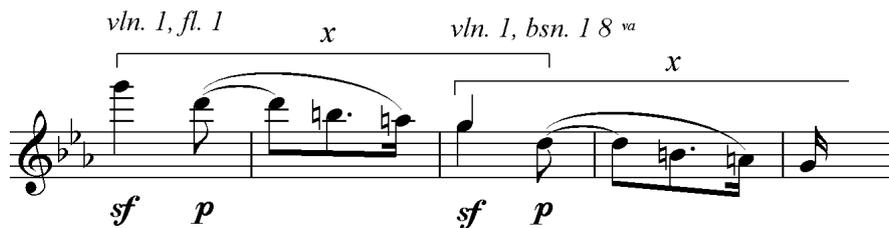
Although Strauss, unlike Brahms, begins on the fifth of the scale rather than the tonic, because the figure descends and repeats, we do hear the exact intervallic pattern of Brahms’s opening three times, each one elided with the next. The nature of the gesture is similar: an abrupt entrance, in a high register and at a loud dynamic, and Strauss’s Juchezer is also uncannily similar to both Ex. 10a and 10b and shares this similarity with Brahms’s opening. All four also have the same placement of the dotted rhythm as well as the same intervallic pattern.

¹¹⁴ Pascall 2009: “it could just as well be that he got to know the yodel after writing the Symphony and made his comment as *post hoc* jest”.

¹¹⁵ *Eine Alpensinfonie* has not received a significant amount of critical attention, as with much of Strauss’s work. However, Bayreuther, in his expansive survey of the work and its sources, labels this theme as a “Juchzer”. Bayreuther 1997: 375

Just as for Brahms, we might ask how we know that Strauss's motif is a Juchezer? Regardless of the similarity to any particular Juchezer, the context is a musical Alpine scene which would almost be incomplete without the shepherd's calls. An entry like the one above, which comes out of the texture over a sustained *piano* chord, soloistic, and unrelated to surrounding material, has to be representative, and the impassioned outburst also fits the description we have of the Juchezer. The coincidence of another similar "yodel" motif by another composer, is interesting in itself, but Strauss's treatment of his theme raises some questions for the Brahms example. Because Strauss's Juchezer falls through an octave and has no chromatic inflections, there is little potential for thematic development, and Strauss's solution is to repeat the theme through a number of octaves, passing from voice to voice. It is almost a musical inevitability, and we might remember that Schumann, when he uses the same intervallic pattern (and a similar rhythm and hemiola to the opening of Brahms's Third) does exactly the same.¹¹⁶

Ex. 13: Schumann, Symphony No. 1 "Spring", Mvt. II, bb. 70-73



As Dahlhaus has noted, Brahms's theme poses a problem as it is a closing gesture because of the features mentioned above which are shared with Schumann's and Strauss's themes.¹¹⁷ Of course, Dahlhaus notices that this theme fulfils its closing potential at the end of both the first and final movements where the theme does indeed repeat and descend to provide tonal closure. For us it is the recurrence of the Juchezer at the close of the finale that is most interesting as it is one of the most striking aspects of the symphony's formal narrative and it combines a number of pertinent musical elements.

¹¹⁶ The similarity between this moment from Schumann's first symphony and the opening of Brahms's Third symphony has been noted by Musgrave. (Musgrave 1985: 220)

¹¹⁷ Dahlhaus 1989: 269

Ex. 14: Brahms Symphony No. 3, Mvt. IV, bb. 301-307: vlns. I+II, vla., vc. and db

Ex. 15: The intervals heard in the highest voice.

Vln. 1

Vla.

