

A CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF GUSTAV MAHLER'S EARLY *DES KNABEN*
WUNDERHORN SETTINGS

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Chapter I: Introduction

Between the years 1887 and 1901 Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) set twenty-four poems from the early 19th century folk collection of Clemens Brentano (1778-1842) and Achim von Arnim (1781-1831), *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte Deutsche Lieder* (hereafter referred to as DKW).¹ Mahler ultimately orchestrated fifteen of these poems, using three of them, “Urlicht”, “Es singen drei Engel”, and “Das himmlische Leben”, as movements in his Second, Third, and Fourth Symphonies respectively. Mahler also used many of the melodies from his DKW settings as fully realized themes in his early symphonies. For example, the melodic material from Mahler’s setting of “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt” is used extensively in the third movement of his Second Symphony, and “Ablösung im Sommer” similarly appears in the third movement of his Third Symphony.

In 1884, prior to these twenty-four settings, Mahler composed the song cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Though this cycle features his own texts, he nonetheless closely modeled the first song on a poem from DKW. Indeed, he attempted to imitate the poetic style of folk poetry throughout the work.² Melodic materials from the second and last songs of *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* show up in the first and third movements of Mahler’s First Symphony. As Peter Revers notes, “It would scarcely be an exaggeration to suggest that Mahler’s compositional ‘genetic code’ can be located

¹ Brentano and von Arnim published *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* in three volumes. The first volume appeared in 1805 followed closely by volumes two and three in 1808. Ludwig Achim Arnim, Clemens Brentano, and Heinz Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987).

² Zoltan Roman, “Song and symphony (1). *Lieder und Gesänge* Volume 1, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and the First Symphony: compositional patterns for the future,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 76-77.

in his Lieder output.”³ It is clear that Brentano and Arnim’s collection exerted a formative and lasting influence on Mahler’s early published compositional efforts.

Given Mahler’s laser focus on poetry from DKW, one might assume, in consideration of his provincial upbringing, that he was a composer of limited literary erudition. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mahler was a man of far-reaching literary tastes. He was particularly fond of Dostoevsky’s (1821-1881) *The Brother’s Karamazov*, and was delighted by Cervantes’ (1547-1616) *Don Quixote* throughout his life.⁴ Mahler acquainted himself with the works of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), using Nietzsche’s “Midnight Song” from *Also Sprach Zarathustra* as the text for the fourth movement of his Third Symphony. Interestingly, he later changed philosophical course, and even recommended to his future wife Alma Schindler (1879-1964) that she burn her Nietzsche collection during their early courtship.⁵ Mahler also greatly enjoyed the work of Jean Paul (1763-1825). According to the conductor and Mahler disciple Bruno Walter (1876-1962), Mahler derived the program of his first symphony from Paul’s great novel *Titan*.⁶ (Mahler eventually discarded this moniker, ultimately deciding that programs only created further misunderstandings of his works.)⁷ These examples offer a glimpse into the larger picture of a man who actively cultivated his insatiable appetite for the written word. As the Mahler biographer Jens Malte Fischer emphatically

³ Peter Revers, “Song and symphony (1.) *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and the Second, Third and Fourth Symphonies: music of heaven and earth,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89.

⁴ Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), 103-104.

⁵ Alma Mahler and Basil Creighton, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 18-19.

⁶ La Grange, *Mahler*, 102.

⁷ Ibid., 582.

states, “With the exception of Wagner, Schumann and Berlioz, there can have been no other composer born in the nineteenth century who was as well-read as Mahler.”⁸

In view of Mahler’s wide-ranging literary tastes, several questions become important in establishing an interpretative approach to his DKW settings. Why did Mahler limit himself to settings of folk style poetry in the first half of his compositional career? What attracted him almost exclusively during this period to the folk poetry of DKW, despite the vast repertoire of art-poetry at his disposal? Just what was his relationship to the folk idiom? As we will see, having grown up in provincial Bohemia, Mahler had a unique perspective on folk music. His exposure to this repertoire began at a very early age, through oral transmission. His exceptional mind was ideally suited for memorizing the multitude of songs and stories that he encountered, and for reproducing them with remarkable clarity. In DKW, Mahler found a familiar repertoire of poetry that he felt ideally qualified to set to music. DKW also provided Mahler with the opportunity to freely alter the poetry at his discretion. For an inventive thinker like Mahler, this collection let him spread his prodigious creative wings more fully than the more restrictive nature of “art poetry” would allow.

Unfortunately this familiarity, which allowed Mahler to feel so comfortable within the folk idiom, becomes a stumbling block for the modern singer. We are essentially cultural outsiders in this complicated literature. Features in the poetry and music that undoubtedly appeared obvious to Mahler have become quite difficult to access for such an interpreter. The resources dealing with folk culture as projected in DKW prove surprisingly scant. This is particularly true for the first nine DKW settings that Mahler composed. The fact that he never orchestrated these songs may be in part

⁸ Jens Malte Fischer, *Gustav Mahler* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) 32-33.

responsible for the lack of attention they receive in the literature. A thorough investigation of this material is necessary to aid interpreters in developing a culturally informed understanding of how to present these poems and their musical settings.

In the following study I will discuss the provenance of the folk collection DKW, detailing the methods by which these poems were collected and sometimes created by Brentano and Arnim. An exploration of the figure of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) will prove necessary in uncovering the roots of the German folk movement as it relates to this collection. I will also unveil the cultural vision that these poets were pursuing as they tried to usher in a German nationhood through the descriptive and prescriptive dimensions of a supposedly German folk repertoire.

I will then discuss Mahler's relationship with the DKW collection. In attempting, wherever possible, to uncover his particular expressed point of view on his settings of DKW poetry, I will examine primary sources in the form of Mahler's correspondence with his contemporaries and family members. I will also consider the troubling realities that Jews faced in the German speaking lands in the late 19th century. How did Mahler navigate the turbulent anti-Semitic waters that he encountered as a Bohemian Jew? Furthermore, how did the rampant anti-Semitism that Mahler experienced on a daily basis in his role as an increasingly powerful and famous Jewish music director impact his view of the racially exclusivist, nation-building intentions of the DKW collection? As we will see, Brentano, Arnim, and much of the Viennese public of Mahler's era were staunchly anti-Semitic.

Finally, I will offer an interpretive analysis of each of the first nine DKW settings that Mahler composed. I will attempt to untangle the variegated imagery that is used in

these poems. Why might he have chosen the particular poems that he did from this collection for musical elaboration? In what ways did he frequently and sometimes drastically alter the structure and wording of the poems in his settings of them? What do these specific ideas, images, and situations connote in German culture that might not be so obvious to the foreign interpreter, or even the modern German listener? What does Mahler's music tell us about his interpretation of these poems? How might the interpreter use all of this information?

The ultimate aim of my research is to provide a rich background of information that the modern performer can draw from in approaching this fascinating music. The scope of this study will focus primarily on Mahler's first nine DKW settings, but will also draw on the later fifteen orchestral DKW settings when they offer interpretive clues to the earlier ones. There is no effort to provide absolute and immutable interpretative answers to the questions I am posing, but rather to offer guideposts that will help the performer to get closer to the nature of the tradition, and to a more refined reading of the material. The goal is to spur the imagination of the interpreter with a wealth of factual detail and cultural content.

Chapter II: The German Folk Tradition

Johann Gottfried Herder

In order to understand what the term “folk” might mean in the context of German language poetry we need to embrace it as a concept that is constantly in flux. For this reason we have to abandon the hope of pinning the idea down, and rather attempt to track its shifting definition through the lens of important figures that defined it in particularly relevant moments. We must necessarily begin this discussion with the figure of Johann Gottfried Herder as a key early contributor to the concept of the German folk. In fact, Herder is credited as being the inventor of the term *Volkslied*.⁹

Herder was born on August 25th, 1744 in Mohrungen, East Prussia and died on December 18th, 1803 in Weimar. An exceptionally ambitious man, he pursued a true Universalist approach to the scholarly enterprise. He wrote and lectured in his various capacities on topics as diverse as philosophy, linguistics, religion, history, literature, and the arts. Herder had ties with, and was an important influence on such thinkers as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805).

Herder favored an approach to art and thought that embraced the cult of Dionysus in an effort to shed the restrictive constraints of French-inspired rationalist expression. Stemming from ancient Greek mythology, freedom of chaotic, instinctual emotional outpouring was considered Dionysian, as opposed to the logic-based creative expressions of Apollonian thinkers. This Dionysian trend in German thought gathered steam during

⁹ Carl Niekerk, *Reading Mahler: German Culture and Jewish Identity in Fin-De-Siècle Vienna* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2010), 57.

the late 1760s. The name of Friedrich Maximilian Klinger's 1776 play *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) also became the name under which these expressive trends in German thought were unified. The *Sturm und Drang* movement encouraged a greater degree of subjective personal expression, which would pave the way for Romanticism. Wolf Koepke succinctly situates Herder in the context of late 18th-century German thought. "Herder has been considered the mastermind of the *Sturm und Drang* movement of the 1770s. Likewise, he was regarded as the chief architect of the German rebellion against Enlightenment thinking."¹⁰

Part of this "rebellion" manifested itself in Herder's desire to elevate the importance of personal freedom over the pervasive rationalism of strict state-oriented structures. It was in this spirit that Herder promoted the vitality of the common people, or *das Volk*, in the establishment of nationalism, against the strong current of elitist idealism that was then dominant. Herder advocated for the formation of a German national literature in his 1773 essay *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (Extracts from a Correspondence about Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples), using Homer, Shakespeare, and Ossian as models. James Macpherson brought the supposedly ancient Scottish Highland poetry of Ossian to the attention of the literary community in 1760-1763. These epic poems, which were reportedly collected from ancient Scottish sources, have since been shown to be forgeries by Macpherson's hand. Nonetheless, Macpherson's Ossian forgeries are particularly relevant to our conversation as they provided the inspiration for Herder's interest in native German folk poetry. Indeed Herder published two volumes of collected folksong texts: *Alte Volkslieder* (1774), and *Volkslieder* (1778-79). In 1807, after Herder's death, his wife

¹⁰ Wulf Koepke, *Johann Gottfried Herder* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), i.

had a third edition of his collective efforts published under the title *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (Voices of the people in songs). While Herder's volumes consist primarily of German language poems, he also includes a healthy representation of poems from many other national traditions.

Koepke offers a succinct articulation of the particular worldview that these collections were pursuing.

Herder had vigorously opposed the notion of literature as an adornment for a ruler's court, and as a game of intellectuals. Genuine literature springs from the “Volk” itself, the ethnic community that is the true cultural unit and source for creative energy. Without such social and cultural community, based on a common language, there cannot be a nation, but only artificial and power-hungry states. Herder found such poetry in the Old Testament, in Homer's Greece, and in Shakespeare's England. Folk songs and other forms of folk literature preserve the spirit of a “Volk”. Goethe, Herder felt, could have been capable of creating a true German folk literature.¹¹

This explanation gets us closer to a Herderian definition of *Das Volk*, but is also somewhat confusing in its proposed inclusion of the work of Goethe. A closer examination of Herder's use of this term is necessary to gain a fuller understanding.

Georgiana Simpson's dissertation, *Herder's Conception of “Das Volk”*, offers a more thorough analysis. She identifies a series of five conceptions of *das Volk*, which she draws from quotations of Herder's writings.

1. *Volk* is that part of a nation which is the governed class as distinct from those who are above them in authority and who stand as the ruling class; i.e., the governed as separate from the governing.

2. *Volk* is used as synonymous with nation. The ideas of collective personality and of *Nationalgeist* (national spirit) are prominent here.

3. *Volk*, a special group, less cultured, unaltered in certain respects by the influence of civilization. There are marked implications of theories of universalism and democracy here. The largest part of the people is the most important and respectable.

¹¹ Ibid., iv.

4. *Volk*, meaning a special group characterized by primitivism in various forms. Here is a clear implication that the *Volk* is a class apart from philosophers, poets, and orators; a class different from the sages. Not being wise and learned, they must be those upon whom artificial methods of training and culture have had less effect than upon the philosophers, poets, and orators. They are therefore more nearly the natural man.

5. *Volk* is equivalent to nation; nation carrying the idea of a group bound together by blood or language or government, or by all three. As such, *Volk* is a collective personality, has marked individuality, and is characterized by a national spirit. *Volk* is a race or nation that never advanced beyond primitive grades of culture; that therefore never was subject to what he considers a group to be found within a civilized nation; a group which has retained the primitivism just noted above... This primitivism whether in the entire race or in a special portion is always eulogized.¹²

Simpson's 4th folk conception would seem to expressly exclude such a learned figure as Goethe from the folk conversation. Perhaps his associations with Goethe in Weimar clouded the exclusivity of his folk conception? It is certainly not uncommon that local social realities can distort the purity of one's ideas. However, Herder believed that in the spirit of Shakespeare, talented writers such as Goethe could create a new "true German folk literature". Thus a contradiction emerges in Herder's folk ideal between the idealized underclass expressions of the past, and the possibility of educated additions to the tradition in the present and future. This contradiction proves important as it paves the way for later poets and musicians, such as Arnim and Brentano, to apply their own stamp on the folk repertoire.

Notably, Herder defines the folk of a given nation not as much by race as by social class and shared language. As we will see, the usage of the term "folk" developed increasing racially-exclusivist overtones in the work of Brentano and Arnim. In fact,

¹² Georgiana Rose Simpson, "Herder's Conception of 'Das Volk'" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1921), 4-14.

Herder's folk concept was ultimately misappropriated for drastically different purposes than his relatively egalitarian concept would have allowed. A more recent example of this paradigm can be found in the Nazi Party's misuses of Herder's ideas in crafting a conception of German nationalism during WWII.¹³ So, what was the particular approach of Brentano and Arnim in their collective efforts for DKW, and how had their view of *das Volk* changed from that of Herder?

Clemens Brentano

Clemens Brentano was born in Ehrenbreitstein on September 9th, 1778, the son of a successful wholesale merchant. His mother, the beautiful daughter of the eighteenth-century novelist Sophie von La Roche (1730-1807), had once attracted the amorous advances of Goethe.¹⁴ Brentano first received a Jesuit education in Koblenz, and later transferred to Mannheim to complete his early education. After unsuccessfully studying mining and mineralogy at the University of Bonn, Brentano returned home to the family business in Frankfurt, where he drew his father's ire by engaging in antics "behind, over, and under the sales counter".¹⁵ His father then banished Brentano to Langensalza in Thuringia to work for an acquaintance. Rather than gaining any professional attainment at this stop on his journey, Brentano preferred to scandalize his employer's customers with his wildly colorful sartorial tastes.

After various other moves, as well as educational and professional failures, he finally matriculated at Jena with the purpose of studying medicine. In Jena, Brentano came into contact with the circle of romantic writers that surrounded Friedrich Schlegel

¹³ Wulf Koepke, *Johann Gottfried Herder* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), V.

¹⁴ John F. Fetzer, *Clemens Brentano* (Boston: Twayne, 1981), 15.

¹⁵ Ibid., 17.

(1772-1829) and Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853). These connections, along with a series of scandalous and tumultuous romantic endeavors, set Brentano on his artistic course. It was in Jena that Brentano launched his literary career with several successful novels, dramas, and poems. His works from this period, such as his music drama *Die Lustigen Musikanten* (1803), are marked by unusual modes of expression and fantastic imagery. In 1808 Brentano would leave Jena to take a teaching position at the university in Landshut, Bavaria.

1817 brought a decidedly religious turn to Brentano's life with his confession and reversion back to Catholicism. The majority of his later works are correspondingly of a theological nature. The primary aim of this work was to chronicle the supposed divine revelations of the stigmatized nun Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774-1824).¹⁶ This religious and conservative tendency in Brentano's later career reflects in many ways the zeitgeist of his literary associations. When Brentano died in Aschaffenburg near Frankfurt on July 28th, 1842 he was numbered among the most important romantic literary figures of his generation.

Ludwig Achim von Arnim

The son of a nobleman and Prussian diplomat, Ludwig Achim von Arnim was born in Berlin in 1781. His father eventually was to become the director of the royal opera. Arnim's mother died three weeks after his birth due to complications from the delivery. Consequently his maternal grandmother Elisabeth von Labes raised him. He studied law at the University of Halle from 1798 through 1801 after which he moved to Göttingen to attend the University. It was here that he first came into contact with

¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

Goethe as well as a young group of literary enthusiasts that included figures such as August Winkelmann (1780-1806), Johannes Ritter (1776-1810), and Clemens Brentano. These associations were extremely important for Arnim, not least of all because they inspired him to adopt poetry as his primary concern.¹⁷ He and Brentano would become the leaders of a group called the “Young Romantics”.¹⁸

In the summer of 1801, Arnim embarked with his brother on a “grand tour” of several important European centers. This journey included Dresden (where he was able to spend time with the poet Ludwig Tieck), Prague, Regensburg, Vienna, Munich, Frankfurt (where he took an important trip down the Rhine with Brentano during which they discussed their mutual interest in collecting folk songs), Stuttgart, Zürich, Milan, Geneva, Lyons, Marseilles, Nice, Turin, Genoa, Paris, London, Wales, and Scotland. In addition to producing several publications during this trip, Arnim was also collecting folk songs that he culled primarily from written sources at his various stops. Through the years Arnim would become increasingly isolated from his former literary colleagues, although he continued to write until his death from an apoplectic stroke on January 23rd, 1831 at his Wiepersdorf estate.

Des Knaben Wunderhorn, Alte Deutsche Lieder

In 1784 Anselm Elwert published *Ungedruckte Reste alten Gesangs* (Unpublished Remnants of Old Songs), a compilation that was inspired by Herder’s writings, but focused its attention more exclusively on folksongs of German origin. Brentano and

¹⁷ Roland Hoermann, *Achim von Arnim* (Boston: Twayne, 1984), 3.

¹⁸ Brenda E. Wepfer, “A Comparative Analysis of the Early Folksong Related Lieder of Johannes Brahms and Gustav Mahler with Special Emphasis on Their Use of the Des Knaben Wunderhorn Text” (M.M. Thesis, Cleveland State University, 1996), 7.

Arnim would draw on Elwert's collection for the first poem of DKW in volume one. They, in fact, derived the title of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Youth's Miraculous Horn) from this poem. This title serves the collection well as it foreshadows the cornucopia of powerful German cultural material that DKW contains. The possession of this material by the naive character of the German youth highlights the collections supposed ownership by the common people.

