

# Arnold Schering, “Die Eroica, eine Homer-Symphonie Beethovens?”: Translated with an Introduction and Commentary

*Translator's Introduction by Glenn Stanley*

With this essay on the “Eroica” Symphony, the eminent German musicologist Arnold Schering (1877–1941) began the second phase of an ambitious project to develop a method for musical hermeneutics and apply it to the interpretation of individual works. The programmatic interpretation of the symphony, which makes Hector, the Trojan warrior of Homer’s *Iliad*, the principal hero of the work rather than Napoleon, inaugurated a series of articles and books devoted to the explication of the symbolic content of Beethoven’s most important instrumental music. Beethoven, Schering argued, was stimulated to compose through his engagement with literary works, which functioned as programs that were presented symbolically in his music.<sup>1</sup> After composing, he suppressed the programs. Although Schering often labored to present arguments about their plausibility, he was unable to provide concrete evidence for such programs and none has since emerged. Hence they must be considered fictions, products of Schering’s own rich musical and literary imagination. Not surprisingly, as the editor’s note (p. 89, n. 1) at the beginning of Schering’s original “Eroica” essay in the *Neues Beethoven Jahrbuch* (1934) makes clear, the Beethoven analyses were controversial to say the least, sometimes provoking ridicule. But Schering’s interpretations have never been entirely dismissed, indeed in the context of recent interest in reception history and hermeneutics, his work has received more attention (some of it guardedly positive) than in the decades following its first appearance and his death in 1941. To the best of my knowledge this is the first published translation of a Beethoven work analysis by Schering; Edward A. Lippman (1990:185–207) has translated one of his essays on the nature of musical symbolism (see pp. 72–73, n. 4). I hope it will be of use to readers interested in critical methodologies and Beethoven reception.

The theoretical basis for Schering’s Beethoven criticism had been largely worked out in the first phase of his research, which produced a series of studies begun in 1912 on critical methodologies and the nature of musical symbolism (see appendix for a select bibliography).<sup>2</sup> Schering developed his ideas about symbolism with respect to Johann Sebastian Bach’s texted music, showing how Bach represented emotions, ideas, human actions, natural events, and objects in music.<sup>3</sup> These different

kinds of textual content gave rise to corresponding types of symbolism in Bach's music, and the interpretation of symbolic content became the basis for the hermeneutic method.

Schering established a confusingly dense network of categories, subcategories, and hierarchies in his attempt to answer questions about the symbolic process *per se* and about the forms of musical symbolism. He established two fundamental classes of symbolism that were linked to specific music symbols. Symbols of emotions and psychological states (*Affekt- und Stimmungs-symbolik*) are represented by musical symbols of motion and sound (rhythm, melody, dynamics, etc.). These are elementary symbols that can be grasped by the listener intuitively. On a higher level are two kinds of symbols of ideas (*Vorstellungs-symbolik*): depictive symbolism, which is musically transmitted by word-painting (*Tonmalelerei*) and conceptual symbols, which involve musical rhetoric, historical styles, specific techniques (e.g., fugue), and culturally derived symbols (e.g., the Protestant chorale).<sup>4</sup> Their recognition requires varying degrees of musical knowledge and the ability to make abstract associations between musical events and their referential meanings.

An ardent non-formalist,<sup>5</sup> Schering was convinced that any music claiming aesthetic significance, whether texted or purely instrumental, must possess a symbolic content that is derived from extra-musical ideas. Musical ideas alone would not suffice; they would produce mere *Spielmusik*, whose aesthetic quality did not transcend mere play in a Kantian sense of the term. Moreover, the degree of aesthetic content in a work and aesthetic pleasure to be derived from it depend on the quality of symbolic content and the degree of its concentration in the work. Armed with his theory, Schering could proceed to the hermeneutic analysis of the instrumental music that possessed these attributes to the highest degree, posed the greatest problems of interpretation, and over the course of its reception history provoked the strongest methodological controversies: Beethoven's instrumental music. But he needed programs—content sources whose symbolic representation stimulated composition.

Schering selected the texts with a knowledge of Beethoven's reading preferences; they ranged from classical antiquity—Homer was one of Beethoven's favorite authors—to Italian Renaissance poets and Shakespeare, to the great contemporary German masters, Goethe and Schiller.<sup>6</sup> As Schering would have it, Beethoven suppressed these texts because he was sensitive to contemporary opposition to program music and also felt that music could and should stand on its own and nevertheless be "correctly" understood. This was possible because the musical ideas—motives and themes, harmonies, forms, in short every aspect of a work—were conceived through a mental process Schering called "transubstantiation" (a

term borrowed from the eucharistic transformation of Christ's body and blood into bread and wine), in which the content in a literary text is distilled into music and thus transmitted through the work. Hence a hermeneutic discussion of the music requires the "discovery" of the programs and the analysis of their symbolic representation in music. The use of explicatory programs derived from specific literary works originated in the mid-eighteenth century; one of the most notable early instances was Herinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg's underlay of Hamlet's monologue, "To be or not to be," to a keyboard fantasy by C. P. E. Bach, and the practice flourished in the nineteenth century (Momigny, Wagner et al.).<sup>7</sup> But this approach differed essentially from Schering's because the literary texts were to be understood metaphorically, as a convenient means of discovering common spiritual content. It was never claimed that the musical works under discussion arose as a result of the composers' reading and musical reinterpretation of the literary texts upon which the critics drew.

Schering found the program for the first three movements of the "Eroica" Symphony in the *Iliad*. The main part of his discussion focuses on the first movement. His decision to begin with the "Eroica" is not coincidental. As he notes at the beginning of the essay, the Third Symphony had always been one of the most discussed pieces in Beethoven's *œuvre*, and the rich field of previous interpretations provided an opportunity for Schering, an aggressively polemical scholar, to expose weaknesses in the arguments of these writers in order to emphasize the rigor of his own methodology. (The astounding lack of self-awareness in this respect is wonderfully ironic.) His primary targets in this essay are A. B. Marx and Paul Bekker, whose work he both censures and praises (he relies on Bekker's discussion of the finale as based on the Prometheus legend rather than Napoleon). Schering does not, however, acknowledge two early French interpretations that were almost certainly known to him and come closer to his own reading: a lecture given at a Parisian society for the fine arts in the 1830s that was published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1844, and a concert review by Berlioz for the *Gazette musicale de Paris* in 1837. Both associate the symphony not only with Napoleon, but also with the *Iliad*, most notably the scherzo, which, it was argued, depicts games in celebration of fallen heroes.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps Schering felt justified in not disclosing these interpretations, because for him they embodied the vague impressionistic character he objected to in nineteenth-century criticism that treated literary programs only as metaphors.<sup>9</sup> Schering is concrete, quoting chapter and verse, a practice he continued in his later work: in the first three movements of the "Eroica," formal sections, shorter passages, and small details (e.g., the C# at the beginning of the first movement and the "premature" horn

entrance in the retransition of the development) are directly related to passages in the *Iliad*. Unfortunately—and this is symptomatic of the later Beethoven interpretations—he does not apply his symbol theory in any meaningful and explicit way. Never in the “Eroica” essay, and only rarely in his other writings, does the reader learn about the specific kind of symbolism that is operative at a given moment. Only at the beginning of the essay does he adumbrate some of the theoretical considerations introduced in previous essays and briefly discuss the nature of Beethoven’s symbolic language. It appears that Schering wished to distinguish theoretical from exegetical emphases, as if he felt that work-interpretation should not be encumbered with a detailed technical analysis involving the varied categories of symbolism that he had already established in the theoretical essays.