Intervals: 6 3 3 5 6 3 3 5 6 4 3 5 1

If we write out the intervals that the oscillating figure implies, (Ex. 15), we see the pattern 3 - 5 - 6 of the horn call in the first violin, stated more fully with the viola entry at b. 305, 6 - 4 - 3 - 5 - 1. The horn call, even when troped like this and played on the strings, rather than the horn, has a particular significance when it comes to the pastoral. E. T. A Hoffman wrote that “certain horn tunes transport us instantly into the forest”¹¹⁸ and, as already mentioned, when discussing troped

¹¹⁸ Monelle 2006: 100-101, quoting *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, vol. 3, 1800, p. 48

horn calls in Schubert's songs Rosen writes that "these horns come from landscape".¹¹⁹ Beller-McKenna also notes "the general capacity of the horn – especially the natural horn – to evoke distance for Brahms, Schumann, and their contemporaries."¹²⁰ The musical notion of distance is linked to the outdoors, and the sensation of hearing the horn as if from afar probably originates in the acoustic quality of an instrument whose sound projects backwards. More specifically, the horn seems to be associated with fluvial scenes; if we remember the notion of Brahms's Third as a "Rhenish", or "river" symphony in some sense, it is interesting to see that two other river depictions, the *Vorspiel* from Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, a depiction of the Rhine, and *Vltava* from Smetana's *Ma Vlast*, also rely heavily on troped horn calls.

Ex. 16: Troped horn calls in Smetana's *Vltava*, from *Ma Vlast*, bb. 413-419: vlns. I+II, and the piano reduction of Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, bb. 99-102

The image displays two musical excerpts. The top excerpt consists of two staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features a melodic line with several phrases marked with a bracket and an infinity symbol (∞), indicating a troped or repeated motif. The bottom excerpt consists of two staves in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). It shows a piano reduction with a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand, also featuring a bracketed and infinity-marked phrase.

Returning to Ex. 14, it is this coda which causes Swafford, in a nod to Wagner, to remind us "that Brahms had studied Wagner's 'Forest Murmurs'."¹²¹ However, two Brahms examples seem

¹¹⁹ Rosen 1996: 135.

¹²⁰ Beller-McKenna 2005: 71. Pairs of natural horns in particular are more limited to the intervallic patterns we see above.

¹²¹ Swafford 1997: 492. The tendency to relate Brahms to Wagner is a strong one. Originally an opposition was perceived between Brahms and Wagner, and this view persisted into the twentieth-century largely unchecked, until Schoenberg sought to rehabilitate Brahms and elevate him to a position alongside Wagner in terms of influence in his article *Brahms the Progressive*. Since its publication in 1950, scholars have increasingly tried to stress the progressive element of Brahms's musical language. This has manifested itself in scholarship on Brahms's Third. Brodbeck, Knapp and Bailey hear a specific allusion in bb. 31-35 of the first movement to the off-stage sirens chorus from

more appropriate for comparison, both of which have pastoral associations. These oscillating figures are a significant feature of the second movement of the Third Symphony, our most explicitly pastoral movement, first occurring to accompany the plagal motion at b. 25, with a similar figure also accompanying the recapitulation at b. 80. Secondly, we have the accompaniment to the alphorn call in the finale of the First Symphony.

Ex. 17: Brahms Symphony No. 1, Mvt. IV, bb. 31-34. The string accompaniment to Brahms's alphorn: hn.1, vlns. I+II, vla., vc. and cb.

Più Andante
f *sempre e passionato*

the first scene of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Brodbeck ascribes some significance to this allusion, as he sees its appearance in an un-Wagnerian context – an overt rejection of Wagnerian style. There is some loose correlation, but if we distil the musical substance of both excerpts we are left only with similarities in harmony as there is little similarity in orchestration, timbre, rhythm or melodic profile, let alone genre. Brodbeck is keen to stress the link with Wagner, and also sees the rather peculiar evolving chords in the second movement as having Wagnerian inspiration, with “*Tristan*-like extended appoggiaturas”. Bailey also believes that bb. 108-9 in the second movement quote a moment in the “Immolation Scene” from *Götterdämmerung*. These comparisons seem to be total red herrings, dubious musical comparisons which take Brahms's more chromatic moments and “explain” them by invoking Wagner, inspired by a more general trend in Brahms scholarship to tie the two German schools, headed by Brahms and Wagner. (See Brodbeck 2009: 68-70, Knapp 2001: 154-7, Bailey 1990: 405-9 – for a more general discussion of the links between the two German schools see Brown 1983.)

