

### CHAPTER III

#### MELODY IN GRIFFES'S SONGS

Study of Griffes's manuscripts has shown that melody was composed first and that the fabric of the song was woven around this initial framework. It is the conclusion of Dr. Anderson, who has completed an intensely detailed study of Griffes's manuscripts, that Griffes "generally composed the vocal line first, and then added the piano accompaniment to complement both the textual and musical implications of the voice part."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, though of primal importance, Griffes seldom concerned himself with the creation of melody for melody's sake. So great was his respect for text that melody had to be integral to the requirements of the text rather than pursuing an independent direction from purely musical necessity. Single words were seldom isolated for obvious tone-painting, though within this body of poetry many such opportunities arose. Precisely because Griffes refused to become entangled in the pictorial characterization of every single aspect of the poem and insisted on a broader perspective, he was able to maintain a continuity and consistency of style.

Melodically speaking, Griffes's respect for the demands of his texts is made manifest in two general ways. First, preconceived melody is avoided. Each new phrase was an individual entity in Griffes's mind and demanded a unique, rather than borrowed, approach to melody. Secondly,

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<sup>1</sup>Donna K. Anderson, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 158.

the song must remain as faithful as musically possible to the declamation of the text. The rhythms, accents, even pitches of the text provided the underlying shape for Griffes's melodies.

A melody can be considered "preconceived" on either a general or more specific level. On the general level, the structure of the melody may appear to be extraneous to the structure of the present text. In other words, the melody may not be chosen in regard to the particular shape of the text in question. Perhaps the melody had been composed previously, with no specific text in mind at the time, and was now being utilized in a song situation. Or, most commonly, the melody has been chosen for its absolute lyricism rather than its relation to the words. Sometimes a particular style or scale structure has been adopted which establishes limits or regulations as to melodic shape.

More specifically, a melody may be considered preconceived if it follows or continues a pattern already established earlier in the song. Most often this means that a melodic pattern composed to words in another part of the song is now being used for new text later in the song: the melody is repeated to new words. It does not necessarily have to be a melodic pattern which is repeated, however. Perhaps the rhythmic pattern has been established, and the melody must adhere to the pattern for formal unity.

Examples of both general and specific preconceived melodies can be found in Griffes's songs. However, Griffes had an admirable ability to adapt these preconceived melodies to their new situations. In any case, the use of preconceived melodies does not necessarily mean that these melodies do not fit their respective texts; no evaluative judgment is intended. Yet the concept is useful for Griffes's songs, for on those

rare occasions when a melody is discovered which simply does not match its text, that is an indication that the melody may have been preconceived. The conceptual process behind its use may then be examined.

Although Griffes closely followed the declamation of his texts, his melodies can only rarely be called "declamatory." Griffes never considered the translation of the declamation of his text into song to be the equivalent of speaking the text, though the rhythms and intervals used in his last songs more closely approximate this. Griffes's declamation is still "singing," not the sprechgesang of Schoenberg or the sometimes undefined melody of impressionist composers.

Yet Griffes understood that melody cannot constantly be enslaved by the declamation of the text. There are occasions when it seems musically necessary to sacrifice declamation in order to maintain the integrity or unity of the musical setting.

### Formative Songs

There is quite a wide variety of melodic writing in the formative songs. At various times one hears in Griffes's German songs examples of Brahmsian vocal lines that are long-breathed and seem to soar of their own accord. Or there may be an overall Wolf-like respect for text and declamation. Seldom do the melodies seem preconceived, but, if so, they result basically from the specific use of preconceived melody, as in the continuation of a pre-established pattern. Rather, in his formative songs, Griffes tended to approach each line of text as a unique entity: the general lack of melodic repetition indicates the preponderance of through-composed songs in this category.

Of all the formative songs, "Zwei Könige" and "Meeresstille" most closely approximate the true declamatory style. The first of these

remains true to the narrative tradition, with the vocal melody declaiming the words of the text. As would be expected, the melody remains rather simple and mostly syllabic in character, closely following the accents and tone of the text.

