Prolegomena to a General Description of Motivic Relationships in Tonal Music

by

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The study of motivic structure--how motives and their associations are integrated into tonal networks--has long proved to be fertile territory for analysis. Traditionally, musicians have examined surface and foreground motives in order to describe formal patterns, developmental techniques, the characteristics of contrasting passages, and, when viewed collectively, the physiognomy of an entire piece. In this latter sense, it is the relationships among motives which are often the real points of investigation, usually to demonstrate that a special type of "organic" coherence binds sections and underlies the unfolding of the composition. Yet the scope of such traditional motivic studies is often too narrow, focusing primarily on simple repetition and transformation at surface and foreground levels.[1]

In recent years the theories of Heinrich Schenker have provided new tools for the exploration of how motivic relationships are integrated into tonal fabrics. But Schenker himself sensed the

[1]Examples of what I am calling "traditional" approaches are Rudolph Reti, *Thematic Patterns in Sonatas of Beethoven*, ed. Deryck Cooke (New York: Macmillan, 1967) and Hans Keller, "K. 503--The Unity of Contrasting Themes and Movements," Part I, *Music Review* 17 (1956): 48-58; Part II: 120-129. At this point I would like to convey my gratitude to Professors David Beach and David Lewin for their astute insights and helpful criticism concerning key points of this study.

problems suggested above--the analytic (and compositional) limitations imposed by regarding motives and their manifestations in restricted contexts. For just this reason he rejected conventional motivic terms and concepts. Consider the following passage from *Free Composition*:

> Great composers trust their long-range vision. For this reason they do not base their compositions upon some "melody," "motive," or "idea." Rather, the content is rooted in the voice-leading transformations and linear progressions whose unity allows no segmentation or names of segments . . . [The great composer] often places the simplest kind of composing-out at the very beginning of a work . . . Of course, the great composer already hears the continuation, and with it a series of composings-out. These form a *totality* and present a melody of far higher order and greater inevitability than a "melody" or "idea" could provide. What is to be designated as "melody" [motive] or "idea" in those pieces whose entire course is identical with the fundamental structure?[2]

Here Schenker apparently uses the quoted terms in a pejorative sense. I am not sure, however, that he was so much opposed to the concepts themselves as to their myopic definition and application; after all, he did on many occasions utilize these terms in his own analyses. But there is more to this passage, something that transcends the rejection of simple labels. It typifies what Schenker

[2]Schenker *Free Composition*, (*Der freie Satz*): Vol. III of *New Musical Theories and Fantasies*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (Longman: New York, 1979), pp. 26-27.

did continually throughout his career: he elevated musical constructs to higher "planes," defining them abstractly and in such a way as to show their broader function in the grand "totality" and unity of his system. In the case of "harmony," for example, he clearly distinguished between the local significance of chord, and the far-reaching ramifications of harmony as scale-step at middleground levels.

I have already found that "motive" is hierarchical in a similar sense, that unified tone successions can integrate and characterize all levels below the background.[3] The concept of "motive" thus stands in need of a broadly-based reformulation that comprehensively describes its role in the multileveled processes of Classical tonal structures. But is it possible, given the sheer number of tone configurations and contexts in which they unfold, to elucidate how motives and their associations interact with tonal processes at all structural levels? In other words, can a theory of motivic structure which would elevate the notion of motive to a higher and abstract plane be developed within Schenker's system? I believe that it can, at least to a certain extent. And we shall see that many musical insights accrue from even the first stages of a theoretical description that describes motivic relationships in broader, abstract terms.

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[3]In my work on the role of expanded motivic repetition in the late piano music of Johannes Brahms, I demonstrated how motives that unfold at different levels influence harmonic and formal structure, as well as subsidiary melodic formations. See Allen Cadwallader, "Schenker's Unpublished Graphic Analysis of Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 117, No. 2: Tonal Structure and Concealed Motivic Repetition," *Music Theory Spectrum* 6 (1984): 1-13; "Motivic Unity and Integration of Structural Levels in Brahms's B Minor Intermezzo, Op. 119, No. 1," *Theory and Practice* 8/2 (1983): 5-24; and "Foreground Motivic Ambiguity: Its Clarification at Middleground Levels in Selected Late Piano Pieces by Johannes Brahms," *Music Analysis* 7 (forthcoming 1988).

A clue toward my general program is a specific process, the phenomenon commonly referred to as concealed motivic expansion. Here one often finds foreground patterns generating enlarged middleground repetitions; such deeply unifying tone successions may span vast stretches of the middleground, shaping the harmonic and motivic properties of the lower levels they embrace. And one will find that these deep patterns exhibit simple shapes, usually comprising only a few notes.[4]

In a quite different context, Schenker alludes to a very similar, but more general type of pattern. He states that "there are some prolongations which would occur *only* at the first level [of the middleground], . . ." (emphasis added).[5] Because of the nature of

[4]The number of studies concerning motivic structure from a Schenkerian perspective has grown tremendously in the past ten years. Instead of listing all the pertinent literature here, I refer the reader to David Beach's excellent bibliographies, and particularly to the most recent one, "The Current State of Schenkerian Research," *Acta Musicologica* LVII (July-December, 1985): 275-307. Here one will find an overview of work done in several areas--including motivic structure--as well as a bibliography of the secondary literature since 1979. In my own opinion, two of the studies listed by Beach will give anyone interested the best introduction to a Schenkerian view of motivic structure. The seminal study of concealed motivic repetitions is Charles Burkhart's article, "Schenker's 'Motivic Parallelisms,'" *Journal of Music Theory* 22 (1978): 145-175. Because I feel that this technique provides clues to a broader formulation of motivic structure in general, of which motivic repetition is a special case, I will draw upon this study several times. The other is *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory* , ed. David Beach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). In this compendium one will find excellent articles by Charles Burkhart, Roger Kamien, John Rothgeb, and Carl Schachter, all of which shed considerable light on and further refine Schenker's ground-breaking insights.

[5]Schenker, *Free Composition*, p. 26. What Schenker means is that the first level admits only certain types of prolongations. Obviously, the lower levels can support any of the contrapuntal formulae (as derivations) that occur at very deep levels. In general, however, the more elaborate the configuration, the lower the level at which it unfolds. For examples of first-level prolongations, see *Free Composition*, pp. 36-52, *passim*.

hierarchical networks, first-level prolongations must also influence the motivic processes of the lower levels they span. But these formations are more global and finite than expanded repetitions (which are aspects of specific pieces), because they unfold exclusively at the first level and reflect the most basic types of diminution--the most general linear patterns of the tonal system--that elaborate the fundamental line. These considerations lead me to coin a special usage to refer to such prolongations at the first level, figures that signify an array of motivic processes from higher to lower levels. I shall call them first-order motives.[6]

From this one can sense a new definition emerging for what is meant by "motive" in a universal sense. As one traces the transformations of surface and foreground configurations through successively deeper levels, the shapes become simpler and more abstract, reducing to the finite and almost "automatic" features of the tonal system: basic linear progressions, reaching-over motions, upper neighbor-note formulae, and so forth. By exploring the ramifications of these patterns from a different point of view, as deriving from motives of a higher order, motivic relationships can be described more abstractly, in terms of general linear formations.

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[6]Schenker uses the term first-order motive, but not systematically and in a more restricted sense than my application. See Heinrich Schenker, "The Largo of J.S. Bach's Sonata No. 3 for Unaccompanied Violin, [BWV 1005]", trans. John Rothgeb, *Music Forum* 4, ed. Felix Salzer and Carl Schachter (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 143-146. The original essay appears in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, 3 vols. (Munich: Drei Masken Verlag, 1925, 1926, 1930; reissued as 3 vols. in 1 slightly reduced facsimile, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974), Yearbook I: 63-73. I should also point out that these deep patterns correspond to what Charles Burkhart terms "diminution of the *Ursatz*." See, Burkhart, "Schenker's 'Motivic Parallelisms'," p. 172.

One must, however, take care when redefining a familiar concept in new guises, especially one that evokes so many clear and traditional associations. It is certainly reasonable to maintain that motives are aspects of individual pieces, and, furthermore, that the term should be reserved for idiosyncratic formations that characterize various levels of a tonal fabric. But motives do unfold at different levels; and the deeper the level, the more general and abstract they appear.

