Rhetorical Types of Phrase Expansion in the Music of J. S. Bach

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On what basis is it possible to hear phrase expansion in tonal music if there is no normative phrase length given by an established tradition of periodicity?[1] More specifically, in the context of early eighteenth-century theory and practice, what are the compositional means by which a composer such as J. S. Bach conveys a sense of phrase expansion, historically prior to the emergence of a predictable phrase rhythm? These are important questions, if we are to understand the historical and stylistic nuances of tonal music in meaningful analytic terms. Yet current methods of analysis largely take as given a four or eight bar normative length for basic phrases in tonal music. This tradition, stretching from Koch through Reicha, Marx, Riemann, Schoenberg, and even Schenker, forms the basis for most formal approaches to tonal music.[2] With this standard, all longer phrases must be explained by various combinations of expansion and compounding. Thus, current analysis of phrase rhythm assumes periodicity, and rightly so, at least for the vast majority of tonal music.[3]

Yet this assumption has also obscured our understanding of phrase techniques in music prior to the standard of periodicity, e.g., much early eighteenth-century music, excluding dance suites and other such pieces.[4] This is especially true for the music of

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[1] I wish to thank Frank Samarotto, Andrew Mead, and Kevin Korsyn for offering insight on an earlier version of this article read at Music Theory Midwest 2003.

[2] Schenker's position can be qualified: he acknowledges a normative phrase length (meter) but also recognizes a deeper level of voice leading in determining phrase lengths (rhythm). Thus, the two organizing forces exist independently, both contributing to the rhythm of free composition, sometimes in equal proportion, other times not (more on this below).

[3] Rothstein 1989a (125-30) traces the emergence of periodicity in the classical style to the influence of dance and the "folk" style of vocal phrasing, including the "quatrain" and other regular verse forms.

[4] Even many of Bach's allemande-type pieces elude a four-square model of phrase rhythm.

Bach—neither the "ritornello form" in his concertos, nor the *Fortspinnung* in his various instrumental genres, nor the subject imitation in his fugues follows a normative phrase length.[5] Channan Willner has insightfully described some of these profound differences between baroque and classical phrase rhythm.[6] Thus, it seems that we should only apply the concept of normative phrase length to this earlier repertoire with caution. Yet we clearly sense phrase expansion in this music. Therefore, this raises the following question: how do we define expansions in the absence of a normative phrase length?

One possible answer: rhetoric. This article will sketch a rhetorical basis for phrase expansion by exploring several distinct compositional means by which Bach achieves a *sense* of phrase expansion without simply extending the measure count of the phrase. By recognizing this special role of rhetoric in early eighteenth-century music, we can achieve a more vivid understanding of the ways in which Bach could create the sense of expansion without relying on periodicity and normative phrase lengths.

We are already familiar with the idea of rhetoric in Bach's music in the form of "word painting" from the work of Bukofzer, Buelow, and Chafe (among others).[7] Alternatively, what I have in mind here is a much deeper, more fundamental aspect of Bach's music—a compositional practice in which figuration in all of its various forms has the potential to elaborate upon a basic musical utterance (and therefore expand the basic phrase) in a manner independent of text, but still rhetorical in function. That the basis of this kind of figuration is *musical* rather than originating from text (emerging from diminution rather than from the articulation and illustration of words) is what differentiates it from the *musica poetica* tradition of analysis, which almost exclusively revolved around poetic text setting.[8] That this kind of figuration is

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[5] Schenker makes this observation about a Bach fugue in *Free Composition*, §298 and Figure 149/8a.

[6] Willner 1999.

[7] Bukofzer, 1939-40; Buelow 1980; Chafe 2000.

[8] The exceptions to this generalization—e.g., Mattheson's remarks on a purely instrumental rhetoric—remain controversial; see Dreyfus 1996, 7.

rhetorical, that it marks crucial or important moments of the music, is what associates it with the musical-rhetorical figures of the *musica poetica.* Taking some specific passages from Bach's vocal and instrumental works, this article illustrates how we can understand his musical figures as rhetorical types of phrase expansion, and briefly explores how this has the potential to change the way we think about musical rhetoric. This approach follows the spirit of the historical *musica poetica,* but rethinks the question of what constitutes a figure and focuses on its role in conveying the sense of phrase expansion.

To choose the music of Bach for this purpose is by no means accidental; while he seems to have paid little attention to his contemporaries' writings about music and rhetoric, his immediate surroundings and his music—both vocal and instrumental—are rich in rhetoric.[9] As a dedicated church composer, he would have included theology as an integral part of his thinking—theology in large part being the practice of commentary and elaboration, interpreting source texts in the form of secondary texts, and reading events in the source texts as tropes or allegories of other events (e.g., as Old Testament narratives prefigure the New Testament gospels).[10] Perhaps more importantly, the practices of variation writing and chorale setting can be considered characteristic forms of commentary—*expanding* musically upon a given topic.[11]

Before proceeding to the idea of a rhetorical basis of phrase expansion, we might benefit from reviewing several established definitions of the basic phrase and phrase expansion, which will offer contrasts to the one proposed here. Koch's explanation is significant because he emphasizes the *sense* of expansion based upon musical material as much as a simple measure count. He writes,

A phrase is extended when it contains more than is absolutely necessary for its completeness. The extension of a phrase through which the feeling it contains is

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[9] Particularly as rhetoric pertains to Bach's compositional process, see Kirkendale 1980, Street 1987, Harrison 1990, McCreless 1992, and Dreyfus 1996.

[10] On the fundamental importance of this practice, see Auerbach 1959.