As mentioned earlier, Brentano and Arnim would meet and forge a lasting friendship in Göttingen in 1801. In 1803 Brentano first approached Arnim with the idea of publishing a joint collection of their own songs as a "memorial to their youth".¹⁹ This germinal idea ultimately culminated in their mutual enterprise of the first published volume of DKW in 1805. This fact in part explains the loose scholarly nature of the collection, with its inclusion of many of Arnim and Brentano's own folksongs and strophic additions, along with actual collected folk material. Encouraged by the critical success of their first volume, and most notably by Goethe's stamp of approval, Brentano and Arnim would go on to publish two further volumes of DKW in 1808. In the interim they would also collaborate in starting the unsuccessful *Zeitung für Einsiedler* (Journal for Hermits), which aimed to present and defend the Romantic perspective against the attacks of such outspoken anti-Romantics as Johann Heinrich Voss (1751-1826).

In developing an understanding of Arnim and Brentano's aims behind the three volumes of DKW, it is important to read them in relationship to the Napoleonic wars. With repeated attacks and occupations by the French of Prussian territories throughout these years, there was a strong impulse amongst this harassed populace to find common cause with their German-speaking counterparts, not only in terms of military goals, but,

¹⁹ Hoermann, *Achim von Arnim*, 4.

especially during times of occupation, in the cultural sphere. This situation was very much in the foreground as Brentano and Arnim created their collection with the aim of defining a cultural Germany that would prefigure an eventual German national unification. “The mood of urgency that culminated in Napoleon’s victory at Austerlitz in early December, 1805, was already reflected during October and November in the hectic intensity with which Brentano and especially Arnim pushed forward their proofreading of the first volume of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder*.²⁰

The ideals of these Second Generation Romantics were specifically Christian, conservative, and nationalistic. In attempting to define and legitimize an imagined future Germany through the prismatic aegis of folksong, Brentano and Arnim were far more exclusivist in their conceptions of the functions and values associated with what constituted folk material than their forerunner Herder had been.

Carl Niekerk presents an illuminating discussion on this matter, drawing on Arnim’s essay *Von Volksliedern*, found at the end of the first volume of DKW, as well as various other writings of Herder.

It could be said that Herder was referring to the essence of a nation in using the “Volk” concept. When using the term, he meant at once a language community and an idealized notion of what one might call the “common man,” so the term for Herder is not entirely free of the original social associations that connected it to the lower classes. His idea of culture was profoundly anti-elitist. Herder was interested in culture as a basic manifestation of human activity. He saw language and culture as means through which humans created identity. The most decisive feature uniting the members of a “Volk” was, for Herder, the fact that they share a language and, as a consequence, a literary and cultural tradition.²¹

However, Niekerk finds important new wrinkles in the term *Volk* as used by Second Generation Romantics, and exemplified in Arnim’s essay *Von Volksliedern*.

²⁰ Ibid., 4.

²¹ Niekerk, *Reading Mahler*, 57-58.

According to von Arnim, only the artist who is close to the ‘Volk’ can bring it together under his “flag”; he can do this even though it may be separated by “language, national prejudices, religious errors, and superfluous fashion”. The question to ask here, then, is: what is the constitutive component of the ‘Volk’ if it is not language, a sense of national identity, or religion? The only answer that von Arnim allows is, surprisingly, the activity of the poet-archaeologist. In the end, the role of the ‘Volk’ is to legitimize the efforts of the poet, and not the other way around. Little remains of the openness to alterity evoked earlier when von Arnim, at the end of his essay, speaks of the folk-song project as a “public monument for the greatest new people, the Germans”. Folk songs are meant to serve the goal of national unification. Here von Arnim is no longer interested in the anthropological, descriptive function of folk poetry; instead, he evokes its prescriptive, normative potential, its ability to create a nation superior to others. It is precisely this element that would later be picked up on by the anti-modern, nationalist, and conservative ‘Völkische Bewegung’ that played an important, even crucial role in the rise of German and Austrian fascism.²²

Not only does this particular folk prescription conveniently legitimize Arnim and Brentano’s collective methods and creative additions, but it also allows them a measure of conservative control over the loose edges of the folk concept as espoused by Herder. Hoermann gives more detail to the nature of their approach.

An early influence on Arnim and Brentano’s involvement with folk culture was their association with Ludwig Tieck. While Tieck promoted the notion of bringing folk materials and chapbooks to the attention of the educated classes, the younger pair felt that these groups were too exclusively attuned to the refinements of the French neoclassical conventions for them to enjoy the rustic charms of popular poetry. Instead, the *Liederbrüder* (Arnim and Brentano) wished to invert Tieck’s formula by popularizing the loftier standards of the ‘high’ tradition within their folk audience, thereby expanding and ennobling the latter’s taste.²³

Indeed Arnim and Brentano were unapologetic about this approach.

In a letter of February 15, 1805, addressed to Arnim in Giebichenstein, Brentano had proposed a format for their project: ‘to undertake a reasonably priced book of folk songs... It must be a delicate balance between the Romantic and the everyday mood, it must contain religious, tradesmen’s, and common laborer’s songs, songs of the times of day and year, and humorously frivolous songs... It must be so arranged that no age is excluded; in it the better folk songs could be preserved and modern ones could be composed for inclusion’. We find then, in the Wunderhorn an entire gamut of alteration, and adaptation, ranging from the approximately one

²² Ibid., 59-60.

²³ Hoermann, *Achim von Arnim*, 19.

sixth that are genuine and unchanged folk songs to the six songs that are explicitly Arnim's and Brentano's original compositions.²⁴

Thus we find in the three volumes of DKW a highly edited and romanticized collection of folksongs in which Brentano and Arnim freely add their own verses, change some of the more rustic textual constructions of the original songs, and sometimes include their own complete poems.²⁵ This results in a collection of over 700 folksongs that were drawn primarily from printed sources, and were usually altered significantly by their compilers. Heinz Rölleke's critical edition of DKW²⁶ shows exhaustively that the origins of many of these folksongs, insofar as they can be definitively traced, are spread far and wide throughout the European landscape. Intriguingly and perhaps unsurprisingly, some of these songs have French roots. For a genre that was originally orally transmitted by figures of mobility, such as soldiers, artisans, and the lower classes, its actual dispersion denotes an inherently boundary-less reality behind these poems. This feature suited Herder's ideas about folksong. However, it needed adjustment and thus editing, to satisfy the prescriptive/nation-building dimensions of Arnim and Brentano, as well as the refined tastes of Second Generation Romantics.

If Prussia's "conciliatory approach"²⁷ toward French occupation wouldn't allow Brentano and Arnim to fight the invader with actual weapons, then they would arm themselves ideologically in trying to draw clear cultural borders between "true" Germans

²⁴ Ibid., 23.

²⁵ As Dargie states, "But although one of their aims was to prevent the traditional songs from disappearing altogether, and although they tried to make their collection as comprehensive as possible, 'preservation' to Arnim and Brentano meant not so much keeping the songs alive in their traditional forms, by reproducing them in 'authentic' versions, but rather touching them up so that they would have widespread appeal among their contemporaries... Finally there was a handful of poems from the pen of Arnim and Brentano themselves: they took great pleasure in having these mistaken for genuine folk-songs." E. Mary Dargie, *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Bern: P. Lang, 1981), 109-110.

²⁶ Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.

²⁷ Ibid., 4.

and outsiders. They would wield their own evolving folk concept as a weapon against French occupations and foreign influences by appropriating and sometimes creating the folksongs in their collection toward this end. This need to fight back would have been keenly felt for Arnim as he was forced to flee from Jena in 1806 after Prussian defeat resulted in the deaths of ten of his family members. It is unsurprising that notable poets including Goethe²⁸ and Heinrich Heine²⁹ (1797-1856) praised the collection, while such scholars as Jakob Grimm (1785-1863) and the anti-Romantic J.H. Voss³⁰ openly questioned its loose scholarship. The ideology behind the collection, after all, favors the intervention of the poet on behalf of the folk. In the beautiful wording of Goethe,

Who can say what a song has to endure when it is passed for a while from mouth to mouth, and not only that of the uneducated! Why would he who notes it down in the end, combines it with others, not also have the same right?... Does not everything that former ages and contemporaries have created belong to the poet by right? Why should he be afraid to pluck flowers wherever he finds them? Only through the amalgamation of alien treasures can greatness be created.³¹

As we can see in Arnim and Brentano's biographies, neither man could count themselves as actual members of the folk by either Herder's, or their own definitions of the term.

Obviously these efforts were anti-French in nature, but they also offered the opportunity for many German-speaking peoples to air their anti-Semitic leanings. Ten

²⁸ Goethe writes in a review for the *Jenaer Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, "Actually, this little book should be available in every home where alert people live, by the window, beneath the mirror, or anywhere else where songbooks and cookbooks are usually kept. Then it could be opened at any moment of enthusiasm or vexation and always furnish something supportive or stimulating...". *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁹ Heine writes, "I cannot praise the book enough. It contains the most graceful flowers of the German spirit, and he who wishes to know the German people at their best, let him read these folksongs... Here German anger beats its drum, here is the pipe of German scorn, the kiss of German love." David McShane, "Gustav Mahler's Des Knaben Wunderhorn Lieder" (D.M.A. Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1985), 13.

³⁰ Heather A. Miller, "The Relationship between Text and Music in the Soldier Songs from Gustav Mahler's Des Knaben Wunderhorn" (M.A. Thesis, Bowling Green State University, 1997), 9.

³¹ Meshane, "Gustav Mahler's Des Knaben Wunderhorn Lieder," 25.

poems are found in DKW that are “characterized by openly anti-Jewish content”.³² To complete the picture of the degree to which Jews were not included in Brentano and Arnim’s nationalistic folk conception, we can also note their membership in the *Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft* (Christian-German Dining Club). This group had strong conservative, religious, and nationalistic leanings that were explicitly anti-Semitic. Indeed Brentano authored *Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte* (The Philistine before, in, and after History) in 1811. Niekerk notes that this was “one of the most notoriously anti-Semitic texts of German Romanticism and originally read at the inaugural meeting of the *Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft*.³³

The success of DKW, at least in elite literary circles,³⁴ spurred several other collections of folk songs in the 19th-century German speaking lands. Anton Wilhelm Florentin von Zuccalmaglio’s (1803-1869) *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Original-Weisen* (1840), Ludwig Erk (1807-1883) and Franz Magnus Böhme’s (1827-1898) three volume *Deutscher Liederhort* (1893), and Karl Becker’s (1853-1928) *Rheinischer Volksliederborn* (1892), were all important installments in this growing interest in collecting and preserving German folksongs. Composers correspondingly became increasingly interested in creating new settings of these folksongs, some of which were purposefully simplistic, and others that imbued the genre with the more sophisticated language of “art music”. Well-known composers such as Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), Robert Schumann (1810-1856), and Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) all composed settings of these poems. However, no other composer

³² Niekerk, *Reading Mahler*, 67.

³³ Ibid., 67.

³⁴ “One should not exaggerate their popularity; first-edition copies of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, for instance, were still available from the publisher in 1900.” Ibid., 56.

of note spent as much time with this anthology, and lavished as much musical attention on it as did Gustav Mahler.

Chapter III: Mahler, Folk Influences, and Being Jewish in late 19th-century

Bohemia, Austria, and Germany

As we consider the particular affinity that Mahler displayed for the texts from DKW, there are several biographical details to consider that will add greater clarity to our discussion. Much has been written about Mahler's upbringing in provincial Jihlava (hereafter referred to by the German name Iglau). It is important to highlight several key features about the city, the sound world in which Mahler was raised, and the social and legal realities that Bohemian Jews encountered during this period. In his excellent Mahler biography, Stuart Feder offers a detailed account of the Mahler family's Jewish background in Bohemia, as well as the steep social climb that they intrepidly navigated in reaching middle-class status. A brief summary of his findings will prove germane to this study.³⁵

In the mid-eighteenth century Mahler's paternal great-great-grandfather Abraham Mahler (1720-1800) settled in the Czech-Moravian hills in the village of Chelmná. This was a typical Jewish enclave in which Abraham performed the functions of the ritual slaughterer. "Only five thousand Jewish families lived legally in Moravia at the time, and this great-great-grandfather of Gustav Mahler could recall the yellow badge that Jews were required to wear before the *Judenreform* of 1781, a relic of the attempted expulsion of the Jews by the regent Maria Theresa (1717-1780). Still in effect was the ancient *Judenzoll*, or body tax, a fee levied on Jews for a sojourn from one region to another for

³⁵ Stuart Feder, *Gustav Mahler: A Life in Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 2-29.

any purpose.”³⁶ While the *Toleranzpatent* of 1782 extended freedom of religion to Jews, it still restricted Jewish enterprise in that it didn’t allow for the use of Yiddish and Hebrew in commercial affairs. It did however allow for a greater freedom of movement, which Abraham’s grandson Simon Mahler (1793-1865) exploited in moving to the village of Kaliště at the time of the birth of Gustav’s father Berhard Mahler (1827-1889). Here Simon set up a distillery, which was among the limited enterprises in which a Jew could engage. Notably, he chose the Germanic name Bernhard for his firstborn in compliance with the reform laws of 1787.

Bernhard Mahler was an ambitious young man who made several trips in the 1850s to neighboring towns delivering liquor and other goods. His travels included stops in Ledec where he became acquainted with the Hermann family. He married the Hermann’s eldest daughter Marie in 1857, securing a substantial dowry of 3,500 florins.³⁷ This dowry certainly helped to further Bernhard’s business concerns, but the marriage was by all accounts an unhappy one. Lame from birth, Marie Hermann had a delicate constitution as well as a heart condition. The contrast between Berhard’s choleric temper and the more demure nature of Marie created an unfortunate mismatch that would lead to “explosive tensions” in the relationship.³⁸

A variety of reforms instituted by Joseph II (1741-1790) allowed for an increasingly stable financial and social foothold to develop for Bohemian Jews during this period. In 1860, the year of Gustav’s birth, the emperor Francis Joseph I (1830-1916) loosened these restrictions further, allowing Jews to own property within the

³⁶ Ibid., 9.

³⁷ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 17.

³⁸ Donald Mitchell, Paul Banks, and David Matthews, *Gustav Mahler: The Early Years* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980), 9.

empire, as well as permitting greater freedom of movement, and in turn settlement. Many Jewish families began moving from rural villages into bigger towns. Bernhard, who had already been eyeing business opportunities in the city of Iglau, used this opportunity to move the family there. At this time Iglau was the second largest town in Moravia, with a population of around 17,000.

After twelve years of hard work in establishing his business enterprises in Iglau, Bernhard was able to buy the adjoining property to his distillery for the considerable sum of 10,000 florins. This attests to his success as a businessman. The following year Bernhard paid a large fee, and finally, thirteen years after moving there, became an official citizen of Iglau. “He was so proud that he had the certificate framed and hung it on his living-room wall.”³⁹ The rather remarkable career of this middle class Jew had reached its zenith, as he was able to take on an important role at the local synagogue, and in Jewish community life in Iglau. By all accounts Bernhard Mahler was a choleric and uncompromising man, who often ran afoul of the authorities with his single-minded financial ambitions.⁴⁰ While Gustav does not seem to have overly appreciated such traits in his father, many of these same qualities would serve him well in his meteoric rise through the Austrian and German musical establishments.

Although it could be construed that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a relatively comfortable place for Jews in the later 19th-century, the reality was that Jews were still outsiders in this culture. Thanks to the liberal policies of the emperor, Jews were able to establish a foothold, but it took the exceptional fortitude, patience, and ingenuity of

³⁹ La Grange, *Mahler*, 10.

⁴⁰ La Grange details two such incidents in which Bernhard Mahler was fined for having illegally sold bread without a license, and having moved his distillery before gaining official permission to do so. Bernhard was also known for his physical brutality toward his family, and in particular, his wife Marie. Gustav had to watch as his father had a series of affairs with serving girls who worked on his premises. *Ibid.*, 9-10.

businessmen like Bernhard Mahler to surmount the many obstacles that they faced in this culture, in order to gain prosperity.

Another feature to consider about many middle-class Bohemian Jews from this period is their considerable effort to assimilate into German culture. Fischer describes this archetype succinctly.

For at least a section of the Jewish population, acculturation and the ascent of the social ladder went hand in hand with a veritable thirst for education, a desire for cultural improvement evident from the autobiographical accounts of many Bohemian and Moravian Jews. In particular, those who had attended grammar schools retained a lifetime commitment to the ideal of education and learning. They read more enthusiastically and more intensively than the Czech population and owned a treasured collection of books, which in middle-class families was carefully kept in a glass-fronted cupboard in the living room. Central to these small private libraries were generally the German classics, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller and, above all, Heinrich Heine, a writer whom they regarded as one of their own, preferring to ignore his somewhat awkward relations with Judaism. Although it was only in Iglau that Bernhard Mahler was really able to feel a member of the middle classes, he too clearly shared this desire to improve his mind.⁴¹

Bernhard Mahler received no formal education, however, one of the most notable features of his personality was his thirst for knowledge.

Although schooling would have been impractical for Bernhard, and impossible for Marie, it was timely for their progeny. Bernhard had a passion for knowledge and always had a supply of books in his wagon, which he would peruse while carting goods. This earned him the nickname “Kutschbockgelehrter” (literally, ‘cart-seat scholar’), reflecting difference as well as a degree of respect among uneducated neighbors.⁴²

While we don’t know the exact contents of the Mahler family library in Iglau, we may safely assume that the young Gustav had ample access to the German classics. He would take full advantage of this access as a child.

⁴¹ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 19.

⁴² Feder, *Gustav Mahler*, 14.

The journals of Mahler's friend and confidant, the violist Nathalie Bauer-Lechner (1858-1921), prove to be an invaluable source in Mahler research. She kept scrupulous records of her conversations with Mahler between the years 1890 and 1902. Unfortunately, this close relationship ended with Mahler's marriage to Alma Schindler in 1902. Alma was a much less reliable and engaged chronicler of Mahler's thoughts and activities than Bauer-Lechner had been. Mahler would relate to Bauer-Lechner, "They (Mahler's parents) did all they could to restrain and deprive me of that nourishment so necessary to my young spirit. Suffering terribly from their constant restraint and prohibitions, my most ardent desire was to read day and night without stopping. How many times I swore to do so when I was grown up."⁴³ An obsessive passion for reading would remain among his most cherished pastimes until his death.

There are many reasons that the Mahler family's move to Iglau was particularly propitious for the young Gustav Mahler. The greater financial success that this move resulted in for the Mahlers allowed Gustav to receive a grammar school education, music lessons, and ultimately the needed support to attend the Vienna Conservatory as a late teen. However, there were other features about Iglau that for Mahler's quicksilver developing mind were perhaps even more important.