It is a truism, but a worthy one, that an interpretation of a text reveals as much about the mind of the critic as it does about the original author. The symbol theory and the programs it required are instruments for a method developed within a synthetic cultural-historical perspective informed by Diltheyian historiography and hermeneutics and by theories of the unity of the arts and intellectual life (*Zeitgeist*). Schering’s work both supports and is motivated by an implicit valorization of Beethoven as the equal of a Homer, a Shakespeare, or a Schiller and the elevation of his instrumental music to the status of the great canonic masterpieces of literature. As for the specific work analyses, if we accept Schering on his own terms, suspending our disbelief in the programs, we discover a sensitive listener who writes vividly and highly musically in enthusiastic response to music that moves him deeply. The musical analysis is sound, marked by great sensitivity to detail, although not particularly deep or systematic. For what it is worth, the programs correspond well to the musical events for the most part, despite one glaring inconsistency: Schering makes Patroclus the victim of the battle he locates in the development of the first movement, and Hector, whose death is not portrayed in his reading of the symphony, the fallen hero whose body is carried in the funeral procession of the second movement.

We can admire his interest in the hermeneutic process, which comes to life with his repeated use of verbs signifying purposeful endeavor (*trachten, versuchen*) and the attainment of a heuristic goal (*ankommen, nachkommen*). These words emphasize his, his readers’, and other authors’ acts of discovering meaning. And we can note—with skepticism or delight—Schering’s own gift for metaphor and his own “heroic” style, which, however, produce texts that are often obscure in meaning and therefore very difficult to translate.<sup>10</sup> He himself becomes a co-author of the “Eroica” he describes, adding (if only dubious) meaning to Beethoven just as he claimed Beethoven did for Homer. Perhaps it is not *Beethoven’s*, but the “Eroica” is certainly *Schering’s* “Homer” Symphony.

*Notes*

1. A single exception to this rule is found in Schering's program for the Fifth Symphony (1934c, see appendix), whose topic was the idea of leadership (*Führung*). This essay was published in 1934 and concludes with an implicit but unmistakable reference to Hitler's accession to power and the changes sweeping Germany. This and other evidence, notably the dedication of his most important book on Beethoven (1936a) to "The Young Germany," and his role in the reorganization of the German musicological society and the removal of Alfred Einstein from his position as editor of the *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* in 1933–34, is damning and has led to highly negative portrayals of Schering in the 1930s (e.g., Pamela Potter 1998). Schering was, however, never a member of the Nazi party and his scholarship does not reflect, in any meaningful way, the methodologies and the ideological and propagandistic agendas identified with the Third Reich. In my view, Schering was an opportunist, who did what he felt necessary to retain his academic position and influence and maintain his own intellectual independence. In the discussion of the Fifth Symphony, he concludes his remarks on leadership with a list of historical figures who have embodied this principle. The list begins with Judas Maccabaeus, the Old-Testament Hebrew military leader. Hitler's name does not appear in the list or elsewhere in the essay. Is the irony intentional? Was Schering a skilled practitioner of double-talk? I plan to write an essay on Schering and the Nazi question, which will incorporate archival material never before discussed.

2. In his seminal essay, "Zur Grundlegung der musikalischen Hermeneutik" (1914), Schering's discussion of musical hermeneutics emphasizes psychophysiological correspondences between musical and organic processes—a twentieth-century update on Baroque *Affektenlehre*. Here symbolism is viewed as a peripheral, extraordinary phenomenon, absent from all texted vocal music because this music is directly expressive of the thoughts and feelings contained in the text, and present in instrumental music only in explicitly programmatic works such as the "Eroica" Symphony or the *Faust* Symphony by Liszt. Schering shifted symbolism to the center of his ideas on musical meaning in the 1920s, when he began writing the Bach essays and several articles on more general aspects of musical symbolism.

3. Schering was not the first writer on music to make use of the symbol concept. In his essays on Bach, he praised but also criticized Albert Schweitzer's pioneering book on symbolism in Bach's sacred choral and organ music ([1905] 1908). He also referred to an article on the same topic by Hugo Goldschmidt (1921). To the best of my knowledge, Schweitzer and Goldschmidt were the first to discuss the expressive and depictive properties of music (including Wagnerian leitmotives) in terms of specific types of musical symbolism. Earlier uses of the term had been more metaphorical or abstract; the two authors are very concrete in labeling passages as symbolic and identifying the kind of symbolism they construe. However, although they explicitly announce their anti-formalist position, their work has no theoretical underpinning; it is conceptually naïve. Schering was the first to attempt a systematic, rigorous investigation of music symbolism.

4. Schering never set forth a general theory of musical symbolism. Two writings approach a synthetic discussion: the 1927 paper given in Halle and the article

based on it (see appendix) and a later article, "Musikalische Symbolkunde" (1936c), which has been translated by Lippman (1990:185–207). On symbol theory, see Lippman (1992:359–70). See also Stanley (2002).

5. Schering's interest in symbolism and his anti-formalist aesthetics were certainly influenced by the German musicologist Hermann Kretzschmar and the philosopher Johannes Volkelt, both of whom taught Schering at the University of Leipzig. Kretzschmar apparently introduced the term "hermeneutics" into musicological discourse and published numerous articles and books on methodology and critical work analyses. See Ian Bent (1994:31–38) and Kretzschmar ([1898] 1994). As early as 1876, Volkelt had argued that the question of symbolism lay at the heart of the great aesthetic controversy of the time, the debate about form versus content, and had proclaimed that the concept of the symbol, of "content becoming form," "will help lead the aesthetics of content to victory over formalism." Symbolism was the primary focus of his multi-volume *System of Aesthetics* (Volkelt 1905–14). In the 1920s, interest in symbolism intensified, spurred on by the work of Ernst Cassirer in linguistics and philosophy and Erwin Panofsky in art history. Schering gave his first public lecture on musical symbolism at an interdisciplinary session on symbolism of the 1927 conference of the Society for Aesthetics and the Sciences of the General Arts at Halle. Cassirer gave the keynote address. The lectures were published in the *Kongressbericht, Halle, Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 21 (1927).

6. Beethoven owned copies of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in German translation. He mentioned Homer several times in correspondence, although never during the composition of the *Eroica* and never in connection with the symphony, and entered several passages from both epics in his diaries. See Maynard Solomon (1988:254).

7. On Gerstenberg, see Helm (1972). On other instances of programmatic explication with a specific text or an invented program see Bonds (1991:169–71) and Bent (1994:58–68, on Wagner, 127–40, on Momigny).

8. The reception history of the symphony, including the relationship of Schering's essay to earlier interpretations, has been discussed in detail by Scott Burnham (1992:4–24) and Thomas Sipe (1998:54–75). Sipe also discusses the early French authors (59–61).

9. See Schering (1937d; 1936a:13–121).

10. Because I regard this essay as a literary text as much as an analytical one, I have attempted as close to a literal translation as was possible. Rarely, and only when no reasonable alternative presented itself, did I modernize Schering's language, or simplify his syntax, because I wanted to preserve his elaborate style (which was for its own time modern) and sometimes weighty rhetoric. The meaning of more than several passages was obscure and certain terms were used in a very colloquial fashion, notably *tonlos*, which appears several times but never once with respect to absolute silence!

# The Eroica: Beethoven's Homer Symphony?<sup>1</sup>

By Arnold Schering

Translated by Glenn Stanley

Beethoven's *Eroica* has always held special interest for critics. It originated in conjunction with some notable circumstances, and its contents cannot be easily revealed in a single, clear interpretation free of contradictions. Each [critic] tried to consider the meaning of Beethoven's concept of heroism and—from Marx until Nef—came up with beautiful and poetic ideas. They mentioned Bonaparte, but otherwise did not consider him further, which corresponds to the fact that the work is only externally connected with his name. Even if Beethoven (according to Ries)<sup>2</sup> was attracted to the brilliant First Consul and inspired by him to conceive a work in heroic style, it is difficult to believe seriously that the great soldier, whose most famous deeds came after 1803, was the spiritual godfather [Pate] for its conception.

