

The Hermeneutic Sentence and Other Literary Models for Tonal Closure

Patrick McCreless

In *S/Z* Roland Barthes defines the hermeneutic code as that feature of narrative whereby enigmas are introduced early on in a story and solved toward its end:

Let us designate as *hermeneutic code* . . . all the units whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer; or even, constitute an enigma and lead to its solution.¹

Barthes designates the hermeneutic and *proairetic* (the code of sequences of actions) codes as “irreversible”: that is, they invoke notions of time, whereas the “reversible” codes do not. Thus the logic of enigma and solution, and of an action and its continuation and completion, require a “before” and “after,” while the oppositions of

¹Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 17. For Barthes’s five codes in *S/Z* see 16-21, 28-30.

the *symbolic* code, the character descriptions of the *semic* code, and the placing of the story in a cultural context through the *referential* code do not.

The cornerstone of Barthes's concept of the hermeneutic code is his equation of it with the suppression and then the revelation of *truth*. The hermeneutic code represents the "Voice of Truth" (21), for just as hermeneutic enigmas in effect generate the narrative, and delays and obstacles keep it open, so does the ultimate discovery of the truth, the solution to the enigmas, articulate its closure. The proposal, suspension, and eventual solution of the enigmas of a narrative constitute for Barthes a hermeneutic *sentence* that spans the entire story:

The proposition of truth is a "well-made" sentence; it contains a subject (theme of the enigma), a statement of the question (formulation of the enigma), its question mark (proposal of the enigma), various subordinate and interpolated clauses and catalysers (delays in the answer), all of which precede the ultimate predicate (disclosure).²

In a more detailed description, Barthes suggests that the hermeneutic sentence of narrative is comprised of ten "morphemes," or as he calls them, "hermeneutemes": 1) thematization of the enigma, 2) proposal of the enigma, 3) formulation of the enigma, 4) promise of an answer, 5) snare, 6) equivocation, 7) jamming, 8) suspended answer, 9) partial answer, and 10) disclosure.³ And, once the truth is revealed, "the vast hermeneutic sentence is closed,"⁴ the narrative is complete:

In short, based on the articulation of question and answer, the hermeneutic narrative is constructed according to our image of the sentence: an organism probably infinite in its expansions, but reducible to a dyadic unity of subject and

²Barthes, 84.

³Barthes, 209-10.

⁴Barthes, 209.

predicate. To narrate (in the classic fashion) is to raise the question as if it were a subject which one delays predicating; and when the predicate (truth) arrives, the sentence, the narrative, are over.⁵

Barthes's hermeneutic sentence thus provides for a *syntax* of narrative, one that metaphorically carries the notion of "subject-predicate" to the broadest level of a narrative.

I. The Hermeneutic Sentence and Tonal Closure

In its positing an ordered progression from a state of tension to one of rest, in its concern with temporality, and in its creating a syntactical unit out of an entire discourse, Barthes's hermeneutic sentence bears remarkable similarities to Heinrich Schenker's *Ursatz*, which provides a comparable model for tonal music. Schenker postulates an initial tension whereby the opening background tonic sonority of a tonal piece is not at a complete state of rest because the upper voice has the third, fifth or octave rather than the root. The syntax of a tonal piece then involves the controlled resolution of this initial tension: the stepwise descent of the upper voice, supported by the bass, with the final $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$ melodic cadence being supported by V-I. Like Barthes, Schenker in effect creates a "sentence" out of an entire discourse: that is, he defines the syntax of a tonal piece in categories appropriate to a single musical-grammatical sentence (a phrase).⁶

⁵Barthes, 76.

⁶Schenker's language in *Free Composition* suggests that the phrase is derived from the *Ursatz*, not vice versa. That is, the form of the fundamental structure is transferred to lower levels, rather than the grammar of the phrase being expanded into deeper levels. See *Free Composition*, trans. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 87. Of course, a study of the development of Schenker's concept of the *Ursatz* makes it abundantly clear that his own understanding of the situation did indeed proceed by taking the model of the phrase as a basis for hypothesizing a deeper level of structure. It is his overriding concern for organicism and the absolute conceptual primacy of the *Ursatz* that underlies his forcefulness in stating the matter the other way around.

Many recent theorists have accepted without question Schenker's model of the *Ursatz* as defining syntactical closure in tonal music. Yet a number of writers who have dealt explicitly with closure have, while accepting the Schenkerian view in principle, taken pains to point out features that complement or exceed it in individual works. V. Kofi Agawu distinguishes syntactical from what he calls "rhetorical" closure in the Chopin Preludes—a closure of gesture and rhythm, more specific to a particular piece and less a given of the tonal language as a whole. Similarly, Robert Hatten, in an article on closure in Beethoven, contrasts *syntactic* closure, which he views as general and stylistic, and *strategic* or *dramatic* closure, which are specific to the individual piece. And Esther Cavett-Dunsby, examining Mozart's codas, follows the Schenkerian model but also suggests what a coda—that music which comes after syntactical closure—can accomplish: motivic reminiscence, recall of the *Kopft*on registral completion, and the like.⁷

Other writers of a different critical persuasion have focused on the more general notion of closure as pattern completion, rather than as the embodiment of a particular tonal syntax. For example, a number of Leonard Meyer's and Eugene Narmour's analyses equate closure with the fulfilling of the expectations or implications of various parameters—sometimes simultaneously, sometimes not.⁸ Joseph Kerman, Lewis Lockwood, and Edward T. Cone have, each in his own way, shown how codas of Beethoven (Kerman and Lockwood) and Schubert (Cone) turn upon the completion of a musical idea that was

⁷V. Kofi Agawu, "Concepts of Closure and Chopin's Op. 28," *Music Theory Spectrum* 9 (1987): 1-17; Robert S. Hatten, "Aspects of Dramatic Closure in Beethoven: A Semiotic Perspective on Music Analysis via Strategies of Dramatic Conflict," *Semiotica* 66/1-3 (1987): 197-209; Esther Cavett-Dunsby, "Mozart's Codas," *Music Analysis* 7/1 (1988): 31-52.

⁸See, for example, Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 128-56. Meyer's discussion of closure in *Explaining Music* shares many points of similarity with the approach taken here—particularly the distinction between the syntactic and formal modes of closure. See *Explaining Music: Essays and Explorations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 89-97. Also Eugene Narmour, *Beyond Schenkerism: The Need for Alternatives in Music Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 151-66.

somehow left incomplete in the movement proper. All three recognize that the process of completion that they describe takes place in a "coda," but they rely not upon the Schenkerian description of structural closure to determine where the coda begins, but upon the notion of formal prototypes.⁹ All of these writers—Meyer and Narmour as well as the others—concern themselves with the fulfilling of musical ideas internal to a given piece, with the realization of intra-piece processes.

David Smyth has recently proposed yet another factor in tonal closure: proportional balance. In analyses of numerous sonata-form movements of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, Smyth endeavors to show the degree to which closure often depends upon the balance of the number of measures in a closing section—a coda, for example—with some previous section or sections. Although Smyth's analyses sometimes do not take into account syntactic and thematic issues, he nevertheless argues convincingly in many cases for the relevance of proportional balance to closure.¹⁰

The notions of rhetorical closure, closure through thematic or other types of completion, formal closure through comparison to a prototype, and closure through proportional balance take us progressively further away from the syntactic closure of Schenker and, by analogy, from the hermeneutic closure of Barthes as well. Yet what these analyses point out is that there is more to tonal closure than just syntax. To be sure, syntax occupies a privileged position: without the harmonic cadence on the tonic, and without the explicit or implicit $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{1}$ melodic descent of the Schenkerian *Urlinie* as well, a tonal piece cannot end; whereas a tonal piece *can* end without rhetorical flourish, thematic completion, fulfillment of formal prototype, or proportional

⁹Joseph Kerman, "Notes on Beethoven's Codas," *Beethoven Studies* 3, ed. Alan Tyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 141-60; Lewis Lockwood, "Eroica Perspectives: Strategy and Design in the First Movement," *ibid.*, 85-106; Edward T. Cone, "Schubert's Unfinished Business," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 7/3 (1984): 222-32.

