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Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory

JOSEPH N. STRAUS

Disability is a pervasive and permanent aspect of the human condition.¹ Like people in all times and places, most of us have been, are now, or (as we age) will be people with disabilities. Despite its universality, however, disability is not uniform or immutable. The nature of disability, the kinds of conditions that are considered disabling, and the meanings attached to disability all vary with time and place. To a significant extent, disability is socially and culturally constructed rather than given: it has a history.

The history of disability as a cultural practice is intertwined with the history of the arts, including music, which both reflect and shape the meaning and reality of disability in particular times and places. Around the end of the

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1. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) defines *disability* as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” Under a closely related definition, the U.S. Census of 2000 identifies approximately fifty million Americans over the age of five (roughly 20 percent of the population) as people with disabilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines an *impairment* as “any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function” and a *disability* as “any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or with the range considered normal for a human being.” Under this definition, the WHO estimated in 1980 that 6 to 7 percent of the world’s population (roughly 245 million people) are disabled. The WHO study is summarized and critiqued in Susan Reynolds Whyte and Benedicte Ingstad, “Disability and Culture: An Overview,” in *Disability and Culture*, ed. Benedicte Ingstad and Susan Reynolds Whyte (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 5–7. Note that both the ADA and WHO definitions are primarily functional—people are understood as disabled if they are unable to do certain things. Neither definition is concerned with the origin of the disability, which may be congenital or acquired through trauma or disease, or in any other way.

eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the history of disability in Western Europe underwent a significant shift. Previously, disability had been understood as something natural and permanent—a mark of divine disfavor. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, disability began to be understood instead as a deviation from a normative standard, neither natural nor permanent, and thus subject to possible remediation. At the same time, Western art music also underwent a significant shift (reflected in the more recent theoretical traditions that have grown up around it), one that involved an increasing interest in rhetorically marked deviations from diatonic and formal normativity, and the possibility of their narrative recuperation.

This essay explores the interconnected histories of disability and music as they are manifested in three theoretical approaches to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Western art music (the musical *Formenlehre* and the tonal theories of Schoenberg and Schenker) and in selected major-key sonata-form works by Beethoven and Schubert, in an effort to show ways in which language about music and music itself may be understood both to represent and to construct disability. More generally, this essay suggests that disability should take its place alongside nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation as a significant category for cultural analysis, including the analysis of music.

Disability Studies in the Humanities

In recent years, a new civil rights movement has emerged in North America, Great Britain, and elsewhere, to enable people with disabilities to enjoy the full right of participation in the social, political, and economic life of their countries.² Like earlier civil rights movements, which have sought an end to discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation, the disability rights movement seeks an end to discrimination based on disability. And, also like those movements, the disability rights movement has brought in its wake an intellectual effort to contextualize, historicize, and theorize the underlying issues.

The newly emerged field of *disability studies* offers a sociopolitical analysis of disability, focusing on social and cultural constructions of the meaning of disability. Like gender, disability has a self-evident physical, biological basis: blindness, deafness, paraplegia, and Down syndrome, for example, are objective, factual matters. But, also like gender, the physical, biological facts of disability are endowed with meaning by the society and culture within which

2. The disability rights movement has achieved some notable successes, including the passage of the ADA. The ADA is modeled on earlier laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race and gender and guarantees people with disabilities full civil rights, including the right of physical access to public spaces and the right to be free from discrimination in employment.

they occur.³ And just as feminist theory distinguishes sex from gender, and critical race theory distinguishes race from ethnicity, disability studies usually distinguish *impairment* (underlying biological or medical condition) from *disability* (the meanings conferred on impairment by social and cultural construction).⁴

3. A central trend in disability studies is the effort to disengage disability from a medical model that conceives of disability as a pathology of individual bodies. “The medicalization of disability casts human variation as deviance from the norm, as pathological condition, as deficit, and, significantly, as an individual burden and personal tragedy. Society, in agreeing to assign medical meaning to disability, colludes to keep the issue within the purview of the medical establishment, to keep it a personal matter and ‘treat’ the condition and the person with the condition rather than ‘treating’ the social processes and policies that constrict disabled people’s lives. The disability studies’ and disability rights movement’s position is critical of the domination of the medical definition and views it as a major stumbling block to the reinterpretation of disability as a political category and to the social changes that could follow such a shift” (Simi Linton, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* [New York: New York University Press, 1998], 11). Similarly, see Paul Longmore and Lauri Umansky, “Introduction: Disability History: From the Margins to the Mainstream,” in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Longmore and Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 1–29. The institutions and professions that exist to serve and care for people with disabilities are active participants in the cultural construction of disability—their own existence and longevity depend on it. This is one of the central insights of Michel Foucault—see, for example, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (1978; repr., New York: Random House, 1990). David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder explain: “Foucault designates the disciplinary exposé of sexual abnormality and deviance as an addictive professional pleasure that both ensures the longevity of the profession itself and assures the insertion of patients with a determinate catalog of perversions. Disability studies critiques a similar history of professional parasitism. Disabled communities traditionally have been defined through scientific narratives about aberrancies and physiological dysfunctions that in turn further sustain the need for the professional discourses that define them” (“Introduction: Disability Studies and the Double Bind of Representation,” in *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability*, ed. Mitchell and Snyder [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997], 25).

4. “Impairments make up the material prerequisite, or substantive premiss, for the social enactment of disability” (Carol Thomas and Mairian Corker, “A Journey around the Social Model,” in *Disability/Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory*, ed. Corker and Tom Shakespeare [London and New York: Continuum, 2002], 20). Lennard J. Davis writes: “Impairment is the physical fact of lacking an arm or a leg. Disability is the social process that turns an impairment into a negative by creating barriers to access. . . . An impairment involves a loss or diminution of sight, hearing, mobility, mental ability, and so on. But an impairment only becomes a disability when the ambient society creates environments with barriers— affective, sensory, cognitive, or architectural” (*Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* [New York: New York University Press, 2002], 12 and 41). This distinction is contested within disability studies, in recognition of the contingent, historically inflected, and permeable boundary between the categories. From Mairian Corker and Sally French: “Social model theory rests on the distinction between disability, which is socially created, and impairment, which is referred to as a physical attribute of the body. In this sense it establishes a paradigm for disabled people which is equivalent to those of sex/gender and race/ethnicity. However, though it is a ground-breaking concept, and one which has provided tremendous political impetus for disabled people, we feel that because the distinction between disability and impairment is presented as a dualism or dichotomy—one part of which (disability) tends to be valorized and the other part (impairment) marginalized or silenced—social model theory, itself, produces and embodies distinctions of value

At first glance, disability may appear to be a more porous, unstable identity than those conferred by gender, race, or ethnicity.

Disability is an overarching and in some ways artificial category that encompasses congenital and acquired physical differences, mental illness and retardation, chronic and acute illnesses, fatal and progressive diseases, temporary and permanent injuries, and a wide range of bodily characteristics considered disfiguring, such as scars, birthmarks, unusual proportions, or obesity. Even though the prototypical disabled person posited in cultural representations never leaves a wheelchair, is totally blind, or profoundly deaf, most of the approximately forty million Americans with disabilities have a much more ambiguous relationship to the label. The physical impairments that render someone “disabled” are almost never absolute or static; they are dynamic, contingent conditions affected by many external factors and usually fluctuating over time. . . . Although categories such as ethnicity, race, and gender are based on shared traits that result in community formation, disabled people seldom consider themselves a group. Little somatic commonality exists among people with different kinds of disabilities because needs and situations are so diverse. A blind person, an epileptic, a paraplegic, a deaf person, and an amputee, for example, have no shared cultural heritage, traditional activities, or common physical experience. Only the shared experience of stigmatization creates commonality. . . . Unlike the ethnically grouped, but more like gays and lesbians, disabled people are sometimes fundamentally isolated from each other, existing often as aliens within their social units.⁵

But, as recent postmodern theorizing of gender and race has made clear, those categories are also socially constructed, permeable, and inherently unstable. In that sense, disability confers a social, cultural, and political identity that is as reliable, and as unreliable, as those conferred by gender and race.⁶

and power” (“Reclaiming Discourse in Disability Studies,” in *Disability Discourse*, ed. Corker and French [Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999], 2).

5. Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 13–15.

6. Identities of this kind, and the essentialism they entail, have been the subject of extensive postmodernist critique. As Lennard J. Davis summarizes: “The disability movement quite rightly desired to include disability as part of the multicultural quilt. If all the identities were under the same tent, then disability wanted to be part of the academic and cultural solidarity that being of a particular, oppressed minority represented. Yet, within that strong notion of identity and identity politics, a deconstructive worm of thought began its own parasitic life. That worm targeted ‘essentialism.’ . . . Essentialists were putatively accused of claiming in a rather simple-minded way that being a woman or an ethnic minority was somehow rooted in the body. That identity was tied to the body, written on the body. Rather, the way out of this reductionist mode was to say that the body and identities around the body were socially constructed and performative. . . . Social constructionism and performativity seemed to offer the way out of the problem caused by the worm of essentialism, but [they] also created severe problems in shaping notions of identity. If all identities are socially constructed or performative, is there a core identity there? Is there a there?” (*Bending Over Backwards*, 13).

Recent work in disability studies shifts our attention from biology to culture. The biology of bodily difference may be the proper study for science and medicine, but the meanings that we attach to bodily difference are the proper study of humanists.

The meanings attributed to extraordinary bodies reside not in inherent physical flaws, but in social relationships in which one group is legitimated by possessing valued physical characteristics and maintains its ascendancy and its self-identity by systematically imposing the role of cultural or corporeal inferiority on others. Representation thus simultaneously buttresses an embodied version of normative identity and shapes a narrative of corporeal difference that excludes those whose bodies or behaviors do not conform.⁷

The goal of disability studies is thus to theorize and historicize disability.⁸ Initially, that has involved providing histories of individuals and groups of people with disabilities and studying cultural images of disability in literature, film, and art, in an effort both to identify and correct negative stereotypes and, in a more celebratory vein, to “reclaim the power of formerly stigmatized representations.”⁹

More recently and more radically, studies in disability have begun to interrogate the concept of the normal, which is socially and culturally constructed also, and constructed precisely with reference to the concepts of the abnormal and the disabled. Historians of disability have identified the early nineteenth

7. Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 7. Similarly, see Paul Longmore’s introduction in *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 1–18.

8. For a survey of recent publications in the history of disability, and an appreciation of their potential to transform the field of history, see Catherine Kudlick, “Disability History: Why We Need Another ‘Other,’ ” *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): “By approaching disability as a social category rather than as an individual characteristic, the field challenges long-held perceptions that relegate it to the unglamorous backwaters primarily of interest to people in rehabilitation, special education, and other applied professional fields. Seen in this way, disability should sit squarely at the center of historical inquiry, both as a subject worth studying in its own right and as one that will provide scholars with a new analytic tool for exploring power itself. Indeed, the books discussed here represent only the beginning of a greater project that will reveal disability as crucial for understanding how Western cultures determine hierarchies and maintain social order as well as how they define progress. . . . Just as gender and race have had an impact well beyond women and people of color, disability is so vast in its economic, social, political, cultural, religious, legal, philosophical, artistic, moral, and medical import that it can force historians to reconsider virtually every concept, every event, every ‘given’ we have taken for granted” (765, 767).

9. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 36. For studies of representations of disability and people with disabilities in literature and film, see Alan Gartner and Tom Joe, eds., *Images of the Disabled, Disabling Images* (New York: Praeger, 1987); Martin F. Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 1996); and Longmore, the chapter “Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion Pictures,” in *Why I Burned My Book*, 131–46.

century as a time of paradigm shift in the social and cultural construction of disability.¹⁰ Prior to that period, disability had been construed as something monstrous, a visible mark of divine disfavor. Subsequent to that period, disability was understood as something abnormal, a deviation from the statistically predominant bodily condition. As such, disability came to be seen as not necessarily permanent; rather, it could be ameliorated—the abnormal body could be normalized.

The metaphor of the natural versus the monstrous was a fundamental way of constructing social reality in [Edmund] Burke's time. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, the concept of the natural was to a great extent displaced or subsumed by the concept of normality. . . . The natural and the normal both are ways of establishing the universal, unquestionable good and right. Both are also ways of establishing social hierarchies that justify the denial of legitimacy and certain rights to individuals or groups. Both are constituted in large part by being set in opposition to culturally variable notions of disability—just as the natural was meaningful in relation to the monstrous and the deformed, so are the cultural meanings of the normal produced in tandem with disability.¹¹

The history of disability is thus the primary site for the emergence of the concepts of normal and abnormal. This article is concerned to demonstrate the ways in which the emergence of those concepts is both embodied in and encouraged by simultaneous developments in the arts, including music. The narrative trajectory of certain early nineteenth-century musical works and the critical discourse that emerged to explain those works and the surrounding repertoire can be understood as reflections, and artistic constructions, of the

10. "To understand the disabled body, one must return to the concept of the norm, the normal body. So much of writing about disability has focused on the disabled person as the object of study, just as the study of race has focused on the person of color. But as with recent scholarship on race, which has turned its attention to whiteness, I would like to focus not so much on the construction of disability as on the construction of normalcy. I do this because the 'problem' is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the 'problem' of the disabled person" (Lennard J. Davis, "Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, the Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Davis [New York: Routledge, 1997], 9). Mitchell and Snyder, in *Narrative Prosthesis*, 17–40, identify five overlapping phases of scholarship within disability studies: (1) negative imagery (exposing and interrogating the extensive history of derogatory stereotypes of people with disabilities in art and literature); (2) social realism (an effort to counter negative stereotypes with more accurate and nuanced accounts, moving beyond a notion of disability as an individual pathology to one of disability as a social status); (3) new historicism (a sensitivity to the ways in which the experience and representation of disability vary with historical and social setting); (4) biographical criticism (the study of authors and artists with disabilities, including the impact of their disability on their work); and (5) transgressive reappropriation (attending to the subversive potential of deviant bodies, both in art and in life).

11. Douglas Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 35.

concepts of normal and abnormal. More specifically, certain works in the tonal tradition and certain of the analytical theories that have grown up around them give expression to the possibility, one that was new around the beginning of the nineteenth century, that disability could be overcome or, in musical terms, that the formally or tonally abnormal could be normalized. In this way, the history of disability and the history of music can be seen as intertwined in mutually reinforcing ways.

For the purposes of this article, disability will be defined as any *culturally stigmatized bodily difference*.¹² By “difference,” I refer to deviation from whatever is understood as normal in a particular time and place. As with gender, race, and sexual orientation, the construction of disability involves the opposition of a normative standard (male, white, straight, able-bodied) and a deviant Other (female, non-white, gay, disabled). By “bodily,” I refer to the full range of physical and mental differences to which the human body is subject, whether congenital or acquired, including physical and mental illnesses or diseases, temporary or permanent injuries, and a variety of non-normative bodily characteristics understood as disfiguring. By “stigmatized,” I refer to any negative social valuation.¹³ Obviously, the value assigned to any particular bodily difference will vary from context to context. Non-normative bodily features and, as we will see, non-normative musical features, may be understood as either desirable or disabling, depending upon the context. By “culturally,” I embrace the conception of disability as socially and culturally constructed, a historically contingent term whose meaning varies with time, place, and context.

12. A related definition that focuses on concepts of normality and deviation uses the term disability to designate “cognitive and physical conditions that deviate from normative ideas of mental ability and physiological function.” This definition is taken from Mitchell and Snyder, “Introduction: Disability Studies,” 2. See also Rosemarie Garland Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory,” in *Gendering Disability*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith and Beth Hutchison (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2004), for “a broad understanding of disability as a pervasive cultural system that stigmatizes certain kinds of bodily variations. . . . The informing premise of feminist disability theory is that disability, like femaleness, is not a natural state of corporeal inferiority, inadequacy, excess or a stroke of misfortune. Rather, disability is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, similar to what we understand as the fictions of race and gender. The disability/ability system produces subjects by differentiating and marking bodies” (76–77). Compared to the ADA and WHO definitions discussed above, the definition adopted here, as well as those of Mitchell and Snyder and Thomson, are less pragmatic in orientation (bodily or mental function) and more concerned with culturally constructed deviation from contextual norms.

13. The classic study in this area is Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963): “The term stigma . . . will be used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed. An attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself” (3).

Music, like other products of culture, may be understood both to reflect and to assist in constructing disability, as it does with concepts of race, gender, and sexual orientation. If disability is understood as culturally stigmatized bodily difference, then femaleness, non-whiteness, and gayness can all be understood as forms of disability, and that is how they have often been described in the history of Western thought.¹⁴ In this sense, disability is the fundamental form of deviant Otherness of which gender, race, and sexual orientation are specific manifestations.¹⁵ Disability is “the master trope of human disqualification.”¹⁶

14. With regard to gender, for example, a formulation with its roots in Aristotle defines the female body as a “monstrosity,” both deviant and inferior with respect to the male body. As Rosemarie Garland Thomson observes: “More significant than his simple conflation of disability and femaleness is that Aristotle reveals the source from which all otherness arises: the concept of a normative, ‘generic type’ against which all corporeal variation is measured and found to be different, derivative, inferior, and insufficient. Not only does this definition of the female as a ‘mutilated male’ inform later versions of woman as a diminished man, but it arranges somatic diversity into a hierarchy of value that assigns plenitude to some bodies and lack to others based on their configurations. Furthermore, by focusing on defining femaleness as deviant rather than the maleness he assumes to be essential, Aristotle also initiates the discursive practice of marking what is deemed aberrant while concealing the position of privilege by asserting its normativeness. Thus we witness perhaps the originary operation of the logic which has become so familiar in discussions of gender, race, or disability: male, white, or able-bodied superiority is naturalized, remaining undisputed and obscured by the ostensible problem of female, black, or disabled deviance” (“Feminist Theory, the Body, and the Disabled Figure,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis [New York: Routledge, 1997], 280).

15. Within disability studies, there is a large literature on the relationship of disability to gender, race, and sexuality. See, for example, the essays collected in *Gendering Disability*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith and Beth Hutchison (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Susan Wendell, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, 260–78 (New York: Routledge, 1997); idem, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on the Disabled Body* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Cindy LaCom, “‘It Is More Than Lame’: Female Disability, Sexuality, and the Maternal in the Nineteenth-Century Novel,” in *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability*, ed. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, 189–201 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Robert McRuer, “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence,” in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, ed. Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 88–99 (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002); and Baynton, “Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History.”

16. Scholars of gender, race, and sexuality have often sought to distance themselves from the historical stigma of disability: “As feminist, race, and sexuality studies sought to unmoor their identities from debilitating physical and cognitive associations, they inevitably positioned disability as the ‘real’ limitation from which they must escape. . . . Biological inferiority had to be exposed as a construction of discursive power. Formerly denigrated identities are ‘rescued’ by understanding gendered, racial, and sexual differences as textually produced, distancing them from the ‘real’ of physical or cognitive aberrancy projected onto their figures. . . . For all populations physical and cognitive limitations constitute a baseline of cultural undesirability from which they must dissociate themselves in the quest for civil rights and for a lessening of stigmatization. Consequently, disability has undergone a dual negation—it has been attributed to all ‘deviant’ biologies as a discrediting feature, while also serving as the material marker of inferiority itself. One might think

Embodiment

An important recent movement in the fields of philosophy and linguistics has focused on the concept of *embodiment*. This movement, sometimes called “experientialism,” argues that we understand the world through our prior, intimate knowledge of our own bodies.¹⁷ Music theorists have recently extended this approach to musical hearing, arguing that music creates meaning by encoding bodily experience, and that we make sense of music in embodied terms.¹⁸ I argue here that disability is among the bodily experiences that music

of disability as the master trope of human disqualification” (Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 2–3).

