‘DREAMS AND DEEDS’ AND OTHER DUALITIES: NIELSEN AND THE TWO-MOVEMENT SYMPHONY

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The last volume of *Carl Nielsen Studies* included an article on Nielsen’s first four symphonies, considered in the light of the model for symphonism proposed by the Russian scholar Mark Aranovsky.[1] The article stopped short of Symphony No. 5, partly because the author had already written at some length about the piece, and partly because he felt that in this instance the comparison with the Aranovsky model ‘would arguably not show anything very new’.[2]

But he has had a bad conscience about this ever since. And the co-author of the present paper has not been prepared to let him get away with it. She, in fact, has provoked and contributed to a new dimension to the understanding of the Fifth Symphony, thanks not least to her Iranian origins and her acquaintance with the dualistic world-views deeply rooted in that culture. The fruits of the dialogue between us are enshrined in the following discussion. We do not propose any hard-wired connection between Nielsen’s Fifth and Persian religious/philosophical thought (though there are some intriguing threads to which we will draw attention). Rather, we will seek to use concepts from the latter as heuristic tools to throw new light on aspects of the former.[3]

Dualities and Archetypes

Part of the reason for confining the ‘Theories of Symphonism’ article to Nielsen’s first four symphonies was simply that the Fifth is in two movements, whereas Mark Aranovsky’s model (or the ‘Aranovsky invariant’) is closely bound up with the traditional four-movement scheme. No mere adaptation of this scheme, as many five-,

1 David Fanning, ‘Carl Nielsen and Theories of Symphonism’, *Carl Nielsen Studies* 4 (2009), 9-25.

2 *Ibid*., 24.

3 We wish to acknowledge the kind help of Daniel Grimley (University of Oxford), Alan Williams (University of Manchester) and Farshid Eshghpour (Toronto), in the preparation of this paper.

three-, two- and even single-movement symphonies clearly are, Nielsen's Fifth is animated by dualities at a fundamental level that relegate the traditional archetypes of symphonism to a subordinate function.

This aspect has, of course, been addressed in the Nielsen literature. A section in David Fanning's book on the Fifth Symphony, for instance, is devoted to 'Symphonic polarities'. It quotes Nielsen's statement to Ludvig Dolleris, in which the composer outlines a number of dualities for the two movements of the Fifth Symphony: 'If the first movement was passivity, [in the second] it is action (or activity) which is conveyed. So it's something very primitive I wanted to express: the division of *dark* and *light*, the battle between *evil* and *good*. A title such as "Dreams and Deeds" could maybe sum up the inner picture I had in front of my eyes when composing'.[4] Related dualities in Nielsen's earlier works – including, crucially, the incidental music to *Aladdin*, with its battle of 'truth against lies, good against evil' in the final scene – are discussed by Fanning in the same pages, along with further oppositions previously adduced by Jørgen I. Jensen in his commentary on the Fifth Symphony.[5] In addition, Nielsen's pencilled descriptions at the end of the manuscript score serve as the headings for Fanning's detailed commentaries on the respective movements: 'Dark, resting forces' and 'Awakened forces'.[6]

However, it is by no means entirely clear whether Nielsen thought of *all* these oppositions as applying to the two separate movements. Some of them at least seem to supply a running thread for the drama of the symphony as a whole. It is true that he used yet another variant of the dualism idea in his interview with Axel Kjerulf, published on the day of the premiere, where he was asked whether the piece had a title, and replied that his headings for Symphonies 2 to 4 were really all 'just different names for the same thing, the only thing that music in the end can express: resting forces in contrast to active ones'.[7] Here he does imply that this duality maps more or less directly onto the two parts of the work:

4 *Var første Sats Passiviteten, var det hér Aktionen (Handlingen), som faar Udtryk. Det er altsaa noget meget primitivt, jeg har villet udtrykke: Fordelingen af Skygge og Lys, Kampen mellem Ondt og Godt. En Titel som "Drøm og Daad" kunde maaske dække det indre Billede, jeg har haft for Øje under Udarbejdelsen.* Ludvig Dolleris, *Carl Nielsen: En musikografi*, Odense 1949, 260-261, quoted in Fanning, *Carl Nielsen: Symphony No. 5*, Cambridge 1997, 13-16.

5 Jørgen I. Jensen, *Carl Nielsen: Danskeren*, Copenhagen 1991, 360-366. We note in passing that the version of *Aladdin* on which Nielsen worked is partially set in Ispahan (though this was a 19th-century gloss on the tale, which originally took place entirely in China).

6 *dunkle, hvilende Kræfter; vaagne Kræfter.*

7 *egentlig blot forskellige Navne paa det samme, det eneste, som Musiken til syvende og sidst kan udtrykke: de hvilende Kræfter i Modsætning til de aktive*; John Fellow (ed.), *Carl Nielsen til sin samtid*, Copenhagen 1999, 257.

> This time I have changed the form and made do with two parts instead of the usual four movements. I've thought a lot about the fact that in the old symphonic form as a rule one says most of what one has to say in the first Allegro. Then comes the peaceful Andante, with the effect of a contrast, then again the Scherzo where again one reaches too high up and destroys the climax in the finale, where the ideas all too often run out. I wonder if maybe Beethoven felt all that in his Ninth, when he brought in human voices to help out towards the conclusion! So this time I've divided the symphony into two large, broad sections – the first which begins slowly and peacefully, and the second more active.[8]

The problem is that the slightest acquaintance with the score reveals that there are plenty of 'dark, resting forces' in the second movement, even though they predominate in the first; and likewise that there are plenty of 'awakened forces' in the first, even though those predominate in the second. Similarly, the straightforward equation of the two movements with 'resting/evil' and 'active/good', soon breaks down. 'Dark resting forces' can as easily be associated with 'good' (in the slow fugue of the second movement) as they can with 'evil' (in the side drum sections of the first); and 'awakened forces' may consort with 'evil' (in those same side drum episodes and elsewhere) as well as, even more obviously, with 'good' (in the first movement's noble Adagio and in the outer sections of the second movement).

Paradoxically, this more differentiated view facilitates comparisons with the apparently poorly adapted 'Aranovsky invariant', which is given in *Fig. 1*.

