SCHENKER'S HIGH-LEVEL MOTIVES

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It is well known that in the final stage of his career, Schenker abandoned the use of the term "motive" to describe aspects of the compositional process. What is not well known are the reasons that led to this rejection, and the great extent to which Schenker's thinking about the role of motive in music had changed during the development of his ideas.[1] In his *Harmony* (1906), for example, Schenker gives the following definition of motive:

> The motif is a recurring series of tones. Any series of tones may become a motif. However, it can be recognized as such only where its repetition follows immediately. As long as there is no immediate repetition, the series in question must be considered as a dependent part of a greater entity, even if later on, somewhere in the course of the composition, the series should be elevated to the rank of a motif (Schenker [1906] 1954, 4–5).

Although the insistence on immediate repetition may seem somewhat out of the ordinary, this description reflects the spirit of most customary definitions, because it still considers motive to be a phenomenon of the *musical surface.*

Three decades later, in *Free Composition* (1935), Schenker's view of motive had been radically altered by his prolonged study of musical substructure; one could hardly have foreseen the extreme position he would adopt toward his earlier conception. Example 1 shows how much Schenker's thinking had changed, and provides some indication

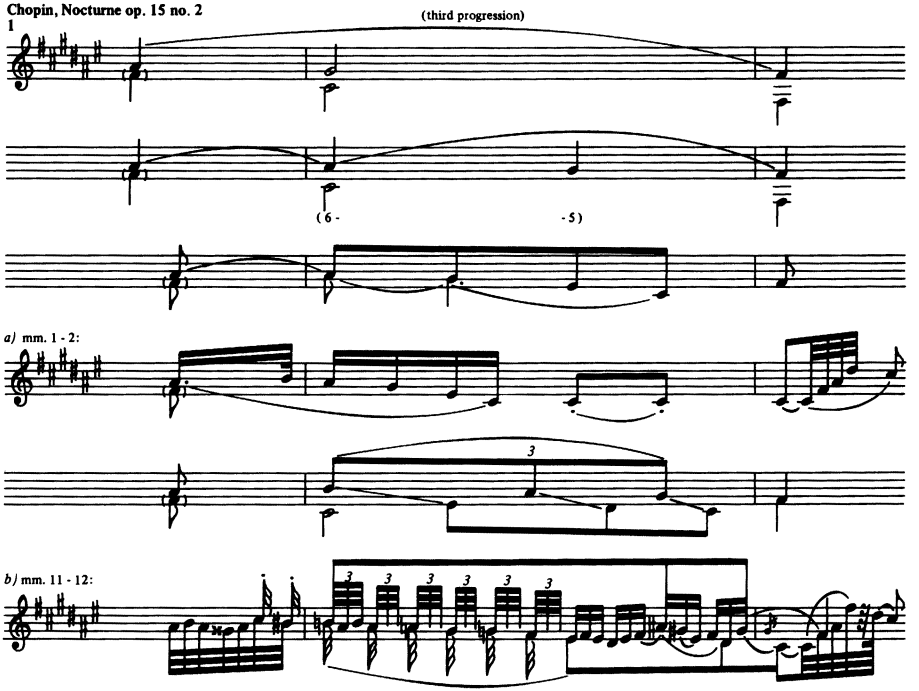
of why he now distrusted surface motivic connections. Taken from *Free Composition,* this sketch shows two passages from a Chopin Nocturne.[2] An analyst guided only by motivic associations at the surface level would likely derive the passage in bars 11–12 from the opening motive of the piece; but Schenker considers such a derivation illusory. He says:

> Even within the foreground, figurations frequently appear which are based on previous statements in the foreground. The occurrence of both statement and variant (figuration) at the foreground level—that is, the presence of two structural levels within the foreground—creates the illusion that the variant belongs only to the foreground statement, but in fact, through this statement it also relates to the background and middleground (Schenker [1935] 1979, 96).

That is to say, as the sketch shows, both statements derive from the same middleground pattern, the first statement being one structural level that is further transformed into the second statement. This transformation would not be possible without the more determinate motivic pattern in the middleground, and it is therefore a mistake to seek the origin of the figured version solely in its precursor at the surface (see example 1).

This example and others like it in *Free Composition* point to Schenker's rejection of his earlier conception of motive and to his negation of analytical modes that invoke motivic manipulation or "transformation" to explain, for example, the generation of contrasting formal divisions or the workings of development sections in sonata forms. Toward the end of his life, Schenker simply disavowed the notion that the examination of motives, in the sense of tone successions that unfold at the surface level, yield any significant insights into the nature of the compositional process. This consideration raises two important questions: How did Schenker arrive at such a radical reversal in his thinking? And what, precisely, did Schenker come to accept as an alternative to conventional motivic analysis?

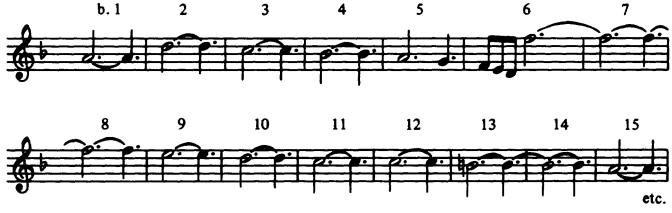
It is evident that the definition of motive given by Schenker in *Harmony* probably would have led to some form of conventional motivic theory, had something not arisen to change his conception. What catalyzed Schenker's thinking about motive—and, indeed, his thinking about analysis in general—was *melodic fluency,* which he formally introduced in *Counterpoint* I (Schenker [1910, 1922] 1987, 1:94–95). Melodic fluency is essentially a name for good voice leading in strict counterpoint, that is, motion primarily by steps, with skips carefully controlled. This characteristic of strict counterpoint takes on great importance when Schenker begins to apply it to free compositions and to look for melodically fluent lines just beneath the surface of the music.



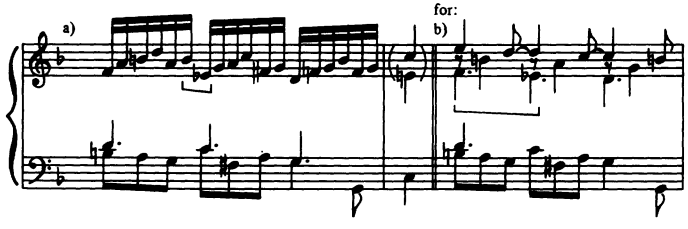
Example 1. Sketch of Chopin: Nocturne in F♯ Major, op. 15, no. 2; mm. 1–2, 11–12 (from Schenker, *Free Composition* [1935])

Example 2 shows two melodically fluent versions of excerpts from a free composition.[3] Example 2A reveals a line that is, as Schenker puts it, "the ultimate product of ascending and descending figurations" in Bach's D-minor English Suite (Schenker [1910, 1922] 1987, 1:96); example 2B shows three separate, melodically fluent, contrapuntal voices underlying a polyphonic melody from a later point in the same piece. These two examples also show that two types of results may be expected when the principles of melodic fluency are operative beneath, rather than at, the musical surface. First, long-range connections may be established, as in example 2A; second, underlying contrapuntal patterns may be revealed, as in example 2B.

This application of melodic fluency to free composition is the crucial step that led to Schenker's recognition of structural levels and, eventually, to his discovery of the *Ursatz*.[4] The same application also began to change Schenker's ideas about motivic structure, because in these melodically fluent lines, he found motivic relationships not obvious at the surface level; he could now begin to comprehend the technique of concealed motivic repetition.[5]



Example 2A. Sketch of J. S. Bach: English Suite No. 6 in D Minor, Prelude; mm. 1–15 (from Schenker, *Counterpoint* I [1910])



Example 2B. Sketch of J. S. Bach: English Suite No. 6, Prelude; mm. 165–166 (from Schenker, *Counterpoint* I)