The upper strings have exactly the same oscillations, descending in a similar tessitura, also played *con sordini*, in another passage which refers, explicitly in this case, to the music of the countryside. Thinking momentarily about the relationship between alhorn calls and yodels, we might notice that the intervallic pattern E – D – C – G that opens the alhorn call is the only melodic element common to all five Juchezer in Ex. 10 – further evidence of the confusion we saw with the *Ranz des vaches*, between melodies that were sung or played.

When considering thematic processes and transformations, the Holy Grail for the musicologist is often sketch material which may give us some idea about the order in which certain ideas came to fruition. Unfortunately Brahms left us no such clues in this case, but we might still suggest that the possibilities of the opening thematic fragment to act as a closing device, whether known by Brahms as a Juchezer or not, would have been immediately apparent – an idea supported by the similar treatment given to comparable themes independently by Schumann and Strauss. Perhaps at this stage, or later, the setting of this closure became saturated with textural and instrumental touches which point to the world of the pastoral, not by way of specific allusions, but integrating with some of the remaining topical conventions. We will never know if the Juchezer was the “seed” of inspiration for the symphony, but one final thought might encourage us to think so. When it came to composing the first theme, Brahms would have been aware that somehow he needed to escape this closed, tonally stable opening gesture. What could undermine his theme more than the move to A \flat in the bass at b. 4, followed immediately by a huge leap in the violins to the same A \flat ? We might argue that the A \flat has already been prepared by the opening two chords, but just because they are the first music we hear does not mean that Brahms conceived of them first. Louise Litterick finds that the two chords Brahms wrote to open his Fourth Symphony were added after composing the movement, but this does not stop them encapsulating the symphonic argument that follows.¹²² It is possible then, that the opening two chords of the Third Symphony were not Brahms’s first thought, but in fact the Juchezer, and the disruptive A \flat . This same A \flat continues to haunt us throughout the symphony, particularly through the choice of F minor for the finale, and it is not until the closing bars that the “Juchezer” is emancipated, back into its countryside surroundings initially denied by Brahms’s A \flat .

¹²² Litterick 1987

Mvt. IV – The Storm

We have seen the nature imagery that various writers have brought to bear on this symphony, with both Ray and Geiringer using the term “storm” to describe the finale. We could easily see these readings as little more than self-indulgent poetic descriptions, but there are several pertinent ways that the storm narrative may be read into Brahms’s finale. Monelle insists that there is no way of detecting a musical storm without a title, as the storm’s only definable musical trait is “general storminess”,¹²³ but it seems possible to construct a model by discovering the similarities of two musical storms which frame Brahms’s symphony chronologically: the storm in Beethoven’s “Pastoral”, and the storm in Strauss’s *Eine Alpensinfonie*. The first condition, exhibited by both examples, is that the storm arrives towards the end of the work, in the tonic minor.¹²⁴ Secondly, the outbreak of the storm is preceded by calm. Strauss labels this section discretely as “Calm Before the Storm”, but for Beethoven it is quite clear that the storm does not erupt until the twenty-first bar with the *ff* arrival of timpani, brass and tutti strings. Finally, the storm is also followed by calm: for Strauss, the descent from the mountain’s summit leading into the “Sunset” and eventually “Night”, and for Beethoven, the “Happy and grateful feelings after the storm”.¹²⁵

In basic terms, it is very easy to map these three conditions onto Brahms’s finale. It is both at the end of the work and in the tonic minor – the movement opens quietly, erupts violently at b. 30 and then, after the final climax with the entry of the opening theme in the cellos and basses at b. 240, the music wends its way into the tonic major, closing with chorales and textures which may, as discussed, be associated with nature. Much of this formal similarity comes just from the choice of the tonic minor as the setting for the finale which, inevitably, resolves into the major. However, as previously discussed, this unusual key scheme could itself be a link with Beethoven’s “Pastoral”, and the finale’s opening withstands a more detailed comparison.

