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## **GUSTAV MAHLER'S SYMPHONIES**

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**PAUL BEKKER**

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\*Bekker's original Table of Contents is given here, with the original page numbers (indicated here, as in the course of the translation, with brackets).

\*\*Bekker provides a separate entry for the chapter on the Ninth Symphony, but gives the same number as the chapter on *Das Lied von der Erde*. He does not provide a separate title page for the Ninth Symphony, but he does begin a new running header. The section on the Ninth Symphony (treated in this translation as a separate chapter) actually begins on [337].

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**FOREWORD**

**The** title states that this book is not a biography of Mahler, but is only concerned with the works. There are enough biographies of Mahler, and those of Specht and Stefan have the advantage of being written from direct knowledge and, in part, from shared experience of the personality and its destiny. What is to be said that is worth knowing about the man Mahler, insofar as it was revealed at all to outsiders, can be learned from them. It therefore appeared to me redundant to review what has already been said. A comprehensive account of the work, however, was necessary. It is not my intention to underestimate the preparatory works of others that have previously been done in this area. I have cited them in the bibliography and have, when they gave me something notable, used them for my book. At any rate, I believe I may say that the underlying plan of my work has been drawn up here for the first time. It was necessary to describe the complete works in all details and, at the same time, as a totality. Should I have succeeded in realizing this project, even if only approximately, then my book should, despite the absence of a life description, give a picture of the personality, for seldom has the work been the life, and the life the work, as with Mahler.

I am not of the opinion that critical discussions about this life and this work are already complete. But before we argue about it, we have the obligation to become accurately acquainted with it. Virtually everything that is said today against Mahler, and much of what is said for him, is based on insufficient expert knowledge. I have experienced this with myself as I, in the beginning of my critical activity, only assessed Mahler from a few symphonies that were coincidentally brought to my attention. Only as, little by little, I became close to the entire output through methodical study, did I recognize that here, out of apparent inadequacies and

contradictions, the image of a personality is formed such as seldom so strongly, intimately, and movingly walks through the ages. From this personal experience emerged the plan for a book that should bring Mahler's complete output to musicians and the laity in a comprehensible presentation, show the connections from symphony to symphony, and make understandable the internal set of laws and the organic growth of the whole. This attempt could only have the prospect of success if it did not remain limited to ravings and enthusiastic commendations, but gave detailed technical justification. The synthesis was the purpose, and the means to it must be analysis.

Thus, a collection of analyses is found here. They are furnished with many musical examples, so that the reader can supply a supplement to the word in a sensation of the sound and verify what is said. In general, the musical examples are held to a single line, not to save space, but by virtue of an easier overview. As far as it was possible and did not complicate the picture too much, I have indicated multiple voices in the later works that are inclined toward a polyphonic style, without however wishing to bring the entire score onto one line. It was always only about emphasizing the most important lines, not about completeness. The reader who [8] obtains the piano reductions or the study scores can easily supply what is absent, but I hope that the musical examples also afford a sufficient insight without aid.

For support in my work, I have Mrs. Alma Maria Mahler to thank. She granted me insight into the draft score of the Tenth Symphony and made important, previously unreleased sketches available to me. The collection of letters that is in preparation is unknown to me.<sup>1</sup> I do

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1 Bekker presumably refers here to the planned publication of a volume of letters by E. P. Tal, which was announced in 1920 but did not materialize because of Alma's antagonism toward the publisher's release of Natalie Bauer-Lechner's *Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler*. Alma's completed manuscript of letters was published in 1924 by Paul Zsolnay Verlag. See *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, edited by Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss in collaboration with Knud Martner, revised and translated by Anthony Beaumont (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. xii-xiv.

not know whether and to what extent they provide information about works that will confirm or refute my account. I am, however, conscious of having gone to work with the honest will of the objective-minded interpreter. If a confirmation of my view of the necessity of this work and of the significance of the Mahlerian oeuvre was needed, then I would have found it in the joyous conviction that continually increased in me from the beginning to the conclusion of the book. In contrast, newer polemical attempts to characterize the advocacy for Mahler as a disparagement of Beethoven appear to me as fruitless and tendentious efforts. I myself wrote a book about Beethoven nine years ago.<sup>2</sup> If I now publish one about Mahler, then I see no contradiction in this consequence, but rather the natural continuation of a line that leads from the hero of the symphony to the most human of his followers. Here no “either-or” is required, only a quiet “as well as.”

Otherwise, it is not my intention here to polemicize against Mahler’s enemies. I wish only to show the work of Mahler as I see it and thereby to create a desire in the readers to likewise learn about it. If I succeed in this, then my purpose is achieved. If they have then really taken Mahler into themselves and experienced him with the intensity that such a creative output demands of those who relive it, then we will continue to speak and to advocate.

Hofheim im Taunus, October 1920.

PAUL BEKKER.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Bekker, *Beethoven* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1911). It appeared in English as early as 1927 (London: J. M. Dent).

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## **THE SYMPHONIC STYLE**

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[11] **When** Richard Wagner viewed the history of the symphony as complete with Beethoven's Ninth and disparagingly rejected attempts at a continuation of Beethoven in one way or another, he had recognized, with the deep insight of creative genius, that the accomplishment of the Beethoven symphony could not be surpassed. He could have likewise declared that the development of opera was complete with Mozart and that further works of this kind were superfluous. Here as there, a genre had achieved its fulfillment, and here as there, the possibilities of the genre were in no way exhausted because of that. Just as the music drama of Wagner, following Weber, Marschner, and Meyerbeer, came in as a new kind of opera beside that of Mozart, not completing it, not surpassing it, but rather, fed by substantially different sources for its construction, supplementing it, so also, in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, did a new type of symphony enter beside that of Beethoven, of a very different nature than it was, related to it only through the basic concepts of the genre, and precisely because of that, just as valid and equal to it. This new type of symphony was shaped and created by Gustav Mahler.

Three groups of musicians stand between Beethoven and Mahler. First are the middle German romantics with Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, and the academics that surrounded them. These are bourgeois musicians. The concept of the symphonic work of art as a mighty, aspiring, monumental form is reduced, downplayed, and led by them to an intimacy that is, in part, genuinely and inwardly felt, but is also not symphonic. The horizon narrows, the feeling becomes more specialized, from the human feeling of the heroic time of Beethoven to the literary interests and tastes of the cultured circles. A second group is formed by the program symphonists, with the appearance of Liszt as a leader who inspired enthusiasm. This group takes up more lively and more broadly spanning relationships into its environment, comprehending the monumental conception of Beethoven in an extensive sense, attempting to transfer it into



intellectual realms. The poetic program is the mediator. It produces relationships that can occasionally carry a surprising weight, that at the same time, however, undermine the essential condition of the symphonic work: a detachment from conceptual bonds. Symphonic program music forges these bonds once again. It succumbs to them in the gradual decline into illustrative music.

While both groups, fighting for success, dominate the field, a third grows in the stillness that comes from the absence of success: that of the Austrian symphonists. Franz Schubert is their herald, Anton Bruckner their strongest elemental force, Gustav Mahler their culminating figure. Like the program symphonists, these three also comprehend the monumental symphonic thoughts of Beethoven, but not, like them, in the extensive, but rather in the intensive sense. The program and the conceptual bondage that it causes remain foreign to them; also foreign is the poetic attitude, determined by taste, of the bourgeois romantics with certain levels of cultivation. Their art is again a creation of feelings without presuppositions. Beethoven's idea of humanity changes into the romantic idea of nature, and in place of the speculatively oriented ethics of the greatest cosmopolitan symphonic composer comes the pantheistic religiosity of German [12] nature worship. There grows a new symphonic style from the will of a new symphonic idea.

Beethoven's symphony is outwardly based on the four-movement scheme that was elevated to the norm by Haydn. It forms the traditional four movements into independent types of the sharpest individual character. These Beethovenian movement types contain within themselves a number of new problems that Beethoven himself recognized as such. First the sequence of the inner movements: the placement of the scherzo. Originally this could not be in doubt. It was determined by the complete type, which led from the spiritually active main movement over the intensification of feelings in the slow movement to relaxation in cheerful

activity, and only later inserted the minuet as a transition between the slow movement and finale. For Beethoven's symphonic type with the more weighty significance of his finale, this kind of sequence was no longer suitable. The scherzo and trio obtained an elevated independence, and in the Ninth Symphony, the Scherzo was distanced from the neighborhood of the Finale and assigned to the first half of the work. In this experimentation with the placement of the inner movements and the overall question of their design that arose as a result—for it was necessary that a change of their character would emerge from the change of their placement—lay the first problem of the complete form. A second was the slow movement. From the Fifth Symphony on, Beethoven avoids the Adagio type. Only the Ninth takes it up once again with full ardor. Here, the devoted release of feelings was conditioned by the overwhelming power of deeply penetrating agitations in the preceding movements, and the Scherzo, in its demonic intensification, formed the bridge to the dream world of the Adagio. From this reordering, Beethoven again created the strength for the deep breaths of the Adagio. But what should become of the slow movement where such tension is absent? As a pure song, did it still have justification within the symphonic whole? The Eighth gives the answer: although its tendency is definitely archaic, and hence externally close to the older models, it avoids both a slow movement and a scherzo. For Beethoven, both no longer belong to the essence of the symphony. They were only to be justified by their respective particular placements, and dropped out as soon as the inner preconditions for them were absent.

A third problem lay in the construction of the first movement. Not in details of its formal structure, but rather in its architectonic layout: in the question of the introduction. In the first two symphonies, Beethoven takes over the introduction corresponding to the model of Haydn. But from the "Eroica" on, serious confrontation with the introduction problem begins. The

introduction shrinks down to two massive *tutti* chords, while in the Fifth and Sixth symphonies it is completely absent, and the theme storms or cajoles itself directly at the listener. In the Fourth and Seventh, Beethoven attempts a new solution, following the precursor in the Second: the introduction as a gradual preparation is abandoned, and a separate movement of independent breadth spreads itself out. Yet here is also no solution. This introduction, imposing in itself, remains more ideally than organically bound to the work. The essence of the old introduction appears intensified and altered, but not newly designed. It is different in the Ninth. For the first time, [13] introduction and main movement are merged into a whole. They overlap, and their connection is so deep that within the movement, the introduction retains its gathering and intensifying strength. Here, the path to the solution was shown—and here Beethoven was finished.

