

Bruckner's Symphonies and Sonata Deformation Theory

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Introduction

Recent investigation of the sonata-type repertoire of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has increasingly emphasized the concept of deformation as a defining characteristic. The widespread structural experimentation in this period, ranging from expansion or truncation to double-function forms and the merging of movements, has prompted an attempt to classify practice as a system of deviant or non-normative formal procedures.

The seminal impetus for this approach has come from James Hepokoski.¹ His basic conviction is that attitudes towards sonata forms after Beethoven become increasingly driven by the distortion of classical precedents, mediated by the emergence of a body of theory, which standardized a set of 'reified defaults', and therefore enabled an expanding range of formal deviations.² As Hepokoski puts it:

By the last third of the nineteenth century there had arisen a whole arsenal of what I have termed deformations of the *Formenlehre* (standard-textbook) structures... These structures cannot

¹ See for example James Hepokoski, 'Fiery Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero? Strauss' *Don Juan* Revisited', in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 135–75 and *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 5–9 and 19–30. Hepokoski has also traced the relationship of norm and deformation back into the classical style, in this case abandoning the orientation around the *Formenlehre* model in favour of a theory of norms derived from practice itself: see 'Back and Forth from *Egmont*: Beethoven, Mozart and the Nonresolving Recapitulation', *Nineteenth-Century Music* 25 (2002), 127–154; 'Beyond the Sonata Principle', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55 (2002), 91–154; and, with Warren Darcy, 'The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition', *Music Theory Spectrum* 19 (1997), 115–54. A full-length study of the issue, in collaboration with Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

² See Hepokoski, 'Fiery Pulsed Libertine', 143.

be said to 'be' sonatas in any strict sense... Still, as part of the perceptual framework within which they ask to be understood, they do depend on the listener's prior knowledge of the *Formenlehre* 'sonata'.³

Hepokoski isolates five categories of deformation that become increasingly common in the nineteenth-century repertoire: the 'breakthrough deformation'; the 'introduction-coda frame'; 'episodes within the developmental space'; the 'strophic/sonata hybrid'; the double-function form, or 'multi-movement form within a single movement'.⁴ He also speculates about three more localized practices: the 'Brahmsian Deformation' or non-repeating exposition; the 'Brucknerian Deformation', which relates to the 'strophic/sonata hybrid'; the 'non-resolving recapitulation', a practice Warren Darcy has subsequently defined as 'sonata process failure'.⁵ For Sibelius, Hepokoski modifies and extends this taxonomy, creating the concepts of 'content-based form', 'rotational form', 'teleological genesis', '*Klang* meditation' and the 'interrelation and fusion of movements'.⁶ Generally, he considers these procedures 'to have stemmed from key works of Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt and Wagner, although certain structures of Beethoven, Weber, Schubert and Chopin were by no means irrelevant'.⁷

Of the repertoire falling within Hepokoski's remit, Bruckner's symphonies have proved especially susceptible to deformational analysis, provoking extended studies by Warren Darcy and Timothy L. Jackson.⁸ Darcy augments Hepokoski's basic taxonomy with three additional concepts—the 'redemption paradigm', the 'rebirth paradigm' and the 'alienated secondary theme zone'—and fuses two of Hepokoski's ideas in order to explain the Brucknerian coda, creating the notion of '*Klang* as *telos*'.⁹ He furthermore contextualizes these categories as responses to the Beethovenian 'struggle-victory' plot archetype, regarding Bruckner's deformations as negations of

³ Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 5.

⁴ Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 6–9.

⁵ Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 94, and Warren Darcy, 'Bruckner's Sonata Deformations', in *Bruckner Studies*, ed. Paul Hawkshaw and Timothy L. Jackson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 256–77 and especially 274–6.

⁶ Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 21–30. The issue of the non-resolving recapitulation is also followed up in the same writer's 'Back and Forth from *Egmont*'.

⁷ Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 5.

