Mahlerian Quotations, Thematic Dramaturgy, and Sonata Form in the First Movement of Shostakovich’s Fourth Symphony

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The frontiers of music are never clear-cut: beyond its framing silence, beyond its inner form, it is caught up in a web of references to other music: its unity is variable and relative. Musical texts speak among themselves.

Michael Klein, Intertextuality in Western Art Music
(Klein 2005: 4)

Surpassing its three predecessors in both size and scope, Dmitri Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 4 (1936) is broadly considered to be the most “Mahlerian” of his symphonic output. The reasons for this consideration range from its size, instrumentation, and use of folk idioms to a wealth of Mahler allusions and quotations distributed throughout its nearly hour-long duration. Indeed, the history of intertextual dialogue between Mahler and Shostakovich reaches back prior to Symphony No. 4’s composition, finding its origins in Shostakovich’s relationship with Ivan Sollertinsky, a champion of Mahler’s music in the Soviet Union with whom Shostakovich took up in-depth study of Mahler’s works (Sollertinsky 1932).¹

Analytical pathways to Shostakovich’s intertextual exchange with Mahlerian practice could thus be traced along two root systems: those that analyze Mahlerian symphonism and those that compare Mahler’s and Shostakovich’s symphonic languages. Foremost in the first category is Theodor Adorno, whose analytical concepts have found a secure place in Shostakovich scholarship (Adorno 1992; Monahan 2008, 2007, 2011). The second category could stretch loosely from contemporary reception of Shostakovich’s symphonies to Russian- and English-language writings by Genrikh Orlov (1961), Marina Sabinina (1976), Richard Taruskin (1997), Boris Gasparov (2005), and Pauline Fairclough (2006), to name but a few.²

In addition to noting thematic and tonal allusions reminiscent of Mahler’s First, Second, Third, Sixth, Ninth, and Tenth Symphonies, Fairclough claims that it is “at the more fundamental level of structure and dramaturgy that the parallels between [Mahlerian practice and Shostakovich’s Fourth Symphony] are most suggestive” (Fairclough 2006: 46). Symphony No. 4’s atypical expression of sonata-form thematic conventions evokes questions of thematic identity and sectional apportioning. In response, analytical readings of the first movement include “reverse” recapitulation, a sonata exposition with three main themes, and even disavowal of sonata form entirely.² These structural analyses also wrestle with the location and designation of the second theme, which appears in various guises throughout the movement.

Within Symphony No. 4’s rich tapestry of Mahler quotations, interactions between its allusions and quotations and each composer’s sonata-form layouts have yet to be explored. In this article, I link Mahler quotations, thematic dramaturgy, and formal design in reconsidering Symphony No. 4’s dialogue with sonata processes through the lens of Mahler’s First Symphony and Sonata Theory (Hepokoski, Darcy 2006).³

I first highlight a Mahlerian “quotation” in Shostakovich IV/I, proposing the plaintive, lyrical bassoon “second” theme at m. 263 is a transformed

¹ For a thorough and excellent recount of Sollertinsky’s work and the relationship between Sollertinsky and Shostakovich, see Fairclough 2001 and 2006.
² In addition to Fairclough and Sabinina, Hugh Ottaway, Michael Koball, Eric Roseberry, Richard Longman, Karen Kopp, and Charity Lofthouse have analyzed the first movement in various publications. See Fairclough 2006; Ottaway 1975, 1978; Koball 1997; Roseberry 1989; Longman 1989; Kopp 1990; and Lofthouse 2014.
³ The term “Sonata Theory” refers specifically to the theoretical framework developed by Hepokoski and Darcy. Related writings preceding Elements of Sonata Theory (Hepokoski, Darcy 2006) include Hepokoski and Darcy 1997; and Hepokoski 2002. Hepokoski explores dialogic form and Beethovenian practice in his article “Sonata Theory and Dialogic Form” (Hepokoski 2009).
version of the *Durchbruch* fanfare from Mahler I/iv. Next, the Mahler I/i and I/iv quotations and allusions found throughout Shostakovich IV/i are contextualized through comparison with their formal locations of origin in Mahler I/iv. Lastly, I employ concepts from Sonata Theory to examine formal and tonal correspondences between the two movements, including the ways Mahler and Shostakovich treat the intersections of form and thematic recomposition or substitution. Similar techniques in each symphony suggest Shostakovich’s “secondary” theme in m. 263 may serve as a compensatory development-space attempt to rectify an underdeveloped S-theme fragment heard earlier in the movement.

