On the Nature of Structural Framing

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Initial Considerations

Structural framing is the reference to initial material at the end of a formal unit; this formal unit might be a theme, section, movement or even a multi-movement work. Structural framing is a special kind of thematic restatement that is fundamentally distinct from recapitulation or apotheosis. Whereas a recapitulation associates the *beginning* of one section with the *beginning* of another section, a structural frame associates the *beginning* of one section with its *end*.[1] Thus a recapitulation is a re-beginning, an apotheosis is a triumphant arrival, and a structural frame is a closing gesture – a parting 'adieu' that assists the listener in the conceptual encompassment of a formal unit.

One occasionally encounters references to 'framing' techniques in the analytical literature. Given their popularity it is surprising to find that no studies focus on framing itself, or address the subtle differences between frames and other types of thematic recurrence. William Rothstein, James Hepokoski and Marianne Kielian-Gilbert are three scholars who invoke the notion of framing.[2] Rothstein, in a chapter on Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, describes a 'framing device' that is 'obviously meant to invoke an accompanimental prelude and postlude to an actual song' (p. 202). Hepokoski posits an 'introduction–coda frame' as the second of five types of 'deformational procedures' shared by nineteenth-century symphonic modernists. According to him, this procedure 'gives the effect of subordinating "sonata-activity" to the overriding contents of

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This paper is a modification of 'Structural Framing, Recapitulation, and Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*', delivered at the Annual Music Theory Midwest Conference held in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1996, and an expanded version of 'On the Nature of Structural Framing', given at the 13th Biennial International Conference on 19th-Century Music, held in Durham, UK, July 2004.

[1] In contrast to the 'progressive' dynamic of an apotheosis (which, after Edward Cone, is 'a grand restatement of a theme with unexpected harmonic richness and textual excitement'), a frame typically has a more 'recessive' dynamic (to use Wallace Berry's term). See E.T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), and Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). More recent studies of apotheosis in the music of Chopin include Michael Klein, 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative', *Music Theory Spectrum* 26/1 (2004): 23–55, and Carl Schachter, Review of Jim Samson's *The Music of Chopin*, *Music Analysis* 8/1–2 (1988): 187–97.

[2] See Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, 'The Rhythms of Form: Correspondence and Analogy in Stravinsky's Designs', *Music Theory Spectrum* 9 (1987): 42–66; James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), Chapter 6.

Nineteenth-Century Music Review, 4/1 (2007): 3–29. Copyright © Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000045 Published online by Cambridge University Press

an encasing introduction and coda'. Hepokoski identifies several works that feature introduction–coda frames, all occurring at what we would refer to as the movement level.[3] Kielian-Gilbert describes Stravinsky's practice of 'framing the beginning and end of a design by a restated musical idea'.[4] The crux of the article, however, is not framing *per se*, but what the author describes as 'relational patterning', the 'interconnection and association of successions of individual, seemingly independent events' (p. 66).

The aim of the present study is to shed light on the phenomenon of structural framing through a variety of examples drawn from nineteenth-century music. Before we begin, however, three things should be stressed. The first is that the nineteenth century has no monopoly on framing: frames abound in earlier and later repertoires, from the Baroque to the present.[5] Yet, as we hope to demonstrate, the formal and expressive predilections of Romantic composers make framing in the nineteenth century a particularly rewarding study. Second, in an effort to manage the scope of this general introduction to the topic of framing, we will be obliged to gloss over many of the subtle or broader-reaching analytical details of some of your favourite examples. And third, several of the compositions that we shall survey have been discussed elsewhere, and a number of the same analytical points have been made by others, albeit not as part of a general discussion of the nature of structural framing.

Figure 1 shows the quadrant of thematic associations that are possible between the beginnings and endings of formal units in music: beginning–beginning, beginning–ending, ending–beginning and ending–ending. Recapitulation, of course, associates the beginning of one unit with the beginning of another unit; structural framing associates a beginning with an ending; linkage technique associates an ending and a beginning; and a closing parallelism associates an ending and an ending. As Figure 2 indicates, each association has a rhetorical analogue. Repetition of the first word or phrase at the beginning of successive poetic or dramatic lines is *anaphora*. In literature, repetition at the beginning of successive lines is usually designed to provoke emphatic determination through narrow variation, as in Churchill's 'We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight

[3] Specifically, Hepokoski lists as 'fully developed examples' Wagner's Overture to *Tannhäuser* and the initial movements of Tchaikovsky's Second, Glazunov's Fourth, and Elgar's First Symphonies, and as 'less developed examples' Mendelssohn's Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, several overtures of Berlioz, and the first movements of Schubert's Ninth and Mendelssohn's 'Scottish' Symphonies (p. 6).

[4] Kielian-Gilbert, speaking of the transposed repetition of the bassoon solo in the introduction to the *Rite of Spring*, and the brass fanfare at the beginning and end of 'The Soldier's March' from *L'Histoire du soldat*, points out that 'their formal repetition effects closure apart from their difference in transposition' (p. 48).

[5] Even a cursory view of the literature suggests the ubiquity of structural frames. In addition to countless frames in the nineteenth century, we can find examples in a multitude of vocal and instrumental works throughout the ages. Readers will certainly have their own favourites; a few of ours include: Bach (*Magnificat*); Haydn (Trio, Hob. XV: 18, i), Mozart (Symphony 40, i and iv); Bartók (*Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, i), Britten (Canticle No. 2, 'Abraham and Isaac'), Debussy (*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*), Messiaen (*Quartet for the End of Time*), Penderecki (Prelude for Solo Clarinet), Ravel (Sonata for Violin and Cello, iii), Sessions (Sonata for Solo Cello, i, and Second Piano Sonata, i), Schoenberg (Violin Concerto op. 36, i), Stravinsky (Serenade in La), and Webern (Saxophone Quartet op. 22, i); as well as progressive rock albums such as Genesis's *Selling England By the Pound* and *Duke* and Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*.

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Recapitulation	associates	**beginning**	with	**beginning**
Structural framing	associates	**beginning**	with	**ending**
Linkage technique	associates	**ending**	with	**beginning**
Closing parallelism	associates	**ending**	with	**ending**

Fig. 1 A 'quadrant' of thematic associations

Recapitulation	⇔	*anaphora*
Linkage	⇔	*anadiplosis*
Closing parallelism	⇔	*epistrophe*
Structural framing	⇔	*epanalepsis*

Anaphora; '*We shall fight* on the beaches, *we shall fight* on the landing groups, *we shall fight* in the fields and in the streets …' (Churchill).
Anadiplosis: 'Flowers in a basket, Basket on the bed, Bed in the chamber, Chamber in the house…' (Nursery rhyme).
Epistrophe: 'Do/You know *nothing*? Do you see *nothing*? Do you remember/ *Nothing*?' (Eliot, *Waste Land*).
Epanalepsis: a figure of speech or emphasis in which the same word or words both begin(s) and end(s) a phrase, clause or sentence:
- '*A lie* begets *a lie*' (English proverb)
- '*Nothing* will come of *nothing*' (*King Lear*)
- '*Common* sense is not so *common*' (Voltaire).

Fig. 2 Rhetorical analogues

on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets …', or fateful destiny, as in John Donne's *Elegy* 'On His Mistress': 'By our first strange and fatal interview, / By all desires which thereof did ensue, / By our long starving hopes, by that remorse / Which my words masculine persuasive force / Begot in thee …'. In musical situations, such heightened material redundancy is closer to the norm for initial thematic presentation within a phrase, and surely represents one of the most distinctive features of musical versus linguistic discourse. As we move to associations between phrases, we find antecedent–consequent structures. Moving to the still larger level of beginning–beginning associations at the section level we come to parallel openings in binary forms, and recapitulation in ternary and sonata forms, those essential features of the dramatic narrative of tonal design.

Continuing with the quadrant, Schenker defined the motivic association between the ending of one formal unit and the beginning of the next as *linkage technique*.[6] Linkage is a fundamental feature of musical continuity and a notable device in Brahms's compositional toolkit, one that he (reasonably) claimed to

[6] Schenker's term linkage technique (*Knüpftechnik*) is described in Oswald Jonas, *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker*, trans. and ed. John Rothgeb (New York: Longman, 1982): 7–9 and 134–5. See also Rothgeb's 'Thematic Content: A Schenkerian View', in *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory*, ed. David Beach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 42–5.

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have learned from Haydn. The rhetorical equivalent, *anadiplosis*, is typical of the chain-link nursery rhyme: 'Flowers in a basket, Basket on the bed, Bed in the chamber, Chamber in the house, [etc.]'; or, more humorously cyclic, 'Laugh I thought I'd die, Die I thought they'd bury me, Bury me I thought the worms would tickle my feet, Tickle my feet I thought I'd laugh'. *Epistrophe* is the rhetorical term for ending–ending associations, as in Eliot's *Waste Land*: 'Do / You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember / 'Nothing'?'. The musical equivalent of ending–ending associations is a *closing parallelism*. It is a typical feature of balanced binary forms (and sonata forms), where the concluding passage of the first part returns (generally transposed to the tonic) to conclude the second part. Both passages are normally cadential or post-cadential in formal-harmonic function. Closing parallelisms are heard neither as mere recurrence nor as recapitulation, but rather as a weighted ending again – a kind of rhyming strategy.

And now we turn to structural framing. In rhetoric, repetition at the end of a line, phrase, clause or sentence of the word(s) that began it is *epanalepsis*.[7] Examples include Lear's succinct 'Nothing will come of nothing' and Voltaire's truism 'Common sense is not so common'.[8] In musical situations, one might think that beginning–ending associations would be too commonplace for analytical attention. Yet the phenomenon of structural framing shows a great deal of variety with respect to the length, poetic effect and salience of the

[7] There are, of course, fundamental distinctions between *epanalepsis* in literature and structural framing in music. The ability of composers to 'mark' musical material makes it possible for listeners to recognize structural framing over vast time spans (the frame across Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, for instance, spans several hours). While it would seem quite difficult to recognize *epanalepsis* across the span of an entire novel, the technique is not uncommon in the short-story genre. See, for example, A.S. Byatt, 'The Thing in the Forest', published in *The New Yorker*, 3 June 2002, and reprinted in *The O. Henry Prize Stories 2003*, ed. Laura Furman (New York: Anchor Books), 3–22. The story begins and ends with the line 'There were once two little girls who saw, or believed they saw, a thing in the forest'. (The final line ends with an ellipsis after the last word, 'forest'…)

For a brilliant example of frames (and formal 'boundary play') in a novel see Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981). Esther Calvino, the author's wife, speaks of Italo Calvino's fascination with frames in a postscript to *Under the Jaguar Sun* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1985), a project the author did not complete. She writes: 'in fact, in notes written a few days before he fell ill – when he had started to think about the book's overall structure – Calvino refers to the importance of the frame and defines it': 'Both in art and in literature, the function of the frame is fundamental. It is the frame that marks the boundary between the picture and what is outside. It allows the picture to exist, isolating it from the rest; but at the same time, it recalls – and somehow stands for – everything that remains out of the picture. I might venture a definition: we consider poetic a production in which each individual experience acquires prominence through its detachment from the general continuum, while it retains a kind of glint of that unlimited vastness' (85–6).

