

## 1 On the Literature

It has been a while since I have done any extensive reading on Beethoven. My involvement has been centered around Viennese classicists pre-Beethoven, and prior to that Debussy and Bartók. So I haven't done any major digging into Beethoven from an analytical point of view for, oh, a good ten years. (I was a bit surprised to find that my home library has a much better collection of Beethoven studies than does the SFCM library, however.)

What I had forgotten (or perhaps never before noticed) was the vast difference between the literature on Mozart & Haydn and that for Beethoven. Mozart & Haydn are today's hot composers; much of the literature is recent—that's especially true in the cast of the major works that now dominate the field. With Beethoven, the literature stretches back right into his own lifetime, and often major works date back to either the 19<sup>th</sup> century or are imbued with a strongly Romantic sensibility.

That isn't to say that this is distasteful—far from it. But one does tend to forget what we have lost in our transformation from the excesses of Romantic thought to our more dispassionate, scholarly, analytic style of thinking at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Romain Rolland's classic "Beethoven the Creator", in the Ernest Newman translation, is a prime example of the combination of analysis and glorious overabundance of language that characterized writing of an earlier era. (I think we can consider Rolland to be fundamentally a 19<sup>th</sup> century writer.) Just dig his introduction to the "Eroica":

To great lives there comes in their June prime an hour of plentitude, ardent and spring-like, when the spirit of the sap splits the bark, and, from dawn to evening, the whole tree is at once flower and fruit, wing and song. The imprisoned forces, the genii of joy and those of sorrow, the demon of the species, the frenzied thrust of the creative need, break through the narrow let of the flood-gates of the days, and, out of the furnace of Being, project the flood of God, the unknown Self. In moments such as these, trials, sickness, and the most grievous wounds all serve to liberate the stream; the pick of suffering pierces the soul and makes an issue for the fire. And the soul's laceration is the spirit's intoxication. Who can say that the one negates or is inconsistent with the other? They are one; they are the rhythm-beat of genius. As long as his strength keeps growing, the harnessed joy and sorrow bear him on; he makes of them his team, which he drives where he will. He it is who wills the route. His energies rise up in legions. But he holds them bound; he assembles them and launches them to the conquest of the interior world.

I am not playing with words! These images are only reflections, shadows of fire that dance across the roadway. Let us enter into the forge! Let us see if ever a Napoleonic will has more victoriously manipulated an incandescent mount of molten matter! Even in the life of a Beethoven, itself exceptional, this period of three years is unique. It rightly bears the title of *Eroica*. It is an Etna; and within, the Cyclopes are forging the shield of Achilles.<sup>1</sup>

Rolland's superheated Gallic overabundance, and his tendency to read into Beethoven all manner of wild speculations, brought forth some wonderful rejoinders from H. L. Mencken for his review of *Beethoven the Creator*, in the Newman translation (which I've quoted above). This review also mentions the Schaffler biography, which is in my bookcase and which was singularly unhelpful about this particular symphony. Mencken's typically snappy style:

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<sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland: *Beethoven the Creator*, Garden City 1937, pages 61-62

M. Rolland is all for believing that Beethoven was made deaf, not by anything so prosaic as microbes or their toxins, but by the sheer power of his own genius. To support that notion he resorts to the testimony of East Indian mystics who say that they “come out of the spells of Yoga with eyes red and bleeding, as if eaten by ants.” Old Ludwig, of course, knew nothing of such spells, but when he sat down to compose music “the hammering of the rhythm and “the sensuous heat of the orchestral color” worked much the same effect upon him, and so his brain was heavily battered, and his auditory centers began to disintegrate. It is all very lovely, but my duty to my art compels me to add that, with all due respect for M. Rolland, it strikes me as hard to distinguish from damned foolishness.

All the critics of Beethoven, alas, seem to be tempted to such highfalutin stuff. Even Mr. Schauffler shows the stigma, though he is naturally a sober fellow, and his account of Beethoven’s life is marked by a considerable common sense. It is when he essays to analyze the Master’s music that he begins to see things.<sup>2</sup>

Then again, it must be admitted that Beethoven does tend to elicit intense prose from even cool, modern writers. The very proper Philip G. Downs was moved to write thus about the development section of the first movement:

For Beethoven’s great predecessors the middle section is an architectural element that serves to separate, and hence to emphasize, the symmetry of a structure; it is an area of difference, of instability. For Beethoven it becomes unmistakably the purgatorial fire that purifies, and he intends to preserve the architecture principles of his forebears while presenting a parable in music of how man makes himself better.<sup>3</sup>

To return to the august pen of H. L. Mencken, I must say that his own description of the first movement of the *Eroica* manages to combine the long tradition of “damned foolishness” with some marvelously penetrating observations.

The older I grow, the more I am convinced that the most portentous phenomenon in the whole history of music was the first public performance of the *Eroica* on April 7, 1805. The manufacturers of programme notes have swathed that gigantic work in so many layers of banal legend and speculation that its intrinsic merits have been almost forgotten. Was it dedicated to Napoleon I? If so, was the dedication sincere or ironical? Who cares—that is, who with ears? It might have been dedicated, just as well, to Louis XIV, Paracelsus or Pontius Pilate. What makes it worth discussing, today and forever, is the fact that on its very first page Beethoven threw his hate into the ring and laid his claim to immortality. Bang!—and he is off. No compromise! No easy bridge from the past! The second symphony is already miles behind. A new order of music has been born. The very manner of it is full of challenge. There is no sneaking into the foul business by way of a mellifluous and disarming introduction; no preparatory hemming and hawing to cajole the audience and enable the conductor to find his place in the score. Nay! Out of silence comes the angry crash of the tonic triad, and then at once, with no pause, the first statement of the first subject—grim, domineering, harsh, raucous, and yet curiously lovely—with its astounding collision with that electrical C sharp. The carnage has begun early; we are only in the seventh measure. In the thirteenth and fourteenth comes the incomparable roll down the simple scale of E-flat—and what follows is all that has ever been said, perhaps all that ever *will* be said, about music-making in the grand manner. What was afterward done, even by Beethoven, was done in the light of that perfect

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from *H. L. Mencken on Music*, Knopf 1975, page 72

<sup>3</sup> Philip G. Downs, *Classical Music: The Era of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*. Norton 1992, page 598.

example. Every line of modern music that is honestly music bears some sort of relation to that epoch-making first movement.<sup>4</sup>

We must remember that the nineteenth century practiced mostly programmatic interpretation and analysis, rather than the more technical variety practiced today. That isn't to say that the nineteenth century was without technical analysis; the C# in measure 7 is analyzed as early as 1807, much in the same light as it is seen today (as being rounded off by its transformation into an enharmonic D-flat in the recapitulation). But on the whole, the writers tended to think in terms of the story line they could provide as a way of entering the world of the music. Towards mid-century the story-line analysis technique was superceded in favor of a more psychological one, in which the work was considered to imbue certain aspects of a composer's own personality. It wasn't until the twentieth century, with writers such as Cassirer and Schenker, that motivic, structural, and finally historical-context analysis came to be the norm.

