

Of Refrains, Fairy-tales and Compositional Hesitation

Act II of Wagner's *Siegfried* Revisited

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As is well known, Wagner began creating the cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen* by writing a three-act dramatic poem entitled *Siegfrieds Tod*, the story of a mythical hero, Siegfried, and his downfall.¹ But *Siegfrieds Tod* was burdened by extended moments of static, explanatory narrative, and Wagner's dramaturgical instincts ultimately led him to write three works that would precede the tragedy of Siegfried's fall. *Der junge Siegfried*, ultimately retitled *Siegfried*, presents the rise of the hero, *Die Walküre* the hero's origins, and *Das Rheingold* serves as a one-act prologue to the Ring-trilogy.² The character of Siegfried was, thus, the generative impulse behind Wagner's cycle and is central to its dramaturgy. The opera *Siegfried* focuses upon the upbringing and, more importantly, the coming of age of this pivotal character.

Act II of *Siegfried*, the last act written before Wagner's seven-year compositional break between 1857 and 1864,³ is vital to the plot of the *Ring* because it focuses on action that shapes the hero of the cycle and, in turn, the events that shape the drama itself. More events occur on stage in this act than in any other act of the *Ring*. At the

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¹ Though Wagner's first prose-draft for *Siegfrieds Tod* was written in 1848, he read a great deal of mythology and legends whose elements would later become part of the *Ring* story beginning in 1842. His first attempt to consolidate his readings into drama appears in *The Nibelung-Myth as a Plan for Drama*, finished 4 October 1848. With this general plan in place, he then wrote a prose-draft and libretto for *Siegfrieds Tod* later that year, revising the libretto several times later in 1848 and in 1852. The *Nibelung* scenario, labelled 'Text Ia' for *Götterdämmerung* in John Deathridge, Martin Geck and Egon Voss, *Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke Richard Wagners und ihrer Quellen* (Mainz: Schott, 1986), hereafter 'WWV', is transcribed in Otto Strobel, *Skizzen und Entwürfe zur Ring-Dichtung* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1930): 26–33. Wagner's first prose-draft for *Siegfrieds Tod*, labelled 'Text IIa' in WWV, is transcribed in Strobel, *Skizzen*, 38–55, along with Wagner's outline for the previously missing Prologue, 'Text IIb' (the Norms' scene), 56ff.

² Wagner wrote the prose-sketch for *Der junge Siegfried* in May of 1851. This prose-sketch, labelled 'Text I' in WWV 86c, is transcribed in Strobel, *Skizzen*, 66–68. The more detailed prose-draft, 'Text II', was written immediately afterwards, between 24 May and 1 June of 1851. It appears in Strobel, *Skizzen*, 69ff.

³ After completing two complete drafts for Act II in August of 1857, Wagner broke off composition of the *Ring* until 1864, when he wrote the full score for Act II. He only began composition of new *Ring* material, however, in March of 1869, when he began sketching Act III of *Siegfried*.

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Table 1 General outline, formal structure of Act II

<i>Bar</i>	<i>Dramatic episode/refrain</i>	<i>Refrain label</i>	<i>Primary harmonies</i>
1	<i>Fafner, Curse</i>	1a, b, c, d	f, b
	<i>Scene 1</i>		
104	Alberich's thoughts, futility		^{o7}
144	<i>Fafner, Curse</i>	1c, a, d	^{o7}
166	Alberich encounters Wanderer		f, b \flat
253	<i>Curse</i>	1d, c	^{o7} , b
385	Wanderer wakes up Fafner		
	<i>Fafner</i>	1a	
476	Alberich's thoughts/futility		b, b \flat
	<i>Fafner, Curse</i>	1c, d, a, b	
	<i>Scene 2</i>		
527	Siegfried enters with Mime, drives him away		d
714	<i>Forest Murmurs</i> Siegfried's introspection	2a, b, c	d–E E
1004	<i>Fafner</i> Siegfried kills Fafner	1b, a	^{o7} f
1099	<i>Fafner ('decayed'), Curse</i>	1b', a, d, c	f
1179	<i>Forest Murmurs</i>	2c, d	E
1198	Siegfried learns about the treasure (and Ring) from Forest Bird		
	<i>Scene 3</i>		
1224	Alberich/Mime		b \flat
1376	<i>Forest Murmurs</i> Siegfried learns about Mime's plot from the Forest Bird	2d	E
1637	Siegfried kills Mime		b \flat , ^{o7}
1648	<i>Curse, Fafner</i> Siegfried buries his enemies	1c, a, b	b, ^{o7}
1702	Siegfried realizes his loneliness		G
1793	<i>Forest Murmurs</i> Siegfried learns about Brünnhilde from the Forest Bird	2d	E
1862	Siegfried, led by the Forest Bird, hurries to Brünnhilde's rock		
1895	<i>Forest Murmurs</i>	2c	E

NB: The Refrains are shown in bold in the 'Dramatic episode/refrain' column, and the 'Refrain label' column specifies components of Refrain 1 (Fafner, Curse) or Refrain 2 (Forest Murmurs).

beginning of the act, Siegfried is a brash, naive young man with no awareness of fear, love or sexuality. As the action unfolds, however, Siegfried begins to learn more about himself and the world around him; he experiences his first moments alone in the forest and ponders his identity and his origins. Several events crucial to his life and the dramatic flow of the *Ring* follow this important moment of contemplation: he vanquishes two of his enemies, Fafner and Mime, he acquires the cursed Ring, and finally he sets off on a quest to find Brünnhilde. Having achieved an increased level of knowledge and maturity in the forest during Act II, he is prepared for two of the most critical encounters in the *Ring*: his encounter with Wotan in Act III, Scene 2 and his awakening of Brünnhilde in Act III, Scene 3.

Not only is Act II pivotal to the plot of the *Ring*, it is also remarkable because of its formal design: a series of dramatic events, or episodes, connected by regularly recurring portions of motivic material that, when considered across the entire act, resemble refrains or ritornello fragments (Table 1). Though this structure hardly fits neatly into a simple 'Refrain-Episode 1-Refrain-Episode 2-etc.' schematic, it is clearly in dialogue with a rondo-like form using the refrain as its fundamental structural device. Structures employing refrains, such as those found in Classical rondo-form pieces or Baroque ritornello-form pieces, negotiate alternation and repetition, relying on the return of thematic material (the refrain) as a structural articulation point to provide a foil for the contrasting episodes. The episodes are thus presented as a sequence of narrative events separated by the recurring refrains. Considering the act's structure from this perspective, the motivic refrains frame the entire sequence of dramatic events in Act II of *Siegfried*, an unprecedented scope of formal and motivic cohesion. This essay will consider the refrain elements in Act II at various levels, in dialogue with a variety of analytical viewpoints from Wagnerian scholars, including Anthony Newcomb, Patrick McCreless and Alfred Lorenz. Additionally, the study will probe the possible relationship between this remarkably large formal cohesion and Wagner's two-week compositional hiatus in the middle of Act II's composition.

Wagnerian Formal Analysis, Refrains and Fairy-tale Heroes

The problem of form and drama in Wagner was first tackled by Alfred Lorenz, whose notorious essays *Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner* ('The Secret of Form in Richard Wagner') professed to unlock the mystery of Wagner's music dramas by organizing his works into rigid architectonic blocks. Portions of music ranging from individual leitmotifs to entire operas fit into forms such as *Bar* (aab), Rondo or *Bogen*, or composites thereof. His rigid formalism, still questioned and discussed to this day,⁴ progressed to Robert Bailey's analyses, which focused on the harmonic associations in the *Ring*, in relation with the evolution of the text and music, in order to better relate Wagner's formal organizations with harmonic and dramatic elements.⁵ More flexible approaches to Wagnerian formal analysis were later advocated by Anthony Newcomb,⁶

⁴ See, for example, Stephen McClatchie, *Analyzing Wagner's Operas: Alfred Lorenz and the German Nationalist Ideology* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998).

⁵ See, for example, Robert Bailey, 'The Structure of the *Ring* and its Evolution', *19th-Century Music* 1/1 (1977): 48–61.

⁶ Anthony Newcomb, 'Ritornello Ritornato: A Variety of Wagnerian Refrain Form', in Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, eds, *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* (Berkeley:

Rheinhold Brinkmann⁷ and Patrick McCreless.⁸ Newcomb, for example, problematized Lorenz' rigid, inflexible architectural analysis and explored how Wagner's forms adhered to *and* deviated from 'traditional' rondo and ritornello forms, and the dramatic significance of this interaction.

It is likely that Wagner chose a large refrain-based form for Act II of *Siegfried* because of its narrative element; because so many events were to occur in this dramatically dense act, such an episodic, repetitive form would be an ideal way to 'narrate' this long sequence of events. In addition, several elements of *Siegfried's* genesis shed light on Wagner's formal plan for the act. From the beginning of his work on *Siegfried's Tod* in 1848, Wagner, throughout his correspondence, referred to the contrast between the comic *Der junge Siegfried* and the tragic *Siegfried's Tod*. For example, on 2 July 1851 (having just completed the first copy of the libretto for *Der junge Siegfried*), he wrote to Ernst Benedikt Kietz:⁹ 'I have just written the poem [Text III] for a *junge Siegfried* ... : it is intended to precede *Siegfried's Tod*, and is of a comic nature.'¹⁰ Wagner also deemed *junge Siegfried* his 'fairy-tale', in both its comic nature and its dramatic elements (a hero forges a sword, kills a dragon, and talks to a bird), evidenced in a letter of 10 May 1851 to Theodor Uhlig:

[Der] *junge Siegfried* has the enormous advantage of conveying the important myth to an audience by means of actions on stage, just as children are taught *fairy-tales*. It will all imprint itself graphically by means of sharply defined physical images, it will all be understood, – so that by the time they hear the more serious *Siegfried's Tod* the audience will know all the things that are taken for granted or simply hinted at there.¹¹

In shaping the story of young Siegfried, Wagner was, in fact, inspired by a German fairy-tale about a boy who could not learn fear.¹² Adapted from a German fairy-

University of California Press, 1989): 202–21, and 'The Birth of Music out of the Spirit of Music Drama: An Essay in Wagnerian Formal Analysis', *19th-Century Music* 5/1 (1981): 38–66.

⁷ Rheinhold Brinkmann, "'Drei der fragen stell' ich mir frei": Zur Wanderer-Szene im 1. Akt von Wagner's *Siegfried*", *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (1972): 120–62.

⁸ Patrick McCreless, *Wagner's Siegfried: Its Drama, History and Music* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982).

⁹ Kietz was a German painter who did many portraits of Wagner in his early years.

¹⁰ 'Ich habe zuletzt einen "jungen Siegfried" gedichtet ... : er soll dem "Siegfried's tod" vorausgehen, und ist *heitrer art*.' Richard Wagner, *Sämtliche Briefe*, ed. Gertrud Strobel and Werner Wolf (Leipzig: WEB deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1979): 69–70. Translation mine and from *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, trans. and ed. S. Spencer and B. Millington (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987): 226. My emphasis.