[8] The Shakespeare and Voltaire examples feature sentence-size word play. A larger-scale (and more subtle) literary frame occurs in Dylan Thomas's famous villanelle, 'Do not Go Gentle into that Good Night'. The initial line and its line-three partner 'Rage, rage against the dying of the light' form a recurrent pair that, however, only appears decoupled over the course of the poetic form; the lines are finally coupled at the end to form a poetic structural frame. (The framing character of this moment is beautifully realized in Stravinsky's setting of the poem, which has its own framing instrumental prelude and postlude.)

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associative relation. Some frames are patently obvious while others are quite veiled and become apparent only through reductive analysis.

Where do structural frames occur? Figure 3 shows the various locations of structural frames in a prototypical sonata form. At the thematic level, motivic associations can build a framing relation between the opening and the ending of the thematic unit, whether principal (the main theme) or secondary (subordinate theme) in an exposition or recapitulation. In such cases, the associative reference to the idea of the theme must be incorporated into its cadential close.

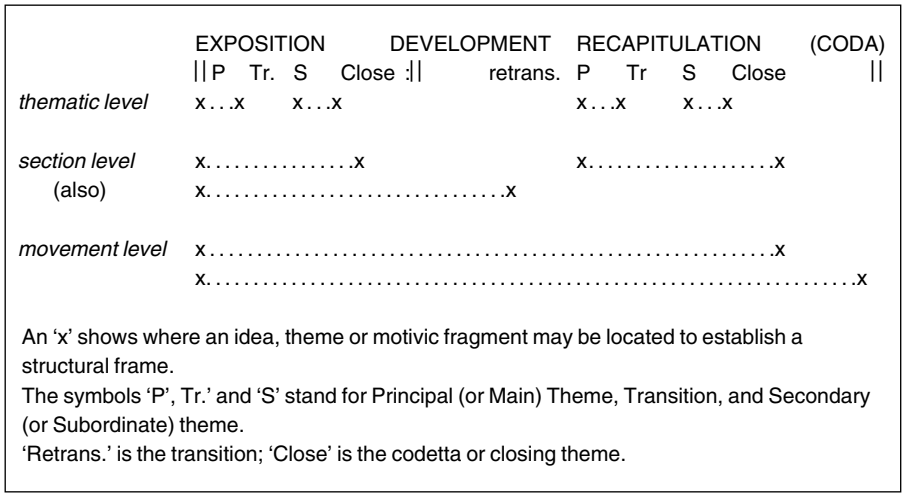


Fig. 3 Locations of structural frames in a prototypical sonata form

This important observation perhaps needs some elaboration. Framing is a phenomenon of motivic association. In order for a beginning–ending association to clinch, or frame, a formal unit, we must experience the framing gesture as being within that unit, indeed as participating in the definition of that unit. In movement-level frames, the framing material obviously associates the beginning and ending of the movement. In cases where this framing consists of a prelude and a postlude, or a relatively closed introduction and a coda, the associated passages are most easily grasped as a 'frame' analogous to our sense of frame in the visual arts. But musical frames at the section level or thematic level depart from the visual analogue and reveal the peculiarly temporal character of musical discourse. Framing that participates in the determination of a theme associates the beginning and ending of that theme. The beginning normally performs a presentational function, the ending a cadential function. Hence the ending portion of the motivic association is routinely incorporated into the cadence. Such motivic cross-reference can be made more manageable with the use of a cadential $^{6}_{4}$, because the opening tonic idea can be remembered in some fashion over the cadential dominant.

In a different way, frames at the section level of course recall material that opened the section. But the end portion of the motivic or thematic association normally appears after the structural cadence that marks the tonal goal of the section. The ending portion, in a manner of speaking, celebrates the section's accomplishment by recalling (often in condensed form) the material with which

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it began. To summarize: in the case of a theme, there is normally no material outside the theme itself, so the framing association is worked into the cadence. In the case of a section, framing material often occurs after the cadential goal is achieved.

At the section level, particularly in codettas and at major points of tonal arrival, a frame is often articulated by an abbreviated or compressed restatement of main-theme material that marks the new scale-degree and closes out the section. As a rule, section-level frames are not worked into the cadences; rather, they begin after them: they are, in William Caplin's terminology, 'post-cadential'.[9] The purpose of codettas, closing themes and retransitions is to cordon off, or 'frame out', the exposition or development sections they conclude. The same kind of framing relation can also be found at the end of B sections in some ternary designs. At the movement level, a framing association can occur between the opening of the exposition and the closing of the recapitulation or between the opening of the movement and its final coda-space. Naturally, structural frames can also occur in non-sonata situations, such as song forms and the ubiquitous ternary instrumental forms.[10]

Before moving on, we should point out that the role of framing at the end of a development section is quite nuanced, and would warrant a separate study. Suffice it to say that a development frame often involves a motivic summation (typically over the dominant) that compresses the structural voice-leading motion of the development section with associative reference to the subordinate and/or main theme as these were evoked in the section. Where the framing reference is to the main theme, the recurrence of that theme at the opening of the recapitulation also effects linkage. (The retransition of the first movement of Mozart's Symphony no. 40 K. 550 is apposite.)

We shall now examine a variety of structural frames in different forms and at different formal levels to reveal more of the character and expressive impact of this important phenomenon. Framing moments are among music's most expressive; we therefore ask your indulgence as we focus on the forest of framing rather than its trees.

[9] See William Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Function for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Caplin's work builds on the *Formenlehre* approaches of Erwin Ratz and Arnold Schoenberg.

[10] Structural frames also occur in rondos and *rondeaux* (both musical and poetic – such as the poems to Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*). A discussion of rondos and other ritornello forms would require a separate study. The recurrence of the ritornello in Baroque forms often feels like a 'falling back in' following passages of developmental 'Fortspinnung' rather than a recapitulation (starting over) or balancing frame. However, a ritornello in the tonic late in the form regularly does sound like a movement-level framing reference back to the opening ritornello. In a multipart (seven-part, ABACABA) or sonata-rondo form, the return of the main theme, or A section, after the middle section (contrasting C section, or development) feels much like a sonata-form recapitulation; however, other recurrences of the theme, those following B sections, have a more subtle role: the first of these acts like the recapitulation of a small-ternary form; the final A section, because its preceding B section is already tonic-transposed, acts more as a final movement-level structural framing statement.
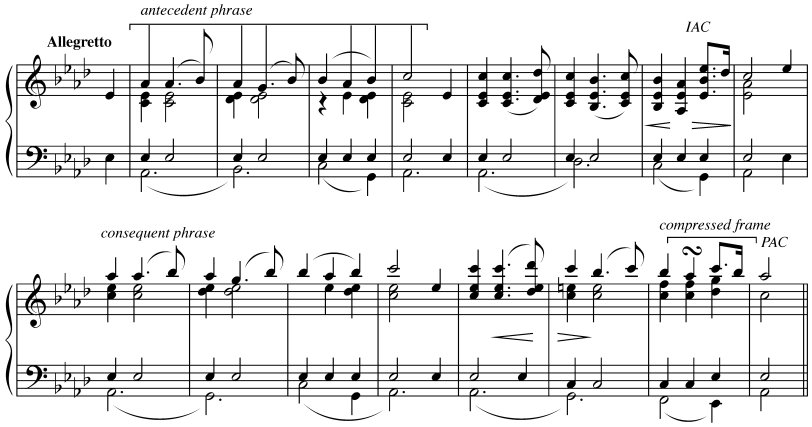
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Thematic- and Section-level Frames
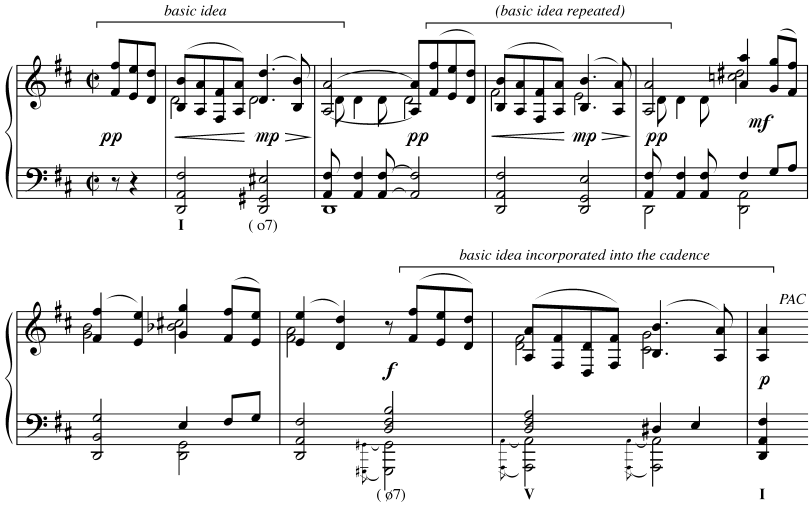
Example 1 shows two thematic-level frames, one classically restrained and quite hidden, the other romantically effusive and quite evident. In Schubert's A♭ major Impromptu, shown in Example 1a, the score annotations show that the initial idea of the antecedent phrase reduces to a neighbouring motion followed by an initial ascent through a third; the idea is embellished by further neighbour notes and appoggiaturas in a turn-like configuration. In this context, the turn figure worked into the cadence at the end of the consequent phrase (though often

Ex. 1 Thematic-level frames

(a) Schubert, Impromptu in A♭ major op. 142, No. 2 (D. 935)



