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## It Can't Be! Faked Functionality and Ambiguity in Brahms's F Minor

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IT CAN'T BE!  
FAKED FUNCTIONALITY AND AMBIGUITY IN BRAHMS'S F MINOR

KYLE KOSTENKO

HONORS PROJECT

Submitted to the Honors College  
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Musicologists have long considered Johannes Brahms to be a formalist composer in an era of high innovation and deep expression in music, and for good reason: In comparison to the music of Wagner, Liszt, and Strauss, Brahms's music certainly sounds as though it harks back to the Classical period. On the surface, Brahms's music seems to adhere to the formalism found in the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven rather than emphasize the excess of lyricism favored by his contemporaries. Though many of Brahms's works display this formalism, they still sound distinctly romantic, especially those of his late period. Further, when performed, Brahms's works still sound distinctly romantic even though one can hear traditional voice-leading procedures and discern a fairly straightforward sonata form. The resulting compositions display a unique mix of classicism and romanticism, one that extends beyond writing formalist music with romantic aesthetics.

Using Schenkerian analysis<sup>1</sup>, I began an analysis of the Clarinet Sonata Op. 120, No. 1's first movement in order to discern how Brahms was able to weave together the two traditions. Under the traditional expectations of Schenkerian analysis, the sonata should display a gradual descent to  $\hat{2}$  over a dominant chord and an interruption prior to the beginning of the recapitulation; the primary tone (the *Kopftone*) returns in the recapitulation and leads to a final full descent to  $\hat{1}$ . However, after completing a full analysis, I found that the work completely disregards these expectations. Certain oddities abound throughout the work's exposition and development that clash with the standard procedures outlined in Schenkerian analysis; chief among these oddities is the complete lack of an interruption or any sort of dominant chord prior to the recapitulation. Even more strange is that the first perfect authentic cadence to occur in the original key of the movement is not found until the closing moments of the recapitulation; most

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief explanation of Schenkerian Analysis, see Appendix A.

of the phrase progressions instead lead to predominant chords. Yet though the piece is abnormal on a deep structural level, on the surface, it sounds conventional. Listeners can clearly delineate the typical formal sections of a sonata and can identify apparent cadences at the ends of many phrases. In short, what Brahms has created is a piece that sounds conventionally formalist, yet, on further analysis, is actually structured more radically.

In the recapitulation, however, the oddities present in the exposition and development nearly disappear. Here, Brahms presents fairly straightforward harmonic progressions with most of the same melodic material from the exposition. This idea of a confusing and ambiguous opening and a fairly straightforward ending is not new to many scholars of Brahms's music. Peter Smith has written extensively about the role of ambiguity in Brahms's sonata form works, and he points to the composer specifically introducing odd, ambiguous excerpts in the exposition that could give rise to several different interpretations that later resolve to Brahms's intended version in the recapitulation.<sup>2</sup> I would argue that this sonata further introduces what I will call faked functionality in addition to ambiguity as a way to prolong the initial tonic area. Rather than taking the expected route of tonic, predominant, dominant, tonic, faked functionality mixes the order, often presenting nonfunctional progressions that sound as though they are functional. This faked functionality extends beyond delayed or deceptive cadences and instead utilizes harmonies that sound as though they are functional even though they are not. In the sonata, faked functionality is primarily in the exposition and development to avoid any significant structural progression; in the recapitulation, then, Brahms writes progressions that are actually functional. Further, by delaying the structural progression to the end of the recapitulation, Brahms makes

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<sup>2</sup> Peter H Smith, "Harmonic Cross-Reference and the Dialectic of Articulation and Continuity in Sonata Expositions of Schubert and Brahms," *Journal of Music Theory* 50, no. 2 (2006): 143-79.

this progression the ultimate end goal of the piece. Through the use of faked functionality and ambiguity, Brahms creates auditory phrase endings that avoid significant structural progressions on the micro level while providing a fairly straightforward structure on the macro level. In doing so, Brahms creates a through-composed sonata form that prolongs the primary tonic area and *Kopftón* nearly to the end of the recapitulation. The resulting piece is thus an example of a late Romantic formalism, satisfying aesthetic principles on the surface while adhering to a classicist style of composition on the macro level.