The placement and character of the middle movements, along with the organic integration of the introduction, were the problems of design in the Beethovenian symphonic type whose solution he himself initiated. He still left aside the main problem, however: the formation of the finale. What Beethoven offered here, the apotheosis-finale in the “Eroica” and in the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Ninth Symphonies, was the correct one for his type, and was also far more powerful than what had been done before him. But it was neither the fulfillment nor the path to it. The struggle for the design of the Ninth’s finale proves that Beethoven had also come to this problem and sought to solve it. But here was the limit of his ability. He could not transcend it because, with the question of the finale and its structure, the question of symphonic construction in general was raised. The finale problem could only be understood and solved from a new comprehension of the idea of symphonic style. In this task of transforming the once cheerful movement of resolution into the main and core piece of the symphonic whole lay everything that

was decisive in problems presented by the symphonic art in general. It was necessary to discover the point from which the other questions—those of the middle movements and the introduction—could also be brought to a new solution, and symphonic multiplicity could be combined into a unity whose internal flow is uninhibited. It was necessary to set, in opposition to the old unwinding from the climax of the opening movement, an upswing to the climax of the finale as a new type. This was the problem of the new symphonic art as Beethoven had left it behind.

One can measure the symphonic disposition of Beethoven's followers in the way that they recognized the questions raised by him as questions at all. Under the bourgeois romantics were several who perceived, with a refined instinct, that which could no longer be developed in the old symphonic organism. What Schumann says about the Adagio, for example, shows that he was well conscious of the internal difficulties in this type of movement.<sup>1</sup> The insertion of the Allegretto into the symphony by Brahms demonstrates that he clearly recognized the inimitable nature of the Beethovenian scherzo type, and carefully went out of the way of this dangerous model.<sup>2</sup> The way in which Schumann and Brahms handled the symphonic introduction, such as Schumann in the symphonies in B-flat and C major and Brahms in the C-minor, attempting to give in the introduction the basic poetic plan of the work and to indicate thematic and poetic references between the individual movements, shows that they recognized the necessity of new connections. But their capability of symphonic design was not sufficient. It remained at thematic linkage and poetic reference, at the means then, that Beethoven himself had already used in the Finale of the Ninth. The core question, the structure of the finale, was cautiously<sup>3</sup> passed over by this entire group of musicians. Either they fell completely back into the old scheme of the pre-Beethoven capstone finale, as Beethoven himself had done in the Fourth and

then, retrospectively, in the Eighth Symphony—thus Mendelssohn and [14] Schumann in all their symphonies and Brahms in the Second—or they were content with the Beethovenian apotheosis finale: Brahms in the First. Where the apotheosis as a resolution of tension was not made possible by the course of the work, the finale was given an elevated weight and emphasis, so that it stood internally equal in relation to the opening movement, as in Brahms's Third and Fourth Symphonies. A solution to the symphonic problem was not obtained thereby, and not even initiated. The Beethovenian type remained the model that was individually varied, as well as artfully and thoughtfully carried out in details, without touching on the stylistic foundations of the entire form.

Liszt proceeded differently. Perhaps even more clearly than the bourgeois romantics, he recognized the necessity of reconstructing the symphonic organism, and also recognized the individual problems: those of the middle movements, the introduction, and the finale. He solved them in the apparently simplest way: he drew the four movements of the symphony together, fused the opening movement and the finale together into one, and worked in the Adagio and scherzo episodically as needed. This cutting through the knot had something compelling in its simplicity, and one can esteem Liszt's action highly in accordance with its stimulating significance. But, in view of the task that was given, was it really a solution? Was it not rather only a bold and spirited circumvention of the symphonic problem? Liszt obtained the unity of the symphonic organism.<sup>4</sup> He obtained it under the surrender of that diversity from which the problem, in a deeper sense, had grown up. With the sacrifice of this diversity, the original essence of the symphony in general, its multi-member construction, built up like a square, was surrendered in favor of an apparent monumentality. The development of the Lisztian type up to the most recent times confirms this perception. Liszt himself was forced in the two works he

considered his greatest—the *Faust* and *Dante* Symphonies—to separate the parts again and thus come closer to the conventional type of design. His followers also were only able to externally maintain the principle of fusion. In the latest large works of Richard Strauss, from *Zarathustra* through *Heldenleben* and up to the *Domestica* and the *Alpensinfonie*, the parts swell further and further apart from one another, and the need for a multi-movement structure emerges ever more clearly. The German romantics had, with all their inability to take hold of the problem by its roots, actually comprehended the nature of symphonic composition more purely than Liszt, or it stuck more deeply in their blood. The abandonment of the multi-movement structure was only a temporary gain. Just as much as the adherence to the multi-movement structure without an internally regulated reorganization, it was a continuation of the tasks incited and left behind by Beethoven. It was the work of descendants without an unusual creative gift born from the deepest understanding of its essential nature.

From Schubert, the earliest of the Austrian group, exist two works that testify to his commitment to the symphony: the great symphony in C major and the unfinished one in B minor. The C major, pointing back in the first movement to the symphony of older musicians, of a thoroughly non-Beethovenian character, singing out without deep thematic reference, laying out all moods of the heart in inexhaustible abundance, deeply serious and yet joyfully pressing forward; [15] melancholy in the Andante, shot through by the brightness of Jean Paul's spirit; filled with lusty merriment in the Scherzo, but not quite with full weight; storming along in bold, thundering exultation in the Finale. Here, despite the powerful scope, there is nothing to be felt of the symphonic problem. The genius of this work, if one ignores the appreciation of its substance, lies in the freedom and boldness with which it heedlessly rushes past Beethoven, and precisely therein shows its special power and fullness of life. The earlier drafted B-minor

symphony may have initially been similarly planned. It was not finished, however, and that is the remarkable thing. A sphere of moods is entered that thus far had been far from the symphonic realm of expression—that mystical, dark dreaminess that builds itself up from the hollow theme of the basses in oppressive repetitions and intensification to a piercing lament on the premonition of death, then, in the Andante, loses itself more and more in distant fantasies of unearthly visions—ultimately not to find the way back again. Why did Schubert break off here? We do not know the answer; we only know that he did it, and we can, we must comprehend it. This symphony was here at its end, for its continuation would have required a breath, an imagination, a strength for which Schubert did not have the power. He had begun the tension-releasing Scherzo and let it lie incomplete. He could not, however, devise the Finale of this symphony. Here it would have been incumbent to venture upon the grand symphonic project, to direct the opening movements into the Finale and to bring them here to a clarifying completion. In that Schubert refrained from this, he recognizably established the finale problem for the first time, likewise denying the possibility of a spontaneous solution when he abandoned the Scherzo.

This finale problem and the questions associated with it continue to be decisive for the Austrian symphonists. As the first and only ones, uninfluenced by the symphonic ventures of the German romantics as well as Liszt, they took up this problem, making it into the focus of their output. Here, the main line of development is further drawn, beside which all other symphonic designs are ordered. The Austrians were superior to the others, primarily through their naïve gladness in music making and the pure absence of preconditions for their artistic drive.<sup>5</sup> They did not build on Beethoven, and did not attempt to continue this or that of his impulses. They left aside the Beethovenian symphonic art, with all of its spiritual undercurrents, and created from the same source as Beethoven, innovatively leading a strong stream of folk-like

impressions to it that were now obliged to lead it to completely different shores than the compass of the speculative Beethovenian ethic.<sup>6</sup> In place of humanity, whose moral consciousness and personality had formed the center of Beethovenian spiritual and emotional life, came nature, with its wonders and secrets, with its inexhaustible, eternal charms, with its deep mysticism, touching on the original sources of religious feeling.<sup>7</sup> This production of new symphonic material for creation was necessary for a new creative style to be found. None of the remaining symphonists had been able to find this new material. The German romantics as well as Liszt had only transferred Beethoven's human ideas to individual areas [16] and in them, each in his way, further expanded, thereby revealing the greatness of the model without being able to achieve its independence. The Austrians first undertook the journey to new shores. Not out of eccentricity, and not out of an intentional quest for originality. Simply out of the natural instinct of great and original creative talent that quietly passes by that which is inimitable, and carries strength within itself to place something new and also inimitable next to it.<sup>8</sup> Thus Schubert, after the torso of his B-minor symphony, created the great C-major, an unconscious but powerful confession of the turn away from Beethoven. Thus Bruckner created his nine symphonies, faithfully praying to Beethoven, but avoiding his tracks and only occasionally bringing him a silent offering. And thus finally Mahler, bringing together Schubert and Bruckner, and also intimately passing through the German romantics and the Liszt school,<sup>9</sup> wrote his symphonic oeuvre, this powerful synthesis of everything that symphonic art had experienced and learned since Beethoven.

**But** how did the new rules of design emerge from the new material?

The old symphonic composition grew from the idea of a play, and its buildup has its basis in the gradual resolution, the overcoming of gravity, the elevation to ever lighter forms of



existence and feeling, from the firm step of the first movement to the soaring of the conclusion. The Haydn-Beethoven symphonic type maintained this basic idea, only deepening it, giving it stronger spiritual and psychological values. But the character of the resolution of that which was bound at first, the release and evaporation of that which was originally fixed and firm, the idea of starting from something that was given, then leading it up into regions of free, fantastic play and rhythmically active joy—this all remained authoritative up to Beethoven's Ninth. The knowledge and the fact: the theme stood at the beginning of this symphonic composition that was directed toward the spiritual. What took place within it was no actual becoming and growing, as ingenious as the representative means of this becoming and growing were used.<sup>10</sup> It was coming to a realization about what was there, an exhausting of abundance that is packed into the most succinct brevity. The first movements of the "Eroica," the "Pastorale," and the Ninth are basically only commentaries on that which occurs in their first measures. The powerful buildups that Beethoven created—the lines from the beginnings of the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies to their conclusions—unfurl with the compelling logic brought by the revelation of an event whose consistency is irrefutable. It carries within itself the immovability of the mathematical formula and stands there from the first moment on through its final implications as an elemental fact. Precisely in the unassailable logical force of this art lay its power, and even today still lies the unique effect of Beethoven's symphonic output. From it emerged the fundamental organic law that even Beethoven could not escape, even in the Ninth, this law that forced the concentration of the main spiritual ideas into the exposition, into the beginning, into the theme, and caused the whole organism to spring out, complete, from this beginning.<sup>11</sup>

[17] The symphonic art of the Austrians does not know the logic of this "must," does not know these unalterable laws of an event whose course is determined from the outset.<sup>12</sup> It is a

symphonic art of becoming and germinating, an illogical symphonic art that gathers and binds together forces where it finds them. A symphonic art that only gradually finds itself in all the varied streams that flow into it and now, swelling more and more into a current, steers to the distant, initially still unrecognized destination. In this new set of laws, it is connected to the life in nature, out of which it grows, out of which it draws its strength, and like it, is apparently subject to chance, apparently arbitrarily formed. And yet only apparently, for out of this chance and this arbitrariness speaks a set of laws of a completely different kind than had been previously known and considered the only possible ones: the laws of Becoming.<sup>13</sup> It creates its strength not from that which has been provided, but from the anticipation of the destination. The way in which the artist, without disturbing the informality and authenticity of symphonic Becoming, steers toward the goal, coming ever closer to it, always circling more tightly around it, until he grasps it and takes it in the middle, determines the level of his symphonic art.