⁸ See Darcy, 'Bruckner's Sonata Deformations', and Timothy L. Jackson, 'The Finale of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony and Tragic Reversed Sonata Form', in *Bruckner Studies*, 140–207.

⁹ See Darcy, 259, 262–4 and 271–6. '*Klang* as *telos*' is considered on pp. 276–7.

the demands of resolution imposed by this paradigm. Jackson, alternatively, places Hepokoski's categories in a Schenkerian context, and associates certain types of deformation, particularly the reversal of recapitulatory order, with Aristotelian rhetorical figures of tragedy.¹⁰

Although many of the practices observed by these commentators are undoubtedly present in the music they analyse, it is less clear whether it is reasonable to characterize them as deformations. Indeed, the concept of deformation courts a series of problems that have yet to receive close attention. The aim of this paper is to obviate and scrutinize these matters, and to recommend an alternative approach via a case study of Bruckner's symphonic first movements.¹¹

Critique

Perhaps the most immediate difficulty with the concept of deformation concerns the relationship of norm and exception. Deformation is only meaningful inasmuch as we recognize a standard, either in theory or practice, against which it is measured. As a theoretical construct, this is considered to be the *Formenlehre* model of sonata form established by A. B. Marx and others. As a component of praxis, this is manifest in a supposed body of music, in which the normative pattern is realized. These two components—a normative model and a normative repertoire—must be in place for the idea of deformation to have theoretical or empirical credibility. If either or both of these elements can be regarded as suspect, then the concept of deformation itself becomes dubious.

In fact, there are grounds for viewing the normativity of both the *Formenlehre* model and its resultant repertoire with suspicion. In the first place, it is inadequate to condense nineteenth-century theory into a single aggregate definition: the models of sonata form proposed by Marx, Czerny, Reicha and others are not reducible to one general formula. Reicha, as is well known, did not describe sonata form at all, but 'la

¹⁰ The relationship between reversal and the Aristotelian rhetoric of tragedy is considered in Jackson, 140–9. Jackson considers works by Bruckner, Brahms, Schubert, Haydn, Cherubini, Beethoven, Liszt, Berlioz, Mahler, Sibelius and Schoenberg in this context.

¹¹ The following critique draws on material taken from Julian Horton, *Bruckner's Symphonies: Analysis, Reception and Cultural Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 152–60, as well as work done in collaboration with Paul Wingfield on sonata procedures in the music of Schumann, presented in 'Norm and Deformation in Nineteenth-Century Sonata Forms' at the 11th Biennial Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music (Royal Holloway, University of London, June 2000), and of Mendelssohn, to be presented in 'Norm and Deformation in Mendelssohn's Sonata Forms' at a conference on Mendelssohn in the Long Nineteenth Century (Trinity College, Dublin, July 2005).

grande coupe binaire' or the large binary arch.¹² Marx departed from Reicha both in naming sonata form and in understanding it as a three-part rather than a two-part structure, but shared with him a notion of form as the product of a work's content, which Czerny's model, although in agreement with Marx's tripartite reading, conspicuously lacked.¹³ As Scott Burnham observes, Marx developed the relationship of content and form into a dialectical theory that recent commentators have largely ignored.¹⁴ For Marx, form was the large-scale expression of the dialectic of rest and motion (*Ruhe* and *Bewegung*) incipient in the musical material, embodied in the phrase forms of the *Satz* and *Gang* respectively. The idea that Marx sought to standardize sonata form as an architectural pattern is thus itself a theoretical misconception. In his view, all forms are in a sense 'content based'.¹⁵