[11] Schulenberg 1982 characterizes variation as a fundamental style feature of the Bach "circle" of composers; see also Sisman 1993 for the connection between rhetoric and variations.

defined more precisely can be brought about by various means. The first of these means is the repetition of a segment of a phrase . . . The second . . . is the addition of an explanation, an appendix, which further clarifies the phrase. This appendix can be a section of the phrase itself, whose repetition makes the meaning of the phrase more emphatic . . . The last means . . . is parenthesis, or the insertion of unessential melodic ideas between the segments of a phrase.[12]

Here the expanded phrase "clarifies" the sense of the basic utterance (please see example 1); it appears as part of his analogy between the basic phrase and the simple sentence of language, which in its bare form must contain a subject and a predicate. Referring to the "logic" of the phrase, he bases the expansion primarily upon the *sense* of elaboration in music *as a language*, and is only secondarily concerned with a regular length of the phrase.
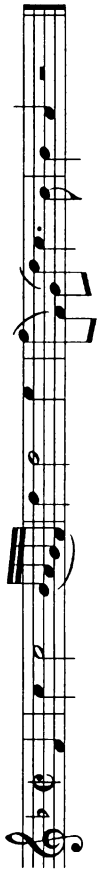
In contrast, Ebenezer Prout's theory of form, informed explicitly by Riemann's notions of motive, rhythm, and periodicity, assumes the eight-bar phrase as a norm in tonal music. At its basis is the notion of metric function, in which an alternation of weak and strong implications (always in this order) exists at various levels, from beats and measures to the 4+4 phrase pair (please see example 2). The eight-bar phrase results from this hierarchy: the eighth bar metrically completes the phrase on several levels, from the immediate cadence to the four-bar phrase segments. Thus, Prout can explain all phrase expansions as originating in repetition and/or the delaying of expected events; his broader categories of deviation also include repeated or extended cadences, interpolation, and elision. In Example 2, one of his more extreme examples, he uses these categories to reduce 24 measures (mm. 9-32) to an underlying 8-bar phrase. By using normative measure numbers in

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[12] Koch, *Versuch*, II, Section 3, Chapter 2, §105, §110, §117 (Baker, 41-54): [§105] "Ein Saz ist erweitert, wenn er mehr enthält als zu seiner Vollständigkeit unumgänglich nöthig ist. Die Erweiterung eines Satzes, durch welche die in demselben enthaltene Empfindung genauer bestimmt wird, kann durch verschiedene Hülfsmittel hervorgebracht werden. Das erste dieser Hülfsmittel ist die Wiederholung eines Theils des Satzes . . . [§110] Das zweyte Hülfsmittel . . . ist dieses, daß man dem Satze eine Erklärung, einen Anhang beyfügt, welcher mehr Licht über ihn verbreitet. Dieser Anhang ist entweder ein Theil des Satzes selbst, durch dessen Wiederholung der Inhalt des Satzes nachdrücklicher gemacht wird . . . [§117] Das lezte . . . Hülfsmittel . . . ist die Parenthese, oder die Einschaltung zufälliger melodischer Theile, zwischen die Glieder eines Satzes."

Example 1. Koch 1782-1793, II, 352-5 (Baker 1983, Examples 1 and 4): Koch's examples of a basic phrase (a) and an expanded phrase (b).

parentheses (always even numbers, following Riemann's convention) he shows the expansion primarily occurring toward the end of the eight-bar prototype. First, the cadence is delayed, taking the listener back to "bar 6" three times; and second, when we finally reach "bar 8," Mendelssohn elides it with the beginning of another four-bar cadential segment ("8=4"), which is repeated and then supplemented with an extra two-bar extension.

Elsewhere in the text, Prout presents similar analyses of a prelude and fugue from Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*, both relying on phrase elision as much as expansion. It should be noted that he chooses a fugue with a four-bar subject, which obviously suits his underlying model. Interestingly enough, though, he introduces the example by admitting that in polyphonic compositions, "passages are to be found in which it is necessary to 'make believe a great deal' in order to trace the four-bar construction at all."[13] While there are clearly insights to be gained by Prout's analyses about the complex interactions of melody, harmony, and rhythm, they often appear predetermined by his model of the eight-bar phrase.

Both of these definitions of phrase expansion differ from the one offered by Schenker.[14] In the insightful chapter on meter and rhythm in *Free Composition*, he offers a definition of expansion [*Dehnung*], a repetition with extra bars of a previous passage with a distinct metric "prototype" (e.g., a four-bar group based upon prolongation or other phrase syntax).[15] While a quick glance at Schenker's explanation here might suggest a concept of expansion much like that of Prout—that the expansion must be based upon a previously heard metric group, usually of even hypermeter—closer inspection reveals that the prototypes in question are almost always determined by voice-leading events (e.g., linear progression, prolongation) rather than by hypermeter. Schenker's analytic sketches confirm this. A good example is from Mozart's Symphony

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[13] Prout 1893, 126. The analysis of the F-minor fugue (book 2) appears on p. 126, and that of the G-major prelude (book 2) on p. 170.

[14] There are, however, some interesting similarities between Koch and Schenker, for example the recognition of phrases other than four or eight bars in length if they do not suggest repetition or retardation of any obvious kind.

[15] Schenker, *Free Composition*, §297 and Oster's footnote also recognizing "middleground prototypes;" Rothstein 1981, chapter 7 and 1989, chapter 3.

Example 2. Prout 1893, 108: Prout's example of an expanded phrase from Mendelssohn's Song without Words, Op. 30, No. 4

in D major, K. 385, ii, given in Example 3, which shows two
separate expansions, the first extending the cadential arrival of the
first phrase pair with typical neighboring motion, the second
stretching a previously stated measure group with a kind of written-
out ritenuto.[16] Both expansions rely upon previously heard "metric
prototypes," which are, in turn, defined by deeper voice leading
events. Whether the prototypes appear in the foreground or the
middleground, the fact remains that linear progressions or other
such voice leading patterns play a fundamental role in Schenker's
concept of phrase expansion, a feature that is largely absent from
the previous two approaches.[17]

    These three explanations are quite distinct: Koch emphasizes
completeness and closure, viewing repetition as a kind of
redundancy and therefore an expansion of musical material within
the phrase, Prout assumes the primary basis of (rhythmic)
periodicity and explains expansions as delays of the imminent
cadence, and Schenker proposes a deeper basis in linear
progressions, which interact with surface periodicity to create
foreground rhythm. It is important to state here that I do not wish
to take sides as to which approach is best; on the contrary, I believe
that each articulates an important basis for phrase expansion in
tonal music.[18] These explanations are, however, only part of a
complete understanding, and the role of rhetoric in phrase
expansion has been largely overlooked in recent analytic work.
Thus, the following examples serve to complement already existing
concepts of phrase expansion in music analysis, not to replace
them; they offer a reminder that earlier composers may have
worked from a wider range of compositional procedures than we

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[16] Schenker's analysis of this passage is discussed insightfully in Rothstein 1981
and Samarotto 1999.

[17] Schenker's conception of phrase expansion also appears in Beach 1995.