As a postscript to this, I offer the deliriously waspish, ever-irritating Hans von Bülow, who in 1897 conducted a performance of the *Eroica* which he re-dedicated to Bismarck, even providing a text to the finale celebrating Bismarck. That is the first instance of the *Eroica* being used for propagandistic purposes, but it certainly wasn't the last: the Nazis made it a musical kingpin for their own particular brand of venomous propaganda.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, page 74

<sup>5</sup> There is some disturbing stuff in the Nazi use of the *Eroica*, especially considering the *Prometheus* ballet which was the original gestation of the last movement materials (and possibly the first movement as well). The version of the Prometheus legend that provides the story of *The Creatures of Prometheus* is not the Aeschylus fable, as Prometheus is punished by the Gods for stealing fire and giving it to mankind. In the ballet, Prometheus is more like Pygmalion in that he creates two perfect *ur-human* beings and introduces them bit by bit to art and music and life and so forth. The parallels between this and the Nietzsche *ur-mensch* are obvious.

## 2 Note on my coverage of the first movement

You've already had the first movement of the *Eroica* in 208, so I will try to avoid repeating the information which is already in Grout and in the *Norton Anthology of Western Music*. There is bound to be some overlap, of course.

There is a ton of literature—much of it fanciful—about the dedication to Napoleon and Beethoven's ripping it out, etc., etc. It's all a big part of the Beethoven legend, mostly hokum, but not completely so. If you want to pursue the Napoleon dedication, I strongly recommend Thomas Sipe: *Beethoven Eroica Symphony*, a volume in the Cambridge Music Handbooks series. There is an entire chapter devoted to the dedication to Napoleon, as well as some good background material about Napoleon's career and intellectual Europe's opinions about him.

I won't talk about the sketches for the first movement, or the alternate form of the introduction, for example. They're in Palisca. I will talk more about the themes because there is more to be said than the Palisca coverage; sometimes it might seem like overlap but perhaps I have an ulterior motive. And of course I have no way of knowing precisely what input Faun Tiedge had, so I may well wind up reiterating her—or even contradicting her. *C'est la guerre*.

### 3 Audience Reception

They didn't like it right away, and in many ways they mostly never did make it to full understanding.

One must always take into account the frightful performances that almost unquestionably must have surrounded the early hearings. Beethoven was definitely not a smooth character when it came to rehearsals; he was ill-tempered, contradictory, confusing. This description of the premiere of the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, by one of Beethoven's colleagues Reichardt, could have just as easily applied to the Third:

I accepted the kind offer of Prince Lobkowitz to let me sit in his box with hearty thanks. There we endured, in the bitterest cold, too, from half past six, to half past ten, and made the experience that it is easy to get too much of a good thing and still more of a loud. Nevertheless, I could no more leave the box before the end than could the exceedingly good-natured and delicate Prince, for the box was in the first balcony near the stage, so that the orchestra and Beethoven conducting it in the middle below us, were near at hand; thus many a failure in the performance vexed our patience in the highest degree... Singers and orchestra were composed of heterogeneous elements, and it had been found impossible to get a single full rehearsal for all the pieces to be performed, all filled with the greatest difficulties.

A private concert in Vienna in 1805, at which both the First Symphony and the *Eroica* were played, elicited these remarks from the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*:

Beethoven's Symphony in C major [the First Symphony] was performed at Herr von Würth's with precision and ease. A splendid artistic production... in which an uncommon richness of beautiful ideas are charmingly and splendidly developed, and overall pervades continuity, order and light. An entirely new symphony by Beethoven [the *Eroica*] is written in a completely different style. This long composition, extremely difficult of performance, is in reality a tremendously expanded, daring and wild fantasia. It lacks nothing in the way of startling and beautiful passages, in which the energetic and talented composer must be recognized; but often it loses itself in lawlessness... The reviewer belongs to Herr van Beethoven's sincerest admirers, but in this composition he must confess that he finds too much that is glaring and bizarre... The Symphony in E-flat by Eberl again was extraordinarily pleasing.<sup>6</sup>

One thing you might have missed on a reading of the review is that it implies three symphonies in one evening—and the First isn't all that short, either. Eberl's symphony—well, who knows. Probably the usual length for the time, about 20 minutes or so. It's quite possible that there were other works on the bill as well. The performance of the *Eroica* was in all likelihood utterly ghastly, and the listeners probably already fairly fatigued when it began.<sup>7</sup>

Beethoven responded to the above article, by the way, pretending to be unaffected or uninjured by the negativity of the review, in a letter to Brietkopf & Härtel, the publisher of the journal:

I hear that in the *Musikalische Zeitung* some one has railed violently against the *symphony* which I sent you last year and which *you* returned to me. *I have not read the*

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<sup>6</sup> I got it from Thayer, pg. 375.

<sup>7</sup> Ferdinand Ries's notes about the first rehearsal (at which he was present) would seem to indicate that the orchestra became hopelessly muddled from all of the syncopations and Beethoven finally had to stop and go back to the beginning.

*article*. If you fancy you can injure *me* by publishing articles of that kind, you are very much mistaken. On the contrary, by so doing you merely bring your journal into disrepute, the more so as I have made *no secret* whatsoever of the fact that you returned to me *that particular* symphony together with some other compositions.<sup>8</sup>

[Note in the above letter that Brietkopf & Härtel returned the score—in other words, they decided not to publish it. There's plenty of speculation about that one, but in all likelihood it's because at the time Beethoven was still referring to it as the 'Bonaparte' symphony, and in 1805 Austria was right on the verge of a major confrontation with Napoleon—a confrontation which would prove disastrous to Austria, and would mark the formal ending of the Holy Roman Empire, in fact. So perhaps that had something to do with their reluctance—being as they were one of the most important publishing houses in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It might also have something to do with Beethoven's removing the dedication to Bonaparte, despite the many Romantically-tinged stories about it.]

A review from the *Musikalische Zeitung* of 1806 was much more positive about the work:

...it is certainly—the voices of all specialists, reviewers included, are in this united, even if some correspondents in certain pamphlets are not!—it is certainly, I say, one of the most original, most sublime, and most profound products the entire genre of music has exhibited. Would it not be a true shame if, perhaps due to lack of support or trust of a publisher, it should remain in the dark and not be brought out into the world?<sup>9</sup>

But it has never been an easy road for listeners. Even as late as the 1860s French audiences were unable to appreciate most of the *Eroica*, according to Berlioz:

A sentiment of sadness not only grave but, so to speak, antique takes possession of me whenever I hear this symphony although the public seem indifferently touched by it. We must certainly deplore the misfortune of an artist who, consumed by such enthusiasm, fails to make himself sufficiently well understood, even by a refined audience, to ensure the raising of his hearers up to the level of his own inspiration. It is all the more sad as the same audience, on other occasions, becomes ardent, excited or sorrowful along with him. It becomes seized with a real and lively passion for some of his compositions; equally admirable, it may be admitted, but nevertheless not more beautiful than the present work. It appreciates at their just value the allegretto in A minor of the seventh symphony; the allegretto scherzando of the eighth; the final of the fifth and the scherzo of the ninth. It even appears to experience emotion at the funeral march of the symphony of which we are now speaking (the "Eroica"); but, in respect of the first movement, it is impossible to indulge in any illusion; for twenty years of observation tend to assure me that the public listen to it with a feeling approaching coldness, and appear to recognize in it a learned and energetic composition, but nothing beyond that. No philosophy is applicable to this case; for it is useless to say that it has always been so, and that everywhere the same fate has befallen all high productions of the human mind.<sup>10</sup>

Note the Romantic orientation indicated in Berlioz's comments—that the music must inspire an emotional response in order for the audience to really appreciate it. That's very typical of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; in the 18<sup>th</sup>, the aesthetics were different. Reviews in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century often speak of the 'science' and 'craft' of the composition as being the main reason for appreciation.