As a city midway along the road between Vienna and Prague, Iglau offered a surprisingly wide array of musical influences for Mahler to ingest. I will turn again to La Grange for his excellent description of these circumstances.

Even before he could stand he would hum tunes he had heard. He soon knew a great many of the local Iglau folk songs by heart; it was a region where everyone was musical by nature; the child heard the sad Slav cradle songs that were to make such an impression on him and later so deeply mark his music. He also heard the gay rounds sung by the peasants and the city dwellers and listened

⁴³ La Grange, *Mahler*, 17.

passionately to the stories he was told, especially those of Nanni, the Fischer's nursemaid, who knew a great many; among them was the sinister story, 'Das Klagende Lied' upon which he later based his first important work.

Young Mahler was also delighted to discover military music, for there was an infantry regiment based in Iglau and soldiers from the nearby barracks would sing as they marched past his home each day. The children were present when the regimental band rehearsed and got to know their repertoire of light music for the Sunday concerts and funeral marches for sadder occasions. Mahler was also sometimes a spectator at village celebrations, when there was much singing and dancing--in the summer in forest clearings and in the winter in local inns. Iglau also had a village band, made up of three string instruments and a little double bass with a handle and bow, which served as an accompaniment.

All those who came in contact with Gustav noticed the speed with which he could reproduce everything he heard; for his third birthday he was given a little accordion, and before long he could play a great many songs and marches faultlessly, as well as the bugle calls from the barracks.⁴⁴

Donald Mitchell finds that, "between the ages of four and six Mahler could sing already over two hundred folk-songs, learnt from servants."⁴⁵ Mahler's natural abilities in music were such that he began to study music formally when he was around five years old. Again, Mahler was fortunate to grow up in Iglau, where there was also a long tradition of music making in a more serious vain.

The Mahler family had access to the local library, which allowed Mahler to expand both his musical and literary knowledge base.

Every week I came back from the library, where we had taken out a subscription, with a brief case full of symphonies, opera arrangements, and salon pieces. All of them filled me with indescribable joy, though I was unable to say which I preferred: at that time I was peculiarly and utterly devoid of judgment. My imagination undoubtedly filled the most junky pieces with all sorts of imaginary beauties, transforming them and perfecting them in my mind.⁴⁶

Clearly, the youthful Mahler had access to an amazingly varied concoction of musical and literary influences that would later co-mingle in his symphonies and songs in fascinating and brilliant ways.

⁴⁴ La Grange, *Mahler*, 14.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Early Years*, 19.

⁴⁶ La Grange, *Mahler*, 17.

What can be difficult for modern generations to appreciate is the degree to which the oral tradition of stories and songs surrounded Mahler's childhood, prior to his eventual interactions with "serious music". In the middle of his career Mahler confided to Bauer-Lechner, "Composing is like playing with bricks, continually making new buildings from the same old stones. But the stones have lain there since one's youth, which is the only time for gathering and hoarding them. They are all ready and shaped for use from that time."⁴⁷ Late in his life Mahler also made the following statement about the importance of these early influences on a composer's maturity:

I have previously expressed the somewhat axiomatic truths through which we learned that the musical influences which surround the child are those which have the greatest influence upon his after-life, and also that the melodies which composers evolve in their maturity are but the flowers which bloom from the fields which were sown with the seeds of the folk-song in their childhood.⁴⁸

Another formative, and rather sad influence on Mahler's childhood was the frequency with which he encountered death in his immediate family. In all, of the fourteen children that Marie Mahler gave birth to, only seven survived past the age of three. The death of his brother Ernst, whose life was above average in length at fourteen years, would be one of the most traumatic events of Mahler's childhood.

And now his brother, the most intelligent and gifted of his brothers, to whom he had been so close since infancy, died after a long illness. Gustav followed the phases of its progress with terror, and for many months scarcely left the dying boy's bedside. He was always inventing new stories to cheer up and take his mind off his sufferings. Later he was to say that no other death had ever affected him so deeply.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Natalie Bauer-Lechner, and Peter Franklin, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 131.

⁴⁸ Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler, Volume 4, A New Life Cut Short (1907-1911)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1142.

⁴⁹ La Grange, *Mahler*, 26.

Mahler was the second child born to Marie, and thus was not alive for the accidental death of his older brother Isadore in Kalischt. He was however, privy to every other sibling fatality, and was thus well acquainted with the funeral rites, music, and familial heartbreak associated with these losses. Given these ongoing tragedies it is perhaps unsurprising that Mahler's Op. 1 composition, written at the age of six, was a combination of a polka with an introductory funeral march.⁵⁰ This tendency of Mahler to juxtapose great tragedy, with light-hearted, and sometimes ironic, hilarity would become a hallmark of his mature compositional style. He certainly found this juxtaposition in the folk tales and songs of his youth, and was later to discover the same paradigm in the folk songs of DKW.

It remains unclear exactly when Mahler first came into contact with Brentano and Arnim's volumes of folk songs. While it is entirely possible that Mahler got to know the collection in his youth, most Mahler scholars agree that this is unlikely. DKW was an important collection that had been endorsed by no less a figure than Goethe, but it by no means had a ubiquitous presence in every corner of the German speaking lands.

Recent literary scholarship has confirmed that conclusion by identifying an 1883 edition of the collection as the most likely source for Mahler's 'Wunderhorn'-texts, and it was in May of that year that Mahler first visited Kassel, the spiritual and commercial center of the 'Wunderhorn'-cult; he moved there in August. It seems reasonable to suggest that he may have bought (or received as a gift) a copy of the new edition of the anthology already in 1883.⁵¹

In any case, the first song from Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* has been shown by Roman to have been adapted from a poem in the DKW anthology despite

⁵⁰ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 27.

⁵¹ Zoltan Roman finds it more likely that Mahler came into contact with DKW in 1883 during his conducting tenure in Kassel. Roman, "Song and symphony," 77.

the fact that Mahler claims authorship of the poem.⁵² Given that he composed this cycle between the years 1883-85, while he was in Kassel, it stands to reason that he became to some degree acquainted with DKW at least as early as these years. Mahler owns up to this debt and provides other insights about his particular point of view on DKW folk poetry in a letter to the Viennese music critic Ludwig Karpath (1866-1936) written in 1905.

...up to the age of forty I took the words for my songs, in so far as I did not write them myself (and even then they are in a certain sense related to the ‘Wunderhorn’), exclusively from that collection. But I think it would be idle to claim any priority in this respect.

Another difference is that I have devoted myself heart and soul to that poetry, which is essentially different from any other kind of ‘literary poetry’, (and might almost be called something more like Nature and Life, in other words, the sources of all poetry, than art), in full awareness of its character and tone.

And there can be no doubt that it is I, who for many years was mocked for that choice of mine, who did, after all, set the fashion going.⁵³

This fashion that Mahler refers to is described by La Grange as a movement called the *Wandervogel*, which wanted to harken back to a simpler pre-industrial Germany, away from big cities.

Its members called themselves ‘Bacchantes’, and dressed in the manner of the ‘fahrenden Gesellen’ (traveling apprentices) of former times... The German Emperor went as far as to set up a commission of scholars and folklorists to make choral arrangements which would respect the ‘German-ness’ and ‘folk’ character of the songs, retaining the ‘singing quality’ of the vocal lines and keeping the accompaniments simple.⁵⁴

Mahler’s folk evocations did not meet muster with the simplistic idealizations of these city dwellers, and none of his settings were ever included in their collections. Even as he was elevating his folk evocations into the sphere of “art music” for the city elite, these

⁵² Ibid., 76.

⁵³ Gustav Mahler, "To Ludwig Karpath," Letter 319 of *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, Ed. Knud Martner, (Worcester: Faber and Faber, 02 Mar 1905), 284.

⁵⁴ Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler, Volume 3, Vienna: Triumph and Disillusion (1904-1907)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 122.

Wandervogel were chasing a non-existent, controlled, utopian German past into the figurative countryside.

Ida Dehmel (1870-1942), the wife of the famous poet Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), relates in her diary a conversation she had with Mahler about DKW, also in 1905, around the occasion of a performance of some of his songs.

He always felt there was something barbaric in the way musicians chose poems of perfect beauty to set to music. It was as if a great sculptor had hewn out a marble to daub it with colour. He, Mahler, had only taken over for his purpose a few poems from the ‘Wunderhorn’; since his early childhood, he had had a special relationship with this book. They were not perfectly finished poems, but rather stone blocks which everyone could shape as he would.⁵⁵

Several interesting considerations spring from Ida Dehmel’s recollections. Firstly, while we will never get completely to the bottom of this, Mahler seems to have intimated a familiarity with DKW going back to his youth. Whatever the case, he was certainly steeped in a tradition that was closely akin to this collection from his “earliest childhood”. In fact, Mahler’s understanding of folk material, and the lower classes from which it supposedly emerged would have been a more direct one than either the noble Arnim, or the middle-class Brentano could claim. It follows that Mahler’s rather open ended perspective on the treatment of these texts as “stone blocks which everyone could shape as he would,” might actually arise from his own knowledge of many variants of these songs that he had gathered and memorized as a boy. To reorganize and reform many of these poems, as we will see that he does quite liberally in his settings of them, would not only be appropriate to the style, but would be in a certain sense in line with the idealized origins of oral transmission in this repertoire.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 121.

Going back to Herder's folk ideas, Mahler exhibits many of the characteristics of this social subset. We can see that his family, in its difficult ascent towards a middle-class existence, was certainly part of the governed class, and as such, subject to the vagaries of the various reform laws that the Austro-Hungarian government instituted. The relative liberality of these laws during Mahler's youth allowed his family to prosper enough that he was able to receive an education, which included his training at the Vienna Conservatory. This education began to move Mahler away from Herder's folk ideal, however he retained a unique experience of the under-culture that Herder writes about. In many ways we can claim that the very difficulties that Jews faced in trying to assimilate into a culture that did not embrace them, even if it became more tolerant, would have deepened Mahler's understanding of this close-to-the-ground social experience.

Mahler's access to folksongs from the oral tradition was first-hand, and his incredible memory allowed him to sponge up this material and reproduce it with a clarity and accuracy that astounded the adults around him. Unlike Arnim and Brentano, this experience didn't at first come from written sources, but was an orally transmitted one. If Arnim and Brentano were engaged in romanticizing the folk idiom with their collection for the consumption of an elite nationalistic audience, Mahler was in a position to renovate this idiom toward a more direct experience of the folk, as he understood it. This directionality of intention would bring Mahler's efforts more in line with the approach to the folk idiom as advocated by Tieck. Tieck felt that the educated classes needed to be instructed by "true" folk material.

An interesting feature about the folk prescription espoused in Arnim's essay *Von Volksliedern*, found at the end of the first volume of DKW, is that these folksongs often came from "figures of mobility". This included artisans that moved around to ply their trades, soldiers who were always on the move, and other such migratory persons that lacked a home base. Arnim and Brentano both traveled extensively in collecting their folk specimens, and we can see that this element of having a wider experience of the world was important to their conception.

In this sense, Mahler's adult life shares many similarities with this particular aspect of Arnim and Brentano's folk ideal. Mahler's conducting career took him all over the German speaking lands and into Hungary. These stops included Bad Hall, Laibach, Olmütz, Kassel, Prague, Leipzig, Budapest, Hamburg, and finally Vienna. Indeed Mahler's first song cycle, the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, capitalizes on this trope of the wandering folk figure. Whether or not the cycle was intended in any kind of an autobiographical sense, he composed it in the aftermath of his love affair with the soprano Johanna Richter while conducting in Kassel, making it difficult to look past the similarities between the homeless lovelorn protagonist in Mahler's cycle, and the vicissitudes of his life.

So we see that Mahler represents in his person many of the key traits that can be associated with the folk as conceived by Herder, as well as Arnim and Brentano. The chief points of departure for Mahler from these prescriptions are found in his education, and more damningly from the perspective of Arnim and Brentano, in his Jewishness. That Mahler encountered anti-Semitism throughout his life is unquestionable. The ferocity of this prejudice varied at different points and locations in his career, but it was

always present.⁵⁶ In reading through La Grange's exhaustive biography of Mahler, this reality becomes upsettingly clear.

A litany of Mahler's press reviews starkly exemplifies this unfortunate situation. Fischer offers two typical examples. In an 1885 newspaper article written about Mahler during his tenure in Kassel we read,

In order that the whole world may see that in Kassel the Jew must play first fiddle on such occasions according to national liberal legal action, Mahler, a Jew who is currently assistant conductor at the Royal Court Theatre, has been named principal conductor.... This satisfied the different racial types, the Germans having all the work, while the Jew received all the credit. Oh, what fun it was to help turn a dear old Jew into a genius by writing and talking him up.⁵⁷

And in April 1897, shortly after Mahler's appointment at the Vienna Hofoper, the *Reichpost* declares,

At the time we already had an inkling of the origin of this celebrity and we therefore avoided publishing anything other than the bare facts about this unadulterated - Jew.... We shall refrain from any over-hasty judgment. The Jew's press will see whether the panegyrics with which they plaster their idol at present do not become washed away by the rain of reality as soon as Herr Mahler starts spouting his Yiddish interpretations from the podium.⁵⁸

Sadly Mahler's Jewishness was used by his enemies throughout his life as a way of devaluing his compositions, his authority as a conductor, and his person. As Mahler describes the situation in a letter to Fritz Löhr written in 1895, "My Jewishness denies my entrance into any Court Theater, as things stand now in the world. Not Vienna or Dresden or Munich stands open to me. Everywhere blows the same wind. In my present state, suppose I came to Vienna? How should I be treated there, with my way of going

⁵⁶ Kravitt tracks the shifting face of anti-semitism in the late 19th and early 20th-century German speaking lands. He finds that the ferocity of this prejudice was in a state of constant flux. For instance, the Vienna of Mahler's student days was much more tolerant than it would be when he returned as the director of the *Wiener Hofoper* in 1897. The appointment of the highly anti-semitic Viennese mayor Karl Lueger, also in 1897, led to a much less tolerant social and political atmosphere for Jews. Edward F. Kravitt, "Mahler, Victim of the 'New' Anti-Semitism," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 127, no. 1 (2002): 72-94.

⁵⁷ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 252.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 252.

about things?”⁵⁹ That he was able to win over large portions of these prejudiced factions in the German speaking lands attests to the extremely high levels of artistic success he attained despite his ethnic background and his “way of going about things”. This latter element should not be overlooked in our conversation. Mahler’s Jewishness wasn’t the only perceived problem. This racial reality, coupled with his exceedingly uncompromising leadership style, were the sharpest swords with which his critics attempted to slay him.

Although Mahler did not identify himself first and foremost as a Jew, but rather as a musician within the great German tradition of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, etc., much of the musical establishment certainly identified him as a Jew, and thus an outsider. This pressure was such that before being able to take the position of music director at the *Wiener Hofoper* he had to convert to Catholicism. Mahler even tried to disguise the close proximity of this conversion to his appointment in Vienna so that the Viennese public might not think that it was a tactical move. In a letter to Ödön von Mihalovich Mahler writes,

Two Circumstances are against me. First, I am told, is my ‘craziness’, which my enemies drag up over and over again whenever they see a chance of blocking my way. Second, is the fact that I am Jewish by birth. As regards this latter point, I should not fail to inform you (in case you are not already aware of the fact) that I completed my conversion to the Catholic faith soon after my departure from Pest.⁶⁰

However, Fischer points out that Mahler didn’t convert to Catholicism until February 1897, two months after he had written this letter.⁶¹ He resigned from the Royal Hungarian Opera in Budapest in 1891. This subterfuge was surely a political strategy

⁵⁹ George M. Cummins III, *Mahler Re-Composed* (Iuniverse Inc, 2011), 142.

⁶⁰ Gustav Mahler, Herta Blaukopf, Kurt Blaukopf, and Zoltan Roman, *Gustav Mahler: Leben und Werk in Zeugnissen der Zeit* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 207-8.

⁶¹ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 250.

aimed at gaining the directorship in Vienna, and at clearing away all obstacles to this end. Nevertheless, Mahler's philosophical and religious outlook cannot be entirely encompassed by Judaism or Catholicism, although both traditions certainly had their influence on him.⁶²

Mahler was well aware of the difficulties that Jews faced in trying to establish themselves in German speaking culture, having grown up watching his father navigate similarly troubled waters in his business dealings. The visual artist Alfred Roller (1864-1935), Mahler's close collaborator and set designer at the *Wiener Hofoper*, had this to say about Mahler's perspective on his Jewish heritage.

Mahler never hid the fact that he was of Jewish origin. But for him that was not something to be pleased about, it was a challenge, a spur to even higher and purer achievements. "It's like someone who comes into the world with one arm too short: the other arm must learn to accomplish more, and ultimately perhaps it does things that two healthy arms would not have managed to do." That was how he once explained to me the effect of his origins upon his work. Often, people who wanted to be agreeable to him would tell him that in view of the way he had developed he was no longer a Jew. That depressed him. "People should listen to my work and see how it affects them, and then accept it or reject it. Their favorable or unfavorable prejudices with regard to the work of a Jew they should leave at home. That I demand as my right." The main thing that bound him to other Jews was compassion.... "Among the poorest of men there is always one who is still poorer, and who happens to be a Jew."⁶³

Another interesting installment on this matter is found in a card that Mahler wrote in 1906 to console the Jewish conductor Oskar Fried (1871-1941) upon his failure to obtain the conductorship of the *Frankfurt Museumkonzerte*.

Such posts are for the race of the Kogels and Hauseggers ---ability is beside the point! But my dear Fried, chin up! Take comfort from my example--for most of

⁶² "Mahler's private religion... was a highly individual mix of Goethean pantheism, a belief in entelechy of a kind associated with both Goethe and Gustav Fechner, namely, the notion of a creative destiny imposed on us by forces outside ourselves, a religion of compassion in the spirit of Dostoevsky, a Nietzschean independence and a profoundly felt natural religion. When Mahler used the word 'God', he didn't mean the Christian or the Jewish God but, an amalgam of all this and much else besides." Ibid., 260.

⁶³ Henry-Louis De La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 455-456.

my life I have gone through that sort of thing.... I, too, have been obliged by the everlasting misunderstandings I encounter and the resulting accumulation of obstacles these cause, to find a ‘modus vivendi’ with the little beasts. And don’t forget our principal fault, our race: we can do nothing about it. The least we can do is try to attenuate those outward signs of our inborn nature which people find objectionable. By doing this we have to make fewer concessions in our work.⁶⁴

So it emerges that Mahler clearly understood the importance of attempting to assimilate into German culture, and to “attenuate” his Jewishness in order to achieve his artistic aims. At all points in his biography Mahler’s creative ideals are given pride of place in his list of priorities.

