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THE FINALE OF MAHLER'S SEVENTH
SYMPHONY: A DECONSTRUCTIVE READING

The last decade has witnessed the opening of a gap within music theory between two distinct modes of inquiry.* These may be loosely identified as 'Analysis' and 'Criticism'. Criticism, by employing hermeneutic techniques derived from poststructuralism and cultural studies, contests the so-called 'formalism' of Analysis. The 'formalist' approach is taken to treat the musical work as a 'self-contained', 'trans-cultural' or 'trans-historical' entity. For the hermeneuticist, on the other hand, the musical work is understood as a discursive moment in a wider social and political field. It is determined only in relation to a heterogeneous and much contested cultural arena. Any analysis that configures its object of study as autonomous, or its findings as internally unified, is thus an ideological fiction predicated on the notion that knowledge is objective, impartial and detached. In a hermeneutic reading, the formalistic music-analytic endeavour is necessarily interested, partial and ideologically implicated.

What follows is an attempt to show that this distinction between Criticism and Analysis is not strictly valid, since the very category 'formalism', against the background of which hermeneutics defines its enterprise, is problematic. The article is divided into two sections. In the first I sketch certain strategic ideas raised by anti-formalist scholarship. It will be suggested that, by insisting on dichotomies that cohere around a distinction between 'object' and 'interpretation', hermeneutics replicates the very formalism it attempts to elude. Broadly speaking, both approaches subscribe to an originary moment which becomes the very measure of the efficacy of the analytic method in question. That is, the musical work itself is the principal site that arbitrates the success or failure of the analytic findings. Despite the postmodernist stance of some hermeneutically-oriented critics, few of these writers make any explicit reference to the

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original formulation of the concepts that they employ. Numerous glancing references are made to Derrida, for instance, particularly to dramatise the plurality of the text – the 'undecidability', or the 'open-ended' nature, of interpretation – but the precise workings of this undecidability are mostly left unmarked. To some extent 'plurality' and 'difference' have themselves become essentialised in the process, and the impact such an analytic orientation may have is accordingly diminished.

The second section of this article analyses the Rondo-Finale of Mahler's Seventh Symphony (1905) in terms that draw explicitly on Derrida's deconstructive method. By focusing closely on the form and character of the various sections that structure the opening ritornello, the analysis will draw out some of the implications they have for the finale as a whole. More precisely, the analysis configures this movement as articulating the workings of Derrida's *supplément*. In doing so, it attempts to show how any 'internally coherent' moment contains within itself a 'space' which inevitably contains its opposite ('incoherence') – a space which reveals the inadequacy of that moment while at the same time, paradoxically, making its very coherence possible. In the Rondo-Finale, the strategic presence (and absence) of certain functional progressions, aspects of metre, elements of the larger form and so on, frequently serves to fill this 'space'. Such an approach adds a new perspective to these traditionally form-giving devices precisely by marking their inadequacy. Conventional categories of tonality, voice leading, large-scale form and so on are maintained, but here they are in dialogue with the implicit chaos upon which they crucially depend. The displaced function of these categories results in a 'transactional reading' between past and future: a breaking and relinking of the sign chain. The analysis will trace some of these moments.

I

Early challenges to traditional methods of analysis were often mapped in terms of the ideological resonances of the nineteenth century. Thus Joseph Kerman, in his well-known article 'How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out' (Kerman 1980), traces the underlying ideology of music analysis historically through the instrumental music of the Pan-German tradition. He shows how J.N. Forkel's rejuvenation of Bach (particularly the new attention Forkel gives to fugue), E.T.A. Hoffmann's invocation of the Goethean *Urpflanz* in his analyses of Beethoven, and Hanslick's view of music as 'sounding form in motion' all cohere around a nexus of theoretical constructs focused on Organicism and Formalism. For Kerman, the writings of Tovey and Schenker attest to the acceptance of 'received opinion' regarding the canon of music's masterpieces. Both accounts involve a concurrent methodological reduction of the melodic surface of music: Tovey reduces the music to the articulated system of

tonality, Schenker reduces it to the tonic triad.

Kerman argues that alternative modes of analysis – he cites Rosen, Meyer and Narmour in particular – frequently collude in this reductionism insofar as a search for an overriding system of relationships among all the musical elements in a single musical text, form or *oeuvre* remains the concealed aim. Kerman questions Schenker's reading of the second song of Schumann's *Dichterliebe* on account of its omission of significant detail. Not only, in his view, does Schenker ignore the crucially located chromaticism of the climax, but he overlooks the textual dimension that elucidates the chromaticism. Kerman offers some suggestions for the broadening of analytic procedure. An approach which relates this song to the first in the cycle, invokes Schumann's private musical symbolism or accounts for the various 'personae' that activate the narrative (the term is borrowed from Cone) may (so he argues) reveal certain musical gestures in a new light. Such an approach might (re-)establish a link between analysis and aesthetic value and thus move beyond the 'ideology of organicism' that has so far prevailed. For Kerman this new method would be more 'humane'.

