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One of the basic assumptions that underlies the undergraduate theory curricula of most colleges and universities is that instruction in counterpoint, harmony, and form will prepare students to do analysis. In some respects, this assumption is valid: a student who understands how passing tones and suspensions work will stand on more solid ground in a Schenkerian analysis course than one who does not. But for the sort of analysis whose goals are less clearly prescribed—when we ask students to make an argument about a work's striking qualities, its particularly beautiful or eccentric events, about what gives it its special character—here, I would maintain, this assumption is misplaced: the typical Freshman-Sophomore sequence proves largely inadequate as a preparation for analysis.

Whether an ability to do analysis is the chief aim of undergraduate instruction in theory is another question. I would argue that it should be, but this is not the issue I intend to take up here. It is likely that the larger community of teachers of music theory would agree that at least one of the goals of undergraduate theory instruction is to develop an ability to analyze music, however that activity is defined. That said, why do the experiences of so many of us confirm this failure of the first years' instruction to develop into an ability to do analysis?

I would suggest that the difficulty is owed not so much to a lack of technical preparation as to a misunderstanding of the process. That is, we fail to bridge the gap between an ability to identify contrapuntal, harmonic, and formal features, and a process whose central quality is an argument, an analytical point of view.

What may seem a simple problem and an easy fix, though, is anything but. Coaxing students to develop and to articulate an analytical point of view is a formidable task. Sadly, the very idea seems thoroughly unfamiliar to most, and as a result, both the knowledge of how and where to begin and the confidence to succeed are in short supply. As a first step, some sense of what we mean by an analytical viewpoint must be conveyed. I have found

an analogy to be the most successful means to this end. A trial lawyer addressing a jury, thanks to television serials and movies, is an image that all students can easily call to mind. This lawyer, they understand, is in possession of a body of evidence. But simply running down the list of that evidence, they also understand, would be a losing strategy. The result would be a bored, frustrated, and confused jury. Instead, the lawyer's task is one of interpretation. Tell the jury a story, simple and concise. Here is what happened! This viewpoint, then, provides context and meaning to all of the individual pieces of evidence presented to them. The viewpoint is everything.

An obvious second step, then, is to make the formation and expression of a viewpoint a central part of the analysis assignment. Guidance is required here, as well. Analytical viewpoints may range widely in many respects, of course, and constraints must be imposed to ensure that students develop a "way in" to a piece that is both manageable and likely to provide a measure of success. Trial and error with a number of classes has led me to focus on one approach to this stage of the process that seems most helpful to students: I ask them to direct their thinking toward the notion of musical "agency," which I define as the capacity of some musical element or idea to influence the course of events. Their analysis, then, will assert that the agent of the piece acts as the guiding force or principle in how the music unfolds. Rather than attempting to be "comprehensive"—which inevitably turns out to be "unfocused," euphemistically characterized—their work will concentrate relentlessly on the workings of this agent, and will try to persuade the reader that viewing the piece through this particular lens is compelling.

Finally, most students require at least some direction in identifying an agent. We want students to learn to do this for themselves, of course, but this is a goal best approached gradually. One strategy here may be to have students submit their ideas for agents and to provide feedback that will help them rethink or hone those ideas. An important precept in my classes is that many analytical perspectives are valid and that their analyses should represent their views—and not try to anticipate my views—on a piece. Because this is an idea that seems to require frequent emphasis, I try to avoid processes that involve my having to approve or agree with their ideas for agents. Instead, I try to provide direction while their ideas are being formulated. One approach is to allow class discussion to carry the

initial stages of the process, to identify a small number of a work's qualities that should suggest ideas for agents, and to have them proceed from that point individually. Another alternative is to have students work in groups of three or four members to come up with agents. We do a number of activities in these small groups in my classes, so students are accustomed to working this way. As they work, I wander around the classroom eavesdropping and inserting an occasional remark. I have used this procedure several times in the past few years, and have been very pleased with the result. Groups have a way of filtering out the really impenetrable ideas that some students tend to come up with individually.