With this scheme in mind, we now propose a tabular representation of the Fifth Symphony, with the elements of the Aranovsky invariant distributed across the two movements and aligned with the dualities Nielsen acknowledged (see *Fig. 2*). Aranovsky's archetypes are given here in the third row, with crucial modifiers of 'non-' and 'anti-', understood as passive and active negation, respectively. The active/passive duality takes its cue from Nielsen's statement to Dolleris quoted above; the modifier 'anti-anti' refers to the exertion of compositional will in the final section of the work that

8 *Jeg har denne Gang ændret Formen og nøjes med to Dele i Stedet for de sædvanlige fire Satser. Jeg har tænkt så meget over dette, at man i den gamle Symfoniform som regel sagde det meste af det, man havde på Hjerte, i den første Allegro. Saa kom den rolige Andante, der virkede som Modsætning, men saa atter Scherzoen, hvor man igen kommer for højt op og ødelægger Stigningen i Finalen, hvor Idéerne altfor tidt er sluppet op. Mon ikke Beethoven har følt det i sin "niende", da han tog Menneskestemmerne til Hjælp mod Slutningen! Jeg har altsaa gjort det denne Gang, at jeg har delt Symfonien i to store, brede Dele – den første, der begynder langsomt og roligt, og den anden mere aktive.* John Fellow (ed.), *op. cit.*, 257-258, *Politiken*, 24.1.1922. Quoted in Fanning, *op. cit.*, 1997, 97.

	First movement	Second movement	Third movement	Fourth movement
	Homo agens	Homo sapiens	Homo ludens	Homo communis
1	fast tempo	slow tempo	fast tempo	fast tempo
2	sonata form	old binary or old sonata form, sonata without development, ternary, variations, more rarely rondo	ternary	rondo, sonata rondo
3	prevalence of development, separation [*drobnost’*], discreteness [*diskretnost’*] of structure	prevalence of exposition, wholeness [*tselostnost’*]	prevalence of exposition, wholeness	prevalence of exposition, wholeness
4	leading role of tonal-harmonic development and discreteness of thematic structures	leading role of melody	leading role of rhythm	relative balance of functional means

Fig. 1. The ‘Aranovsky invariant’, from Mark Aranovsky, Simfonicheskiye iskaniya *[Symphonic Explorations]. Leningrad, Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1979, 27*

eventually triumphs over the active negation encountered at the beginning of the second movement. The bottom row on *Fig. 2* reminds us that the symphony is by no means entirely unrelated to the four-movement mould. Here again, the modifiers, in this case shown as question marks, are vital, the idea being that a double-function second movement folds scherzo and slow movement into an interrupted finale, which itself has some first-movement characteristics; all of which balances out the ‘non-first-movement’ quality of the first movement itself. The two rows above this one indicate the more fundamental dualities that produce the relationship with the symphonic archetypes given in row 3. Reading row 3 from left to right, it might be possible to infer that one of the symphony’s over-arching concerns is with a search for the homo agens archetype. The agens quality associated with ‘first-movement’ dynamism, is at first merely sidelined, where one might expect it to be most directly present (non-agens); then it falls apart as the Allegro of the second movement progresses (anti-agens), after what seems initially to be an attempt to assert it; finally it is reinstated by defying the previous negations (anti-anti agens). This entire process operates somewhat at the expense of the ‘finale’ archetype of homo communis, which is so powerfully affirmed in the finales of Nielsen’s previous symphonies.

First movement		Second movement (double-function sonata)			
Tempo giusto	Adagio	Allegro	Presto	Andante poco tranquillo	Allegro
(Non-) agens	(Anti-)sapiens	(Anti-)agens	(Anti)ludens	Sapiens	(Anti-anti-) Agens
Dark, resting forces		Awakened forces			
Dream	Thought/nightmare	Deeds	Dream (Nightmare)	Thought	Deeds
Limbo; evil	Self-awareness; good vs. evil	Regeneration; disintegration	Evil (Danse macabre)	Good (Problem-solving)	Reintegration
First?	Slow	First?/finale?	Scherzo	Slow	First/finale

Fig. 2. Nielsen: Symphony No. 5 in the light of the Aranovsky invariant

This would then be one way of pointing towards the Fifth Symphony's unique place within symphonic tradition. And one might go further, to claim that the confrontation and ultimate overcoming of negative forces is as hazardous, yet exhilarating, an enterprise – technically and aesthetically speaking – as any symphonist ever undertook. That this process is sustained without respite across the entirety of the work makes it hard to find parallels even in the works of such kindred spirits in the field of conflictual symphonism as Tchaikovsky, Mahler or Shostakovich.

All this arguably amounts to little more than the insights of Robert Simpson's classic 1952 study, couched in other terms.[9] However, the more important purpose of the current paper will be to consider in addition where Nielsen's Fifth stands in relation to other two-movement forms, especially symphonies, and especially those two-movement symphonies that embody explicit and highly dramatised dualities. The investigation will seek to corroborate the view of the piece outlined above as a kind of 'anti-anti' symphony, using a broader discussion of varieties of dualism to help distinguish the Fifth from other related symphonies and thereby more precisely to locate its historical significance. It should be understood from the outset that in no case do we intend to imply 'influence' on or from Nielsen; nor do we aspire to comprehensive coverage of all worthwhile two-movement symphonies ever composed. The rationale for our choice is simply those works that illuminate the fundamental concerns of Nielsen's Fifth thanks to various degrees of overlap.

9 Robert Simpson, *Carl Nielsen: Symphonist*, London 1952, 84-104, rev. edn. London 1979, 92-111.

Dualities and Dualism

We make a pragmatic distinction between 'contrast' and 'duality'. Practically all symphonies up to and including Nielsen's day embody contrasts of thematic material and/or tonality as the stuff of their musical dramas. It is in this sense that Hans Keller's definition of symphonism as the 'large-scale integration of contrasts', which he offered in the context of Mozart, has some validity.[10] 'Duality' as we use it here refers to higher-level oppositions or polarities, such as those Nielsen used to describe his Fifth Symphony (as quoted above), or even more drastic examples of incompatibility, such as high/low art, new/old style, sacred/secular genre, or even composed/improvised music, as found in certain symphonies from the 1960s and 70s discussed below.

As a further distinction we use 'dualism' to apply to the underlying principle of such oppositions, and 'duality' to their embodiment in artistic practice.