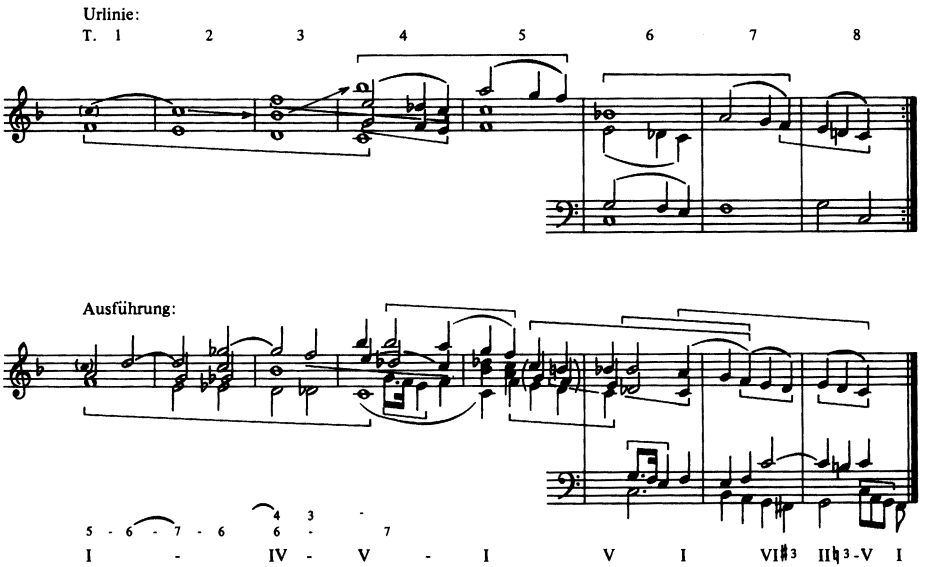
Readings similar to those in example 2 are found in Schenker's work even as early as the 1909 analysis of Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, but his 1920 analysis of Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 101 marks the first extended application of melodic fluency to underlying motivic relations. The sketches shown in example 3 reveal a motivically significant fluent line of a descending fourth in the second movement of the sonata.[6] The relationships of example 3A are not difficult to perceive. The descending fourth is the primary component of the graph labeled *Urlinie* (in this context, the term *Urlinie* refers simply to a foreground reduction of the music), but there is also a motive consisting of a descending third that arises from the inner-voice counterpoint in bars 4 and 6. The sketch labeled *Ausführung* (the final level of elaboration) indicates that this third-motive is the diminution that expands the final repetition of the germinal descending fourth from f^1 to c^1 (see bars 7–8 in the *Urlinie* graph).

The relationships sketched in the graph of example 3B are of a different order. For example, the bass progression at level *e,* the lowest staff, reveals in bars 11–36 a motivic recurrence of the same descending fourth-motive that opens the movement in bars 1–4; even the chromatic passing tones are present. A glance at the score makes it clear why such motivic parallels must be called "hidden": these connections are difficult to perceive because of the many intervening contrapuntal and harmonic motions in the long stretches between bars 11–19 and bars 25–36.

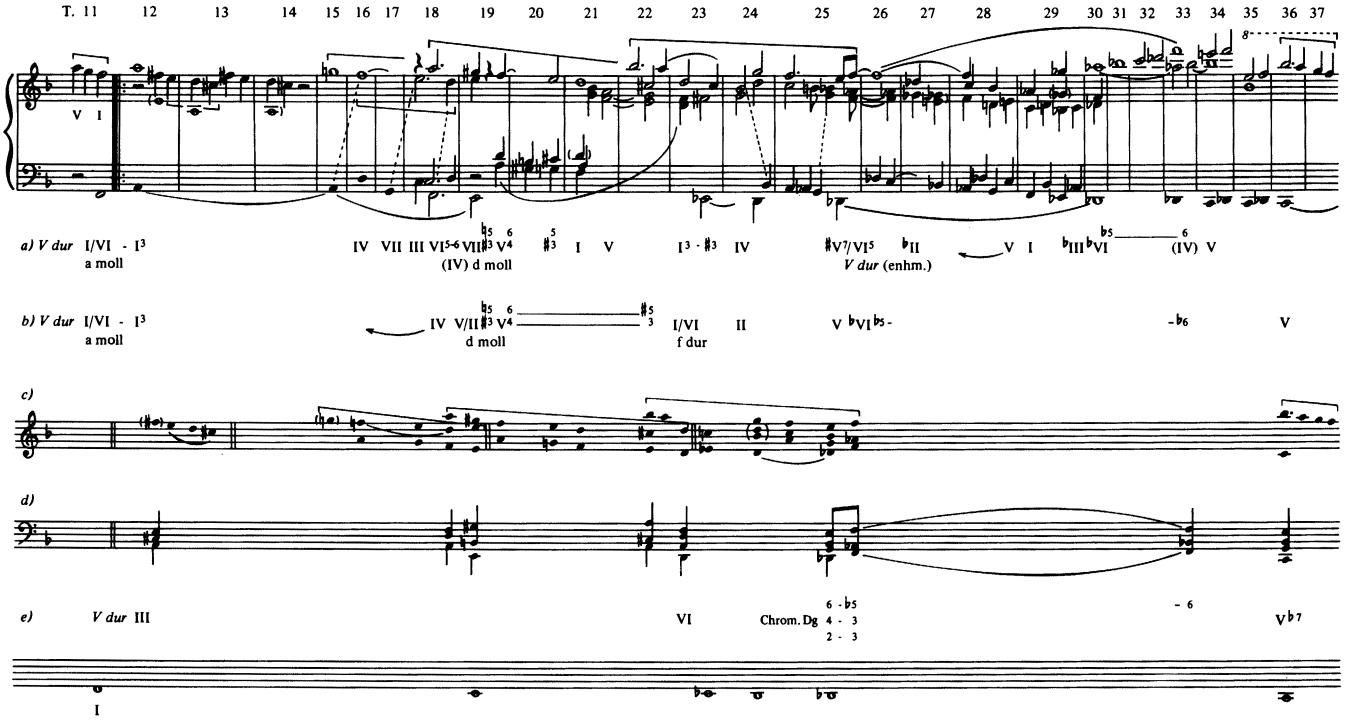
Two important facts about Schenker's application of melodic fluency to free composition arise from example 3. First, by identifying motivic activity in the melodically fluent lines beneath the surface, Schenker expands the issue of motivic relations into another dimension; in addition to the obvious occurrences of motivic groups on the surface, there are also other relationships, involving different motives, on another level. Second, because of the voice-leading principles governing melodically fluent lines, the motivic elements of such lines will consist mainly of step-wise motion.

But there is a third important fact not illustrated by the sketches in example 3. Schenker sees the presence of higher-level motives as a liberating force for the surface motivic relations; he places freedom of motivic association at the surface, while positing a certain amount of necessity in motivic association at the higher levels. In the introduction to the op. 101 analysis Schenker writes:

> On first looking at the *Urlinien,* one should not allow oneself to be disillusioned by the fact that they all resemble one another in continual successions of seconds, in repetitions, or also in a regular rise and fall, like breathing in and breathing out. For it is precisely the task of the



Example 3A. Sketch of Beethoven: Sonata in A Major, op. 101/II; mm. 1–8 (from Schenker, *Beethoven: Op. 101* [1920])



Example 3B. Sketch of Beethoven: op. 101/II; mm. 11–37 (Schenker, *Beethoven: Op. 101*)

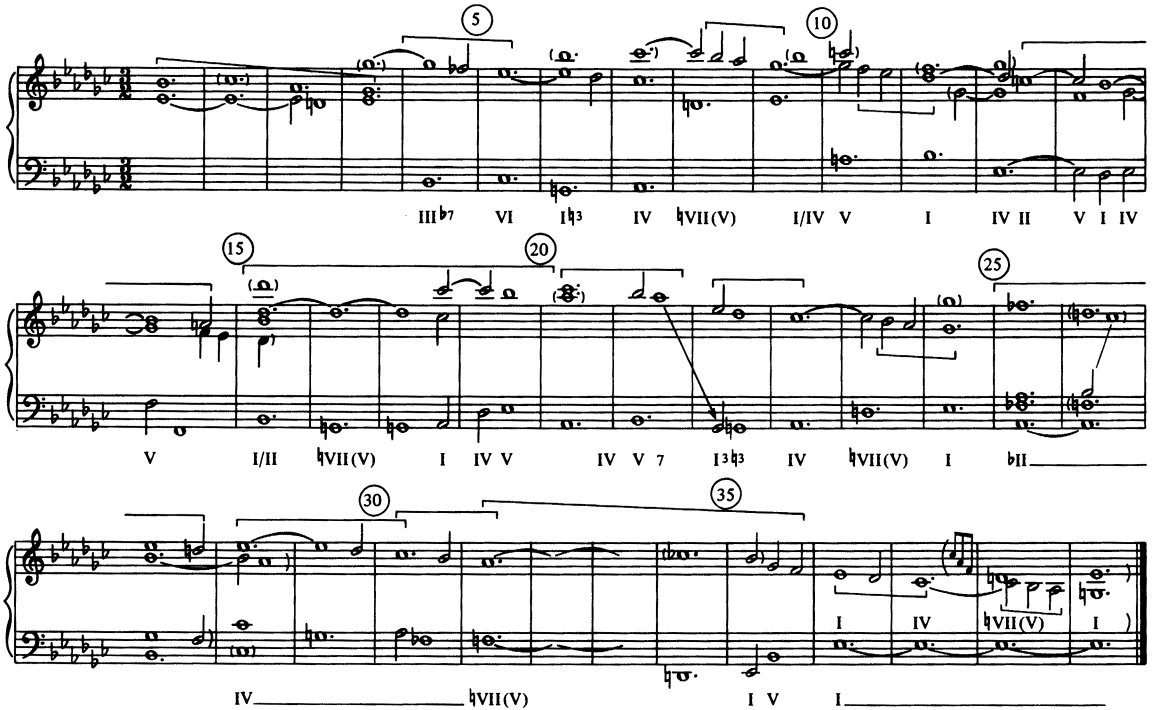
artist to bring forth his own tensions by means of this determinate number of seconds, these specific repetitions, this specific rise and fall; to continually elicit from the rising and falling lines, in concert with the basic laws of voice leading and harmonic step progression, new versions of his own motives and melodies, and thus to resolve each general case into its particulars: *semper idem, sed non eodem modo*—more the artist cannot do (Schenker [1920] 1972, 8).