¹¹ '[Der] "junge Siegfried" hat den ungeheuren Vortheil, daß er den wichtigen Mythos dem publikum im spiel, wie einem kinde ein *märchen*, beibringt. Alles prägt sich durch scharfe sinnliche Eindrücke plastisch ein, alles wird verstanden, – und kommt dann der ernste "Siegfried's tod", so weiß das publikum Alles, was dort vorausgesetzt oder eben nur angedeutet werden mußte.' Wagner, *Sämtliche Briefe*, vol. 4, 43f. Translation from *Selected Letters*, 223. My emphasis.

¹² According to McCreless, *Wagner's Siegfried*, 39–40, there are several versions of this fairy-tale: Grimm's version can be found in Jakob Grimm, *German Folk Tales*, trans. Francis P. Magoun and Alexander Krappe (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960): 12–20. Wagner merged this story with elements from the other sources to provide the comic, fairy-tale atmosphere of *Der junge Siegfried*.

tale and likened to a fairy-tale by Wagner,¹³ *Siegfried* is the comic, fairy-tale counterpart to the high tragedy in *Siegfrieds Tod*, which would ultimately become *Götterdämmerung*. To Wagner, the association of refrain form with fairy-tale narratives would have been a logical extension of the connotation of rondo-form pieces with comedy or liveliness, such as symphonic finales or opera buffa excerpts, and he accordingly structured Act II of his comic fairy-tale as a large refrain-based structure.

To say 'Act II of *Siegfried* is a giant rondo' would not only be an oversimplification, but would imply a rigid, somewhat Lorenzian approach to some 1,900 bars of music. Also, the numerous internal musical events that do not fit 'cleanly' into such a formal scheme and the distance between certain refrain recurrences (most notably, over 250 bars during Mime's five-part scene with Siegfried in Scene 3) problematizes this large rondo structure. Far more useful would be an analysis grounded in the following statement: 'the repetitive, refrain-driven form of Act II is in dialogue with elements of rondo and ritornello form, employing the idea of repetition and episodic sequence in a large-scale, flexible fashion'. Previous analysts, including Patrick McCreless, Alfred Lorenz, Daniel Coren and Anthony Newcomb, have addressed the idea of rondo or refrain forms in *Siegfried*.¹⁴ McCreless, in addition to discussing a 'gigantic rondo' throughout Scenes 2 and 3, notes the 'rondo-like' and 'refrain-based' format implied by the 'use of the Forest Bird music as a refrain', although he problematizes the formal construction and treats the rondo idea with flexibility.¹⁵ So, too, does Anthony Newcomb, although Newcomb analyses a different scene from *Siegfried* (the 'Riddle Scene' between Mime and the Wanderer in Act I, Scene 2); Newcomb advocates a flexible treatment of the ritornello principle in discussing intermediate-sized formal units (between 150 and 600 bars). He notes that not all of Wagner's refrain-based forms are identical, indeed that it is a 'mistake to assert that most Wagnerian units are in any single form. Rather, each appeals to various formal conventions as it proceeds, plays with them, intermixes them, and asks us to interpret and re-interpret the succession of musical events that we hear as particular functions, within those conventional sections.'¹⁶ Using the refrain idea as a point of departure, Newcomb outlines intermediate-sized case studies from *Siegfried* and *Tristan und Isolde* (Act II, Scene 1), composed within less than a year and a half of each other and chronologically bookending Act II of *Siegfried*. Adopting McCreless and Newcomb's flexible treatment of form in my discussion of Act II, I examine the structure's interaction with formal conventions, as well as its congruence with the dramatic events central to *Siegfried* and the entire *Ring* cycle.

¹³ Wagner refers to this fairy-tale inspiration in a letter of 24 August 1851 (after the completion and revision of the poem) to August Röckel: 'Siegfried ist nun ungefähr derselbe junge Bursche, der im Märchen vorkommt, und auszieht, "um das Fürchten zu lernen.'" (Siegfried is more or less the same young lad as the one who is to be found in the fairy-tale, and who leaves home 'to learn fear'.) Wagner, *Sämtliche Briefe*, 94–5. Translation from *Selected Letters*, 227–8.

¹⁴ McCreless, *Wagner's Siegfried*; Alfred Lorenz, *Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner*, vol. 1: *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1924); Daniel Coren, 'A Study of Wagner's *Siegfried*', PhD dissertation (University of California at Berkeley, 1971); Newcomb, 'Ritornello Ritornato'.

¹⁵ McCreless, *Wagner's Siegfried*, 186.

¹⁶ Newcomb, 'Ritornello Ritornato', 204.

The Refrains of Act II and the Rhythm of Siegfried

The refrain-based form Wagner employs in Act II of *Siegfried* involves a pair of contrasting refrains, both containing referential leitmotifs: Refrain 1 contains the motifs of Fafner and the Curse, and Refrain 2 consists of the various forms of the Forest Murmurs ('Waldweben')¹⁷ music. These two refrains represent the two contrasting forces at work in the act: inactivity and activity. The components of Refrain 1 – somnolent, evil and inactive – remain essentially unchanged each time they recur. Refrain 1's presence in Scene 1 depicts the immobility of Fafner, the stasis of the action, and the evil presence dominating the forest: Fafner, sleeping in his cave, guards the Ring and the treasure-hoard, which have been in his possession since Scene 4 of *Das Rheingold*. The Curse component of Refrain 1 portrays Alberich's evil yet futile presence at *Neidhölle*, and his equally futile hope of somehow re-acquiring the ring from Fafner. By contrast, Refrain 2, containing the Forest Murmurs music, evolves through rhythmic acceleration from a slow, undulating quaver figure to a highly active semiquaver shimmering, much like the rhythmic evolution of the Rhine motif in the *Rheingold* Prelude. The recurrence of the Forest Murmurs refrain throughout Scenes 2 and 3 reflects the dramatic *activity*: Siegfried arrives in the forest, disturbs the inactivity and lethargy of Fafner, and grows keenly aware of himself and his surroundings. Each recurrence of Refrain 2 seems to catalyse a thought or action by Siegfried, at first through the wordless sounds of the forest, a quintessential German Romantic symbol of the subconscious, and later through the words of the Forest Bird. A dialectic thus arises between the two refrains that represent the opposing forces of the forest, inactivity and activity. Fafner's refrain (Refrain 1) embodies the forest's sinister, evil presence, whereas the Forest Murmurs refrain (Refrain 2) represents the forest's identity as a source of enlightenment, activity and heightened awareness. The repetitive use of these contrasting refrains to frame the plot elements gives the act a strong sense of rhythmic pulse and regularity, and accents the dichotomy between the two characteristics of the forest (see Table 1). Granted, the idea of a 'double refrain' such as this presents analytical problems – it is its interaction with Act II's dramaturgy (the shift of 'dramatic control' from Fafner/Alberich to Siegfried/Nature) that provides the most relevant formal model for the act.

Prelude and Scene 1: Fafner and Stasis

The Prelude to the Second Act (which nearly inspired Wagner to name his villa on the Wesendoncks' property 'Fafner's Repose'¹⁸) has a twofold effect on the

¹⁷ In the prose-draft for *Der junge Siegfried*, Wagner affixed the designation 'Waldweben' in the spot where the Forest Murmurs music would later appear, namely Siegfried's first moment alone in the forest after driving Mime away.

¹⁸ In *Mein Leben*, Wagner recalls: 'Ich griff wieder zum *Siegfried*, und began die Komposition des zweiten Aktes davon. Während ich nun unschlüssig darüber gewesen war, wie ich mein neu gewonnenes Asyl benennen wollte, musste ich, da die Einleitung dieses Aktes bei guter Laune mir sehr wohl gerieth, laut lachen, als mir einfiel, ich müsste, eben dieser ersten Arbeit entsprechend, mein neues Heimweisen "*Fafners Ruhe*" nennen.' (I went back to *Siegfried* and began the composition of the second act. While I had been previously in doubt as to the name I would give my new refuge ['Asyl'], I had to laugh when it occurred to me, when the beginning of this act came off quite nicely, that it should be called 'Fafner's Repose'.) Richard Wagner, *Mein Leben*, 2 vols (Munich: F. Bruckmann,

listener: it invokes the sinister, lethargic atmosphere that dominates the forest¹⁹ and introduces the various components of the Fafner/Curse refrain (Refrain 1) in a rondo-like section, thus establishing the refrain-based form of the entire act at the level of the individual section.

Refrain 1 (Fafner/Curse) consists of four components containing motifs associated with Fafner and his possession of the Ring (Ex. 1), all of which appear for the first time in *Das Rheingold*: the Giants' motif (which becomes Refrain 1a), the Dragon motif (Refrain 1b), and the bipartite Curse motif (hereafter Refrains 1c and 1d). The Giants' motif²⁰ and the Dragon motif²¹ are combined in the introduction to Act II of *Siegfried* to form the 'Fafner' components of Refrain 1, and Refrains 1a and 1b. However, Wagner has recast the motifs here to reflect the dramatic situation: the Giants' theme is now heard pianissimo in the timpani, and its perfect fourth (C–G in Ex. 1a) is now a tritone (C–G \flat in Ex. 1c), suggesting both Fafner's new somnolent state and his possession of the cursed Ring. Also, the Dragon motif's rhythm is slightly extended and appears in triple metre rather than quadruple metre, and the combination of both themes is accompanied by a bare C tremolo in the violas, depicting the foreboding atmosphere of the dark forest. Often, only one of the two Fafner components appears when Refrain 1 recurs throughout the act (and, at times, the tritone of Refrain 1a is stretched into longer note values in the tuba).²²

The Dragon component of this refrain was probably one of the first musical themes connected with the *Ring* cycle that Wagner ever composed; in 1851, after the ill-fated 1850 composition sketch for *Siegfrieds Tod* (which also contained the Valkyries' motif in its embryonic version), Wagner wrote several sketches containing preliminary versions of the Dragon component of the Fafner refrain.²³

1911), II: 649. Translation from Richard Wagner, *My Life*, trans. Andrew Gray, ed. Mary Whittall (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992): 548.

¹⁹ Two earlier Wagnerian introductions similarly establish a glum, foreboding atmosphere before the curtain rises: the introduction to Act III of *Tannhäuser*, an orchestral depiction of Tannhäuser's pilgrimage to Rome, and the introduction to Act II of *Lohengrin*, depicting the cogitation of the defeated Ortrud and Friedrich. The connection between the *Siegfried* Act II introduction and these two earlier introductions is discussed further in Graham Hunt, "Ever New Formal Structures": The Evolution of the Dialogue-Scene in Wagner's "Lohengrin", PhD dissertation (Duke University, 2001).

²⁰ This motif is first heard in the brass and timpani when Fafner and Fasolt first enter in Scene 2 of *Das Rheingold*.

²¹ This motif is first heard in the tuba when Alberich turns himself into a dragon in Scene 3 of *Das Rheingold*.