¹⁰David Smyth, "Codas in Classical Form: Aspects of Large-Scale Rhythm and Pattern Completion," Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1985.

balance. But our very ability to conceive of these processes separately raises the intriguing question, How does syntactic closure interact with other aspects of closure in tonal music? Is it structurally independent of them, or is it in ways inseparable from them? And does the parallel between Schenker's *Ursatz* and Barthes's notion of hermeneutic closure contribute to an understanding of such processes? If so, how deeply can the analogy between the two be carried, and where do they break apart?

The strategy to be adopted here in dealing with such questions will be an interdisciplinary one: to invoke relevant discussions of closure in literature and literary criticism that parallel the various categories already identified above for music, and then to bring these discussions into creative contact with Barthes's hermeneutic sentence, so as to gain new insights into tonal closure. Part II will examine two types of closure defined in Barbara Herrnstein Smith's *Poetic Closure*—formal closure and thematic closure—and a type of closure that might be designated as "rhetorical" closure, as elaborated in the classic treatise of Quintilian, the *Institutio oratoria*.¹¹ Part III will concentrate on three relatively simple musical examples—a German folk tune, the theme of the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and the Menuet from J.S. Bach's French Suite in E Major—to show more specifically how we can define syntactical, thematic, formal, and rhetorical closure in tonal music, in ways analogous to their use in the literary models. Finally, Part IV will use the third movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1, to illustrate the theoretical problems that these different types of closure raise in a sonata form.

II. Formal, Thematic, and Rhetorical Closure

Barbara Herrnstein Smith's concept of poetic closure is in ways analogous to Barthes's hermeneutic closure. Indeed, Barthes's

¹¹Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: Or Why Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, trans. H.E. Butler, 4 vols. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920).

reference to poetry in *S/Z* might suggest that closural processes in poetry and narrative are the same:

. . . [T]he poetic code has a function, the one we (with Jakobson) attribute to the poetic code: just as rhyme (notably) structures the poem according to the expectation and desire for recurrence, so the hermeneutic terms structure the enigma according to the expectation and desire for its solution.¹²

But Smith would by no means equate the closure effected by rhyme with that effected by the solution of a hermeneutic enigma. The function of the “poetic code” here identified by Barthes would be classified by Smith as a technique of what she calls *formal* closure. The solution of a hermeneutic enigma would, on the other hand, for Smith constitute an instance of *thematic* closure.

Smith defines the formal elements of a poem as “those which arise from the physical nature of words, and would include such features as rhyme, alliteration, and syllabic meter.”¹³ Formal elements may be structured in such a way as to suggest closure by means of return, pattern completion, or proportional balance. For example, the repetition of a line after a number of intervening lines suggests closure, as does the technique of “terminal modification”—the establishment of a regularity (say, a two-line rhymed couplet used as a refrain at the end of a series of stanzas), and then the breaking of that regularity (replacing the rhymed couplet with another). And conventional genres such as the sonnet, or, on a less exalted level, the limerick, build formal closure into their very essence, through balanced metric and structural patterns.

The thematic elements of a poem, on the other hand, are “those which arise from the symbolic or conventional nature of words, and to which only someone familiar with the language could respond; they

¹²Barthes, 75.

¹³Smith, 6.

would include everything from reference to syntax to tone.”¹⁴ Closure in the thematic domain results, for example, from sequential or logical progressions that either semantically or syntactically suggest beginning, continuation, and end. Poems that invoke the succession of seasons, the course of a day from dawn to dusk, or the events of life from birth to youth, maturity, and death, incorporate their own principle of closure, since they activate the reader’s sense of beginning, middle, and end, from his or her own experience. Thematic closure of this sort differs from closure in that it is, in Smith’s words, “generated by an *extraliterary* principle of succession.”¹⁵ It thus strikingly parallels Barthes’s proairetic, or *empirical* code, the code of actions, which invokes our sense of time in real life and adapts it to a literary end. The functions described by Barthes’s hermeneutic code would also for Smith fall in the domain of thematic closure. Finally, Smith classifies as a type of thematic closure the employment of logical or syntactical sequences that strongly imply their own completion or conclusion. Poems that are structured around “If . . . then” arguments are included in this category, as are poems that turn on the syntactic forms “not only . . . but also” or “when . . . now.”

As an example of a poem that achieves thematic closure by means of a logical sequence, Smith analyzes Stanley Kunitz’s “The Summing Up”:

When young I scribbled, boasting, on my wall,
 No Love, No Property, No Wages.
 In youth’s good time I somehow bought them all,
 And cheap, you’d think, for maybe a hundred pages.

¹⁴Smith, 6.

¹⁵Smith, 110.

Now in my prime, disburdened of my gear,
 My trophies ransomed, broken, lost,
 I carve again on the lintel of the year
 My sign: *Mobility*—and damn the cost!¹⁶

She suggests—because the first stanza begins with the word “When,” and because it twice locates itself in the past time of “youth”—that by the end of the first stanza we strongly expect the next stanza to offer a contrast (“When young I thought X; *now* I know Y”). Thematically what the poet does is both to confirm and deny the expectations generated by the opening stanza. We get the expected logical and temporal contrast—“Now,” a perspective on the first stanza from the point of view of the present—and we get a return to the economic metaphor established by the first stanza. But the semantic *truth* that emerges is not necessarily the truth that we anticipated: he gives us not the denial (“a youthful motto . . . that wisdom has qualified,” as Smith describes it) of his early experience, but rather an emphatic confirmation of it.¹⁷

Although Smith does not analyze the poem in terms of formal closure, it is easy enough to do so according to her own principles, and thus to provide a clear example of how her two types of closure can interact. That the poem is structured as two quatrains with the rhyme scheme *abab, cdcd*, enables us to hear the second quatrain as balancing the first, and as a possible conclusion—although, as Smith asserts repeatedly, stanzaic organization and rhyme schemes do not in and of themselves secure closure: there is here no formal reason why the poem cannot continue after the second stanza. Yet other purely formal factors do function in such a way as to suggest closure. The enjambment (the only one in the poem) between the two final lines causes the penultimate line to flow smoothly into the first stress of the final line, only to have this accumulated momentum destroyed by two sudden

¹⁶Stanley Kunitz, *Selected Poems, 1928-1958* (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown and Co., 1958), 112. Quoted in Smith, 138.

¹⁷Smith, 137-38.

stops (“My sign: Mobility—”). The process of an uninterrupted metric flow being shattered by two stops effectively focuses our attention on the words of the last line. The overall metric structure also contributes to the accentuation of the final line, for the metric irregularity of the final two lines disrupts the essentially unbroken iambic regularity of the first six. The extra syllables (“on the lintel of the year”) at the end of the seventh line push us inexorably into the two stops at the beginning of line eight; and then the resumption of iambs with the forceful monosyllables “and damn the cost!” briefly restores yet at the same time emphasizes the return to metric regularity and thus signals closure. Other formal features that help to articulate closure include orthography (the colon, dash, and exclamation point in line eight, and the capitalization and italicization of “*Mobility*”) and a shift for the only time in the poem to the imperative mood (“and damn the cost!”).

To syntactic, formal, and thematic closure we may add *rhetorical* closure. Surely the most difficult of the four types of closure to define from a rigorous theoretical point of view, it is perhaps the easiest to understand intuitively. Quintilian’s description of closure in oratory provides only an informal account—and an account from the speaker’s (or for us, the writer’s) point of view, rather than that of the listener, reader, or critic—of how to render the conclusion of a legal argument most moving and effective. Quintilian divides the forensic speech into five parts: the *exordium*, the *narratio* (statements of facts), the proof, the refutation (of the opponent’s arguments), and the peroration or conclusion.¹⁸ He does not insist that all five parts always be included, or that they follow in a rigid, prescribed order. Nor does he give rules as such for the peroration (always the concluding part, regardless of the larger shape of the argument), but only a statement of its purpose (securing the agreement of the judge) and a characterization of the techniques that can be invoked toward this end.

