

Notes on Form for MUTH 202

Part I

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1) Phrase Overlap

In the discussion of general rules for phrase diagrams in the notes from last term, it was stated that no measure is ever contained in two different arcs on the same level of structure, that arcs on the same level never overlap. Exceptions to this rule were promised, and here they are.

One sometimes finds cases in which a single musical event serves both as the final event of one grouping unit and as the first event of the grouping unit that follows. This is called an **overlap**. Most frequently this occurs at authentic cadences, when the tonic arrival that concludes the first phrase also serves as the initial chord of the second phrase. Example 1, the beginning of Mozart's Piano Sonata in C, K.279, illustrates this.

This is a particularly interesting example because the number of cadences is open to debate. Clearly there is a PAC in m. 5, and as mm. 1-2 are identical to mm. 3-4, it would seem to make sense to hear a PAC in m. 3 as well. Personally I don't hear a cadence there, as too little has happened since the beginning of the movement. I instead hear an unusual overlap in the middle of a phrase.

2) Phrase Elision

In an overlap, the shared event belongs to each grouping unit equally well – of course in terms of harmonic function, but also in terms of register, voicing, orchestration, dynamic, articulation, etc. One sometimes encounters an event that serves harmonically both as the end of one grouping unit and as the beginning of the next, but which, in terms of some other sonic parameter, belongs more with one phrase than the other. A case of this sort is called an **elision**. It is as if the end of the first phrase has been omitted and replaced by the beginning of the second phrase, a replacement that works in terms of harmony but that creates a disjunction in some other way. Example 2, from the first movement of Haydn's Symphony No. 104, illustrates this.

In most cases, as in the Haydn, it is the new beginning that replaces the ending. While a loud beginning replacing a soft is more common, soft beginnings can also replace loud endings. It is much more uncommon for an ending to replace a new beginning – can you see why this makes sense?

3) Graphing Meter as Heard

Before looking at Example 3, from the duet "Bei Männern" from Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, listen to the music. The music is in 6/8; conduct along with it. Now look at the example.

You are probably surprised by the placement of the bar lines; you were probably conducting beats as notated, but conducting downbeats at the half measure and vice versa. Composers do this from time to time – they take music that has clear metrical implications and they notate it so that the heard downbeats are different from the downbeats given by the bar lines.

When this happens, we will diagram the music as heard, not as notated. This means that arcs will touch down in the middles of measures – not because of pickups, but because that's where the downbeats are heard and understood. Example 3b demonstrates what this looks like for the Mozart duet.

4) Phrase Extensions: General Overview

We sometimes encounter musical phrases that seem to include “extra” material. We are aware that the music would correspond more closely to norms and expectations if the “extra” material were removed. This is not to say that the “extra” material shouldn’t be there, or that the music would be better if it were removed. The music would simply be more normal if it were removed. This extra material, that could in theory be removed, is called a **phrase extension**.

In making phrase diagrams, use dashed lines instead of solid lines above phrase extensions; this indicates their special status in relation to the more fundamental material.

In the following discussion of the various types of phrase extension, pay close attention to the cues that lead us wonder if some material could be removed, as well as to the criteria that would make us decide either that the music would be more normal without the measures in question or that those measures are structurally necessary parts of the phrase.

By “structurally necessary” I mean those measures that are integral to the ball-throwing analogy from term 1: a clear point of initiation, a logical sense of motion toward a cadence, and finally the landing on the cadence itself. If some parts of the phrase are not necessary in this sense, this in no way demeans their aesthetic value. I like to think about this issue in terms of a lighthouse. A structural engineer, thinking *as* an engineer, will tell you that it is the frame of the building that counts, whether made of stone or steel girders. The light on top is a mere decoration. But that same engineer, thinking as a business person, also knows that to the shipping company that commissions the lighthouse, the light on top is the whole point; the kind of structure that holds it there doesn’t matter, so long as it stays standing. When we say that some measures aren’t structurally necessary, we’re like the engineer thinking as an engineer, a good thing to be able to do if we care about the whole picture of how the phrase functions. This doesn’t preclude also being aware that the expressive quality imparted by the “extra” measures may be one of the most compelling things about the phrase.

5) Post-Cadential Extension

Sometimes composers write a few measures of “extra” music following a cadence – this music doesn’t initiate a new phrase but rather serves to confirm and solidify the cadence that just occurred. It may simply repeat the tonic triad. Or it may go through the same harmonic processes that a self-standing phrase would, but without a real sense of initiation of something new, and with a much weaker sense of substance and weight behind the harmonic motion. In such cases we speak of a **post-cadential extension**.