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Sipe, *Beethoven Eroica Symphony*, Cambridge Handbooks, page 56

<sup>9</sup> Sipe, *op. cit.*, page 57

<sup>10</sup> Berlioz, *Beethoven's Nine Symphonies*, pages 46-47.

Typical of such a review would be this from the London *Morning Herald* of February 14, 1792 of a review of a Professional Concert featuring a symphony by Pleyel:

The first Act concluded with a very fine Overture composed on purpose for this Concert, by PLEYEL; it abounded with beautiful passages, and was elegant, interesting, and scientific...<sup>11</sup>

The same newspaper referred to the premiere of Haydn's "Surprise" symphony as follows:

A new composition from such a man as HAYDN is a great event in the history of Music. His novelty of last night was a grand Overture, the subject of which was remarkably simple, but extended to vast complication, exquisitely modulated, and striking in effect. Critical applause was fervid and abundant.<sup>12</sup>

Note how the review doesn't talk about people being moved; he talks about the complication and modulation—the technique of the work, in other words. There is a hint here that the 19<sup>th</sup> century was primarily responsible for not understanding the *Eroica*—I wonder if perhaps the 18<sup>th</sup> century would have done a better job of it. The *Eroica*, despite all its revolutionary qualities, still belongs primarily to the world of Viennese classicism, and less to the 19<sup>th</sup> century world. Haydn on steroids.

Probably the somewhat more classically-oriented 20<sup>th</sup> century was needed in order to start really appreciating the *Eroica*—especially the first movement—for what it is. Mencken's remarks on the work (see above) are those of a 20<sup>th</sup> century listener and thinker, and not a 19<sup>th</sup> century one, and they set the tone for modern thinking about the work.

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<sup>11</sup> H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn in England*, page 132.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, page 149

#### 4 The Sidetracked “Death” Analyses

There are a group of early analyses of the *Eroica* (including Berlioz) which all see the work from the standpoint of a funeral procession for a dead hero—not just the slow movement, but the whole thing.

For example, an early English review says that the order of movements was wrong:

...it ought, on such an occasions, to have ended with the [funeral] march, the impression intended to be made would have been left, but was entirely obliterated by the ill-suited minuet that followed.<sup>13</sup>

Berlioz saw the last movement as being an elegy to the slain hero:

The hero causes many tears; but, after the last regrets paid to his memory, the poet turns aside from elegy; in order to intone with transport the hymn of glory.<sup>14</sup>

This all seems kind of confusing—since we certainly don’t think of the work as being in memory of a *dead* hero, but just a hero. It clears up when you learn that the first complete score of the work (as against a piano reduction), published in London in 1809 by Cianchettini and Sperati, prints the title as: “Sinfonia Eroica composta per celebrare la morte d’un Eroe.” Berlioz’s copy translated it into French: “pour célébrer l’anniversaire de la mort d’un grand homme.”

This misunderstanding rattled down throughout the nineteenth century. The *toujours*-silly Fétis (I’ve railed about him before) made up his mind that Beethoven had actually wanted to end the *Eroica* with what is now the finale of the Fifth. According to Fétis, Beethoven’s disillusionment over Napoleon’s coronation caused him to replace that originally grand, heroic last movement with a despondent funeral march in C minor, and to write a new finale. Oh, that Fétis.

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Sipe, pg. 60

<sup>14</sup> Berlioz, *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies*, pg. 46



## 5 Themes

The first movement is notable for its surprising number of themes—far more than one would normally encounter in a Classical sonata-form movement. However, the themes are all clearly derived from each other, to one extent or another. (Even the mysterious “extra theme” in the development turns out to be a derivation from extant material, and not a new theme at all.)

The main theme itself is divided into three motivic fragments, which will be labeled as motive ‘a’, motive ‘b’, and motive ‘c’:



These three fragments are characterized as much by their rhythms as by their melodic shape, but it should be emphasized that motive ‘c’ is as much melodic as rhythmic; it is the chromatic nature of the fragment that is most important. Both ‘a’ and ‘b’ are triadic in nature and differ primarily in their rhythm; the difference in the direction and in the inversion of the tonic triad (‘a’ outlines a 64 triad; ‘b’ outlines a 53) are secondary to the rhythmic differences.

This is probably the place to mention that there is a strong correspondence between this theme and the *Prometheus* theme of the last movement; there are some contemporary analyses which give the last-movement theme primacy and consider the first movement theme to be derived from it; therefore we have a case of derivation before original, variation before theme, as it were.

I suppose this is also the place to mention that the *Eroica Variations*, Opus 35, do not come *after* the *Eroica* symphony, but before. The theme is that of the last movement of the symphony, certainly. But that last movement theme is first encountered in Beethoven’s ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*. We may call them the *Eroica* variations nowadays due to their using the same theme, but in fact they are probably better called the *Prometheus* variations; Beethoven in fact wanted the publisher to include a squib on the front cover that indicated that the variations came from the *Prometheus* ballet.

Analysts differ as to the identification and even the very existence of the various themes. There has been speculation of the secondary group arriving as early as measure 57, although most writers seem to agree on the true arrival in the secondary group as being at measure 83. Palisca<sup>15</sup> identifies six separate themes in the movement, whereas Plantinga<sup>16</sup> identifies no fewer than ten.

In all cases the themes can be seen as emanating from some aspect or another of one of the three fragmentary motives of the primary theme, although their derivation might require intervening steps in order to be understood. (That’s especially true of the theme which Plantinga identifies as ‘f’, that requiring the tail of the theme he calls ‘b’—which provides a strong hemiola creating a duple meter within the overriding triple.)

The chart will identify the themes using three systems: the first is that which begins the secondary group at measure 57, the second is that which begins the secondary group at measure 83; themes are marked as ‘primary’, ‘transitional’, ‘secondary’, or ‘closing’. The system used by Plantinga,

<sup>15</sup> *Norton Anthology of Western Music*—I think you’ve spent some time with that one.

<sup>16</sup> *Romantic Music*, Norton

which gives each theme a letter (not to be confused with the motivic fragment letters identified above) follows.