Quintilian divides perorations into two types: those that deal primarily with the facts, and those that deal primarily with the

¹⁸Quintilian III, ix (Butler translation, Vol. 1, 515).

emotional aspects of the case.¹⁹ In the former type, his concern is with recapitulating and enumerating briefly the arguments adduced over the course of the speech. The *enumeratio* “serves both to refresh the memory of the judge and to place the whole of the case before his eyes, and, even though the facts may have made little impression on him in detail, their cumulative effect is considerable.”²⁰ His primary concern in the second type of peroration, to which he gives by far the more discussion, is to move his listeners, whether the judge or public, and to sway them to the point of view that he desires. And here, more than anywhere else in the speech, the orator may appeal to the feelings of his audience: “The peroration is the most important part of forensic pleading, and in the main consists of appeals to the emotions. . . .”²¹ It is in the peroration, then—in the establishment of closure—that he is most free to introduce all the tropes and figures of his rhetorical art:

But it is in the peroration, if anywhere, that we must let loose the whole torrent of our eloquence. For, if we have spoken well in the rest of our speech, we shall now have the judges on our side, and shall be in a position, now that we have emerged from the reefs and shoals, to spread all our canvas, while since the chief task of the peroration consists of amplification, we may legitimately make free use of words and reflexions that are magnificent and ornate. It is at the close of our drama that we must really stir the theatre. . . .²²

Quintilian does not specify technical details about the peroration; those he leaves to the discretion of the individual orator and the particular case. But he does paint a clear picture of amassing the accumulated

¹⁹Quintilian VI, i (Butler translation, Vol. 2, 383).

²⁰Quintilian VI, i (Butler translation, Vol. 2, 383).

²¹Quintilian VI, ii (Butler translation, Vol. 2, 417).

²²Quintilian VI, i (Butler translation, Vol. 2, 415).

evidence in a compressed form, and of saving the best rhetorical flourishes for last.

Yet the notion of rhetorical closure as emphasis can hardly count as theory. From Barthes we know precisely how to define the syntactic closure of the hermeneutic sentence, and from Smith how to define formal and thematic closure. But how can we define rhetorical closure? The very nature of the concepts of rhetoric and rhetorical closure may prohibit us from ever defining them with theoretical rigor. For both the standard usage of the term *rhetoric* and Quintilian's description of the art conflate what is structure and what is ornament added for emphasis. As definitions of "rhetoric" Webster's gives "the art or science of using words effectively in speaking or writing, so as to influence or persuade," and "artificial eloquence."²³ If both definitions suggest that rhetoric is concerned with the artful use of individual expression ("the art or science of using words," "artificial eloquence"), the first also carries an implication that, in order to influence or persuade, one must also organize an entire discourse effectively. George Kennedy, a contemporary classicist, has distinguished the "rhetoric of persuasion" (what we might call structural rhetoric) from the "rhetoric of literary device" (what we might call surface rhetoric), designating the former as *primary rhetoric*, the latter as *secondary rhetoric*.²⁴ Primary rhetoric refers to the art of persuasive discourse as a whole, secondary rhetoric to the various techniques (figures, tropes, and the like) that amplify and ornament a discourse.

Here we will employ the term *rhetorical closure* in the sense of secondary rhetoric only, since we already have terms (syntactical, formal, and thematic closure) to designate other clearly identifiable aspects of the process. The use of standard figures of secondary rhetoric involves two aspects—that of *convention* and that of *excess*.

²³Webster's *New Twentieth-Century Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

²⁴George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 204. For a discussion of primary and secondary rhetoric in a musical context, see Daniel Harrison, "Rhetoric and Fugue," *Music Theory Spectrum* 12/1 (1990): 2.

In general, rhetorical closure involves both the importation of *conventions* that dramatize and call attention to closure, and the *exceeding* of already established internal norms in a work as a way of signalling closure. As an example, consider again the final line of Stanley Kunitz's "The Summing Up." In Kunitz's poem the inclusion of orthographic (the capitalization of "Mobility" and the exclamation point at the end of the line) and semantic (the expression "damn the cost!") conventions heighten the sense of closure; and both these conventions and the breaking of the metric norms of the poem mark the final line as one of excess—a rhetorically amplified line that punctuates and dramatizes the thematic end of the poem.

Yet what is the relation of rhetoric to structure? Have we not already designated many of these aspects of rhetorical closure as embodying formal or thematic closure? To be sure, we have. But it is a hallmark of rhetoric always to collapse into structure. Phrased another way, effective secondary rhetoric always collapses into effective primary rhetoric. For if secondary rhetoric is excess employed in the service of persuasion, it can only be effective if it is justified by and grounded in the structure that it is meant to dramatize. It is only "empty" rhetoric, "artificial eloquence," that cannot thus be recuperated into structure. Should we therefore discard the notion of rhetoric altogether? Absolutely not, for (secondary) rhetoric not only addresses us directly and appeals to us immediately and persuasively; it also provides us as analysts with valuable clues that can lead us to an understanding of structure. In the best works, we will never be able to separate out certain words, expressions, or passages, and say, "These are rhetorical; the rest is structural." That is precisely what we can do in ineffective works, in poor speeches. For real eloquence, it is precisely the persuasive force of rhetoric that leads us to an understanding of structure.

What sorts of differences emerge when we compare the syntactical closure of Barthes's hermeneutic sentence with Smith's formal and thematic closure, and with Quintilian's rhetorical closure? Barthes's approach to closure is *syntactical* or *grammatical*: he describes the narrative process as a sentence that involves a number of successive parts—proposal of the enigma, delay, jamming, and so forth—and he

defines closure as the attainment of the “predicate” of this hermeneutic sentence, the solution of the enigma, the discovery of truth. He thus equates the structure of the single sentence, an entity that we might claim to know reasonably well, with an entire narrative, such that our understanding of how sentences operate (or more specifically, how they close) can be used by analogy to increase our understanding of how narrative discourse operates (and how it closes). Smith, on the other hand, makes no such structural analogies, nor does she propose a sequential grammar of poetry. Rather, her essential contribution is to distinguish between *formal* and *thematic* closure. In comparison with Barthes, what this point of view accomplishes is to separate those aspects of closure effected primarily by the abstract patterning of language from those effected by its referential and semantic content. Such a separation, of course, is more critical in the study of poetry than in that of narrative, and it is not surprising that Smith makes more of the distinction than does Barthes. Finally, what is striking about Quintilian’s perspective on closure is that, although he provides neither a structural grammar for the discourse of oratory (his division of a speech into parts is hardly a grammar, but only a loose description of how it may be ordered) nor a model for its formal patterning, he forcefully argues in support of taking advantage of all the means afforded by the rhetorical art in order to make the peroration emphatic, moving, and convincing.

A feature in which the three approaches differ decisively is their treatment of “truth.” In the syntax of the Barthesian narrative, truth is saved for the end. Truth takes on a grammatical role, in that is the predicate of the hermeneutic sentence that constitutes the narrative. Quintilian, by contrast, as a lawyer rather than a storyteller, as one who evaluates Real events rather than one who invents fictional ones, distributes truth throughout his discourse—point by point, argument by argument. In consequence, closure is not defined by the arrival and disclosure of truth, but by its summarization and rhetorical emphasis. Smith’s view of poetic closure falls somewhere in between Barthes and Quintilian, in that she recognizes both the sense of satisfaction, the sense of conclusion in what she calls “poetic truth” (although what that

truth is for her we cannot address here),²⁵ and the value of summation;²⁶ yet she does not insist on a closural grammar like Barthes, or on a closural rhetoric, like Quintilian.

Another theoretical issue in terms of which the three descriptions of closure can be measured involves the degree to which the theories operate “in time” or “out of time.” That is, does each description claim to explain our sense of closure or non-closure in real time as we experience the discourse, or abstractly, looking back over the finished product once we have read or heard it and can judge its governing structural principles, as Edward Cone would say, “synoptically”? Of course, Quintilian’s rhetoric has nothing to say—from a *bona fide* theoretical point of view, anyway—on this issue. But we might suggest that, since he both expresses a concern with how effectively a speech unfolds to the ear of the listener, and implies that the logical structure of an argument is abstractable from its presentation, he might claim that his rhetorical art is interpretable both ways.