A remarkable instance that demonstrates the relation between surface freedom and underlying necessity is shown in example 4, a sketch of the E♭-minor Prelude from Book I of the *Well Tempered Clavier,* published in *Der Tonwille* 1 (1921). This sketch reveals that the motivic relations of the melodically fluent lines beneath the surface consist of multiple repetitions of a single motive, a descending third. After commenting on the great variety of ways in which the third-motive is produced and shaded by different harmonic degrees, Schenker proceeds to a brief discussion of the surface motives. He writes:

> The first tone of the *Urlinie,* bar 1, gives birth to an arpeggiation that also lays claim to independent motivic significance, which is confirmed not only by the repetition in bar 2, but also by its further applications: see, for instance, the inversions in bars 4, 6, and so forth . . . or the alteration in bar 3. [These remarks refer to the score of the piece.]
>
> . . . In bar 4, the line ends at $g♭^1$. Now if in the *Urlinie* a repetition of the motive were to follow beginning with this pitch, then, because the motive always falls, the line would have been forced to descend into a register in which diminution would hardly be possible on account of the very close proximity of the two outer voices—to say nothing of the purely sonorous disadvantage that arises from not exploiting the higher octaves. With a simple but ingenious device [that is, the figure beginning on the downbeat of bar 4 of the score] the *Urlinie* is moved up to the register of the double-stroked octave. Now, when in what follows the same danger and necessity return and are always met in the same fashion, this device also seems to be elevated to the status of an independent motive, which then contributes in its own way to propagating the illusion that one is dealing here with a completely separate world in which the freest development of motives is the only law (Schenker 1921, 39).

On the surface, then, motivic association can occur in ways that seem haphazard, because the freely distributed surface motives are carried along by the necessity inherent in the underlying *Urlinie* motives.

The next step in the development of Schenker's thinking followed from his increasing awareness of the multiplicity of structural levels during the publication of *Der Tonwille* (1921–1924). Examples 5 and



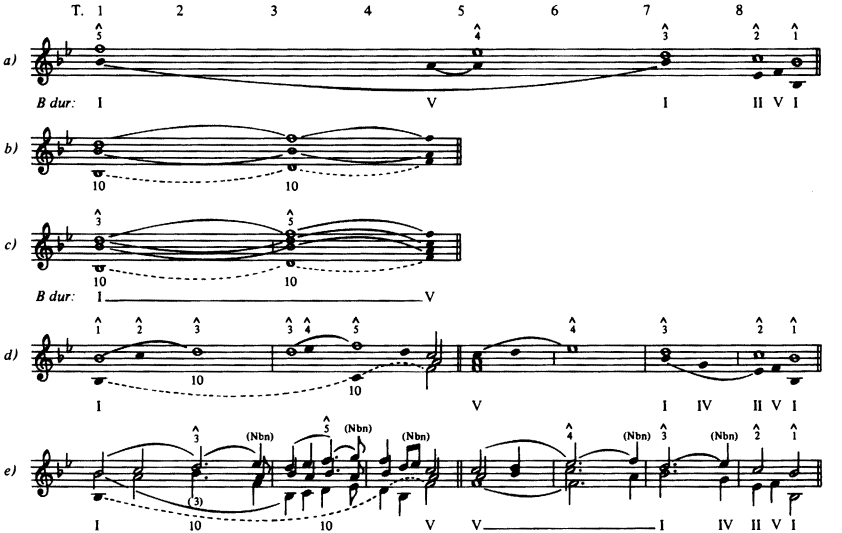
Example 4. Sketch of J. S. Bach: *The Well-Tempered Clavier,* Prelude No. 8 in E♭ Minor (from Schenker, *Der Tonwille* 1 [1921])

6, graphs of the theme (an aria) and third variation of Brahm's Handel Variations (1924), illustrate that Schenker has logically extended the principle of surface freedom and underlying necessity to all analytic levels.[7] In example 5, for instance, the primary motivic association at level *d* is that of rising and falling third-progressions; the determinate succession of these motives then supports the free introduction of a new motive—the neighboring tone—at level *e*. As one approaches the surface, the freedom of motivic association becomes even greater, and tiny reflections of the higher-level motivic elements begin to appear. Thus, the level below *g* shows a diminished form of the rising third-motive of level *d* taking place within the neighboring-tone motive of levels *e* and *g*. The score reveals further diminutions of the neighboring-tone motive and the rising third motive in the trills on the second beat of every measure.

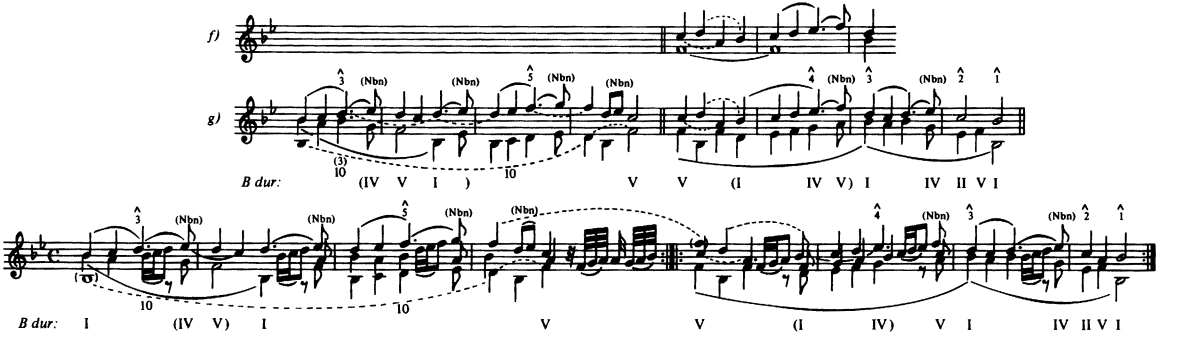
Viewed in this light, the motivic surface of the music now begins to shimmer: multiple diminished reflections of the higher-level motives float on a plane that is supported and shaped by the very same motives acting in more determinate successions beneath the surface. It is merely a consequence of the principle of melodic fluency that the motives of the higher levels are extremely abstract and simple—in this case only third-progressions and neighboring tones. These more determinate, abstract motives might be called *high-level motives.*

Example 6 provides another instance of the activity of high-level motives that illuminates the role of the higher levels in variation sets. A simple relocation of one of the neighbor notes of the theme (g^2 in example 5, bar 3) from a weak position to a strong one (g^2 in example 6, bar 4) produces a different underlying necessity in the variation. The accented neighbor engenders a IV harmony in the motion from I to V, a new scale step that changes the shape of all the levels and, particularly, the content of bar 4 of the theme. For example, the accented neighbor g^2 and the subdominant, which are in force for two beats, displace the tone of resolution, the primary tone f^2, to the weak part of the bar (in the theme, this f^2 occurs on the downbeat, within an expanded tonic). The metric accentuation of the upper neighbor g^2 in the variation effectively inhibits f^2 from moving into an inner voice and thus prevents the phrase from ending with $\hat{2}$ over V (compare bar 4, respectively, in the lowest levels of examples 5 and 6).