**Shostakovich’s “Mahlerian” Second Theme**

Analyses often denote mm. 47–159 as a lyrical, contrasting theme that expresses the potential for an attempted secondary theme, especially when compared to the just-completed strident and militaristic primary theme. These readings differ, however, as to whether this lyrical theme’s rhetorical and tonal deficiencies eliminate it entirely as a prospect for the movement’s S-theme (it is not considered a second theme at all, but instead a contrasting subsidiary theme that takes part in a P-theme group), create a situation of eventual displacement (it is a flawed or “failed” secondary theme later supplanted by the “real” secondary theme beginning in m. 263), or compel a third theme (it is a troubled, loosely formed S-theme, necessitating a more suitably lyrical and cohesive compensatory theme presented in the development).  

It is during this debated “subsidiary” theme zone, mm. 47–159, that the first of Shostakovich’s Mahler quotations appears. Figure 1 displays the thematic layout of mm. 47–159. The triplet “Inferno” motive from Mahler I/iv is quoted for the first time within this section at m. 132, soon after four statements of a series of five melodic fragments. Two of these melodic fragments (displayed in Example 1a and b) are notable: (1) the arpeggio outlined at mm. 53, 100, 106, and 109; and (2) the stepwise descending fourth followed by an ascending leap in mm. 61 and 69. These fragments are later expanded into what is broadly considered the movement’s second theme at m. 263. The key areas indicated for each fragment reoccur

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4 This nomenclature for identifying symphonic movements refers to the symphony and movement; I will use this labeling system throughout the article.

5 See Ottaway, Koball, Kopp, Longman, Fairclough, Sabinina, Roseberry, and Lofthouse. Several of these analyses consider this theme to be part of a primary-theme zone group or first subject group, with various characterizations ranging from “subsidiary theme” to “transition theme” to “false second subject” (Fairclough 2006: 83; Roseberry 1989: 389–395; Longman 1989: 9; Sabinina 1976: 101; Kopp 1990: 157; and Koball 1997: 5). Hugh Ottaway and Charity Lofthouse read the theme in m. 263 as belonging to development space (Ottaway 1975: 20; Lofthouse 2014: chapters 3–5). Though the subsidiary-theme designation is ascribed in most analyses, consideration of this theme’s identity within particular analyses also seems to reflect the difficulties regarding its contrasting rhetoric with the primary theme and its ambiguous tonality. For example, Roseberry explicitly argues the identity of the theme beginning at m. 47 as a subsidiary theme of the first theme group, then immediately refers to it as a “secondary” theme. The interchangeability of the terms in this case is not explained.
Example 1a. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 4, i, mm. 47–72, reduction.
during further statements throughout the rest of the movement.  

These thematic fragments and the “Inferno” Mahlerian quotation next appear – again paired – during a more subdued and tightly organized theme zone beginning at m. 261, wherein whole-tone harp accompanimental figures and a plaintive solo bassoon provide a more cohesive version of the fragments first heard in mm. 47–159. I propose this more unified version of the fragmented lyrical theme at m. 263, often considered the actual second theme, can be deemed an additional modified quotation from Mahler I/iv (see Example 2).