Using Mahler’s orientation to the culture as a guide, we can now get a clearer sense of why he may have been so attracted to these texts despite the racially exclusive aims of their collectors, and the anti-Semitic school of thought, which they were collected to support. First and foremost, as a composer he was obviously attracted to folk stories and songs in general. Nearly all of his early-published works are in some way related to the folk idiom. We can say that having grown up with the indelible impression of a large repertoire of folksongs, Mahler thought of this genre as his own. When setting these poems, he didn’t treat them strictly, but rather altered them to suit his taste. Whether or not his specific aim was to more firmly situate himself within the Germanic tradition in his folk settings, the act of doing so had the effect of rewriting the anti-Semitic, nationalistic intentions of Arnim and Brentano into a more Herderian, egalitarian reading that included his own experience as a Jew.

In this context we must remember that Mahler was considered one of the greatest interpreters of Richard Wagner’s (1813-1883) operas during his lifetime, and was a devout disciple of the famous composer, despite having a keen knowledge of his writings

⁶⁴ Ibid., 503.

in all their anti-Semitic fervor.⁶⁵ We might say that he was fighting for a more open prescription of the idealized German future, or perhaps that he was rewriting the nationalist program of Arnim and Brentano to include himself in the conversation. It will remain a thorny enterprise to attempt to confidently state exactly what Mahler was after with his DKW obsession, or that there was a singular aim with this enterprise. However, it would be equally short sighted to imagine that Mahler's refined literary mind would have been blind to the implications that settings from one of the most German of German texts by a Jew would have in this culture. After all, if he was to achieve his primary goal of reaching the highest artistic standards possible, he had no choice but to embrace the culture for all of its warts, and to reform it from within, even as many of its ruling dignitaries kept him at arms length. In attempting this cultural revision, DKW presented an ideal repertoire for Mahler to stake his claim on the future.

⁶⁵ "Whenever my spirits are low, I have only to think of Wagner and my mood improves. How amazing that a light like his ever penetrated the world!" Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 38.

Chapter IV: Analysis and Performance Considerations in Mahler's First

Nine *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* Settings

Notwithstanding the first song from *Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen*, which was composed in 1884-85, and has been confirmed as an adaptation from a DKW poem, Mahler composed his first nine DKW settings between 1887-1890. Up until this point Mahler had written his own texts in folk style for both his lieder and his fairytale cantata *Das Klagende Lied*. There are four exceptions to this rule. These are the settings of Tirso de Molina and Richard Leander, two each, that are found in *Lieder und Gesänge*, Volume 1. *Lieder und Gesänge*, Volumes 2 and 3 contain the nine songs for which he first claimed DKW as a source. All three of these volumes were originally published in 1892.⁶⁶ As Mahler's later orchestral DKW songs have received much greater attention in both the primary and secondary literature, the details about the provenance of these earlier compositions are not overly plentiful. The subject of this chapter will be these first nine DKW settings.

The following analysis will first delve into the textual alterations that Mahler made to the original DKW poetry in composing these songs. Mahler's adaptations of the DKW poems, with English translations, are given at the beginning of each discussion. The texts and translations of the original DKW poems are available in appendix A for direct comparison. Besides Mahler's own indigenous understanding of the folk repertoire, what other precedents and sources were available in the broader culture that

⁶⁶ Some confusion can result from the later 1912 publication of *14 Lieder und Gesänge, aus der Jugendzeit, für eine Singstimme und Klavier*. The three volumes of this publication contain the same songs in the same order as the earlier 1892 publication.

relate to these texts? Franz Magnus Böhme (1827-1898) and Ludwig Christian Erk's (1807-1883) three volume *Deutscher Liederhort* proves to be a particularly valuable source as it includes variants of the DKW poems that Mahler chose to set.⁶⁷ This collection differs from DKW in that Erk and Böhme were far less liberal than Arnim and Brentano in their editorial practices, resulting in a collection that is more faithful to their original sources. Unlike DKW, the *Deutscher Liederhort* also includes examples of the melodies that were associated with these poems. We will see that Mahler had a relatively free hand in his treatment of the DKW texts. While the argument can be made that some of his melodic material shares a likeness with that found in the Erk/Böhme collection, these similarities function musically as a point of departure for Mahler's far more complicated structures. His wife Alma recalls him referring to these constitutive elements as, "blocks of marble which anyone might make his own."⁶⁸ Secondly this study will look into the various folk images that crop up in Mahler's DKW settings such as the nightingale and the cuckoo. What clues can these tropes give the interpreter about Mahler's approach to the poetry? How can this information be of use in developing a culturally informed interpretation of his songs? Thirdly, we will look carefully at Mahler's musical settings of the poetry, attempting to gather in the deceptively complex interpretive connotations that exist in his music. To this end we will look carefully at the relationship between the piano and vocal line. Finally, we will discuss the interpretive possibilities that this research offers to the performer.

⁶⁷ Franz Magnus Böhme and Ludwig Christian Erk, *Deutscher Liederhort: Auswahl der vorzüglicheren deutschen Volkslieder nach Wort und Weise aus der Vorzeit und der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1925).

⁶⁸ Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, 93.

In many places we will find that biographical parallels can be drawn between Mahler's life during the composition of these songs, and the textual alterations and musical gestures that he employs. A short discussion of Mahler's time in Leipzig, and his relationship with the Weber family during these years is necessary. During his conducting tenure (1886-1888) at the *Leipzig Neues Stadttheater*, Mahler became acquainted--or reacquainted, as the case may be--with an edition of DKW. This happy discovery happened while perusing the library of Baron Carl von Weber, the grandson of the famous composer Carl Maria von Weber. Mahler's interaction with the Weber family was fortuitous, not only because of his access to these texts, but also due to his first major compositional success in completing Weber's unfinished comic opera *Die drei Pintos*. This completion earned Mahler a significant amount of money at publication, (20,000 marks not including eventual royalties), and a needed dose of confidence in his own compositional worth.⁶⁹ Weber had left *Die Drei Pintos* far from complete, and Mahler took great delight in having duped the public into believing that his substantial reworking of the material, as well as much of his own original composition for the opera, was indeed Weber's. Mahler also had a requited and "violent passion" with Baron Carl von Weber's wife Marion von Weber.⁷⁰ This surely contributed to his close relationship with the family, and no doubt to his compositional vigor. The Weber's were musical confidants of Mahler in lending him their ears for the first performance at the piano of his First Symphony. His connection with the Weber family will prove to be an interesting component in the forthcoming interpretive analysis.

⁶⁹ La Grange, *Mahler*, 171.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 155.

In exploring Mahler's methods of setting text to music, Natalie Bauer-Lechner again provides invaluable information. Evidence of Mahler's compositional approach in writing songs, like many aspects of his personality, is contradictory in nature. An example of this inconsistency can be found in Bauer-Lechner's recollections. For instance, in one passage she recalls that Mahler described his compositional process as starting with the text:

Have you noticed that, with me, the melody always grows out of the words? The words, so to speak, generate the melody--never vice versa... And this is the only way to achieve an indissoluble unity of word and note. The opposite process, by which some words or other have to fit arbitrarily to a melody, is the conventional relationship, but not an organic fusion of both elements.⁷¹

Yet, in another place, she quotes him as saying the opposite:

It happens in a hundred different ways. One minute it is the poem that is the inspiration, the next it is the melody, I often begin in the middle, often at the beginning, sometimes even at the end, and the rest of it gradually falls into place until it develops into a complete whole.⁷²

He even experienced a certain sense of fate with his later DKW setting of "Der Tambour'sell," in which he thought he had come up with a symphonic theme, but realized that it was actually a melody ideally suited to the DKW text with every word "fitted perfectly."⁷³

As we navigate these deviations in Mahler's process, it is important to avoid the dubious undertaking of deciding precisely what Mahler meant to express in these compositions. There are several biographical and cultural clues that I will use in looking at these songs, but I will confine our considerations to the questions that an interpreter must ponder when preparing for a performance of them, rather than attempting to

⁷¹ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 50.

⁷² Ibid., 33.

⁷³ Ibid., 173.

understand exactly what Mahler intended. In all likelihood, he would have given as many different answers, as times that he was asked about his compositions. However, one feature of Mahler's compositional approach that remains ubiquitous is his unwillingness to exactly repeat material.

In my writing, from the very first, you won't find any more repetition from strophe to strophe; for music is governed by the law of eternal evolution, eternal development--just as the world, even in one and the same spot, is always changing, eternally fresh and new. But of course this development must be progressive, or I don't give a damn for it!⁷⁴

Mahler's point of view on his compositions also seems to have gone through this "progressive development."

I will not directly address Mahler's Jewishness in relationship to these settings. Mahler did not consider his music to be Jewish, and neither shall we in our analysis of it. That the action of setting these particular texts had the effect of including Mahler in an otherwise racially exclusive context has already been established in chapter two. While we need to be aware of this paradigm as we interpret his songs, it would be dangerous to attempt to analyze them in detail from a Jewish perspective. This would be expressly against Mahler's intentions. We've also discussed Mahler's unique firsthand relationship with folk material dating from his youth. We will see that while he pays homage to his own roots in the folk idiom, he continually adds levels of musical complexity in both the piano accompaniments and the vocal writing, which move his efforts squarely into the realm of "art music".

Given that there is no exact chronological record of the nine early DKW settings, in the forthcoming discussion I will deal with them in the originally published order of

⁷⁴ Ibid., 130.

1892. The reader should have a score of these songs available for perusal while reading the following analyses.

Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen (To make naughty children well behaved)

Es kam ein Herr zum Schlösseli
Auf einem schönen Röss'li,
Ku-ku-kuk, ku-ku-kuk!
Da lugt die Frau zum Fenster aus
Und sagt: "Der Mann ist nicht zu Haus,
Und niemand heim als meine Kind',
Und's Mädchen ist auf der Wäschewind!"

Der Herr auf seinem Rösseli
Sagt zu der Frau im Schlösseli:
Ku-ku-kuk, ku-ku-kuk!
"Sind's gute Kind', sind's böse Kind'?
Ach, liebe Frau, ach sagt geschwind,"
Ku-ku-kuk, ku-ku-kuk!

"In meiner Tasch' für folgsam Kind',
Da hab' ich manche Angebind,"
Ku-ku-kuk, ku-ku-kuk!
Die Frau die sagt: "Sehr böse Kind'
Sie folgen Mutter nicht geschwind,
Sind böse, sind böse!"

Da sagt der Herr: "So reit' ich heim,
Dergleichen Kinder brauch' ich kein'!"
Ku-ku-kuk, ku-ku-kuk!
Und reit' auf seinem Rösseli
Weit, weit entweg vom Schlösseli!
Ku-ku-kuk, ku-ku-kuk!

There came a gentleman up to the castle,
On a beautiful horse,
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
There the wife peeps out of the window
and says, "My husband is not home,
and no one is here but my children,
and the maid is at her washing!"

The gentleman on his horse
says to the wife in the castle:
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
"Are they good children, or naughty children?
Ah, dear woman, tell me quickly!"
Cuckoo, cuckoo!

"In my pocket, for obedient children,
I have there many presents."
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
The woman says: "Very naughty children!
They don't obey their mother quickly;
they're naughty, they're naughty!"

Then the gentleman says: "Then I will ride home,
for I have no use for such children!"
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
And he rides his horse
far, far away from the castle!
Cuckoo, cuckoo!

The original poem for this song can be found in volume one of DKW under the title "Um die Kinder still und artig zu machen."⁷⁵ The source for Arnim/Brentano's version of this folksong is found in Friedrich Nicolai's 1777 collection of Swiss folksongs, *Eyn feyner kleyner Almanach*.⁷⁶ Mahler makes three major changes to Arnim/Brentano's DKW text. First, the lines "In meiner Tasch' für folgsam Kind", da hab' ich manche Angebind" are added to the original poem thus clarifying why the

⁷⁵ Rölleke. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume 1*, 325.

⁷⁶ Compared to Nicolai's version of this poem, *Eyn schweizerisch Wyegen-Lyd*, Arnim and Brentano keep the basic content of the original, but update the language for modern German readers in taking out most instances of the Swiss dialect. Friedrich Nicolai, *Eyn feyner kleyner Almanach vol schöner echter liblicher Volkslieder* (Berlin: F. Nicolai, 1777), 144.

gentleman is asking whether or not the children are good. In the original folksong the purpose of this question is left ambiguous. Secondly Mahler adds the persistent use of “Ku-ku-kuk” as a refrain in his song. Thirdly, the structure of the poem is disrupted from the four four-line stanzas of DKW to a four-stanza structure with the following (7-6-6-6) line breakdown. Other smaller changes occur, such as the maid being “at her washing” as opposed to “in the attic” in DKW, and a respelling of the Swiss dialect in changing the word “Schlössli” to “Schlösseli”, and “Röss’li” to “Rösseli.” This latter can probably be explained as an example of Mahler adding a syllable to suit the dotted rhythm of his musical inspiration.

As mentioned earlier, the DKW version of this folksong leaves a certain ambiguity about the purpose of the gentleman’s visit. Mahler makes the gentleman’s reasons somewhat more explicit, although there remains doubt as to what is really going on. Why is the wife at home alone? Why is the gentleman concerned with her children? Why does he ask her to tell her “quickly?” And perhaps the strangest element of all, why does Mahler add all of this cuckooing? No instance of cuckooing can be found in any other source related to this folksong. It should be noted here that the cuckoo makes an appearance in two other DKW settings by Mahler. We will discuss his use of the cuckoo in “Ablösung im Sommer” later in this chapter. The other setting involving the cuckoo, “Lob des hohen Verstands,” is found in Mahler’s (1899) publication of orchestral DKW songs. In this song a donkey acts as judge in a singing competition between a cuckoo and a nightingale. The cuckoo wins the competition, despite the sweeter singing of the nightingale. Mitchell notes that Mahler’s original title for this song, “Lob der Kritik” (critical acclaim), makes it clear “that he conceived this song, in part at least, as a hit at

his critics.”⁷⁷ While these uses of the cuckoo trope are interesting, neither of these settings helps to explain the unusual addition of the cuckoo in “Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen”.

Several possibilities should be considered. Mahler wrote at least some of these songs for the Weber children, with whom he became intimately acquainted at the home of Baron Karl von Weber and his wife Marion von Weber. Mahler mentions to Natalie Bauer-Lechner that “Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen” specifically had been written for this purpose.⁷⁸ In this context one could argue that these cuckoos might serve the purpose of keeping the attention of young minds so that they would stay focused on his sermon all the way to the end. Mahler’s addition of the “many presents” that the gentleman had for “obedient children,” would also serve the function of providing these children with a greater stimulus for their good behavior. However, this still doesn’t account for the haste with which the gentleman approaches the woman, and the fact that he rides off “far, far away”, claiming that he has no use for such children.

In gathering more detail about the trope of the cuckoo in folk literature, other possibilities prove interesting. The cuckoo is known as the messenger of spring. Its call is associated with timekeeping, prophesying the hour of the day, the number of years that one will live, and even how long a maid will remain unmarried. This timekeeping element of the cuckoo is familiar in the form of the cuckoo clock. The sight and sound of the cuckoo were thought of as a good omen for marriage.⁷⁹ However, there is also a common usage of the cuckoo as a symbol of illicit love. The cuckoo is well known for

⁷⁷ Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years: Chronicles and Commentaries* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1976) 261.

⁷⁸ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 33.

⁷⁹ Leach, Maria, “cuckoo” in *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls), 1949.

laying its eggs in other bird's nests. "Often the cuckoo mother will push other eggs from the nest, both to allay the host's suspicions that an egg has been added and to reduce competition for her own young once hatched."⁸⁰ This sense of deception can also be found in Greek mythology as Zeus disguised himself as a cuckoo to engage in his clandestine amorous adventures.⁸¹ We derive our modern word "cuckold" from this aspect of the cuckoo. We also associate the cuckoo with foolishness or insanity, as it is common to refer to someone engaging in strange behaviors as cuckoo.

With these ideas in mind, our reading of Mahler's addition of the "Ku-ku-kuk" refrain becomes far less arbitrary. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, while Mahler was writing these songs he was engaged in a passionate affair with Marion von Weber. Allusions to this affair appear in two of Mahler's letters. He writes to Friedrich Löhr, "I have met a beautiful person here in Leipzig--and let me tell you at once--the sort that tempts one to do foolish things.--Do I make myself clear, *amice*? But this time I mean to be careful, or else I shall be in trouble again."⁸² In another letter to Löhr he mentions being "on the point of once again committing a number of 'follies,'" and also of wanting to "run away."⁸³ La Grange clarifies just how serious Mahler was about both the love affair with Marion von Weber, and the intention to disappear with her.

Mahler admitted that in a moment of madness he planned to run away with Marion. On the day agreed upon, he even spent an agonized hour waiting for her in the train, wondering what his moral and material future would be after he had carried off the wife of a man who had treated him so well. At the moment of the train's departure Frau Weber had still not arrived, so he got out onto the platform and went home, both disappointed and relieved.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Alison Jones, "cuckoo" in *Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore* (Edinburgh: Larousse, 1995).

⁸¹ Ad de Vries, "cuckoo" in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1976).

⁸² Gustav Mahler to Friedrich Löhr, October, 1886, in *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler: The Original Edition*, ed. Knud Martner (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979) 101-102.

⁸³ Gustav Mahler to Friedrich Löhr, January, 1887, in *Ibid.*, 106.

⁸⁴ La Grange, *Mahler*, 173.

While it is impossible to say with certainty that Mahler doctored “Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen” with encoded messages to Marion von Weber, this possibility appears likely. The situation of a gentleman arriving at a castle, receiving insinuating information from the woman of the house that her husband isn’t home and that the maid is busy, and then inquiring with a need for haste as to the behavior of the children, already has a certain edge of infidelity to it. When Mahler, with no historical precedent, adds a refrain of cuckoos to this scene, the intention of depicting infidelity, either past or present, as well as the foolishness of his passion appears almost obvious. This incessant cuckooing heightens the need for haste that both the gentleman and the wife concern themselves with. Is there concern about being discovered? Could it also be possible that these naughty children who don’t obey their mother quickly, may be incapable of keeping secret the potential amorous liaison of the wife and the gentleman? The three-part purpose of making Frau Weber’s children laugh with the cuckoo refrain, of teaching a moral lesson that would aid Frau Weber in parenting them, and of sending Frau Weber a discreet yet remarkably bold message of his amorous intentions makes for a fascinating interpretation if not a provable reality in this song.