In Act 1 of Mozart’s *Magic Flute*, at the end of the quintet, Tamino and Papageno say a protracted good-bye to the three ladies who serve the Queen of the Night. Example 4a

shows the end of the end, as the final cadence receives post-cadential extension that humorously depicts the last gasp of their parting.

As with all phrase extensions, use dashed lines for post-cadential extensions. And use flat lines, not curved arcs, above post-cadential extensions. This indicates that the meat of the phrase, the arc of motion that led to the cadence, has already been concluded. In a longer post-cadential extension, it may be helpful to indicate subphrases within the extension, and this may be done with curved, dashed arcs. Just be sure that a flat line covers the whole of the extension. Example 4b shows how Example 4a would be graphed.

Note the final cadences that are labeled on Example 4b. As the concluding measures are post-cadential extension, these are not cadences in the usual sense – they do not conclude their own arcs of tonal motion. They are labeled as cadences for two reasons: because they present the usual harmonic formula of the authentic cadence, and because there is a sense that the music comes to rest there. Because of these reasons, these measures are heard as restatements of the true cadence in measure 16 of the example, and they are labeled as cadences. But be careful labeling cadences within post-cadential extensions – both criteria are necessary! The final measure is where the motion finally comes to a complete resting point, but it is not labeled as a cadence because it merely restates the tonic harmony that we have been hearing since the middle of measure 20 of the example – because the tonic harmony there is not preceded by dominant harmony, it doesn't meet the harmonic criterion for being a cadence.

Example 5a offers another case of post-cadential extension, taken from the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in B-flat, K. 333. Here it is a half cadence that is extended. Example 5 raises a subtle but important point about hierarchy.

In the analysis shown in Example 5b, the post-cadential extension is grouped together with the second phrase; an arc covers the basic phrase of mm. 15-18, and an arc covers the phrase together with its extension, mm. 15-22. Finally, an arc binds the two phrases of the example into a single unit.

In Example 5c, the post-cadential extension is understood to embellish the entire two-phrase unit that runs from m. 11 to m. 18. As before there is an arc covering mm. 15-18, but now mm. 11-18 are slurred together, with the post-cadential extension fitting under an arc that unites it with mm. 11-18 as an undivided entity.

Both of these are well-formed analyses. In Example 5b, the post-cadential extension decorates only the second phrase, while in Example 5c it decorates the two-phrase grouping unit. Personally, I agree with the second analysis. The analysis given in Example 5b seems strangely proportioned in that the decoration (mm. 19-22) is as long as the phrase being decorated, 4 measures. In Example 5c, it is the whole unit of 8 measures that is decorated by the 4-bar postcadential extension; such a long and emphatic embellishment seems to me best heard as a confirmation of the whole trajectory that started in m. 11.

6) Extension Before the Beginning

Composers sometimes write one or more measures of music that precede the true beginning of the phrase; these can consist of vamping on a single chord, or they can have a modest degree of melodic and harmonic substance that do not suffice to mark a true start of the phrase. We call such phrase extensions **extension before the beginning**.

Like post-cadential extensions, extensions before the beginning are diagrammed with flat, dashed lines.

Example 6, from the Duke's aria "Questa o quella" from Act 1 of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, illustrates a typical vamping extension before the beginning. Example 7, the opening of Brahms's Sonata in F minor for Clarinet and Piano, op. 120 no. 1, shows a more substantive extension before the beginning.

7) Extension in Course

So far we have dealt with "extra" measures before a phrase really begins and after its cadence; what clearly remains is extra measures added between the beginning and the cadence. Such an extension is called an **extension in course**.

The other two kinds of phrase extensions are easier to identify; there isn't usually anything at all before the beginning or after the cadence, so when there is, we know that there is a phrase extension. But how do we know if there is an extension in course?

The key is the number of measures in the phrase. The number of measures in most phrases is a multiple of four, with four and eight measures being the most commonly encountered lengths. When we find a phrase whose length is not a multiple of four measures, we should look for an extension in course. (Occasionally a composer will create a context in which some other number of measures becomes the norm; if this has happened, a number of measures that *is* a multiple of four may be heard as resulting from phrase extension.) There may not actually be an extension in course; some phrases consist of unusual numbers of measures for reasons other than phrase extension. But if there is an unusual number of measures we should be on the look out.

Once we know that we are looking for an extension in course, how do we actually go about looking? The key is that certain measures should be removable, leaving a phrase that seems structurally more normal than the phrase that we actually encounter. There are two criteria for the removability of measures.

- A) The total number of measures to be removed should be the difference between the actual number of measures and the nearest lower multiple of four.

If the phrase is eleven measures long, the nearest lower multiple of four is eight, so we should look for three measures to remove. It doesn't make sense to remove four

measures, because this would leave a more basic phrase of seven measures, which is no more usual than eleven measures. And it doesn't make sense to remove seven measures, because while the remaining four measures would be a multiple of four, too much of the phrase would have been cut out. In effect, one part of this rule is that we should never label more than three measures within a phrase as extension in course.