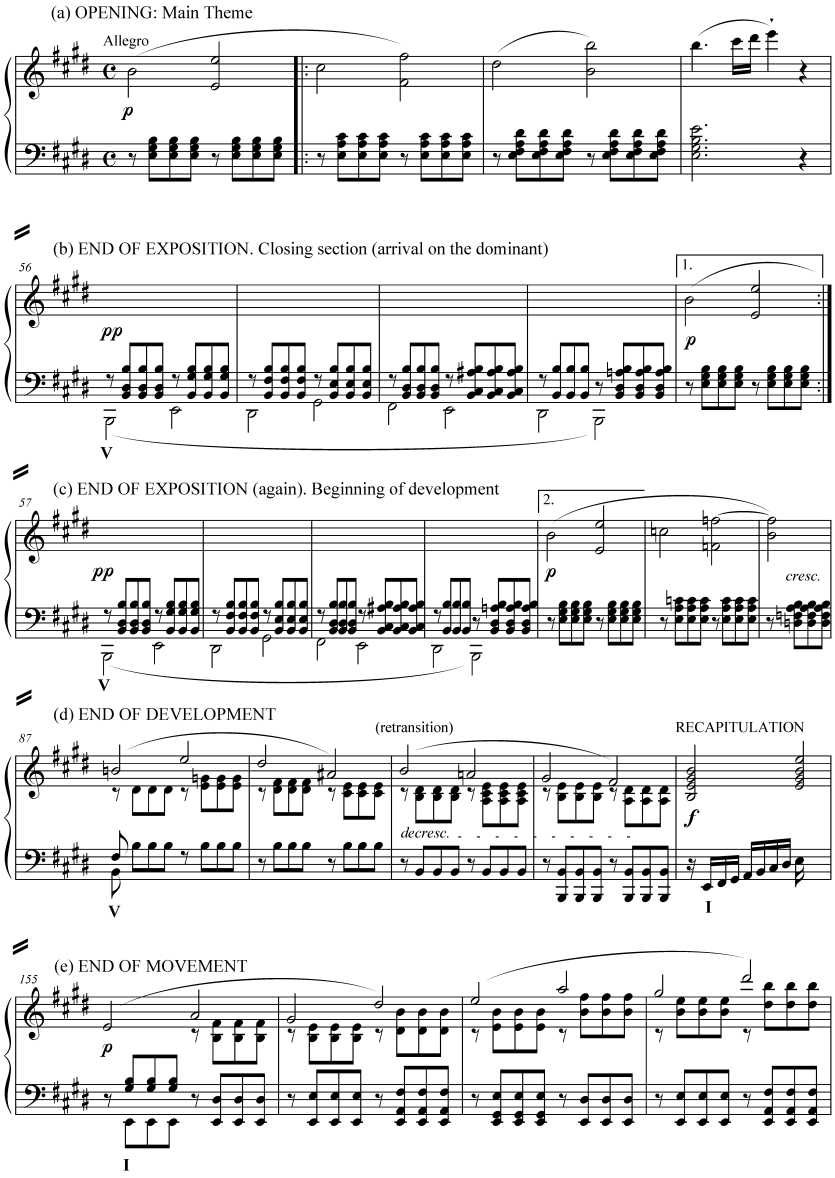
(b) Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 6, i, subordinate theme



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Ex. 2 Section-level frames

Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E Major op. 14, No. 1, i



played as if it were mere frippery) serves as an elegant framing motivic summation as well as a typical cadential liquidation of the theme.

A second thematic-level example displays the subordinate theme from the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony. The theme is a prototypical sentence. Note the narrow variation in the repetition of the basic idea, the recurrence of the diminished seventh and half-diminished seventh sonorities, the

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ubiquitous and far-reaching 6–5 upper-neighbouring motions, and the subtle chromatic details. Here, in a concrete instance of romantic individuation, Tchaikovsky refuses to give up the thematic idea: rather than liquidate it at the cadence, he recalls it in its entirety. We would argue that thematic-level frames are under-recognized, and that the topic itself is under-theorized. Indeed, thematic-level frames are commonly incorporated in (or, alternatively, analytically extracted from) the main themes of Classical-period compositions.

Moving now to section-level frames, Example 2 gives the opening of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E Major op. 14, no. 1. The main theme, with its characteristic minim fourths and accompanying crotchet complementary rhythms, returns, unmistakably though not literally, after the perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in the dominant (see Example 2b). This creates a section-level frame of the exposition. We should note here that composers often take advantage of a section-level frame by composing a delightful ambivalence into the border play that allows us both to go back to the exposition repeat and to go forward into the development. The association of the passage at the end of the exposition with the main theme thus serves as structural frame to the exposition, and as linkage to its repeat (see Example 2b, first ending). It also serves as linkage to the beginning of the development in cases where that section begins with material clearly derived from the codetta of the exposition or from the main theme itself, shown in Example 2c, second ending. (This latter case begins as if it were another exposition repeat that is then quickly disavowed through a modal shift or developmental departure.)[11] Returning to the example, we can see that the end of the development (Example 2d) also brings back a framing reference to the main theme, again unmistakably though not literally, which then becomes the retransition to the recapitulation. Finally, by bringing back the opening idea at the end of the recapitulation, Beethoven frames the movement as a whole (Example 2e).

We can summarize the wealth of thematic associations in the movement as such:

Structural framing:	beginning of movement – end of exposition
	beginning of movement – end of development
	beginning of movement – end of movement
Linkage:	end of exposition – beginning of exposition repeat
	end of development – beginning of recapitulation
Closing parallelism:	end of exposition – end of movement
Recapitulation:	beginning of exposition – beginning of recapitulation

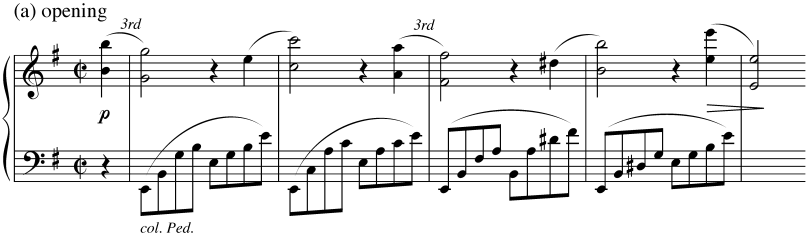
Two points should be stressed. First, this movement (rather atypically) features each of the four types of thematic associations identified in the quadrant of Figure 1. While the associations are not always literal – indeed, there is much to say about the differential details in register, contour, scale-degree inflection, and dynamics – they are easily recognized. Second, virtually every sonata form contains a recapitulation and a closing parallelism. We would assert that many compositions also feature linkage at various major formal junctures, and

[11] Such ambivalence is famously exploited in works such as Beethoven's String Quartet in F Major op. 59, no. 1, where the beginning of the development initially masquerades as the exposition repeat. The same holds true in many movements of Brahms, including the first movements of the Sonata for Violin and Piano op. 78, and the Fourth Symphony, to be discussed shortly.

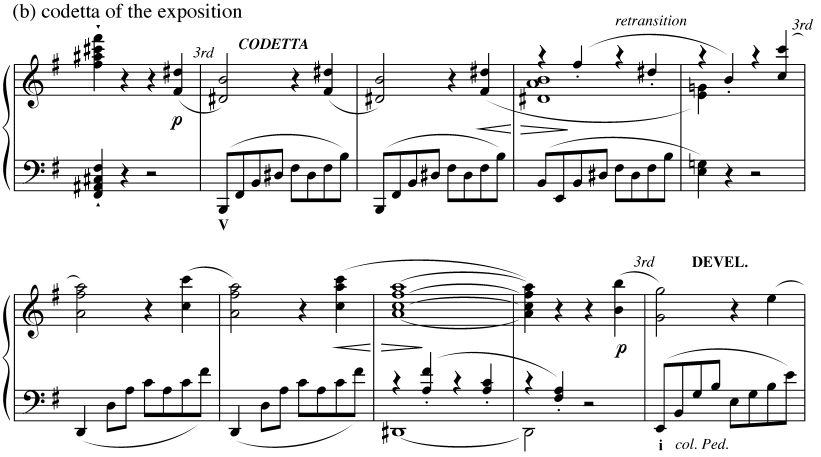
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Ex. 3 Brahms, Symphony No. 4, first movement
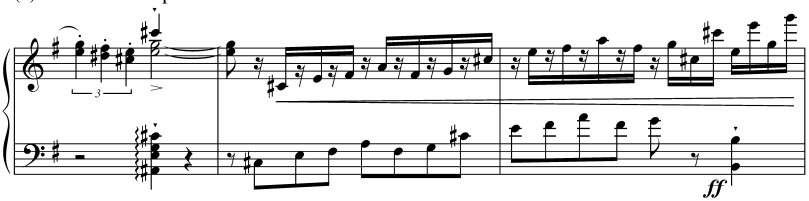
(a) opening



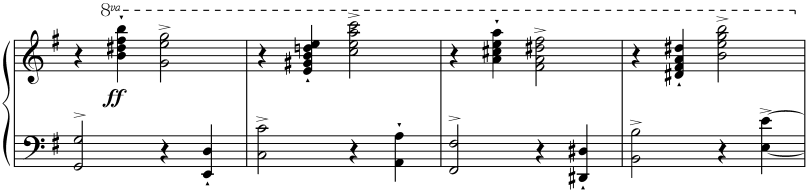
(b) codetta of the exposition



(c) end of the recapitulation



Main theme: an apotheosis, not a frame (it does not end a formal unit)



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structural framing on various formal levels. In this movement, Beethoven's use of structural framing passages at the end of the exposition sets up ambiguous (and understudied) opportunities for linkage, both back to the exposition repeat, and forward to the development.[12]

Example 3 shows the section-level frame of the exposition of the first movement of Brahms's Fourth Symphony. Example 3a shows the main theme, with its characteristic falling thirds (and rising sixths); the theme is based on an underlying B–C–B neighbouring motion that is increasingly exploited throughout the movement. Following a perfect authentic cadence in the dominant, the codetta of the exposition, shown in Example 3b, brings back the characteristic falling thirds, now D♯–B and C–A, as part of a retransition to set up the exposition repeat. Despite his predilection for highly balanced sonata forms, Brahms does not repeat the exposition; instead, the retransition takes us directly into the beginning of the development. This relatively recessive exposition frame does not recur at the end of the recapitulation, shown in Example 3c. Instead, the canonic potential of the main theme is fully realized in a concluding apotheosis. (It is not a frame because the motivic recollection does not occur at the *end* of a formal unit.)