Even if we accept a generalized *Formenlehre* model, we nevertheless encounter the question of whether it is really acceptable to assert that all composers in whose work deformations are apparent engaged in the conscious distortion of an agreed theoretical norm. At best, this contention demands a hunt for the theoretical texts that conditioned each composer's concept of sonata form before it can be verified, in which circumstances the aggregate model again comes apart, since it is plainly not the case that a single didactic text, or an aggregation of the available models, was employed in the same way in all countries and at all times. In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russia, for instance, Marx's *Formenlehre* gained widespread acceptance, and a link between this definition and patterns of distortion in the Russian symphony could be tentatively made. Bruckner, on the other hand, drew principally on Ernst Friedrich Richter's *Die Grundzüge der musikalischen Formen und ihre Analyse* during his lessons with Otto Kitzler.¹⁶ Richter agreed with Marx in understanding sonata form as arising

¹² See Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, vol. 2 (Paris: Zetter, 1826), 300.

¹³ Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1845) and see also selected writings in the same author's *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, trans. and ed. Scott Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ See Scott Burnham, 'The Role of Sonata Form in A. B. Marx's Theory of Form', *Journal of Music Theory* 33 (1989), 247–72. Czerny's definition of sonata form appears in *School of Practical Composition*, vol. 1 (London, 1848), especially as tabulated on p. 33.

¹⁵ Marx was keenly aware of this issue: 'In general: how can one speak of form in art as something that exists for itself; how can form and content be separated, since the characteristic essence of art rests in its revelation of spiritual content — the idea — through material embodiment?' See Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, 56.

¹⁶ Ernst Friedrich Richter, *Die Grundzüge der musikalischen Formen und ihre Analyse* (Leipzig: Verlag von Georg Wigand, 1852). On this matter, see also Paul Hawkshaw, 'A Composer Learns his Craft: Anton Bruckner's Lessons in Form and Orchestration, 1861–3', in *Perspectives on Anton Bruckner*, ed. Paul

from its constituent expressions of 'the musical idea', but departed from him in conceiving of the whole as a two-part form.¹⁷ By these terms, we cannot consider Brucknerian deformations to arise from the same conception of form as deformations in, for example, a symphony by Borodin. If the origin of deformation *is* theory, then a separate model of the relationship between norm and deviation is required for each instance of the reception of theory.

The idea that practice can be reduced to the esthetics of theory is troublesome for other reasons. The simple fact that a composer encountered a given theory is not in itself proof of that theory's compositional influence. Composers, in other words, may reject or ignore theory in favour of other precedents. The notion of sonata form applied, for instance, in a Bruckner symphony might arise as much from an engagement with Beethoven as it does from the absorption of a didactic text. Deformation would thus need to be reconceived as part of the reception of earlier practice, which for the nineteenth-century symphony was virtually synonymous with the Beethoven paradigm. It seems historically obtuse, in short, to view Bruckner as more concerned with the misprision of A. B. Marx than with the misprision of Beethoven.

There is, moreover, an historical mismatch between the theoretical sources against which deformation is measured, and the sources in compositional practice that Hepokoski cites. Given that the earliest example of a consensus model of sonata form is usually taken to be Marx's treatise of 1845–7, how is it possible that deformational procedures have their foundations in the music of Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Chopin and Schumann, and especially of Beethoven, Weber and Schubert? Although some of the later sonata-type music of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Chopin is contemporary with Marx's work, it is scarcely credible to suggest that these composers either consciously or unconsciously distorted Marx's definition. The earliest sonata movements of Chopin and Mendelssohn, which plainly exhibit deformations, even predate the dissemination of Reicha's treatise of 1826. Tracing the idea back to Beethoven and Schubert is even more tendentious; can we really assert that the variety of sonata structures in their music arises from the distortion of 'reified defaults'?

Hawkshaw, Crawford Howie and Timothy L. Jackson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 3–29, and Stephen Parkany, *Kurth's Bruckner and the Vocabulary of Symphonic Formal Process in the Late 19th Century* (PhD diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1989), 146–57.

¹⁷ See Richter, 27–48.