In order to fully discuss the specific occurrences of faked functionality and ambiguity, a discussion of the overall Schenkerian analysis should take place so that one fully understands how the prolongation occurs.<sup>3</sup> One of the earliest questions posed in any Schenkerian analysis concerns the piece's background structure (the *Ursatz*) and whether this background presents a melodic descent from  $\hat{5}$  or  $\hat{3}$  (the *Urlinie*, which begins with the *Kopftón*). Significantly, the composition is ambiguous in presenting this structure, as a preliminary analysis could support either *Kopftón*. Many Schenkerians would initially propose that the piece presents a descent from  $\hat{5}$ ; after all, the piece begins on  $\hat{5}$  and frequently returns to it throughout the movement at important structural moments. However, frequency alone is not enough to determine the *Kopftón*, and even then,  $\hat{3}$  appears throughout the piece just as often as  $\hat{5}$ . My analysis thus proceeds with the assumption that  $\hat{3}$  serves as the piece's *Kopftón*, with two primary factors influencing this assumption.

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<sup>3</sup> My full graph (including a foreground, shallow middleground, deep middleground, and background) is located in Appendix B. An annotated score is included in Appendix C.

Example 1: Structural Progression in mm. 200-204

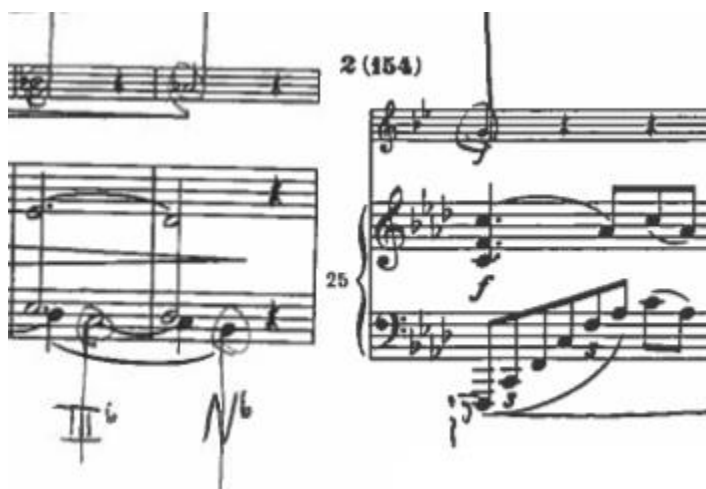
Firstly, an *Urlinie* led by  $\hat{5}$  needs to present significant support for  $\hat{4}$  at some point in the piece. This support never comes. In the structural progression presented in mm. 200-204, shown in Example 1,<sup>4</sup>  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{3}$  both occur over a root position tonic chord, while  $\hat{4}$  appears over  $\text{vii}^\circ$ . In a true 5-line *Ursatz*,  $\hat{4}$  is traditionally presented over either a V chord or some sort of predominant, with  $\hat{3}$  then occurring over  $\text{V}^6_4$  or I. Neither of these situations is present in the structural progression. Instead,  $\hat{4}$  appears over the weak dominant  $\text{vii}^\circ$ , a harmony made significantly weaker when presented in inversion. This has the effect of making  $\hat{4}$  seem like a passing tone as a way for  $\hat{5}$  to return to  $\hat{3}$  rather than for  $\hat{5}$  to move fully to  $\hat{3}$ . Even more,  $\hat{4}$  is

<sup>4</sup> In the analysis presented in Example 1, the chord appearing in mm. 203 is technically a  $\text{III}^6$  chord. I am analyzing this chord as an extension of V, as both chords share  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{7}$  and because the III chord appears directly after a structural dominant. My analysis here is similar to the analysis of  $\text{VI}^6$  as an extension of I, and is thus notated as  $\text{V}^{5-6}$ .

never significantly prolonged in any part of the preceding music; the prolongation only ever truly concerns  $\hat{5}$  or  $\hat{3}$ .