With which aspect of his person, about whom the reports and rumors had no doubt produced a still very sketchy image, could Beethoven have begun, if not simply with the idea of the extraordinary nature of the entire phenomenon? Why did he give the funeral march already to the second movement of the symphony?<sup>3</sup> Who were the mourners of the deceased? Why did he dedicate the entire work expressly to "the memory" of a hero [see note 2], indeed to one whom Beethoven no longer thought of as alive?

That Beethoven again associated the symphony with Bonaparte after its completion can easily be explained by his wish to honor him further as an expression of thanks for the initial stimulus [to composition].<sup>4</sup> There is no connection—this has long been known—between the music itself and the future French Emperor. Not even to his character, which on the basis of the musical interpretations [*Deutungen*], must have been an unusual mixture of strength and irresolution.<sup>5</sup> The famous destruction of the Bonaparte title page meant little more than the cancellation of the original dedication to the great man. Moreover, Beethoven biographers should allow the English General Abercrombie [*sic*]<sup>6</sup> to rest in peace and treat all further anecdotes about the conception of the [individual] movements as that which they are: rumors that do not reveal anything decisive about that which first sparked the flame [of inspiration] in the breast of the composer, even if, for whatever reason, they issued from Beethoven himself.

Interpreters of the work's meaning have usually focused on an impersonal, ideal character and viewed Beethoven's music as the expression of

thoughts and feelings that accompany the mental image of an equally abstract heroic life. Because certain groups of affects in the work are nothing other than clearly understandable, a certain common line of interpretation was attained. Today things have reached a point that no one sees or expects any problems. Nonetheless, although the symphony stands fast as an element of the cultural-idea "Beethoven" in our cultural heritage, although it speaks a clear, concise, and comprehensible language to anyone who listens with understanding, although a kind of interpretative canon has been developed by the important conductors, the question still remains whether all the mysteries have already been solved. For performance practice in all probability, but for the scholar, not yet. I have long been convinced that Beethoven—just like Sebastian Bach—possessed a "musical language" [*Tonsprache*], in which the clarity of ideas and affects is concealed behind a musical symbolism, the key to which we have not yet rediscovered. This key appears to have been lost already during Beethoven's lifetime, probably through the advent of the new romantic mentality. In his late years he complained to Schindler about the prevailing poverty of imagination. "The time," he said, "in which I composed my sonatas, was more poetic than now, for which reason such suggestions [about content] were superfluous. Back then everyone could sense in the Adagio of the Third Sonata in D [op. 10, no. 3] the representation of a melancholy state of the soul, with all the diverse nuances of light and shadow in the image of melancholy in its different phases. A title providing the key for this was not necessary. And everyone found in the two Sonatas of op. 14 the struggle between two principles or the representation of a dialogue between two persons, because it was so obvious in each case."<sup>7</sup>

These suggestive remarks have been taken to heart by all critics, and none of the explications of Beethoven's works has failed to apply wholeheartedly the affects in their attempt to pursue the meaning of the music. But it appears that Beethoven's "clarity" goes much further and pertains to things that cannot be correctly described only in terms of feelings. Just as we cannot scientifically approach Bach if we try to understand him only in terms of the emotions, it will not work with Beethoven. The study of Bach's musical symbolism teaches us that his affects—the expression of emotions—were never based on a vague, hazy, non-objective psychology, but rather were always tied to specific ideas, images, and impressions of the imagination. Later on, this remarkable link between the sense perceptions and feeling loosened, but never was completely lost. Beethoven must have still possessed it to a high degree. On the whole, I believe that much more of the Baroque intellectual heritage remained valid for him than we have hitherto believed. In all likelihood the affects will remain the



first and fundamental basis for the interpretation of his music, because they are related to the simple, elemental sensory facts about which there is little to argue. But this interpretation will only lead to basic comprehension [*Verständnis*] not to true knowledge [*Erkenntnis*], because knowledge activates the intellectual spirit, and spiritual content can only be attained through comparative, discursive, inquiring thought. If we want to make progress, our humanistic Beethoven scholarship in the future must do more to discover Beethoven's musical language and its symbolism, which differs considerably from that of Bach. We may do so in the hope that we can still unravel some mysteries.

Whoever in this context thinks about program music in the customary sense, errs as much for Beethoven as for Bach and will find the following discussion incomprehensible. Perhaps we even need a new music aesthetics that avoids the failures of the Romantics and develops new concepts. But this is not the place to pursue this further. Only this may perhaps be said, that there is nothing in the intellectual, emotional, and objective physical world that cannot assume musical form in a composer's imagination. On the strength of a mysterious process, which can be called musical transubstantiation [the eucharistic transformation of bread and wine to the flesh and blood of Christ], images of the fantasy and the mind become music. That which is conceived or perceived transforms itself into tone according to still undiscovered laws about the interdependence of mind and soul. It discards everything that cannot be musically transferred and retains only that which can be communicated through sound and the rules governing it, and in as concentrated form as can be imagined, that is, at the core of its essence. If we knew how an artist like Beethoven, for example, undertook this kind of transubstantiation, then we could discover such essences everywhere. The old controversy that took place years ago, whether the "Einfall" [a purely musical thought] or the "poetic idea"<sup>8</sup> was decisive for Beethoven, can be resolved in a Solomonic manner: neither will suffice without the other. Transubstantiation means nothing other than the transformation of every kind of impression into a tonal event. Every "Einfall" is itself a transubstantiation, whether a conscious process or one arising from the apparent unconsciousness.

Let us, however, return to the *Eroica*. The situation in the first movement has been recognized by all writers on the movement. They all agree about one point: that in the development Beethoven leads his hero into a battle from which he emerges the victor. The intensification of technique towards an extreme realism permits no doubt about the intentions. But they are less sure about the sections that frame this. Instead of asking how Beethoven linked the spirit of this realistic battle with the preceding and

following [music], they base their interpretation on the conception of a quite general, supposedly heroic portrait of character. Like Haydn, who acknowledged that he depicted "moral characters" in his symphonies, they believe that this explanation, which is certainly important, is enough. The master wanted to depict, they say, every essential aspect of this portrait of the hero: courage, determination, energy, reflection, depression, etc., and simultaneously to create a great synthesis of these characteristics and affects. This is largely correct; these interpretations are, at first glance, in part convincing. But when we look closer, we get the impression that a very confused psychological approach is operative here, an approach that lacks all logic. It indiscriminately throws together every possible impulse or emotion and does not shy from placing diametrically opposed catastrophes of the soul within spans of a few measures. The first fifteen measures alone supposedly establish the dual characters of strength and melancholy, the latter already with an undertone of tragedy. The hero appears to constantly change his form and color, like a kaleidoscope of the soul, like a ball tossed back and forth by opposing internal forces. The peculiarity of the formal structure, the strange disposition of themes, the exceptional instrumentation—about which only immaterial or self-evident claims have been made—these remain unexplained. I have nowhere found a clear explication of the spiritual contents of the movement. On the basis of the indefinite, vacillating analysis of the affects, one could well imagine a different but equally logical course of musical action.

Did Beethoven really conceive of the movement only as a vague character portrait and nevertheless risked placing the listener amidst the events of a real battle in the development? The richness of the ideas and the originality of the structure force us to assume that other, more important matters played a role.

After a long intellectual journey, for which the remarkable measures 3–15 formed the point of departure, I have become convinced that Beethoven took his image of the hero not from his own time, but rather from classical antiquity—to be precise, from Homer's *Iliad*. It appears to have been the character of Hector, more than any other, which radiated an extraordinary heroism for Beethoven, the enthusiastic reader and admirer of Homer since his time in Bonn. But this figure was not simply an abstraction, an ideal image without profile or contour, that he imagined. He extracted certain scenes from the poem, transubstantiated them into music, and with them designed the first three movements of the symphony. The numerous passages of a melancholy and resigned quality were the clues that led me to this. They seemed irreconcilable with the image of the man of deeds that is portrayed in the development. I believed that many of them must be related to a feminine character. The

analysis confirmed this, hence it may be stated that Beethoven did not only include the hero (Hector) but also his wife (Andromache) in his narrative field of vision.