Movement-level Frames

Let us now survey some movement-level frames. The 'prelude = postlude' frame is undoubtedly the most familiar (and easily recognized) type of movement-level frame.[13] Example 4a reproduces a typical prelude = postlude frame in Liszt's 'Freudvoll und leidvoll'. In the prelude, Liszt's somewhat clichéd juxtaposition of major and minor implicates the tonal territory exploited later in the song. Coincident with the final cadence, this prelude material is restated as postlude. The only tweaking that occurs is that the pre-dominant augmented-sixth sonority in the prelude becomes a common-tone augmented-sixth in the postlude, thus replacing the directedness towards the dominant seventh of the opening with the plagal quietude of the motion directed to the tonic at the end. In Example 4b, Schubert's 'Die Krähe', the circling swoop of the crow is depicted in the perambulated scalar descent of the right-hand accompaniment. This motto-like idea is then linked to become the vocal part and left-hand doubling of the song proper. Elided to the PAC at the end of the song, a restatement of this idea forms a framing postlude, extended by deceptive and plagal motions as the crow seems to alight on the poet's future grave. Interestingly enough, such near-literal frames are less common than one might think. Even the Liszt and Schubert examples show slight modifications, invoking typical 'plagalisms' to help focus their end frames. (By 'plagalisms' we mean reworkings that emphasize the subdominant.)
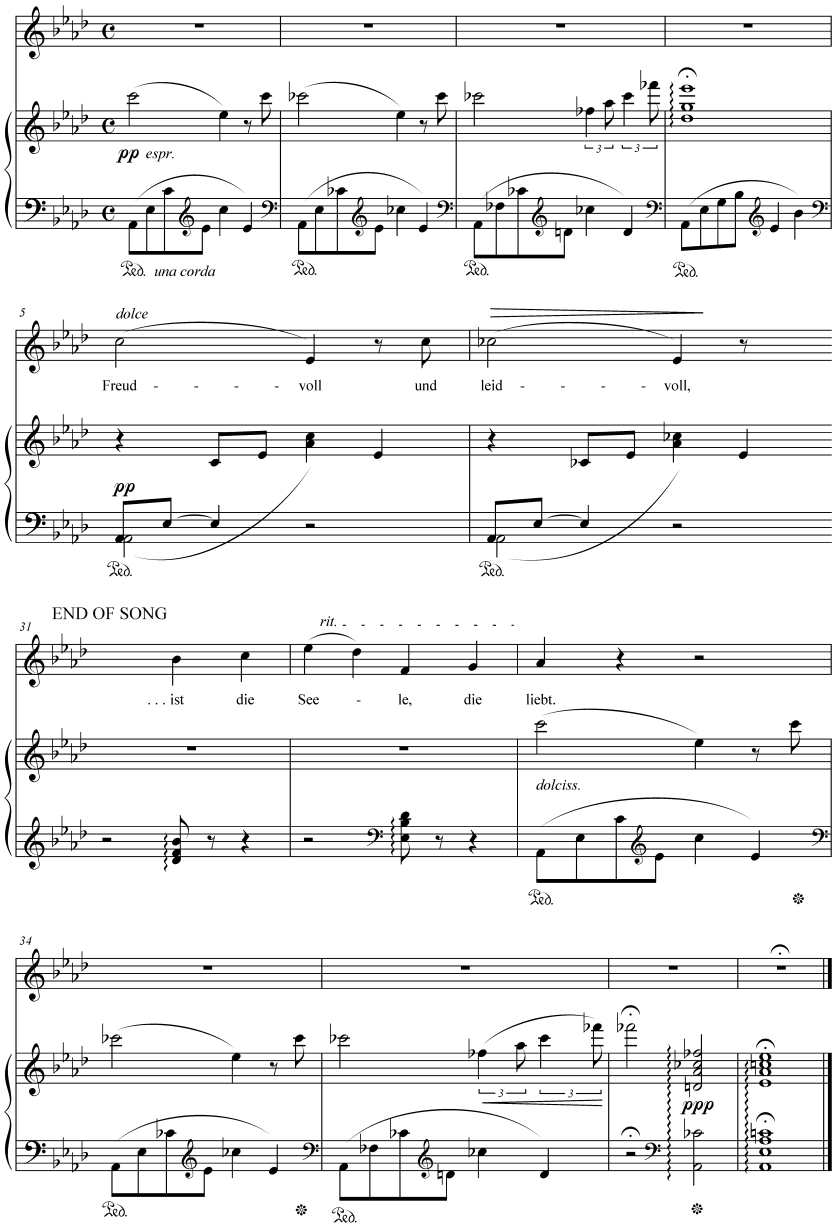
[12] It goes without saying that a performer's decision not to repeat the exposition (or recapitulation) of a sonata form robs the listener of this important association.

[13] Prelude = postlude frames often effect a 'bilateral symmetry' about a composition, and provide a close analogue to the relationship between a frame and a picture in the visual arts. Of course, the real 'frame' to a musical composition is the silence on either end; this frame is normally structured by performer and listener. The frame for a painting is often chosen by a curator, the artist's responsibilities having ended at the edge of a work. Such ideas are explored throughout E.T. Cone's *Musical Form and Musical Performance.*

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Ex. 4 Movement-level frames
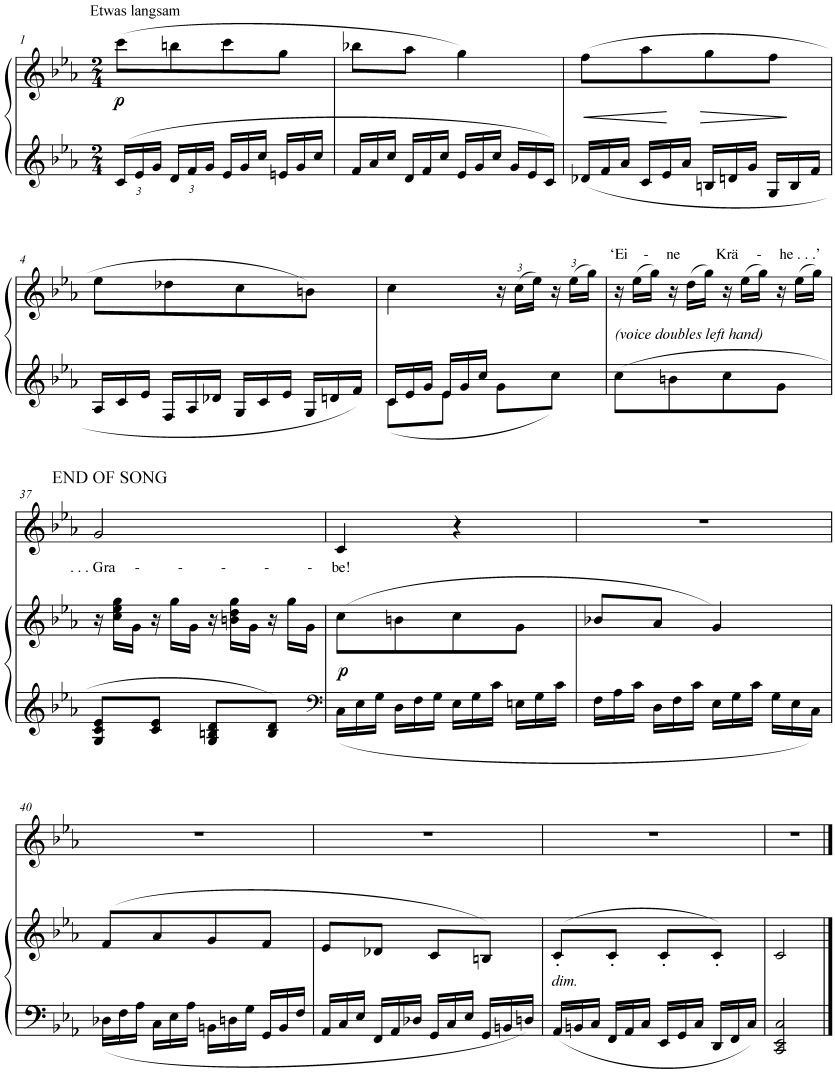
(a) Liszt, 'Freudvoll und leidvoll' (1860)



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Ex. 4 continued

(b) Schubert, *Winterreise*, 'Eine Krähe'
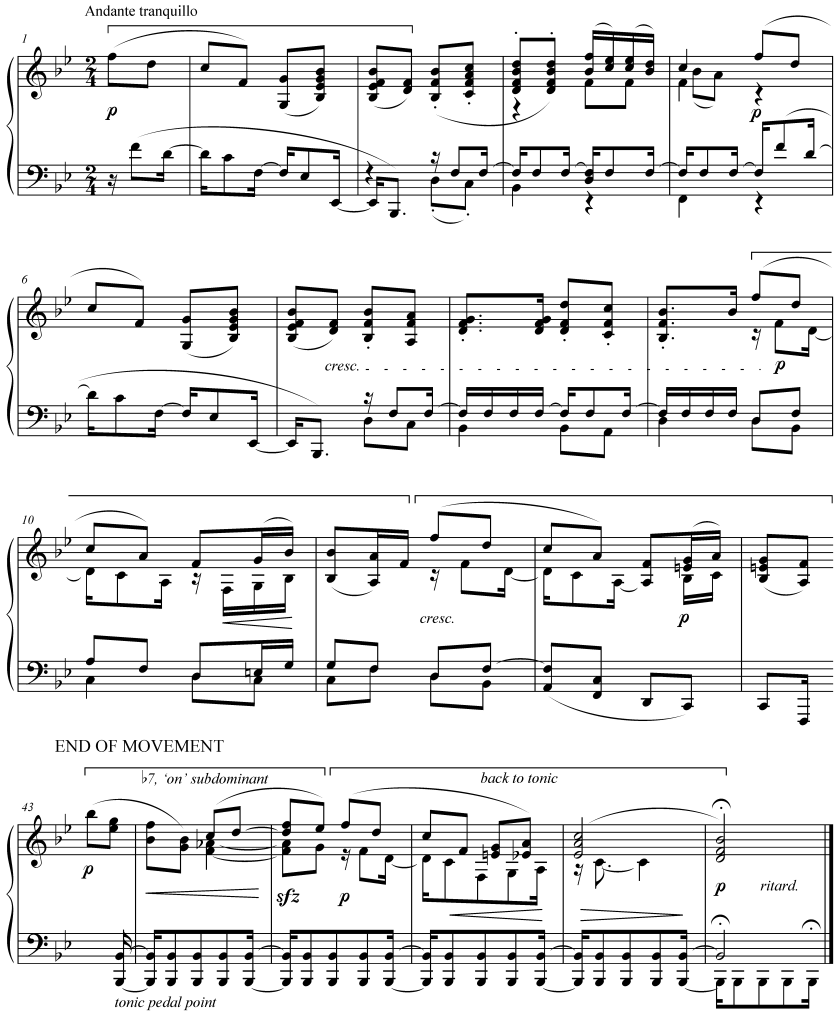


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Ex. 4 concluded

(c) Mendelssohn, *Songs Without Words* op. 67, No. 3



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Prelude = postlude frames arise in instrumental compositions as well. Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* provide a panoply of framing, linkage and modified recapitulatory manipulations.[14] Example 4c brackets the basic idea of the antecedent phrase of his op. 67, no. 3. Characteristic of Mendelssohn is the way in which the consequent phrase is expanded in a modulation to the dominant; this modulation twice brings back the original idea as a thematic-qua-sectional framing device.[15] In the coda, this idea returns again to frame the composition – first in a post-cadential subdominant form and then in the tonic. Such recast plagalisms are regular features of post-cadential frames.[16] In fact, composers routinely endow movement-level frames with post-cadential features, chief among them tonic pedal points, lowered seventh degrees (subtonic) leading to various subdominant inflections, descending diatonic or chromatic (8–5) tetrachords, and recessive tempos and dynamics.