The opening phrase of "Zwei Könige" is a very straightforward, almost detached rendering of the beginning of the narrative, which sets the scene (Example 25).<sup>2</sup> Yet gradually as the tale unfolds, the melodic line becomes increasingly agitated. Griffes dramatically set the final phrase of the narrative for unaccompanied voice, again in the lower range as at the first and now più lento. Griffes proved in this song that the declamatory style need not be without its own passion.

Although there is little if any exact repetition of melodic phrases, there is a homogeneous melodic character throughout the entire song. Certain melodic figures or tendencies create a continuity of the melodic line and serve to unify the through-composed formal structure.

Griffes's only Goethe setting, "Meeresstille", illustrates many of the same tendencies as the preceding song, though on a much smaller scale. While not a true narrative, it is also rather declamatory. Rather it has more of a chorale character--sustained and basically static. Again the melody remains simple and straightforward, with little ornamentation. Its opening phrase is even more unassuming than that of "Zwei Könige" (Example 17). Other than the rather steady rhythmic pulse, with an occasional dotted figure when Griffes decided a syllable needed extra emphasis, there are no obvious recurring patterns in the melody. Each melodic phrase

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<sup>2</sup>All musical examples can be found on pages 131 through 168, immediately following the main body of the thesis. For coherence in identification and comparison of the songs and style periods, the examples follow the chronological sequence of the songs.

has been uniquely composed for its particular poetic phrase.


In contrast to the melodic style of the two preceding songs is Griffes's first German song, "Auf dem Teich, dem Regungslosen." Actually, several different melodic styles are encompassed in this song; the changes in style usually correspond with a new sentence of poetry. The expansive, long-breathed opening phrase is reminiscent of Brahms (Example 3). Still lyrical but more declamatory in nature is the beginning of the second phrase (Example 5). So declamatory that it approaches recitative is the opening of the third phrase, accompanied only by sustained chords.

Though these shifts in melodic style may be suggested by changes in the text's mood, there are other instances in Griffes's setting of this text which cannot be so easily defended. Most disputable is the lovely lyrical rising melodic line from meas. 6 to a pianissimo climax on *g#* at meas. 8 on the word "in." Since the necessity of emphasizing this particular word, or even the phrase in which it is found, is not apparent, this could be one example of Griffes's use of lyricism as an end in itself (Example 4).

More successful in melodically fulfilling the text's requirements is the delicate "Könnst' ich." Though still very lyrical in character, the entire first strophe is still a more than adequate rendering of the declamation of the text. The rhythms and accents of the poetic phrase are maintained while none of the lyricism is sacrificed (Example 27). However, the tendency towards an expansive melody, with a character almost extraneous to the text it carries, dominates the second strophe. Again the textual necessity for such a long-breathed, climactic melody is not obvious (Example 28).

This song exhibits two manifestations of specific preconceived

melodic writing which are common to the German songs of this period.

First, though not really strophic in formal structure, the opening melody of the first strophe also begins the second strophe, though the direction after this repetition is totally different. Also, it is a rhythmic motive rather than a melodic motive which becomes the recurring pattern. This  figure, or a variation of it, can be found in several of Griffes's German songs.

Perhaps the most melodically gratifying song in the formative group is "Auf geheimem Waldespfade." The flowing and lyrical vocal lines build naturally from the text and are controlled in their expansiveness rather than forced or exaggerated. Above all, this song illustrates Griffes's capability for uniting a pleasing lyrical melody with excellent declamation (Example 6). This sustained melodic writing gives way by meas. 15 to a more agitated, impassioned utterance (Example 7). This phrase also illustrates Griffes's attempt in this song to capture the emotive content of each poetic phrase in his melodic writing.