The openings of the first and second phrases from Shostakovich IV/i bear strong resemblance to the breakthrough brass arpeggios and subsequent theme from Mahler I/iv. Shostakovich IV/i’s opening arpeggio gesture, contour, and rhythm evoke the motive from the Durchbruch arpeggios in Mahler I/iv, including the strong-beat ascent of an octave launching from the fifth of a major triad, neighbor figuration emphasizing scale-degree 2 at the mid point, and the return to scale-degree 3 following the initial arpeggiated ascent. The second phrase presents a contour similar to the chorale-like Mahler I/iv theme first presented in m. 389 following the arpeggio breakthrough heard at m. 370; both melodies outline two motives of a descending fourth, followed by an ascending leap of a seventh.

Though one could argue these gestures too generic to constitute a quotation, several other associations in this section support its link to the

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6 A major is the featured key at the fragment’s first return, in m. 263; F major is omitted; and D-flat major is featured at m. 812. The A-major and D-flat-major appearances are each paired with quotations from Mahler I/iv.
Example 2. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 4, i, mm. 263–275 and 287–295, demonstrating correspondences to Mahler, Symphony No. 1, iv, mm. 624–626 and 306–316.

Shostakovich IV/i, S-variant theme, first phrase (mm. 263–275).

Mahler I/iv, trumpet arpeggio breakthrough motive, third appearance (mm. 624–626); stems indicate correspondence to Shostakovich.

Shostakovich IV/i, S-variant theme, second phrase (mm. 287–295).

Mahler I/iv, Breakthrough theme, first appearance (mm. 306–316); marked intervals indicate correspondences to Shostakovich.
**Figure 2.** Shostakovich, Symphony No. 4, i, subrotation 3 key and quotation layout, outlining additive quotation/allusion schema of repetitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme statement</th>
<th>m. #</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Mahler I/iv quotations and allusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 1</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>A major</td>
<td>Breakthrough-variant theme; trumpet “Inferno” triplets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 2</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>B major</td>
<td>Breakthrough-variant; cuckoo from Mahler i/i and i/iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 3</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>A major</td>
<td>Breakthrough-variant; cuckoo at pitch; “Inferno” triplets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 4</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>D/C</td>
<td>Breakthrough-variant; key areas; descending-fourth melody and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dominant six-four harmonic emphasis at breakthrough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Durchbruch* theme from Mahler I/iv. The bassoon theme is consistently paired with additional direct quotations from Mahler I/iv during each of three successive repetitions in mm. 335, 372, and 428 respectively. Figure 2 shows quotations from Mahler I/iv and corresponding keys that appear during each repetition of the theme. First to return is the “Inferno” trumpet quotation, which accompanies the initial statement of the lyrical breakthrough-like theme. This is followed by the first appearance of the “cuckoo” fourths from Mahler I/i (also quoted in Mahler I/iv) during the repetition. The third statement contains both the “Inferno” and cuckoo quotations, with the latter featuring the original D-A fourth from Mahler I/i and I/iv.

The final repetition presents the theme in D major, the “redemption” key of Mahler I/iv and the overall tonality of Mahler I/i, and surrounded by *furioso* scalar figures resembling those accompanying the brass *Durchbruch* arpeggios at m. 370 of Mahler I/iv.

This fourth statement of the lyrical theme then progresses into a *Durchbruch*-like continuation at m. 435, featuring a thematic motive first introduced in m. 307. Shown in Example 3, this C major breakthrough also strongly outlines the descending-fourth interval found in the chorale-like Mahler I/iv theme and unfolds over a dominant harmony in 6/4 position; this is a harmonic choice similar to the extended dominant harmony undergirding the S-theme at the end of Mahler I/iv’s development. After this breakthrough, one last truncated statement of this lyrical theme accompanies a sardonic descent back to reality; instead of dreamlike harps and celesta neighbor-tone accompaniment, the Mahler cuckoos become mocking ninths as the basses and contrabassoon present an incomplete, grotesque version of the theme’s now distant and illusory lyricism.