17. Among the principal sources in this area are: Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). From a radically different point of view, an important trend in postmodern theorizing of gender, race, and sexuality focuses on the body. Some representative works in this area are: Robyn Wiegman, ed., *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Although these two approaches differ in their premises, they share a virtually complete neglect of disability as a common feature of human bodies. As Lennard J. Davis observes, “In recent years, hundreds of texts have claimed to be rethinking the body; but the body they have been rethinking—female, black, queer—has rarely been rethought as disabled. Normalcy continues its hegemony even in progressive areas such as cultural studies—perhaps even more so in cultural studies since there the power and ability of ‘transgressive’ bodies tend to be romanticized for complex reasons. Disabled bodies are not permitted to participate in the erotics of power, in the power of the erotic, in economies of transgression. There has been virtually no liberatory rhetoric—outside of the disability rights movement—tied to prostheses, wheelchairs, colostomy bags, canes, or leg braces” (*Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* [London and New York: Verso, 1995], 158).

18. See, for example, Candace Brower, “Pathway, Blockage, and Containment in *Density 21.5*,” *Theory and Practice* 22–23 (1997–98): 35–54; idem, “A Cognitive Theory of Musical Meaning,” *Journal of Music Theory* 44 (2000): 323–80; George Fisher and Judy Lochhead, “Analyzing from the Body,” *Theory and Practice* 27 (2002): 37–67; Andrew Mead, “Bodily Hearing: Physiological Metaphors and Musical Understanding,” *Journal of Music Theory* 43 (1999): 1–19; Janna K. Saslaw, “Forces, Containers, and Paths: The Role of Body-Derived Image Schemas in the Conceptualization of Music,” *Journal of Music Theory* 40 (1996): 217–43; idem, “Life Forces: Conceptual Structures in Schenker’s *Free Composition* and Schoenberg’s *The Musical Idea*,” *Theory and Practice* 22–23 (1997–98): 17–33; Lawrence M. Zbikowski, “*Des Herzsraums Abschied*: Mark Johnson’s Theory of Embodied Knowledge and Music Theory,” *Theory and Practice* 22–23 (1997–98): 1–16; and idem, *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). In addition, a significant body of recent musicological work has approached questions of the body and embodiment from a point of view influenced by postmodern thought. See, for example, Suzanne Csusick, “On a

and discourse about music may be understood to encode. Further, I will argue that the disabled body is not an immutable, trans-historical product of human biology, but is a historically contingent cultural construction. Western art music from the early nineteenth century and its analytical description in surrounding music-theoretical traditions reflect a particular conceptualization of the disabled body, one rooted in contemporaneous notions of normality and abnormality.

According to experientialism, we use our direct, concrete, physical knowledge of our own bodies as a basis for understanding the world around us; our knowledge of the world is thus embodied. The mind and body are not separate; rather the body is in the mind.

The centrality of human embodiment directly influences what and how things can be meaningful for us, the ways in which these meanings can be developed and articulated, the ways we are able to comprehend and reason about our experience, and the actions we take. Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interaction with objects. It is never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and prepositional judgments.¹⁹

In other words, we know what we know, and make meaning of what we experience, based on our own physicality: “Experientialism claims that conceptual structure is meaningful because it is embodied, that is, it arises from, and is tied to, our pre-conceptual bodily experiences.”²⁰ Like our knowledge of the world in general, our knowledge of music is also embodied: we make sense of music, we understand it, according to patterns of bodily perception, activity, and feeling.²¹

When we understand one thing in terms of another, as when, for example, we understand abstract concepts in terms of our bodily experience, we must employ metaphor. Traditionally, metaphor has usually been understood as a kind of linguistic flourish, a surface embellishment of language, with no deeper cognitive impact. Lakoff and Johnson argue, in contrast, that metaphor is the inescapable means by which we map knowledge across the domains of physical embodiment and abstract conceptualization: “Metaphor pervades

Lesbian Relationship with Music: A Serious Effort Not to Think Straight,” in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67–83; and Fred Maus, “Masculine Discourse in Music Theory,” *Perspectives of New Music* 31 (1993): 264–93. Both Cusick and Maus liken pieces of music to fully sexualized human bodies. See also Elisabeth Le Guin, “‘One Says That One Weeps, but One Does Not Weep’: *Sensible*, Grotesque, and Mechanical Embodiments in Boccherini’s Chamber Music,” this *Journal* 55 (2002): 207–54.

19. Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, xix.

20. Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 267.

21. Mark Johnson, “Embodied Musical Meaning,” *Theory and Practice* 22–23 (1997–98): 95.

our normal conceptual system. Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc.), we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms (spatial orientations, objects, etc.). This need leads to metaphorical definition in our conceptual system.”²²

Lakoff and Johnson have argued that metaphors tend to cluster into a relatively small number of “image schemas,” such as CONTAINERS, PATHS, LINKS, FORCES, BALANCE, UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, PART-WHOLE, and CENTER-PERIPHERY.²³ Image schemas are

recurring, flexible patterns of our embodied interactions with our environments. They are the result of both the way we are structured physically as embodied organisms and the structure of our environments that permits only certain kinds of interactions with those environments. Moreover, they are not fixed templates that we impose on experience, but are instead highly flexible cross-modal patterns that make it possible for us to have ordered experiences that we can make some sense of. Image schemas like compulsive force, source-path-goal, balance, iteration, linkage, containment, and verticality are essential to our ability to have any meaningful experience at all, since they give us recurrent patterns and structured processes that we need to survive and flourish in our world.²⁴

Many of the image schemas described by Lakoff and Johnson have seemed suggestive to music theorists, including particularly CONTAINER, CYCLE, VERTICALITY, BALANCE, CENTER-PERIPHERY, FORCES, and SOURCE-PATH-GOAL. Recent work has identified these schemas both in standard music theories as well as in the melodic, harmonic, and formal organization of music.²⁵

In all of the experientialist literature, however, including its recent music-theoretical manifestations, there has been the blithe assumption that we all inhabit the same kind of body, a normatively abled body, and thus all experience our bodies in pretty much the same way. Experientialist discourse about embodiment has relied on the first person plural to an almost hypnotic degree: “*Our* reality is shaped by the patterns of *our* bodily movement, the contours of *our* spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of *our* interaction with objects”;²⁶ “*we* are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of *our* skins, and *we* experience the rest of the world as

22. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 115.

23. Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 267. In the literature, including the experientialist musical literature cited in note 18, image schemas are typically written in capital letters. I will use small capital letters here.

24. Johnson, “Embodied Musical Meaning,” 97.

25. For example, Brower engages all of these schemas in an analysis of Schubert’s “Du bist die Ruh” (“A Cognitive Theory of Musical Meaning”); and Saslaw shows the role of many of these schemas in the theoretical writing of Schoenberg, Schenker, and Riemann (“Life Forces” and “Forces, Containers, and Paths”).

26. Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, xix.

outside *us*”²⁷ (emphasis added). Through sheer repetition, this rhetorical device takes on a coercive force, unpleasant in its unexamined assumption that our bodies and our bodily experiences are all the same.

On the contrary, bodies differ, and bodily difference makes a difference. Furthermore, the ways in which people experience and understand their own bodies are historically contingent, varying with time and place. To the extent to which the body is a cultural and historical construction, that construction may involve disability or the possibility of disability.

To get a sense of how a disability-inflected version of experientialism might work, it may be helpful to look more closely at two related image schemas proposed by Lakoff and Johnson: BALANCE and VERTICALITY.

Balance is something we experience immediately with our bodies. It involves our felt sense of an upright posture in which forces acting on us are organized around a central axis so that we remain upright, relatively in control of our actions, able to function effectively, and feeling somewhat stable. We know the meaning of balance pre-reflectively, in and through our bodies, even without thinking about it or conceptualizing it. Notice that there is what we might call a corporeal logic of our bodily balance: being balanced permits you to function successfully to achieve your ends.²⁸

The VERTICALITY schema is based on “our felt sense of standing upright . . . the vertical orientation of our bodies.”²⁹

Balance and verticality are certainly widely shared experiences, but in no sense universal. There are plenty of people whose normal posture is not upright, balanced, and vertical.³⁰ In addition, we all have experiences of imbalance and loss of verticality, the disabled counterparts of balance and verticality. If Lakoff and Johnson are right that we—all of us—understand our world in light of our experience of our own bodies, then significant bodily difference and more generally available experiences of non-normative bodily states should unavoidably inflect our understanding. Indeed, as I will show, image

27. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 29.

28. Johnson, “Embodied Musical Meaning,” 98.

29. Zbikowski, “*Des Herzraums Abschied*,” 6.

30. See, for example, John Hockenberry’s experience of balance and verticality as a journalist covering Kurdish refugees after the Gulf War: “Neither the heroic foot-borne relief efforts, anticipation of the horrors ahead, nor the brilliance of the scenery around me struck home as much as the rhythm of the donkey’s forelegs beneath my hips. It was walking, that feeling of groping and climbing and floating on stilts that I had not felt for fifteen years. It was a feeling no wheelchair could convey. I had long ago grown to love my own wheels and their special physical grace, and so this clumsy leg walk was not something I missed until the sensation came rushing back through my body from the shoulders of a donkey” (John Hockenberry, *Moving Violations: War Zones, Wheelchairs, and Declarations of Independence* [New York: Hyperion 1995], 2–3). This passage is cited in Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music*, 73.

schemas and metaphors of the disabled body may be found in a range of music and discourse about music.³¹

Balance, for example, is a central metaphor in a wide range of theoretical discourse about music, including concepts of formal balance (the relation of the parts to each other and to the whole), tonal balance (the relationships among keys), harmonic balance (the relationship of harmonies around a central tonic), and inversional balance (a sense of symmetry in pitch or pitch-class space).³² Beginning around the turn of the nineteenth century, Western classical music may often be heard as engaging a narrative of disability overcome, disease cured, an open wound closed, the abnormal normalized, and in many cases, this narrative centers on the quality of musical balance: a piece begins in a state of balance, then moves through a state of imbalance before the initial balance is restored. Such conceptualizations depend crucially on prior embodied knowledge not only of balance, but of imbalance as well. The relationship between balance and imbalance in music and writing about music mirrors contemporaneous cultural constructions of ability and disability, of the normative and non-normative body.

The same sort of cultural and historical contingency inflects the operation of two other image schemas that are prevalent in discourse about music: CONTAINER and SOURCE-PATH-GOAL. Studies of musical form frequently imagine formal units as containers for musical content, and a variety of harmonic theories imagine progressions as moving along a path from an initial source to a goal. Lakoff and Johnson argue that both of these image schemas are embodied, that is, these concepts have their roots in our experience of our own bodies as containers or as moving through space. I would argue that historically and culturally mediated experiences of disability significantly inflect these embodied experiences, and thus also the more abstract conceptualizations of music arising from them.

All of us, the normatively abled as well as the disabled, have experiences of disability and of the threat of disability. Indeed, disability and the threat of disability are central to our experience of our bodies and are implicated in our conceptual image schemas to a degree far beyond anything acknowledged by Lakoff and Johnson. We learn to experience BALANCE in moments when it is threatened or overturned by IMBALANCE. We can never experience BALANCE directly; rather, it is always experienced in relationship to its opposing term. Similarly, we experience SOURCE-PATH-GOAL only in relation to an experience of BLOCKAGE, and we experience our bodies as a CONTAINER only when that

31. For a suggestive account of the kinds of metaphors that may accrete around certain illnesses, including particularly cancer and tuberculosis, see Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978).

32. See Joseph N. Straus, "Inversional Balance and the 'Normal' Body in the Music of Schoenberg and Webern," in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (New York: Routledge, 2006, forthcoming).

container is PUNCTURED in some way (by the extrusion of something from inside the container or a wound from without) or its shape is DISTORTED, either expanded or compressed. In short, we know our abilities in relationship to our disabilities.³³

In the following sections I foreground the ways in which disability has inflected conceptualization of at least some music and at least some of our discourse about music. I trace the role of particular image schemas, including both the normative and non-normative bodily states involved, in shaping discourse about music within three theoretical traditions. First, I discuss the image schema of the CONTAINER within the *Formenlehre* tradition. I will show that theorists within that tradition often conceive of musical forms as containers, and do so most vividly at moments when the containers are ruptured or distorted in some way. Like a human body, a musical work has a form, and this form may be “deformed.” In this way, I hope to show that the *Formenlehre* tradition deeply engages questions of disability. Second, I discuss the image schema of BALANCE in the writings of Schoenberg. For Schoenberg, a relationship between balance (the normative state in which a piece often begins) and imbalance (resulting from the intrusion of a problematic, destabilizing element) is central to the musical idea. Musical works may thus seem to strive to recuperate from a non-normative state just as human bodies grapple with the threat or reality of disability. Third, I discuss the image schema of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL in the writings of Schenker. Schenker is particularly concerned about the ways in which musical motion is enabled and the kinds of musical events that impede motion or, in extreme cases, paralyze the motion altogether. In all three theoretical traditions, I show ways in which disability (both its physical reality and the anxiety it induces) shapes the discourse. More specifically, I show how emerging, contemporaneous understanding of disability and the disabled body as something not unnatural but rather abnormal penetrates deeply into verbal descriptions of music and into the music itself.

Formenlehre: abnormalities and deformations

There are two persistent strains in studies of musical form, reaching back to the end of the eighteenth century and becoming increasingly pronounced over the course of the nineteenth. The first is the conception of musical form as a CONTAINER, an arrangement of bounded spaces that contain musical content (themes and/or harmonies). FORM IS A CONTAINER is an embodied image schema. Through it we understand that musical form can speak to us of human bodies, and that musical forms, like human bodies, may be *well-formed* or *deformed*. The possibility of *formal deformation* links this conception of musical form to the history of disability.

33. BLOCKAGE is actually an image schema identified by Johnson, but IMBALANCE, PUNCTURE, and DISTORTION are not. Experientialism has tended to ignore the non-normative, disabled counterparts of the bodily states and functions it conceives as potential image schemas.

A second strain in form studies is the sense that form is a norm, a normative or conventional arrangement of musical elements. In this sense, forms may be *normal* or *abnormal*. FORM IS A NORM is not an embodied image schema, but the possibility of *formal abnormality* links this conception also to the history of disability.

These two strains in the history of form studies are closely intertwined—musical form may be understood as a conventional mold, a normative container. “Form may be viewed, textbook fashion, as a *mold* or standardized design, with all the conveniences of quick reference that such classifications permit and all the dangers of Procrustean analysis and false criteria that they pose. Approaching a form as a mold puts the emphasis on everything that is typical or common practice, if not commonplace. Our best illustration, of course, is textbook ‘sonata form,’ itself.”³⁴

In form studies, the sense of form as a normative container (an approach that Mark Evan Bonds calls “conformational”) coexists with a diametrically opposed sense of form as the unique shape of an individual work (an approach that Bonds calls “generative”).³⁵ The generative approach maintained the aesthetic and moral high ground through much of the twentieth century. Indeed, it is hard to find a study of musical form from the twentieth century that does not contain a denunciation of taxonomies, of “jelly-moulds” (Tovey), of stereotypical patterns.³⁶ But even the most ardent generativists

34. William S. Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven*, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 1983), 110.

35. Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991): “The concept of musical form encompasses two basic perspectives that differ radically from each other. On the one hand, ‘form’ is often used to denote those various structural elements that a large number of works share in common. In terms of practical analysis, this approach to form looks for lowest common denominators and views individual works in comparison with such stereotypical patterns as sonata form, rondo, ABA, and the like. For the sake of convenience, this view of form may be called ‘conformational,’ as it is based on the comparison of a specific work against an abstract, ideal type. The contrasting perspective sees form as the unique shape of a specific work. This view, unlike the first, is essentially generative, in that it considers how each individual work grows from within and how the various elements of a work coordinate to make a coherent whole. In its most extreme manifestations, the generative idea of form makes no essential distinction between the form and content of a given work” (13–14).

36. Donald Francis Tovey, “Some Aspects of Beethoven’s Art Forms,” in *The Main Stream of Music and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949): “The art forms of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were not moulds in which music could be cast, but inner principles by which the music grew” (289). Richard Strauss made the same point somewhat more colorfully in an 1888 letter to Hans von Bülow: “Now, what was for Beethoven a ‘form’ absolutely in congruity with the highest, most glorious content, is now, after 60 years, used as a formula inseparable from our instrumental music (which I strongly dispute), simply to accommodate and enclose a ‘pure musical’ (in the strictest and narrowest meaning of the word) content, or worse, to stuff and expand a content with which it does not correspond. . . . We cannot have any more random patterns, that mean nothing either to the composer or the listener, and no symphonies (Brahms excepted, of course) that always give me the impression of being giant’s clothes, made to fit a

have found it hard to escape entirely the image schemas of containers and norms—these have proven remarkably persistent, and not only in the textbooks. Furthermore, the three most important contemporary studies of form—those of Bonds, Caplin, and Hepokoski/Darcy—have all taken approaches that are explicitly conformational, at least to some degree:

Both [generative and conformational] approaches are valid, yet neither is sufficient for musical analysis. Looking for stereotypical patterns can help call attention to deviations from a recognized norm, but it cannot explain these deviations. At the same time, analyzing a work entirely “from within” cannot account for the striking structural similarities that exist among a large number of quite independent works. . . . What is needed, then, is a general theory of form that can account for conventional patterns and at the same time do justice to the immense diversity that exists within the framework of these patterns.³⁷

The theory [set forth in this book] establishes strict formal categories but applies them flexibly in analysis. One reason that the traditional *Formenlehre* has fallen out of favor with many historians and theorists is their belief that the use of rigid, abstract categories of form results too often in procrustean analyses that obscure diversities in style and distort the individuality of the musical work. Yet forsaking categories would make it almost impossible to generalize about formal organization, and such a situation runs counter to most musicians’ intuitions that classical form features regularly recurring patterns of conventionalized procedures.³⁸

In our view, moment-to-moment compositional choices may be profitably understood as elements of an ongoing dialogue with reasonably ascertainable, flexible generic norms. . . . Our aim has been twofold: first, to (re-)generate those norms—again, inductively (under the conviction that the most valuable treatises on late-eighteenth-century “sonata form” were written by the great masters, not by the early theorists); second, to configure the norms into an ordered description of standard practices, deformations, and overrides that we call “Sonata Theory” (with capital S and capital T).³⁹

Hercules, in which a thin tailor is trying to comport himself elegantly” (cited in Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven*, 35–36). More recently, James Webster wrote: “Sonata form is not a mould into which the composer has poured the contents . . . each movement grows bar by bar and phrase by phrase, with the meaning of each event depending both on its function in the structure and its dramatic context” (“Sonata Form,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. [2001], 23:688).

37. Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, 14 and 29.

38. William S. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4.

39. James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, “The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 19 (1997): 116–17. They give their “Sonata Theory” its fullest exposition in *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, forthcoming). The central role of norms and deformations is apparent from the title. See also

Both Bonds's "frameworks" and Caplin's "categories" are instances of containers—formal spaces that can be filled by various kinds of musical content. In a more oblique way, so are Hepokoski and Darcy's "spaces."⁴⁰ Intrinsic to the image schema of CONTAINER is the possibility that the container can be ruptured or distorted. Indeed, the sense of a formal unit as a container is perhaps most strongly felt just at the moments when the its exterior shell is breached, or when the container is suddenly forced to change shape under pressure from its internal contents. Caplin's terms for this phenomenon are *elision*, *evasion*, *deception*, and *falseness* (as in a "false recapitulation"), suggesting transgression of a boundary that is not only formal but possibly moral as well. Hepokoski and Darcy's even more suggestive term for this phenomenon is *deformation*, defined as "a strikingly unusual or strained procedure relying on our knowledge of the typical limits of the norm."⁴¹ If musical form can be understood metaphorically as a human body via the image schema of the container, then deformations in musical form may metaphorically suggest deformations in a human body.