Dualism, to which we now turn, is obviously not just an artistic phenomenon but a world-view, with its own history and ramifications, some of which may be traced back to ancient Persian sources. Generally regarded as the earliest dualistic monotheist religion, Zoroastrianism was founded by Zoroaster (Zarathustra), whose origins are obscure, but who probably lived the territory of the then Persian Empire sometime between 6000 and 1200 BC. Zoroaster appears as Sarastro in Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte* – well known to Nielsen, of course – where he represents moral order and light, in opposition to the Queen of the Night. Little is known of his life, except through texts in the sacred language of the scriptures, Avestan.[11] In Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda (or Ohrmazd, the Wise Lord) has an adversary named Angra Mainyu (or, as more familiar to the West, Ahriman, the Destructive Spirit) who is the originator of death and all that is evil in the world (these names are understood as denoting spirits rather than personalities). Ahura Mazda, who is perfect, abides in Heaven, whereas Angra Mainyu dwells in the depths of Hell, and these two abodes await humans after death, depending on their behaviour in life. The similarities with Christian concepts are evident, and there is widespread agreement that Zoroastrianism is the progenitor.[12]

10 See Robert Simpson, *The Symphony*, vol. 1, Harmondsworth 1966, 52.

11 The most important collection of Avestan manuscripts in Europe is located in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, having been purchased in India and Iran in the 1820s and 1840s. Several of these were published as facsimiles by A. Christensen & K. Barr, *Codices Avestici et Pahlavici Bibliothecae Universitatis Hafniensis*, 12 vols., Copenhagen, 1931-1944. They were catalogued by N. L. Westergaard, J. Olshausen, and A. Mehren, in *Codices Orientales Bibliothecae Regiae Havniensis, iussu et auspiciis Regis Daniae Christiani Octavi enumerati et descripti*. Pars I, Copenhagen 1846-1857.

12 According to Mary Boyce (1920-2006, British scholar of Iranian language and culture), 'Zoroastrianism is the oldest of the revealed credal religions, and it has probably had more influence on mankind, directly and indirectly, than any other single faith.' Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London 1979, 1.

The first statements that define Zoroastrian dualism are attributed to the Prophet and founder himself. He states the doctrine in two places in the Gathas, the sacred hymns that form the core text of the religion's scriptures. The first passage consists of stanzas 1-7 of Yasna 30, or song 3 of the 17 Gatha hymns, given below together with the second mention of dualistic teaching, from Yasna 45, verse 2, both here translated by Ali Jafarey:

Yasna 30:

1. Now I shall speak to those who wish to hear of the two principles, I shall also, with veneration for good mind and the good consideration of righteousness, have praises for the Lord, so that you may see brilliant happiness.
2. Hear the best with your ears and ponder with a bright mind. Then each man and woman, for his or her self, select either of the two. Awaken to this Doctrine of ours before the Great Event of Choice ushers in.
3. Now, the two foremost mentalities, known to be imaginary twins, are the better and the bad in thoughts, words, and deeds. [...]
4. Now, when the two mentalities first got together, they created 'life' and 'not-living'. Until the end of existence, the worst mind shall be for the wrongful, and the best mind shall be for the righteous.
5. Of these two mentalities, the wrongful mentality chose worst actions, and the most progressive mentality, as steadfast as rock, chose righteousness. Therefore, those who would please the Wise Lord (Ahura Mazda) may do so by choosing true actions.
6. Between these two, the seekers of false gods did not decide correctly, because delusion came to them in their deliberations. Therefore, they chose the worst mind, rushed in wrath, and afflicted the human existence.
7. But to the person who chooses correctly, comes endurance of body and steadfast serenity through strength, good mind, and righteousness. [...]

Yasna 45:

Now, I shall proclaim the two foremost mentalities of life. Of these, the more progressive one told the retarding one thus: Neither our thoughts, nor teachings, nor intellects, nor choices, nor words, nor deeds, nor consciences, nor souls agree.[13]

13 *The Gathas, our Guide*, tr. Ali A. Jafarey, Cypress, CA 1989, 21, 37.

From these statements there arise two major interpretations of Zoroastrian dualism. The ethical or moral line takes its inspiration directly from the text of the Gathas, while the cosmic is associated with later interpretative traditions, which are echoed in Manichaean thought (see below).

In cosmic dualism Good as represented by Ahura Mazda/Ohrmazd and Evil as represented by Angra Mainyu/Ahriman are engaged in perpetual struggle. The attacks by Angra Mainyu on God’s pure created world render it impure and prone to all the maladies that afflict humankind. Oppositions of life and death, day and night, good and evil are all associated with cosmic dualism. However, the notion of two gods, sometimes associated with this principle, has never been part of Zoroastrian belief. Zoroastrians have always believed that there is only one God, Ahura Mazda, while Angra Mainyu may appear to be powerful but has never been viewed as divine. From Zoroaster’s teaching onwards, the Evil Spirit is considered a subordinate entity in rebellion against the One God and His Truth. Angra Mainyu’s reign is temporary, and he is not eternal.

Moral dualism on the other hand refers to the opposition of Good and Evil in the mind of mankind. God’s gift to man was free will, which is arguably Zoroastrianism’s biggest contribution to religious philosophy. Accordingly Man has the choice to follow the path of Evil (druj – deceit) or that of Righteousness (asha – truth). The path of Evil leads to misery and ultimately Hell. The path of Righteousness leads to peace and everlasting happiness in Heaven. Though such polarities as happiness/sadness and truth/deception clearly resemble those of cosmic dualism, the emphasis here is on choice, which in turn determines whether we are the ‘helper’ of Ahura Mazda or of Angra Mainyu.

In practice, modern Zoroastrianism looks positively on the destiny of humankind, as do most Christian sects, teaching that our fundamental goodness will eventually triumph and bring about heaven on earth. This could be seen as a retrenchment from the faith’s original purity of dualism. In any case, its resonance with Nielsen’s non-religious articles of faith, as embodied in the Fifth Symphony and elsewhere, is clear.

There are several routes by which the dualism of Zoroastrianism entered Judeo-Christian thought. Already in the Gospels a mixture of cosmic and ethical dualism is a running thread: ‘All that came to be had life in him. And that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower’ (John 1:3-5, Jerusalem Bible). ‘Though the light has come into the world, men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, lest his actions be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may plainly be

seen that what he does is done in God' (John 3:19-21, Jerusalem Bible). Manichaeanism and Gnosticism, which arose in Persia and the Middle East in the early centuries AD, were based on cosmic dualism. These traditions viewed the entire physical world as corrupt, except for 'particles of light' imprisoned within matter. The task of humans is to escape rather than redeem the world, in the process rejecting matter so far as possible, and holding the physical world, including the body, in contempt (cf. major Christian thinkers such as Saint Augustine). Mani (216-276 AD) and his followers stressed the association between goodness, spirituality and light, as opposed to evil, dark materiality. Manichaeism thrived between the third and seventh centuries, and at its height it was one of the most widespread religions in the world. Surviving longer in the East, it appears to have finally faded away after the 14th century in southern China, living on to this day in the West mainly as a pejorative term referring to naively polarised either/or, black-or-white thinking or argument.