On those rare instances in his German songs when a melody is obviously repeated with new text, Griffes varied the return in such a way that it would more closely accommodate its new situation. A very subtle example of this occurs in "Es fiel ein Reif"; there are only two slight changes between the opening melody (meas. 4-8) and its repeat (meas. 43-47).<sup>3</sup> "Am Kreuzweg wird begraben," which will be discussed later, and two songs in manuscript, "Gedicht von Heine" and "Nachtlied," exhibit similar variations in the repeated melody, some more obvious than those in "Es fiel ein Reif."

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<sup>3</sup>This song is Song 2 of the Appendix.

No mention has yet been made of melody in the two French songs, Griffes's first extant attempts in the solo song. Study of these songs is valuable not for the individual importance of Griffes's student works but rather for the light they can shed on the development of Griffes's song style. It is interesting to see how the composer later resolves problems first encountered early in his career.

Primary among the problems found in "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" is an uncertainty concerning the procedure for setting poetic declamation to melody. Perhaps this is due to Griffes's insecurity with the French language, but there are several examples of awkward text settings. From the manuscript it is apparent that the composer had originally divided the word "fuiraient" (meas. 5) into three syllables, as "fu-ir-ai-ent," but then corrected this to the correct two syllable form. Yet his emphasis is still on the first rather than the second syllable. There is also an ambiguity about the proper setting of the final "e", which is generally set as an extra syllable when sung. Thus we have the proper two-note setting for "comme" in meas. 11, but originally only one note for the same word in meas. 27.<sup>4</sup>

It also seems possible that the melody of this song could have been preconceived in the general sense. It is impossible to be certain, of course, but the flow of the melody does not seem to be intrinsic to the shape of the text. It seems instead that the words have been arranged as well as possible along a predetermined vocal line.

What is true for "Si mes vers" is even more true for "Sur ma lyre l'autrefois". Griffes's setting of the French language is even more dis-

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<sup>4</sup>This song is Song 1 of the Appendix.

torted in his second song. The unnaturalness of the setting is manifested in two main problems. First, as in "Si mes vers," there is the ambiguity concerning the final "e", which is apparent already in the first vocal phrase (Example 1). This problem of neglecting to add a syllable for the mute "e" recurs throughout the song, though many instances have obviously been corrected. The second problem concerns the opposite tendency, composing several notes to a syllable. This results in long melismas on single words (Example 2). The fact that Griffes failed to divide all his words into syllables in this song, and that there is an uncertainty as to which note was meant for which syllable, adds to the confusion.

Again it seems as though the melody had been previously composed. Or perhaps the melody stems more from the atmosphere Griffes wanted to create than from the accentual patterns of the words themselves.

Similar problems with preconceived melodies can be found in the German songs of the formative group, though as a whole Griffes was much more successful in setting his German texts. The melody created in meas. 11 of "So halt'ich endlich dich umfangen" becomes the pattern for the three successive phrases from meas. 15 to meas. 20 (Example 12). The continual crescendo and constant reaching for the  $g\#$  seem not genuinely suited to the demands of the text and detract from the actual climax (on  $g\#$  again) in meas. 25 (Example 13). In "An den Wind" the constraining pattern is established in the accompaniment of the final strophe, which forces the vocal melody into a more unnatural flow.

Yet most of Griffes's German songs illustrate that he has competently dealt with the problems first encountered in his earlier French songs and has arrived at satisfactory resolutions. His German songs are



admirably composed around the text-created-melody ideal in which each poetic phrase is viewed as a unique entity demanding its own melodic treatment.

### Divergent Songs

In contrast to this, the melodies of the divergent songs tend much more strongly to preconceived forms. This is true for at least three reasons, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. There is more of an abundance of formal structures in which melodic repetition is crucial to the nature of the form itself: e.g., strophic, rondo, rounded binary. Secondly, there are more instances in which the creation of pure lyricism seems to have been the critical factor in composing the melody. And thirdly, there is an overriding desire on Griffes's part in most of these songs to compose a melody that would conform to a certain style, be it oriental, medieval, folk, or traditional. So universal is the incidence of preconceived melody for the divergent songs that every song of this group exemplifies at least one, if not two, of these three approaches.