Ruth Solie, in her article 'The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis' (Solie 1980), similarly traces the historical uses of organic terms to describe works of art and shows how the principal impulses in music analysis are inflected by these terms. Unlike Kerman, who describes Schenker's analysis of the Schumann song as '... exemplary ... show[ing] up the limitations of the discipline as a whole with exemplary clarity' (1980: 323), Solie distinguishes Schenker's organicism from the wider practice of formalist music analysis. For Solie, the latter analysis paradoxically *mis*appropriates this use of organicism by simply describing the taxonomic arrangement of the constituent parts of a work, rather than elevating the work to a transcendental status. Indeed, for Solie, only Schenker's model, positing a central generative force 'greater than the sum of its parts', accurately reflects the Hegelian organicist tradition. According to Schenker, the work of art itself, and not the observer, projects the organic totality by means of the 'natural urges' of the *Naturklang* (the major triad as embodied in the overtone series), which sonority is itself concretised in the *Ursatz*. This nucleus of concepts, deriving from a pre-stabilised harmony and so unalterable, is an 'anti-taxonomic' device. In some respects, then, organicism as a metaphoric figure may be considered advantageous for music analysis. Solie states: '[O]rganic aesthetic beliefs have been useful for musical criticism insofar as they have helped to steer the course of analysis away from the purely mechanistic and simplistically structural' (1980: 156).

Even from these two brief reviews, it can be seen that the figure of Schenker is paradoxically situated for the purposes of the two arguments. For Solie, the Schenkerian approach widens the scope of analysis, while for Kerman the same approach forecloses the possible options.[1] But Solie and

Kerman are held to be situated on roughly the same side of the current debate. As both argue for an analysis which moves beyond the narrowly formalistic, this ambivalence suggests, at least fleetingly, that the divisions and alliances in the music-analytic domain are more complex than the simple distinction between 'hermeneuticists' and 'formalists' would suggest.

Nevertheless a host of recent debates coheres around the purported distinction between 'hermeneutically-' and 'formalistically-oriented' analyses. For instance, Alan Street, in his article 'Superior Myths, Dogmatic Allegories: The Resistance to Musical Unity' (Street 1989), disputes the seeming plurality of analytic strategies in circulation today. For Street, if the 'knowledge-constitutive' interests of the analysis are highlighted (taking into account the fact that rational argument itself is frequently employed in the service of 'naturalized meaning'), these divergent strategies are shown to foreground a common principle. This he calls the principle of 'atemporal formalism'. Street argues that such analyses rest on the logocentric assumption that signifier and signified 'articulate together' and that musical works are thus treated as reified and finite entities. He traces a hermeneutical circle in the analytic process. The explanatory power of formalist analysis thus amounts to little more than a rhetorical formula: 'Manner [in these analyses] exclusively dictates matter' (1989: 90), he proclaims, while for any 'enlightened' analytic practice 'matter must dictate manner' (*ibid.*).

Lawrence Kramer, in a recent article, identifies an analogous circularity in the work of Nicholas Cook. He denounces Cook's notion of music analysis as '. . . an art of musical "self-interrogation" aimed at representing the listener's experience' (and thus not a science) because of the strict way in which the listening subject is regulated. Kramer summarises Cook's position as follows: 'A "musical" subject engages in transparent self-reflection and reproduces a "musically valid" experience which turns out to be precisely the kind of experience that analysis best represents' (1992a: 4). For Kramer such circularity ultimately constitutes a modified extension of formalist dogma. To avoid this, Kramer offers an analysis which readily accepts 'extramusical' data into its methods. In his later response to Scott Burnham's criticisms, Kramer claims that the difference between the critical and the analytic treatments of the music is 'ineradicable'. With regard to foreground details on the musical surface, for instance, Kramer remarks: 'Schenkerian analysis [which is identified as quintessentially formalistic in his account] privileges the details that fit best into its schema of a "highly ramified contrapuntal process"; criticism privileges the details that carry the most expressive value, signifying power, and cultural resonance' (1992b: 78).

All these theorists, then, seek approaches to music analysis that move beyond formalistic premises. Kerman aims for a more 'humane' method; Solie dismisses the 'purely mechanistic'; for Street 'matter must dictate

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manner'; and for Kramer 'extramusical' data is equally relevant. Instead of effecting a reconciliation between these theorists and the 'formalists', I shall attempt to show that the very 'gap' that divides them may be a fictitious construct. This is not the same as simply saying that all 'formalistic' analysis involves a measure of 'interpretation' or that all 'hermeneutic' analysis involves some 'formal' analysis. Instead, it is an attempt to question the assumptions that govern the oppositions harnessed by these critics to structure the divide: 'mechanistic'/'humane'; '(purely) musical'/'extramusical'; 'manner'/'matter'.

This could be done in a number of ways. One could trace the contradictory invocations of certain theoretical methods in these writings and show how difficult it is to identify any method as strictly 'formalist' or how deeply these ('formalist') methods are interwoven within the 'hermeneutic' method. This in turn could lead to an explication of how the narrative style of the 'hermeneutic' text itself permits and prohibits certain options for debate, or how the 'form' and 'content' of the text are not all that easily separated. Alternatively, one could show how the expansion of analysis into a broader cultural field may replicate precisely the organicist model it eschews, by including 'context' and 'culture' (as if these constructs were somehow extratextual) so as to produce a work that is 'greater than the sum of its parts'.

Rather than taking any of these courses, however, I shall attempt to show, through a strategic invocation of Derrida's supplement, how the dichotomy between 'formalist' and 'hermeneutic' readings is a false one. For any reading that elaborates what is *in* a text inevitably engages what is external to it and thus calls into question the very possibility of a 'formalist' category. Mahler's Rondo-Finale exemplifies this double movement between (internal) elements in the music and the 'traditional' (historically external) appearances of these elements, by using traditional techniques in ways that cannot be aligned with tradition.