For all the overlaps with Zoroastrian precepts, the Manichaean dualism of soul against world, of mind against body, diverges from Zoroastrian dualism, which stresses continuity rather than separation of the physical and spiritual, the one affecting the other.[14]

As will be seen below, a Zoroastrian dualistic world-view attached to conflict and faith in positive outcomes is by no means universal. Nor is it so within the confines of the two-movement symphony. Nielsen's Fifth clearly has strong affinities with it, but we will leave this idea for the time being, without forcing the issue.

Two-Movement Symphonies Before Nielsen

Nielsen certainly had no need of such philosophical or religious baggage in order to develop a highly dualistic frame of mind. The antagonisms of his rural upbringing and (relatively) cosmopolitan career, national and international outlook, sensual drives and more ascetic artistic principles, are well known and have been extensively explored.[15] But he was also intensely interested in the possibilities of symphonic form for their own sake, among which the two-movement symphony had been one of the least cultivated; which may be one reason why it appeared to him fresh and full of potential.

For most musicians the first two-movement symphony before Nielsen's to come to mind – setting aside Schubert's 'Unfinished', for obvious reasons – would

14 The above paragraphs draw on Paula Hartz, *Zoroastrianism*, New York 1999; Robert Charles Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, London 1961; Prods O. Skjærvø, *The Spirit of Zoroastrianism*, New Haven 2011; and Geo Widenren, *Mani and Manichaeism*, London 1961.

15 Most notably in Jørgen I. Jensen, *op. cit.*, passim, and Daniel Grimley, *Carl Nielsen and the Art of Modernism*, Rochester, NY 2011, esp. 18-20.

probably be Mahler's Eighth. This carries a very different agenda from Nielsen's Fifth, its over-riding idea being redemption through love. Although nothing is known of Nielsen's contact with this specific piece, he did profess knowledge of a number of Mahler's works, and in a letter to his friend (and future dedicatee of the Fifth Symphony) Carl Johan Michaelsen, he declared that he had founded 'a little private society consisting mostly of my pupils, in which we have assembled most of the new music that has recently appeared. There we also played through Mahler's symphonies.'[16] That letter was sent a few months after Mahler completed his Eighth Symphony; and it is highly likely that Nielsen would at least have heard of the work's sensational first performance in Munich four years later.

It is worth noting some coincidental similarities with Nielsen's Fifth. Apart from its conceptual unity, Mahler's Eighth is tied together by a single motif – E♭, B♭, A♭ – which happens to be the same as the main motif (in transposition) of Nielsen's second movement. Each symphony ends in a resounding E flat major. But in terms of dualities, Mahler is at once more drastic and less conflictual, juxtaposing sacred and secular texts, Latin and German languages, communal and individual rites, symphonic allegro and cantata, but confining each element to its respective movement (the Faust/Eternal Feminine duality is of course embodied in the second movement alone).

In view of Mahler's interest in the Orient, gleaned from Schopenhauer and others, and considering the fact that the dualities in the Eighth Symphony are cast more as complementary than conflictual, it seems appropriate to invoke comparison with the Taoist philosophy of Yin and Yang.[17] This concept is used to describe how polar opposites or seemingly contrary forces – in essence dark and light, respectively are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other in turn. Yin and Yang are not so much opposing forces as complementary opposites. Everything possesses both aspects, although one or the other may predominate and their relationship may vary with time. The concept is symbolized by the Taijitu symbol (meaning 'diagram of the supreme ultimate') shown in *Fig. 3*, in particular by the dot of Yin in Yang and the dot of Yang in Yin.

16 *et lille Selskab (privat) af mest Elever af mig, hvor vi anskaffede det meste af hvad der udkommer af nyere Musik. Der spillede vi ogsaa Mahlers Symfonier.* Letter of 29.11.1906, in John Fellow (ed.), *Carl Nielsen Brevudgaven*, Copenhagen 2005ff, vol. 3, 112.

17 For more on dualities in the Eighth Symphony and *Das Lied von der Erde* in relation to Yin and Yang, see Stephen Hefling's article on *Das Lied* in Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (ed.), *The Mahler Companion*, Oxford, 1999, 440-442. Hefling offers a fine summary of dualistic aspects in his monograph, *Mahler: Das Lied von der Erde*, Cambridge 2000, 80ff.

Fig. 3. The Yin and Yang Symbol (white represents Yang, black represents Yin)

An underlying principle in Taoism states that within every independent entity lies a part of its opposite. It follows that essential Evil is foreign to this tradition of thought and rather to be viewed as an imbalance, to be corrected by proper respect for universal harmony.

> When beauty is abstracted
> Then ugliness has been implied;
> When good is abstracted
> Then evil has been implied.[18]

It is apparent that this line of thought fits Mahler much more closely than it does Nielsen, for Nielsen's Fifth Symphony is a battleground relating to the Zoroastrian eventual triumph of Good through struggle, rather than to the eternal balance associated with Yin and Yang. In addition the large-scale structural layout of Mahler's Eighth is in several respects more conventional than Nielsen's – his original plan was indeed for a more or less conventional four-movement scheme, and the *Faust* setting in the definitive two-movement design has often been seen as embracing slow movement, scherzo and finale.

The relationship of the two-movement pattern to the traditional four is clearer still in Saint-Saëns's Symphony No. 3, the so-called 'Organ Symphony' (1886), in which, as he himself put it, 'the traditional four-movement structure is maintained', though the symphony was definitely conceived as a two-movement work. This would

18 Quoted in Ernest Valea, 'The problem of evil in world religions', http://www.comparativereligion.com/evil.html, accessed 27.1.2012.

seem to be a classic case of a composer having his cake and eating it, in the sense of wanting to take credit for originality but at the same time being careful not to offend traditional opinion. If we place Saint-Saëns's tempo headings side-by-side with Nielsen's, a certain similarity is evident (*Fig. 4*, cf. *Fig. 2*). But in this instance there is no sense of grand dualities at work, be they conflictual or complementary. Rather the guiding premise is of a Lisztian thematic transformation that ties together – one might even say strangles – all the contrasts.[19]

First movement			Second movement			
Adagio	Allegro maestoso	Adagio	Allegro moderato	Presto	Maestoso	Più allegro

Fig. 4. Saint-Saëns: Symphony No. 3, layout of movements and sections

Liszt himself produced a two-movement symphony, of sorts, with the *Dante Symphony* (1847, 1855-1856). This was originally conceived in three movements – Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso – but at Wagner's persuasion Liszt pared these down to two, eliminating the Paradiso and tacking on a token Magnificat to the Purgatorio. The design would clearly have been more dualistic had he simply retained the Inferno and Paradiso, and not even the revised *fortissimo* ending can create the impression of a satisfactory whole.[20] As will be seen, two-movement symphonies resulting from the deletion of one movement account for several notable examples in the twentieth century.