None of the songs of the divergent group is so obviously strophic--in both textual and musical structure--as "Two Birds." The melody of the first strophe (meas. 5-24) is well-chosen to match the metrical flow of the poem. Due to the parallel construction of the four strophes of the text, very few modifications in the original melody are necessary in order to accommodate the new strophes. Griffes preferred to entrust the embodiment of the expression changes from strophe to strophe to variations in the accompaniment rather than the melody. The exception to this is of course the third verse, which was intended as a contrast to

the other three. Its vocal melody begins basically as the original melody (meas. 51), though at a different key level, but changes to its own unique melodic and metrical character by meas. 56. Apparently Griffes could find no accompaniment for this contrasting melody that satisfied him, as eight measures are left incomplete.<sup>5</sup>

Use of preconceived melody in its generalized aspect is also illustrated in this song. As in most of his divergent songs, Griffes intended to compose this song in what he considered was an established style. That is, certain characteristics concerning melody, harmony, and complexity are attributed to a particular style, and in deciding to compose in that style, the composer agreed to limit or confine his creativity within the boundaries delineated by that style. In this case, for his Rumanian folk poem, Griffes chose a haunting melodic pattern based on the harmonic g minor scale, which he associated with the Rumanian or East European folk song sound (see particularly meas. 5-7 and meas. 18-20). The relatively simple melodic structure and the use of repeated melody were also attributed to this style. Perhaps Griffes was unable to complete the third strophe because it was assuming a character too complex for the style he had adopted.

Though contrasting greatly in mood with this folk song, "We'll to the Woods, and Gather May" illustrates similar compositional techniques. Again, the repetition of the original melody is necessary for the delineation of the song's formal structure, in this case either a modified strophic or, more likely, a rondo-type form. The mechanics of this structure will be discussed more thoroughly later, but it is impor-

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<sup>5</sup>This song is Song 4 of the Appendix.

tant to know that repetition of a major portion of the melody of the first strophe plays a great part in the structure of two of the other three strophes (Example 48).

Of course, some manipulation of the text results with so many repetitions of melodic motives, yet Griffes has avoided awkward distortions of syllables or misplaced accents remarkably well. Again this is due in large part to the choice of a poem with stanzas uniform in meter and parallel in structure.

In a way Griffes adopted another style of composition for this song also, though not exotic in any way. In this song, and in its rightful companion "Come, Love, Across the Sunlit Land," Griffes restricted himself to a more traditional style, one common to many of his contemporaries but rare to Griffes. He understood the melodic implication of this style to include a diatonic foundation, with only rare and brief departures from the predictable direction, and lyrical motives which are interesting in their own right. Though not oblivious to the declamatory demands of the text, it is obvious the main concern in "We'll to the Woods" is to convey the spirit of the carefree poem.

The ultimate extent of Griffes's tendency in the divergent songs to lend musical considerations more weight than those of the text is realized in "Evening Song," the composer's first song in English. Although the opening melodic phrases are not particularly unsuited to the poetic phrases they carry, the impression is created that the vocal melody is stretched out across the accompaniment. It quickens or prolongs its movement as the pattern established in the piano dictates. This tendency increases throughout the song so that by the final phrase the vocal melody has been totally subordinated to the logical musical development of the piano accompaniment (Example 29). The expansiveness of the melody in

this song gives the mistaken impression that the search for flowing lyricism is the rationale behind its creation, yet closer study of the structure and direction of the song reveals that the real motivation is the logical completion of the established musical momentum, regardless of the text's demand.