¹²³ Monelle 2006: 243

¹²⁴ Although Strauss works his way through a whole variety of keys, the storm is in B♭ minor, the key of the opening and close.

¹²⁵ “Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm”

Ex. 18: The opening of Beethoven's "Storm". Symphony No. 6, Mvt. IV, bb. 1-8: vlins., vla., vc./cb.

Allegro

The musical score consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the first four measures. The second system shows measures 5 through 8. The key signature is F minor (three flats) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The dynamics are marked 'pp' (pianissimo) in several places. The score includes parts for Violins I and II, Viola, and Cello/Contrabass.

Although the music preceding the storm must be calm it must also seem unsettled. The reason for this is obvious, as it mirrors quite exactly the physical sensations we experience when a storm is approaching – the looming clouds, winds and even the smell of rain which prepare the inevitable. In Beethoven's "Pastoral" this uncertainty manifests itself in the first two bars, which after the sharp cut-off mid-phrase on the dominant at the end of the third movement, contain a bass *pianissimo* tremolo on D \flat . This is followed by stuttering staccato quavers in the upper strings and a short, awkward melodic figure in the first violins which ascends through a tritone. Throughout, until the outbreak of the storm proper in F minor at b. 21 there is no tonal stasis, with the bass interjecting with ascending semitones.

In a harmonic world as complex as Strauss's, tonal uncertainty is more difficult to discern, but the tonal underlay for the wind solos which open "Calm Before the Storm" is confused, with Strauss overlapping each chord with the next. The opposition of two pairs of tritones means that no two chords sounding together have any notes in common.

Ex. 19: The harmonic underpinning of the opening of the “Calm Before the Storm” from Strauss’s *Eine Alpensinfonie*.

If we turn to the opening of Brahms’s finale with these features in mind we see some more particular musical similarities, (see Ex. 20). The finale starts with all the strings and bassoons in octaves, marked “*p e sotto voce*”, lending the opening a similar sense of nervousness and anticipation afforded by Beethoven’s scuttling *pp* quavers. In both cases it is a textural effect used in combination with harmonic uncertainty which gives this sensation. Just like Beethoven, Brahms avoids the tonic, using the same relationship between C and D \flat , opening on the dominant and moving immediately to the flattened sixth. With only fleeting nods towards any cadential progression in F minor, the phrase ends on the dominant only for a modified version to be taken up by the wind.

Ex. 20: Brahms, Symphony No. 3, Mvt. IV, bb. 1-9: bsns., vlms., vla., vc., cb.

Allegro

Bsns.
p e sotto voce

6

Fls. + Cls.
p mezzo voce

p mezzo voce

dim.

dim.

dim.

dim.

dim.

dim.

dim.

legg.

pp

legg.

pp

pizz.

However, we cannot forget that there are significant points of musical departure from the storm model. The arrival of the storm at b. 30 does not confirm the tonic minor as it should, but retains the uncertainty of C and D \flat . Similarly, the scoring and rhythmic figuration do not present the block of sound that we hear in both the Beethoven and Strauss examples. However, Brahms's finale is not explicitly programmatic and as an integrated symphonic form in its own right we could never expect it follow the exact trajectory of a musical storm. This said, there is a fundamental way in which Brahms's form, and his use of musical memory, invokes a Romantic landscape as the setting for this abstracted narrative.

