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Background conglomerates in Alkan's Quasi-Faust, op. 33, no. 2

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BACKGROUND CONGLOMERATES IN ALKAN’S QUASI-FAUST, OP. 33, NO. 2

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in The School of Music

by

Matthew James Steinbron
B.M., University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, 2004
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ABSTRACT

Various approaches have been used over the past 50 years to describe and analyze works that exhibit tonality but have more than one tonic. This paper focuses solely on a subcategory of such works: those that begin in one key and end in another, the first key being permanently replaced by the second. The most prominent systems of terminology and analysis for such works include “progressive tonality,” “directional tonality,” “interlocking structures,” and “background conglomerates.” After examining these systems, “background conglomerates” is determined to best suit works that permanently change tonics. This approach, which was introduced by Harald Krebs, employs a Schenkerian based style of analysis to show that two Ursätze are present in the background of these works. Applying Krebs’s style of analysis reveals that many different structures can occur in background conglomerates, one of which has never been identified: elided Ursätze. The possibilities for elided Ursätze are explored and Alkan’s Quasi-Faust, the second movement of his Grande Sonate op. 33, is provided as an example. The effects that the elided Ursätze has on the sonata form and octave line of Quasi-Faust are also addressed.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Tonality has long been described in terms of the gravitational pull that a central tonic has all other chords and pitches. Heinrich Schenker believed that the gravitational pull is caused by the overtone series.¹ The reason for this is that the most naturally occurring pitches in the overtone series, the first six partials, create a triad. This “chord of nature” is thus considered to be the central focus in tonal music because it is perceived to be the most stable. In comparison to the tonic, all other chords and pitches are heard as unstable and our ears desire them to return to the stability of the tonic. For this reason, composers of tonal music begin and end the majority of their pieces with the same tonic triad; indeed, such pieces are understood in Schenkerian terms as composing out a single triad. This triad typically occurs at the beginning and at the ending of tonal works, and all intervening tonal events are derived, directly or indirectly, from it. In contrast to tonally “secure” works, there are numerous pieces that have off-tonic beginnings and others that have multiple triads acting as tonic. Of these, Schenker’s theory accommodates the off-tonic beginnings only because they are retrospectively heard as leading to the final tonic, thus being referred to as “auxiliary cadences.”² Pieces that have more than one governing triad, on the other hand, do not fit well into typical theories on tonality. Over the past century, theorists have written about works with multiple tonics and have provided a variety of terms and approaches in an attempt to better understand the phenomenon that this repertoire represents. Unfortunately, the plethora of terminologies and methodologies for dealing with this repertoire only hinders research on the topic rather than furthering its development.

² Schenker, Free Composition, 88-90. Auxiliary cadences will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Schenker had already introduced this idea in his Harmonielehre, but refers to it as “harmonic inversion development.” See Schenker, Harmony, 34.
As will be discussed in the second chapter, theorists tend to use one of two sets of terms when discussing pieces that have more than one tonic: “concentric tonality” or “monotonality” when a single tonic governs a work and “progressive tonality” or “directional tonality” when more than one tonic is present in a work. This study focuses solely on one structure of “progressive/directional tonality”: works that begin in one key and end in another, the first being permanently replaced by another.

The purpose of the second chapter is threefold: to examine the terminology that exists for pieces with multiple tonics and the analytical techniques associated with the terms; to determine which analytical technique and terminology is most appropriate for works that permanently change tonics; and to clearly define the terminology that best suits this phenomenon. The third chapter then clarifies what types of pieces truly belong to this repertoire. Due to past and recent confusion over what types of pieces begin and end in different keys, specific criteria need to be established. By using the conclusions from the second chapter, requirements will be established that distinguish between those pieces that permanently change tonics and those that do not. These requirements will then be applied to pieces that have a contentious analytical history in the hope of shedding new light on them.

The final chapter explores the diversity of situations that can occur in pieces that permanently change tonics. Subsequently, a theory of elided Ursätze will be presented as a way of analyzing specialized situations that occur in such pieces. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of Charles Alkan’s Quasi-Faust, the second movement of his Grande Sonate op. 33. Quasi-Faust serves as an example of elided Ursätze as well as of a sonata form movement that includes an octave line. The effect that elided Ursätze have on the octave line in Quasi-Faust will also be addressed.

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3 The origins of these terms will be discussed in the second chapter.
CHAPTER 2: TERMINOLOGY

Formal Paradigms

As will be made apparent, three formal paradigms are used by theorists as examples of forms beginning and ending in different keys: auxiliary cadences, oscillating tonalities, and background structures in which one key succeeds another at the deepest background level. This paper focuses on the latter of the three paradigms, but the first two need to be addressed because they play a key role in many of the following discussions.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the concept of the auxiliary cadence originated with Schenker, who explains it as an authentic cadence that is not preceded by a root position tonic triad (Figure 2.1).4 Auxiliary cadences can occur anywhere in a work, even at the beginning. An auxiliary cadence at the beginning of a work results in a non-tonic opening. Concentric tonality governs such a piece because all material prior to the tonic is retrospectively heard as leading to the tonic. It should be noted that two types of auxiliary cadences exist: shallow middleground and background.5 Shallow middleground auxiliary cadences are fairly short and are heard as an anacrusis to a piece, and will most likely be reduced out in a deeper middleground level. Background auxiliary cadences, on the other hand, are prolonged over a significant portion of a piece and are included in a graphic analysis of the work’s background.

Figure 2.1: Schenker’s graphs of possible auxiliary cadences6

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4 Schenker, Free Composition, 88.
5 Schenker provides examples of both shallow middleground and background auxiliary cadences, but never makes a distinction between the two. The examples in Figure 2.1 can therefore represent either case. For all of Schenker’s examples of auxiliary cadences, see Free Composition, Figure 110.
6 Ibid., Figure 110a.
level. When an auxiliary cadence is discussed from this point on, background auxiliary cadences that occur at the beginning of a work are assumed since they are the most applicable to this paper.

The other paradigm, oscillating tonalities, occurs when there is a continuous alternation between two or more keys throughout the duration of a work. The effect of such pieces is a tonal limbo in which any of the keys could end the piece at the composer’s discretion. In the following discussions, examples will be given of analyses in which theorists confuse this type of paradigm with the third type, in which a background structure begins in one key and ends in another. If such pieces are ambiguous due to their undulating key scheme, then how can any key be said to govern the first portion of such a work, let alone a distinctive change of tonalities be perceived by the end of such a work? Even though many examples of this structure do end on a different “key” than they began, this is an arbitrary point since works of this sort could just as easily end with any of the tonalities that appear in alternation. The reason that auxiliary cadences and tonally oscillating structures are discussed in this paper is that they are often confused with works that have clear motion from one tonality to another tonality. In order to make further progress in analyzing pieces that permanently change tonal centers, confusion with analyses that depend on auxiliary cadences and tonally oscillating structures need to be avoided since these are different compositional processes.

Progressive Tonality

One of the oldest terms for pieces that begin and end in different keys is “progressive tonality.” The term was apparently first used by Dika Newlin in her discussion of numerous
compositions by Gustav Mahler that begin and end in different keys. Newlin introduces “progressive tonality” as an alternative process to what she calls “concentric tonality,” in other words pieces that have a single tonic.\(^8\) As with most authors who have adopted the term “progressive tonality,” Newlin only mentions that it exists for dramatic effect and never goes into detail about the effect that “progressive tonality” has on form.\(^9\) Since she uses the term in a purely descriptive manner and provides no detailed analysis, it is hard to determine if she means to apply “progressive tonality” solely to works that “progress” from one key to another or if she also includes works that have auxiliary cadences and or works that oscillate between keys under its rubric. In order to determine what types of works are included as examples of “progressive tonality,” the analyses of theorists who actually do more than simply describe the beginning and end keys of a work need to be examined.

One theorist who analyzes a “tonally progressive” piece as truly moving from a clearly defined key to another is John Nelson. According to Nelson’s analysis in Figure 2.2, the finale of Schumann’s Piano Quintet op. 44 is in a seven part rondo form that begins in G minor and ends in E\(^b\) major. Nelson presents the sections of the movement out of order so comparisons can easily be made between similar sections. The ordering of sections in the movement is as follows: A\(_1\), B\(_1\), A\(_2\), C, A\(_3\), B\(_2\), A\(_4\). Sections A\(_1\) and B\(_1\) are shown as clearly prolonging G minor while the following A\(_2\) and C sections contain ambiguous materials. This ambiguous stretch acts as a contrapuntal link between the two structurally stable keys and does not allow E\(^b\) major to be heard as a governing tonic until Section B\(_2\), which it is then prolonged for the remainder of

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\(^9\) Appendix B includes a list of terms used to discuss pieces that begin and end in different keys. Also included is who used each term and when they used it. One reason that Newlin’s terminology has lasted for so long is that Mahler scholars use it for sake of consistency. V. Kofi Agawu even states this in his article “Mahler’s Tonal Strategies: A Study of the Song Cycles,” *The Journal of Musicological Research* 6/1-2 (1986): 45.
the movement. There is no doubt that this “tonally progressive” movement has two governing tonics that occur in succession.

Figure 2.2: Nelson’s analysis of finale of Schubert’s Piano Quintet op. 44

A different view of “progressive tonality” is found in David Fanning’s analysis of the first movement of Carl Nielsen’s Fifth Symphony (Figure 2.3). Fanning shows in his

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11 Along with Mahler, Nielsen is one of the composers who are most associated with “progressive tonality.” This association is due to Robert Simpson’s early reference to the “progressive tonality” found in Nielsen’s symphonies. Nielsen scholars appear to use “progressive tonality” for consistency’s sake just as Mahler scholars do. See Robert Simpson, Carl Nielsen: Symphonist (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1952) 23 and 87.
“progressively tonal” analysis that the movement has an auxiliary cadence. The central tonality of the movement is G major, but G major is preceded by an ambiguous off-tonic opening that leads to G major. Similarly, Robert Simpson initially labels this same movement as exhibiting “progressive tonality,” but later concludes that “emergent tonality” would be a better term since G major “emerges” as tonic from the ambiguous beginning. No matter what terminology is used, this movement can only be said to have one tonic since an auxiliary cadence, not a fully realized separate tonal region, precedes the final section in G.

