GRUNDGESTALT AND DIATONIC/OCTATONIC INTERACTION IN CHOPIN'S BALLADES

by

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When published 1836, Chopin's first Ballade in G minor, Op. 23, was not only the first instrumental ballade of his own, but also the first ballade ever written without words. Since Chopin himself never disclosed any literature behind his idea, a question arises: how did he express the narrative nature of the Ballades in his purely instrumental music? The purpose of this dissertation is to explore Chopin's logic and the coherence that governs and connects every detail of the piece and how he "narrates" without words in his instrumental works.

I use two compositional and analytical ideas established by Schoenberg—*Grundgestalt* and tonal network—to explore Chopin's compositional idea. According to Schoenberg, the real compositional idea of tonal music is how balance is restored. The *Grundgestalt* becomes the source of conflict and unity throughout the Ballades while the story unfolds, and the balance is restored in a unique way in each Ballade. I attempt to apply two features of *Grundgestalt*: functional *Grundgestalt*, which is responsible for

the piece's structural development, and motivic *Grundgestalt*, which creates thematic development.

Another focus of the dissertation is how Chopin's excursion to the outskirts of the tonal boundary, the manifestation of octatonic pitch collections, was created and later assimilated into the tonal structure. Traditionally, the use of octatonic scales was considered a tool for much later compositions, typically in the early twentieth-century works of Russian composers such as Stravinsky. However, recent research reveals that the application of the octatonic scale goes back considerably farther. Chopin's use of the octatonic scale is for the most part manifested by tonally ambiguous chords, such as diminished 7th chords and modal mixtures, to lengthen octatonic pitch-sets already existing in diatonic scales. Although Chopin's application of octatonic scales is subtle, it usually relates to other sections of the piece motivically and is smoothly integrated into his tonal scheme and graceful style of writing.

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to Jack Forrest Boss, my advisor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chopin composed four instrumental Ballades during his most productive years. The first Ballade (Op. 23) was published in 1836, while the last Ballade (Op. 52) was completed in 1842.[1] The instrumental "Ballade" was Chopin's own innovation. Although Chopin did not give any evidence that his Ballades had literary models, the title "Ballade" itself invites speculation that his Ballades were based on specific literature. Many scholars in the past have attempted to make connections between Chopin's Ballades and literary ballads, especially the ones written by his countryman Mickiewicz. However, the latest research tends to dismiss the idea that Chopin's Ballades were based on specific works of literature, and the analytical trend has shifted to a more theory-based approach.

If one cannot prove that Chopin's Ballades were based on specific works of literature, then, how can one comprehend his music?

Jim Samson writes:

> The title "ballade" signifies no particular programme, then, but it does invite the listener to interpret musical relationships at least partly in the terms of a literary narrative, even if this can only be at the level of

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[1]Jim Samson, *Chopin:The Four Ballades*, (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 14; see also James Parakilas, *Ballades Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrunental Ballade* (Portland, Amadeus Press, 1992), 19.

> metaphor. It is not so much the intrinsic qualities of the musical work which may suggest a narrative, but our predisposition—given the genre title—to construct a narrative from the various ways in which purely musical events are transformed through time. Such a musical narrative would be based on the generic character and interplay of themes, on the transformation of conventional formal succession and on the organization of large-scale tonal relationships.[2]

As Samson notes in his statement above, it is possible to interpret Ballades without reference to any specific literature. The challenge of analyzing Chopin's Ballades is, however, how to read specific musical events without a text, and comprehend the entire piece as a coherent entity. Any interpretation of music may be intuitive and subjective, but a theoretical approach can become a confirmation of one's intuition. I think it is not only gratifying but also provocative to use metaphors for listeners, performers and even theorists in order to follow the musical discourse in Romantic repertoire, especially Chopin's Ballades. And it is more persuasive if the metaphor is based on musical logic rather than general impressions based on perceptions from the piece.

The expressiveness and narrative character of the Ballades outgrew the "absolute" instrumental music from the previous era, and formal archetypes alone, such as sonata form, cannot explain all the nuances and unexpected turns specific to Chopin's Ballades. Schenkerian analyses that reveal the large-scale harmonic discourses of musical works are useful in so far as they bring to light the overall structures of pieces, but they tend also to generalize the harmonic structure at large and fail to illustrate the thematic developments and meanings of specific musical events as they

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[2]Samson, *Four Ballades*, 14.

succeed one another. The exciting aspects of the Ballades depend not only on their large-scale structures, such as the energy that accumulates through the agency of delayed dominant-tonic resolutions, but also on a subtle interplay of themes and episodes on the surface level that is difficult to illustrate with middle- to background Schenkerian graphs.

This dissertation makes an important contribution to the analytic literature on Chopin's Ballades by doing three things: (1) it shows how the main motives become the source of thematic development of each Ballade, (2) it exhibits how the functional tonal cells in the main motives account for the key scheme and express the dramatic progression of each Ballade, and 3) it examines how the octatonic collection relates to the main motives and plays clearly defined roles in the drama. In order to isolate how the changes in tonal context of the main motives give rise to the key areas, I will adapt and more clearly define Schoenberg's methods of *Grundgestalt* and tonal network. At the end, I will also demonstrate how the motives of each Ballade and the development of their tonal contexts fit together into a large narrative that spans all four Ballades.

Past Analyses

Jim Samson has compiled the most extensive survey of research devoted to analyzing Chopin's Ballades. His book *Chopin: The Four Ballades* includes the majority of historical and theoretical research published on this subject from the nineteenth century to the early 1990s. The book covers these works' historical background as well as gives information on their various editions, public reception of

the music, analytical trends, and other topics explored by musicologists, theorists, and critics. The analysis of each Ballade is also a synthesis of various points of view and touches on forms, keys, thematic materials, interpretations, and different analytical methodologies. Although there are different approaches to analyzing the Ballades, there are common traits in these works that engender mutual agreement: delayed V-I resolution, emphasis on third-related key regions, and expansive codas are among them.

John Rink's article also summarizes the history of past analysis.[3] According to Rink, there have been three phases of analytical trends in the 150 years since Chopin's four Ballades were published. In the first phase, "narrative content" and "extramusical programmes" were the primary focus. He quotes Jim Samson: "The nineteenth-century critic was less interested in formulating theories than in conveying his experience of a work directly to his readers, and the metaphor was his principal tool. In case of the Ballades the temptation was to allow the genre title to make even more specific the customary references to non-musical designates."[4]

Many critics in the nineteenth century tried to discern a relationship between Chopin's Ballades and the ballads found in literature. Some critics drew connections between Chopin's Ballades and the works of the Polish Poet Mickiewicz. Samson writes that Huneker, Cortot, and Bourniquel cited Schumann as a source for Chopin's

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[3]John Rink, "Review: Chopin's Ballades and the Dialectic: Analysis in Historical Perspective," *Music Analysis* 13, no. 1 (March 1994): 99-115.

[4]Samson, *Four Ballades*, 34.

indebtedness to Mickiewicz without any written evidence.[5] According to them, when Schumann first met Chopin in Leipzig, Chopin confessed that he conceived the idea of the instrumental Ballades from the poems by his fellow countryman.

Chopin's encounters with these poems harkened back to his youth, when, at age sixteen, he happened to purchase a copy of Mickiewicz's *Ballads and Romance* at a Warsaw bookstore.[6] Impressed by Mickiewicz's work, Chopin composed music based on one of the ballads by Mickiewicz at that time, according to Szulc, but the manuscript was lost. Typically, critics speculate upon possible associations between Chopin's first Ballade and Mickiewicz's "Konrad Wallenrod," and the fourth Ballade and "Trzech budrysow."[7] The second Ballade was sometimes referred to as both "Switez" and "Switezianka," while the third was associated with "Undine." More common associations, however, connected the second Ballade to "Switez" and the third to "Switezianka." However, evidence for such connections has been scarce to nonexistent,

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Tad Szulc, *Chopin in Paris: Life and Times of the Romantic Composer* (Cambridge and New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 52. Huneker also writes, "That Chopin had a programme, a definite one, there can be no doubt; but he was [a] wise artist [and] left us no clue beyond Mickiewicz's, the Polish bard [*sic*] Lithuanian poems. In Leipzig, Karasowski relates that when Schumann met Chopin, the pianist confessed having 'been incited to the creation of the Ballades by the poetry' of his own countryman." James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York: Dover, 1966), 156.

[7]Samson, *Four Ballades,* 34.

giving some credence to Ehlert's claim that "Chopin narrates a story, but one which has never taken place, except as an odyssey of the spirit."[8]

In addition, nineteenth-century critics did not hesitate to elaborate the Ballades with metaphor and other emotional statements. For example, Huneker describes the fast waltz section in E♭ major in the first Ballade as "a capricious, butterfly existence," and the coda, marked *Presto,* as "a perpendicular roar . . . almost appalling."[9] Frederick Nieck's expression belongs to the same category. He describes the first Ballade as "all over quivering with intensest feeling, full of sighs, sobs, groans, and passionate ebullitions."[10]

The second phase of research on Chopin's Ballades began in the early twentieth century. Rink summarizes this trend as "triumphs of architecture" over "the wordless narratives of Chopin's age." He writes,

> Later authors played down the "literary and programmatic associations" of Chopin's extended works "in favor of their purely musical values, and in particular the strength and stability of their structures," responding to an early twentieth-century tendency to "de-contextualize the musical work, to let it make its own statement, assign it a monadic character whose meaning might be revealed only through analysis."[11]

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[8]Samson, *Four Ballades,* 35, citing Louis Ehloert, *Aus der Tonwelt* (Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1877), 298.

[9]Huneker, 157.

[10]Rink, 101.

[11]Ibid., 100.

Hugo Leichtentritt's attempt to study Chopin's work reveals form, harmony, phrase, rhythm, meter, and motive.[12] His approach is more objective rather than endlessly descriptive of emotion and feeling. The most groundbreaking analytical approach during this phase, however, was Schenkerian theory, which sheds light on the deepest structural levels of a composition, revealing both its unity and its evolution as a contrapuntal organism. Schenker's own graph of Chopin's G minor Ballade is a charismatic statement that has both structural logic and beauty (see Figure 1).[13] His graph clearly shows the work's form and the importance of the ♭VI region. The most striking event in the graph is that the final descent of the melody occurs after the structural cadence, because there is no $\hat{4}$ before the coda if we choose to apply a 5-line for the soprano. The graph expresses the dramatic development in the coda and the end-weighted structure of the Ballade.

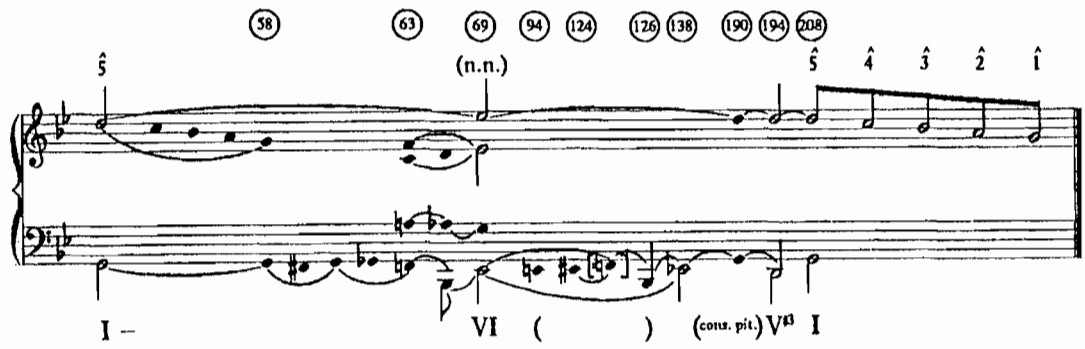

FIGURE 1. Schenker's graph of the G minor Ballade.

[12]Ibid., 101.

[13]Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, translated and edited by Ernst Oster (New York and London: Longman, 1979), 153.

