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The Austro-German Heroic in the Music-Hermeneutical Era: Musical Discourse in the Service of Nationalist-Patriotic Armament between 1887 and the Early 1930s

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National-Patriotic Armament in Germany after 1870 in the Youth-Pedagogical and the Music-Didactical Discourse

The idea of the heroic in music is the effect of the interplay of several components – a socio-political '(zeit)geist' that feels drawn to attribute a heroic character to the actions and attitudes of individuals, a verbal discourse on music that characterizes musical configurations as 'variants' of non-musical phenomena, and, thirdly, compositional techniques that support such a view.[1]

I will reconstruct these components in the German discourse of the period following 1870[2] – the German victory over France and the first unification of the German countries in Western history – and the early 1930s – the time at the end of the German Weimar Republic and the Austrian First Republic, and the seizure of power by the Nazis in Germany. This period was marked by numerous heroizations in the socio-political and musical discourse. It was not only the instigators of patriotism and nationalism who used the heroic zeitgeist and the tendency towards hero-worshipping to advance their political goals; at the same time, the music-hermeneutic discourse gained increasing importance in music literature – coincidentally, albeit not unsuitably. On the one hand, the musical discourse was based on ideas that described music in terms of human traits including heroic action modes. On the other hand, the discourse's participants believed that these action modes could be recognized in musical compositions and they associated them with compositional developments, at least since Beethoven, which underpinned the heroic musical discourse.

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[1]   Many thanks are due to Volker Helbing without whose opinions from a music-theoretical perspective some ideas in this article would not have emerged or been developed.

[2]   'German' in the sense of the German language, not the German national territory.

Following 1870, Germany (as well as other nation states in Europe) became increasingly patriotic, nationalist, and militaristic.[3] In this politico-cultural climate, the heroic discourse praising the patriotic military-hero was popular, especially in the education sector.[4] Numerous pedagogically oriented publications – textbooks for schools and youth literature – revolved around individuals to which their authors and editors explicitly attributed a heroic character. The publications pointed to heroes – and sometimes also heroines[5] – from the past and the present: Greek and Roman fighters; Germanic legendary figures such as the Nibelungs; defenders of Austria against the Turkish threat in the sixteenth century such as Niklas Graf Zrinyi and Nikola Jurišić; and the combatants active in the wars of liberation from Napoleon (1813–15) and the First World War, such as the anonymous young victims from the battle of Langemarck.[6]

Emphasizing heroic narratives in youth literature, authors and editors of those publications aimed to spark a patriotic and combative spirit in their young readership and win them for the military profession.[7] Accordingly, heroes in pedagogical literature figured as models for the ideal combatant for the fatherland, as the editors and authors of those books repeatedly made clear in their forewords and

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[3] Cf. Eric John Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge, 1990); Daniel König, *Patriotismus in Deutschland* (Hamburg, 2012); John Breuilly, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford, 2013).

[4] This 'interaction' of the national-patriotic with the heroic discourse does not mean that the terms 'Held' (hero), 'Helden' (heroes) and 'heroisch' (heroic) were used inflationarily. According to the Google Books Ngram Viewer, prints in the period between 1870 and 1935 was by no means marked by a preference for heroic terms. On the contrary, the number of uses of these terms only increased again in the first half of the 1940s after a peak and a subsequent continuous decline around 1800. Google Books Ngram Viewer, search terms: 'Helden, Held, heroischen, heroische, Heldentum, heroischer, Heroismus, heroisch, Heldenmut', <https://books.google.com/ngrams> [accessed 6 Mar. 2016].

[5] Cf. Louis Noel, *Die deutschen Heldinnen in den Kriegsjahren 1807–1815* (Berlin, 1912).

[6] Cf. Franz Weller, *Niclas Graf von Zrinyi, der Held von Sziget* (Vienna, 1880); Jakob Carl Andrae (ed.), *Griechische Heldensagen für die Jugend, insbesondere für die Schüler der unteren und mittleren Klassen höherer Lehranstalten* (Kreuznach, 1881); Moriz Bermann, *Das wohlthätige Venediger-Mandl. Künstlergeschichte. Der Held von Güns. Episode aus den Türkenkriegen* (Vienna, 1890); Ferdinand Schmidt, *Die Nibelungen* (Berlin, 1903); Gustav Schalk, *Meisterbuch deutscher Götter- und Heldensagen* (Berlin; Vienna, 1911); Valerie Hodann, *Heldenkämpfe: Erzählungen aus dem nordischen Altertum* (Langensalza, 1926); Albert Fabian, *Heldengeist im Heldenlied: eine Einführung in die Edda und andere altdeutsche Dichtungen für die Jugend des 3. Reiches* (Breslau, 1934); Hans Scheil, *Langemarck: der Opfergang einer heldischen Jugend* (Breslau, 1934). See also: n. 2.