Figure 2.3: Fanning’s analysis of the first movement of Nielsen’s Fifth Symphony

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12 A similar instance of auxiliary cadences discussed in terms of “progressive tonality” can be found in William Ya Deau’s analyses of Chopin’s Ballade op. 38 and Fantasy op. 49. See William Ya Deau, Tonal and Formal Structure in Selected Larger Works of Chopin, Ph.D. diss. (University of Illinois, 1980), 84 and 124 respectively. Another example is Steven Laitz’s analysis of Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2. Steven Laitz, The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 695.
13 Simpson, Carl Nielsen, 86-7.
Yet another interpretation of “progressive tonality” is that it can be used to describe pieces that oscillate between keys. This association originally began with Newlin’s claim that Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde* is “tonally progressive.”¹⁶ Newlin’s observation that the cycle begins and ends in different keys is correct, but various theorists argue that she fails to realize the true relationship between the oscillating keys.¹⁷ As is shown by V. Kofi Agawu in his analysis, the cycle lacks large scale dominants, thus calling into question the syntactic connection between the successive tonal centers (Figure 2.4). Agawu also points out that the cycle ends on a sonority

![Figure 2.4: Agawu’s analyses of Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde*](image)

¹⁶ Newlin, *Bruckner*, 199.
consisting of the combination of the two tonic chords that provide the tonal foci of the cycle, C major and A minor.\textsuperscript{19} This closing sonority further proves the previously stated argument that since oscillating keys do not produce sections that have definitive keys, the tonic chord that such a work begins and ends on is structurally arbitrary. Christopher Lewis and Jim Samson makes a similar claim that “progressive tonality” occurs in oscillating works, e.g. in the prelude and first act of Wagner’s \textit{Tristan und Isolde}.\textsuperscript{20} A slightly different structural type, just as ambiguous as oscillation, is described by Marjorie Hirsch as exemplifying “progressive tonality”: works that frequently change keys and end in different keys than they began, such as Schubert’s \textit{Prometheus} D. 674.

In review, “progressive tonality” has been used to analyze the following structures: works with a single tonic that begin with an auxiliary cadence, works that have two established tonics that occur in succession, and works that are ambiguous due to oscillation between keys or rapid succession through various keys. With the above analyses, it can be concluded that “progressive tonality” is used as a larger category that includes works that truly begin in one key and progress to another as well as other works that display completely different compositional techniques. “Progressive tonality” is therefore too broad to be used as a specific term for pieces that truly begin and end in different keys.

\textbf{Directional Tonality}

The next most popular set of terms is the more recent “monotonality” and “directional tonality.” These terms replace “concentric tonality” and “progressive tonality” respectively. “Monotonality” was originally used by Schoenberg to mean the same thing as “concentric

\textsuperscript{19} Agawu presents the idea that this concluding sonority be labeled as a “double” or “bi-triadic background.” See Agawu, “Mahler’s Tonal Strategies,” 17-21.

tonality,” but Schoenberg used it to contrast conventional tonality to bi- and polytonality rather
than to pieces that begin and end in different keys. Later, theorists who refer to pieces that
begin and end in different keys as “directional tonality” typically use the term “monotonality” for
contrast. The term “directional tonality” came into use by some of Robert Bailey’s students,
who claim that he coined it and used in his lectures to refer to pieces that begin and end in
different keys.\textsuperscript{22}

Deborah Stein, a student of Bailey, was the first to extensively discuss “directional
 tonality” and provide detailed analyses of the phenomenon. As is seen in her graph of Wolf’s
\textit{Lebewohl}, Stein uses “directional tonality” to analyze works that exhibit a dual tonic structure
(Figure 2.5). On the other hand, as in her analysis of Wolf’s \textit{Mir ward gesagt}, Stein also shows
that “directional tonality” can be used to account for pieces that begin with tonally ambiguous
passages or with auxiliary cadences that resolves to a single tonic (Figure 2.6).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2.5.png}
\caption{Stein’s analysis of Wolf’s \textit{Lebewohl}\textsuperscript{23}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{22} Bailey’s students who attribute the term to him include Harald Krebs (1980, 174; 1989, 432; 1991, 49), Deborah Stein (1982, 209; 1985, 228), and Patrick McCreless (1983, 61). Oddly, Bailey does not seem to use this
term in any of his published writings, at least that I have found. In McCreless’s citation, he mentions a
“forthcoming” article of Bailey’s that was supposedly going to use and define “directional tonality,” but
unfortunately the article seems to have never been published.
William Kinderman presents an alternative method of identifying “directional tonality” than Stein, but ultimately ends up confirming that works that begin with auxiliary cadences are examples of “directional tonality.” One example of this is his analysis of Chopin’s Fantasy op. 49 (Figure 2.7).25

The arrows show that Kinderman considers A♭ major as the goal of all of the material prior to its arrival. Kinderman also shows direction by pointing out the ascending third progression found in the “exposition” that leads to the dominant of A♭ major. That same progression of thirds reappears in the “recapitulation” transposed so as to resolve to A♭ major. A Schenkerian analysis

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24 Ibid., 161.
25 Boyd Pomeroy also uses “directional tonality” to describe many of Chopin’s works that are considered to have auxiliary cadences. These include Chopin’s Scherzo op. 31, Sonata no. 2, op. 35, Fantasy op. 49, and Prelude op. 28, no. 2. See Boyd Pomeroy, “Tales of Two Tonics: Directional Tonality in Debussy’s Orchestral Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 26 (2004): 88.
of the Fantasy by Carl Schachter displays the auxiliary cadence in a more visible way (Figure 2.8).

![Figure 2.8: Schachter’s analysis of Chopin’s Fantasy op. 49](image)

Just as in the analyses of “progressive tonality,” oscillating tonalities are considered to be a kind of “directional tonality.” The most noted example of this is in Wagner’s music, particularly in *Tristan und Isolde*. Both Kinderman²⁸ and Patrick McCreless argue this point, but McCreless is the only one who explicitly explains how this type of “directional tonality” operates:

[Directional tonality] concerns not so much prolongation of a tonality as the gradual turning from one key to another. Generally, in such works, the initial and final tonalities are “associative” or “cross-referential” in their own right. Structural depth is achieved by cross-relating these keys at a number of levels — at the level of large sections or scenes, or of subsections, or of brief passages, or even individual chords. Thus… the entire prologue and act 1 of *Götterdämmerung* progresses from E♭ to B, and this large-scale progression is reflected (or foreshadowed by) the first two chords, E♭ and C♭.²⁹

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According to McCreless, prolonged tonics do not have to be present in “directionally tonal”
pieces. The more important aspect is to alternate between keys so as to reflect the overall tonal
scheme, or in other words to create hidden repetitions. This compositional technique, therefore,
causes oscillating tonalities and a lack of prolongation, hence why McCreless does not require
prolongation to be present in such works. In conclusion, “directional tonality” or “progressive
tonality” is not suitable for use when exclusively referring to pieces that clearly move from one
tonality to another. A more precise term and analytical approach is needed to discuss such
works.

**Interlocking Structures**

Graham George employs a completely different analytical approach and terminology for
pieces that begin and end in different keys: “interlocking structures.” As is evident in his
analysis of Mahler’s Second Symphony, George shows how different tonalities “interlock” with
one another (Figure 2.9). George attempts to show that C major/minor and E\textsubscript{b} major/minor are
“closed” structures. In other words, he contends that two complete tonal structures are being
prolonged simultaneously. It is indeed interesting to see the large scale connections of key
occurrences, but George fails to show two “closed” structures in his analysis. If the first
movement has a single tonic of C minor, then the first E\textsubscript{b} minor tonicization would be heard as in
the context of that key rather than as the beginning of a new structure. Without providing a clear
sense of well delineated tonal structures and how the music moves from one to another, George’s
analyses are only an intricate way of listing successive tonicizations throughout a composition.

It should be mentioned that George’s analyses are apt at displaying one type of structure:
oscillation of tonalities. His analysis of Nielsen’s *Sinfonia Espansiva* provides an extremely
visible alternation of D major/minor and B major/minor (Figure 2.10). But as previous
discussed, oscillation between keys is a different compositional technique than moving from one distinct tonal structure to another. Therefore, George’s theory of “interlocking structures” is not suitable for pieces that change from one key to another.

Figure 2.9: George’s analysis of Mahler’s Second Symphony

Figure 2.10: George’s analysis of Nielsen’s *Sinfonia Espansiva*

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30 Graham George, *Tonality and Musical Structure* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 193. Major tonalities are shown by ‘ma’ following a letter or a letter by itself, and minor by ‘mi.’ Horizontal lines show where
Background Conglomerate

The only other well publicized system to be used for describing and analyzing pieces that truly begin and end in different keys is Harald Krebs’s “background conglomerate” approach. Figure 2.11 shows Krebs’s analysis of Schubert’s Klage D. 346. As is apparent in Krebs’s analysis, his Schenkerian approach clearly reflects two tonal structures that occur within this Lied. Unlike the other approaches, the “background conglomerate” approach has only been used to analyze pieces that clearly move from one tonal structure to another. The single exception to this is that Krebs originally considered pieces with oscillating tonalities to be “background conglomerates,” but he later dismisses this notion and clearly states that such pieces belong in their own separate category. Since Krebs’s “background conglomerate” style of analysis has been solely used for pieces containing two or more prolonged tonics that occur in succession, it is the only approach that is specific enough to be applied to such pieces.

![Figure 2.11: Krebs’s analysis of Schubert’s Klage D. 346](image)

movements begin and end. Vertical lines help show the relative importance of each key and double vertical lines show the most important keys.

31 Ibid., 205.
Conclusions on Terminology

The remainder of this study will develop and explore the implications of the Krebsian background conglomerate, which produces the most fitting conceptual framework for pieces that begin and end in different keys. Not only do the analyses that Krebs provides of background conglomerates reflect how such works are constructed, but the actual term “background conglomerate” captures a sense of the coherent but heterodox structure of an understudied collection of works. The first of the two words, “background,” implies a Schenkerian sensibility. This is appropriate since Krebs’s work capably demonstrates that Schenkerian graphic analysis is the best means of portraying multiple tonal structures within a single piece and explaining their relationship to the work as a whole. The second word, “conglomerate,” implies the presence of two or more structural units. In Schenkerian terms, this means the coexistence of two or more Ursätze: in order for two or more distinct Ursätze to occur, the key structures need to be in succession rather than in oscillation. Therefore, “background conglomerate” succinctly differentiates the structure of a piece that contains two or more tonics from polytonal, oscillating, or auxiliary cadence structures.

Next, the terminology concerning the number of tonics within a piece needs to be addressed. By far the most popular terms are Newlin’s “concentric tonality” and Schoenberg’s “monotonality.” It only makes sense to choose between these because of their wide acceptance. I propose that “concentric tonality” be used rather than “monotonality.” The major argument against “monotonality” is its inherent association with bitonality and polytonality, for which monotonality is the etymological antonym. Because “polytonality” is unavoidably associated with music in which more than one tonal center occurs at one time, it is not available to describe otherwise conventionally tonal pieces in which two or more tonal centers succeed one another;
writers who wish to borrow Schoenberg’s terminology thus must use the clumsy term “non-
monotonality” to discuss such pieces.34 The use of such cumbersome terminology seems
unnecessary when “concentric tonality” is an option.