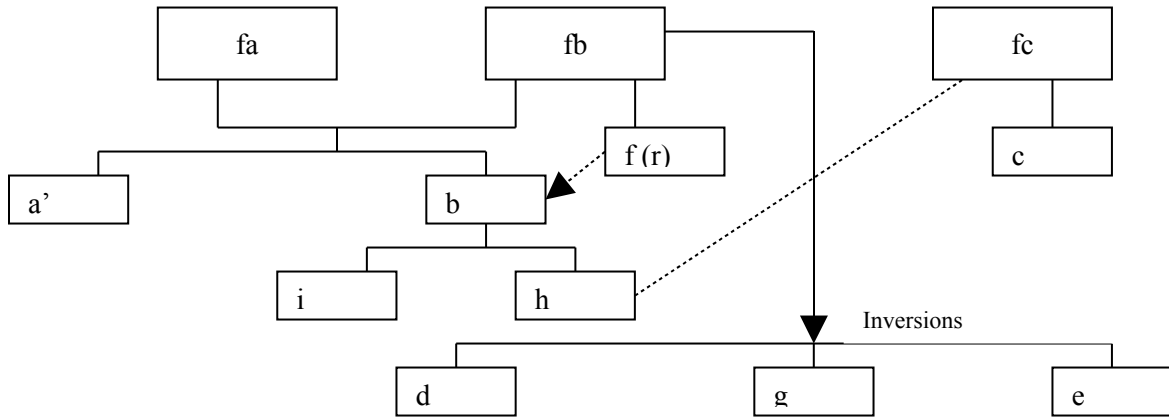
The musical score consists of nine staves, each with a label to its left. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The staves are:

- Staff a:** Labeled "Primary Primary a". It begins with a bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4.
- Staff b:** Labeled "b". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff c:** Labeled "Trans 1 Trans c". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff d:** Labeled "Trans 2 Secondary 1 d". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff e:** Labeled "Trans 3 Secondary 2 e". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff f:** Labeled "Secondary Secondary 3 f". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff g:** Labeled "Closing Closing a'". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff h:** Labeled "h". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff i:** Labeled "i". It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.

The primary differences between the Plantinga system (letters) and the standard ones are as follows:

- The Plantinga system does not commit to sectional interpretation—there is no distinction made between ‘primary’ or ‘secondary’ or ‘closing’.
- Plantinga sees as separate themes material which in other analyses is not seen as thematic (i.e., themes b, g, h, and i).

There appears to be a kind of derivation-hierarchy, a family tree if you will, of the way themes are developed.



In the diagram, the upper three boxes indicate the three motivic fragments (fa, fb, and fc). The lines of derivation will either indicate a direct derivation (such as ‘c’ from ‘fc’), or might indicate that a derivation is the result of a combination between two of the motivic fragments (as ‘b’ is the result of a combination of ‘fa’ and ‘fb’.)

It’s interesting to note that fragment ‘c’ (the semitone) is used to derive only the important transitional theme in a fundamental way; the connection to theme ‘h’ is tenuous at best and therefore I haven’t committed completely to the derivation—theme ‘h’ does feature a number of semitone motions and I have identified them as probably stemming from ‘fc’, but this is by no means conclusive.

However, fragment c’s seeming inconsequential nature when it comes to deriving themes is completely overshadowed by its importance in the overall emotional scheme of the work; the semitone motion as an antithesis to the triadic motions of ‘a’ and ‘b’ is central to the emotional impact of the movement.

### 5.1 The Main Theme In Literature

Many writers have been busy little squirrels finding similarities between this theme and other themes in the literature. George Grove, in particular, goes somewhat wild about the whole practice, finding a link to the overture of Mozart’s “Bastien und Bastienne”, of all the obscurities to unearth. (It wasn’t even published until Beethoven had been dead for fifty years.)

The theme is similar to a lot of other themes. That’s inevitable; it outlines a tonic triad, a very common technique for the primary theme of a Classical symphony. The necessity of developing the theme thoroughly as well as providing the required tonic stability tends to lead composers into themes which strongly outline the tonic triad.

The Grove study was written at the close of the nineteenth century, at a time in which the classical literature was perhaps not as well known. It’s true that the similarity to the Mozart is quite striking.



Grove isn’t foolish; he doesn’t interpret the similarity of this theme with Beethoven’s as any kind of plagiarism (even the unconscious type). Instead, he sees the similarities—even with later composers—as

...the links with convey the great Apostolic Succession of Composers from generation to generation. Handel builds on a phrase of Carissimi or Stradella, and shapes it to his own end—an end how different from that of his predecessor! Mozart does the same by Handel; Mendelssohn goes back, now to the old Church melodies, now to Bach, and now to Beethoven. Schumann and Wagner adopt passages from Mendelssohn. Beethoven himself is not free from the direct influence of Haydn, and even such individual creators as Schubert and Brahms bind themselves by these cords of love to their great forerunner; and thus is forged, age by age, the golden chain, which is destined never to end as long as the world lasts.<sup>17</sup>

That said, there is one work which does impress me as actually paying an homage to the *Eroica* in its opening theme, and that's the 2<sup>nd</sup> symphony of Brahms:



I consider this to be a respectful quotation on Brahms's part and not another of those triadic coincidences. For one thing, the low-string and horn nature of the setting brings the *Eroica* to mind almost immediately. For another, Brahms had already paid a clear homage to Beethoven in the 1<sup>st</sup> symphony, and thus another quotation might be very much in order.

However, even this is debatable and can be chalked up to triadic coincidence; there would be no real way to prove it without asking Brahms himself what he meant—and probably taking some heat from him as a result of the impertinence of the question. We must be careful not to see homages, anticipations, or even plagiarisms in triple-meter triads; they're just too doggone common.

## 5.2 The Main Theme as a Juxtaposition

Any number of commentators have seen in the juxtaposition of triadic (motivic fragments a & b) with chromatic semitone motion (motivic fragment c) the essential component, the emotional heart of the piece. This makes sense if you understand that most early programmatic analyses of the piece saw it as a battle—and so the juxtaposition itself is seen as part of the battle.

The Marx biography of Beethoven in 1859 refers to this as suggesting “great situations”, which is in line with other commentators, in using the importance of these very distinctive syntactic elements of tonal music.

A work of Johann Vanhal, *Die Schlacht bei Würzburg*, of 1797, is a work that Beethoven possibly knew, but which also shows this chromatic juxtaposition vividly. It's a battle-piece, frankly programmatic, with the subtitle: “The threatening of the Imperial residency at Vienna by French troops under the command of General Bonaparte and its freeing by the noteworthy Austrian bravery of 4 April 1797.” Wow. The opening goes like this:

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<sup>17</sup> Grove, George: *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*, Dover reprint, page 60

Allegro

*fp*

The image shows a musical score for piano. It consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff is in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and common time. The bass staff is in common time and has a dynamic marking of *fp* (fortissimo piano). The music is marked *Allegro*. The score consists of four measures. The first measure has a treble staff chord of F#4, A4, C5 and a bass staff quarter note of C3. The second measure has a treble staff chord of G4, B4, D5 and a bass staff quarter note of D3. The third measure has a treble staff chord of A4, C5, E5 and a bass staff quarter note of E3. The fourth measure has a treble staff chord of B4, D5, F#5 and a bass staff quarter note of F#3.

## 6 Primary Group (3 – 44)

3: The statement of the theme is harmonically just a bit ambiguous. Note that there is no firm tonic underlying the melodic motion, with the theme there in the bass. The theme will not be stated with really strong harmonic underpinning in fact until 37.