One thing resulted from this as a natural consequence: that is that the center of gravity in the events of the symphony slipped from the opening movement, now more and more preparatory, over into the following ones, to the Adagio or the finale. Also casually resulting from this was the organic placement of the introduction into these symphonic events. It was the first call to assembly, upon which the main part of the opening movement followed in a steadily rising line.<sup>14</sup> The question of the middle movements also now gained a new sense. The Adagio obtained through the preparatory character of the first movement an elevated justification for its presence, and frequently became the main movement of the whole work, in which all the gradually attracted forces gathered and accumulated before breaking into the finale by way of the scherzo, which was placed as a mediator. To the scherzo, new forces were brought by the non-poetic, natural incorporation of folk elements. They allowed a dependence upon the pattern and

the winged rhythms of the Beethovenian scherzo type without thereby hindering the ruggedness of the new dance type. There thus emerged from this new attitude, without any intention or speculative consideration, a solution, or at least the possibility of a solution to the symphonic problems, which it grasped within its innermost being and brought about the new birth of the symphonic organism from the spirit of a new artistic and world view.<sup>15</sup>

It was Anton Bruckner's historical mission to initiate this change, following the two great preparatory works of Franz Schubert, and to make it a reality through a powerful action.

Bruckner was the first who undertook to solve the symphonic problems left behind by Beethoven and who also brought them to a solution as far as an individual could succeed at this. He created the new symphonic introduction in which, as in the Fourth Symphony, the birth of the theme was carried out.<sup>16</sup> He took away the spiritual predominance from the first movement, in that, while certainly leaving it with thematic fullness and strength, he gave it a more preparatory than decisive character in its course. From the theme as such, he took away the Beethovenian significance of a concentrated motto and gave it, through a lush melodic expansion, the character of an [18] opening line that only gradually reveals its nature. This new type of organic layout also caused a new type of thematic design. The thematic work molded after Beethoven, this tremendous, grand reflection of the sharpest compression of thoughts and of unwavering purposefulness, no longer found an inner foundation in the new symphonic style, which did not know the unrelenting will that came from a center of spiritual creation, but on the contrary was first required to gather its forces in the diversity of its appearances. Thus, the tight, organic thematic technique of Beethoven went out of use, or rather it became a subsidiary aid.<sup>17</sup> In its place came a considerably more relaxed direction of ideas. It allowed broad latitude for melodic and harmonic fantasy. The aid of rhythmic architectonic structure—the breathing spaces of

fermatas and general pauses—were used not only as exceptional artistic resources in moments of the greatest heightening of affect, such as by Beethoven in the C-minor symphony. They transformed effortlessly into views of new things, to moments of calm for the collecting of fresh thoughts. Thus, the construction of the entire first movement obtains substantially softer, less purposeful aspects. The themes lose the sharp, commanding tone of Beethoven. They can now be modeled, and shape themselves out of the melodic line only gradually into firm, plastic forms. Even where they, as in the very opening of the D-minor Symphony No. 3, reminiscently pointing to Beethoven, enter in sharply molded versions, they obtain in the course of the movement and the work more the character of something that excites the fantasy than of thematic kernels born on their own.

If the preeminent position within the work is withdrawn from the first symphonic movement, then in compensation, the middle movements gain in significance. In general, Bruckner does not change their placement, and only in the Eighth and Ninth does the Scherzo come before the Adagio. However, both movement types obtain an impulse regarding content that actually makes Bruckner's Adagio and scherzo movements the first that were newly written since Beethoven. In these scherzos, that elemental strength and freshness which also imbues Beethoven's scherzos again truly comes to life. It does not come to life through the spirit of Beethoven, which here was the sweep of an impulse driven to the greatest frenzy. It comes to life through a native natural force that is thoroughly rooted on earth. In rhythms of the coarsest exuberance and elemental joy, it creates an expression, while reaching back to dance types, whose original character transfers a new blood flow of native folk music into the symphonic, artistic structure.

Perhaps even more powerfully than in the scherzos, the invigorating and new inner

creative strength is revealed in the Adagio movements of Bruckner. With him, they grow into the focal points of the symphonic action, in a rising line from the Adagios of the early works, past the mightily expansive pieces of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Symphonies, up to the Adagio movements of the Eighth and Ninth, which lead to heights far distant from the earth. That Bruckner was able to increase this force of the Adagio, this capability of the broadest and deepest singing out of the soul, this artistic version of an unrestrained swelling of a stream of feelings that overflows all dams to such an extreme, to the point where the listener's ability to sense it almost fails and only the oblivious [19] abandon that renounces every demand and every conscious intention remains—that was the highest gift and accomplishment of his genius. He exhausted himself in this accomplishment. It was the tragedy in Bruckner's creative output—if one can speak of tragedy in relation to such an output—that he certainly took up the structural problem of the new symphonic art, but probably also feelingly recognized that he was not able to completely carry out the solution. He foundered on the richness of his Adagio movements. Bruckner attempted to solve the problem of the finale. He attempted to slowly raise the symphonic line up to the finale, to make this not only the external climax, but also the actual source of life for the symphonic whole, the revelation of the symphonic secret. The magnificence and boldness in the layout of his finale movements leaves no doubt about that which he envisaged. He never succeeded in the execution, not even where he reached for grandiose external intensification such as the addition of a brass choir, or to architectural aids such as the use of a fugal form. That which served as an advantage in the first movement—that absence of purposefulness, of the logical necessity, in the layout of the whole as well as in the design of the individual themes—this very thing became the undoing of the finale. Here it would have been necessary to provide a synthesis of both types of design and thus to obtain, if not an

advance beyond Beethoven, a continuation of his art in a developmentally relative sense. However, Bruckner failed here. He did not transcend that becoming and gathering of the first movement, and he did not attain, despite thematic references and allusions, a real concentration of the creative forces that had been evoked up to that point. He remained rhapsodic.<sup>18</sup> Directly after the powerful upswing of his Adagio movements, after the mighty demonstrations of strength in his scherzos, the closing movements appear that much less internally grounded, that much more inadequate as conclusions of such a wide-reaching Becoming. Bruckner's last symphony remained without a finale—a symbol of that which was missing from this unusual force of nature in its ultimate ability to provide a final, definitive summation.

Bruckner had distanced the center of gravity in the symphonic course of events out of the opening movements, and had pushed it further into the middle of the work. He wanted to move it into the closing movement, but his musicianship and fantasy held firm in the Adagio, and the finale remained in the distance. Mahler came to the symphony with the same naïveté of the musical man in nature as did Bruckner.<sup>19</sup> But he had two advantages over the latter: he combined with the naïveté of the Austrian musicians the perspicacious, superior intellect of the Jew,<sup>20</sup>—and the work of Bruckner was already available to him when he began. How deeply this work must have spoken to him does not only emerge from the fact of his study with Bruckner. His symphonies also demonstrate it in the layout of many movements, in the shape of several individual themes, in the particular use of the brass choir in chorale-like hymns. The deepest influence of Bruckner on Mahler, however, is probably to be seen in the fact that Bruckner's work gave Mahler the clue to that design of the symphony that alone made possible a new development of the symphonic form: to the Finale Symphony. Mahler takes hold of this type in the first work that he writes. [20] The solution does not succeed immediately, or at least not in a

way that one can speak of an attempt free of imperfections. About the firm, deliberate embrace of it, however, about the hint of a grandly conceived solution, and with it the final breakthrough of a new conception of the nature of the symphonic work—about all this there is already no dispute from the first appearance of Mahler. The act as such has occurred, the puzzle proven to be solvable. Now come the most varied possibilities that genius invents for itself, always new, always bold in themselves, opening up still other ideas of creation, and each revealing a new set of laws in the organism.

All of Mahler's symphonies are Finale Symphonies. The Finale, be it short, be it long, be it, as in the First, a long-spun Allegro, or in the Second, a wildly varied and fantastic image distantly reminiscent of Berlioz, or as in the Third, a restful Adagio, or as in the Fourth, a mystically tinged idyll—all of these finales all the way up to the Ninth conceal within themselves the key to the work and are the center to which the threads of all the preceding movements lead and from which they are unraveled. One can initially assess this type of design externally: as the means to a grandiose buildup and intensification of the symphonic structure, a means that the older symphonic repertoire had not known. And this means is also initially understood from a structural instinct, and it is architectonically sensed. Its conscious employment attests to an awakening of the architectonic musical drive such as had not been previously known in such a demonstration and as it now came into the musical design in general as a new element. Furthermore, one can assess this type of design based on its internal consequences: as a means of creating connections between the individual movements that no longer require the poeticized and artful thematic integration, but instead now spin themselves out from an organic compulsion to the Finale and only here allow the strict regularity of their sequence and the firmness of their rooting to be recognized.<sup>21</sup>

But above these external and internal advantages of the architectonic construction and the organic unification stands, as the most important consequence of the new design out of the Finale, that it was only now possible to confront the complete symphonic construction free of conventional relationships or literary references, but purely from the necessities of the creative musical drive. The symphonic scheme required a four-part structure based on preconditions that had had an inner validity up to Beethoven, but then, under the relaxation of the monumental creative compulsion, had actually become insubstantial, resulting in a dry, conventional formula. In the moment where the finale became the main movement of the work, there immediately and retroactively emerged a new, free, and uninhibited position in relation to the question of structural organization. From the content of the closing movement, from the central symphonic idea that should arrive at its concluding pronouncement in the Finale, emerged the layout of the whole, the number of movements, their characters, their arrangements among one another. All of these were no longer optional individual factors that were attached according to discretion as supplements to the principal sum of the first movement. They were parts of a complete sum that was precisely settled in the Finale and for whose individual accuracy the Finale formed the infallible test.<sup>22</sup>

[21] There thus initially emerged for the new symphonic art an independence from the previous types of four- or three- or one-movement construction, a freedom with respect to the pattern that was somehow perceived as schematic. Depending on how the final goal was devised, the type of individual arrangement formed itself. Mahler exploited the possibilities that were provided thereby to such a high degree that each of his works signifies an individual personality in itself in layout, organization, and construction.<sup>23</sup> Within these varied individual structures then appear again certain correspondences of the kind that represent varied solutions upon a



common fundamental basis. The first, most obvious kind is that of the direct, forward-moving ascent to the final goal. Mahler uses it in the First, Sixth, and Eighth Symphonies. The First is constructed in four movements, and thus stands externally closest to the old symphonic type. Despite the unity of its thematic structure, what additionally makes it appear related to this older type is the imperfection of the first bold undertaking, which was able to give the Finale externally, but not yet internally, the encompassing strength that should have actually come to it.