Book 6 of the *Iliad* contains the famous episode of Hector's farewell to Andromache and to his young son Astyanax. If I am not completely mistaken, it was this which sparked Beethoven's fantasy. The first part of the first movement pertains to it. To it Beethoven related in the development the battle scenes (the death of Patroclus) that are depicted in Book 16, about which more will be said. In Book 23 we read of the war games and competitions in honor of the fallen Patroclus, which we rediscover in the scherzo of the symphony. And in Book 24 the funeral service for Hector, slain by Achilles, provided the sublime model for the funeral march.

The association of Homer and Beethoven is not surprising. Nor is the process which in Beethoven's mind transformed classical ideas into music. As we know, such ideas extend as far as the sketches for the Tenth Symphony and may rest, hidden from us, within some other works as well.<sup>9</sup> Beethoven was a spiritual child of German idealism; classical antiquity was a second homeland for him. As it bore fruit in Schiller, who translated large parts of the *Aeneid*, as it brought forth Goethe's *Iphigenie*, so may it have inspired the soul of Beethoven to the highest degree. I will skip over what can be read in the biographies about his interest in antiquity and his own comments about that, and only mention that the *Eroica* finale, in [its] association with the Prometheus music, is directly linked to Greek mythology.<sup>10</sup>

It has never been doubted that, with the *Eroica*, Beethoven wanted to write a program symphony. The work will lose nothing and retain its value for us when more details about the program emerge. It does not appear superfluous to emphasize this, because a one-dimensional aesthetic loves to devalue program music as a concept and reduce it to music of a second order. We can best protect ourselves from such misunderstanding by considering that Beethoven did not just meekly retrace Homer, although he did conform to the poem in its general outlines, but rather freely transformed into music the impressions he received, and, where it became necessary, made further independent additions to the poem.

When, therefore, in the following, we spin out the thread with which Beethoven wove the wonderful web of his work, the sobriety of each and every statement must be kept in mind. They may account only for the basic relationships between event and process, between action and experience, without distorting [anything] through the slightest overzealousness. Moreover, the step-by-step demonstration of the chain of small elements that directly inspired the creative spirit must always remain meticulous. Hence, only the constantly vivid exposure of each single turn [of events]

and, in response to each one anew, its placement in the broader context guarantee correct understanding. As we have heard, Beethoven did not reckon with Philistines, but rather with [listeners possessing] a talent for fantasy. The historical events themselves were not the primary consideration for Beethoven; instead it was the internal events that they triggered. But how could these have been represented without emphasizing the external ones that could be the basis for the imagination? What we have always admitted for the battle scene in the development, namely that it is one of the clearest and most graphic depictions of fighting in the entire musical literature, we cannot deny about many other parts of the work, which conceal less acoustically evident but similar cases. Everything rests on an inner logic that develops the program, and on the question whether both the music and the program are fully accounted for. Only if there is no other alternative will it be legitimate to reject this interpretation and begin anew.

Marx understood the first two chords in the sense of a “Hark, hark!”<sup>11</sup> That they mean more, namely that the hero energetically arises, will become clear in the following discussion, but it is also revealed in the original version[s] of these measures, which according to Nottebohm (*Ein Skizzenbuch aus dem Jahre 1803*) contain two sketches [ex. 1].<sup>12</sup>

**Example 1:**



Beethoven later weakened this abrupt beginning, which comes in the middle of already unfolding events. But he retained the character of a vehement gesture (Up! Up!). The image in his fantasy that determines the beginning can be thought of in the following way. Hector frees himself from his wife's embracing arms in order to join the fighting. Neither roughly nor boldly, but rather protectively, he tells her of his decision: the hero's theme appears in the most tender form in the basses. The move to C# [m. 7] can only signify a surprise, a kind of reflex facial reaction to that which is revealed in measures 7–15, because just now the loving wife raised her hands in supplication: do not go! [This is] an affective gesture possible only in music, a distillation of Homer's depiction of the scene (Book 6, 405–412):

. . . but Andromache came close to his side weeping, and clasped his hand and spake to him, saying: 'Ah, my husband, this prowess of thine will be thy doom, neither hast thou any pity for thine

infant child nor for hapless me that soon shall be thy widow; for soon will the Achaeans all set upon thee and slay thee. But for me it were better to go down to the grave if I lose thee, for nevermore shall any comfort be mine, when thou hast met thy fate, but only woes.<sup>13</sup>

Animated by the greatest anxiety, this compelling phrase intensifies; it cannot possibly be attributed to the hero, filled with determination, who had just made his decision. We are already in the middle of the action. Soothingly, he answers his wife, and the statement of the theme by the violins and woodwinds (mm. 15–22) has a loving and tender character. He promises her that his unbroken courage and strong hand will win the battle:

Then spake to her great Hector of the flashing helm: 'Woman, I too take thought of all this, but wondrously have I shame of the Trojans, and the Trojans' wives, with trailing robes, if like a coward I skulk apart from the battle. Not doth mine own heart suffer it, seeing I have learnt to be valiant always and to fight amid the foremost Trojans, striving to win my father's great glory and mine own.' (Book 6, 440–46)

This warlike outburst, rising proudly, occurs in mm. 23–45. But Andromache pleads again (in the second theme, mm. 45–55); this time her entreaties are admixed with tenderness. Or is it Astyanax, whom she holds before the father?

Smiling, the father regarded the child, as did the tender mother, and forthwith glorious Hector took the helm from this head and laid it all-gleaming upon the ground. But he kissed his dear son, and fondled him in his arms.<sup>14</sup> (Book 6, 471–74)

Manfully the hero interrupts the tender agitation of his wife (mm. 55–56); he speaks softly and comfortingly to her and reminds her again of [his] duty and [his] love of battle, not without cleverly diminishing its gravity to the fearful woman by emphasizing its sport. Her answer is a new, expressly painful reaction (mm. 83–86, woodwinds). With optimism and infinitely loving devotion Hector would calm her (mm. 87–91, strings), but this, however, calls forth an intensely heavy sighing from his wife (mm. 93–92, woodwinds again). For a moment both sink into dark thoughts of renunciation. But he is steadfast in his decision. He tears himself from her loving embrace and storms away, as the completely broken and quivering woman

reluctantly lets him go (mm. 99ff.). The rhythms of the tenderness- or Astyanax-motive from mm. 45ff. become militant (mm. 113–16), and in a splendid upsurge (mm. 119–31), he shows his beloved how his sword will fulfill its terrible mission:

Dear wife, in no wise, I pray thee, grieve overmuch at heart; no man beyond my fate shall send me forth to Hades . . . Go thou to the house and busy thyself with thine own tasks, the loom and the distaff, and bid thy handmaids ply their work: but war shall be for men. (Book 6, 486–87, 490–93)

After a pledge [by Hector] in the sense of “Take comfort, I will return somehow and sometime” (mm. 132ff.) they wave to each other a last time, he exultant and she despairing:

So spake glorious Hector and took up his helm with horse-hair crest; and his dear wife went forthwith to her house, oft turning back, and shedding big tears. (Book 6, 494–96)

Here the first part of the movement resignedly concludes, plunging into the depths. It comprises exclusively the episode of “Farewell of the Hero from his Wife.” It portrays both characters in the throes of the emotions and contains neither an actual battle scene nor a suggestion of the tragedy that will befall the hero. Beethoven held very strictly to the poem. The music that presents melancholy and softness signifies the feminine element, the wife of the hero.