Once these steps have been taken, students are given a written assignment that is comprised of three parts. The first is a one-paragraph description of the piece—its outer form and characteristic features. The second part is a "point of view" statement. Two restrictions are set here: first, these statements must be concise—no more than a sentence or two; second, the agent they describe must flow out of the description of the piece as given in their opening paragraph. The third part of the assignment is the analysis itself. Once again, students are admonished not to stray from their point of view: every word they write should serve the argument for that idea.

The balance of the essay will illustrate this process using two well-known pieces that have served well in recent classes. At the conclusion of each analysis, I will provide summaries of analyses that proceed from contrasting agents and viewpoints, in each case taken from my students' work. I will close with a note on the usefulness of this process in large classes.

Chopin, Mazurka 49 in F minor, Op. 68/4[1]

Description: The piece is cast in an "ABA" design. The opening section is closed in tonic F minor. The "B" section is tonally open, leading to V, and, though it gets away from the tonic, does not establish a contrasting key area. While this is more typical of digression sections in rounded binary forms, here the "B" section has sufficient weight and independence that the piece is best understood as a sectional ternary form.[2] The surface texture of the opening music is thoroughly chromatic, both in the melody of the right hand and in the individual voices that comprise the accompanying chords. This feature is introduced in the initial melodic gesture, where D♭5 appears as the upper neighbor to C5. The "A" section is fashioned from a single eight-bar phrase and its varied restatement. That restatement is expanded internally by means of a striking digression into A major. The link between the F-minor phrase and the A-major digression is the D♭, enharmonically reinterpreted as C♯.

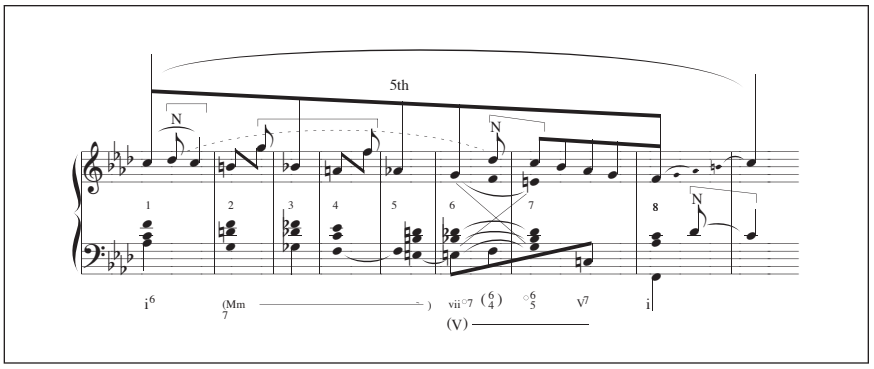
"Point of View" Statement: The tone D♭/C♯5, the "agent" of the piece, is assigned privileged status. It acts as a point of reference, remaining frozen as the musical context changes around it, and, bound as neighbor to C5, defines the voice-leading motion that characterizes much of the piece.

Analysis: Example 1 simplifies the opening eight-measure phrase. The chromatic descent that guides all voices springs from the first melodic idea of the piece, the C-D♭-C neighbor motion. Chopin maintains outer-voice M10^{ths} through the first five

[1]The version of the piece I am using is the partial transcription by his amanuensis, Julian Fontana, of the sketch that Chopin left behind. This version omits one whole section and several repetitions of other sections implied in Chopin's sketch. For an account of the complex history of attempts to reconstruct the sketch, see Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996): 118-34. A brief discussion of the piece also appears in Steven G. Laitz, *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2003): 547-51.

[2]Melodically (or thematically), both the rounded binary and ternary forms express an "ABA" design. The difference between the A | BA rounded-binary and the A | B | A ternary conceptions turns on the musical "substance" of the B section, a quality influenced by a number of factors.

measures: in the i^{6} chord of m. 1, the M10th occurs as the 3rd and 5th of the triad; thereafter, this interval represents the root and 3rd of a series of Mm7th chords. None carries any harmonic function, of course, and by the time we reach the Mm7th chord on E♮ in m. 5, our sense of tonal priority has grown vague in the chromatic haze. In m. 6 Chopin allows the upper three chord tones to descend, but keeps the bass E♮ in place, creating a °7th chord. This harmony, vii°^{7}, moves through a passing $\frac{6}{4}$ chord to its $\frac{6}{5}$ position in m. 7, and on the third beat becomes the root-position V^{7} that allows closure of the phrase.



