

The Classical Sonata Exposition: Cadential Goals and Form-Functional Plans¹

This paper recalls some of the obvious inadequacies of two traditional models of sonata exposition: 'the dual thematic model' and the 'key-area model.' The dual-thematic model is refined by reformulating its component parts as specific 'formal functions,' as developed in the author's book *Classical Form*. The key-area model is extended in scope by identifying a scheme of five principal cadential goals within an exposition. The revised models are related to each other by showing how the exposition's cadences interact with a variety of form-functional plans, as illustrated in selected expositions by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. The resulting view of the classical sonata exposition aims to be well-grounded theoretically while remaining sensitive to the diverse formal possibilities found throughout the repertoire.

Few theoretical concepts are regarded by scholars of the classical period with such ambivalence as sonata form. Although theorists and historians alike regularly describe the instrumental works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven using terms such as 'exposition,' 'recapitulation,' 'first subject,' 'second-theme group,' they often do so with a guilty conscience. After all, conventional wisdom holds that since sonata form was codified at least forty years after the fact, applying this anachronistic construct to the high classical repertory manifestly distorts the complexities of its formal organization. Yet despite our historicist qualms, we cannot quite give up on sonata form as a working tool for analysis and history. As Carl Dahlhaus has observed:

'In theory the sonata-form scheme has been discredited; in the practice of analysis, however, it seems to be indispensable even now, and we continue to use the traditional nomenclature in the consciousness that it would be equally difficult either to replace it or to give a serious justification of it.'²

Dahlhaus's gloomy diagnosis of the relation between sonata theory and sonata analysis must be sorry news to theorists who believe that a sound analytical practice should, in principle, ensue from a sound, if not fully articulated, theoretical basis. And so taking up Dahlhaus's implicit challenge, I have attempted to renew

the theory of sonata form with the goal of setting it on more secure and sophisticated foundations. Building upon ideas of musical form first introduced by Arnold Schoenberg, and extended further by his student Erwin Ratz,³ my recently published treatise, *Classical Form*, develops a comprehensive theory of *formal functions* lying at the basis of classical sonata form (as well as other formal types, such as minuet, rondo, and concerto forms).⁴

Though *Classical Form* includes entire chapters devoted to the functions of main theme, subordinate theme, transition, development, recapitulation, and coda, the structure of the exposition section as a whole is given short shrift. I want now to redress this imbalance by elaborating a model of the sonata exposition initially presented in cursory form.⁵ I begin by reviewing two traditional models of sonata exposition - the *dual thematic* model and the *key-area* model - and recall some of their obvious inadequacies. I then show that the dual-thematic model can be refined by reformulating its component parts as specific formal functions. In addition, I propose as an extension of the key-area model a scheme that identifies five principal cadential goals within an exposition. Finally, I relate these revised models to each other and show how the exposition's cadences interact with a variety of form-functional plans. The resulting

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2 Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music*, trans. Mary Whittall, Oxford 1991, p. 97.

3 Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein, London 1967; Erwin Ratz, *Einführung in die musikalische Formenlehre: Ueber Formprinzipien in den Inventionen und Fugen J. S. Bachs und ihre Bedeutung für die Kompositionstechnik Beethovens*, 3rd ed., enl., Vienna 1973.

4 William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*, New York 1998.

5 *Classical Form*, pp. 196-97. The theoretical ideas of the present article are found scattered throughout *Classical Form*. With the exception of the first example, however, all of the musical passages used to illustrate the principles are new.

view of the classical sonata exposition aims to be well-grounded theoretically while remaining sensitive to the diverse formal possibilities found throughout the repertoire.

Sonata form originally arose out of theories based largely on melodic, but also tonal, differentiation.⁶ The most simplistic dual-thematic model sees the exposition section containing an initial melodic idea in the tonic key, often of 'masculine' character, against which is later opposed a contrasting, 'feminine' melody in a related tonal region. Various sets of terms traditionally refer to these melodic ideas, such as principal theme vs. secondary theme, first subject vs. second subject, and so forth. The remaining music of less salient melodic profile, often considered 'non-thematic,' is consigned by the model to rather vague categories of transition, continuation of second subject, closing material, and the like. The inadequacies of this melody-based approach are familiar enough: very few sonata-form movements are limited to just two melodic ideas, and no theorist of whom I am aware has formulated explicit criteria for determining which of the many ideas arising within an exposition earn the status of first and second subjects. Moreover, numerous classical works, especially by Haydn, but also many by Mozart, bring little in the way of melodic contrast in association with the modulation to the new key. Largely in reaction to the overly melodic emphasis of the dual-thematic model, and following more in the spirit of some eighteenth-century theorists, especially Koch, some historians have abandoned speaking of distinct subjects or themes within an exposition. Instead, they prefer to identify even more generally a *first key area* in the tonic contrasting with a *second key area* normally in the dominant. The onset of the second key area is usually located at that place where the dual-thematic model would speak of a second subject, but, of course, the key-area model makes no claims for any special melodic salience or contrast at this point in the form. If the key-area model avoids many of the problems of the dual-thematic model simply by ignoring the melodic dimension, significant problems nonetheless remain. Most obviously, the pure key-area model does not provide for further subdivisions of the form. Clearly, though, there are articulations within an exposition beyond the bipartite division covered by

the model. But even in its own tonal terms, the model is often vague in its implications about where the change from one key area to the next actually takes place. In fact, most expositions achieve the new key within what the dual-thematic model would term the transition, well before the appearance of the second subject. And this moment of key change is often not associated with any formally significant event. Today, of course, few historians employ solely one model or the other; rather the two are often combined together in ways that are more or less sophisticated.⁷ As a general rule, however, most analytical work on sonata expositions continues to privilege the tonal and the melodic over other potentially form-defining processes. And thus many of the deficiencies associated with the simplistic models just described still haunt more recent approaches.