In the third phase, the last decades of the twentieth-century, a fusion of first- and second-phase approaches occurred. Critics have attempted to justify subjective interpretations of the music through theoretical logic. One trend has been the revival of Schenkerian analysis. For example, Harald Krebs' analysis of the second Ballade utilizes a Schenkerian graph to explain the problem of the "two-key scheme."[14] In his graph, there are two *Kopftone*: two oppositional keys, F major and A minor, successively interlocking with each other. This solution to Schenker's monotonal theory, which allows only one tonic, is unique. At the end of his analysis, Krebs refers to Mickiewicz's poem "The Switez." He writes, "If the tradition is valid, the music renders the maidens' transformation generally by a shift from F major to A minor, and specifically, in the final measures of the work, by the partial statement, in the new key of A minor, of the theme previously associated with F major." Although there is no evidence that the Ballade is based on Mickiewicz's poem, the structural and tonal analysis proves why some critics in the past found a connection between the music and literary ballad.

Another Schenker-inspired approach can be observed in Lauri Suurpaa's analysis of the F minor Ballade.[15] His graphs are skillfully written, and he points out at the beginning of his analysis that there is a massive culmination near the end and the

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[14]Harald Krebs, "Alternatives to Monotonality in Early Nineteenth-Century Music," *Journal of Music Theory* 25, no. 1: 1-16.

[15]Lauri Suurpaa, "The Path from Tonic to Dominant in the Second Movement of Schubert's String Quintet and in Chopin's Fourth Ballade," *Journal of Music Theory* 44, no. 2: 451-85.

entire piece is directed to it. In spite of this initial statement (with which I agree), his attention shifts to searching for a traditional formal prototype, such as sonata or variation form. He writes, "There are, then, no clearly drawn boundaries that would be articulated by all formal principles underlying the work."[16] He then chooses to write a graph based on the sonata form with rotations. [17]The final middle-ground graph (see Figure 2) summarizes his ideas about the form of the Ballade.

Like Chopin's other Ballades, the most dramatic key in the Ballade is ♭VI , the key of the second "secondary theme," placed before the final structural cadence in the home key F minor. The ♭$\hat{6}$ is also prominent melodically in the principal theme, suggesting the direction of the piece. However, since Suurpaa's concern lies somewhere between sonata and variation form, he hardly shows any of this important development. His final graph displays only the repetition of the primary theme (developed via rotation) and the ♭VI region is de-emphasized, and therefore it lacks excitement and drama.

Brent Lawrence Auerbach writes, "Schoenberg, as it is well known, was greatly distressed by Schenkerian reduction because it appears to filter out the small details which drive music's moment-to-moment evolution."[18] Suurpaa's initial impression of

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[16]Ibid., 465.

[17]Suurpaa explains that the word "rotation" is taken from James Hepokoski and is used to mean "cycles." According to Suurpaa, there are four cycles that start with the main thematic material in the home key and end with a weak dominant (except the last one). Ibid., 467.

[18]Brent Lawrence Auerbach, "The Analytical *Grundgestalt*: A New Model and Methodology" (Ph.D diss., University of Rochester, 2005), 103.

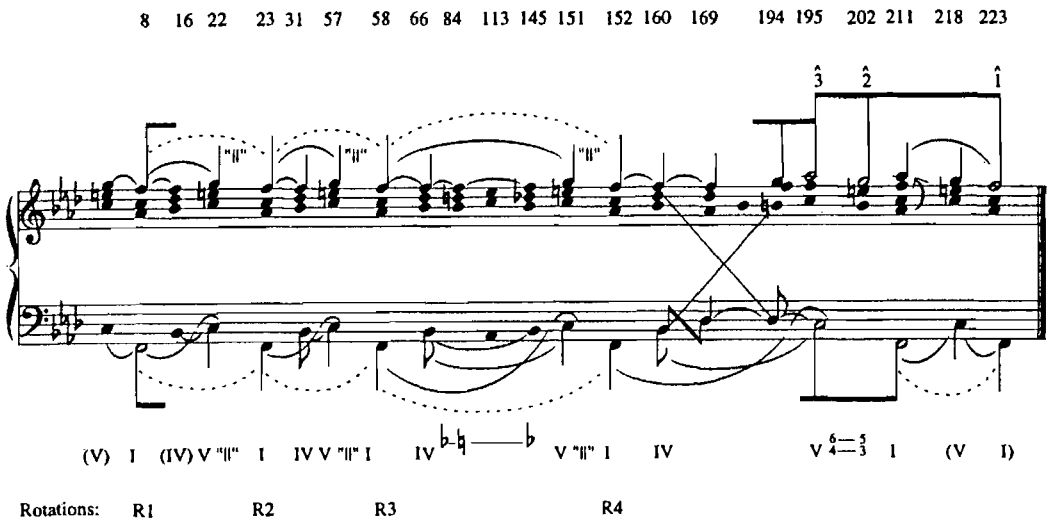

FIGURE 2. Lauri Suurpaa's Schenkerian graph of Chopin's F minor Ballade. Source: Lauri Suurpaa, "The Path from Tonic to Dominant in the Second Movement of Schubert's String Quintet and in Chopin's Fourth Ballade," *Journal of Music Theory* 44, no. 2 (2000): 478.

the Ballade, especially the accumulation of the energy towards the end, must have derived from his experience of playing the Ballade or listening to it. But in the process of the reduction, it seems that Chopin's musical idea and its unique development were buried under the concept of the prototype. I think the Schenkerian graph is an effective tool for expressing and grasping an entire piece in a concise form. Moreover, it has the potential to reveal the deepest level of the music's contrapuntal structure. But Schenkerian analysis alone cannot express the uniqueness and specifics of a composition, such as motivic development.

David Witten's analysis of Chopin's four Ballades is another example of a recent approach.[19] He praises twentieth-century theorists like Hugo Riemann, Arnold Schoenberg, Heinrich Schenker, Rudolph Reti, and Hans Keller. As a pianist, Witten is apparently pursuing the objective of enriching performance through analytical comprehension of the music.

In addition to objective analysis, Witten uses metaphor. He writes, "Metaphor has been defined as the hidden unity of the cosmos, revealing its points of convergence. Metaphor and her twin sister, analogy, facilitate our understanding in art, music, and other modes of nonverbal communication. Though some metaphors may seem whimsical at first, the best ones have a way of growing profound at second glance." He further states, "Metaphors are the missing link between the analysis of music and the performance of music."[20]

His analysis shows the differences in energy distribution between the traditional classical sonata form and Chopin's Ballades; Chopin's climax comes much later. Witten is aware of the importance of the submediant region. He shows how Chopin often elaborates $\hat{5}$ by chromatic motion, such as $\sharp\hat{4}$-$\hat{5}$ and $\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$, which Witten calls "wedges." He also demonstrates his points by making hypothetical versions of phrases. Although I don't agree with a few details of his analysis, I think it is valid, accurate, and appealing to performers since he tries to mediate between theorists' desire to find logic in the

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[19]David Witten, "The Coda Wagging the Dog: Tails and Wedges in the Chopin Ballades," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music: Essays in Performance and Analysis*, ed. David Witten (New York: Garland, 1997), 126-86.

[20]Ibid., 11.

music and performers' need to comprehend the music in a way that enhances their artistic expression.

Alan Walker's analysis of the opening of the third Ballade seems to be inspired by Schoenbergian analysis.[21] Although he does not use the word *Grundgestalt*, his example (see Figure 3) displays "basic shapes" at the opening that are essential to the motivic development in the later thematic materials. His model is a melodic one, and he does not mention tonally functional elements of the *Grundgestalt* that become an important issue for some later analysts.

For the analysis of a single Ballade, some notable studies by other theorists have become available in recent years. Michael Klein's analysis of the fourth Ballade, in which he applies Robert Hatten's semiotic theory, is one of them.[22] In his approach, the narrative of Chopin's Ballade is uncovered not by mapping the existing text to the music or seeking a sequence of actors and actions, but by following the expressive states based on the narrative logic presented in the music itself. His analysis highlights the secondary theme in the recapitulation as a desired emotional state using the idea of "apotheosis" established by Edward T. Cone. In Klein's diagram, the apotheosis leads to the tragic coda, which together forge the climax of the piece.

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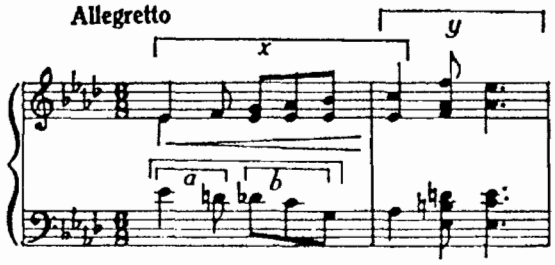
[21]Alan Walker, "Chopin and Musical Structure: An Analytical Approach," *The Chopin Companion*, ed. Alan Walker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1966), 227-58.

[22]Michael Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26 (2004): 23-55.

A. A♭ major Ballade, mm. 1-2:



B. A♭ major Ballade measure, mm. 13-17:

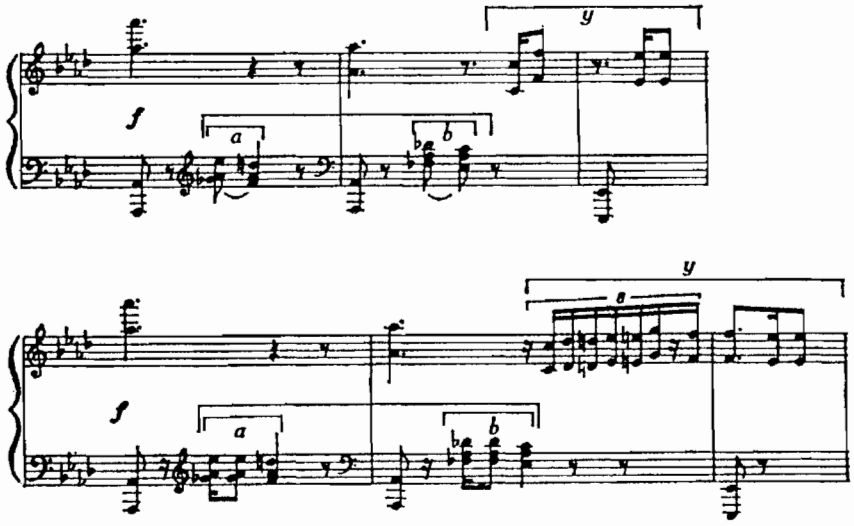


FIGURE 3. Alan Walker's examples: The opening theme of the A♭ major Ballade and its development. Source: Adapted from Allen Walker, "Chopin and Musical Structure: An Analytical Approach," in *The Chopin Companion: Profiles of the Man and Musician*, ed. Alan Walker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1966), 236-37.

Klein writes,

With regard to the Fourth Ballade, we ask why the apotheosis makes a sudden affective turn; why the pastoral topic is marked for apotheosis; why the waltz is the opening topic; we ask if these topics cohere; if the surface signifies temporality; if the action unfolds before our eyes; or if a narrator frames the action. I have tried to answer these questions by

> mediating between my intuitions and the music's structure. In particular, I have borrowed semiotic theories by Hatten and Monelle to understand how this music signifies.[23]

Most performers follow their intuition when they interpret music. They intuitively "know" the music, and by dint of their interpretive prowess, their performance delivers the music to the audience. The general image of music theory, however, is more scientific, or objective. Theorists try to encode the music in order to find logic and coherence in it. While performers move the audience emotionally, theorists satisfy their curiosity. But is there any middle ground between performance and analysis?

According to Alan Walker, "There is an essential difference between description and analysis. Description tells you *what* is there. Analysis attempts to tell you *why* it is there."[24] His statement clarifies the evolution that occurred in the analysis of Chopin's music between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Klein's words "mediating my intuitions and music's structure" represent a more recent trend of the late twentieth century. As David Witten has advocated, there are some efforts to connect performance practice and analyses.

Dorota Zakrzewska's analysis "Alienation and Powerlessness: Adam Mickiewictz's Ballady and Chopin's Ballade" is one of the studies that tries to understand the music from a historical and cultural point of view. It also spotlights the

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[23]Klein, 52.

[24]Walker, 227.

connection between Mickiewicz's ballads and Chopin's second Ballade.[25] Zakrzewska states that the Polish exiles experienced "intense and disturbing emotions—alienation, powerlessness, and morbid anxiety—all easily connected to the ideology of the Polish emigration in Paris in the 1830s," as expressed in Mickiewicz's poems.[26] She agrees with the connection between ideology and the narrative works posited by Karol Berger.