Example 1. Chopin, Mazurka 49 in F minor, Op. 68, no. 4, mm. 1-8

The arrival on the °7th chord in m. 6 breaks the symmetry of the parallel Mm7th chords but, lacking an immediate tonal context, does not revive our tonal focus. It is only with the motion through the B♭-minor $\frac{6}{4}$ chord and into the $^{\circ 6}_{5}$ that we hear this °7th on E♮ as vii°^{7}. Note that this passing $\frac{6}{4}$ chord coincides with a return of the D♭5 neighbor tone. This tone initiates a closing melodic gesture that summarizes the descending-5th descent that shapes the whole of the opening phrase. Chopin signals the long-delayed return to a functional harmony, then—and to our tonal bearings—with a poetic recurrence of the opening D♭5 chromatic neighbor.

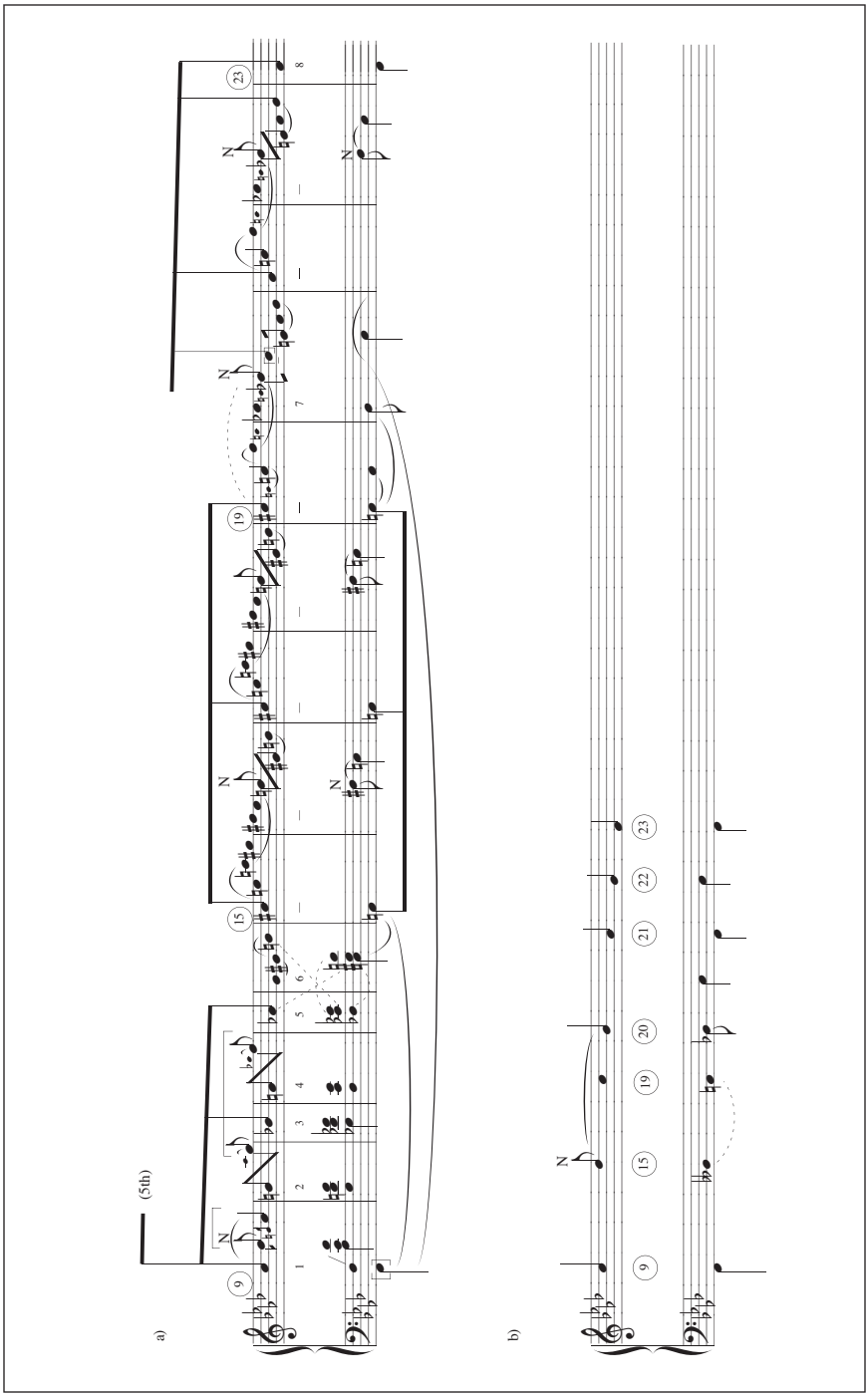
A restatement of the opening phrase begins in m. 9, but extends not eight but fifteen measures, reaching its cadence in m. 23. Its expansion is effected by an interpolation involving an extraordinary shift into A major, which, in the context of F minor, has a remarkably bright quality. The contrast is especially vivid because our attention is drawn to the transformation of D♭ into C♯ as the main tone of melodic focus. The expansion results, then, from the already prominent D♭ neighbor of the opening phrase being elevated to a higher level of