The ambiguity in the harmony has been noted by many, and brought forth some really marvelous nineteenth century prose. How about Marx (the same fellow who was largely responsible for the textbook account of sonata form):

The [hero-idea] steps forward in the violoncellos still pale, not yet warming, like the rising sun level on the horizon—as though hiding itself in chilly haze.<sup>18</sup>

Apparently Oulibicheff—writer of an 1857 biography of Beethoven—was strongly influenced by Marx:

After presenting itself, like the sun on the horizon, it holds itself for a moment behind the fog of an indecisive harmony, to reappear in all the splendor and rotundity of its disc.<sup>19</sup>

7: The C# in the bass, such a big surprise—even after hearing the thing a jillion times—and is not only interesting in and of itself but in its harmonic identity. What, precisely, is it? In fact we don't really have a firm idea at first. Beethoven is marvelously (and maddeningly) uncommittal about it; the chord is spelled C#-G-Bflat. This seems to imply a vii7 of some sort, although a critical note (e-natural) has been omitted. If one is forced to give it a label, the only one that seems to fit is to describe it as a common-tone diminished seventh chord which decorates V65, the chord which follows.

The real function of this C# does not become apparent until we reach the recapitulation. At that point, the C# is treated as a Dflat instead—measure 403—and here takes on what appears to be a motion to F minor, acting as vii42 (which then resolves downwards to V and hence into the tonic of F minor.) However, it turns out to be vii42 of F Major, and not F Minor—the theme itself not being particularly amenable to minor-key statements.

By the way, this change of harmonization of the C# to an implied D-flat was first brought to attention in 1807, in one of the earlier reviews of the *Eroica* published in Vienna. That isn't all that surprising considering that the sudden feint into F major in the recapitulation that results from the rethinking of the note is one of the more striking moments in the first movement.

13 – 14: This trailing ending of the main theme isn't really part of the theme; it isn't used in the recap and is in fact clipped off of restatements of the theme as a rule. It comes across as being freely connective material—note the inversion of it in measures 35 – 36. In fact, the main theme itself must be heard as continuing in the cellos—note that the basses stay strictly out of the picture until the resolution onto the E-flat in measure 15.

15 – 22: I'd like to propose this as a particularly beautiful use of the augmented sixth chord as a way of affecting a motion to the dominant. This usage in fact almost establishes the dominant as a key area—almost, but not completely. Note also that the motion from IV-IV6, and hence to the

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<sup>18</sup> Quotes in Sipe, pg. 61

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Sipe, pg. 62

augmented sixth chord, shows beautifully the derivation of the augmented sixth chord from the Phrygian cadence figure IV6-V.

It's worth noting that this is the first use of an augmented sixth chord in the movement; the augmented sixth chord is used strategically so as to be doggone nearly motivic material in and of itself.

23 – 36: Plantinga refers to this as being a separate theme; that's debatable I suppose. What is not debatable is that this introduces the metric duality which is such a part of this movement. A series of hemiola create what is in effect large 3/2 measures superimposed on the smaller triple meter, together with a sense of 2/4 for each group of the 3/2. This is one of the technical features which Berlioz noted:

The rhythm is particularly remarkable by the frequency of syncopation and by combinations of duple measure; thrown, by accentuation of the weak beat, into the triple bar.

37 – 44: This is a restatement of the primary theme (which usually happens in a sonata form), but more to the point it is also a restatement of 15 – 22 with an even more striking use of an augmented sixth chord, here the augmented sixth of the dominant, moving to V/V. It's worth comparing the two progressions in sketch form, as if they were chorales à la Harmony class, in order to see how such masterful transitions can be affected. In this sketch, bars 15 – 22 are the upper line, and bars 37 – 44 are the lower line.

The image contains two musical sketches, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) in G-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The first sketch shows a progression of four measures. The first measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The second measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The third measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The fourth measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The second sketch shows a progression of five measures. The first measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The second measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The third measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The fourth measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat. The fifth measure has a treble clef chord with notes G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat, and a bass clef chord with notes G-flat and B-flat.

There's a lot to notice here—for just a refresher and lesson on chromatic harmony if nothing else. Note that the augmented sixth chord of the first example (penultimate chord) is the Italian variety—it is a modified IV6, and not a modified IV65 (that's the German.) The Italian, remember, moves comfortably to V without a pot load of parallel fifths, which plague the use of the German in moving directly to V. The German, as a rule, moves to a cadential 64 in order to avoid those parallel fifths problems.

In the second line, the augmented sixth chord is the French variety—that is, a modified ii43. That may not be immediately recognizable; note that the resolution is to an F Major triad—that's the dominant of B-flat. Thus in B-flat the ii7 is C-Eflat-G-Bflat; the ii43 would be therefore G-Bflat-C-Eflat. The augmented sixth version lowers the bass note and raises the sixth. The French augmented sixth chord can move comfortably to V as well, which happens here.

I think that the first two measures of both of these examples merit study just to see two different ways of affecting a motion to IV from the tonic, using secondary dominants. Note that you can

move just as comfortably to ii (upper line) or to vi (lower line) and then effect a quick move to IV via V7/IV; either will work just fine.

Another item being demonstrated here is IV's suitability as a pivotal chord, and its flexibility of motion. It gives way to an augmented sixth chord in its own key just as well as it does to an augmented sixth chord in the key of the dominant. Nifty chord, IV.



## 7 Transition (45 – 82)

With this heading I stake my claim that the arrival at measure 57 is in no way an early arrival at the secondary key center, but is still part of a longer transition, with the actual secondary key center being reached at measure 83.

I can see no real justification for measure 57 as being anything other than continuous transition. True there is a cadence of sorts into B-flat major, but here we come up against Tovey's dictum about being *on* the dominant rather than *in* the dominant. It's a very important concept, and one which must be considered carefully. It is perfectly possible to reach the dominant via its own dominant—i.e., V/V to V, without really establishing the dominant as key. The use of a secondary dominant does not, in and of itself, establish the goal of motion as a new key center. Much more jockeying about is required, so much so that really a *ternary* dominant—V/V/V—is usually required before the resolution is really and truly heard as being in the new key.

A good test of being 'in' versus 'on' the dominant is to listen carefully to the original *tonic* in comparison to the dominant. If you are *on* the dominant, then the tonic will continue to sound like a tonic. But if you are *in* the dominant, the tonic will sound like a subdominant to that dominant. The ear hears it always; all you have to do is listen.

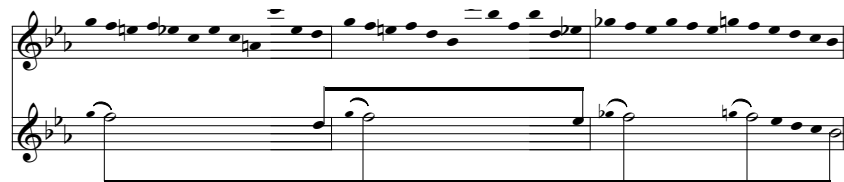
45 – 57: Theme 'c' here is a perfect rhythmic diminution of fragment c. It's stuff like this which has moved theoreticians to pontificate loudly over the years about motives being primarily rhythmic and not melodic. Yet the rhythm is only one part of the derivation since without the sharp semitone grab of the melodic fragments, this would wind up sounding really more like a diminution of fragment a, and not fragment c. In other words, those theoreticians who insist that a motive is *only* rhythmic and has no melodic component are rather unobservant theoreticians.

Worth noting that the accompaniment to this figure is derived from fragment b.

The orchestration is also of considerable interest. Mozart started this sort of thing and now Beethoven takes it to heights: the tossing around of a melody from instrument to instrument. This melody is perfectly suited for this kind of treatment, being made up of one-measure snippets and that are combined in Beethoven's signature 'collage' fashion of making up compositions and melodies.