Because there is no developed theory that explains how deep motives shape the middleground levels, it might prove fruitful to focus initially on the first level of the middleground, and assume that all linear patterns are inherently motivic; after all, they always lead to traditional types of motives at some lower level. This approach will provide a starting point from which one can begin to examine motivic interrelationships in terms of finite linear constructs. For this purpose, a first-order motive--a figure at the first level--is a useful abstraction, implying that some formations are more general than others, that such deep patterns are the "basic motives" of the tonal system.[7]

As I view the development of Schenker's ideas, I am convinced that he regarded the basic linear progressions and

[7]My line of reasoning here warrants further brief comment. Basic linear progressions and contrapuntal formulae--third-progressions, fourth-progressions, upper neighbor-note figures, and so forth--obviously unfold at lower levels in simple and elaborated (fleshed out) versions. But my main point is that these formations *must* appear unadorned when they unfold near the background, due to the nature of diminution at deep levels. And here is where my broader view of motive departs from traditional perspectives: at some point, motives--in the sense of compositional premises--begin to resemble and coincide with the general and intrinsic linear constructs of the tonal system.

contrapuntal formulae of the tonal system as the essence of motives, as motives of an abstract and higher order. This assertion, though never expressed by Schenker in so many words, captures the spirit of many of his graphs and expositions (from *Der Tonwille* to *Der freie Satz*), which demonstrate that fundamental tone successions underlie the manifold diminutions of all structural levels. Yet this thesis about motives of a "higher order" is based on more than speculation on my part, for Schenker stated explicitly that "each structural level carries with it its own motives; the specific organization and growth of these motives parallels the specific organization and growth of the structural level to which they belong."[8]

In the present study I will begin to develop the notion of first-order motives--a first step toward a general description of motivic relationships--by describing the consequences and interrelationships of two motivic formulae in Beethoven's G-minor Bagatelle of Op. 119. I have chosen this composition as a "set piece" for this purpose: it provides a harmonic-linear framework that is clear and fairly straightforward, yet it displays a remarkable degree of motivic integration between different levels and different formal sections. I will focus first on specific issues, showing how the two basic motives shape the formal, harmonic and linear content at various levels; within this context, I can then elaborate the two linear formulae in broader, abstract terms, as patterns intrinsic to the tonal

[8]There is a significant implication in this statement: that some melodic formations are germane to particular levels, and that in order to be regarded as motives, they do not *necessarily* have to characterize the lower levels of a tonal fabric; their presence is manifest simply by the fact that they *influence* the diminutions (motivic configurations) of the lower levels according to the harmonic and contrapuntal conventions of the tonal system. See Schenker, "The Largo of J.S. Bach's Sonata No. 3 for Unaccompanied Violin, [BWV 1002]," p. 152.

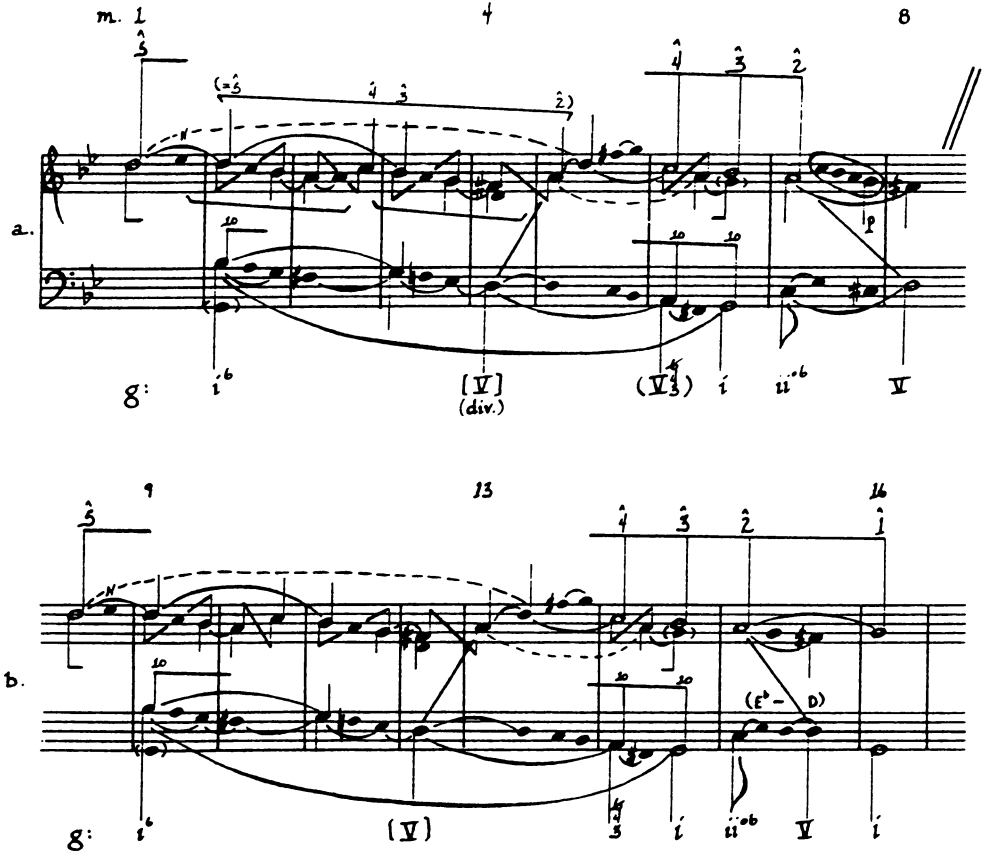
system at very deep levels. The juxtaposition of the specific with the general, illustrating how idiosyncratic features are linked to recurring melodic configurations at deep levels, will shed light on the nature of motivic structure as a corollary to Schenker's theory of pitch organization.[9]

The apparent fourth-motive

Ex. 1 presents a graphic analysis of the A section (bs. 1-16). Its first clearly articulated segment occurs in bs. 1-2 as the upper voice descends from d^2 to a^1; a varied repetition of this descent, from b^{b1} to $f^{\#1}$, follows in bs. 3-4. These fourths however--unfolding as motions to and from inner voices--are only apparent. As the first part of Ex. 1 illustrates (bs. 1-4), the upper voice is rhythmically articulated to resemble fourths at the surface, but harmonic features indicate a grouping of a third plus a step. Now notice the nesting process. The top line of this compound melody traverses a larger version of the fourth that subsumes the lower-level patterns, all of which are embraced by yet a deeper version: with d^2 of the anacrusis still operative as the primary tone $\hat{5}$, the upper

[9] For more information regarding Beethoven's Bagatelles, see Edward Cone's article, "Beethoven Experiments in Composition: The Late Bagatelles." *Beethoven Studies* 2, ed. Alan Tyson (London: Oxford University Press, 1977): 84-105; Alan Tyson, "The First Edition of Beethoven's Op. 119 Bagatelles," *Musical Quarterly* 49 (July, 1963): 331-338 and Nicholas Marston, "Trifles or a Multi-Trifle? Beethoven's Bagatelles, Op.119, Nos 7-11," *Music Analysis* 5 (1986): 193-206. There is also an excellent study by Janet Schmalfeldt on pieces in the Op. 126 set that relates analysis to performance. See "On the Relation of Analysis to Performance: Beethoven Bagatelles Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5," *Journal of Music Theory* 29 (1985): 1-31.

Example 1



register is regained in order to secure c^2, b^{b1}, and a^1 ($\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$), a structural fourth progression, the first branch of the divided fundamental line that describes the antecedent phrase.

The synopsis presented as Example 2 shows more concisely that the apparent fourth-motive (transposed and untransposed) is the basic motive of this section, a configuration that shapes several structural levels in nested repetitions (the smallest motivic brackets simply indicate that the fourths result from the articulation of unfolded thirds).[10] But the main point is that the lower-level nested motives reflect the higher-ranking line $\hat{5}$-$\hat{2}$, which is the first branch of an interrupted fundamental line, one of the most frequently recurring linear formations in tonal music. The structural levels of bs. 1-8 are in fact unified by versions of a singular construct, a framework (at the phrase level) that influences the tonal environment in which the nested motives unfold. This process is repeated in the consequent phrase, the second part of a parallel period.[11]