Zakrzewska also finds similarity in the structures of Mickiewicz's ballady and Chopin's second Ballade. She writes,

> On the most obvious level, the form of Ballade no. 2 reveals its similarities to the structure of its literary counterpart. Both the large-scale and local level form of the work corresponds to the main characteristics of the literary ballad's syntax with its characteristic stanzaic structure (often with some kind of refrain), patterns of repetitions and variation, usually regular length of lines and rhythm distribution, and frequent use of framing technique.[27]

Regarding the Ballade's "two-key scheme," she interprets the weakness of F major as the powerlessness of Polish immigrants. At the end of the Ballade, "The theme is never allowed to return to its home key after the expressive rest in m. 8, and concludes its tonal pilgrimage in a main key of the second theme rather than its own."[28]

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[25]Dorota Zakrzewska, Alienation and Powerlessness: Adam Mickiewicz's Ballady and Chopin's Ballade", *Music Research Forum* 15 (2000).

[26]Zakrzewska, 31.

[27]Ibid., 58.

[28]Ibid., 69.

Wai-Ling Cheong focuses on the "two-key scheme" of Chopin's second Ballade.[29] She states that Schenker adhered to the idea of monotonality more rigidly than Schoenberg, although the term "monotonality" was established by Schoenberg. Cheong writes, "Despite the assertion that 'there is only one tonality in a piece,' Schoenberg, unlike Schenker, does not regard 'monotonality' as the essential "truth' of music. For him, the 'principle of monotonality' is only one of the possible options." I see substantial validity in Cheong's interpretation of the conflicting statements found in *Structural Functions of Harmony* and *Theory of Harmony* by Schoenberg. In the former, Schoenberg writes on tonal music with a clear tonal center, and in the latter, he talks about more possibilities of breaking rules traditionally followed in tonal music.

Cheong writes, "monotonality is a deep-rooted convention for music from the common practice period. As Chopin's Op. 38 comes to end in a minor key that lies a major third above the original tonic, an effect of being left hanging is created. It is important to realize that such an effect is only achievable if it is heard against a monotonal background."[30] She concludes that avoidance of the monotonality is a negative way of confirming it.

The above literature review reveals various approaches to the analysis of Chopin's Ballades. As Rink pointed out, the recent trend of research bridges between our emotional reaction to the music typically elaborated in nineteenth-century literature

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[29]Wai-Ling Cheong, "Structural Coherence and the Two-Key Scheme: A Study of Selected Cases from the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge, 1988).

[30]Cheong, 61.

and the logical explanation of all the musical events in Chopin's Ballades. My approach to the Ballade also follows recent trends. As David Witten's analysis is aimed towards performers, I would like to find logic in the music that coincides with my own interpretation as a performer or listener.

I presented my papers on Chopin's G minor Ballade and F minor Ballade at the International Chopin Conference in Warsaw (organized by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute) in 2006 and 2007, respectively. After my presentation of the F minor Ballade at the 2007 conference, Rink asked me how my detailed analysis of the Ballade relates to my performance. I think my analysis is the confirmation of my intuition, and while a great masterpiece offers so many different interpretations, there is a strong desire among theorists to interpret music based on their own intuition just as all pianists have their own interpretations based on their own intuition.

During the conferences, I had the privilege of listening to presentations based on the latest research by leading Chopin scholars. There were many papers given from an historical perspective, but few from a purely theoretical perspective. There seems to be a prevailing opinion among theorists that, in theoretical terms, Chopin's music is relatively conservative, even though his endeavors in pianism are highly regarded. I think, however, that many of Chopin's subtle innovations are hidden in his graceful style of writing. These occult theoretical nuances motivated my analytical approach to Chopin's Ballades with the purpose of revealing their *Grundgestalten* and octatonic scales.

Analytical Method and Focus in This Dissertation

Now I would like to focus on my analytical method. My idea to apply Schoenberg's notion of the *Grundgestalt* to Chopin's Ballades evolved from my other projects on the music of Arnold Schoenberg. I analyzed a few compositions by Schoenberg, including his atonal work "Hanging Gardens" and his twelve-tone composition "String Quintet, Op. 26," before I chose to work on Chopin's music. Schoenberg's compositional path from tonality to atonality to twelve-tone music was one of the most influential and radical aesthetic phenomena of his era, but it was also a result of his belief that one single idea, or *Grundgestalt*, governs all good music. The twelve-tone method was the ultimate expression of his ideas because a single twelve-tone row and its intervallic equivalents can be repeated throughout a piece. Thus, the single row becomes the source of an entire piece, creating both opposition and coherence.

When I analyzed the first movement of Schoenberg's Op. 26, I realized that not all twelve tones are given equal emphasis; some pitches or intervals are emphasized and others are de-emphasized, and by shifting the emphasis, the piece has different themes, phrases, harmonies, and its own unique structure. When I looked at the G minor Ballade, I noticed that Chopin's idea was economical, and certain pitches or intervals were reinterpreted to create different themes and/or specific tonal structures. I decided to apply Schoenberg's analytical method to my dissertation on Chopin's Ballades.

In this dissertation, I explore how the *Grundgestalt* or *Gundgestalten* unify the Ballades tonally, harmonically, and thematically. Before I discuss how I apply the idea

of *Grundgestalt* to my analysis, I would like to define what *Grundgestalt* is and how other Schoenbergian theorists used the idea.

According to Josef Rufer, Schoenberg started using the term *Grundgestalt* around 1919.[31] Although Schoenberg wrote several theory textbooks during his life, the idea of *Grundgestalt* remained rather obscure. Schoenberg struggled with the idea of unifying means, but it seemed to keep evolving side by side with his innovative twelve-tone composition technique. In his letter to Josef Matthias Hauer in December 1923, Schoenberg wrote,

> Probably the book to be entitled "The Theory of Musical Unity," originally planned about ten years ago, often sketched out and just as often scrapped, time and again newly delimited and then again enlarged, will in the end have just the modest title: "Composition with Twelve Notes." This is as far as I have got in the last approximately two years. . . .[32]

Some of Schoenberg's students—e.g., Rufer and Patricia Carpenter—wrote on the *Grundgestalt*, but they have presented some conflicting ideas. Hali Annette Fieldman examines several *Grundgestalt* analysts in her dissertation "The *Grundgestalt* and Schubert Sonata Forms." Both Rudolph Reti and Alan Walker claim that the "basic shape" is responsible for the development of music from its surface to deeper levels,

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[31]Hali Annette Fieldman, "The *Grundgestalt* and Schubert Sonata Forms" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1996), 61; see also Auerbach, 53.

[32]Arnold Schoenberg, *Arnold Schoenberg: Letters,* edited by Erwin Stein (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 104.

including the key areas.[33] However, Fieldman comments that both studies are unsystematic and do not support their claims.[34] According to Fieldman, Hans Keller's "Functional Analyses" and Walter Frisch's study of Brahms focused on more local levels of motivic development instead of large-scale influences like the *Grundgestalt*.

Brent Lawrence Auerbach also acknowledges in his extensive dissertation that it is difficult to define the term *Grundgestalt*. He writes,

> Schoenberg regarded the Musical Idea as the pinnacle of his theory, yet never finished the treatise describing it. And while Schoenberg's ideas pervade and influence modern musical thought—consider the extent to which we accept his views on motives and the historical trend towards "emancipation of dissonance"—his ideas have never been corralled within the confines of a single tight, analytical system.[35]

He concludes, "where Schoenberg's prose becomes less reliable—later discussion will show how often he is unclear and unsystematic in his terminology—we must rely on the accounts of his students."[36] However, the students' accounts conflict with each other partly because Schoenberg's teaching was not consistent. Auerbach concludes, "The seemingly limitless analytic potential of the *Grundgestalt* has impelled theorists to

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[33]Fieldman cites the following studies: Alan Walker, *A Study of Musical Analysis* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962); Rudolph Reti, *The Thematic Process in Music* (New York: Macmillan, 1951).

[34]Fieldman, 65.

[35]Auerbach, 8.

[36]Ibid., 11.

continually push it in new directions, regardless of their intentions to remain faithful to the letter of Schoenberg's theories."[37]

Most of the Schoenbergian analysts, such as Epstein, have focused on the purely melodic *Grundgestalt*. In addition, the *Grundgestalt* was supposed to be apparent at the beginning of a piece. Significant advancement was made by Patricia Carpenter, who was one of the last disciples of Schoenberg. Auerbach says that Carpenter's major contribution was that *Grundgestalt* is perceived vertically and polyphonically. His example of Carpenter's analysis of Brahms's A major Intermezzo (see Figure 4) demonstrates that Carpenter's *Grundgestalt* is taken from the polyphonic structure of the music.

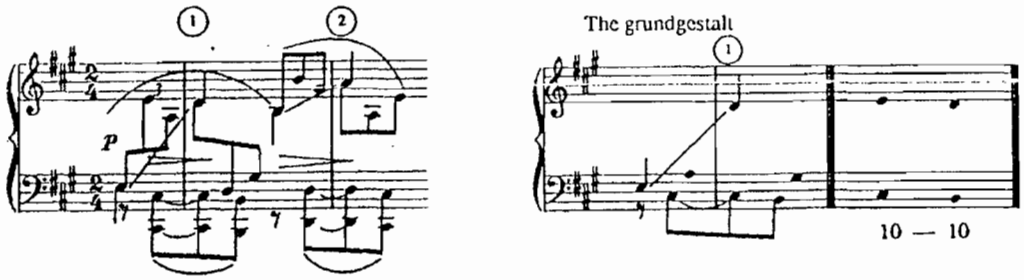

FIGURE 4. Carpenter's *Grundgestalt* of Brahms's A major Intermezzo. Source: Brent Lawrence Auerbach, "The Analytical Grundgestalt: A New Model and Methodology Based on the Music of Johannes Brahms" (Ph.D. diss., Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 2005), 97.

Since my own analysis of Chopin's Ballades partially derives from Carpenter's analytical idea, I would like to summarize her concept of *Grundgestalt*. Carpenter

[37]Ibid., 103.

writes, "by *Grundgestalt* or 'basic shape,' I mean the concrete, technical aspect of the idea."[38] She exhibits her notion of the *Grundgestalt* in the analysis of Beethoven's *Appassionata*, op. 57, which, according to Carpenter, Schoenberg used to demonstrate the unity of the horizontal and vertical implication of the idea." She states that three technical features of the *Grundgestalt* are motive, harmony and tonality. Grundgestalt works as a "germ" that grows throughout the entire piece, and it is considered as the "smallest common multiple" that includes elements of every subsequent musical figure—and the "greatest common factor" included in every subsequent figure. *Grundgestalt* in tonal music is responsible for the specific tonal discourse in the preexisting tonal network, in which the tonal instability or unrest is finally restored at the end of the piece.

I will use both horizontal and vertical *Grundgestalten* in my analysis of Chopin's Ballades. If the *Grundgestalt* embodies the totality of a piece, it has to generate not only a motivic development but also the tonal structure and harmonic progression as well. There have been some analysts, such as Alan Walker and Anatoly Leikin, who demonstrated a "basic shape" in Chopin's Ballades, but their idea of *Grundgestalt* was limited to motivic development in different thematic areas at most. In order to display the tonal discourse of the Ballades, I will use a tonal pyramid that exhibits my own idea of tonal network and its hierarchy, instead of Schoenberg's Chart of the Regions.

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[38]Patricia Carpenter, "*Grundgestalt* as Tonal Function," *Music Theory Spectrum* 5 (1983), 15.

Another objective of this dissertation is to investigate Chopin's application of octatonic scales. My idea for this aspect of the dissertation materialized from playing Chopin's G minor Ballade. I always sensed that there was a tonally unstable region containing a strange scale in the middle of the piece. Then it dawned on me one day that it was an octatonic scale. But how could there be an octatonic scale in Chopin's music? We associate the octatonic scale with Russian composers such as Scriabin, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky—or Barók and Debussy.

I examined the score carefully, and there were eight pitches from a full octatonic scale, which suggested that Chopin's use of the scale was intentional. Since the G minor Ballade was published in 1836, the composer may already have had some exposure to the octatonic scale in France. I was curious to see if Chopin made use of octatonic passages in his other compositions, and to ascertain the extent to which he employed them if there were any. I also wondered how the octatonic segments contributed to the unifying idea of the Ballade and how they related to the rest of the piece.