With an argument made for the use of “monotonality’s” antonym, it is only fitting that
the antonym for “concentric tonality” be argued for as well. Sarah Reid uses “non-concentric
tonality” in this way, but this is incorrectly implies that no center of gravity is present and would
thus describe atonality.35 Besides, why use “non-concentric” when the antonym for “concentric”
is “eccentric”? The following is the first entry for eccentric found in the Oxford English
Dictionary: “Of a circle: Not concentric with another circle... Of two or more circles: Not
mutually concentric. Chiefly used of circles of which one is within the other.” What better
antithesis to “concentric tonality” could there be, therefore, than eccentric tonality?36 It is also
true that “eccentric” is commonly known to refer to something that is out of the ordinary. This
definition is also suitable when concentric tonality is considered to be “ordinary” tonality. A
final argument for “concentric tonality” is that so many descriptions of tonality includes similes

34 There has been a recent argument by Peter Kaminsky for the abandonment of the term “polytonality.”
He proposes that “superimposition” be used instead. If this bold assertion takes hold and the prior meaning of
polytonality is discarded, then it is feasible that polytonality could be used to refer to pieces with more than one
tonic. While this change is possible, it is not likely to happen any time soon, if ever, since polytonality is so well
established. See Peter Kaminsky, “Ravel’s Late Music and the Problem of Polytonality,” Music Theory Spectrum 26
35 Sarah Reid, Tonality’s Changing Role: A Survey of Non-Concentric Instrumental Works of the
Nineteenth Century, Ph.D. diss. (University of Texas at Austin, 1980).
36 Thomson uses “eccentric” in his book on tonality, but he only uses it when discussing single-line
melodies that end off-tonic. Since it is only used in conjunction with single pitches and no discussion of tonal
centricity appears near by, Thomson is using “eccentric” in a purely descriptive manner. See William Thomson,
Tonality in Music (San Marino: Everett Books, 1999), 301-302. An odd occurrence of “eccentric” takes place in the
abstract of an article by Lewis. The reason it is odd is that Lewis uses “eccentric foreground” in his abstract, but
never in the article itself. Lewis’s usage turns out to be the same as Thomson’s: descriptive. Lewis discusses
Edward Cone’s idea of “tonal normal” and that there are surface sonorities that conflict with tonal normal, thus
resulting in Lewis’s description of an “eccentric foreground.” See Christopher Lewis, “Mirrors and Metaphors,” 35.
or metaphors that draw on gravity, planets, the solar system, etc., that it seems appropriate to use concentricity as the basis for terminology.37

Now that satisfactory terminology has been chosen, the next step is to provide concise definitions:

1) Concentric tonality: a hierarchy of pitch classes and chords that has one central pitch class, and the triad built on it, to which all other gravitate.

2) Eccentric tonality: any system of pitch classes and chords that is not governed by concentric tonality.

3) Background conglomerate: A fundamental structure that includes the prolongation of two or more triads.

With these terms and definitions, a foundation is provided for the development and exploration of background conglomerates.

CHAPTER 3: RECOGNIZING BACKGROUND CONGLOMERATES

Requirements for Background Conglomerates

General criteria must be established to decide whether or not the tonal structure of a piece constitutes a background conglomerate. An outline of such criteria is presented in this chapter. A defining property of the background conglomerate is that a succession of two or more tonics needs to be clearly prolonged. In this light, pieces with initial auxiliary cadences that lead to a single tonic prolongation are not background conglomerates.\(^{38}\) Similarly, when a piece begins with a tonally ambiguous opening (or concludes with an ambiguous ending) that eventually reaches a single clear tonic, the piece is tonally concentric because only one tonic is present. The ambiguous material cannot be analyzed within a key because there is no definite tonic–dominant relationship, which means that there is no governing tonic for its duration. The ambiguous material should be interpreted as such rather than trying to force a tonic on it. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a work with an ambiguous opening would be a fitting situation in which to use Simpson’s concept of emergent tonality; the tonic emerges out of vagueness. Another point discussed in the previous chapter is that structures that oscillate between keys have been mistakenly referred to as constituting background conglomerates. As seen in Krebs’s analysis of Schubert’s *Sehnsucht der Liebe*, D. 180, attempting to show two prolonged tonics in an oscillating situation is rather awkward (Figure 3.1). It is also doubtful that listeners are able to comprehend the *Ursätze* of each tonic when they overlap, creating conflicting claims on foreground events, up as they are in this analysis. Unless two or more

\(^{38}\) The only exception is when a background conglomerate has an auxiliary cadence itself. The piece would still be heard as having more than one tonic, just that the opening to the initial tonic would begin off-tonic. An intriguing situation could arise if there was a background auxiliary cadence combined with a background conglomerate.
tonics are unequivocally prolonged in the background, the piece is not governed by a background conglomerate.

Figure 3.1: Krebs’s analysis of Schubert’s *Sehnsucht der Liebe*, D. 180

The next defining property of a background conglomerate is that the non-final tonic triads must each be prolonged for a durationally significant time span: in other words, it must be durationally salient. The final tonic is automatically significant since it is the last tonic heard and may therefore occupy a shorter time span than its predecessors. In order to be considered a full-fledged tonic instead of an auxiliary cadence or illusory key, the prolongational span of each non-final tonic should be commensurate to that of any of the other non-final tonics. If the first of two potential tonics was only prolonged for a small fraction of the piece, it might be heard as an auxiliary cadence and not as an actual prolongation. Likewise, if the middle of three potential tonics was prolonged for considerably less time than the others, it would function as a tonicization and therefore an illusory key within one of the other tonic spans. With longer pieces, the issue of duration becomes more important. The initial tonic is aurally retained with ease in a short work, but becomes easier to forget in a more substantial work. If the final tonic in a lengthy movement is prolonged for a much longer period of time than any other tonic, the listeners are likely to become so grounded in the final key that they may forget what keys have

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39 Krebs, “The Background Level,” 15.
previously occurred. When this situation arises, the final tonic is heard as the most important simply because the others have been forgotten. An analysis that properly reflects this situation would show concentric tonality with all of the “tonics” being subordinate to the final tonic.

The last property of a background conglomerate is that the final tonic prolongation has to have a complete *Ursatz*. The final key of a background conglomerate needs to provide closure for the movement as a whole. The background structures of previous prolongations need not be complete because the final key is providing closure. The non-final keys need only to be established and have durational salience in order to be recognized. This requirement for final completeness also weeds out pieces that are concentrically tonal, but end off-tonic.\(^{40}\) The most typical example of this would be a half cadence that ends one movement and leads into the next movement of the same key. Another situation can arise between two movements with different keys; the first movement is concentric with a complete *Ursatz*, but then a transitory expansion occurs that leads into the following movement; here, an off-tonic ending serves as a transition. Off-tonic endings then do not have complete *Ursätze* due to their transitory function and therefore do not contribute to the formation of a background conglomerate.

To review, a piece must meet the following criteria to be considered background conglomerates:

1) More than one tonic is clearly prolonged.
2) Each tonic prolongation has durational salience.
3) The final tonic prolongation includes a complete *Ursatz*.

If a piece fails to meet these requirements, it is not necessarily tonally concentric; it could be an example of some other type of eccentric tonality. With these three conditions in place, it should be relatively easy to classify whether or not a piece is governed by a background conglomerate.

\(^{40}\) As with auxiliary cadences, it would be interesting to find an example of a background conglomerate with an off-tonic ending.
Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2

A piece that epitomizes the lack of agreement over classification is Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2 (Figure 3.2). Analyses of the piece have placed it into one of three general categories: as a concentric piece with an auxiliary cadence, as a concentric piece with an ambiguous

Figure 3.2: Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2

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opening, or as a background conglomerate. The most influential analysis of this prelude is Schenker’s analysis from *Free Composition* (Figure 3.3).\(^{42}\) As can be seen, Schenker analyzes the prelude as exemplifying concentric tonality with an auxiliary cadence. According to his analysis, V of A minor is stated at the outset of the prelude and is prolonged for the majority of the piece.

![Figure 3.3: Schenker’s analysis of Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2](image)

Cheryl Noden-Skinner’s analysis of the prelude largely agrees with Schenker’s, but places stronger emphasis on its motivic structure (Figure 3.4). The most obvious difference between the two analyses is that Noden-Skinner uses slurs to highlight the melodic motive whereas Schenker employs them to show voice-leading connections. A subtler but more important difference between the graphs is where white noteheads are used. Most notably, Noden-Skinner shows the B\(^2\) in m. 8 as having more structural weight than the A\(^2\) that follows it.

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\(^{43}\) Schenker, *Free Composition*, Figure 110 a3. In his earlier analysis of the prelude, Schenker considered the E minor triad to be VI of G major. See Schenker, *Harmony*, 251-52. This discrepancy is most likely due to his undeveloped idea of auxiliary cadences when he wrote *Harmony*. Schenker initially refers to off-tonic beginnings as “inverted harmonic development,” but he only gives middleground examples. See Schenker, *Harmony*, 34-6. Later, in *Free Composition*, he develops the idea further to include background occurrences as well, as seen in the prelude.
While this helps reinforce the reading that the E triad is being prolonged, it is questionable on grounds of duration and overall harmonic coherence: the B² in m. 8 only lasts for one measure and, as Schenker’s analysis suggests, is most plausibly interpreted as an incomplete neighbor to the A² in the following measure. That A² is then sustained for 4 measures (indeed, Schenker shows that it is prolonged in the deep middleground until m. 21), much longer than the duration of the B², which assumes the role of a reaching-over. This detail, however, leads one to question a feature in Schenker’s analysis; since this B² acts as a neighbor to A², would not the same relationship apply to the initial E² and D²? Perhaps Noden-Skinner attempts to address this, but her reading of the B² in m. 8, which is so fleeting and weak, is ultimately unconvincing.

![Figure 3.4: Noden-Skinner’s analysis of Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2](image)

Most of the published analyses of Op. 28 No. 2 disagree with Schenker’s reading of the prelude’s tonal structure. Leonard Meyer’s analysis differs from Schenker’s auxiliary cadence approach by showing concentric tonality with an ambiguous opening (Figure 3.5). Other theorists who have similar conclusions include Rose Subotnik (1978), Michael Rogers (1981), Reed Hoyt (1985), Lawrence Kramer (1985), Agawu (1987), and Laitz (2003).