Beethoven wrote a repeat sign. However, it could only have been a concession to symphonic convention of the time and not seriously intended, as proven by the fairly mechanical transition to the repeat [of the exposition]. It strikes one as unorganic and foreign, for which reason it is often ignored by contemporary conductors.<sup>15</sup>

Although the interpretation to this point could be closely linked to Homer, now it must diverge, because Beethoven united all the battle scenes depicted in the poem into one concentrated portrait. This was obviously [necessary]. In a masterful manipulation of symphonic form, he freely added the following to the poem. The development<sup>16</sup> begins contemplatively. A heavy air of oppression weighs on the spirits [of Hector and Andromache] in the quiet and harmonically static [*tonlos gesponnene*] measures 156ff. A short burst of energy in the *crescendo* (mm. 168–69), and we accompany the hero to the battlefield. He knows what he will defend there: wife and child, hence the tender motives of the second theme sound above the energetically running eighth-note figures in the violins

and woodwinds (mm. 172, 176ff.). With the move to C minor and the sudden *pianissimo*, the situation becomes serious. The enemy is seen and—after twice being pursued (mm. 182–89)—engaged (m. 190). The previous battle motives (mm. 65ff.), which had been more than harmless suggestions, now become real: the opponents test one another in close combat, back and forth (exchanges in the violins). Because they are equally strong, they charge at each other again (mm. 224ff.), the hero accompanied by the battle cries of the second theme. They become entangled. This same theme provides the rhythm for the dueling in the fugato, from which Beethoven develops slashing figures that rain down like blows above the winding eighth-note counterpoint (m. 240). They come ever faster and more brutally, and, when everything breaks apart into ghastly, screaming dissonances, the outcome of the battle appears clear:

So the twain joined in strife for Cebriones like two lions, that on the peaks of a mountain fight for a slain hind, both of them hungering, both high of heart; even so for Cebriones the two masters of the war-cry, even Patroclus, son of Menoetius, and glorious Hector, were fain to cleave the other's flesh with pitiless bronze. (Book 16, 755–60)

Then the unexpected happens: in the middle of the battle the hero releases his staggering victim (mm. 284ff.). Why? The answer is expressed by the theme appearing for the first time at this point [ex. 2]:

**Example 2:**



The “regretfulness” of this phrase has never been misunderstood. But only now, and in this context, does it become justified. The hero recoils from the death-blow that he must deal the brave opponent. Shall this flourishing adolescent really perish? [This is] certainly not a Greek idea, but rather a Christian humanistic one, yet worthy of Beethoven’s world view, and at this place [in the movement] highly poetic.

Incidentally, the interruption of the battle has a precedent in Homer. Before Hector kills him, Patroclus, who with his fellow Greeks is murdering crazedly, receives a mighty blow on the shoulders and back from Phoebus Apollo. His eyes fill with tears, his helmet rolls onto the sand and he must leave the battleground:

But Patroclus, overcome by the stroke of the god and by the spear, drew back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding fate. (Book 16, 815–16)

The short *crescendo* in measure 303 puts an end to the hero's sympathy. The threatening C-major and C-minor intensifications in measures 304–16 and thereafter sound like a last warning that the enemy surrender. And now the hero is overcome with emotion for a second time, when he sees the mortally wounded Patroclus return. But because he [Patroclus] stubbornly persists, [Hector] goes all out. The violent explosions in the basses and the stretto on the hero-motive in the winds proclaim an accumulation of the utmost energy.

What follows is clear. The enemy sinks to the ground under fearful blows. He repeatedly tries to stand, but in vain. His strength ebbs, all that remains is a terrible moaning and death rattle.

But Hector, when he beheld great-souled Patroclus drawing back smitten with the sharp bronze, came nigh him through the ranks, and smote him with a thrust of his spear in the nethermost belly, and drove the bronze clean through; and he fell with a thud, and sorely grieved the host of the Achaeans. (Book 16, 817–21)

Deeply moved and exhausted, the hero strains to hear, but only awakes from his stupor when a distant horn quietly calls his name. A split second struggle in his heart between the powers of life and death. Can we not understand that Beethoven boldly dared the utmost in order to describe the most extraordinary emotions?

Now, in measure 402, the reprise begins. The entire first part of the movement (until m. 145) is repeated with important changes. At measure 557 a second development section, about which more will be said, is introduced with the familiar violent harmonic shifts from E $\flat$  to D $\flat$  and C. But first the question, how, after the preceding, is the reprise to be understood?

If Beethoven had been able to use Liszt's model, the course of the movement would have been different. Sonata form required a repetition of the beginning, meaning—if we want to interpret the whole movement programmatically—the return to an earlier stage of events. We don't know whether Beethoven thought about this. But the appearance of the reprise can be interpreted [programmatically] even in view of its external formal requirements. It occurs not [only as] a matter of necessity, if we view it as the depiction of a recollection or a dream of the wife who remained at home. She experiences for the second time the farewell scene while the



hero is away—an interpretation that I believe can be supported with a few explanatory points. Because precisely here, in the last part of the first movement, Beethoven departs in a striking way from structural convention. This has often been noticed, but never explained. The continuation of our program provides the key.

With the end of the battle and the beginning of the reprise Beethoven clearly changes the scene. We are back at the beginning again: the departure for battle. The first motive of sorrow and pleading in mm. 7–15 reappears (mm. 406–12), but in different colors: no longer is it despairing and suffering; it now moves confidently and strongly from E $\flat$  major to F major. The horn call of her beloved reaches the inner ear of the wife. Was he victorious, as the instrument's proud repetitions of the high C imply? Was he defeated? As she ponders, the harmony abruptly slips to D $\flat$  major on a sudden *piano*. Was he defeated? repeats the anxious soul. The progression becomes harmonically static and softens [*Die Bewegung wird tonloser . . .*] and returns to the dominant of the beginning. No, it cannot be! This is announced by the mighty upsurge of measures 428–34 and the entrance of the now truly “glorious” Hector-theme.

And now, as stated above, the entire farewell replays itself in a heart that sweetly remembers happier times during days of sorrow (Dante)—just as in the exposition, except that the brighter dominant harmony is now prominent. The dream, or recollection, lasts until the moment of the actual farewell, which had been reached shortly before the repeat sign [in the exposition]. What Beethoven now does appears to confirm almost absolutely this attempt to interpret the movement. The E $\flat$  major in measure 555 begins nothing other than the equivalent of the opening [of the movement]: the scene of the reunion of the husband and wife. It has been prepared ever so sensitively, as only a poet can.

Andromache awakens, listening alertly. The hero-motive sounds softly in the woodwinds, while the unison E $\flat$  of the strings is prolonged over four measures and fades to a *pp*. Did she hear it correctly? Once more, now in D $\flat$  major and more strongly. Is it really him? The theme a third time, now in C major and in full strength! That cannot be an illusion, that is reality: he is coming! But unrestrained joy is premature. Only happy certainty, internal relief from all worry can be expressed: mildly and without excitement the hero-theme wells up in the second violin, again and again, as if it cannot stop, as if this C major would begin a new life in the woman's soul.<sup>17</sup>

Above this shivers the concealed nervousness of expectation: those minute, shy figures that no critic has tried to justify until now. And joining the expectation is the regret, introduced as a sudden change of mood through the descending eighths (mm. 581ff.), that the battle had claimed a victim (the woodwind theme from the battle episode, mm. 585ff.). But

the secret joy triumphs (mm. 599ff.), as the victor's strides can already be heard at a distance (mm. 607ff.) No explanation is required for that which follows. It is the moment in which the wife, full of pulsating intense expectation, is tumultuously reunited with her returning husband, who in measure 659 appears before us in all his greatness and—not without caresses (mm. 677ff.)—enjoys the fruits of his triumphs.