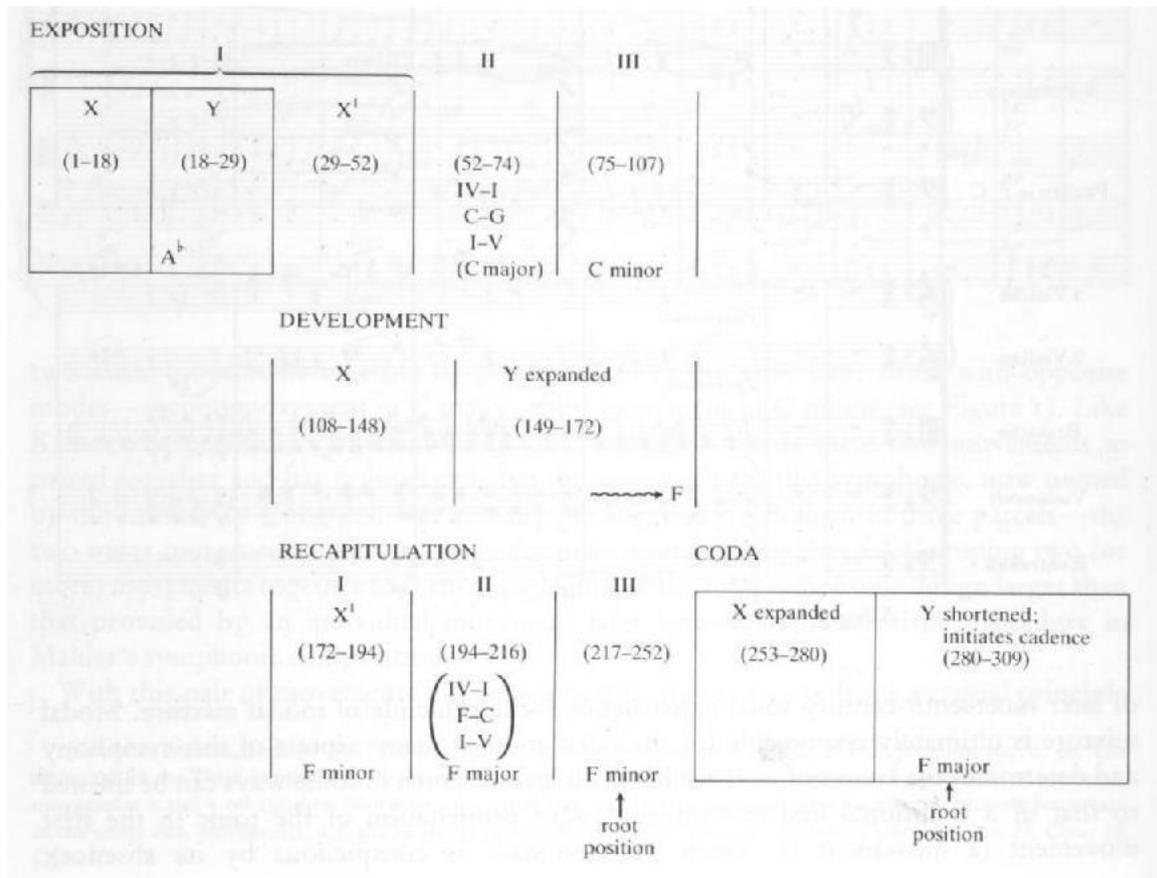
The Finale: Landscape and Memory

Finally we turn to perhaps the most remarkable part of Brahms's finale: the recurrence of a version of the second theme from the second movement at b. 19. This entry, and its partner at b. 280, have a sense of significance, even monumentality, which seem to have the effect of setting the music in a large space. Brahms takes a melody from b. 40 of the second movement and realises it, quite particularly, as a chorale, with the solemnity of quiet trombones, and the predominance of the wind sound in both cases. There are two ways of seeing this chorale. We might associate it with religiosity and the organ, heard in large, man-made, ecclesiastical spaces – Hatten notes that religious and hymn topics are often troped with the pastoral¹²⁶ – or we could associate the sound of massed winds, like the opening of the second movement, with the outdoors, as wind and brass instruments have better projection than strings in the open air.¹²⁷ Either way, from the very outset Brahms opens up a large space, or we might say, a landscape, for his finale.

However, there is a more important way in which these chorales help contribute to an evocation of landscape, and that is the way that they function as memory within the form of the finale. To address these issues we might usefully start with Bailey's formal analysis of the fourth movement, the most significant of its type.