Recently, Hepokoski has sought to compensate for this difficulty by proposing a generic, rather than a theoretical, norm for classical sonata forms.¹⁸ Yet, as Charles Rosen recognized, it is not at all clear that a common conception of sonata form as an architectural pattern, rather than a general stylistic principle, existed in classical practice either.¹⁹ Such a norm cannot be inferred simply by isolating procedures that seem unusual (non-tonic recapitulations, for instance), because the practices they supplant tend to operate at the level of style, system or material process rather than architecture (tonic recapitulations confirm a property of the tonal system, not an abstracted formal category). The suggestion that sonata form has the status of a genre is similarly questionable: does a principle found in symphonies, concertos, quintets, quartets, trios, duos, sonatas, arias and even the occasional Mass really warrant an independent generic designation? There must surely be a difference between genre and form, in this instance as in many others; otherwise we risk nonsensically asserting, for example, that the Kyrie of a Mass by Haydn and the first movement of a symphony by Mozart inhabit the same genre because they exhibit similar forms. Sonata form, in other words, must be trans-generic.

Whether our focus is the classical 'generic' sonata form or its theorized nineteenth-century counterpart, we are compelled in both cases to establish the presence of a corresponding normative repertoire before we can classify deformations as theoretically distinctive. Yet the evidence for a body of work that fulfils rather than distorts the *Formenlehre* model (whatever that might be) remains patchy. It is, in truth, hard to find a canonical nineteenth-century sonata form that does not in some sense deviate from the models of Reicha, Marx or Czerny.²⁰ We could, of course, assert that the normative repertoire exists in a hinterland of neglected works by neglected composers, and that an extensive digression into this terrain would render it visible. Yet none of the research applying the concept of deformation has thus far provided the statistical

¹⁸ As for example in the claims that 'Beethoven was working most fundamentally within sonata-generic guidelines firmly established by precedent' or that other instances of 'non-resolving recapitulation' constitute 'subtypes of the genre'. See Hepokoski, 'Back and Forth from *Egmont*', 133 and 136.

¹⁹ I think, of course, of Rosen's *The Classical Style: Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971) and *Sonata Forms* (New York: Norton, 1980).

²⁰ I assert this *pace* Charles Rosen's observation that 'except for those of Chopin, most nineteenth-century sonatas were written according to the orthodox recipe, and mostly for the worse'. See Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 31. It is hard to reconcile this observation with the diversity of practices in the music of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Brahms and certainly Bruckner, amongst many others.

or analytical evidence to support this contention.²¹ But without a normative repertoire against which deformation can be measured, the idea of the normative model has no palpable form, existing purely as an aggregation of theory.

A partial escape from these problems might be sought by designating the norm as a platonic form, or more practically as an abstraction that has become basic to contemporary listening strategies, even if it remains evasive within the repertoire or from an historical perspective. Hepokoski at times moves towards something resembling these positions; the assertion that deformations 'depend on the listener's prior knowledge of the *Formenlehre* sonata' invokes a prevalent contemporary perception as much as an historical phenomenon. This proposition, however, carries its own critical difficulties. The fact that some models of sonata form may have become didactic standards is no reason to accept them as benchmarks for comprehending theoretically troublesome repertoire. Hepokoski generally defines these benchmarks as categories of 'necessary' sonata procedure: 'essential structural closure', 'essential expositional closure', 'essential structural trajectory' and so forth.²² This argument courts self-justification: *a posteriori* definitions of formal necessity will naturally exclude some structural procedures, and the categories of deformation become self-selecting under the terms of the abstracted normative model. It also risks a kind of musicological naïvety: the strategies developed by composers in response to their generative material end up being viewed as exceptional under the terms of an historically indifferent theoretical construct.