Example 2a: mm. 1-5



Example 2b: mm. 23-25

Secondly, in Schenkerian analysis, the *Ursatz* will frequently appear on the lower level throughout the piece. In this sonata particularly, Brahms specifically designates the *Urlinie* as a descending  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  motive that recurs throughout the movement. This motive occurs quite early in the piece in both the piano introduction and at the end of the first phrase in the clarinet (mm. 4-5 and 23-25 respectively, shown in Example 2a and 2b). In the clarinet, the motive further appears in both the melody line and the bass, as the harmonies here proceed from III to  $\flat$ II to I (an early example of faked functionality). Even more significantly, Brahms utilizes this motive as the second theme at mm. 38; then, Brahms inverts the motive and sets it as the third theme at

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, specifically measures 38 through 55. The score is written for two staves, with the upper staff in treble clef and the lower staff in bass clef. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo and meter are indicated as 'p' (piano) and '3/4' time. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'dolce', 'pp' (pianissimo), and 'dim.' (diminuendo). Handwritten annotations in blue ink are present, including Roman numerals (I, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII) and a circled 'C' at the bottom. The measures are numbered 37, 44, and 51 on the left margin.

Example 2c: mm. 38-55, showing  $\hat{3} - \hat{2} - \hat{1}$  motive and inversion

mm. 53 (both shown in Example 2c). Though  $\hat{3} - \hat{2} - \hat{1}$  and its inversion takes motivic significance throughout the piece, this is not to say that Brahms does not write 5-line descents, and in fact, he often includes these descents at significant structural occasions. However, in comparison to the  $\hat{3} - \hat{2} - \hat{1}$  motive, the 5-line descent occurs less frequently. In addition, when this fifth descent occurs at the most structurally significant portion of the music (mm. 200-204), Brahms places the top tone of this line in the lower register, then leaps up to the second note, significantly altering the shape of the line; this leap is absent in the corresponding passage in the recapitulation. In considering the musicality of the passage, some may point to Brahms's desire to add dramatic



flair to the structural progression; however, I would posit that the leap breaks up the 5-line motive to give the 3-line motive more structural significance at the most structurally important moment.

Throughout the piece, then,  $\hat{3}$  will be prolonged on a micro level by faked functionality, as evidenced throughout this paper by upcoming musical examples; however, an analysis of the form is necessary to better understand how  $\hat{3}$  is prolonged on the macro level. Clearly, the piece is in sonata form, but as previously mentioned, Brahms makes significant alterations to the expected structure, most notably abandoning a tonicization of the home key at the end of a development to prepare for the return to the recapitulation. From a Schenkerian perspective, this dramatically alters the overall structure of the piece. In traditional Schenkerian analyses of sonata form, a high level interruption of the *Ursatz* occurs at the end of the development, because the piece has made a structurally significant descent to  $\hat{2}$  over V. This interruption has the effect of separating the exposition and the development from the recapitulation, making for a far more sectionalized piece. However, because Brahms has avoided the descent to  $\hat{2}$  over V, he avoids an interruption, and this decision has the effect of turning a normally sectionalized form like sonata form into a continuous, through-composed composition. Significantly, then, this means that  $\hat{3}$  must be prolonged up until the structurally significant progression at the end of the recapitulation.

In examining the movement's foreground, one would be hard pressed to easily explain how Brahms prolongs  $\hat{3}$  for nearly the entirety of the movement because so much of the movement involves non-functional harmonic progressions; this issue becomes even more troublesome in the development, especially as the music explores distantly related keys.