Let me turn now to how I believe the two models can be refined and reformulated, beginning first with the dual-thematic model. In casual parlance, a *theme* usually refers exclusively to a melodic idea, often a relatively short snippet. I would propose, however, that for the purposes of formal analysis, the concept of theme should be broadened to embrace a more comprehensive musical unit. Such a theme would comprise, in addition to its melodic-motivic content, a series of harmonic progressions, its accompanimental patterns, a multi-phrase grouping structure, and, above all, cadential closure. The various phrases within a theme fulfill specific formal functions, expressing the general temporal qualities of beginning, being-in-the-middle, and ending. A relatively symmetrical, *tight-knit* theme, one appropriate for the main theme of an exposition, normally lasts eight to sixteen measures. But a single theme, especially a subordinate theme, may become highly expanded through various *loosening* techniques, sometimes approaching forty to fifty measures in length.⁸ As just discussed, the dual-thematic model generally recognizes two themes within the exposition. But with the reformulated notion of theme just presented, some of the traditional non-thematic regions, such as transition and closing material, can also be regarded as theme-like structures, with complete form-functional expression. In my revised model, a sonata exposition contains three main formal divisions - *main theme*, *transition*, and *subordinate theme* - each of which is constructed as a complete thematic unit. Many

6 On the history of sonata-form theory, see Fred Ritzel, *Die Entwicklung der "Sonatenform" im musiktheoretischen Schrifttum des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1974.

7 For example, when introducing sonata form, Leonard Ratner first employs the key-area model, but then adds to his description a rudimentary version of the dual-thematic model (*Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, New York 1980, pp. 217-221).

8 Schoenberg's distinction between tight-knit and loose formal organization plays a central role in my theory of formal functions; see *Classical Form*, pp. 84-86. In labeling themes within an exposition, I follow Schoenberg's usage in *Musical Composition* by speaking of *main theme* and *subordinate theme* to translate the traditional German expressions *Hauptsatz* and *Seitensatz*.

expositions, however, bring multiple subordinate themes, and two main themes may appear as well.⁹ Of particular importance is the fact that the formal articulations of these themes, and especially their internal form-functional expressions, depend minimally upon melodic criteria such as aesthetic salience and contrast with (or derivation from) earlier ideas. Instead, the nature of the local harmonic progressions combined with grouping processes such as repetition and fragmentation prove to be more essential for defining formal organization within, and among, themes.

Just as the component phrases within a given theme have form-functional definition, so too, can we speak of the main theme, transition, and subordinate themes as formal functions within the exposition itself. Unlike the phrase functions of an individual theme, which are based largely on progressions of surface harmonies, the functions of themes themselves relate more broadly to the fundamental tonal conflict between the tonic, *home key* and the dominant, *subordinate key* within the exposition.¹⁰ The main theme of the exposition has three major functions. First, to introduce and fix in the mind of the listener the principal melodic-motivic ideas of the movement. Second, to establish and confirm the home key by means of a cadence, usually an authentic cadence, but sometimes a half cadence. And third, to define the degree of tight-knit organization to which the more loosely organized units in the movement can be compared. The subordinate theme provides the formal means of confirming the subordinate key as the tonal antagonist of the home key. The subordinate theme also functions to loosen the formal organization, primarily through extensions and expansions, so that the rival key can acquire sufficient temporal weight to counterbalance its inherent tonal subordination. Unlike a main theme, which may close with any of the standard cadence types, a subordinate theme always ends with a perfect authentic cadence. (Exceptions to this rule are extremely rare.) This stricter cadential requirement relates to one of the theme's principal functions: in order for the subordinate key to gain the necessary strength to vie for prominence with the home key (and thus to create the dramatic conflict of tonalities so central to the classical aesthetic), the subordinate key must be fully confirmed by a perfect authentic cadence. In addition to ending in the subordinate key, the subordinate theme will, with few exceptions, open in that key. Some cases of modulating subordinate themes start in another tonal region, but never does a subordinate theme begin in the home key. Standing between the main and subordinate themes is

the transition, which functions to destabilize the home key so that the subordinate key can emerge as a competing tonality. Additionally, the transition loosens the form established by the tight-knit main theme and imparts greater rhythmic continuity and momentum to the exposition. Especially towards its end, the transition liquidates characteristic melodic-motivic material in order to 'clear the stage,' so to speak, for the entrance of the subordinate theme. All transitions begin in the home key, and although a majority eventually modulate, a fair minority remain in the initial key, closing there with a half cadence. Note that when characterizing the primary tonal function of the transition, I referred to a 'destabilizing of the home key.' For a number of reasons, I did not speak of it as primarily 'modulating to the new key,' as is customarily the case. In the first place, the notion of establishing a new key can be embraced within the more inclusive notion of home-key destabilization, for the process of changing tonal focus obviously undermines the prevailing sense of tonality. Moreover, not all transitions modulate, and thus we need to identify a functional generalization broad enough to embrace such situations. Finally, the idea of the transition destabilizing the home key finds further expression when we examine the various cadential goals found within an exposition.