James Hepokoski, "Back and Forth from *Egmont*: Beethoven, Mozart, and the Nonresolving Recapitulation," *19th-Century Music* 25 (2001–2): 127–54; and idem, "Beyond the Sonata Principle," this *Journal* 55 (2002): 91–154. It would not be accurate to describe the Sonata Theory of Hepokoski and Darcy as strictly conformational: "Sonata Theory starts from the premise that an individual composition is a musical utterance that is set (by the composer) into a dialogue with implied norms. This is an understanding of formal procedures as *dynamic, dialogic*. Our conception of the sonata as an instance of *dialogic form* is not accurately described as presenting a bluntly 'conformational' view of that structure. . . . Viewed more subtly, it is not the obligation of a sonata to 'conform' to a fixed background pattern, which then, in turn, might be construed as an 'ideal' or 'well formed' shape from which deviations might be regarded as compositional errors or aesthetically undesirable distortions" (*Elements of Sonata Theory*, 10). But at the very least, like Bonds's "patterns" and Caplin's "categories," the "norms" of Hepokoski and Darcy create a template against which to understand deviations and deformations. That need not mean, however, that the normative is depicted as desirable. A central and extremely attractive feature of Hepokoski and Darcy's Sonata Theory is its embrace of the deviant, the non-normative, the formally deformed. Their Sonata Theory thus participates in the history of the concept of the normal, a history with its roots in cultural conceptualizations of disability, but generally reverses the traditional polarity of valuation: Sonata Theory is in some measure about learning to celebrate the non-normative body, both musical and human.

40. Hepokoski and Darcy write in *Elements of Sonata Theory*: "The normative . . . sonata consists of three musical action-spaces (again, the exposition, development, and recapitulation). . . . Each of the three spaces is usually subjected to thematic and textural differentiation. Each is marked by several successive themes and textures, all of which are normally recognizable as generically appropriate for their specified location" (16). They argue that their spaces should not be understood as mere, inert containers to be filled but rather as "complex sets (or constellations) of flexible action-options, devised to facilitate the dialogue [with a backdrop of implied norms]" (11). However, any spatial model of form engages the image schema of the container in some way. By their very nature, spaces are bounded, with an exterior and an interior, separated by a boundary or shell, and the interior space is available to be filled.

41. Hepokoski and Darcy, "The Medial Caesura," 131.

The suggestiveness of the term takes us beyond the meaning explicitly attached to it by Hepokoski and Darcy, who assert that *deformation* need carry no connotation of actual human disability:

While we do intend the analytical/technical term “deformation” to imply a strain and distortion of the norm—the composer’s application of uncommon creative force toward the production of a singular aesthetic effect—we do not use this term in its looser, more colloquial sense, one that might connote a negative sense of aesthetic defectiveness, imperfection, or ugliness. . . . Within our system, “deformation” is a technical term referring to a striking way of stretching or overriding a norm. . . . We are suggesting neither that a sonata deformation is an unattractive structure (as opposed to any supposedly more attractive or socially preferable norm) nor that it is the result of a misguided execution on the part of the composer. Nor, more locally, are we implying that. . . [sonata] deformation. . . results in something that is aesthetically negative.⁴²

But the term “deformation,” like any theoretical concept, has a history and a resonance that are impossible to escape entirely. Indeed, from a certain point of view (not Hepokoski and Darcy’s point of view), their use of the term deformation simply makes explicit what is already implicit in any conformational theory of musical form: a musical form, understood as a normative container, is a metaphorical human body, and thus formal deformations can be understood as bodily disfigurements.

It is a paradox worth pondering that deformities are valued so differently in life and in art. Formal deviations, which are dealt with harshly in real life when manifested as bodily deformities, may be prized within art, and sonatas with “deformations” are often the most interesting and expressive ones.⁴³ In this

42. Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 614–15. Clearly the term “deformation” can be used in something like a neutral manner to suggest simply “alteration of form or shape,” and it has even been used in that sense in previous and related musical scholarship—see Robert O. Gjerdingen, “The Formation and Deformation of Classic/Romantic Phrase Schemata: A Theoretical Model and Historical Study,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 8 (1986): 25–43. But that sense is only the third of the definitions listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, compact ed., 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). The first two are “The action (or result) of deforming or marring the form or beauty of; disfigurement, defacement” and “Alteration of form for the worse.” The neutral, non-evaluative usage cannot fully escape the resonance of the more familiar use of the term. What is important here is not that the term “deformation” has historically had negative connotations. Such negative valuations can be reversed, and such a reversal is in fact the explicit project both of the contemporary movement for political and social rights for people with disabilities and Hepokoski and Darcy’s *Sonata Theory*—both urge us to embrace “deformations.” Rather, the significant impact of the term “deformation” is to enable us to understand that theories of musical form may have something to tell us about human forms, and that conceptualizations of musical form and of human form have shared roots in the history of disability.

43. The differential treatment of disability in art and in life is a familiar theme in the disability studies literature: “While disability’s troubling presence provides literary works with the potency of an unsettling cultural commentary, disabled people have been historically refused a parallel power with their social institutions. In other words, while literature often relies on disability’s transgressive potential, disabled people have been sequestered, excluded, exploited, and obliterated on the very basis of which their literary representation so often rests. Literature serves up disability as

sense, sonata deformations are not “culturally stigmatized bodily differences” (my definition of disability) so much as they are culturally *valorized* bodily differences. In this way, Hepokoski and Darcy’s Sonata Theory in particular manifests a progressive, liberational impulse, suggesting the possibility that bodily deformations, like formal deformations, might come to be understood as having particular value and interest. But whether the deformations are valued negatively (as they usually are in life) or positively (as they often are in art and in theories of form), conformational theories of musical form, and the musical forms themselves when viewed conformationally, may be understood to be metaphorically about normal and deviant bodies, and thus to participate in the construction of the culture and history of disability.

Even more than the image schema of the CONTAINER, the concept of the normal, so central to conformational ideas about musical form, can be richly understood in the context of the history of disability and of people with disabilities. The concepts of normal and abnormal are deeply familiar ones. We are all well habituated to sorting things into those categories, of identifying certain practices as constituting a norm, as normative, and others as abnormal or deviant, as statistical outliers. But our habituation to these terms and concepts has tended to conceal their history, one that is bound up with issues of disability. In fact, in the history of Western thought, the concepts of normal and abnormal emerge at a particular time—roughly the first half of the nineteenth century—in part as a response to changes in the cultural construction of disability and the material circumstances of people with disabilities.⁴⁴

Prior to roughly 1840, the relevant constellation of words (normal, normalcy, normality, norm, abnormal) had not existed in any European language.⁴⁵ The middle of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of

a repressed deviation from cultural imperatives of normativity, while disabled populations suffer the consequences of representational association with deviance and recalcitrant corporeal difference. The paradox of these two deployments, artistic versus historical, cannot be reconciled” (Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 8–9).

44. The following discussion is based on Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, particularly chapter 2, “Constructing Normalcy.” See also Jan Branson and Don Miller, *Damned for Their Difference: The Cultural Construction of Deaf People as “Disabled”; A Sociological History* (Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2002): “[In the early 19th century], the concept of normality entered not only the language of science but also the language of everyday life, especially that of the middle classes for whom the distinction between normality and pathology became a vital source of social control. . . . The concept of normality remained and remains at all times insecure, dependent on its opposite and in constant need of reaffirmation. A view of a diverse humanity that was imbued with almost infinite difference gave way to a view of an essentially uniform humanity that was surrounded on its edges, on its margins, by the pathological foils to that uniformity or ‘normality.’ But no ‘pathological’ population could exist until one was culturally constructed” (37–38).

45. In English (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*), the word “normal” (in its original sense of “standing at right angles”) dates back to the seventeenth century, with roots in Latin, but in its modern sense of “constituting, conforming to, not deviating or differing from, the common type of standard; regular, usual,” its earliest use is given as 1828, and it becomes

the science of statistics and the associated practice of studying populations and evaluating them in relation to particular traits, such as intelligence or height. From the very beginning, this practice of statistical norming, in which most people are located under a bell-shaped curve while the rest are relegated to its margins, was associated with eugenics, a desire to purge society of people defined as abnormal or deviant.⁴⁶ Just at the historical moment that people with disabilities begin to emerge as a distinctive class, with a new set of institutions to educate, train, and treat them, statistics and eugenics also emerge, with their concepts of normal and abnormal, to contain and marginalize the disabled.⁴⁷

At roughly the same moment, the study of musical form began to coalesce into the tradition of musical *Formenlehre*. That involved a significant reorientation in conceptions of musical form, from one that views musical forms as ideal types, to be used as models for emulation by composers, to one that views them in terms of statistical norms, to be used as objects for analysis and contemplation.

According to Scott Burnham, the analysis of large-scale tonal form became a central preoccupation of music-theoretical writings ever since the “work concept” (consolidated around 1800) decisively shifted theoretical focus to whole

common only after around 1840 (*ibid.*). In French, the first appearance of the adjective “normal” or “normale” in the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* comes in the 6th edition, from 1835 (Paris: Firmin Didot frères). In German, the first use of the term “normal” in its modern sense dates from the mid-1850s (*Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, ed. Matthias von Lexer [Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1889; repr., Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994]). Of course, there may be a significant lapse of time between the emergence of a concept and the emergence of terms used to express it. Certainly a kind of casual statistical norming (e.g., “that guy over there doesn’t look like the rest of us”) is presumably a pretty common and long-standing notion. What is new in the mid-nineteenth century is the conceptualization of the normal in implicitly or explicitly statistical terms, as something that situates individuals in relation to large populations with respect to particular traits.

46. The career of Francis Galton may be taken as emblematic of the intertwining of the history of statistics (with its foundational interest in sorting populations into normal and abnormal) and the history of eugenics (with its foundational interest in purging society of people with disabilities). Galton was both a pioneering figure in statistics (the originator of concepts like “regression” and the “correlation coefficient”) and a founder of the movement for eugenics, a term he coined. See Martin Brookes, *Extreme Measures: The Dark Visions and Bright Ideas of Francis Galton* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004).

47. “The concept of a norm, unlike that of an ideal, implies that the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm. The norm pins down that majority of the population that falls under the arch of the standard bell-shaped curve. . . . With the concept of the norm comes the concept of deviations or extremes. When we think of bodies, in a society where the concept of the norm is operative, then people with disabilities will be thought of as deviants. . . . Statistics is bound up with eugenics because the central insight of statistics is the idea that a population can be normed. An important consequence of the idea of the norm is that it divides the total population into standard and nonstandard subpopulations. The next step in conceiving of the population as norm and non-norm is for the state to attempt to norm the nonstandard—the aim of eugenics” (Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, 29–30).

works of music and thus to overall form. The analysis of musical forms began in this context as a pedagogical exercise in emulation. . . . But by the end of the nineteenth century, the business of formal analysis began to be undertaken as a kind of research program—what was primarily at stake was no longer the education of a young composer but rather the viability of theories of music that attempted to determine what were felt to be the natural laws of music. Pedagogy gave way to taxonomy, emulation to contemplation.⁴⁸

To put it in slightly different terms, the focus of the inquiry into musical form, like the simultaneous inquiry into the meaning of disability, shifted from what is ideal or natural to what is statistically normal.

A. B. Marx may be taken as the turning point in this development. On the one hand, Marx adopted what Burnham calls “the idealist view of the musical artwork,” understanding musical form “as the process of artistic reason calling forth its own progressive concretization.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, Marx grounded his inquiries in an empirical study of the procedures of Beethoven’s music, particularly the piano sonatas—they were the population he studied. His classification of musical forms thus follows the same logic as the classification of individuals in a population: they are sorted as normal or abnormal with respect to certain (desirable) traits.⁵⁰ As a result, Marx has become known, unfairly in many respects, as the father of conformational theories of musical form, as Charles Rosen suggests: “The term ‘sonata form’ itself is the invention of Marx. His codification of the form helped to establish its nineteenth- and twentieth-century prestige as the supreme form of instrumental music, its supremacy guaranteed by Beethoven. Largely a generalization of the procedures of Beethoven before 1812, the description was normative and intended above all as an aid to composition.”⁵¹

48. Scott Burnham, “Form,” in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 880.

49. Scott Burnham, “Introduction: Music and Spirit,” in A. B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method*, ed. and trans. Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13 and 9.

50. “[Marx distinguishes] between *Form* and *Kunstform*. . . . This terminological distinction between the mechanistic-conformational (*Kunstform*) and the organic-generative (*Form*) confirms the establishment of a dichotomy that is still very much a part of theoretical thought today. . . . Thus, although earlier theorists had recognized the existence of conventional structures, Marx is the first to make a consistent terminological distinction between stereotypical patterns and the broader concept of form in general. . . . It is the classification and description of specific conventional forms in *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition* that have remained the work’s most enduring legacy. This is in itself a tribute to Marx’s method, for the pedagogical usefulness of such a taxonomy has proven itself repeatedly over more than a century. But Marx’s simultaneous derogatory attitude toward conventional forms has gone largely unrecognized, even though it, too, persists in present-day pedagogy and analysis” (Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, 154–56).

51. Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: Norton, 1980), 3–4. For an account of Marx that vigorously challenges the received view of him as essentially a taxonomist, see Scott Burnham, “Aesthetics, Theory and History in the Works of Adolph Bernhard Marx” (PhD diss., Brandeis

By the end of the nineteenth century, the study of musical form had taken a decisive empirical turn, one that has endured until the present, although under continual critique (in some cases by the empiricists themselves). It is assumed by Prout and Tovey, as it is more recently by Blume, Newman, and Hepokoski/Darcy, that the study of musical form involves the inspection of lots of pieces and their categorization based on shared attributes, implicitly a process of statistical norming in which most of the population is sheltered under the bell-shaped curve, with abnormal members relegated to the margins.⁵²

Prout gives a personal and evocative account of this implicitly statistical methodology:

In the preface to *Musical Form* [an earlier work by Prout] it was said that that work had involved more labour than any of its predecessors. But the compilation of that volume proved to be mere child's play in comparison with the research necessary for the present one, which has required more than eighteen months' hard work to complete it. This has been the inevitable result of the system on which the author has worked. Though he has consulted numerous theoretical treatises, he has in no case taken either his statements or his illustrations at second hand; in every single instance he has gone direct to the works of the great masters, both for his rules and for his examples. What this involves may be judged from one or two illustrations. Before writing the three paragraphs on the Minuet, the author examined every minuet in the complete works of Handel, Bach, Couperin, Corelli, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, the whole of Haydn's 83 quartets, all the symphonies (about fifty) which he possesses by the same composer, and a number of miscellaneous specimens by other writers. The result of all this work occupies less than three pages. Even more laborious were the preliminary investigations for the sonata form. About 1,200 movements were carefully examined before a line of the text was written; and this task occupied the whole of the author's spare time for nearly a month.⁵³

University, 1988) and idem, "The Role of Sonata Form in A. B. Marx's Theory of Form," *Journal of Music Theory* 33 (1989): 247-72.

52. This new orientation toward statistical norming is described and critiqued in Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: Norton, 1972), 32: "The most dangerous aspect of the traditional theory of 'sonata form' is the normative one. . . . The assumption that divergences from the pattern are irregularities is made as often as the inference that earlier eighteenth-century versions of the form represent an inferior stage from which a higher type evolved. This is implied, too, but in a more specious way, in a good deal of twentieth-century musical thought. Now the attitude is statistical rather than hortative: the pattern for 'sonata form' is no longer an idealized one but is based on the common practice of eighteenth-century composers. 'Sonata form' is taken to mean the form generally used by a majority of composers at a given time." The "statistical attitude" is apparent in Friedrich Blume, *Classic and Romantic Music: A Comprehensive Survey*, trans. M. D. Herter Norton (London: Faber and Faber, 1979) and William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 1983) and *The Sonata since Beethoven*.

53. Ebenezer Prout, *Applied Forms: A Sequel to "Musical Form"* (London: Augener, 1895), iii. Apparently Prout studied roughly forty movements per day during his "spare time."

A similar empirical approach characterizes the Sonata Theory of Hepokoski and Darcy, which is “generated inductively from the analysis of hundreds of sonatas, symphonies, overtures, quartets, and other chamber music from the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century repertory. The works examined include not only those of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but also those of other composers preceding and surrounding them, including Sammartini, Stamitz, Cannabich, J. C. Bach, C. P. E. Bach, Dittersdorf, Boccherini, Clementi, Dussek, Cherubini, and others.”⁵⁴ In analyzing individual compositions, their goal in each case is “to determine which gestures in it were normative within the style, which were elaborate, elegant, or strained treatments of the culturally available norms, and which were not normative at all.”⁵⁵ The tension between normative procedures and non-normative deviations thus lies right at the heart of Sonata Theory. Of course, the non-normative features of a musical work may well be the most distinctive, attractive, and highly valued—music and theories of musical form like Sonata Theory may create a space in which deviations and deformations are celebrated. Nonetheless, by relying on the fundamental dichotomy of the normal and the abnormal, Sonata Theory and similar theories of musical form participate in the history and construction of disability. There is a potent analogy to the literary form of the novel, which emerged at roughly the same time as the sonata form, in response to similar social forces, and with a similar cultural impact:

If we accept that novels are a social practice that arose as part of the project of middle-class hegemony, then we can see that the plot and character development of novels tend to pull toward the normative. For example, most characters in nineteenth-century novels are somewhat ordinary people who are put in abnormal circumstances, as opposed to the heroic characters who represent the ideal in earlier forms such as the epic. . . . The novel form, that proliferator of ideology, is intricately connected with concepts of the norm. From the typicality of the central character, to the normalizing devices of plot to bring deviant characters back into the normal of society, to the normalizing coda of endings, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century novel promulgates and disburses notions of normalcy and by extension makes of physical differences ideological differences.⁵⁶

The cultural work of the novel is, in part, to assert the normality of its central characters in distinction to abnormal Others.⁵⁷ The sonata form, in its

54. Hepokoski and Darcy, “The Medial Caesura,” 116.

55. Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 10.

56. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, 41 and 49.

57. Characters with disabilities are extraordinarily pervasive in literature in general, and the nineteenth-century novel in particular, including *Jane Eyre* (Bertha and Rochester), *Moby Dick* (Ahab), Frances Burney’s *Camilla* (Eugenia), and *The Scarlet Letter* (Chillingworth). Five nineteenth-century novels, among many, that use a secondary character with a physical difference as a foil to a normative protagonist, are Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (the protagonist, Anne Elliot, in relation to her crippled friend, Mrs. Smith); Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (the eponymous

central dialogue between normal procedures and “deformities,” does the same kind of work: it normalizes the abnormal. The crystallization of sonata form in the emerging *Formenlehre* tradition coincides closely with the emergence of the actual terms normal and abnormal. Both the form itself and the conformational theoretical tradition that grows up around it simultaneously reflect these concepts and assist in constructing them. The sonata form, among its many other achievements, helps to teach us what it means for people, for bodies, to be well-formed or deformed, normal or abnormal—that is its cultural work. Beyond the sonata, the conformational wing of the *Formenlehre* tradition, with its implicitly statistical methodology and its insistence on distinguishing the normal from the abnormal, teaches us what it means for a musical form to conform to or transgress conventional norms and therefore also may assist in teaching us what it means to have a normative or non-normative body.