Beethoven himself created this scene of reunion, which reminds us of Oberon and Tristan. Just eleven years later Carl Maria followed him, although he did not live up to the greatness of his model. The contents of the *Konzertstück* in F Minor is related to similar thought processes. Its program, as recorded by Weber's friend Benedikt [*sic*] after Weber's own description and published in Max von Weber's biography of his father, is given here for comparison:

The lady of the castle sits on the balcony. She looks mournfully into the distance. The knight has been in the Holy Land for years. Will she see him again? Many bloody battles have been waged. Not a word from him, who means everything to her. In vain her prayers to God, in vain her yearning for the great man. Finally a horrible vision takes hold of her. He lies on the field of battle—abandoned by his own men—bleeding from a wound to the heart. Ach, if she could be there and at least die with him! Exhausted she collapses and faints. Hark! What sounds there in the distance?! What is gleaming there in the forest under the sunlight? What comes closer and closer? The magnificent knights and pages, all with the sign of the cross, and waving flags and the jubilant crowd, and there, there he is! And now she throws herself into his arms. What a surge of love, what infinite, indescribable happiness! Rapturously the rolling waves and rustling branches proclaim the triumph of true love.<sup>18</sup>

Whether [in] the chivalry of antiquity or of the Middle Ages, the experiences of tragic conflicts of the heart always remain the same; the visions of Beethoven and Weber differ only in the power of the artistic depiction and design. Weber hated all "tone portraits with titles," as he once wrote to Rochlitz, because he feared that he would be "misunderstood and considered a charlatan" like Abbé Vogler. Hence he did not include the program in the print of the *Konzertstück*. Beethoven concealed the actual program [of the *Eroica*] for the same reason, and because it was more difficult than later in the *Pastorale* to make clear to the listener the difference between the "expression of feeling" (*Ausdruck der Empfindung*) and "painting" (*Malerei*). He left it open; one seeks and finds the hero and interprets his fate as best one can.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the interpretation developed here, one cannot dismiss the fact that it goes further than a simple, unspecific psychology of affects and that it offers a plan for the internal oppositions in the themes and for the peculiar structure of the entire movement that Beethoven could well have followed. Stripped of all novelistic form and considered only as a meaningful human experience, it was as worthy of his creative genius as the poetic models for the *Leonore* Overtures, and the Overtures to *Egmont* and *Coriolan*, more worthy in any case than *Wellington's Victory*. And now, for the first time, it can be understood why Beethoven, compelled by the program he had freely chosen, immeasurably expanded the form of the first movement, so that all ties to the first two symphonies were broken. After finishing the reprise, he needed space and time for the preparation and realization of the reunion scene, for which the second part was given not only its oft-discussed expansion but also a second inner climax. It comes at the conclusion and, after the preceding [music], almost possesses the meaning of a tumultuous coda to an overture, similar to the *Leonore* and *Egmont* Overtures. There can be no doubt that in this case Beethoven put traditional sonata form to the use of the logic of the ideal program.

Let us move on to the second movement! If another link to Homer were not readily available, it would appear risky to make one. But "Hector's Interment" once belonged, together with "The Farewell from Andromache," to the most impressive scenes in this classical epic and was always a favorite for drawing and painting. The *Marcia funebre* shows how deeply Beethoven was moved by the depiction of the events in Book 24. It did not become a classicistic Greek funeral service, but one alive with all the compassion that Homer was able to render from the soul of one born later.<sup>19</sup>

Come ye, men and women of Troy, and behold Hector, if ever while yet he lived ye had joy of his coming back from battle; since great joy was he to the city and to all the folk. So spake she [Cassandra] nor was any man left there within the city, neither any woman, for upon all had come grief that might not be borne; and hard by the gates they met Priam, as he bare home the dead. First Hector's dear wife and queenly mother flung themselves upon the light-running waggon, and clasping his head the while, wailed and tore their hair; and the folk thronged about and wept. (Book 24, 703-11)

Doesn't this read as an exact program for Beethoven's funeral music? And does not, in the *Maggiore*, the three-part woodwind *cantilena* seem to symbolize (not "represent") the three women: Hecuba (the mother of Hector), Andromache (the wife), Helen (the sister-in-law) at "the gate,"

their voices raised in weeping, when they see the approaching funeral procession. One only has to read the verses in which the poet conveyed the laments of the three women (Book 24, 724ff.). What the poet was forced to present successively, the musician could transform into a single simultaneous depiction of deeply moving, graphic beauty: "On this wise held they funeral for horse-taming Hector" [Book 24, 805].

A feminine element is also prominent in this movement, which—utterly in the sense of the eighteenth century—emphasizes feeling. The middle section in C major is devoted to this, while the dark, hard C-minor lament is reserved for the men.<sup>20</sup> This too completely corresponds to Homer's conception. But it could only be explained, if Beethoven had permitted something of his [own] time to influence his image of the scene from antiquity. In the imperial Vienna of his time the splendor of a funeral still drew on strong, old Baroque tradition. Perhaps it remained customary for solemn fanfares to drown out the laments of mourners when they lost control, as they do here [in the movement] twice so strikingly. Beethoven clearly conceived the C-major section as part of the action in the scene, that is at [Hector's] bier, because the cortege begins to move again only after the deeply painful unison descent of the melodic line that precedes the return of C minor.<sup>21</sup> Melancholy memories, sighs, outcries, silent footsteps and pious blessings accompany him until they fade away, suffocated by tears.

Until now, the Scherzo of the symphony could be associated with the two previous movements only with a kind of desperate exertion. About the horn calls of the Trio, Kretzschmar asked in puzzlement: "The hero at the hunt?"<sup>22</sup> How can that be believed, when he was just buried? Bekker, who did not very well know what to do with the movement, would like to see it played before the Funeral March, because he thought that the latter was more closely related to the finale.<sup>23</sup> Marx is of the opinion that Beethoven was depicting the merry life in the camp: "Is this camp-fun? Has peace come and is the army leaving for the beloved homeland? The horns call lightly and boldly, like nimble riders high on their horses and the soldiers watch contentedly and call back to them."<sup>24</sup> One sees the interpretative dilemma which arises from the impossibility of combining the merriment of the Scherzo with the Funeral March.

Once again Homer saves the day. As we know, when Patroclus fell at the hand of Hector, the Greeks staged splendid competitions in his honor. In Book 24 (257ff.), they are portrayed in colorful detail, vivid evidence of the Greek athletic spirit. Should Beethoven have celebrated his ideal Homeric hero in some other way, perhaps with sunken head and funeral decorations? He remained faithful to the poet and would have rejected a transposition of his movements with a reproachful reference to

this penultimate book of the *Iliad*. In Homer, the horsemen and the chariot drivers first appear, then the boxers and the wrestlers, the runners, the shot-putters and archers, finally the spear-throwers.

In the Scherzo, Beethoven retained nothing but everything of this. Marx came closest to the meaning, with the image of the exuberant camp life, but did not provide the objective reason for it. Now the mystery has been solved, because Beethoven was able to disregard that in Homer these games took place not in honor of Hector, but rather of Patroclus. He named no names and [thus] preserved the freedom of his artistic inclinations.

If one hears the music now—how it ascends from unclear, almost elemental sonorities and rushes by in breathless haste; how nimble figures pop up here and there; how the swarming riders and charioteers come ever closer and roar past in loudest *forte*, the one or the other tumbling over headfirst; how winds and strings in the most audacious tempo toss the smallest motives back and forth like balls; how the running and chasing begin again and again; how finally, in the Trio, new teams appear, hunters, jugglers, and others; and how it all is predicated on virtuosity and surprise—one will grasp that Beethoven's depiction of Homer's images bears the imprint of a second, additional artistic genius. This youthful commotion could not have been portrayed more economically, plastically, or impetuously: [it is] a "synthetic show" of artistic fantasy without equal.<sup>25</sup>

Not much remains to be said about the finale. The essence has been explained by Paul Bekker's convincing demonstration of both the [musical] thematic and the conceptual associations with the "Prometheus" music.<sup>26</sup> The *Iliad* concluded with the burial of Hector. Beethoven himself had to complete the final movement and he again seized on a concept of humanity quite in keeping with the nobility of his [own] convictions: the representation of the continuing impact of great men through all time and place. The myth of Prometheus made clear to him how greatness of the spirit and the soul can create dynamic life, joy, and inspiration from the least fertile soil. Into the rigid, cold, raw theme of the beginning, his creative spirit instilled ever more life—at first [primitive] organic [bass theme], then [higher-order] animalistic [contrapuntal variations] finally—at the entrance of the song-melody [the melodic theme]—human and soulful, which is taken through every conceivable form over the course of the variation cycle. With an apotheosis of splendor and power the work concludes.