Anatoly Leikin pointed out the exposure of the octatonic scale in the G minor Ballade, but he did not investigate how the octatonic scale relates to the rest of the piece.[39] Roy Howat's research shows Chopin's influence on later composers' works, such as Faure, Debussy, and Ravel.[40] Howat writes, "Chopin was also something of a

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[39]Anatoly Leikin, "The Dissolution of Sonata Structure in Romantic Piano Music (1820-1950)" (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1986), 237.

[40]Roy Howat, "Chopin's Influence on the *Fin de Siècle* and Beyond," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 246-327.

pioneer with the octatonic scale (of alternating tones and semitones). . . . Debussy and Ravel are more often credited as innovators in this field, yet one of Debussy's clearest octatonic passages, in 'Jardins sous la pluie' of 1903, is essentially just [Figure 5] in reverse."[41]

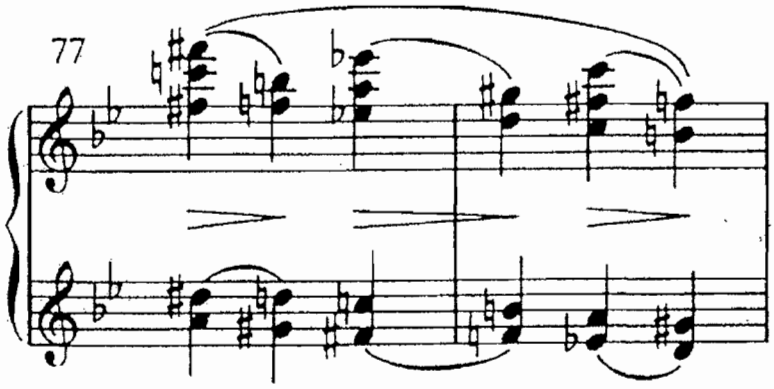

FIGURE 5. Roy Howat's example of octatonic segment in Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 15, No.3, measure 77. Source: Roy Howat's "Chopin's Influence on the *Fin de Siècle* and Beyond," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 275.

Since Howat does not analyze the passage below, I added rectangular boxes to his example to show how this passage is structured (see Figure 6). The passage consists of descending diminished 7th chords. Each box has two adjacent diminished 7th chords related by a half-step, creating a full octatonic set 8-28. There is a whole step in the

[41]Ibid., 275.

bass-line between the boxes, which creates a descending octatonic 2 scale[42] horizontally in different voices, except in the top voice.

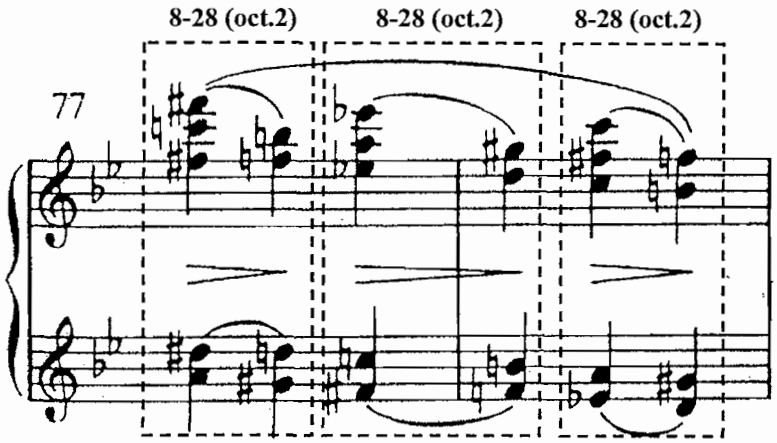

FIGURE 6. The octatonic sets in Howat's example.

Howat's article displays several examples of Chopin's octatonic segments and comparisons between Chopin's and later composers' use of the collection. However, he does not investigate what type of octatonic scale is used, how the octatonic segment is brought out, how the octatonic section relates to the rest of the piece, or how much historic significance Chopin's octatonic application has, compared to other composers who used octatonic scales in their compositions. In my analysis, I will seek answers to the above questions. I will analyze the first, second and fourth Ballades, which have at least one notable octatonic application, and focus on *Grundgestalt* and the manifestation

[42]There are three transpositions of the octatonic scale, and I will identify them by octatonic 0, octatonic 1, and octatonic 2. Octatonic 0 scale consists of 0134679T, octatonic 1 consists of 124578TE, and octatonic 3 scale consists of 235689E0 (0="C," 1="C♯/D♭," 2="D," etc.).

of octatonic scales in those pieces. In order to identify the octatonic pitch sets, I will use pitch-class set numbers (such as 7-31) established and used by Allen Forte and others.[43]

[43]I will use pitch-class set numbers in order to measure the size of the octatonic pitch set rather than discussing the nature of the components of the pitch-class set or finding relationships between the octatonic pitch sets; for example, the pitch set number 7-31 indicates that 7 pitches are drawn out of 8 pitches from a single octatonic collection. The larger the cardinal number is, the more pitches the pitch set has. A full octatonic scale is 8-28, which consists of all 8 pitches. I used the Simplified Set List. See Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 2d ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2000), appendix.

CHAPTER II

G MINOR BALLADE, OP. 23

When published in 1836, Chopin's Ballade in G minor, Op. 23, was not only the composer's first instrumental ballade, but also the first ballade ever written without words.[1] Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words" had already been published in 1835, but Chopin's Ballade was a much more substantial and ambitious work in the Romantic piano repertoire.[2] The free narrative form of this Ballade[3] is Chopin's own invention, and its rhapsodic nature stimulates the listener's imagination.

There have been a few published analyses on the G minor Ballade in past decades. In his analysis "The Form of Chopin's 'Ballade,' Op. 23," Karol Berger writes, "The main challenge facing a composer of a relatively long and complex work is that of continuity."[4] He further writes, "Once they assume that they are dealing with a single work, performers and listeners must attempt to determine . . . how the whole is divided

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[1]Op. 23 was published in various editions in 1836, and some of them had titles like "Ballade ohne Worte" ("Ballade Without Words"). See James Parakilas, *Ballads Without Words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1992) p.19. Chopin, who was fascinated by the Polish poet Mikiewicz's *Ballad and Romances*, had already composed and published a vocal work to one of Mikiewicz"s ballads in 1826, but Op. 23 is Chopin's first instrumental ballade among four that he composed during his lifetime. See Szulc, 52.

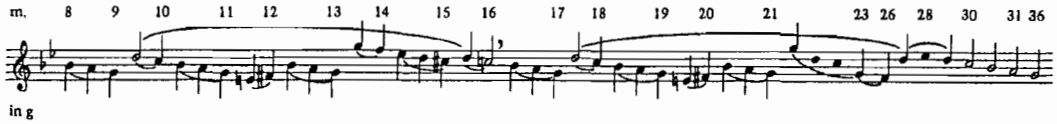
[2]According to Parakilas, Gottfried Wilhelm Fink (1783-1846) wrote, "We have songs without words; why shouldn't we have ballades without words as well? Anyway, the newer music loves to compose stories in sound." Parakilas, 19.

[3]Chopin told Schumann that he was "incited to the creation of the ballades by the poetry" of his fellow countryman. However, Chopin never disclosed the program of the ballade. See Huneker, 156.

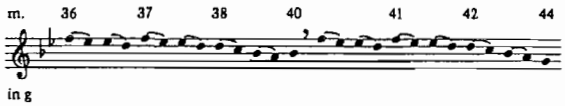
[4]Karol Berger, "The Form of Chopin's 'Ballade,' Op. 23," *Nineteenth Century Music* 20, no. 1 (1996): 46-71.

into parts and what function each part has in making up the whole. And once they assume that the work is narrative, they must then look for the relationship of causing and resulting among the parts." Then Berger focuses on the varying strength of the cadences that punctuate the piece.

Berger also analyzes the G minor Ballade's melodies in reductive form to emphasize certain characteristics in its thematic material—e.g., the "sigh motive" evident in the falling seconds (see Figure 7).



Example 2: *Ballade,* mm. 9–36, reduction.



Example 3: *Ballade,* mm. 36–44, reduction.

FIGURE 7. Karol Berger's melodic reduction of Chopin's G minor Ballade. Source: Karol Berger, "The Form of Chopin's Ballade, Op. 23," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 20, no. 1 (1996): 58.

Berger's idea of melodic reduction is similar to Schenker's mode of structural analysis, which focuses on a work's foreground, middleground and background, but Berger's method of harmonic and melodic analysis tends to linger at the surface level. Sometimes, he seems to get lost in the foreground of the melody. For instance, Berger's example 2 in Figure 7 presents neither the structural hierarchy of pitches nor the melodic direction. Moreover, his melodic reduction does not have any harmonic support. He extols "the threads provided by a single sigh motif, which generates with

astonishing economy the essential motivic substance of the work."[5] It is true that the dyad he describes as a "sigh motive" is used in various sections of the piece, but how does it contribute to the music on the structural level? Are certain pitch collections in specific "sigh motives" more prominent than others? In my analysis, the most important descending dyad is "E♭-D," which, in terms of crucial meaning, towers over the dyads that Berger emphasizes.

Berger also emphasizes

> the obsessive focusing on a single pitch, C, which maintains its identity even through the changes of underlying keys and which, as the opening pitch of the Ur-motif C-B♭, generates the expectation of the structural melodic descent from the fourth to the first scale of the main key. The expectation is repeatedly frustrated, and the work concludes instead with a climactic, catastrophic-heroic reversal of the structural melody's direction, that is, with an ascent from $\hat{4}$-$\hat{1}$ in mm. 230-50.[6]

It is true that the structural $\hat{4}$ is missing throughout the piece until the coda. This forces the final descent in the soprano, $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$, to be delayed until the end of the coda in Schenker's famous graph of the Ballade, while the structural V^7 is resolved to I at the beginning of the coda (see Figure 8). This delay of the final descent, instead of the ascent that Berger points out, symbolizes the unusual intensity and importance of the final moments in the Ballade and it differentiates the Ballade from the traditional sonata form.

Not only does Berger miss the soprano's structural descent $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$ in the coda, but he also overlooks the coda's logical resolution of the ambiguous Neapolitan chord (mm. 216-217 and 226-227) found in the opening of the Ballade. Although Berger

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[5]Ibid., 66.

[6]Ibid.

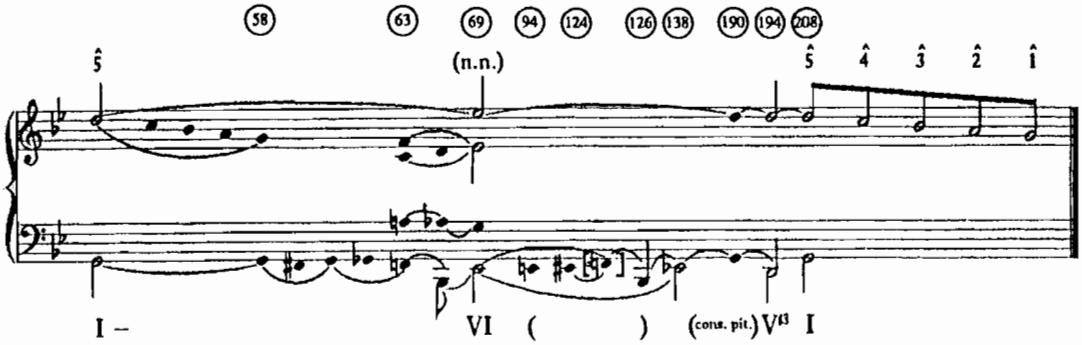

FIGURE 8. Schenker's analysis of the First Ballade. Source: Jim Samson, *Chopin: The Four Ballades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48.

describes general structural idiosyncrasies such as the prominence of the coda, his analysis does not fathom the deepest level of the work's structural and tonal coherence.

He states in the conclusion that "These essential threads of narrative continuity would remain undiscovered without reaching below the surface and reducing the melody phrase by phrase. Reduction of this sort does not have to go very deep. . . ."[7] His focus is limited to the melodic figures without harmonic support, and one can easily miss the structural and tonal hierarchy when one focuses only on the melodic figures. It also seems insufficient to focus only on cadences when analyzing musical forms. We need to focus on the key areas. For example, there is a strong emphasis on VI (E♭ major) in the G minor Ballade's secondary theme areas, but Berger's analysis hardly mentions it.