Such a 'double movement' bears a striking affinity with the workings of Derrida's supplement. In Derrida's terminology, the supplement comprises one side of a historical binary which is configured asymmetrically. By 'supplement' Derrida refers to those conceptual oppositions of metaphysics which are structured hierarchically inasmuch as one term belongs to *logos* (and presence), while the other signifies a 'fall' from such presence: speech/writing, nature/education, synchrony/diachrony, signified/signifier, and so on. In such oppositions the latter terms are supplementary. For Derrida, the supplement '... is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the *fullest measure* of presence' (1976: 144). However, such oppositions become non-pertinent when *différance* (the simultaneous action of differing and deferring) intervenes, because, for the former term to be truly itself, the supplement becomes an essential condition. In Derrida's words: 'This kind of supplementarity determines in a certain way all the conceptual oppositions in which ... [is] ... inscribe[d] the notion of Nature

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to the extent that it *should* be self-sufficient' (: 145). Both terms of the binary are thus separated and fused in such a way that the one term becomes the inevitable accomplice of the other. How may Derrida's supplement be utilised in the service of music analysis?[2] The following discussion of Mahler's Rondo-Finale suggests one possible answer.

II

James L. Zychowicz's recent essay 'Ein schlechter Jasager: Considerations on the Finale to Mahler's Seventh Symphony' (Zychowicz 1990) surveys the negative reception of the Rondo-Finale. For Zychowicz this barrage of criticism signals something deeper than a flaw or weakness in the work itself. Far from dismissing the movement as superficial, regressive or faulty in construction, Zychowicz makes the crucial point that the fault may lie on the side of the interpretative mechanisms employed to elucidate it. He states: 'If the Finale does not fit some of the analytic models with which it is compared, it may be that the methods of analysis rather than the music fail' (1990: 104). It is partly from this observation that the analysis that follows takes its cue.

But first, what are some of the ambiguities that surround the Finale of this work? Schoenberg, on hearing the Seventh Symphony, proclaimed Mahler's greatness, whereas Adorno (whose *Philosophy of Modern Music* vehemently defends the music of Schoenberg) decries the persistent diatonicism of the Finale, likening its 'strained happy tone' to a 'tableau with motley crowd' (1960: 180).[3] Two critics who are usually in close alignment with one another thus make contradictory claims with respect to this movement – claims which are paradoxically made *on the same basis*. That is, the fact that the layers of meaning in this movement overlap, juxtapose and/or decay to the point where no single level can be followed consistently throughout is taken both as a strength and as a weakness. Both critics endorse the progress of modern music and attribute a positive sense to historical *dis*continuity. For Schoenberg this work represents just such a break, and is thus to be praised, while for Adorno the diatonicism is excessive, trivial and regressive. Ironically, these contradictory stances may provide the very clue to the interpretation of the Finale.

The controversy shows no signs of abating in more recent music scholarship. Karl Schumann, for instance, inveighs against the Finale as a '. . . giant persiflage of the aesthetics that were binding at the time' (quoted in Floros 1985: 240). For Deryck Cooke it is mere *Kappellmeistermusik* (1980: 89). And for Donald Mitchell the '. . . unusually long stretches of purely diatonic invention' (1963: 649) render the work weak and enigmatic. Constantin Floros decries the dominance of the major keys, and specifically that of C major, labelling this asymmetry 'oppressive' (1985: 211). Jean Matter, however, in his more sympathetic interpretation,

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configures the cheerfulness of the movement as 'ironic' (1974: 240).[4] Again, it is the finale's carnivalesque attitude towards traditional rondo form and its seemingly regressive insistence on extended diatonic passages that underlie these objections. But how regressive is the diatonicism? What relation does it have to tradition? Clearly, its ability to disconcert the critic lies less in the (outdated) invocation of a continuous tradition alone than in the deeply ambiguous way in which this diatonicism is harnessed in the service of discontinuity and is made to challenge rather than support that tradition. One must also ask how 'persiflage', in a musical context, is even possible if it is not mediated by its opposite. I shall attempt to show that it is precisely by negating the context that ensures the usual functioning of certain formal, harmonic and metric features that the Finale brings these oppositions into an unusual focus.

It is important to distinguish the type of ambiguity that results from these contextual shifts from mere 'ambivalence' (that is, a merely 'undecidable' reading) or 'irony' (as in Matter's interpretation of the Rondo-Finale). For one thing, in the case of ambiguity the musical work is assumed to be open-ended. Understanding it involves more than tracing simply the patterns of internal coherence: it includes a grasp of the general contexts that the work invokes. Whereas the term 'ambivalence' would imply that the opposing meanings might be reconciled in a taut (albeit antithetical) structure, the ambiguities of the Rondo-Finale can never be finally pinned down. They indicate those moments where the syntax of the music falters, gestures beyond itself or simply disintegrates, suggesting an inexhaustable context of meaning. In the same way that Derrida's supplementary term marks the inadequacy of the sign while paradoxically making it whole, the Finale marks those oppositions that are the conditions of its own possibility. Derrida's concept thus reveals its guiding logic in a new light.

First, however, some comment on the overall form of the Finale is warranted. The breakdown of ritornelli and secondary themes corresponds roughly with the following scheme:

b.1	Opening statement
b.53	First statement of first secondary theme
b.79	First ritornello
b.100	First statement of second secondary theme
b.120	Second ritornello
b.153	Second statement of first secondary theme
b.189	Third ritornello
b.209	Third statement of first secondary theme
[b.269	Developmental passage]
b.291	Fourth ritornello
b.309	Fourth statement of first secondary theme
b.360	Fifth ritornello

b.402   Second statement of second secondary theme
b.446   Sixth ritornello
b.517   Third statement of second secondary theme
b.538   Seventh ritornello

Because of the low incidence of chromaticism and the repeated return to the key of C major (a return which does not coincide consistently with the ritornelli), it seems puzzling that the momentum of the movement can be maintained at all. The lack of a clearly identifiable development section (customary for a movement of this size), together with the persistent cadencing (though not even the cadences necessarily coincide with the structural points of the movement), serves to undermine, rather than underscore, the overall logic of the finale. It seems impossible, then, to designate a sonata-like formal division. In fact, except for the passages beginning at b.249 and b.368, there are few passages that have a forward-pressing character at all. In what way, therefore, is the tension maintained, or is the movement, as Adorno maintains, merely episodic?