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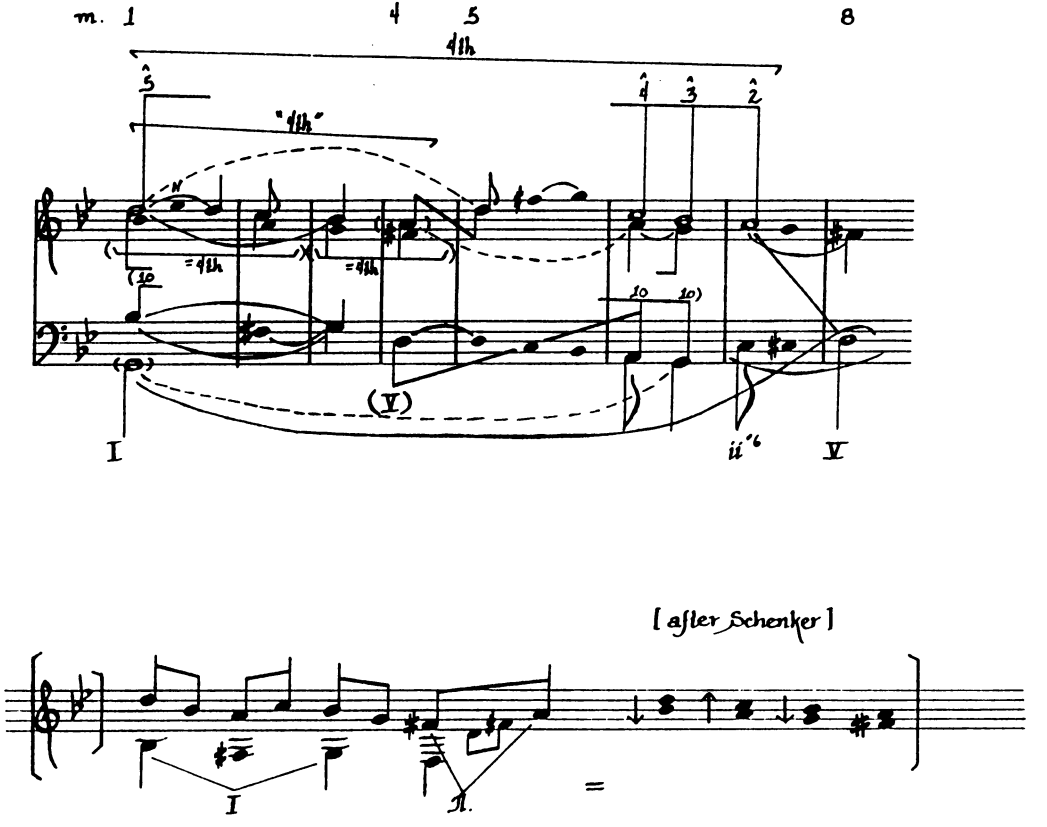
[10]The second part of the example illustrates Schenker's graphic shorthand, and is one of a series of sketches of this piece contained in the Oster Collection that show either detailed analyses of a few bars, or deep middleground features of the entire Bagatelle. They indicate his growing awareness of the hierarchical makeup of descending surface lines, that "new" upper voices actually consist of motions into inner voices. He explains, for example, that the sixth progression that unfolds in bs. 1-4 (from d^2 to $f^{\#1}$) is governed by a deeper fourth progression (d^2 to a^1), which represents an "incomplete" (unfulfilled) 5-line; furthermore, he is also concerned with the nature of the unsupported stretch $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$. It is impossible to date the sketches precisely, but it is my guess that they were composed relatively late, possibly in the mid to late 1920s, and they are good examples of Schenker's everyday working process, occurring over many years, the results of which led to *Free Composition*.

[11]In a sense, the fourth is manifest in both branches, at least until 1 is achieved, because the second branch repeats the features influenced by the fourth of the first phrase. Furthermore, though Schenker refers to the first branch specifically as a fourth-progression, bear in mind that in the case of $\hat{5}$-$\hat{2}$, the structural tones are

Example 2



Before leaving the A section, I would like to point out a distinctive element that will figure prominently as the piece unfolds. Because of the contrapuntal nature of the bass (Ex. 1), which follows the upper voice in parallel 10ths on two different levels, the dominant of b. 4 is a divider, articulating the phrase into equal segments. As this local dominant unfolds through b. 5 and into b. 6, the 4/3 position becomes more significant at a deeper level because it supports structural $\hat{4}$; thus $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ of the fundamental line descends over a purely linear manifestation of tonic harmony and $\hat{4}$ is only weakly supported in the harmonic organization of the flanking G-minor sections. Below I will show how this is compensated for throughout the piece, and particularly in the Coda.

I would also call attention to the higher register of the upper voice, which signals the presence of higher-ranking tones, foreshadows significant events yet to be realized, and recalls features previously heard. For example, the first part of the upper voice (in the antecedent phrase) clearly moves into an inner voice, prolonging the primary tone $\hat{5}$, before the original register is regained to secure $\hat{4}$. But notice also that the surface line touches upon g^2 in a kind of boundary play, preparing the listener for the higher register in the B section. The manipulation and interconnection of different registers will emerge as a compositional premise in its own right.

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normally grouped in some fashion: for example, $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}\hat{3}\hat{2}$ or $\hat{5}\hat{4}\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$. Thus the qualifier "apparent" can apply even to the deepest version of the fourth and denotes an internal organization predicated on the harmonic context.

The upper neighbor-note $\hat{6}$ and the B section

The subsidiary first-order motive, the upper neighbor-note figure D-E^b-D, is foreshadowed at the beginning of the piece as an element of surface diminution. However, as the piece unfolds, this figure is enlarged to span the first level of the middleground, becoming an overarching linear progression that prolongs the primary tone $\hat{5}$ as it articulates the ABA design scheme. The internal pitch of the figure--the upper neighbor E^b--governs the network of motivic processes in the B section and generates the secondary key of E^b major. However, unlike the fourth-motive of the A section--and this is one of the intriguing aspects of this piece--the upper neighbor E^b does not permeate the motivic fabric of the B section, though the ramifications of this tone shape its lower-level tone successions. Instead, E^b more resembles a silent cantus-firmus tone that conceptually influences, at a very deep level, the span for which it is operative.[12]

Now $\hat{6}$ in the minor mode is particularly active in the direction of $\hat{5}$; thus, because the high-ranking $\hat{6}$ of the B section influences such a large amount of tonal space, that entire section acquires a degree of contrapuntal and rhythmic tension that corresponds on a grander scale to the voice-leading characteristics of $\hat{6}$ at local levels. As I will suggest, this tension is played out over the lengthy Coda, which continues to prolong the concluding tonic scale-

[12]In other words, one can draw a parallel here between the high-ranking e^{b2} of the B section and a dominant scale-step that governs the development section of a sonata form, a harmonic region that is not always literally present at surface and foreground levels.

step after the A^2 section has run its course. Example 3 presents a broad overview of the first part of the B section, bs. 17-24.

If one were to view this section in isolation, as a self-contained piece, it is clear that the upper voice would be based on a contrapuntal/harmonic framework in E^b-major, with g^1 representing the primary tone $\hat{3}$ in this new tonal environment. Thus one has to wonder, given my contention that this section is generated by a deep-level neighbor note, why e^{b2} appears so infrequently and plays such a relatively insignificant role in the motivic life of this section. In other words, what relationships exist between the e^{b2} of the anacrusis and the features of the B section; what motivic associations follow from the deep-level recomposition of the upper neighbor?

The clue to these questions lies in the fundamental principles of the tonal system. E^{b2} cannot serve as the main structural tone because it represents $\hat{1}$ in this new context. In effect, it does not provide the necessary "tone space" within which musical content unfolds. Therefore, a subordinate fundamental structure--a lower-level tone space--is transferred to the scale-step of E^b, resulting in a contrasting theme and set of pitch relationships. For now I would like to focus solely on the motivic and harmonic processes of this lower level, the consequences of the upper neighbor E^b, momentarily postponing my discussion of $\hat{6}$ as part of a first-order motive.