What Mahler took up in the First Symphony, but did not completely accomplish, became a reality in two later works, the Sixth and Eighth symphonies. Here, the buildup is led steeply upward with ruthless consistency, directly to the goal. There thus emerged retroactively a new type of structural organization: the no longer four-, but rather two-part construction, the separation into the preparatory and the fulfilling sections. As such, the Finale comes forward in both works autocratically and with paramount significance, in the Sixth pushing the three preceding movements, through internal and external force, into a secondary position as preludes, and in the Eighth absorbing the two middle movements within itself and assigning the opening movement the place of a powerfully reaching, independent introduction that thereby was still perceived as preparatory. This two-part structure, in relation to which the division into movements becomes a secondary question, is the sharpest consequence of the new design principle and one of the most significant architectural innovations of Mahler. The complete organism is transformed from the inside out. Under the compulsion of the necessity that drives toward the Finale, the front of the construction is compressed together. The whole power of the creative will leads with unrestrained force up and into the Finale.<sup>24</sup>

In only these three works—the First as an experiment, and the Sixth and Eighth as a fulfillment—did Mahler choose the inexorably straight kind of structure. In a group of

symphonies that lies between them, a new type appears: one with an arrangement of movements that, as it were, orbits the nucleus of the Finale. The Second, Third, Fifth and Seventh Symphonies belong to this group. The Finale is again the center, but the preceding movements do not lead up in a direct ascent; rather, they settle themselves around it, thereby circling it ever more narrowly. The opening movements, as the most broadly drawn circles, newly obtain a greater scope and strength of content, while the middle movements become narrower and their number increases. Suite-like elements enter the symphonic work, not added due to external speculation or overly enthusiastic music making, but rather determined by the stepwise sequence of the inner development. Thus, similarly as in the great [22] quartets of Beethoven, the number of movements in the symphony increases. Beside the scherzo and slow movement come new, songlike pictures with a fantastic richness of forms. The Second Symphony has five, the Third six, the Fifth and Seventh again five movements each. The division into parts is also again taken up here, and it gives the symphonic whole a larger, unifying structure. Mahler's architectonic strength shows itself here with the greatest surety, and reaches out most widely. The final movements of these works differ thereby from those of the first group in that they are not the most externally weighty, yet they are constructed in diverse ways. The closing section of the Second Symphony is a solemnly tuned choral movement introduced by a grand, sweeping instrumental passage, the Finale of the Third is an Adagio, and the last pieces of the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies are rondos. With the exception of the Second, the Finale in all these symphonies does not obtain its central placement within the work—as in the First, Sixth, and Eighth Symphonies—through its own great weight, but rather only through its relationship to the remaining movements. In purely objective significance, these are sometimes superior to the Finale, such as, for example, within the Second and Third Symphonies the first, and within the

Fifth Symphony the second movement reaches out most powerfully. They only obtain their inner justification and foundation, however, and their spiritual solidification, through the concluding Finale.

Beside these two types, the arrangement of movements that ascends in a straight line to the final summit, and the one that forms a circle around the central finale, is found yet a third kind. It holds the middle ground, so to speak, between the two others, which are perceived in strict opposition to each other. Mahler only used it twice, both times in works that have a conclusive character: in the Fourth and in the Ninth Symphonies. The finales of these two works are not summits, as in the First, Sixth, and Eighth Symphonies, but are closer to resolutions in the sense of the Second, Third, Fifth, and Seventh. And yet, with them, one cannot speak of a circular or suite-like arrangement of the preceding movements. Here is shown a fantastically floating construction, and any systemic movement order is absent. The arbitrary mood of the creator, who only follows the impulse with an almost Schubertian lack of concern, appears to rule. They are the two most mature, transfigured works of Mahler, both kept in four movements, but thoroughly divergent from the previous type of the four-movement symphony. The Fourth most closely still resembles earlier patterns, at least in the first three movements. Its Finale is a slow song movement, not striking by any external weightiness, a completely unpretentious and simple resolution of a work that is unproblematic in itself. There is no buildup, then, rather a bright transfiguration of the original idea that is carried out with a lightly programmatic echo.<sup>25</sup> The Ninth Symphony occupies an even more unusual position within the complete Mahlerian oeuvre. It is also in four movements, but this four-movement design almost appears as a mockery of its conventional precedent. The principle of the movement sequence is turned inside out: two slow movements, the first an Andante, the last an Adagio, frame two lively ones, a

scherzo and a burlesque rondo. The closing Adagio is also a transfiguring resolution here, without matching the preceding movements in external weightiness, and also here one cannot speak of either a rising line or an orbit around the finale. [23] It appears that Mahler, similar to Beethoven in his Ninth, strove for a new type of symphonic construction, that he attempted to find a kind of organic emergence of the symphony that gravitated more toward the middle and viewed the Adagio Finale no longer as the goal, but rather as an epilogue-like conclusion.<sup>26</sup>

That was a possibility. The question of whether and how it would have been able to be brought to reality can no longer be asked today. Only the basic recognition of the elemental importance of the organic design principle for the symphonist is decisive. In the rhythm of the complete course of events lies the first, greatest, decisive effect of the symphonic work. The single tone, the phrase, and the melody in itself are only constructive elements of a subordinate kind. They only obtain significance through the surroundings in which they are placed, through the sequence within which they unfold. The symphonist is the builder, and the kind and choice of building blocks is not decisive for him, but rather the discovery of the constructive idea. From this idea that determines the structure, organization, number, and character of the movements now also emerged the special kind of individual stylistic elements, along with the intellectual and technical structure of the execution. The ideal conception, the vision of the whole, was the primary thing, and in it the generative symphonic force was revealed. Mahler's special musical nature was one of conceiving and of giving birth, and these were the emotional sources of his being, which, not capable of forming themselves, strove toward fertilization through the symphonic principle of design.

**Mahler's** symphonic work divides itself into four groups. The first extends to the Fourth

Symphony, the second from the Fifth to the Seventh. The Eighth stands separately, and the Ninth in turn follows directly upon *Das Lied von der Erde*. Each of the groups springs from the emotional source of a certain song cycle that is closed in mood and in thought. The common foundation for the first group of symphonies up to the Fourth is the folksong-like element. In the First Symphony it is based on the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (*Songs of a Wayfarer*), in the Second, Third, and Fourth on songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The songs to poems of Rückert provide the frame of moods for the second group of symphonies from the Fifth to the Seventh. The Eighth Symphony, assembled from the old church hymn “Veni creator spiritus” and the closing scenes of Goethe’s *Faust*, obtains its character from these texts. The Ninth reflects the world of feelings, entered with *Das Lied von der Erde*, of the old Chinese lyrics as adapted by Hans Bethge.

It is curious: Mahler’s symphonic art, determined in its organic manifestation by the broadly and powerfully constructive monumental drive, finds its emotional sources in the smallest musical manifestations of form, in the song.<sup>27</sup> Song and the monumental drive strive toward one another in Mahler. The song is lifted up from the confinement of the subjective expression of feeling into the broadly shining and sounding sphere of the symphonic style. This in turn enriches its outwardly expansive force with the intimacy of the most personal feeling. [24] This appears to be a paradox, and yet in such a unity of opposites there lies an explanation for the unusual nature of Gustav Mahler, which encompasses the inner and outer world, drawing the most personal and the most distant into his realm of expression. It explains his often so externally contradictory art, which indiscriminately scrambles together the most apparently heterogeneous elements of style. It explains the contrasts in the assessment and evaluation of his creative output.<sup>28</sup> Finally, it explains the slowly but inexorably advancing effect of his works,

which, combining folk and art music, again draws from a deep well that gives the wide-reaching form the intensity of ardent intimacy and the subjective experience of feeling the powerful resonance of a sweeping composition that aims for greatness.

The songs form not only the emotional core of most of the symphonic works, but also provide the stylistic foundations. In the choice of song type, in the character of the poetry to which Mahler turns, the world of imagination that attracts him in each phase of his life, and from which he finds his creative guidelines, can already be recognized. The *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* grew out of a harrowing youthful experience. He composed the texts himself while freely utilizing a single *Wunderhorn* song. It is typical how Mahler here matched the style and character of the *Wunderhorn* poetry with such adaptability, how he himself created something that corresponded with the compulsion toward an intimate and unpretentious folk style. In the moment, however, when Mahler gets his hands on the complete *Wunderhorn* volume, it is as if the curtains fall for him and he has suddenly found the key to his own essence. A large group of songs emerges, written for one voice with orchestral accompaniment. A substantial portion of these songs passes into the symphonies, some with texts in their original versions, others transcribed into a purely instrumental language until, with the quietly fading closing song of the “heavenly joys” in the Fourth Symphony, that expressive area is exhausted for Mahler. The *Wunderhorn* book closes, for this world has been passed through. The artist has witnessed its deep, intimate cries of pain, along with its naïve faith, its coarse, sarcastic humor, and all of its precious, pure, and strong impressions up to the beatified child’s dream of that moving final song about the delights of the fairy tale paradise. He has artistically conquered all this, and now grasps a new walking staff for the journey into another land.<sup>29</sup>

This time of folk-based song-symphonies lasted fifteen years, from the composition of

the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* in 1884 to the completion of the Fourth Symphony in 1900, or to the conclusion of Mahler's fortieth year. It determined the character of Mahler's appearance for his contemporary world and its immediate posterity, for, apart from the Eighth Symphony and *Das Lied von der Erde*, the knowledge of Mahler today is still almost exclusively based on the first four symphonies and the songs that belong to them. How is this profound connection between song and symphony to be understood as necessary when coming from Mahler's nature and as justified by the nature of his symphonic composition, and what are the inner sources of this will toward the folk character?