The idea of studying musical form in relation to prevailing norms has been enormously productive. The rich *Formenlehre* tradition, including its recent efflorescence in the work of Bonds, Caplin, and Hepokoski/Darcy, has depended from its very beginning on what has come to seem a self-evident concept of the normal, understood fundamentally as a statistical norm. But the very usefulness of the statistical norm has tended, ironically, to normalize and naturalize the concept itself, to obscure its history, a history that is closely bound up with changing conceptualizations of the human body and particularly the disabled human body. Both the normal musical form and the normal human body are cultural constructions of a particular time and place. Restoring our sense of their intertwined histories enriches our understanding of both.

Schoenberg: imbalance and unrest

The organicist critical tradition of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which likens a piece of music to a living organism, most often a human body, persisted into the twentieth century in the theoretical writings of

protagonist in relation to the monster); Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (the eponymous hero in relation to Uriah Heep); Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (Jim Hawkins in relation to Long John Silver); and Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers* (Arabin in relation to Madeline Neroni). On the last of these, see Cindy LaCom, “‘It Is More Than Lame’: Female Disability, Sexuality, and the Maternal in the Nineteenth-Century Novel.” The sheer number of fictional representations distinguishes disability from other forms of Otherness: “While other identities such as race, sexuality, and ethnicity have pointed to the dearth of images produced about them in the dominant literature, disability has experienced a plethora of representations in visual and discursive works. Consequently, disabled people’s marginalization has occurred in the midst of a perpetual circulation of their images. Curiously, a social erasure has been performed even as a representational repertoire has evolved.” Mitchell and Synder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 6.

Schoenberg and many others. The concept of the organic is in obvious and explicit contrast to the inorganic, that is, the mechanical. To say something is organic is to say that its parts are not mechanically assembled but all grow together from a shared seed or root. But there is another contrast that is inexplicit, rarely acknowledged, but nonetheless crucial, and that is to organisms that are deficient, defective, disabled. Just as the concept of the normal depends on an often-unarticulated concept of the abnormal, the concept of the praiseworthy organic (the symmetrical body) depends on the concept of the disabled organic (the deformed, disabled body). Disability is the dark and largely unexplored underside of organicism.

The disabled organic usually remains only implicit in Schoenberg's writings, but occasionally produces a surface hint: "Thence it became clear to me that the work of art is like every other complete organism. It is so homogeneous that in every little detail it reveals its truest, inmost essence. When one cuts into any part of the human body, the same thing always comes out—blood."⁵⁸ Schoenberg's explicit point is that a work's inmost essence, its lifeblood, is the same throughout all parts of the artistic body. But in making that point, Schoenberg engages the embodied image schema of the CONTAINER: like human bodies, musical works are containers that may be ruptured or punctured, and may bleed. In that sense, disfigurement and the possibility of disability are built right into Schoenberg's organicist conception.

Schoenberg expresses this possibility even more emphatically in his response to a request from Zemlinsky for permission to make a cut in *Pelleas und Melisande*:

First and foremost: my attitude to cuts is the same as ever. I am against removing tonsils although I know one can somehow manage to go on living without arms, legs, nose, eyes, tongue, ears, etc. In my view that sort of bare survival isn't always important enough to warrant changing something in the programme of the Creator who, on the great rationing day, allotted us so and so many arms, legs, ears and other organs. And so I also hold the view that a work doesn't have to live, i.e., be performed, at all costs either, not if it means losing parts of it that may even be ugly or faulty but which it was born with.⁵⁹

For the most part, when Schoenberg and other organicists invoke bodily metaphors, they do so to praise the nondisabled status of the music they describe—balanced and harmonious, with all the parts coordinated perfectly with each other and with the whole. But Schoenberg also acknowledges that parts of the organism may be ugly or faulty, and that some editors may be

58. Arnold Schoenberg, "The Relationship to the Text" (1912), in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 144.

59. Schoenberg, Letter to Alexander von Zemlinsky, 20 March 1918, in *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, ed. Erwin Stein, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 54. Zemlinsky had conducted a performance of the work in Prague in February 1918.

tempted to make cuts. Schoenberg's attitude toward defective parts of the organism is evidently an accepting one, but he nonetheless acknowledges that an organism need not be perfect—it may be marred by defects. Musical works, that is, like other organisms, may be disabled.

Disability may enter into the musical body in the form of what Schoenberg calls a “tonal problem.” The tonal problem is a musical event (often a chromatic note) that threatens to destabilize the prevailing tonality. There are two aspects of the tonal problem, both of which involve bodily states: balance/imbalance and rest/unrest.⁶⁰ BALANCE is one of Lakoff and Johnson's image schemas, and both balance and rest are fully embodied metaphors. They bespeak the physicality of Schoenberg's organicist orientation: a piece of music is a human body, and as such is susceptible to non-normative stigmatized states, i.e., disabilities, such as imbalance and unrest. The normative and desirable bodily state (balance and rest) is understood in relation to a non-normative and undesirable state (imbalance and unrest).

In certain contexts, imbalance and unrest may be understood as desirable, even essential, inasmuch as they permit forward movement, both of music and of bodies. Each time we take a step, and each time the tonic confronts a tonal problem, we find ourselves temporarily in a state of imbalance and unrest. Indeed, walking involves a series of controlled falls—without them there would be no forward motion at all.⁶¹ But if excessive and uncontained, if incapable of normalization, imbalance and unrest may become disabilities, and that possibility is essential to Schoenberg's tonal problems.

For Schoenberg, musical works typically begin in a normative state of balance and rest, which is disrupted by the imbalance and unrest of the tonal problem. It is then the task of the piece to solve the problem and in so doing to reestablish balance and rest.

60. Balance plays a central role in Schoenberg's thought, extending beyond its role in creating a “tonal problem.” As David Lewin has argued, for Schoenberg, a tonic in a tonal piece and an inversional axis in an atonal piece are both capable of inducing a musical sense of harmonious balance, and in analogous ways: “The ‘balance’ of the total chromatic induced by the functioning of such an inversion was treated by Schoenberg, throughout his career, as something quite analogous to the balance induced by a tonal center. . . . [Schoenberg] conceived of a ‘tonic’ as a fulcrum about which all else balanced. . . . Indeed, the widely used term ‘tonal *center*’ implicitly suggests exactly such a notion” (“Inversional Balance as an Organizing Force in Schoenberg's Music and Thought,” *Perspectives of New Music* 6 [1968]: 2–3). Lewin relates the idea of inversion also to other tonal theorists who invoke the concept of balance, including Rameau (for whom dominant and subdominant are balanced symmetrically around a tonic) and Riemann (whose harmonic dualism imagined a major and minor triad generated symmetrically above and below a root).

61. The idea that walking and falling are intimately related is a familiar one. It is given particularly vivid expression in the lyrics of a song by Laurie Anderson called “Walking and Falling,” which contains the following lines: “With each step you fall forward slightly / And then catch yourself from falling.”

In its most common meaning, the term *idea* is used as a synonym for theme, melody, phrase or motive. I myself consider the totality of a piece as the *idea*: the idea which its creator wanted to present. But because of the lack of better terms I am forced to define the term *idea* in the following manner: Every tone which is added to a beginning tone makes the meaning of that tone doubtful. If, for instance, G follows after C, the ear may not be sure whether this expresses C major or G major, or even F major or E minor; and the addition of other tones may or may not clarify this problem. In this manner there is produced a state of unrest or imbalance which grows throughout most of the piece and is enforced further by similar functions of the rhythm. The method by which balance is restored seems to me the real *idea* of the composition.⁶²

Imbalance and unrest are desirable aesthetically. They propel the piece forward and provide an essential contrast with the normatively balanced and restful beginning and ending. Without a tonal problem to solve, a piece would be lifeless, without character or interest. At the same time, however, imbalance and unrest are non-normative bodily states that require normalization. For the listener approaching the piece from the outside, imbalance and unrest are sources of pleasure and interest, but from the point of view of the piece's tonic, they are disruptive and potentially disabling events that must be contained, abnormalities that must be normalized. As long as the tonal problem can eventually be solved, with balance and rest restored, the piece emerges enriched, its metaphorical body fully intact. But the aesthetic value of that restoration depends precisely on the threat posed by the tonal problem. If the tonal problem is not understood as at least potentially disabling, then the eventual solution will have little value. Instead, for Schoenberg, the eventual triumph over the threat of disability must be won through a struggle:

The tonic must make great efforts to prevail, just as a revolutionary party after attaining power must make powerless all who at any time had got in its way. . . . The tonic, once placed in question, must wander through all regions and prevail over every single one after having allowed each to display its full power. And only after conquering and neutralizing all opponents—at the end, in other words—can the power of the tonic prove itself and a *state of rest* again prevail.⁶³

The *furtherance of the musical idea* may ensue only if the *unrest—problem—*present in the *grundgestalt* or in the *motive* (and formulated by the *theme* or not, if none has been stated) is shown in all its *consequences*. These consequences are presented through the *destinies* of the motive or the *grundgestalt*. Just how the *grundgestalt* is altered under the influence of the *forces struggling*

62. Arnold Schoenberg, "New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea" (1946), in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 122–23.

63. Arnold Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of Its Presentation*, ed. and trans. Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 105, 107. This passage is discussed in Saslaw, "Life Forces," 23. The prevailing metaphor here is obviously political, but rest/unrest remains a bodily image.

within it, how this *motion* to which the unrest leads, how the forces again attain a state of *rest*—this is the *realization of the idea*, this is its presentation.⁶⁴

Every succession of tones produces unrest, conflict, problems. . . . Every musical form can be considered as an attempt to treat this unrest either by halting or limiting it, or by solving the problem.⁶⁵

Over the course of a work, the tonal problem must be solved, and this solution involves normalizing an abnormal bodily state: rest is reattained and balance is restored. Indeed, for Schoenberg, the tonal problem provides the essential motivation for the musical drama, the crux of the narrative. Works begin by posing a problem, and then proceed to solve the problem, possibly with a culminating rhetorical flourish.

Musical ideas are such combinations of tones, rhythms, and harmonies which require a treatment like the main theses of a philosophical subject. It raises a question, puts up a problem, which in the course of the piece has to be answered, resolved, carried through. It has to be carried through many contradictory situations, it has to be developed by drawing consequences from what it postulates, it has to be checked in many cases and all this might lead to a conclusion, a *pronunciamento*.⁶⁶

Schoenberg himself never defined “tonal problem” in a comprehensive or systematic way and provided no complete analytical demonstration. The closest approximation is his discussion of Brahms’s String Quartet, Op. 51, no. 1, first movement, which focuses on the rhetorically charged F# in measure 20. This F#, a “tonal problem” in the key of C minor, a “far-reaching digression,” as Schoenberg calls it, has the local effect of destabilizing and unbalancing the tonality and the long-range effect of leading to remote keys, including E-flat minor (of which the F#, now spelled as Gb, is the diatonic third degree).⁶⁷

64. Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea*, 226. This passage is discussed in Saslaw, “Life Forces,” 23, in terms of Johnson’s “compulsion schema.”

65. Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 102. Similarly, with reference to sonata-allegro form, Schoenberg defines the function of the first theme as that of formulating “the problem of unrest present in the basic gestalt” (Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea*, 181).

66. Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea*, 395–96.

67. Schoenberg’s discussion, in *ibid.*, 320–23, is elaborated in Severine Neff, “Schoenberg as Theorist: Three Forms of Presentation,” in *Schoenberg and His World*, ed. Walter Frisch, 55–84 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999). A related discussion of the first movement of Brahms’s Sextet, Op. 36, may be found in Schoenberg, *The Musical Idea*, 308, and this analysis is treated at length in Patricia Carpenter, “Tonality: A Conflict of Forces,” in *Music Theory in Concept and Practice*, ed. James Baker, David Beach, and Jonathan Bernard, 97–129 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997). See also Patricia Carpenter, “Grundgestalt as Tonal Function” *Music Theory Spectrum* 5 (1983): 15–38, for a related discussion of Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 57 (“Appassionata”).

The turn to E-flat minor, which comes early in the exposition, is striking and beautiful—the work would certainly be less interesting and compelling in its absence. From the point of view of the listener interested in the aesthetic impact of the work as a whole, the tonally problematic F# and the E-flat-minor tonicization to which it gives rise are welcome and desirable, and in that sense, not metaphorical disabilities at all. But from the point of view of the C-minor tonic, with its own intrinsic desire for balance and rest, they are highly destabilizing events. To use Schoenberg's own embodied image schemas, the tonal problem creates the non-normative and stigmatized bodily states of imbalance and unrest. In that sense, Schoenberg's tonal problem is a concept deeply bound up with disability, both its threat and its actuality. For Schoenberg, tonal pieces are bodies and, like bodies, they must strive to maintain their integrity and normativity in the face of the threat of disfigurement and disability.

In this sense, Schoenberg's tonal problems are analogous to those secondary characters in literature whose negative qualities, often manifested in physical disabilities of one kind or another, make them useful foils for the normative protagonists. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, for example, Prospero says of Caliban, "He is disproportioned in his manners / As in his shape" (act 5). Caliban is a narrative problem in much the same way that Brahms's F# is a tonal problem—he is essential to the forward propulsion of the drama, which would be impoverished by his absence, but at the same time, he is understood with respect to Prospero and Miranda as a negative figure, and his disability is treated poetically as the stigmatizing outward manifestation of his problematic role in the narrative.

Metaphors of the human body, either normatively abled or disabled, are central to Schoenberg's organicist orientation generally and to his concept of the tonal problem specifically. For Schoenberg, tonal pieces may follow a disability-inflected narrative of bodily balance and rest first asserted, then challenged by imbalance and unrest, and finally restored—a narrative of disability overcome. The concluding section of this article traces that narrative in works by Beethoven and Schubert.

Schenker: normalization and paralysis

Like Schoenberg, Schenker is immersed in the organicist tradition. For him, the organic nature of a composition is exemplified in the relationship among its structural levels, which approximates the physical relationship among the parts of a human body.

Musical coherence can be achieved only through the fundamental structure in the background and its transformations in the middleground and foreground. It should have been evident long ago that the same principle applies both to a musical organism and to the human body: it grows outward from within.

Therefore it would be fruitless as well as incorrect to attempt to draw conclusions about the organism from its epidermis. The hands, legs, and ears of the human body do not begin to grow after birth; they are present at the time of birth. Similarly, in a composition, a limb which was not somehow born with the middle and background cannot grow to be a diminution.⁶⁸

Schenker also shares Schoenberg's sense that, like the human body, a musical work may be subjected to forces that threaten to disable it. A good piece of music is like a well-formed body; a bad piece of music is like a deformed body. This notion is nicely captured in a poem by Goethe that Schenker cites with approval in *Der Tonwille*:⁶⁹

There is nothing on the skin
That is not in the bones.
Everyone is repelled by a misshapen figure,
For it hurts the eyes.

What pleases everyone, then? To see flowering
That is already well formed from within.
Externally, it may be smooth or dappled.
That has been destined from the start.

Where Schoenberg was concerned with a piece confronting its "tonal problem" as it unfolds in time, Schenker is more concerned about the drama of the relationship among the structural levels. There, too, elements may occur at the later levels (the levels nearer the musical surface) that it is the business of the earlier levels to neutralize, absorb, "normalize."⁷⁰ Schenkerian

68. Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition (Der freie Satz)*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 6.

69. The title of the poem is "Typus."

Es ist nichts in der Haut,
Was nicht im Knochen ist.
Vor schlechtem Gebilde Jedem graut,
Das ein Augenschmerz ihm ist.

Was freut denn Jeden? Blühen zu sehn,
Das von innen schon gut gestaltet.
Aussen mag's in Glätte, mag in Farben gehn.
Es ist ihm schon voran gewaltet.

Schenker cites it in *Der Tonwille*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1922), 5. Schenker's discussion is elaborated (and the poem translated) in William Pastille, "Music and Morphology: Goethe's Influence on Schenker's Thought," in *Schenker Studies*, ed. Hedi Siegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 34.

70. "Normalization" is a term that originates with William Rothstein. Rothstein applies the term primarily to tonal rhythm—he shows that a variety of surface rhythms can be understood as displacements of an underlying norm—but he describes the concept in terms sufficiently general as to embrace pitch as well: "In tonal music we continually hear the specific, the distinctive, and the surprising in relation to the general, the normal, and the expected; *the abnormal is understood*

analytical practice, for both pitch and rhythm, always involves normalization—musical events are understood in relationship to the normative prototypes they transform or displace.⁷¹ The analytical process involves normalizing the abnormal.

I do not mean to suggest that there is anything intrinsically wrong with proceeding in this fashion. Indeed, remarkable and compelling analytical insights may result from a comparison of what happens in a piece with the appropriate underlying conventions or norms. It is not my project to condemn the use of the normal as a standard for assessing the abnormal, much less to offer alternatives. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine what the field of music theory in particular would look like without its profound and largely unacknowledged dependence on understanding abnormal events in terms of normative standards.⁷² This way of approaching music is not inevitable or natural, however, but historically contingent, involving the intertwining of the history of music with the history of disability.

In this underlying dialectic of normal and abnormal, Schenker's musical thought reflects the same historical and cultural forces that shape the *Formenlehre* tradition (a comparison that Schenker himself would probably not have welcomed). In both cases, a large population of musical works is normed with respect to certain desirable traits, with anomalous events understood as abnormal. Furthermore, in both cases, the normative takes on a coercive force: the abnormal must be normalized (or, at least, rationalized with respect to the norm). By engaging the dichotomy of normal and abnormal, Schenker's theory both reflects and participates in the history and cultural construction of disability.

For Schenker, the principal musical abnormality requiring normalization is dissonance. Dissonance, if properly contained within a linear progression, is a

in terms of the normal [emphasis added]. Tension is understood to arise from the difference between the given musical phenomena (which, in a piece of any artistic interest, are bound to contain surprises and abnormalities) and the musical norms from which those phenomena depart. The distance between the musical surface and the underlying norms fluctuates within a composition, yielding for the listener a corresponding fluctuation of tension" (William Rothstein, "Rhythmic Displacement and Rhythmic Normalization," in *Trends in Schenkerian Research*, ed. Allen Cadwallader [New York: Schirmer Books, 1990], 89). Technically, Rothstein uses the term to describe realignments of notes between the musical surface and a voice-leading reduction, or between two levels of a voice-leading reduction, with the process of normalization applied anew at each successive level of reduction.

71. This attitude underpins every theory of tonal harmony post-1850, and is particularly conspicuous in the pedagogy of tonal harmony. Students are taught what is normative, and warned away from the abnormal. It is in that spirit that Aldwell and Schachter describe weak-beat cadential 6/4 chords as "deviant" (Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 2nd ed. [San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989], 298).

72. For a recent demonstration of an interpretive commitment to understanding apparently anomalous musical events in terms of underlying, regulating norms, see Robert Morgan, "The Concept of Unity and Musical Analysis," *Music Analysis* 22 (2003): 7–50.

principal source of musical content, interest, and motion. But if dissonances are allowed to pile up outside the control of the linear progressions, the musical body becomes disabled. Properly controlled, dissonances enable mobility; uncontrolled, dissonances impair mobility—they produce musical “paralysis,” as Schenker demonstrates in a series of highly critical discussions of Rameau, Riemann, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky.