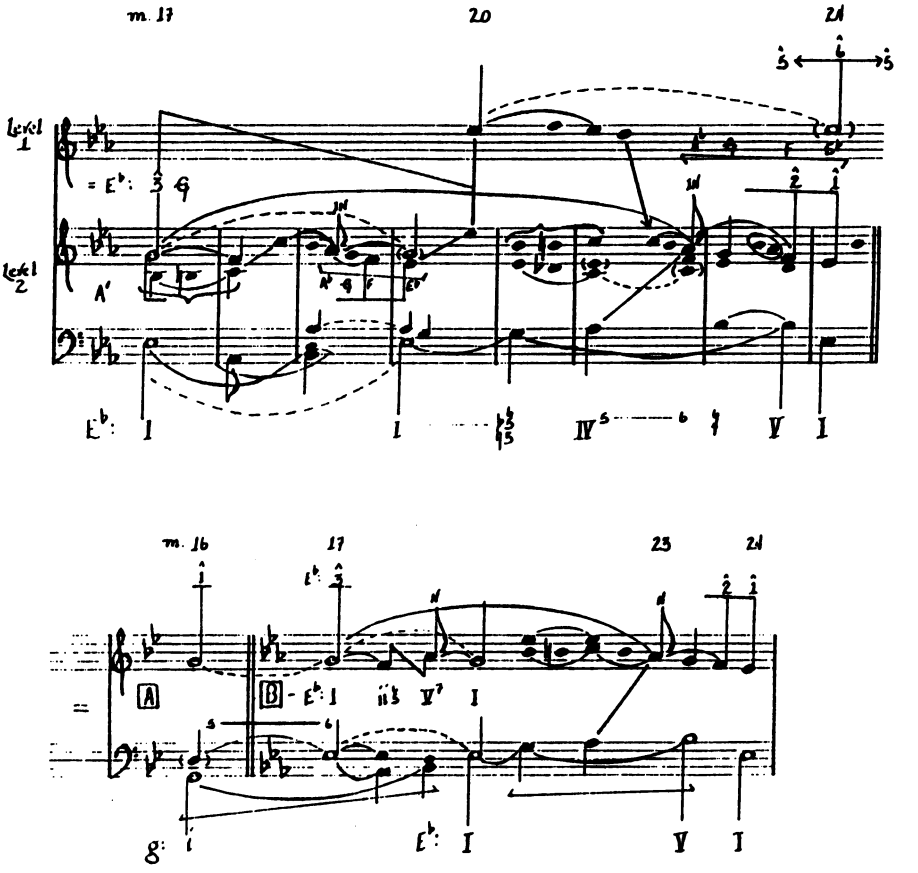
As Ex. 3a indicates (level 2), a reaching-over motion (bs. 17-20) prolongs tonic harmony and g^1, the primary tone of the

section.[13] Embedded in the surface line is a parallelism of two descending seconds: g^1-f^1, a^{b1}-g^1, with a^{b1} functioning as an incomplete upper-neighbor note. Furthermore, the descending line of the reaching-over motion begins from c^2, which recalls the descents from $\hat{4}$ in the A section, and in particular, the surface descent of b. 7 (see the circled portion in Ex. 1).[14] In b. 22, c^2 is again attained by a repetition of the "alto" voice of bs. 17-18 (note the curly brackets in Ex. 3). From this point, c^2 leads again to a^{b1}, a

[13] I should point out a subtle overlapping of the A and B sections, a kind of hidden *knupftechnik*, which is depicted in Ex. 3b. At the surface, the B section begins with E^b-major harmony in root position, a scale-step generated contrapuntally by a 5-6 motion over the global tonic G minor. But, in a deeper sense, G in the bass--the harmonic goal of the A section--leads across the formal boundary to the V-I cadence (in E^b major) in bs. 19-20. This foreground reduction reveals characteristics of an auxiliary cadence, where the tonal relationships of a new scale-step begin to crystallize under the influence of the previous tonal context; that is, the new "key" begins to take shape at the surface *before* it is firmly established at a deeper level by a cadential formula. These circumstances often characterize transitions and modulatory passages, which often do not exhibit such a clearly-stated beginning tonic. But in this example we are clearly dealing with a separate section, which requires a root-position E^b chord (b. 17) to articulate the formal division at the surface.

[14] The compensation for the weak support of $\hat{4}$ in the A section is already beginning with this descent, here in a new tonal context where c^2 functions as $\hat{6}$. Furthermore, this line will recur untransposed three more times (not counting the repeats) during the course of the piece, as it serves cross-referentially to unify the sections in a subtle fashion. As Carl Schachter has observed: ". . . many benefits accrue to a piece in which an important motivic element persists untransposed through changes of key. . . the familiar pitches serve as a measure of the tonal distance that the piece has traversed, for any change is best measured in relation to a constant. . . . since these patterns project into new key areas pitches originally associated with the tonic key, they serve to remind the listener of the tonic at the very time when other tonal areas are being explored." See Carl Schachter, "Beethoven's Sketches for the First Movement of Op. 14, no. 1: A Study in Design," *Journal of Music Theory* 26 (1982), p. 14.

Example 3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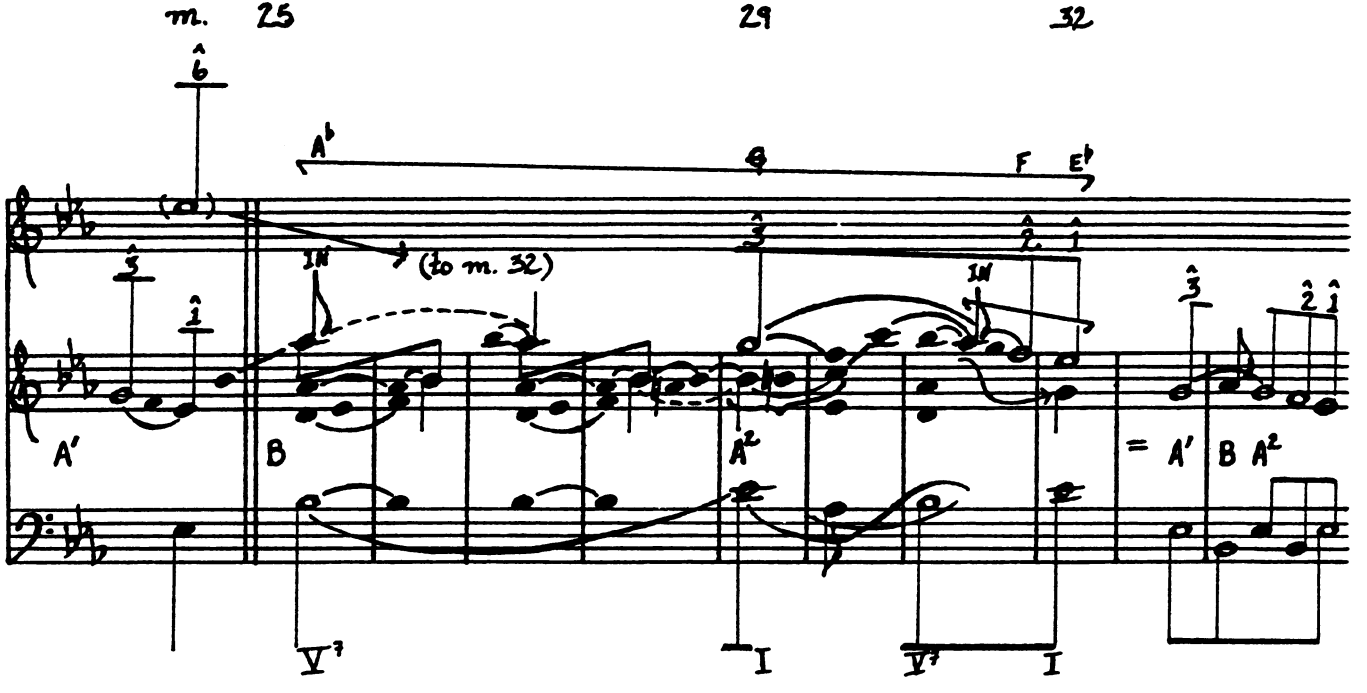
Example 4



deeper manifestation of the incomplete neighbor, which moves to the cadential $\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$ (over V-I) in bs. 23-24.[15]

A four-bar prolongation of the dominant seventh chord underlies the short middle passage of the B section (Ex. 4; bs. 25-28). In the upper voice, the dominant is worked out by motion to an inner voice from the chordal seventh a^{b2}, which resolves at a deeper level to g^2, initiating the miniature reprise (bs. 29-32).

Two important features warrant comment. First, the embedded descent, a^{b1} to e^{b1} of bs. 19-20 and 22-24 (Ex. 3a), is expanded to become the upper-voice framework that spans the sections after the double bar (compare the motivic brackets of Exs. 3a and 4). But note also how the function of these four pitches changes in different contexts, from a third plus a step in the initial versions, to a step plus a third that describes bs. 25-32 (the apparent fourths again). Second, and this is a more subtle point, the repetition of the contrasting surface theme (b. 29) unfolds in the higher register, reinstating the upper neighbor E^b at its original pitch level, as well as shifting the recollection of $\hat{4}$ of the background tonic to c^3. The attainment of this even higher register sets the stage for further motivic recollections in the Coda.