[25] It was not a will in the sense of a conscious intention. It was an elemental will that spoke and pressed out of Mahler, leading him onto paths that none before him had walked, and that he himself only trod under the force of somnambulism. Mahler was a naïve, faithful, and simple nature, endowed with a prophetic vision for all that grew out of an unselfconscious and quiet originality. He was filled with a burning desire to break through the layers of distorting educated intellect that lay above the pure humanity of the natural being.<sup>30</sup> Out of the mixture of both elements in his being grew for him the tragedy of existence and creation. Out of the conflict of his own nature he arrived at the establishment of the two opposing principles of his creative work: the song as a symbol of the innermost feeling and experience, as the expression of longing for the sources of personal existence and of the knowledge of oneness with the original sources of nature—and the symphonic style as the method of confrontation—with the world and with laws and with events—that most powerfully reached into general consciousness. Mahler recognized these oppositions of subjective feeling and world events, of desire and law, of song and symphony as polarities of his creation. To find the unity between this desire and this law of the world was the last goal of his symphonic composition, to which he strove in all his works on

ever new paths.

If one allows Mahler's symphonic movements to affect oneself, naïvely comparing and contrasting them with those before and contemporary with him, the realization of a harsh contradiction imposes itself. One feels that a different principle of life than that to which one was previously accustomed rules and works in these sounds and individual structures. Even with Bruckner, to whom Mahler stands closest, the contrast to the previous concept of the symphonic is not as distinctly palpable as it is with Mahler. It is a difference like the one between studio and open-air painting. Old fundamental views that were held as unalterable are disregarded, while other kinds of expression that were held as unusable come into play, taking over in a self-evidence that initially calls forth astonishment and smiling wonderment. The concept of the artistic—strictly self-contained and majestically turned away from the ordinary—falls apart, and is never brought forth as special or important. The work, the technical boldness in melodic themes, in harmonic modulation, in instrumentation, loses its particular significance. Where it becomes noticeable, it appears almost more as a coincidental consequence of ineptitude than as a cleverly devised subtlety. The whole makes the impression of a badly concealed primitiveness coming from incompetence, and the sophisticated listener, expecting all kinds of difficulties of the usual kind, is disappointed in the apparently minimal demands of his artistic understanding.<sup>31</sup>

The first movement may retain in many cases the usual sonata scheme. Yet of the urgent, tense, purposeful spirit of the sonata, almost nothing remains. The structure appears only to strive to blur the sonata character as much as possible.<sup>32</sup> Either the relationships of the outlines and the parts are compressed, making the individual groups insignificant, as in the opening movement of the First Symphony, or, as in the first movements of the Second and Third Symphonies, sections of such powerful scope are inserted that the listener who is accustomed to



the usual structure [26] loses track of the overview and feels driven into endless space. The smooth flow and the continuity of that which is typically called development is often interrupted and redirected. Obstructions seem to appear everywhere. The middle movements touch on similar strangeness. The usual three-quarter scherzo type is almost completely avoided by Mahler, and is only used in two symphonies, the Fifth and the Seventh. In the remaining works, Mahler favors a new type, inspired by Schubert's and Bruckner's trios, that now inclines to the minuet, now the slow Ländler,<sup>33</sup> and now the more lively waltz, but in all cases brings a piece of naturalistic life into the symphony and thus willfully profanes, as it were, the artistic rigor of the symphonic concept. In addition, Mahler is often not satisfied with one scherzo-like movement. In the Second, Third, and Seventh Symphonies, yet other dance- or song-like intermezzos are inserted, which in the Second and Seventh must substitute for the missing slow movement. The slow movements themselves are treated most concisely and most strangely. In the nine symphonies of Mahler, no more than two largely conceived movements of the pure Adagio type are to be found. In both cases, they stand at the conclusion of the works: in the Third and in the Ninth Symphonies. Mahler knows from Bruckner the dangerous power of the Adagio. He knows that the wide-reaching Adagio easily soaks up the juices of the work. He draws the most obvious conclusion from this knowledge: he places the Adagio, when he uses it, at the conclusion of the work, as the great collecting reservoir of all spiritual streams, as the place of their most intensive internalization. Where he once, as an exception, uses it before the Finale—in the Fifth Symphony—he is careful of giving it too much weight or emphasis. It remains an Adagietto in both name and content and appears more as a slow prelude to the closing movement. In all other works where Mahler uses slow middle movements, he is satisfied with the calmer and less intensive Andante type—such as in the Second, where this Andante appears as a minuet,

in the Fourth, where it appears as a gradually more animated variation sequence, and in the Sixth, where it has a songlike character.<sup>34</sup>

If the normal appearance of the symphony is changed by this sequence and character of movements, then the way in which Mahler incorporates the singing voice into the symphonic organism signifies the most striking and fundamental deviation from the familiar. Inspirations from Berlioz may have resonated vividly, yet they can only be viewed as of an external kind. With Berlioz, the incorporation of the voice—in *Faust*, in *Romeo and Juliet*—always goes back to the concept of a symphonic-operatic hybrid effect. With Mahler, it remains strictly within the symphonic frame. A certain correspondence with the old models of Beethoven and Liszt regarding the use of the choir can best be established with the Resurrection Chorus in Mahler's Second. But these apparent similarities vanish in view of the way in which Mahler integrates the individual voice into the symphonic work. Now he gives it within the symphony—in the Second and Third—the meaning of a clarifying inner spiritual voice, slowly awakening to consciousness out of the mysterious instrumental world. Now, as in the Fourth, he assigns to it the redeeming final word that expresses the last things in a charming allegory. [27] In *Das Lied von der Erde*, he elevates it to the sole messenger of his ideas. In his outwardly mightiest work<sup>35</sup> he deploys it in all of its expressive possibilities: double choir and boys' choir with multiple solo voices in the center of the symphonic events. From this method speaks more than an imitation or an outward exaggeration of Beethoven, Berlioz, or Liszt. The use of the singing voice is one of the peculiarities of Mahler's musical language. Like the treatment of the orchestra, like the style of the themes and melodies, of the harmonic and rhythmic structure, of the dynamics and voice leading, and of the performance method, it also flows from the single source of a new musical conception, of a new musical world view and picture of life. In its reception and proclamation,

the actual creative idea in Mahler's appearance is determined. As his overall symphonic idea stands in fundamental opposition to the symphonic idea of Beethoven, so also does Mahler's musical language, with all that branches out from it, grow from a similar contrast to the musical language of Beethoven and those who followed him.

Beethoven's language is a language of abstraction. It blossoms from the cult of a vocal art that is raised to the utmost heights. It takes up the developmental idea that leads away from this vocal art to the dominance of the purely instrumental idea, and it wins and consolidates this dominance in that it lays hold to the instrumental idea as the most subtle reinforcement of the capacity for musical expression. Beethoven's art is a compression of every relationship. Each expression is driven to the utmost intensity and refinement, to the absolute extraction of spiritual essentials. The entire development of Beethoven's musical language, the method of his formal construction, his themes, and his handling of sound can be led back to this striving for the most extreme abstraction and spiritualization of musical sensation, corresponding to Beethoven's personality with its urge to comprehend the last spiritual impulse of motion, its drive to desensualize the sensual nature of things, its desire for criticism and for recognition.

Mahler stood at the end of a time of purely instrumental sensibility. The vocal element had fallen so strongly into decline since Beethoven that vocal music itself borrowed its stylistic rules from instrumental expression.<sup>36</sup> The urge toward abstraction had been driven to its exhaustion, to an ossification in conventions. There remained only the opposing path toward sensualization, to a softening and dissolving of musical language out of the bonds of the instrumental will toward spiritualization, to the renewed expansion of what had been powerfully compressed, to a view that was no longer critical, but that had a naïve faith in revelation.

From this demonstrative and sensual urge of Mahler the artist and man emerged the inner

necessity of his use of the human voice within the symphony. The voice arrived at its pursuit of sensualization not only through the words of text which it spoke. This would be the minimum, and a purely external gain. It brought above all a living, immediate, and warm stream of feelings into the instrumental sea, and this was likely what Mahler required. Its use followed from the emotional requirements of the sonic design, not from any intent of intellectual explanation or enhancement. It sprang from the orchestra, [28] from the idea of the sound, from the concept of a new nature of the appearance of sound in general.

Beethoven's world of sound, as represented for the symphonic composer in the orchestra, had developed from a gradual summation of individual phenomena. In slowly finding and complementing each other, the instruments had come together, each sacrificing something from its individuality in this juxtaposition, but without giving it up. Beethoven's orchestra was a republican unity, each instrument serving the same goal, but each at the same time an entity itself with its own set of laws. Thus, the human voice, when it joined the orchestra, also remained a representative of the human organism, an individual, a companion, freely joining the great whole, not out of a natural necessity.<sup>37</sup>

The orchestras of the romantics and program symphonists show the same relationship in comparison to Beethoven, as is reflected in the manner of their symphonic conception and design. They either adhere to Beethoven's scheme, partially shaping it, as particularly Brahms does in his middle movements, further toward the side of chamber music. Or they strengthen, as do Liszt and his followers, out of a strong coloristic fantasy, the luminosity and intensity of the colors, but without thereby changing the basic character of the orchestra as an overall sound.

Mahler's orchestra does not take part in this revelry of colors found in the New German School. In Mahler's instrumentation, the contour is decisive. Everything regarding color is

handled with an almost contemptuous hardness and ruthlessness.<sup>38</sup> With Mahler, the individual nature of the single instrument also vanishes. The orchestra as a naturally closed, total appearance that has become completely integrated is what he gives. The individual instrument occasionally detaches itself for certain moments as an exceptional exercise of free will, but without ever obtaining independence beyond the episodic significance of a brief instrumental effect. This orchestra is no republic, no summation, not an organized multiplicity that a superior will forms into a unity. It is made by nature into this unity, and it is a sonic appearance of itself. It is a sounding cosmos in which countless stirrings of life unfold, push, and spread out, and yet each one always only draws life and strength from the complete manifestation. This cosmic sound arises from the new conception of the musical event in general as something natural, elemental, as a pure declaration of feelings. It corresponds to the new materials of design, the new organism, and the new constructive plan of the symphonic type, just as on the other hand the Beethoven orchestra in its idealized individualism, with its being directed toward the sharpest isolation of the idea, corresponded to the basic course of Beethoven's symphonic art toward the abstract, the critical, the cognitive recognition.