By the way, 19<sup>th</sup> century writers were wont to describe this as an expression of the teamwork between comrades in arms in the great war. No, I'm not kidding.

Within this Beethovenian collage there is most definitely an *urline* at work here; we are slowly but steadily working our way into a clear statement of scale degrees (6)-5-4-3-2-1 over the dominant. (g-f-e-flat-d-c-b-flat.) It takes a while to get there; chromaticisms delay the movement and at one point it even takes on a slight minor quality (g-flats at 53 and 54), but sooner or later we get there. The overall outline of the melodic structure might make that reasonably clear:



The purely transitional nature of the theme is made all the more obvious I think by this melodic outline; the descent from F down to B-flat is clearly delineated.<sup>20</sup>

The horns at measures 47 – 49, by the way, impress me as being an anticipation of the secondary theme of measure 83—already foreshadowed by the winds at measures 39 – 42.

By the way, this is a pretty strong progression—and so it is understandable that, based on melodic considerations only, one might be moved to consider measure 57 (the end of the above flowchart) to be *the* arrival at the secondary key.

57 – 64: Plantinga calls this theme ‘d’: it is derived I think primarily from fragment b; the triad is filled in. At the same time the first measure of the theme certainly does stem from fragment a’s rhythm.

This passage makes sense primarily as an early arrival on V which is as yet not stable enough to stand as a key center. (This is where that sense of *on* V is important, rather than being *in* V.) Nor do I think we are meant to hear this as anything other than a dominant; note that use of the A-flats in measure 57. Even though these are passing notes, rhythmically very weak, it takes very little for the ear to interpret a V as a V7 and hence as something other than a key center. In fact, this B-flat major is part of an overall motion to G minor (the mediant), which will serve as the pivot into the real cadence in B-flat major. It even moves again to V/V at measure 64, which prepares us for the real, successful push *into* the dominant, instead of being *on* the dominant as we are now.

65 – 82: this is the real transition to V as a key center. Beethoven has made some nifty feints and jabs towards the dominant key up to this point, now he throws his roundhouse. It is a rich and sophisticated harmonic progression, worthy of careful study as a wonderful example of how to create an utterly satisfying modulation at the grand scale.

The underlying motion is described simply enough: make a move to the mediant (iii), treat that as a pivot chord (iii = vi of the dominant) and then move from there into the key of the dominant. But in order for this to work properly, the mediant must be well established or its status as a pivot will not convince the ear, and the movement to the tonic following the iii = vi pivot point must be also carefully made.

This flowchart can help see the underlying motion, which depends largely on V-I relationships: those are the strongest and guide the ear with the most security. However, superimposed on those V-I relationships is a foreground chromatic motion that is highly reminiscent of Mozart’s practices at similar locations. In the flowchart below, the lower line gives root motion, clearly showing the V-I sequential nature of the progression, while the upper line shows the foreground motions in soprano and bass:

<sup>20</sup> Of course, it’s clearly delineated because I *wanted* it to be clearly delineated. One can find almost anything in a passage provided one is willing to look for it.

It might not be all that easy to hear this modulation from the flowchart—even comparing it with the score, and so another approach might be of use. Here I write the modulation with free voice-leading, as a chorale:

It's really worth spending some time exploring a modulation such as this one, and noting where it has been expanded—for example, the motion from I-IV in B-flat major (chords 6 – 7) is highly decorated with a Mozartean chromatic line, making the motion all the more convincing. It's worth noting that it even has the nerve to tonicize the previous tonic—look above at the larger flowchart and notice the V42 at the beginning of the chromatic motion, which is by this point really a V42/IV, moving to IV6, and hence to the augmented sixth chord.

Other sophisticated elements involve the play on the F# which then becomes a G-flat in order to create the augmented sixth chord (see the flowchart) and the deceptive cadential motion into IV (also see the flowchart.)

In this passage, starting right at the beginning at measure 65, Beethoven emphasizes the importance of the tonicization of iii by providing a noticeable theme (theme 'e') which establishes a new rhythmic energy in the movement. *We are meant to hear the tonicization on iii as being fundamental and important.*

Finally, it's worth mentioning that in measures 80 – 82, Beethoven completes the 5-4-3-2-1 motion that he began with measures 55 – 57, this time making the transition to B-flat major all the more emphatic by adding yet another octave to the descent. The arrival is truly *in* B-flat major at this point; we are *in* the dominant, no longer *on* it as we were at measure 57.

## 8 Second (and Closing) Group (83 – 155(1))<sup>21</sup>

83 – 108: The second theme is surprisingly matter-of-fact, although there is an interesting motion into the minor at measure 93, which is interesting as creating a motion to the dominant that will sound fresh upon moving into measure 109.

109 – 131 Closing Theme 1 (Plantinga calls these themes a', g, and h)

The derivations are clear enough: a' is a rewriting of theme a (thus a' and not calling it something completely different.) 'g' is also clearly enough derived from fragment b, and is therefore a very close cousin to theme e.

Theme 'h' is a bit more complicated. Rhythmically it has more in common with fragment b, but it makes full use of the semitone motion that is characteristic of fragment c—therefore I have given it a direct parentage from fragment b, with a subsidiary derivation from fragment c.

128 – 131 are two measures of 3/2 superimposed on the 3/4; the ultimate hemiola, also the perfect textbook example if you ever need something that the dullest dolt could hear.

132 – 155 Closing Theme 2 (Plantinga calls this theme 'i'). The augmented sixth sonority is reiterated here, a sonority which plays such an interesting role in the movement (I've mentioned before that it almost warrants motivic status).

147: the startling dissonance here results from a vii65 which has been superimposed over a tonic pedal; the pedal is reiterated in the upper voices as well in the bass (soprano pedal points are just as possible as those in the bass, so here we get both at the same time.)

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<sup>21</sup> A note here on my measure numbering: there are two different ways to number first and second endings. I use the older technique in which the measure numbers overlap for those measures which are effected by the first and second ending. Thus there are two versions each of measures 152 – 155. I indicate those by including which group (first or second) to which I refer. Thus 155(1) is the ending of the exposition, the location of the double bar. Some other editions may use a numbering system in which each measure is numbered separately. In those editions, the numbers beginning with the development will be three ahead of mine.

## 9 Development

The development falls into four main sections. Sections 1 & 2 deal primarily with the transitional theme (theme c), while section 3 reintroduces theme a. Section 4 is the retransition to the recapitulation.

This is a *very* long development—longer by 100 measures than the exposition. It is developments like this (and particularly this development) that caused a historical distortion on the part of theoreticians about the work of Haydn and Mozart. Downs discusses this rather nicely:

It is this development, quite without precedent, that gives the *Eroica* its unique position in the history of the symphony and of sonata form, and has caused subsequent historians, looking back at the eighteenth century through *Eroica*-colored lenses, to misinterpret the symphony of Haydn and Mozart. It is from this symphony as much as from the Ninth that the nineteenth century derives the notion that the essence of music lies in development. More than the late quartets, the *Eroica* Symphony shows us why Beethoven was the standard bearer of the “Romantic” era, but it also shows us that in Beethoven’s ordered thinking, the symmetry-giving impulse towards repetition must be preserved.<sup>22</sup>

### 9.1 Section 1: 152(2) – 221

The first section begins with a short bridge passage which serves the harmonic function of taking us to a V7 in the key of C major (although we would normally expect C minor, that being the submediant of E-flat major.)