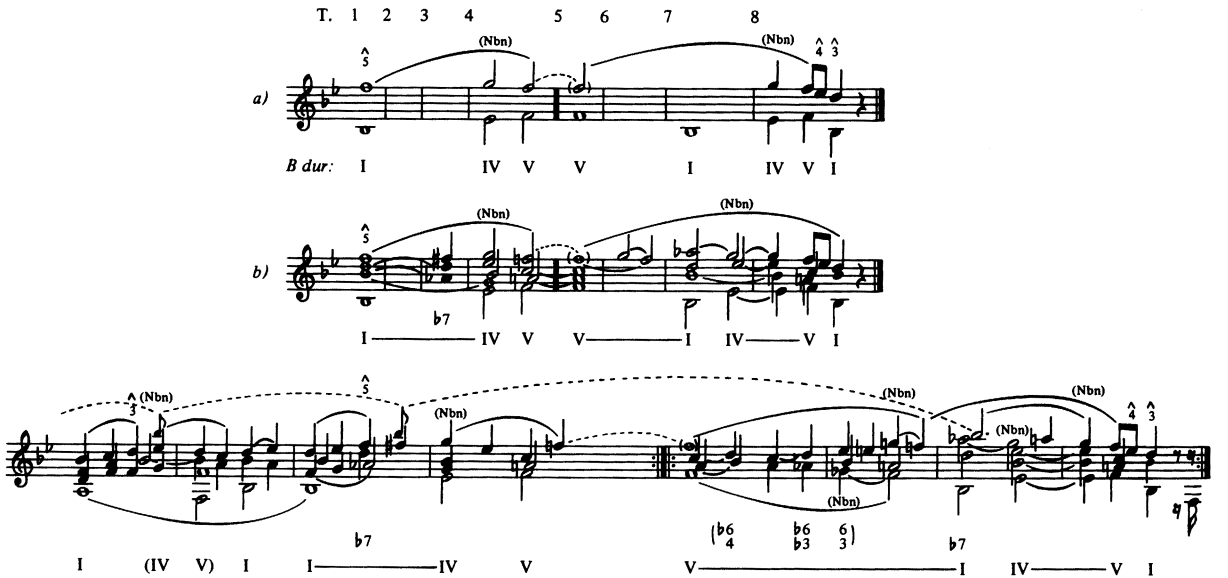
The repositioning and structural harmonic support of the upper neighbor-note g^2 consequently alter the character of the highest level in the variation, giving rise to a high-level motive—an accented neighboring tone—that had not been present in the theme. Furthermore, the generation of this high-level motive is communicated to the surface of the piece, where the effect of the accented upper neighbor can



Example 5. Sketch of Brahms: Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Händel, op. 24/Aria (from Schenker, *Der Tonwille* 8/9 [1924])



Example 5 *(continued)*



Example 6. Sketch of Brahms: Handel Variations, Var. 3 (from Schenker, *Der Tonwille* 8/9)

be felt in the many emphatic appoggiaturas that are the most noticeable foreground characteristic of the variation.

The specific attributes of motivic elements at different analytic levels is finally addressed directly by Schenker in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* I (1925). In his analysis of the Largo from Bach's third Sonata for solo violin, Schenker explicitly links levels and motives together.[8] Referring to the upper three systems shown in example 7, he says:

> Each structural level carries with it its own motives [see levels *b* and *c*]; the specific organization and growth of these motives parallels the specific organization and growth of the level to which they belong. The nearer they are to the foreground, the more developed and varied the motives will be (Schenker [1925] 1976, 152).

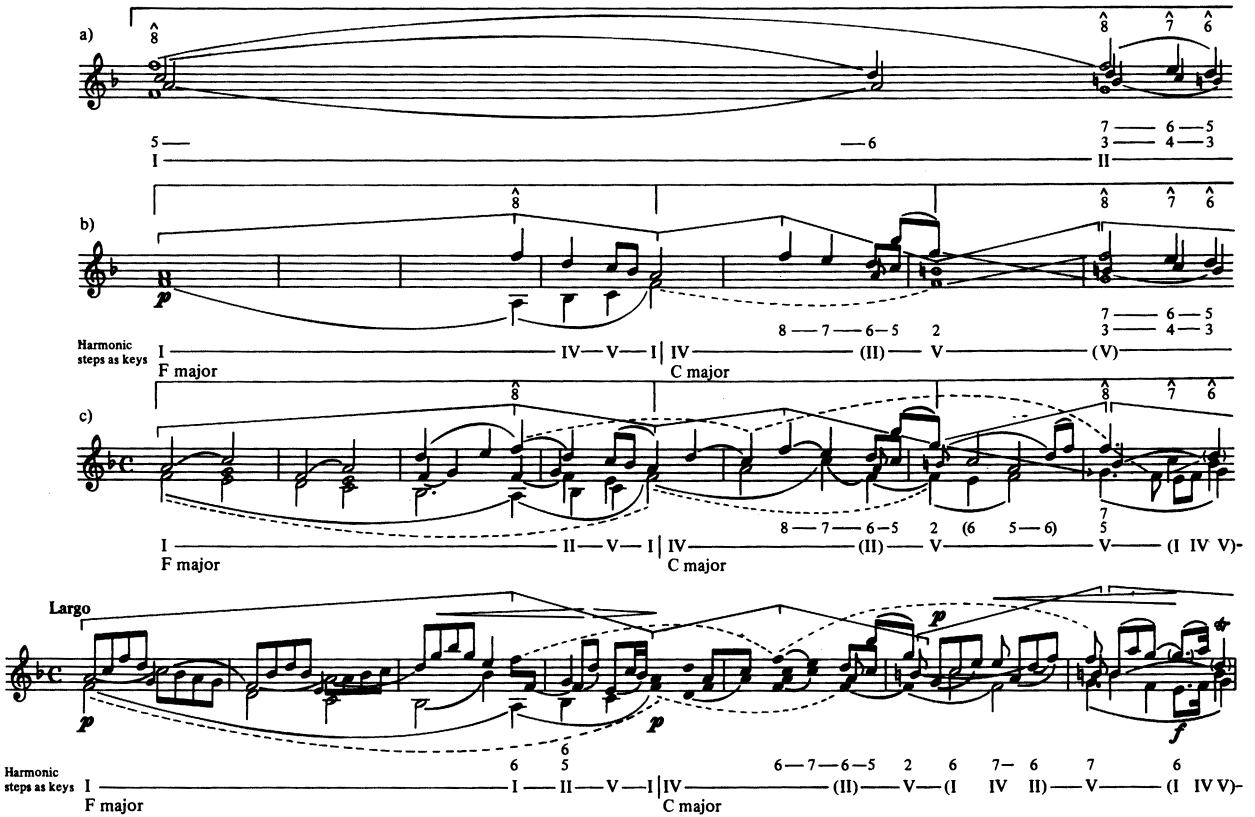
At this point, however, the word "motive" has an unmistakably new meaning. Schenker says:

> [Level *b*] shows the first stages of the diminution, the motives of the first order: the unfolding of the upper voice into progressions through the sixth, fifth, and fourth, transfers into the lower and higher registers, and so on. All of these motives are produced by the upper voice which, in its constant rise and fall, transforms vertical intervals [see level *a*] into melodic progressions and leaps, thereby horizontalizing them. In other words, the motives serve as links between the upper and middle voices (Schenker [1925] 1976, 143–144).

Here the term "motive" is clearly applied to the constituent transformative elements of Schenker's method—that is, linear progressions, arpeggiations, octave transfers, and the like. These abstract elements now have the status of motives in Schenker's thought; indeed, these elements *are* his high-level motives.

Bars 1–4 of example 7 illustrate how these high-level motives operate. Level *b* shows two high-level motives in those measures—an ascending arpeggiated sixth followed by a descending sixth, which is subdivided into a third-arpeggiation plus a descending fourth. At level *c*, a new motive—an ascending third-arpeggiation—adds life to the opening arpeggiated sixth in bars 1–3. Finally, at the level labeled "Largo," we see yet more new motives used to flesh out the rising thirds of level *c*.