From the cosmic concept of sound in this orchestral idea resulted the necessity of its arousing everything to sound, of incorporating everything into this enlivening that was hidden within the sounds of life. Thus, the singing voice flowed as a phenomenon of sound, unbound from everything humanly personal, into this sounding world. So in Mahler do the individual sound groups grow to mighty dimensions, both in number and in sonic mass. The woodwind group is multiplied, D and E-flat [29] clarinets are frequently added, and four-voice scoring of the woodwind choir is typical. In the brass and the horns, similar expansions are found. On multiple occasions, similarly as in Bruckner, the heavy brass is used in separate groups. At the

same time, all instruments, even those that are otherwise unwieldy and cumbersome, obtain an unusual mobility. Such instruments that were previously never found in the symphony orchestra are enlisted for important isolated effects: the flügelhorn in the post horn episode of the Scherzo of the Third Symphony, the tenor horn for the presentation of the theme in the first movement of the Seventh Symphony. The group of percussion instruments is treated with particular diversity. In Mahler it is expanded, with the inclusion of various innovations—sleigh bell sounds in the Fourth, a hammer in the Sixth—into a real small orchestra. Of other innovations, the most striking are the cowbells in the Sixth Symphony and the retuning of the solo violin a step higher to characterize the flat fiddle sound of “Freund Hein” in the Fourth Symphony. To achieve special sound effects, the brass and woodwinds are often asked to raise their bells. It is hardly necessary to mention that Mahler places extraordinary requirements on the technique of the strings. Yet these requirements, in contrast to, say, the orchestral technique of a Richard Strauss, are less extraordinary in relation to the agility of the left hand, just as Mahler’s overall orchestral language is far removed from everything that dazzles and captivates through instrumental brilliance. It is more the difficulty of the expressive concept, the connection of very distant registers, the sudden transitions, his strange kind of *glissandi*, the unexpected, whose style is difficult to capture, even when of an apparent crudeness, that appears foreign and unwieldy to the string players in Mahler’s symphonies. In addition, there are bowing effects, prescriptions of phrasing that are often very uncomfortable to execute but are of great conceptual importance, unusual demands of a strong vocal element in the presentation, and formations with persistent rhythm that go against habit. In all of this, a highly imaginative diversity reigns. The full strength is in no way typical for Mahler, as he often sets it in contrast to unadorned simplicity within a work. Thus, in the Fifth Symphony, the opening and closing movements, which are

particularly heavy-laden with brass, in contrast to the Adagietto, written only for strings and harp; in the Seventh, the massive outer movements in contrast to the idyllic second “Nachtmusik”; and in the Ninth, the grotesque middle movements in contrast to the final Adagio, which sings itself out with celestial transfiguration in the string orchestra. An entire work also occasionally displays such restraint: the Fourth Symphony is written without trombones.

This treatment of the orchestra is closely related to Mahler’s manner of presentation, dynamics, and phrasing. In this, he goes substantially beyond Beethoven’s exactness in indication, not only through the strict prescriptions that he makes to the individual player regarding technique of execution, and not only through the breath marks in the phrasing, precisely indicated by him in the form of commas. Above all, he does it through the manner of his characteristics in presentation, which almost always have something poetically programmatic. The number and kind of these indications are of astounding diversity and vivid clarity. [30] Movement headings such as “Etwas täppisch und sehr derb” (“Somewhat clumsily and very coarse”) in the second movement and “Sehr trotzig” (“Very defiant”) in the third movement of the Ninth already give pregnant instructions. They are supplemented by isolated indications such as “Mit höchster Wut” (“With greatest fury”), “Wie gepeitscht” (“As if whipped”), “Heftig ausbrechend” (“Violently breaking out”), “Wie ein Kondukt” (“Like a funeral procession”), “Schwebend” (“Soaring”), “Ersterbend” (“Dying away”). Together with the notation, they awaken imaginative conceptions of an almost tangible plasticity about what is wanted, and they completely compel in the direction of the composer’s will. Mahler’s dynamics are similarly insistent. Like the entire manner of his sonic design, they also reflect the warm, piercing, flashing intensity of his feeling. Their harsh opposition, which is often apparently unmediated, is not actually the expression of an external contrast or change of mood. It is a surge of blood, a

swing of temperament, the most secret sensual life, just as his buildups or his long-lasting, steady dynamic suspensions are not intended as organic climaxes of the inner motion. They often mean the opposite of that which the habitual perception would support. The fading *pianissimo* often represents for Mahler the utmost sharpening of expression, and the *fortissimo* can mean for him an external turmoil of feelings rather than a summation and intensification.<sup>39</sup>

If one recognizes the striving for intensity as the actual determining moment in Mahler's sonic design, then his harmony, rhythm, and voice leading also appear less disconcerting. The spun-out march motions, for example, that frequently dominate entire movements in Mahler, have often drawn him the accusation of rhythmic monotony. Such preference for the retention of certain, very simply defined basic rhythmic formulas becomes explicable as soon as the listener affords himself enough naïveté and willingness to empathize in order to surrender to the restless uniformity and the fantastic constancy of this motion. Mahler's harmony is also often amazingly naïve in detail. Not at all seeking after originality, it carelessly makes use of the simplest turns. Then again, it appears inextricable in its muddled interweaving of the most varied elements of sound. This opposition is no longer enigmatic if one here also does not take the musical end in itself or the desire for exceptional and bold combinations as the inducement. It is a calm enjoyment of the unfettered singing out of voices, which now run through long stretches of the same harmonic surface, then randomly cross each other, making it hardly possible to find their way harmonically. Mahler's musical conception is far less harmonically determined than that of most of his contemporaries and predecessors. The melodic and linear perception predominates.<sup>40</sup> Even when his polyphony, as in the fugal Finale of the Fifth Symphony, consistently moves within the boundaries of the fundamental harmonic ideas, only intersecting, expanding, or denting them, then this harmony still emerges mostly as a consequence, not as a cause of the



voices coming together. These are led, the further Mahler's development progresses, ever more independently, more freely, ever less concerned with harmonic considerations. It was not granted to Mahler to travel the path he trod here, which was initially more compulsive, then gradually more conscious, to the very end, to completely loose himself from the bonds of harmonic thinking and perception, [31] to abandon himself to only the melodic impulse of the individual voice and to understand the simultaneous sound as merely a consequence of voices crossing each other. As a harmonist, Mahler stands on the border between two worlds, just as he is, in his overall and general appearance, not so much an innovator as a finisher, a summarizer of what has gone before through the strength of a personal artistic and world view.

He once uttered a deeply characteristic statement for the fundamental nature of this view when he was questioned about the use of the cowbells in the Sixth Symphony. Most listeners, he commented, incorrectly understood this innovation. He said that it was not about the achievement of any sort of striking sound effect, but about finding a symbol in sound for the feeling of distance from the Earth, for the greatest loneliness. As such a symbol, the cowbells appeared for him—the last sound that the wanderer, ascending to the heights, hears coming from the Earth.<sup>41</sup> This statement is instructive for Mahler's type of sound perception in general. In its symbolism lies the most important characteristic of his music. It was for him an instinctive emotional life that played not above, but rather outside of the intellectual, not representable in an intellectual way, a pure language of the subconscious swelling from the natural impulse. This language of sensuous life created symbols in the tonal language of the music, upon whose symphonic fate a purely emotional experience was manifested. As Mahler's creative power was revealed in the power of this creation of symbols, so is everything that he wrote and how he wrote it only to be understood from the symbolic meaning of his musical language. It also

explains Mahler's choice of keys, both in individual movements and in entire works, explaining, say, the turn of the Second Symphony from the C-minor opening to the grand E-flat-major conclusion, that of the Fourth Symphony from a sweet G major to a mystically transfigured E major, that of the Fifth from the gloomy C-sharp minor of the funeral march to the lusty, cheerful D major of the final Rondo, that of the Seventh from a harmonically unclear and active E minor to a festive C major, and that of the Ninth from a calm, singing D major to a sublime D-flat major. It is this symbolism that, in summation, determines the entire essence of Mahler's sound, his manner of instrumental treatment, his rhythm, harmony, dynamics, phrasing, his performance indications—in short, everything that can be perceived by the senses. The pursuit of a sonic symbolization of an emotional event is always the standard. From here, there also emerges the particular usage of the human voice. The more large-scale and powerful the image was which he envisioned, the more numerous and diverse the forces enlisted needed to be. "Imagine that the entire universe begins to ring and resound," Mahler wrote about the Eighth Symphony.<sup>42</sup> For this sounding of the entire universe, the human voice with all its expressive possibilities had to be utilized, not because the mere orchestra would have been insufficient for the musician, but because the orchestral sound as such would have been inadequate for feeling and imagining the resounding universe.

The drive toward symbolism grows out of Mahler's world view. It brings Mahler to his symphonic materials, it allows him to discover the laws of the organism from the particular nature of these materials, it determines the individual ordering, [32] sequence, and construction of this organism, and it forms the sound world with all of its various manifestations. Thus, the symphony develops from the conception of the basic symphonic idea to the individual performance as a realization in sound. And as the last consequence of this development from the

general to the particular, from the whole to the detail, which is decisive for the composer, the symphonic theme is finally formed, this apparent foundation, yet in reality only the last realization, the ultimate summit in the fulfillment of the symphonic idea.

The conception of the theme not as the cornerstone, but only as the actual agent of motion for the symphonic organism, must have evolved in a composer of Mahler's kind more strongly the more meaningless for him the concept of thematic work in the traditional sense, and the clearer to him the task of thematic expansion became. Once it was the thematic core that, to some extent, contained the whole movement within itself, and ran its course like a bullet. Now it is the thematic melisma that, hardly aware of itself, only gropes on in a slow push forward and in restless starts, only gradually obtaining form through juxtaposition with other elements, without any determination, without the will to continue, merely an appearance in itself, a natural shape, an experience, an image that lines up next to other images. The Mahlerian themes from the Second Symphony on can hardly still be viewed in the usual manner of thematic understanding. Indeed motivic kernels can be found, from which the entire structure apparently grows and from which it obtains its motor force. But the usual thematic structure and periodic boundaries fall away. The themes, or what one wishes to call such, broaden to almost movement-like appearances. These structures are then intertwined with others that newly emerge and are similarly organized, such that the analytic mind, which asks about division, order, and grouping, stands clueless. Only a perpetual growing and entwining, a continuous sprouting and blooming, a ceaseless thematic Becoming can be determined, in contrast to which all attempts at division are powerless and actually untenable.<sup>43</sup> The opening movements of the Second and Third Symphonies already show this constant life of the thematic force, which even here can only be documented as an active and generative force, but not as an individual manifestation. Mahler's

manner of thematic formation only reaches its full display, however, in the large instrumental symphonies from the Fifth on; then in the Eighth and beyond it in the Ninth, it causes all memories of the former thematic division and working out to vanish. The absolute freedom of making music purely from imaginative fantasy prevails. A mighty stream, apparently flowing without restraint, pours out from inexhaustible sources. It knows no other laws than those of the natural drive from creation and the creator, of the innermost motion, only coming to an end at the self-determined goal.