Generally, the notion of deformation is part of a tendency that has been endemic to the theoretical and analytical discourse on large-scale nineteenth-century instrumental forms, which is a consistent reticence to read their structures as stylistically, formally or systemically distinct. Although deformations predominate to the virtual exclusion of the normative model, the possibility that they should be theorized apart from the distortion of theoretical precedents is not pursued. We could instead understand deformation as part of a general process of post-Beethovenian diversification: it is not that nineteenth-century sonata forms fall within the shadow of a theorized high-classical principle that they can only distort, but that the Beethovenian achievement enables a diversity of formal procedures that the relative homogeneity of the classical style constrains. This progression is of course aesthetic and social as well as formal. The increased plurality of sonata-type practices is a function of the liberating effects of

²¹ For a broad survey of such works, see William S. Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

²² See for instance Hepokoski, 'Back and Forth from *Egmont*', 128–9.

the emergence of a radical concept of autonomy, for which Beethoven's music came to be regarded as prototypical. Sonata procedures are reinvented to accommodate a fresh set of social, aesthetic and expressive demands: they are therefore not deformations, but rather reformations of the classical principle, to use a term suggested by Nicholas Marston.²³

From this perspective, what appears to be distortion is really a shift in the basis of practice; theory represents a parallel effort to classify the sources of influence that this practice inherits. Nineteenth-century sonata forms are therefore in essence dialectical: they simultaneously acknowledge and supersede the high-classical model, whilst presenting the result as a synthetic whole. The dialectic is the norm of its time; Hepokoski's deformations are its individual manifestations.

Analysis

Bruckner's symphonic first movements from the First to the Ninth symphonies attest to these points.²⁴ Each movement contains consistent principles, which plainly respond to Beethovenian and Schubertian archetypes. Casting the net more broadly than Darcy, these principles can be grouped into four basic categories: expansion, teleology, negation and discontinuity. The categories are not exclusive, but interact. Generally, they underpin Hepokoski's deformations; they are the cause, of which the types of deformation are the effect.

The most frequently noted example of expansion is the increased delineation of second group and closing section, to the extent that the closing section becomes a third group in itself. There are four main ways in which this is achieved. In the First and Second symphonies, the third group is prepared as a tonal and gestural goal by a cadential phrase that is also integral to the second group. In the Third, Fourth, Sixth and Seventh symphonies, the two groups are connected by an appended, cumulative intensification. This type also invokes the category of teleology: the third group is the goal of a motivic and harmonic intensification, forcing a structural reorientation through which the first and second themes appear as preparatory. This practice is complicated in the Fourth and Sixth symphonies by the harmonic relationship between the second and third groups. In the former, the transition to the third theme resumes and resolves the dominant preparation of V interrupted at the end of the first

²³ Reported from private communication.

²⁴ Analyses refer to the editions of the Anton Bruckner Gesamtausgabe, edited by Leopold Nowak. Where multiple versions exist, the following were consulted: No. 1 (1866/77); No. 2 (1877); No. 3 (1873, 1877, 1889); No. 4 (1878/80); No. 8 (1890).

group (bars 71–74 and 115–119). In the latter, the force of the arrival of the third theme at bar 101 is compromised by its harmonic function as an interrupted cadence. In these examples, teleology, expansion and discontinuity interact. The Fifth and Ninth symphonies deploy discontinuity without teleology: the second theme is liquidated, the texture dissolves and the third theme is introduced in a new, unprepared tonality. In both cases, teleological intensification is reserved for the end of the third group. The Eighth Symphony combines elements of the previous two types: the transition between second and third groups comprises a thematic liquidation that also prepares the tonality of the third theme, and the moment of teleological intensification is transferred to the end of the exposition in the same manner as the Fifth and Ninth symphonies.

Negation involves a redeployment of teleology and discontinuity in the recapitulation, such that the expected continuity of tonal context and material presentation is disrupted, and is a feature of the first movements from the Fifth Symphony onwards. In the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, this results from locating the reprise of the first theme as the goal of the movement's most extensive intensification process thus far: a protracted dominant preparation in the Fifth; a false recapitulation and its rectification in the Sixth. The result in the Fifth is a fragmentation of the first group and an expansion of the teleological intensification in the third group. In the Sixth, the intensification preceding the third group is removed and replaced by liquidation and discontinuity. The recapitulation in the first movement of the Seventh Symphony is even more extensively denuded of the points of intensification characterising the exposition. The end of the reprised second group carries no preparatory function, and the third group begins over an interrupted cadence.