However, proceeding from the background structure to a middleground analysis (shown in

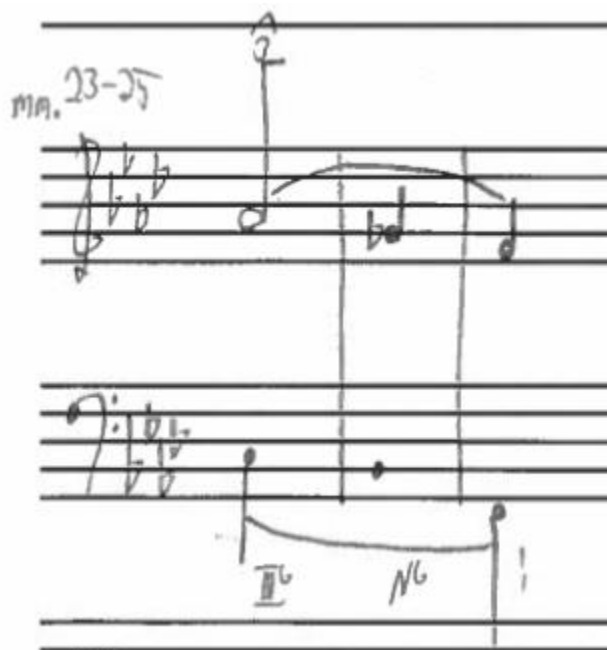
The image displays a handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes, including circled numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100) and various musical symbols (accents, slurs, ties, etc.). The annotations are written in a cursive, handwritten style, suggesting a personal or working draft. The score is organized into two systems, each with two staves. The first system is on the left, and the second system is on the right. The notation is dense and complex, with many notes and markings. The overall appearance is that of a detailed musical analysis or sketch.

Example 3: Shallow Middleground Sketch

Example 3), one can more clearly see how Brahms prolongs the *Kopft*on. Much of the prolongation can be explained by the movement between different key areas. Brahms moves from F major to D $\flat$  major to C minor through the exposition. Motivically, this movement represents a  $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$  motive that reoccurs throughout the piece; melodically, each of these key areas support A $\flat$  or C, with the time spent in C minor representing a macro-level chordal skip from A $\flat$  to C. The development begins by repeating the first theme of the secondary theme group in A $\flat$  major, which provides obvious support for the *Kopft*on. The harmonic motion from F to C to A $\flat$  actually represents the initial arpeggiated ascent to the *Kopft*on, while the movement from C-minor to A $\flat$  major echoes the corresponding melodic motion from C to A $\flat$ .

While A $\flat$  is easily prolonged through A $\flat$  major, the time spent in this key area is short, as the movement transitions quickly to E major. This motion presents the most significant challenge in prolonging the *Kopft*on yet, as A $\flat$  is not found in the key signature of E major. However, Brahms cleverly chromatically respells A $\flat$  as G $\sharp$ , which can easily be prolonged through both E major and C $\sharp$  minor, the next key area explored in the development. This motion could be seen as a 3-line descent from F-E-D $\flat$ , which echoes the motivic 3-line descent. From here, one might anticipate that C $\sharp$  minor could be used as a chromatic version of C major to reach the recapitulation, but instead, in the closing moments of the development, Brahms moves to F $\sharp$  minor and briefly tonicizes A major before returning to F minor. Melodically, G $\sharp$  steps down to F $\sharp$ , which then skips to C $\sharp$  over A major. C $\sharp$  then chromatically steps to C, which again echoes the  $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$  motive, as C $\sharp$  can be respelled as D $\flat$  chromatically.