This example underscores two significant points. First, the motives that unfold at the deepest levels of the middleground are very general; they express the most fundamental intervallic components of triadic unfolding. As the surface and foreground levels are approached, however, the choice of motives becomes considerably freer, because the



Example 7. Sketch of J. S. Bach: Sonata for Solo Violin No. 3, Largo; mm. 1–7 (from Schenker, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* I [1925])

transformational effects of diminution are constrained less at lower levels than at higher ones. The only requirement is that the motives at each level express the tonal content of the previous level. In other words, even if level *b* began with a different motive, it would still have to express the initial triad; even if level *c* did not use thirds, its motive would still have to act in the service of level *b*'s rising sixth; and any other motives in the "Largo" level would have to conform to the needs of level *c*'s third-arpeggiations. Thus freedom and necessity coexist at every level and stand in a delicate balance.

Second, as the transformations approach the foreground, there is a tendency to "bring down" high-level motives into the diminutions of lower levels. For instance, the outline of a sixth that characterizes the motive of the "Largo" level is a reflection of the high-level motive of the sixth from level *b*. Thus the foreground levels, and especially the surface of the music, incorporate motivic elements from earlier levels both in the large and in the small, giving rise to cross-level motivic integration and the characteristic shimmering effect mentioned earlier.

Having uncovered this variegated motivic activity across many transformation levels, Schenker now comes to regard surface motivic relations with some suspicion. In the same article he writes:

> We see how the composer's imagination creates a foreground, bringing forth motives which, by virtue of their literal presence in the music, are so readily accepted as "melodies" by the ear incapable of hearing longer spans. But the source of the "melodies" is revealed only through an understanding of successive stages of voice-leading, beginning with the fundamental structure. The specific shapes of such melodies are determined not by the whim of an imagination concerned with nothing more than "melody," but rather by the necessity that the voice-leading process be anchored in a fundamental structure (Schenker [1925] 1976, 148–150).

In *Free Composition* Schenker finally rejects the term "motive" altogether, or, more accurately, he uses the term only in a pejorative sense. Instead of "motive," Schenker talks about the relationships among *diminutions,* a word he feels has broader application and that he uses in his own special way to denote the linear patterns that unfold at different structural levels. And the diminutions at the deepest level of the middleground, the first elaborations of the fundamental structure, Schenker now refers to simply as the "characteristics of the first level of the middleground."[9] We can now better understand passages like the following in *Free Composition,* indicating that Schenker's attitude toward the role of motive in music is now inimical to conventional views of surface motivic structure:

> Great composers trust their long-range vision. For this reason they do not base their compositions on 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 (Schenker [1935] 1979, 26–27).

Given what we now know about high-level motives, it is not difficult to understand why Schenker came to embrace this extreme attitude: he had discovered that the source of lower-level motives is found in motives of a higher order, which he believed to be inherent in the grammar of the tonal system itself.

* * *

What we refer to as high-level motives received theoretical formulation in the brief but fruitful period during which the ten issues of *Der Tonwille* and the first and second volumes of *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* were published (1921–1926). At this time the term "motive" still had meaning for Schenker, probably because his study of melodic fluency revealed a palpable connection between the "motifs" (his term in *Harmony*) of the surface and foreground and the figures of deeper levels. But his "*Urlinie* motives" and "motives of the first and second order," which developed during the 1920's, are different from the motives that he describes in *Harmony* (1906). In the later usage, Schenker means the melodically fluent, guiding lines that bind the surface and foreground to the more determinate *Urlinie* itself: simple and often undifferentiated lines, formations such as linear progressions and neighboring-tone figures that establish certain parameters at high structural levels.[10]

It is not necessary to embrace the extreme position toward the role of motive in music that Schenker expresses in *Free Composition*. "Motive" is a useful term, as long as one understands that, like the term "harmony," it denotes a thoroughly hierarchical aspect of tonal structures; as Schenker came to realize in the 1920's, motives unfold at all levels below the background. In the final section of this study we further illustrate this point and examine the role of high-level motives (of the first- and second-order) in the exposition and development sections of Mozart's A-minor Piano Sonata, K. 310.[11] Whereas Schenker, however, was concerned primarily with the motivic physiognomy of a specific piece, we are here considering high-level motives in a more general sense, as the "basic motives" of the tonal system—figures that recur at middleground levels and regulate the development of lower-level motives in contrasting passages and sections throughout the

tonal system. This perspective, we believe, can yield broader insights about the motivic properties of tonal music.

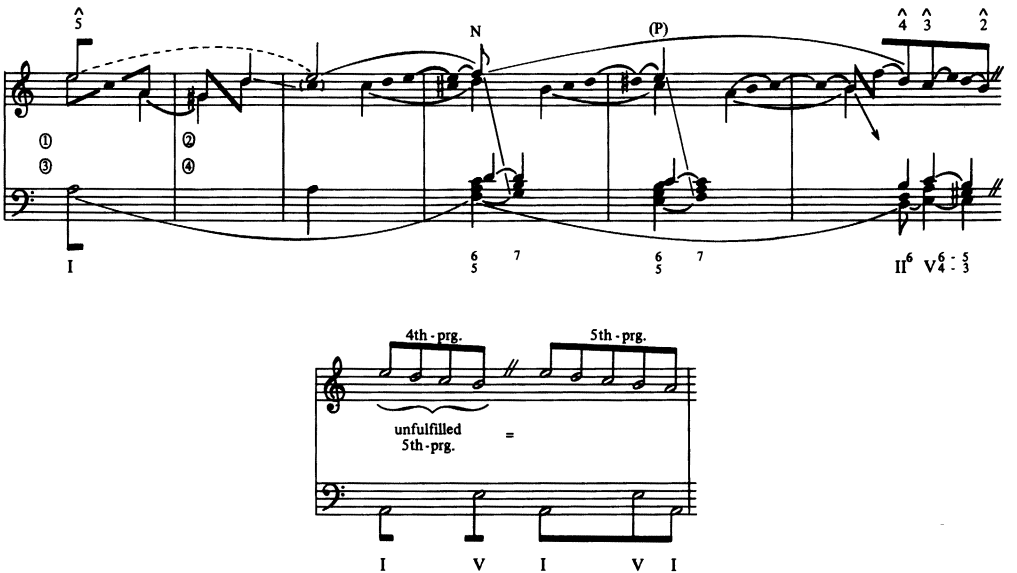
* * *

The arpeggiated descending fifth (E-C-A) in the opening bar of Mozart's A minor Piano Sonata is a well-known feature of the piece; in fact this motive is a feature of design at the surface and foreground in many of Mozart's works. More important for this discussion, however, is that the significance of the melodic fifth from E to A extends into the middleground of the initial tonic area. In sonata movements in which the first part of the exposition is melodically and harmonically closed, a version of the fundamental line naturally unfolds as part of a lower-level *Ursatz* parallelism.

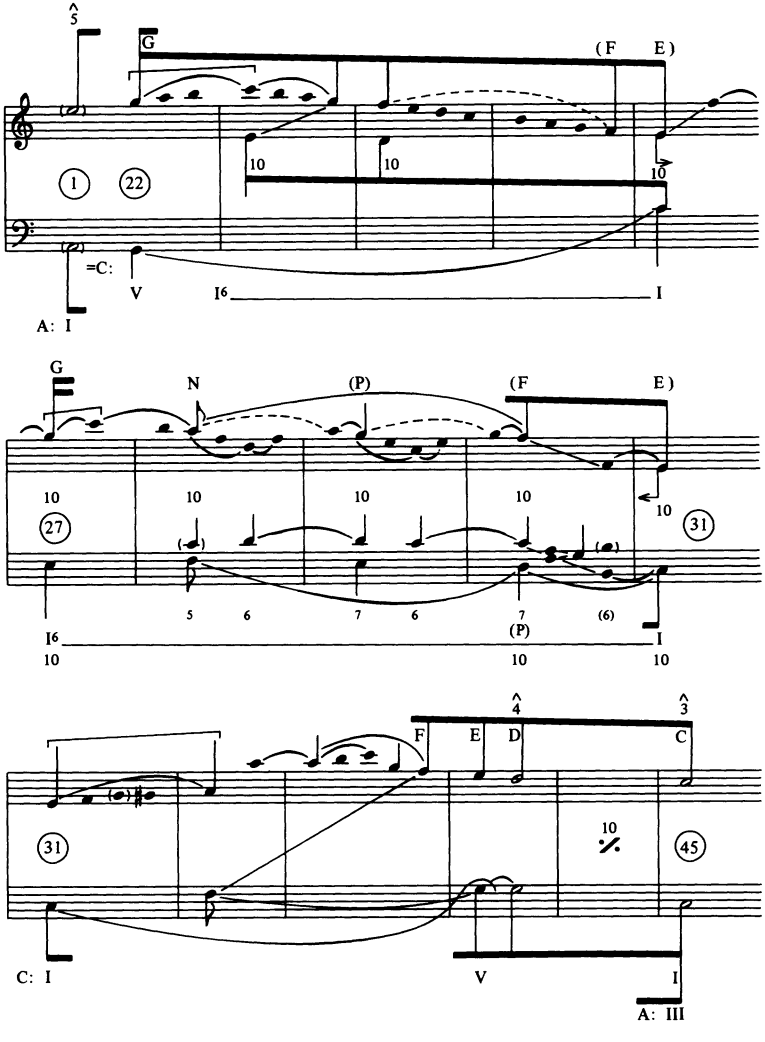
As example 8 illustrates, the first phrase appears to initiate this very process. The upper voice, however, descends only to $\hat{2}$, closure does not occur (the harmonic and melodic progressions are interrupted), and the consequent phrase quickly becomes the modulatory transition that establishes the mediant scale step. Thus the tonic area is not literally described by a complete fifth-progression. Schenker, however, referred to the first branch of an interruption (in a $\hat{5}$-line) not only as a fourth-progression but, more characteristically, as an "unfulfilled" fifth-progression. Thus we may conceptually represent the tonic region of the exposition by an *Urlinie* parallelism, a version of the fifth from E to A, which is both an individual feature of design and a general construct—a high-level motive—that shapes the contexts for the unfolding of lower-level motives throughout the tonal literature.