Perhaps the most emphatic example of negation occurs in the first movement of the Eighth Symphony.²⁵ Here, the functions of development and recapitulation overlap in a way that enhances the material's dramatic force, whilst depleting its capacity for stabilizing the structural tensions of the exposition. As Example 1 reveals, the reprise at pitch of the first theme in augmentation in the bass from bar 224 is simultaneously a

²⁵ Warren Darcy ('Bruckner's Sonata Deformations', 274–6) considers this, along with the first movements of the Symphony in F minor and the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Ninth symphonies, as an example of 'sonata process failure'. In this instance, he links structural collapse to the presence of an 'alienated secondary theme zone', on the grounds that the second theme in the exposition tonicizes V instead of III. The mechanism of the moment of recapitulation is however not considered in detail.

Example 1
Bruckner, Symphony no.8 (1890 Nowak)
First movement, climax of development and recapitulation

Thematic reprise
Free augmentation of second theme

229

fff

Augmentation of first theme at pitch

Developmental rising sequence follows

237

fff

243

fff

Tonal reprise: C minor attained

248

pp

pp

Fragmentation of first-group material ensues

253

pp

etc.

thematic recapitulation and part of an ongoing developmental process pressing towards the climactic recovery of the tonic C minor at bar 249. The return of the first theme sustains neither a stable point of thematic reprise, being part of a continuous process of development, nor a stable tonal reprise, being harmonically oblique and part of an ascending sequence. Conversely, the return to the tonic cannot support a thematic reprise, since the necessity of tonic prolongation is compromised by the first theme's harmonic instability. Moreover, whereas in the exposition, the first theme is set against an ascending semitonal line in the upper voice, which twice leads, in bars 23 and 40, to an attempted cadential assertion of the tonic, in bars 224–9 this is replaced by a counterpointing free variant of the second theme. Consequently, the first theme becomes detached from the voice-leading mechanism, which in the exposition facilitated the cadential presentation of C minor.

The antithetical demands of thematic presentation and tonal stability provoke a negation of recapitulatory function. In the space between this climax and the return of the second theme (bars 249–310) a structural gap opens up in which the expected first-group reprise is replaced by the sequential repetition of motivic residues. The phrase structure of the group is reassembled in bars 282–302, but this is undercut at bar 303 by a chromatic interruption leading to the second group. The relationship of second and third groups is now changed from one of preparation to discontinuity. The second group culminates on an unresolved diminished seventh, and the third group enters after a caesura at bar 341. Bruckner again compensates by placing a more forceful teleological intensification at the end of the third group, but here there is no attempt to balance this climax with a synthetic coda, and the movement ends in profound fragmentation.

The Ninth Symphony, which is concerned in many ways with expanding the procedures presented relatively concisely in the first movement of the Eighth, takes the clash of recapitulatory and developmental functions a stage further. On the largest scale, the first movement plays out a conflict between bipartite and tripartite formal conceptions. The second and third groups are reprised in varied but more or less complete forms, but the tonic return of first-group material from bar 333 is again elided with the end of the development, and the tonal recapitulation is caught between the competing structural demands of development and reprise, intensification and resolution. Bruckner's response once more turns on a redistribution of these properties. The tonic restatement of first-group material becomes part of a chromatic sequence, yielding at bar 355 to a new passage of developmental intensification. The discontinuity between second and third groups is exacerbated rather than resolved, and the intensification process at the end of the third group is concomitantly expanded.