Musically, Mahler sets this poem in a surprisingly strict strophic fashion. Each strophe occupies two stanzas of text. Some of the melodic material shows a passing resemblance to Erk/Böhme’s version of this folksong, “Der Schimmelreiter”, found in their 1893-94 compilations the *Deutscher Liederhort*.⁸⁵ While Mahler may have used this folksong as a point of departure, (the piano introduction bears a resemblance to the original with its sixteenth note motion), his musical materials depart rapidly from the

⁸⁵ Ludwig Erk, and Franz M. Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: Vol. 3* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963), 623.

model. This sixteenth note motion is only heard once in each strophe of the vocal line. The harmony of Mahler's setting is fairly straightforward throughout. However he imbeds this simple structure with chromaticism at key moments. One such moment is found in measure 9 where in the vocal line he repeats the melodic material of the earlier "Ku-ku-kuk" refrain, but this time the words are "und niemand," and the left hand delivers a rather insinuating chromatic accompaniment that makes the repeated idea of no one being home sound insistently important.

Other notable features include Mahler's use of strong offbeat accents in the piano introduction, as well as in both the piano and vocal line on the final cuckoo of each strophe. In this final cuckoo the chromatic motion returns. In the spirit of progressive development Mahler changes the accompaniment in the third strophe, although the vocal line is repeated nearly verbatim. Mahler inverts the right and left hand accompaniment figures in this stanza, the left hand now outlining the vocal melody. The only moment where the accompaniment does not in some fashion directly play the melody with the vocal line comes in measures 29 and 30. Interestingly in the text in these measures the mother complains that her children are "bad," and don't follow her quickly. Perhaps the accompaniment can be heard as a musical depiction of the children not following their mother. This moment seals the fate of the children who will now not receive any presents from the gentleman. Mahler doesn't miss the opportunity to subtly depict this feature in the music. The accompaniment is more filled out in the third and fourth strophe, lending even more emphasis to the aforementioned chromatic motion in right hand octaves for the words "sind böse, sind böse". The dynamic markings in the second

half of the piece also vary from the first half. In general the music is playful with sudden dynamic contrasts, and a rhythmically dry restraint in piano pedaling.

This analysis offers the fascinating interpretive possibility of imagining oneself to be Mahler at the piano, delivering an encoded amorous message to Frau Weber in the guise of an entertaining, moralizing tale for children. At the very least the overtones of infidelity, present in this song, should be capitalized on by the performer in some fashion.

Ich ging mit Lust durch einem grünen Wald

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

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

Der Tag verging, die Nacht brach an,
Er kam zu Feinsliebchen gegangen.
Er klopft so leis' wohl an den Ring:
"Ei schlafst du oder wachst mein Kind?
Ich hab so lang gestanden!"

Es schaut der Mond durchs Fensterlein
zum holden, süßen Lieben,
Die Nachtigall sang die ganze Nacht.
Du schlafselig Mägdelein, nimm dich in Acht!
Wo ist dein Herzliebster geblieben?

I walked with joy through a green wood;
I heard the birds singing.
they sang so youthfully, they sang so maturely,
those small birds in the green wood!
How gladly I listened to their singing!

Now sing, now sing, Lady Nightingale!
sing by my sweetheart's house:
just come when it's dark,
when no one is in the street -
then come to me!
I will let you in.

The day was gone, night fell;
he went to his sweetheart.
He knocks so softly on the ring:
Eh, are you sleeping or are you awake, my dear?
I have been standing here so long!"

The moon gazes through the little window,
at this tender, sweet love;
the nightingale sang the whole night.
You sleepy maiden, stay alert!
Where has your beloved gone?

A few initial details need clarification in reading this poem. Who are the characters and what lines in the poem do they deliver? A maiden, a man, and a narrator all have roles in the story. While there are other possible interpretations, in my reading the maiden delivers the first two stanzas. The third stanza starts with the narrator who introduces the statements in the final two lines by the male lover. The final stanza is sung entirely by the narrator.

The DKW poem from which Mahler adapted his text for "Ich ging mit Lust durch einen grünen Wald," is found in volume three with the title "Waldvögelein".⁸⁶ Arnim and Brentano assign an oral attribution to this song. In the first three stanzas Mahler follows the DKW poem quite closely with a few exceptions. In the second stanza Mahler

⁸⁶ Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume 3*, 84.

changes the word “Gassen” to the singular “Gasse,” lending a greater sense of familiarity to the street in question. Perhaps Mahler wants to strengthen the impression that the maiden’s lover has been to her particular street, and perhaps to her bedroom before. He also adds the text “komm zu mir” to this second stanza, increasing the passionate intensity of the maiden’s desire to be with her lover. This also lengthens this stanza from five to six lines. In the third stanza Mahler changes the line “Ei schläfst du, oder wachst du, Kind” from the original DKW poem to “Ei schäfst du oder wachst, mein kind?” This subtle alteration can also be viewed as an attempt to denote a history of relationship between the lovers as he uses the possessive “mein.” The question mark helps to clarify this text as well. For the fourth stanza, Mahler leaves out the final two stanzas from the DKW version and writes his own ending verse. The omitted DKW stanzas read as follows:

Dass du so lang’ gestanden hast,
Ich hab’ noch nicht geschlafen;
Ich dacht’ als frei in meinem Sinn,
Wo ist mein Herzallerliebster hin,
Wo mag er so lang’ bleiben?

Wo ich so lang’ geblieben bin,
Das darf ich dir wohl sagen;
Beim Bier und auch beim roten Wein,
Bei einem schwarzbraunen Mädelein,
Hätt’ deiner bald vergessen.

If you have been standing long,
I have not been sleeping yet;
I have been thinking in my mind,
Where has my sweetheart gone,
Where can he be staying so long?

Where I stayed so long,
That I may well tell you;
At the beer and also at the red wine,
With a dark maiden,
I had almost forgotten you.

Mahler takes a rather different turn with his final verse. Now the sweethearts keep their rendezvous, and the “blissfully drowsy maiden” fails to realize that her lover has departed in the night. We are left to interpret whether or not the warning of the narrator, “nimm dich in Acht!” should be heard as similar to that of the DKW version, which highlights the faithlessness of the male, or as a lighter hearted warning that denotes the possible illicit nature of their union. Dargie advocates a reading that views both versions as

poems of “love deceived”, but it is certainly possible to imagine that the male lover was not faithless at all, but left his lover for some other reason without her realizing it in her sleepy languor.⁸⁷

The nightingale plays an important role in this song, and deserves greater examination here. Initially the maiden sends the nightingale as a messenger to her lover to ask him to come to her. Later the nightingale sings all night as the moon shines through the window on the lovers. A well-known story about the nightingale found in medieval folklore describes the sleepless nature of this bird.⁸⁸ According to legend the nightingale is so afraid of being eaten by a snake that it presses itself into a thorn to stay awake, and sings out of the pain that this causes. In a related legend the nightingale is in love with a white rose and dies while pressing itself into the roses thorns, thus staining the rose red.⁸⁹ These legends, especially given that the nightingale represents the female lover’s interests in Mahler’s song, can lend a measure of sensuality to our reading. The beautiful song of the nightingale communicates the pain of separation from her lover, the exhortation for the young man to visit her at night, and perhaps the sweet pain of the couples sexual union, “the nightingale sang the whole night.” There is a strong sense that Mahler poetically conflates the sleepless singing of the nightingale from the pain of the thorn, with the sleepless ecstasy of the maiden as she makes love with her sweetheart. This reading renders a powerful degree of eroticism to Mahler’s final stanza.

Musically Mahler sets his adaptation in *da capo* form: AABA. The melodic material shows little to no relationship with the Erk/Böhme version of this song, other

⁸⁷ Mary E. Dargie, *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Bern: P. Lang, 1981), 133.

⁸⁸ Leach, “nightingale” in *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore*.

⁸⁹ De Vries, “nightingale” in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*.

than the typical folk-like style of stepwise and triadic motion.⁹⁰ As is typical of Mahler's compositional approach, each A section is different from the last. The harmony proceeds quite simply in a dreamy C major with the recommendation of a heavy use of the sustain pedal. Mahler employs sharp 4th grace notes in measures 15-16, which he uses quite often in his folk settings. These appear throughout the piece when the harmony moves to A minor.

One of the most notable features of this song is the nightingale refrain found in the accompaniment beginning in measures 6-8, and returning throughout the piece as connecting material between the vocal statements. This consists of a sixteenth note quintuplet figure preceded by two even sixteenth notes. A valuable source that should be examined in studying this song is found in Mahler's *Welte-Mignon* piano roll recording of it made in Leipzig, 1905.⁹¹ The Welte system was revolutionary in its time, possessing the ability to not only record the notes and rhythms of the pianist, but also the nuances and dynamics of the performance. The Welte firm recorded an impressive array of major artists including Gabriel Fauré, Edvard Grieg, Richard Strauss, and Camille Saint-Saëns. Mahler only recorded three pieces in his session, which, fortunately for our purposes, include a piano solo version of "Ich ging mit Lust durch einen grünen Wald." In listening to Mahler's recording of this song, he treats the nightingale sixteenth notes quite evenly, unlike many modern interpretations. The *Welte-Mignon* piano rolls provide an invaluable source that deserves careful examination by the interpreter.

The B-section is marked *etwas langsamer*, and initiates a rolling left-hand F major arpeggiation, which heralds the onset of night and the anticipation of the lovers

⁹⁰ Erk/Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: Volume 2*, 390.

⁹¹ Gustav Mahler, *Mahler Plays Mahler: The Welte-Mignon Piano Rolls*, Gustav Mahler, Yvonne Kenny, Claudine Carlson, Gilbert E. Kaplan, and William F. Malloch, Golden Legacy, CD, 1993.

meeting. When the male lover speaks to the female at “ei, schläfst du oder wachst, mein kind? Ich hab so lang gestanden!”, the harmony moves toward the relative uncertainty of D-flat-major before resolving back to F major. The nightingale refrain that begins in F major modulates in stunning fashion to D major before re-arriving at the home key of C major. In the final A section the nightingale sixteenth note motion continues through as accompaniment to the words “die Nachtigall sang die ganze Nacht.” The overriding musical feeling in the final lines of warning to the maiden are of peace and contentment rather than any disturbance. The dynamic is marked (pp), and then (ppp) for the final nightingale refrain postlude. Nothing in Mahler’s musical setting denotes conflict or deception, but rather a peacefully ecstatic evocation of a lovers meeting.

We can see that Mahler has refigured this poem, both textually and musically, away from the more crass version found in DKW. The interpreter can certainly still deliver this story as the warning tale of love deceived advocated by Dargie. However, Mahler’s setting makes a more idyllic reading of this story compelling. His clandestine affair with Frau Weber during the songs composition, in which he may have engaged in similar nocturnal visits, also lends weight to this reading. We can imagine this story to be a remembrance of a passionate night, the exploits of which were not permitted during the day. This allows for the interpretation of the male characters sudden departure as a necessity brought on by the onset of day and potential discovery, rather than merely a fickle-hearted abandonment of his lover shortly after their union.

Aus! Aus! (Over! Over!)

Heute marschieren wir,
Juch-he, im grünen Mai!
Morgen marshieren wir
Zu dem hohen Tor hinaus! Aus!

Reis'st du denn schon fort?
Je, je! mein Liebster!
Kommst niemals wieder heim?
Je, je! mein Liebster!

Heute marschieren wir,
Juch-he, im grünen Mai!
Ei, du schwarzbraun's Mägdelein,
Uns're Lieb ist noch nicht aus,
Die Lieb' ist noch nicht aus, aus!

Trink' du ein Gläschen Wein
Zur Gesundheit dein und mein!
Siehst du diesen Strauss am Hut?
Jetzo heisst's marschieren gut!
Nimm das Tüchlein aus der Tasch',
Deine Tränlein mit abwasch'!

Ich will ins Kloster geh'n,
Weil mein Schatz davon geht!
Wo geht's denn hin, mein Schatz?
Gehst du fort, heut schon fort?
Und kommst nimmer wieder?
Ach! Wie wird's traurig sein
Hier in dem Städtchen!
Wie bald vergisst du mein!
Ich! armes Mädchen!

Heute marschieren wir,
Juch-he, im grünen Mai!
Tröst dich, mein lieber Schatz,
Im Mai blüh'n gar viel Blümlein!
Die Lieb' ist noch nicht aus!
Aus! Aus!

Today we march!
Hurrah! in the green month of May!
Tomorrow we march
out through the high gate.

Are you going away then already?
Alas, my beloved!
Will you never come home again?
Alas, my beloved!

Today we march!
Hurrah! in the green month of May!
Ah, dusky maiden,
our love is not yet over,
love is not yet over! Over!

Drink a little glass of wine
to your health and mine!
Do you see this nosegay on my hat?
Now it's time to march bravely!
Take your handkerchief out of your pocket,
and wipe away your tears!

I will go into the convent
because my love is going away!
Where are you going, my love?
Are you going away, today, so soon?
And you will never come back?
Oh, how sad it will be,
here in the little town!
How soon you will forget me!
Poor maid that I am!

Tomorrow we march!
Hurrah! in the green month of May!
Take comfort, my dear one,
many flowers bloom in May!
Love is not yet over!
Over! Over!

Mahler's song "Aus! Aus!" was adapted from the DKW poem entitled "Abschied für immer" found in volume two of the collection.⁹² The original source was apparently oral, and this poem stands as a good example of Arnim and Brentano's creative efforts.

⁹² Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume 2*, 37-38.

They created the final stanza. The relationship of Mahler's adaptation to that of the original DKW folksong is quite distant. He uses it as a starting point, but freely changes the structure and wording such that we end up with a rondo structure.⁹³ By entitling the song "Aus! Aus!", and by emphasizing these words at the end of the soldiers refrain, Mahler makes it clear that the couples love is indeed over. That their parting takes place in the month of May adds another ironic element to this song.

In the German speaking lands May Day celebrations were and still are ubiquitous. This included various ceremonies that were intended to usher in the growing season, the fertility of crops and of women, and the coupling off of young people. This is the same month that the folk-imagery laden lovebirds, the cuckoo and the nightingale, can be heard for the first time of the year. That this young couple would part, and the young man would head off to war instead of staying with his lover, projects the opposite of a picture of renewal and fertility. In the original poem, both lovers seem to be upset by their parting, but Mahler superimposes the excitement of heading to war with the soldier's "Juch-he," as well as a parodied level of mourning in the young woman's complaint that she'll have to go "into the convent."

Mahler marks his score *Keckes Marschtempo* (lively march tempo), musically notifying the listener that the soldier is not in the least sad about leaving town with his boisterous C major music. The entrance of the female is correspondingly marked *kläglich, mit parodie* (miserably, with parody), intimating that while she would like to

⁹³ La Grange writes that Mahler's adaptation is, "so considerably altered that few lines have remained intact. By transforming the first line '*Heute marschieren wir,*' into a refrain and adding "*Juch-he, Juch-he, im grünen Mai!*", Mahler gave the whole song a rondo structure. The original poem has four short stanzas and a longer fifth one, which Mahler suppressed, probably because it was known to have been written by the editors of the anthology. In the remaining stanzas, he added and cut several words, altered the position of two lines and deleted five." La Grange, *Mahler*, 763.

make her lover feel bad about his departure, she is also not truly and deeply upset by this separation. The harmony moves rather abruptly to A major for her music, which is not the relative A minor that one might envision for a true lament. Her music ends on a C# major chord which slams abruptly into the C major return of the soldiers refrain. As the soldier consoles his beloved after this refrain, the harmony modulates to Ab major. We can imagine that, with the rather suave-sounding chromatics of the vocal line and the smooth piano underpinning, this is perhaps the music that the soldier used to woo the maiden at the beginning of their relationship. Could he be rehearsing for his next conquest? Before launching into another statement of his exultant refrain, he tells his lover dismissively that she should wipe away her tears with her own handkerchief. This is certainly not a very gallant or sympathetic response to her grief. We get the sense that there is a jovially thin veil over their mutual deception.

With her next attempt to gain the soldiers pity, the harmony moves to F minor, marking the first time that a minor key is used extensively. The maiden deepens her indulgence in parodied self-pity in this verse as she threatens to enter a convent. Mahler uses the same smoother piano accompaniment that he employed earlier for the soldier to console his lover. Here this texture highlights her parodied suffering. However, the compelling march rhythm begins to take hold again even as she continues to air her complaint. This section ends on a G minor chord with which she calls herself a “poor girl.” However, the soldier’s irresistible C major refrain returns immediately, and seemingly inevitably, out of this G minor excursion. He mentions that many flowers bloom in May before saying again that their love is not yet over. The four repetitions of

“aus!” that end the song drive home the point that, at least for the soldier, the love affair has definitely come to a pitiless end.

Having grown up in Iglau, which was a well-known gathering place for military drills and a staging ground for warlike enterprises, Mahler likely would have seen many such temporary relationships come and go. This rather cynical attitude towards love may have originated with the young Mahler witnessing such love affairs between the transitory soldiers moving through Iglau and the serving girls in his father’s tavern. The reported philandering of his father with these same serving girls may in part explain Mahler’s less than sympathetic approach to the maiden in his song.⁹⁴ Whatever the case, this is how he characterizes the situation in “Aus! Aus!”.

It is important that the interpreter arrives at the right level of parody for this song. Neither character appears to be overly serious about the sadness of this farewell. However, this does not mean that the characters should be casual in their emotional outpouring. On the contrary, the more they indulge in the overwrought, “put on” heartbreak of the situation, the more humorous the song becomes. While the male figure may want to ease his own conscience by letting her down easy, the female wants to gauge the effect she has on him by acting out a tragedy that she doesn’t actually feel. Neither character is successful. The female doesn’t allow the male to gain the satisfaction that he has sufficiently consoled her. However she also doesn’t seem to arouse even an instant of wavering from the male in his intention of heading off to war.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 21.

Starke Einbildungskraft (Strong Imagination)

Mädchen:

Hast gesagt, du willst mich nehmen,
So bald der Sommer kommt!
Der Sommer ist gekommen, ja kommen,
Du hast mich nicht genommen, ja nommen!
Geh', Büble, geh'! Geh', nehm' mich!
Gelt, ja? Gelt, ja? Gelt, ja du nimmst mich noch?

Büble:

Wie soll ich dich denn nehmen,
Dieweil ich doch schon hab'?
Und wenn ich halt an dich gedenk',
So mein' ich alle weile:
Ich wär' schon bei dir!

Girl:

You said that you wanted to take me,
As soon as summer comes!
The summer has come, yes come,
But you have not taken me, yes taken me!
Go ahead, boy, go ahead! Take me!
So, yes? So, yes? So, yes won't you take me yet?