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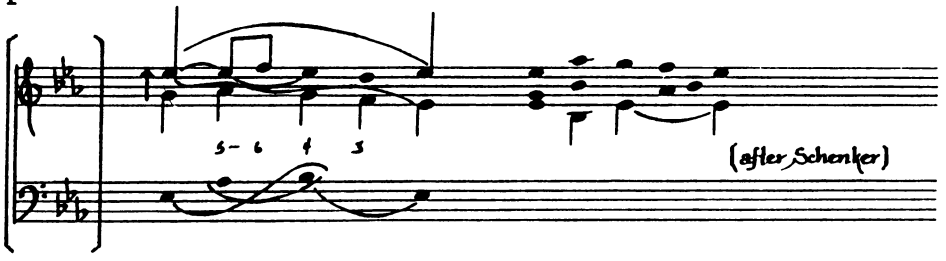
[15] As Alan Tyson has pointed out, some editions include a^{b1}-g^1 in b. 20, but that the Henle edition (the one I have used for my analysis) omits these tones, apparently to avoid the parallel octaves with the tenor line. Due to the context, I hardly feel that these could represent structural octaves; the editions that include these tones are undoubtedly correct (they are present in the autograph). In any case, g^1 would be understood by contrapuntal implication in b. 20 (consider the voice leading of the tenor voice). A lower-level $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$ (g^1-f^1-e^{b1}) unfolds through these bars, but it lies beneath the upper neighbor-note figure (the motion to e^{b1} represents motion into an inner voice). See Alan Tyson, "The First Edition of Beethoven Bagatelles," pp. 334-335.

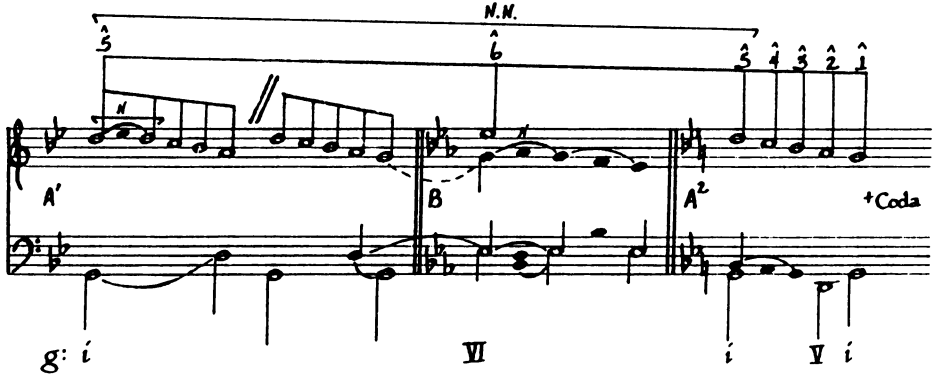
It is now possible to elucidate more completely the significance of e^{b2}. As Ex. 3a in particular illustrates, e^{b2} resides at a higher-ranking structural level, and is invoked only briefly (for five beats) in the first part of the B section; for this reason I have assigned this deep-level pitch its own staff in the graphic reduction. It occurs literally as the boundary of an unfolded sixth from g^1. But the deep upper neighbor is a stationary tone; the primary voice-leading transformations of the B section unfold beneath it. This is an excellent visual (and aural) example of the demarcation of widely separated structural levels, of different strata. As mentioned above, e^{b2} (an element of a first-order motive foreshadowed in the A section) generates the lower-level tonal framework, but it is not a featured part of the motivic fabric of the B section, except when it is briefly recalled at its original pitch level.

Two short graphs should more concisely summarize the features of the B section described above. Ex. 5 (one of Schenker's brief sketches) shows clearly that the unfolding of motivic and pitch content occurs in conjunction with an *inner voice* of an E^b-major triad. The e^{b2} of the expanded neighbor-note figure does not undergo substantial elaboration; it relates only to the first middleground level. And finally, Ex. 6 is a synopsis of the complete fundamental structure. It shows the prolongation of the primary tone $\hat{5}$ by the upper neighbor at two levels, the structural framework of the B section that results as an outgrowth of the deep-level neighbor, as well as the considerable amount of tonal space formed by the expansion of the $\hat{5}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ figure in the fundamental line. The neighbor-note formula shapes the first level of the middleground

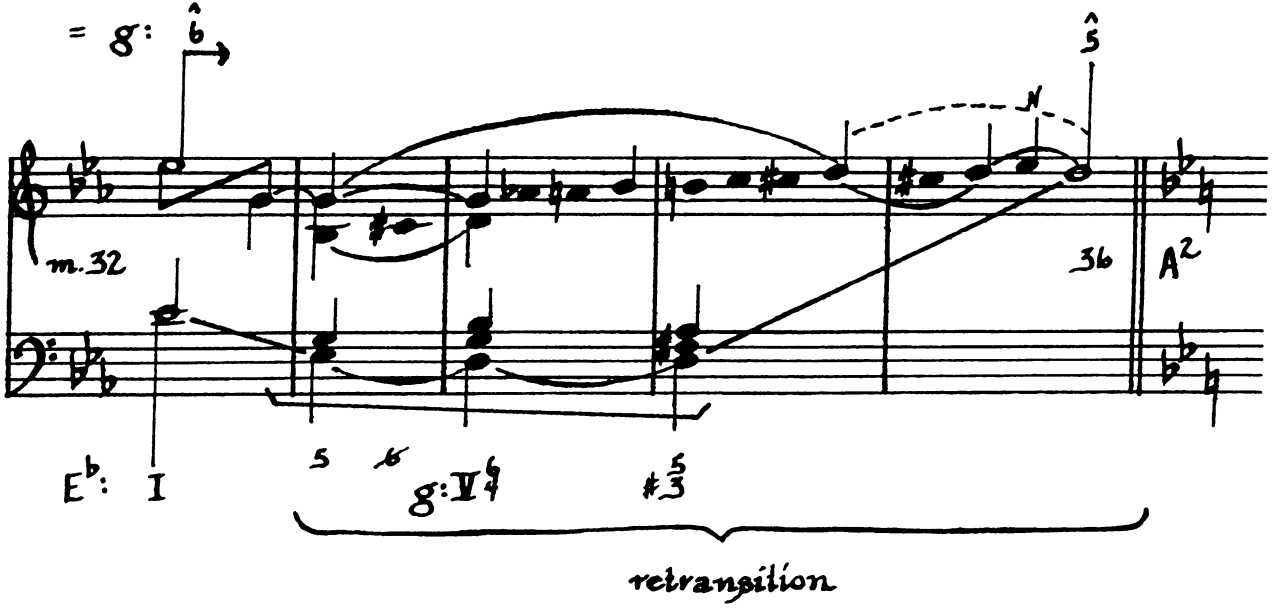
Example 5



Example 6



Example 7



and is one of the most frequently occurring first-order motives in the tonal system.

The short bridge (bs. 33-36) belongs primarily to later levels (Ex. 7). At the surface it transforms the E^{b}-major triad into an augmented sixth that leads back to G minor; in the upper voice g^{1} ascends chromatically (as motion from an inner voice) to d^{2}, reestablishing it as the primary tone $\hat{5}$. (In this context, the dominant of G-minor functions subordinately to the E^{b}-major scale-step, which prolongs the global tonic.) The most significant feature of the bridge is that Beethoven recalls the resolution of $\hat{6}$ to $\hat{5}$ *in the bass*, as the augmented sixth resolves. Thus the primary tone is reinstated, and some of the contrapuntal tension of the B section is dissipated by the motion from E^{b}-D, before the Reprise commences. The large sections in fact overlap in a subtle fashion.[16]

The A2 Section and Coda

The A^{2} section (bs. 38-52) does not require detailed commentary; it is virtually identical with the initial A section, except for the contrasting rhythmic figuration. But it recalls and, accordingly, underscores a compositional problem left unresolved--the compensation for the weak support of structural $\hat{4}$ in the

[16]One must not overlook the bass when examining motivic associations, regardless of the level at which they occur. In *Free Composition*, p. 102, Schenker states that "within the limits defined both by nature and by the arpeggiation of the fundamental structure, diminution in the bass employs the entire array of prolongational techniques. . . . The value of a masterwork rests to no small degree upon a purposeful and ingenious construction of the bass." Here the augmented sixth can be linked to a motivic premise and a general "modulatory" formula.