The descent from G# to F# (or, chromatically respelled as A $\flat$  to G $\flat$ ) is representative of the 3-line motivic descent; even more, this specific descent echoes a motive established in the opening phrase. This phrase actually proceeds rather functionally, with a series of evaded or deceptive cadences extending the phrase beyond its first four measures. The most significant part of these early measures is the inclusion of the Neapolitan chord in mm. 8; however, on its own, this chord is not incredibly significant. The goal of this first phrase is mm. 23 (shown in Example 4), where



Example 4: Sketch of mm. 23-25

the *Kopfton* appears over a III $^6$  chord, followed by the motivic 3-line descent to  $\hat{1}$  over the next two measures. To listeners, these measures signal a clear cadence and the end of the first theme.

However, from a Schenkerian perspective, these measures are not a cadence. In mm. 24, where one would expect a dominant chord, Brahms writes a Neapolitan chord, and in the melodic line, chromatically alters  $\hat{2}$  to  $\flat\hat{2}$ . The result of this decision is a progression that sounds like it completes a phrase, yet according to the rules of Schenkerian analysis, does not complete a phrase. According to these rules, for a phrase to end, there has to be a cadence of some sort, and a cadence always involves a dominant chord. Yet Brahms has still created what sounds like a cadence even though he uses different chords. The Neapolitan possesses a distinct chromatic character: By including  $\flat\hat{2}$ , the listener automatically feels a strong pull to  $\hat{1}$ , and traditional voice-leading rules dictate that the  $\flat\hat{2}$  must step down to  $\hat{1}$  or skip to  $\hat{7}$ , which would then

resolve to  $\hat{1}$ . While this pull helps to create the feeling of a cadence, Schenkerians would still not consider the harmonic progression of  $\text{III}^6\text{-N}^6\text{-i}$  functional.

It is exactly this lack of function – or, in my terms, faked function – that Brahms uses to prolong  $\hat{3}$ . By placing the Neapolitan chord at the cadence point instead of V, Brahms avoids an actual cadence that would otherwise have moved  $\hat{3}$  down to  $\hat{1}$  by the end of the first phrase. While this motion is generally not an issue in Schenkerian theory, the role the faked function plays in prolonging  $\hat{3}$  has greater repercussions on the macro-level. In relation to the macro-level harmonic motion, the movement to F# (G $\flat$ ) minor – the minor mode of the Neapolitan key – at the end of the development echoes the faked function at mm. 23-25. This same motion on the macro-level over the development shows that Brahms is purposefully ignoring convention in order to prolong the *Kopft*on throughout the piece. Had Brahms written a V chord at the end of his first phrase, he would have set precedent for a V chord at the end of the development. Because Brahms places a Neapolitan chord in place of the V chord, he has liberty to echo this faked function at the end of the development. Curiously, in the recapitulation, only the first eight bars of the opening phrase are present: Brahms rewrites the rest of the material to move quickly to the second theme group. This decision means that the descent to  $\hat{1}$  via  $\flat\hat{2}$  over the Neapolitan is absent in the recapitulation, because there is no longer a structural need for it. In the exposition, Brahms established that he was going to prolong  $\hat{3}$  by avoiding V through use of the Neapolitan; now that he has avoided V in the most significant place in sonata form, he can easily prolong the *Kopft*on over the development and proceed rather traditionally through the recapitulation.

The image shows a handwritten musical sketch for measures 38-52. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with harmonic annotations. The bottom system also has a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with harmonic annotations. The annotations include Roman numerals and figured bass notation, such as  $I^6$ ,  $IV$ ,  $I^6_4$ ,  $ii^6_5$ ,  $I^6_3$ ,  $ii^6_5$ ,  $[V^6_4 \rightarrow]$ ,  $V^7_{-2}$ ,  $I^6$ ,  $IV$ ,  $[vi^6_5]$ ,  $IV$ ,  $I^6_3$ ,  $ii^6_5$ ,  $iv$ ,  $I^6$ , and  $iii$ . The sketch is written in a fluid, handwritten style with various musical notations including notes, rests, and slurs.