Boy:

Why should I then take you,
Because I but already have you?
And when I stop to think of you,
Thus it seems to me all the time,
That I am already with you!

In this setting Mahler presents a more innocent side of love. Unusually, he retains the poem from the original DKW version with very few alterations save the repeating of key words, and a minor adjustment of two lines. Mahler changes the second line of the second stanza from “und wenn ich dich schon hab,” to end in the question “dieweil ich doch schon hab?” He then changes the beginning of the next line from “denn” to “und”. Mahler also interpolates “alleweile” into the penultimate line of the second verse. These are small additions, and indeed he doesn’t even change the title from the original. “Starke Einbildungskraft” appears in volume one of DKW and is attributed to an oral source.⁹⁵ Heinz Rölleke notes that Brentano already knew a version of this poem in 1802, and that the poem published in Volume 1 of DKW is probably an example of an edited and altered version of the original.⁹⁶ In this folksong we have an example of the naive character that is often attributed to folk poetry. Here the girl is clearly offering herself to the boy. The degree of explicit sexuality in this offer is up to the interpreter’s

⁹⁵ Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume 1*, 335.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 539.

imagination. The boy seems either to not understand the nature of her offer, or to want to keep her at a distance by playing up his naivety. The title of the poem becomes a sort of joke. The boy must have a strong imagination if he is content to keep her at arms length with such an offer at his disposal.

A few things should be said about the term *Büble*. “Bub” is an old fashioned way of saying “boy” with a certain laddish quality to it. This term was colloquial in the southern German speaking lands of Switzerland and Austria. The “le” at the end of the word functions as a diminutive, necessitating the addition of the umlaut found in “Büble”. It is doubtful that the poem is actually referring here to a small boy, but rather that the girl is using this mode of address in a flirtatious way toward the young man. This term, as well as the feeling and subject matter of “Starke Einbildungskraft”, are found echoed in Mahler’s later DKW setting “Verlorne Müh”. In this later DKW setting the advances of the girl are also spurned by the young man, but in an even more gruff and dismissive fashion.

The score is marked *sehr gemächlich, mit humoristischem Ausdruck* (very leisurely, with humorous expression). Mahler sets the stanzas in varied strophic form, changing the melodic material, the details of the accompaniment, and some of the melodic material for the second verse. Most interesting in this contrast between verses is the use of accents, dynamics, tempo, and grace note gesturing in the first verse. After a two-bar introduction, the maiden’s opening line has an immediate *poco ritardando*. Mahler increases the sixteenth note motion toward the end of this phrase in measure 4, which highlights her impatience even as she emphasizes her words more slowly. Next she tries the tactic of a *crescendo* to an accented note with homophonic accompaniment,

followed by a *subito piano* restatement of the same text in measures 5-7. When this doesn't seem to have the desired effect she flirts with her statements of "Gelt, ja?" The accompaniment punctuates this question with accented eighth notes that are preceded by descending grace notes. One can imagine the maiden poking and prodding the boy in her efforts to get a response from him.

In contrast, Mahler sets the boys stanza with very little dynamic and rhythmic alteration. This effect vividly depicts the physical disinterest of a young man who, perhaps, isn't quite aware of what the girl has to offer him yet. The one exception comes at the end of his verse where he crescendos through his third statement of "so mein' ich alleweile" with an accent on the final syllable. Whether he is frustrated, irritated, or just trying to physically gain space from her with this musical gesture is up to the interpreter's imagination.

Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz

(In Strassburg on the rampart)

Zu Straßburg auf der Schanz,
Da ging mein Trauern an;
Das Alphorn hört' ich drüben wohl anstimmen,
Ins Vaterland mußt ich hinüberschwimmen,
Das ging ja nicht an.

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

Frühmorgens um zehn Uhr
Stellt man mich vor das Regiment;
Ich soll da bitten um Pardon,
Und ich bekomme doch meinen Lohn,
Das weiß ich schon.

Ihr Brüder allzumal,
Heut' seht ihr mich zum letztenmal;
Der Hirtenbub ist nur schuld daran,
Das Alphorn hat mir's angetan,
Das klag ich an.

In Strassburg on the rampart,
There began my troubles:
I heard the the alp-horn sounding from afar,
To my fatherland I must swim across,
That was unacceptable.

One hour in the night
They captured me;
They led me straight to Captain's house,
Ah God, they'd fished me right out of the river,
For me it is over.

Early in the morning at ten
They'll place me before the regiment;
I am supposed to beg for pardon,
And I will receive my wages,
This I know alright.

My brothers all together,
Today you'll see me for the last time;
The shepherd boy is responsible for it.
The alp-horn has done this to me,
I accuse it!

In Mahler's song "Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz" we find the first example of his DKW settings about ill-fated military figures. His later masterly songs "Der Tamboursg'sell" and "Revelge" employ similar themes and musical environments. In "Der Tamboursg'sell" an unfortunate drummer boy has been caught by the enemy, and sings a sad farewell to his comrades in arms while awaiting his execution at the gallows. "Revelge" deals with the plight of a soldier that is shot in battle, and desperately beats his drum as he watches his company getting "mown down" by the enemy. At the end of the song, the ghost of the soldier marches at the head of his slain comrades to beat his drum before his sweetheart's house. All three of these songs carry musical connotations, the drums and the alphorn, which may have appealed to Mahler's sensibilities. Like "Der Tamboursg'sell" and "Revelge", he seems to have at some point intended an orchestral

version of “Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz”. Mahler, in fact, orchestrated the first two pages of this song, but did not complete the project.⁹⁷ It is highly recommended that the interpreter make a careful study of “Der Tamboursg’sell” and “Revelge” in preparing a performance of “Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz”.

Mahler stays very close to the DKW model with his adaptation, which can be found in volume one under the title “Der Schweizer” (the Swiss boy). Omitting the final two stanzas, and slightly altering the words in a few places, his primary textual shift is found in simply repeating the final lines of the stanzas. Dargie notes that Arnim and Brentano altered the central figure of the this poem from the mercenary soldier found in traditional versions to a “soft-hearted Swiss boy.”⁹⁸ The innocence of this boy, as he responds to the sound of the alphorn with a surge of homesickness, offers a far more sympathetic and nationalistic character to this story than the mercenary who is rightly punished for desertion. But just what was the particular allure of the alphorn that would cause a young soldier to desert his post and ultimately get executed?

Alphorns were used as a mode of long-range communication in the Alps. They were employed to call herds, and also in the observance of sunset rites. It was believed that the sound of the alphorn could prolong daylight, and protect humans at dusk against the dangers of transition.⁹⁹ In the Alps this sound meant the end of the workday and permission to return to the warmth and safety of home. The daily repetition of this sound would have been deeply implanted in the psyche of Swiss soldiers, making it disturbing to hear in the midst of foreign lands, surrounded by the extreme danger of warfare. Dargie finds further detail about this paradigm.

⁹⁷ La Grange, *Mahler*, 764.

⁹⁸ Dargie, *Music and Poetry*, 168.

⁹⁹ Funk, “alphorn” in *Funk and Wagnall’s*.

“Long before the Romantic age, attention had been drawn to the power exercised over the Swiss by the ‘Ranz des vaches’ - ‘a melody which for centuries had been sung, or played on the Alphorn, to summon the cows from the lofty pastures above the tree-line in the Alps’. Hyatt King reports that as early as 1710 Theodor Zwinger wrote that ‘it was forbidden to play or sing the Ranz in the hearing of the Swiss soldiers who then formed a considerable part of the mercenary armies of Europe, because it always filled them with such a profound yearning for their native land that they used to weep or desert’.”¹⁰⁰

For Arnim and Brentano, with their conservative/nationalist sympathies, this Swiss boy provides a fitting example of their romanticized folk ideal.

Mahler begins his song with an interesting decision in his instructions for the sounding of the alphorn. This consists of a triadic statement in F-major that is marked *Im Volkston, ohne Sentimentalität, äusserst rythmisch* (in folk style, without sentimentality, extremely rhythmic), and is to be played *wie ein Schalmei* (like a shawm). The shawm, a precursor to the oboe and the English horn, was more typically associated with German military band music during this period, than with any particularly alpine sound.¹⁰¹ It is as if Mahler tells us musically at the beginning of the song that the soldier has mistaken the sound of a military instrument for a sound from his homeland. That this soldier would lose his life over a misheard sound makes the situation all the more pathetic.

Alternatively, Dargie notes that Wagner used the shawm for his famous pastoral shepherd music at the beginning of the third act of *Tristan und Isolde*, which was “inspired by the alphorn.”¹⁰² We also find an example of a pastoral usage of the shawm by a shepherd in Act 1 of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*. Having conducted both of these operas multiple times, Mahler knew this music extremely well, and it is possible that he intended a connection with Wagner’s scores. However, the fact remains that the more bright and

¹⁰⁰ Dargie, *Music and Poetry*, 168-169.

¹⁰¹ Anthony C. Baines and Martin Kirnbauer, "Shawm," *Grove Music Online*, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43658>> (Accessed 29 March 2014).

¹⁰² Dargie, *Music and Poetry*, 169.

piercing tone of the shawm shares little resemblance with the deeper, mellow resonance of the alphorn.

After the “alphorn” introduction, Mahler’s music displays a crisp military style of rhythm with measured march tempo. These square rhythms, with the usage of dotted eighth followed by sixteenth note configurations, clearly anticipate the similar rhythmic procedures found in “Der Tamboursg’sell” and “Revelge”. Before the singers first mention of the alphorn, Mahler again musically depicts it with an open fifth. This fifth continues to accompany the singer as he “hears the alphorn from afar,” but the texture dissolves after a measure into an even tonic/fifth quarter note oscillation. This feature recalls the funeral march from the final song of Mahler’s *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. The accented descending eighth notes on the fourth beats of measures 12 and 13 are also reminiscent of this same funeral march, when the wanderer laments that no one has bid him “ade!” as he heads to die underneath the linden tree.

The second and third stanzas proceed in an unrelenting military style, with a proliferation of grace-note pickups and tightly dotted rhythms. Mahler instructs the pianist to imitate the muffled sound of drums with low left-hand trills. This style of rhythm persists into the beginning of the final stanza, but softens into a more lyrical accompaniment and singing style for the words “heut’ seht ihr mich zum letzten mal.” The shawm-stylized alphorn returns before the soldier states “the alphorn has done this to me.” This false alphorn shows its true colors, as the left-hand plays a rising chromatic triplet figure. Mahler has only used triplets for the “alphorn” solo up to this point in the song. This triplet figure thus calls the alphorn to mind, but in a chromatic fashion that would be impossible for an alphorn to achieve. Even as the young soldier accuses the

alphorn of guilt for his desertion, Mahler makes it musically clear that the fault actually lies with the wishful ears of the soldier. His intense homesickness caused him to refigure a military instrument, into an emotionally charged reminder of his homeland. We must admit that it would be difficult to mistake the sound of a shawm for that of an alphorn.

However one chooses to interpret Mahler's use of the shawm/alphorn in this song, whether as a military instrument, or as a Wagner inspired pastoral evocation, it should be noted that Strasburg is not located geographically in a region that would make an actual alphorn likely to be heard by the soldier. The singer can imagine that this sound, which makes the soldier long for home, exists, perhaps, only in his mind. It could also be viewed as a case of the soldier tricking himself into believing that a military sound is in fact a sound from his homeland. One could additionally decide that Mahler was depicting the alphorn in the musical language that he knew, that of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, or even as a sound that he associated with his own upbringing in Iglau. All of these approaches make for emotionally charged interpretations of the song. One thing remains relatively clear; the soldier does not seem to actually hear a true alphorn.

Ablösung im Sommer (Detachment in the summer)

Kuckuck hat sich zu Tode gefallen
An einer grünen Weiden,
Kuckuck ist todt! Kuckuck ist todt!
Wer soll uns jetzt den Sommer lang
Die Zeit und Weil vertreiben?

Ei, das soll tun Frau Nachtigall,
Die sitzt auf grünem Zweige;
Die kleine, feine Nachtigall,
Die liebe, süße Nachtigall!
Sie singt und springt, ist allzeit froh,
Wenn andre Vögel schweigen.

Wir warten auf Frau Nachtigall,
Die wohnt im grünen Hage,
Und wenn der Kukuk zu Ende ist,
Dann fängt sie an zu schlagen!

The cuckoo has fallen to its death
From a green willow,
The cuckoo is dead! The cuckoo is dead!
Who should then the summer long
Help us pass the time?

Oh, that should be Mrs. Nightingale!
She sits on a green branch!
The small, fine nightingale,
The lovely, sweet nightingale!
She sings and springs, is always joyous,
When other birds are silent!

We await Mrs. Nightingale,
Who lives in a green glen,
And when the cuckoo call is at its end,
Then does she begin to sing!

For the song “Ablösung im Sommer,” Mahler makes several changes to the DKW text. However, the basic story remains intact. The DKW poem is found under the title “Ablösung” in the third volume.¹⁰³ Rölleke states that this poem is essentially unchanged from the version found in Johann Ott’s *Hundert und fünfzehn guter newer Liedlein* of 1544, making it a good example of folk poetry for which Arnim and Brentano eschewed their more invasive editorial influence.¹⁰⁴ In Mahler’s version the willow becomes “green” as opposed to “hollow” in the first stanza. He adds the lines “Kuckuck ist tot! Kuckuck ist tot!,” and “Die kleine, feine Nachtigall, die liebe, süsse Nachtigall!” to the respective middles of the first two stanzas. The final stanza is entirely Mahler’s addition.

We have already discussed the various folk connotations that the cuckoo involves. It can be seen as the herald of the spring, a love oracle, a timekeeper, an example of foolishness or insanity, and an emblem of cuckoldry. Additionally, the common cuckoo has some interesting natural traits that are worth mentioning. In early spring the common

¹⁰³ Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume 3*, 109.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 369.

cuckoo's descending two-note song spans the interval of a minor third. As spring wears on and summer nears, this interval expands to a major third, and even a perfect fourth. The common cuckoo seems to have absolute pitch, as it tends to execute these intervals in or near the key of C. Finally, the common cuckoo seems to forget its song as summer sets in, and often sings other ascending patterns of various types.¹⁰⁵ To explain this sudden disappearance of the characteristic cuckoo song "folklore invents its own interpretation, imagining that the sudden silence may be accounted for by nothing less than the cuckoo's death."¹⁰⁶

That the cuckoo falls to its demise out of a willow tree also holds significance. The willow tree was believed to be a graveside tree, representing sterility, celibacy, and forsaken love.¹⁰⁷ The various medicinal powers that were associated with the willow had the apparent negative side effect of being anti-aphrodisiac.¹⁰⁸ With these thoughts in mind, we can see that when the cuckoo falls to its death from the willow tree, we have a strong image of liberation from sterility, faithless love, sexual inhibition, and mental disorder. The nightingale's singing now dominates the summer months with its concomitant images of beauty, grace, and sexual consummation (see "Ich ging mit Lust durch einen grünen Wald").

In his setting, Mahler initially depicts the late spring call of the cuckoo with falling perfect fourths, appropriately in the key of C major. It would seem that he is representing the wider intervals of the cuckoo in late spring just before it falls silent, or in actuality changes its song so drastically that folk culture assumed its death. This call

¹⁰⁵ Arthur L. Thomson, "Common Cuckoo" in *A New Dictionary of Birds*. London: Nelson, 1964.

¹⁰⁶ Dargie, *Music and Poetry*, 241.

¹⁰⁷ De Vries, "Willow" in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

shifts to major thirds for the statements of “Kukuk ist todt!” There is a touch of irony here in Mahler’s use of the most commonly associated cuckoo interval, heard in cuckoo clocks, to depict the death of the bird. He accents the word “todt” to provide humorous and brutal emphasis to the downfall of this quirky animal. Mahler employs the cuckoo’s descending minor third call with two statements of “Kukuk” toward the end of the stanza, just before asking who will help to pass the summertime now that the cuckoo is dead. These “Kukuks” can perhaps be heard as a wistful remembrance of the bird’s early springtime interval. The music for this first stanza, marked *Mit Humor* (with humor), makes comic use of jagged intervals, and chromatic colorings. Mahler also employs the Phrygian mode, lending this music a sort of medieval feel as it arrives by descending half step to the E final.

These features give way as the piano introduction to the second stanza resolves this final E into A major, and a more typical diatonic structure. The descending chromatic sixteenth notes that add tension at the end of the first stanza (measures 22-25), are now released into smooth flowing, warbling consonance, as Mahler musically evokes the nightingale with a descending series of neighbor tones. It is worth stating that this modulation to A major has the effect of removing all memory of the C major world of the cuckoo. The sixteenth note motion runs uninterrupted until the final line of the second stanza when Mahler begins to blend the cutting intervals of the cuckoo call, and the associated chromatic harmonies, with the gracefully flowing nightingale music. In the final stanza (measures 51-52) Mahler directly superimposes the descending neighbor tone nightingale theme, with the chromatically descending, tension-laden music from the first stanza. He also hearkens back to the first stanza, as his use of triplets in the vocal line for

the word “Kukuk” return. These various cuckoo motives engender a feeling of waiting for the nightingale, “Wir warten auf Frau Nachtigall” as they bring the idea of anxiously watching a clock to mind. The song ends with several statements of the descending cuckoo call, now exclusively in perfect fourths. Not only do these fourths signal the end of the cuckoos song, but the setting finishes with an open fifth rooted on A, the key of the forthcoming nightingale.

The following biographical notes may or may not have a relationship with Mahler’s setting of “Ablösung im Sommer,” but they are nonetheless of potential interest to interpreters of this piece. La Grange relates an anecdote about the affair between Mahler and Marion von Weber.