My contention is that vestiges of sonata form (corresponding to exposition, development, recapitulation and coda) can indeed be traced, although the form has been robbed of much of its developmental function. The overall structure is more sequential than developmental in character. Nonetheless, the conventional (even archaic) triadic fanfare-melodies of the ritornello, as well as the persistent formality and conventionality of the cadencing, suggest that a backward (historical) glance is implied and that the music is relating itself in some sense to a different era. (These claims are made in relation to the date of composition, namely 1905.) But it does so in a highly modern way. By exposing the shell of a form, but denying it the developmental function that is customarily associated with it, the composer creates a new tension. This tension can be related to the workings of the supplement.

On close inspection, there does, however, seem to be a large-scale harmonic and thematic logic of transmutation at work. That is, both the keys and the thematic materials that are selected from the opening statement in order to express each ritornello follow a certain pattern. This pattern is defined as much by what is omitted as by what is included. To illustrate this point, I must first outline the various components of the ritornello and the two secondary themes upon which the structure of the movement turns. There are five principal themes in the opening statement, each associated with different instruments. (These themes correspond more or less with those identified by Floros [1985 : 209].) The first (Ex. 1) is the fanfare introduced by the timpani (bs 1-6). The imitative entries of the other instrumental groups occur at progressively shorter intervals, creating a stretto-like effect. This occasions a subtle metric ambiguity when the winds enter with the theme in b.4, accenting the third beat, and the strings begin their descent on the third beat of b.5.[5] There are passing

references to the key of E minor throughout. First, the timpani announce a motive based on the pitches G and E, while horns and bassoons answer this motive with the (minor) dominant of E minor and the dominant of C major. Second, the entrance of the strings could be understood as V-I in E minor (bs 4-5). Finally, the lack of clear root movement into the next section (b.6) underscores this reference. This invocation of E is intensified during the presentation of the second theme, where the key of E major is momentarily suggested (bs 13-14).

Ex. 1 First theme (timpani)

The second theme (Ex. 2) is more like a chorale, with the principal idea being stated by first trumpet (bs 7-14). Here the emphatic perfect cadence in C (bs 14-15) recalls this theme from the momentary climactic diversion to E major. In bs 7-11 the absence of root-position tonic/dominant harmonies (which usually accompany fanfares of this kind) throws into relief the brief digression to E major, which is in fact stated in root position (b.13). At the very point that a root-position harmony is reached, then, the music has digressed to another key. This kind of misplaced fulfilment of a tendency in the music recurs throughout the movement. Frequently, for instance, a cadential resolution is effected prematurely[6] or an opportunity to resolve at a cadence comes too late. The way in which these structural elements are put out of kilter will be elaborated further below. For now it is sufficient to note that the tendency to jump to E major to enhance a climactic moment is characteristic throughout. For instance, in the ritornelli beginning at bs 268 and 538 the theme drives towards E major in a similar way (cf. bs 277 and 544 respectively). There is also a subtle metrical ambiguity within the second theme. The prominent leaps to high C followed by scalar descents (bs 9 and 12) occur at a three-bar interval and thus disrupt the underlying four-bar phrase structure.

Ex. 2 Second theme (trumpet)

In spite of the seeming clarity of the opening statement, then, such fleeting ambiguities already begin to suggest that the rondo is not, in fact, quite what it appears to be. In an important sense, the opening does indeed contain the kernel of what is to follow, but it does so in a way that is radically different from traditional classical opening sections. That is, instead of carrying the seeds for development, the opening contains those very ambiguities that lead into deeper equivocation. At this point, they are stated only covertly. If we configure these ambiguities as supplementary – as implying the absence of uniformity that nonetheless makes possible the uniform – then, with the further progress of the movement, a paradoxical distancing from tradition results as the supplement itself is foregrounded. As Derrida states: 'The ... supplement, which Rousseau calls a "fatal advantage", is properly seductive; it leads desire away from the good path, makes it err far from natural ways, guides it towards its loss or fall and therefore it is a sort of lapse or scandal' (1975: 151). The Finale challenges tradition precisely by making its own guiding logic – the denial of its ordinary functions – progressively more audible. Thus there is a kind of inverted development. This begins already with the next theme.

The third theme (Ex. 3) contains what is often said to be a loose paraphrase of Wagner's *Meistersinger* prelude in the strings and brass. This theme is roughly palindromic in structure. The components of this palindrome are bracketed in the Example. Twice, a descending leap in minims to a harmonic tone ('bs' i and iii) is followed by an upward stepwise motion in shorter note-values. This pattern is balanced by an analogous ascending leap in minims ('bs' v and vi) followed by a stepwise descent in shorter values. The affinity is underscored by the parallel interval of a fourth which begins the gestures at 'bs' i and v. The accompanying lower voices (bassoon, fourth horn and low strings) are in broad contrary motion to the theme, adding a kind of verticality to the palindrome.[7] It is apt that this theme, with its mirror writing, should be the middle theme of the opening ritornello. More importantly, the theme suggests something beyond itself, for the movement as a whole has some of the characteristics of a palindrome.[8]

Ex. 3 Third theme (violins)

For instance, the first and last appearances of the ritornello, barring the final chord, are precisely equal in length despite their differences in content. Also, the ritornello that occurs in the middle of the movement (the one beginning in b.291), where themes from sections 1, 2 and 4 are

for the first time vertically combined (see below), is the only ritornello that contains an explicit reference to a secondary theme *not* stated in the opening statement. This is the minuet-like theme (first encountered in b.100) which is quoted by oboes, cor anglais and B♭ clarinets at b.295. The contrapuntal references are thus most dense at this point. In terms of bar numbers, the quotation occurs precisely at the midpoint of the movement.