Example 5: Sketch of mm. 38-52

Like the first theme, the second theme continues to utilize faked function to extend  $\hat{3}$  over the exposition. Example 5 displays a sketch of the second theme showing the prolongation of  $A^b$  through the phrase. Examining the second theme, one would expect that this phrase leads to some sort of cadence. In mm. 51-52, the second theme clearly comes to a close – by moving from  $iv$  to  $I^6$  to  $iii$ . The only actual dominant chord in this theme resolves to  $I^6$  through  $V^4_2$ , and that resolution occurs in the middle of the phrase! Like the first theme, this theme has a clear endpoint but lacks a structural cadence. The harmonies used at the theme's conclusion further prolong the *Kopfton*:  $A^b$  is the penultimate note of the theme in the clarinet, while the final note







Unlike the beginnings of the exposition and recapitulation, which begin similarly but quickly differ once Brahms has melodically established the recapitulation, the ends of both the exposition and the recapitulation are significantly more similar. In contrast to the preceding section, the end of the exposition (mm. 77-89, a sketch of which is shown in Example 7) almost sounds as if it is a self-contained section, beginning after a clear half-cadence and ending in a clear perfect cadence, both in the key of C minor. The corresponding passage in the recapitulation (mm. 192-204) echoes this structure and further proceeds to the piece's only perfect authentic cadence in the home key of F minor. Harmonically, both sections are notable for their functionality; melodically, however, the two sections serve different purposes. The ending of the recapitulation, as expected, completes the *Ursatz* structure, and while this is alluded to in the end of the exposition, rather than present a descent, the end of the exposition is instead more interested in an upper neighbor motive that has frequently occurred in the preceding music. This occurs several times throughout the section on both a local level and on a larger level. Thus, the end of the exposition continues the prolongation of C.

The development, beginning at mm. 90, restates the second theme but transposed to A $\flat$  major. The brief phrase serves the purpose of skipping from  $\hat{5}$  back to the *Kopftön*; further, by completing this arpeggiation, Brahms is able to use the *Kopftön* as a pivot point to move to E major. Brahms approaches the section by showing a stepwise third ascent – an inversion of the  $\hat{3} - \hat{2} - \hat{1}$  motive prevalent throughout the piece – in the piano in mm. 99-100. Harmonically, the development proceeds from C minor, A $\flat$  major, E major, C $\sharp$  minor, F $\sharp$  minor, to A major – or, respelled chromatically, C-A $\flat$ -F $\flat$ -D $\flat$ -G $\flat$ -A. The initial four key areas represent a large-scale arpeggiation in the bass of the F minor chord, with the descent by mediant from C helping to further prolong the initial tonic area. The final four harmonic areas again display the inverted  $\hat{3} -$

$\hat{2} - \hat{1}$  motive on a macro level, with  $D\flat$  acting as an extension of both F and  $G\flat$ , as the submediant and the dominant of the two keys respectively. The overall motion serves as a prolongation of tonic; further, each harmonic area supports the *Kopfton* or helps extend C, which further prolongs the *Kopfton*.

Though I have previously established that Brahms avoids the dominant of F minor at the end of the development, how Brahms returns to the home key is of vital importance to the overall prolongation of the *Kopfton*. I have already discussed how Brahms accomplishes this prolongation harmonically through the use of the Neapolitan key as a macro-level representation of the  $\hat{3} - \flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$  motive from mm. 23-25, but I now wish to discuss how Brahms returns to F minor melodically. My sketch of the end of the development and the beginning of the recapitulation is shown in Example 8. Beginning in mm. 126, Brahms uses a transformation of the descending 3-note and 5-note motives in the piano to highlight melodic motion from  $F\sharp$  to  $C\sharp$  and back again (a further reinforcement of the overall relation of C to F made throughout the piece). A declamatory passage in the clarinet in mm. 129-130 seemingly moves the melodic line back to  $C\sharp$ , but in the piano, a return to the opening theme of the piece indicates movement of the *Urlinie* to another voice with A as the primary tone. A complicated passage in the piano follows in mm. 131-132, but by mm. 133, A major has overtaken  $F\sharp$  minor as the harmonic area, with A arpeggiating down to  $C\sharp$  in the melodic line. The 3-note motive in mm. 133 is echoed by the clarinet in mm. 134-136, and when the music transitions back to F minor, the  $D\flat$  in the clarinet (enharmonically equivalent to  $C\sharp$ ) only has to resolve by a half-step to reach the C-natural of the original key.