As discussed, the basic key-area model is overly simplistic on many grounds. Among its deficiencies, the model gives the impression of two keys essentially juxtaposed with each other; it says little about the processes that go into the establishment and confirmation of these keys. I would propose as a refinement a model that reveals a series of cadential goals articulating a curve of tonal reinforcement and attenuation. The complete series, shown in the upper lines of Table 1, consists of five cadences of varying weights and tonal reference. First, a relatively weak half cadence partially confirms the home key. Second, a stronger perfect authentic cadence provides fuller confirmation. Third, another home-key half cadence marks a destabilization of the key in relation to the preceding perfect authentic cadence. Fourth, a half cadence in the subordinate key partially confirms that new key. And finally, a perfect authentic cadence supplies its fullest confirmation.¹¹ Admittedly, the complete model of five cadences is actually employed in a relatively small number of expositions; most often, one or more of the first four cadences is omitted. The final perfect authentic cadence in the subordinate key, however, is absolutely required of the form. Moreover, expositions featuring multiple subordinate themes bring additional perfect authentic cadences, one for each theme. (These

9 Whereas many theorists recognize a specific 'closing theme' within an exposition, I regard such units as either a second or third subordinate theme or else a post-cadential *closing section* to the final subordinate theme; see *Classical Form*, p. 122.

10 The subordinate key of minor-mode movements is usually based on the mediant degree ('relative major').

11 This table is essentially the same as Table 13.1 of *Classical Form*, p. 196.

extra cadences are not indicated in the table.) The only other cadential requirement is the presence of at least one home-key cadence, so that this initial key can acquire sufficient stability prior to being abandoned during the exposition.

principal thematic functions in a variety of ways. Table 1 presents eight such patterns (labeled A through H). The first four patterns are generally familiar, and so my treatment of them here is primarily for the purpose of establishing the theoretical framework. The final four patterns

Table 1
Cadential goals and form-functional patterns

Pattern	Cadences				
	one required		optional		required
	#1 HC in HK	#2 PAC in HK	#3 HC in HK	#4 HC in SK	#5 PAC in SK
A	MT	—	—	Tr mod	ST
B	—	MT	—	Tr mod	ST
C	MT ant	MT cons	—	Tr mod	ST
D	—	MT	Tr non-mod	—	ST
E	(MT)	MT	Tr non-mod	ST pt 1	ST pt 2
F	(MT)	MT	Tr pt 1	Tr pt 2	ST
G	(MT A)	MT A	MT B	MT A' ⇒ Tr	ST
H	(MT)	MT	—	—	Tr/ST

Abbreviations: A, small ternary exposition; A', small ternary recapitulation; ant, antecedent; B, small ternary contrasting middle; cons, consequent; HC, half cadence; HK, home key; mod, modulating; MT, main theme; non-mod, nonmodulating; PAC, perfect authentic cadence; pt, part; SK, subordinate key; ST, subordinate theme; Tr, transition; Tr/ST, fusion of transition and subordinate theme; ⇒, 'becomes'.

The content of this revised key-area model is by no means entirely new. Most of these cadential articulations have long been recognized by theorists and historians. The complete scheme, however, has not been so systematically laid out. And, of the five cadences listed, the third one, the home-key half cadence appearing prior to the modulation to the new key, is probably the least familiar.¹² This cadence marks an important stage in the breaking down of the home key so that the subordinate key can emerge as a rival tonality; and, as we shall shortly see, this moment of tonal destabilization correlates directly to what I have already identified as a central function of the transition.

With this introduction to my revised models, I turn now to how the exposition's cadential goals can relate to its

have gone largely unrecognized in the theoretical literature, and so I hope that my discussion of them will show that my theory is sufficiently flexible to accommodate less common formal situations.

Pattern A sees the main theme closing with a half cadence in the home key. As such, that key receives only partial confirmation within the exposition; full confirmation by means of a perfect authentic cadence is postponed until later in the movement, normally towards the end of the recapitulation. The main theme is usually built as a *sentence*, a formal type containing a single cadence. The transition modulates to the subordinate key and ends there with a half cadence. The subordinate theme begins in the new key and fully confirms it with a closing perfect authentic cadence.

A familiar example of this pattern is the opening-move-

12 The only study that significantly highlights this cadential goal is Warren Darcy and James Hepokoski, "The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition," in: *Music Theory Spectrum* 19 (1997), pp. 119-54. Though the approach of Darcy and Hepokoski differs significantly from mine, we have observed many of the same formal phenomena occurring in the classical sonata exposition.

ment exposition of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2/1.¹³ The tight-knit main theme is the *locus classicus* of the sentence form. It begins with a two-measure *basic idea* harmonized by tonic; the idea is then immediately repeated in the context of dominant harmony in the following two measures. At measure 5, the idea is reduced to a one-measure unit, which in turn is repeated in the following bar. The theme closes with a half cadence in measure 8 (goal #1 of the model).

Let us look at this theme more closely from a functional point of view. The first formal function arises from the immediate repetition of the basic idea. I refer to this as *presentation* function because, by directly restating the basic idea, the composer unequivocally 'presents' to the listener the fundamental melodic-motivic material of the theme. The presentation serves not only to establish the basic idea through repetition, but also to provide a secure harmonic foundation for the sense of thematic beginning. Consequently, presentation function is supported by tonic harmony, most often in root position. The tonic may be literally extended for the duration of the presentation, or, as in this example, be prolonged by means of neighboring or passing chords, usually of dominant harmony.

The second formal function, termed *continuation*, destabilizes the prevailing phrase-structural, rhythmic, and harmonic context as defined by the presentation.