[18] It should be clarified additionally that these three types of expansion are not
exclusively associated with the three theorists mentioned; examples of alternate
types of expansion do appear occasionally in other writers' work (e.g., Koch
suggesting a Schenkerian kind of phrase expansion, or Schenker acknowledging
the tendency for linear progressions to conclude within the span of a four- or
eight-bar phrase). Nevertheless, the three types represent each theorist's primary
contribution to the accumulated knowledge of phrase rhythm and form.

Example 3. Schenker [1935] 1979, Figure 148/1: Schenker's example of phrase expansion in Mozart's Symphony in D major, K. 385, II.

typically assume today, and that historical distance might obscure important theoretical concepts.

"Rhetorical Figures" and Phrase Expansion

Designating phrase expansions as rhetorical may capture an intuitive truth about Bach's compositional practice, but doing so also invites problems. The so-called musical-rhetorical figures remain controversial in current music research, in some cases forming the key to interpreting Baroque musical works and in others misleading listeners by a superficial comparison with rhetorical terms. These figures were enumerated originally within a rather limited historical/geographic context, as part of the *musica poetica* tradition of 17th- and 18th-century North German Protestant musicians; this limited scope was subsequently expanded as the figures were codified as a systematic vocabulary by a small handful of early twentieth-century musicologists and applied more widely in the analysis of musical works.[19] In spite of these applications, each insightful in its own way, the figures remain vulnerable to the criticism of superficiality, of inflating a simple analogy between rhetoric and music beyond its historical relevance.[20]

Does this mean that we should set aside rhetoric in music as an historical curiosity, less relevant than current thought in music analysis? Perhaps so. But there seems to be an intuitive truth to the notion that music can work rhetorically and that it has "figures." The problem seems to arise most acutely when we ask music to be too much like language, in other words, when we move from vocal to instrumental music without adjusting our model, without rethinking rhetoric.

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[19] One could construct a loose genealogy of this approach, beginning with the primary *musica poetica* writers (Burmeister, Kircher, Bernhard, Printz, Mattheson, and Forkel), continuing with the early musicologists (Schering, Kretzschmar, Schweitzer, and Bukofzer), and leading to recent music research (Buelow, Agawu, and Sisman).

[20] McCreless 2002 provides an excellent, up-to-date overview of the *musica poetica* tradition; while largely sympathetic, he nevertheless raises this problem of superficiality.

The following examples offer a partial solution—they illustrate how Bach uses what I will call *figures of expansion* as a kind of musical commentary.[21] Generalizing from these examples into a (relatively unformalized) theory of rhetorical figures in music requires us to rethink figures in a new, more flexible manner, no longer bound by the wide ranging and often vague definitions of the *musica poetica* treatises.

To this end, we can update our model of rhetoric from ancient and medieval writers to more innovative twentieth-century thinkers on language and rhetoric. Chaim Perelman, a French philosopher, offers an insightful way of thinking of figures not by their structures, but by their functions—not by what they *are*, but by what they *do*.[22] A simple example would be the use of a well-known metaphor not simply for elegance but to establish a heightened sense of familiarity or community between writer/speaker and reader/listener. The conceptual *structure* of the metaphor (i.e., an analogy in which certain terms are elided) becomes less important than its *effect* on the audience.[23] Rhetorical functions, of course, can be difficult to pin down, for "figures" frequently play multiple, complicated roles in a discourse. Nevertheless, Perelman identifies two generalized types that would seem to be valid for music as well as language. The first includes events that increase the presence (i.e., the vividness, the intensity) of a subject in the mind of the listener—most obviously, repetition (the traditional figures of *anaphora, conduplicatio*, and *adjectio*) and amplification (aggregation, synonymy, and *interpretatio*), appropriately called "figures of presence." I will adapt this category to music by the designation "figures of expansion." The second includes events that listeners recognize as part of a shared cultural vocabulary—for example, allusion and quotation, which enhance the bond between speaker and audience, and which he designates

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[21] Interestingly, Mattheson uses the same term, "figures of expansion" [*die grossen Erweiterungs-Figuren*] to refer to the various compositional elaborations that are typical in fugue. See Mattheson 1739, 244 and Bent 1994, 21.

[22] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969. I am grateful to Kevin Korsyn for bringing this important work to my attention.

[23] It is in this sense that Cohen 1979 speaks of *intimacy* as an important function of metaphor.

"figures of communion."[24] We can think of these in musical terms
simply as "figures of reference." The first category (figures of
expansion) will form the basis for rhetorical types of expansion in
the Bach examples below; the second category (figures of reference),
while important, is independent of such expansion and will not
figure directly into the following analysis. Although Perelman does
not state it directly, we should acknowledge that these categories
are by no means exclusive: there may be significant overlap between
them, simply because they denote rhetorical *function* instead of
structure—thus a single event can play several rhetorical roles. This
is, after all, one of the unique attributes of poetic language, in
which words have a surplus of meaning and can signify
simultaneously on multiple levels and in reference to multiple
words and ideas.

How can the notions of presence and expansion help us to
rethink musical figures? As rhetoricians have long known, one of
the most persuasive techniques of oratory is to make something (an
idea, a person, a feeling) more vivid in the listener's mind simply by
increasing its profile, by making it more memorable through
repetition, enumeration, amplification, elaboration, and other
discursive techniques. (These devices have been mastered, of
course, in advertising and politics.) Obviously, repetition already
plays a central role in music—it can clearly increase the listener's
familiarity with a musical idea or affect, particularly when it
reinforces repetitions of text in vocal music.[25] But repetition is not
the only way of increasing presence, of intensifying the listener's
participation and deepening his or her memory of the musical ideas
present(ed). Amplification through diminution, dissonance
treatment, harmonic and formal function, and phrase rhythm
techniques can also increase presence. Thus, the phrase expansions
illustrated in the following Bach examples are a particular form of
elaboration or amplification: the increasing of presence through
expansion, which deepens the impression of musical ideas and
affects. Instigated variously by repetition, diminution, and

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[24] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 174-9.

[25] In his early work, Schenker was even prepared to base his entire notion of
musical coherence on musical repetition and the psychology of association. See
Schenker, *Harmony*, §2-7.

prolongation, these expansions directly affect the phrase by giving it a *sense* of expansion. As a result, the approach rethinks the historical *musica poetica* according to more explicitly musical theories that range from eighteenth-century *Satzlehre* techniques to Schenker's "composed-out" voice-leading events. Thus, the Bach examples serve to identify figures of expansion as embodiments of commentary which expand the sense of the phrase, and therefore (in Perelman's terms) as rhetorical figures of presence.