¹²⁶ Hatten 2003: 156, Hatten 1994: 99

¹²⁷ Various composers have exploited the projection of wind instruments in the open-air. Berlioz's *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, commissioned to be played to accompany a procession through Paris, was originally scored for windband. Another work to be performed outside, Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, was also written for an ensemble of wind and brass.

Ex. 21: Bailey's formal diagram of the finale of Brahms's Third Symphony.¹²⁸

Bailey labels the various thematic sections and divides them into a tripartite sonata form. However, there are a number of weaknesses. Bailey is keen to suggest a tripartite form for both the exposition and recapitulation but the first twenty nine bars seem, quite clearly, to function as an introduction, with the exposition only really beginning with the outbreak of the storm at b. 30, this form then being recapitulated identically. Secondly, Bailey treats the form as being self-contained and does not differentiate new themes like X, from the chorale quotation Y.

¹²⁸ Reproduced from Bailey 1990: 412

Ex. 22: Musical memory in the finale of Brahms's Third Symphony.

Intro		Exposition		Development		Recapitulation		Coda		
X	Y	X ¹	2nd sub.	X	Y¹	X ¹	2nd sub.	X ²	Y²	Z
1	18	30	52	108	149	172	194	253	180	301

Ex. 22 shows an alternative view of the form of the finale, the most important addition being the identification, in bold, of the four quotations of previous material: the three appearances of **Y**, and **Z**, the symphony's opening theme. These quotations are memories, as quotations are, by definition, repetitions of material that we "remember". Hatten suspects that questions of memory are involved in the Romantic pastoral, arguing that they may help evoke the monumentality of landscape and Meyer also notes that memory and landscape were very much linked in the other arts. For Romantic poets and painters, who settled on a Romantic conception of landscape before their musical counterparts, "the essential condition of the new style was the visible presence of the past in the present."¹²⁹ Rosen also finds the existence of two time scales to be a vital element in Romantic writers' perception of landscape, specifically the portrait landscape. By saturating his finale with musical quotations and memories, Brahms creates a double time scale – "the combination of immediate perception with a sense of immensely slow natural development"¹³⁰ – evoking a Romantic musical landscape.

We can also think about memory with more musical specificity as it is linked to the rise of cyclic form, which Taylor finds to be the musical manifestation of a trend in early nineteenth-century literature and philosophy to discuss "the past as recreated in memory".¹³¹ These thematic returns to the musical past are, unsurprisingly, often understood as transformations. Mercer-Taylor hears the return of the symphonic protagonist in the finale of Mendelssohn's "Scottish" Symphony in an allusion to the first movement's main theme,¹³² but when heard in the finale, framed by an invocation of the "Guttenberg" *Festgesang*, it becomes an act of "ceremonial remembrance".¹³³ Taylor searches for links between Mendelssohn and various German intellectuals and poets and he finds numerous transformational narratives concerning memory which share pastoral themes – "the notion of a lost golden age, a vanished Arcadia or a primal Edenic state of innocence and

¹²⁹ Meyer 1996: 159

¹³⁰ Rosen 1995: 150

¹³¹ Taylor 2007: 88

¹³² Mercer-Taylor 1995: 81

¹³³ *Ibid.*: 81

harmony”.¹³⁴ The allusions and quotations of opening material that Taylor finds throughout Mendelssohn’s Piano Sonata No. 1. Op. 6 take us back to the opening’s pastoral world, resisting “the onward movement away from the idyllic Arcadian landscape of the opening movement”.¹³⁵ In the final resolution of Brahms’s Third Symphony we see something similar, with a regaining of a pastoral world that was present, if only by implication, in both **Y** and **Z**. Expressed analytically, the final bars might be represented as follows:

Ex. 22: The three-stage closure of Brahms’s Symphony No.3, Mvt. IV

The musical score illustrates the three-stage closure of Brahms's Symphony No. 3, Mvt. IV. It is written in F major and 4/4 time. The score is divided into three stages:

- Stage 1: Chorale** (measures 278-280). The melody is a simple, diatonic line in A minor, while the accompaniment is in G major.
- Stage 2: C/D♭** (measures 296-297). The melody is in A minor, and the accompaniment is in G major.
- Stage 3: Juchezer** (measures 271-275). The melody is in A minor, and the accompaniment is in G major.