In viewing dissonance in this way, Schenker participates in a long tradition in Western music theory of regarding dissonance as something potentially threatening to the consonant framework that simultaneously constrains it and gives it meaning. David Cohen writes:

Consonance is to be regarded as the fundamental material of music, dissonance as a special element introduced into the basic consonant material for specific reasons, and under specific conditions, in accordance with certain “rules.” . . . Dissonance is always ultimately thought of as a foreign element that is “added to” a fundamentally consonant substrate, or as a deviation, a departure from the basic, essential state of consonance to an *other* state that disrupts it, followed (inevitably) by a return.⁷³

Dissonance is needed (for expressive purposes, and to propel the music forward), but simultaneously stigmatized as undesirable and threatening to the integrity of the structure:

Dissonance has always been a *problem* for the discipline of music, a dilemma, in fact, posed by the tension between two contradictory perceptions: that dissonance is, on the one hand, *necessary* and, on the other, . . . *undesirable*. . . . The result has been what may be called a dialectical understanding of dissonance, in which the ingrained norms of its rule-governed occurrence are precisely the grounds of its extraordinary power as the vehicle of heightened expression and intensity, effects created by our implicit expectations of its ultimate resolution. Finally this dialectical understanding reaches a kind of apotheosis in the powerful thought of Schenker, for whom the “organic unity” of the musical masterwork consists precisely in the dialectical interplay by which the “unity” (*Einheit*) of consonance (the *Klang in der Natur*) is activated and actualized via its temporal prolongation through dissonance.⁷⁴

Cohen deconstructs the “hierarchized opposition” of consonance-dissonance by historicizing it, by showing that it is a convention and an ideology, not self-evident, necessary, or natural—“the contingent outcome of a particular history.”⁷⁵ My argument here is that one strand in the construction of this ideology, as practiced by Schenker, implicates disability, with consonance associated with the normative, healthy, body, and dissonance with the possibility of abnormality, deformation, and paralysis.

73. David Cohen, “Metaphysics, Ideology, Discipline: Consonance, Dissonance, and the Foundations of Western Polyphony,” *Theoria* 7 (1993): 3–4.

74. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

75. *Ibid.*, 8–9.

Schenker's understanding of the effects of dissonance is embodied, drawing on the bodily image schema of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL and the associated schema of BLOCKAGE. For Schenker, the linear progression is the principal source of musical continuity and coherence—the *Urfinie* itself is a linear progression—and it has the metaphorical trajectory of a body in motion from a source, along a path, toward a goal: “Every linear progression shows the eternal shape of life—birth to death. The linear progression begins, lives its own existence in the passing tones, ceases when it has reached its goal—all as organic as life itself.”⁷⁶

In the course of its journey from source to goal, the musical body may encounter obstacles that threaten to impede the motion.⁷⁷ In most cases, such blockages are a vital part of the music—they create interest and content. Without them, a musical work would be boring and extremely short—the eventual attainment of the concluding tonic would represent no significant achievement at all: “In the art of music, as in life, motion toward the goal encounters obstacles, reverses, disappointments, and involves great distances, detours, expansions, interpolations, and, in short, retardations of all kinds.”⁷⁸ Like Schoenberg's tonal problems, and like Hepokoski and Darcy's sonata deformations, Schenker's blockages suggest the aesthetic value of disability, a value that is enshrined in a great deal of art of all kinds. Often, it seems, the works we value most are those that deal in some way with the threat or reality of disability. Usually, such works successfully contain the disability, but it must be vigorously present in order to be satisfyingly contained.

Blockages may be aesthetically desirable if they generate interest and content, but if they cannot be dislodged, then the motion stops and the music becomes paralyzed. For Schenker, the most troubling kind of blockage results from an excess of VERTICALITY, another embodied image schema. Instead of flowing forward along normative linear pathways, the notes may be piled up in vertical stacks, fatally arresting the sense of motion along a path toward a goal. It is precisely that excess of verticality, and the resulting musical paralysis, that Schenker criticizes in a chorale setting by Hugo Riemann: “The setting [of a chorale melody] by Hugo Riemann illustrates the latter-day disastrous growth of chords [“Stufen”] in the exclusively vertical sense. These ‘chords’ paralyze [“unterbinden”] the contrapuntal flow of the bass as well as that of the inner voices.”⁷⁹ In their autonomous verticality, Riemann's chords inhibit the contrapuntal flow. Riemann's bass line, in particular, is a disjunct series of chordal roots rather than the kind of melodic line that might have formed itself into linear progressions.

76. Schenker, *Free Composition*, 44.

77. The role of various members of “the force schema category,” including BLOCKAGE, in Schenker's thought is discussed in Saslaw, “Life Forces,” 18–22.

78. Schenker, *Free Composition*, 5.

79. *Ibid.*, 96.

The disabling paralysis that afflicts Riemann's chorale setting can be traced to the musical theories of Rameau, as in the title of Schenker's essay "Rameau or Beethoven? Creeping Paralysis or Spiritual Potency in Music?"⁸⁰ Musical paralysis results when composers fail to compose "with the sensually vital motion of [music's] innate horizontal linear progressions, patterns that correspond with the motions of the human soul" and focus instead on vertical harmonic combinations.⁸¹ Schenker blames Rameau for the resulting paralysis:

In Rameau's fundamental idea there lurked an element of the mechanical—turned away from the living art of voice-leading—right from the start, but that first mechanical element engendered mechanism upon mechanism in its train. Little by little, the seventh, whether as passing note or suspension, and the ninth, whether as suspension or changing-note, were made out to be chord-components, from which it was but a short step to bona fide seventh and ninth chords. Once on this slippery slope, nothing could stop recognition being given also to eleventh and thirteenth chords; and so, today, things have reached such a pass that, on pretext of the higher partials of the overtone series, any and every piling-up of notes, no matter how it may have come about, is indiscriminately taken for a chord. Make no mistake: Rameau's error has been compounded to the limit, the followers of Rameau's theory have reached a point of no return. Paralysis!⁸²

Schenker blames Rameau, but the real villains of the piece are those contemporary composers who pile up notes into complex, dissonant harmonies. If a piece of music is metaphorically a body, then an excess of verticality, particularly if it involves the piling up of dissonant notes, is a disabling condition, one that restricts and potentially paralyzes movement. The dissonances, instead of creating motion under the control of a linear progression, impede the

80. Heinrich Schenker, "Rameau or Beethoven? Creeping Paralysis or Spiritual Potency in Music?" *The Masterwork in Music* 3, ed. William Drabkin, trans. Ian Bent, 1–9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The German word that Bent translates as "paralysis" is "Erstarrung." Bent comments: "Schenker's motivic use of *Erstarrung* and *erstarren* throughout the first two-thirds of this essay presents the translator with a conundrum, for the verb *erstarren* has a range of meanings, from "stiffen," through "congeal," "coagulate," "solidify," "freeze," to "become numb," "torpid," "paralyzed," and Schenker exploits this range such that no one English word will work idiomatically" (1).

81. *Ibid.*, 4.

82. *Ibid.*, 5. In referring to the higher partials of the overtone series as a justification for complex harmonies, Schenker seems to have Schoenberg in mind, in particular a passage from Schoenberg's *Theory of Harmony*: "The expressions 'consonance' and 'dissonance,' which signify an antithesis, are false. It all simply depends on the growing ability of the analyzing ear to familiarize itself with the remote overtones, thereby expanding the conception of what is euphonious, suitable for art, so that it embraces the whole natural phenomenon. What today is remote can tomorrow be close at hand; it is all a matter of whether one can get closer. And the evolution of music has followed this course: it has drawn into the stock of artistic resources more and more of the harmonic possibilities inherent in the tone" (Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Carter [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978], 21).

motion—they comprise a fatally disabling obstacle along the path traversed by the musical body.

It is just this disabling condition that, for Schenker, characterizes the modern music of his time. Once the dissonances have liberated themselves from the control of the linear progressions, once they are “emancipated,” in Schoenberg’s term, the result according to Schenker is theoretical confusion and musical paralysis, as in Stravinsky’s Piano Concerto:

A setting like Stravinsky’s is insufficient even for certifying dissonances, because the only surety even for dissonances—and this is the crux of the matter—is the cohesiveness of a well-organized linear progression: without cohesiveness, dissonances do not even exist! Thus it is completely futile when Stravinsky imagines that he can make the dissonance still more dissonant by piling up dissonances (or, to put it in the language of Schoenberg, who equates dissonance with consonance, make the consonance more consonant). It is futile to masquerade all the inability to create tension by means of appropriate linear progressions as freedom, and to proclaim that nothing bad exists in music at all.⁸³

The “piling up of dissonances” thus impairs the mobility of the linear progressions. Such dissonances are beyond the recuperative power of normalization.

Schenker’s quoted comments are in reference to a particular work of Stravinsky’s—his Piano Concerto—but are obviously applicable to an entire repertoire that Schenker detests. Schenker thus suggests that an entire repertoire can be disabled. A repertoire is also a body—a body or *corpus* of work. And like an individual piece, an entire body of work can become disabled through excessive verticality and unregulated dissonance. That, for Schenker, is the problem of atonality: it represents disability or abnormality with respect to well-formed, normal, “natural” tonality:

Today it is the fashion to talk about an “excess of technique,” an excess that allegedly stifles the composer. If we could only gain clarity about what this slogan really means! Is technique not the fulfillment on the part of the artist of those demands which the subject matter itself, far above the artist, imposes on him? In pursuit of such fulfillment, is not technique then a necessary, good, and—so to speak—healthy thing? Is not the technique of a work comparable to the health of a body whose organs fulfill all the functions nature demands of them? If we mean technique in its authentic and true significance, how can we speak logically of an “excess of technique”? Does anyone ever speak seriously of an excess of health? How could this be more than simply health itself? . . . [Today’s composers] try to make up for their shortcomings by stuffing their sounds with the excelsior of passing tones. Indeed, passing tones are the sum and substance of today’s pompously flaunted technique. If composers

83. Heinrich Schenker, “Further Consideration of the Urlinie: II,” in *The Masterwork in Music 2*, ed. William Drabkin, trans. John Rothgeb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18.

could at least demonstrate a greater mastery of this art! But even here a secure instinct and reliable aural skills are lacking: . . . inadvertently comical discords are generated instead of forthright conflicts between several voices. The present era, which is guilty of using this latest non-technique for the first time in the history of our art, was also the one to find a suitable name for it: generally it is called “cacophony.”⁸⁴

Modern music as a whole thus appears to Schenker as disabled and unhealthy, with its organs functioning improperly. Just as it is the business of each piece to heal its own wounds, normalize its own abnormalities, Schenker takes it as his historical task to cure music of the disability of atonality.

The threat of disability (particularly paralysis) lurks both within individual works and within repertoires, and the awareness of this threat is fundamental to Schenker’s musical thinking. Within individual works by the masters of the tonal tradition, that threat can be contained by the normalizing power of the fundamental structure. For Schoenberg, the process of normalizing the abnormal unfolds diachronically: a tonal problem is introduced and, over the course of a piece, brought into conformity with normative tonality. For Schenker, the process unfolds synchronically, in the relationship among the structural levels: dissonances and their tendency toward excessive verticality are ultimately normalized within the fundamental structure. But, for Schenker, the threat posed by atonality to the body of common-practice tonal works is not so easily contained. Indeed, Schenker believed that music had been left permanently disabled (paralyzed) by the emancipation of the dissonance.

A Master Narrative of Disability Overcome, the Abnormal Normalized

Instrumental music is capable of representing disability directly. I am thinking, for example, of the rhythmic pattern known as *alla zoppa* (that is, “in a limping manner”),⁸⁵ or the high E near the end of the final movement of Smetana’s String Quartet No. 1 (“From My Life”)—by which the composer depicts the disabling tinnitus that led to his eventual deafness,⁸⁶ or Schoen-

84. Heinrich Schenker, *Counterpoint*, ed. John Rothgeb, trans. Rothgeb and Jürgen Thym (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987), xxi–xxii.

85. The term “*alla zoppa*” (from the Italian word for “lame,” or “limping”) refers to “a rhythm in which the second quaver in a bar of 2/4 time is accentuated.” (“Zoppa, *alla*,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. [2001], 27:867). This rhythmic figure is apparently designed to imitate the walk of someone with a halting, asymmetrical gait. “*Alla zoppa*” is one of the topics named and discussed by Leonard G. Ratner in *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), where it is described as a “short-long, ‘limping’ figure” (85).

86. Smetana described his String Quartet No. 1 (“From My Life”) as “a remembrance of my life and the catastrophe of complete deafness” (letter to Srb-Debrnov, 10 February 1879, cited in

berg's *Todesfall* ("death") represented in his String Trio,⁸⁷ or the many musical depictions of madness or mental disorder, including melancholy.⁸⁸ But these tend to be relatively isolated occurrences, difficult to knit together into a comprehensive sense of music in relation to disability. It seems more productive rather to understand disability as playing a central role in a master narrative that underpins a good deal of the tonal repertoire, a narrative of disability overcome, of the abnormal normalized.

This master narrative hears in a musical work a dramatic trajectory that moves through a state of threatened disability to a state of health restored.⁸⁹ The narrative may be inflected in many different ways. In some works, the threat of disability is overcome in a heroic blaze—the "tonal problem" is resolved in triumph. In others, a destabilizing and potentially disabling musical condition may be accommodated in more ambiguous ways. But however it is

Brian Large, *Smetana* [New York: Praeger, 1970], 317). Smetana had earlier written, "The long insistent note in the finale . . . is the fateful ringing in my ears of the high-pitched tones which, in 1874, announced the beginning of my deafness. I permitted myself this little joke because it was so disastrous to me" (letter to Srb-Debrnov, 12 April 1878, cited in Large, *Smetana*, 318).

87. "I have now to report the peculiar case of what I call my 'Todesfall' (decease). On August 2, 1946 . . . a very heavy pain started in my whole body, especially in the chest and around the heart. . . . I thought I had had a heart attack, but [Dr. Lloyd Jones] did not find my heart to be the cause. He gave me an injection of Dilaudid, in order to ease my pain. This helped instantly; but after ten minutes I lost consciousness, had no heart beat or pulse and stopped breathing. In other words, I was practically dead" (Schoenberg, letter to his doctors, dated 2 August 1950, cited in Joseph H. Auner, ed., *A Schoenberg Reader: Documents of a Life* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003], 348). Schoenberg told students and friends that the String Trio was his musical depiction of this incident. See Walter Bailey, *Programmatic Elements in the Works of Schoenberg* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984), 151–57. See also Michael Cherlin, "Memory and Rhetorical Trope in Schoenberg's String Trio," this *Journal* 51 (1998): 559–602.

88. For two examples among very many, Hepokoski names Mozart, String Quartet in D Minor, K. 173, first movement, and Haydn, String Quartet, Op. 20, no. 5, first movement, as "instrumental representations of extreme melancholy or even madness" ("Beyond the Sonata Principle," 149). See also two unpublished papers by Elaine Sisman: "Paradoxical Emblems of Melancholy in the Age of Kant" and "C. P. E. Bach, Beethoven, and the Labyrinth of Melancholy." And, of course, the history of opera is full of musical depictions of disordered mental states.

89. Paradoxically, while the narrative within an individual tonal piece may move through disability to health, the traditional master narrative of tonality itself moves in the opposite direction: "The diachronic account of tonal music is most often related in terms of musical evolution or continuous progress, a master narrative in which the historical course of tonal music is directed toward its own end, depicted either as a heroic completion or (as is more common) a tragic demise. In either case, the *telos* of these stories reflects the strong forward momentum toward a cadential goal so often viewed as an essential attribute of tonal music. While these histories are sometimes recounted as technological allegories in which tonality collapses, breaks down or wears out from overuse, it is more common to imagine them as genetic narratives, organic processes of growth and decay, birth and death" (Brian Hyer, "Tonality," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. [2001], 25:591).

inflected, a narrative that involves a musical response to the actuality or threat of disability shapes a significant body of instrumental music.⁹⁰

The pioneering work in this area is Edward Cone's widely cited article on what he calls "promissory notes" in the music of Schubert.⁹¹ A promissory note is one "that has been blocked from proceeding to an indicated resolution, and whose thwarted condition is underlined both by rhythmic emphasis and by relative isolation."⁹² In his analysis of Schubert's *Moment musical* in A-flat Major, Op. 94, no. 6, Cone shows that the failure of E \flat in measure 12 to resolve to F as expected, although hardly noticed in its local context, initiates a series of increasingly disruptive harmonic moves, including the tonicization of E major (F-flat major). In Cone's interpretation, this work

dramatizes the injection of a strange, unsettling element into an otherwise peaceful situation. At first ignored or suppressed, that element persistently returns. It not only makes itself at home but even takes over the direction of events in order to reveal unsuspected possibilities. When the normal state of affairs eventually returns, the originally foreign element seems to have been completely assimilated. But that appearance is deceptive. The element has not been tamed; it bursts out with even greater force, revealing itself as basically inimical to its surroundings, which it proceeds to demolish.⁹³

90. Recent work in disability studies has described the same narrative at work in literature, particularly novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, Mitchell and Snyder write: "A narrative issues to resolve or correct a deviance marked as improper to a social context. A simple schematic of narrative structure might run thus: first, a deviance or marked difference is exposed to a reader; second, a narrative consolidates the need for its own existence by calling for an explanation of the deviation's origins and formative consequences; third, the deviance is brought from the periphery of concerns to the center of the story to come; and fourth, the remainder of the story rehabilitates or fixes the deviance in some manner. This fourth step of the repair of deviance may involve an obliteration of the difference through a 'cure,' the rescue of the despised object from social censure, the extermination of the deviant as a purification of the social body, or the reevaluation of an alternative mode of being. Since what we now call disability has been historically narrated as that which characterizes a body as deviant from shared norms of bodily appearance and ability, disability has functioned throughout history as one of the most marked and remarked upon differences that originates the act of storytelling. Narratives turn signs of cultural deviance into textually marked bodies" (*Narrative Prosthesis*, 53–54). Similarly, see Davis, *Bending Over Backwards*, 97–98: "Plot in the novel, then, is really a device to turn what is perceived as the average, ordinary milieu into an abnormal one. Plot functions in the novel, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by temporarily deforming or disabling the fantasy of nation, social class, and gender behaviors that are constructed as norms. The *telos* of the plot aims to return the protagonists to this norm by the end of the novel. The end of the novel represents a cure, a repair of the disability, a nostalgic return to a normal time. . . . This notion of cure as closure is the rule in novels in which the end represents the plot as strategic abnormality overcome."

91. Edward T. Cone, "Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics," *19th-Century Music* 5 (1982): 233–41.

92. *Ibid.*, 236.

93. *Ibid.*, 239–40.

Cone relates this dramatic plan to “the effect of vice on a sensitive personality,” and, more specifically, to Schubert’s experience of syphilis, including its disabling psychological and physical effects.⁹⁴

Cone’s promissory notes are a particular kind of “tonal problem,” a rhetorically charged, motivic chromaticism that engenders harmonic and formal disruptions. Cone does not offer a simple one-to-one mapping of the tonal problem onto a particular disability, or even to the psychological anxiety that may be induced by the threat of disability. Rather, he understands the tonal problem as setting in motion a narrative that can be usefully interpreted in terms of disability, including the composer’s own personal experience of disability.