Let us now consider three different rhetorical types of expansion in the following series of examples. While it is possible to identify additional types, these three provide a preliminary basis for rethinking musical-rhetorical figures in that they represent expansion in three distinct compositional domains—motivic repetition, harmonic prolongation, and dissonance treatment. For each type, a passage from the *St. Matthew Passion* will form a vocal basis for an analogous passage from Bach's keyboard music, with references to theoretical treatises along the way to locate these figures in a larger historical tradition. By citing examples from both vocal and instrumental music, I am suggesting that this concept of rhetorical figures can be based on purely musical techniques, and that this sense of musical rhetoric might be implied in sections of compositional treatises not explicitly addressing rhetoric.

Expanded phrases through text/motive repetition. First and most obviously, the figure of repetition—of a motivic fragment or of a one- or two-bar segment—is the simplest way of creating a sense of phrase expansion. A clear example occurs in Example 4, a well-known aria from the *St. Matthew Passion.*[26] Bach composes the opening ritornello more or less as a "sentence" type of phrase,[27] where the opening two-bar basic idea (which includes a descending fourth motive, g^2-ff^2-e^2-d^2, at the half-note pace; see bracket in score) is repeated a third higher, undergoes fragmentation (or at least the sense of fragmentation through acceleration of the fourth

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[26] This aria appears in the analytic writings of both Schenker and Schoenberg. See Schenker [1910] 1987, 208 and 61, and Schoenberg 1967, 68.

[27] Caplin 1986, 256-8 compares the baroque *Fortspinnung* procedures with the later "sentence" phrase type.

Example 4. St. Matthew Passion, aria *"Blute nur," first part: opening ritornello as model for rhetorically expanded vocal phrase.*

motive to eighth notes) and leads to a conclusive cadence on the
downbeat of bar 9. Bach's phrase differs, of course, from the
prototype sentence in that the cadence arrives on what we might
call the next hypermetric downbeat, simultaneously beginning the
next phrase. Bach often uses this kind of phrase overlap in opening
ritornelli, but its sense of overlap is less overt than the
corresponding technique in the context of the "Classical style."[28]
Bach also uses the ritornello to introduce the double-neighbor
motive (see bracket in m. 1) together with syncopation, both of
which play important roles in the aria. The subsequent phrase
proceeds through its sixth measure as a vocal version of the opening
ritornello, with inverted counterpoint in the fifth and sixth
measures (an ascending-fifth sequence III-VII-IV-I-V with
tonicizations of each chord). Then, Bach uses text repetition to
create a dramatic phrase expansion: he reiterates the text "Blute nur
mein liebes Herz" for two additional measures and reinforces the
sense of expansion by setting the text repetitions with a
chromaticized 5-6 sequence (leading from V to I through a fourth
progression in the bass). In essence, the 5-6 succession acts here as
a figure of rhetorical expansion, which supports the repetition of
the text. This is not to suggest that a 5-6 sequence is *always* a
rhetorical figure in this sense, but that it functions as such—as a
figure of expansion—in this particular case because it gives the
listener a sense of elaboration and commentary beyond the scope of
the basic utterance.[29] After these "extra" two measures, Bach adds
an additional two bars that prolong a dramatic dissonance, at first
over a rather surprising ♭II on the important word "Herz" (a

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[28] Thus, the ritornello itself could be reduced further to an implied prototype
(without repetition), but doing so would follow the phrase rhythmic assumptions
of Classical periodicity without holding open the possibility that Bach worked by
other procedures.

[29] A counterexample that serves to substantiate this point could be taken almost at
random from the Bach repertoire of *Fortspinnung*-type phrases, in which a
sequential passage is an expected part of the larger phrase and therefore will lack
the sense of markedness, of heightened significance, that is illustrated in the
examples presented here. Fischer 1915, who first coined the term, cites as vivid
examples the opening phrases from the Courante from the C-Minor French Suite
(No. 2) and the Allemande from the E-Major French Suite (No. 6). Many
inventions and preludes also illustrate the standard *Fortspinnung* type.

deceptive resolution of the previous applied dominant). I will have more to say about this dissonance momentarily; for now we can simply notice that it extends the phrase an extra two bars and that it recalls the double-neighbor motive in the bass. Thus, when Bach sets up his conclusive cadence, he—in a sense—resumes with the eighth and ninth bars of his opening phrase.

I should note here that the 5-6 sequence was identified by Burmeister as a musical-rhetorical figure.[30] While the original rhetorical term, *congeries*, may not suggest much to the modern listener, Classical rhetoricians classified it as a figure of amplification, which supports the interpretation given here. Quintilian explains,

Accumulation of words and sentences identical in meaning may also be regarded under the head of *amplification* . . . in this passage all the accumulated details have but one reference. The heightening of effect may also be produced by making the words rise to a climax.
"There stood the porter of the prison,
  the praetor's executioner,
     the death and terror of the citizens and allies of Rome,
        the lictor Sextius."[31]

Again, this is not to suggest that a sequence or linear intervallic pattern always fulfills a rhetorical function of expansion, only that it *can* do so if the composer wishes. The crucial difference is one of function rather than structure, of context rather than singular event.

At least one eighteenth-century treatise also illustrates how repetition of this kind can expand the phrase dimensions of a composition as a kind of rhetorical commentary: presumably this is what Mattheson had in mind when he described how a composer can elaborate a simple set of ideas. Unfortunately, Mattheson's example offers only text, merely implying an appropriate musical setting. Given the countless examples of this sort of elaboration in the vocal repertoire, it is not difficult to imagine what Mattheson intended. See Example 5, where the numbered segments designate

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[30] Burmeister [1606] 1993, 184-5.

[31] Quintilian 1921-1922, 279 (VIII, iv, 26-7).

Example 5. Mattheson 1739, II, 8, §44 and §47 (Harris 1981, 378-9): Mattheson's example of text-based commentary in sacred vocal music.

"Now just as no slight strength results from a clever and not exaggerated repetition of the melody, it is no less accomplished by so-called melodic analysis or elucidation . . . ."

Ist das Paradies nun offen?
1) Ist es offen? 2) Das Paradies?
Erschallt ihr hellen Lüffte!
Ertönet, Zions Klüffte!
1) Helle Lüfft erschallt!
   Zions Klüffte ertönt!
2) Ertönt, erschallt!
   erschallt, ertönt!
Sprich für mich, mein Jesus gut.
1) Sprich gut für mich, mein Jesu.
2) Mein Jesu, sprich gut für mich.
Wer will uns verdammen?
1) Wer will verdammen?
2) Wer? Wer?
3) Wer will es thun?