As Darcy observes, negation of recapitulatory function often transfers a burden of resolution onto the coda.²⁶ In the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh symphonies, the coda responds positively to these demands, supplying a cumulative intensification in the tonic major. In the Eighth Symphony, Bruckner adopts the opposite strategy, closing the first movement with an exacerbation of the recapitulatory crisis. The first movements of the Third and Ninth symphonies mediate these two extremes: the coda supplies a final teleological intensification, which emphatically negates the possibility of a synthetic minor-major trajectory. In cases where negation is sustained at the end of the first movement, the responsibility of synthesis is placed more heavily on the finale. At the same time, Darcy's association of 'sonata process failure' with the absence of 'redemption from minor to major' is perhaps too limited.²⁷ Negation also results from an inability to accommodate the conflicting demands of intensification and recapitulatory stabilisation, and the concomitant redistribution of teleology and discontinuity.

Conclusions

Of the many interesting reminiscences in Carl Hruby's *Meine Erinnerungen an Anton Bruckner*, the following is especially germane to the present context:

After [Bruckner] had spent a while sunk in thought...he suddenly broke the silence: 'I think, if Beethoven were still alive today, and I went to him, showed him my Seventh Symphony and said to him, "Don't you think, Herr von Beethoven, that the Seventh isn't as bad as certain people make it out to be—those people who make an example of it and portray me as an idiot—" then, maybe, Beethoven might take me by the hand and say, "My dear Bruckner, don't bother yourself about it. It was no better for me, and the same gentlemen who use me as a stick with which to beat you still don't really understand my last quartets, however much they may pretend to." Then, I might go on and say, "Please excuse me, Herr von Beethoven, if I've gone beyond you..."' (Bruckner was referring to his use of form!) "...but I've always said that a true artist can work out his own form and then stick to it."²⁸

Assuming Hruby's account is reliable, it sheds a revealing light on the current debate. Bruckner's remarks read like an encapsulation of the dialectical compositional mindset. On the one hand, he makes plain the necessity of engaging with Beethovenian formal archetypes. On the other hand, his apology to Beethoven for

²⁶ Darcy, 'Bruckner's Sonata Deformations', 274.

²⁷ As note 26.

²⁸ As translated in Stephen Johnson (ed.), *Bruckner Remembered* (London: Faber & Faber, 1998), 160; originally in German in Carl Hruby, *Meine Erinnerungen an Anton Bruckner* (Vienna, 1901).

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'going beyond' him in the realm of form concerns what is antithetical to the Beethovenian model, and therefore describes the innovation that necessarily supersedes the precedents offered by tradition. Bruckner plainly considered the result, however, to be greater than the sum of these parts. The admonition that 'a true artist' should 'work out his own form and then stick to it' describes a concept of form uniting tradition and innovation within a consistent compositional attitude.

What Bruckner's comments do not imply is the conscious deformation of a standard textbook form; neither do they suggest that the relationship between influence and form is anything more than a matter of accepting and surpassing paradigms in the repertoire. Of course, Bruckner's attitude towards theory was more complex than this. His engagement with Simon Sechter and with the various authorities drawn upon by Kitzler left an indelible mark on his compositional imagination and on his conception of the relationship between strict and free composition, as evinced most clearly in the complex harmonic and metrical annotations he added to his scores. But none of this leads inevitably to the conclusion that sonata form in the symphonies is a matter of deforming these precedents. On the contrary, Bruckner seemed to rely on them as a means of demonstrating the theoretical consistency of his own ideas, rather than as a platform for deviation.

Ultimately, this study pleads for a more concerted effort to derive analytical principles for Bruckner in particular, and for nineteenth-century sonata forms in general, that are epistemically specific; that is to say, which do not repeat, in fresh guises, the old habit of understanding nineteenth-century practices either as negative reflections of classicism, or as a preparation for tonal disintegration and the various forms of *fin-de-siècle* modernism. At the risk of sounding overtly Foucauldian, it seems more appropriate to give the nineteenth century its own analytical and theoretical space, and to allow its epistemological conditions to determine how we fill that space.