Another point that must be made about the third theme in the opening statement concerns its relationship to Wagner's *Meistersinger*. Although the quotation is not literal, the motivic correspondence has been noted ever since the earliest performances of the work. The descending fourth followed by a rising scalar passage is found in both works, both of which are in C major. The ambiguity that surrounds the question of whether this reference was conscious or not is taken by Adorno to be symptomatic of the deficiencies and the equivocation of the movement as a whole. Mahler was not averse to quotation of this kind: similar references occur in the First and Third Symphonies. Another type of citation occurs in the Seventh Symphony finale: towards the end of the movement there are numerous references to the main theme of the first movement. But this layering of significance may be the very point. An additional complication arises from the fact that the third theme appears to be derived from the second (cf. Exs 2 and 3). This is the first time so far that a clear reference has been made to previous material. Why is Wagner invoked precisely at this point? Does the backward glance (to previous material) extend beyond the limits of the piece, thereby presenting the quotation as paradoxically dependent on material that is causally isolated from it? Or does it play on that very moment at which the music begins to signify 'intratextually' by merging the 'intratextual' reference with the 'extratextual'? Still more strikingly, does it thereby connect the very idea of deriving the future of a work out of its initial materials to a similar practice from a bygone era? At the very least, this paradoxical thematic allusion casts a different light on the nature of the ambiguities involved. An analytic method that can differentiate shades of ambiguity as well as degrees of unity is thus required.

The fourth theme (Ex. 4), which begins in b.23, consists of a descending sequence in horns and strings which in turn consists of rising seconds and falling thirds followed by a rising stepwise three-note upbeat figure marked with accent signs. The former is an augmented version of material from the first theme (bs 5-6), while the upbeat figure derives from the clarinet and trumpet figures of the second theme (b.9). The descending line that brings the first theme to a close returns here as the opening material of a new section. This idea that the same material returns with a different role occurs throughout the movement. For instance, the first appearance of a triplet figure (b.14) brings the second theme to a close by underscoring the fleeting root movement on the last beat of the bar and leading to the cadence. In bs 45-6, however, the triplet figure announces

Ex. 4 Fourth theme (violins and horns)

the onset of a coda-like section, thus leading away from the cadence. A more important example concerns the movement as a whole: the references to the main theme of the first movement towards the end of the Finale (bs 455, 465, 506, etc.) have the function of breaking the cycle of internal references and bringing the movement to a close. By this point there has been such an abundance of derived motives and thematic references that their origins and significances have become obscure. It is for this reason that the theme from the first movement is quoted. However, what functioned as an initial impetus for the first movement becomes an agent of closure in the last.[9]

Such a consideration also lies behind the penultimate augmented chord of the movement, which clearly recalls the analogously placed A♭ major chord that overlaps with the final C major chord of the opening statement (b.53). The sudden modulation without transition to the flattened submediant offsets the harmonic stasis of the opening statement, which has remained in the home key for a full fifty-two bars. It recalls the workings of a deceptive cadence and initiates a contrasting secondary theme in the character of a pastorale. The augmented chord in b.589, on the other hand, is a true deceptive cadence which, paradoxically, brings the movement (and the symphony) to a close.

The mechanism by means of which this process is effected deserves to be studied in a little more detail. Because of the persistent formality of the cadencing throughout the movement, and because some of the more emphatic perfect cadences do not seem to articulate important structural moments, the traditional use of the perfect cadence as signifying closure is weakened. In bs 410-11, for example, the perfect cadence does not signify closure or the beginning of a new section, but simply continues the material of the Grazioso theme (first introduced in b.100) which had returned in b.402. The next formal division occurs only at b.434; and, once again, this is not articulated by a perfect cadence. In addition, the emphatic cadence leading out of the fifth ritornello at b.368, although it marks a formal division, is not without ambivalence. In previous returns, the expectation of a stronger cadence is denied (see especially the cadences at bs 86-7[10] and bs 196-7[11]); this itself sets up an expectation that the cadence will, on its next return, be denied. Instead the cadence is resolved, and the original expectation fulfilled, albeit at a structurally somewhat arbitrary moment.

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The radical recontextualizing of the cadential figure thus demands something beyond itself in order to signify a final closure at b.589. Hence the augmented chord in the penultimate bar, which heightens the sense of tonic precisely by deviating from it. Although its A♭ major analogue at b.53 heralds a new beginning, its appearance at the end of the piece heralds closure. One level of interpretation that should not be denied, however, is that this final gesture (as echoing a moment which brought a new beginning) may itself be pointing beyond the boundaries of the work into the future (that is, towards a new beginning). This would offset the backward glance into the past at b.15 (which, incidentally, represents the first chromatic shift away from C major in the movement) and reflect the loose palindromic structure of the movement on a broader, temporal level.[12]

Such an interpretation would tend to strengthen Floros's reading of the movement as a parable for the eternal. Floros constructs his argument around the use of bells, which were Mahler's sound symbols for eternity, and around the copious returns of the ritornello. In the chapter 'The Seven Seals' from *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Nietzsche evokes the idea of eternal return in the form of a rondo. Mahler proclaimed his admiration for Nietzsche, one year after completing the Seventh Symphony, in a conversation with Bernard Scharlitt: 'His *Zarathustra* originated in the spirit of music; indeed it is almost symphonically conceived' (quoted in Floros 1985: 211). Perhaps the Finale has something to do with Nietzsche's conception of eternity.[13] In addition, a loud ringing of bells ('Starkes Glockengeläute') appears for the first time in the chorale-like passage at bs 360-7; this may account for the seemingly unmotivated emphasis on the cadence in bs 367-8. The unison theme that follows is thus given unprecedented significance.