“According to the English composer Ethyl Smyth, who was living in Leipzig at that time and who was a friend of the Webers, matters went much further than Mahler himself and his biographers have suggested: Marion was passionately in love, for ‘in spite of his ugliness he had a demoniacal charm’ and Karl closed his eyes as long as possible, fearing a scandal that would force him to leave the Army. Also according to Ethel Smyth, Mahler, ‘a tyrannical lover, never hesitated to compromise his mistresses. Things were getting critical, when one day, traveling to Dresden in the company of strangers, Weber suddenly burst out laughing, drew a revolver and began taking William Tell-like shots at the headrests between the seats. He was overpowered, the train brought to a standstill, they took him to the police station raving mad--thence to an asylum. Always considered rather queer in the Army, the Mahler business had broken down his brain. I afterwards heard he had lucid intervals, that his wife in an agony of remorse refused to see her lover again... and the rest is silence.’¹⁰⁹

Whether or not there was an intended autobiographical connection between the off-kilter Baron Carl von Weber and the cuckoo, as well as the nightingale and Marion von Weber, is impossible to say. It is however noteworthy to consider Mahler’s additions to the original DKW poem. He uses relatively vicious, mocking music for his addition to the poetry of “Kukuk ist todt,” and he adds several compliments to his portrayal of the

¹⁰⁹ La Grange, *Mahler*, 172.

nightingale with “Die kleine, feine Nachtigall, die liebe, süsse Nachtigall” (the little, fine nightingale, the dear, sweet nightingale). In the score, Mahler indicates that the text “die liebe, süsse Nachtigall” can be left out at the discretion of the singer. Mahler’s reason for this indication could certainly be seen as an effort to allow the singer time to breath in a difficult passage. However, we are also left to ponder whether he might have felt that this line was too obviously a reference to Frau Weber. In the final stanza he adds that we will wait for the nightingale until the cuckoo’s song is at an end. This strong anticipation for the beloved nightingale that will bring an end to the image of sterility, infidelity, and insanity that the cuckoo and the willow represent, becomes a remarkably good fit for Mahler’s dilemma in the Weber household.

For the interpreter, it is vital that the musical changes that Mahler composed for the cuckoo and the nightingale are highlighted. The sharp, quirky, angular character of the cuckoo’s passages should become smooth and graceful when the nightingale sings. Because the musical gestures of both birds overlap each other toward the end of the song, it is important that these initial statements are distinctly rendered. The brilliant polyphony of motives in the last stanza can only be musically understood if they are clearly articulated, and if they preserve their character from earlier in the song. This can be achieved through careful consideration of rhythmic gesture and vocal tone color. These contrasts are unmistakable in Mahler’s score, and should be emphasized in performance.

Scheiden und Meiden (Separation and Avoidance)

Es ritten drei Reiter zum Thore hinaus,
Ade!
Fein's Liebchen schaute zum Fenster hinaus,
Ade!
Und wenn es denn soll geschieden sein,
So reich mir dein goldenes Ringlein.
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, scheiden und meiden thut weh.

Es scheidet das Kind schon in der Wieg,
Ade!
Wann werd' ich mein Schätzchen wohl kriegen?
Ade!
Und ist es nicht morgen, ach, wär' es doch heut,
Es machte uns Beiden wohl grosse Freud'!,
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, scheiden und meiden thut weh.

Three horsemen rode out of the gate
Farewell!
Beloved looked out of the window
Farewell!
And if then there should be parting,
Then give me your little gold ring,
Farewell, farewell, farewell!
Yes, separating and avoiding hurts.

The child is separated already in its cradle,
Farewell!
When do you think I'll get my darling back?
Farewell!
And if it isn't tomorrow, ah, could it be but today,
It would give us both indeed great joy,
Farewell, farewell, farewell!
Yes, separating and avoiding hurts.

The original DKW text that Mahler used for “Scheiden und Meiden” is found under the title “Drei Reiter am Thor” in volume one.¹¹⁰ Mahler continues his typical alteration to the original text in changing certain key words, and in taking out the second stanza of the original entirely. The word “lassen” that is used in the last line of each stanza becomes “meiden”. This change is subtle linguistically, but the word “lassen” implies leaving or leaving alone, while “meiden” describes avoiding. In leaving out the second stanza of the DKW version, Mahler sidesteps the figure of death as the ultimate cause of separation. The omitted stanza reads as follows.

¹¹⁰ Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume I*, 223-224.

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

And he who parts us, that is death,
Farewell!
He takes so many rosy young maidens,
Farewell!
And yet her beloved body would have become
For love a sweet pastime,
Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
Yes, separating and leaving hurts.

In the final stanza Mahler changes the first line so that the cradle becomes the first separation of the child from her mother, rather than from death. The other minor word changes in this stanza are less important to the overall structure.

It seems a bit unusual that Mahler would cut out the powerful image of death in this song. So much of Mahler's music centers on images and evocations of death. However, the effect of this alteration is to make the lament over separation more worldly, immediate, and specific to the loss of a romantic connection. Additionally, using the word "meiden" lends a sense of a certain amount of effort to this separation, rather than just the reality of a distance that makes physically seeing each other impossible. By removing death from the equation, and by using the term avoiding instead of leaving, Mahler leaves us to think of other causes for separation, such as war, or work, or something socially forbidden.

The melody of this song is quite closely related to that found in the Erk/Böhme collection, and we must assume that Mahler knew this version well.¹¹¹ La Grange points out that the "prevailing rhythm is that often used to imitate a horse's gallop."¹¹² At the entry of the vocal line Mahler marks the piano part to be played *wie Trompetenmusik* (like trumpet music), and indeed, this music reminds the listener of German hunting

¹¹¹ Erk/Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: Volume 2*, 561.

¹¹² La Grange, *Mahler*, 766.

music. Mahler sets the majority of this song in the key of F major, but he makes frequent excursions to other key areas for special moments. In the interlude at measures 15-18 he changes mode in each bar, and then twice a bar, before launching into 2/4 meter in the key of F minor for the words “Und wenn es denn soll geschieden sein.” This sonority then moves to the relative major key of Ab major, as the singer asks the maiden for her golden ring. Mahler calls for *breiten Triolen* (wide triplets) to highlight the gallant grandiosity of this request. For the following statements of “ade!” Mahler employs the curious device of accenting the first syllable of this word against its normal stress. He uses a *pianissimo* dynamic, and slackens the tempo with a *ritardando*, effecting a change of mood from the earlier gallantry into the following statement of the “Scheiden und Meiden” refrain. This sets up a wonderful progression of chromatic harmony that winds its way expressively back to our alternating F major/minor piano interlude. This mixture of minor and major mode set to such a rollicking rhythm gives a strangely ambiguous sentiment, as if the singer isn’t entirely certain if he’s excited or morose about the separation.

Musically, the second stanza is treated in inverse order from the first stanza. F minor is used for the text about the child already being separated in the cradle, and the following “ade!” is marked *leise, zögernd* (lightly, hesitantly). The second half of the stanza returns eventually to F major and is marked *schnell steigernd* (increasingly fast). After a sixfold repeat of “ade!” sung *fortissimo*, the refrain returns with similar harmonic treatment to the first verse. The end of the refrain is extended, and reaches virtuosically up to a high G on the word “weh!” The final “ade!” has a dramatic double accent before

ascending to a held high F, with a postlude in the galloping F major of the earlier interludes. The postlude is unclouded this time by the minor mode.

We find a certain paradox in this setting related to the pain of parting. The initial marking of *Lustig* (cheerfully), belies the overriding lament of the separation. Although Mahler does not use parody in this song, we find a connection with his setting of “Aus! Aus!” However, the sentiment of excitement at the prospect of heading out into the world, juxtaposed with the downside of losing the intimacy of a home-based love relationship, is now given a more truehearted expression. The interpreter should display this conflict of emotions as it alternates musically throughout the song. Mahler’s profusion of varied musical indications places this struggle center stage. Although, the emotions in “Scheiden und Meiden” are of a more genuine nature than “Aus! Aus!,” the resulting separation is the same. After repeating his lament with emotionally indulgent textual repetition and vocal outcry, the male figure nonetheless immediately rides out of the gate excitedly and cheerfully in the postlude.

Nicht wiedersehen! (Not to see each other again!)

Und nun ade, mein herzallerliebster Schatz,
Jetzt muß ich wohl scheiden von dir,
Bis auf den andern Sommer,
Dann komm' ich wieder zu dir.

Und als der junge Knab heimkam,
Von seiner Liebsten fing er an:
Wo ist meine Herzallerliebste,
Die ich verlassen hab?

Auf dem Kirchhof liegt sie begraben,
Heut ist's der dritte Tag,
Das Trauern und das Weinen
Hat sie zum Tod gebracht.

Jetzt will ich auf den Kirchhof gehen,
Will suchen meiner Liebsten Grab,
Will ihr allweil rufen,
Bis daß sie mir Antwort gab.

Ei, du mein herzallerliebster Schatz,
Mach' auf dein tiefes Grab,
Du hörst kein Glöcklein läuten,
Du hörst kein Vöglein pfeifen,
Du siehst weder Sonne noch Mond!

And now, farewell, my darling treasure,
now I must leave you,
until next summer,
when I shall return to you.

And as the youth returned home,
he thought of his beloved:
Where is my love,
whom I have left?

She is buried in the churchyard,
today is the third day.
Her mourning and crying
has killed her.

Now I shall go to the churchyard,
to look for my beloved's grave,
and will call out for her
until she answers.

O, my darling treasure,
open up your grave,
you cannot hear the bells tolling,
you cannot hear the birds singing,
you can see neither sun nor moon!

After carefully avoiding the connotation of death as the ultimate cause of separation in “Scheiden und Meiden,” Mahler’s setting of “Nicht Wiedersehen” directly engages the tragedy of a mortal end to the love relationship. He makes very few, and relatively negligible, changes to the original DKW text found under the same title in volume three.¹¹³ The primary difference in his setting is in his use of the text “Ade, mein herzallerliebster Schatz” as a refrain after the first, third, and final stanzas. A Kassel folksong using the same text can be found in the Erk/Böhme collection.¹¹⁴ However,

¹¹³ Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume 3*, 22-23.

¹¹⁴ Erk/Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort: volume 1*, 606.

other than sharing 4/4 meter, the melodic material bears little resemblance to Mahler's setting. This is contrary to La Grange's stated opinion of a "close connection."¹¹⁵

There is no evidence to suggest that Mahler intended these early songs to be performed in cyclic fashion, but it is nonetheless interesting to consider that in "Scheiden und Meiden," which precedes "Nicht Wiedersehen" in volume three of *Lieder und Gesänge*, the departure of the young lover is treated in bittersweet, yet ultimately upbeat fashion. These two songs provide a good foil for each other, as the pain of the departure in "Scheiden und Meiden" reaches unforeseen levels of grief for the young man when he returns home in "Nicht Wiedersehen." It is entirely possible that Mahler altered the original DKW version of "Scheiden und Meiden" to exclude death so that "Nicht Wiedersehen" could deal with this aspect of the tragedy of separation exclusively.

Mahler's score is marked *Schwermüthig* (melancholy). Although the first stanza deals only with the departure of the lover, the solitary semitone oscillation that comprises the piano introduction sets the tragic mood. This oscillation prefigures a similar motive that recurs throughout Mahler's later DKW setting of "Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen," in which a soldier returns to his lover as a ghost, announcing his death on the green heath. When the vocal line enters we hear the tonic/fifth quarter note underpinning that Mahler had already used to signify the funeral marches in "Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz," as well as "Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz" from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. For the refrain Mahler also echoes his musical trope of accenting the fourth beat and placing unusual stress on the first syllable of the word "ade." This gives it special emphasis, and clearly recalls the similar procedure that he uses in several of his other DKW settings. After the second stanza, when the young man asks where his

¹¹⁵ La Grange, *Mahler*, 767.

lover is, the piano engages a threefold statement of this same “ade” motive. These statements tragically prefigure the forthcoming bad news for the young man.

As the narrator informs the young man in the third stanza that his lover is buried in the churchyard, Mahler instructs the pianist to play the funeral-march tonic/fifth underpinning *wie fernes Glockenläuten* (like distant bells ringing). Mahler’s setting of the third and fourth stanzas is structurally and melodically quite similar to the first two stanzas. Mahler extends the “ade” refrain after the third stanza to give weight to the suffering of the now fully informed young man. In the fourth stanza Mahler repeats the text in which the young man calls out to his lover “ja rufen” with *pianissimo* dynamic. This engenders a heartrending sense of the tragedy breaking over him, as he desperately hopes she’ll answer his heartfelt, gentle call. The piano again plays a threefold version of the “ade” refrain after the fourth stanza, this time with accents on each descending eighth note, increasing the drama of the scene.

In the final stanza Mahler executes a procedure that is again strongly reminiscent of the end of “Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz.” He shifts the mode of the funeral march to a meditative B major oscillation, as the vocal line softly chants the pleading lines “mach’ auf dein tiefes Grab.” But the young lover’s cries go unanswered. The music swells back to forte for a final *leidenschaftlich* (passionate) statement of the “ade” refrain, reaching the upper reaches of the singers range, using heavy accents on the final eight notes of the song, and emphatically landing back in the key of B minor.

It would make for an interesting programming choice to perform “Scheiden und Meiden” and “Nichtwiedersehen” back to back, as their texts create an antecedent/consequent unit. It seems likely that Mahler may have placed them in this

order for his publication with this thought in mind. While the lament of this song is already heard in the first stanza “ade” refrain, the singer should be careful to save the deepest levels of sorrow in singing this word for the end of the song. This can be achieved by adding increasing emphasis to the accents, and by scrupulously observing Mahler’s dynamic markings, which only allow for a *fortissimo* statement of “ade” in the final iteration.

Selbstgefühl (Self-awareness)

Ich weiss nicht, wie mir ist!
Ich bin nicht krank und nicht gesund,
Ich bin blessirt und hab' kein' Wund',
Ich weiss nicht, wie mir ist!

Ich thät gern essen und schmeckt mir nichts;
Ich hab' ein Geld und gilt mir nichts,
Ich weiss nicht, wie mir ist!

Ich hab' sogar kein' Schnupftabak,
Und hab' kein Kreuzer Geld im Sack,
Ich weiss nicht wie mir ist, wie mir ist!

Heiraten thät ich auch schon gern',
Kann aber Kinderschrei'n nicht hör'n!
Ich weiss nicht, wie mir ist!

Ich hab' erst heut' den Doktor gefragt,
Der hat mir's in's Gesicht gesagt:
"Ich weiss wohl', was dir ist, was dir ist:
Ein Narr bist du gewiss!"
"Nun weiss ich, wie mir ist!"

I do not know, how I feel,
I am not ill and not well;
I've been injured and have no wound,
I do not know, what is wrong with me!

I like to eat well, but taste nothing;
I have some money and it gets me nothing;
I do not know, what is wrong with me!

I don't even have any snuff,
And have not even a farthing in my bag,
I do not know, what is wrong with me!

I would gladly get married already,
But I can't stand to hear children screaming.
I do not know, what is wrong with me!

Just today I asked the doctor,
Who told me to my face:
"I know well, what it is with you:
A fool you certainly are!"
Now I know, what is wrong with me!"

Other than the repeating of words, Mahler has made very few alterations to the original DKW poem, and has kept the same title, "Selbstgefühl," as found in volume two of the collection.¹¹⁶ We can imagine that Mahler related well to this whimsical text, as his life was free of attachments, and his mode of living was rather spartan. It has also been well documented that Mahler had serious issues with interruptions of noise in his life, and may well have enjoyed the dichotomy in this poem of the yearning for marriage, mixed with the well-founded fear of noisy disruptions that such an attachment might entail. Natalie Bauer-Lechner offers a humorous anecdote on this latter aspect of Mahler's character during the summer months while composing in his *Häuschen*.

Anything that moved or made the slightest sound was chased away from the vicinity of the little house. We had thought out a whole system intended to keep the village children at a distance and quiet. They were not only forbidden to set

¹¹⁶ Rölleke, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Volume 2*, 64-65.

foot on Mahler's meadow, or play and bathe in the lake, but they dared not so much as whisper in their houses or on the streets. We achieved this end with pleas, promises, sweets, and presents of toys.¹¹⁷

The lines that Mahler repeats in his setting give an idea of the parts of this poem that he wanted to portray as particularly vexing. These are as follows: "I have some money and it gets me nothing," "and have not even a farthing in my bag," and "but I can't stand to hear children screaming." The contrast between the problems of having money and not knowing what to do with it, and of being completely destitute, comically paints a picture of a man who has issues that are greater than money. He also repeats the punchline of the poem "ein Narr bist du gewiss!," and the following statements of "Nun weiss ich, wie mir ist." The fool is quite relieved to have been given a diagnosis!

Mahler marks his score *in verdriesslichem Ton* (in sullen tone), summing up the general attitude of this character's attempt at self-analysis. The rhythmic nature of his setting has a flexible Ländler-like quality, with running eighth notes, and dotted quarter followed by three eighth note figurations. This style of rhythm is quite common in German folk music. Mahler would employ this type of rhythmic figuration throughout his compositional career. This running eighth note, Ländler-style rhythm ties together what is otherwise a through-composed piece. A profusion of musical effects highlight the humorous aspects of this text. Particularly entertaining is Mahler's direction *verärgert* (angry) when the vocalist mentions that he would gladly get married, followed by the whining chromatic setting of "Kinderschrei'n nicht hörn." The music takes on a mock serious air in C major with *piano* dynamic as the doctor pronounces "Ich weiss wohl', was dir ist:" (I know well, what it is with you:). We can feel the character's anxious anticipation in the piano interlude before the doctor delivers his verdict, "ein

¹¹⁷ Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 56.

Narr bist du gewiss!" (a fool you certainly are). The excited statements of "Nun weiss ich, wie mir ist" (now I know what is wrong with me) by the foolish character don't seem to satisfy the doctor who restates his diagnosis, this time ending on a more pointed C#. But still the fool seems happy enough with this prognosis, and the song ends *pianissimo* in F major.

The interpreter should exact a change in vocal color for the statements of the doctor, perhaps by using a darker, "learned" timbre. The fool's response can then project both naive excitement, and relief at this prognosis, despite the fact that the doctor has really only offered him an insult. The humor of the doctor's irritation at having his insult misunderstood is featured musically, and should be made apparent vocally. That the fool continues to react to his prognosis with a sunny disposition gives the impression that he has no intention of altering his ways. Indeed he seems to be entirely incapable of such a change. It is possible that Mahler was poking fun at himself with this song. The parallels between Mahler's life and that of the fool are indeed compelling.

Chapter V: Conclusion

The results of this research reveal an exceedingly complicated cultural paradigm at work in the German folk tradition. Herder, Brentano/Arnim, and Mahler all engaged unique approaches to the folk tradition, which can be seen to have served diverse cultural purposes. Herder wanted to use folk material to focus greater attention on the common people's role in the formation of the German nation. This was directly opposed to the prevailing role of French-inspired rationalist idealism. Brentano and Arnim thought that this folk material needed the intervention of the learned poet to make it more effective as a nation-building device. They also added a strong current of anti-Semitism to the equation. For Mahler, folk material was an essential part of the cultural soil in which he was raised. He felt that this material was his by right, and that despite his Jewish background, he was as qualified as any other German artist to enter into the tradition. The very action of Mahler enthusiastically engaging in a tradition that had become so rife with anti-Semitism had the ultimate effect of refiguring this tradition into a more egalitarian version.