structural import in the restatement. Example 2 illustrates. Here the neighbor tone, as C♯, is given consonant support in tonicized A major, whose extension causes a temporary departure from the unfolding of the underlying eight-bar phrase. The example uses numbers between the staves to show this underlying phrase, and dashes to indicate the digression. The main part of the latter is the five-bar interpolation following the sixth measure of the phrase. In m. 20 the C♯5 of the A-major prolongation reassumes its role as D♭5, signaling a resumption of the underlying phrase. Measures 21-22 confirm the return to D♭5 and produce a further expansion of the phrase with their repetition of the melodic gesture of mm. 19-20 before the final bar of the basic eight-bar unit sounds in m. 23.

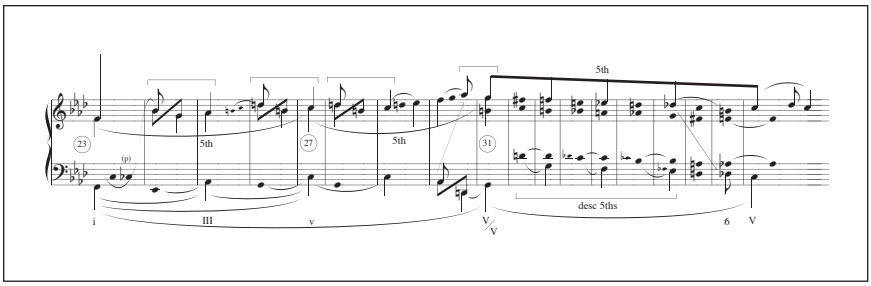
The turning of C♯ back into D♭ is beautifully simple. In m. 19 C♯ moves to C♮ which then leaps up a 4th to F. This changes the A2 in the bass from root to chordal third, which resolves as leading-tone to B♭2 on the downbeat of m. 20. Meanwhile, F5 in the soprano passes through the chordal 7th, E♭5, which urges resolution to D♭5.

Chopin accomplishes two things with this deft transformation. First, the consequent proximity of A-major and F-minor passages maximizes their contrast. Second, it integrates the A-major passage into the underlying voice-leading of the phrase; a more complex or extended passage would tend to have had the opposite effect, isolating the interpolated material. In Example 2b, mm. 15-19 are represented by B𝄫, rather than A♮, in the bass in order to depict the soprano tone as D♭. This notation emphasizes the kinship between the first and second phrases, and illustrates that the derivation of the one from the other turns on an emphasis upon D♭5.