Is paradise now open?
1) Is it open? 2) Paradise?
Ring on bright air!
Resound Zion's clefts!
1) Bright air ring!
   Zion's clefts resound!
2) Resound, ring!
   ring, resound!
Speak for me my Jesus.
1) Speak for me my Jesus.
2) My Jesus, speak for me.
Who will damn us?
1) Who will damn?
2) Who? Who?
3) Who will do it?

commentary on the primary text in boldface. His terms "analysis" and "elucidation" suggest Perelman's figures of presence in that analysis divides something into its component parts and describes each one in turn, thereby expanding the subject in the listener's mind. Not only is this strikingly similar to the Bach passage above, we can also take this rhetorical expansion as a model for a rhetoric of instrumental music, when exclusively instrumental figuration seems to expand the musical content within a given passage. This sort of expansion happens more than once in the bourrée from the G-major French Suite, excerpted in Example 6. While the phrase expansions in this example do appear against the backdrop of regular phrase rhythm typical of dance pieces, this normative periodicity simply heightens the sense of expansion, which (as the previous example has shown) originates in the motivic repetition. In other words, the rhetorical expansion is independent of the regular hypermeter. (In the previous example the normative phrase length was defined in part by the ritornello, which renders the subsequent expansion more vivid when it arrives.)

Here, the opening phrase pair (antecedent, consequent) has been expanded to ten bars through repetition of the main motive in mm. 7-8 (see brackets in score), which is harmonized by a descending fourth progression (stepwise parallel tenths with implied descending-fifth sequence) to the dominant scale degree, on which the phrase cadences. The repetition during the consequent phrase clearly exceeds the expected length established by the antecedent phrase (and continued in the subsequent phrase pair, not appearing in Example 6). At the end of the piece, the expectation of an eight-bar phrase pair is again not realized, this time being expanded to 12 measures through a 5-6 sequence and a repetition of the earlier fourth progression passage transposed to conclude on the tonic scale degree. The concluding phrase is significant here for maintaining a consistent surface hypermeter but giving the underlying sense of expansion through repetition (and through a temporary expansion of the "basic pace").[32]

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[32] Schenker provides a model for the occurrence of phrase rhythm on different levels; e.g., when a four-bar metric unit at the foreground serves as an expansion of a single "bar" within a "four-bar unit of a higher order." ("Viertakter höherer Ordnung," appears in *Masterwork*, II, 68, in Schenker's essay on Mozart's G-

Example 6. French Suite No. 5, bourrée, mm. 1-10: rhetorical phrase expansions in the latter half of phrase pairs

minor Symphony.) Example 6 thus resembles Schenker's Fig. 148, 3c from *Free Composition*, although the musical justification for the higher-level metric unit originates from different sources: in the former it confirms the eight-bar pattern Bach establishes throughout the short piece, and in the latter it stems from a middleground unfolding. On the play of pacing, see Willner 1999.

Example 6, continued. French Suite No. 5, bourrée, mm. 19-30:
rhetorical phrase expansions in the latter half of phrase pairs

Significantly, the eight-bar phrase rhythm is established clearly in the middle phrase pair; thus, Bach writes a piece in which the basic length involves three 8-bar phrases where the first and last are expanded. Such expansion is somewhat unusual in dance suites; therefore, these passages become marked events, rhetorical expansions that add a purely instrumental "commentary" to the basic structure.[33] Voice-leading sequences here play a rhetorical role as figures of expansion.

Example 7. Heinichen 1728, 642 (Buelow 1992, Example C-21): Two of Heinichen's examples of chord inversion before resolution.

Expanded harmonic function (through diminution). Figures of expansion can also include the traditional practice of *diminution,* in particular the figurative expansion of a single harmonic function through changes of voicing or inversion. In his well-known treatise on thoroughbass, Johann David Heinichen (no stranger to the teachings of rhetoric) describes diminutions that expand harmonic functions, but does so without explicitly noting their rhetorical nature; yet we can easily read his examples as figures of expansion in the sense I have developed here. See Example 7 for two of Heinichen's examples of "prolonged" thoroughbass chords. In the first, the chords of m. 1 on C, Eb, and F♯ all share the same fundamental, and in the second, the four-two chord on C and the seventh chord on F♯ share a related fundamental. Delaying the resolution of a dissonant chord through "inversion" or rearrangement of tones is of course a standard compositional

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[33] I should clarify here that my identification of rhetorical repetitions that result in phrase expansions may or may not also be expansions at deeper levels of tonal structure: in other words, I understand rhetorical gestures in music to be local events of expansion that may function independently within the larger tonal structure (i.e., a foreground figure may or may not be a middleground one).

Example 8. St. Matthew Passion, recitative "Du lieber Heiland du," mm. 3-6:
rhetorical phrase expansion using harmonic "prolongation" and delayed resolution.

technique of tonal music; but when a composer uses it to prolong a harmony longer or otherwise than is typical, it too can be a marked event—a figure—of rhetorical expansion.[34] This happens in the recitative given in Example 8. Here, Bach achieves expansion through prolonged thoroughbass chords: first with a four-two then a six-five chord, each repeated with different chord tones in the vocal part, all of which serve to tonicize the goal e-minor triad. Significantly, the resolution of the prolonged dissonant harmony coincides with the end of the text phrase, thus the expansion of the harmony also serves to punctuate the articulation of the text, with the delayed resolution arriving with the end of the text phrase. What is more, Bach also connects the end of the prolongation with its beginning, marking these endpoints with a text rhyme: "streiten" and "bereiten." It makes perfect sense that in the absence of a regular phrase rhythm typical of recitative the composer would choose to mark such text relationships with a technique other than verse-length phrase rhythm.[35]

Example 9 offers an analogous passage in an instrumental work; the similarities between the previous recitative and this example are striking. Near the end of this well-known prelude, Bach lingers on different voicings of a prolonged diminished (extended dominant) harmony to the point of suspending the normal temporal flow of the prelude. During this dominant prolongation, the normal pace of events is stretched and expanded, resuming once the resolution arrives. As is typical for Bach

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[34] Within the context of Schenkerian analysis, this type of figure falls somewhere in between ordinary prolongation and a "fermata-like effect," which he identifies in Bach's C-Major Prelude from WTC I (*Five Graphic Analyses*), and in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, second and third movements (originally in *Tonwille*). See Rothstein 1981, 65. A similar effect results from the interaction of metric prototypes at different structural levels; see Rothstein 1981, 173 and Schenker, *Free Composition*, Figure 148,1 and 4. Although not invoking rhetoric and figures, Frank Samarotto (Samarotto 1999) presents intriguing examples of this sort of temporal effect, calling it "temporal plasticity."