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45 Other theorists who have similar conclusions include Rose Subotnik (1978), Michael Rogers (1981), Reed Hoyt (1985), Lawrence Kramer (1985), Agawu (1987), and Laitz (2003).
patterns are actually what lead Meyer to his harmonic analysis. Figure 3.6 provides the three motives found in the prelude: a descending second motion, a descending third motion, and an octave leap.\textsuperscript{46} Meyer provides a convincing argument that the motivic pattern is clearly disrupted between m. 14-16.\textsuperscript{47} This disruption turns out to be important because it structurally articulates where the piece begins to truly imply A minor.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{harmonic_analysis.png}
\caption{Meyer’s harmonic analysis of Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2\textsuperscript{48}}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{motivic_analysis.png}
\caption{Meyer’s motivic analysis of Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2\textsuperscript{49}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{46} Noden-Skinner emphasizes melodic motives in her analysis, but has a different take on the motivic structure. Instead of showing a series of descending seconds and thirds, Noden-Skinner shows a chain of descending perfect fourths, each resolving up by step or minor third. Even with this difference in motivic structure, her sequence is broken at m. 14, as are all of the other analyses considered.


\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 94-95.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 94.
Both the melody and the harmony make a decisive turn towards A minor during mm. 14-16. Meyer’s harmonic analysis shows that the harmonic sequence is disrupted when the piece turns towards A minor. Meyer then notes that if the sequence were to continue unaltered, it would have arrived naturally at A minor (Figure 3.7). Chopin’s alterations to the harmonic sequence produce tonal ambiguity in m. 11-14 that raises doubt as to the goal of the passage. This doubt is then increased by the break in the melodic pattern and harmonic sequence. All of these events combine to make the arrival of A minor stand out even more from the preceding material. According to Meyer’s analysis, A minor “emerges” as tonic out of “directed” ambiguity, effectively showing that the prelude has concentric tonality.

\[
\begin{align*}
G: \text{VI} & - V_4^6 : \frac{5}{3} & - I \\
D: (IV) & - VI & - V_4^6 : \frac{5}{3} & - I \\
a: (IV) & - VI & - V_4^5 : \frac{5}{3} & - I
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 3.7: Meyer’s continuation of the harmonic sequence\(^{50}\)

Another analysis of the prelude that is worth mentioning is by Michael Rogers (Figure 3.8). What is noteworthy about his interpretation of the prelude is that his extremely different analytical technique reinforces Meyer’s analysis. Unlike any other analysis of the work, Rogers bases his analysis on temporal events rather than melodic and harmonic details. Rogers believes that durational organization helps clarify the ambiguities created by the melody and harmony of the prelude. Using the same motivic analysis as Meyer, Rogers concentrates on the proportions created by the motives. Interestingly, a wealth of golden-section relationships occurs throughout

\(^{50}\)Ibid., 96. The first phrase in G has been added to Meyer’s original example to show the entire progression. Also, the roman numerals given here differ slightly from Meyer’s; the cadential Ⅵ’s are labeled as \(V_4^6 : \frac{5}{3}\) rather than \(I Ⅵ - V_3^5\).
the prelude.\textsuperscript{51} The arrival of A minor’s cadential $6^4$ at m. 15, which signals the start of dominant harmonic function, is also the most important durational event of the piece since it lies on the golden section of the whole prelude.

Rogers’s motivic analysis also emphasizes this important event: the first melodic descent of the prelude outlines a minor seventh that is constructed of alternating major seconds and minor thirds. The second melodic descent begins at m. 14, this time outlining a minor seventh with only minor thirds. Not only do the descending minor sevenths accentuate the turning point of the prelude, but the intervallic structure of the minor sevenths descents contribute to it as well. Even though Rogers uses different means to construct his graphic analysis and does not show the sequence as explicitly, his analysis concurs with Meyer’s in that the prelude begins with tonal ambiguity that is resolved to A minor.\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{rogers_analysis.png}
\caption{Rogers’s analysis of Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2\textsuperscript{53}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{51} The golden section is basically 0.618034 and can be represented mathematically as $\frac{1}{2}(\sqrt{5}-1)$. Rogers includes a margin of error of 2% for his analysis.

\textsuperscript{52} Even though it appears that Rogers is emphasizing E\textsuperscript{2} in his “Schenkerian” graph, he does not advocate this emphasis anywhere in his article and stresses that the prelude has “myriad blurrings.”

Only two theorists, Deborah Stein and William Kinderman, argue that the structure of this prelude is a background conglomerate. Of the two, Stein is the primary advocate since Kinderman only states that the prelude begins and ends in different keys with no further explanation or analysis. One of Stein’s own requirements for a piece to be a background conglomerate is that the first prolonged tonic needs to be convincingly established. Unfortunately, her analysis of the prelude does not reflect this (Figure 3.9). Stein even admits that the prelude begins ambiguously in either E minor or G major, or even both! Stein’s analysis noticeably contradicts her own requirements stated only two pages earlier.

Figure 3.9: Stein’s analysis of Chopin’s Prelude op. 28, no. 2

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54 Stein, *Hugo Wolf’s Lieder*, 146-49. Kinderman, “Directional Tonality,” 60. Stein and Kinderman use “directional tonality” rather than “background conglomerate.” James Boyd also discusses the possibility that the prelude may exhibit “directional tonality,” but never makes a firm conclusion on whether it does or not. Because of his indecisiveness, he cannot be considered as supporting any of the three types of analyses. For a more in-depth discussion of Schenker’s, Meyer’s, and Stein’s analyses of the prelude, see James Boyd, *Tonality, Genre, and Form: Mahler’s Lider Eines Fahrenden Gesellen*, Ph.D. diss., (University of Michigan, 1994), 21-41.

55 Kinderman, “Directional Tonality,” 60.


After examining three different ways of analyzing the prelude, the two concentric readings seem very possible while the background conglomerate reading is quite inadequate. The background auxiliary cadence reading is possible simply because the prelude is so short. By the time the authentic cadence in A minor is reached, it is still easy to recall the initial E minor and then hear it become transformed into the dominant seventh of A minor. The ambiguous opening reading is just as probable because it is difficult to prove that the initial E minor is prolonged through the sequential pattern, motivic patterns, and durational proportions that reinforce the patterns. In either case, both show concentric tonality. According to the requirements for background conglomerates stated above, the structure of Chopin’s prelude cannot be a background conglomerate and does not represent any other type of eccentric tonality because there is only one tonic present.

**Schubert’s Klage D. 436**

Now that an example has been presented of what a background conglomerate is not, an example of what it is should follow. An extremely clear background conglomerate can be observed in Schubert’s *Klage* D. 436 (Figure 3.10). Krebs’s analysis shows two distinctly prolonged tonics, F major and D minor, that each has its own complete *Ursatz* (Figure 3.11). This immediately fulfills two of the three requirements for background conglomerates listed on p.21: more than one tonic is clearly prolonged, and the final tonic prolongation includes a complete *Ursatz*.

The other requirement that needs to be investigated is durational significance. The first two strophes prolong the initial tonic, F major, and the final strophe prolongs D. This turns out to be nineteen measures in F major and ten measures in D minor; or nearly 2/3 in F major and 1/3 in D minor. F major is definitely the most proportionally significant in this song, but D
Figure 3.10: Schubert’s *Klage* D. 436

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minor is significant as well because it is the last tonic heard, as previously discussed in this chapter. *Klage* meets all the requirements for background conglomerates and Krebs’s analysis properly indicates this. If a concentric analysis were made of this song, something along the lines of Figure 3.12 would result. This concentric reading undoubtedly misrepresents what occurs in the song. D minor cannot be heard as governing the F major section (nor visa versa). Any listener would agree that the song sounds like it is split into two sections, which Krebs’s analysis adequately shows.

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![Figure 3.11: Krebs’s background conglomerate analysis of *Klage an den Mond*](image)

Figure 3.11: Krebs’s background conglomerate analysis of *Klage an den Mond*

![Figure 3.12: A possible concentric analysis of *Klage an den Mond*](image)

Figure 3.12: A possible concentric analysis of *Klage an den Mond*

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59 Krebs, “The Background Level,” 7.
Chopin’s Ballade, op. 38

A more extensive example that should be discussed is Chopin’s Ballade op. 38. Theorists have disagreed on the classification of Chopin’s Ballade, just as they have on the A minor Prelude: some view the piece as concentric with an off-tonic opening and others believe it is a background conglomerate. Burstein’s analysis of the Ballade is representative of the off-tonic argument (Figure 3.13). He shows a clear 5-line in A minor that is preceded by a background auxiliary cadence. The preceding incomplete upper neighbor of F major, in turn, ornaments the auxiliary cadence. Burstein uses black noteheads for the initial F major section to show that it eventually leads into the final A minor section. Since one prolonged triad is shown in his analysis, Burstein considers the Ballade to be tonally concentric.

Figure 3.13: Burstein’s concentric, off-tonic opening analysis of Chopin’s Ballade op. 38

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60 Burstein does state that a “multi-key” reading of the Ballade would provide some insight, but ultimately determines that everything leads to the A minor ending, thus making it concentric. See Burstein, The Non-tonic Opening, 213. Other theorists that Burstein cites as concurring with his analysis includes William Ya Deau (1980), Robert Lau (1979), Noden-Skinner (1984), Kinderman (1988), and Burstein’s teacher, Carl Schachter.

Krebs’s analysis of the Ballade presents the background conglomerate argument (Figure 3.14). The first thing shown in his analysis is a prolongation of F major for at least 82 measures of the 203 measure Ballade. Following this is an ambiguous passage that approximately lasts until m. 148. Since Krebs hears this stretch of music as ambiguous, he does not give any tonality authority over its duration. A minor is finally established by m. 168 and remains in control for the remainder of the Ballade. Krebs actually points out that A minor is introduced at m. 46 during the F major section. With the dashed stemming, Krebs reflects that this is a brief tonicization and is still heard within F major. The early A minor tonicization can be heard as connecting to the final A minor section only in retrospect.

Even though Burstein’s and Krebs’s analyses of the Ballade is each convincing in its own way, Krebs’s analysis ends up better representing the Ballade. The most questionable point in Burstein’s analysis is that his more detailed level shows that the initial F major is clearly prolonged. By notating the F major portion with black noteheads, Burstein reduces it to the status of an upper neighbor in the deep middleground. Further, Burstein’s analysis shows F major extending for nearly three-quarters of the total duration of the piece. How can one hear over 75% of a piece as based on a simple neighbor note? Taking this a step further, the physical proportions of Burstein’s graph are faulty. According to the physical layout, the final A minor portion accounts for at least a third of the piece. In reality, the final section only takes up 17% of the entire Ballade, which is much less than what Burstein displays. The graph’s inaccurate proportions contribute to the overall belittlement of F major.