[7] Conscription was enshrined in German law since the wars of liberation from Napoleon in 1813/14. After defeat in the First World War and as a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles, conscription did not take place until 1935. The patriotic and nationalist spirit, however, prevailed during this period of arms limitation in Europe. Interestingly, while youth literature popularized this spirit, hero-worshipping played almost no role in the military realm itself. Military journals and calendars such as the *Militär-Literatur-Zeitung*, *Militär-Wochenblatt*, *Deutscher Armeekalender*, *Jahrbücher für die deutsche Armee und Marine*, *Deutsches Offizierblatt* and *Deutsche Heeres-Zeitung* soberly focused on the maintenance and running of the German army, weapons technology, and recruitment.

introductions. This became apparent just a few months after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. In the subtitle of his monograph *Der deutsche Krieg 1870 und seine Helden,*[8] J. S. Ewald defined the book's purpose as being 'to vitalize *patriotic emotions*, narrated for the German youth and people'.[9] Similarly, eighteen years later, in 1898, August Wolter, the editor of the poetic anthology *Vaterländische Helden und Ehrentage im Spiegel deutscher Dichtung: eine Sammlung von Gedichten für Schulen, Präparandenanstalten und Seminare zur Verwertung im Geschichtsunterricht und bei patriotischen Festen*[10] emphasized the pedagogical as well as patriotizing effect of his publication: 'Our time, in which young lads that have just finished school begin to undermine the welfare of the Reich, requires the implantation and cultivation of love of the ruler and fatherland, and the arousal of a noble enthusiasm for German life and endeavour.'[11]

It is characteristic of those forewords and introductions of pedagogical and youth literature which were published during the newly united Wilhelmine Empire that the heroes that young people were expected to emulate were rather vaguely characterized: platitudes such as 'German love and faithfulness, German morality, and – in general – German spirit';[12] 'heroic courage' and 'moral nobleness';[13] 'heartful sense' counteracting 'modern dandiness and sober smugness';[14] 'our [i.e. the German people's] aristocracy' and 'German essence', 'German nature, German faithfulness and

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[8]   'The German War of 1870 and its Heroes.'

[9]   'Zur Belebung des *vaterländischen Gefühls* für die deutsche Jugend und das Volk erzählt', my italics: J. S. Ewald, *Der deutsche Krieg 1870 und seine Helden. zur Belebung des vaterländischen Gefühls für die deutsche Jugend und das Volk erzählt* (Dresden, [1870]).

[10] 'Patriotic Heroes and Honour Days as Reflected in German Poetry: A Collection of Poems for Schools, Preparation Schools and Seminars to be used in History Classes and Patriotic Feasts.'

[11] 'Unsere Zeit, in der jugendliche Burschen, die eben der Schule entlaufen sind, bereits beginnen das Wohl des Reiches zu untergraben, erfordert mehr denn je die Pflanzung und Pflege der Liebe zu Fürst und Vaterland und die Erweckung einer edlen Begeisterung für deutsches Leben und Streben, und diese erhält, das lässt sich nicht leugnen einen kräftigen Ansporn durch die feierliche Begehung vaterländischer Gedenktage… Hundert und aber hundert 18. Juni und 18. Oktober können ins Land gehen, und Millionen von Herzen deutscher Landeskinder bleiben unberührt, kalt, still und stumm, weil niemand sich der Helden und Heldenthaten dieser Tage erinnert und kein äußerer Anlaß zur Erhebung der Gemüter zu patriotischer Begeisterung gegeben wird.' August Wolter, *Vaterländische Helden und Ehrentage im Spiegel deutscher Dichtung: eine Sammlung von Gedichten für Schulen, Präparandenanstalten und Seminare zur Verwertung im Geschichtsunterricht und bei patriotischen Festen* (Berlin, 1898), pp. V–VI.

[12] 'Deutsche Liebe und Treue, deutsche Redlichkeit, überhaupt das deutsche Gemüth': Wilhelm Wägner, *Deutsche Heldensagen: erzählt für Jugend und Volk,* 5 vols (Leipzig, 1898), vol. 2, p. VII.

[13] 'Heldenmütige Tapferkeit' and 'sittlicher Adel': 'Vorwort', in Schalk, *Meisterbuch deutscher Götter- und Heldensagen.*

[14] The book's purpose is 'unsrer Jugend den alten herzhaften deutschen Sinn zu wecken und zu stärken, dem modernen Geckentum aber und der nüchternen Blasiertheit, die das innerste Mark unsres tüchtigen Volkes anfressen möchten, entgegen zu wirken': Gotthold Klee, *Die Deutschen Heldensagen* (Gütersloh, 1883), p. VIII.

German heroism'[15] aroused strong (but diffuse) emotions of uprising and supremacy. In the introduction to his edition of the *Deutsche Heldensagen für Jugend und Volk* of 1901, for instance, Gustav Schalk pointed to the 'elevating consciousness' of the German people's original nobleness that his volume aimed to support.[16]

The tendency to vague heroizations and emotionalization intensified after the First World War. In her *Heldenkämpfe: Erzählungen aus dem nordischen Altertum* (1926), Valerie Hodann expressed the intention that the narratives of her volume should 'make the heart wide and great and sweeping us away like an effervescent mountain fountain overwhelming us'.[17] Correspondingly, Arnold Reimann hoped that the heroic narratives of his *Heldenbuch, Erzählungen aus der deutschen Geschichte für den Anfangsunterricht* should be experienced by its readers as 'an adventure, inspire to awe regarding greatness of human strive, [and] to enthusiasm for the heroes from the German past to the recent present'.[18] As before the First World War, it remained unclear by which properties the German heroic character was marked. The editor of *Heldengeist im Heldenlied: eine Einführung in die Edda und andere altdeutsche Dichtungen für die Jugend des 3. Reiches* of 1934, i.e. one year after Hitler's seizure of power, Albert Fabian, claimed that the poetry of the Teutons articulated 'the strong heroism and deep inwardness of our forefathers'.[19] In the same year Georg Vogel stated in his *Helden des Weltkrieges* without further explanation: 'One of the essential characteristics of the Teuton-German human is heroism.'[20]

[15] 'Wir lernen aus den Sagen, die uns in der Edda, dem ältesten germanischen Schriftwerk, überliefert sind, die germanische Weltanschauung kennen und ersehen daraus unseres Volkes Edelart.' The book wishes 'die Liebe für unsere germanische Heimat zu stärken, das Verständnis für germanisches Wesen zu schärfen und den Vorsatz in den Herzen meiner Leser wachzurufen, allezeit festzuhalten an deutscher Art, deutscher Treu und deutschem Heldentum.' Hodann, *Heldenkämpfe*, pp. 3 and 4.