**Quotations and Locations in Sonata Space**

Having outlined the thematic structure and Mahler quotations of mm. 261–476, let us turn to mm. 477–905, widely regarded as the movement’s development. Additional quotations from Mahler I/i’s finale imply further correspondence between the two works; though allusions attributed to Mahler’s Sixth, Ninth, and Tenth Symphonies are found in this section, the “Inferno” triplets and cuckoos remain most salient. In addition to similarities in thematic partitioning, corresponding placement of Mahler I/i quotations in Shostakovich IV/i and Mahler I/iv suggests the Mahler I/i quotations and allusions in Shostakovich IV/i can be considered as corresponding to the formal placement of similarly located quotations from the development of Mahler I/iv, not as borrowings directly from Mahler I/i.

Figure 3 illustrates the thematic layout of mm. 477–905 from Shostakovich IV/i and mm. 317–532 from Mahler I/iv. The overall thematic and formal...

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7 More generally, the key areas of these repetitions feature the pitches that serve as the melodic link between the brass arpeggios and the subsequent *Durchbruch* theme in Mahler I/iv: A–B–D, before arriving at the movement’s own *Durchbruch* suggesting C major. Finally, the last repetition’s key areas, D and C are the key areas employed at the D-major and C-major breakthrough statements in Mahler I/iv.
Example 3. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 4, i, mm. 428–451.
Example 3, continued.

Breakthrough in C major, descending-fourth contour resembles Mahler I/iv breakthrough theme

435

\[ \text{fff espr.} \]

ascending scales resemble end of exposition

440

(C: V\(_4\))

Breakthrough shifts to B-flat major, still over G!

445

Breakthrough is derailed, Mahler cuckoos as mocking ninths, sardonic S-theme in tubas, retransition
layout does not provide an identical correlation, but several congruencies are notable. First, both movements alternate more standard developmental passages with two instances of what could be considered extra-formal interruptions containing flashbacks, previews, or breakthrough material (these are distributed roughly in the same order and formal location). Significant departures from expositional materials or ruptures that feature contrasting instrumentation, new thematic modules, or other indicators of departure follow truncated and fragmented cycles of P/S statements. Second, C major is featured at the moment of breakthrough in both works. These

8 For a detailed examination of breakthrough and fantasy projection in Mahler, see Darcy 2001; Monahan 2008, 2007 and 2011.
breakthrough moments are followed by preparatory or retransitional passages before returning to more typical developmental P/S-centered activity at the beginning of the next section.

Perhaps most striking, near the end of each development zone both movements prominently feature their respective S-theme modules alongside quotations from the first movement of Mahler’s First Symphony: in other words, both Shostakovich IV/i and Mahler I/iv allude to the same referential movement, Mahler I/i, just before the end of the their developments. Example 4 displays mm. 812–820 from Shostakovich IV/i, near the end of the development section; this area of sonata space (mm. 812–905) presents several correspondences to Mahler I/iv. First, a series of S-theme statements begins in D-flat major, Shostakovich IV/i’s global Neapolitan and the key of Mahler I/iv’s secondary theme. In addition to the S-theme, formal placement, and key area, the string accompanimental figures in mm. 812–820 transform the section’s waltz-like triplet figure into a turn motive and ascending-sixth gesture resembling accompanimental turns and the second portion of Mahler I/iv’s primary theme.

Mahlerian correspondences increase in the next passage: Example 5a shows mm. 422–446 of Mahler I/iv; Example 5b provides the corresponding passage, mm. 853–906 of Shostakovich IV/i. Following a module based on Shostakovich IV/i’s breakthrough, a second S-theme statement in m. 831 – now in E-flat and shortened to only the opening Mahler-like arpeggio – leads to motivic
Example 5a. Mahler, Symphony No. 1, iv, mm. 422–446, reduction, outlining quotations and tonal/chordal events corresponding to Shostakovich IV/i.
Example 5a, cont.