²² Many refrain-based forms from the Baroque and Classical periods featured abbreviated or partial returns of the refrain, in their recurrences throughout the piece. For example, in a Haydn symphonic finale in rondo form, the initial A section would be in miniature ternary form (aba'), and later returns of the A section might contain only the a section, and omit the ba' continuation. The return of only the Dragon or Giants component of Refrain 1 later in Act II in the present analytical model is analogous to this partial return of A in earlier refrain-based forms.

²³ Curt von Westernhagen discusses the *Siegfrieds Tod* composition sketch from 1850 in 'Die Kompositions-Skizze zu *Siegfrieds Tod* aus dem Jahre 1850', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (NZ) 125/5 (1963): 178–82. Detailed discussion of the 1851 Fafner sketches can be found in both Robert Bailey, 'The Method of Composition', in *The Wagner Companion* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 269–338, and Curt von Westernhagen, *The Forging of the Ring*, trans. Arnold and Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 149–50.

Ex. 1a Giants (*Das Rheingold*)

Ex. 1b Dragon (*Das Rheingold*)

Ex. 1c Fafner refrain components (Refrains 1a and 1b), *Siegfried*, Act II, bars 1–10

Ex. 1d Curse refrain components (Refrains 1c and 1d), *Siegfried*, Act II, bars 66–76

Although these sketches experiment with different metres, melodic contours and transpositions, the seeds of the extant 'Dragon' melody that appears in bar 5 of Act II's *Vorspiel* clearly reside in these sketches. That Wagner's overall refrain structure for Act II is partially constructed from the first theme he ever wrote for *Siegfried* suggests the importance he placed on this motivic idea, and provides a vital historical background for our formal analysis of the act.

The other two components of Refrain 1, derived from the Curse motive (Refrains 1c and 1d), also appear in the Prelude (Ex. 1d); Refrain 1c consists of an instrumental version of Alberich's Curse, the rising-third theme from Scene 4 of *Das Rheingold* ('Wie durch Fluch er mir gerieth ...') and Refrain 1d, the so-called 'Resentment' motif, which is the series of syncopated diminished and augmented chords that bookend this section of *Rheingold*.²⁴ As with the two Fafner themes, Wagner uses one or both parts of the Curse refrain throughout the act in the refrain-based structure, as illustrated in Table 1. Treating the refrain idea flexibly, these two bipartite motivic elements comprise the inactive Fafner/Curse refrain.

The four components of Refrain 1 are introduced at the outset of Act II and immediately integrated into the formal structure of the first two sections, the *Vorspiel* and Alberich's solo scene. Table 2 incorporates this link between the two sections formed by Fafner's refrain remaining in the texture throughout the two sections.²⁵ The tonalities of F minor and B minor, associated with Fafner and Alberich, respectively, dominate these sections, as well as a great deal of Scene 1.

Granted, the idea of a rondo-like structure using Fafner's material (Refrains 1a and 1b) as a refrain has its appeal because of its recurrence and its placement as the 'A' section at the beginning and the end. However, a caveat crucial to the overall analysis of the act arises from an alternative reading of the formal structure: beginning in bar 55, the Curse material (Refrains 1c and 1d) recurs regularly, framing internal episodes (including the Fafner refrain itself in bars 150–55) much like the Fafner refrain does in Table 2. Thus, bars 55–165 could be analysed as a refrain form with the *Curse* material as the refrain, rather than the Fafner material. This alternative formal model is shown in Table 3. An obvious objection to this

²⁴ In *Das Rheingold*, the syncopated chords that precede Alberich's curse begin with a C' diminished triad, whereas the chords that follow the curse begin with a B' diminished triad. The version of this motif that appears throughout Act II of *Siegfried* as my Refrain 1d is usually the latter of these two versions, although it, too, is occasionally transposed. McCreless separates these two refrains as 'Rc' (Curse) and 'Ra' (Alberich), respectively. I treat them both as part of the general 'Curse' refrain, which, along with Fafner's music, constitutes the flexible Refrain 1.

²⁵ Although Alfred Lorenz, per his usual custom, treats the Prelude and the section that follows as two independent formal units (Lorenz, *Geheimnis*, 178 and 133), the analysis here treats the two sections as one intermediate-sized Newcombian unit (Newcomb designates three 'sizes' for Wagnerian formal units: small (up to 150 bars), intermediate (between 150 and 600 bars) and large (greater than 600 bars). McCreless, while noting that Alberich's solo scene is independent from the *Vorspiel* from a poetic-musical period perspective, allows that the return of much of the *Vorspiel*'s thematic material in Alberich's scene suggests that both sections are a 'single musical unit unified by [Fafner's] refrain' (McCreless, *Wagner's Siegfried*, 161). Alfred Lorenz analyses the Prelude as a bar-form (Stollen I – Stollen II – Abgesang, or AAB); the present study shares McCreless' view of the Prelude as a rondo-like structure, with Fafner's material as a refrain or A section framing internal motivic episodes. Lorenz analyses Alberich's scenes as a *Bogen* (arch) and McCreless divides the scene into three sections, each containing a different refrain.

Table 2 Formal analysis of Act II, Prelude and Alberich's scene

<i>Bar</i>	<i>Rondo/Refrain</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Primary harmony</i>
<i>Vorspiel</i>			
1	A (R1a)	<i>Fafner 1</i> (Giants)	f
6	A (R1b)	<i>Fafner 2</i> (Dragon)	f
29	B	<i>Ring/Fafner</i>	f
49	A (R1a)	<i>Fafner 1</i>	b
55	C (R1c)	<i>Curse 1</i>	b/f?
73	C (R1d)	<i>Curse 2</i>	^{o7}
(91–93)		CLIMAX	
96	A (R1a)	<i>Fafner 1</i>	f
<i>Alberich Alone</i>			
104	C (R1d)	<i>Curse 2</i>	b
114	Transition	'Banger tag ...'	b
119	D	Wotan approach	b
138	Re-transition	'Naht schon ...'	b
144	C (R1c)	<i>Curse 1</i>	b
150	A (R1a)	<i>Fafner 1</i>	f/b?
156	C (R1c, d)	<i>Curse 1, 2</i>	b

Table 3 Alternative analysis of Act II, Prelude and Alberich's scene (partial)

<i>Bar</i>	<i>Rondo/Refrain</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Vorspiel</i>			
1	[Introduction]	[Introduction]	<i>Fafner 1, 2</i>
55	A	Refrain (R1c, d)	<i>Curse 1, 2</i>
91	B	Episode 1	Climax, <i>Fafner 1</i>
<i>Alberich</i>			
104	A'	Refrain (R1d)	<i>Curse 2</i>
114	C	Episode 2	Transition–Wotan–Transition
144	A'	Refrain (R1c)	<i>Curse 1</i>
150	B?	Episode 1?	<i>Fafner 1</i>
156	A	Refrain (R1c, d)	<i>Curse 1, 2</i>

alternative reading would be that isolating this segment of music (bars 55–165) is somewhat arbitrary and blurs the structural division between the Prelude and Alberich's scene. In addition, the return of the Fafner material in bars 96–103 simultaneously reinforces its role as the primary refrain and weakens the Curse material as a refrain. However, a further reading of these two formal models might be that the refrain itself shifts from the Fafner material to the Curse material beginning in bar 104; in other words, rather than using a strict refrain form with an unchanging ritornello idea, Wagner treats the refrain flexibly and shifts from

Table 4 Shifting refrain analysis of Act II, Prelude and Alberich's scene

<i>Bar</i>	<i>Rondo/Refrain</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Content</i>
<i>Vorspiel</i>			
1	A	Refrain (R1a, b)	<i>Fafner 1, 2</i>
29	B	Episode 1	<i>Ring/Fafner</i>
49	A	Refrain (R1a)	<i>Fafner 1</i>
55	C	Episode 2	<i>Curse 1, 2</i>
91		CLIMAX	
96	A	Refrain (R1a)	<i>Fafner 1</i>
<i>Alberich</i>			
104	A	Refrain (R1d)	<i>Curse 2</i>
114	D	Episode 3	Transition–Wotan–Transition
144	A	Refrain (R1c)	<i>Curse 1</i>
150	B?	Episode 4 (reprise of Ep. 1?)	<i>Fafner 1</i>
156	A	Refrain (R1c, d)	<i>Curse 1, 2</i>

one pair of the Refrain 1 components to the other pair. This interpretation, illustrated in Table 4, is grounded in the dramatic undercurrent of this portion of *Siegfried*: while the opening of the *Vorspiel* depicts Fafner's possession of the Ring in his cave (reinforced by Mime's descriptions of the forest in Act I), Alberich's presence and gloomy brooding claim the dramatic focus beginning with his opening words, 'In Wald und Nacht', in bar 104. Thus, the formal device (the refrain) shifts to depict the shift of dramatic emphasis from Fafner's abstract portrayal to Alberich's physical appearance and monologue.

This concept of a malleable refrain that can be culled from the analysis of the *Vorspiel* and Alberich's scene is paralleled on a larger scale in the overall structure of the act. As noted earlier, the entire act takes on a refrain-based form, one which, rather than using a static refrain over some two thousand bars, employs several refrain ideas which recur recognizably, although occasionally with some degree of dramatically grounded variation, throughout all three scenes, thus providing a flexible formal-dramatic idea for the entire act.

Likewise, a flexible refrain structure with dramatic underpinnings forms the basis for the entirety of Scene 1; the Prelude and Scene 1 combine to form 526 bars, an 'intermediate'-sized structure in Newcomb's terms, and the recurrence of both Refrain 1a/b (Fafner) and Refrain 1c/d (Curse) gives this section of music an episodic, refrain-based form (see Table 5). In addition, the components of Refrain 1 remain essentially unchanged throughout Scene 1; the lack of substantial modification generates a sense of regularity and inactivity with each recurrence. The resemblance of Scene 1's overall refrain-based structure and that of the Prelude and Alberich's scene reinforces the importance of recurrent musical material throughout Act II, and suggests Wagner was experimenting with a whole new way to put an act together when composing the act in 1857.²⁶

²⁶ Further integration of the Prelude and Scene 1 results from Wagner's 're-composition' of the Prelude's musical material in Scene 1; he had done this with the Prelude and first

Table 5 Formal analysis, Prelude and Scene 1

Bar	Function	Content	Dramatic event
1 119	Refrain Episode 1	<i>Fafner, Curse</i> [1a, b, c, d]	Alberich's brooding Alberich hopes Fafner's slayer is arriving
144 166	Refrain Episode 2	<i>Fafner, Curse</i> [1c, a, d]	Alberich still alone Wanderer/Alberich confrontation
253 292	Refrain Episode 3	<i>Curse</i> (1d, c) [includes reprise of 73–99]	Alberich boasts of his return to power Wanderer denies Alberich's boasting
385 451	Refrain Episode 4	<i>Fafner</i> (1a)	Wanderer wakes up Fafner; Fafner refuses to bargain
496	Refrain	<i>Curse, Fafner</i> (1c, d, a, b)	Wanderer leaves the forest Alberich's futility and lack of progress since the beginning of Act II

In consonance with the formal recurrence of the motivic material, Fafner and the Curse dominate the dramatic content of Scene 1: despite Alberich's obsession to regain the Ring (depicted by the Curse), Fafner's immobile, static refrain saturates the scene, suggesting Alberich's inability to change the situation at hand. During his confrontation with the Wanderer, Alberich twice has delusions about reclaiming the Ring and its power (during the third refrain, bars 253–292, which contains a literal repeat of material from the Prelude in bars 262–286), but the Wanderer dashes Alberich's delusions by waking up Fafner.