Though the "B" section provides a contrast in character, the neighbor figure and stepwise 5th motion that it embellishes are maintained as the central ideas, and thereby provide a powerful bond between the two sections. The linking of the sections is effected by a passing motion through the tenor-voice C♭ in m. 23 to the soprano B♭ of m. 24, a simple and beautiful gesture that recalls the D♭-C neighbor figure of the opening. As Example 3 illustrates, successive ascending stepwise 5ths, the first from F4 to C5, the second from C5 to G5, carry the music from i in m 23 to V/V in m. 31. Both ascents are embellished prominently by upper-neighbor tones, which are bracketed in the example.



Example 2. Chopin, Op. 68, no. 4, mm. 9-23



Example 3. Chopin, Op. 68, no. 4, mm. 23-40

The second stage of the "B" section, though quite different in character, shares several basic features with the work's opening music. Here a 5th-sequence of interlocking V^7 chords results in stepwise chromatic descents in two voices a tritone apart. Chopin adds chromatic passing tones in the tenor voice, creating a series of Mm7th chords with three voices in chromatic descent. Differences between this passage and that of the opening are the motion of the bass voice and the root movement it describes. The arrival of D♭5 in the soprano in m. 37 signals the end of the 5th-sequence and a change in surface figuration. A new sequential gesture pushes the music down in parallel Mm7th chords, reaching D♭3 in the bass in m. 39. Its Mm7th is treated as a Gr^{+6}…, which moves to the home dominant in m. 40—marked by the conspicuous motion of D♭ into C.

A wonderful effect is created by the opening gesture of the reprise being set within the V^6_4. It might be argued that this carries further the quality of a diluted tonic already present in the work's initial i^6, which contributes to the harmonically unanchored nature of the opening phrase.[3] But it is quite possible to hear other than a dominant prolongation through m. 40. An elision is also a reasonable interpretation. The German augmented 6th-chord, of course, normally leads into a dominant embellished by a cadential $^6_4$ in order to avoid surface parallel 5ths. As the melody signals the reprise in the second half of the measure, though, dominant harmony gives way to the tonic point of departure of the opening phrase. The unstable, decorative quality of the notes of the $^6_4$, A♭ and

[3]While it is undeniable that the opening i^6 depletes somewhat the stability that would attach to a root-position tonic, it does not necessarily follow that a desire for this effect was the reason for the choice. It is at least as plausible that the i^6 support for a melody that begins on scale-degree 5 is due to a desire for outer-voice 10ths rather than 12ths. (A similar passage begins the E-minor Prelude.) Understood in this way, the listener may not hear the tonic as weakened in any real sense.

F, seems to evaporate, and these tones become the stable 3rd and root of tonic harmony. One might say, then, that the $\frac{6}{4}$–$\frac{5}{3}$ resolution occurs, but is not written into the music; rather, it is understood, or, more accurately, it is provided by the listener.[4]

By way of summary, the "point of view" statement at the outset assigned privileged status to the tone D♭5, asserting that, as musical "agent," this tone shapes the course of the piece. In the opening phrase D♭5 appears in the first melodic gesture, and is regained as tonal focus is reestablished late in the phrase. The expansion of the varied repetition of this phrase from eight to fifteen measures is the result of an interpolated passage that fixes upon D♭5, turning the fleeting neighbor tone into the stable 3rd of the locally tonicized A major. The transformation of C♯5 back into D♭5 brings the opening section to a close. In the opening eight bars of the middle section, it is not the D♭ itself, but rather its neighbor-note function, as well as the 5th-span it embellishes, that are chiefly influential. With the ascent to G5, the 5th-sequence reestablishes the descending chromatic voices that issued originally from the D♭5-C5 neighbor figure. The sequence breaks precisely as D♭5 is regained in the soprano, and from here parallel Mm 7th chords push down to the one built on D♭3. This chord is reinterpreted as a Gr+6, which urges motion into the dominant, and, of course, D♭ into C in the bass. Finally, resolution of the V^6_4 is conceptual rather than actual, an eccentricity that throws light on the return of the seminal D♭5-C5 gesture that signals the reprise. It is no hyperbole, then, to say that D♭5 is felt in every measure of the work.