Continuation function is characterized foremost by a reduction in the size of the musical units, a process I call *fragmentation*. This function also tends to feature an acceleration of harmonic rhythm, which usually accompanies the fragmentation. In this example, the rate of harmonic change doubles at the beginning of the continuation and doubles again in measure 7 as the theme approaches its end.

The third formal function effects harmonic and melodic closure of the theme and is thus appropriately named *cadential*. This function is defined essentially by its underlying harmonic content - more specifically, by the presence of a conventionalized progression of chords including an initial tonic, usually in first inversion; a predominant II⁶ or IV chord; a dominant, always in root position; and finally, in the case of authentic cadences, an ending tonic, also in root position. In this Beethoven theme, cadential function is expressed by a simple two-measure idea beginning with the I⁶ chord in measure 7 and leading to a half cadence in the following measure. Following the end of the main theme, the transition begins with the opening basic idea, though somewhat

unusually transposed into the minor-dominant region.

The structure becomes loosened through an extension of the continuation, whereby a sequential progression of harmonies - another continuational trait - effects a modulation to the subordinate key of A-flat, the relative major of the home key. The transition closes with a half cadence at measure 16 (goal #4), followed by a *standing on the dominant*, to use Erwin Ratz's rather colloquial expression.¹⁴

The subordinate theme begins at measure 21 with a two-measure basic idea, whose repetition in measures 23-24 creates presentation function. A significant loosening of this function is brought about by the dominant pedal, which destabilizes the tonic prolongation otherwise implied by the melodic line. The basic idea begins to be repeated again in measure 25, but then leads abruptly into a new eighth-note motive, which brings about the fragmentation and harmonic acceleration so typical of continuation function. The continuation itself is then extended for a full eight measures, which further loosens the formal organization.

We now expect cadential function of some kind to close the theme. And indeed the prominent arrival of a I⁶ chord in measure 33 at the climax of the continuation signals the beginning of a cadential progression, one that is expanded to occupy a full four-measure phrase. Notice that the individual chords of this *expanded cadential progression* (abbreviated E.C.P.) last twice as long as their corresponding chords in the main theme, and that the steady eighth-note descent against the syncopated figure in the bass fully distinguishes this cadential phrase from the continuation phrase that precedes it. Although the theme could have ended at measure 37, the implied cadence is *evaded* when the dominant seventh of measure 36 moves to another I⁶ to initiate a repetition of the cadential phrase. The repeated expanded cadential progression finally reaches a root-position tonic at measure 41 to bring the perfect authentic cadence that closes the theme (goal #5 of the model).

Pattern B is perhaps more familiar and representative within the repertoire. It is similar to the previous one except that the main theme, built usually as a sentence, closes with a perfect authentic cadence to confirm fully the home key. This common pattern is well illustrated by the opening movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in G, Op. 14/2. The main theme is a sentence.¹⁵

The transition, beginning with the upbeat to measure 9, is also sentential in structure, although the continuation is extended by means of model-sequence technique. The

13 Readers already familiar with my analytical terminology and the specific analysis of this movement in *Classical Form* (pp. 10-11, 17-20; exs. 1.1, 1.7, and 1.8) are invited to skip ahead to the discussion of pattern B. Space requirements prohibit reproduction of all the musical passages discussed here, but scores for these works should be readily available.

14 *Musikalische Formenlehre*, p. 25.

15 This sentence is discussed and analyzed in *Classical Form*, pp. 36-37 (ex. 3.4).

modulation to the subordinate key is partially confirmed by the half cadence at measure 19 and reinforced by the subsequent standing on the dominant. The first of two subordinate themes begins at measure 26 firmly in the new key and eventually closes with a perfect authentic cadence at measure 47. The transition of this exposition contains an interesting detail that might easily be overlooked unless one is aware of the complete model of cadential goals. Note, in Example 1, that the continuation phrase at first leads to what might have been a half cadence in the home key at measure 15. This potential goal, which corresponds to cadence #3 of the model, is thwarted when the cadential idea is subjected to stepwise-ascending sequential activity, and thus the music presses on to cadential goal #4 in measures 18-19 (the same music as before, but now transposed to the new key) in order to mark the transition's structural end.¹⁶

ing a *consequent*.¹⁷

This pattern is sufficiently clear not to require any specific exemplification here. As the column under cadence #1 shows (see Table 1), the remaining patterns to be discussed can optionally include a main theme articulating both cadential goals #1 and #2.

In pattern D, the main theme fully confirms the home key with a perfect authentic cadence. The subsequent transition then undermines this tonal stability by leading to the *home-key* dominant, a decidedly weaker harmonic goal. This cadence is widely known, after Robert Winter, as a 'bifocal close'.¹⁸ But the entire structure is perhaps best termed a *nonmodulating transition*, to distinguish it from the more typical modulating transition of most sonata expositions. Following the transition, the subordinate theme begins directly in the new key and eventually closes there with a perfect authentic cadence. The

13 [Transition] continuation
p cresc.

cad. => mod. seq.

G: II⁶ (V⁹) V... (#3)

17 seq. => cad. standing on the dominant
p

D (V): V...
HC
#4

Example 1

Beethoven, Piano Sonata in G, Op. 14/2, i, mm. 13-20.

In pattern C, the confirmation of the home key occurs in two stages, first with a half cadence, then with a perfect authentic cadence. This tonal establishment takes place within the context of the main theme, which is typically built as a *period*. Unlike the sentence, the period contains two cadences—the first, a weaker one ending a phrase of *antecedent* function; the second, a stronger cadence end-

subordinate key is thus fully confirmed without any prior partial confirmation.