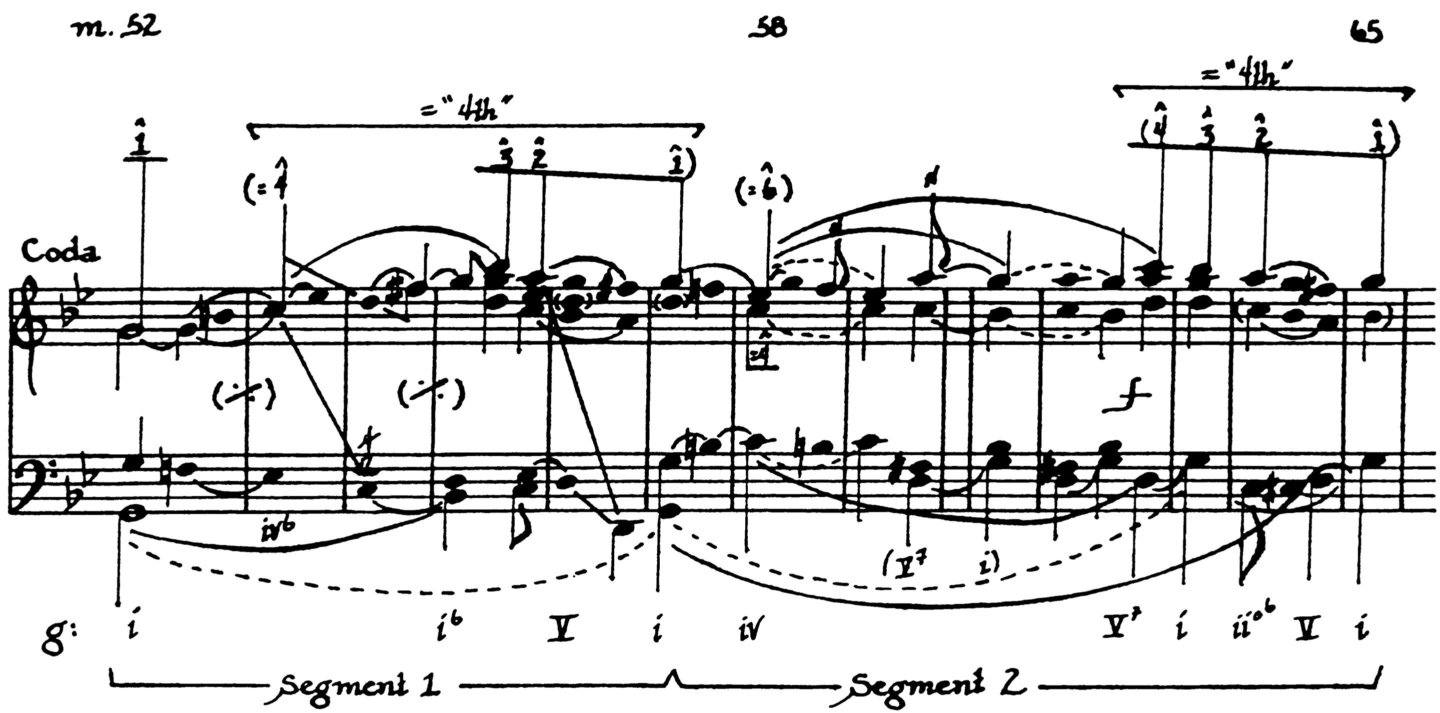
fundamental line. This occurs in the Coda, which also recalls motivic features from each section, thereby integrating the piece as a whole.

The first remarkable feature of this Coda is its length. It spans 22 bars out of a total of 74, which makes it seem rather lengthy for such a short piece; as mentioned previously, this may be explained by the relative brevity of the A^2 section, which by itself does not compensate for the contrapuntal tension (from the high-ranking $\hat{6}$) accumulated in the B section. The Coda in fact comprises three segments, each serving a different purpose. Ex. 8 presents a graphic overview of segments 1 and 2.

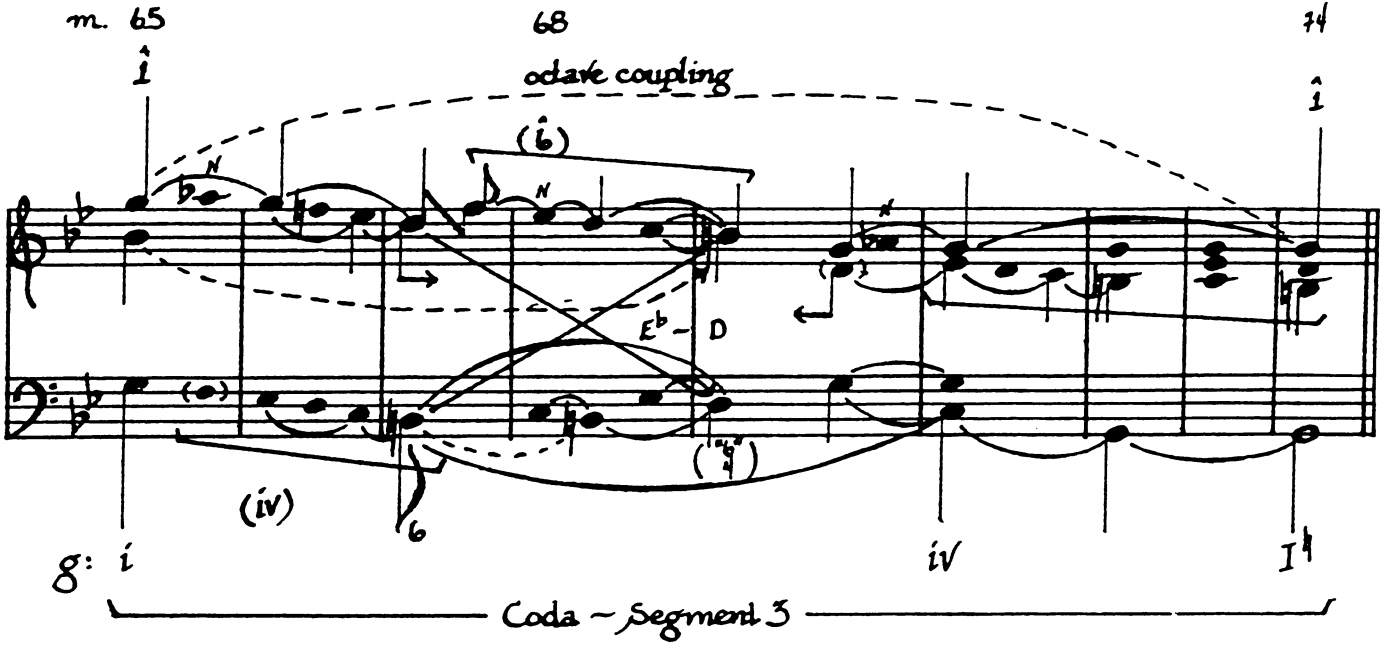
A subdominant region is featured at the beginning of each segment, and twice a partial echo of the fundamental line emanates from $\hat{4}$. The first descent starts from c^2 (segment 1), which recalls the original position of $\hat{4}$ in the obligatory register, before the descent runs its course in the higher register. The second descent, however, follows after a reaching-over motion and unfolds entirely in the higher register (note Beethoven's *forte* designation, highlighting c^3). Ernst Oster has pointed out the registral relationship between this passage and bs. 30-31 of the B section, where c^3 functions temporarily as $\hat{6}$ in E^b; and I have maintained that the interplay of registers constitutes a compositional premise from the beginning of the piece.[17] In the Coda, therefore, Beethoven recalls a portion of

[17] See Ernst Oster, "Register and the Large-Scale Connection." *Journal of Music Theory* 5 (1961): 54-71; reprinted in *Readings in Schenker Analysis and Other Approaches*, ed. Maury Yeston (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977): 54-71. (For the aforementioned reference, see pp. 59-60 in either source.) As one might recall, the compensation and descent from $\hat{4}$ (C) occurs as early as bs. 18-19 in the B section from c^2. This version hearkens back to features of the A^1 section, while its counterpart in bs. 30-31, in the higher register from c^3, looks forward to the Coda.

Example 8


m. 52
58
65
Coda
= "4th"
= "4th"
g:
i
i6
V
i
iv
V7
i
ii°6
V
i
Segment 1
Segment 2
f

Example 9



the fundamental line in the higher register to compensate for the weakly supported $\hat{4}$ of the G-minor sections.[18]

The final segment of the Coda (bs. 65-74) is illustrated in Ex. 9. In the bass, $B^{\natural}$ signals the unfolding of a major tonic chord, which is further prolonged by a voice exchange before it resolves to the main subdominant in b. 70; within this tonic region (bs. 68-69), a local subdominant supports the final recollection of the $E^{\flat}$-D motive in the bass (the 6/4 is consonant). More significantly, the upper voice recalls motives from each section. For example, in bs. 65-67 structural $\hat{1}$ is stressed and elaborated in such a way as to recall the upper neighbor-note figure of the B section, G-$A^{\flat}$-G, in the contour and rhythmic guise of the first theme.[19] And $E^{\flat}$ appears for the final time in the two-line octave as a metrically accentuated neighbor note within a reaching-over motion. Thus this segment of the Coda recalls the unique motivic features from all sections of the piece, but it also supports a general tonal process: the concluding ten bars effects an octave coupling that transfers $\hat{1}$ back to its original position in the one-line octave.