Example 8: sketch of mm. 126-139

The process in and of itself is rather confusing, but there are a few key takeaways from this section. Firstly, though Brahms is using the Neapolitan's motivic function to prepare for the return to F-minor, by presenting the opening theme in F# minor and A major, Brahms melodically reminds the listener of the exposition in order to prepare for the recapitulation. Secondly, the section can be reduced to a series of simple chordal skips between the notes of the F# minor triad in both the bass and the soprano voices, and these skips can be taken to be representative of the opening arpeggiation up to the *Kopftön* (a motive previously referred to by

the motion from F minor-C minor-A $\flat$  major). The harmonic motion from C $\sharp$  minor to F $\sharp$  minor to A major – shown on both the lower level in mm. 126-133 and on a more extended level from the C $\sharp$  minor area beginning in mm. 116 – is further representative of a higher-level harmonic motion. The piece, having begun in F minor, moves to G $\flat$  minor and A-major by the end of the development, and though this movement involves an augmented second, my view is that this is a large level F-G-A motion that prolongs the F minor tonic area. Even more, the use of A major at the end of the development anticipates the movement to the parallel major at the ends of both the movement and the sonata. By suggesting a major key at the end of the development, Brahms is suggesting a move to the major key at the end of the piece, as A major is the mode mixture version of A $\flat$ . All in all, by avoiding the expected dominant chord at the end of the development in favor of F $\sharp$  minor and A major, Brahms cleverly prolongs the original tonic and simultaneously sets himself up for a movement to F major by the end of the work.

Having provided several examples in which Brahms purposefully writes nonfunctional progressions on both the micro- and macro-levels throughout the exposition and recapitulation, one should now consider the closing moments of the recapitulation in relation to the rest of the piece. In a movement filled with nonfunctional progressions and ambiguity, the music beginning in mm. 192 and extending to mm. 204 follows all the basic rules of voice-leading. The harmonic progressions here could easily appear in any other piece; the only progression that seemingly sticks out is the motion from i-vii-III-vii<sup>6</sup>-I, but, for Brahms, this is a fairly straightforward tonic extension. Though the section's harmonic progression is simple, this simplicity this section the most structurally significant part of the music. For the first time in the piece, Brahms is presenting music that actually follows expectations of Schenkerian analysis! Tonic leads to predominant, predominant to dominant, and dominant back to tonic. Even more significantly, the

cadence at the end of the section is the first perfect authentic cadence in F minor in the entire piece. This cadence is clearly the goal of the piece, and while this idea is basic to Schenkerian analysis, because Brahms has so frequently avoided functional progressions that end in authentic cadences, he emphasizes the cadence's function as a structural goal of the piece.

Brahms's Clarinet Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, No. 1, is a perplexing work to analyze. On the surface, the piece seems to break every rule of voice-leading and part writing by avoiding any sense of function, making an actual Schenkerian analysis of the work nearly impossible. Further, the piece somehow manages to sound incredibly functional, with a clearly delineated form and cadence structures, presenting the analyst with a piece that does not work theoretically yet somehow sounds correct. However, when one pulls back to the middleground and background and wipes away these non-functional progressions, the piece presents an incredibly Classical structure and form, and an analyst can easily apply Schenkerian principles to these progressions. In combining the background's function with the foreground's faked function, Brahms demonstrates how he is able to write formalist music that is still distinctly romantic. On the surface, the music is Romantic; only when one pulls back to the middleground does one recognize the Classical structure at play.