[16] The German people should not lose the 'erhebende Bewusstsein' 'seines angestammten Adels': Gustav Schalk, *Deutsche Heldensagen für Jugend und Volk* (Bonn, 1901), p. VIII.

[17] 'Aus der germanischen Götter- und Heldenwelt weht uns reinste, edelste Poesie entgegen, eine Poesie, die das Herz weit und groß macht und uns mit sich fortreißt, wie ein sprudelnder Bergstrom.' Hodann, *Heldenkämpfe*, p. 3.

[18] 'Zur ersten Einführung in geschichtliches Denken werden hier entsprechend der Forderung der preußischen Richtlinien Geschichten geboten, die bestimmte Heldenpersönlichkeiten in den Mittelpunkt stellen und um sie die Hauptereignisse eines ganzen Zeitalters gruppieren. [sic]… alles sollte Leben atmen, zum Erlebnis werden, mit fortreißen zur Ehrfurcht vor der Größe menschlichen Ringens, zur Begeisterung für die Helden der deutschen Vergangenheit bis in die jüngste Gegenwart hinein.' Arnold Reimann, *Das Heldenbuch: Erzählungen aus der deutschen Geschichte für den Anfangsunterricht* (Munich; Berlin, 1926), p. 3.

[19] 'Aus ihr [der Dichtung der Germanen] sprechen das starke Heldentum und die tiefe Innerlichkeit unserer Vorväter.' Fabian, *Heldengeist im Heldenlied*, p. 2.

[20] 'Eine der wesentlichsten Charaktereigenschaften des germanisch-deutschen Menschen ist die Heldenhaftigkeit.' Georg Vogel, *Helden zur See*, Helden des Weltkrieges 2 (Breslau, 1934), p. 2.

Heroic Rhetoric in the Music-Hermeneutical Discourse

Like the pedagogical-political discourse, the then-promoted discourse on music availed itself of heroic rhetorical means. From the mid-1880s onwards, those perceived today as representatives of the music-hermeneutical camp[21] – Hermann Kretzschmar (1848–1924), Paul Bekker (1882–1937), and Arnold Schering (1877–1941) – explained music in terms of heroism, often replicating the heroic clichés prevalent in Germany at this time. In their writings on music, they evoked heroic images and narrative episodes that praised physical violence, force, and the courage to accept challenges. According to their comments on selected compositions, the hero was a leader figure who strove for liberty and his people, and excelled by means of achievements, triumph, splendour, and majesty. With respect to Brahms's Third Symphony, Kretzschmar stated:

> In the context of [its] first performance… Hans Richter called this symphony… quite appropriately the Eroica of Brahms. Though it [the symphony] does not include martial images, its hero is a strongman. In the first movement, he appears in a Herculean way and holds his ground against mushy enticements.[22] Most intensively, the final movement takes a heroic tone: there stands a hero bent forward as for defence; vigorous strikes flash.[23] People have called it heroic; they did so with justification insofar as it articulates a tremendous abundance of the most healthy power.[24]

Regarding Beethoven, Bekker stated:

> The political hero is the basis of Beethoven's oeuvre; the hero that leads his people up through hot fight to happy liberty. At this time Beethoven believed in such a

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[21] Although Bekker is usually not classified as a music-hermeneutical writer, it is reasonable to consider him as such in light of his style of writing about music. Cf. regarding the similarity between Bekker's and Kretzschmar's music-interpretative methods: Andreas Eichhorn, *Paul Bekker: Facetten eines kritischen Geistes* (Hildesheim, 2002), p. 547, n. 71. The reason for this contradiction is most likely due to the fact that the music hermeneutic method is often regarded by contemporary musicologists as unscientific 'poetics' which, in the person of Schering, could also be perceived as leaning towards National Socialism, whereas Bekker emigrated after Hitler's seizure of power and was subsequently ostracised by the National Socialists.

[22] 'Hans Richter hat bei der ersten Aufführung (2. Dezember 1883 zu Wien) diese Symphonie, die dritte des Komponisten, nicht übel als die Eroica von Brahms bezeichnet. Kriegsbilder enthält sie zwar nicht, aber ihr Held ist ein Kraftmensch. Im ersten Satz tritt er herkulisch auf und behauptet sich gegen weichliche Verlockungen und von besserm Leben über den Sternen. Im dritten Satz, einem gedämpften, in Spohrschen Farben gehaltnen Reigen, dunkelt sich der Horizont, im Schlußsatz entlädt sich ein Schicksalsgewitter, das mit verklärtem Abendfrieden endet.' Hermann Kretzschmar, *Gesammelte Aufsätze über Musik aus den Grenzboten,* Gesammelte Aufsätze über Musik und Anderes 1 (Leipzig, 1910), p. 556; similar to Hermann Kretzschmar, *Führer durch den Konzertsaal: Sinfonie Suite,* vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1913), p. 751.