The first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in G, K. 283, contains an exposition using this pattern. The main theme, built as an expanded sentence, confirms the home key with a perfect authentic cadence at measure 12.¹⁹ The transition, whose functional expression is largely

¹⁶ Cadential goals are indicated by circled numbers under the cadence. The symbol '=>' (read 'becomes') indicates a 'retrospective reinterpretation' of formal functionality. Thus, the potential cadential idea in mm. 14-15 becomes (retrospectively) a 'model' for sequencing, and the sequential restatement in mm. 18-19 becomes the true cadential idea.

¹⁷ See *Classical Form*, chap. 4, for an extensive discussion of the period theme type.

¹⁸ Robert Winter, "The Bifocal Close and the Evolution of the Viennese Classical Style," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42 (1989), pp. 275-337.

¹⁹ This sentence is discussed and analyzed in *Classical Form*, pp. 36-37, 47-48 (ex. 3.3).

continual from its beginning,²⁰ remains in the home key, but destabilizes it by ending with a half cadence at measure 22. The subsequent subordinate theme brings a direct modulation to the new key, one that is confirmed by a later appearing perfect authentic cadence (m. 43).

Pattern D also finds expression in a situation that has been described by some historians as a 'reversed' period.²¹ Example 2, from the slow movement of Mozart's Violin Sonata in A, K. 526, shows that if an opening unit (here, an eight-measure sentence) ending with a perfect authentic cadence is followed by a repetition of that unit ending with a half cadence, then the sense of a 'consequent' followed by an 'antecedent' is clearly projected. This use of *phrase* functional labels is fine as far as it goes, but it leaves open the question of how logical it can be for the composer simply to reverse syntactical units. When we recognize that these units have specific *thematic* functions, namely that of a main theme followed by a non-modulating transition, then the logic of the formal syntax becomes more convincing. Some interesting details in the cadential content of this example suggest that 're-reversing' the units into a normative antecedent-consequent succession would not be entirely satisfactory. Note that the half cadence ending the antecedent unit (mm. 15-16) is distinctly longer (due to the expanded pre-dominant, which brings an augmented-sixth harmonic embellishment) than the authentic cadence ending the consequent (m. 8). As well, the melody of the antecedent achieves a greater climax by reaching up to e^{♯4}, far surpassing the b[♭] of the consequent (see circled notes). In a standard period, these details would seem quite out of place: it is normally the consequent phrase, not the antecedent, that effects the greatest cadential duration and the melodic climax. From a thematic perspective, however, these cadential structures are placed in an entirely appropriate succession. A transition typically features a more expand-

ed cadential articulation than a main theme. As well, the use of an augmented-sixth harmony to signal the final dominant of a transition is much more common than the appearance of this pre-dominant at the end of a standard antecedent phrase of a period. And, finally, the high e[♯] of measure 15, a local embellishment at the end of the transition, is immediately taken up as an initiating structural pitch of the subordinate theme beginning in A major at measure 17. In short, an analysis that merely identifies a 'reversed' period without any mention of main-theme and transition functions fails to account for some significant details of compositional technique within this exposition.²²

The next three patterns reveal, through different form-functional realizations, that the processes of home-key destabilization and tonal shift can be accomplished in two distinct stages, employing both the third and fourth cadential goals of the model. Pattern E, like the previous one, features a main theme followed by a nonmodulating transition. In this case, the absence of dominant of the subordinate key at the end of the transition motivates a cadential articulation of this harmony *within* the boundaries of the subsequent subordinate theme; and this harmonic goal may be further emphasized by a standing on the dominant. Although we recognize a certain sense of ending to the theme, we also know that a more conclusive authentic cadence must eventually follow. Since further subordinate-theme material will invariably occur, I refer to this articulation as an *internal half cadence* (or *dominant arrival*) within a single subordinate theme.²³ This technique is well illustrated by the last movement of Mozart's String Quartet in D, K. 575.²⁴ A nonmodulating transition ends at measure 29 with a half cadence of the home key, D major, and three measures of standing on the dominant ensue. The subordinate theme then begins at measure 32 directly in A major with the basic idea from the main theme sound-

20 The sense of continuation function at the very start of the transition is projected by the fragmentation into one-measure groups (relative to the immediately preceding 2-m. cadential unit), greater rhythmic drive through the exclusive use of sixteenth-notes, and a general harmonic instability arising from the unison texture.

21 The terms 'inverted period' and 'antiperiod' (James Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through-Composition and Cyclic Integration in His Instrumental Music*, Cambridge 1991, p. 44) are also sometimes encountered.

22 I cannot leave this example without pointing out another striking detail - Mozart's shifting the music to minor within the main theme and even going so far as to bring a cadence in that modality. Main themes rarely feature such mixture and even rarer is the cadential confirmation of the modal shift. See *Classical Form*, p. 272, n. 64.

23 See *Classical Form*, pp. 215-17. Darcy and Hepokoski describe a similar situation as a 'mid-expositional trimodular block' ("Medial Caesura", p. 146). I will define the concept of dominant arrival shortly.

24 The movement is actually in sonata-rondo form, but it contains a standard sonata exposition nonetheless.

Main Theme
'Consequent'
presentation

basic idea

Andante

p

p

D: I (V₅⁶ 4 2 —————) I⁶ 5₃

continuation frag.