C/A♭ juxtaposition (seen throughout development of Shostakovich IV/i)

C/F juxtaposition (seen throughout development of Shostakovich IV/i)
Cuckoo quotations in C and F; cuckoos only quoted in development section of Mahler I/iv

Mahler I/iv S-based transition fragment

Mahler I/iv S-theme quotation

(the following measures feature "flashback" material as a retransition leads to an attempted Type 3 recapitulation)
Example 5b. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 4, i, mm. 853–906, reduction, displaying Mahler allusions from development space.

(The preceding passage featured fragments of the breakthrough theme, originally derived from Mahler I/iv breakthrough)

Allusion to chordal quotation from Mahler I/i

Ascending sixth with descending semitone resolution resembles P^{1,2} of Mahler I/iv (see Example 4)

(Loosely resembles melodic “flashback” material from opening and closing of Mahler I/iv development)
fragmentation and a stasis point in m. 853 that closely resembles Mahler I/iv in texture, Mahler I/i quotation, and location in sonata space.

In Shostakovich IV/i, the development-concluding presentation of the S-theme (the last in a series of four statements) appears in B major at m. 854. Simultaneously, the wind instrumentation and texture sustaining B-flat strongly alludes to the opening of Mahler I/i (and, with the presence of the campanelli, a return to fantasy-like flashback instrumentation heard throughout mm. 261–476). A Mahler I/i flashback is similarly featured near the end of the development of Mahler I/iv; there, a quotation from the first movement appears in m. 429 during a flashback episode following the second breakthrough interruption. Moreover, the B/B-flat semitone juxtaposition from Shostakovich IV/i corresponds to the D/E-flat dyads at an analogous location in development space in Mahler I/iv: mm. 432–435. This dyad accompanies a presentation of the breakthrough arpeggios as well, and is succeeded by a presentation of the triplet “Inferno” motive.

Shortened to just its initial Mahlerian arpeggio, Shostakovich IV/i’s B-major S statement at m. 854 launches a series of Mahlerian quotations and allusions in succession, unfolding through the end of the development and roughly mapping onto the events at the conclusion of Mahler I/iv. The S-theme arpeggios are followed in m. 860 by a figure whose ascending-sixth leap and semitone descent again resembles the P-theme module from Mahler I/iv. A descending melody in mm. 864–872 journeys in mirror opposition to the chromatic ascending “flashback” theme from the opening and closing of Mahler I/iv’s development. Lastly, an

\[ [0,2,3,5,6,8,9] \]
\[ (0235689) \text{septachord, OCT and complement of (01369)} \text{ in m. 875} \]
octatonic retransition in mm. 898–906 is nearly identical to an S-based fragment from a transition passage near the end of Mahler I/iv’s development (see Example 5a and 5b). This retransition reorients the Mahler quotation into octatonic figures that usher in the return to the movement’s opening introductory module at m. 906.

Sonata Theory, Rotation, and Thematic Overwriting

Thematic quotations and formal correspondences within sonata space between Shostakovich IV/i and Mahler I/iv illuminate larger notions of thwarted thematic expectations within sonata-form frameworks. The thematic and formal correspondences between the two movements outlined above suggest two points of reconsideration regarding the formal layout and thematic dramaturgy of Shostakovich IV/i.

First, quotation and formal correspondences to Mahler I/iv, coupled with considerations of Sonata Theory’s rotational processes, buttress an interpretation of Shostakovich IV/i as complicating sonata-form space with thematic displacements and extra-formal visions of thematic salvation. Second, as a result of rotational and formal correspondences and of the S-theme’s identification as a quotation of Mahler I/iv’s Durchbruch theme, Shostakovich’s lyrical “second” theme beginning in m. 263 may be reinterpreted as unfolding within development space, serving as a dreamlike, compensatory development “breakthrough” version of the earlier, “failed” secondary theme. This compensatory statement is part of a series of thwarted thematic and rotational promises, with fragmentation, fantasy projection, and substitution culminating in the brutal reimagining of this theme at the end of development space, another choice in dialogue with Mahler I/iv’s Durchbruch.