So far as major symphonists before Nielsen go, that is more or less the full story. As not uninteresting footnotes, one might mention Musorgsky's two-movement Symphony in D of 1861, sketched as an exercise for Balakirev; or Myaskovsky's ultra-depressive A minor Symphony No. 3 (1914), or the same composer's ultra-Skryabinian Seventh (1921-1922, an exact contemporary of Nielsen's Fifth); or Lazare Saminsky's Second of 1918, 'Symphonie des sommets', with its programme of the spirit's longing for elevation. Peter Brown, who has written on the symphonic repertoire at greater length than any other scholar, asserts that the two movements of the *Dante Symphony* are 'unprecedented outside the context of the eighteenth-century *sinfonia da chiesa*',[21] and we are unable to contradict him. Even Haydn, who pioneered numerous innovations in the genre, never considered the possibility. That he and others were never-

19 For a useful consideration of what is innovative or not in Saint-Saëns's Third Symphony, see A. Peter Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire Volume III Part B*, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2008, 565-582 (section authored by Brian Hart).

20 See A. Peter Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire Volume III Part A*, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2007, 807-822.

21 *Ibid.*, 808.

theless happy to compose two-movement *sonatas*, indicates the power of generic constraints – or lack of them – at the time. Some of these sonatas are subtly balanced, others quite sharply polarised, albeit in a craftsmanly rather than existential way: for examples, see Haydn's C major Hob. XVI:48, or Beethoven's F sharp major Op. 78 and E minor Op. 90, or his Cello Sonatas Op. 5, No. 2 and Op. 120, No. 1. The single most startling case, not irrelevant to the symphonic tradition, is undoubtedly Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 111, with its turbulent and highly compressed C minor sonata first movement, set against a meditative, expansive set of variations in C major. That succession of polarised movements positively begs for dualistic descriptors, such as action/meditation, outer/inner, immanent/transcendent, or in Buddhist terms samsara/nirvana – the cycle of life and death versus the release from it, not to mention the baggage loaded onto it in Chapter 8 of Thomas Mann's 1943-1947 novel *Doktor Faustus*, where the music teacher Wendell Kretschmar is a mouthpiece for the philosophical lucubrations of Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno.

Two-Movement Symphonies After Nielsen

Mention of Beethoven's Op. 111 brings us back to symphonic dualities and to the years immediately following Nielsen's Fifth: specifically to Prokofiev's Second Symphony of 1924-1925. There is no evidence that Prokofiev had encountered Nielsen's Fifth at that stage, and as one of Myaskovsky's closest friends, he had no need to look for models outside his homeland. As has often been noted, his two-movement structure, with its driving sonata first movement and theme-and-variations finale, bears an external similarity to that of Beethoven's Op. 111. This resemblance is often brushed aside as no more than superficial, and it is true that Prokofiev's work – 'made of iron and steel', as he said – has more to do with post-*Rite of Spring* Parisian *style mécanique* than with anything remotely Viennese Classical. Certainly nothing could be more diametrically opposed than this to the Haydnesquerie of his 'Classical' Symphony. Yet the overall dimensions of Prokofiev's Second are indeed rather similar to those of Beethoven's Op. 111, and Prokofiev himself observed that the main theme of the first movement shares an angular quality with Beethoven's opening gestures. He might have added that the first movement's unusually compact development section functions very similarly to its Beethovenian counterpart.

Large-scale dualities come into play in Prokofiev's Second Symphony precisely because each movement is so single-minded. The first insists on a kind of exultant, industrial-strength physicality, whereas the second is, at least initially, inward, in a vaporous, inchoate way, almost as if drugged, which at times makes it hard to trace the outlines of the theme in the subsequent variations. This, then, could be viewed as a kind of Deeds and Dreams symphony, but without the presence of Good and Evil,

still less of conflict and resolution. To be sure, there is some sense of double function in the second movement's variations (i.e., vestiges of slow movement, scherzo and finale), and some degree of synthesis in their later stages, where the physicality of the first movement reappears (see *Fig. 5*). Even at quite a late stage in the conception, Prokofiev, like Liszt, was planning a third movement, but in the end he settled for a concluding variation that synthesizes ideas from both movements.[22] It would be hard to say which, if any, of the symphony's many moods dominates at the end, which comes with a sense of ambivalence, unease and provisionality.

First movement (sonata)	Second movement (theme and variations)						
	Theme	1	2	3	4	5	6
First	Slow	Scherzo	Episode	Finale		Synthesis	
Agens/non-sapiens	Sapiens	Ludens		Communis			
Outer (deeds)	Inner (dreams)					Dance	
Reality ('Iron and Steel')	Unreality						
Allegro ben articulato	Andante	Listesso tempo	Allegro non troppo	Allegro	Larghetto	Allegro con brio	Allegro moderato

Fig. 5. Prokofiev: Symphony No. 2, layout of movements and sections

In effect, then, Prokofiev deals not in a moral, but a variety of cosmic dualism – a presentation of opposites, not a judgment on them. If anything, the opposition boils down to one between material and spiritual life as the composer experienced and conceived it in the middle of the Roaring Twenties.

The dualities of Prokofiev's Second are arguably more polarized than those of any other of his symphonies. However, given that his philosophical outlook went little beyond the 'positive thinking' precepts of Christian Science, and that his musical language is dominated by gestural associations with ballet and fairy-tale, he is unlikely to have entertained any grand pretensions when it came to the Second Symphony. An example of the inner/outer dualism in far more sustained and ambitious practice is Michael Tippett's Third Symphony, discussed below.