[23] 'Am stärksten schlägt das Finale den heroischen Ton an: *da steht ein Held* wie zur Abwehr vorgebeugt, energische Schläge zucken – am Ende klärt es sich zu köstlichem Frieden.' Kretzschmar, *Gesammelte Aufsätze über Musik*, p. 201.

[24] 'Man hat sie eine heroische genannt; mit einigem Recht, insofern sich in ihrem Wesen eine ungeheure Fülle von gesundester Kraft ausspricht.' *Ibid.*

hero who would achieve those deeds. He also believed the goal of development would be found in this liberation of humans and the most sublime propagation of extroverted human willpower in the deeds of such a hero.[25]

In the String Quartet in E-flat major, op. 74, no. 10:

a new melody in E-flat major is born from the lyrical theme in the second violin, which possesses a truly royal splendour. Triumphantly, it outshines all other voices and lends the entire poetry a heroic, majestic conclusion.[26]

In the same vein, Schering characterized the Adagio of Beethoven's String Quartet in F major, op. 18, no. 1 as 'heroic'.[27]

While the heroizations in the politico-cultural discourse could easily be achieved by dubbing an individual's courageous deed and willingness to risk their life heroic, in the musical discourse such a rhetoric appears to be much less plausible. How could music be called heroic if it is not a subject and, thus, cannot carry out dangerous, self-sacrificing, and other supportive deeds or possess courage and determination, and triumph over its own desires? As I will demonstrate, the employment of the heroic rhetoric in the musical context was built on a musical discourse that had been developed since the end of the eighteenth century and supported by analogies with human figures. This becomes visible if we reconsider the emergence of the music-hermeneutical discourse in a wider music-discursive context.[28]

The Music-Hermeneutical Discourse and the Idea of Musical Character

The music-hermeneutical discourse did not develop out of nowhere in the late nineteenth century. In 1902, Kretzschmar marked out two articles in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (AMZ) under the guidance of Friedrich Rochlitz (1798–1818) as models of his manner of writing about music: Carl Friedrich Zelter's review of

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[25] 'Der politische Heros bildet den Ausgangspunkt des Beethovenschen Werkes, der Heros, der seine Völker durch heißen Kampf zur beglückenden Freiheit emporführt. Damals glaubte Beethoven an einen Helden, der solche Taten vollbringen würde. Er glaubte auch, in dieser Befreiung des Menschen das Ziel der Entwicklung zu finden, in den Taten eines solchen Helden die erhabensten Kundgebungen nach außen gewandter menschlicher Willenskraft.' Paul Bekker, *Beethoven* (Berlin, 1912), p. 86.

[26] 'Und nun gebiert sich aus dem Gesangsthema in der 2. Violine eine neue Es-dur-Melodie von wahrhaft *königlichem Glanz. Triumphierend überstrahlt* sie alle anderen Stimmen und gibt der ganzen Dichtung einen heldenhaft *majestätischen* Ausklang. Wie diese beglückende Vision fast unmerklich heraufgestiegen war, so zerfließt sie auch wieder.' *Ibid.*, p. 509.

[27] Arnold Schering, *Beethoven in neuer Deutung* (Leipzig, 1934), p. 22.

[28] Other topics of the music-hermeneutical discourse were: gender roles; national tone and folk-likeness; fighting and war; happiness and misfortune; victory and triumph; dark and light; magnificence, splendour, and majesty; power and energy; mightiness and power; ferocity and the demonic; moods such as nostalgia, melancholy and lament; joy and jocundity; solemnity and the pathetic; piety and emotion.

Haydn's *Creation*[29] (1801/02) and E. T. A. Hoffmann's description of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony[30] (1810) respectively.[31]

From our perspective today, it is not a coincidence that Kretzschmar appreciated Hoffmann's review. Hoffmann's study from the turn of the nineteenth century adhered to a specific music-discursive trend of this time, on which Kretzschmar would build his method of music-hermeneutical interpretation. This discourse around 1800 revolved around the idea of the 'musical character' and transferred the concept of character, as it had been used in everyday language with respect to human beings, to the musical field.[32] In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, writers adopted this discourse in order to articulate particular appreciation of compositions that, in their perception, had character. Compositions with character were marked by specific expressive qualities,[33] which they described using analogies to the character, temperament, or moods of an individual. In their opinion, those compositions were aesthetically valuable because the music's character lent distinctiveness to a composition and made it appear unique.[34] In being unique, musical artworks resembled human individuals who, starting at this time, were also considered unique in that they possessed individual, singular traits and temperaments, and, thus, were worth surviving and being cared for.[35] The attribution of a person's character to music – which is related to Edward Cone's persona theory developed in 1974[36] – additionally fuelled the

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[29] [Carl Friedrich Zelter], 'Recension', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 24, (1801/2), 385–96.

[30] E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'Sinfonie pour 2 Violons, 2 Violes, Violoncelle et Contre-Violon, 2 Flûtes, petite Flûte, 2 Hautbois, 2 Clarinettes, 2 Bassons, Contrebasson, 2 Cors, 2 Trompettes, Timbales et 3 Trompes, composée et dédiée etc. par Louis van Beethoven. à Leipsic, chez Breitkopf et Härtel. Oeuvre 67. No. 5. des Sinfonies. (Pr. 4 Rthlr. 12 Gr.)', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 12 (1810), 630–42 (often printed under the title 'Beethoven's Instrumental=Musik').