Example 5 reproduces another of the *Songs Without Words*, op. 19, no. 6. The rhythm and texture, as well as the fragmentary melodic and formal profile, are characteristic of the 'Gondellied' type.[17] Here, the framing idea includes an embellishing third motion, D–F–E♭–D above scale-degree 5. The *Song* opens with the frame followed by the main theme over a tonic pedal. At the end, this same framing idea is preceded by a closed version of the main theme. What makes this modest composition so interesting is the realization of the central section, which features an enlargement of the framing motif. (The notes of the motif are indicated by boxes on the example.) In this way, Mendelssohn associates the materials of the frame and the central section.

Chopin's Mazurka in A Minor, op. 17, no. 4, follows a similar plan, but with a twist: it provides a provocative reversal of the normal tonal stability of a frame (see Example 6). The introduction, set off from the Mazurka proper by a double bar line, begin with a pensive, tonally indeterminate accompaniment figure with a distinctive B–C–D inner-voice string. This motif, in a charming example of compressed linkage, then becomes the head of the Mazurka theme. (The same B–C–D string also occurs in embedded enlargement over the first three bars of the

[14] Most of the analytical interest in the *Songs Without Words* comes from the Schenkerian community. In addition to Rothstein's chapter (mentioned above), other Schenkerian studies include: Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony*, ed. Oswald Jonas and trans. Elizabeth Mann Borgese (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); Carl Schachter, 'Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Aspects of Meter', *The Music Forum* 6/1 (1987): 1–59, 'The Triad as Place and Action', *Music Theory Spectrum* 17/2 (1995): 149–69; Allen Cadwallader, 'Form and Tonal Process; The Design of Different Levels of Structure', *Trends in Schenkerian Research* (New York: Schirmer, 1990): 1–21; and Edward Laufer, 'A Different Reading for the Same Music', read at the Music Theory Society of New York State Conference, Queen's College, New York, October 1993.
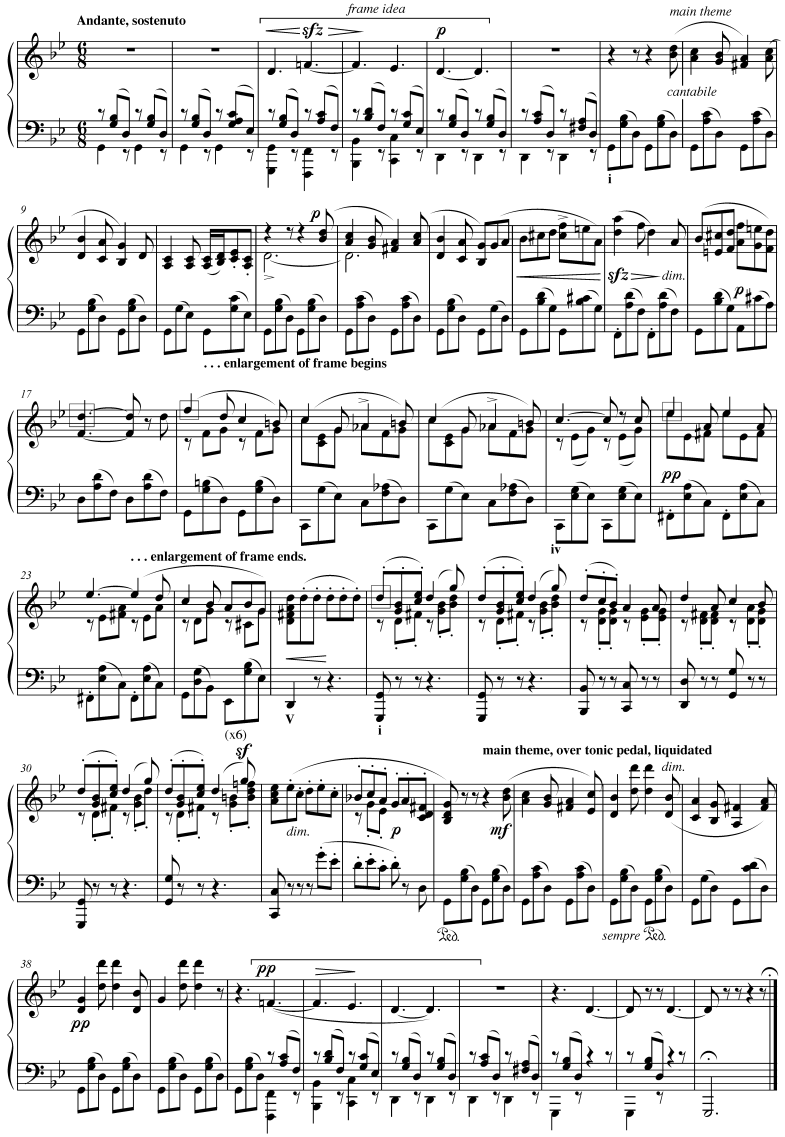
[15] By thematic-qua-sectional we mean to acknowledge the way Mendelssohn's expanded and modulating consequent blurs the distinction between thematic and sectional units. In the case of op. 67, no. 3, by the time the thematic unit has completed its consequent phrase, the first section of the piece has also concluded, with its modulation to the dominant assisted by a structural-framing motivic association. Note that, redundancies notwithstanding, the framing association is incorporated into the cadence in the manner typical of a thematic frame, rather than appearing in the post-cadential position more typical of section-level frames.

[16] Mendelssohn's op. 19, no. 2 features a similar ending, with a two-fold return of the main idea over a tonic pedal, first in the subdominant, then in the tonic.

[17] Other 'Gondellieder' among the *Songs Without Words* include op. 30, no. 6 (discussed by both Schenker and Rothstein) and op. 62, no. 5.

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Ex. 5 Mendelssohn, *Songs Without Words* op. 19, No. 6, 'Gondellied'
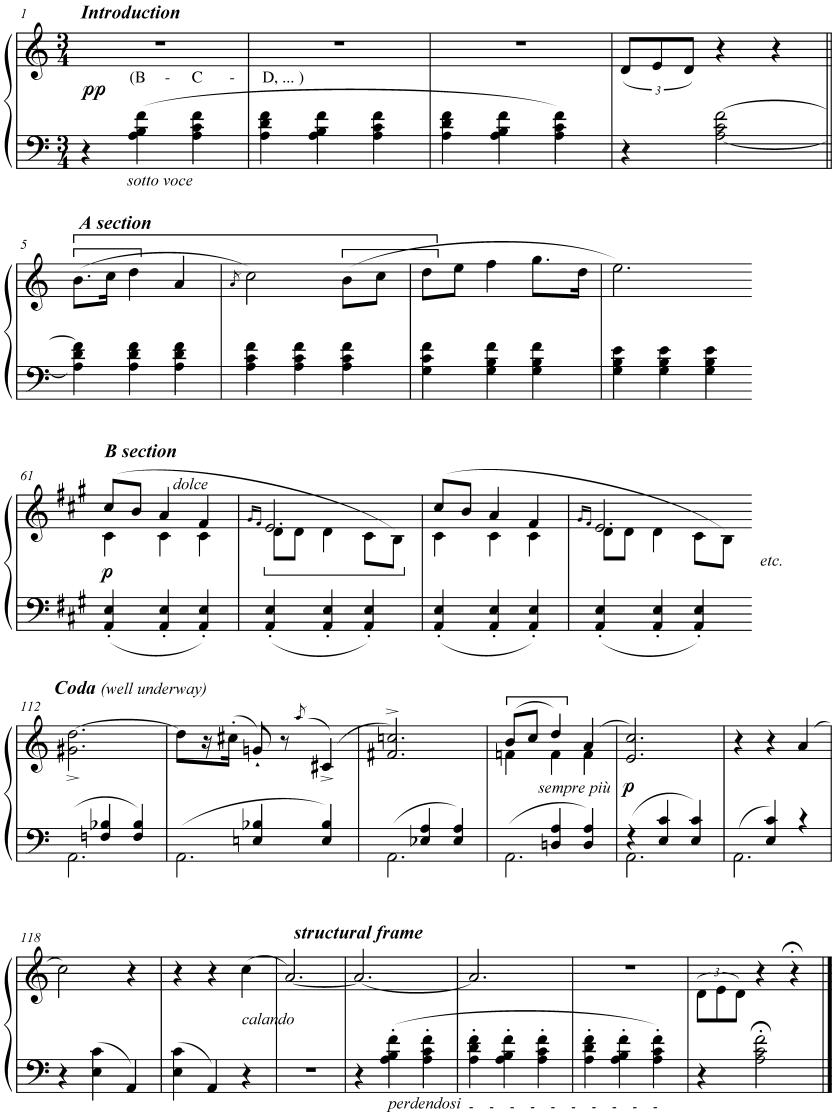


theme, and the A-major middle section works a related D–C♯–B string into the inner voice.) Near the end of the work (bar 115), a surface B–C–D string recurs just before the final C–A is stabilized. A parting frame then looks outward, bringing back the harmonic instability of the opening accompaniment figure, *perdendosi*. The Chopin and Mendelssohn examples find subtle ways to relate framing materials to elements interior to the work.