We now turn to the second tonal area (excluding the closing section), an overview of which is presented in example 9. The main point here is that another fifth-progression, a "first-order" middleground line from G to C, describes the upper voice from bars 22 to 45. A descent from natural $\hat{7}$ to $\hat{3}$ in the mediant region can be elaborated in general terms (like the middleground fifth of the tonic area) as a recurring feature of minor-mode tonality. That is, this line is an element of tonal grammar, one of a few contrapuntal (melodic) archetypes that arise from *Auskomponierung,* in this case, from the composing-out of the mediant scale step.

In the minor mode, the bass arpeggiation from I to III frequently supports $\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$ of a fundamental line (example 10). The resulting octave ($\hat{3}$ over III) between the background outer voices, however, can present compositional problems at lower levels, because without elaboration this structural octave can produce closure and thus inhibit the composing-out of the mediant. Thus a lower-level version of a fundamental line is often applied to the new scale step so that musical con-

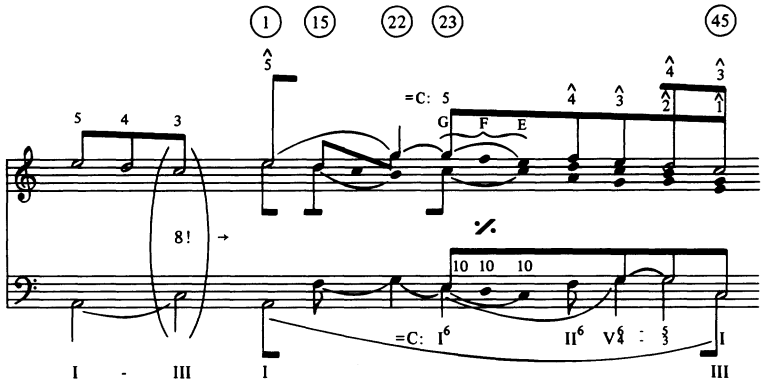


Example 8. Mozart: Piano Sonata in A minor, K. 310/I; mm. 1–8



Example 9. Mozart: K. 310/I; mm. 22–45 (second theme)

tent may unfold before a structural $\hat{3}$ is achieved.[12] As example 10 shows, the local descent from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ in the key of C major elaborates the background $\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$ in A minor, creating the musical (and motivic) content of the second tonal area.[13] This is the general tonal explana-



Example 10. Mozart: K. 310/I; middleground graph of mm. 1–45

tion. We may also consider the fifth-progression as a high-level motivic archetype, a pattern similar to the fifth from the first tonal area, that establishes different conditions and thus different possibilities for lower-level motives in the tonal environment of the mediant.

Example 9 shows that the descent from G to C is initially forestalled. Mozart twice leads his line from G to E (bars 22–31) as motions into an inner voice, before the main line at this level descends from f^2 toward closure in bars 33–45 (the approach to the cadence is repeated; rhythm and register confirm closure, $\hat{1}$ in C major, only in bar 45). Thus, as example 10 summarizes, the fifth-progression of the mediant key area is articulated so that the tone succession G-F-E emerges as a second-order motive, defined as such through repetition and the contrapuntal support of the bass (note the parallel 10ths); this motive is a possibility realized from the conditions established by the recomposition in the mediant of the germinal descending fifth. This perspective provides a way of relating the contrasting lower-level motives of the first and second tonal areas. Furthermore, we shall see that the third-motive recurs again at a deeper level, holding a different set of possibilities for the lower levels of the development section.

The large-scale tonal plan of the development section is rather typical insofar as it reflects another recurring feature of minor-mode tonality in sonata movements: the section begins in the mediant and progresses through the subdominant to the structural dominant, which is composed out as a retransition. The significant issue, of course, con-

cerns the linear pattern that unfolds at a deep middleground level in the tonal space from III to V (example 11).

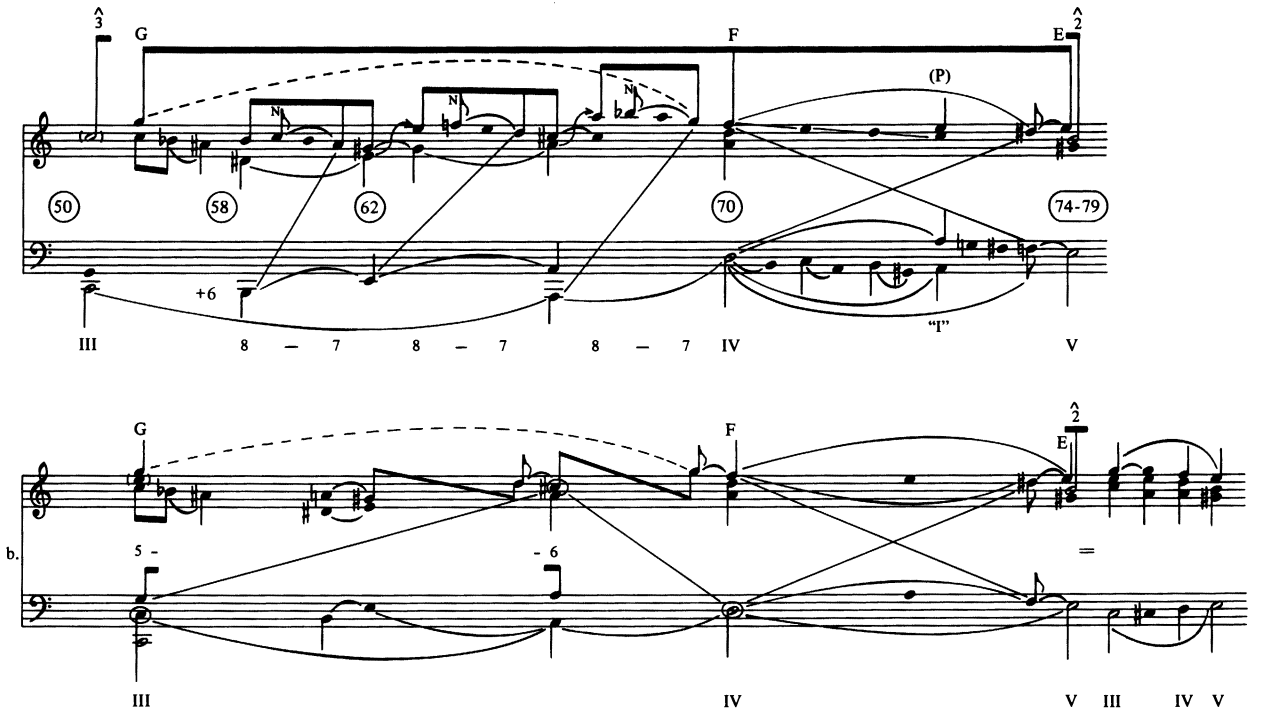
The development begins with a restatement of the first theme, now in C major, with G as the main tone in the upper voice. A sequential passage follows, supporting motivic activity that belongs initially, as the disposition of register indicates, to the inner voices of the prolonged mediant region. The sequence gradually reestablishes the upper register, and its conclusion articulates the arrival of the subdominant and highlights a deeper linear connection: G has moved to F as the main tone in the upper voice. From that point, F is prolonged by a chromatic voice exchange that expands the subdominant, producing the characteristic D♯–E figure at the end of the subdominant region. E is finally achieved in the upper voice with the arrival of the structural dominant, completing the line G–F–E, which unfolds over the structural progression from $\hat{3}$, at the beginning of the development, to $\hat{2}$, at its conclusion.[14]

The motivic fabric of the development section, therefore, is governed by the high-level motive G–F–E, which also shaped the lower levels in the mediant area of the exposition. Examining the motivic design of the middleground has revealed a deeply unifying relationship between the exposition and the development sections, an association that far transcends customary notions of surface and foreground motivic development.