[4]This interpretation points to a larger idea of which this passage is just one example: that conventional patterns in music become a compositional resource, since they trigger an expectation in the listener which a composer can exploit. Numerous examples come to mind that suggest a broad range of interplay between the anticipated and the actual. In the present example, it is as if having arrived on the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$, since his audience knows perfectly well how this pattern works, Chopin allows us to complete it for ourselves while he goes on to the next idea. It might be pointed out to students that they themselves do this very thing all the time in conversation, abandoning ideas in mid-sentence once the meaning has been conveyed, and moving on to the next thought.

I have used this piece successfully in class assignments over several years. Most recently, one student identified the agent as "chromatic descent," and viewed the piece as an attempt to "expand two typical contexts for chromatic lines, the descending bass tetrachord from tonic to dominant and the descending 5th sequence with interlocking 7ths." These two contexts had been taken up in class, of course, and the student's analysis tried to trace all of the chromatic descents in the piece back to one of these two models. Though not entirely successful, it was nonetheless a very thorough and focused analysis.

Another student decided that "the neighbor tone" was the agent, and argued that "neighbor tones are primarily responsible for delaying the arrival of melodic chord tones and thereby cause the restless and haunting character of the music." The analysis became a dogged search for neighbor tones, and while a few passing tones and chord tones got caught up in the process, of particular value was the student's attempt to sort out passages such as the melodic line of mm. 9-10, where it was argued that five neighbor tones occur in succession, the D♭'s and B♮ to the foregoing C, and the C and A♯ to the following B.

Schumann: "Walzer" (Albumblätter, Op. 124, No. 4)

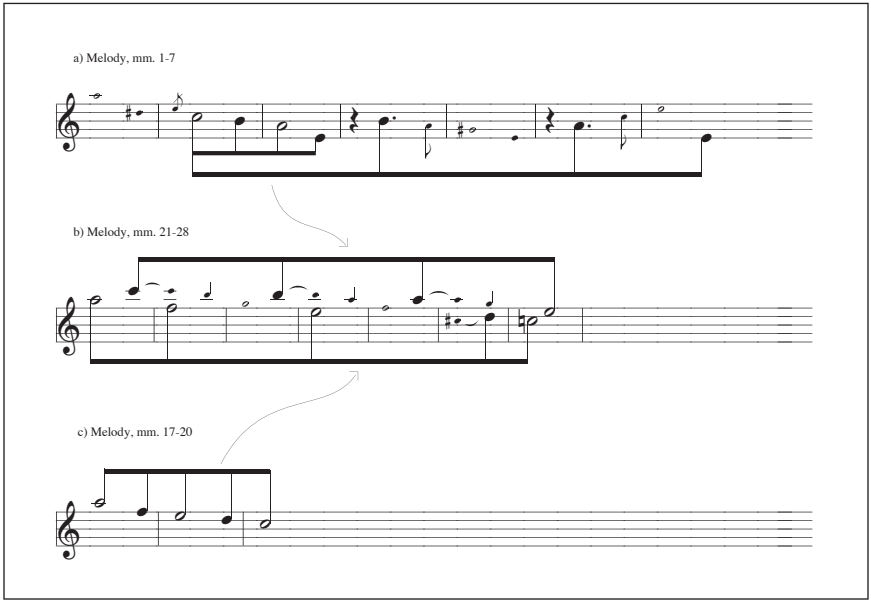
Description: This work, like the Chopin Mazurka, is cast in a broad three-part design. The "A" section is comprised of two eight-measure phrases, whose antecedent-consequent relationship forms a parallel interrupted period. Though the "B" section is comprised largely of a descending-5th sequence (again, like the Chopin), typical of the "digression" in a rounded-binary form, its contrasting key area and repetition make the section sufficiently substantial to counterpoise the surrounding "A" sections, suggesting a ternary conception. The most conspicuous feature is the F2-A5 dyad that serves as point of departure for every phrase in the piece (can a similar claim be made of any other piece?), and which is heard eight times through the course of this brief work, each on the first beat of a hypermetrically accented bar, and each sounding alone until the complete harmony appears on the second beat.

"Point of View" Statement: The agent here is the ambiguity in meaning or function that attaches to the F2-A5 dyad. This quality draws attention to these tones, and thereby creates a source of both unity and contrast: the former through the recurrences of the dyad; the latter through the different harmonic contexts into which it is set.