Generically, Mahler I/iv and Shostakovich IV/i engage with expectations of the exposition’s thematic retracking in recapitulation space, a process framed by Sonata Theory as rotation. Considered a foundational principle, rotational structures “extend through musical space by recycling one or more times – with appropriate alterations and adjustments – a referential thematic pattern established as an ordered succession at the piece’s outset” [emphasis added] (Hepokoski, Darcy 2006: 611). Typical to sonata-form movements is a layout wherein three large-scale rotations correspond to the exposition, development, and recapitulation, with the exposition’s P/S thematic layout serving as a referential rotation for the remainder of the movement.

Alterations to sonata-form rotational structures may range from straightforward transpositions to large-scale deformations and even wholesale recomposition. Such a recomposition or substitution is referred to by Hepokoski and Darcy as thematic “overwriting.” Heard commonly as episodic displacement of primary-theme material at the beginning of development space, writing over a theme involves substituting new material for an expected, rotationally ordered thematic return while otherwise maintaining the rotational ordering of the referential (typically expositional) rotation. These substitutions may be a predictable element of an otherwise rotational episodic development section, or appear as a driving force behind thematic dramas wherein a major expected return – e.g., the return of the primary theme at the moment of recapitulation – may be written over (Hepokoski, Darcy 2006: 212–215). This exceptional choice significantly impacts the sense of return generically expected at recapitulation space.

The thematic quotation outlined earlier – Shostakovich’s “secondary” theme as a quotation of the Durchbruch of Mahler I/iv – may be coupled with formal and thematic correspondences to Mahler I/iv (viz. the gradual emergence of an additional thematic module during developmental space, the return of the secondary theme in the tonic before the primary theme, and the replacement of the exposition’s secondary thematic statement with a development-space theme) to create a formal correlation between placement and function. The “secondary” theme of m. 263 in Shostakovich IV/i may thus be reinterpreted, in the light of its Mahlerian associations, as a compensatory Durchbruch theme, a fantasy version of

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10 Rotational deformations are examined in depth in Darcy 1997.
11 Overwriting a problematic or flawed theme in Mahler’s symphonic works is addressed in Darcy 2001.
what the fragmented statements in mm. 47–159 should have been.

Comparison with the overall formal layout of Mahler I/iv highlights the thematic and rotational connections that underpin this recontextualization. Shown in Figure 4, Mahler I/iv’s development features continuing P/S rotational cycles and departures from development space altogether, looking backward and forward with interruptions, flashbacks, quotations, and previews of breakthrough material to come.¹² In a process similar to Shostakovich IV/i, the secondary theme of Mahler I/iv emerges at the end of the Flashback 2 section and is further developed throughout the retransition. This appearance of the secondary theme is comparable in length to its original expositional statement. Furthermore, it is in F major, the major-mode inflection of the movement’s global tonic, blurring the tonal lines between development and recapitulation spaces. This F-major return is

¹² The structural analysis and thematic labels referred to here are from unpublished analytical sketches created by Warren Darcy from 2005. I created the graphs using Darcy’s proposed layout and analytical terminology; the hermeneutic analysis is my own. Seth Monahan outlines this general partitioning of the movement similarly, including dividing the development into flashback, preview/premonition, and Durchbruch spaces. See Monahan 2011: 47.
Mahlerian Quotations, Thematic Dramaturgy, and Sonata Form in the First Movement of Shostakovich’s Fourth Symphony

Figure 5. Shostakovich, Symphony No. 4, i, large-scale thematic/rotational overview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotation</th>
<th>Rotation 1</th>
<th>Rotation 2</th>
<th>Rotation 3</th>
<th>Rotation 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m.#</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P+S, P TR, S themes</td>
<td>P S fragments</td>
<td>TR, S, S+P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development, continued</th>
<th>Tonal Resolution (Crux)</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 5</td>
<td>Rotation 6</td>
<td>Rotation 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.#</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Fugue</td>
<td>S, S, S + Mahler, retransition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P (fifth too low)</td>
<td>P + TR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P + S-var, P / TR</td>
<td>no S!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exposition

further complicated by its placement over a pedal C-natural in the bass, creating a sustained cadential 6/4 harmony that destabilizes this tonic return of the secondary theme.