5

cresc.

f

p

8

9

Transition (nonmod.)
'Antecedent'
presentation

cresc.

f

p

cresc.

f

cresc.

f

II₅⁶... (modal shift)

VII₄⁴ I⁶ (VI) II₅⁶ V I

PAC #2

10

continuation

p

[Subordinate Theme]

15

16

17

cresc.

f

p

cresc.

f

p

cresc.

f

p

IV⁶ (A⁶) V A: L... (V)

HC #3

Example 2

Mozart, Violin Sonata in A, K. 526, ii, mm. 1-18.

ing in the second violin; a subsequent two-measure contrasting idea creates a four-measure phrase.²⁵ The repetition of this four-measure unit in measures 36-39 (the modal shift here is typical of a subordinate theme) creates a large-scale presentation, whose subsequent continuation leads to an internal *dominant arrival* at measure 46 and six measures of standing on the dominant. I identify a dominant arrival in place of a half cadence when the harmonic progression creating the sense of ending dominant deviates from the norms of a genuine half-cadential progression, for example, if the dominant contains the dissonant seventh or becomes inverted.²⁶ As Example 3 shows, the harmony that arrives at measure 46 is a dominant seventh, which represents the last link of a sequential harmonic progression (not a specifically cadential progression). But the subsequent extension of this dominant gives the strong impression of its being an ending harmony nonetheless.

When the dominant finally resolves to tonic at measure 52, the material that follows has more the character of a continuation than a new beginning: the ideas are brought in fragments of one measure, the prolonged tonic is placed in the less stable first inversion alternating with V_2^5 and the triplets maintain the same rhythmic figures introduced in the second part of the standing on the dominant. Sequential activity starting in measure 54 further expresses continuation function, which culminates in the cadential idea of measures 56-58 (not shown). A subsequent closing section, supported entirely by root-position tonic, leads quickly to a retransition and a return of the main theme. To be sure, some theorists might find it difficult to accept a subordinate theme beginning prior to a prominent emphasis of the subordinate key's dominant, an articulation that typically precedes the start of the theme; moreover, the lack of melodic contrast at measure 32 hardly projects a second subject in the traditional sense. Yet no other moment preceding the authentic cadence at measure 58 expresses a sense of structural beginning; indeed, the entire passage from measures 32 to 58 brings a logical succession of phrase functions residing entirely in the subordinate

key, thus completely fulfilling the definition of a true subordinate theme.²⁷

Pattern F shows that the two stages of home-key destabilization can occur completely within the confines of the transition. The resulting structure can be termed a *two-part transition*, a formal type that has not been previously identified as such in the theoretical literature.²⁸ Following a main theme ending with a perfect authentic cadence, the first part of the transition leads to a half cadence in the home key, just like a nonmodulating transition. The second part begins in the home key and then modulates to the subordinate key, ending there with a half cadence. The opening movement of Haydn's String Quartet in F, Op. 74/2, illustrates this pattern. The first part of the transition begins with what seems to be codettas to the main theme, but which retrospectively can be understood as the functional beginning of the transition (see Example 4a). This *false closing section*, as I term it,²⁹ leads to the dominant of the home key at measure 32, which is then stretched out for eight measures in the sense of a standing on the dominant (especially so in mm. 36-39, not shown). Note that although the dominant of measure 32 could be seen to arise from a half-cadential progression (I⁶-V), it seems to appear much too early within the ongoing thematic process, coming as it does immediately after a presentation without any intervening continuation. For this reason, I prefer to speak of a *premature dominant arrival* rather than a genuine half cadence;³⁰ this dominant nonetheless represents cadential goal #3 of the model. The second part of the transition starts at measure 40 with the same false closing as before, thus solidly expressing the home-key tonic (Example 4b). But the home-key dominant that arrives at measure 44 does not seem like an ending harmony, for the new continuation at measure 47 forces a modulation to the subordinate key (C major). This key is then confirmed initially by the dominant of measure 51 (cadential goal #4), which is then stretched out until measure 56 (not shown). The subordinate theme begins with tonic of the new key at measure 57.

25 It is difficult to say with certainty whether this 4-m. phrase ends with a cadence or not. (A case can be made for both interpretations.) If we hear cadential closure, then the unit would have antecedent function; if not, then we can identify what I term a *compound basic idea* - a two-measure basic idea followed by a two-measure contrasting idea and no cadential closure. (An antecedent phrase has the same structure except that it closes with a weak cadence of some kind.) In light of the sentential structure which ultimately emerges, I prefer the interpretation of compound basic idea (see my discussion of *compound sentence* in *Classical Form*, p. 69).

26 For a fuller treatment of dominant arrival, see *Classical Form*, pp. 79-81, 133-35.

27 The organization of this exposition is strikingly similar to that of the finale of Mozart's Piano Sonata in D, K. 576 (analyzed in *Classical Form*, pp. 116-17, ex. 8.16); it is thus impossible not to believe that one of these works was clearly modeled on the other (*Classical Form*, p. 272, n. 57).

28 Situations of what I call two-part transitions are subsumed in various ways by Darcy and Hepokoski within their concept of the 'medial caesura declined' ("Medial Caesura," pp. 140-41).

29 See *Classical Form*, pp. 123, 129.

30 See *Classical Form*, p. 81.

[Main Theme] Transition (part 1)
 cad. idea false clos. sec. ⇒ presentation
 codetta ⇒ basic idea standing on the dominant

F: VII_{3/4} V(4 7) I ped. 6 V dom. arr. premature #3

Example 4a

Haydn, String Quartet in F, Op. 74/2, i, mm. 26-33.

Transition (part 2)
 false clos. sec. ⇒ pres. (std. on dom.?)