Krebs, on the other hand, puts much more emphasis on the initial F major prolongation. He displays visual proportions and employs white noteheads to acknowledge the prolongation of F major. The only shortcoming of Krebs’s analysis is that he does not show a complete *Ursatz*

62 Samson also comes to the same conclusion as Krebs in 1985, 1992, and 1996.
Figure 3.14: Krebs’s background conglomerate analysis of Chopin’s Ballade op. 38

63 Krebs, “Alternative to Monotony,” Example 4. This analysis is virtually identical to his previous analysis in Third Relation, Figure III.12 on pages 68-69 of his examples.
in the final key of A minor – a feature of the piece that is correctly shown in Burstein’s analysis.

Figure 3.15 shows what Krebs’s deep middleground graph would look like ending with a complete Urtext. With this alteration, Krebs’s analysis provides a compelling case for analyzing the Ballade as a background conglomerate; each tonic is clearly prolonged and proportionally significant, and the final tonic has a complete Urtext.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Chopin’s Prelude op. 28 no. 2 does not feature a background conglomerate due to a lack of two sufficiently prolonged triads; on the other hand, the tonal structures of Schubert’s Klage D. 436 and Chopin’s Ballade op. 38 are background conglomerates. It is hoped that the above criteria and case studies have cleared up misconceptions concerning potential background conglomerates.

Figure 3.15: A modified version of Krebs’s analysis of Chopin’s Ballade op. 38
CHAPTER 4: EXPLORING BACKGROUND CONGLOMERATES

Background Conglomerate Scenarios

After deciding on terminology and determining what is or is not a background conglomerate, the final phase of this project is to explore what types of background conglomerates are possible. Recently, theorists have begun to recognize that different types of background conglomerates exist. The earliest example is Krebs’s Schenkerian analyses of several works whose tonal structures are best classified as background conglomerates. Krebs discovers that three types of background conglomerates are possible when two triads are prolonged: first, both Ursätze are complete with no overlap between them (Figure 4.1); second; the initial Ursatz is incomplete and has no overlap with the final, complete line (Figure 4.2); and lastly, the first Ursatz is incomplete and overlaps with the second line that begins with a structural auxiliary cadence (Figure 4.3).64

Figure 4.1: Krebs’s analysis of Schubert’s *Klage* D. 34665

![Figure 4.1: Krebs's analysis of Schubert’s *Klage* D. 346](image)

Figure 4.2: Kreb’s analysis of Schubert’s *Geistes-Gruss* D. 14266

![Figure 4.2: Kreb's analysis of Schubert’s *Geistes-Gruss* D. 142](image)

64 Krebs also includes oscillation between keys as a fourth type, but this is not a background conglomerate for reasons stated on page 5. See Figure 3.1 for Krebs’s example of the fourth type. Later, Krebs rejects tonally oscillating structures as a form of background conglomerate. See page 16.

65 Krebs, “The Background Level,” 7. This analysis was previously discussed in Chapter 3. The music and graph appear in Figure 3.10 and 3.11 respectively.
Krebs’s early categorizing is a positive advancement in the study of background conglomerates. Because he restricts himself to those types of background conglomerates that occur within the specific repertoire he considers, he leaves the way clear for others to propose a more comprehensive survey of all possibilities with respect to the typology of background conglomerate structures. By taking three general aspects from Krebs’s observations and adding one other, as will be explained later, such a comprehensive survey emerges.

The first general aspect that should be considered when categorizing background conglomerates is the completeness of the first Ursatz. If the first Ursatz is complete, as in Schubert’s Klage (Figure 4.1), then the Kopfton descends to \( \hat{1} \) and is supported by root position tonic harmony. Any other type of Ursatz is by definition incomplete. Incomplete Ursätze, then, either have a Kopfton that never reaches \( \hat{1} \), as in Schubert’s Geistes-Gruss (Figure 4.2), or have a Kopfton that reaches \( \hat{1} \) but is supported by something other than a root position tonic harmony.

The second aspect addresses the second Ursatz. According to the criteria presented in Chapter 2, the second Ursatz of a background conglomerate must be complete: the harmony that
supports the beginning of the second Ursatz can vary, however. One possible type of initial harmonic support is the tonic, as in Schubert’s Klage (Figure 4.1). The other possibility is non-tonic support, which produces an auxiliary cadence in the second key, as seen in Schubert’s Edone (Figure 4.3).

A third aspect is whether or not the Ursätze have identical Kopftöne. Here “identical” means that both Ursätze have their own Kopfion and that the same pitch is used for each Kopfion. Although the pitch used for both Kopfione is the same, it has a different scale degree function in each key. Schubert’s Edone is an example of a background conglomerate with identical Kopfione (Figure 4.3). As is evident in Figure 4.4, “two” Ursätze that share the same Kopfion would no longer be heard as two separate lines, but rather a single Ursatz with an off-tonic beginning.

![Figure 4.4: A single 3-line that begins off-tonic rather than two separate Ursätze](image)

A fourth aspect not mentioned by Krebs is whether or not ambiguous materials occur between the two Ursätze. In some instances, the Ursätze simply occur side by side. At other times, materials occur between the Ursätze that have only a contrapuntal relationship to the two lines. Chopin’s Ballade op. 38 includes such ambiguous materials in mm. 82-148 (Figure 3.15).
With these four general aspects of background conglomerates in mind, sixteen possible scenarios emerge as opposed to Krebs’s three (Figure 4.5). A reevaluation of Krebs’s examples can be made in terms of these scenarios. According to Krebs’s analysis, Klage is a Scenario 1 work: it has an initial Ursatz that is complete, there is no ambiguous link, the second Ursatz begins with tonic harmony, and the Ursätze have different Kopftöne. One general difference exists between Krebs’s graphs of Geistes-Gruss and Klage: the first Ursatz is incomplete rather than complete. This makes Geistes-Gruss a Scenario 9 composition. In contrast, Krebs’s analysis of Edone has many differing features from the previous two analyses: the first Ursatz is incomplete, there is ambiguous material between the Ursätze, the second Ursatz begins with non-tonic harmony that results in an auxiliary cadence, and the Ursätze have identical Kopftöne. Therefore, according to Krebs’s analysis, Edone is a piece whose structure follows Scenario 16.

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<th>Scenario</th>
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<th>2nd Ursatz Beginning</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

Figure 4.5: Possible scenarios for background conglomerates

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68 Asterisks signify the scenarios that allow for elided Ursätze; see the discussion below.
Longer, purely instrumental works fit just as easily into these categories, e.g. Chopin’s Ballade op. 38 (Figure 3.15). The Ballade has an incomplete first Ursatz, an ambiguous link is present, the second Ursatz begins with tonic harmony, and the Kopftöne are different between the Ursätze.\textsuperscript{69} The Ballade is therefore an example of Scenario 13. As is evident, most background conglomerates can be easily described using these four basic aspects.

**Elided Ursätze**

There is one type of situation that is not described precisely by the scenarios in Figure 3.2: a background conglomerate that has elided Ursätze, i.e. a structure in which the end of one Ursatz acts as the beginning of another, thus creating an elision of Ursätze that is similar to the elision of phrases.\textsuperscript{70} The pivot between elided Ursätze can be either a single Stufe or an extended area of Stufen. Figure 4.6 shows a 5-line and another 5-line eliding with a single Stufe acting as the pivot, thus producing a 3/5-line.\textsuperscript{71} A more extensive elision containing a pivot area of multiple Stufen can be seen with the 5/8-line presented in Figure 4.7.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{5_5-line.png}
\caption{5/5-line, C major to F major\textsuperscript{72}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{69} As previously mentioned, the second fundamental line is complete, but Krebs does not acknowledge this.

\textsuperscript{70} It goes without saying that elided Ursätze can only occur in a background conglomerate and not in any other form of eccentric tonality, or concentric tonality for that matter. Two clearly prolonged triads need to be present in order for this phenomenon to occur, which only background conglomerates possess.

\textsuperscript{71} “A 3/5-line” would be spoken as “a three five line.”

\textsuperscript{72} The second of the two examples is the same as the first, but with a “generic” bass line. The only notes that are included in the “generic” bass line are those that are necessary to produce the specific example. This “generic” bass notation will be used for most of the examples in this chapter and for all of the examples in Appendix A. The reason for this is that there are numerous ways to support the Urlinien and rather than clutter the page with
As previously discussed, the first Ursatz in a background conglomerate need not be complete. With the final Ursatz providing closure for the work, any other line only needs to be well established and have durational significance. This also holds true for elided Ursätze since they only occur in background conglomerates. Figure 4.8 shows an incomplete 8-line eliding with a complete 8-line and a single Stufe as the pivot. While it is less likely, as will be discussed every possible harmonization, a single prototype will suffice. Some examples in this chapter are given with complete bass lines and are notated in a different fashion. For an example of this, see Figure 4.7.

The second of the two examples is a shorthand notation of the first. In elided Ursätze, the end of the first Ursatz will always have a different function in the second Ursatz. Rather than providing two bass staves throughout the remainder of the chapter, the lines will be combined and the change of function will be assumed.
later, multiple Stufen can be used as a pivot area between an incomplete Ursatz and a complete one (Figure 4.9).

Although there is an abundance of elided phrases in tonal music, elided Ursätze are uncommon. Not only does a piece have to meet all of the requirements for being a background conglomerate, but other stipulations need to be met as well. The most apparent stipulation on elided Ursätze is that there can be no ambiguous material between the Ursätze. If the Ursätze are separated, then no elision is possible. Take Chopin’s Ballade op. 38 as an example: no overlapping of Ursätze occurs because an ambiguous link is present (Figure 3.15). Another example can be seen in Krebs’s graph of Edone (Figure 4.3). This limitation is sufficient to prevent half of the background conglomerate scenarios from having elided Ursätze.

Figure 4.8: 8/8-line, C major to G major

![Figure 4.8: 8/8-line, C major to G major](image)

Figure 4.9: 8/8-line, C minor to G minor

![Figure 4.9: 8/8-line, C minor to G minor](image)
Another requirement for elided Ursätze is that the second Kopfion has to be supported by a common chord between the tonalities. Attempting to support the second Kopfion with a non-common chord would result in non-diatonic support for either the end of the first Ursatz or for the second Kopfion: both situations are actually perceived as separated, rather than elided Ursätze because one key fails to be heard in context of the other (Figure 4.10). By using a common chord, the second Kopfion can be supported by either tonic or off-tonic harmony. Tonic support will create a normative Ursatz for the second key and an incomplete Ursatz for the first key that ends in either a half cadence (Figure 4.11) or a deceptive cadence (Figure 4.12). When the support for the second Kopfion is non-tonic, then the first Ursatz can be either complete or incomplete depending on the specific situation.74

Figure 4.10: An apparent 3/3-line that is actually separate 3-lines, C major to A major

Figure 4.11: 8/8-line, C major to G major

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74 There will be a discussion of the specific situations shortly.
Out of the forty-four key relationships that are possible in two-key background conglomerates, only eleven allow for elided Ursätze because of the common chord prerequisite. If only C major or C minor are used for the first Ursatz, the eleven key relationships that allow for elision are as follows: C major is able to elide only with $A^b$ major, A minor, E minor, F major, F minor, and G major; C minor can only elide with $A^b$ major, E$^b$ major, F major, F minor, and G minor.