We occasionally encounter instances of thematic restatements that seem to cross formal boundaries and blur altogether the distinction between the formal functions of recapitulation and framing. Example 7 shows the opening and the closing passages of Schubert's *Quartettsatz*, a single-movement composition for
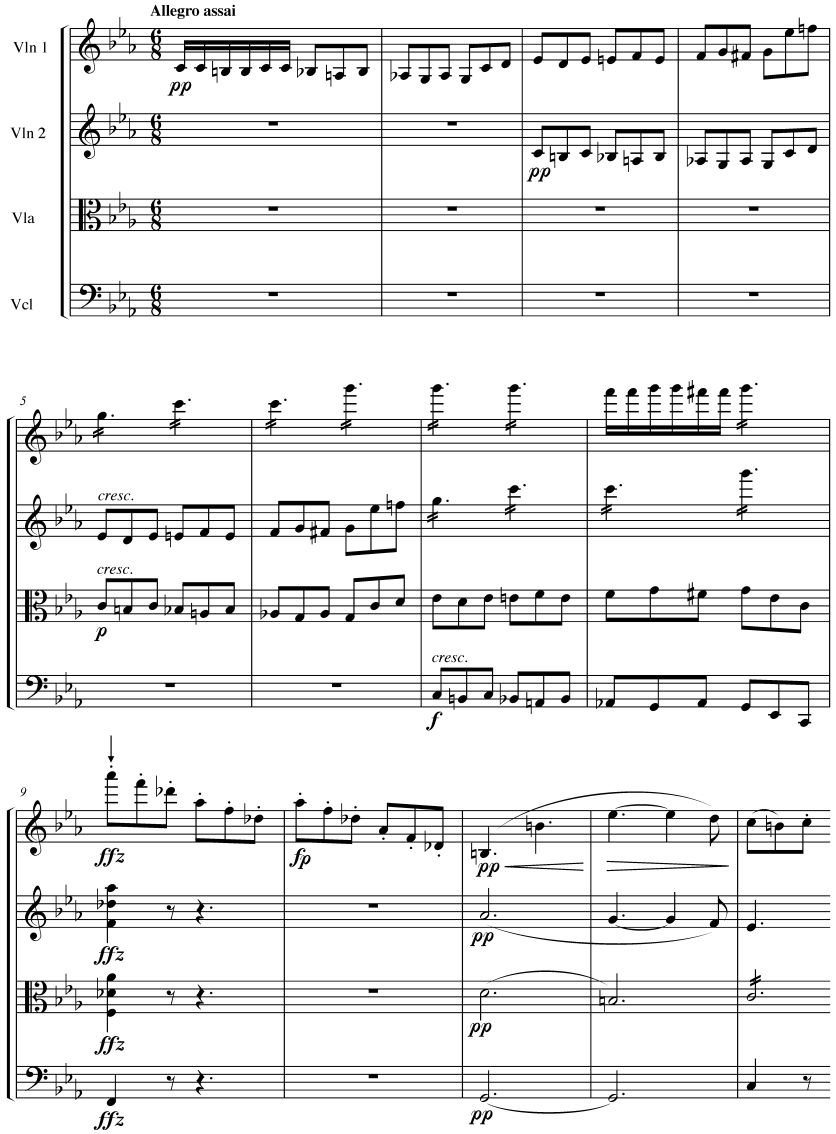
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Ex. 6 Chopin, Mazurka in A minor op. 17, No. 4
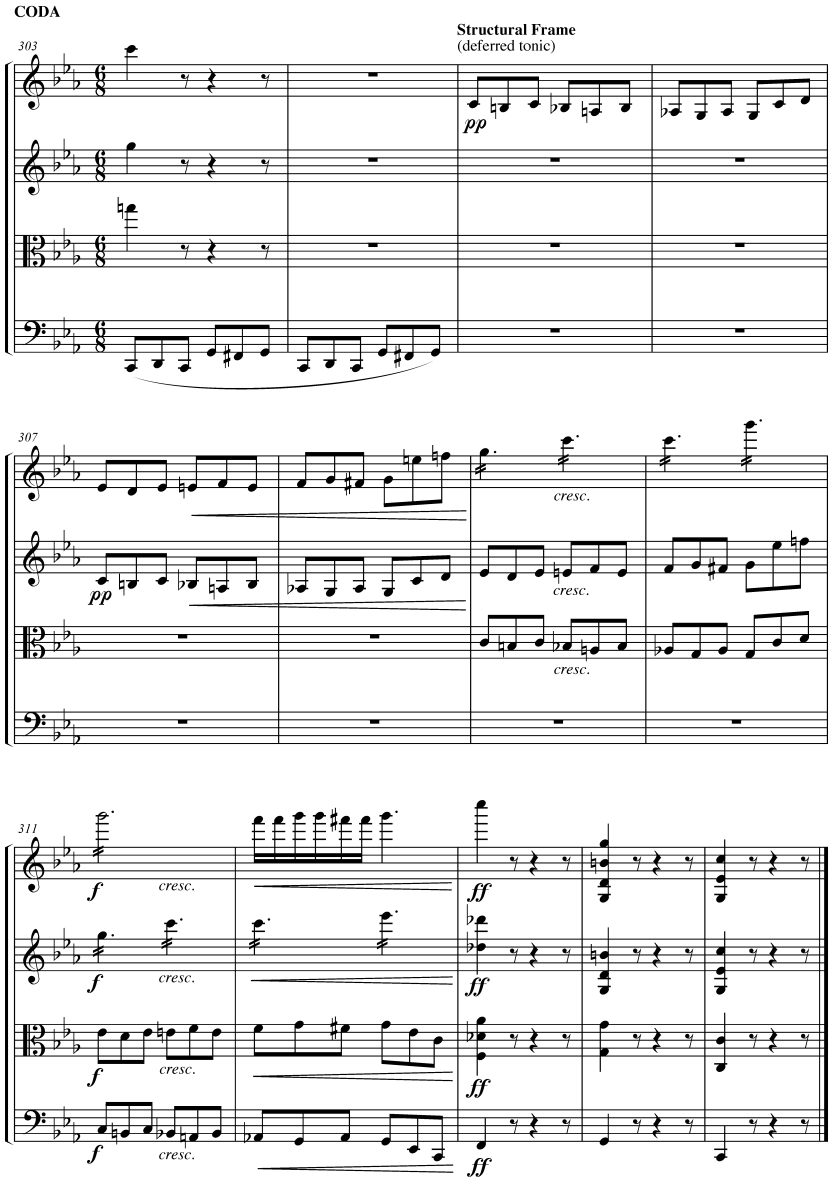


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Ex. 7 Schubert, *Quartettsatz* (Quartet No. 12) in C Minor



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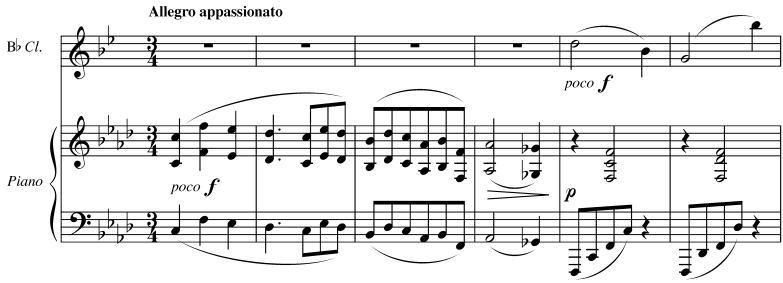
Ex. 7 concluded
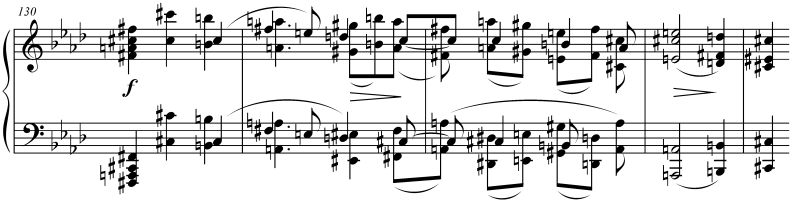


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Ex. 8 Brahms, Sonata in F Minor for Clarinet and Piano op. 120, No. 1, first movement
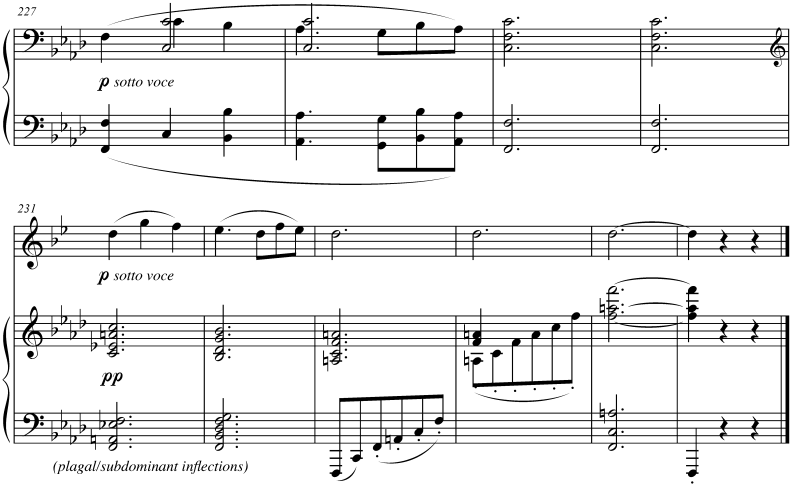
(a) Opening of the movement



(b) End of the development



(c) End of the movement



string quartet.[18] At first blush, this is a straightforward movement-level frame: the last thing we hear is a slightly modified restatement of the entire main theme, which is characterized by an accented Neapolitan sixth chord. (This Neapolitan is a harbinger for the modal mixture and chromaticism that infuses the work.) There is, however, an intriguing aspect to this frame in terms of the overall

[18] For a close reading of the work see Hali Fieldman, 'Schubert's *Quartettsatz* and Sonata Form's New Way', *Journal of Musicological Research* 21/1–2 (2002): 99–146. Fieldman's analysis invokes the notions of Hegelian dialectics and Schoenberg's *Grundgestalt*.