I ped. V ...

continuation

C: { V I VI IV II V } #4

Example 4b

ibid., mm. 40-51.

Sometimes, the second part of a two-part transition begins with a reference to the basic idea of the main theme. This technique is well illustrated in the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E-flat, Op. 31/3. The main theme, a most unusual structure built entirely over an expanded cadential progression, ends with a perfect authentic cadence at measure 8. The main theme is then repeated with some registral variants. A new four-measure codetta-like unit, functioning as a false closing section, initiates the first part of the transition, which closes on the home-key dominant in measures 31-32. The return at measure 33 of the movement's opening idea (see Example 5), now shifted into the minor mode, marks the beginning of the second part of the transition, which modulates to the new key, ending there with the half cadence at measure 44 (not shown). The subsequent subordinate theme, built upon an expanded cadential progression (like the main theme) eventually leads to a perfect authentic cadence to confirm the subordinate key.

Transition (part 2)
basic idea from M.T.

33

E♭: II 5
(modal shift)

Example 5

Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E-flat, Op. 31/3, i, mm. 33-36.

Pattern G sees the process of home-key destabilization shifted even further back into the realm of the main theme itself. In this case, the main theme projects the sense of small ternary form, but that theme type is not fully realized, because the return of the opening A section fails to close cadentially and is thus reinterpreted as the beginning of a modulating transition. The finale of Beethoven's Piano Concerto in G, Op. 58, illustrates this pattern. The main theme seems to be in the process of forming itself as a standard small ternary. The opening A section, played first by the solo piano, and then repeated by the orchestra, is followed by a B section emphasizing dominant harmony (mm. 21-31). A clear sense of structural return occurs with the orchestral tutti at measure 32, and this A' section is poised to close with a perfect authentic cadence on the downbeat of measure 41. But instead, the cadence is evaded and the music moves off to the submediant region, eventually arriving on the dominant of the subordinate key at measure 57. We thus

understand, in retrospect, that the B section brings cadential goal #3 and that the beginning of the unclosed A' section is the actual starting point of the transition, which brings cadential goal #4 at measure 57.

A potential ambiguity between pattern G just discussed and the previous pattern F can sometimes arise if the second part of a two-part transition begins with a return of the main theme's basic idea. In that case, the basic idea can project a strong recapitulatory effect and thus suggest the start of an A' section. Such confusion would not likely occur in the case of Example 5, Beethoven's E-flat Sonata, because the returning opening idea at measure 33 is shifted to the minor mode, something that rarely (if ever) happens at the start of an A' section. But consider the opening of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata in B-flat, Op. 106. The main theme begins with the famous fanfare chords functioning as basic idea; its repetition creates a presentation phrase; and the subsequent continuation leads quickly to a half cadence - goal #1 of the model. The continuation begins to be repeated

again, and its enormous extension leads to a concluding perfect authentic cadence. This cadential goal, #2 of the model, elides at measure 17 with the beginning of the next section (see Example 6a). Here, a highly extended presentation built over a tonic pedal eventually leads to the home-key dominant at measure 31, cadential goal #3 (see Example 6b). The subsequent standing on the dominant liquidates the texture and dissipates the accumulated energy, only to yield suddenly to a bursting forth of the opening fanfare chords at measure 35. The repeated basic idea suddenly moves to the dominant of the subordinate key, G major, in the middle of measure 37, thus articulating cadential goal #4.³¹

The extensive standing on the dominant that follows (not shown) leads into the subordinate theme at measure 47, which is initially built over the continuing dominant pedal. This enormous subordinate theme brings the final cadential goal #5 some fifty measures later.³²

31 This goal is realized as a premature dominant arrival rather than a genuine half cadence.

32 I provide a complete analysis of this complex subordinate theme in "The 'Expanded Cadential Progression': A Category for the Analysis of Classical Form," in: *Journal of Musicological Research* 7 (1987), pp. 237-42.

Transition (part 1)
pres. (ext.)

basic idea (new)

16 17

f *p* *f* *f* *p*

1 ...
PAC
②

*

Example 6a

Beethoven, Piano Sonata in B-flat ("Hammerklavier"), Op. 106, i, mm. 16-20.

Transition (part 2)
basic idea (from M.T.)

standing on the dominant

a tempo

31 35

dim... *p* *ritard.* *pp* *f*

V ...
HC
③

1 ...

36 37

standing on the dominant

p

* G: V ...
(VI) (dom. arr. premature)
④

Example 6b

ibid, mm. 31-40.

How are we to interpret the formal organization of this extraordinary exposition? To begin, we could note that following the home-key standing on the dominant in measures 31-34 (Ex. 6b), the sudden outburst at measure 35 of the chordal fanfare has a striking recapitulatory character. And thus, following pattern G, we might well believe that this moment marks the A' section of an incomplete ternary form. The ternary interpretation is weak, however, on a number of accounts. In the first place, an examination of complete small ternaries in the classical repertoire reveals that the beginning of the B section always occurs in the measure following the end of the A section. In this case, however, the close of the putative A section at measure 17 (Ex. 6a) manifestly

elides with the beginning of the next section, in a manner quite foreign to the spirit of ternary forms. Furthermore, this new beginning is marked by a sudden increase in rhythmic intensity and momentum, supported by a powerful prolongation of root-position tonic, and these features are more typical of a transition than a ternary B section. For these reasons, then, I prefer an alternative interpretation based on pattern F. I thus see the main theme closing at measure 17 and eliding with the start of a two-part transition. The second part, beginning at measure 35, brings back the opening basic idea, though, to be sure, in a manner highly suggestive of a ternary recapitulation.