By looking in detail at Mahler's nine early DKW settings, it becomes clear that he was on a very different path from the naive folk evocations, advocated by groups such as the *Wandervogel*, which were in vogue in the later 19th century. Rather than looking backwards in an effort to regain the qualities of a romanticized folk past, Mahler used the folk materials that he grew up with as building blocks in his efforts toward the "art music" of the future. We see that while engaging to an extent in a "naive" tone of expression in these songs, Mahler heightens the genre of folk song in his settings with a tremendous amount of musical detail and harmonic complexity. He also freely changes

the poetry to suit his artistic ends. That he would go on to provide wonderfully orchestrated versions of his later 15 settings from DKW, attests to his clear intention of using folk material to create “art music”.

We learn from this research that Mahler’s biography while composing these early DKW settings offers some interesting parallels to the songs themselves that can inform the interpreter about his possible intentions. Mahler’s illicit relationship with Frau Weber during his years in Leipzig offers particularly interesting implications in many of these songs. Additionally, by looking carefully at the connotations associated with specific folk objects, such as the alphorn, we derive a more culturally centered perspective in this music.

Ultimately, it is the job of the performer to fashion a unique interpretation of these songs. However, we can view the efforts in this research toward coming to terms with the folk tradition and Mahler’s interaction with it, as a gathering of useful tools that, once in the workshop, will allow for more detailed interpretations to result. It is imperative to realize that Mahler’s intellectual and musical capacities were far beyond those of most individuals who wish to interpret his music. One can easily find oneself overwhelmed by the connotative detail in his complex and subtle compositions. It is my sincere hope that the information provided in this research will help the modern interpreter to swim more confidently in these deep waters.

Appendix A: Original DKW Texts and Translations

*The following English translations were made by Mary Dargie.

Um die Kinder still und artig zu machen

Es kam ein Herr zum Schlossli
Auf einem schönen Rössli,
Da lugt die Frau zum Fenster aus
Und sagt: "Der Mann ist nicht zu Haus".

Und niemand heim als Kinder
Und's Mädchen auf der Winden."
Der Herr auf seinem Rössli,
Sagt zu der Frau im Schlossli:

"Sind's gute Kind', sind's böse Kind'?
Ach, liebe Frau, ach sagt geschwind."
Die Frau, die Sagt: "Sehr böse Kind',
Sie folgen Muttern nicht geschwind."

Da sagt der Herr: "So reit' ich heim,
Dergleichen Kinder brauch' ich kein'."
Und reit' auf seinem Rössli
Weit, weit entweg vom Schlossli.

Waldvöglein

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

Nun sing, nun sing, Frau Nachtigall,
Sing du's bei meinem Feinsliebchen:
"Komm schier, komm schier, wenn's finster ist.
Wenn niemand auf der Gassen ist,
Herein will ich dich lassen."

Der Tag verging, die Nacht brach an,
Er kam zu Feinslieb gegangen;
Er klopfte so leis wohl an den Ring,
Ei schlafst du, oder wachst du, Kind,
Ich hab' so lang' gestanden.

Dass du so lang' gestanden hast,
Ich hab' noch nicht geschlafen;
Ich dacht' als frei in meinem Sinn,
Wo ist mein Herzallerliebster hin,
Wo mag er so lang' bleiben?

Wo ich so lang' geblieben bin,
Das darf ich dir wohl sagen;
Beim Bier und auch beim roten Wein,
Bei einem schwarzbraunen Mädelein,
Hätt' deiner bald vergessen.

To make children good and quiet

There came a gentleman to the castle
on a fine horse
then the woman looks out of the window
and says, "My husband is not at home;

and no-one is at home but the children
and the maid in the attic."
The gentleman on his horse
says to the woman in the castle:

"Are they good children, or are they bad?
Tell me quickly, good woman."
The woman says, "Very bad children,
they are not quick to do as their mother tells them."

Then says the gentleman, "Then I will ride home,
I have no need for children of that sort."
And off he rides on his horse,
far, far away from the castle.

Woodland birds

I walked with delight through a green forest,
I heard the little birds sing;
they sang so young, they sang so old,
the little woodland birds in the forest,
how I enjoyed hearing them sing.

Sing, then, sing, Madam Nightingale,
sing this at my beloved's house:
"Come quickly, come quickly, when it's dark,
when there is no-one in the street
I shall let you in."

The day passed, the night fell,
he came to his beloved;
he knocked so quietly at the door.
Are you asleep or are you awake, my child,
I've been standing such a long time.

If you have been standing such a long time,
it is not because I have been asleep;
I could not help wondering in my mind,
where has my sweetheart gone,
where can he be staying so long?

Where I stayed so long,
that I may well tell you;
at the beer and at the red wine,
and with a dark maiden
I had almost forgotten you.

Abschied für immer

Heute marschieren wir,
Morgen marschieren wir
Zu dem hohen Tor hinaus,
Ei, du wacker schwarzbraun Mägdlein,
Unsre Lieb' ist noch nicht aus.

Reist du schon fort?
Reist du denn schon fort?
Kommst du niemals wieder heim?
Und wenn du kommst in ein fremdes Ländchen,
Liebster Schatz, vergiss mein nicht.

Trink du ein Gläschen Wein,
Zur Gesundheit mein und dein,
Kauf mir einen Strauss am Hut,
Nimm mein Tüchlein in die Tasche,
Deine Tränlein mit abwasch.

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

“Dorten sind zwei Turteltaubchen,
Sitzen auf dem dünnen Ast.
Wo sich zwei Verliebte scheiden,
Da verwelket Laub und Gras.
Was batt mich ein schöner Garten,
Wenn ich nichts darinnen hab’?
Was batt mich die schönste Rose,
Wenn ich sie nicht brechen soll?
Was batt mich ein jung’ frisch’ Leben,
Wenn ich’s nicht der Lieb’ ergeb’?”

Starke Einbildungskraft

Mädchen

Hast gesagt, du willst mich nehmen,
Sobald der Sommer kommt,
Der Sommer ist gekommen,
Du hast mich nicht genommen,
Geh, Buble, geh nehm mich! Gelt ja,
Du nimmst mich noch.

Bube

Wie soll ich dich denn nehmen,
Und wenn ich dich schon hab’,
Denn wenn ich halt an dich gedenk’,
Denn wenn ich halt an dich gedenk’,
Ich wär bei dir.

Farewell forever

Today we march,
tomorrow we march
out through the high gate,
you fine dusky maiden,
our love is not yet over.

Are you going away already?
Are you really going away already?
Will you never come home again?
And when you reach a strange land,
my dear one, do not forget me.

Drink a little glass of wine
to my health and to yours,
buy me a nosegay for my hat,
take my handkerchief
to wipe away your tears.

The lark is coming,
the stork is coming,
the sun is coming into the firmament.
Into the convent I will go,
because I no longer see my love,
because my love does not come back!

“Yonder are two little turtle-doves,
sitting on the withered bough.
Where two lovers part,
leaves and grass wither.
What use is a lovely garden to me
if I have nothing in it?
What use is the loveliest rose to me
if I may not pluck it?
What use is a fresh young life to me
if I do not devote it to love?”

Strong Imagination

Girl

You said you were going to take me
as soon as summer comes;
summer has come,
you have not taken me,
come, my lad, come take me,
you will take me, won’t you?

Boy

How can I take you
when I already have you?
For I have only to think of you
and I fancy
that I am with you.

Der Schweizer

Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz',
Da ging mein Trauren an,
Das Alphorn hört' ich drüben wohl anstimmen,
Ins Vaterland musst' ich hinüber schwimmen,
Das ging nicht an.

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

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

Ihr Brüder allzumal,
Heut seht ihr mich zum letztenmal;
Der Hirtenbub ist doch mur schuld daran,
Das Alphorn hat mir solches angetan,
Das klag' ich an.

Ihr Brüder alle drei,
Was ich euch bitt', erschiesst mich gleich;
Verschont mein junges Leben nicht,
Schiess zu, dass das Blut 'rausspritzt,
Das bitt' ich euch.

O Himmelskönig, Herr!
Nimm du meine arme Seele dahin,
Nimm sie zu dir in den Himmel ein,
Lass sie ewig bei dir sein,
Und vergiss nicht mein!

Ablösung

Kuckuck hat sich zutod gefallen
An einer hohlen Weiden,
Wer soll uns diesen Sommer lang
Die Zeit und Weil' vertreiben?
Ei, das soll tun Frau Nachtigall,
Die sitzt auf grünem Zweige;
Sie singt und springt, ist allzeit froh,
Wenn andre Vögel schweigen.

The Swiss boy

At Strasburg on the ramparts,
there my sorrows began,
I heard the Alpine horn sounding over there,
I had to swim across into my native country,
that could not be.

Some time in the night
they brought me back;
they took me at once to the captain's house,
Alas, they pulled me out of the river,
it's all over with me.

At ten o'clock in the morning
they will make me stand before the regiment;
I am to ask for pardon,
and I shall get reward all the same,
that I know.

My brother's all,
today you see me for the last time;
the shepherd boy alone is to blame,
the Alpine horn has done this to me,
I accuse it.

My brothers three,
I beg you, shoot me at once;
do not spare my young body,
fire so that the blood spurts out,
this I ask of you.

O king of Heaven, Lord,
take my poor soul,
take it to Thee into Heaven,
let it be with Thee forever,
and do not forget me!

Change of duty

Cuckoo has fallen to his death
on a hollow willow-tree,
who is going to pass the time for us
during this summer?
Oh, that Mistress Nightingale can do,
who sits on the green branches;
she sings and springs, and is always happy
when other birds are silent.

Drei Reiter am Tor

Es ritten drei Reiter zum Tor hinaus,
Ade!
Feins Liebchen schaute zum Fenster hinaus,
Ade!
Und wenn es denn soll geschieden sein,
So reich mir dein goldenes Ringlein,
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, scheiden und lassen tut weh.

Und der uns scheidet, das ist der Tod,
Ade!
Er scheidet so manches Jungfräulein rot,
Ade!
Und wär doch geworden der liebe Leib
Der Liebe ein süsser Zeitvertrieb,
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, scheiden und lassen tut weh.

Er scheidet das Kind wohl in der Wieg',
Ade!
Wenn werd' ich mein Schätzchen doch kriegen?
Ade!
Und ist es nicht morgen? Ach wär es doch heut,
Es macht' uns allbeiden gar grosse Freud',
Ade! Ade! Ade!
Ja, scheiden und lassen tut weh.

Nicht Wiedersehen!

Nun ade mein allerherzliebster Schatz,
Jetzt muss ich wohl scheiden von dir,
Bis auf den andern Sommer,
Dann komm' ich wieder zu dir.

Und als der junge Knab' heimkam,
Von seiner Liebsten fing er an,
Wo ist meine Herzallerliebste,
Die ich verlassen hab'?

Auf dem Kirchhof liegt sie begraben,
Heut ist's der dritte Tag,
Das Trauren und das Weinen,
Hat sie zum Tod gebracht.

Jetzt will ich auf den Kirchhof gehen,
Will suchen meiner Liebsten Grab,
Will ihr alleweil rufen,
Bis dass sie mir Antwort gibt.

Ei du mein allerherzliebster Schatz,
Mach auf dein tiefes Grab,
Du hörst kein Glöcklein läuten,
Du hörst kein Vöglein pfeifen,
Du siehst weder Sonn' noch Mond!

Three horsemen at the gate

Three horsemen rode out at the gate,
Farewell!
Truelove looked out at the window,
Farewell!
And if we must part,
then give me your golden ring,
Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
Yes, parting and leaving is painful.

And the one that parts us is death,
Farewell!
He takes away so many a rosy maiden,
Farewell!
And yet her sweet body would have become
a delightful pastime for love,
Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
Yes, parting and leaving is painful.

He takes away even children in the cradle,
Farewell!
When shall I get my sweetheart?
Farewell!
And will it not be tomorrow? Oh, if it were today,
it would make us both so very happy,
Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
Yes, parting and leaving is painful.

Never to meet again!

Now farewell, my heart's dearest,
now I must part from you
until next summer,
then I shall come back to you.

And when the young boy came home again,
he began to ask about his beloved:
Where is my dearest one
whom I left behind?

In the churchyard she lies buried,
today is the third day;
grieving and weeping
brought her to her death.

Now I will go to the churchyard,
I will look for my dear one's grave,
I will call her unceasingly
until she answers me.

Oh my heart's dearest,
open your deep grave,
you cannot hear any bell ringing,
you cannot hear any little bird singing,
you cannot see the sun or the moon!

Selbstgefühl

Ich weiss nicht, wie mir's ist,
Ich bin nicht krank und bin nicht gesund,
Ich bin blassiert und hab' keine Wund'.

Ich weiss nich, wie mir's ist,
Ich tät' gern essen und geschmeckt mir nichts,
Ich hab' ein Geld und gilt mir nichts.

Ich weiss nicht, wie mir's ist,
Ich hab' sogar kein' Schnupftabak,
Und hab' kein' Kreuzer Geld im Sack.

Ich weiss nicht, wie mir's ist,
Heiraten tät' ich auch schon gern,
Kann aber Kinderschrei'n nicht hörn.

Ich weiss nicht, wie mir's ist,
Ich hab' erst heut den Doktor gefragt,
Der hat mir's unters Gesicht gesagt.

Ich weiss wohl, was dir ist,
Ein Narr bist du gewiss;
Nun weiss ich, wie mir ist!

Self-assurance

I don't know what is the matter with me,
I am not ill and I am not well,
I am hurt and yet I have no wound.

I don't know what is the matter with me,
I should like to eat and I don't enjoy any food,
I have some money and nothing has value for me.

I don't know what is the matter with me,
I haven't even got any snuff,
or a single farthing in my purse.

I don't know what is the matter with me,
I'd like to get married, too,
but I can't stand children's yelling.

I don't know what is the matter with me,
just today I asked the doctor,
and he told me straight out.

I know quite well what is the matter with you,
you are undoubtedly a fool;
now I know what is the matter with me!

Appendix B: Glossary of Folk Terms

The following definitions represent a compilation of information from the following sources: Ad de Vries' *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, Chevalier and Gheerbrant's *A Dictionary of Symbols*, Cooper's *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*, Jones' *Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore*, Leach's *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, and Pickering's *A Dictionary of Folklore*. All of these sources are given complete listings in the bibliography.

Alphorn: A long wooden trumpet, four to twelve feet long, used in the alps for sunset rites, to call herds, to signal over long distances. The alphorn is audible for miles. It is believed to prolong daylight, and protect against the dangers of transition at dusk. The pitch is controlled by lips and breath, rather than by stops, and the few traditional tunes, also sung as *Kuhreihen* or *ranz des vaches*, show signs of archaism. In some areas Christianity has added the singing of the evening prayer as the instrument sounds. The instrument is ancient, mentioned by the Roman historian Tacitus.

Bells: Bells were thought to ward off evil spirits of all kinds. They were said to have the power to break storms. Bells were frequently used to accompany the departed on their way to heaven, and were believed to summon the supreme spirit himself. The bells rung to mark the death of an individual were thought to protect the mourners from envious ghosts. The Christian rite of exorcism is a clear indication of the potency ascribed to the bell; bell book and candle, all highly symbolic, are the priest's only tools. They were also used as an amulet. Fairy folk find the ringing of bells hard to bear. Teutonic legend

holds that it was the ringing of church bells that drove dwarfs, trolls, and other mountain people out of Germany and Scandinavia. Fairies often complain of the disturbance to their sport and rest caused by bells.

Cuckoo: The distinctive cry of the cuckoo is considered a herald of spring, and is heard joyfully throughout much of Europe. Peasants would roll on the grass and say *der KuckKuck hat gerufen* (the cuckoo have called). The cuckoo was believed to be capable of prophesying the hour of the day, the number of years of life, and how long a maid will remain unmarried. A love oracle, the sight and sound of the cuckoo are considered a good omen for marriage. The cuckoo also carries the connotation adultery. Zeus took the cuckoo's form for his illicit love adventures. The cuckoo is often connected with phallic symbolism. Ghosts and the devil are said to be able to assume the form of the cuckoo. The cuckoo can also denote insanity or battiness, (as the cuckoo clock that is always sounding at the wrong time). The common cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) lays its eggs in other bird's nests, often pushing out the real mother's eggs so that she won't notice the deception. Another feature of the common cuckoo is that in the early spring it sounds a descending minor 3rd. Later in the spring this becomes a major 3rd, and eventually a perfect 4th. Finally, the common cuckoo seems to fall silent, although in fact it has merely changed its tune. Peasants imagined that this seeming silence meant the cuckoo had died.

May Day: May Day is an ancient European festival day commemorating fertility and the arrival of spring. A May King and Queen are chosen who lead festive dancing and

singing. This festival revolves around a maypole, which carries strong phallic symbolism. May Day was intended to insure creative power for crops, cattle, and women. In France a jilted youth could lie in a field and feign sleep on May Day. Any village girl could awaken him with a kiss and marry him. Women also rolled naked in the dew on May Day eve for beauty, health, and luck. Getting your head wet on May Day was believed to prevent headaches for a year.

Nightingale: A small thrush, usually *Erithacus megarhynchos*, a native of Asia and Europe renowned for its sweet crescendoing song. There is a medieval story that the nightingale is afraid of snakes and presses itself against a thorn to stay awake all night, singing mournfully because of the pain. In a related story the nightingale is in love with a white rose and dies while pressing itself into the roses thorns, thus staining the rose red. The nightingale is a bird of spring. A legend holds that the nightingale was once a shepherdess who postponed her marriage, and was cursed by her lover to not sleep because he hadn't been able to. In Greek legend King Tereus of Thrace, entrusted with the task of escorting Philomena to see her sister Procne (his wife), raped her on the way, and cut out her tongue to prevent her telling the story. Philomena however wove the outrage into a tapestry, which she sent to Procne. The two sisters revenged themselves by killing Tereus' young son Itys, and serving him to his father in a stew. When Procne produced her son's head triumphantly, Tereus leapt to take revenge, but the gods transformed all three into birds; Tereus became a hawk, Procne a swallow, and Philomena a nightingale.

Willow: The willow was believed to be a graveside tree, representing sterility, celibacy, and forsaken love. It held certain useful medicinal properties, such as curing barrenness, but had the side effect of being an anti-aphrodisiac. Odysseus saw willow and black poplar at the entrance of Hades. Willows are connected with witches, who make their winnowing baskets of them. The willow was sacred to the moon, and figured prominently in harvest-moon festivals. Willow branches were used ceremonially to express the human mouth rejoicing before God.

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