There are many early nineteenth-century musical works that, like the Schubert *Moment musical* discussed by Cone, follow a dramatic plan in three phases:

1. The music begins with a relatively straightforward assertion of key. Early on, usually within the first sixteen measures, a chromatic note is stated in a rhetorically charged manner that marks it for attention. In the music that follows immediately, the chromatic note is abandoned, and the music proceeds as if it had never occurred.
2. Later, however, that chromatic note becomes the focal point for harmonic and formal disruptions that increase in intensity over the course of the piece.
3. Finally, near the end of the piece, the chromatic note is normalized in some way, subsumed into the diatonic frame.

Pieces that follow this plan are particularly characteristic of middle-period Beethoven and late-period Schubert. There are relatively few compositional precedents or descendants. Pungent, motivic use of chromaticism, of course, may be found in earlier works by Mozart and Haydn, for example, but not often with rhetorically charged emphasis on the initial chromatic tone. In any case, it is certainly less typical of Mozart and Haydn than of Beethoven and Schubert. And, with a number of notable exceptions (particularly in the music of Brahms), later music often contains too much ambient chromaticism to

94. “A vice, as I see it, begins as a novel and fascinating suggestion, not necessarily dangerous though often disturbing. It becomes dangerous, however, as its increasing attractiveness encourages investigation and experimentation, leading to possible obsession and eventual addiction. If one now apparently recovers self-control, believing that the vice has been mastered, it is often too late: either the habit returns to exert its domination in some fearful form, or the effects of the early indulgence have left their indelible and painful marks on the personality—and frequently, of course, on the body as well” (ibid., 240). The term “vice” is apparently Cone’s subtle reference to Schubert’s sexual promiscuity, the source of his syphilis. The dramatic trajectory that Cone relates to Schubert’s syphilis could also be profitably related to Schubert’s experience of his own culturally stigmatized and legally forbidden sexuality: something impossible to repress, that bursts forth with potentially destructive consequences.

permit the kind of rhetorical emphasis I am describing here. In short, this three-stage dramatic narrative typifies music in a particular time and place and by particular composers.⁹⁵ Both compositionally and music-theoretically, the idea that chromaticism can be motivic, with large-scale harmonic and formal consequences, seems to be something new and distinctive in the early nineteenth century, and seems particularly to typify middle-period Beethoven and late-period Schubert.

I want to make three arguments about this body of music, and about this time and place. My first argument is historical: musical narratives that center on motivic chromaticism can be richly understood in relation to concurrent developments in the history of disability. Foremost among these is the emergence of the concepts of normal and abnormal. Within a diatonic frame, the rhetorically charged intrusion of a chromatic element has been widely understood as the disruption of a normative state by something abnormal. The resulting musical narrative then involves normalization of the abnormal. This compositional and interpretive possibility would not have been available to composers or critics in the absence of more general cultural concepts of normal and abnormal.

Throughout early modern Europe, disability had been understood as an immutable condition, the result of divine disfavor.⁹⁶ At the turn of the nine-

95. As Roger Kamien has observed: “Beethoven’s opening themes frequently generate enormous tension and expectation. Of course, Haydn and Mozart also wrote opening themes that create rhythmic and tonal instability or ambiguity. . . . Yet Beethoven’s opening gestures tend to be more extreme in this respect. Beethoven often uses chromatic inflection to build instability, tension or tentativeness directly into opening themes. . . . In the diatonic context of an opening theme these chromatic events are ‘marked for memory’ and are reflected in later themes of the exposition as well as in large-scale tonal motions or key successions” (“Phrase, Period, Theme,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, ed. Glenn Stanley [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 79–80). Kamien adduces as examples a number of works, mostly from Beethoven’s middle period, including the two that I will discuss here. David Epstein makes a similar observation in *Beyond Orpheus: Studies in Musical Structure* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987): “The point of inquiry is whether, in movements that contain chromatic elements as part of their basic pitch shape, this chromatic shape is subsequently reflected in the movement in terms of patterns of modulation and key relationships. Conversely, in movements whose basic shapes do not contain such chromatic elements, are there no, or significantly fewer, such relationships? The evidence strongly suggests a positive conclusion in both cases. In virtually every instance in which Beethoven’s initial themes contain a striking chromatic element, this shape is manifested in the large. . . . In contrast, those movements whose thematic shapes are fundamentally diatonic have markedly fewer modulations or key relations that conform to this chromatic pattern” (213). Epstein adduces the “Eroica” Symphony as his principal analytical example, but he discusses many other works as well, all by Beethoven and all from the middle period.

96. Margaret Winzer writes: “In the thousands of years of human existence before 1800, life for most exceptional people appears to have been a series of unmitigated hardships. The great majority of disabled persons had no occupation, no source of income, limited social interaction, and little religious comfort. Conspicuously abnormal persons were surrounded by superstition, myth, and fatalism—especially fatalism. Their lives were severely limited by widely held beliefs and superstitions that justified the pervasive prejudice and callous treatment. Individuals seen as different

teenth century, it came to be understood instead as a deviation from the norm, one that could potentially be remediated, that is, normalized. This has direct resonance for the Beethoven and Schubert pieces to be discussed here: they enact a drama in which a rhetorically charged chromatic note, and the tonal disruptions to which it leads, are normalized within a subsuming diatonic frame.

The dramatic plan of these pieces can be related not only to the overarching concepts of normal and abnormal but to specific contemporary cultural trends in the conceptualization and treatment of people with disabilities, including the emergence of disability as a concept, the growing awareness of people with disabilities as defining a distinctive class, and the emergence of medical and educational institutions for people with disabilities.⁹⁷ These new institutions were based on the belief, one that was new at the time, that through personal effort, and with institutional support, a person with a disability could participate in normal society. In other words, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries mark the first historical era in which disability was understood as *something that could be overcome*. That new understanding is crucial for the narrative structure of the Beethoven and Schubert pieces to be discussed here, in which the potentially disabling chromaticism is typically overcome through the agency of vigorous diatonic reassertion.

My second argument is biographical: a dramatic plan that involves the attempted recuperation of disability can be productively understood in part as a musical response to the composers' own disabilities, to deafness in Beethoven's case and to syphilis in Schubert's.⁹⁸

were destroyed, exorcised, ignored, exiled, exploited—or set apart because some were even considered divine” (“Disability and Society before the Eighteenth Century: Dread and Despair,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, [London: Routledge, 1997], 76).

97. Henri-Jacques Stiker identifies the close of the eighteenth century as the moment when “the idea . . . of formally organizing the disabled and returning them to the level of others makes its entry into history, along with ideas for appropriate technologies and specialized institutions. . . . In short, there was a completely new concern: for *education* and the *rehabilitation of the disabled*” (*A History of Disability*, trans. William Sayers [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999], 102; italics in the original). The institutions were designed “to offset the objective obstacles that hindered access to a personal and social life. It was no longer a question of simply gathering the disabled together, or even of putting them to work as less than able-bodied. The objective was rather to provide entry to the common cultural and social heritage of their fellow citizens” (107).

98. At first blush it may seem artificial to conflate Beethoven's deafness and Schubert's syphilis as disabilities, one a chronic condition, the other a disease resulting from an infection. But under both the pragmatic, functional definition of disability offered by the ADA (“a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities”) and the more abstract, theoretical definition observed in this article (“any culturally stigmatized bodily difference”), that conflation is both correct and of significant explanatory value. According to a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1998, the HIV virus (like syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection) is a disability under the terms of the ADA, even in the absence of symptoms of AIDS. In Schubert's own time and place, his syphilis—with its long list of attendant symptoms, disfigurements, and impairments—endowed him with a culturally stigmatized, non-normative body, and

My third argument involves critical reception: pieces with this dramatic plan have often elicited critical responses that engage metaphors of disability. From the very beginning, listeners have understood this dramatic plan in an embodied way: the initial chromatic intrusion is something akin to a threat to the bodily integrity of the music, a threat that the remaining music is obliged to resist and, if possible, overcome. Critical concepts described earlier in this article, including the idea of formal “deformation” that is either implicit or explicit in much of the *Formenlehre* tradition, Schoenberg’s idea of a “tonal problem” (implicating bodily states such as imbalance and unrest), and Schenker’s reliance on embodied metaphors of blockage and paralysis, share a sense that disability is among the many things that music may be understood to be about.

In what follows, I offer brief critical interpretations of two works by Beethoven and one by Schubert from the first decades of the nineteenth century. These works, all major-key movements in sonata form, follow a three-part dramatic plan of a balanced, diatonic beginning, the intrusion of a tonal problem leading to extensive harmonic disruptions and formal “deformations,” and a restorative denouement in which the wound is healed, the disability cured, the balance reestablished, the abnormal normalized.⁹⁹ All three

certainly limited his activities. What is important is not the source of the disability but its effect: Schubert’s disease had a disabling effect, and thus it is proper to consider him disabled as a result. Indeed, Beethoven’s deafness itself may have had its origins in an infectious disease, possibly typhus. For a summary and critique of the extensive literature on Beethoven’s physical and mental health issues, including his deafness, see Peter J. Davies, *Beethoven in Person: His Deafness, Illnesses, and Death* (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2001). Schubert, through his syphilis, and Beethoven, through his deafness, both participate in the culturally constructed category of people with disabilities.

99. Among the many works that embody this musical narrative but are not discussed here, Beethoven’s Piano Trio in G Major, Op. 1, no. 2, second movement, may be taken as a prototype. The movement is in E major and features a rhetorically charged B \sharp in measures 4–5. The same note, enharmonically respelled as C \flat , returns climactically in measure 34 as part of V⁷ of G major, the highly unusual key in which the exposition ends. At the end of the recapitulation, the music of the second theme area is transposed down a perfect fifth to C major—not to the expected tonic of recapitulatory “resolution,” E major. In this context C major is locally tonicized to effect what Hepokoski and Darcy call one of several available types of “nonresolving recapitulation”—one of the most extreme kinds of sonata deformation (Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 245–47; Hepokoski, “Back and Forth from *Egmont*,” 127–53). In the coda, the initially problematic B \sharp is finally normalized as C \flat within a diminished seventh chord that modally colors the tonic E major. Additional comparable works, also not discussed here, include Beethoven, Violin Concerto (the D \sharp in measures 10 and 12 motivates a tonicization of E \flat as the culmination of the development section); Beethoven, Piano Trio, Op. 70, no. 2 (the F \sharp in measure 5 motivates a tonicization of F as the culmination of the development section); Schubert, String Quintet (the E \flat in measure 3 generates all kinds of chromatic disruptions); and Schubert, Grand Duo, second movement (the recurring G \flat in the opening period leads to harmonic disruptions later). In principle, any of the five chromatic notes may create a “tonal problem,” but $\flat 6/\sharp 5$ appears to be the most common.

works have attracted a large analytical literature that has emphasized the generative effects of the motivic chromaticism. But these works have not been previously discussed as a class, nor have they been discussed in relation to issues of disability.

Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 (“Eroica”), first movement: a potentially disabling C# heroically overcome

This movement enacts the three-part drama in heroic mode: the tonal problem is solved in triumph. Both the problem and its solution have long been interpreted by critics in embodied terms, and can be fruitfully related both to Beethoven’s specific disability (deafness) and to the history of disability.

Most narrative accounts of the work (and there are remarkably many) imagine it as depicting a battle or a struggle of some kind.¹⁰⁰ The opening E-flat-major chords and the arpeggiated theme that follows are widely understood to introduce us to the heroic protagonist of the drama (possibly Hector, Napoleon, Prometheus, or Beethoven himself).¹⁰¹ The music is thus metaphorically conflated with the body of a fleshly human being.

100. The relevant literature is surveyed and evaluated in Thomas Sipe, “Interpreting Beethoven: History, Aesthetics, and Critical Reception” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1992); idem, *Beethoven: Eroica Symphony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). See also Brian Hyer, “Second Immediacies in the ‘Eroica,’ ” in *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism*, ed. Ian Bent, 77–104 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Lawrence Earp, “Tovey’s ‘Cloud’ in the First Movement of the *Eroica*: An Analysis Based on Sketches for the Development and Coda,” in *Beethoven Forum* 2, ed. Christopher Reynolds, Lewis Lockwood, and James Webster, 55–84 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); and Lewis Lockwood, “‘Eroica’ Perspectives: Strategy and Design in the First Movement,” in *Beethoven Studies* 3, ed. Alan Tyson, 85–105 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

101. The identification of the narrative hero as Hector is a conceit of Arnold Schering (“Die *Eroica*, eine Homer-Symphonie Beethovens?” *Neues Beethoven Jahrbuch* 5 [1933]: 159–77). The narrative hero has been identified as Napoleon by many commentators, including Adolf Bernhard Marx (*Ludwig van Beethoven: Leben und Schaffen*, 2 vols. [Berlin: Otto Janke, 1859; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1979], 1:254–307). Constantin Floros (*Beethovens Eroica und Prometheus-Musik: Sujet-Studien* [Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1978]) and Peter Schleuning (“Beethoven in alter Deutung: Der ‘neue Weg’ mit der ‘Sinfonia eroica,’ ” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 44 [1987]: 165–94) have argued that the narrative hero is the mythical Prometheus, conflated with the historical Napoleon. Prometheus’s disability-related issues associated with his liver (an eagle pecked it out daily), would seem to make the Prometheus-Eroica conjunction appealing for the present study. But Floros does not offer a plausible Promethean narrative for the first movement of the symphony, arguing only that it incorporates two references to Beethoven’s ballet *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (one in which Prometheus expresses his anger at the inability of his creatures to reason and the other in which the god Bacchus enters). Neither Floros nor Schleuning offers a Promethean interpretation of the initial C#, the crux of the discussion here, and, in any case, the historical basis for their interpretation has been sharply undercut by Sipe in “Interpreting Beethoven” and *Beethoven: Eroica Symphony*. The identification of Beethoven himself as the hero of the drama is discussed below.

The C# that enters in the seventh measure of the piece (the fifth measure of the heroic theme) is the first chromatic note in the piece and has become the locus for intensive interpretive activity. Some commentators liken the C#, and the indecisive harmony it supports, to the hero's external surroundings, possibly a cloud (Tovey) or a fog (Oulibicheff).¹⁰² Of greater interest in the present context, many commentators imagine the C# as expressive of something that more directly inflects the hero's journey, something that causes him to pause or hesitate. The hero strides forth, but then falters momentarily, his mobility impaired either by an external obstacle or an internal apprehension or foreboding.¹⁰³

In terms of Lakoff and Johnson's embodied image schemas, such interpretations invoke the schema of BLOCKAGE in relation to SOURCE-PATH-GOAL: musical events are understood metaphorically in terms of embodied experience, as in the following observations by Marx and Romain Rolland.

The [hero-idea] steps forward in the violoncellos still pale, not yet warming, like the rising sun level on the horizon—as though hiding itself in chilly haze. This “not yet” (how often Napoleon spoke it in the heat of battle, if his generals called for the reserves too early!), this dispersal in the relative minor of the dominant, expands the phrase from four measures to thirteen; we are directed toward great situations.¹⁰⁴

Simple and upright [the motive] goes forward; from its first step it is marked with the seal of its destiny, that marches to its appointed end and knows no other. The soul into which this order has entered bends, at the fifth bar, under the burden. But this burden itself is its destiny, is a part of its essence; it accepts it with a sigh, and abandons itself to the stream.¹⁰⁵

In the local context, the hero regains his balance and continues to stride forth. Later, however, that C# engenders a series of harmonic and formal disruptions that represent the vicissitudes of the hero's journey, one that has been too often discussed to require recapitulation here. In the end, the C# and its

102. “After presenting itself, like the sun on the horizon, it holds itself for a moment behind the fog of an indecisive harmony” (Alexandre Oulibicheff, *Beethoven, ses critiques et ses glossateurs* [Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1857], 175; cited and translated in Sipe, *Beethoven: Eroica Symphony*, 61–62). “Then, as the violins enter with a palpitating high note, the harmony becomes clouded, soon however to resolve in sunshine. Whatever you may enjoy or miss in the Eroica Symphony, remember this cloud” (Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. 1, *Symphonies* [London: Oxford University Press, 1935], 30).

103. In their summaries of the relevant critical traditions, Sipe associates the C# with a sense of apprehension before battle (*Beethoven: Eroica Symphony*, 100), and Burnham associates it with an intimation of eventual death (*Beethoven Hero*, 22).

104. Marx, *Ludwig van Beethoven*, 1:258; cited, translated, and discussed in Sipe, “Interpreting Beethoven,” 257.

105. Romain Rolland, *Beethoven the Creator*, trans. Ernest Newman (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929; repr., New York: Dover, 1964), 55. Cited and discussed in Sipe, “Interpreting Beethoven,” 257.

implicit threat to the hero's mobility are overcome in a blaze of triumph and affirmation.

Who is this hero, and what is the impediment that causes him to hesitate, the burden under which he bends in measure 7? Of particular interest in the present context is a tradition in "Eroica" reception that identifies Beethoven as the hero and his deafness as the obstacle to be overcome. Maynard Solomon has made this connection clear, by way of a commentary on the "Heiligenstadt Testament," a document that is preoccupied with the implications of Beethoven's progressive loss of hearing:

The Heiligenstadt Testament is a leave-taking—which is to say, a fresh start. Beethoven here metaphorically enacted his own death in order that he might live again. He recreated himself in a new guise, self-sufficient and heroic. In a sense, [the testament] is the literary prototype of the Eroica Symphony, a portrait of the artist as hero, stricken by deafness, withdrawn from mankind, conquering his impulses to suicide, struggling against fate, hoping to find "but one day of pure joy."¹⁰⁶

Solomon's interpretation of the "Eroica" Symphony as a portrait of the composer himself struggling to overcome his own fate, specifically his incipient deafness, forms part of an interpretive tradition that is epitomized by Romain Rolland.¹⁰⁷ For Rolland, Beethoven himself is the protagonist of the drama ("In a mind like that of Beethoven, wholly absorbed in itself, its passions, its combats, and its God, the external world counts merely as a reflection, an echo, a symbol of the interior drama") and the "Eroica" emerges directly from the Heiligenstadt Testament, an expression of Beethoven's determination to overcome the effects of his deafness ("In the lone house at Heiligenstadt, a death-roar is wrung from Beethoven. A mournful Testament

106. Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven*, 2nd ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 157–58. The tradition of interpreting the *Eroica* Symphony in relation to the Heiligenstadt Testament extends back to J. W. N. Sullivan and beyond: "The Eroica Symphony is an amazingly realized and coordinated expression of the spiritual experiences that underlay that document" (*Beethoven: His Spiritual Development* [New York: Knopf, 1927], 134–35).

107. For a compelling account of Rolland's position within the interpretive traditions around the "Eroica" Symphony, see Sipe, "Interpreting Beethoven," 236: "The psychological approach was heightened to the pitch of eloquence by Rolland, who accepted Wagner's abstract, metaphorical program from 1851. But he argued that Wagner's allegorical hero was in fact Beethoven himself. The psychological background for the work became for Rolland Beethoven's struggle with his deafness and his victory through art. Rolland used the Heiligenstadt Testament as evidence that Beethoven 'fought' his fated affliction to a 'heroic' victory with the composition of the Third Symphony." A similar link between the Testament and the "Eroica," and the resulting narrative of personal striving in the latter, is described by Philip G. Downs: "The dramatic purpose of the Eroica Symphony is to provide a lesson on the conquering of self. . . . The forces which so nearly overwhelmed Beethoven, and which ultimately resulted in the Heiligenstadt Testament and the rejection of suicide as a way out of difficulty, certainly appear in the musical parable" ("Beethoven's 'New Way' and the Eroica," *Musical Quarterly* 56 [1970]: 603).