[31] Hermann Kretzschmar, 'Anregungen zur Förderung der musikalischen Hermeneutik' (1902), in Hermann Kretzschmar, *Gesammelte Aufsätze über Musik*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1910), vol. 2, pp. 168–92, esp. p. 177.

[32] Cf. Martha Vidor, 'Zur Begriffsbestimmung des musikalischen Charakterstücks mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Charakterstücks für Klavier' (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Leipzig, 1924); Jacob de Ruiter, *Der Charakterbegriff in der Musik* (Stuttgart, 1989).

[33] This manifests itself, for instance, in Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg's writings in which he uses 'character' and 'affect' synonymously: *Anleitung zum Clavierspielen* (Berlin, 1765), p. 16.

[34] This distinctiveness could also include the verbalization of the music's content. According to Ruiter (*Der Charakterbegriff*, pp. 107–14), the original genre title of Beethoven's *Pastorale*, *Sinfonia caracteristica*, for instance, indicated that the 'content' of the composition was less ineffable than other instrumental music.

[35] Probably not coincidentally, the first more extensive declaration of human rights in the framework of the US-American Declaration of Independence was written at the same time, 1776.

[36] Edward Cone, 'Persona, Protagonist, and Characters', in Edward Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley 1974), pp. 20–40.

idea that the individuality of the composer's character manifested itself in the character of the composer's music.[37]

Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony participated in the discourse on 'music as individual'. He interpreted the first movement as a whole as having 'the character of anxious, restless nostalgia',[38] and the chord repetitions with the agglomeration of diminished seventh chords starting in bar 46 of the development in the first movement were for him 'sounds by means of which [an individual] who is pressed by the presentiment of the tremendous and, frightened, vents her spleen, and like a friendly figure lightening the night moves through the clouds'.[39] Other authors also availed themselves of their imagination of an individual's character while writing about music. In 1783, the theologian and writer Carl Friedrich Cramer, for instance, compared the subject of the 'Rondo in A major' of Bach's fourth collection *Für Kenner und Liebhaber* with 'a lovely girl… who has set her mind on something she wants to obtain in any case by means of mood and insisting'.[40] Moreover, the metaphorical description of music as a person obviously helped eighteenth-century music critics to develop new modes of speaking about music,[41] which, at this time, was still often considered as abstract, meaningless *Geklingel*.[42] Sulzer, for instance, recommended in 1777 that the composer 'precisely imagines the character of a person, or a situation, a passion and exert his fantasy until he believes he hears a person in such circumstances speak'.[43]

In light of this discourse revolving around the idea of musical character being equivalent to an individual's character, writers on music of the later nineteenth century could adopt the heroic discourse from the politico-cultural field on nationalism and patriotism and, in doing so, comply with the musical discourse when they attributed a heroic character to a composition. Correspondingly, in Kretzschmar's writing, the term 'character' has a conspicuous place. Although it often serves as

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[37] See also Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 185 ff.

[38] This is a theme, 'welches zwar melodiös ist, aber doch dem Charakter ängstlicher, unruhvoller Sehnsucht, den der ganze Satz ausspricht, getreu bleibt'. Hoffmann, 'Sinfonie', p. 637.

[39] 'Es sind Laute, womit sich die Brust, von Ahnungen des Ungeheuren gepresst und beängstet gewaltsam Luft macht; und wie eine freundliche Gestalt, die glänzend, die tiefe Nacht erleuchtend, durch die Wolken zieht, tritt nun ein Thema ein.' Hoffmann, 'Sinfonie', p. 638.

[40] 'Einem allerliebsten Mädchen, das ihr Köpfchen auf was gesezt hat, das sie durch Laune und artiges Pochen durchaus erreichen will.' Carl Friedrich Cramer, 'Rezensionen, Ankündigungen', *Magazin der Musik* 1, 7 December 1783, 1235–376, at p. 1243.

[41] Cf. Ruiter, *Der Charakterbegriff*, p. 72.

[42] 'Ringing'. Anonymous critique of 'Komische Opern, 1. und 2. Band', *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, 11 (1770), 1–5, at p. 5.

[43] 'Der Tonsetzer [thut] wol, wenn er sich allemal den Charakter einer Person, oder eine Situation, eine Leidenschaft, bestimmt vorstellt, und seine Phantasie so lang anspannt, bis er eine in diesen Umständen sich befindende Person glaubt, reden zu hören'. Johann Georg Sulzer, 'Instrumentalmusik', *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, 1 (Leipzig, 1777), 559–60, at p. 559.

little more than a synonym for 'shape', 'type', or 'expression',[44] in other contexts Kretzschmar's specification of the musical character seemed to draw on typical characterizations of human individuals. The character of Rupert Mayr's suite collection *Pythagoreische Schmidts Fünklein*, for example, was heartfelt (innig) and of German nature; those of the final movement of Haydn's Symphony no. 11 and of the Menuet of his Symphony no. 12 were heavy and energetic, and stolid and dancing, respectively, while the character of the second theme of the first movement of Mozart's Symphony in G minor, no. 40, was agitated and dark.[45] In brief, Kretzschmar seemed to describe human individuals while writing about music.