The subsequent tonic return of Mahler I/iv’s primary theme at m. 533 then attempts to bring about a standard recapitulatory rotation. Rather than a full return including the secondary theme in the tonic, the breakthrough theme interjects directly after the primary theme and produces the movement’s jubilant telos. This breakthrough and its succeeding thematic modules appear in the order first featured during the development and completely displace the expected secondary-theme recapitulatory appearance normative to a sonata recapitulation.

Figure 5 shows the overall thematic layout of Shostakovich IV/i. The arrival of the “lyrical” bassoon theme in m. 263 – set apart with dreamlike instrumentation after a crisis point and emerging from an F-minor Mahler I/iv tonal landscape – may be reconsidered as presenting not merely a developing variant of the previously troubled lyrical theme attempt, but also a transformed, subduced, and fantasy-like version of the Durchbruch theme from the development of Mahler I/iv. The theme in m. 263 attempts a rescue of the problematic S-theme by creating its own fantastic “breakthrough” version, coopting the triumphant, bombastic brass theme from Mahler I/iv as a means of redemption. The theme’s eventual telos appearance at m. 906, as a displacement of the primary theme at the moment of return to tonic, then may be considered as strongly in dialogue with the analogous tonic statement of the secondary theme and subsequent telos statement of the Durchbruch during the recapitulation space in Mahler I/iv.

Furthermore, the recomposition of the original S-theme fragments can be recontextualized as part of a larger pattern of substitution and overwriting resulting from the unsatisfactory status of the S-fragments in mm. 47–159. During subsequent rotations, additional attempts to address the difficulties of the initial presentation result in continued fragmentation, as heard throughout mm. 160–232. Still consistently paired with Mahler quotations, the lyrical, Durchbruch version in m. 263, though quoting Mahler’s successful breakthrough, is troubled by its dreamlike instrumentation; the tragic, then sardonic recasting of Mahler’s triumph eventually gives way to ironic polka and waltz textures in a return to development-space reality.

The next substantial rotational invitation to S-theme material at m. 580 supplants an expected secondary theme with a frantic four-voice fugal string passage in mm. 580–716. After a waltz-like version at m. 854 is mired in the static texture of Mahler I/i, the theme’s C-minor telos version emerges at m. 906 as victorious, yet brutalized by the oppressive primary-theme texture and minor-
mode presentation. No longer lyrical, the “triumphal” version uses the thematic and formal road-
map of Mahler I/iv, paired with the rhetoric of its own militaristic opening, to shore up the move-
ment’s foundering thematic structure, which en-
dangers both the execution of the overarching sonata form trajectory and the movement’s driv-
ing, relentless, almost menacing musical energy.

Form versus (Mahlerian) Content
In light of the Mahlerian quotations and corre-
spondences outlined here, where does this recon-
sideration position what is considered by many scholars to be the “real” arrival of S in m. 263? Cer-
tainly the S-theme presented at m. 263 is what is commonly considered rhetorically, thematically,
and formally necessary to cement an unequivo-
cal secondary-theme zone; thus, the later state-
ment seems to compensate for the failures of the earlier statement. In this light, considerations of the S-theme fragments as a failed or aborted at-
tempt that is addressed by the later, more cohe-
sive statement beginning in m. 263 (or even as a variation of the P-theme) are certainly plausible. The bassoon version of the theme is presented in A major, a chromatic variation on the common submediant S-theme default in expositions at the time. Furthermore, the most prominent melodic fragment at m. 47 is not the Mahlerian arpeggios, but rather a descending scale violin melody, argu-
ably that section’s “main” theme.