. . . The appealing cry of the Testament is answered by the mysterious horn-call of the *Eroica*).¹⁰⁸

For Rolland, the hesitation and wavering of the C# in measure 7 are directly associated with Beethoven's deafness, and the ensuing musical response with Beethoven's determination to overcome it.

Hesitation of the still troubled soul to follow the injunction given it by the invisible Master, the call to action, to the great destiny! . . . And this throws the light of day on the "October night" [Rolland refers to Beethoven's authorship of the Heiligenstadt Testament in October of 1802] in which the bleeding heart of Beethoven received, in a clap of thunder, the heroic mission, and, for a moment, grew faint and wavered. . . . But the imperious flood takes possession of him again and carries him along.¹⁰⁹

The association of the initial C# and the music it engenders with Beethoven's incipient deafness and his heroic response to it is thus well established in critical reception of the "Eroica" Symphony. What has not been recognized, however, is the link between this interpretive tradition and developments in the history and construction of disability. In 1802, the idea that a disability could be overcome, that an abnormality could be remediated and thus functionally normalized, was something new in the history of disability and in the history of ideas.¹¹⁰ In Beethoven's lifetime, in Vienna and in all of the European capitals, new institutions for the education and training particularly of the blind and the deaf were springing up, embodying the possibility of remediation and recuperation.¹¹¹ Vienna itself was home to a newly created

108. Rolland, *Beethoven the Creator*, 53 and 38.

109. *Ibid.*, 40.

110. Helen Deutsch locates the emergence of this new conceptualization of disability in the mid-eighteenth century: "Suspended between two narrative constructions of the disabled individual, eighteenth-century paradigms of disability existed in formative relation to the concept of individuality. The earlier paradigm viewed disability as a largely visual sign of deserved divine punishment for moral failings, while the modern paradigm conceived of disability as ineffable identity in the familiar narrative terms we now recognize: a vehicle to a proof of inner worth, an obstacle to be heroically conquered by a randomly afflicted individual" ("Exemplary Aberration: Samuel Johnson and the English Canon," in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, ed. Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson [New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002], 198).

111. "Between 1780 and 1820 establishments were set up across Europe which for the first time sought to educate the blind and train them for work. In France in 1784, in England and Scotland during the 1790s, and shortly afterwards in Austria, Prussia, Holland and elsewhere, enterprises were begun, claiming some kind of educational purpose. . . . The creation of the blind asylum may be conceived in terms of four propositions—which its founders were required to make to themselves and to others. The first designated the blind as a class with distinctive physical and behavioral characteristics. The second asserted that their condition could be improved by a form of training adapted to these characteristics. The third pronounced the ability to engage in productive work as the principal goal of such training. The fourth identified a formalised, rule-governed institution as the most appropriate means of furnishing it" (Gordon Phillips, *The Blind in British Society: Charity, State and Community, c. 1780–1930* [Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004],

Taubstummennstitut designed to assist “deaf-mutes” in overcoming their condition by providing them with the skills necessary to make them functional members of the larger community.¹¹² Beethoven’s Heiligenstadt Testament and his “Eroica” Symphony can both be understood in part as emblems of this new way of thinking about disability.

That new way of thinking is evident in Beethoven’s life as in his music, as he sought a variety of technologies, adaptive prostheses, to overcome his disability.¹¹³ This effort was also part of a general contemporary trend toward the use of technology as a means of remediating and rehabilitating people with a variety of disabilities:

The idea of remedial training or rehabilitation for the disabled was then not new, but it put down solid roots, for some categories at least, at the end of the Age of Enlightenment. . . . Through the intervention of appropriate techniques, people with sensory disability could gain access to an intellectual, artistic, professional life. . . . The examples of the blind and the deaf put us on a route toward the twentieth century, with the themes of rehabilitation and specialized institutions. But training, especially in the form of conventional schooling, which was a principal goal of these foundations, was still very far from what we, today, would call reintegration and redeployment. Then it was a matter of drawing impaired persons out of inactivity and lack of culture, the results of prejudice concerning their capacity. The implications are more humanist and moral than social. The disabled are to be “raised up,” restored. . . . Even on the level of praxis, a change was in the offing [by the end of the eighteenth century]. A sharper scientific focus, the more effective medical treatment of many afflictions, the will no longer to accept as destiny what is made in society and can be modified by it—all this favored what we might call a humanization of

18 and 27). The first public educational institution for deaf people was founded in Paris in 1771 by Abbé Charles Michel de l’Épée. In the subsequent two decades, similar schools, modeled on l’Épée’s, were founded throughout Europe, including Bordeaux, Karlsruhe, Prague, Munich, Freising, Linz, and, notably, Vienna. “Although the work of l’Épée and his successors did indeed establish for all to see that people who were deaf could be educated to participate creatively in the intellectual, vocational, and artistic realms of social life, these educators also laid the ground for the effective medicalization of deafness and for the entry of deaf people into the ranks of the ‘disabled’ ” (Branson and Miller, *Damned for Their Difference*, 106). On the history of deaf people and the institutions created to educate them, see Harlan Lane, *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf* (New York: Random House, 1984).

112. For a contemporary account of the *Taubstummennstitut*, see Johann Pezzl, *Skizze von Wien: Ein Kultur- und Sittenbild aus der josephinischen Zeit*, ed. Gustav Gugitz and Anton Schlossar (Graz: Leykam, 1923), 274–77. As one of their therapeutic activities, the residents of the *Taubstummennstitut* operated a printing press that printed opera libretti, among other things.

113. For a recent account of Beethoven’s deafness as it changed over time and his attempts to remediate it using contemporary technology, see George Ealy, “Of Ear Trumpets and a Resonance Plate: Early Aids and Beethoven’s Hearing Perception,” *19th-Century Music* 17 (1994): 262–73. Henri-Jacques Siker describes a variety of such “normalization devices” for different disabilities in *A History of Disability*, 115.

the lot of the aberrant, a willingness to address these situations through appropriate technology.¹¹⁴

This new attitude toward disability, including deafness, one that “refuses to accept as destiny what is made in society,” can be heard in the triumphant response of the *Eroica* Symphony to its initial, troubling C#. In this way, Beethoven is understood to thematize his own deafness within his music. The narrative in the “Eroica” of disability overcome thus forms part of the history of disability, and that history in turn provides an essential context for the interpretation of Beethoven’s life and work.¹¹⁵

Beethoven, Symphony No. 8, finale: a deforming C# comically recuperated

This movement enacts the same three-part drama—tonal problem, deformations and disruptions, recuperation and normalization—but in a comic mode. As in the “Eroica” Symphony, critical reception of the finale of the Eighth Symphony has often invoked narratives of human actions and human bodies, including bodies that are disabled or threatened with disability, and a rhetorically charged C# sets those narratives in motion in both pieces. That the same C# is the tonal problem in both works suggests a kinship between them. Indeed, in its treatment of disability, the Eighth Symphony finale can be heard as a humorous, ironic deflation of the heroism of the “Eroica.”

In the Eighth Symphony finale, C# bursts forth in measure 17 as a shocking surprise—a *fortissimo* outburst amid a quiet diatonic surrounding—and is not resolved, or musically acknowledged in any way, in its local context (see Ex. 1). It is clearly felt as an interpolation—the music would move smoothly if it were simply excised—and critics have generally understood it as a manifestation of brusque humor. Tovey calls the C# a “stumbling block”¹¹⁶—thus foregrounding the idea of loss of physical balance and the possibility of a fall. We are still dealing with an idea of BLOCKAGE along the path to a goal, and with a

114. Stiker, *A History of Disability*, 104–8.

115. Beyond the argument made about Beethoven’s deafness here—that it may be treated thematically within his music, which thus in turn may be profitably understood in relation to the history of disability—it has strongly inflected the reception of his music. “Indeed, of all his music, the music of the so-called late period has undergone the biggest transformation in its reception. Many early critics held these works to be the symptoms of illness; the prevailing later view prefers to understand them as the highest testimony to his genius. The decisive turn to this latter view was helped by Wagner’s influential monograph of 1870, written for Beethoven’s centenary, in which he glorified Beethoven’s deafness as a trait of enhanced interiority—the deaf composer forced to listen inwardly” (Scott Burnham, “Beethoven, Ludwig van: Posthumous Influence and Reception,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. [2001], 3:111). For important amplification of this idea, see K. M. Knittell, “Wagner, Deafness, and the Reception of Beethoven’s Late Style,” this *Journal* 51 (1998): 49–82.

116. Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. 1, *Symphonies*, 66.

Example 1 Beethoven, Symphony No. 8, finale, mm. 1–21: C# as “tonal problem” (m. 17)

Allegro vivace

2 Flauti

2 Oboi

2 Clarinetti
in B \flat

2 Fagotti

2 Corni
in F

2 Trombe
in F

Timpani in

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello
e Contrabbasso

Example 1 continued

The musical score is divided into four systems, each containing staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Violin (VI.), and Viola (Vla.).

- System 1 (Measures 3-5):** Flute and Oboe have rests. Violin and Viola play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Triplet markings (3) are present in measures 4 and 5.
- System 2 (Measures 6-8):** Violin and Viola continue with eighth-note patterns. Triplet markings (3) are present in measures 7 and 8.
- System 3 (Measures 9-11):** Violin and Viola continue with eighth-note patterns. Triplet markings (3) are present in measures 10 and 11.
- System 4 (Measures 12-14):** Violin and Viola continue with eighth-note patterns. Triplet markings (3) are present in measures 13 and 14. The dynamic marking *più p* is indicated in measures 13 and 14.

Example 1 continued

15

Fl. *ff* *sempre ff*

Ob. 1. *ppp* *ff* *sempre ff*

Cl. *ff* *sempre ff*

Fg. *ff* *sempre ff*

Cor. (F) *ppp* *sempre ff*

Tr. (F) *sempre ff*

Timp. *sempre ff*

VI. *ppp* *ff* *sempre ff*

Vla. *ppp* *ff* *sempre ff*

Vc. e Cb. *ppp* *ff* *sempre ff*

Detailed description: This musical score shows measures 15 through 18. Measure 15 is mostly rests for the woodwinds and brass, with a dynamic of *ppp*. In measure 16, the woodwinds and brass enter with a dynamic of *ff*. Measure 17 continues with *ff* dynamics. Measure 18 features a dynamic of *sempre ff* and includes triplets in the woodwinds, brass, and strings. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes throughout the passage.

Example 1 continued

The musical score for Example 1 continued, measures 19-21, is presented in a multi-staff format. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Fl.:** Treble clef, one flat. Features eighth-note patterns and triplet markings.
- Ob.:** Treble clef, one flat. Features eighth-note patterns and triplet markings.
- Cl.:** Treble clef, one sharp. Features eighth-note patterns and triplet markings.
- Fg.:** Bass clef, one flat. Features eighth-note patterns and triplet markings.
- Cor. (F):** Treble clef, one flat. Features quarter-note chords and triplet markings.
- Tr. (F):** Treble clef, one flat. Features quarter-note chords and triplet markings.
- Timp.:** Bass clef. Features a simple rhythmic pattern with triplet markings.
- VI.:** Treble clef, one flat. Features eighth-note patterns and triplet markings.
- Vla.:** Bass clef, one flat. Features a continuous sixteenth-note run.
- Vc. c. Cb.:** Bass clef, one flat. Features a simple rhythmic pattern.

sense of physical imbalance, but instead of the threat of tragedy implicit in the *Eroica's* C#, this C# suggest something more like a spill, a tumble, a pratfall (as Scott Burnham has called it).

Rosen describes it as “an irritant,”¹¹⁷ a description that Burnham qualifies this way:

I prefer to hear the initial C# less as a portentous irritant and more as a musical pratfall. The suddenness both of its onset and its disappearance renders the C#

117. Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 337.

more a potentially comic interjection than a real threat (compare, for example, the equally famous D#s at the outset of the Violin Concerto), although one could make a case for the reactive vehemence of the statement of the theme that immediately follows. Perhaps a conflation of both views comes out about right: brutal humor.¹¹⁸

Burnham goes on to imagine the C# as evoking some of the crude humor traditionally associated with people who are hard of hearing: “a nearly deaf man reacting with pique to a conversation that has fallen out of his range of hearing: ‘What?!’”¹¹⁹ In light of Beethoven’s own deafness, there is obviously considerable irony here, as Burnham acknowledges. If we wish to follow Burnham, the C# may be taken as an emblem of deafness, of Beethoven’s own deafness (just like the C# in the “Eroica” Symphony), but rather than a potential tragedy to be heroically overcome, it is rendered here as a source of crude humor.¹²⁰

The intrusive C# leads eventually to the tonicization of F# minor in the coda, and an astonishing expansion of the form (a “deformation” in Hepokoski and Darcy’s sense). As Rosen puts it: “When we consider the violence of this climax [in F-sharp minor], we no longer may judge the length of the coda as unprovoked; we may see it as justified and even demanded by the material. From bar 17 on, the grandest of all Beethoven’s codas is a necessity.”¹²¹ In other words, the initial “tonal problem” leads both to harmonic abnormalities and to formal “deformities.”

For Tovey, as for Rosen, the deformation and the humor of the greatly enlarged coda have their source in the “abnormal” C# of measure 17: “With all its originality and wealth, there has so far been no puzzling or abnormal feature in the movement, with one glaring exception. What on earth did that irrelevant roaring C# mean? Thereby hangs a tail, videlicet, a coda that is nearly as long as the whole body of the movement. My pun is not more violent than Beethoven’s harmonic or enharmonic jokes on this point.”¹²²

In his description of the F-sharp-minor culmination of the coda, and its extended normalization within the overall tonic, Tovey emphasizes the comic effect. In particular, he imagines an outburst of laughter among the gods as they see the lame Hephaestus walking about.

118. Scott Burnham, “The Second Nature of Sonata Form,” in *Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Suzannah Clark and Alexander Rehding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 135.

119. *Ibid.*

120. In his book on cinematic images of people with disabilities, Martin F. Norden refers to “a particularly durable stereotype we might call the ‘Comic Misadventurer’: a disabled person victimized by one or more able-bodied people, and a disabled person whose impairment leads to trouble, whether self-directed, other-directed, or both. All in the name of comedy, of course” (*Cinema of Isolation*, 20). There is a long tradition, in both literature and film, of treating certain disabilities, including hearing impairments, as a source of comedy.

121. Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 342.

122. Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, 67.

[The main theme] reaches that C sharp; and now it suddenly appears that Beethoven has held that note in reserve, wherewith to batter at the door of some immensely distant key. Out bursts the theme, then, in F sharp minor. Can we ever find a way home again? Well, E sharp (or F natural) is the leading note of this new key, and upon E sharp the trumpets pounce, and hammer away at it until they have thoroughly convinced the orchestra that they mean it for the tonic. When this is settled, in sails the radiant second subject again. Now Ganymede is all very well; but the original cup-bearer of the gods is Hephaestus, who is lame, and grimy with his metallurgy in the bowels of the earth. However, he will not be ousted; and so the basses sing the theme too. Straightway unquenchable laughter arises among the blessed gods as they look at him bestirring himself about the house. The laughter has all the vaults of heaven wherein to disperse itself, and to gather again into the last long series of joyous shouts.¹²³

Tovey and Burnham thus agree that disability is the source of humor in this work, either a hearing impairment (Burnham) or a mobility impairment (Tovey). As in the “Eroica,” a narrative involving disability is set in motion by a “tonal problem,” specifically a C# that can be associated either with a mobility impairment or deafness. But the shared narrative is inflected very differently in the two symphonies. Indeed, one can imagine the last movement of the Eighth Symphony as an ironic inversion of the first movement of the Third Symphony: what was once treated as potential tragedy now returns as something akin to farce, and the abnormal is normalized amid “unquenchable laughter.”

Schubert, Piano Sonata in B-Flat Major, D. 960, first movement: an infectious G \flat accommodated

This movement famously engages with G \flat as a disruptive “tonal problem.”¹²⁴ The disquieting trill on G \flat in measure 8 and its generative implications have been widely discussed (see Ex. 2a).¹²⁵ In Rosen’s words: “The opening phrase

123. Ibid.

124. The less-discussed Piano Trio in B-Flat Major, Op. 99, is a virtual companion piece to the Sonata, both structurally and narratively. The first movement of the Trio begins in heroic mode, but soon bumps up against an ominous, trilled G \flat (m. 9). The interest in that problematic G \flat culminates in a sonata-form recapitulation that begins away from the tonic in G-flat major. The form is thus virtually hijacked by the G \flat —it would be hard to imagine a more significant “sonata deformation.” The relationship between F and G \flat in the Trio is discussed extensively in Gordon Sly, “Schubert’s Innovations in Sonata Form: Compositional Logic and Structural Interpretation,” *Journal of Music Theory* 45 (2001): 119–43. Sly interprets the thematic return in G \flat at measure 187 as still part of the development section; the structural recapitulation does not begin until the tonic return in measure 211. But even in this view, the separation of the thematic and harmonic returns in itself comprises a “sonata deformation.”

125. Among recent discussions, see Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert’s Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); Rosen, *Sonata Forms*; Joseph Kerman, “A Romantic Detail in Schubert’s

Example 2 Schubert, Piano Sonata in B-Flat Major, D. 960(a) first movement, mm. 1–9: G \flat as “tonal problem”

Molto moderato

The musical score consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-2) shows the piano part with a trill in the bass. The second system (measures 3-5) continues the piano part with a trill in the bass. The third system (measures 6-9) shows the piano part with a trill in the bass. The tempo is 'Molto moderato' and the dynamics are 'pp ligato'. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major.

of the first theme of this movement ends with a trill in the bass, pianissimo, on a G \flat resolved into an F, and the more one plays it, the more the entire work seems to arise out of that mysterious sonority. The long passage in F-sharp minor [at the beginning of the second theme area] works out the implications of the opening theme on the largest scale.”¹²⁶ These implications, both formal and harmonic, include both the apparent second theme in F-sharp minor,

Schwanengesang,” in *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch, 48–64 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); James Webster, “Schubert’s Sonata Form and Brahms’s First Maturity,” *19th-Century Music* 2 (1978): 18–35, and 3 (1979): 52–71; and David Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29–32. Severine Neff offers a Schoenbergian analysis that emphasizes the capacity of the G \flat to “endanger the power of the tonic” (“Reinventing the Organic Artwork: Schoenberg’s Changing Images of Tonal Form,” in *Schoenberg and Words: The Modernist Years*, ed. Charlotte Cross and Russell Berman, 287–88 [New York: Garland, 2001]).

126. Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 249. Commentators have been concerned to establish a relationship between the highly unusual F-sharp minor and the tonic B-flat major. Richard Cohn describes F-sharp minor as the “hexatonic pole” of the tonic B-flat major (“As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at Tonality in Schubert,” *19th-Century Music* 22 [1999]: 213–32).

Example 2 continued

(b) first movement, mm. 332–end: problem accommodated, not overcome

332 *fp* *decresc.* *pp* *cresc.*

337 *f* *p*

341 *f* *p* *cresc.*

345 *pp* *cresc.*

349 *pp* *decresc.* *tr.*

353 *pp*

Example 2 continued

(c) fourth movement, mm. 490–512: final normalization of G♭

490

496

501

507

p

decresc.

pp

cresc.

pp

alluded to by Rosen, and a protracted episode in D minor near the end of the development section.