More interestingly, the issue provides an unexpected point of contact between Smith and Barthes. For even though Smith seems to favor an “in time” point of view and Barthes an “outside of time” one, the two writers are less one-sided than we might initially expect. Smith makes it clear from the outset that her interest is in how we perceive a poem in time, how we desire and expect closure, how we are frustrated by its delay and satisfied by its arrival. Hence her focus on the principles “according to which one element follows another” and her taking a point of view from inside the time of a poem rather than outside it—a point of view that sees a poem as fundamentally temporal, “rather than as an organization of, or relationship among, elements.”²⁷ She does not assume the traditional structuralist stance of viewing a work of art as an atemporal system of relations. Yet, however much her analyses privilege the temporal and experiential, we can still look back upon them once they are complete, and understand

²⁵Smith, 151-58.

²⁶Smith, 163-66.

²⁷Smith, 4.

the formal and thematic structures that she uncovers as abstractions that we can perceive as a synoptic whole. Barthes, on the other hand, is philosophically on the side of the atemporal. He is at pains to slow our reading down with the starred text, to release voices and associations that hermeneutic/proairetic readings would run roughshod over, and to show that we can also perceive these temporal codes outside of time. Yet his very analysis of the operation of the irreversible codes in *Sarrasine* (the Balzac story that is the subject of *S/Z*) demonstrates (despite his own opposition) the power of classic narrative as it is experienced in real time. This is perhaps why he suggests that we read the Balzac story and familiarize ourselves with it *before* we read his analysis. Such a reading dramatically illustrates the power and allure of these codes, even as his analysis frees us of our dependence upon them and allows us to perceive them more objectively, so that we can understand them without being seduced by them.

III. The Literary Models and Tonal Closure: Three Examples

Tonal music, like narrative, poetry, and oratory, involves syntactic, formal, thematic, and rhetorical closure. The literary models described above suggest ways in which these four types of closure might fruitfully be defined. By analogy to Barthes's hermeneutic sentence, let us define syntactical closure as the tonal closure effected by the Schenkerian *Ursatz*. Following Smith, let us define formal closure as that which results from proportional balance of sections, thematic return, and completion of formal prototypes. Formal closure will thus involve aspects of what Douglass Green has designated as *design*, as opposed to *tonal structure* or *syntax*.²⁸ (Already the categories begin to overlap: since some formal archetypes—that of sonata-allegro form, for example—posit a large-scale syntax of tonal

²⁸Douglass M. Green, *Form in Tonal Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979), 3-4.

structure as well as a design, the two dovetail together.) To Smith's thematic closure tonal music cannot offer a precise analogue, since it involves no parallel to her "extraliterary principle of succession." But inasmuch as Smith's analyses of thematic closure concern the structure and progression of *ideas* in poetry, we shall define thematic closure in tonal music as that type of closure which invokes the completion of themes or thematic processes, or thematic reminiscence and "summing up." Finally, we shall designate as rhetorical closure the importation of closural *conventions* or the use of harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, textural, orchestrational, dynamic, articulative, or registral extremes as a means of dramatizing the end of a piece. Analysis of specific examples will reveal that the categories are loose and that they overlap; but it will also demonstrate the validity of distinguishing them, and of drawing analogies to their literary models.

As a simple example, consider the German folk tune given in Example 1:

Example 1.



Although the folk tune involves all four types of closure, its simplicity highlights syntactic closure. In Schenkerian terms, a state of tension is embodied in the *Kopftön*, A4, which is prolonged and eventually resolved through the *Urfinie* descent to D4, with the requisite bass support (Example 2).

Example 2.



Barthes's hermeneutic sentence offers a comparable model: the presentation of an enigma (a state of tension), followed by the working out of the enigma through various suspensions and delays, to the eventual discovery of truth (the tonic) and thus closure.

In the little melody formal closure works together with syntactic closure. The four phrases of the piece are equal in length, and they have precisely the same rhythm. They thus constitute what Smith calls a "series." As she points out, a series does not in and of itself suggest closure, and some other principle is needed to articulate its conclusions. In the present case it is the design of the piece, working in tandem with the tonal syntax, that assures closure. The repetition of the initial phrase, to create the overall form *ab ac*, divides the piece in half, so that we hear the third and fourth phrases as a balanced answer to the first two—a tendency that is clinched by the syntax of cadencing on $\hat{5}$ halfway through the piece, and on $\hat{1}$ at the end.

Even in such a brief piece, there is theoretical ground to be gained by examining formal closure and its interaction with syntactical closure. First, the primacy of the latter is uncontested, for it would be possible to alter the design and proportional balance of the piece in various ways (such as making the final phrase a three-measure phrase, as in Example 3) and still maintain closure, whereas it is impossible to take away the syntax of tonal closure and experience the piece as complete.

Example 3.



The example makes a second point: analysis of formal closure is dependent upon the placement of syntactical closure. In the real piece, as given in Example 1, an analyst would point to the balancing of phrases and sections as an indication of formal closure. Yet in the perfectly plausible imposter given in Example 3, the same analyst might

well suggest that formal closure is achieved by Smith's "terminal modification"—the last member of a series is changed in such a way as to make the end seem final. And one final point: we can analyze closural forces in real time, as a piece progresses, or outside of time, looking back over the piece synoptically. Smith may analyze a poem, or Meyer and Narmour a piece, for closural tendencies as the work proceeds. But the predictions that they make in real time are inevitably based upon models that they conceive as wholes *outside* of time—models of formal prototypes, completed patterns, and the like. So even if we analyze forces for closure moment-by-moment as we listen to the German folk tune, and even if the interaction of our predictions and what the piece does produces meaning for us, the fact remains that once the tune is complete, it *is* a structure and can be analyzed synoptically as such.

Thematic closure also has its place in the folk tune. The first two phrases make it clear that the piece is in some sense "about" direct stepwise motion from a tonic beginning to dominant goal ($\hat{1}$ to $\hat{5}$, or $\hat{8}$ to $\hat{5}$), and the securing of the latter by a neighbor motion. If the third phrase reiterates this topic, the fourth achieves thematic closure by transforming it: rather than moving from $\hat{1}$ *up* to $\hat{5}$ in quarter notes, the underlying motion of the final phrase moves from $\hat{5}$ *down* to $\hat{1}$ in half notes (that is, on the strong beats of mm. 7-8). Since the final phrase suggests a reversal and augmentation of the first and third phrases, and since it turns the figure around to move toward the stability of the tonic rather than the instability of the dominant, it functions as a sort of "apotheosis" (if I may be forgiven the use of such a lofty term for such a humble piece) of the idea of the piece, and thus as an appropriate and effective means of closure. Its function as an apotheosis is suggested also by two other thematic transformations: (1) the partial augmentation of the neighboring figure, and arriving on it on the tonic for the first and only time in the piece at the end;²⁹ and (2) the

²⁹The analysis here raises an important question with respect to Schenkerian analysis. To hear the final D4—E4—D4 motion as a neighbor figure contradicts the linear analysis of Example 2, which interprets the initial D as a surface arpeggiation from F-sharp4. Can we hear the initial D both ways? I suggest that, because of the motivic marking of

reminiscence of the underlying D4–F-sharp4–A4 half-note motion of mm. 1-2 in the retrograde of these pitches in diminution in beats 2-4 of m. 7. Like formal closure, thematic closure works because it is dependent upon syntactic closure. The thematic transformations in the final phrase take on closural significance not just because they manipulate the idea of the piece, but because they manipulate it in conjunction with the syntactical return to the tonic.

And is there rhetorical closure in the folk tune? Certainly no rhythmic, registral, or other extremes highlight the end of the melody. But augmentation, even in oratory, is a common figure, and Warren Kirkendale and Daniel Harrison have argued for its rhetorical function in music.³⁰ To the extent that the augmentation of the melodic figure goes beyond the internal norms established by the piece, it can be considered legitimately rhetorical. Indeed, it provides a happy example of how the rhetorical collapses into the structural. For, even if the listener hears the augmentation as emphasis, as persuasive conclusion, it is clear that what is perceived as rhetoric turns out to be structure—in this case not only thematic structure, but syntactic as well, since it is the syntactical motion of the piece (the *Urlinie* descent from $\hat{5}$) that has itself been thematized.

Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" theme (Example 4) uses the same sort of syntactical tonal structure, formal balancing of the two halves of the piece, and standard formal design (*aa'ba'*) as does the German folk tune. At the same time, it lacks distinct thematic closure, and its only claim to rhetorical structure consists of the syncopated anticipation of the initial note of the final phrase. Yet what is different about the

the neighbor figure in the piece, we hear the final three notes as motivic, even though we also hear the initial D of this figure as subsidiary to the F-sharp of m. 7. The passage provides a simple example of the sorts of conflicts between harmonic-contrapuntal and motivic readings that Richard Cohn addressed in his paper, "Three Challenges to the Schenkerian View of Motive," Society for Music Theory national conference, Oakland, California, November 8, 1990.

³⁰Warren Kirkendale, "Ciceronians versus Aristotelians on the Ricercar as Exordium from Bembo to Bach," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 32 (1979): 38; Harrison, 7.

Beethoven, and what raises an important theoretical issue, is that the first half of the piece constitutes a complete period, so that there are two tonic cadences rather than one—one full cadence at the midpoint, another at the end. The difference between the pieces is simple but telling, for it points up two issues on which the close analogy between the Schenkerian *Ursatz* and Barthes's hermeneutic sentence fractures.

Example 4.



These two issues might be designated as the problem of circularity and the problem of confusion of levels.

A telling difference between a tonal piece and a narrative is that the former inevitably suggests a circularity that the latter does not. Tonal pieces (with well-known nineteenth-century exceptions) begin on the tonic and return to it. Even if tonal music is, in the Schenkerian view, fundamentally linear, it is also, at least in a purely harmonic sense, circular. Narratives start at a point in narrative time—not chronological time—where one or more enigmas are introduced, and progress to a point where those enigmas are solved. Tonal pieces function on a dynamic of establishing a strong base of stability, moving away from it and returning to it, while narratives (although they may sometimes be circular) function on a dynamic of progressing linearly from enigma to truth. The psychology of elaboration, suspension, delay, false answers, and the like, are common to both, but the underlying dynamic is different. Furthermore, since the principle of tonality controls everything in a tonal piece, tonal truth carries a sense of inevitability that is lacking in narrative truth. We do not know what the latter is until it arrives, whereas in tonal music we know the truth

in advance, even though we experience a pleasure similar to that of reading a novel in getting there.

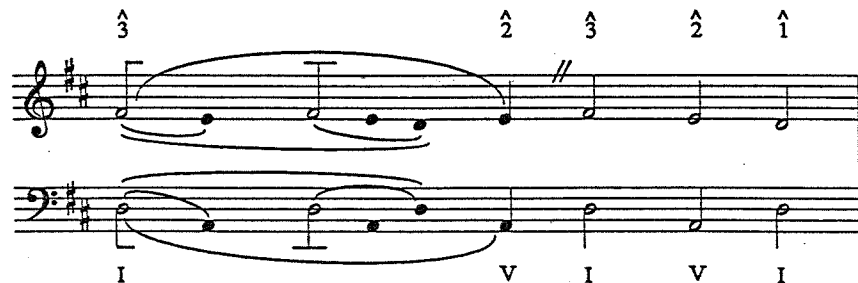
A Schenkerian view of pieces like Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" theme—binary or ternary forms with perfect authentic cadences at the binary division (what Douglass Green would call "sectional" forms,³¹ such as the theme of the first movement of Mozart's K.331 Piano Sonata, or Haydn's St. Anthony Chorale)—is not compatible with the Barthesian hermeneutic sentence. In part because Barthes's model is linear rather than circular, in part because the real truth can only arrive once, pieces with multiple tonic closes have no analogues in narrative literature. No novel could arrive at the explicit solution of its central enigma twice. Schenker solves the problem of pieces with multiple tonic closes by designating as their background close, as their hermeneutic solution, either their final cadence or the one that is suggested by a given piece's means of formal or rhetorical closure. That he must make such a choice, of course, demonstrates a critical difference between the dynamic of tonal music and that of narrative, between his system and Barthes's. But it also shows that, just as in a short piece like the German folk tune, the analysis of formal structure is dependent upon syntactic structure. So in longer pieces with multiple tonic closes, the decision as to what cadence embodies Schenker's closural syntax can in fact sometimes be dependent upon formal and rhetorical and even on thematic closure. And it suggests that, at least for formally conventional pieces such as sectional rounded binary forms, closure is defined not by syntax alone, but by the completion of formal prototypes. For such pieces, Smith's category of formal closure is an essential complement to syntactic closure, and poetry is perhaps a better literary model than narrative.

A second and related point of incompatibility between Schenker's system and Barthes's involves a problem unknown either to the syntax of the sentence or to Barthes's hermeneutic sentence itself: a confusion of what predicate goes with what subject. Suppose that we make an analogy between tonal syntax and the grammar of the sentence, comparable to the analogy that Barthes makes between narrative

³¹Green, 74-76.

discourse and the grammar of the sentence. We might thus designate the opening tonic sonority of Beethoven's theme, with the *Kopftön* in the melody, as the "subject," and the $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ melodic cadence supported by V-I in the bass as the "predicate" (Example 5).

Example 5.



In the German folk tune, such a syntactical structure is unproblematic, since once we reach the A4 there is no descent to the tonic and no V-I cadence until the very end. But in the Beethoven theme, as we have seen, there are two descents to the melodic tonic and two V-I cadences. So does the "subject" (the opening sonority) function as a subject with respect to the cadence at m. 8, or that of m. 16, or both? Obviously, it functions as a subject for both, but at different levels. This situation, however, is impossible either in the grammar of the sentence or the "grammar" of Barthes's hermeneutic code. In the sentence there can be no mixing of levels between subjects and verbs; there is no confusion as to what are the subjects and predicates of the independent clause or clauses, and of the dependent clause or clauses. Similarly, in Barthes's hermeneutic sentence, the truth can be discovered only once; after that the narrative is, syntactically in any case, complete. We might argue that false answers to the enigma are subsidiary predicates of a sort, rather like Beethoven's cadence in m. 8. But this supposition serves only to clinch the difference between the semantics of the hermeneutic sentence and the syntax of the musical one: false answers are all different from the real answer, whereas all perfect

authentic cadences in music are syntactically the same. Precisely because music lacks semantic reference, Schenker can make the “stuff” of his foreground level and his background level the same, and thus make the opening sonority with the *Kopftön* the subject, and two different cadences the predicates, of “sentences” at two different levels. But this is not an option available to Barthes, since his semantic truth can solve his semantic enigma only once—at the end of the narrative.

A third example, the Menuet from Bach’s French Suite in E Major (see Example 6), brings us closer to more sophisticated compositional and analytical problems of closure.

Example 6.

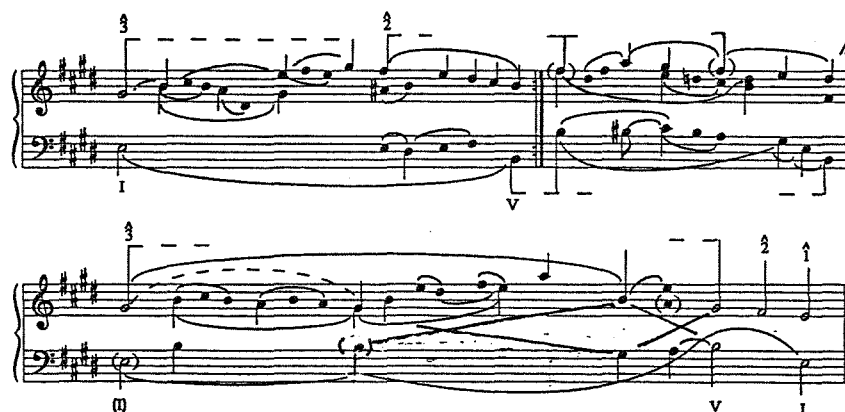
The musical score for Example 6 is a Minuet from Bach's French Suite in E Major. It is written for piano in 3/4 time. The score consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is E major (three sharps). Measure numbers 7, 13, and 19 are marked above the treble staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in measure 19.

