

Phrases and Cadences (Notes from Caplin, 1998)

Today we are going to move away from the notions of motive and texture, and look at larger musical groupings, known as phrases and sentences.

This will begin our study of *Formenlehre*, which simply means the "teaching of form."

Sentences

For our purposes, we will define a sentence as being an eight-measure structure. It typically begins with a two-measure **basic idea**, which will usually introduce the fundamental melodic (and motivic) material. There can be multiple motives in the basic theme.

The sentences we will be looking at in the near future (those found in Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven) contain phrases that indicate a presentation, a continuation, and a cadence.

Presentation Phrase

An eight measure sentence typically begins with a four-measure *presentation phrase*, consisting of a repeated two measure **basic idea**, which can usually be heard as being within a tonic area (see **tonic prolongation**).

Caplin writes that the "presentation functions to create a solid structural beginning for the theme by establishing its melodic-motivic content in a stable harmonic-tonal environment."(Caplin, 1998; p.35)

Basic Idea

A basic idea is basically what we've been exploring for the past couple of classes. It has a salient melodic aspect, is usually presented early on (in fact in the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Brahms, it is almost always presented at the very beginning).

When looking at the repetition of the basic idea, it is helpful to think of three types of repetition:

- Exact repetition (self-explanatory)
 - For example, this example from Mozart's K.330, i mm.1--8 shows an the statement of the basic idea in mm.1-2, and it's exact repetition in mm.3--4.

The musical score shows a piano part in G major (C: I ped.) with a basso continuo part. The score is divided into sections: 'presentation' (measures 1-2), 'b.i.' (measures 3-4), 'continuation frag.' (measures 5-7), and 'cad.' (measure 8). The basso continuo part provides harmonic support, with labels like (V⁷), I, (IV), and V($\frac{4}{2}$) appearing below the bass line. Measure 8 concludes with a forte dynamic (f) and a cadence. A box labeled 'IAC' is located in the bottom right corner.

- Another example can be found in Haydn's Piano Sonata in B-flat, 41, ii 1--8:

The musical score shows a piano part in B-flat major (Bb: I) with a basso continuo part. The score is divided into sections: 'presentation' (measures 1-2), 'b.i.' (measures 3-4), 'continuation frag.' (measures 5-7), and 'cad.' (measure 8). The basso continuo part provides harmonic support, with labels like (V), I, (V), V $\frac{5}{2}$ /II, V⁷, V $\frac{5}{2}$ I, II $\frac{6}{5}$, and V appearing below the bass line. Measure 8 concludes with a forte dynamic (f) and a cadence. A box labeled 'HC' is located in the bottom right corner.

- Statement-response repetition (a version of the basic idea in the tonic is followed by the same idea in the dominant).

-See the Example below, from Haydn's Piano Sonata in G, Hob, XVI:27, ii, 1--8.

- Sequential Repetition occurs when the idea is **transposed to a different scale degree in both melody and harmony**.

- See the example from Beethoven's piano Sonata in G, op.14/2 i 1--8. (Caplin, p.36)

EXAMPLE 3.4 Beethoven, Piano Sonata in G, Op. 14/2, i, 1-8

Example 1

If we look at Example 1, from Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F minor, op.2/I, i mm.1--8, we can see that this 8-bar sentence can be divided into a number of nested ideas that we might examine to understand what makes sentences work.

EXAMPLE 1.1 Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F Minor, Op. 2/1, i, 1-8

First, we can see that we have a **basic idea** that spans the first two measures. This melodic idea returns in m.3. We might call this the return of the basic idea, although now in it has been transposed up a perfect fifth.

Because it has been repeated and we as listeners are now very conscious of it, we might think of it as having been presented to us. We might therefore refer to the measures 1--4, with the basic idea and its repetition, as our *presentation phrase*.

Tonic Prolongation

For Caplin (and many others) a presentation phrase prolongs the tonic harmony. The two concepts are intertwined.

An harmonic prolongation occurs when a single harmony (such as Tonic or Dominant) is perceived as existing for many measures, **despite the existence of interpolated harmonies**.

Prolongation creates *another level* of harmonic function. Therefore, there is both a local level (where there is an harmonic function for each chord), and a deeper level in which there is a prolonged harmony.

The harmony of the first presentation of the basic idea is first presented with Tonic accompaniment, while the repetition is over the dominant. The first instantiation of the basic idea can be thought of as the "statement", whereas the second might be called the "response."