166 – 178: exploration of theme c, the transitional theme.

178 – 185: theme ‘a’ makes an appearance, during a motion to d minor.

186 – 194: Theme ‘a’ is combined with theme ‘c’ as well as the syncopated material from measure 7 (Tovey calls it the ‘cloud’ material)—as well as the rhythm at least of theme ‘f’ (the second theme). This is quite impressive, all this combination—a bit like the combinatorial coda of the last movement of the *Jupiter* symphony, but for different reasons. When you derive your themes from each other, as Beethoven has done here, then combinations such as this are much more possible than they would be otherwise.

194 – 197: a transitional passage, establishes V7 of G minor, the next main stop along the way.

198 – 206: repeat of 186 – 194 in G minor.

207 – 220: this begins as though it is going to be another transitional passage like 194 – 197 which moves to C minor, but it veers off and begins a chromatic, Mozartean progression into E-flat major. (This is not a recapitulation, though, and the ear does not hear it as such.)

Note the use of an augmented sixth chord at measure 220 which effects the final move into E-flat major. This is noticeably similar to the move into theme ‘c’ in the exposition (measure 44 – 45) and has much the same feel about it—which is why, I think, that there is absolutely no sense of recapitulation here. Thus the *thematic* nature of sonata form makes itself felt here; it is neither all harmonic nor all melodic motion, but a synthesis of both.

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<sup>22</sup> Downs, *Classical Music*, page 598

## 9.2 Section 2: 221 – 284

221 – 236: begins much the same way as did section 1, but it is definitely not going to do the same thing. (How boring that would be.) Instead, we move quickly away from E-flat major, using theme 'c', to A-flat major and hence to a cadence in F minor.

237 – 245: this begins as though Beethoven intends to start an elaborate fugue on theme 'c' at this point. However, he doesn't do it. He hints and feints at the idea, and then pulls away before taking it very far. However, we do have noticeable subject/answer combinations in the instruments:

237: subject in the violas

238: answer in the second violins

241: subject in the first violins

243: answer in the basses

However, the fugal structure is extremely loose given that these subject/answer pairs are not in the traditional key arrangement but are instead more sequential in nature. Fugues do not begin sequentially as a rule, although they certainly do become sequential after their opening expository passages.

245 – 280: this is the 'rage' passage, which stretches the metric tension almost to the breaking point, mixing  $\frac{3}{4}$ , duple, and  $\frac{3}{2}$  meter all over the place. Berlioz came up with some wonderfully purple prose about this passage:

When, with this disjointed rhythm, rude dissonances come to present themselves in combination, like those we find near the middle of the second repeat, where the first violins strike F natural against E (the fifth of the chord of A minor) it is impossible to repress a sensation of fear at such a picture of ungovernable fury. It is the voice of despair, almost of rage.<sup>23</sup>

Harmonically it is not too difficult. The purpose of the passage is a long chromatic modulation to the Phrygian II of the raised tonic minor, although obviously the harmonic motion is less important than the emotional surge of the passage. The motion is created by a series of diminished seventh chords and their resolutions, arriving finally at an F major chord in first inversion, which is the Phrygian II of e minor, moving into that key at measure 285:

The image shows a musical score for two staves, treble and bass clef, in a key signature of two flats (B-flat major/E-flat minor). The passage consists of a series of diminished seventh chords in the treble clef and single notes in the bass clef. The chords in the treble clef are: F#7b9, G7b9, A7b9, Bb7b9, C7b9, D7b9, Eb7b9, and F7b9. The bass clef contains single notes: F, G, A, Bb, C, D, Eb, and F. Below the bass clef, there are two chord symbols:  $\text{F}^{\flat} \text{II}^{\flat} \text{7}^{\flat} \text{9}^{\flat}$  and  $\text{F}^{\flat} \text{III}^{\flat} \text{7}^{\flat} \text{9}^{\flat}$ , with a 'v' symbol above the second one.

<sup>23</sup> Berlioz, *Beethoven's Nine Symphonies*, page 42

### 9.3 Section 3: 285 – 338

285 – 300: the famous “new” theme which is not new at all. The oboe line was originally a simple supporting line to the cello, which is clearly an ornamented version of theme a. In its working out, the oboe line became more important, but it is nonetheless a counterpoint to the cello line, which is an ornamented theme ‘a’.

But it was considered to be a separate, new theme for some time, and thus represented something slightly wicked given that you weren’t *supposed* to create a new theme during the development. That was *against the rules*—rules which really didn’t exist at the time, anyway. Various writers were moved to remark on this, each in his own way. George Grove:

This is what is technically termed an episode; that is, a melody or theme which has not been heard in the former section, and has, therefore, as it were, no right to appear in the section devoted to the discussion of the previous materials. With Beethoven, however, everything was more or less an open question, and in the present case he has pleased to will otherwise.<sup>24</sup>

Tovey doesn’t make a big deal out of it but he does quote it and call it a new theme:

...and when the still more vast development has twice introduced an entirely new lyric passage...<sup>25</sup>

It remained for later writers, who had access to Beethoven’s sketches, to understand the derivation of the passage. Of course looking at it now it seems obvious—but that’s the nature of hindsight, always 20/20.

301 – 322: theme ‘a’ now asserts itself in its ‘pure’ form (as opposed to the ornamented version of the previous section). This could be heard possibly as a false recapitulation, but I find it highly unlikely.

323 – 338: the ornamental theme ‘a’ (previously thought to be a ‘new’ theme) returns in a modulatory passage that focuses on Eb Major, but not as a tonic, but as the minor subdominant of the dominant.

### 9.4 Section 4: 339 – 399

This section can be described as a very long involved dominant pedal point.

Special points of interest:

The canonic treatment of theme ‘a’ in the winds (338 – 359) over a bass line which Grove describes as:

...a wonderful staccato bass accompanied by the original theme, stalking over the world as none but a hero can stalk, and making us feel like pigmies as we listen to his determined and elastic footfalls...<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Grove, *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*, page 64

<sup>25</sup> Tovey, *Studies in Musical Analysis*, Volume I, page 30

<sup>26</sup> Grove, *op. cit.*, page 65

The semitone idea rules the roost starting at measure 367. This entire passage presents a suddenly glacial time frame, when four measures now do the duty previously given to each single measure. In other words, the time frame is multiplied times 4; everything slows down to a quarter of its former speed. This is not the only time this happens in Beethoven; he is in fact rather partial to these kinds of slowdowns. *TyrannoGreenberg Rex* has a name for them: he calls them “near-death experiences” and it’s a tremendously apt description. It is though the music flatlines; the monitors go silent, the heart monitor shows just a flat line without the oscillations indicating life.

If we think of this long passage starting at 367, as it hovers uncertainly from semitone to semitone, as such a near-death experience, then the ‘early entry’ of the horn at measure 395 can be thought of as the first few tentative beeps from the heart monitor which tell us that the patient is indeed going to pull through.