It is helpful at this point to compare requirements for the two obvious categories of elided Ursätze: those that have different Kopftöne between the Ursätze and those have identical Kopftöne. The most distinctive difference concerns the presence or absence of interruption. When the Ursätze have identical Kopftöne, the first Ursatz needs to be interrupted in order for there to be an elision (Figure 4.13). An interruption in the first Ursatz allows the initial key to be prolonged before the final key takes over. Not only is there a descent within the first key, there is also a half cadence followed by another statement of tonic that reinforces the key. Everything preceding the interruption is then heard within the context of the initial key and only that key. After the interruption, the initial Ursatz restarts, functioning as both a further prolongation of the initial tonic and an auxiliary cadence in the final key. The interruption thus creates an overlap of...
Ursätze with identical Kopftöne. When there is no interruption, a single “shared” Kopfton results. As mentioned above, one Ursatz encompasses the other and is heard as a single line rather than an elision (Figure 4.14). In the case of this “3/5-line,” the C major portion can just be considered an auxiliary cadence in A minor. The same situation occurs in “3/8-lines” if there is no descent from the “first” Kopfton (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.13: 3/5-line, C major to A minor

Figure 4.14: A single 3-line that begins off-tonic rather than two separate Ursätze

Figure 4.15: A single octave line that begins off-tonic rather than two separate Ursätze
While interruptions certainly help to establish the initial key of elided *Ursätze*, they are not necessary for elisions with different *Kopftöne*. When interruptions are not present in elisions with different *Kopftöne*, two *Ursätze* are still perceived, unlike the “shared” *Kopfton* situation described above (Figure 4.16). Just as with any background conglomerate, there still needs to be adequate emphasis and duration to project the first prolongation. If there is not, the initial key should be reduced out of the background, or at least shown as having less importance (Figure 4.17).

![Figure 4.16: 5/5-line, C major to F major](image1)

The next most important aspect for elided *Ursätze* is the completeness of the first *Ursatz*. In order for backgrounds with identical *Kopftöne* to elide, the first *Ursatz* needs to be incomplete. If the first *Ursatz* is complete, then the goal of everything prior to its completion is
the initial tonic; thus the first Ursatz cannot be heard within the context of the final tonic. Take for instance the apparent 3/5-line in Figure 4.18. Due to the completed 3-line, an auxiliary cadence in A minor cannot be perceived until the final Stufe of the 3-line: this cannot, therefore, be a 3/5-line. This still results in elided Ursätze, but a 3/3-line with different Kopftöne rather than a 3/5-line with identical Kopftöne. A different situation comes about when a completed 3-line occurs in an apparent 3/8-line with identical Kopftöne (Figure 4.19). Due to the finality of the 3-line, there is no notion of the second Ursatz until after the 3-line is completed. This results in two separate Ursätze occurring side-by-side rather than elision. Therefore, this is an example of a Scenario 1 background conglomerate without elision: the first Ursatz is complete, there is no ambiguous link, the second Ursatz begins with tonic harmony, and there are two different Kopftöne. As is apparent, completeness plays a vital role for elisions with identical Kopftöne.

Figure 4.18: An apparent 3/5-line that is actually a 3/3-line, C major to A minor

Figure 4.19: An apparent 3/8-line that is actually separate 3- and 5-lines, C major to E minor
In most elisions with identical Kopftöne, the first Ursatz cannot be heard as descending past its Kopftön after the interruption. The cause of this is that the chord that directly proceeds the Kopftön would be non-diatonic within the first key and would only be understood within the context of the second key. An example of this can be found in Figure 4.20, which shows a 5/8-line with identical Kopftöne. After the interruption, 5 of C major cannot be heard as descending because the next chord includes an F#, which is non-diatonic within C major. This Stufe can only be heard within the context of G major and once it is reached, any sense of the initial C major tonality is lost.

![Figure 4.20: 5/8-line, C major to G major](image)

Though most situations for elisions with identical Kopftöne do not allow the initial Urlinie to reach 1, a small number of situations do allow it. As previously discussed, the initial Ursatz cannot be complete in these types of elisions. This means that if 1 is reached in the context of the first key, it has to be supported by something other than a root position tonic triad in the first key. Avoided cadences and deceptive cadences are left as the only options for ending the initial Ursatz. Avoided cadences occur when V is expected to resolve to a root position triad, but resolves to a non-root position tonic triad instead. When the non-root position tonic triad occurs, thus avoiding any sense of closure and propelling the music forward until closure is
reached. The initial 3-line in Figure 4.21 ends with an avoided cadence that forces the music to seek a complete resolution, but that resolution ends up being found in another key.

Deceptive cadences have the same unsettling affect as avoided cadences, but produce a smoother pivot area than do avoided cadences. Since deceptive cadences resolve to non-tonic chords and the chord in this situation has to include $\hat{1}$, IV, IV$^6$, and VI within the first key are left as the most likely options. Of these, IV cannot occur because parallel fifths occur when V resolves to IV (Figure 4.22). Besides that fact, VI provides the best harmonic support for both Ursätze. In the case of the 3/8-line in Figure 4.23, VI in the first key becomes IV in the second key, thus creating an auxiliary cadence in the second key.

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75 The chords that produce parallel fifths are notated with an “X.”
Another set of possible deceptive resolutions is possible when modal mixture is taken into account. A technique frequently used in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, modal mixture occurs when a major key work contains chords from its parallel minor. This technique allows deceptive cadences in these elided Ursätze to resolve to iv⁶, and bVI. Since modal mixture is such a popular technique in tonal music, an example like Figure 4.24 could very well exist.

The requirement for incompleteness in the first Ursatz also applies to elisions with different Kopftöne, except in cases where in the first key becomes the Kopfton of the second

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key. As opposed to elisions with identical Kopftöne, the completion of the first Ursatz presents no perceptible drawbacks for these elisions. As is shown in Figure 4.25, the last Stufe of the completed 5-line creates an auxiliary cadence for the 3-line. Keeping in mind that the first Ursatz has to be durationally salient, the 5-line in this example is not heard as a simple auxiliary cadence in A minor. With the exception of cases like Figure 4.25, the first Ursatz for elisions with different Kopftöne should end in an avoided or deceptive cadence when 1 is reached for the same reasons stated for elisions with identical Kopftöne.

![Figure 4.25: 5/3-line, C major to A minor]

Elisions with a pivot area of multiple Stufen can occur in only eleven situations. Four of these situations have identical Kopftöne: the 3/5-line that elides C major to A minor, both 3/8-lines, and the 5/8-line that elides C minor and G minor. The other seven situations occur when different Kopftöne are present: the 8/5- and 5/5-lines that elide C major and A minor, the 8/8- and 5/8-lines that elide C major and E minor, the 8/8- and 5/8-lines that elide C minor and E minor^b major, and the 8/8-line that elides C minor and G minor. Other situations do not accommodate these extended elisions because there are either non-diatonic obstacles that block the unfolding of the first Ursatz or the second Ursatz is simply shorter than the first. Extended elisions also

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^77 See Appendix A for graphs of these situations.
have a stipulation that is specific to them: the harmony that directly follows the end of the first Ursatz has to be V of the second key. An auxiliary cadence is produced in the final key when this happens (Figure 4.26). If the support for 2 is not V, then the second Ursatz will lack an auxiliary cadence and any sense of elision (Figure 4.27). The reason for the lack of elision is that motion to tonic from a chord other than V would be present, but auxiliary cadences are required to reach tonic via V. As is seen in Figure 4.27, this ultimately results in the absence of elision between the lines.

The last aspect to consider is how the beginning of the second Ursatz is supported. Elisions with identical Kopftöne have only one possibility: the second Ursatz has to begin with an auxiliary cadence. In order for the required interruption to occur, the harmony directly after
the interruption needs to be of the first tonic. As seen in Figure 4.28, this forces the second Ursatz to begin with an auxiliary cadence. If the second Ursatz began with a tonic harmony in the second key, as in Figure 4.29, no interruption would be present, parallel fifths occur, and two separated Ursätze would emerge. The result would be a Scenario 10 background conglomerate: the first Ursatz is incomplete since it ends with a half cadence on 2, there is no ambiguous link present, the second Ursatz begins with tonic harmony, and the Kopftöne are identical. Analyzing Figure 4.29 as 2 separate lines is still not ideal since the parallel fifths are still present. As with all the other requirements for elisions with identical Kopftöne, beginning the second Ursatz with an auxiliary cadence is crucial.

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**Figure 4.28: 3/5-line, C major to A minor**

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**Figure 4.29: An apparent 3/5-line that is actually separate 3- and 5-lines, C major to A minor**

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78 The chords that produce parallel fifths are notated with an “X.”
As is typical of elisions with different Kopftöne, there is an exception to beginning the second *Ursatz* with an auxiliary cadence: the second *Ursatz* can begin with tonic harmony of the second key. The result of this is either ending the first *Ursatz* with a half cadence (Figure 4.30) or a deceptive cadence (Figure 4.31). With no interruption required, a tonic beginning in the second key only presents structural problems in a few circumstances. One obvious circumstance is if the second key’s tonic is IV in the first key. As previously discussed, V to IV would cause parallel fifths and is therefore not a viable option. The only other problem arises when the second key’s tonic is not a diatonic chord in the first key. As noted above, when the beginning of the second *Ursatz* is not supported by a common chord with the first key, then it is non-diatonic in the first key and therefore not heard in context of the first key. This results in two separated *Ursätze* as was shown in Figure 4.10.