Although we use the dominant harmony in mm.3-4, we might think of the entire first four measures as being able to be reduced to a tonic harmony. We might call this tonic prolongation. Most "presentation" tend to be the result of a **tonic prolongation**.

Continuation Phrase

The *presentation phrase* can be followed in the next four measures by a *continuation phrase*. In the Classical Style, continuation phrases typically contain two characteristics:

- Harmonic Acceleration, in which the **harmonic rhythm** increases.
- Fragmentation, in which the size of the original motivic units are made smaller.

Looking at this example, we see that where we did have a harmonic change every two measures, it now occurs every measure.

The fragmentation occurs in the melody. It helps that there's an exact repetition to help us delineate what exactly is the fragmented motive. It's the melody that occurs in m.2 of the piece.

Because of this, we might now go back and distinguish between the motive 'a' in the first measure, and motive 'b' in the second. It is motive 'b' that fragments in our continuation phrase.

Beethoven has completely detached motive 'B' from motive 'A', pretty much getting rid of the first part of the presentation phrase. In measure 7, he changes the 16th note triplets to steady eighth notes, leading into the cadence. The gradual dissolution of characteristic motives is frequently referred to as "liquidation."

Caplin writes that "...the purpose of motivic liquidation is to strip the basic idea of its characteristic features, thus leaving the merely conventional ones for the cadence."

This brings us to the third "formal function" (after presentation and continuation) is the *cadential* function.

The cadential function usually consists of:

- Falling melodic line (or a melody which contains structural tones that descend)
- Harmonic cadence (HC, PAC, etc.)

Cadential Phrase

In the example above, the process of fragmentation, liquidation, harmonic acceleration, etc. all lead quite seamlessly into the cadential portion of the phrase. They allow the listener to move away from the salient ideas from the first part of the sentence, and toward a point of melodic and harmonic closure.

- Authentic cadential progressions
- Half-cadential progressions

Exercise

Provide an analysis of the basic idea, the phrases, the harmonic analysis, *etc.* for Mozart's Violin Sonata in A, K.402, mm.1--8:

Provide an analysis of the basic idea, the phrases, the harmonic analysis, *etc.* for Mozart's Piano Sonata in D, K.311, iii mm.1--8:

A musical score for two staves. The top staff is for the piano right hand, starting with a dynamic 'p' (pianissimo). It features a series of eighth-note chords and sixteenth-note patterns. The bottom staff is for the piano left hand, showing bass notes and harmonic support. The key signature is one sharp (F# major), and the time signature alternates between common time and 6/8.

Periods

The most common theme type in classical instrumental music is the eight-measure *period*. The period is divided into **two, four-measure phrases** fulfilling an **antecedent-consequent** relationship.

We can see a great example of this in the opening of the second movement of Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*:

The Antecedent Phrase

Again, we begin with a two-measure basic idea.

"In a sentence, the basic idea is immediately repeated, but in a period, the basic idea is juxtaposed with a contrasting idea, one that brings a weak cadence" (Caplin, 49)

Contrasting Idea

The contrasting idea introduces new motivic content. Contrast can be achieved by looking at a number of the elements that we've previously touched on this semester: texture, dynamics, and articulation.

As you can see from the example below, Haydn begins with a basic idea with an arpeggiated ascent in his Piano Trio in C (HV 27, iii, mm.1--8), but the scalar descent in the following measures, indicates that this is a contrasting idea. The consequent phrases continues this pattern of basic idea, followed by contrasting idea.

The most important contrast between the basic idea and the contrasting idea, however, is not melodic, but harmonic content. Remember, **the basic idea is supported by a tonic prolongational progression, whereas the contrasting idea should close with a cadential progression**.

Here, in Mozart's Piano Concerto in F, K.459, we have a basic idea presented in the first two measures, and a contrasting idea takes over at the end of m.2. We might think that it is not a contrasting idea, but some sort of repetition, but the harmonic context moves to a half cadence in m.4, whereas the basic idea doesn't. The consequent phrases follows this formula, as well.

"A basic idea followed by a contrasting idea does not in itself constitute an antecedent. Essential to this function is the presence of a weak cadence that effects partial closure of the phrase." (Caplin, 51)

Most antecedent phrases will end with a half cadence; this allows for some sort of contrast when the consequent phrases ends with more resolution, with a Perfect Authentic Cadence.

Exercise

Write an eight-measure period using the given harmonic function and figured bass. Make sure to follow **all part-writing rules**. This includes no parallels, the treatment of the leading tone, range, and spacing issues.

Piano

I V₅⁶ I VI V₃⁴ / V V(HC)

5

Pno.

I II₆ V I