The passage—the horn stating theme ‘a’ while the strings continue to tremolo over the dominant—has of course been misinterpreted and misunderstood from the very first rehearsal onwards. Beethoven’s student Ferdinand Ries thought in fact that the horn player had miscounted his rests:

In the first Allegro occurs a wicked whim (*böse Laune*) of Beethoven’s for the horn; in the second part, several measures before the theme recurs in its entirety, Beethoven has the horn suggest it at a place where the two violins are still holding a second chord. To one unfamiliar with the score this must always sound as if the horn player had made a miscount and entered at the wrong place. At the first rehearsal of the symphony, which was horrible, but at which the horn player made his entry correctly, I stood beside Beethoven, and, thinking that a blunder had been made I said: “Can’t the damned hornist count?—it sounds infamously false!” I think I came pretty close to receiving a box on the ear. Beethoven did not forgive the slip for a long time.<sup>27</sup>

Conductors and editors, especially in the nineteenth century, have actually changed it. Grove describes some of the worst offenders:

This passage has actually been altered in print and performance to make it agreeable to the then so-called rules of music. Fétis and the Italian conductors used to take it as if the notes of the horn were written in the tenor clef, and read Bflat, D, Bflat, F (chord of the dominant). Wagner and Costa are said, although it is almost incredible, to have made the second violins play G (chord of the tonic). In the English edition—‘a complete collection of Mozart and Beethoven’s Symphonies in score,’ dedicated to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and therefore published before January, 1820—the second violin is thus altered to G.<sup>28</sup>

Remarkably enough, Berlioz, the super-duper avant-gardist of the nineteenth century, didn’t get the passage either:

It is impossible to describe or even to indicate, the multitude of melodic and harmonic aspects in which Beethoven reproduces his theme; we will confine ourselves to the mention of one which is extremely strange, which has formed the text of many discussions, and which the French editor corrected in the score, imagining it to be a mistake of the engraver; but which was, later one, re-instated—as the result of more ample information.

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<sup>27</sup> Ries, *Notizen*, page 79.

<sup>28</sup> Grove, *op. cit.*, page 66. Remember that the Grove study was published near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and so “His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales” would refer only to George IV who ascended to the throne without a male heir in 1820 (the throne passed to Victoria in 1837.)



The first and second violins alone hold, in tremolo, the major second B flat, A flat (part of the chord of the dominant seventh in E flat); when a horn, having quite the appearance of being at fault and of coming in four bars too soon, starts timidly with the commencement of the principal theme; running exclusively on the notes—E flat, G, E flat, B flat. One may imagine the strange effect produced by this melody, formed of the three notes of the tonic chord, against the two dissonant notes of the chord of the dominant; notwithstanding the harshness being much reduced by separation of the parts. But, at the moment when the ear is inclined to revolt against such an anomaly, a vigorous tutti interrupts the horn; and, concluding *piano* on the tonic chord, allows the violoncellos to return; who then state the entire theme with its natural harmony. Looking at things broadly it is difficult to find a serious justification for this musical caprice. [Berlioz's footnote: Whichever way we look at it, if the above is really an intention of Beethoven, and if there is any truth in the anecdotes which are current upon the subject, it must be admitted to be a whim amounting to absurdity.]

## 10 Recapitulation

For the most part the recapitulation follows the textbooks, but there is a very interesting item to go over right at the beginning, which is the sudden shift to F major.

The flowchart below is a start to understanding what's happening here:

The image shows three systems of musical notation. The top system is a piano system with a treble clef and a bass clef, containing a complex harmonic passage. The middle system is a reduction of the piano system, showing primary motions with a slur and a beam. The bottom system is a further reduction of the passage, showing fundamental passing note motion.

The flowchart has three lines; the first, which is a piano system, is a harmonic reduction of the important harmonic motions in the passage.

Immediately below that is a reduction which shows the primary motions within the progression. A few notes about the reduction:

- A slur indicates a passing note/neighbor tone of some sort. Consider the f-natural in the middle of reduction 1 (at 416). This f-natural is the upper neighbor to the E-flat which flanks it on both sides. Note that the D-flat immediately following that in reduction is a lower neighbor to the same E-flat. Smaller passing notes are found moving D-flat to C natural, C-flat to B-flat, and E-flat to D.
- Half notes indicate notes of primary structural importance—primary key centers.
- A beam between the notes indicates that they are connected, as in here in which they are the beginning and end of the progression.

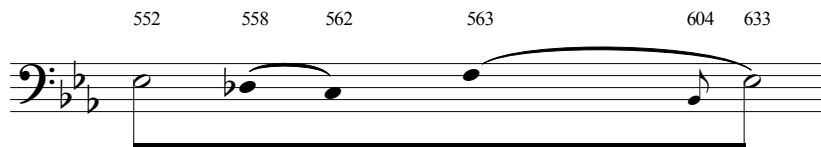
The lowest line is a further reduction of the passage, which looks for fundamental passing note motion. (I could have reduced it to just fundamental neighbor tone motion instead.)

What I find in this is that the semitone motion of motive 'c' is here brought to full fruition as the genesis of these motions into F Major, D-Flat major, and then back into E-flat. Throughout I am writing the C# of the exposition here as a D-flat, which I think it really is enharmonically. I think it's worth noting the way the semitone motion of the opening of the work is here reduced down to a descending chromatic line, which I have noted in the third line of the reduction.

## 11 Coda

The coda—at about 150 measures—is Beethoven’s first major symphonic ultra-coda. There are other ones, particularly in the Fifth and Ninth symphonies, but this one is the primogenitor.

The coda has an interesting harmonic structure:



If you take a good look at the opening, you notice immediately that it is remarkably similar to the opening of the recapitulation—note the downward modulation from E-flat, through D-flat, to C, and hence to F (in the recap it’s F major and here F minor). Harmonically the coda thus begins as though it is a repeat of the recapitulation, and then moves off into its own direction.

The coda is in three large sections: section 1 from 552 through 632, which turns back to E-flat major after modulations, is the area which the above harmonic flowchart maps. Both sections 2 and 3 are in E-flat major and do not modulate noticeably.

### 11.1 Section One (552 – 632)

552 – 562: the ‘modulation’ to C Major is actually not a classical modulation, but just a repeat of the ‘a’ theme figure, each time a step lower. No attempt has been made to glue the key changes together with any modulatory material. This kind of modulation has been dubbed a *plop* by Elinor Armer, and the name is exceedingly apt. He just goes *plop* into the new key. The Romantics absolutely loved this sort of thing.

563 – 582: the move into F minor is made, much as in the recap, but here the key is F minor—which is the ‘proper’ key for E-flat major.

582 – 632: here the ‘extra theme’ of the development (which isn’t an extra theme at all, but a decoration and ornamentation of theme a) makes a final appearance. It is accompanied by the ‘cloud’ pattern of measure 7, here sounding for all the world as though it is making one last attempt to take over the joint.

### 11.2 Section Two (633 – 685)

Theme ‘e’ – the faster, eighth-sixteenth-sixteenth figure—is used within an overall framework of motive ‘b’—the ascending triad. This accompanies theme a, which is heard first in the horns and then in the violins.

### **11.3 Section Three (685 – 702)**

This can be thought of as the closing theme and its environs, and is in fact modeled on the closing thematic sections of both the exposition and the recapitulation. Theme 'd' is heard in the cellos, theme 'f' in the violins—or at least something which approximates theme 'f'.

At the conclusion, measures 692 – 695 give us one last bit of metric confusion, a final big hemiola just to round everything off.