In the final pattern H of Table 1, the half-cadential goals

Transition / Subordinate Theme pres.

cad. basic idea

14 *ring.* 16 17

1 PAC (#2) VI

18 20 cont.

V7 C: (VI) (V) (II)

21 23 cad.

V7 I (VII⁶) I⁶ (V⁴) I⁶ E.C.P.

24 (V⁴) I⁶ II⁶

26 27

V⁶ 7) I PAC (#5)

Example 7

Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2/1, ii, mm. 14-27.

#3 and #4, which have largely occupied our attention in the last number of examples, are entirely eliminated. The home key thus gives itself up to a complete confirmation of the subordinate key without any intermediate cadential articulations. The associated thematic process fea-

tures what I term form-functional *fusion*, whereby two logically succeeding functions merge into a single grouping unit. In this case, transition and subordinate-theme functions are fused in such a way that the end of the former and the beginning of the latter receive no clear

delineation.³³ Fusion of this sort is typically used in slow movements in order to compress the formal functions into relatively shorter time spans, appropriate to the slower pacing of events.³⁴ Example 7, from the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F-minor, Op. 2/1, illustrates well this fusion technique.

The main theme is built as a complete small ternary, closing in measure 16 with a perfect authentic cadence. The immediate shift to the submediant region in the next measure is a standard signal for the onset of a transition, and when the VI harmony participates in the subsequent pivot modulation (m. 20), the transition function is fully validated. However, instead of leading to a closing half-cadential articulation, the continuation phrase arrives at measure 23 on V_3^2 , which participates in a two-measure prolongation of I⁶. The remaining harmonies realize an expanded cadential progression, which brings a perfect authentic cadence to close the thematic unit, entirely in the manner of a subordinate theme. But just as the transition does not have a clear sense of functional ending, neither does the subordinate theme have a well-articulated functional beginning. Instead the two thematic functions are fused together in a way that makes it difficult to say where the first one ends and the second one begins.

Without a concept such as form-function fusion, we might not feel entirely comfortable considering this passage to be part of an actual sonata exposition. Or, even if, following Tovey, we rather mechanically assign the labels transition to measures 17-22 and subordinate theme to measures 23-27,³⁵ then we would still be at a loss to explain how two such theoretically discrete formal functions operate together to form a single unit consisting of presentation, continuation, and cadential phrases.

The eight patterns of Table 1 do not, of course, exhaust the ways in which the principal cadential goals of a sonata exposition can be related to their constituent the-

matic functions (main theme, transition, subordinate theme). Additional possibilities, mostly variants of these types, appear now and then in the classical literature.

Moreover, the model does not even begin to stipulate the manifold ways in which the various phrase functions (presentation, continuation, cadential, antecedent, consequent, codetta, standing on the dominant, etc.) combine to create these thematic functions. That task, of course, is the main subject matter of *Classical Form*.

Indeed, a central innovation of my attempts to refine sonata-form theory resides largely in my direct linking of *phrase* function to *thematic* function.³⁶ Whereas Schoenberg and Ratz locate formal functionality almost exclusively at the level of basic thematic organization (main theme, transition, subordinate theme, development, recapitulation, coda),³⁷ I define formal functions at all levels of classical form, with special emphasis on the functional expression of the two-measure idea and the four- to eight-measure phrase. Thus unlike most dual-thematic models, in which the specific boundaries and phrase divisions of the themes are left undefined,³⁸ my theory provides the means for detailing exactly how the main theme, transition, and subordinate theme are built out of specific ideas and phrases expressing the temporal senses of beginning, being-in-the-middle, and ending. As a result, we can be more certain in tackling the kinds of questions that regularly arise in our everyday courses in "Form and analysis", such as 'Where does the main theme end?' or 'Where does the subordinate theme begin?' And in the case of genuine formal ambiguity, we have a way of generating viable alternatives and a means of grounding them theoretically. By recognizing that formal functionality saturates all hierarchical levels of form in music of the classical style, we are in a position to understand how the highly imaginative manipulation of these functional elements yields the seemingly inexhaustible diversity and formal renewal that the classical composers achieve from one work to the next.

33 See *Classical Form*, p. 203. Some writers are reluctant to identify a subordinate theme in the absence of a clear end to the transition. For example, Darcy and Hepokoski argue that without a medial caesura (a prominent dominant articulation defining the end of the transition), a genuine subordinate theme (their 'S-zone') cannot be identified: 'If there is no medial caesura, there is no S' ("Medial Caesura," p. 122).

34 Fusion of transition and subordinate-theme functions sometimes arises in fast movements, such as in Haydn, Symphony No. 93 in D, i, mm. 46-77, and Mozart, Violin Sonata in B-flat, K. 454, i, mm. 14-31 (see *Classical Form*, p. 203, exs. 13.8 and 13.9); see also, Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F-sharp, Op. 78, i.

35 Donald Francis Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, London 1935, p. 13.

36 In *Classical Form* (p. 17), I spoke more awkwardly of *intrathematic* and *interthematic* functions in reference to what I here call phrase and thematic functions respectively.

37 See Ratz's *Urform* of five formal functions (*Musikalische Formenlehre*, p. 56).

38 For example, Darcy and Hepokoski, to take the most important recent study, provide no criteria for defining the boundaries and internal structure of what they call the 'secondary-theme zone (S)' ("Medial Caesura," p. 121); indeed, the expression 'zone' itself implies a certain imprecision about boundaries and internal points of articulation.