David Witten's analysis of the four Ballades is a synthesis of traditional tonal and harmonic analysis and some Schenkerian analysis. He points out the delayed dominant-to-tonic resolution and the importance of the submediant key, an

[7]Ibid., 67.

interpretation that coincides with the reading of Jim Samson, and others. Witten also mentions the half-step motions, which he calls wedges, frequently observed in Chopin's music to embellish important structural notes—e.g., $\hat{5}$ is emphasized by $\flat\hat{6}$ and $\sharp\hat{4}$ (see Figure 9).

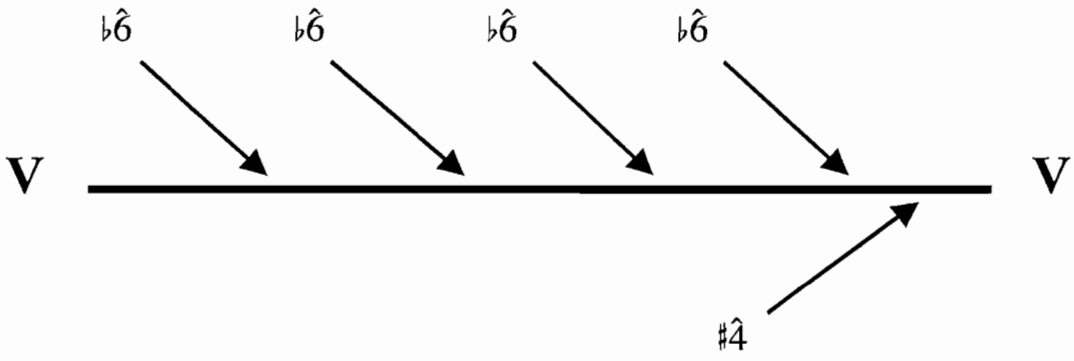

FIGURE 9. David Witten's example of wedges, modified from Witten's example 5.7. Source: David Witten, "The Coda Wagging the Dog: Tails and Wedges in the Chopin Ballades," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music: Essays in Performance and Analysis*, ed. David Witten (New York: Garland, 1997), 124.

The idea of wedges is applied to various areas in the Ballade, including the introduction and the coda. In Witten's example, the controversial E♭ ($\flat\hat{6}$) in the inner voice at the end of the introduction is resolved to $\hat{5}$ at the beginning of the primary theme area. However, this resolution is interrupted by the rest and the tempo change, and it is only implied. In my analysis, the resolution from $\flat\hat{6}$- $\hat{5}$ is established by analogy much later in the piece. The missing link between $\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ is the main plot of the drama that gradually unfolds.

Anatoly Leikin's dissertation "The Dissolution of Sonata Structure in Romantic Piano Music (1820-1850)" points out the motivic relationship between the primary

theme and the secondary themes in the Ballade.[8] They are in arch forms and start from a weak beat and land on a downbeat with a long value.

Another contribution of Leikin's analysis is the connection between the descending seconds in the primary theme area and the lament motive that originated from the seventeenth-century Italian *lamenti*. According to Leikin, Valentina Konen, a prominent Russian musicologist, called a descending trochaic second the "sorrow" or *lament* motive (see Figure10). Although it became a trend to include *lament* in opera in mid-seventeenth-century Italy, it gradually disappeared from operas at the end of the seventeenth century. However, this particular gesture and its implication of sorrow was adapted in instrumental music by later composers, including Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Leikin also mentions the phrase containing the octatonic scale: "these augmented rhythmic patterns are placed in the lower melodic voice that contains perhaps the earliest example of the octatonic (semitone-tone) scale in Romantic music."[9] Since Leikin does not elaborate further on the octatonic segment, I will show how the octatonic pitch collection is generated and how it relates to the rest of the Ballade.

One tendency of recent analyses is to focus on structural and hierarchical forms. Other theorists—e.g., Schenker and his followers—have already provided a fairly clear view of the G minor Ballade's structure and architectural significance. Although Schenker's graph is strikingly beautiful in its concise view of the Ballade's entire structure, there is a danger in overgeneralizing the significance of a particular form or overlooking significant motivic details that have special meaning. Instead of arguing

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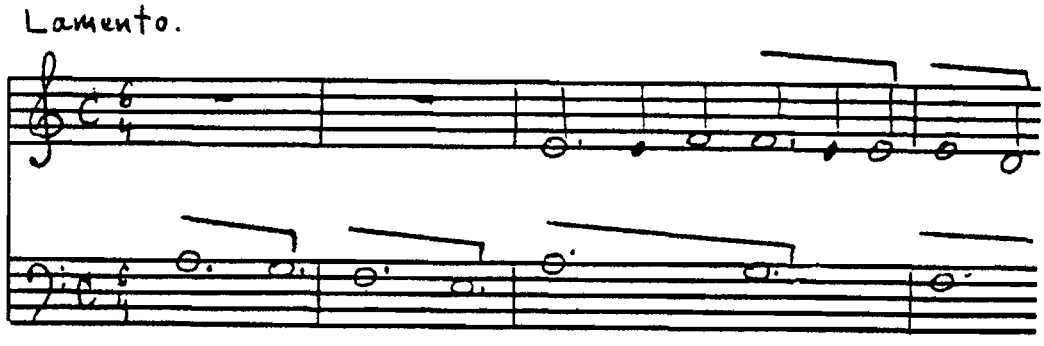
[8]Leikin, 230-62.

[9]Ibid., 236-37.

A. Cavalli's *Gli amori d'Apollo e di Dafne*



B. Primary theme from Chopin's G minor Ballade

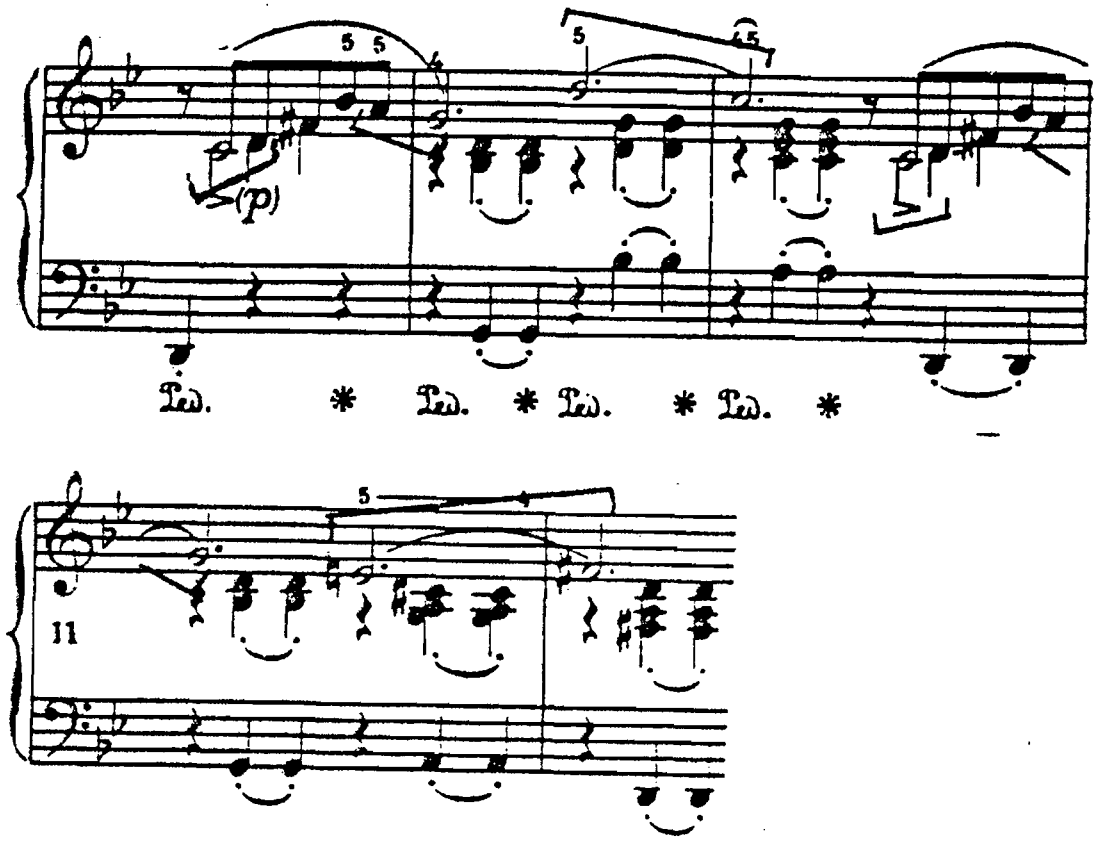


FIGURE 10. Cavalli's *lamento* aria and Chopin's primary theme. Source: Anatoly Leikin, "The Dissolution of Sonata Structure in Romantic Piano Music (1820-1850)" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1986), 243 and 242, respectively.

whether the Ballade is based on the sonata form, I am more interested in demonstrating how the motives or themes—or, more specifically, the *Grundgestalt*—contributes to Chopin's structural design. Karol Berger tries to illuminate the narrative of the Ballade by focusing on the surface-level motives, but he does not attempt to explicate how the motives contribute to the formal design. In my view, a deeper comprehension of the music requires a focus on both foreground and background. I believe the unity is evident in the logical development of the single idea that exists in both the foreground and background. As my analysis contends, a seed is planted at the beginning of the Ballade, and the narrative of the Ballade occurs when the seed starts to grow. My analysis focuses on how the drama unfolds through the growth of the seed throughout the piece.

As mentioned in the introduction, I will use two compositional and analytical ideas established by Schoenberg, *Grundgestalt* and tonal network, to explore Chopin's compositional idea in the Ballade. According to Schoenberg, the real compositional idea of tonal music is how balance is restored.[10] The problems created at the beginning of the piece are eventually solved. The tonic conquers all the foreign elements and restores its governing power to conclude the piece. I employ a "tonal pyramid" to illustrate the tonal scheme and hierarchy within the Ballade's pre-existing tonal network. In addition, a Schenkerian graph is used to display the work's thematic and motivic relationships at different levels of its musical hierarchy. I also examine how Chopin's excursion to the outskirts of the tonal boundary, his manifestation of octatonic pitch collections, is created and later assimilated into the tonal structure.

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[10]See Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 123.

Overall Structure

Before I explore the details of the development of the *Grundgestalt*, I would like to present the structure of Chopin's Gm Ballade by employing a diagram of the piece (Table 1) and a Schenkerian graph (Figure 11), both of which should foster better comprehension of the work as a whole. The entire piece can be divided into several distinct sections: introduction, A, B, A^1, and coda.

TABLE 1. Formal Structure of the G Minor Ballade, Op. 23

Section	Measure	Theme	Key	*Grundgestalten* (x and y^1)	Remarks
Intro.	1-7		Ambiguous	E♭-(D)	N^6 of Gm: followed by ambiguous chords Unresolved **E♭**
A	8-35	Theme I	Gm:	B♭-A-G	
	36-67	Bridge Theme	Gm:	B♭-A//B♭-A♭-G	
	68-82	Theme II-a	E♭M: + B♭M:	F-G-E♭/C-D-B♭	
	82-94	Theme II-b	E♭M:	G-A♭-B♭ D♭-C♭-B♭	Pedal point on **E♭**
B	94-105	Theme I	Am/E	C-B-A	Pedal point on **E**
	106-125	Theme II-a	AM: + EM:	B-C♯-A/F♯-G♯-E	
	125-137			C♭-C♯	Octatonic 1
	138-166	Theme III	E♭M:	(C)-B♭-A♭-G	
A^1	166-180	Theme II-a	E♭M: + B♭M:	F-G-E♭/C-D-B♭	
	180-193	Theme II-b	E♭M:	G-A♭-B♭	Pedal point on **E♭**
	194-208	Theme I	Gm:	B♭-A-G	Pedal point on **D**
Coda	208-264		Gm:	E♭-D B♭-A-G	N^6-V^7-i(Gm:) Strong resolution to tonic Gm

*Colon signifies that the key is established as a region.