22 See David Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West 1891-1935*, London 2003, 203.

From about the time of Prokofiev's Second, the two-movement symphony ceased to be a conspicuous novelty, and only exceptionally does it present itself thereafter in militantly dualistic fashion. In the Soviet Union alone, Vissarion Shebalin and his pupil Dmitry Kabalevsky produced well-crafted examples either side of 1930 (the former's Second and Fourth, 1929 and 1934, the latter's First and Third, 1932 and 1935). Shebalin's symphonies are respectable examples of attempts to compress the four-movement cycle into two, and Kabalevsky's First is clearly an emulation of Shebalin's Second (even being in the same outré key of C sharp minor). Shebalin's Fourth, subtitled 'To the Heroes of Perekop', and Kabalevsky's Third, his choral 'Lenin Symphony', are in at least one sense strongly dualistic, in that they both contrast the darkness of Russia before Lenin with the bright heroism of the Communist present and future – a common topic for the Soviet arts immediately before and after the advent of Socialist Realism. But neither work is strongly dualistic in its musical material, and none cited in this paragraph makes for revealing comparison with Nielsen.

Nor are there exceptionally strong dualities at work in two-movement symphonies by Nordic composers – such as Rued Langgaard's Second (1912-1914, revised 1926-1933) or Ludvig Irgens Jensen's D minor (1941, revised c. 1952) both of which were, like Liszt's *Dante* and Prokofiev's Second, revised from three-movement originals, or Vagn Holmboe's masterly Sixth (1947).

In fact the search for meaningful comparisons demands a leap forward to the 1960s, a decade – like the 1920s – that was largely inimical to the production of traditional symphonies and therefore, paradoxically, congenial to the appearance of symphonies that question and explore what a symphony might be. The brief discussions that follow do not seek to group the selected works according to any principles other than their relative prominence within their respective national traditions and their potential to illuminate Nielsen's Fifth by contrast between their salient dualities and his.

By these criteria Robert Simpson's two-movement Third Symphony (1962) is a borderline case, and it ultimately proves less directly relevant than one might think given that Simpson was the great Nielsen expert of the time. In fact, for all its exceptional creative vigour, and for all that a number of crucial textures are borrowed from *The Inextinguishable* (first and third movements), Simpson's large-scale conception is not particularly Nielsenesque, except in the broadest terms as a rare example of a symphonist in the 1960s asserting musical motion over any other priority. The first movement is a close paraphrase of the opening movement of Beethoven's Ninth, and the second is a linked chain of slow movement, scherzo and finale. So the overall design is more like that of the pre-Nielsen symphonies discussed above, albeit put together with a mastery of patient transition that is really much more like Sibelius in principle.

Closer to the mark, although representing a completely unrelated tradition, is Lutosławski’s Second Symphony (1965-1967), with its two movements headed ‘Hesitant’ and ‘Direct’. These certainly live up to their titles, in the sense that continuity in the first movement is deliberately episodic, while everything in the second is goal-directed, with waves of textural accumulation and – rather as in Simpson’s Third – a sustained underlying *accelerando*.[23] Even so, the similarity to Nielsen’s ‘resting and awakened forces’ (see note 6 above) is only distant, and the work remains resolutely non-engaged in ethical terms. Lutosławski himself claimed that his driving concern was with the audience’s attention over a half-hour span. Hence his deliberate frustration of expectations with the stop-start first movement, followed by gratification in the second. When asked if the symphony was being ‘hesitant’ and ‘direct’ *about* anything, he ducked the question, as he routinely did when asked to comment on the meaning of his music.[24] What he might justly have claimed in addition is that the work is at one level an attempt to reconcile sonorism, which is inherently static, with symphonic style, which is, at least by hallowed convention, inherently dynamic. In those terms the Second Symphony is undoubtedly effective, though surely less so than Lutosławski’s immediately following orchestral masterwork, *Livre* (1968).

Certain of Lutosławski’s fellow Poles have not been so shy about extra-musical content: Penderecki above all, though none of his symphonies is in two movements, but also Górecki, whose Second Symphony, ‘Copernican’ (1972), is so dualistic that its two movements might almost be by different composers. The first contemplates the mysteries of the universe as it were from the universe’s point of view, with awe-inspiring chromatic clusters and relentless hammer-blows, like some raw version of Lutosławski, while the second is super-sweet, this time contemplating the universe as it were from the human point of view, with pentatonic and triadic aggregations and prayerful solo voices that sound much like the more familiar Górecki of the Third Symphony.[25] The quality of ideas in Górecki’s Second, and the subtlety of their working-out, are perhaps open to question. However, his harnessing of a sharp dichotomy of styles to a markedly dualistic symbolic dimension is nothing if not a reincarnation of one of the driving concerns of Nielsen’s Fifth.[26]

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23 See Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and his Music*, Cambridge 1981, 159-165; Charles Bodman Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, London 1994, 102-108.

24 See Tadeusz Kaczyński, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, rev. and expanded edition, London 1985, 55-64.

25 According to the composer, the duality was ‘first the whole mechanism, let us say, of the world, followed by contemplation’. Henryk Górecki, ‘Powiem pastwe szczerze…’ (*I shall tell you frankly…*), *ViVO* 1 (Kraków 1994), 45, quoted in Adrian Thomas, *Górecki*, Oxford 1996, 75.

26 For a sympathetic elucidation of the work, see Thomas, *op. cit.*, 74-78.

That something was in the air at this time regarding high-level symphonic dualism is suggested by the appearance of Schnittke's (four-movement) First Symphony (1968-1972), which superimposes the dichotomy of composition versus improvisation on top of every other (order/chaos, high/low and old/new music, tonal/12-note, history/contemporaneity). Here, too, it has to be said that a large question mark hovers over the craftsmanship of the work, for all its conceptual daring. On the other hand, it is an extraordinary fact that Nielsen's non-notated side drum cadenza is the only significant precursor for Schnittke's dramatisation of composition and improvisation.

It is with a close contemporary of Górecki's Second and Schnittke's First symphonies that the historical line traced in this paper comes most sharply into focus. And for once the element of craft proves as sophisticated as the concept. Tippett's Third Symphony (1970-1972) is one of the most strikingly dualistic symphonies ever composed. Its two parts are each more than 25 minutes long. Externally like Saint-Saëns's Third, each part embodies two of the conventional four movements – first and slow, then scherzo and finale. And each of these four embedded movements comes with its own built-in anti-matter – for example, the first movement is explicitly designed as a juxtaposition of 'arrest' and 'movement', à la Lutosławski.[27]

The over-riding dualities in Tippett's Third Symphony are summarised in Ian Kemp's classic life-and-works study:

> In design [...] the Symphony is one massive antithesis: a structure in two parts, the first abstract and instrumental, the second dramatic and vocal (a solo soprano), reflecting opposition between music as unremitting intellectual argument and music as human expression, between disinterested logic and passionate response, cause and effect, fact and message.[28]

The crunch-point comes when the 'finale' suddenly tips over from abstract to concrete, quoting the 'Schreckensfanfare' from Beethoven's Ninth, but substituting a massively painful tripartite blues – an Ode to Sorrow, in effect, replacing Beethoven's

27 There is a more or less smooth continuum between symphonies in two parts that divide internally into sections that suggest 'movements' (such as Nielsen's Fifth and Tippett's Third) and ones where each 'part' contains two or more explicitly numbered movements (such as Mahler's Fifth and Bernstein's Second – *The Age of Anxiety*, 1949); those in the latter category we have chosen not to take into account, mainly because the dualistic aspect is only weakly present. This applies, for example, to William Schuman's Third (1941), in which Part 1 divides into Passacaglia and Fugue, and Part 2 into Chorale and Toccata.