[35] It is worth noting here that the recitative resembles a thoroughbass modulation pattern such as those suggested by C. P. E. Bach in the final chapter of his *Versuch*. Such a comparison can underscore how compositional artistry can transform a simple progression into a highly expressive and memorable passage, in this case largely through the expansion just described.

Example 9. E♭ Minor Prelude from the Well Tempered Clavier, I, mm. 32-6: rhetorical phrase expansion using harmonic "prolongation" and delayed resolution.

(especially in his preludes), this dominant expansion precedes the final resolution to tonic harmony for the entire piece, thereby dramatizing a formal function as well as a single harmonic function.   By lingering during this intentionally prolonged harmonic expansion, Bach marks it as a rhetorical event, one which expands the normally expected sequence of events.

  Expanded dissonance (through bass diminution).   Perhaps even more effective than the previous examples, however, is the expansion of a dissonance beyond its basic rhythmic profile—that is, when the composer lingers on a dissonant tone much longer than necessary and thus heightens the sense of resolution when it finally arrives.[36]   (We need to remember that for Bach, the strict treatment of dissonance was still based solidly on the *prima prattica*, requiring consonant preparation and stepwise resolution for each dissonance, which itself normally occupied merely a single beat in the rhythmic hierarchy.) As it turns out, Bach frequently uses this figure of free dissonance treatment with a consistent bass pattern and gives it a rhetorical sense of expansion within its context.[37]
  Recall for a moment the vocal phrase expansion from Example 4: after the expansion through repetition there occurred a rhythmically expanded dissonance figure. The tone expanded is scale-degree 4, e^2, established as a consonance first over a sudden ♭II, becomes dissonant over the V, which arrives in the bass through passing motion and an arpeggiation, and then finally resolves to d^2 over tonic harmony some six beats later. Significantly, it extends the metric sense of the phrase, adding two additional measures to the overall phrase length. Thus, Bach uses two different figures of

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[36] A more thorough exploration of this technique appears in Braunschweig 2003. I am grateful to the Editor of *Theory and Practice* for granting permission to reproduce some of the material here.

[37] The difference between this and the previous category is important: in the previous type, a strong articulation initiates a dissonant chord that is then prolonged, whereas in this type, a strong articulation emphasizes first a consonant sonority that then transforms (usually through an unfolded bass, arpeggiated alone or with passing notes) into a dissonant one. Schenker notes this configuration several times in *Free Composition*, including an instance from Bach's E-Major French Suite at a middleground level (Fig. 62,9) and general observations on Bach's bass line diminutions (§210 and §257).

expansion to prolong the phrase, the one based upon repetition and the other upon expanded dissonance.

   As with all of the previous examples, this figure also has historical precedent in eighteenth-century treatises. Walther, Heinichen and Riepel all present examples of such expanded dissonance treatment, the latter both in basic form and with variation (see example 10).[38]

   Example 10. (a) Walther [1732] 2001, "resolutio," (b) Heinichen 1728, 650-1 (Buelow 1992, C-25), (c) Riepel 1768, V, 13 (Emmerig 1996, 459): examples of expanded dissonance.

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[38] Bernhard had already presented examples of expanded dissonance in the seventeenth century, though none as elaborate as appear in the eighteenth-century treatises; see his *Tractatus*, Chapters 28, 32, and 36, under the designations, "syncopatione catachrestica," "consonantiis impropriis," and "extension" (Bernhard 1999).

An additional vocal example is taken from the well-known opening chorus of the *St. Matthew Passion*,[39] where the expanded dissonance appears no less than four times and functions in part to articulate a rhyme scheme in the text. All are oriented toward the dominant, B, although two actually appear in the temporary foreground key of the dominant (thus moving to *its* dominant, F♯). The first instance (mm. 7-9, not shown) appears as part of the instrumental introduction and prepares a long dominant pedal and definitive cadence. The second instance, mm. 24-6 (see Example 11), serves to highlight the important verb "klagen," which marks the end of a text phrase just before the dramatic exchange between choirs. The third instance (mm. 40-2, not shown) appears during an instrumental interlude, and the fourth (mm. 80-2, not shown) sets the verb "tragen," thus closing the rhyme with the earlier passage. In the passage appearing in Example 11, the soprano voice sustains the prolonged dissonance, e^2, while the first violins dance around it with various diminutions; both nevertheless serve to prolong the dissonant tone e^2 (scale-degree 1), resolving eventually to $d♯^2$, while the bass moves through the characteristic contour. In addition to the rhyme scheme connecting the second and fourth instances, the first and fourth appearances (together with the phrases in which they appear) also help to frame the entire movement, the same basic passage occurring in each position.

This figure appears just as frequently in Bach's instrumental music, in which we can hear a similar emphasis on a prolonged—and thus highly emphasized—word/tone; see Example 12 from the C-minor French Suite, one of many possible examples.

The voice-leading reduction of mm. 25-29 outlines the basic figure: scale-degree 4 (f^2) initiates the figure over a diatonic II, becomes dissonant as the bass moves through the characteristic passing six-four (over the tonic note) towards the V, and finally resolves (to $e♭^2$) over tonic harmony (at the next hypermetric downbeat). Another feature typical of Bach's procedure is present here: the use of scale-degree 6 moving at the last moment to scale-degree 5, which thus gives the surface effect of a leading-tone seventh chord moving into the dominant, and at a deeper level of

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[39] Schenker's essay on this movement in *Tonwille* tends to focus on Bach's setting of the chorale and its characteristic motives.

Example 11. St. Matthew Passion, *vocal reduction of opening chorus, mm. 24-6: rhetorical expansion using expanded dissonance.*

Example 12. French Suite No. 2, minuet, mm. 25-9: rhetorical expansion using expanded dissonance.

the dominant ninth chord resolving prior to the harmonic
resolution. Additionally, while the expanded use of dissonance
does not affect the successive phrase lengths (the overall phrase
rhythm of this *dance* piece), it does achieve a subtle but marked
effect by temporarily suspending the normal pace of harmonic
events and thus heightening the anticipation of the resumption of
harmonic motion (much as the previous type of expansion
prolonged a harmonic and formal function).