Another point to be made about the emphatic cadence that precedes the unison theme at b.368 is connected with the larger tonal and motivic structuring of the rondo. It is precisely through this type of emphasis that the unison theme becomes increasingly marked. Its first full appearance, in b.249,[14] is the result of a gradual transformation of the Grazioso theme – the second secondary theme of the movement – in the bars immediately preceding it. At b.368, however, it is severed from its origins and is thus invested with increased significance. This increased significance becomes crucial to the overall structure of the rondo insofar as the unison theme recurs more frequently in the second half of the movement. And just as the unison theme gains in significance, so the ritornelli that return in the second half of the movement gradually decrease in length (the two ritornelli that occur after the midpoint, but before the final ritornello, are both under nine bars in length), as does the consistently shifting material that is selected to announce the return. I shall return to this last point below. For now, it suffices to note that it is as if the material that provides the initial impetus for the movement gradually peters out while the

secondary material gains in significance as the movement progresses. Just as beginnings are substituted for endings, a similar logic underlies the paradoxical loss of significance in the primary themes and the simultaneous gaining thereof in the secondary themes.

I now return briefly to the fourth theme of the opening statement. After four harmonically and metrically stable bars (which present a sequential augmentation of the material in the strings from bs 5-6), the next four bars witness a subtle metric disruption. The syncopated upward leaps followed by a longer note in the violins (bs 27-9) suggest a shift in metre, though this is normalised by b.31.[15] Simultaneously, however, a harmonic implication fails to be fulfilled precisely at this moment of normalisation. In b.30 an expectation for a modulation to the subdominant is set up; but this is ignored in the ensuing bar, which persists with the tonic chord in C major. This obscuring of certain parameters while others are clarified recalls similar situations earlier and becomes a characteristic motto for the Finale as a whole. In the four bars that follow, both forms of the sequential descent are found in interlocking bars (bs 31 and 33 recall the descent in its initial form, while bs 32 and 34 recall the augmented descent of bs 23-6). This interlocking procedure is found throughout this movement and is a small-scale counterpart to the idea of 'rondo'.[16] The small-scale procedure may be illustrated with an example that juxtaposes (by interlocking) these same descending sequences with the initial timpani motive (bs 249-54). The second point, pertaining to the very idea of 'rondo', is played out remarkably consistently throughout the movement. That is, every ritornello is consistently separated by one of the secondary themes – either the first, which is initially stated in A♭ major (b.53), or the second, Grazioso theme (first stated in b.100) – with the result that there are never any two repeats of the ritornello without an intervening secondary theme nor any consecutive statement of the two secondary themes. The characteristic feature of rondo form is thus retained.

The final theme of the opening statement (Ex. 5, bs 38-51) is in a fanfare style and is recapitulatory in character. Not only is it composed principally of previously heard motives, but the new theme announced by the trumpet is itself an amalgam of motives from the first two themes. In Ex. 5 'b.' i is derived from the opening timpani motive, while 'bs' iii and v recall the second theme. These motivic references are marked with square brackets. Taken as a whole, however, the motivic gestures in this section are principally references to the bravura motive of the first theme. A sense of motion is achieved as the rhythmic groupings begin to cross over the barline and semiquavers accumulate. The predominance of motifs from the first theme underscores the sense of palindrome (discussed above) which characterises the opening statement. Since this entire statement is in C major, it is essential that these motivic links are harnessed in the service of a sense of closure and form. In so doing, however, the tentative affiliation between opening and closing gestures is concurrently affirmed

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again. The various, sometimes contradictory, layers of meaning none-theless function simultaneously.

Ex. 5 Fifth theme (trumpet)
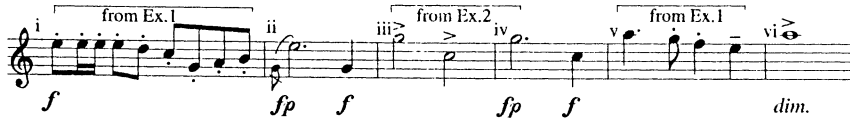
Taken as a whole, each theme in the opening statement is longer than the previous one(s) and is increasingly derived from previous motives. The cadences separating the themes, too, become increasingly more pro-nounced. In the cadence at bs 6-7, following the first theme, there is no root movement at all. The second cadence, in bs 14-15, has some root movement, and the short diversion to E major (V/vi?) in bs 13-14 further enhances the tonic arrival. The cadence in bs 22-3 has a clearer and more extended root movement than any so far and is additionally emphasised by the preceding material, which has deviated still further from the home key in bs 17-20. It is a feature of the Finale that some of the less important structural moments, such as these opening sections, are marked with forceful cadences, while structurally weightier sections tend to peter out or are suddenly interrupted with blocks of new material. Functional cadential figures are thus continually brought into question, their structural roles paradoxically reversed.