28 Ian Kemp, *The Composer and his Music*, London 1984, 438.

Ode to Joy. This blues setting of Tippett's own post-Jungian texts (themselves somewhat controversial as to literary quality), is itself another Dream and Deeds scenario, albeit one that ends in a kind of equilibrium rather than victory. There is far more to the Symphony's dualistic construction than can be captured in a single paragraph or diagram, but *Fig. 6* attempts a summary. A comparison with *Fig. 2* immediately suggests the commonality of concept between Tippett and Nielsen, in terms of both design and dualities.

First part		Second part (double-function sonata)			
'First movement'	'Slow movement'	Scherzo	(Finale) Blues 1-3	Recollections	Dream
Allegro non troppo/ Allegro molto	Lento	Allegro molto	Presto	Andante poco tranquillo	Allegro
(Non-)agens	(Anti-) sapiens	(Anti-) agens	(Non-) ludens	Sapiens	(Anti-anti-) Agens
Intellectual		Expressive			
Outer	Inner	Outer	Outer	Inner	Balance
Deeds	Thought	Deeds	Nightmare	Thought	Dream/Deeds
Arrest vs. movement – organic	Palindrome – geometric	New life; explosion	Ode to Sorrow	Coming to terms	Acceptance

Fig. 6. Tippett: Symphony No. 3

Clearly the connections to and disconnections from Nielsen could be explored at far greater length. All we wish to propose is that there is no two-movement symphony that relates to Nielsen's Fifth more potently at the level of dualities than Tippett's Third, and that the ongoing historical challenge Nielsen's masterpiece presents to symphonists has found at least one potent – though probably unwitting – acceptance.

Denmark After Nielsen

There is no evidence of that challenge having been taken up in Denmark, at least not directly. To be sure there are plenty of two-movement symphonies, including four composed later in the 1970s. But these confirm the uniqueness of Nielsen's Fifth by their distance from it, rather than by shared concerns.

Hans Abrahamsen, for instance, more recently known as an orchestrator and arranger of Nielsen's music, composed a two-movement Symphony in 1974 that has

been characterised by Mogens Helmer Petersen as 'deliberately naïve, artless'.[29] The piece certainly seems determined to avoid symphonic rhetoric; indeed it seems suspicious of significant statement altogether. In that sense it could be categorised as a non-symphony (in that it ignores rather than defies expectations of the genre, being diminutive, quizzical, divertimento-like and quasi-minimalist).

Far more imposing, both in concept and in design, is Per Nørgård's Third Symphony (1972-1975). Externally this presents similar dualisms to Tippett's Third, being instrumental and essentially abstract in the first part, then choral (juxtaposing secular and sacred texts, with Western and Eastern connotations) and essentially concrete (with its quotation of Schubert's 'Du bist die Ruh') in the second. The composer's own summary is pertinent: 'The intent is to show a world in growth, balance and interaction – an interaction between emotion and understanding, and between ascending and descending forces [clarified at the respective beginnings of each movement].'[30] Even after his broadening of aesthetic horizons around 1960 – from the Nordic tone represented by his teacher Holmboe and by Sibelius towards a critical engagement with Central European innovations – Nørgård could be characterized in the most general terms as 'Carl Nielsen's most visible heir', precisely on the grounds of the equilibrium he has sought between tradition and innovation.[31] And at first glance it might seem that his Fourth Symphony of 1980 – also in two movements – brings the dualistic principle closer to the orbit of Nielsen's Fifth.[32] Yet despite its basis in the work of the schizophrenic artist Adolf Wölfli, and the polarization exemplified in the movement titles 'Indian Rose-Garden' and 'Chinese Witches' Lake', the product is once again fundamentally concerned with equilibrium rather than dynamism. Here, as with Mahler, the relationship is best characterized in terms of Yin and Yang, which Nørgård himself has used in connection with his own music and which others have indeed applied directly to the Fourth Symphony.[33]

More radically, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's *Symphony-Antiphony* of 1977 reduces the hallowed genre of symphony to a two-and-a-half minute overture, 'balancing' it with six stylistic confrontations, lasting some 25 minutes, under the heading 'Antiphony'. No explicit agenda is forced here, but it is still hard not to read the con-

29 Booklet note to Kontrapunkt 32194 [1993], 6.

30 Booklet note to DaCapo 8901 [1989], 6.

31 Anders Beyer, 'Attraction and Repulsion', in Beyer (ed.), *The Music of Per Nørgård*, Aldershot 1996, 127-129 (quotation at 129).

32 Poul Ruders has characterized the shift from Nørgård's Third to Fourth Symphonies as one from 'harmonious' to 'frenetic' – see *Ibid.*, 247 – and Nørgård himself has referred to a change from a '"cosmic" (and socially innocent) period [...] to the horror (and joy) that hide behind everyday cosiness (and insecurity)' – see *Ibid.*, 121.

33 See *Ibid.*, 128 and 14.

ception as a critique of the hallowed status of symphony, and ultimately that critique is merely presented, rather than as a premise either for a dramatic confrontation of principles or for an act of renewing will-power.[34]

Anti-Symphonies and Anti-Anti Symphonies

And this returns us to the heart of the matter. It is the idea of embodying anti-symphonic elements at several levels, and tussling mightily with them, that marks out Nielsen and Tippett from the crowd and suggests how their two-movement symphonies relate to, yet stand apart from, the broader symphonic tradition.