As a final, slightly more elaborate version of this figure,
consider Example 13 from the sixth French Suite. In this context of
this example, Bach leads the expanded dissonance from scale-degree
1 over tonic harmony to an elaboration of the V/V.[40] Interestingly,
the dominant ninth ($d\sharp^2$, becoming $d\natural^2$) remains until the moment
of resolution, thus implying a kind of double extended dissonance:
along with the main outer-voice counterpoint of 1-3-5-7-3 is a
secondary 3-5-7-9-5 (not shown in the example), the underlying
motion being 8-10. Although this secondary strand usually resolves
before the resumption of harmonic motion, here it becomes more
independent, standing along with the main line in a double
dissonance figure. Additionally, the implied phrase rhythm here is
complex. The expanded dissonance defines a four-bar unit, but a
consistent four-bar hypermeter is not present in this piece (as it was
in the previous example). Instead, after two consecutive eight-bar
phrases, Bach reinterprets m. 16 as the initiation of a new metric
unit, which comprises the expanded dissonance as well as four
additional measures composing out the dominant of the dominant
(a typical harmonic pattern for a two-reprise form).[41] Bach uses a
similar passage at the end of the gigue (mm. 44-47), reinterpreting
m. 44 as the initiation of the expanded dissonance, which is of
course modified to conclude on the tonic triad.[42]

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[40] Kirnberger uses this little piece as his model for "tossing off" a sonata; see
Newman 1961. Schenker provides a foreground analysis in *Free Composition*, Fig.
87, 4.

[41] Schenker discusses reinterpretation in *Free Composition* §298; see also Rothstein
1989a, 52-6.

[42] Further examples (but which depart from the bass pattern explored here) appear
in C. P. E. Bach [1753-1762] 1949, 193.

Example 13. French Suite No. 6, gigue, mm. 16-9: rhetorical expansion using expanded dissonance.

Concluding Remarks on Musical Rhetoric

These examples provide a rhetorical basis for phrase expansion, revealing marked passages in which Bach expands the *sense* of the phrase through various means. As a preliminary revision of the concept of rhetoric in music, it has freed us from the overly literal definition of the *musica poetica* while still addressing the composer's rhetoric. But we must generalize further if we are to have a useful approach to hearing rhetoric in instrumental music. As a preliminary step, we can enumerate two important musical consequences of the conception that instrumental music is a rhetorical kind of language and that figures can be the basis of phrase expansion—two starting points for music analysis.

First, certain musical events perform a role of rhetorical expansion beyond their participation in normal tonal syntax. We must differentiate figure from ground, or foreground from background (in the general, not Schenkerian, sense). We must distinguish those events or figures that function as markers of tonal grammar, genre, or form, from those that function as musical "subjects" and serve to present and elaborate what we might take to be the "content" of a composition. The former category includes such regular events as cadences, sequences (interval patterns), reprises, and diminution; the latter category includes marked events such as prominent repetitions and prolongations that cause phrase expansion, expanded dissonance treatment, as well as unison passages and chromaticism. While this distinction allows us to interpret the rich play of meaning in actual compositions, it is as provisional as any other set of categories and may quickly break down with certain musical figures that embody both functions or that invert the described tendencies.[43] Nevertheless, this initial

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[43] Of course, intentionally subverting conventions would have to be included as a marked figure, one that attracts our attention and plays a primary role in the presentation of the "discourse." But ordinary markers of genre and form would not usually be considered; thus, even the helpful interpretation of beginning-middle-end rhetorical functions—appearing as "introversive semiosis" (Agawu 1991), as "formal functions" (Ratz 1973, Caplin 1999), or as related concepts such as *Fortspinnung* (Fischer 1915, Dreyfus 1996)—will take a secondary priority to the traditional figures of diminution directly involved in elaborating a musical subject.

interpretive strategy can help to sort out the proliferation of musical-rhetorical figures (from the *musica poetica* tradition), and to focus on those musical events that truly seem central to the sense of a composition as it unfolds in time. Perelman suggests this important distinction when he describes the malleability of rhetorical figures depending upon usage and context (to adapt his words for the case of music, we can substitute the term rhetorical for his term argumentative):

A figure is argumentative [i.e., rhetorical] if its use, leading to a change in perspective, seems normal in relation to the new situation thus suggested. But if the discourse does not gain the audience's adherence, the figure will be perceived as an ornament, a figure of style, ineffective as a means of persuasion. Thus an established metaphor passes unnoticed and even becomes a cliché.[44]

The result is that for music analysis, we can "bracket" the figures that normally appear in tonal compositions and focus attention instead on those "marked" events that contribute to the uniqueness of a work. Importantly, the point of the Bach examples given above was to highlight such marked moments of the music. Following French literary critic Gérard Genette's suggestion that anything can be a figure if we perceive it as such, we can focus on the play of meaning that occurs in the space that is opened between a chosen signifier, other possible signifiers within the literary language, and an underlying signified.[45] Thus we can perceive figures because we sense a surplus of meaning; e.g., the figures of expansion in the Bach examples create a difference between the figure and its implied, plain basis, thus offering to the listener a space of interpretation (what is being elaborated? how? etc.) and consequently a surplus of meaning when compared to an unmarked or ordinary passage with no figurative or implied depth.[46]

    Second, musical signs—topics, affects, figures—can never be fixed, timeless, or unchangeable in their "meaning." If we take

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[44] Perelman 1982, 38-9.

[45] Genette 1982, 45-60.