One cannot debate the fact that the results of this technique are sometimes disastrous for the declamation of the text. Since this song is also in an ABA' form, the possibilities for distortion of the text are even greater. The prime example is the final phrase, beginning "Never" (Example 29). The break in the phrase created by the rest (as well as the extreme length of the first word) not only destroys the text's metrical flow but also creates ambiguity in the meaning of the text. All in all, the violations committed in this song cause one to wonder if Griffes was uncomfortable writing in his own language at this time. It is not strange that Robinson was prompted in his less than complimentary article about Griffes to say that Griffes's "feeling for English prosody. . .was distinctly warped, and in some songs the scanning of the lines is positively absurd."<sup>6</sup>

The same cannot be said concerning "Tears," perhaps the most expressive of Griffes's Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan. Although there are occasional distortions, on the whole Griffes managed to successfully combine the sustained, long-breathed phrases with a realistic setting of the text's declamatory demands. Particularly natural in its flow is the melody in the  $\frac{4}{4}$  poco piu mosso section (Example 69).

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<sup>6</sup>Edward Robinson, "The Life and Death of an American Composer," American Mercury, 30:346 (November, 1933).

Yet the very title of this set belies the fact that this song is inspired from a preconceived pattern. As with the others of this set, Griffes includes, directly under the title, the scale pattern which is the basis for this song (Example 67). Both melody and accompaniment conform to this established scale, with an emphasis on melodic and harmonic intervals of a fourth and a fifth (see "grief more deep" in preceding example). That Griffes conceived of the oriental style as also embodying a straightforward simplicity can be seen in the uncomplicated character of the melody; there are no complex rhythmic patterns or vocalisms.

The naturalness of the melody achieved in "Tears" is not matched in the remaining songs of the set, however. Although the declamation of the text is followed fairly well in "The Old Temple among the Mountains," Griffes assumed that a melismatic ornamentation of a few words would add to the oriental flavor (Example 66). Examples of this same technique can be found also in "A Feast of Lanterns." In this song, the repeated patterns established in the voice and the accompaniment, and the five-tone scale melodic limitation, have actually stifled the creative expression possible in the vocal melody. As in most of Griffes's oriental songs, what emerges is a static melody, with little expressive quality, whose sole tasks are to faithfully follow the five or six note scale and to declaim the text as simply as possible (Example 77). Melodies such as these are the only ones in all of Griffes's songs which in any way deserve Robinson's uncomplimentary appraisal:

Thus his melodies, for the most part, lack grace and vitality, and usually degenerate into a monotonous recitative, giving the effect of a prolonged chant or parlando.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

As far as the actual sound achieved is concerned, Griffes's Javanese songs, also in the divergent group, come closer to an authentic oriental expression. This is due to several facts concerning the vocal melody of these three songs ("Djakoan," "Kinanti," and "Hampelas"). First, according to some sources, the melodies used in these three songs are from actual Javanese folk songs which Eva Gauthier had collected and asked Griffes to harmonize.<sup>8</sup> Whereas the Five Poems sound like an American composer's impression of what an oriental melody should sound like, the Javanese melodies have a more authentic-sounding aura. The use of the original Javanese words also adds to the creation of a more oriental sound.<sup>9</sup>

#### Mainstream Songs

In contrast to the divergent songs, there is little use of pre-conceived melody on the general level in the mainstream songs. Whereas with the preceding group every song evolved from Griffes's desire either to assume a particular style or to create melody expressive of demands other than those of the text's declamation, there are surprisingly few instances of such techniques in Griffes's mainstream songs.

As usual, the two borderline songs, "La fuite de la lune" and "An Old Song Re-Sung," prove to be the problematic exceptions to this statement. (This is, of course, the reasoning behind considering them to be borderline between the mainstream and divergent songs). In "La

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<sup>8</sup>A. Walter Kramer, "Charles T. Griffes: Cut Down in His Prime, a Victim of Our Barbarous Neglect of Genius," Musical America, 32:39 (May 22, 1920).