The bass line features a chromatic descent from G to F, with a V-I-V-I cadence indicated below the staff.

Some closing elements do appear earlier, with the shimmering string textures and major tonality emerging at b. 260 and b. 267 respectively, but the chorale theme is retained for the first moment of harmonic closure, the first perfect cadence in F in the entire movement. In its original context this theme appeared within a pastoral milieu but did not fit; it was played by solo unison bassoon and clarinet, accompanied by chromatic and tonally unstable string chords and with a tension between the melody, which is diatonically placed in A minor, and an accompaniment which pulls towards G major – these features do not tally with a picture of simple serenity. When the chorale first appears in the finale, despite the pastoral association of the new instrumental sonorities, it is still tonally problematic as it appears in A♭ at b. 18, and in its second appearance in the development, the theme’s triumph is cruelly subverted. After the blast of *fortissimo* trumpets, horns and timpani in F major, the A♭ of the Ic chord in b. 170, rather than falling to the dominant and then completing a perfect cadence, falls to A♭, and the dominant in the bass does not resolve, instead leading straight into the recapitulation. It is only in its final version that the chorale finds the pastoral surroundings that it was originally missing, in the comfort of the tonic major, accompanied almost exclusively by root position harmony and by the string textures that may well have been a sound of the countryside for Brahms. We can add that the quotation of the opening, whether or not it is a transcription of a Juchezer, rediscovers the harmonic simplicity

¹³⁴ Taylor 2007: 88 cites “Winckelmann, Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Novalis, the Schegels and Eichendorff”.

¹³⁵ Taylor 2007: 94

which, given its particular melodic profile, it was always capable of, as shown by Strauss and Schumann. The final element of this threefold closure is the resolution of the tension between C and D \flat that has dictated the course of the storm, with a repeated move to D \natural over a tonic pedal. Just as the storm itself is framed by the past in the introduction and the coda, the resolution of the tension which has fuelled the storm is also framed with memories, as Brahms finds pastoral ends for his symphony's two least pastoral themes.

A Summary of Musical Findings

At this stage it is worth summarising the results of the musical investigation above. We have seen how Brahms's opening theme undeniably alludes to Schumann's "Rhenish" and rather than relate the "Rhenish" to Beethoven's "Eroica", the depictional and folk-like nature of Schumann's symphony suggests a link with Beethoven's "Pastoral". The key schemes of both the "Rhenish" and "Pastoral", with progressions from tonic minor to major, seem to be the only possible symphonic precedents for Brahms's key scheme. In terms of the importance of key itself, we have also seen that by the second half of the nineteenth century F major was defined by Beethoven's "Pastoral" while E \flat major was not necessarily a heroic key for Schumann. Furthermore, the second movement and the second subject from the first movement both rely on traditional pastoral signifiers. Although we cannot be sure whether the opening theme is based on a Juchezer, the appearance of the same Juchezer in Strauss's *Eine Alpensinfonie* and the explicitly pastoral musical scenario into which the Juchezer finally settles in the coda of the finale might encourage this interpretation. The Juchezer also offers a feasible (albeit hypothetical) compositional scenario which would help explain the dramatic turn of the first theme to A \flat . The fourth movement, with its unusual minor-major key scheme, seems to fulfil many of the narrative requirements of the musical storm and our sense that we are occupying a landscape is achieved by a recurrence of musical memories, an important element of the Romantic conception of landscape. Finally, in the closing stages, quotations are placed in the pastoral contexts which they have thus far been denied, thereby regaining their lost simplicity – something that both Hatten and Taylor have suggested to be an important component in pastoral narratives.