Analysis: The ambiguous quality of the F2-A5 dyad is established in the opening measure, as Schumann sets these tones within a completely unexpected context: as the 3rd and 5th of a Gr^{+6} chord in A minor.[5] This function becomes apparent, however, only with the arrival of the dominant on E2 in m. 2. The opening dyad leads us to expect a major triad on F, which, being the first sonority of the piece, we would tend to hear as the tonic. On the second beat, though, D♯ and C♮ are added to the F and A. This new information causes us to revise our assumption of an F tonic triad; what we have instead, apparently, is a V^7 chord on F. With the downbeat of m. 2, we realize that we are twice deceived. Schumann keeps us off balance with an irregular phrase structure: the eight-measure antecedent phrase divides into groupings of 3 + 2 + 2 + 1. The consequent phrase begins with the same three-bar unit that began the opening phrase before following its own course to closure, again setting forth an irregular division, this time into 3 + 3 + 2 measures.

It is left for the "B" section to realize the tonal context for the F2-A5 dyad that the listener anticipated but was denied in m. 1. Here, as a reflection of this more predictable course, the phrase structure unfolds a regular design. A four-measure phrase that leads from the (local) tonic to the dominant is followed by an eight-measure phrase that is framed by these same harmonic degrees. That the "B" section should end on the dominant is necessary, of course, since the motion from this harmony into the F2-A5 dyad that signals the return of the "A" section is integral to the central idea of the piece. In fact, that the first beat of m. 29 is this time heard *explicitly* to function as an F-major tonic triad makes its reinterpretation as the Gr^{+6} in A minor all the more vivid, and reenergizes the imbalance that so characterizes the outer sections of the work and that is so decidedly absent from the central section.

[5]Beginning a piece with an augmented-6th chord is very unusual, of course, but Schumann employs this strategy to great effect here and elsewhere. See, for example, *Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen*, the twelfth song from *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48, where, in addition to beginning the work with the Gr^{+6} chord, Schumann later reinterprets this chord as $V^7/♭II$.



Example 4. Schumann, "Walzer" from Albumblätter, Op. 124

Set against the contrasts between the "A" and "B" sections are a number of similarities, which perhaps acknowledge and issue from the identity of the sections' opening sonorities. Their initial melodic gestures are alike in rhythm and contour, and the manner of accompaniment remains unchanged. The final eight measures of the "B" section unfold a descending-5th sequence that alternates root-position and first-inversion triads. This allows for an upper-voice figuration that integrates the phrase melodically within the piece. Example 4 illustrates the detail of this integration. The melody of the opening phrase is given at a). As the beams show, the segment of mm. 2-3 is nested within a broader occurrence of that same segment that shapes the phrase. The melody of mm. 17-20 is shown at c), and that of mm. 21-28 at b). The arrows projected from a) and c) toward b) suggest that the latter is formed as a conflation of the other two. Points of contrast and of unity, then, are salient features of this work, and, as proposed at the outset, both flow out of the workings of the F2-A5 dyad that its harmonic ambiguity allow.

This piece has also prompted many insightful interpretations in several classes of students. The most sophisticated came from a student who named "contrast within unity" as the agent, and argued that in a "B" section whose tempo, rhythmic figures, and

melodic shape remained unchanged from the previous section, the contrast that one expects to find is provided by metric regularity and, tonally, "begin-clarified gestures," as opposed to the metric irregularity and "end-clarified gestures" of the "A" section.

* * *

Finally, as promised, an observation of pragmatic importance. The foregoing analytical commentaries comprise approximately 1600 and 700 words, respectively. In double-spaced, 12-point, Palatino font, these numbers translate roughly to five and two pages. Many of us face enrollments in undergraduate analysis classes in the thirties, forties, even fifties. This creates an intractable challenge: how to design a written analysis assignment that can be both substantive and of manageable length. The approach discussed here offers a solution. The constraints on the scope of students' discussion imposed by the "viewpoint" ensures that succinctness be a central concern. At the same time, that very requirement of an articulated viewpoint demands a thorough and thoughtful consideration of the music.