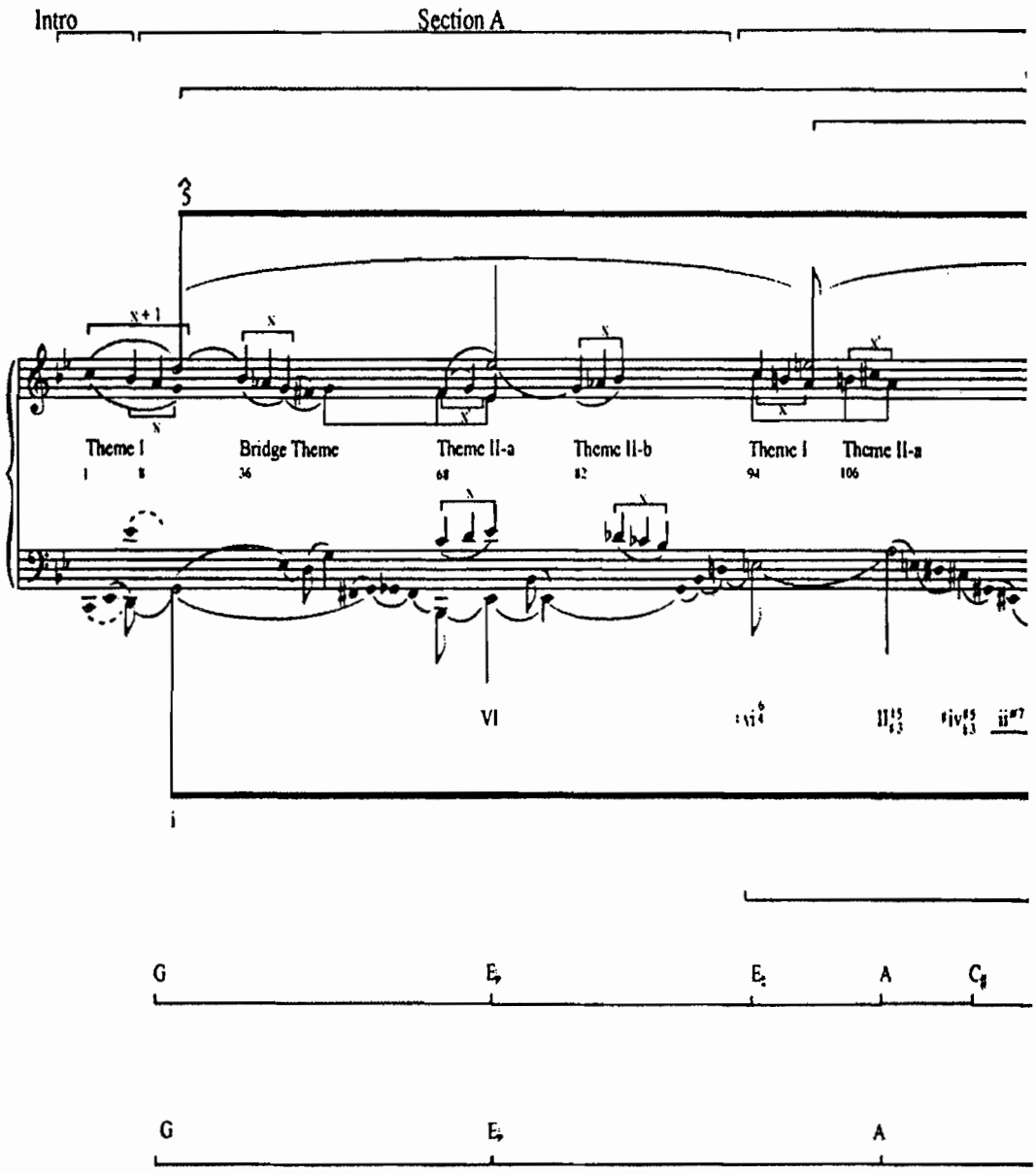

FIGURE 11. Schenkerian graph of the G minor Ballade.

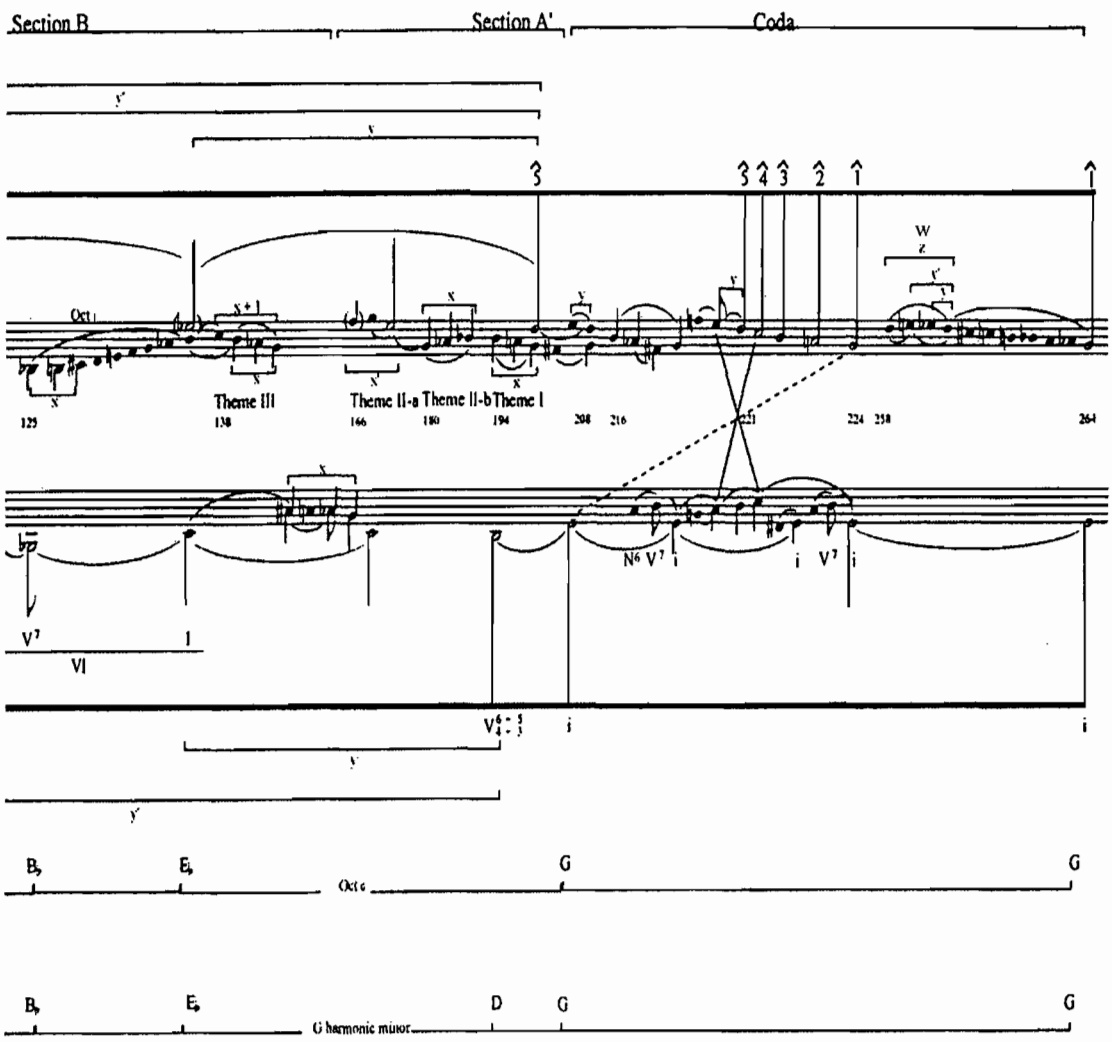

FIGURE 11. (Continued)

The structure of the piece is symmetrical and folds against a sonata form background.[11] However, the piece is rather directional and goal-oriented; there is an accumulation of energy towards the end, and finally there is a burst of energy in the

[11]See Samson, *Four Ballades*, 45-50, and Leikin, 253-56.

coda to conclude the piece. Not only is the coda in the Schenkerian graph disproportionately large, but it also demonstrates that the real resolution from V to i occurs at the beginning of the coda and that the soprano's important structural descent from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ has to wait until the middle of the coda.[12]

Theme I (the "primary theme" area) in section B (the "development section") and Theme I in section A^1 (the "recapitulation") rest entirely on the dominant bass, driven by the strong pull of gravity towards the following tonic. This is another characteristic that differs from sonata form. In addition, all the themes are derived from a single motivic idea to create a unified whole (see my Schenkerian graph above). The metaphor of this aspect of the piece is that the protagonist (represented by theme) is driven by fate (represented by the accumulating harmonic intensity towards the end) beyond his control.

Grundgestalt and Motivic Development

Patricia Carpenter wrote that the *Grundgestalt*, or basic shape, is the "germ" of the idea.[13] She contends that *Grundgestalt* is a source of coherence in a composition and the subject of the musical discourse. Her article demonstrates that the *Grundgestalt* not

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[12]I chose 5 lines because of the emphasis on $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the soprano. The final descent to the tonic in the soprano occurs in the middle of the coda because there is no $\hat{4}$ elsewhere before the coda, which differs from typical classical sonatas. The structural resolution from the dominant to tonic occurs at the beginning of the coda. The entire coda becomes a battleground and releases a culmination of energy.

[13]Carpenter, 15-38.

only provides motivic and thematic development but also deeply penetrates the composition to govern its harmonic structure and tonal hierarchy.

I think the *Grundgestalt* of Chopin's Gm Ballade is B♭-A-G in measure 8, and E♭[14] in the inner voice juxtaposed with D in the bass in measure 7 (see Figure 12). As part of the *Grundgestalt*, B♭-A-G indicates the fundamental tone G and determines its minor mode. Beginning from $\hat{3}$ of the key of G minor, the intervals between the three notes are a half-step and a whole step, thus creating a minor third between the outer pitches. The actual pitches of B♭-A-G, as well as the intervallic relationship between the three notes, are exploited in the discourse of the piece.

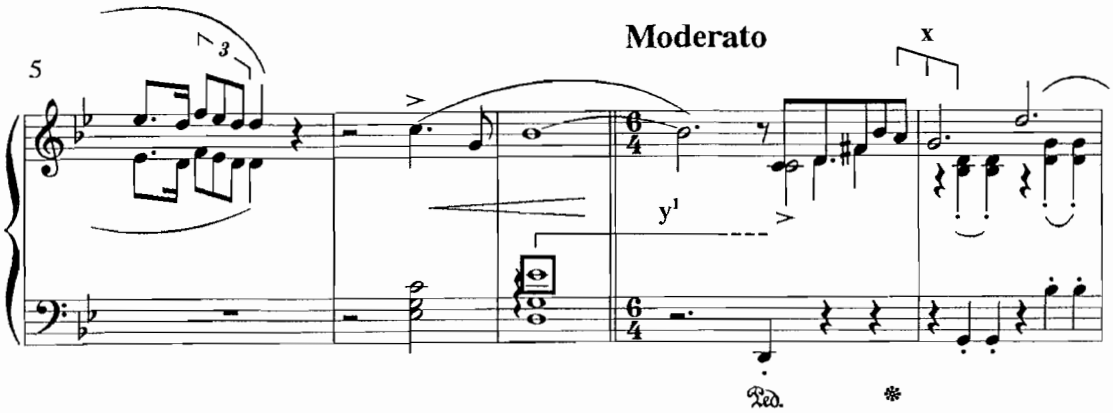


FIGURE 12. *Grundgestalt* in the G minor Ballade: "y[1]" and "x."

[14]The E♭ in the last bar of the introduction has caused some controversy; according to Jim Samson, a D instead of E♭ first appeared in the German edition (Breitkopf &Hårtel, plate no. 5706) in 1836, and the D appeared in other later editions (Samson, 22). Gutman, Mikuli, and other pupils of Chopin insisted that E♭ was correct, while Klindworth and Kullak chose to use a D natural (Huneker, 157). Finally, E♭ became firmly established when the New York pianist Ferdinand Von Inten discovered that Chopin had actually written an E♭ in the last bar of the introduction, as confirmed in his original manuscript in Stuttgart (Huneker, 157).

The controversial E♭, on the other hand, is a dissonance on the 6/4 chord in measure 7. Although some Schenkerian theorists might think the resolution D is in the inner voice of the right-hand part in the following measure, there is a rest at the beginning of measure 8, and the tempo changes from Largo to Moderato. There is a strong contrast between the unstable and disoriented introduction and the more grounded waltz section in 6/4 time. This indicates that the resolution $\hat{\flat 6}$-$\hat{5}$ is somewhat detached, or at least postponed, and the E♭ lingers in the listener's ear. I will refer to the three-note figure B♭-A-G in the waltz section as "x" and the dyad E♭-D as "y^1."