The Menuet is a perfectly symmetrical rounded binary form:

$$\begin{array}{c} || :8: || :8 \ 8 : || \\ || :a: || :b \ a' : || \end{array}$$

Syntactical closure in the piece is unproblematic. As the linear sketch shows, the resolution of the *Urlinie* occurs in the final measures, with the melodic and harmonic tonic being attained in m. 24 (Example 7).

Example 7.



Formal closure also appears to be straightforward: the closing *a'* phrase symmetrically balances the two preceding phrases in the sense that all three are equivalent in length. But the claim that the symmetrical phrase structure causes a perfect congruence of formal and syntactical closure rests on a hidden underlying hypothesis: that the basis of formal closure is symmetry of phrasing. To accept this hypothesis is to assert that formal closure is not so absolute as syntactical closure, for all tonal pieces achieve syntactical closure, but by no means do all tonal pieces support this syntax with formal symmetry. Thus the same problem arises that we saw in the German folk tune: if the final *a'* section were two measures longer, the piece would lack symmetry in its formal closure, yet no one would deny that the piece closes. But then formal closure would become a contingent category, dependent entirely upon syntactical closure. If syntactical closure occurs in such a way as to establish a clean symmetrical structure, we appeal to formal symmetry; if it does not, we appeal to terminal modification or some other contingency.

The interaction of thematic and rhetorical closure in Bach's Menuet also raises some provocative questions. It makes sense to look at rhetoric first, for closural rhetoric, as defined here, is that which calls attention to, which dramatizes closure and makes it persuasive. Formal closure in the Menuet does not exceed either internal or external norms, but there is an event in the final eight measures that does have the ring of rhetorical excess in the service of convincing closure. That event is the rapid ascent of register from G-sharp⁴ to A⁵ in mm. 21-22. What exceeds the norm is not register itself—the G-sharp⁵ and A⁵ have been heard before—but the rate of ascent to this higher register. The arpeggiation of this octave in the space of two measures near the end of the piece is an eloquent rhetorical transformation of mm. 1-5, which accomplishes the arpeggiation of the same octave space in five measures—or, better, over the course of three attempts in three two-measure phrases. But whereas the ascent in mm. 1-5 progressed from a harmonically supported G-sharp⁴ in m. 1 simply to a similarly supported G-sharp⁵ in m. 5, here the registral transfer leads not to a consonant G-sharp⁵, but to a high point of A⁵, which, as Example 7 shows, functions contrapuntally as a registrally displaced passing tone to B⁴ in m. 23. The telescoping of this imaginatively transformed octave transfer into two measures rather than five is *thematic* as well as rhetorical. Like the final $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ descent in augmentation in the German folk tune, the sweeping ascent of mm. 21-22 in the Menuet makes a rhetorical transformation of a thematic unit in the service of closure.

What is more, the rhetoric also brings the piece's syntactical closure into relief. A crucial change affected by mm. 17-24 with respect to the opening mm. 1-8 occurs in mm. 19-20. These measures announce that the B⁴ of the second measure of the phrase, which previously had constituted one leg of the arpeggiation up to G-sharp⁵, now is going to push *down* to A⁴, and thus apparently toward the concluding tonic, rather than up. This A⁴ is incorporated into a foreground passing motion back down to G-sharp (see the B⁴—A⁴—G-sharp⁴ motion in mm. 18-21). This passing motion is metrically reinforced (the B⁴, A⁴, and G-sharp⁴ all occur on downbeats) to the extent that it actually sounds as though it initiates a *bona fide* structural

Urlinie descent from B4. Although, as the linear sketch in Example 7 shows, the B4–A4–G-sharp4 motion is foreground rather than background, its descending motion suggests that we are nearing closure, so that the dramatic registral transfer that takes place in mm. 21–22 sounds like a rhetorical heightening of a descent that has already begun.³²

As listeners or analysts we can perceive the rhetoric of these closing measures either in real time or synoptic time. Listening to the events of mm. 19–22 in real time, we find our expectations teased in an elegant and playful way. Yet we can also look back on these measures and make structural sense of them in the light of existing theories such as Schenker's. Indeed, it is precisely in our making of this structural sense that the "rhetoric" of the passage collapses into structure. The rhetoric gets our attention, and it dramatizes closure; but in retrospect we realize that the passage yields, at least in part, to a structural model. That is, we may invoke two of Schenker's notions to explain what happens here: 1) register transfer, and 2) motivic parallelism. But Schenker's theory does not account for everything in our experience of the passage, because he has no theoretical model that would explain the crucial effect achieved by the diminution of the octave arpeggiation. Does this mean that perhaps a little rhetoric has survived the collapse into structure? And if so, does that tiny piece of rhetoric point the way to its own destruction by suggesting a new area for theoretical formalization?

In a genre with the severe harmonic, tonal, linear, rhythmic, and textural constraints of the early eighteenth-century menuet, it is hardly

³²The example raises another Schenkerian problem. One could argue that the initial *a* section at the beginning of the Menuet has a *Kopftön* of $\hat{3}$ (G-sharp4), while the concluding *a'* section has an *Kopftön* of $\hat{5}$ (B4). That is, given the centrality of the arpeggiation of G-sharp4–B4–E5–G-sharp5, mm. 1–8 must be based on G-sharp; but given the centrality of the descent from B4 in mm. 17–24, these measures must be based on B. Or, to phrase the matter another way, I suspect that most analysts, provided with mm. 1–8 alone, would interpret these measures as prolonging $\hat{3}$; but the same analysts, provided with mm. 17–24 alone, would interpret these measures as prolonging $\hat{5}$. The analysis in Example 7 suppresses the latter, perfectly natural hearing in order to take G-sharp4 as the *Kopftön* for the entire piece.

surprising that register is often called upon to play a rhetorical role in achieving persuasive closure. Indeed, the use of upward registral displacement within the descent of the *Urlinie* seems to be a recurring trope in binary movements of Bach and Handel. Example 8 gives two examples:

Examples 8a and 8b.

a.

b.

The examples require little comment, except to note the following:

- 1) In both examples, a shift to a higher register occurs during the descent of the *Urlinie*, in such a way as to call

attention to and dramatize the syntactical closure effected by that descent. In the Handel Menuetto (Example 8a), the descent begins in m. 17, and the rhetorical registral displacement occurs in m. 21. In the "Goldberg" Variations theme (Example 8b), a descending line from $\hat{6}$ (E5) begins in m. 25, and progresses through D5 (m. 26), C5 (m. 27), and B4 (m. 29) before the line changes direction to bring a rhetorical displacement at m. 31.

2) In each case, as in the Bach menuet, a strict sequential, rhythmic regularity acts as a foil to highlight the registral disturbance. What we might call the "peroration" of all the examples begins with the descent $\hat{5}-\hat{4}$, or $\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}$, on strong beats, and the rhetorical displacement of register occurs on or around scale degrees $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{3}$.

IV. Beethoven: Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1, Finale

The interaction among the four types of closure becomes predictably more complex in longer works. Sonata movements are of particular interest, for they often present not just one but a number of cadences that could be considered to complete the *Umlinie*. They also raise issues of formal closure involving proportional symmetry and thematic return, and they are stylistically inclined both to thematicize and rhetoricize closure. Take as an example the end of the third movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1 (Example 9):

Example 9.

Example 9 is a musical score for piano and voice. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of several systems of music, each with a measure number in a box at the beginning.

The first system (measures 85-90) features a piano introduction with a *cresc.* marking. The second system (measures 90-95) continues the piano introduction. The third system (measures 95-100) features a piano introduction with a *ff* marking. The fourth system (measures 100-105) features a piano introduction with a *cresc.* marking. The fifth system (measures 105-110) features a piano introduction with a *pp* marking. The sixth system (measures 110-115) features a piano introduction with a *pp* marking. The seventh system (measures 115-120) features a piano introduction with a *pp* marking.