That Mahler's thematic design could display this power, which exploded all the familiar rules from within, can be attributed to its origin in song melody. This is not, in its nature, bound to the developmental rules of the symphonic theme. It carries within itself the sweeping force and the ability to unfold that are inherent in every genuine lyrical inspiration. It only requires the strong [33] drive of feeling to proliferate forward out of itself, and to grow to a great stream. In the song form, this would not have been possible, and even the transcription of the song from the intimate duet with piano into orchestral language would not have been sufficient to create the bed that this powerfully lyrical creative urge required. Here emerged the inner necessity of a union between the harshest apparent opposites: song melody and symphonic composition. Each of the two brought with it what the other required: the song brought the inwardly flowing melodic force, and the symphonic organism brought the form that could be stretched out. Here, the song could put aside all the barriers of subjective life, could spare the words without necessarily completely renouncing them, and could allow the expansive forces dwelling within it to operate without hindrance.

Thus, Mahler's thematic construction is the last necessary consequence of the nature of his symphonic style. The turn away from Beethoven's urge toward abstraction, the tendency

toward natural elements that also comprehended man as a natural being, had brought the new symphonic material. From its creative penetration arose the new symphonic organism, the type of the Finale Symphony. From its concept and idea emerged the individual structure: the form, sequence, and character of the movements. In the face of this concept and idea grew the new sound world with all its manifestations of a stylistic kind: its cosmic sonic design through the union of all things that produced sound, from the blunt percussion instrument to the human voice, its rhythm, harmony, and dynamics, the art of its presentation and finally its themes—the last consequence and yet again the first precondition of the new symphonic style. The circle closes. Song and symphony flow together into one new entity. This new entity, inwardly based upon a burning intensity of feeling, externally strengthened by a powerfully summarizing creative ability, obtains its ethical foundation through the force with which here the symbolic meaning of the musical artwork is revealed.

In this power of symbolic formation, however, lies the measure of what is enduring, valid, and true in art. The captivating ethical sweep of Beethoven's art had confused and overwhelmed minds. Incapable of matching this sweep and not strong enough to take hold of new symbols themselves, the succeeding generations had allowed the external sound to grow to the significance of the end in itself of musical art. The effective treatment of the materials of sound had become the objective. The knowledge that the sound and its formation was not a subject, only an object, and that every true musical event is an event beyond the sound, only based upon its transmission, and that only in the rediscovery of the deep emotional sources could a new stream of life for musical creation be discovered—this knowledge was not present. As creative natures arose in Bruckner and Mahler that again went back to these sources of feeling, the lack of enlightenment in their contemporaries denied acknowledgment to them. They were called crude

or simplistic or banal because others did not comprehend their courage, because they could find no understanding for their profound faith in basic humanity, [34] and because they could not grasp the grandiose naïveté of such spirits.<sup>44</sup>

But the skepticism of a jaded time is on the wane. New people and new masses are rising up, and the yearning for faith, for light, for revelation is powerful in them. The defiant, passionate, inwardly glowing, longing art of Mahler finds in them a growing response, and in the shadow of this world-encompassing art, the softer, smoother, more externally accessible music of Bruckner also gains ever more ground. In both lies the future message of the symphonic art, for where something most intimate is formed into great art, it gains power over all humanity.

## NOTES

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- 1 It is unclear here whether Bekker is referring to an actual statement of Schumann on this subject or to what he “said” in the music of the slow movements themselves. The slow movement of the Second Symphony in C major (Op. 61) could certainly be considered one of the most successful true post-Beethoven, pre-Bruckner Adagio movements. It is also in the third position of a four-movement work, as in Beethoven’s Ninth.
- 2 Bekker’s statement here aptly applies to the first three Brahms symphonies, but ignores the *Allegro giocoso* C-major third movement of the Fourth Symphony in E minor, which, while in duple instead of triple meter, corresponds rather closely to the model of the scherzo type. Brahms also uses the “Allegretto” intermezzo type in several chamber works, but true scherzo movements are also common in his early- and middle-period chamber works, along with the three early piano sonatas.
- 3 A more standard translation of the word “scheu” here would be “timidly” or “shyly,” but both seem somewhat strong for the point Bekker is making here.
- 4 While Bekker is vague about exactly which works of Liszt he is referring to, it is apparent that he is discussing the symphonic poems, perhaps epitomized in *Les Préludes*, which rather clearly displays the “fused” form with “Adagio and scherzo worked in episodically.” His references to the *Faust* and *Dante* symphonies a bit later seem to confirm this. This statement about the “unity of the symphonic organism” is similarly vague, but seems to refer to the one-movement construction of the symphonic poems. The later course of the discussion also confirms this. Bekker does not mention Schumann’s Fourth, which he must have known, in this context. Perhaps he perceived that, although that work’s movements follow one another without a break, they are still more distinct and independent than the sections of a Liszt symphonic poem.
- 5 Bekker’s statement here has a definite echo of the ideas in Friedrich Schiller’s influential essay “On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry” (“Über naive und sentimentale Dichtung”) from 1795, particularly one of its principal theses, that “every true genius must be naïve or it is not genius.” For Schiller, “naïve” poetry emerges from natural genius and is based on eternal principles of nature, following its laws. This is an ideal nature, a “true” nature, as distinct from “actual” nature. Bekker ascribes a similar type of idealistic genius to the “Austrian” symphonists and their compositions, not only through the use of the word “naïve,” but also through the invocation of nature as the principal source. This echo of Schiller can be traced through Bekker’s analysis of the symphonies, such as the discussion of the *Wunderhorn* poems at the end of the chapter on the Fourth Symphony (p. 387 and p. 392, note 44).
- 6 The term “speculative ethic” can be traced to post-Hegelian philosophy. Two works by such philosophers carry the same title, *System der spekulativen Ethik* (*System of Speculative Ethics*). These are Johann Ulrich Wirth, *System der spekulativen Ethik: Eine Encyclopädie der gesamten Disciplinen der praktischen Philosophie* (Heilbronn: Carl Dreschler Verlag, 1842, 2 vols.); and Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus, *System der spekulativen Ethik: oder, Philosophie der Familie, des Staates, und der religiösen Sitte* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1850, 2 vols.). Both of these writers were heavily influenced by Hegel, although Chalybäus sought to mitigate the idealistic Hegelian dialectic with more realist elements. Bekker’s use of the term in relation to Beethoven suggests a Hegelian reading of the history of the symphony and Beethoven’s role. This is confirmed by his invocation of Mahler’s symphonies as a “synthesis” at the end of this section.
- 7 As stated above, nature as the source of inspiration is a primary thread in Schiller’s “On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry.” Schiller himself credits Immanuel Kant in this context, citing the first part of *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*), “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” (“Lehre vom ästhetischen Urteil”), which had appeared five years earlier than Schiller’s essay.

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- 8 The ideas of Schiller and Kant continue to resonate here. This idea of originality and refusal to imitate recalls Kant's ideas of intellectual autonomy outlined in his 1784 essay "Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?" ("Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?").
- 9 Bekker presumably includes Wagner and Berlioz in the "Liszt school." Franz Brendel, editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, introduced the term "New German School" in 1859 and included both composers.
- 10 The idea of symphonic "Becoming" is a thread throughout Bekker's commentary on the symphonies, most notably in the discussion of the Third (see, for example, pp. 259-61). Bekker frequently capitalizes the word "Werden" ("Becoming"), signifying its use as a noun. In this translation, I capitalize the word "becoming" in certain instances where it is particularly appropriate. In others, I leave it without an initial capital according to my judgment. Here, where it is paired with the word "growing" ("Wachsen"), it does not seem warranted, for example.
- 11 The entire passage from "The first movements of the 'Eroica,' the 'Pastorale,' and the Ninth . . ." is quoted by Theodor Adorno in a discussion of similar concepts. Adorno introduces the Bekker quotation with his own interpretation of the idea: "Beethoven's mightiest symphonic movements pronounce a celebratory 'That is it' in repeating what has already existed in any case, present what is merely a regained identity as the Other, assert it as significant. The classical Beethoven glorifies what is because it cannot be other than it is by demonstrating its irresistibility" (Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992], p. 63). The Bekker quotation follows on p. 64.
- 12 Bekker's distancing of the Austrian composers from the "organicist" models of analysis favored by Heinrich Schenker is notable. The animosity between Bekker and Schenker is well-documented, and neither man had any sympathy for the other's critical approach. Much of the mutual disrespect stemmed from Schenker's criticisms of Bekker's espousal of hermeneutics and Bekker's attacks on Schenker (which the latter saw as retaliatory) in his capacity as music critic of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* between 1911 and 1925. These barbs were typically in connection with the writings of both men on Beethoven. Universal Edition and its director Emil Hertzka were caught in the middle of the antipathy between the two men. A comprehensive account of the Schenker/Bekker disputes, with links to relevant documents from Schenker's side in both German and English, can be found at <http://www.schenkerdocumentsonline.org/profiles/person/entity-000057.html> (accessed March 5, 2012). Bekker does not mention Schenker by name here or elsewhere in the book.
- 13 The organic metaphors and language used by Bekker here and elsewhere, often using terms such as "germinating" and "becoming," bring to mind Goethe's concept of the "Urpflanz," or "archetypal plant." Bekker makes reference to Goethe on several occasions throughout the book, not only in connection with the Eighth Symphony. Goethe is of course closely associated with some of Schubert's most familiar song compositions, which makes these allusions in the context of the "Austrian" symphonists even more striking.
- 14 The most relevant example of this in Mahler is the opening of the Third Symphony.
- 15 After indirectly invoking Goethe, Bekker here seems to be doing the same for another figure closely associated with Mahler, Friedrich Nietzsche, particularly *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, 1872), whose title is distinctly reflected in the structure of this sentence.
- 16 This type of "introduction" appears to be modeled on that of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth, to which Bruckner's openings, including that of the Fourth Symphony, are often compared.
- 17 Adorno also quotes this entire passage beginning with "From the theme as such . . ." The quotation and the



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subsequent material of this paragraph is extremely similar to and influential for Adorno's own approach, but Adorno seeks to reach beyond his predecessor. He follows the quotation thus: "However, Bekker underestimates the extent to which Mahler mobilized the constructive forces of the system, however much he may have been perplexed by them. In the productive conflict of the contradictory elements his art flourishes. That is why it is so foolish to patronize him as a composer caught between the ages" (*Mahler*, p. 65). Because Bekker is discussing Bruckner, not Mahler, in the passage quoted by Adorno, this comment is at least somewhat disingenuous.