With Fafner's awakening (during the fourth refrain, bars 385–451), the inactive Fafner refrain reappears, and Alberich's frustration increases when his attempt to bargain with Fafner fails. After the Wanderer leaves and Alberich's gloomy, futile state returns, the Fafner refrain returns once again (bars 512–526) in F minor to close out the scene. This final appearance of the inactive refrain, bookending the scene together with its appearance at the beginning of the act and establishing Fafner's key of F minor as the primary harmony of Scene 1, highlights Scene 1's dramatic stasis: the situation remains unchanged since the beginning of the act. Fafner still somnolently guards the treasure and, despite his futile boasts to the Wanderer, Alberich has made no progress towards reclaiming the Ring.

Given the remarkable amount of musical recurrence throughout this act, one might speculate that Wagner had specifically earmarked this act as a testing ground for his large refrain structure as early as the hasty prose-sketch of *Der junge Siegfried* in May 1851. As a general principle, however, Bailey and Coren argue that is wrong to think Wagner had specific musical ideas in place with each word

scene of *Die Walküre's* Act III and *Siegfried's* Act I, and also later in Act III of *Tristan und Isolde*.

of the poem he wrote.²⁷ Rather, Bailey observes that the poems can often foreshadow the general shape of the musical setting of the text: 'Wagner's fundamental concern during the years following the completion of *Lohengrin* was the construction of a dramatic text that would be specifically and uniquely suitable for musical elaboration – a text constructed in a way that, as Wagner later expressed it [in *Zukunftsmusik*], the musical form is already completely prepared in the poem.'²⁸ Coren cites one of the most blatant examples of this, Mime's opening monologue in Act I of Siegfried, 'Zwangvolle Plage'. In the first draft of the libretto for *Der junge Siegfried*, the verse of text beginning with 'Zwangvolle Plage! Müh' ohne Zweck!' appears at both the beginning of the monologue and the end (in modified form). This textual repetition evolved into a musical refrain, as Wagner, when composing the music for *Siegfried* some five years after writing the text,²⁹ used the same music to accompany each appearance of 'Zwangvolle plage' – in other words, the textual repetition itself (rare for Wagner) generated the musical repetition. This remarkably obvious example of 'musical foreshadowing' in the text notwithstanding, it is possible that Wagner at least had the seeds for his musical structure of Act II in place soon after writing the text of *Der junge Siegfried* in 1851.

The first musical motifs in *Siegfried* Wagner ever wrote were probably composed in 1851, and would later become the Fafner and Forest Bird motifs; in fact, some of the sketches are labelled 'Fafner', and Wagner referred to these sketches in a letter dated 2 September 1851, to Theodor Uhlig:³⁰ 'For Liszt I have similarly prepared a copy of my new "comic opera libretto" [*junge Siegfried*] ... I am now making a start on the music [of *Siegfried*] ... *The beginning is already in my head; also a few malleable motives such as "Fafner"*. I am looking forward to working on it uninterruptedly.'³¹ Knowing the full dramatic content of Act II of *Siegfried* as it stands now (Wagner revised very little of the text this act, so the original libretto of Act II from 1851 closely resembles the final version, save some minor corrections), Wagner likely had already established a connection between his Fafner sketches and the text, even if in the most general sense (given Fafner's appearance throughout the Act).³² Following Bailey's idea that general musical

²⁷ See Daniel Coren, 'Inspiration and Calculation in the Genesis of Wagner's *Siegfried*', in John Walter Hill, ed., *Studies in Musicology in Honor of Otto E. Albrecht* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1980): 266–87, and Robert Bailey, 'Wagner's Musical Sketches for *Siegfried's* Tod', in Harold Powers, ed., *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968): 459–94.

²⁸ Bailey, 'Wagner's Musical Sketches', 477.

²⁹ Wagner wrote the libretto in June 1851 and began the Preliminary Draft of Act I of *Siegfried* in December 1856.

³⁰ Date from John N. Burk, ed. and trans., *Letters of Richard Wagner: The Burrell Collection* (New York: Macmillan, 1950): 620. Barry Millington and Stuart Spencer (see n. 10), 228, give a slightly different date of 3 September.

³¹ 'Für Liszt habe ich die Abschrift von meinem neuen, "komischen Operntext" nun ebenfalls besorgt ... Ich gehe nun an die Musik ... *den Anfang hab' ich schon im Kopfe; auch einige plastische Motive, wie den Fafner*. Ich freue mich darauf nun ganz dabei zu bleiben.' *Sämtliche Briefe*, vol. 4, 98–99. Translation from *Selected Letters*, 228–9, and Bailey, 'Method of Composition', 287. (Note: in a recent conversation with the author, Dr Bailey revised his translation of the adjective 'plastische' from his original 'plastic' to 'malleable', the latter of which is included above.) My emphasis.

³² If these 'Fafner' sketches did indeed date from the summer of 1851 (during or after the time he was writing the *junge Siegfried* prose-draft), then Wagner had already established

structures were foreshadowed by the text, it is possible that Wagner was, as early as September 1851, considering using these musical sketches as a refrain, at least throughout Scene 1, where Fafner's presence and possession of the Ring dominate the drama.³³ It is thus reasonable to say that some musical-dramatic planning for Act II occurred in the late summer of 1851.

The Compositional Break(s)

Siegfried's solo scene follows a brief dialogue with Mime, in which the latter attempts, in vain, to provoke fear in Siegfried with ominous descriptions of Fafner. Siegfried, frustrated by Mime's cloying presence, drives him away; finally alone in the forest, he sits under the linden tree to rest. This point in the drama marks not only the beginning of Siegfried's contemplative solo scene, but also the location of Wagner's two-week break from composition in late June of 1857. After beginning the Preliminary Draft of Act II on 22 May, and the Developed Draft on 18 June,³⁴ Wagner's preoccupation with gestating ideas for *Tristan und*

Fafner as a former giant transformed into a dragon when he wrote them. In his original *Nibelungsage*, however, this connection was missing – when the giants obtained the hoard and the ring from the Gods in the portion of the saga that would become *Das Rheingold*, the 'giants leave the hoard and the ring in charge of a huge dragon on the *Gnitaheide*', Strobel *Skizzen*, 26. My translation. The 'Gnitaheide', literally 'plain of envy', was the desolate plain where Sigurd, accompanied by Regin (later Mime), travelled to kill Fafnir in one of the sources Wagner used for the *Ring* material, the Scandinavian *Volsunga Saga*. Thus, at some point between writing the *Nibelungsage* in October 1848 and the prose-draft for *Der junge Siegfried* in May and June of 1851, Wagner established this connection between the dragon and the former giant. It is interesting to note that in the prose-sketch for *Der junge Siegfried* (which was written in May before Wagner wrote the prose-draft, and contains three paragraphs providing broad outlines for each act), Siegfried merely kills 'Fafner', so it is unclear whether Wagner had actually made the connection at this point, since there is no detail about Fafner's death-speech, in which he reveals to Siegfried his history as a former giant and his murder of Fasolt. However, given that Wagner proceeded more or less directly from writing this prose-sketch to the prose-draft, the idea was probably already in place.

³³ Of course, his first integration of the Dragon ('Fafner') motif into the *Ring* cycle occurred during the Preliminary Draft of *Das Rheingold* (WWV 86A Musik II), written in November and December of 1854, when he inserted the motif (there labelled 'Schlange') during Alberich's demonstration of the Tarnhelm's transformational power during Scene 3 on page 25 verso. The label, as well as a transcription of this portion of the Preliminary Draft, appears in Warren Darcy, *Wagner's Das Rheingold* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993): 234.

³⁴ In this paper, I use the nomenclature coined by Robert Bailey (*The Wagner Companion*). The Preliminary Draft, 'Musik II/Kompositionszizze' in WWV, consists of a vocal staff and either one or two orchestral staves, at times including orchestral details on the vocal staff (he used three staves for the orchestral part in the Preliminary Draft for Act III, which he did not begin until 1869). The Developed Draft (a stage of composition Wagner had not used in *Die Walküre*, instead proceeding directly from the Preliminary Draft to the Full Score), 'Musik III/Orchesterskizze' in WWV, consists of one staff exclusively for the vocal part(s) and two staves for the orchestral part, with more musical details included in the orchestral staves. It should be noted that in *Siegfried*, for the first time, Wagner completed all three stages – Preliminary Draft, Developed Draft and Full Score – for *each act* before moving on to the next act. In other words, before beginning his work on Act II in May 1857, Wagner had already completed the Preliminary Draft, Developed Draft and Full Score for Act I. Bailey posits that the main reason for this was the trouble Wagner encountered when

Isolde,³⁵ his frustration with his failed attempts to publish the *Ring* project and the prospect of never seeing his *Ring* cycle performed on stage began to wear on his will to continue composition. Ultimately, Wagner did, of course, break off composition of the *Ring* altogether on 9 August 1857 after finishing Act II (Preliminary Draft and Developed Draft), not returning to work on *Siegfried* until September 1864.³⁶ However, Wagner's lengthy hiatus from the *Ring* nearly occurred midway through the act; on 26 June 1857, Wagner stopped working on the Preliminary Draft at the end of bar 721, eight bars after Mime's parting word 'um[brächten]'.³⁷ The following day, 27 June 1857, he broke off composition of the Developed Draft five bars later, following a double bar at the beginning of bar 725, a cancellation of the single-flat key signature, and four more quavers in the string figures.³⁸ Next to Wagner's written date appears the plaintive annotation directed towards his resting hero, 'Wann seh'n wie uns wieder??' (When will we meet again??)

After a two-week hiatus, Wagner resumed work on the Developed Draft on approximately 11 July 1857 (there is no resumption date on the Preliminary Draft, although it was probably either 10 or 11 July, as there is no mention of resuming composition in a letter to Liszt on 9 July, and he would not have resumed work on the less detailed Preliminary Draft before resuming work on the Developed Draft).³⁹ Wagner rapidly worked straight through to the end of the act in both drafts, completing the Preliminary Draft on 30 July and the Developed Draft on 9 August. Why, then, did Wagner return to finish the act after his break at the

composing *Die Walküre* when he would set the work aside for periods of time and forget details he had only hastily outlined before (in one case even referring to his previously sketched materials as 'hieroglyphics'); these setbacks caused the composition of *Walküre* to last much longer than perhaps it should have in Wagner's mind.