Examples below show the motives of the themes created by the three-note figure B♭-A-G from the *Grundgestalt*. Table 1 and the Schenkerian graph also display the development of the *Grundgestalt* in the themes and the corresponding key regions.

Theme I, the "primary theme," establishes the *Grundgestalt* "x," or the original B♭-A-G figure, within a G minor context (see Figure 13). The meter is a waltz-like 6/4 and the tempo is Moderato. However, the absence of the bass on the downbeats enervates this section. "x" is repeated many times throughout the Theme I area. This stagnation is varied only by the "sigh motive" following each phrase containing "x"—as if the protagonist's melancholic question is never answered and he is lost.

The Bridge Theme shown in Figure 14 suggests a gradual departure from Gm by halting the "x," or B♭-A-G three-note figure from Theme I, and restating it as B♭-A♭-G, a subset of E♭ major. E♭ major is the key in the secondary theme area (see Table 1), and therefore this is an early sign of the development of the Ballade's plot. After the Bridge Theme is established between measures 36 and 44, the thematic materials begin to erode and finally fragment into arpeggios between measures 56 and 65.

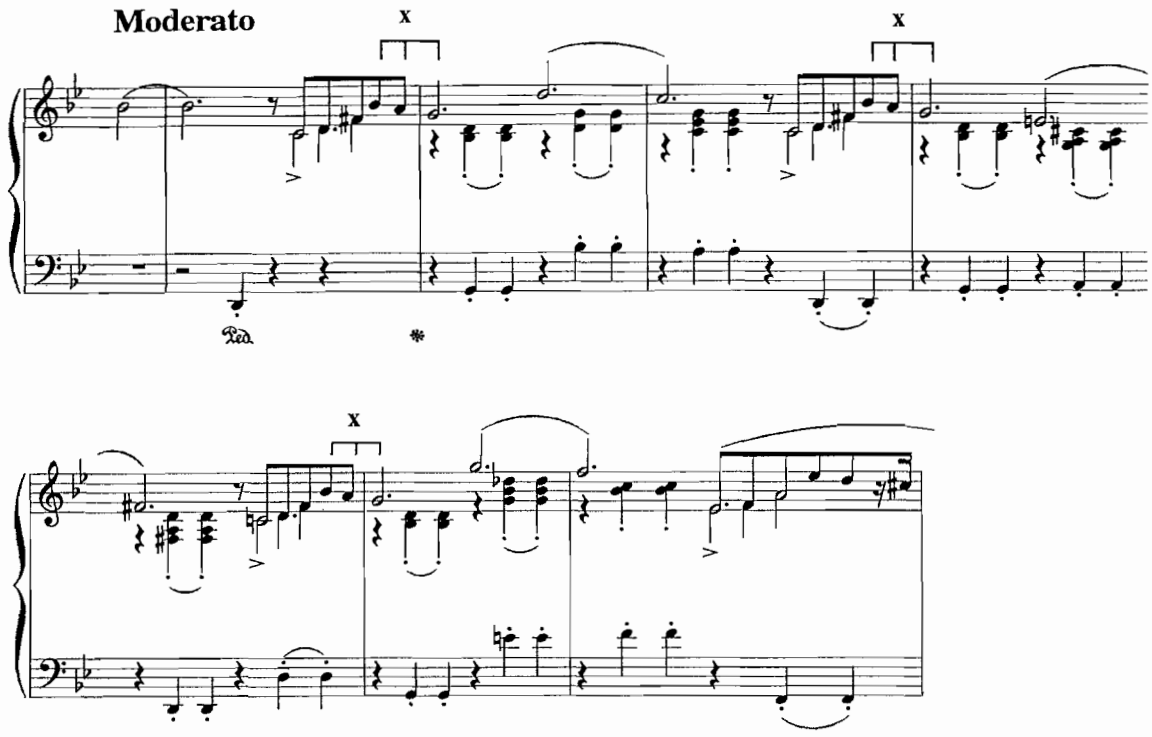


FIGURE 13. Theme I in the key of G minor and "x's."

Theme II-a in Figure 15, the first secondary theme, is marked with *meno mosso* and *sotto voce*, creating a striking contrast with the melancholic primary theme area and the volcanic transition. The upper voice of the duet presents a disordered "x" in the major key, F-G-E♭ (2̂-3̂-1̂ in the key of E♭ major), while its inner voice intones C-D-E♭, a retrograde transposition of B♭-A-G. The F-G-A figure not only resembles the arch form of the primary theme, but it also shows off the third G-E♭ to declare the supremacy of the tonic E♭ major.

In the soprano and alto of the Theme II-a area, the melodic motion is created by interlocking instances of "x" shown in Figure 14. Theme II-a also displays two keys by

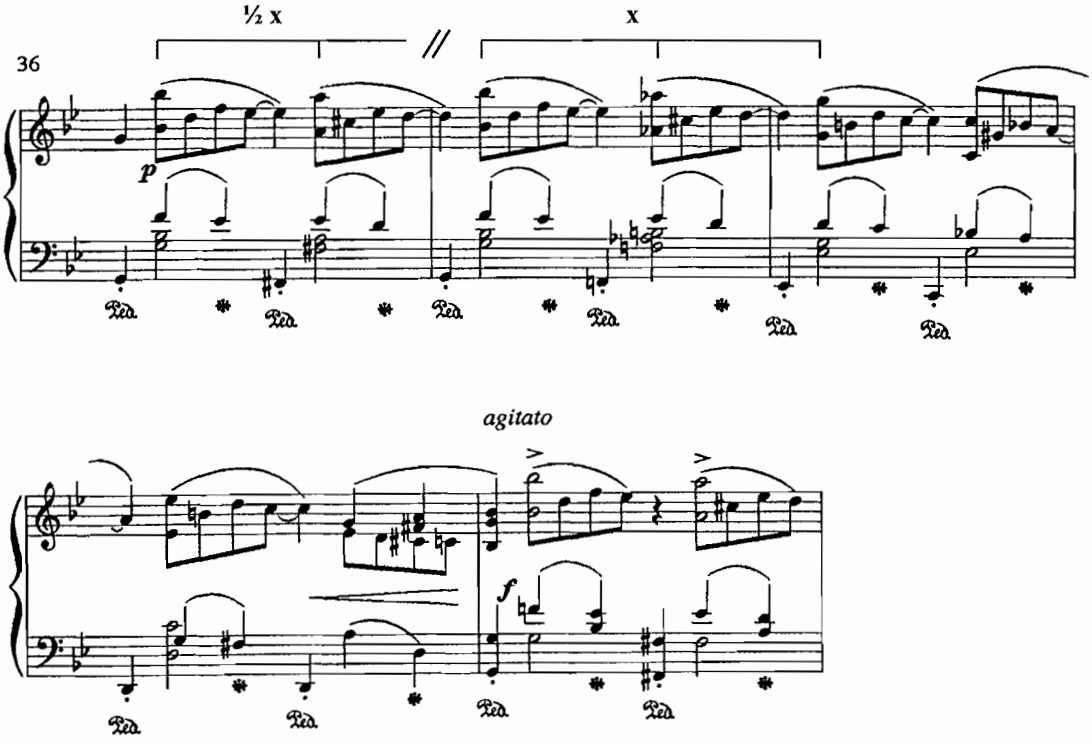


FIGURE 14. Bridge Theme: Suggesting a departure from G minor (B♭-A-G) to E♭ major (B♭-A♭-G).

sequences: E♭ major (submediant major) and B♭ major (mediant major).[15] The preparation of the secondary theme area between measures 62 and 67 has a clear tendency towards the key of B♭ major. However, the music does not stop on the B♭ major triad, and keeps moving by a fifth to create a E♭ major triad in measure 69, as if it cannot wait to realize the E♭ major suggested in the introduction that is the antithesis of Theme I in the key of G minor. Then the music retreats to B♭ major followed by a descending cycle of fifths.

[15]There is an ambiguity of the key in this section. Theme II-a is presented in E♭ major and then B♭ major in sequence, and immediately followed by a cycle of 5ths, without emphasizing either E♭ or B♭ as a primary key.

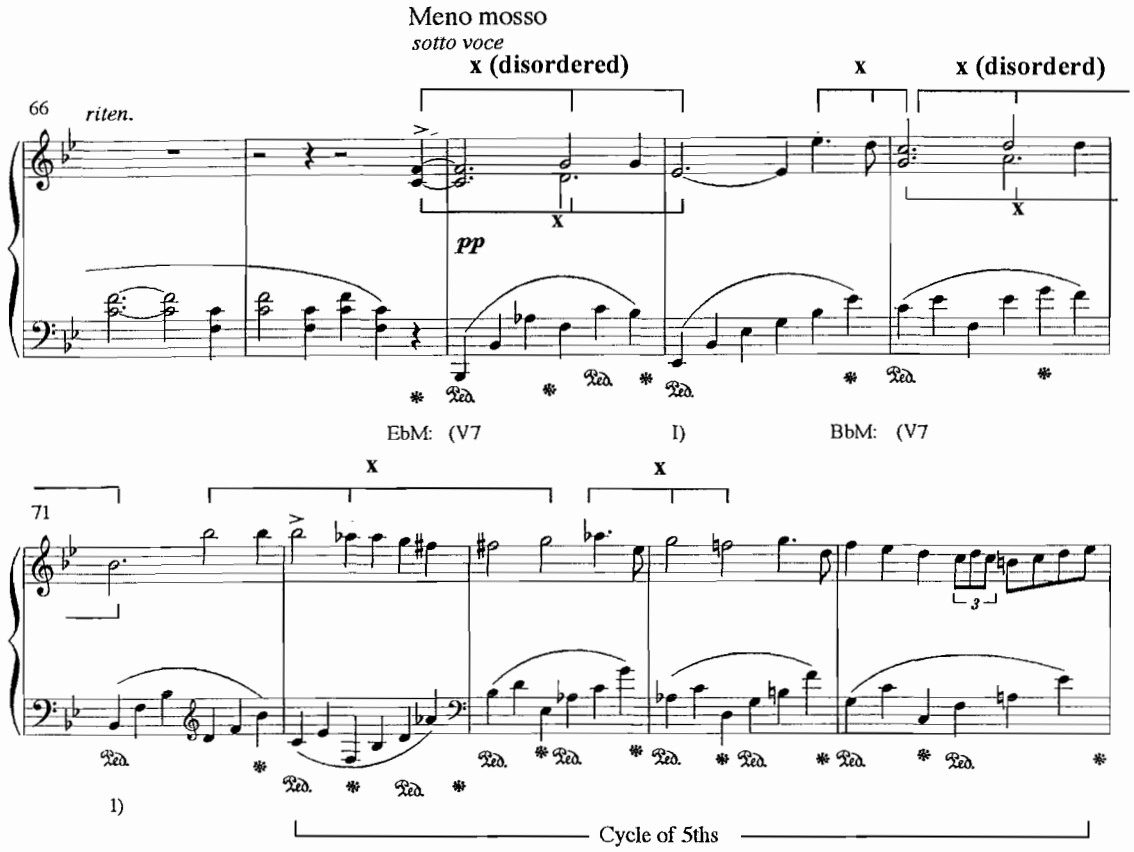


FIGURE 15. Theme II-a: Disordered "x's" create a major region.

The theme is repeated twice. The mood of the section is intimate, but the sequential phrases in the two keys, as well as the cycle of fifths, serve as a joyful foil to the static and melancholic waltz section in the opening. As a whole, the Theme II-a section works as a dominant section to prepare for the more stable E♭ major region in the Theme II-b area.

Theme II-b, the second secondary theme in E♭ major, is most closely related to Theme I by contour (see Figure 16). The first phrase G-A♭-B♭-D-C-B♭ includes two examples of "x": G-A♭-B♭, the transposed inversion of the original B♭-A-G figure (see

Figure 12). The example also shows "x," or B♭-A♭-G in the soprano, which spans the entire theme between measures 83-86. In the inner voice in the left-hand part, another G-A♭-B♭ is observed between measures 85-86. The interlocking examples of "x" in Theme II-b, originating from the E♭ major scale, overwhelmingly dominate the Theme II-b area. The third of the original "x" in the Theme I area, B♭-G, $\hat{3}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of G minor, is now reinterpreted as $\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$ in the E♭ major context and declares its supremacy over G minor in the Theme I area.