<sup>9</sup>"Hampelas" is Song 5 of the Appendix.

fuite" the difficulties stem mainly from the use of lovely lyrical melodic phrases which seem not particularly suited to the needs of the text. Evidences of this are most prevalent in the opening section (the song is in ABA' form) (Example 40). The flow of the melody seems not entirely natural to the flow of the text. The possibility that this may have been a pre-composed melody seems stronger when one realizes that the original melodic pattern returns in the A' section in the piano this time, and now overshadows the less lyrical vocal melody (Example 42).

Other indications that lyricism may have been the chief determinant in creation of the melody are found in several instances in which Griffes's usual close attention to the metrical patterns of the text is lacking. At meas. 7 the composer shifts meters from the original  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{4}{4}$ . Although this is usually done to accommodate some nuance in the text's rhythm, in this case the shift is not demanded until the next measure, and forces an unnatural accentuation of weak syllables in meas. 7. In the A' section Griffes builds a lovely rising line, with a crescendo, to a climax at meas. 29, yet the word emphasized here is "to" rather than a word with either more content or longer duration. The overabundance of such examples in this song suggests that melody resulted from the desire to satisfy musical imperatives rather than textual demands, except for the possibility that the actual graceful contour and sustained flow of the melody itself were meant to express the peaceful mood of the text.

The situation with "An Old Song Re-Sung" is somewhat different. There is no overall problem with the melody suiting the demands of the text. Instead, the opening melody sounds strikingly familiar. It is almost as though Griffes had adapted an actual sea chantey tune to his own sailor song (Example 85).

The possibility for problems with suiting the text arises from the fact that this song is strophic in form and that the melody stated in the first strophe forms the basic pattern for the other two strophes. Yet, as in the strophic divergent songs, the metrical patterns from one poetic strophe to the next are so similar in construction that few difficulties are actually encountered. And in this particular song, as in no other strophic song written by the composer, Griffes very capably varied the melodic line from strophe to strophe to accommodate both metrical and expressive changes. It is the final strophe which has the most variations, many of them created more for a better setting of the text's expression than from declamatory necessity.

This use of the repetition of melodic motives in some form for unity's sake is indicative of the contrast between the formative and mainstream songs. While such repetition was found to be rather rare among Griffes's early songs, there are few among his mainstream songs which do not recall an earlier melodic pattern, though admittedly its recurrence is sometimes highly transformed.

Such a technique is evident even from the very first song of this group, "The First Snowfall." Rather than the obvious repetitions used in "An Old Song Re-Sung", Griffes preferred a more subtle approach in this song. Of the four phrases of the song, the first three open with a similar contour, both intervallically and rhythmically (Example 30). Griffes very cleverly suspended the reiteration of this pattern in the fourth phrase until the conclusion of the phrase (Example 32). Such variations allow for textual differences without sacrificing the unity achieved through motivic repetition,

As the first of Griffes's mainstream songs, "The First Snowfall"



also illustrates the composer's close attention in this group to the declamatory demands of the text. Melody in these songs springs naturally from the poem and yet maintains a character which is definitely musical and vocal. Only one real difficulty arises in this particular song, and that is the break, created by a sustained note and a rest following, which interrupts a poetic phrase which should somehow be musically connected (Example 31). While interrupting the continuity of thought, Griffes did maintain the phrase balance by following the established pattern.

The composer was able to find more satisfactory solutions for such textual difficulties in his later Four Impressions. In these four Oscar Wilde settings, Griffes has given the most minute attention to preserving both the poetry's metric and expressive qualities. The return of an opening motive in the beginning of the A' section of both "Impression du Matin" and "La Mer" presents no difficulty in textual declamation. In "La Mer," as in most mainstream songs, the melodic pattern is transformed masterfully to embody not only the slight accentual changes but also the contrasting mood of the text. While the opening melody is marked molto tempestoso (Example 35), the recurrence of the melody, slightly altered, is marked tranquillo (Example 38).