![Figure 4.30: 8/8-line, C major to G major](image)

![Figure 4.31: 5/3-line, C major to A minor](image)
From the above discussion on elided *Ursätze*, a chart can be made for easy comparison between elisions with identical *Kopftöne* and those with different *Kopftöne*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Identical Kopftöne</strong></th>
<th><strong>Different Kopftöne</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannot have an ambiguous link</td>
<td>Same as identical Kopftöne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Kopfton has to be supported by a common chord between keys</td>
<td>Same as identical Kopftone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a more extensive elision is present, the harmony that directly proceeds the end of the first <em>Ursatz</em> has to be V of the final key</td>
<td>Same as identical Kopftone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruption is necessary</td>
<td>Interruption is not necessary, but is possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first <em>Ursatz</em> ending has to be incomplete</td>
<td>Same as identical Kopftone unless i of the first key is reinterpreted as the Kopfton of the second key, then it can be complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second <em>Ursatz</em> has to begin with an auxiliary cadence</td>
<td>Same as identical Kopftone unless the final tonic is a common chord with the first key, then it can begin with tonic harmony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.32: Elided *Ursatz* Requirements

Upon comparing the requirements for elided *Ursätze* to the scenarios for background conglomerates, only four scenarios allow for elided *Ursätze*. These are marked with asterisks in Figure 4.5. Of these four scenarios, elided *Ursätze* with identical *Kopftone* are only possible in Scenario 12. Those with different *Kopftone* can occur in Scenarios 3, 9, and 11. With so many stipulations to meet, only fifty-eight background conglomerate structures allow for elided *Ursätze*.79 This number is dwarfed in comparison to the nearly infinite number of background structures that are possible due to different possible key relationships, sizes of *Ursätze*, completeness of the first line, etcetera.

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79 See the Appendix for the 55 possible scenarios. This number only accounts for generic key relationships and does not reflect transpositions. For simplicity’s sake, C major or minor will be used for the first prolonged triad in every graph. Naturally, all graphs can be transposed to any level of tonality.
The following brief analyses are intended to help clarify the difference between elided and non-elided *Ursätze*. First, two of Krebs’s previously discussed analyses will be considered again. His graph of Schubert’s *Klage* appears to be a likely candidate for elided *Ursätze* (Figure 4.1). What makes this a possibility is that the first *Ursatz* reaches 1 and that same pitch is used as the *Kopfton* for the second *Ursatz* (of which it is 3), thus yielding a potential 5/3-line with different *Kopftöne*. It seems to meet all of the requirements for this type of elision: there is no ambiguous link, the second *Kopfton* is a common chord between the keys, the first *Ursatz* is complete (which is allowable since 1 of the first line is the second *Kopfton*), and the second *Ursatz* begins with tonic harmony (which is allowable since it is a common chord with the first key and does not produce bad voice leading). Though all of these requirements are met, the interaction between the *Ursätze* prevents them from eliding. This thwarted elision is caused by the reharmonization of 1 by the first *Ursatz*. Since a single *Stufe* was not used to support the end of the first *Ursatz* and the beginning of the second, a fresh beginning is heard rather than a continuation. This disjointedness is furthered by an initial ascent in D minor to its *Kopfton*. D minor then begins its descent without any help from F major. *Klage* thus remains a Scenario 1 background conglomerate without elided *Ursätze*.

Another analysis by Krebs that could possibly show elided *Ursätze* is his analysis of Schubert’s *Edone* (Figure 4.3). What is unique about this graph amongst all of Krebs’s graphs is that he actually reveals continuity between the *Ursätze*. Krebs exposes this continuity by showing an incomplete and interrupted *Ursatz* in the first key that is reinterpreted as an auxiliary cadence after the interruption. This would be a prime candidate for a 3/5-line with identical

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80 This theory of elided *Ursätze* was originally conceived without the consultation of this graph. Krebs’s graph of *Edone* was found after the fact and only helps to reinforce the theory. The theory came about in the process of formulating a cogent analysis of Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust*, op. 33 no. 2. A brief introduction to the theory along with a graph of *Quasi-Faust* was presented at the convention for South Central Society for Music Theory in March 2006.
Kopftöne, but as previously mentioned, Krebs shows an ambiguous link that places this into Scenario 16 rather than 12. However, upon further examination of the work, this stretch of “ambiguity” is firmly grounded in E♭ major (Figure 4.34). Krebs actually analyzed Edone in an earlier paper and showed this stretch as belonging to E♭ major. If Krebs’s present graph of Edone were modified to reflect this, the song could be presented as a perfect example of an elision with two identical Kopftöne: there is no ambiguous link, a common chord supports the second Kopfton, there is an interruption in the first key, the first Ursatz is incomplete, and the second Ursatz begins with an auxiliary cadence (Figure 4.33). Edone now fits nicely into a Scenario 12 background conglomerate with elided Ursätze.

Figure 4.33: Krebs’s analysis of Schubert’s Edone, with alterations

Analysis of Alkan’s Quasi-Faust

The final example to be discussed is the most intricate of the pieces presented in this paper: Alkan’s Quasi-Faust, the second movement of his extraordinary and extensive Grande Sonate op. 33 for solo piano. The sonata was composed in 1848 and is typical for a nineteenth-century sonata in that it has four movements; however, many distinctive features make this sonata stand out from contemporaneous ones. These include an overall deceleration in the tempi

81 Krebs, Third Relation, p.64 of his examples, Figure III.9.
Figure 4.34: Schubert’s *Edone, D. 445*[^schubert]

of the movements, the use of different keys in all four movements, the appearance of sonata form only in the second movement, and the fact that the second movement begins and ends in different keys. It should be noted that each movement has a title: 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, and 50 years respectively. This sonata is programmatic and represents the aging of Alkan’s father, as Alkan states in the preface of the sonata. The last three movements are subtitled: *Quasi-Faust, A Happy Household, and Prometheus In Chains* respectively. A diagram of the complete sonata is given in Figure 4.35. The second movement is most commonly programmed as a solo piece and is usually referred to by its subtitle *Quasi-Faust*; it will be referred to as such throughout the rest of this paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Subtitle</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20 ans</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>Très Vite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30 ans</td>
<td><em>Quasi-Faust</em></td>
<td>D♭ minor/F♯ major</td>
<td>Assez Vite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40 ans</td>
<td><em>Un Heureux Ménage</em></td>
<td>G major</td>
<td>Lentement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50 ans</td>
<td><em>Prométhée Enchaîné</em></td>
<td>G♯ minor</td>
<td>Extrêmement Lent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.35: A formal diagram of Alkan’s *Grande Sonate* op. 33

Since the movement is unfamiliar to most people, a brief overview of the piece is in order (Figure 4.36a). Though it has an unusual key scheme, *Quasi-Faust* is a convincing sonata-form movement. The movement begins without introduction with a first group begins in D♭ minor; the second group begins at m. 57 in G♯ minor. The relationship between these two groups is unique in that no other sonata form movement in the tonal repertoire has a second group in the subdominant.83 This large area of subdominant is eventually followed by a dominant divider at the end of the development section, which begins at m. 131. After the interruption, the first group is recapitulated at m. 190 in D♭ minor. The second group is not recapitulated in tonic, but

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83 This interesting fact was pointed out by David Smyth.
a: A formal diagram of Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Episode: trans.</th>
<th>Theme II</th>
<th>closing theme</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
<th>Episode: <em>fugato</em></th>
<th>Theme II</th>
<th>closing theme</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme I</td>
<td>(“The Devil”)</td>
<td>57-116</td>
<td>131-189</td>
<td>190-230</td>
<td>231-274</td>
<td>275-293</td>
<td>293-310</td>
<td></td>
<td>310-332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b: Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust* analyzed as Scenario 11 without elided *Ursätze*

```
F#: 5 4 3 2 1

F#: V I
```

c: Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust* analyzed as Scenario 12 with elided *Ursätze*

```
F#: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

F#: vi V
```

d: Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust* analyzed as an auxiliary cadence

```
F#: vi
```

Figure 4.36: Analyses of Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust*
rather in the relative major of tonic, F# major, at m. 275. F# major governs the coda as well, and thus remains the controlling tonic for the remaining third of *Quasi-Faust*.

As shown in Figure 4.36b, the structure of *Quasi-Faust* may be interpreted as a background conglomerate without elision. The movement begins in D# minor and remains in this key for two thirds of the movement’s 332 measures. When the more than two hundred measures of D# are taken into account, it seems important enough to interpret it as a basic structure that unfolds at the background level. The initial motive found in the first measure actually foreshadows what is going to occur throughout the D# minor portion of *Quasi-Faust*; a 3-line with F# as the *Kopfton* (Figure 4.37). The prominence of F# is not only apparent at the outset of the theme, but is also reinforced by a hidden repetition in the first statement of the theme. The hypermetrical downbeats, shown with circles in Figure 4.37, reveal the initial motive prolonged over the first fifteen measures; D# in m. 1, F# in m. 5, E# in m. 9, and a return to D# in m. 15. When a transitional episode begins in m. 38, F# maintains its significant role (Figure 4.38). The episode imitates the opening motive of the movement by keeping the same rhythm and inverting the pitches. The episode leads to a D# major triad in m. 47, the dominant of the second group key, G# minor. This in turn transforms the *Kopfton* from F# to F*X*, the leading tone of the second theme. The F*X* then resolves to G# at the start of the second theme in m. 57. From this point, as is typical, the *Kopfton* does not resume its principal role in the *Ursatz* until after the interruption in m. 189, by which point structural 2 has arrived. The recapitulation then begins at m. 190 with a thicker texture than the exposition, but returns to the original D# minor tonality as well as the initial motive and its hidden repetition, accented again by hypermetrical downbeats (Figure 4.39). With the arrival of 1 at m. 296 and its D# minor support, an interrupted 3-line in D# minor has unfolded. From this point on, the D# minor tonality never reappears and F# major is
Figure 4.37: Alkan’s Quasi-Faust, m. 1-16

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84 Circled indicate which notes are included in the hidden repetition. Measure numbers are given above the staves and hypermetrical “beat” numbers within the staves.
prolonged. When the movement is read as a normal background conglomerate without elision, the final *Ursatz* of F# major is a clear 5-line that begins with an auxiliary cadence (Figure 4.36b). This analysis shows *Quasi-Faust* as a Scenario 11 background conglomerate without elision.

Having established that the movement’s structure is that of a background conglomerate, the possibility of elided *Ursätze* can be explored. Since *Quasi-Faust* has a structural interruption and F# plays an important role as a *Kopfton*, it is possible to analyze it as a 3/8-line with two identical *Kopftöne* of F# (Figure 4.36c). When read in this fashion, the movement flawlessly meets all of the requirements for elided *Ursätze* with identical *Kopftöne*: there is no ambiguous link present; the second *Kopfton* is supported by a D# major triad, a common chord between the keys; the harmony that directly follows the end of the first *Ursatz* is V of F# major, as previously
Figure 4.39: Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust*, m. 189-206

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85 Circled indicate which notes are included in the hidden repetition.
discussed, this is a necessity for an extended elision; there is an interruption; the first Ursatz ends with has an avoided cadence, making it incomplete; and the second Ursatz begins with an auxiliary cadence.