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context of the movement. The *Quartettsatz* is a modified, irregular sonata form with what might be understood as a 'deferred' recapitulation: Schubert omits the main theme from the recapitulation proper. Once we realize this, we have every right to expect an appearance of the main theme in the tonic – it is, in a manner of speaking, 'due'. Yet, when we do hear the main theme return in the tonic, it is too late for a true recapitulation: the return of the 'prodigal' main theme serves not to recapitulate the movement but to frame it.[19]

Example 8 showcases another multivalent and structurally ambiguous frame. In the first movement of Brahms's Clarinet Sonata in F Minor, the opening piano tune sets up the clarinet's main theme proper. The end of the development section brings back the opening tune in bar 130, but in F♯ (which is enharmonically the key area of ♭II), using a 'tonal answer' version of the idea (that is, with a rising fifth 1–5 rather than a rising fourth 5–8). This passage is cleverly bridged into the recapitulation (via a common-tone augmented-sixth sonority) that then begins directly in the tonic with the clarinet main theme (somewhat elaborated by arpeggio figuration). At the end of the movement (bars 227–236), the 'tonal answer' version of the opening idea, now corrected to the tonic scale degree, initiates the movement-level frame. A fragmentary statement of the original opening idea, now on clarinet and accompanied by standard plagalisms (notably V^7/IV) clinches the relation between the two forms of the tune and completes the frame.

Sometimes a fragmentary idea suffices to establish a frame. Example 9 cites some familiar instances. Example 9a shows how the initial unaccompanied statement of Mussorgsky's promenade theme returns harmonized (and slightly redirected) at its end. Example 9b reminds us that the *Tristan* Prelude brings back and redirects its periphrastic A-minor opening in a spiral harmonic shift towards C minor, nonetheless closing with a pitch-class-equivalent linear framing statement of the famous opening sonority. Example 9c highlights the jocular aural pun (one of many) that brings the motif of the slow introduction back as the last framing gesture of the coda of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, as if the movement could dance itself all over again. The famously static heroic tonic chords that open the 'Eroica' Symphony, in Example 9d, return only slightly redisposed at the end of the movement. In all of these cases, fragmentary recall of an opening idea is sufficient to establish the structural framing effect.[20] The

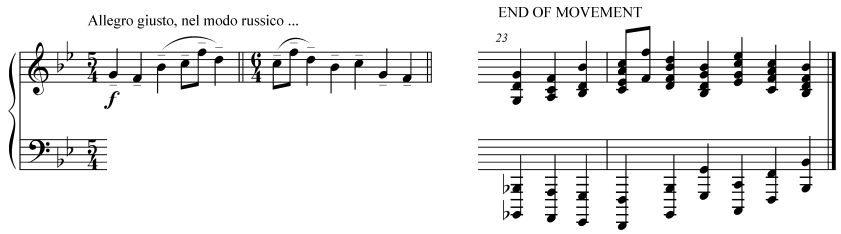
[19] Similar issues of structural framing arise in other compositions with 'deferred recapitulations', such as the fourth movement of Mozart's String Quartet in G Major, K. 387, and in compositions whose recapitulations are not in (or 'on') the tonic, such as the first movement of Brahms's Sextet No. 1 op. 18. Both situations heighten expectations for a last-minute tonic statement of the main theme. Such statements can arise anywhere in the coda; some initiate the coda, others conclude it. In *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy refer to sonata forms that omit the main theme in the recapitulation as 'Type-II' sonatas. Timothy Jackson has characterized sonata movements where the main theme follows the subordinate theme in the recapitulation as 'tragic' – certainly an apt description of the emotional affect of tragic loss in Schubert's *Quartettsatz*. See Jackson's 'The Finale of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony and Tragic Reversed Sonata Form' in *Bruckner Studies*, ed. Timothy L. Jackson and Paul Hawkshaw (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 140–208.

[20] This brings into question the 'minimum requirements': just how much material is needed to erect a frame? The answer depends, of course, on context; specifically, matters of timbre, register, spacing, dynamics, and so on. It is conceivable that a single chord, especially one that has been previously established as a referential sonority, could achieve a framing reference.

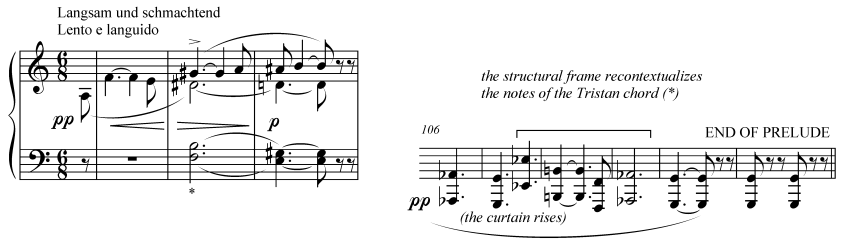
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Ex. 9 'Fragment' frames

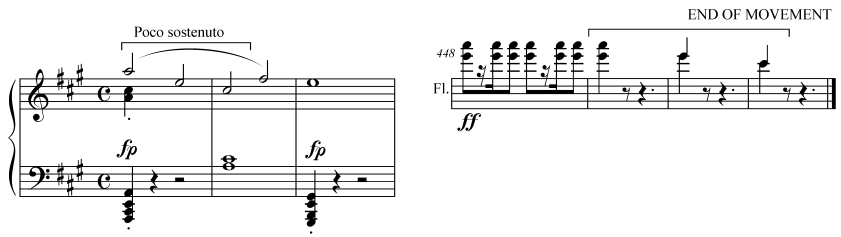
(a) Mussorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, 'Promenade' (1874)



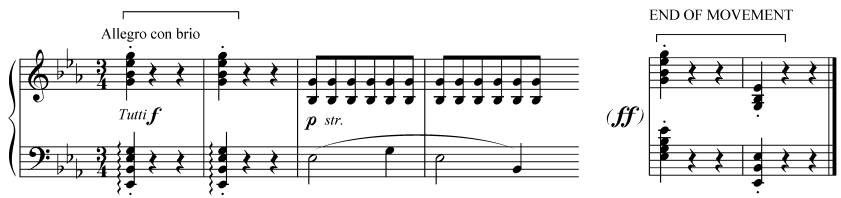
(b) Wagner, *Tristan* prelude



(c) Beethoven, Symphony No. 7, first movement



(d) Beethoven, 'Eroica' Symphony, first movement

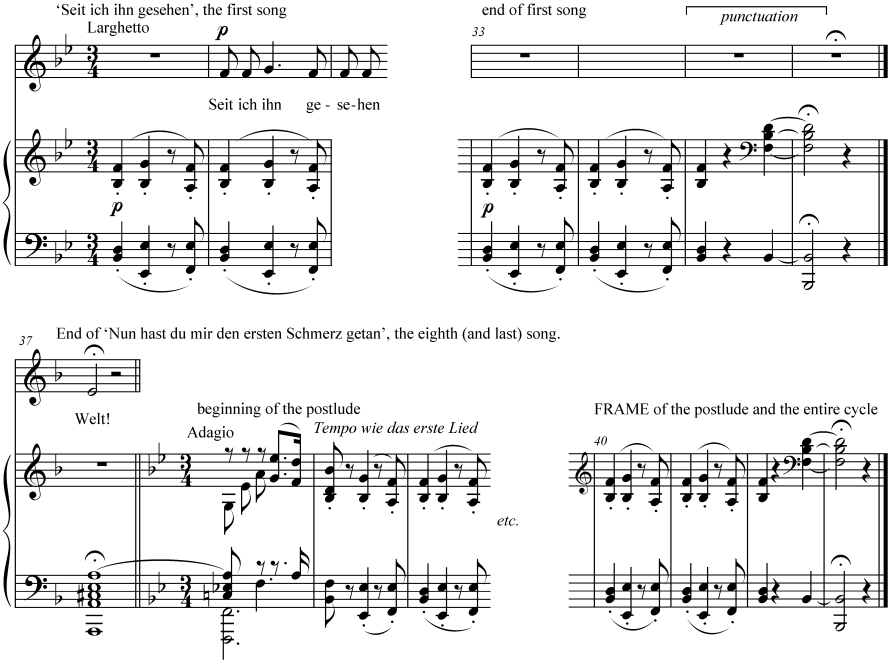


Beethoven examples also show that not all frames are 'private' gestures: they need not be quiet. (Frames are often private in another sense, however: they regularly manifest an underlying stream of compositional wit, displaying subtle motivic relationships to be discovered and shared with other cognoscenti.)
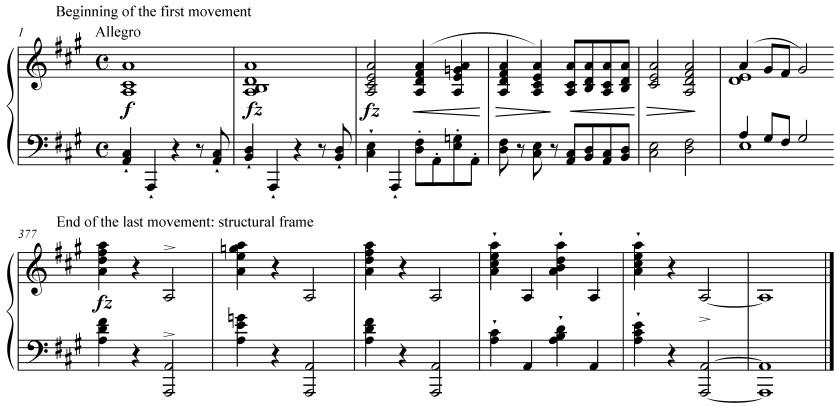
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Ex. 10 Broader-reaching frames

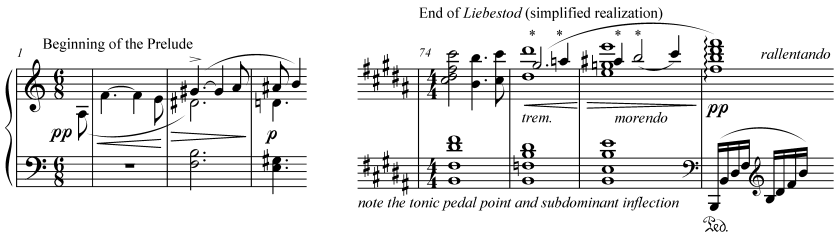
(a) Schumann, *Frauenliebe und Leben*. Structural frame across a song cycle.



(b) Schubert, Piano Sonata in A Major D. 959. Frame across an entire sonata.



(c) Wagner, *Tristan*. Structural frame across an opera.