Related to this rhetorical method, Bekker considered the character of a composition to be the result of a composer's shaping of fictive figures and situations, not unlike a novelist in a narrative. According to Bekker, in the 'Eroica' Symphony Beethoven 'had to manage the characterization of the hero's victorious, robust and combatant nature… by formal as well as colouristic means'.[46] Schering varied the procedures of his colleagues Kretzschmar and Bekker by adopting the term 'character image' (Charakterbild) (instead of 'character') from the discourses on both musical and human character. In comparison with 'character', 'character image' emphasized that the character of an individual or a piece of music was a homogeneous entity. Correspondingly, Schering described the second movement of the String Quartet in C-Sharp minor, op. 131, as possessing a 'general character image [Charakterbild] of which purity of heart [Herzensreinheit] and the need of love [Liebe[s]bedürfnis] are the prominent features'.[47]

If, however, the nationalist-heroic spirit and the musical discourse revolving around character matched so perfectly in the decades around 1900, to what degree did the ascription of heroic features to music and the implied association with a character or person comply with the compositional substance? In other words, were Kretzschmar, Bekker, and Schering's *de*scriptions of music as heroic mere *a*scriptions, or were the music-hermeneutical interpretations supported by the 'shape' of the music? If so, how were the perceived musical character and the composition's heroic features interrelated with each other? I will explore this by means of the first movement of Mahler's Second Symphony.

The Heroic in Mahler's Second Symphony

In his monograph on Mahler's symphonies of 1921 – Mahler had died ten years previously – Bekker characterized the A-flat major theme from the first group of

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[44] Cf., for instance, Kretzschmar, *Führer durch den Konzertsaal,* pp. 87, 132, and 190.

[45] *Ibid.,* pp. 56, 161–2, and 185.

[46] 'In der Eroica aber sah er sich vor einen neuen Stoff gestellt. Es galt, die *sieghaft kernige Kampfnatur* des Helden nicht nur in formalen Architekturen, sondern auch koloristisch zu charakterisieren'. Bekker, *Beethoven*, pp. 216–17.

[47] 'So begnügt sich Beethoven mit einem allgemeinen Charakterbild, in dem Herzensreinheit und Liebebedürfnis [*sic*] die hervorstechenden Züge sind.' Schering, *Beethoven in neuer Deutung*, p. 54.

themes of the first movement of the Second Symphony as 'the heroic secondary theme'.[48] Bekker neither elaborated his association, nor verified it by means of musical analysis. In order to examine whether Bekker's characterization of Mahler's music as heroic has a compositional foundation, we have no choice but to reconstruct Bekker's process of understanding against the background of the compositional facts. (The page and bar numbers in this article refer to the 1910 Universal Edition of the symphony.[49])

Mahler furnished the A-flat major theme (bar 74 ff, p. 10) with musical properties that from a perspective focused on the concept of character, particularly invited the listener to relate them to human beings, their characters, behaviour modes, and practices. There are, first, the overall melodic upwards movement and the impulsive-energetic dotted rhythm of the second part of the theme that can be related to the dynamic, swinging way of walking of an upright and smiling person: i.e. a person whose corners of his/her mouth, like their posture, are directed upwards. The emotional state that an observer deduces from those external characteristics comprises self-confidence (upright posture and straight, goal-oriented way of walking) and optimism (smiling).[50] In this light and drawing on the discourse on musical character, the A-flat major theme can be considered as analogous to an individual with character traits in the modern sense; its character can be defined as self-confident and optimistic.

Although this first group of properties is not specifically 'heroic' (because self-confidence and optimism are not specific to heroes or heroines, but also apply to various other figures such as sportsmen and movie stars as well as everyday individuals), in combination with two further groups of musical properties they generate a complex of meaning usually referred to by using the word 'heroic'. The second group entails the theme's overall acceleration that results from, first, the rhythmic diminishing of the theme's second part and, second, the metrical change from downbeat (in the theme's first part) to upbeat (in its second part) and, connected with this, the overlapping of both parts. The acceleration transports a specific energy and stimulates associations such as the *potential* for action[51]

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[48] 'Da erscheint als einstweilige Krönung und Verheißung das heroische Seitenthema': Paul Bekker, *Gustav Mahlers Sinfonien* (Berlin, 1921), p. 79.

[49] Gustav Mahler, Symphony no. 2 'Resurrection' (Vienna, 1910). Available at <https://imslp.org/wiki/Symphony_No.2_(Mahler%2C_Gustav)> [accessed 4 Jun. 2019].

[50] What I have described above basically corresponds with Zbikowsky's and Trivedi's observation. In her chapter on the heroization of nineteenth-century Hungarian music in this volume, Csilla Pethő-Vernet points to similar phenomena (see section on 'The Rákóczi March'). Cf. Zbikowsky in Pethő-Vernet's chapter, n. 36; cf. Saam Trivedi, 'Music and Imagination', in Theodore Gracyk and Andrew Kania (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music* (New York, 2011), pp. 113–22, at p. 118.