³⁵ Evidence of this preoccupation with *Tristan* can be found in Wagner's letters from as early as December of 1856. In addition, Wagner wrote several individual sketches for *Tristan* throughout early 1857, and entered the inscription 'Tristan bereits beschlossen' (Tristan already decided upon) at the top of the first page of the Developed Draft of Act II.

³⁶ Even then he simply wrote the full score for Act II, which had already been drafted in its entirety in the Preliminary and Developed Drafts; as noted earlier, he did not begin work on new *Ring* material until beginning the Preliminary Draft of Act III of *Siegfried* in March of 1869.

³⁷ Wagner himself wrote the date in large letters in the middle of the staff after writing a double bar at the end of present-day bar 721 and a single 'D' after the bar. A reproduction of the Preliminary Draft appears in Otto Strobel, 'Aus Wagners Musikerwerkstatt. Betrachtungen über die Kompositionsskizzen zum "Ring des Nibelungen"', *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, 58 (1931): 496.

³⁸ A facsimile of page 64 of the Developed Draft, with the breaking-off point at the very bottom of the sheet, appears in *Zeitschrift für Musik*, 98 (1931), 'Notenbeilage #7 ['Orchesterskizze aus 'Siegfried' (2. Akt)].

³⁹ The date of 11 July is taken from the top left of page 65 of the Developed Draft; I am indebted to Dr Sven Friedrich and Herr Günter Fischer at the Bayreuth Nationalarchiv for providing me with copies of this and other pages from the various *Siegfried* drafts and sketches. However, there is a possibility that he resumed composition even earlier; the letter to Liszt from July 9 mentions an unspecified 'work' that he is unsettled about (*Sämtliche Briefe*, vol. 8, 363), and a letter to Mathilde Wesendonck on the same day mentions that 'Fafner lebt', a comment he might not make if his mentality was still that of an indefinite break from the *Ring*. Even if he had not actually resumed composition by 9 July, it seems that he had at least begun thinking about it again.

beginning of Siegfried's solo scene? After all, at the time, he did not intend this break to be a temporary, two-week hiatus; rather, as he said to Franz Liszt in a letter from 28 June, the day after stopping the Developed Draft, he reluctantly planned to give up in *Siegfried* indefinitely:

I have led my young Siegfried into the beautiful forest solitude; there I have left him beneath a linden tree and have said farewell to him with tears of heartfelt sorrow: – he is better there than anywhere else. – If I am ever to take up this work again, it must ... be made easier for me ... Whether I shall then feel attracted by my Nibelungen again, I cannot tell: ... while feeling in the best possible mood I had to wrench Siegfried away from my heart and place him under lock and key as though I were burying him alive. I shall leave him there, and no one shall have a glimpse of him as long as he has to remain locked away like this. Well, perhaps the rest will do him good; I have no plans for waking him ... It has cost me a hard and bitter struggle to reach this point! – Let us now regard the matter as closed!⁴⁰

Wagner's tone in this letter suggests a rather lengthy compositional break, rather than the two-week break that it ultimately became. Over a week later, he provided a more specific length of time for the hiatus, in a letter to Julie Ritter from 4 July: 'I am on the point – with great self-control – of leaving Siegfried alone in the forest for a year.'⁴¹ Therefore, something brought Wagner back to at least finish Act II; he, in hindsight, refers to a 'pitiful longing' for *Siegfried* the day he finished the Developed Draft (9 August),⁴² and according to *Mein Leben*, he finished the second act in order to prove to himself that he was not being scared away from the *Ring*.⁴³ However, our discussion of Wagner's large-scale form for the entire act opens another possibility for Wagner's motivation to return to composition. Did he wish to complete this large refrain-based organization that he had begun before a long break pushed it from his memory, as had happened with smaller-scale musical details in *Walküre* after delays much shorter than a year? (Wagner, of course, rarely analysed his own music in his letters or writings, and therefore would not have openly stated that he wished to, for example, 'round out his refrain form in Act II' or 'use the Fafner motif recurrently throughout Scene 1'.) The formal analysis

⁴⁰ 'Ich habe meinen jungen Siegfried noch in die schöne Waldsamkeit geleitet; dort hab' ich ihn unter der Linde gelassen und mit herzlichen Thränen von ihm Abschied genommen: – er ist dort besser dran, als anders wo. – Soll ich das Werk wieder einmal aufnehmen, so müßte mir dieß ... sehr leicht gemacht werden ... Ob mir dann meine Nibelungen wieder ankommen, kann ich allerdings nicht voraus sehen: ... ich habe mitten in der besten Stimmung den Siegfried mir vom Herzen gerissen und wie einen lebendig Begrabenen unter Schloß und Riegel gelegt. Dort will ich ihn halten, und keiner soll etwas davon sehen zu bekommen, da ich ihn mir selbst verschließen muß. Nun, vielleicht bekommt ihm der Schlaf gut; für sein Erwachen bestimme ich aber nichts ... Es hat mich einen harten, bösen Kampf gekostet, ehe ich so weit kam! – Nun lassen wir auch das abgemacht sein!' Erich Kloss, ed., *Briefwechsel zwischen Wagner und Liszt*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1910), II: 171 and 173. Translation from *Selected Letters*, 370 and 372.

⁴¹ 'ich im Begriff stehe – mit grosser Ueberwindung – den Siegfried auf ein Jahr im Walde allein zu lassen.' *Sämtliche Briefe*, vol. 8, 360. Translation from Westernhagen, *Forging of the Ring*, 152.

⁴² 'ein sehnsüchtiger Jammer', from Wagner's letter to Mathilde Wesendonck, which appears in Richard Sternfeld, 'Richard Wagner in seinem Briefen an "Das Kind"', *Die Musik*, xix/I (1926–27): 5.

⁴³ Wagner, *Mein Leben*, II, 649.

Ex. 2a Refrain 2a, *Siegfried*, Act II, Scene 2, bars 714–720

Ex. 2b Sketch written during the 1857 two-week break

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of the act, especially the section after the two-week compositional break, provokes speculation on this possibility.

The first form of the Forest Murmurs, the primary structural refrain of Scenes 2 and 3, was penned by Wagner before the two-week compositional hiatus;⁴⁴ this form, Refrain 2a, is a slowly undulating quaver figure in the cellos (see Ex. 2a)⁴⁵ A short sketch of what would become one of the bird-songs of the Forest Murmurs appears in the Preliminary Draft beneath Wagner's 'June 26 1857' date of breaking off composition (see Ex. 2b). It was clearly written before the compositional break, as it is written on what had been a previously blank staff on Wagner's paper and the music after the date skips this staff, meaning it was already in place (i.e. he had to skip this staff to get to a blank one) when Wagner resumed composition. Given the appearance of 'Waldweben' throughout his text-drafts and libretti for *Der junge Siegfried*, the birdsong sketches he had written in 1851 along with the

⁴⁴ A hint of the Forest Murmurs music appears slightly before Mime leaves, in bars 662–668 and 675–679.

⁴⁵ This figure was slightly different in the Preliminary Draft: after the first bar, the violas and cellos moved in oscillating parallel thirds, rather than the existing alternation between third and sixth resulting from the cellos dropping down a third on the offbeats. In what is now bar 716, Wagner appears to have decided upon the third–sixth alternation, crossing out the parallel thirds and writing in the new figure. Wagner converted bars 714 and 715 from parallel thirds to alternating thirds and sixths not in the Preliminary Draft, but in the Developed Draft, where he had already proceeded with the parallel-third patterns. Thus, Wagner had made the decision to change these figures only when writing out this section in the Developed Draft. These modifications suggest that Wagner was somewhat uncertain about how to proceed with the Forest Murmurs refrain, having corrected its first few bars and then broken off composition in the middle of it.

Fafner sketches,⁴⁶ the curious bird-sketch written under 'June 26', and the upcoming bird-speeches in Scenes 2 and 3, it is likely Wagner knew at this time that the Forest Murmurs music would play an important role throughout the remainder of the act. Thus, during his two-week break, he potentially feared losing his ideas for what would become a vital part of his refrain music, and accordingly was driven to finish the act to avoid the problems of forgetfulness that had plagued him throughout the composition of *Die Walküre*. Therefore, his desire (necessity?) to continue the Forest Murmurs music, which was only in its most basic form before the compositional break, probably sparked him to return to the composition in July.

Scenes 2 and 3: Siegfried, 'Waldweben' and the Death of Stasis

The Forest Murmurs refrain has four different forms, the first three of which are introduced in Siegfried's solo scene. After appearing in its original form, Refrain 2a (see again Ex. 2a), it begins to grow and evolve to provide a musical analogue for nature's growing influence on Siegfried. First, it appears in the basic form of forest sounds (2a), then in a quicker, more active instrumental semiquaver form (Refrain 2b) (see Ex. 2c). The songs of birds depicted by the high winds, over the instrumental motion from Refrain 2b, comprise Refrain 2c, and the final version of the Forest Murmurs refrain, Refrain 2d, contains the same music as 2c, but with one of the Forest Birds' songs sung by the soprano *Waldvogels Stimme*: (see Exx. 2d and 2e). Unlike the components of Refrain 1, which recurred without significant variation throughout Scene 1, the Forest Murmurs refrain develops throughout Siegfried's solo scene, bringing about different actions of Siegfried each time it returns. The key of the Forest Bird, E major, which accompanies all but the initial form of Refrain 2, simultaneously recalls the end of *Die Walküre* (and the 'Magic Sleep' music) and foreshadows the last scene of *Siegfried* (particularly portions of Brünnhilde's awakening and her 'Ewig bin ich'). The bird will, of course, guide Siegfried to Brünnhilde at the end of Act II, and thus the tonal associations with Refrain 2 and E major's control over the majority of Scenes 2 and 3 carry crucial ramifications in the musical-dramatic structure of the *Ring* as a whole.

We continue our analysis of Act II by maintaining the Newcombian formal flexibility noted earlier; as shown in the analysis of the Prelude, Alberich's solo scene, and Scene 1 as a whole, a malleable construction that takes the 'shifting refrain' idea into account, sheds new light on the formal-dramatic elements at work at the opening of Act I. Indeed, this flexible treatment is grounded in the refrain-like structure of Act II as a whole, which derives its usefulness not from a rigid, Lorenzian formalistic approach, but rather from the flexible analytical approach that we maintain in the analysis of the remainder of Act II.

The rondo-like structure of Siegfried's solo scene (Table 6),⁴⁷ reveals the Forest Murmurs refrain as a catalyst for Siegfried's three primary preoccupations: his

⁴⁶ These sketches, labelled 'Waldvogel', appeared on the same sheet as several Fafner sketches, which were probably written in the summer of 1851. They are transcribed and discussed in Bailey, 'Method', 291.