And this idea also originates in Hellenism. It is completely tied to the concept of that "fine and strong free human being," as Richard Wagner epitomized the Greeks. And, as the epitome of all humanity, it was Beethoven's vision while he wrote the *Eroica*. It has not been conjured up psychologically; it is not a universal, cosmopolitan [*weltbürgerlich*] song, but rather is based on the clear conception of a very specific ethos, precisely

the one in keeping with his own convictions that he found in Homer's heroic song. If this work first came into the world as the Bonaparte Symphony, and was later elevated by Hans von Bülow into a Bismarck Symphony,<sup>27</sup> today it may be more correctly designated as Beethoven's Homer Symphony.

#### Notes

1. This article, which was completed in December 1933, was the first in which I attempted a new interpretation of Beethoven's music. It was submitted to the editors of the *Beethovenjahrbuch* in January 1934. External circumstances delayed the publication of the yearbook for such a long time that the article was preceded by two other similar publications: "Zur Sinndeutung der 4. und 5. Symphonie Beethovens" in the February 1934 issue of the *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* and the book *Beethoven in neuer Deutung* I, Leipzig, C. F. Kahnt (the five Shakespeare-String Quartets opp. 74, 95, 127, 130, 131; the eight Shakespeare-Piano Sonatas opp. 27 [1 and 2], 28, 31 [1 and 2], 54, 57, 11; the Schiller-Sonata op. 106). I wish to mention these later essays to the readers, because they decisively develop the problems that are only cautiously approached in this article on the *Eroica*.

Editor's Note: It has naturally come to the attention of the editors [of the *Neues Beethoven Jahrbuch*] that the interpretations in the Beethoven articles mentioned above by Schering have met with strong opposition. Perhaps the present study will have a similar reception; but in the *Neues Beethoven Jahrbuch* everyone should have the chance to speak who is scientifically legitimate and whose integrity cannot be doubted.

2. Translator's Note: Schering refers to Franz Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries ([1838] 1972:77-78). Ries's account is one of the earliest that associates the symphony with Napoleon. Closely contemporaneous with it are F.-J. Fetis's groundless claims (1835-44) that Beethoven had first planned to end the symphony with a C-major movement that ultimately became the finale of the Fifth Symphony and, after hearing of Napoleon's coronation as Emperor, composed the Funeral March and a new finale. See Sipe (1998:60-61).

3. Translator's Note: Schering alludes to Paul Bekker's thesis that the funeral march would be more effective as the third movement. See Bekker ([1911] 1927:161).

4. Summarized in Thayer-Riemann II, 1910, pp. 418ff.

Translator's note: See Thayer (1973:348-51). Schering alludes here to the complex history of Beethoven's changing plans about dedicating the symphony to Napoleon and including his name in the title. Some of the main stages in this process include: the plan to dedicate it to him (letter to Ferdinand Ries of October 1803); the inscription of "Bonaparte" on the title page of the autograph manuscript; the destruction of this page by Beethoven in May 1804 when he learned that Napoleon had had himself crowned Emperor in Rome by the Pope; the crossing-out of the words "Intitulata Bonaparte" on a manuscript copy, upon which was later entered "Geschrieben auf Bonaparte"; and an August 1804 letter to Breitkopf und Härtel, with whom Beethoven wanted to publish the symphony

("The actual title of the symphony is Bonaparte"). The symphony was in fact published by the Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoire in Vienna in 1806 as "Sinfonia Eroica . . . composta per festeggiare il sovvenire di un grand Uomo" (composed in memory of a great man). It was dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz, one of Beethoven's most important patrons. See Carl Dahlhaus (1991:19–26) and Sipe (1998:30–53).

5. Translator's Note: The meaning is unclear. Schering writes "Deutungen" (interpretations) and the question remains whether the plural noun refers only to Beethoven's characterization of Napoleon (although Schering contends that Napoleon is not the hero of the symphony) or to music by other composers.

6. Translator's Note: General Ralph Abercromby (1734–1801) was killed in Alexandria, Egypt in 1801 during a victorious battle against Napoleonic troops. Here Schering rebukes Bekker ([1911] 1927:160) who had advanced the hypothesis that Beethoven composed the funeral march of the symphony in honor of Abercromby. A British connection to the funeral march (Lord Nelson was also proposed as the honoree) was also suggested by Joseph Bertoline, one of Beethoven's doctors. See Solomon (1988:83), who refers to Carl Czerny as an early source for this story.

7. Translator's Note: The German text in this citation departs in several insignificant details from that in the first two editions of Schindler's biography (Münster, 1840 and 1845, respectively). This is probably a result of Schering's hasty transcription. Schindler introduced changes into the text of the third edition (Münster, 1860), which is the basis for subsequent editions after his death and the twentieth-century English translation (Schindler 1966:406–7). Schering did not specify the edition he used, but it must have been either the first or the second.

The conversation is a fabrication. Schindler possessed a number of Beethoven's sketchbooks, apparently having illegally confiscated at least some of them after Beethoven's death, and he drastically altered their contents. This forged entry was included in Georg Schünemann's edition (1941–43, 3:341). On the forgeries see Dagmar and Gritta Herre (1979, especially 12 and 40). On page 40 are the entries: "Erinnern Sie Sich, wie ich Ihnen vor einigen Jahren die Sonaten Op. 14 vorsielen durfte? . . . jetzt alles klar" (Do you remember that you allowed me to play the op 14 sonatas for you a few years ago . . . now it is all clear) and "2 Principe auch im Mittelsatz der Pathetique" (also two principles in the middle movement of the Pathétique). In addition to creating the idea of the "two principles," which become an important idea for Beethoven style criticism, Schindler, directly above this passage, also told the story that led to the nickname "Tempest" for the Piano Sonata op. 31, no. 2 in D minor.

8. Translator's Note: Schering alludes to a controversy that broke out in 1920 when Hans Pfitzner, in his polemical essay *Die neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz* (1926), attacked Bekker, who in his biography argued that a "poetic idea" was always the point of departure for Beethoven to begin a new work. Pfitzner argued for the inherently music idea—the *Einfall*—that stimulated composition. Schering also mentioned this controversy in his discussion of the history of Beethoven reception in the introduction to *Beethoven und die Dichtung* (1936a:52–54).

9. Translator's Note: Schering refers here to a memorandum Beethoven wrote in spring 1818 on the back of a sketchleaf containing work on the second movement of the "Hammerklavier" Sonata (Bonn, Beethoven Haus, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer, BsK 8): "Adagio cantique. Pious song in a symphony in ancient modes—Lord God we praise Thee—alleluia—either alone or as introduction to a fugue. The whole 2nd sinfonie might be characterized in this manner in which case the vocal parts would enter in the last movement or already in the Adagio. The violins, etc., of the orchestra to be increased tenfold in the last movement, in which case the vocal parts would enter gradually—in the text of the Adagio Greek myth, *Cantique Ecclesiastique*—in the Allegro, feast of Bacchus [*sic*]" (Thayer 1973:888). Nottebohm published the original in *Zweite Beethoveniana*=N II ([1887] 1970:163), and this was in all likelihood Schering's source.

On Beethoven's plans for the composition of two symphonies in the years following 1818 and the controversies about its status, see Sieghard Brandenburg (1984), Barry Cooper (1987), and Robert S. Winter (1973/77, 1991).

10. Translator's Note: The ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*, op. 43, first performed in 1801, contains the two themes that Beethoven used in the Piano Variations in E $\flat$ , op. 35 (which Beethoven referred to as the "Prometheus" Variations) and in the finale of the *Eroica*. The ballet has been interpreted as an allegory in honor of Napoleon; see Constantin Floros (1978:73–81) and Lewis Lockwood (1992:134–36), who cautiously endorses Floros's views.