In b.79. for instance, the ritornello begins in the home key before the material of the A♭ major section has resolved. The jarring sense of a premature return is underscored, first by the relative prematurity of the returning material itself, which does not begin at the beginning of the ritornello but with the third theme, and second by the proportions of the sections (in relation to the pacing of the first section the A♭ section seems too short). The proportions are out of kilter here. In this connection it is important to point out that for such a break with the apposite proportions to be registered something of the apposite proportions must remain implicit. Functioning as supplementary to these implied proportions, the disruptions draw a new kind of attention to them, revealing them through what they are not and simultaneously defining them as provisional and contingent. There is a clear parallel here with the idea that certain elements in a deconstructive text may be placed under erasure, that they only become visible by being deleted or withheld.

Other examples where structurally important moments are brought off in a less functional way than might be expected include the third ritornello at b.189 (which seems to have slipped up a semitone) and the crashing descending scales that lead to the final ritornello in b.536. These scales seem to erupt at a seemingly unmotivated moment, an impression

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underscored by their entrance on the second beat of a metrically stable phrase. At the same time, however, the same scale figure, which appears three times, seems to recall the movement to its main concerns in passages that have either digressed or that threaten to become too thematically significant. In the first two appearances of the descending figure (b.267 and b.400) the unison theme, which was derived from the second secondary theme in the manner discussed above, is dramatically brought to a close. This is significant precisely because the unison theme returns more frequently in the latter half of the movement. Its forward-pressing character is thus contained by the scalar disruptions. A similar logic of erasure is at work here.

How does this logic accrue to the overall structuring of sections and key areas? Firstly, it can be noted that as the movement progresses the length of the ritornelli decreases along with the frequency with which they return. Of course, this does not apply to the final ritornello. The first three ritornelli (beginning in bs 79, 120 and 189) average between twenty and thirty bars; the fourth (b.291) is eighteen bars; and the final two (bs 360 and 446) are each under ten bars. Two additional features undergo a concurrent transformation. The key in which the ritornello returns shifts from the tonic (bs 79 and 120) to other keys (bs 189, 291, 360 and 144), the two ritornelli preceding the final return appearing at the distance of a tone below and above the tonic (B♭ major in b.360, D major in b.446). This pattern finally 'rights itself' with the last ritornello (C major, b.538). Moreover, the thematic content of the ritornelli shifts in an analogous way. In the first three returns, material from the third and fourth themes of the opening statement is employed, whereas the final two ritornelli before the last one emphasise material from the second theme. The ritornello around the middle of the movement (b.291) contrapuntally combines material from the first, second and fourth themes.

In terms of large-scale structure, the ritornelli undergo a threefold transformation (in length, key and motivic content) which is offset by the nature of the intervening material. The more frequent occurrence of the unison theme after the developmental section (bs 269-90) has already been noted. What was originally secondary material is thereby invested with increasing significance, perhaps even to the extent of replacing the original material. In addition, the two secondary subjects (first stated in bs 53 and 100 respectively) seem to reflect an identical reversal of roles. The first secondary subject also decreases in significance. After appearing three times before the developmental section,[17] it appears only once after it (in b.309 – well before the end of the movement). The second secondary subject, on the other hand, appears twice more towards the end of the movement (bs 402 and 507). Noteworthy too is the fact that both these appearances are in C major, instead of, say, the D major in which the theme first appeared (b.100). In this respect the secondary subject has exchanged the role of announcing the home key with the ritornelli. The

penultimate ritornello (b.446) is then in D major! The duplicitous manner in which the roles of the various sections are reversed and transformed configures the overall structure of the movement.

This ambiguous interplay between sections is replicated on several levels: between metrically stable and metrically unstable passages, between functional and non-functional harmonic progressions, between chromatic and diatonic passages, between expectations that are fulfilled and those that are undercut, between motives that are developed and those that are repeated, between sections that are clearly delimited by cadential figures and those that simply peter out, between the organic and the episodic, between the intra- and the extra-textual, and between the supplemental and the actual. There is also a sense in which the movement brings to the surface something about the tonal language that has nothing to do with increased chromaticism or the innovations of Schoenberg. The latter developments are predicated on an idea of evolution, on the notion that the tonal language has 'inherent tendencies' which are susceptible to development. In Mahler's Rondo-Finale, however, there are numerous *types* of ambiguity; no level can be followed consistently throughout. There is neither a single *telos*, nor is the movement a mere sequence of sections: rather, the very ideas of *telos* and sequentiality are put into a dialogue with each other. As a result, the act of interpretation itself is foregrounded; the listener is drawn into the text. The strategic juxtaposition of the various traditional form-creating devices – that is, the act of presenting them 'out of phase' with each other – casts the devices themselves in a new light. It is by disclosing these devices, in other words, that their inadequacy is exposed. This is the way the supplement operates. In this Derridean sense, in which traditional systems of form, order, tonality and so on are brought into a 'transactional' dialogue with the implicit 'chaos' that makes these systems possible, Mahler's Rondo-Finale reveals itself as less *grammatical* than *grammatological*.

NOTES

1. This ambivalence towards Schenkerian analysis has persisted in more recent writings. Nicholas Cook, in his book *A Guide To Musical Analysis*, argues that Schenkerian analysis most successfully bridges the gap between the formalistic and the subjective '... by allowing a great deal of interaction between the aural experience on the one hand and the analytic rationalization on the other ... ' (1987: 231), while Scott Burnham, in a reply to Lawrence Kramer, claims that Schenker's formalism is an all too easy target for the more hermeneutically-minded criticism, as if the configuration of Schenker as a mere formalist had been clearly established (1992).
2. Except for a recent unpublished paper by Adam Krims (Krims 1993),

Derrida's supplement has not (to my knowledge) been explicitly applied to music analysis. Krims's paper offers two distinct analyses of the opening phrase of J.S. Bach's chorale prelude 'Schmücke Dich, o liebe Seele'. The first uses 'Schenkerian' classificatory criteria, the second 'Schoenbergian' ones. The two readings are then taken to exist in a binary relationship according to which '... the two simultaneous ... articulations, in fact, depend on each other as mutual references' (1993: 23). In other words, these readings are presumed to exist in a relationship of supplementarity to each other. However, to my mind, this kind of relationship has nothing to do with the binary to which Derrida's supplement forms an inevitable part. There is no sense in which one reading 'undoes' the other; there are no forces in the first reading which inevitably illuminate the other; and there is no established hierarchy whose basis can be subverted at all. In fact, Krims fails to specify which of the two readings *is* the supplement.