What they relate to is the principle of the anti-symphonic symphony. Works of this kind, which come strongly to the fore in the 1910s and 1920s, create duality at a more fundamental level than anything known before the twentieth century. At their most extreme, they confront symphonic ideals with the possibility of their extinction, symbolically enacting the existential crisis of the pre- and post-Great War era. The idea is already adumbrated in the dialectic of motion and inertia at the core of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony (1911), and it is strongly dramatised as movement versus stasis in Nielsen's Fourth, Fifth and Sixth.[35] At a jocular level it even forms the premise of Prokofiev's 'Classical' Symphony, while at its most subversive it materialises in the calculatedly anti-humanistic 'symphonies' of such Dada-associated composers as Erwin Schulhoff – his gruesome *Symphonia germanica* (1919) – and Jeff Golyscheff (Yefim Golïshev) – his notorious 'Musical-circular guillotine', explicitly styled as an Anti-symphony (1919). It is arguably present in milder guise (milder, because non-polemic and non-dramatic) in Webern's two-movement Symphony, Op. 21, of 1927-1928, which, like Prokofiev's Second, was originally to be in three movements (something of a habit for Webern at the time, since it is the case in both surrounding opuses, the String Trio Op. 20 and the Quartet Op. 22).[36] Then it resurfaces in the late 1960s with Berio's *Sinfonia* (1968-1969), and with the extraordinary conjunction of Tippett's Third, Simpson's masterly Fifth (in five symmetrically laid out movements) and above all Schnittke's First, all of them completed in 1972.

Of all these more-or-less anti-symphonies, only a very few dramatise the existential dualism between the symphonic and the anti-symphonic, as opposed to

34 For a rare assessment of this work in the context of other unorthodox 20th-century symphonies, see Daniel Grimley, '*Symphony/Antiphony*: Formal Strategies in the Twentieth-Century Symphony', in Julian Horton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Symphony*, Cambridge forthcoming.

35 See Colin Roth, 'Stasis and Energy: Danish Paradox or European Issue?', *Carl Nielsen Studies* 1 (2003), 160-162.

36 See Julian Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*, Cambridge 1999, 177.

merely presenting it or using it as the basis for an alternative aesthetic. And of these very few, Nielsen's Fifth and Tippett's Third stand out for their conceptual boldness, their alliance of mastery and richness of detail, and their refusal to acquiesce to the pressures of the anti-symphonic. They are thus anti-anti-symphonies *par excellence*, since their elements of anarchy (Nielsen's side drum cadenza), quotation (Tippett's of Beethoven's Ninth) and 'low' styles (Tippett's Blues) throw down a gauntlet that is then taken up with maximum creative will-power. The potency of such 'anti-symphonic' qualities for symbolising antithetical forces in the real world gives edge to the power of music to transcend them. Thus musical and ethical dualities are equally in play.

Even so, whereas Nielsen's Fifth ends unequivocally with the victory of positive over negative, echoing an article of faith in the Zoroastrian and Judaeo-Christian traditions, Tippett's Third concludes with a tense balance between opposites, suggesting an alternative religio-philosophical background.

Probably no other study of a composer contains as many index entries for 'dualism' as David Clarke's on Tippett.[37] Admittedly the Third Symphony is not one of the focal points for Clarke's study, but his probing of the relationship between music and ideas is one of the richest sources for an understanding of dualistic principles in the music of the twentieth century. As he points out, Tippett's over-riding concern was with the polarities most familiar from German metaphysics – Nietzsche (Dionysiac/Apollonian), Jung (conscious/collective subconscious, rational/irrational) and Schoenberg (style/idea, effable/ineffable). All these Tippett perceived as being dramatically embodied in 20th-century life as well as art. His Third Symphony, perhaps more than any other of his major works, ends in – or at least aspires to end in – liberation from dualism. And that aspiration lies at the heart of a world-view he did not directly engage with, namely Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam stressing inwardness and meditation, possibly influenced by contact with Christian monks in territories conquered by Islam, beginning as early as the 8th century AD. The chief aim of Sufis is to let go of all notions of duality (and therefore of the individual self also) and to realize the divine unity which is considered to be the Truth. It is in this spirit that the great Persian Sufi poet Rumi (real name Mowlānā Jalāloddin Balkhi, 1207-1273) writes in his Spiritual Verses:

> For God created pain and grief for this,
> that by these opposites contentment comes.

37 See David Clarke, *The Music and Thought of Michael Tippett: Modern Times and Metaphysics*, Cambridge 2001.

So hidden things appear through opposites.
God has no opposite; He stays concealed.

For vision falls on light and then on colour.
Extremes reveal extremes like black and white.

So you know light by its own opposite –
they show up one another coming forth.

But God’s light has no opposite in being,
that you might make Him known through opposites.[38]

Interpret all this in post-Jungian psychological terms – ‘I would know my shadow and my light, so shall I at last be whole’, as Tippett wrote in *A Child of our Time* – and this is surely the state of being towards which he was striving. Though Tippett does not have obvious successors in this respect within the Western symphonic tradition, the transcendence of dualism may well prove more in tune with 21st-century sensibilities than Nielsen’s post-Zoroastrian conflictuality and (in 1922 at least) optimism. Whichever way the historical line may be heading, there are good grounds to view Nielsen’s Fifth and Tippett’s Third – two masterful two-movement symphonies, separated by exactly 50 years – as highpoints in the post-Beethovenian engagement with symphonic dualism. 40 years further on, it is hard to imagine that other great creative spirits will not one day square up to the challenge.

38 From ‘More on the Trickery of the Hare’, Spiritual Verses I, lines 1138-1142, in Alan Williams, trans. and ed., *Rumi: Spiritual Verses: The First Book of the Masnavi-ye Ma’navi*, London 2006, 110.

ABSTRACT

It is well known that Nielsen's two-movement Fifth Symphony is strongly dualistic in character. The composer himself commented that 'A title such as "Dreams and Deeds" [*Drøm og Daad*] could maybe sum up the inner picture I had in front of my eyes when composing'. But it is by no means clear at what level that duality and others he mentioned are actually embodied in the work, or where it stands in relation to other two-movement symphonies composed before and after. Building on an essay by David Fanning in *Carl Nielsen Studies 4*, the present article first considers these questions in the light of the model for symphonism proposed by the Russian scholar Mark Aranovsky. The Fifth Symphony and those two-movement symphonies found to contain the most fundamental and polarised dualities are then variously related to religious and philosophical traditions that stress dualism – from Zoroastrianism, through Yin and Yang, to Sufism, touching in passing on the philosophy of the mind and on Jung. The aim is to gain a richer and clearer picture of the uniqueness of Nielsen's Fifth in relation both to symphonic tradition and to the history of ideas.