To this point I have presented an analysis that focuses on the motivic features of a specific piece. I would now like to amplify my discussion of the two basic motives, now viewing them as types of

[18]Compare also the beginning of each segment, with their inverted outer voices. In bs. 53-54 a local IV^6 (with $E^{\flat}$ in the bass) supports $\hat{4}$ in the upper voice; this relationship of course, is reversed in the following segment. Thus the manipulation of register functions in conjunction with the subdominant region of the Coda, establishing the tonal conditions for the compensation of $\hat{4}$ as well as the recollection of $\hat{6}$, the fundamental upper neighbor note.

[19]More precisely, G-$A^{\flat}$-G-F-$E^{\flat}$--the deep middleground line of the B section--unfolds at the surface in bs. 65-66. Compare this passage to the structural line in Ex. 3a, and to the short synopsis in Ex. 4.

general formations that frequently unfold in tonal compositions at the first level of the middleground. This Bagatelle certainly does not exhibit all possible ramifications of the two first-order motives that characterize its motivic fabric. But it does provide a context that clearly demonstrates the potential significance of my approach for a general description of motivic relationships.[20]

First-order motives and other postulates

We have seen how the apparent fourth--the basic motive of the A sections--is manifest at various levels as reflections of the structural fourth from $\hat{5}$-$\hat{2}$. The first branch of an interruption scheme is a first-order motive, though to assign it the status of a motive at the first level might seem questionable because it is so general and comprises only structural tones; traditionally, of course, motives are considered as diminutions, as elaborations of an underlying harmonic-linear framework. But this is where my broader view of "motive" departs from conventional descriptions: I

[20]It is, of course, impossible to construct a framework for a general theory of motivic structure based on only one example; a complete theory based on Schenkerian principles would require many examples drawn from all styles within the tonal repertory. However, I reiterate that the primary issue of this essay is to introduce the notion of a first-order motive, an abstract construct, I am aware, that is far removed from the more conventional notion of a "motive" as a lower-level and often complex configuration. But it is the reconciliation of these viewpoints that has led me to focus on concealed motivic repetition. For this is one of Schenker's most accessible and demonstrable insights, which provides the clue that deep patterns retain traditional motivic qualities even as they span vast stretches of the middleground and begin to associate with the simple and basic linear formations of the tonal system. This view, I believe, reflects a first principle that must be established before a systematic, hierarchical theory of motivic relationships can be developed.

consider a first-order motive to be any linear formation that *patterns (elaborates) the first level of the middleground.* In the case of the interruption procedure, the two branches unfold at the first level and pattern the fundamental structure just below the background (the *Ursatz* is by nature a singular construct); in a deep sense, therefore, each branch represents the most basic elaboration of the fundamental structure in the tonal system.

Moreover, interruption formations shape all lower levels, and the closer to the surface and foreground they unfold, the more complex the diminutions they support. Here we return to more familiar descriptions of motives, but note that a singular construct can be invoked to explain and coordinate a vast array of motivic configurations. This raises the issue of the "transference of the *Ursatz* forms," a topic that I will deal with briefly below.[21]

The upper neighbor-note figure at the first level is also a first-order motive, but as an elaboration of the fundamental line it functions quite differently from the structural fourth progression. According to Schenker, "in contrast to the interruption, the neighboring-note formation remains at the same pitch level and thus reinforces the primary tone." This means that the upper neighbor delays the descent of the fundamental line, generating scale-steps

[21]It is important to distinguish between the branches of an interruption scheme and what Schenker terms a first-order linear progression: the latter emanates from and prolongs background tones, while the branches of an interruption comprise only these structural tones. Schenker discusses both types in his section on the first level of the middleground, which is what leads me to consider the individual branches as elaborations in the deepest sense of the term. For Ernst Oster's discussion of the meaning of the two branches, see Schenker, *Free Composition*, n.7, p. 37; for Schenker's discussion of a linear progression of the first order, pp. 43-46.

and lower-level networks that do not come under the immediate influence of the primary tone.

Schenker also states that "only the upper neighboring note is possible at the first level [of the middleground]." The reason for this is that "if it occurred in the fundamental line, the lower neighboring note would give the impression of an interruption . . . . Hence it [the upper neighbor] alone can appear at the first level, as a neighbor note of the first order." Furthermore, it is "in most cases form-generative; its inherent delaying quality brings organic unity to that which in the foreground is a two- or three-part form." Later in *Free Composition* Schenker, in reference to Fig. 76, 5, reiterates that an expansion of the first-level neighbor can lead to the middle part of a three-part form. And this is precisely what unfolds in this Bagatelle: the motive $\hat{5}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ is not merely an idiosyncratic aspect of surface diminution. It returns as an overarching linear progression that articulates the formal boundaries of the Bagatelle, with $\hat{6}$ governing the tonal space of the B section.[22]

This investigation of first-order motives has highlighted two aspects of the tonal system that need to be explored briefly, for both

[22]For a sampling of Schenker's views of the upper neighbor-note figure (including the quoted passages), see, *Free Composition*, pp. 42-43 for the first level and, for the later levels, pp. 71-73 passim. There are, of course, many other references to the neighbor-note throughout Schenker's work and in his analyses. For example, Figs. 30 and 153, 1 & 2 (in the *Supplement* to *Free Composition*) show both types of functions for the contrapuntal scale-step VI; however, this Bagatelle more closely resembles Figs. 30 and 153, 2, insofar as $\hat{6}$ is linked to the generation of VI as a higher-ranking scale-step (generated in principle by a 5-6 motion). Also, Fig. 153, 3b illustrates extensive lower-level ramifications of the upper neighbor-note figure; in this case the neighbors are nested, with the pattern occurring in b. 6. Concerning the motion back to G minor in the bridge section, see Fig. 130b in the *Supplement*, for it depicts a dominant that is subordinate to the higher-ranking VI in the larger harmonic organization of the piece.

are necessary to describe how first-order motives are linked to the specific motivic properties of the lower levels. The first is the transference of the fundamental structure to lower levels, a far-reaching tenet of Schenker's system that explains transposition and global "modulation." For now, however, I only wish to point out its significance for future motivic investigations.

The transference principle is most clearly illustrated in the B section of the Bagatelle, because the working out of a contrasting scale-step leads to a different tonal fabric and set of pitch relationships that are easily distinguished from the background tonic. As one might recall, the network of motivic associations is not as tightly-knit (from level to level) as are the layered fourths that unfold in the A section. This is due to a greater degree of separation in the B section between the first level of the middleground--where the neighbor e^{b2} resides--and the motivic configurations of the lower levels, the primary focus of tonal activity. Yet there are cross-associations from the A section that suggest "reasons" why the surface and foreground tone successions of the E^{b}-major section appear as they do, which is to say that they seem to follow from what has preceded.

For example, g^{1} now functions as $\hat{3}$ of a transferred fundamental structure, but in the previous section it is the melodic goal ($\hat{1}$) that is postponed by the interruption of the fundamental line. Thus, when it is attained, it naturally forms a link between the sections, functioning as the first pitch of the "contrasting" theme. And, of course, there is the local descent from c^{2} that recalls part of the background descent; its recomposition in E^{b}-major forms an integral element of the surface theme, and produces the incomplete

neighbor a^{b1} that plays such a functional role in the E^{b}-major section. This shows clearly that motivic associations between sections (or between segments, depending on the composition) are often disclosed by examining cross-relationships at different structural levels. Therefore, as a general postulate, the transference of the *Ursatz* forms projects versions of first-order motives and their associations into the lower levels; this principle itself becomes a link in describing the makeup of the first level and the specific motivic features of a piece at all levels.[23]

An issue that has not been investigated to any great extent concerns the distribution of the tones in the fundamental line. First-order motives, as we have seen, can comprise either the structural tones themselves ($\hat{5}$-$\hat{2}$), or are elaborations of these tones ($\hat{5}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$). Now consider, for example, the tonic region of the first phrase, which supports the $\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$ portion of the first branch (Ex. 1; bs. 1-6). Note the "tone space"--the delay--that results before $\hat{5}$ moves to $\hat{4}$, which creates the environment that supports the lower-ranking, nested fourths and the local I-V progression.[24] At the first level, the primary tone $\hat{5}$ is prolonged by $\hat{6}$ for a stretch of 42 bars before the fundamental line begins its descent in the A^{2} section. As I have

[23]For more information about the transference of the *Ursatz* forms, see Schenker, *Free Composition*, pp. 44-45 (regarding first-order linear progressions), p. 68 (reappearance of first-level prolongations), and for the specific procedure, pp. 87-90. One might also consider Charles Burkhart's concept of an "*Ursatz parallelism*," which he distinguishes from a contracted motivic repetition. I would imagine from his description that he would not consider an *Urlinie* formation at the first level as a motivic construct, though I feel that it represents the first stage of diminution, and, therefore, is a motivic configuration in the deepest sense (Schenker calls it a first-order linear progression). See Burkhart, "Schenker's 'Motivic Parallelisms,'" p. 153.