11. Translator's Note: Adolph Bernhard Marx (1875, 1:245–86; see translation in 1997:158–88). Marx's hero is Napoleon himself; the action of the symphony takes place on a battlefield.

12. Translator's Note: Schering refers to sketches in Landsberg 6; see Gustav Nottebohm (1979:51–52), which contains the two sketches Schering cites. There are sketches for the symphony that precede Landsberg 6. They are found in the Wielhorsky sketchbook of 1802–03; see the edition by Natan Fisman (1962:44ff.). The sketches for the opening measures in Wielhorsky do not contain anything like the sketches in Landsberg 6 or in the finished work. See Lockwood (1992:134–50, especially his transcription on 138).

13. Translator's Note: I use the 1937 translation of Homer's *Iliad* by A. T. Murray. Schering does not indicate the source of the German citations.

14. Translator's Note: In Murray's translation, the first line reads: "Aloud then laughed his dear father and queenly mother" (297). I have revised this to conform to the German version in Schering.

15. See Nottebohm, op. cit., on Beethoven's inconsistency about the repeat.

Translator's Note: Nottebohm (1979:70–71) does not mention this problem explicitly, although one of his transcriptions includes repeat signs and he does discuss the detailed work on and revisions of the closing group.

16. For the reader's orientation, measure 156 is the first measure after the double bar (A $\flat$  in the first violin).

17. One can note that the episode explained here as a dream-vision is removed from its context and stands by itself through characteristic harmonic shifts at the beginning and the end: the first time from F major to D $\flat$  major and B $\flat$  major (mm. 412–28), the second time from E $\flat$  major to D $\flat$  major and C major (mm. 555–65).



18. Translator's Note: Julius Benedict (1804–85) studied with Weber from 1821–1824. He was Weber's first student and was treated as a member of his family. Later, he had positions in Vienna and in Naples, and settled in London in 1835. Benedict's biography of Weber (1881) has been commonly accepted by Weber scholars as the original source for the program of the *Konzertstück* (composed in 1821). See Nicholas Temperley (2001). Schering cites Max von Weber ([1864–66] 1912, 2:311).

19. Translator's Note: Schering writes (174): "Eine antikisierende griechische Totenfeier ist sie nicht geworden, aber eine in der alles lebt, *was Homer aus der Seele des Nachgeborenen an Mitgefühl herauschlagen konnte.*" The last clause (given in italics) is the most obscure passage in this difficult text. The main problem is the referential meaning of "Nachgeborenen," which can mean familial progeny, descendants in a more general sense of later generation, or posthumous survivor. Several interpretations are plausible, but none is definite; each also depends on the meaning of the preposition "aus." The previous sentence suggests that the reference is to Beethoven himself; the new sentence continues the thought that Beethoven is moved by Homer's text. This would, however, require that "aus" be translated as "in," which is contrived. The reference could also be to Homer himself, implying that Homer, who was believed to have been born after the time of the *Iliad*, was able to write so movingly because of the compassion he felt, which he rendered from his own soul.

20. Translator's Note: This argument seems counter-intuitive. After its gentle beginning, the C-major section (mm. 69ff.) assumes an overall strength and features musical gestures that, notwithstanding the presence of feminine heroism in the music of the classical period (e.g., Leonore in *Fidelio*), undoubtedly belong primarily to musical images of maleness. Moreover, the association of the major mode with feminine sentiments does not square with eighteenth-century thinking on this matter. See Gretchen Wheelock (1993).

21. Translator's Note: Schering implicitly critiques Bekker ([1911] 1927:161), who argues that the movement depicts "the emotions of a spectator" viewing a funeral procession from a distance.

22. Translator's Note: The reference is to Hermann Kretzschmar (1919: 199–207).

23. Translator's Note: See Bekker ([1911] 1927:163).

24. Translator's Note: Marx (1875, 1:273; 1997:173). Marx includes a musical example showing the three horns arpeggiating an E $\flat$ -major triad.

25. Let us note that Max Bruch, in his oratorio *Achilles* [op. 50 (1885)], also depicted the games during the burial rites for Patroclus with an instrumental movement.

26. *Beethoven* (1911) [sic], 1922, p. 223 [1927:163–65]. On the thematic connections alone see Thayer-Riemann, op. cit, pp. 422ff.

Translator's note: This is not included in the Forbes edition of Thayer (1973).

27. Translator's Note: Schering refers to remarks by von Bulöw after a performance of the symphony in March 1892 (which he dedicated to Bismarck) on the occasion of his final concert with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Berlin. The concert, dedication, and remarks were repeated shortly thereafter in

Hamburg. At the concerts, von Bülow included in the program notes his own text to a "Bismarck-Hymne" that was underlaid to the melodic theme of the finale. For a brief period of time thereafter, the *Eroica* was referred to as the "Bismarck-Symphonie" in some newspapers. But reactions to von Bülow's homage to Bismarck were mixed; in Berlin it created a minor scandal. His remarks were published in the first edition of his letters and essays edited by Marie von Bülow (1896–1908, 8:371–78). Communication from Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, Zurich. See also Sipe (1998:64).

## Appendix: Arnold Schering's Writings on Musical Symbolism

### J. S. Bach's Vocal Music

- 1925 Bach und das Symbol. 1. Studie: Insbesondere die Symbolik seines Kanons. *Bach-Jahrbuch* 22: 40–63.
- 1928 Bach und das Symbol. 2. Studie: Das "Figürliche" und "Metaphorische." *Bach-Jahrbuch* 25: 119–37.
- 1937a Bach und das Symbol 3. Studie: Psychologische Grundlegung des Symbolbegriffs aus Christian Wolffs "Psychologia empirica." *Bach-Jahrbuch* 34: 83–95.
- 1950 *Über Kantaten J. S. Bachs*. Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang.

### Beethoven's instrumental music

- 1934a Die *Eroica*, eine Homer-Symphonie Beethovens? *Neues Beethoven-Jahrbuch* 5: 159–77.
- 1934b *Beethoven in neuer Deutung*. Leipzig: C. F. Kahnt.
- 1934c Zur Sinndeutung der 4. und 5. Symphonie von Beethoven. *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 16: 65–83.
- 1936a *Beethoven und die Dichtung*. Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt.
- 1936b Zu Beethovens Sonata pathétique. *Archiv für Musikforschung* 1: 336–67.
- 1936–38 Zu Beethovens Violinsonaten. Parts 1–4. *Zeitschrift für Musik* 103: 1041–48 (Die Sonata a-moll, op. 23); 103: 1308–18 (Die Sonate F-dur, op. 24); 104: 374–81 (Die Sonate D-dur, op. 30 no. 3); 105: 121–30 (Die Sonate Es-dur, op. 12 no. 3).
- 1937b Die Symbolik des Pizzikatos bei Beethoven. *Archiv für Musikforschung* 2: 273–84.
- 1938 *Zur Erkenntnis Beethovens. Neue Beiträge zur Deutung seiner Werke*. Würzburg: Trilitsch.
- 1955 Über einige Grundsymbole der Tonsprache Beethovens. Posthumous in *Humor, Heldentum, Tragik bei Beethoven*, 65–76. Strasbourg/Kehl: Librarie Heitz.

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- 1914 Zur Grundlegung der musikalischen Hermeneutik. *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 9: 168–75.
- 1927 Das Symbol in der Musik. In *Kongreßbericht, Halle, 1927. Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 21: 379–88.

- 1936c Musikalische Symbolkunde. *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 42: 11–23.
- 1937c Das Entstehen der instrumentalen Symbolwelt. *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 43: 15–29.
- 1937d Kritik des romantischen Musikbegriffs. *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 44: 9–28.
- 1941 *Das Symbol in der Musik*. Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang.

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