* * *

Our analysis of Mozart's piano sonata has highlighted some of the general figures constituting a rarefied and limited class of motives, residing on higher planes, that communicate the determined course of the *Urlinie* to the lower levels. We can now usefully regard motives as *theoretical* constructs as well as *compositional* elements of design in specific pieces.[15] The latter is the customary description, involving issues such as Art, the compositional process, and the imagination of the composer. On the other hand, high-level motives are, as Schenker might have put it, provided by the system: they are the general linear patterns that characterize middleground levels throughout the tonal literature, the "basic motives" of the tonal system.[16]

This distinction provides a point of departure for examining motivic structure from a unique perspective. In our discussion of the Mozart sonata, we alluded to its contrasting lower-level motives as possibilities defined by similar high-level motives in different harmonic contexts. Consider now that lower-level motives in general (in all tonal pieces) are possibilities realized from the vast array of diminutions permitted by the grammar of the tonal language. The conditions that constrain the possibilities are represented contrapuntally at



Example 11. Mozart: K. 310/I; graph of development section, mm. 50–79

deep levels by high-level motives; in other words, they establish certain parameters and limit the motives that unfold at lower levels from the vast number of theoretically possible formations. Since high-level motives are a class of figures that recur throughout the tonal literature, it is conceivable that general principles of motivic structure can be revealed by examining the ways in which they relate to and interact with the compositional motives of lower levels.

The idea of "realized possibilities" is not foreign to Schenker's thinking. In his later writings he frequently refers to the "seed and harvest," which, of course, is a metaphor that alludes to constraint and possibility.[17] The seed is a prototype that encapsulates the biological conditions for the possibilities that are manifested in the harvest. Similarly, we view high-level motives as *archetypes,* which underlie all complex lower-level diminutions and appear in their most fundamental forms at deep levels. They encapsulate information—the harmonic-contrapuntal possibilities realized at lower levels as specific motives, motives in the compositional sense.

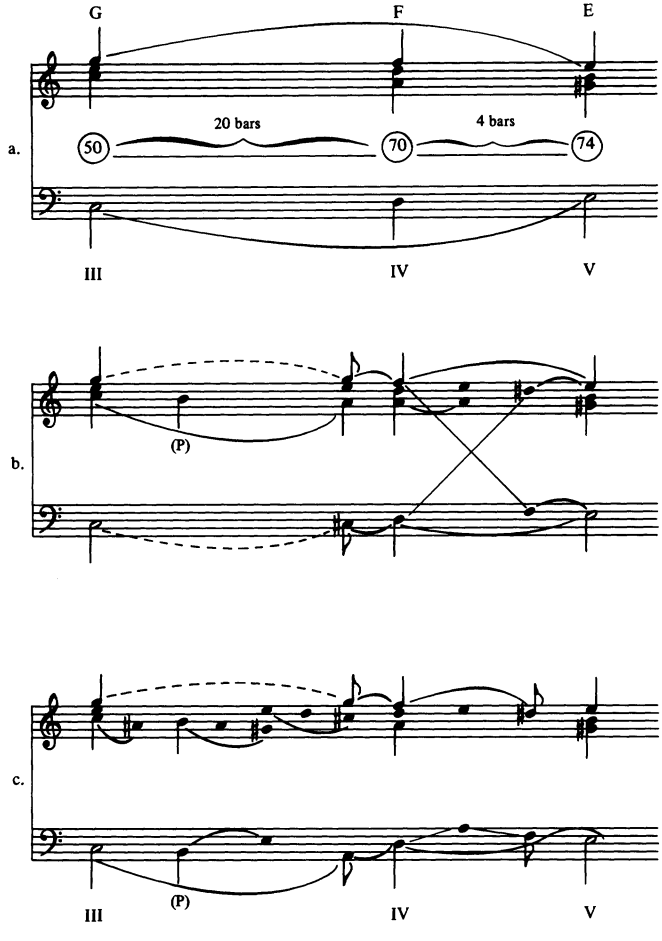
High-level motives by themselves, however, are almost too general to serve as practical constructs. In the Mozart sonata, for example, we saw that the third-progression G-F-E occurred in contrasting harmonic environments, in the mediant area of the exposition and in the development section, and thus defined two contrasting motivic networks. To reveal and quantify their latent possibilities, to see what conditions they exemplify, one must evaluate and compare high-level motives in the basic harmonic contexts of triadic unfolding in which they occur. In conclusion we explore briefly the application of a high-level motive as a theoretical construct—as a motivic archetype that establishes parameters and signifies possibilities.

Example 12 represents the harmonic environment of the development section schematically as a chord progression, with the high-level motive as its upper voice. This middleground "harmonization" illustrates symbolically the array of pitch and intervallic relationships that define the conditions (possibilities) for the unfolding of lower-level motives (note that these motives, at least initially, arise from the working out of the inner voices). [18] In other words, the conditions for the unfolding of motives at lower levels in the development section can be determined from the conjunction of the high-level motive and the scale-step progression from III to V. As can be seen by comparing examples 10 and 12, the lower-level motives of the development section arise from conditions very different from those in the mediant area of the exposition, where the same figure produces a different network of tonal relationships. This last observation continues to clarify why Schenker came to distrust surface motivic connections. Compositions are not based on contrasting surface "themes" or "melodies,"

sion alone. In other words, the inner voices in this theoretical scheme are assumed to be lower-ranking than the "soprano," and represent the source of the surface and foreground (compositional) motives of the development section (examples 12b and 12c).[18] Hence the conditions for the unfolding of motives at lower levels are established by the conjunction of the high-level motive and the scale-step progression from III to V. These conditions, of course, are different from those in the mediant area of the exposition, where the same figure produces a different network of relationships. The last observation further clarifies why Schenker came to distrust surface motivic connections. Compositions are not based on contrasting surface "themes" or "melodies," but on contrasting tonal networks produced by the unfolding of the tonic triad and unified by high-level motives.[19]

In closing, we consider again the notion of melodic fluency, which led Schenker to realize that motives unfold at various levels below the background, and which leads us to a conclusion about the archetypal nature of high-level motives: they resemble the elements of strict counterpoint, the most concise formulation of the essence of melody in tonal music. For example, the upper neighbor formation, which unfolds at all levels below the background and is common "first-order" motive at the first level of the middleground, derives from third species; and basic linear progressions, which we saw at different middleground levels in the Mozart example, arise from the passing-tone motions of second species. These figures, of course, occur at all lower levels. But so do the ornate diminutions—the products of free composition—that are not permitted in strict counterpoint. Thus the physiognomy of the deepest levels of the middleground clearly illuminates the relationship between strict counterpoint and the foundations of motives.[20]

These observations also shed light on our remarks about the balance of necessity and freedom that creates a regulated tension in tonal structures.[21] The deep levels are those most strictly governed by the basic shapes of strict counterpoint. By this we do not mean that high-level motives are independent of the compositional process, only that they are natural features of the tonal system itself; they certainly interact with compositional design at lower levels. The balance, however, shifts in favor of freedom at the lower levels, the realm of free composition, where the imagination of the composer fashions the essential linear patterns of the tonal system into motives in the compositional sense. The specific shapes of these motives, to recall Schenker's words, are determined by the necessity that the voice-leading process be anchored in a fundamental structure. High-level motives are the agents of the fundamental structure that shape the course of the surface and foreground; they epitomize the essence of



Example 12. Mozart: K. 310/I; development section, mm. 50–74

motives and define the contexts in which more elaborate formations unfold at lower levels. Thus a more complete examination of their properties can reveal universal principles of motivic relationships—principles communicated by the determined figures of deep levels, the basic motives of the tonal system.