Conversely, this movement’s saturation with Mahlerian quotations and its obsessive rotational cycles complicate the nature of the secondary theme’s “failed” origins and its role within the overall sonata structure. Whereas the eventual thematic arrival of the secondary theme in the development is indeed the first cohesive appear-
ance of this theme, I contend the rhetorical effects of m. 47’s similarity to a rotationally expected S-
theme, its “failure,” and the dramatization of its subsequent statements support a hearing of the first rotation through these thematic modules in mm. 47–159 as corresponding to the expositional rotation of a sonata-form structure. In addition to its contrasting lyrical style, this section features key areas commonly associated with S-themes (the first fragment highlights G minor, v, a common key choice for minor-mode sonata move-
ments, and later features VI, a then-common S-
theme option, and the Neapolitan, the S-theme tonality of Shostakovich V/i). Further, the two highlighted Mahlerian fragments from mm. 47–159 eventually displace their scalar-melody counterpart, most prominently at the movement’s recapitulatory return to C minor. This reversal of fortunes serves to further underscore both the importance of these Mahlerian fragments at their first appearance and the meaning behind the ro-
tational retracing of their “failure” to rise above the violin’s melodic hegemony earlier on.

Pauline Fairclough refers to Shostakovich’s Fourth Symphony as a particular manifestation of the Soviet concepts of syuzhet versus fabula, “plot” versus “story” or form vs. content (Fairclough 2006: 56). In Shostakovich IV/i, each suc-
cessive rotation engages the dilemma of the initially fragmented secondary theme, and rhe-
torical drama is built by the consistent thwarting of rotational expectations, as well as constant reminders – engendered through the very same process of rotation – of the formal processes threatened by such thematic failures. Highlight-
ning the connections between this movement and Mahler’s First Symphony and grounding these observations in Sonata Theory allows expressive possibilities that position Shostakovich’s thematic and formal innovations within a constellation of dialogic norms and deformations, adding another layer to the interchange between form and con-
tent. This frames the movement so that, as Seth Monahan emphasizes regarding Mahler’s music, “later happenings, down to their smallest inflec-
tions might be understood as the consequence of earlier events” (Monahan 2011: 37). Shostakovich’s formal and thematic processes in Symphony No. 4, equally captivating, create a grand formal plot, with a grand story to match.
Mahlerian Quotations, Thematic Dramaturgy, and Sonata Form in the First Movement of Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony

References


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Mahleri tsitaadid, temaatilise dramaturgia ja sõnaadivorm Šostakovitši neljanda sümfoonia I osas

— Charity Lofthouse
(tõlkkinud Kerri Kotta)

Dmitri Šostakovitši neljandat sümfooniait (1936), mis ületab helilooja varasemaid sümfooniaid nii pikkusest kui ulatuselt, on peetud tema sümfooniate seas üheks kõige „mahlerlikumaks“. Selle põhjused ulatuvad teose mastaapsusest, orkestratsioonist ja rahvamuusika kasutamisest mahlerlike asotsiatsioonide ja tsitaatideni, mida on teoses läbivalt kasutatud. Lisaks temaatilistele ja harmoonilistele sarnasustele Gustav Mahleri sümfooniatega on kõnealune teos sõnaadivormi konventsioonidega dialoogis viisil, mis tekib küsimusi tema identiteerimisel ja struktuurset määratlemisel: sümfoonia I osa erinevad käsitlused on selles leidnud peegelreprinti, kolmest teemast moodustuvad ekspositsiooni ja isegi sõnaadivormi kui sellise täielikku eitamist. Eelinevat analüüsides on ühtlasi osutunud probleemiks kõrvale teema täpse asukoha määratlemine, sest see näib erinevat maskeeringutes kummitavat I osa läbivalt.


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ted kulmineeruvad töötluse lõpus mainitud teema brutaalses taasilmumises, sarnaselt Mahleri esimese sümfoonia IV osa reppriisi algust artikuleerivale läbimurdmotiiviile.