Even as the narrative of Schubert's music involves normalizing the tonally problematic G♭ and the unusual harmonies to which it gives rise, critical response to this music has often involved attempts to normalize them analytically.¹²⁷ The musical narrative itself, and the long tradition in Schubert

127. Cohn, in "As Wonderful as Star Clusters," includes a brief survey of critical responses to Schubert's harmony generally and to the harmonic consequences of the problematic G♭ in the B-Flat-Major Sonata specifically. These responses fall roughly into three categories, all of which recognize the challenge posed by Schubert's music to normative (Beethovenian) tonal harmony: (1) attempts to reconcile Schubert's harmonies with tonal norms; (2) celebrations (or condemnations) of Schubert's harmonies for their independence from tonal norms; (3) creation of alternative, nontonal theoretical frameworks. Cohn's article represents the third category. For an

studies of attempting to rationalize Schubert's harmony in relation to prevailing (usually Beethovenian) norms, thus involve both Schubert and some of his critics in the emerging history of the concept of the normal. The harmonies and tonal areas associated with the problematic $G\flat$ have been understood as abnormal, requiring musical or analytical recuperation, binding them to the relevant norm. In that sense, they are like dissonances within a Schenkerian linear progression: aesthetically desirable, but also potentially disabling. The expressive impact of the work may be heard to depend on understanding the $G\flat$ as a potentially serious danger to the integrity of the musical body.

At the end of the movement, the music makes a number of attempts to create a convincing final cadence in B-flat major, each of which dissipates in silence. Finally, we get two strong perfect authentic cadences, both featuring a normatively resolving $G\flat$ in the alto voice, in measures 339 and 344 (see Ex. 2b). The disruptive potential of the $G\flat$ would seem to be fully contained at this point—now it is presented as a simple chromatic upper neighbor in an inner voice—and its abnormality has been normalized. But the movement continues with a three-fold reminiscence of the opening theme. As the third of these concludes (m. 352), the ominous trill on $G\flat$ returns, in virtually every respect just as it was in the beginning. The tonal problem has not been solved—its imbalance and unrest resound right through the end of the movement. Certainly there is no sense at all of heroic overcoming in the Beethovenian manner. If the $G\flat$ can be understood metaphorically as a wound of some kind, as I shall argue, then the wound remains open, unhealed at the end of the movement. The musical body remains in a non-normative, stigmatized state—it is still disabled. But the disability, instead of being cured in triumph, is accepted and accommodated.

The tonal problem posed by the $G\flat$ resonates throughout the entire multi-movement work, as Rosen suggests. In the finale, the tonal problem is revisited for the last time. In Alfred Brendel's description, "In the touching epilogue [mm. 490–511], which seems to suspend time before the final stretta, the three-note descent [$G-G\flat-F$] emerges as a serious question. The ensuing bars subtly make us aware that $G\flat$ has ceased to pose a problem, and the sonata's '*Dolens*' (as I would call it) is finally overcome [see Ex. 2c]."¹²⁸

example of the first category, in which Schubert's harmony is analytically normalized, understood in relationship to classical norms, see Fisk, *Returning Cycles*: "Because of Schubert's manifest characterological differentiation of keys other than tonic and dominant from those fundamental keys, and because in his mature music he still accords to tonic and dominant their traditional structural roles, he does not simply relegate classical tonal and formal procedures to a peripheral, frame-producing status. Instead he explores his own idiosyncratic tonal paths and creates space for these explorations against the persisting and palpable background of the tonic-dominant axis" (19).

128. Alfred Brendel, *Music Sounded Out: Essays, Lectures, Interviews, Afterthoughts* (London: Robson Books, 1990), 75–76.

But despite Brendel's reference to a problem "overcome," the finale's treatment of the $G\flat$ seems more an almost light-hearted reminiscence, an attempt to laugh off a problem that was treated in all seriousness in the first movement. In this sense, the finale stands in somewhat the same relationship to the first movement that Beethoven's Eighth Symphony finale does to the "Eroica" first movement—a humorous and ironic commentary on what had previously seemed a potential or real tragedy.

But even in the first movement of the sonata, there is no Beethovenian sense of vindication through struggle. The three-part narrative has been inflected in a particular way. First, a rhetorically marked $G\flat$ ruptures and destabilizes a previously secure, diatonic B-flat major. This tonal problem then leads to a variety of harmonic dislocations and formal deformations. In the end, however, the tonal problem is not overcome, but rather accepted and accommodated.

These musical differences—Beethoven's sense of overcoming as opposed to Schubert's sense of accommodation—are reflected in the metaphors ("embodied image schemas" in Lakoff and Johnson's terms) critics have used to understand them. In the two Beethoven works discussed above, critics have understood the tonally problematic $C\sharp$ as a form of BLOCKAGE (an obstacle, a stumbling block) in a heroic progress along a narrative of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL. In the Schubert sonata, in contrast, critics have understood the problematic $G\flat$ as a puncture or opening in a CONTAINER in two relevant senses. First, the protagonist is freed or banished from a confining or protective enclosure and forced to wander afield. Second, the puncture permits toxic foreign elements to enter the bodily enclosure from outside.

Many theories of tonal music imagine a key to be a kind of container, in the same way that a body can be understood as a kind of container: things are either inside or outside the container, and are separated by a boundary.¹²⁹ If a key is a container, then what it contains are the seven diatonic notes and the harmonic progressions they can form, with such progressions bounded by a cadence.¹³⁰ In that sense, chromatic "promissory" notes and "tonal problems" are intrusions from outside the container. They rupture the protective external boundary of the tonic key in just the way that a sharp object can pierce skin.

That sense of a boundary transgressed, a container suddenly opened, is felt consistently in critical descriptions of the $G\flat$ trill and its aftereffects. For Fisk, for example,

Schubert finds a context for his mysterious gesture that makes its $G\flat$ not merely a coloristic element, but a seemingly portentous one. The trill—Schubert's

129. "Our encounter with containment and boundedness is one of the most pervasive features of our bodily experience. We are intimately aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers into which we put certain things (food, water, air) and out of which other things emerge (food and water wastes, air, blood, etc.)" (Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, 21).

130. Saslaw, in "Forces, Containers, and Paths," describes the sense of a key (and a diatonic progression) as a container in the theoretical writings of Hugo Riemann.

particular trill, so low, so hushed, so close to stopping time—reconfigures a common chromatic inflection, the lowered sixth degree, as something extraordinary. The G \flat emerges beneath the first semicadence as a harbinger of *something outside or beyond* what is implied by the theme itself, something fascinating in both its allure and its danger.¹³¹ (Italics added)

Inside the diatonic container of the first theme is peace and security, outside is danger, and it is the trilled G \flat that opens the container, letting the inside out and the outside in.

Metaphorically, the puncture of a container is analogous to a wound: by rupturing the diatonicity of the tonic key, tonally problematic notes like Schubert's G \flat threaten the integrity of the musical body, and create a wound or an opening that permits the contents of the container to leak out or, perhaps, permits an outside infection to enter in. Although this is not a direction that Schubert criticism has taken in the past, I would suggest that contemplating these chromatic notes, in all of their challenging deviance from the prevailing diatonic norm, is like contemplating deviance of any kind and may produce the kind of terror associated with bodily dissolution. These intrusive chromatic notes may cause us to think about our own bodies, about the wounds and disabilities to which they are subject.

I would like to hear in the G \flat of the Sonata in B-Flat Major very much the kind of musical meaning that Cone attributes to his "promissory" E \sharp in the *Moment musical* No. 6 in A-Flat Major. The narrative of the Sonata, like that of the *Moment musical*, may be understood in relation to Schubert's syphilis, a disabling disease that impaired his health in many different ways and eventually killed him. "It is well established now that Schubert . . . suffered from syphilis. The disease was probably contracted late in 1822; and although it was ameliorated by treatment, or perhaps just by time, it was, of course, in those days, incurable. Did Schubert's realization of that fact, and of its implications, induce, or at least intensify, the sense of desolation, even dread, that penetrates much of his music from then on?"¹³²

131. Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 241–42.

132. Cone, "Schubert's Promissory Note," 241. Similarly, see Christopher Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): "While it is impossible to offer definitive posthumous diagnoses, especially in a case where compromising materials may have been intentionally destroyed, physicians and biographers, after examining the surviving evidence, have concluded almost unanimously that Schubert contracted syphilis, possibly in late 1822. The various specific references to his symptoms and treatments—rashes, aches and pains, and so forth—are consistent with the primary and secondary stages of the disease. . . . Even if the medical treatments Schubert received, probably including applications of a highly poisonous mercury salve, were helpful, his view of the world was nevertheless altered, and he apparently believed that his time was limited. As tests to verify the healing of venereal diseases were not yet available, one can reasonably speculate that Schubert consciously embarked on his final creative stage, a period customarily associated with the autumnal glow of later years, when he was only in his mid-twenties" (93, 109).

Even more specifically, I want to hear in the G♭ itself one of the “indelible and painful marks on the personality—and frequently, of course, on the body” left by this disease.¹³³ Syphilis manifests itself in many ways and, in Schubert’s case, left many marks on his body at different times, including a genital chancre within a month of the initial infection, a rash of pinkish, circular spots roughly a month later, followed by further eruptions of inflamed, dome-shaped papules on various parts of his body, including his face and head, leading eventually to hair loss.¹³⁴ All of these external marks would have been recognized by both physicians and laypersons as symptoms of syphilis, and Schubert himself doubtless understood them as the stigmatizing outer marks of a disease that was virtually certain to destroy his health and to cause his premature death.

In a word, I feel myself the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who in sheer despair over this ever makes things worse and worse, instead of better; imagine a man, I say, whose most brilliant hopes have perished, to whom the happiness of love and friendship have nothing to offer but pain, at best, whose enthusiasm (at least of the stimulating kind) for all things beautiful threatens to disappear, and I ask you, is he not a miserable, unhappy being?¹³⁵

Schubert would also have shared the common understanding that syphilis is contracted through sexual contact, which enabled “alien substances” or “poisons” into the body and blood.¹³⁶ Through the embodied image schema of the CONTAINER, the B-flat-major opening of the sonata can be understood as analogous to a body, possibly Schubert’s own body. The tonally problematic G♭ can thus be heard as a puncture in the container, a wound in the

133. Cone, “Schubert’s Promissory Note,” 240. In this particular passage, Cone is referring not directly to syphilis, but in a more veiled way to “the effect of vice on a sensitive personality” and “the effects of the early indulgence.”

134. There is a significant secondary literature on Schubert’s health issues, including his syphilis. See Deborah Hayden, *Pox: Genius, Madness, and the Mysteries of Syphilis* (New York: Basic Books, 2003); Peter Gilroy Bevan, “Adversity: Schubert’s Illnesses and Their Background,” in *Schubert Studies*, ed. Brian Newbould, 244–66 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1998); and Eric Sams, “Schubert’s Illness Re-Examined,” *Musical Times* 121 (1980): 15–22.

135. Schubert, Letter to Leopold Kupelwieser on the last day of March 1824, after Schubert had been seriously ill for more than a year. Cited in Sams, “Schubert’s Illness Re-Examined,” 17, where Sams adduces it as a response to “the secondary stage of the disease [which] would now be extending and tightening its grip.”

136. Sams, “Schubert’s Illness Re-Examined,” 17, citing contemporary medical treatises on syphilis, including those written by Schubert’s own doctors, Josef von Vering and Ernst Rinna. Similarly, Bevans describes bleeding, purging, and emesis (along with mercury) as the principal contemporary treatments for syphilis, all ineffective against the disease and harmful to the patient. According to Bevans, “The main objective of all the measures used was to rid the body of the toxins or poisons produced by the disease” (250). To put it in the metaphorical terms of my own discussion, something undesirable from outside the bodily container had entered through an opening; cure depended on expelling the foreign element, moving it from inside to outside.

metaphorical body. “Alien substances” and “poisons” may enter through the wound and seriously compromise the normal functioning of the musical body, which must react as best it can to heal itself. Ultimately, however, there is no cure, no heroic overcoming, just acceptance and accommodation.

Following Cone’s lead, I have argued for hearing in the sonata a narrative of a bodily experience of disease and disability. A much more prevalent metaphorical hearing of Schubert’s music identifies him as a Romantic Wanderer and hears in his music a recurring tale of “exploration, banishment, exile, and eventual homecoming.”¹³⁷ This literature emphasizes Schubert’s feeling, lived in his life and expressed in his music, of being an outcast, isolated from the community, in a state of exile, always and forever an outsider.¹³⁸

What is the source of this sense of alienation, loneliness, of inalterable otherness? What impels the wanderer on his journey? An important strain in recent Schubert scholarship has suggested that the answers to these questions may be found in his allegedly non-normative sexuality.¹³⁹ I would like to suggest that the same feelings are also among the most widely shared and discussed responses to personal experience of disability (including disabling diseases, such as syphilis).¹⁴⁰ Certainly, it is well established that Schubert’s

137. Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 267. See also William Kinderman, “Wandering Archetypes in Schubert’s Instrumental Music,” *19th-Century Music* 21 (1997): 208–22.

138. A related strain in Schubert scholarship has interpreted aspects of Schubert’s life and music, particularly the music written after he contracted syphilis, in light of a brief prose work Schubert wrote in 1822, entitled “My Dream.” The text of this strange fiction may be found in Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, trans. Eric Blom (New York: Norton, 1947), 226–28. In it, the protagonist is banished by his father and “wander[s] into far-off regions.” Upon the death of his mother, he returns only to be expelled again. Finally, at the funeral of a young woman, he is mysteriously welcomed into the circle of mourners and reconciles with his father. “My Dream” is discussed and explicitly linked to the B-Flat-Major Sonata in Peter Pesic, “Schubert’s Dream,” *19th-Century Music* 23 (1999): 136–44. According to Pesic, “‘My Dream’ centers on the motif of double banishment; [Schubert’s] music often shows a parallel structure of two shifts around a ‘circle of sixths’ ” (137). In the first movement of the B-Flat-Major Sonata, those shifts are from B-flat major to G-flat major/F-sharp minor to D minor. See also Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 278–80, where the narrative of “My Dream” is related to the musical structure of the *Moment musical* in A-Flat Major, Op. 94, no. 2.

139. The conversation about Schubert’s sexuality begins with Maynard Solomon, “Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini,” *19th-Century Music* 12 (1989): 193–206. Solomon’s argument, and Schubert’s sexuality, remain controversial topics.

140. Henri-Jacques Stiker observes, “Disability strikes me in that very elementary and perhaps unsophisticated need not to be exiled, misunderstood, strange and a stranger, in my own eyes at first, then in the eyes of others” (*A History of Disability*, 8). Certainly Beethoven experienced and spoke of his deafness as isolating: “I was soon obliged to seclude myself and live in solitude. . . . I must live quite alone and may creep into society only as often as sheer necessity demands; I must live like an outcast” (Heiligenstadt Testament, October 1802). Similarly, “In my present condition I must withdraw from everything” (letter to Karl Amenda, July 1801) and “I am living—alone—alone—alone! Alone! Alone!” (letter to Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, July 1812). (All are cited and discussed in Maynard Solomon, *Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003], 61.)

physical withdrawal from society at various points during the 1820s was directly related to his desire to hide the stigmatizing marks of his disease.¹⁴¹ Indeed, profound experiences of alienation, banishment, loneliness, wandering, isolation, and unalterable otherness would seem to be something that gay culture and disability culture have in common. Whatever role Schubert's sexuality may have had in shaping the narrative trajectory of certain of his music, and whatever the nature of that sexuality, I would like to suggest that his experience of disability may also have played a formative role.

Conclusion

Disability has played a central role in Western art, from its origins in classical antiquity up to the present time. From Homer to Beethoven and beyond, the creators of the central canon have often had personal experiences of disability. Within art works throughout the Western tradition we find a remarkable profusion of characters with disabilities, and disability itself is widely thematized. Disability has been hiding in plain sight—pervasive as a personal experience of authors, as an attribute of characters, and as a dramatic theme, but largely untheorized until the advent of disability studies.

In a more abstract sense, disability has also played a central role in the aesthetics of Western art, particularly the aesthetics of romanticism. There is a long tradition in art reception of according a special place of honor to works that have some conspicuous defect. Works with problems, with formal deformations, for example, are often considered the most interesting ones, prized for the distinctiveness conferred on them by their artistic disabilities.

To argue that disability has a rich but hidden role in [the history of art] is not to say that disability has been excluded. It is rather the case that disability is rarely recognized as such, even though it often works as the very factor that establishes works as superior examples of the aesthetic. Disability intercedes to make the difference between good and bad art—and not as one would initially expect. That is, good art incorporates disability. This is hardly an absolute formula, although some have argued it, notably Edgar Allan Poe, who claimed “There is no exquisite beauty without some strangeness in the proportion.”¹⁴²

Musical works often benefit aesthetically from the presence of formal deformations and abnormalities, tonal problems with their attendant imbalance and unrest, and dissonances requiring normalization. Artistic works with these

141. Schubert was confined to his house or to a hospital at several junctures during the final years of his life in response to stigmatizing alterations in his appearance, bouts of illness resulting from the disease, the rigors of various attempted cures, or some combination of these (Sams, “Schubert’s Illness Re-Examined”).

142. Tobin Siebers, “Disability Aesthetics,” Paper presented at conference on “Disability Studies and the University,” Emory University, March 2004.

kinds of conspicuous strangeness in their proportion may be particularly effective at eliciting sympathetic identification from people with disabilities, or who live with the threat of the possibility of disability, which is to say from all of us. A brief entry from the diary of Heinrich Heine crystallizes these points about the centrality of disability in Western art, the resulting possibility of sympathetic identification of people with disabilities (potential or actual) with disability in art, and the possibility and limitations of the consolation we can find there:

It was in May 1848, on the day I went out for the last time, that I said good-bye to the gracious idols I worshiped in more fortunate times. I dragged myself to the Louvre only with great effort, and I almost broke down altogether when I entered the lofty hall where the blessed goddess of beauty, Our Lady of Milo, stands on her pedestal. I lay at her feet for a long time, and I wept so hard that I must have moved a stone to pity. The goddess also gazed down on me with compassion, but at the same time so disconsolately as if to say: Don't you see that I have no arms and so cannot help?¹⁴³

Disability is a central, shared part of life and art. This inescapable aspect of the human condition is reflected throughout our artistic traditions (including music), and they in turn shape the culture and social reality of disability. If disability is indeed a cultural and historical phenomenon (as well as a biological one), then it is appropriate that people whose work is the interpretation of culture and history should attend to it, not only as a matter of justice for people with disabilities, but also for the sake of a richer understanding of the artists and artworks we cherish.

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143. From "Postscript to the *Romancero*," *The Complete Poems of Heinrich Heine: A Modern English Version by Hal Draper* (Boston: Suhrkamp/Insel, 1982): 696. Heine refers to the crippling illness (possibly syphilis) that left him bedridden shortly after the visit to the Louvre described here and that eventually killed him.

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Abstract

The emerging interdisciplinary field of disability studies takes as its subject matter the historical, social, and cultural construction of disability. After a brief introduction to disability studies, this article explores the interconnected histories of disability and music as they are manifested in three theoretical approaches to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Western art music (the musical *Formenlehre* and the tonal theories of Schoenberg and Schenker)

and in three works by Beethoven and Schubert. Around the turn of the nineteenth century in Western Europe, disability began to be understood not as something natural and permanent but rather as a deviation from a normative standard, and thus subject to possible remediation. In the same time and place, art music also underwent a significant shift (reflected in the more recent theoretical traditions that have grown up around it), one that involved an increasing interest in rhetorically marked deviations from diatonic and formal normativity, and the possibility of their narrative recuperation. The article describes ways in which language about music and music itself may be understood both to represent and construct disability. More generally, it suggests that disability should take its place alongside nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation as a significant category for cultural analysis, including the analysis of music.