The vocal part enters in measure 105 with the lyrics: "ri - tar - lan - dan - do. do. tenuto". The tempo marking "Adagio." appears above measure 110, and "Tempo L." appears above measure 115. The score concludes with a *decrec.* marking in measure 120.

Assuming, as we have done heretofore, that syntactic closure, the closure of the hermeneutic sentence, is primary and the other three types of closure secondary, the first question that must be addressed is that of locating the point of syntactic closure. There are four candidates: the cadences on the downbeats of mm. 94, 97, 100, and 115. Even to broach the question of which of these cadences constitutes the *Urlinie* descent is to raise the more general issue of how we, as Schenkerian analysts, choose one of a number of viable cadences as *the* cadence. If there is more than one perfect authentic cadence at the end of a sonata form, we tend to make the choice on the following bases: 1) if one of the cadences provides an explicit *Urlinie* descent from $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{5}$, whichever is required, with strong harmonic support, but the others do not, then we choose the one with the good descent; 2) if two or more of the cadences are equally strong, we tend to make the choice according to either formal criteria (for example, to select the cadence that parallels the end of the exposition rather than one earlier or later), or rhetorical criteria (one of the cadences receives more emphasis in terms of rhythm, texture, dynamics, or other factors).

In the final movement of Op. 10, No. 1, if we take $\hat{5}$ as the *Kopftön* (as Allen Forte and Steven Gilbert do),³³ then only one of the four possible cadences is capable of achieving structural closure, because only one is immediately preceded by a traversal of the linear space from $\hat{5}$ down to $\hat{1}$, with strong harmonic support for $\hat{4}$. That cadence is the one at m. 94. Thus, from a strict Schenkerian point of view, it is this cadence and only this cadence that provides syntactic closure for the movement, even though it is not the cadence at m. 94, but the one at m. 100, that most closely parallels the cadential closure at the end of the exposition.

Although in the finale of Op. 10, No. 1, only one of the cadences satisfies the requirements of Schenker's *Ursatz* such is by no means always the case. For example, in the opening movement of Beethoven's Op. 14, No. 2 in G Major, both the "second theme" and the "closing theme" (Schenker would say the "second and third prolongat-

³³Allen Forte and Steven E. Gilbert, *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1982), 289.

ions'') provide syntactically correct linear descents. Accordingly, most Schenkerian analysts would choose the latter one—a decision that surely must be made on *formal* criteria, since the closing theme cadence parallels the one at the end of the exposition. The same problem would arise in Op. 10, No. 1, if we were to select $\hat{3}$ rather than $\hat{5}$ as the *Kopftön*; then all four of the cadences listed above would be acceptable.

The balance of syntactical and formal forces for closure is thus subtly changed here in comparison with what obtains in brief pieces such as the German folk tune and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" theme. There, with only a single tonic cadence near the end of the piece, that one cadence necessarily determined syntactic closure, and an evaluation of formal closure had to be subservient to the evaluation of syntax. But in the sonata movement, the balance of power is altered in two crucial, interrelated ways. First, since there is an overabundance of perfect authentic cadences, we are forced to make a choice among them. If we identify *syntactical* closure on the basis of our interpretation of *formal* closure, then it becomes more difficult to claim that syntactic closure is primary. Perhaps we can in the sense that syntactic closure is still the one type of closure that is absolutely primary—there has to be a perfect authentic cadence at the end of the piece; however, if that requirement is met in abundance, as it is here, we as analysts are forced into choosing which cadence is really the syntactic one. And to return to an earlier point, this is a situation that can occur neither in the grammar of the sentence nor in Barthes's hermeneutic sentence. Once a subject has a verb, a sentence is syntactically complete; once the central enigma is solved, the hermeneutic sentence is over. But in a sonata, if the dynamic is a hermeneutic one like that of Barthes, the enigma is solved multiply, and we must decide which resolution really counts.

A related way in which the balance of power is altered in longer movements such as sonatas involves the whole notion of thematic return. Edward Cone's "sonata principle" and Charles Rosen's many analyses of sonatas are predicated upon the idea that *resolution* in a sonata movement is achieved by stating materials that were in the

opposing key in the exposition in the tonic in the recapitulation or coda.³⁴ Such a view proposes a dynamic of form rather than one of line. It turns on a hermeneutic not of the *Kopftön* and its contrapuntal and harmonic resolution, but of a simple harmonic polarity and the associated formal recuperation of material originally stated at the dominant or other tonal level back to the tonic. The sonata principle elevates the formal and thematic prototype, with its formal returns of material, to become more of a determinant of closure than is the case in the Schenkerian model. Hearing a sonata in terms of the sonata principle is like reading a poem from the point of view of Barbara Herrnstein Smith's notion of the closural expectations generated by the formal patterning of a particular genre. Hearing the same sonata in terms of Schenker's theory is more like reading a Barthesian classic narrative. The final movement of Op. 10, No. 1 provides a serendipitous example because the two hearings do not coincide, as they would in the opening movement of Op. 14, No. 2. Because only the cadence at m. 94 (in Op. 10, No. 1) provides closure to the movement as a Schenkerian $\hat{5}$ -piece, it must be the structural cadence; whereas a strict interpretation according to the sonata principle would locate closure at m. 100.

Or would it? We have not yet considered here the other aspect of Smith's formal closure, that involving principles of symmetry. Beethoven in a sense has the last word, because what a precise formal symmetry to the exposition would require is a cadence at m. 102—a cadence that never happens. What does happen is that the little codetta figure of mm. 100-101 does *not* cadence after two measures, as it did in the exposition, but rather is extended two more measures to bring a tonicization of D-flat, the flatted second scale degree. One might surmise that Beethoven is deliberately playing with formal conventions: the movement could conceivably end in the tonic in m. 102 on the model of m. 100, but such a conclusion would surely be too abrupt, even for Beethoven. Rather, he uses the same ploy as he did in the

³⁴For a discussion of the sonata principle, see Edward T. Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: Norton, 1968), 76-77. See also Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1972).

first movement of Op. 2, No. 1, where the closural problem is exactly the same as it is here. That is, satisfactory Schenkerian closure arrives only at the end of the *second* thematic group, not the closing group, and the latter is elided into a short coda, so that any formal expectations of an exact correspondence with the exposition are in both cases frustrated. What we are left with is hardly the model of clarity that we saw in the Bach Menuet, where all four types of closure converge on the same cadential moment. Here syntax suggests a different moment of closure than a formal reading does, and the latter is itself not entirely satisfactory because it does not behave in accordance with expectations of symmetry, as was the case in the Bach Menuet.

Further complications are raised by thematic and rhetorical closure in the sonata movement. The extension of the codetta figure at mm. 102-103 and the ensuing statements of the second theme in D-flat (mm. 107-113) and of the opening motive over a tonic pedal (mm. 115-22) are necessary neither to syntactic nor formal closure in the movement. They perform what Kofi Agawu has, in his analyses of the Chopin Preludes, called a “rhetorical” as opposed to “syntactic” function.³⁵ Or, in terms suggested by Quintilian’s description of the peroration of a speech, these measures appeal to both the “factual” and the “emotional” sides of the piece. Let us deal with what we might call the “factual” side first: the repetition of the principal motive of the piece in successively lower registers in the final measures. A central issue posited by the opening thematic material of the movement is that of register, for the opening motive, focusing on the pitch-classes C and B, F and E-flat, spreads itself over three different registers in mm. 1-12, then ties these registers together in the precipitous sixteenth-note descent of mm. 12-16. Rhetorically the final measures of the movement constitute what Quintilian would call an “enumeration” of these registers—a compressed statement of them all in quick succession, from highest to lowest (now even including the low C2), such that the syntactic tonal closure already secured is rendered persuasive by a rhetorical gesture.

³⁵Agawu, 11.