[51] The acceleration of the theme in A-flat major makes us not only *feel* the acceleration in the music, but also *experience* acceleration in our bodies which, since this acceleration does not lead to any musical discharge of energy, appears to be energy *in potentia*: i.e. energy that strives for discharge in action and, from the perspective of the individuals who have this energy, feels like a thirst for action. The reasons for this effect have recently been explained by Tom Cochrane, 'A Simulation Theory of Musical Expressivity',

and the appropriate mental state, the *thirst* for action, that is the condition for the execution of the heroic deed.[52]

The third group of properties, which in combination with the A-flat major theme can be considered heroic, is the orchestration of the theme's first part by brass instruments and triads. These features make the passage resemble a fanfare.[53] The acoustically intrusive, overpowering traits of this orchestration label the event or person to which the fanfare refers – the fictive optimist, self-confident, energy-laden individual – with the same qualities: intrusiveness and power, as it is essential for warrior heroes and victorious heroes.[54] The meaning of this last group of properties emerges not only from the construction of similarities by the listener, but also from conventions, i.e. the listener's knowledge of which contexts fanfares have been used in throughout history. The result of the combination of the three groups of musical properties is a complex of features, a character, that is marked by self-confidence, optimism, the thirst and potential for action, energy, intrusiveness, and power, as well as splendour.

Australasian Journal of Philosophy, 88 (2010), 191–207, esp. p. 198. He assembles the findings of Antonio Damasio, Stephen Davies, Vittorio Gallese, Alvin Goldman, Jenefer Robinson, and numerous others. According to these theories, it is reasonable to assume that our musical perceptions do not only stimulate us to construct structural similarities between the perceptions and their various 'contours' (on contour theory: see n. 26), on the one hand, and bodily movements or mimics that can additionally be interpreted as external manifestations of mental states, on the other, but musical properties also *directly* alter the listener's mental and physical state, not unlike coffee or other drugs. Unlike drugs, however, this change of the mental and physical state is not based on chemical causes, but – most likely – on mirror neurons that synchronize our perceptions of emotions and movements of other individuals with our own emotions and muscle tension.

[52] Note that thirst for action, 'frohe[r] Tatendrang' as a feature of heroic figures can also be found in Kretzschmar's description of the heroic in Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony published seven years before Bekker's book on Mahler's symphonies (Kretzschmar, *Führer durch den Konzertsaal*, p. 202). 'Thirst for action' as a marker of those who are heroes or want to become heroes can also be found in pedagogical literature. In 1925 the *Bayerische Blätter für das Gymnasialschulwesen*, vol. 61, recommended the reading of 'Die Nibelungen' at the age when boys start to develop 'a spirit of enterprise, thirst for action and heroic feelings'. ('Der dritte Band, "Die Nibelungen", ist für die Altersstufe bestimmt, auf der im Knaben die Unternehmungslust, der Tatendrang und heldisches Gefühl sich zu regen beginnt'). *Bayerische Blätter für das Gymnasialschulwesen*, 61, (Munich, 1925), p.365. There are numerous other examples for the close association between heroism and thirst for action in the years between 1880 and 1930: see Google Books, keywords: 'Tatendrang' and 'heldisch', publication years: '1880 to 1930'. <www. google.de/search?hl=de&tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=tatendrang+heldisch&tbs=,cdr:1,cd_ min:01.01.1880,cd_max:31.12.1930&num=100> [accessed 10 May 2014]

[53] Although the concept of the fanfare is rather vague and equivocal – the term's meaning ranges from 'noise' and 'roar' to a distinct configuration of intervals and durations that serve to announce an event (such as the arrival of a ruler or the end of a hunt) or call for action (such as an attack) – there is a consensus that it is a signal that draws attention to important events or persons.

[54] Cf. Roman Hankeln's chapter, which reconstructs how the relationship between rulership and heroism had been established in the Middle Ages.

Having focused on the first statement of the A-flat major theme, however, my reconstruction of the musical factors that motivated Bekker to describe the scene in A-flat major as heroic is not yet complete. For it is not the *first* statement, but the *re*statement of the theme in bar 175 (p. 21), in the second, varied recapitulation of the first group of themes, that inspired him to label this theme as 'heroic'.[55] (Regarding the preceding exposition of the theme, starting in bar 74, Bekker employed the more analytical, less associative attributes: 'upward striding', 'solemnly rhythmicized', and of 'fanfare-like continuation'.[56]) This raises the question of what features (in addition to those of the first statement) the restatement displays that evoked the idea of the heroic?

The restatement, as I have described above, is different from the statement in its original shape with respect to four parameters: the first statement is *piano* (instead of *forte*, as in the restatement), in A-flat major (instead of D major) and performed by tubas and trombones joining the trumpets (instead of French horns); these are marked *tenuto* (instead of *martellato*). All these parameters together create what I call expressive ambivalence. The theme's upward gesture in A-flat major performed *piano* and without *martellato* articulation does not evoke the image of a self-confident, optimistic, onwardly marching individual, but refers to an optimistic, yet also modest and cautious attitude. (In contrast, the new features of the restatement abolish the expressive abeyance by which the exposition of the theme is marked.) The *forte* intensity underscores the analogy between self-confidence and the theme's upward gesture, if we assume a proportional ratio between self-confidence and the intensity with which a self-confident person dares to speak. Despite the softer instrumentation of 'trumpets and French horns' (instead of tubas, trombones, and trumpets), the *martellato* articulation creates an overall brilliant, almost strident timbre, like a threatening, intense, and screaming voice that can be associated with resoluteness, the claim of power and the potential for action. Additionally, the new key, D major, operates as a denotative marker of heroism and triumph.