⁴⁷ Lorenz and McCreless both agree on a rondo or refrain-based structure in this scene. However, Daniel Coren's analysis, although presenting the scene as more of a *Bar*-form, perceptively points out the connection between the scene's formal structure and Siegfried's dramatic psychology. Siegfried undergoes several 'cycles' of alternating between

Ex. 2c Refrain 2b, *Siegfried*, Act II, Scene 2, bars 764–770

Ex. 2d Refrain 2c, *Siegfried*, Act II, Scene 2, bars 831–835

thoughtfulness and agitation; each of the recurring pensive states moves Siegfried to a new physical position (indicated by the stage directions, such as ‘he leans back in thought’) representing a deeper state of relaxation and meditation. These emotional ‘cycles’ work in tandem with the refrain-based form (Table 6): each recurrence of the refrain, containing the Forest Murmurs music and predominantly E-major harmony, accompanies Siegfried’s moments of thought and relaxation, whereas the contrasting episodes, containing unstable arioso texture and shifting harmonies, interrupt these moments of thought, and convey Siegfried’s distracted, occasionally frustrated, states of mind. The exception is the second episode, Siegfried’s moment of deepest introspection, rather than agitation, in which he

Ex. 2e Refrain 2d, *Siegfried*, Act II, Scene 2, bars 1198–1203

Vogelstimme

Hei! Siegfried gehört nunder Nibelungen Hort!

O, fänd in der Höle den Hort er jetzt!

father, his mother and the Forest Bird. Each time the refrain recurs, it seems to provoke a new curiosity, and thus becomes part of his maturation process. Wagner has taken the refrain/episode paradigm of classical rondo form and moulded the form into a structure specifically designed to fit his musical-dramatic needs at this turning point in his fairy-tale hero's saga. The gradual transformation of the refrain throughout the scene represents Wagner's dramatically grounded re-interpretation of Classic rondo form; the refrain is no longer simply a recurring A section, but an evolving idea with a specific dramatic meaning – Siegfried's inner growth catalysed by the Forest Murmurs.

Siegfried's solo scene in Scene 2 is analogous to the Prelude and Alberich's scene in the sense that it depicts the solitary brooding of a character, introduces the refrain elements that will recur the remainder of the scene (and, indeed, the act), and uses these refrains in a smaller, self-contained refrain-based form. It provides further evidence of Wagner's preoccupation with repetition and regularity throughout the act on many structural levels. However, crucial differences between Siegfried's scene and the Prelude and Alberich's scene exist: here, the Forest Murmurs music defines the refrain-based form, rather than the Fafner/Curse

ponders his mother's mortality. This section provides contrast through the lack of the refrain music and the first use of C major in the scene; thus, this second episode stands apart not only from the refrain sections, but also from Episodes 1 and 3 (more agitated and generally motivically barren), implying a general outline of A–B–A–C–A–B–A for the first 159 bars of the scene.

Table 6 Formal analysis of Siegfried's solo scene

<i>Bar</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Content/ Texture</i>	<i>Dramatic situation</i>	<i>Siegfried's emotional state</i>	<i>Primary harmony</i>
714	<i>Refrain (A)</i>	R2a	S. stretches out beneath tree/speculates on his father	Pensive (relief)	d
750	Episode 1 (B)	Arioso/ Mime rhythm	Thoughts about Mime	Agitated	Mod.*
764	<i>Refrain (A)</i>	R2b	Siegfried leans back further, tries to imagine his mother	Pensive	E
788	Episode 2 (C)	Quasi-arioso	Thoughts about his mother's mortality	Deeply meditative	Mod. → C
831	<i>Refrain (A)</i>	R2c	Siegfried leans still further back, listens to the birds	Attentive to birds	E → C
874	Episode 3 (B)	Quasi-arioso	Siegfried strives to communicate with the bird	Anxious to communicate with bird	Mod.
894	<i>Refrain (A)</i>	R2c	Siegfried makes a reed	Attentive to bird	E
901	Episode 4	Recit	Siegfried attempts to play reed	Frustrated	Mod.
923	<i>Refrain</i>	R2c	Siegfried sadly gives up	Pensive/resigned	E

* 'Mod.' refers to unstable or modulatory harmony.

complex, and Siegfried's brooding is an unfolding process of self-awareness and contemplation, as opposed to Alberich's morbid, non-progressive obsession. The nature of the formal device itself (the refrain), as used in each of the two scenes, establishes this important dramatic dialectic between the psychology of two of the *Ring's* most important characters, Alberich and Siegfried.

In Alberich's scene, the two primary refrains, based on Fafner's music (Refrains 1a and 1b) and the Curse music (Refrains 1c and 1d), are based on dissonant harmonies which either remain tonally open (1a, 1b and 1c) or restlessly strive towards tonal closure which is never achieved (1d). None of these refrains moves towards a cadence (save the second portion of Fafner's music, Refrain 1b, which only reaches an F-minor cadence after a long extension, which never re-appears in conjunction with the motif⁴⁸). Rather, each of these components remains rooted in its dissonant harmonic world, either through its static harmony (1a, 1b and 1c) or its unfulfilled search for tonal resolution after a gradual 'Steigerung' in the bass (1d). The harmonic nature of these refrains depicts Alberich's frustration with the unchanging situation of Fafner's possession of the Ring, and even the upward bass motion of Refrain 1d, implying Alberich's growing hope of the arrival of Fafner's conqueror, twice ends in abnegated hope (in bars 114 and 166). Wagner's interplay between musical-formal convention (the recurring, though varied, refrains) and the dramatic logic provides a multi-dimensional portrayal of Alberich's psychological state.

Although Siegfried's solo scene presents an entirely different psychological portrayal from Alberich's scene, the portrayal in both scenes is in consonance with the very nature of the formal devices. All three forms of the Forest Murmurs refrain employed in the scene (2a, 2b and 2c) are tonally stable – a pedal point underneath a series of major triads (except for the opening segment of 2a, which outlines a D-minor triad, and bars 773–785, in which the pedal point disappears and minor triads begin to appear, leading to the barren arioso texture of the C section). After the opening appearance of 2a in D minor, the refrains appear in E major. Counteracting the static harmony of the refrains themselves is their evolution throughout the scene, from the slow quavers of 2a, to the accelerated rhythms of 2b, and finally to the rapid rhythms combined with bird-songs in 2c. In other words, the music of the refrain itself, the music of nature, becomes more and more active as Siegfried's psychological character develops; as he sees nature around him more clearly, he attempts to understand his own nature – his foster-father, his real father, his real mother, and the birds that seem to be communicating with him. In contrast, Alberich's psychological stagnation is reflected in the non-mutating refrains in his solo scene. The polarity between the personae of Alberich and Siegfried is tightly wrapped up in Wagner's manipulations of the formal conventions in the only two solo scenes for these characters anywhere in the *Ring*.

It is in Siegfried's scene that his growing activity brought on by nature, rather than inactivity generated by Fafner and Alberich's resulting frustration, begins to permeate the dramatic atmosphere. Siegfried's activity, which eventually leads to his murder of Fafner and Mime and his excursion to Brünnhilde's rock, is closely connected with the Forest Murmurs music, which assumes the role of primary structural articulation device throughout Scenes 2 and 3.

⁴⁸ The rather conventional cadence that concludes this extension of the Fafner music was in place in Wagner's sketches from 1851, when Wagner's harmonic idiom was perhaps less keenly shifted towards dissonance and cadential avoidance than in 1857.

Table 7 Formal analysis, Scenes 2 and 3

Bar	Function	Refrain	Central dramatic event	Primary Harmony
<i>Scene 2</i>				
527	(Introduction)		Siegfried drives Mime away	d
714	<i>Refrain</i>	2a, b, c	Siegfried's solo scene	E
961	Episode 1		Siegfried accidentally wakes up Fafner	F
1004	<i>Refrain</i>	1b, 1a	Fafner appears	f
1051	Episode 2	(1a, 1b)	Siegfried kills Fafner	f
1099	<i>Refrain</i>	1b', a, d, c	Fafner's death-speech	f-b
1179	"	2c, d	Siegfried learns about treasure and Ring from the Forest Bird	E
1198	Episode 3		Siegfried acquires the Ring and the Tarnhelm	E
<i>Scene 3</i>				
1224	Episode 4		Mime and Alberich argue	b \flat
1376	<i>Refrain</i>	2d	Siegfried learns about Mime's plot from the Forest Bird	E
1412	Episode 5: Mime/potion		Mime attempts to kill Siegfried; Siegfried kills him instead	D
1648	[<i>Refrain?</i>]	1c, b, a[*2c]	Siegfried buries his enemies	b
1702	Episode 6		Siegfried realizes his loneliness	G/e
1793	<i>Refrain</i>	2d	Siegfried learns about Brünnhilde from the Forest Bird	E
1862	Episode 7		Siegfried follows the Forest Bird to Brünnhilde's rock	E
1895	<i>Refrain</i>	2d (ff)	(Orchestral postlude)	E

* Wagner included an appearance of Refrain 2c in the Preliminary Draft, but later cut it.

In these two scenes, a flurry of rapid stage action dissolves the stasis that dominated the first scene. As McCreless observes, since so much action occurs in this portion of the act, the recurring Forest Murmurs refrain provides some formal and tonal coherence, an 'efficient' and 'consistent' way of presenting Siegfried's mythological sequence of events.⁴⁹ Unlike the immobility symbolized by Fafner's refrain, the Forest Murmurs refrain catalyses Siegfried's various actions throughout the rest of the act. Initially, it catalyses his first inner thoughts about his origins ('who were my mother and father?'), and later brings him to a battle with Fafner. Once Siegfried tastes the blood of the dead Fafner and can understand the Forest Bird's song, the words of the Forest Bird catalyse three more important events. First, the bird informs him about the treasure inside Fafner's cave, and Siegfried acquires the Ring when he goes inside. Then, the bird warns Siegfried of Mime's murderous intentions, and Siegfried accordingly kills Mime before this can happen. Finally, the bird informs him about Brünnhilde, and leads Siegfried on

⁴⁹ McCreless, *Wagner's Siegfried*, 169.

his journey to her rock. Table 7 shows the use of Refrain 2 (and Refrain 1) throughout Scenes 2 and 3 to frame the sequence of events. After the growth of Refrain 2 (and Siegfried) in Siegfried's solo scene and recurrences of Refrain 1 components during Fafner's appearance, the most active form of the Forest Murmurs, Refrain 2d, becomes the primary refrain element of the remainder of the act. Despite remaining relatively unvaried throughout Scenes 2 and 3 (save the different text sung by the Forest Bird), each recurrence of Refrain 2d retains the active, catalytic connotation of the Forest Murmurs established in Siegfried's solo scene by leading to an important action by Siegfried.