[46] Interestingly enough, this conclusion is similar (but without the notion of rhetoric) to that reached by Nicholas Cook (Cook 2002), who advocates that we take an analytic proposition not as "this musical event IS that" but rather "we can hear this musical event as that."

them to have meaning, it is based upon contextual utterance and intertextual reference. Musical signs cannot be interpreted by simply identifying clichés or marking all interval figures as representing an underlying affect. Tempting though it is for the analysis of early eighteenth-century music, such would be the equivalent of fixed word meaning (one-to-one representation through a transparent language) which can only be established fully by the context at hand. Take the example of labeling half-step chromaticism as *passus duriusculus*—in "sighing" figures or an ostinato bass "chromatic fourth:" it is likely that many passages will fulfill an affect associated with this common figure, but not every chromatic half step will signify this.[47] Or consider Albert Schweitzer's identification of various "motives" (topics) in Bach's sacred music (e.g., the "step" motives, the "tumult" motive, motives of exhaustion, of terror, of grief, of joy, rhythms of felicity); as he himself notes, not every instance of a motive will signify the accompanying affect.[48] This impulse to fix signifiers has also been the most decisive weakness of the *musica poetica* figures; while it is possible to find rhetorical instances of these figures, not every appearance of the figure will signify the same rhetorical sense (e.g., not every ascending leap will signify an *exclamatio*). Figures *can* signify consistently, but they *need* not. Consistency is not absolute. (While the techniques of repetition, prolongation, and expanded dissonance in the Bach examples above seem to be marked by the composer as important moments in their respective contexts, they need not always fulfill this role.)

    These conceptual revisions to the notion of musical-rhetorical figures allow us to radically simplify terminology from the historical *musica poetica*, and to apply the figures to the repertoire more flexibly, with particular attention to the *sense* of a musical utterance within its context and its effect upon the listener.[49] Within each

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[47] Although Peter Williams (Williams 1997) acknowledges this, his collection of widely divergent passages as representations of the same figure are at times based on superficial resemblance.

[48] Schweitzer 1911, 74-122. This weakness is inherent in any analysis that applies the musical-rhetorical figures in an an overly literal or systematic manner: e.g., Schering 1908; Kretzschmar 1911/1912; Bukofzer 1939-40.

[49] These classifications have been adapted from Buelow 1980 and Schmitz 1955.

category of the traditional *musica poetica*, the figures have the potential to foster presence and/or communion—what I have translated into music as figures of expansion and figures of reference—depending upon the composer's rhetorical intention and the listener's response. This allows us to dispense with the Greek and Latin terms and to focus more directly on the compositional poetics of these devices as they appear in almost limitless variety in particular contexts. It also means that we need to recognize the possible role of *Satzlehre* techniques as rhetorical figures; while some of these techniques appear as musical-rhetorical figures (e.g., 5-6 sequence), others do not (e.g., harmonic prolongation). Thus we must supplement our table of figures with those aspects of compositional theory (including many of Schenker's concepts) not historically identified in treatises as rhetorical. See Table 1 for a visual representation of these conceptual revisions. The inadequacy of the older figures thus becomes apparent when we attempt to place the figures of expansion explored in this article. While repetition offers no significant problem, the other two are considerably more difficult. The free treatment of dissonance was identified as a figure since Bernhard, but the particular expanded configuration appearing here appears only in portions of treatises not explicitly devoted to rhetoric. This is the case even more with harmonic prolongation, which never appeared as a part of the *musica poetica*: rather, prolongation as a concept emerged (though not by name) as an explanatory strategy in newly emerging theories of harmony (e.g., Kirnberger) and thus served different purposes than the theory of musical rhetoric and the arts of composition and performance, which also cultivated prolongation but in the form of standardized progressions (learned by rote in thoroughbass practice and imitated by observation in composition).

The missing link in understanding musical figures as rhetorical (in a deeper way than that offered by the *musica poetica*) lies between classical ideas of rhetoric (elaboration, amplification) and the traditional teachings of the *Satzlehre* (counterpoint, thoroughbass, melody). By directly linking these two traditions, in a sense bypassing the *musica poetica*, we can redefine a musical figure as that which expands upon a given subject or refers to a poetic idea using traditional tonal diminution and other techniques

Table 1. Simplification of the musical-rhetorical figures (* denotes the most important figure of the musica poetica tradition).

traditional figures (*musica poetica*)	rhetorical function	compositional theory
Hypotyposis (allegory, "word painting") anabasis*, catabasis, tirata, circulatio, fuga (also, saltus duriusculus*, passus duriusculus*, suspiratio, catachresis, heterolepsis, mutatio, hyperbole, hypobole) **Pathos (affect figures)** epizeuxis, pathopoiia*, saltus duriusculus, passus duriusculus, distendente maniera, parrhesia, ellipsis, abruption **Emphasis** a) figures of repetition anaphora, epizeuxis, climax*, gradatio*, auxesis, anadiplosis, epistrophe, symploke, palillogia, paronomasia, polyptoton, congeries, synonymia. b) figures of punctuation parenthesis*, heterolepsis (general sense), hyperbaton, antithesis, noema, mutatio (per genus, per systema, per tonum, per melopoeiam), exclamatio*, interrogatio* c) rhetorical use of rests, pauses aposiopesis, suspiratio, tmesis, ellipsis, abruption*, apokope **Embellishment** accento, passaggio, cercare della nota, tremolo, trillo, bombo, groppo, circolo mezzo, tirata mezza, coria, messanza **Dissonance (strict and free)** transitus*, syncope/syncopatio*, multiplikation, ellipsis* (two types), retardation, heterolepsis*, quasitransitus, abruption, parrhesia	figures of expansion and/or figures of reference (determined by context)	diminution counterpoint thoroughbass patterns cadences types of melody tonicization, modulation harmonic prolongation linear progressions chromatic chords rhythmic/metric "dissonance"

of free composition. It is no accident that the "marked" moments in the Bach examples above illustrated these traditional *Satzlehre* techniques. Musical diminution as taught through counterpoint, thoroughbass, and melody is just such an elaboration. We can easily perceive the same sense of expansion embodied in traditional rhetoric: it was the orator's task to select a given case or subject (even a given story) and elaborate it in such a way that the argumentation became more convincing or a story more compelling, objectives gained by dividing a subject into parts and elaborating the parts separately, and by utilizing eloquent turns of phrase and conceptual metaphors that might move listeners' feelings or change their minds.[50] This is the essence of musical figuration.

While venturing any definitive statements about this kind of rhetoric in music lacks the level of formalization we tend to expect in music theory, it is worth pursuing these ideas as a matter of compositional choice, and of meaningful listening.[51] What this approach lacks in formalization and predictability, it gains in insight into particular moments of brilliance and artistry in the repertoire, and more generally into music as a "literary" language, as artistic expression that is self-conscious, heightened in import, and rich in meaning.

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[50] France 1972, 17-8.

[51] While David Lewin's work is often marked by a high degree of formalization, he is clearly aware of this important point: that musical listening involves thinking as a composer, being aware of alternative possibilities given a particular choice of musical events. See Lewin 1986.

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