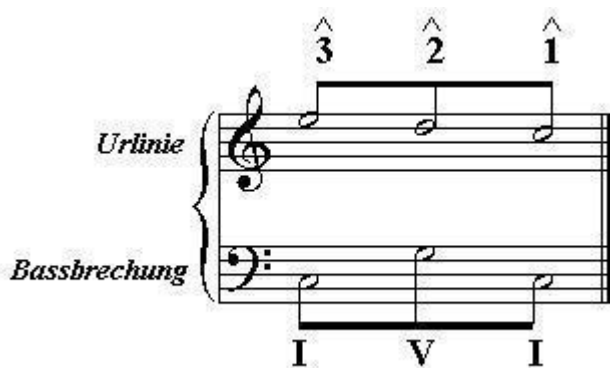
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## Appendix A: A Brief Explanation of Schenkerian Analysis

A full explanation of Schenkerian Analysis is not completely necessary to understand the ideas laid forth in the paper; however, as the paper will discuss aspects of Schenkerian Theory, it is important to understand some basic underlying tenets of the theory. In the paper, I will use several German terms used by Schenker in referring to the structure of the piece. These terms include the words *Ursatz*, *Urlinie*, and *Kopfton*. The *Ursatz* refers to the piece's background structure, while the *Urlinie* refers to the melodic descent in this structure. The *Kopfton* refers to the primary tone of the *Urlinie*.



Example A: Typical 3-line Background Structure

Schenkerian theory posits that most tonal music is an extension of a basic background structure, shown in Example A. The goal of Schenkerian theory is not to discover the background structure – in fact, Schenkerians approach an analysis with the assumption that the piece contains this background structure. Instead, analysis is built around determining how this basic 6-note structure is prolonged throughout a piece with far more than 6 notes. In Schenkerian Analysis, analysts present 3 levels of analysis to help show this prolongation: a foreground analysis, the middleground analysis, and the background analysis. As one proceeds from foreground to background, more and more embellishments are removed to show only the most



important structural notes and harmonies. The foreground sketch shows most of the notes between the bass and the melody line, leaving out only the most obvious elaborations (huge scale sweeps, grace notes, ornamentation, etc.). Though the foreground deals with the most notes, it is actually the simplest of the three structures, and is thus called the surface. In the middleground, it is possible to present multiple different middlegrounds that differ in the amount of embellishments they show. Middlegrounds that display more notes are called shallow middlegrounds, while middlegrounds with fewer notes are referred to as deep middlegrounds. Thus, the goal of Schenkerian analysis is to show how we move from the foreground – the music on the page – to the background, often through the use of the middleground. We will always show the background structure at all levels; however, most often, the background structure will appear in the foreground at opposite ends of the sketch rather than right next to each other.

In Schenkerian analysis, it is possible to prolong each of the tones of the *Ursatz* – however, the *Kopftone* is usually the most prolonged out of all notes. In showing the prolongation, the analysis has to show harmonic and melodic support for the *Kopftone* – thus, if the *Kopftone* is F and it appears over a C major chord, it cannot be argued that the note is being prolonged. However, it is possible to say that the *Kopftone* is being prolonged over harmonies where it does not appear. For example, if F moves to G melodically and back to F over the course of 3 measures with 3 different harmonies, we would see this as an “upper neighbor figure” – a shallow middleground analysis that would appear on the foreground as a way to show that F is still the main tone and that G is not structurally significant. These types of analyses are prevalent throughout Schenkerian theory, and also include lower neighbor figures, passing tones, and chordal skips. On the middleground, it is possible to see these all interacting with one another – for example, a group of 20 measures may support F, then the next 20 measures show that F has

stepped down to E, then the next 20 measures show that E has had a chordal skip to B, then the next 20 measures move to D, which could be a chordal skip from B or a completion of the passing figure from F-E-D. It is also possible to apply these ideas to the harmonies, viewing many of the non-structural dominants as chordal skips from the tonic.