Two plot elements central to Act II – Fafner and the Forest Murmurs – converge within Scene 2; Fafner's appearance and subsequent death in bars 1004–1178 generates a reappearance of Refrain 1. All components of Refrain 1, including the Curse components, are prevalent in his death-speech to Siegfried in bars 1099–1169, and Fafner's music is modified for the first time. The 'decayed' form of Fafner's music contains the familiar dotted downward tritones in the timpani, but now combined with an inversion of Refrain 1a – rising tritones, both in the bass- and contrabass-tubas in long note-values,⁵⁰ and in the cellos and basses, after a more rapid triplet figure (see Ex. 3a). The tritone, which depicted Fafner's possession of the cursed Ring in the Prelude to Act II, now saturates the texture of Fafner's death-speech as Alberich's curse claims its second victim (his brother, Fasolt, whom he himself murdered to acquire the Ring in Scene 4 of *Das Rheingold*, was the first victim). Although the timpani tritones change briefly to perfect fourths in bars 1127–1130 (and are re-orchestrated, now appearing in the bassoons and low strings, rather than the timpani) as Fafner recalls his pre-Ring days of ruling the earth with Fasolt, they return in bar 1133 when Fafner observes that 'fielen nun beide' (both have now fallen) (see Ex. 3b).⁵¹

After the dramatic thread of Fafner, and the Curse that has now victimized him, ebbs away with Fafner's last breath, the Forest Murmurs reaches its final stage of evolution: verbal communication (Refrain 2d). Siegfried's accidental consumption of Fafner's blood allows him to understand the words of what had previously been wordless birdsongs. Accordingly, instead of wordless sounds generating Siegfried's meditations throughout his solo scene, the Forest Murmurs

⁵⁰ These rising diminished fourths in the tubas occasionally appeared in conjunction with the timpani tritones in the Prelude and Scene 1, for examples in bars 96–10 and bars 150–153.

⁵¹ Originally, Fafner's death-speech was different in the prose-draft (Text II) and first draft of the libretto (Text III). Significantly, it is one of the few portions of these drafts of *Der junge Siegfried's* text not involving the Wanderer that Wagner modified extensively. He mostly cut lines pertaining to the history of the giants, as well as a statement that 'the price of envy I now pay' ('des neides lohn fand ich jetzt'), which then leads to the statement that remained in the extant version counselling Siegfried to beware of the person who led him on this mission. In the final version this reference to his own envy causing his downfall is omitted. Also, since Fafner's brother Fasolt was not specifically part of Wagner's Ring conception at all at the time of these early versions of the text (late spring 1851), Fafner only refers to murdering the 'last brother' ('der letzten bruder') and then guarding the hoard in the form of a dragon. As mentioned previously, Wagner's original *Nibelungsage* had the Giants giving the hoard to an actual dragon to guard; sometime between 1848 and 1851, Wagner decided upon Fafner transforming himself into the dragon, thus providing a more personal angle to this death-speech, the downfall of the last member of his once-proud race.

Ex. 3a Fafner's 'decayed' refrain (1a and 1b), *Siegfried*, Act II, Scene 2, bars 1099–1100

Ex. 3b Perfect fourth/tritone shift in Fafner's death-speech, *Siegfried*, Act II, Scene 2, bars 1127–1134

now have a voice that directly gives Siegfried advice and information. The power of the Forest Murmurs grows to its most potent, and most catalytic, state when it spurs Siegfried to several crucial actions. The idea of Mime's trickery brings the important dichotomy between Refrain 1 and Refrain 2 to light, namely the inactivity-breeding connotations of Refrain 1 as opposed to the catalytic effects of Refrain 2. Fafner, in his death-speech, warns Siegfried that whoever spurred him on to murdering him now seeks his life. Since Fafner is unable to name Siegfried's companion, Siegfried pays no heed to this warning, in fact not even acknowledging the warning in any way. In other words, Fafner *fails* to catalyse meaningful awareness in Siegfried, and the appearance of Refrain 1 in Fafner's death-speech breeds no awareness or activity – no new action by Siegfried occurs until after the next appearance of the Forest Murmurs refrain (beginning in bar 1179). By contrast, in Scene 3, the singing Forest Bird (Refrain 2d) successfully imparts this information to Siegfried; it specifically warns Siegfried of Mime's treachery and

catalyses Siegfried's discovery of Mime as a dangerous enemy.⁵² In consonance with the refrain-based structure in the act, Mime's cajoling attempt to kill Siegfried with the help of the sleeping-potion is governed by a rondo-like structure, in which five recurrences of the cloying D-major 'refrain' depict Mime's repeated attempts to deceive Siegfried. Like Alberich and Siegfried's solo scenes, this 'episode' utilizes the refrain-based structure at an intermediate-sized Newcombian level, further strengthening the sense of repetition and regularity throughout the act at different structural levels.

A modification related to the refrain-based structure sheds light on the idea of Refrain 2, in its various forms, representing a catalyst for an important action or increased awareness of Siegfried. According to Westernhagen, Wagner, in the Preliminary Draft, included an additional recurrence of the Forest Murmurs while Siegfried moves the bodies of Mime and Fafner to the cave.⁵³ This wordless appearance of the Forest Murmurs (probably similar to Refrain 2c⁵⁴) would have depicted the Forest Murmurs as merely a passive, uninformative observer of the action, the only such inactive appearance of the refrain in Act II. Wagner's cut implies that he did indeed associate the Forest Murmurs with Siegfried's progress and development, and his burial of Fafner and Mime, if anything, is a regressive step in disposing of his two former enemies. In the final version, however, Refrains 1c, 1a and 1b accompany Siegfried's burials, then lead to Siegfried's state of fatigued inactivity in bars 1702–1792, when he sits once again under the linden tree and longs for further contact with the bird. These elements of Refrain 1 reprise their inactive musical-dramatic function from Scene 1, as they lead to a period of dramatic inactivity (the first such period of inactivity since Scene 1, save perhaps Siegfried and Mime's conversation at the beginning of Scene 2).

Nowhere is the dichotomy between the static Refrain 1 and the active Refrain 2 more obvious than when the bird, after Siegfried's pleadings, sings again (bars 1797 onwards), informing Siegfried of Brünnhilde. The bird's words, once again housed in a recurrence of Refrain 2d, arouse Siegfried, who springs out of inactivity, galvanized by the thought of new adventure and a potential companion. The contrasting atmospheres that follow the appearances of each Refrain (Siegfried's exhaustion and boredom following Refrain 1 in bars 1672–1701 as opposed to Siegfried's sudden excitement following Refrain 2 in bars 1797–1809), juxtaposed here, encapsulate the large-scale contrast between the two main components of Act II's refrain-based structure.

Siegfried receives three vital pieces of information in the last large section of Act II (bars 1793–1861): the location of Brünnhilde; the fact that his new emotion is called love; and the fact that, since he has never learned what fear is, he is to

⁵² The idea of speech in the Forest Murmurs music originates in Refrain 2c (first seen in bars 833–856), which contains the woodwind imitations of actual birdsongs, and introduces several wordless 'voices' of the forest. Bernard Hoffman, in his 1906 'scientifico-musical study' of the *Waldweben* appearing in Siegfried's solo scene, 'Die Waldvögel-Motive in Wagners "Siegfried": Eine Naturwissenschaftlich-Musikalische Studie', *Bayreuther Blätter*, 28 (1906): 137–58, matches the various birdsongs in bars 833–856 to the actual inflections and rhythm patterns of various birds. Further discussion of the Forest Bird, including a detailed survey of its genesis throughout the evolution of the *Ring*, can be found in Graham Hunt, 'Wagner's Forest-Bird(s): The Genesis of the Maternal Spirit in Act II of Wagner's *Siegfried*', *Wagner*, 25/1 (April 2004): 19–47.

⁵³ Westernhagen, *Forging of the Ring*, 159.

⁵⁴ 'the [Preliminary Draft] has ten bars of Forest Murmurs with two birdcalls, blackbird and oriole: idyllic allusions which the score dispenses with.' *Ibid.*, 159.

win Brünnhilde as his bride. These pieces of information are delivered in three dialogues with the following structure: bird information – (Refrain 2d) – question by Siegfried. This section also represents the first time Siegfried has interacted with the bird; he is thus able to garner all the information vital to his continuing adventure through questions. The final, most important, action the Forest Murmurs engenders is actually a physical action – the bird flies out of the forest, leading Siegfried directly to Brünnhilde's rock.

Bernhard Hoffman, in a musico-scientific study of the Forest Murmurs from 1906, states that actual ornithological sources for the birdsongs in the Forest Murmurs can be determined.⁵⁵ In his biography on Wagner, William Ashton Ellis notes that all bird species identified by Hoffman are indigenous to Zurich except for the nightingale, which was, however, common in Dresden, where Wagner lived from 1842 to 1849.⁵⁶ Wagner himself recalls at least his Zurich-based inspirations for the Forest Murmurs in *Mein Leben*:

My daily walks on the bright summer afternoons were directed toward the tranquil Sihltahl [a forest close to the Wesendonck's property], in whose wooded surroundings I listened long and attentively to the song of forest birds. In doing so I was astonished to hear entirely new melodies from singers whose forms I could not see and whose names were even less familiar. Whatever I brought home with me from their melodies I put into the forest scene of *Siegfried* in artistic imitation.⁵⁷

Given Wagner's interest in the sounds of the forest at the time and the birdsong-sketch written on the Preliminary Draft during his two-week compositional break, the birdsongs that found their way into Refrain 2d might well have been one reason Wagner returned to composition in early July. Wagner, often prone to sudden flashes of inspiration,⁵⁸ might have been provoked with new interest in his temporarily derailed *Siegfried* project during his walks in the Sihltahl, and given the new direction necessary to proceed with the music that he knew would be crucial throughout the remainder of the act.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Hoffman, 'Die Waldvögel-Motive', identifies the birdcalls depicted in the high winds during a portion of Siegfried's solo scene (bars 833–856): the yellow-hammer, yellow oriole, nightingale, tree-pipit, and blackbird, respectively. Wagner retains only the blackbird melody (the falling then rising thirds), and that of the nightingale (the arpeggiated rising E-major triad followed by the long F♯), in Refrain 2d, when the Forest Bird's voice is added and now vocalizes the previously instrumental imitations of these two birds' songs.

⁵⁶ William Ashton Ellis, *The Life of Richard Wagner* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1908), vol. 6: 244.

⁵⁷ 'Meine täglichen Spaziergänge richtete ich an den heiteren Sommernachmittagen nach dem stillen Sihltahl, in dessen waldiger Umgebung ich viel und aufmerksam nach dem Gesange der Waldvögel lauschte, wobei ich erstaunt war, die mir gänzlich neuen Weisen von Sängern kennen zu lernen, deren Gestalt ich nicht sah, und deren Namen ich noch weniger wusste. Was ich von ihren Weisen mit nach Hause brachte, legte ich in der Waldscene *Siegfried* in künstlicher Nachahmung nieder.' *Mein Leben*, 653–4. Translation from *My Life II*, 551.

⁵⁸ For example, his sudden excitement at reading the *Lohengrin* myth while at the Marienbad spa in summer 1845, which prompted him to run half-naked from his bath to his cottage in order to get his ideas on paper.

⁵⁹ Recall that the break occurred before the birdsongs entered the Forest Murmurs music, and that Wagner seemed uncertain of the exact form Refrain 2a should take (making corrections to the cello lines).