- 18 In a discussion of the Finale of the (Mahler) Ninth Symphony, Christopher Orlo Lewis takes issue with Bekker here. After quoting and paraphrasing Bekker's views on why Bruckner's finale movements are unsuccessful, he states that "Bekker misrepresents Bruckner in several respects," claiming that Bekker's grouping of German symphonists is artificial and that both Bruckner and Mahler owe much to Schumann and Brahms. Making the point that Bruckner only placed the Adagio in third position in his last two symphonies, he then goes on to say that "Bekker seems to underestimate the dramatic value of these powerful third movement dances," which is contradicted by Bekker's statement, immediately following the passage quoted by Lewis, that Bruckner's scherzo movements are "mighty demonstrations of strength." The strongest points made by Lewis are that the Bruckner finale "always makes some tonal point" and that in the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, "the Finale is not nearly so rhapsodic and unconscious of its goal as Bekker suggests." See Lewis, *Tonal Coherence in Mahler's Ninth Symphony* (Studies in Musicology: No. 79; Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1984), p. 102. For further discussion of Bekker's critical stance toward Bruckner and of his intellectual relationship with his contemporaries, the Bruckner scholars August Halm and Ernst Kurth, see my introduction, pp. 4-5 and 8-9.
- 19 Yet another echo of the ideas in Schiller's "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry." See note 5 above.
- 20 While this is a provocative statement, it should be noted that Bekker was Jewish.
- 21 Bekker's concept of the "Finale Symphony" is not without problems. Constantin Floros called it an "extreme thesis" and said that it "does not do justice to all symphonic works of the master" (*Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, trans. Vernon Wicker [Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1992], p. 67). The idea is, however, the basis for Bekker's analysis of all the symphonies, and for him it is the principal reason for including *Das Lied von der Erde* among the symphonic works rather than regarding it as a mere song cycle. The abstract and metaphorical characterizations in the preceding paragraph become more convincing in the course of Bekker's analyses.
- 22 Bekker's unusual language here appears to be a financial metaphor. The "supplements" to the "principal sum" of the first movement could also be read as "interest" or "dividends" in this sense.
- 23 The concepts here display a similarity to Arnold Schoenberg's "Grundgestalt," where all musical events in a piece are connected to and dependent upon the totality of the work, including motivic, harmonic, rhythmic, and textual information. The "individual personality" described by Bekker is potentially synonymous with the "Grundgestalt." This type of terminology, however, would have been unusual in Bekker's hermeneutic approach to analysis.
- 24 Bekker's logic here raises several problems. By relegating the first three movements of the Sixth Symphony to the status of "preludes," he avoids the problem of the order of the inner movements, which would have ramifications for the symphony moving "directly upward in a straight line." The argument, however, becomes clearer and more justified in his analysis of each respective work. Bekker will later say that the Finale of the First Symphony almost bursts the boundaries of form that are imposed upon it, which may explain the assertion

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that the movement received its due significance “externally, but not yet internally.” More problematic is the exclusion of the Second Symphony from this group of works, but since Bekker will later describe that symphony’s Finale as a “piecemeal” structure (including its external connections to the third and fourth movements), his reluctance to view it as the goal of a “two-part construction” is understandable. Indeed, Bekker’s analysis of the Second is curiously weighted toward the first movement, which he was apparently reluctant to assign the status of a “prelude,” as he does with the first movements of the Sixth and the Eighth. The reasons for this become apparent in the discussion of the next group of symphonies, in which the Second is included.

- 25 In Donald Mitchell’s thoughtful article on the Fourth Symphony, “‘Swallowing the Programme’: Mahler’s Fourth Symphony” in *The Mahler Companion*, edited by Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 187-216, the author adds a more sophisticated dimension to the symphony’s “unpretentious,” “simple,” and “unproblematic” aspects, in short, those associated with the work’s “childlike” or “innocent” character. He analyzes the symphony as a journey from “Experience” to “Innocence.” See also the chapter on the Fourth Symphony, pp. 325-26, along with note 5 for that chapter, p. 389. Bekker’s “lightly programmatic echo” is interesting in light of Mitchell’s title. The program is “swallowed” in that the moment of revelation for its source is postponed until the Finale. Bekker’s own analysis of the Fourth actually comes close to that conclusion.
- 26 These assertions are also debatable. Despite the actual content and the fact that it takes up far fewer pages of the score, the Finale of the Ninth typically lasts much longer than the middle movements in terms of performance time. Its status as a “goal” is a principal point in Lewis’s argument about the “tonal plot” of the symphony. See *Tonal Coherence*, pp. 105-6.
- 27 There is an obvious comparison to Schubert here, but in an inverted way. Schubert is often considered a song composer who wrote symphonies, while Mahler would be more likely judged as a symphonic composer who wrote songs. The cross-pollination between song and symphony in Mahler finds its Schubertian counterpart in works such as the “Wanderer” Fantasy, D. 760, the “Trout” Quintet, D. 667, and the “Death and the Maiden” String Quartet, D. 810, for which Mahler drafted an arrangement for string orchestra.
- 28 Adorno quotes much of this extremely important paragraph, from the second sentence to this point, in connection with his observations about Mahler and his divergence from “subjective lyric.” See *Mahler*, pp. 74-75.
- 29 Compare this passage to the closing section of the chapter on the Fourth Symphony, pp. 385-88.
- 30 The “layers of distorting educated intellect” are similar to the “intellectual guidance” that constitutes a self-imposed immaturity and a lack of intellectual autonomy in Kant’s “What is Enlightenment?”
- 31 This highly provocative idea is echoed by Adorno, who says that “Mahler cannot be reconciled with the notion of standard competence.” He makes reference to Debussy walking out of the Paris premiere of the Second Symphony, stating that to him, “it may have sounded as Henri Rousseau’s paintings looked among the impressionists in the Jeu de Paume” (*Mahler*, pp. 19-20). Rousseau’s works have been described as “post-Impressionist” and are frequently described as deliberately “naive” or “primitive.”
- 32 This is an important perception. Bekker himself fails to recognize sonata form in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony, while later writers frequently analyze the movement as such. The most extreme case is that of the Finale of the Sixth Symphony. Robert Samuels compared several diverging analyses of the movement in some sort of sonata form, including Bekker’s, and none of them match in the designations of boundaries and sections, particularly the “line” between the exposition and the development. See Samuels, *Mahler’s Sixth*

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*Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 72-75. It is certainly significant that Bekker himself recognized the problematic nature of Mahler's sonata forms.

- 33 This word will remain untranslated and capitalized throughout the translation.
- 34 While Bekker's primary point here is interesting—particularly the lesson from Bruckner about the “dangerous power of the Adagio”—the summary is arguably too dismissive of the expressive powers in certain slow movements, particularly those of the Fourth and the Sixth. The one in the Fourth is in fact marked “Poco Adagio,” so assigning it to the Andante type is problematic. That of the Sixth is an Andante, but it can be argued that it carries as much emotional weight as the Adagietto of the Fifth, which also has a “songlike” character but is assigned to the Adagio type, albeit with a qualification.
- 35 The Eighth.
- 36 Bekker presumably means that the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not primarily known as a great age of choral music, and that the most familiar pieces of such music are written with full orchestra, treating the voices in largely the same manner as the instruments. He seems to be contrasting this age with the greatest times and realms of vocal music, such as the German baroque, the age of Bach.
- 37 As compared to the “inner necessity of [Mahler's] use of the human voice within the symphony.”
- 38 Adorno quotes the paragraph to this point. While Bekker's assertion here about “hardness and ruthlessness in the treatment of color” is indeed provocative, Adorno takes this provocative language even further. He prefaces the Bekker quotation with the following remarkable statements: “Nowhere is Mahler's music inspired primarily by a sense for sound. In this he was, initially, rather inept. The lack of expertise is remarkable in a conductor of his experience. At first he was seldom able to achieve the glowing orchestral tutti that even the most minor representatives of the New German School copied from Wagner, insofar as he ever aimed at it.” Following the Bekker quotation, however, Adorno continues: “But instrumentation in Mahler, which, by the criteria of Wagner or Schreker, appears dry or incorporeal, suits its purpose not through asceticism but as a true portrayal of the composition, and to that extent is decades ahead of its time. Here too virtue and necessity collaborate” (*Mahler*, p. 116).
- 39 On the subject of Mahler's performance indications, Adorno makes the following observation: “The expression marks, like many peculiarities of the instrumentation in the mature works, are protective measures against the performers . . . Mahler attempted to achieve a foolproof composition. His wisdom . . . is confirmed by the fact that the very mistakes he tried to prevent occur again and again; for example, eminent conductors invariably speed up where the score warns against it. Concern for correct reproduction became a canon of the composition. To compose music in such a way that the performance cannot destroy it, and so virtually to abolish performance, means to compose with absolute clarity and unambiguity” (*Mahler*, p. 108). Regarding dynamics and orchestration, he states, in connection to the Sixth Symphony in particular, that “its frequently paradoxical combinations of forte and piano in different instruments and groups create a sound that is as it is through preventing what would result from more conventional composition or directions” (p. 116).
- 40 Adorno makes a similar point: “Only where other elements, like melody and metrics, become specific do they enrich harmony with dissonant arpeggios and degrees” (*Mahler*, p. 109).
- 41 See note 5 in the chapter on the Sixth Symphony, p. 536.
- 42 In a letter to Willem Mengelberg. See *Gustav Mahler Briefe*, edited and revised by Herta Blaukopf (Vienna and

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Hamburg: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1982), p. 312 (Letter 360).

- 43 These ideas evoke Schoenberg and his concept of “developing variation.” David B. Greene adds another interesting layer to Bekker’s words here: “Bekker does not seem to notice that Mahler explicitly alludes to periodic grouping at the same time that he makes periodic grouping, in the end, untenable. Consequently, Bekker misses the possibility that Mahler’s phrase structure may evoke the common-sense concept of consciousness in order to reject it and replace it with a different understanding of consciousness.” See Greene, *Mahler: Consciousness and Temporality* (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1984), p. 32.
- 44 Again, at the end of the chapter, Bekker arrives at Schiller’s idea of “naive genius.”