Already obvious in the first phrase is Griffes's solicitous care in setting the accentual flow of the text. Though written in <sup>6</sup>8 meter, occasionally the vocal line will shift to a duple <sup>2</sup>4 meter in order to make certain syllables more equal in stress. Besides the "white mist" phrase in meas. 3, there are four other such instances in which Griffes felt a more equal emphasis was imperative. At times the composer also found that a more judicious rendering of the metrical pattern could be achieved by the addition of an extra beat to the measure (Example 36).

Above all, this song is an excellent example of Griffes's use of melody to express the character of the text. Almost every phrase can be shown to convey somehow the significance of the words it declaims. The opening image of the drifting mist is embodied in the contour of the melody, as it creates a wave with its descending and ascending motion. For the description of the steel rods "throbbing" in the engine room, Griffes chose an ascending broken Major seventh chord, with an agitated piano accompaniment (Example 37). Yet such portrayals are not incidental or detracting but are well-integrated into the overall scheme.

Never again in Griffes's songs is this melodic embodiment of every nuance of the text employed quite so intensely and so consistently; occasionally in his later songs a melodic phrase is encountered whose contour and movement are particularly content-laden. Such is the case in "In a Myrtle Shade" (Example 71). This example again illustrates Griffes's common technique of changing meters for better text accentuation. One of the most natural melodies composed by Griffes results from another such meter shift at the conclusion of the song (Example 72).

Now more aware of the idiosyncrasies of English diction, which allow for stronger accents and tangible metric patterns, Griffes created vocal melody in this song which is both very lyrical in its own right and mindful of the demands of the poem's declamation. Unlike most mainstream songs, no melodic pattern recurs to unify. However, Griffes did create a continuity of melodic character, based especially on a recurring use of pentatonic melodic phrases (Example 70).

More typical in its use of recurring melodic phrases is "Sorrow of Mydath." In this case, one particular motive occurs at the close of each of the three formal sections (Example 79). Its repetition creates

no special problems with declamation, however, because the same words are also repeated. Except for the first two phrases, which are almost identical, no other melodic repetitions are used, though at times certain figures are reminiscent of earlier motives.

Actually the expressive qualities of melody in this song are much more striking than any use of preconceived melodies. Rather than attempting to embody the character of each poetic image in its contour as do the melodies of the Four Impressions, the melody of "Sorrow of Mydath" succeeds in encompassing the penetrating, total despair of the poet. Most obvious is the use of chromatic vocal glide. This "new melodic technique. . .-- the notated glissando"<sup>10</sup> occurs in the opening phrase and returns for the word "mind" in meas. 9 and, in altered form, for "crying" in meas. 15 and "dreamily" in meas. 42 (Example 78).

Yet the melodic expression of this text relies on much more than an occasional vocal glissando. As the song progresses, the melodic lines become less diatonic and more irregular in character. By the middle of the song it becomes evident that both vocal pitch and rhythm, though notated exactly, are really only an approximation of the line desired. In this song more than in any other he composed, Griffes most nearly approached an actual singing declamation closely resembling the agitated speech from which it takes its inspiration (Example 81). Not at all lyrical, melodic phrases such as this, in their tortured character, embody the torment of the poet.

Melody, then, is one element in Griffes's songs which closely adheres to the criteria delineating the three groups. In the formative

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<sup>10</sup>George Arnold Conrey, "The Published Songs of Charles Tomlinson Griffes: A Stylistic Examination" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago Musical College, 1955), p. 138.

group we find Griffes struggling with conflicting approaches to setting a poetic text to a vocal melody. In avoiding the use of preconceived melody, Griffes tended to isolate each phrase or section for individual treatment, thus often destroying melodic continuity. Preconceived melody is, by contrast, very prevalent among the divergent songs, especially in a general sense. Usually a particular style has been adopted which, in dictating certain "givens", allowed little opportunity for more natural melodic creativity. It is in the mainstream songs that vocal melodies in the specific sense are used strategically and judiciously for continuity. At the same time, Griffes succeeded in melodically satisfying both expressive and declamatory demands of the text.