There is even evidence to support reading the F# major portion (m. 190-332) of the movement as an octave line. The replacement of D# minor by F# major is announced in m. 231 with an episode like no other: a seven-voice fugato!\(^{86}\) This fugato includes octave descents between many of the subject statements. Figure 4.41 shows how the first two statements of the subject combine to form a local octave descent. This fugato therefore reinforces an octave line

\[\text{Figure 4.40: Alkan’s Quasi-Faust, m. 227-238}\]

\[\text{Figure 4.41: First two subjects forming a local octave descent}\]

\(^{86}\) An extremely rare musical oddity can be found in this peculiar fugato; a triple sharp in m. 258.
reading for the F major portion just as the hidden repetitions of the D minor portion indicate a 3-line. How better to reflect this than by analyzing the movement as a 3/8-line? According to the prior discussion on elided Ursätze, Quasi-Faust turns out to be a great example of a Scenario 12 background conglomerate with a 3/8-line. Could an analysis of Quasi-Faust that shows a background auxiliary cadence present the amount of information a 3/8-line reading does? Figure 4.36d presents such an analysis, which pales in comparison to the 3/8-line reading because over half of the musical events are marginalized, including the interruption that helps to define the movement’s sonata form.

**Background Conglomerates and Octave Lines**

One byproduct of the type of elision found in Quasi-Faust is an octave line in the second key. Many theorists that have followed Schenker and have developed his theories consider the use of octave lines in analysis problematic. These supposed problems are due to inadequacies found in the octave line graph itself and in its application to form, especially sonata form. David Smyth has convincingly addressed these purported problems, but as seen in Quasi-Faust, an alternative way to produce octave lines that overcome the problems is through the use of background conglomerates.87

David Neumeyer is one of the most prominent of the theorists who oppose the use of octave lines. He has drawn together five of the most common objections to the octave line.88 His objections will be addressed in relation to the octave line in Quasi-Faust. The first these problems is the unsupported stretches that occur in the Ursatz. The most common to be unsupported are 7 and 6. In order for a true octave line to occur, Neumeyer requires that these

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scale degrees be supported. If there is no support, then the portion of the line from \( \hat{8} \) to \( \hat{5} \) should be considered an “initial descent,” with the true line starting on \( \hat{5} \). With the 3/8-line of Quasi-Faust, \( \hat{7} \) and \( \hat{6} \) are easily supported. When these scale degrees are considered in the context of D\# minor, they are \( \hat{2} \) and \( \hat{1} \). These are harmonized in the typical fashion; dominant and tonic respectively. What would normally be an unsupported stretch in the octave line is given full harmonic supported.

The second of Neumeyer’s problems is the inclusion of \( \hat{7} \) in the octave line. Neumeyer seems to assume that \( \hat{7} \) will be harmonized as the leading tone, which should resolve back to tonic. If this were always the case, no octave line could indeed exist: Smyth points out, however, that there are in fact many ways to harmonize \( \hat{7} \) so as not to engage its leading tone function.\(^{89}\) Quasi-Faust is a great example of this as \( \hat{7} \) is harmonized in m. 200 with A\# major, the dominant of D\# minor, or in other words the submediant of F\# major. By using this harmony, \( \hat{7} \) (\( \hat{2} \) of vi) is allowed and even encouraged to continue in the octave descent.

Neumeyer’s third problem concerns interruption. If an interruption were to occur at \( \hat{2} \), the dissonant interval of a seventh would be outlined. According to Neumeyer and others, including Schenker, the outline of such an interval is problematic. Neumeyer admits that interruption in 3- and 5-lines also causes outlined dissonant intervals, but raises another related issue to take its place: a structural descent from \( \hat{8} \) to \( \hat{2} \) can actually be heard as a rising second from \( \hat{8} \) to \( \hat{9} \), resulting in a line that move contrary to the descent of the Ursatz (Figure 4.42).\(^{90}\) Contrary to this argument, Neumeyer later analyzes C. P. E. Bach’s Prussian Sonata no. 2, movement 1 as having an interrupted octave line (Figure 4.43). It appears that Neumeyer


\(^{90}\) This issue is also raised by Schenker. See Schenker, Free Composition, 34.
believes that some works exhibit only a descent to $\hat{2}$ rather than an upper neighbor motion to $\hat{9}$.

In any case, this issue does not present a problem for the octave line in *Quasi-Faust* since it does not begin until after the interruption.

$$\begin{array}{c}
8\hat{7}6\hat{5}4\hat{3}\hat{2} & || & \hat{8}\hat{7}\hat{6}\hat{5}4\hat{3}\hat{2}\
= & 8 & \hat{9} & || & \hat{8}\hat{7}\hat{6}\hat{5}4\hat{3}\hat{2}
\end{array}$$

Figure 4.42: Interpretation of an interrupted octave line breaking its *obligatory register*

Yet another issue is taken up by Neumeyer that stems from the previous one: an octave line by definition descends from $\hat{8}$ to $\hat{1}$, but Neumeyer believes this *Ursatz* can be viewed as a simple coupling, which Schenker defines as “the connection of two register which lie n octave apart.” Neumeyer, “The Urlinie from $\hat{8}$,” 20. The outcome of such a reading would be a static background motion from $\hat{8}$ to itself,

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91 Neumeyer, “The Urlinie from $\hat{8}$,” 20.
92 Schenker, *Free Composition*, 52.
or in other words an unelaborated prolongation of 1. An Ursatz should be goal oriented, as Neumeyer states. 3- and 5-lines accomplish this by starting on a scale degree other than 1, consequently requiring the line to descend until 1 is reached. When an octave line is considered to be the result of coupling, there is no actual descent required as the line begins on its goal. This is not the case for Quasi-Faust, or any other octave line piece that begins with an auxiliary cadence. D# minor is perceived to be tonic at the beginning of the movement, and since F# is the Kopfton, a descent is initiated to reach D#. Once F# major takes control over the movement, a descent from F# has already begun and must continue until 1 is reached in F# major. Neumeyer’s issue does not appear to pose any problems in Quasi-Faust.

The fourth octave line problem conveyed by Neumeyer is that such lines usually require two or more bass arpeggiations rather than one. Considering fundamental structures in general, Neumeyer is convinced that in order for a background graph to be viable, it has to have simple features. David Beach has discussed a conflicting view stated by Schenker himself in Free Composition and concludes that genuine octave lines should contain two bass arpeggiations.93 Smyth argues the point further, writing that octave lines are more elaborate due to the wealth of melodic pitches and that the resulting bass arpeggiations produce a contrapuntally rich architecture. These appealing features should not be ruled out for the sake of “systemic economy.”94

Quasi-Faust indeed presents such a case of contrapuntal richness and requires multiple bass arpeggiations. Would a background graph with a single bass arpeggiation truly be able to capture the play of keys apparent in Quasi-Faust? If such a graph were made, it would surely be

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a poor representation of the movement. Neumeyer’s analysis C. P. E. Bach’s *Prussian Sonata* no. 2, movement 1 even contains multiple bass arpeggations (Figure 4.43). According to his analysis, there are not only two, but three bass arpeggations within the movement. Clearly some pieces need multiple bass arpeggations at the background level in order to reveal the true nature of such pieces.

The final problem Neumeyer has with octave lines is that they are nearly impossible to apply to sonata form. Neumeyer makes this bold statement at the beginning of his article, but never provides an argument for it and even contradicts it by analyzing C. P. E. Bach’s *Prussian Sonata* no. 2, movement 1 as having a sonata form and an octave line (Figure 4.43). Schenker also provides an example of an octave line paired with sonata form that opposes Neumeyer’s statement (Figure 4.44). Even if Neumeyer’s argument that sonata form and the octave line cannot appear together is seen as convincing, *Quasi-Faust*’s 3/8-line presents an alternative method to combine them without causing any problems: the form is interrupted as sonata forms typically are, there is an incomplete *Ursatz* before the interruption and a compete *Ursatz* after the interruption, and the recapitulation begins after the interruption.

![Figure 4.44: Schenker’s graph of a possible combination of an octave line and sonata form](image)

95 Schenker, *Free Composition*, Figure 27b. The scale degree numbers are not originally in 27b, but they do appear in 27a and apply to this octave line as well.
In summary, elided Ursätze present solutions to the “problems” that are associated with octave lines: unsupported stretches are no longer present, ₇ is harmonized in such a way that it encourages the Urlinie to descend, interruption is present, multiple bass arpeggiations are used in an appropriate manner, and an octave line exists within a sonata form. Since elided Ursätze, and more generally background conglomerates, have such a large impact on sonata form, their affect on other forms deserves more attention in future studies.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Pieces that begin and end in different keys have obviously been a topic of analytical interest for many years. It is remarkable that no standardized terminology or requirements for the phenomenon has come about, especially when the large number of publications on this topic is taken into consideration. In order for research on this topic to be more successful and complete, a system of terms and guidelines needs to be agreed upon. This paper has argued that such a system should include the terms concentric tonality, eccentric tonality, background conglomerate, and elided *Ursätze*, as defined here. By using this system, it is easier to distinguish between genuine background conglomerates and other structures that are commonly confused with background conglomerates. This distinction will allow much needed focus to fall on true background conglomerates rather than on other structures. Many implications of background conglomerate structures have gone largely untouched, an example being the possibility of a conglomerate of more than two prolonged triads. If interesting structures like elided *Ursätze* exist when there are only two keys present in a background conglomerate, it can only be speculated as to what structures may exist when more than two keys are present. With so many unanalyzed background conglomerates available, there is no telling what could be discovered beyond the elided *Ursätze* of the two-triad background conglomerate.
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APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND CONGLOMERATE STRUCTURES THAT ALLOW FOR ELIDED URSÄTZE

Elisions with Identical Kopftöne
Elisions with Different Kopftöne
APPENDIX B: TERMINOLOGY CHART

Note: This chart only takes into account whether or not authors mentions a term, not if they agree or disagree with its use. All of these sources are included in my bibliography, which is why only years and authors are provided. Although I was as thorough as possible, there may be instances of terms that were missed. If any others are found, feel free to contact me about them.

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VITA

Matthew J. Steinbron was born and raised in Minnesota. He entered the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire in 1999 as a music education major, but soon found his interests were in music theory, so he switched majors. After graduating in 2004 with a Bachelor of Music in music theory and an emphasis on piano, Steinbron entered the master’s degree program in the School of Music of Louisiana State University, completing his master’s thesis, “Background Conglomerates in Alkan’s *Quasi-Faust*, op. 33, no. 2,” in August 2006. Beginning in the fall semester of 2006, he will begin the Ph.D. program in music theory with a minor in piano pedagogy at Louisiana State University. Throughout his studies in music theory, Steinbron has continually pursued the study of piano and has given many performances, received various awards, accompanied countless soloists and ensembles, and has taught privately.