3. What relation Schoenberg's response has to the fifth movement is not clear. Fred Lerdahl has suggested to me that Schoenberg was probably responding to Mahler's use of fourth chords in the *first* movement. Nonetheless, the contradictory views held by these two critics remain disconcerting, if only because the elements on which they chose to base their evaluations were so very different.

4. This characterisation of the Rondo-Finale as ironic echoes Karl Schumann's understanding of the work as 'a resounding satire on the conventionality of the world' (quoted in Floros 1985: 87). To my mind this view is too simple and carries with it the assumption that anything that sounds 'cheerful', 'splendid' or 'bright' cannot possibly be intended as such by the composer; it must therefore be ironic or even a joke. John Williamson endorses the latter view, arguing that Mahler is playing with certain rhetorical devices: the purported cheerfulness is not to be interpreted literally, but should be taken as suggesting certain deeper ambiguities – and oppositions structuring the very composition – which underlie the surface mood (1982).

5. The three ascending accented notes in the timpani one bar later also act as an upbeat to the third beat of the bar, underscoring the metric shift (see, for example, the use of such a three-note ascent in the first trumpet and the clarinet lines in b.8, or the three accented notes in the horns and other parts in bs 24 and 26).

6. For example, in b.69, after a dominant extension lasting more than five bars, the passage suddenly resolves on the third beat of the bar. It is as if the resolution has come two beats too soon. (On the notion of tracking various structural dimensions of the music that are 'out of phase' with each other I am indebted to Jonathan Kramer. Kramer's work will appear as part of a book he is currently writing on postmodernism and music.)

7. When this theme is transformed in later passages, it often 'mirrors' the mirror theme. For example, in bs 128–31, the rising interval followed by a falling scale inverts the original contours. Here again the bass instruments move in contrary motion. Incidentally, it is passages like these that align motives from

the various opening themes: the embellished descending line in first violins, for instance, recalls the strings in bs 5-6 of the first theme and the strings' sequential descent in the fourth theme.

8. The relationship between the harmony and the phrase structure is analogously mirrored. As the harmonies are normalised halfway through b.20 (reaching the dominant of the home key after a chromatic drift to A major, D major and D minor) the phrase structure becomes more complex, breaking with the simple two-bar units at bs 15, 17 and 19.

9. Once again the citation of material from another movement calls into question the boundary that distinguishes what is 'inside' from what is 'outside' any particular musical configuration. None of this is strictly novel in the Seventh Symphony. Quotation across movements is often associated with Beethoven, while the device of using a certain figure as both a beginning and an ending can be traced as far back as Machaut. What is significant is that *these* are the historical strategies chosen in this work.

10. The comparative weakness of the cadence in bs 86-7 derives, in turn, from the sheer instrumental force with which the roughly identical passage cadences for the first time in bs 22-3. Again the levels of ambiguity persist. The earlier cadence does not announce a change of key and demarcates only a sectional subdivision within the opening statement. At this point its force seems to exceed its function. In comparison the cadence in bs 86-7 appears weak.

11. The cadence at bs 196-7 is a repeat of bs 86-7. Precisely that which was surprising is repeated and thus becomes less so. The entire Rondo-Finale articulates this kind of duplicitous logic in various ways.

12. It will be remembered that the reference to Wagner's *Meistersinger* is itself a loose palindrome.

13. It may be significant that the seven verses of Nietzsche's rondo-poem are parallelled here with seven returns of the opening statement (see above) – and this in the Finale of Mahler's *Seventh* Symphony.

14. At the *Pesante* in b.186 the beginning of the theme is already suggested, but the theme is then interrupted by the fourth ritornello, a semitone higher. This interruption is significant insofar as it refuses to fulfil even the simplest implications of the unison theme, namely the descent to C. Given that every previous ritornello has served to establish C major, the failure to do so here is noteworthy. By an inverse logic this actually serves to draw attention to the unison passage.

15. Seven bars later, in bs 35-6, this syncopation (now in cellos and basses) in fact results in a three-bar phrase, thus offsetting the four-bar periodicity that has characterised the prior material.

16. The structure of the fourth section itself consists of interlocking four-bar groups. The first and third four-bar groups (beginning in bs 23 and 31 respectively) employ the augmented version of the descending motive and are both harmonically stable and metrically square, while the intervening second and fourth groups (beginning in bs 27 and 35 respectively) employ the

original descending motive, are metrically more disruptive and move momentarily away from tonic harmony.

17. This section is not unambiguously 'developmental'. Development-like characteristics include the numerous, emphatic changes of key (to E major in b.276, to A♭ major in b.282 and to C major in b.286) and the unprecedented use of motives from both the opening ritornello and the second secondary subject within the same section. This is not to say that this section *is* a development, but that it carries within it vestiges of a development. By the logic of the supplement, the passage refers to the idea of 'development' paradoxically, through a failure to fully embody it.

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