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Broader-reaching and Multi-movement Frames

We now move to a consideration of several broader-reaching frames. In Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*, shown in Example 10(a), we find that the one-bar introduction and opening idea of the first song recurs in the accompaniment to frame its end. (It may be worth pointing out that the 'extra' final tonic chord serves as kind of punctuation marker to confirm that the frame has indeed functioned as an ending here, since the idea has in earlier instances served as a beginning. The punctuation marker might be heard as a descending tonic arpeggio, 5–3–1.) In the eighth and final song of the cycle, the entire sixteen-bar first strophe of the first song returns, with tacit text, providing a large-scale cyclic frame. Finally, the end of the last song brings back the opening bars (and thus also the closing bars) of the first song, embedding structural framing and closing parallelism in one poetic affect – a frame within a frame.[21]

Of course, instrumental works can also exhibit inter-movement frames. Example 10(b) cites the outer movements of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959.[22] Consider the opening of the first movement and the conclusion of the fourth movement. How exactly is this a frame? It is not a literal restatement: the closer we look the more the tenuous connections seem to evaporate. Yet, the falling octave gestures, pedal points, dynamics, articulation markings, plagal (♭7) inflections, and some fascinatingly similar voice-leading patterns draw the two passages together, so that the first and last utterances of the composition – nearly twenty minutes apart – produce a framing reference of considerable subtlety but tremendous effect.[23]

Example 10c returns to Wagner's *Tristan*. We noted earlier that the end of the Prelude linearly frames its famous opening sonority. As is well known, the end of the *Liebestod* also references the opera's opening idea. At the leitmotivic level this correspondence is clear enough. However, the passage also serves as the meeting ground between formal framing gesture and harmonic 'functional drift'. That is, the fundamental pre-dominant versus dominant ambiguity of the *Tristan* chord – which ambiguity is steadfastly though shiftily maintained throughout the opera – returns in the final bars of the *Liebestod*, where it is inflected in an unambiguously transfigurative plagalism that 'resolves' the principal idea of the drama and transcendentally frames the work.[24]

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[21] Several authors have noted this framing reference, and have suggested that the likely inspiration for the framing gesture in this song is Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*. A recent study that addresses the expressive potential of the postlude is Kristina Muxfeldt, '*Frauenliebe und Leben* Now and Then', *19th-Century Music* 25/1 (2000): 27–48. Muxfeldt writes: 'Schumann's postlude may be thought to represent a memory, and not merely a symbolic or formal return, precisely because the past is brought back through the filter of present emotion and experience. The very inaccuracy of the repetition, its muted passion, imitates the perceptual mechanisms of a memory that has no hope of being revitalized by physical proximity' (47).

[22] Robert Hatten offers an intriguing – and rather different – reading in 'Schubert the Progressive: The Role of Resonance and Gesture in the Piano Sonata in A, D. 959', *Intégral* 7 (1993): 38–81.

[23] There is, however, some correspondence between the two passages: they are pitch-class retrogrades of each other. We leave it to the reader to decide if this retrograde is 'hearable', or merely a theoretical conceit.

[24] A more thorough coverage of framing techniques would invoke a special category for un-transposed references to opening material, when the key of the reference is not that of the opening. Both the *Tristan* example and Beethoven's op. 14, no. 1 belong to this

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Our final example raises intriguing issues of intertextuality. Example 11a shows the beginning and end of Grieg's 'Arietta', op. 12, no. 1 from the *Lyric Pieces*, composed in 1867. We draw your attention to the four fragmentary G_5s that frame the piece. Example 11b shows an excerpt from Grieg's final published *Lyric Piece*, op. 71, no. 7, composed in 1901. Appropriately entitled 'Souvenirs' (or 'Remembrances'), the piece recontextualizes the 'Arietta' as a waltz. The waltz, too, ends with the same high G_5s – thus, in a consciously reflective way, framing Grieg's 34 years of creative output in the genre.[25]

Final Considerations

The aims of this essay have been relatively modest: to shed light on the phenomenon of structural framing at different formal levels through examples drawn from nineteenth-century repertoire, and to suggest that a preoccupation or delight in framing may represent a fundamental approach to the articulation of form.

This study is very much a work in progress. We have argued that structural framing is one of four possible beginning–ending relations for the alignment of motivic and formal associations (summarized in Figure 1). The other possibilities – recapitulation (restarting at various formal levels), linkage (ending–beginning continuities), and closing parallelisms – also warrant broader analytical observation and closer theoretical scrutiny. Of course, these phenomena are not exclusive to nineteenth-century music, so there is ample room for inquiry both within and across different repertoires: historical, geographic, generic and stylistic.

In examining the broad opportunities for framing and other motivic–formal associations that characterize sonata form (shown in Figure 3 and Example 2), we hope to bring a fresh appreciation of formal boundary play to the experience of listeners. The ubiquitous nineteenth-century prelude–postlude song forms and instrumental ternary forms (Examples 4, 5 and 6) also represent framing opportunities that though common in occurrence are far from common in the subtlety of their compositional realization. In examining framing at different formal levels, we have shown how thematic-level frames (Example 1) incorporate their framing gestures into the cadential close of the theme itself,

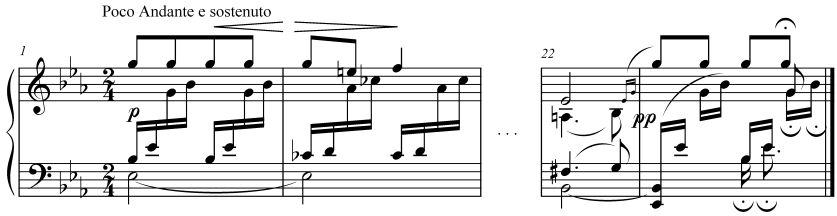
category. Several other examples are discussed in Naphtali Wagner's 'Tonic References in Non-tonic Key Areas', in *Israel Studies in Musicology* 4 (1987): 59–72. Studies that discuss motivic association in *Tristan* (though rarely from the vantage point of structural framing) include Robert Bailey, *Richard Wagner: Prelude and Transfiguration from 'Tristan and Isolde'*, Norton Critical Scores (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985); Benjamin Boretz, *Meta-Variations: Studies in the Foundations of Musical Thought* (Red Hook, NY: Open Space, 1995); Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), and John Rothgeb, 'The Tristan Chord: Identity and Origin', *Music Theory Online* 1/1 (1995), http://smt.ucsb.edu/mto/mtohome.html.

[25] There are many delightful details worthy of exploration in these *Lyric Pieces*, especially the high degree of harmonic ambiguity achieved in large part through a subtle and extraordinary avoidance of 'pure' V or V^7 chords. Fittingly, 'Souvenirs' is a larger, more nuanced composition, in which Grieg takes the waltz theme through a variety of common-tone modulations before returning to the home key of E♭ Major. The website www.bach-cantatas.com/Topics/Epanalepsis.htm, which focuses on examples of *epanalepsis* in Bach's cantatas, also cites Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*.
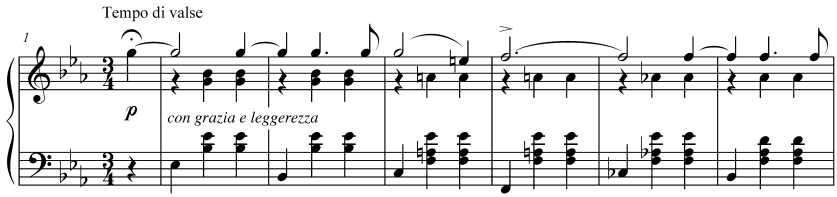
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Ex. 11 Two of Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*

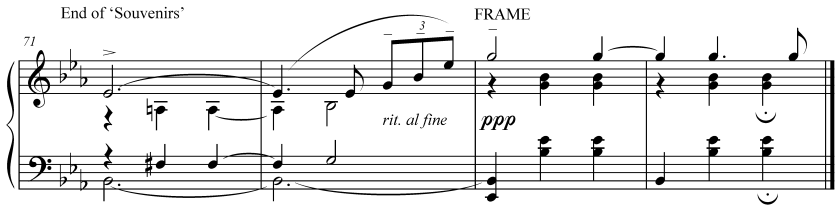
(a) 'Arietta' op. 12, no. 1 (1867)



(b) 'Souvenirs' op. 71, no. 7



the waltz theme is restated in the keys of D *major and* B♭ *major, before returning to* E♭ *major*



whereas section-level frames routinely elide the motivic–thematic framing reference with the moment of cadential arrival, and are thus normally positioned post-cadentially to the subordinate key or post the dominant arrival (Examples 2, 3b and 5b). One of several theoretical issues that would greatly benefit from further explication concerns the notion of 'elision' or 'overlapping', to use Lerdahl and Jackendoff's term.[26] Returning to our quadrant of thematic associations, we might ask: what stops the beginning of one time span from 'rhyming' with the end of more than one other? How might we describe the differences in effect and weight of such multiple rhyming relations? Still other issues include: consideration of the constraints on nesting, the promiscuity of framing, its capacity for minimalist sufficiency, and, especially, a more nuanced exploration of the specific factors that constitute (formal) closure in the first place.

Movement-level frames of the prelude–postlude type (Example 4) have long been recognized, but a development of more refined distinctions between recapitulation, apotheosis and structural framing (Examples 3, 7 and 8) would

[26] See Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), in particular pp. 55–62: 'The Perception of Grouping Overlaps and Elisions'.

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give us greater appreciation of the complexities of our large-scale listening experience. Consciousness of even larger-scale and multi-movement framing events (Examples 9 and 10) not only challenges our theoretical understanding of formal boundaries and motivic sufficiency, but suggests interesting avenues for perceptual and cognitive studies of phenomena usually considered too high-level for experimental inquiry. And such inquiry is important because it would address questions that are of deep value and salience to most musicians.

By way of conclusion, we offer three reasons why we feel that framing is so prevalent and so compelling in nineteenth-century music. First and foremost, framing is a powerful expressive device, and the focus of nineteenth-century composers and musical thinkers on means of expressivity remains one of that period's most central aesthetic concerns. A structural frame allows a composer effortlessly to evoke the distant (or not-so-distant) past, and to endow a thematic idea or gesture with form-clinching resonance. Such emphasis on the manipulation of memory is a poetic preoccupation of nineteenth-century composers. And structural frames invite us to explore some of their most poignant evocations. Second, frames allow composers to engage in the act of formal 'boundary play', to develop and exploit associative relations that challenge our understanding (and perception) of formal boundaries. It should come as no surprise that such play would appeal to Romantic composers' interest in the critical transformation of classical harmonic and formal principles. Indeed, there are many 'aha' moments in nineteenth-century repertoire where we realize that 'we've been framed'. Finally, frames provide an ideal opportunity for composers of any era to impose content on form, to engage in the subjective manipulation of an idea, and to use that idea to achieve formal and expressive closure.

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