Siegfried's undeniable infusion of rhythm and regularity⁶⁰ provokes a broad view of Act II's repetitive, refrain-based structure as a very large rondo, providing we treat the idea with flexibility and in dialogue with the dramatic progression of the act. In addition, enlarging the analytical scope across the entire act (rather than isolating Scene 1 from Scenes 2 and 3) generates the idea of a 'double refrain' in Act II, that is, considering Refrains 1 and 2 as contrasting, yet cooperative, ideas united in a large formal apparatus. This flexible treatment yields a significant model for the transformation of the refrain idea itself: a refrain that changes and transforms as an analogue to the drama itself (refer to Table 1 once more). The refrain begins the act depicting the static Fafner in possession of the cursed Ring; however, as the act progresses, the refrain shifts towards the Forest Murmurs, which catalyse Siegfried to self-introspection, to slay his enemies (Fafner and Mime), to obtain the cursed Ring, and finally to move towards Brünnhilde's rock. When considered alongside the dramatic motion of the entire act, the refrain-based, episodic structure provides a strong unifying principle between the musical-formal unit (the refrain) and the pivotal dramatic action in Act II of *Siegfried*.

Wagner's use of a refrain whose manipulation and transformation is closely connected with the drama is not unprecedented; several scenes written before Act II of *Siegfried* help contextualize this formal-dramatic innovation of Wagner's. In Tannhäuser's Rome Narrative from Act III, Scene 3 of *Tannhäuser*, Tannhäuser's description of his initially hopeful pilgrimage to Rome that ends in disaster is wrapped up in a formal breakdown of refrain structure as his pilgrimage fails.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Paul Bekker (Paul Bekker, *Richard Wagner, His Life in His Work*, trans. M.M. Bozman (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971): 280) notes that *Siegfried* is the story of 'dramatically developing rhythm' and the 'growth of the power of rhythm'. The 'power of rhythm' that Bekker refers to permeates the opera on several levels, from the rhythmic alternation of episode and refrain seen in Table 1, to repeated rhythmic gestures uniting the entire opera. At one level, there are similarly repeated rhythmic and motivic gestures at the beginning of each act, giving the entire opera a sense of regularity; the prelude to each of *Siegfried's* acts employs a consistently repeated rhythmic pattern. The first rhythmic gesture heard in the opera, following the rhythmically barren opening measures (bars 1–50), is the repetitive dotted rhythm associated with the Nibelungs (in this case, Mime, busy attempting to re-forge Nothung for Siegfried). The second act opens with the rhythmic figure that had previously been associated with the Giants, but which has now taken on the somnolent, sinister connotation of the sleeping dragon, Fafner. Finally, the tempestuous Prelude to Act III begins with two repeated rhythms, the Valkyrie's rhythm in the upper register along with the iambic rhythm associated with the rising Nature/Erda motif in the lower register. In addition, all of the Preludes begin softly and inevitably build towards the same climax: a fortissimo statement of the Servitude chords. At the level of the single act, Act II has a rhythmic, repetitive refrain-based form. At the level of individual sections, several parts of the opera are in rondo form and strophic form, both forms involving repetition and regularity (for example, Mime's *Staarenlied*, Siegfried's Forging Song, Mime's attempt to kill Siegfried, and the entire Riddle Scene [Act I, Scene 2], the latter of which is governed by a large, flexible rondo-like structure.)

⁶¹ A restless refrain repeated at the opening of each of the first two verses, depicting the steps of his journey, disappears when he arrives at Rome, replaced by a more active refrain as the possibility of his salvation, in the form of the Pope, arrives. The opening refrain returns for a third time when he describes the Pope's approach, but the refrain becomes fragmented, and disappears after six bars, stripping the narrative of what seemed initially to be a regular refrain-based structure. The remainder of the narrative, which contains the Pope's malediction of Tannhäuser, becomes an open-ended, refrain-barren form.

The *Todesverkündigung* scene in Act II, Scene 4 of *Die Walküre* similarly manipulates an initially regular refrain structure to portray an important dramatic shift. Brünnhilde's proclamation of Siegmund's impending death at the scene's opening is formally depicted by the unyielding recurrence of the Fate motif; however, once Siegmund persuades the Valkyrie to prevent his death, the Fate refrain disappears and the repetitive form that governed the early part of the scene disappears. Finally, a scene earlier in *Siegfried* further illustrates Wagner's interest in ritornello-like forms during the composition of the work: the Riddle-Scene between Mime and Wotan in Act I, Scene 2. The riddles themselves involve the repetition of a refrain with each question asked by the two contestants, but, as Anthony Newcomb points out, the entire scene is governed by a ritornello structure whose refrain is the tripartite Wanderer motif-complex.⁶² The fragmented recurrence of one, two, or all components of the Wanderer refrain throughout the scene portends the interchangeable use of the four components of Refrain 1 throughout Act II, Scene 1. Additionally, the 'dramatically telling'⁶³ modification and placement of the refrain throughout the Riddle-Scene similarly presages the use of Refrain 2 throughout Scenes 2 and 3 to help convey Siegfried's psychological maturation and increasing awareness of his surroundings. These formal resemblances are hardly surprising, given that Wagner composed the Riddle-Scene just five months before beginning composition of Act II.

Newcomb also presents some evidence that the prevalence of ritornello-like forms in the operas of the 1850s (he also discusses the ritornello structure in Act II, Scene 1 of *Tristan und Isolde*) might have been related to Wagner's interest in the music of J.S. Bach, whose concerti contain large ritornello structures. Several letters and recollections, both by friends and Wagner (found in *Mein Leben*), convey an interest in Bach's music during this period; for example, Wagner, when showing visitor Robert Franz his musical scores during his visit to Zurich in summer 1857, had in his library mostly music by his visitor, Beethoven and J.S. Bach.⁶⁴ However accurate this evidence of the extent of Wagner's interest in Bach's music in this period, it at least opens the possibility of Wagner's artistic imitation (conscious or unconscious) of Baroque ritornello forms, and his unique tailoring of the formal prototype in the scenes just discussed, and indeed throughout Act II of *Siegfried*.

Another possible reason for Wagner's return to composition is that he simply wished to be done with the act as quickly as possible so that he could achieve closure with Act II of *Siegfried* and finally move on to his germinating *Tristan* project. Perhaps the frequent repetition of the Forest Murmurs music throughout the rest of the act, interspersed mostly with arioso textures and the occasional motivic reference, was Wagner's way of being 'economical' with his musical material in order to complete Act II quickly (after writing the first 725 bars in just over a month, he wrote the remaining 1185 bars in just twenty days). Bailey suggests that Wagner 'began to lose control of ... [A]ct [III]' as the *Tristan* ideas began to consume him, and as a result it is 'the weakest [act] in the *Ring*'.⁶⁵ McCreless also avers that the unifying principles of Act II have their weaknesses, such as the musical-formal detachment of Scene 1 from the rest of the act due to the lack of musical connection between the two large sections. Indeed, the formal role of the Refrain 1 components as refrains is weakened when they appear in

⁶² Newcomb, 'Ritornello Ritornato', 211–18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁶⁵ Bailey, 'Method', 327.

Scenes 2 and 3 because of this gap and because Refrain 2 has now assumed the role of primary structural device; they now function more as motivic recollections of the inactivity of Scene 1, as well as ominous expressions of the Curse claiming two further victims (Fafner and Mime). Perhaps these structural weaknesses or ambiguities were due both to Wagner's inexperience in creating large refrain-based structures and his desire to finish off Act II quickly so he could move on to his new project.

Whatever inspiration or motivation Wagner had for his refrain-based structure in Act II of *Siegfried*, it is quite obvious that he was experimenting with an entirely new method of organizing an entire act. Nowhere else does so much musical repetition occur throughout an act, nor, not coincidentally, does any other act in the *Ring* contain such a remarkable amount of stage-action. To present all this action, he needed a new, cohesive formal solution, and decided that multifaceted, shifting refrains would hold the structure together most efficiently. This flexible structure resembles a rondo structure in the recurrence of motivic material that frames the dramatic events as 'episodes', yet it is also tied closely to the dramatic shift from Fafner's inactive dominion of the forest in Scene 1 to Siegfried's growth, activity, and defeat of Fafner in Scenes 2 and 3. The multifaceted components of each refrain, the shifting of the refrain itself, and the paucity of 1900-bar rondos necessitate the flexible analytical approach used in this paper; yet, these formal 'difficulties' confirm Newcomb's statement quoted earlier that Wagner's forms must be treated in terms of their relationships to formal conventions, and the manipulations and new interpretation of those conventions.⁶⁶

Wagner's unique interpretation of refrain-based form in Act II, however successful as a compositional device (as noted above, some scholars have pointed out weaknesses in the music and formal structure of Act II), also sheds light on the mysterious two-week compositional hiatus just after he had begun Siegfried's solo scene. As noted earlier, his reasons for stopping on 29 June seem to be related to his reasons for later stopping for seven years: his failed attempts at publication with Breikopf and Härtel, his growing preoccupation with *Tristan und Isolde*, and his pessimism at ever seeing the *Ring* cycle performed. However, what indeed brought Wagner back to *Siegfried* in early July if he originally intended his 29 June break to be 'indefinite'? The answer, at least partially, is related to the giant formal experiment of Act II, and the fact that the compositional break occurred just after he had started composing the refrain that would govern Scenes 2 and 3. Knowing the Forest Murmurs would play a significant (repetitive) role throughout the rest of the act, Wagner might have stopped composition on 29 June because he was unsure of exactly how to proceed with his Forest Murmurs music. Though he openly voiced his disenchantment related to the three reasons just cited, he might have been unwilling to admit that his formal planning was also contributing to his compositional crisis. If this is true, then what brought him back was a fear of losing his ideas for the formal plan of the remainder of Act II, prompting him to proceed with his composition. Whether he decided upon the formal plan outlined in this paper during the two-week compositional break or already had the idea (whether in general or detailed form) is difficult to determine. However, the birdsong sketch written on the Preliminary Draft during the hiatus strongly suggests that the Forest Murmurs music was involved in bringing him back to the composition of *Siegfried*. His fear of losing control of his formal plan, his

⁶⁶ op. cit., 204–5.

renewed motivation for finishing *Siegfried* after fully developing his birdsong sketches (perhaps after his Sihltahl walks), or a combination of both, probably sparked his return to composition. At this point, he felt ready to complete the transformation of his young hero from the brash, naive youngster of Act I to the wiser, more mature hero of Act II. By 9 August, as Wagner triumphantly wrote to Marie von Wittgenstein, the composition of Act II was 'done: Fafner is dead, Mime is dead, and Siegfried has run after the Forest Bird as it flutters away'.⁶⁷ A wiser Siegfried leaves the forest, ready for the profound experiences that lie ahead.

⁶⁷ 'ausgeführt; Fafner ist tot, Mime ist tot und Siegfried ist dem fortflatternden Waldvogel nachgelaufen.' Sternfeld, 'Richard Wagner', 5. Translation, slightly modified, from Bailey, 'Method', 327.