We will see a few exceptions to this rule of labeling no more than three measures per phrase as extension. One, the deceptive cadence, will be discussed shortly. The basic idea is that everything between the deceptive chord and the eventual tonic resolution is heard as extension; no matter how many measures are involved, the deceptive cadence provides a clear cue to the beginning of a phrase extension. We can also understand phrase extensions longer than three measures when we have heard the unextended version of the phrase before. Mozart, in his concerti, liked to present a simple, eight-measure second theme in the orchestral introduction and then have the soloist extend this phrase out of all sense of normal proportion when it returned. Because we remember the original phrase, we are easily able to understand more than twenty measures of extension as we wait and wait for the expected cadence.

- B) If the measures in question are truly extension, then it should be possible to remove them, leaving the basic structure of the phrase intact. In particular, it should take little or no adjustment of melody or harmony to make the end of the measure before the extension flow smoothly into the first measure after the extension.

Determining whether the seams will work just takes some simple analysis. Examine the harmony to see if the progression is still coherent once the measures in question have been removed. And look at the melody line to see if the join will be smooth. Pay attention to the most structurally important tones of the melody (usually just one or two for each chord); if frilly decorations don't match up that's not necessarily a problem, but if the main notes don't make a sensible melodic connection then the phrase extension (if any) probably consists of a different set of measures. Allow for shifts up or down by an octave if need be – for example, in A major, a leading tone G-sharp⁴ just before the phrase extension may resolve to a tonic A⁵ just after the extension – that's not a problem.

The beginning of the slow movement of Mozart's String Quartet in D major, K. 499, shown in Example 8a, offers a clear example of an extension in course. The phrase is ten measures long, alerting us to the possibility of two measures of extension in course, and as the phrase divides 4 + 6, we will focus our attention on the second large subphrase.

One of the first things to observe is that measure eight is an embellished version of measure seven. This repetition suggests the possibility of redundancy – maybe one of those measures isn't needed. Repetition isn't always a sign of phrase extension, of course – for example, some eight-measure phrases included repeated measures. But they are a good place to start when looking for phrase extensions, because the repetition guarantees that the seams will be smooth if the repeated material is removed.

In this case the repetition gets us only part of what we need – if we label measure eight as an extension, we are still left with a nine-measure phrase. Here a bit more analysis will help. Because of the repetition, measures seven and eight end in the same way: with a main melody note of E5 supported by a root-position IV chord. But now look at measure six – it also ends the same way. So we can label both measures seven and eight as phrase extension; if we remove them, the music will flow smoothly and make sense, and we will be left with a more normal version of the same phrase.

Example 8b diagrams this analysis. The arcs are placed and numbered based on the way the music actually is, including the measures that are labeled as phrase extension. But the arcs become dashed for the measures that are considered to be extensions in course. The dashing goes from the lowest subphrase level up to the level of the period (or three-phrase period or double period). Above this level, don't bother continuing to make parts of larger arcs dashed – just use solid lines over those measures.

Phrase extensions present a new use for the Finale notation software. The music of Example 8a is available as a Finale file to download. Download and open this file, and play the music. Then select the measure tool (the staff line with the whole-note rest). Highlight measures seven and eight, and then choose “Delete” from the “Measure” menu. This deletes those measures, so that what was formerly measure nine is now measure seven. Now play the music again. You can hear how the music sounds with the measures of extension removed, and you can verify that the music still makes good sense. You can undo the deletion by choosing “Undo” from the “Edit” menu. If you feel like playing some, you can delete other pairs of measures; chances are the results won't make nearly as much sense. Some of the passages that you will be asked to analyze on homework assignments will be available as Finale documents. This will allow you to check your analyses by ear to make sure that they actually make sense.

8) Deceptive Cadences and Extensions in Course

As mentioned above, deceptive cadences are an exception to the rule that extensions in course consist of at most three measures. The reason for this is that the deceptive chord of resolution cues us to the beginning of the phrase extension. Deceptive cadences always create extensions in course because the phrase could have ended with an authentic cadence at that point. Because we are aware that the phrase could have ended there, the remainder of the phrase (up until the tonic that concludes the real authentic cadence) will be heard as an extension in course. (In some cases that real cadence never arrives, and we are forced to hear the deceptive cadence as the cadence that ends the phrase – but such cases are fairly rare.)

The beginning of the so-called “Kegelstatt” trio by Mozart, shown in Example 9, demonstrates this principle. Note that the phrase has a normal number of measures (12) even with the extension; this is common when extensions in course are created by deceptive cadences.