Those differences between the first statement and the restatement would be rather insignificant if both statements did not occur in the context of two contrasting dramaturgies, especially the preparatory phase before the statement's and restatement's entrances. The exposition of the theme in bars 74 ff (p. 10) is preceded by a one-bar upward-moving gesture by the strings (bar 73) that intensifies to *forte*, but abruptly terminates in *piano* with the start of the theme's statement, in this way, 'leaving' space for the theme's exposition. The one-bar *crescendo* of the strings completes a nine-bar build-up starting in bar 64 that revolves around the first, threatening, lugubrious group of themes in a sort of *fausse reprise* or second exposition. Mahler attenuates the contrast between the threatening build-up and the solemn

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55   He writes: 'In the basses the movement swells [or grows]. The heroic secondary theme appears as a temporary highpoint and promise, now transposed from A-flat major to D major' ('In den Bässen schwillt die Bewegung. Da erscheint als einstweilige Krönung und Verheißung das heroische Seitenthema, jetzt aus As-dur in warmes D-dur übertragen'). Bekker, *Gustav Mahlers Sinfonien*, p. 79.

56   'Aufwärts schreitend', 'feierlich rhythmisiert', and 'in fanfarenartiger Weiterführung': *ibid.*, p. 77.

A-flat major theme by the harmonic progression: from bar 73–4, the bass moves downwards to A-flat (the new root of the tonic of the heroic theme) beneath the sustained tones C and E-flat in the French horns and upper woodwind. This process makes the entry of the theme appear smooth and self-evident.

In comparison to the theme's exposition, its reappearance from bar 175 is prepared much more spaciously and dramatically. The last two bars of the exposition of the second, lyrical group of themes become gloomy with a shift from E major to E minor (bars 145–6, p. 18). Not unlike Rossini's rocket, the music of the subsequent thirty bars dramatically builds by various means: a threatening, dotted, march-like, bass line (bars 147 ff), the upward-moving sequence of short motifs and accompaniment figures of one or two bars (bars 155 ff), a subtle accelerando (bars 163 ff), an elliptic and, thus, pushing chord progression that omits the tonics of second dominants (bars 164–5), and the intensification of the motivic and timbral complexity through contrapuntal figures such as the scalic *crescendo* of the strings (bars 171 ff).

The entire process of preparing the entrance of the restatement can be described as follows: unlike the exposition of the statement, the restatement appears as part of a wave that builds up over some thirty bars and, at its crest, catapults the theme into the composition. It is this dramatic design that 'motivates' the re-entry of the second theme which finishes off the build-up. Mahler supports this dramaturgy by means of harmonic alterations of the theme itself. Whereas in the exposition the first part of the original statement (bars 74–6) primarily features the central harmonic functions of A-flat major – I, IV, I, vi, V, I – the corresponding bars 175–7 of the restatement in D major highlight the subdominant area, i.e. a functional area that usually appears near the end of a composition and has an apotheotic effect. Mahler achieves this by replacing the major with the minor subdominant (I, iv, I, I^{56}, V, I) and presenting its characteristic pitch B-flat in the strings and bassoons.

How does this musical dramaturgy contribute to what Bekker considered the theme's heroic character? If one interprets this increase of drama in the wake of the theme's restatement as an indication of danger, the heroic theme's restatement and its main characteristics – self-confidence, energy, majestic habit, and a thirst for action – can be understood as a kind of resistance against or overcoming of the insecure situation that has been evoked. Seen from this perspective, the restatement of the heroic theme and its context represent an extremely condensed variant of the 'classical' nineteenth-century, two-phase dramaturgy *per aspera ad astra* in which the first phase is marked by challenge, struggle, and overcoming, while the second phase conveys triumph and grandeur. In the context of bars 175 ff, the heroic plot is: the emergence of some form of danger (phase 1) followed by the heroic theme's triumphant response (phase 2). In this light, the exposition of the minor subdominant evoking the turn to the minor subdominant key area as an alternative to the major subdominant key area (that was much too established at the end of the nineteenth century to constitute an apotheotic air in a symphonic movement's recapitulation) can in fact be interpreted as the allusion to a victorious end.

Relating those music-analytical findings to the theories on musical character emerging since the late eighteenth century, which I have described as operating as the foundation of or inspiration for the development of the heroic discourse in

music hermeneutics in the late nineteenth century, it becomes apparent that Mahler does not only design a heroic character by musical means, but also a heroic narrative.

Conclusion

In an article from 1974, Dahlhaus coined the idea of the history of composition as the 'history of (compositional) problems'.[57] By this he meant that composers did not use compositional techniques by chance. Instead, these techniques were the result of compositional development processes. The current compositional technique was based on the previous one; the latter modifying, further developing, or undermining the former by opposing tendencies. This description of the 'nature' of change in artistic practice applies not only to composition, but also to musical discourse, which does not emerge from nothing, but is the result of various factors. In the present case, these factors were, first, the discourse on musical character; second, compositional procedures – such as fanfares (brass instruments, dotted rhythms, and triads) and the *per aspera ad astra* dramaturgy – which stimulated heroic associations; and third, extra-musical heroic thinking, which was widespread and established in society at this time. The complex of these factors enabled musical hermeneutics to function as a promoter of heroization in musical discourse.

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[57] Carl Dahlhaus, 'Zur Problemgeschichte des Komponierens', in *Zwischen Romantik und Moderne: Vier Studien zur Musikgeschichte des späteren 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1974), pp. 40–73.