Again following Quintilian, we might suggest that the events of mm. 102-114 address more the *emotional* side of the discourse. For they invoke, as we might expect for rhetorical closure, both convention and excess. The long pedal A-flat, the sudden dynamic change, the long *ritard* and *Adagio*, the fermatas in mm. 106, 112, and 113—all are both *conventions* that call attention to closure (rather like the conventions imported by Stanley Kunitz in “The Summing-Up”) and *excesses* that go beyond the norms established internally in the movement. The D-flat tonicization itself is rhetorical, for it is this sudden departure to a foreign key that threatens the listener’s growing confidence in tonal stability near the end of the movement. And it is through the use of this departure as a ploy, soon to prove a phantom rather than a real threat to tonal closure, that the composer “lets loose the whole torrent of his eloquence,” that he makes a rhetorical gesture that dramatizes closure and brings the movement to a convincing conclusion.

One reason that these measures are so *rhetorically* effective is that they are thematic—and thematic in two ways. First, of course, they are thematic simply because they restate a previous theme. Second, however, they are thematic because they realize the implications of the distinctive harmonic event that constitutes the first chord of the piece—the augmented sixth chord of m. 3. To make compositional use of both harmonic implications of this chord is, to be sure, characteristic of the Classical style. The point here is that the turn to the “other” side of the augmented sixth chord—its repelling as the dominant of D-flat major—in mm. 102-114 is legitimately thematic. And this thematicization of the chord is both harmonic and linear: harmonic because it brings to flower a seed planted early in the movement, linear because so much of the piece has been about the lower neighbor to the tonic (B) that it makes sense at the end to use as a contrast a prolonged upper neighbor (D-flat) as well.

The D-flat episode at the end of the movement casts an entirely new light on the analogy between tonal processes and Barthes’s hermeneutic sentence. Until now the parallel that has been drawn between tonal closure and the hermeneutic sentence has involved the syntactic model of Schenker: the sonority with the *Kopftön* has been viewed as the generating enigma of a tonal piece, the *Ursatz* the means

of elaborating and expanding that sonority into a coherent musical sentence. But Beethoven's treatment of the augmented sixth chord in the Finale of Op. 10, No. 1 suggests another, and perhaps even more appropriate analogy between the narrative language and the musical one. For if we conceive of the augmented sixth chord of m. 3 as an enigma—an interloper in the diatonic language of the opening theme—then we might interpret mm. 103-114 as a rhetorical passage in which this enigma is finally allowed to realize its hidden subversive implications (the tonicization of a distant key, D-flat), but is also convincingly recuperated, in mm. 112-14, back into the prevailing diatonicism of the tonic C minor.

As an alternative to the parallel of Schenkerian syntax and the Barthesian hermeneutic sentence, such an interpretation of the movement is both attractive and problematic. It is attractive because the augmented sixth seems to capture more of the spirit of Barthes's enigmas than does a tonic sonority with $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{5}$ in the upper voice. The augmented sixth chord of m. 3 is indeed "marked" by its difference from the surrounding harmonies, just as a narrative enigma is somehow identified in the context in which it occurs as posing a problem. The augmented sixth is thus interpretable as what Barthes would call a *seme*—a unit of hermeneutic meaning capable of later development. A *Kopftón* sonority, on the other hand, is less of an enigma than it is a stable harmonic sonority of which only one aspect, the linear or melodic aspect, lacks stability and completion.

This alternative is problematic, however, in that the dynamic of the Finale of Op. 10, No. 1 does not really turn upon what happens to the augmented sixth chord. That chord occurs at the beginning of the piece, and also at the beginning of the recapitulation. And it is reintroduced at the end of the final statement of the closing theme, right before the rhetorical passage that we have been discussing. But in no sense does the motivic, thematic, or syntactic discourse of the piece center on the chord. In consequence, it is impossible to imagine for it a hermeneutic syntax of anything like the complexity that Barthes suggests for narrative in *S/Z*. Unlike many later Beethoven movements which introduce a tonal or harmonic enigma early on, it does not make its enigma a subject for musical action throughout. For example, the

opening movement of the Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1, introduces the pitches F and B-flat with obvious rhetorical emphasis in the initial measures; and, as I have shown elsewhere, one can argue that the tonal dynamic—the hermeneutic code—of the piece does turn precisely on what happens to the F and B-flat.³⁶ Yet such is not the case in the Finale of Op. 10, No. 1. The rhetoric of mm. 103-114 suggests a similar process at work, but the absence of the augmented sixth through much of the piece, despite its early appearance in m. 3, militates against our considering it as a hermeneutic enigma. The episode that tonicizes D-flat is thus more likely to be heard as an *expansion* of an idea early in the piece than it is as a solution to a problematic harmony.

From the tonal point of view the D-flat tonicization represents, with respect to the rest of the piece, a passage of rhetorical excess: the only time in the movement in which a foreign key is tonicized. As such, it embodies a convention that Douglas Johnson has pointed out in the early works of Beethoven—the sudden tonicization of a distant key toward the end of Finales, especially Rondo Finales.³⁷ The D-flat episode is thus both an extreme in the context of the movement, and a convention established by Beethoven himself in other works of the same period. But if it is for these reasons clearly rhetorical, it is also, because of its close thematic connection to the rest of the movement, structural as well. Since the tonal disjunction is motivated both harmonically (by the implicit possibility of the D-flat resolution of the augmented sixth chord) and linearly (by the neighbor tone relation), the rhetorical episode is better integrated with the remainder of the movement than is, for example, the tonicization of B-flat at the end of the Finale of the Piano Sonata in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2. In this earlier sonata, the tonicization of B-flat can indeed be explained as a prolonged upper neighbor, as in Op. 10, No. 1; but the tonal move is neither predicted by a previous harmonic event nor justified by an

³⁶Patrick McCreless, "Roland Barthes's *S/Z* from a Musical Point of View," *In Theory Only* 10/7-8 (1988): 1-29.

³⁷Douglas Johnson, "1794-1795: Critical Years in Beethoven's Development," *Beethoven Studies* 3 (see above, footnote 9).

underlying motive. In Op. 10, No. 1, on the other hand, the interrelationship of the augmented sixth and the D-flat tonicization at the end of the movement may not yet qualify as the enigma and solution of a hermeneutic sentence, as might be claimed for, say, the famous C-sharp in the Finale of the Eighth Symphony. Yet it nevertheless demonstrates a successful attempt to integrate closural rhetoric with the thematic content of a movement.

What, then, is the structural status of the rhetorical section of closure at the end—the coda? Certainly it is necessary neither for syntactic closure nor formal closure. Just as certainly, it does highlight thematic closure in that it sums up a registral idea of the piece and dramatically expands a harmonic one, and it highlights rhetorical closure, both in the sense of the use of conventions and in the sense of exceeding established norms of the piece. Should we, then, as Kofi Agawu has suggested for the final measures of Chopin's G Major Prelude, relegate sections such as this coda to the realm of *rhetoric* rather than of *structure*?³⁸ It is not necessary to do so, provided that our concept of structure is sufficiently broad. Agawu's analysis betrays the Schenkerian tendency to equate "structure" in tonal music with the *Ursatz* and its transformations on various levels. Under such a limitation, *closure* means *syntactical closure*, which automatically places other closural processes under the category of rhetoric, or something outside of structure. Yet a *structure* is only the product of a *theory*: we cannot speak of a structure unless we have a theoretical model to generate it. So long as the only model of structure is the Schenkerian one, codas such as that of the Finale of Op. 10, No. 1 will appear to be "beyond structure," to constitute a passage that is only rhetorical. Yet if we approach the same piece with a theory of formal or thematic closure, then what seemed beyond structure suddenly is incorporated directly into it. And even closural passages that seem "only" rhetorical—such as the final measures of Chopin's G Major Prelude in Agawu's analysis—become structural if the net that we cast is wide enough.

³⁸Agawu, 10-11.

A number of questions remain to be answered, of course. What would such a theoretical net look like, and how might it more rigorously define syntactic, formal, thematic, and rhetorical closure? And how might it reconcile the tensions and strains among these very different types of closure? If a full description of such stresses is beyond the scope of the present paper, the examples analyzed here may serve as evidence that they are stresses worth hearing, worth noticing, and worth thinking about.