[24]The point here is that there are only certain derivative configurations that result from $\hat{5}$ moving to $\hat{4}$ at a deeper level.

suggested, one can link the motivic features of this span *at all levels* to the prolongation of the primary tone by its upper neighbor.[25] Thus the specific motivic features of the lower levels are determined by the pace at which the fundamental line descends, and the relationships between its first-level elaborations and structural tones.[26]

In conclusion, I would like to summarize this approach by drawing an analogy to a "tree" diagram, which is often used to symbolize hierarchical networks; although not presented as an example, the features of such a paradigm are easily explained in the context of a hypothetical tonal framework.

The top line (or symbol) represents the span of the entire piece, depicting the fundamental line and its first-order motivic elaborations. The initial branching emanates from the first-order motives and would also exhibit simple shapes, often as versions of the first-order motives. As the branching continues--that is, as

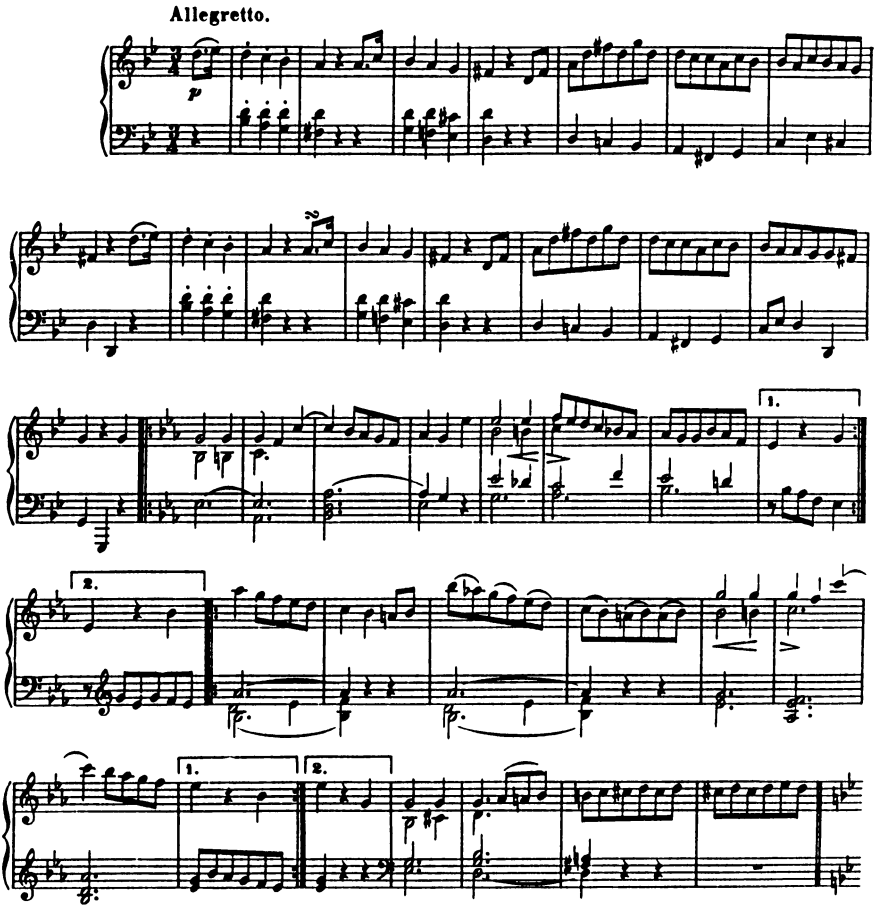
[25] A point should be made here concerning the graphics of ternary formats of this type, in which the A section returns virtually unchanged: the descent of the fundamental line is ultimately represented in the A^2 section. For even though the *Ursatz* occurs self-contained in the harmonically-closed region of A^1, this percept must be reevaluated when and after the B section introduces digression. The fundamental line must span the B section, and end in the final, large-scale tonic area.

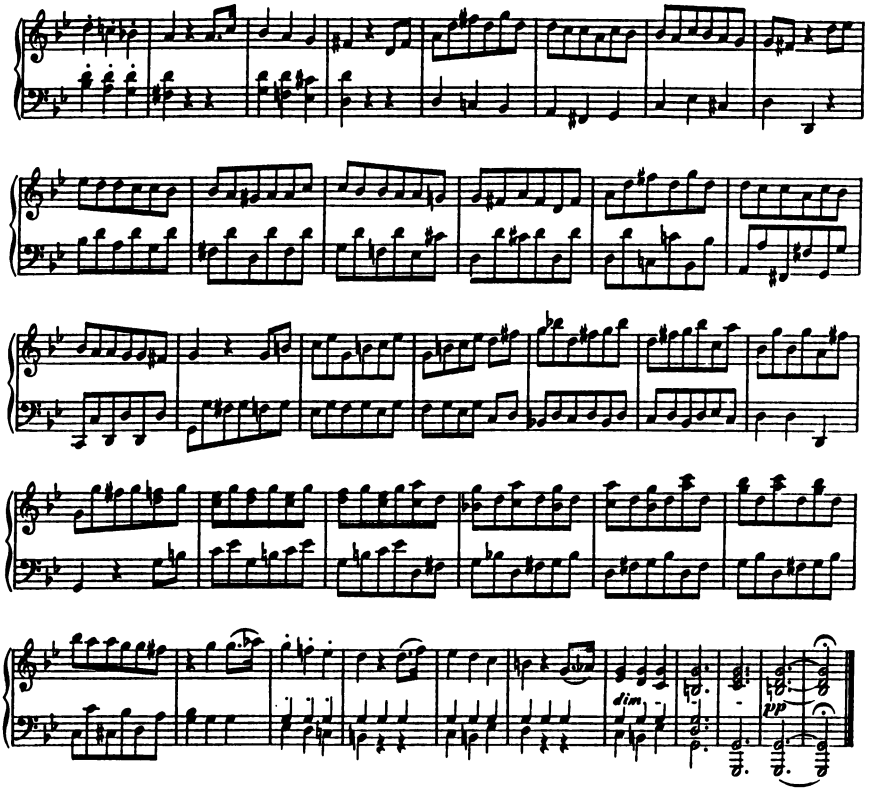
[26] There might appear to be some circularity in this line of reasoning. Because of the hierarchical nature of tonal structures, first-level elaborations must exist. But do the tones of the *Urlinie* determine their type and placement, according to a type of tonal logic, or are first-order motives elements of compositional design; that is, do they reflect unique premises and shape the middleground levels accordingly? In a sense both perspectives are valid. I have examined pieces where it is obvious that deep motives are worked out over large spans; but, on the other hand, the pacing of some fundamental lines and first-order elaborations often seem to unfold predictably, usually according to recurring formal and stylistic characteristics. This point, however, may be irrelevant. The primary analytical task is to determine the relationships between first-order motives and how they influence the lower levels.

diminution and voice-leading transformations shape the lower levels--we would finally observe the vast array of derivative motivic configurations that stamp the piece as unique, but which can appear unrelated and temporally separated at the surface and foreground. What I am suggesting is that one could more precisely elaborate the motivic fabric not by referring to the bottom of the tree (the surface and foreground), but to its *uppermost* levels, where the corresponding, but finite and simpler relationships reside, the motivic progenitors of the first level. This approach would provide a middleground synopsis of the harmonic, contrapuntal, and hence the motivic possibilities for an entire piece.

The next stage of my theory must address questions that will provide a more complete picture of first-order motives. For example, what are the tonal constraints that govern them at the first level; do they shape the middleground and thus the unfolding of the tonic triad in systematically predictable ways; and can all of their manifestations and ramifications be elaborated precisely? Good answers, it seems to me, would take us a significant distance towards unraveling the complexities of motivic structure in terms of general tonal principles. As the physiognomy of middleground levels is described motivically by invoking the finite configurations intrinsic to the tonal system at deep levels, the "flights of fancy" of the composer--the "long-range vision" of which Schenker speaks--and the general nature of the tonal system will be revealed as essentially interconnected and inseparable.

Beethoven: Bagatelle Opus 119/1

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