NOTES

1. In the mid 1920's, before he completely abandoned the term in *Free Composition,* Schenker embraced a notion of "motive" that refers to general figures that reside at the deep middleground levels and shape the development of lower-level motives (diminutions). Our intent is to clarify the stages in this transformation of Schenker's thought. We will describe how he arrived at this highly abstract and hierarchical conception of motive, and then will illustrate these figures in analytical contexts. Because we focus only on the complex evolution of Schenker's ideas, we have decided not to survey here the motivic concepts of his contemporaries. A comparison of Schenker's views with those of other theorists belongs to a future and more broadly conceived study.

   An earlier version of this paper was read at the 1989 annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory as part of a session entitled "Schenker: New Perspectives." The authors would like to express their gratitude to Professor Charles Burkhart, the chair of that session, and to Hedi Siegel for their valuable criticism. Translations are by the authors unless cited.
2. The graph in example 1 is from Schenker [1935] 1979, suppl.:fig. 117/1.
3. Example 2A is from Schenker [1910, 1922] 1987, 1:96; example 2B is from Schenker 1987, 1:71.
4. See Pastille 1990. Some of that discussion—enough to make comprehensible the notion of melodic fluency—has been recapitulated here.
5. See also Burkhart 1978, 145–175.
6. The sketches in example 3A and 3B are from Schenker [1920] 1972, 35, 37–38.
7. Examples 5 and 6 are from Schenker 1924, 3, 8, and *Anhang.*
8. All of Schenker's analyses in the first two volumes of *Das Meisterwerk* (1925–1926) share with his study of the Largo the same notions of layered motivic development. We have chosen to focus on this analysis because Schenker introduces his new motivic ideas here and because he explicitly identifies the motives of different structural levels as "first-order," "second-order," and so forth.
9. See Schenker [1935] 1979, 93–106, for an extended discussion of *diminution,* which can be considered his final thoughts on matters pertaining to what is conventionally termed "motivic structure." Schenker describes the specific characteristics of the first level of the middleground, some of which he refers to as "first-order" characteristics, on pp. 29–52.
10. Sylvan Kalib describes Schenker's later usage of "motive" as follows: "[In Schenker's essay on Bach's Largo] we encounter the term 'motive' in the unique way Schenker uses it: a succession of tones which is formed from the specific processes of the diminution. Such motives occur in the various stages of voice leading or diminution. Hence there are motives of the first or highest order . . . i.e., motives of closest structural significance in relationship to the ursatz [sic]; motives of the second order . . . etc. Note the great contrast between this conception of the term 'motive' as opposed to its conventional use, referring solely to motives in terms of the foreground, i.e., to successions of immediately successive notes only." See Kalib 1973, 3:29.
11. For other studies that examine the first movement of K.310, see David Beach, "The First Movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in A Minor, K.310: Some Thoughts on Structure and Performance," *The Journal of Musicological Re-*

search (1987):157–186; John Rothgeb discusses the development section in "Design as a Key to Structure in Tonal Music," *Journal of Music Theory* 15 (1971): 230–253; reprinted in Maury Yeston, ed., *Readings in Schenker Analysis and Other Approaches* (New Haven, 1977), 72–93; Oswald Jonas also deals with the development section in *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker,* trans and ed. John Rothgeb, (New York and London, 1982), 103–104. The authors are aware of certain similarities between the analysis presented here and the studies just cited (primarily regarding the development section), though our interpretation was conceived independently of those analyses; we do, however, gratefully acknowledge the influence of Carl Schachter on our conception of this piece.

We also point out that Schenker (1922) examines Mozart's A-Minor Piano Sonata, K. 310, in considerable detail. His analysis, however, is in spirit and content closer to the Beethoven op. 101 *Erläuterungsausgabe* (1920) than to the more sophisticated analyses presented in the first and second volumes of *Meisterwerk* (1925 and 1926). Although one can detect instances of what Schenker would call *Urlinie* motives in his analysis of K. 310, the absence of a stratified melodic dimension, or delineated structural levels, evinces an earlier stage of Schenker's thought. The analysis does not indicate that Schenker was aware of different levels of motivic activity, as he certainly was in his analysis of Bach's Largo (1925). The analysis of K. 310 in the present study reflects the more advanced analytical technique found in the analyses of *Das Meisterwerk* and *Free Composition.*

12. Schenker describes this aspect of tonal grammar as the "transference of the forms of the fundamental structure to individual harmonies" (Schenker [1935] 1979, 87–88). *Ursatz and Urlinie* forms, of course, are tonal archetypes. We consider the *Urlinie* forms at the first level of the middleground and below to be inherently motivic; they are high-level motives.
13. This is a controversial passage in Mozart's famous sonata, involving two plausible readings. The issue concerns whether structural $\hat{4}$ (d^2) appears in the transition section (mm. 9–22) or in the line that describes the second tonal group (the mediant region). Although the voice leading unquestionably reveals a line E–D–C in mm. 1–23, example 10 shows that we regard this line as motion into an inner voice: d^2 leads to c^2 in bar 23, but both are revealed as inner-voice tones because d^2 "reaches over" to the g^2 that begins the second theme; the higher register is regained, suggesting that e^2 is still active as the primary tone $\hat{5}$. The motion from high G then passes through (and recalls) the primary tone $\hat{5}$ before $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{3}$ of the fundamental line appear just before the closing section.
14. A structural outline of mm. 70–78 of this development section is provided in Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter 1989, 489.
15. See Cadwallader 1988, 1–35, for a discussion of a first-order motive. Although written first, that study actually represents the logical next stage of the examination of Schenker's ideas that we are outlining in the present essay.
16. The point is often raised that a tone succession should recur, at the same level or across different levels, to qualify as a motive. But we see no reason for a theoretical requirement that a tone succession must unfold at a surface or foreground level to be granted the status of a motive at a higher level. For example, one can easily imagine a neighbor-note figure, a motive by any definition, that

unfolds only at the first level of the middleground. The phenomenon of expanded repetition shows that deep figures can be motives. Why not, then, extend this reasoning and accept all deep linear patterns as inherently motivic, regardless of whether they characterize multiple levels? Like concealed motivic repetitions, reflections of high-level motives may appear at different levels, but they do not have to: this is one distinction between a theoretical and compositional notion of motive. In any case, high-level motives do satisfy this condition in a broader sense—they recur *across* different pieces.

17. See for instance, Schenker's discussion of J. S. Bach's Little Prelude in E minor, BMV 941, in which he points out a rising third-progression (E–F♯–G) that he refers to as the "seed" (*Aussaat*) that determines the subsequent "harvest" (*Ernte*); that is, this general figure, which unfolds at the surface and deep middleground levels, is the basis for most of the diminution in the composition (Schenker 1925, 109–110).
18. We have not attempted in this brief exposition to address every question raised by this approach. For example, surface and foreground motives do not always unfold "below" higher-ranking tones; and registrally superior, high-level motives may include, but are subordinate to, the tones of the *Urlinie*. Consequently, the relationship between register, lower-level motives, and the "inner voices" of a tonal network must be developed as an issue in its own right in future studies.
19. One should also consider rhythm in describing the properties of high-level motives. The figure G–F–E is a high-level motive precisely because its tones are high-ranking. The tones also embody various degrees of high-ranking durational weight: the G in the example governs 20 bars, the F, four bars. High-level motives unfold more slowly than motives at lower levels, and their tones often govern large amounts of tonal space. This observation may seem rather obvious, but it continues to distinguish the relationships of the network. The rhythmic properties of a middleground motive can be described through the foreground span it embraces and the distance between its tones, indicating how fully the motivic possibilities of the network are worked out.
20. Motives and motivic relationships, of course, are not aspects of strict counterpoint. Our point is that the basic shapes of high-level motives are codified in the five species of counterpoint.
21. Schenker always considered the balance of necessity and freedom to be a hallmark of the creative artist. In 1924, for example, he writes (after Schiller), "But only when both combine—when the will freely complies with the laws of necessity and when the reason, notwithstanding all of the fluctuations of the imagination, maintains its rule—only then does the divine or the ideal emerge" (Schenker 1924, 3). This dialectic is put into sharper focus when one defines one of its aspects—necessity—in terms of the laws of tonality, of which high-level motives are manifestations.

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