Conclusion

So do the musical observations listed above allow us to call this symphony Brahms's "Other Pastoral Symphony"? Probably not, it is still informed speculation, but we have added some interpretative weight to Clara Schumann's observations and added another interesting dimension to the work for listeners and audiences. Given the heroicism so often detected in this music, we might be attracted to Brown's concept of the "heroic-pastoral", a symphonic tradition that he sees stretching back to Haydn, and including Schumann's "Rhenish".¹³⁶ However, as long as musical heroism lacks a definition and personal motivation for Brahms, it is a concept that should be used with care. On the other hand, if we want a motivation for this turn to nature then Brinkmann provides it: the idyll is a product of Brahms's internalization of his melancholic outlook on life.¹³⁷ The "autumnal" flavour noticed in the symphony, coming from the weight of minor keys in the second half of the work, and elegiac third movement (elegy being the pastoral's genre of loss and mourning) do indeed expose this melancholic streak.

However, finding a genuinely new definition for Brahms's Third Symphony was always going to be a challenge. The exploratory nature of this essay means the main lessons to be learnt are perhaps musicological. As we have progressed through Brahms's symphony we have been building a version of the Romantic pastoral which is confined neither to the rigid set of musical signifiers that characterize the Classical pastoral, nor to Hatten's essentially conceptual Romantic "mode", but that incorporates elements of both. The musical language of the Classical period evidently still had significance for Brahms, but he also explores musical memory and recall to build a truly Romantic pastoral. Trying to discover explicit musical meaning in this symphony will always be difficult; Brahms, unlike Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Beethoven never even departed from the four-movement symphonic scheme, let alone provided titles or evocative descriptions for his symphonies. However, this has not necessarily resulted in "pure" or "absolute" music, but music where musical signifiers and meanings are sublimated. The most arresting musical comparison that has emerged has been with Strauss's *Eine Alpensinfonie*, music at the opposite end of the scale, music that is overtly and unashamedly descriptive. The two composers are linked, not directly, but by their interaction with a common topical heritage, that of the pastoral, proving the continued importance of the topic as a mode of communication even beyond Brahms.

¹³⁶ Brown 2007 Vol. III, Part A: 292

¹³⁷ Brinkmann 1990: 199

Brahms's position in the history of music is rather unique. His personal commitment to learning and collecting music was encouraged and facilitated by the publication during his lifetime of complete editions of Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn and Schumann which formed the backbone of his huge library along with large numbers of first editions and autographs.¹³⁸ Geiringer writes that "music of the past...enriched his [Brahms's] musical personality"¹³⁹ and undoubtedly Brahms's knowledge and awareness of his own musical heritage means that questions of influence have, quite rightly, become important in Brahms scholarship. Thus far, allusion has promised to act both as a framework for tackling the question of influence, as well as suggesting extra-musical interpretations for Brahms's music. Despite Agawu's insistence that "topics abound in the music of Romantic composers"¹⁴⁰ and Reynolds's conclusion that "allusion and topic, could, of course exist simultaneously",¹⁴¹ scholars seemed to have followed the prevailing view that Romantic composers were more concerned with personal musical codes than with cultural ones, with allusions rather than topics. However, why should particular and discrete allusive relationships assume such importance and the more general overlapping and interweaving of topical signifiers go largely ignored? The evidence provided by this investigation is that a more topical outlook might open up provocative new directions and shed light on repertoire which has become musicologically rather stale. Just as the pastoral has supplanted the heroic in Brahms's Third, perhaps we can look forward to a more general model of influence, explored topically, to complement or even supersede our apparent obsession with the specificity of allusion.

¹³⁸ Geiringer 1933: 162, K Geiringer, I Geiringer 1973: 12

¹³⁹ Ibid.: 14

¹⁴⁰ Agawu 1991: 137

¹⁴¹ Reynolds 2003: 10

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- PASCALL, Robert. 2009: "Brahms, Mountains and the Uses of Music Philology", lecture given in Cambridge, Nov. 18, 2009

Appendix 1

A colour photochrome print of the Wissower Klinken by an unnamed artist made between 1890 and 1900 in Rügen, Germany.

Taken from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wissower_Klinken_2_1900.jpg on 10/07/10.

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