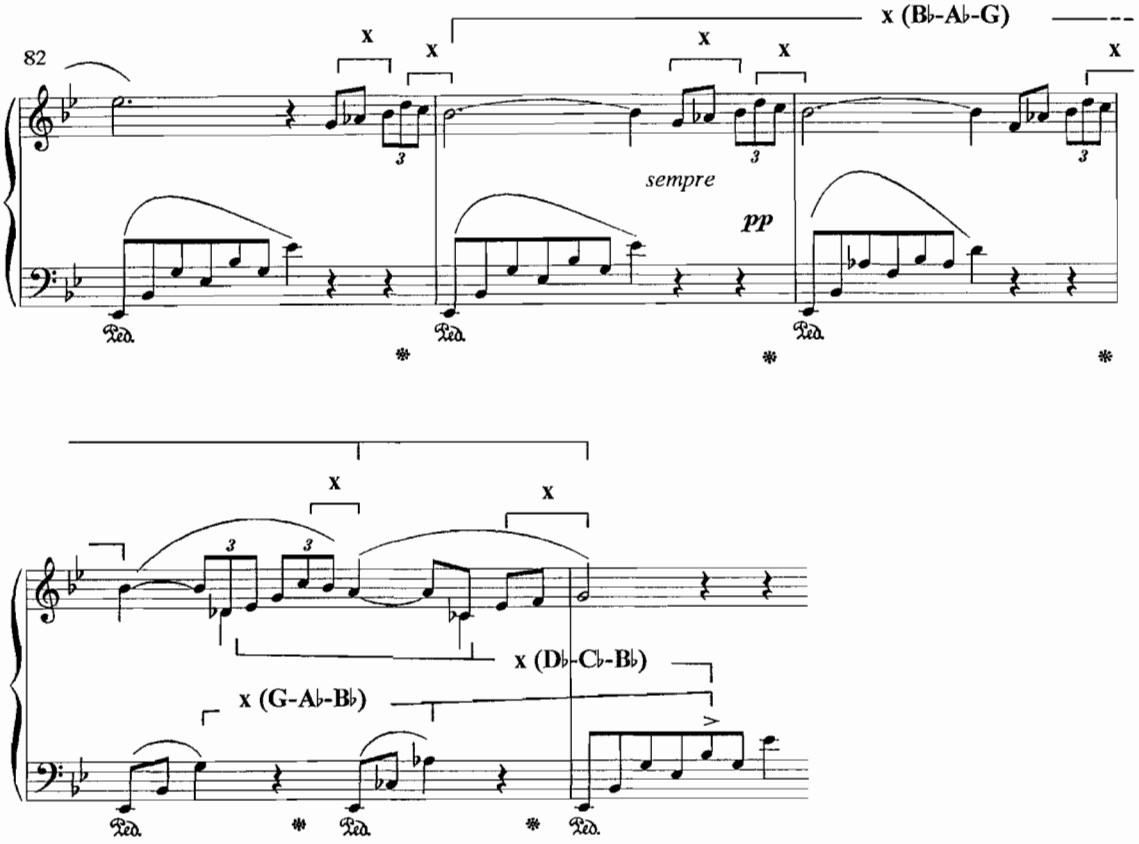


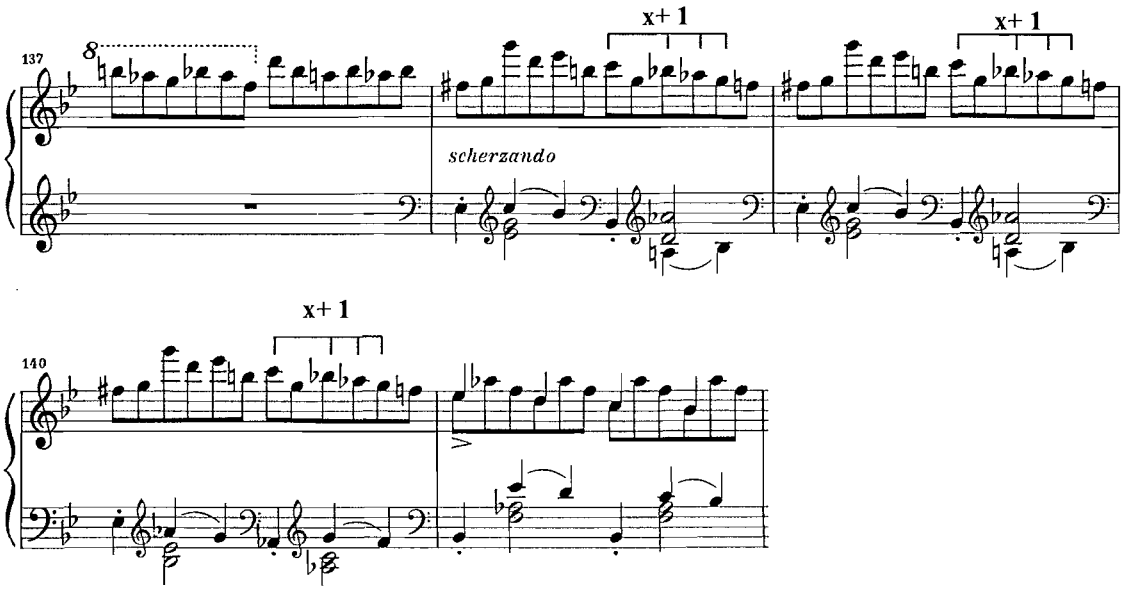
FIGURE 16. Theme II-b (second secondary theme in the key of E♭ major) on the pedal point E♭.

Contrary to the Theme II-a area, which modulates throughout, the key of the Theme D area is firmly grounded in E♭ major on the pedal point E♭, creating the atmosphere of a lullaby or barcarole. The stability and calm of the Theme D section is a safe haven from the minor key area in the Ballade. The three-note figure D♭-C♭-B♭ is accented in the inner voice in measures 85 and 86, which is acquired by the modal mixture between E♭ major and E♭ minor through the subdominant minor A♭ minor triad. Later, the motive D♭-C♭-B♭ is further extended to create an octatonic section.

In Theme III, marked *scherzando*, the three-note linear figure B♭-A-G, or "x," is expanded to a four-note figure C-B♭-A♭-G, or "x + 1," in the E♭ major context, which makes a perceptive connection to the four-note figure C-B♭-A♭-G in measure 3 in the introduction (see Figure 17).

The above examples show that Chopin develops the linear *Grundgestalt* B♭-A-G presented in the primary theme area to create all the themes economically (see Table 2). First, the departure from the home key G minor is suggested in the Bridge Theme area. Then the three-note figure B♭-A-G, $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$, is transposed and disordered ($\hat{2}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{1}$) in the secondary Theme I area and emphasizes tonics in E♭ major (submediant) and B♭ major (median), respectively. Then the submediant key is more firmly established in the secondary Theme II area by the three-note figure G-A♭-B♭ ($\hat{3}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{5}$). The third between G and B♭ ($\hat{1}$-$\hat{3}$) in the original *Grundgestalt* in the key of G minor is reinterpreted as ($\hat{3}$-$\hat{5}$) in the key of E♭ major. The three-note figure in the key of E♭ major is expanded to a four-note fugure C-B♭-A♭-G in the Theme III area, creating $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ in the key of E♭ major.

Theme III



Introduction of the Ballade

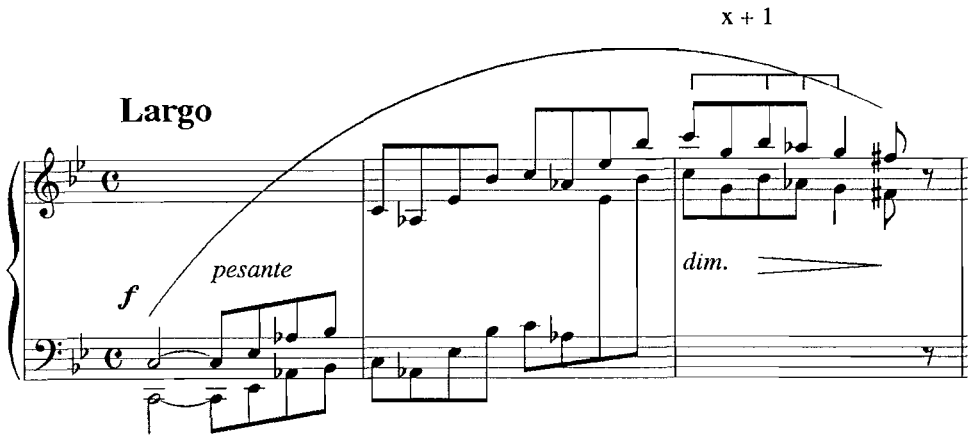


FIGURE 17. Theme III and the introduction of the Ballade: The "x + 1" connection.

TABLE 2. Summary of "x's"

Theme	Theme I	Bridge Theme	Theme II-a	Theme II-b	Theme III
Grundgestalt	**B♭-A-G**	**B♭-A//** **B♭-A♭-G**	**F-G-E♭** **C-D-B♭**	**G-A♭-B♭**	**C-B♭-A♭-G**
Key	**Gm:**	**Gm:** **to E♭M:**	**E♭M:** **B♭M:**	**E♭M:**	**E♭M**

The operations here are similar to the operations suggested by Patricia Carpenter.[16] There are two possible operations: (1) reinterpretation of the same pitches, such as G-B♭ as $\hat{1}$-$\hat{3}$ from $\hat{3}$-$\hat{5}$; and (2) reinterpretation of the same function in a different tonal context, such as $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of G minor and $\hat{2}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{1}$ (disordered in Theme II-a) in the key of E♭ major.

Tonal Network in Chopin's G Minor Ballade

According to Schoenberg, a tonal network is "not merely the relation of the tones with one another, but much more . . . the particular way in which all tones relate to the fundamental tone, especially the fundamental tone of the scale."[17] Figure 18 shows Schoenberg's Charts of Regions in major and minor modes. The Chart of Regions has its own unique property that differs from the popular cycle of fifths; in addition to the fifth relations shown vertically in the chart, the third relations are shown horizontally. It also displays the parallel keys next to each other.

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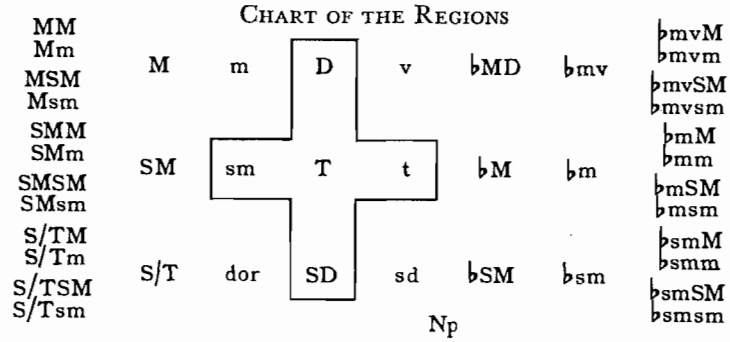
[16]See Carpenter, 31.

[17]Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, 123.

A. Chart of regions in major mode



B. Chart of Regions in minor mode

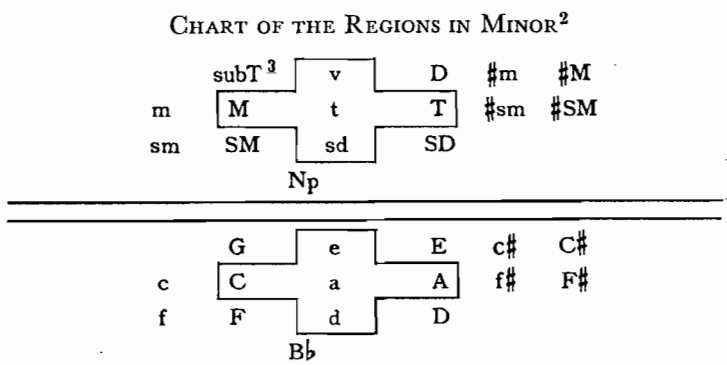


FIGURE 18. Schoenberg's Chart of Regions in major and minor modes. Source: Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, rev. ed., edited by Leonard Stein (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 20 and 30. Since Schoenberg's Chart of Regions in the minor mode shows a rather limited tonal network, I will use my tonal pyramid to map the tonal discourse of Chopin's Ballade (see Figure 19).

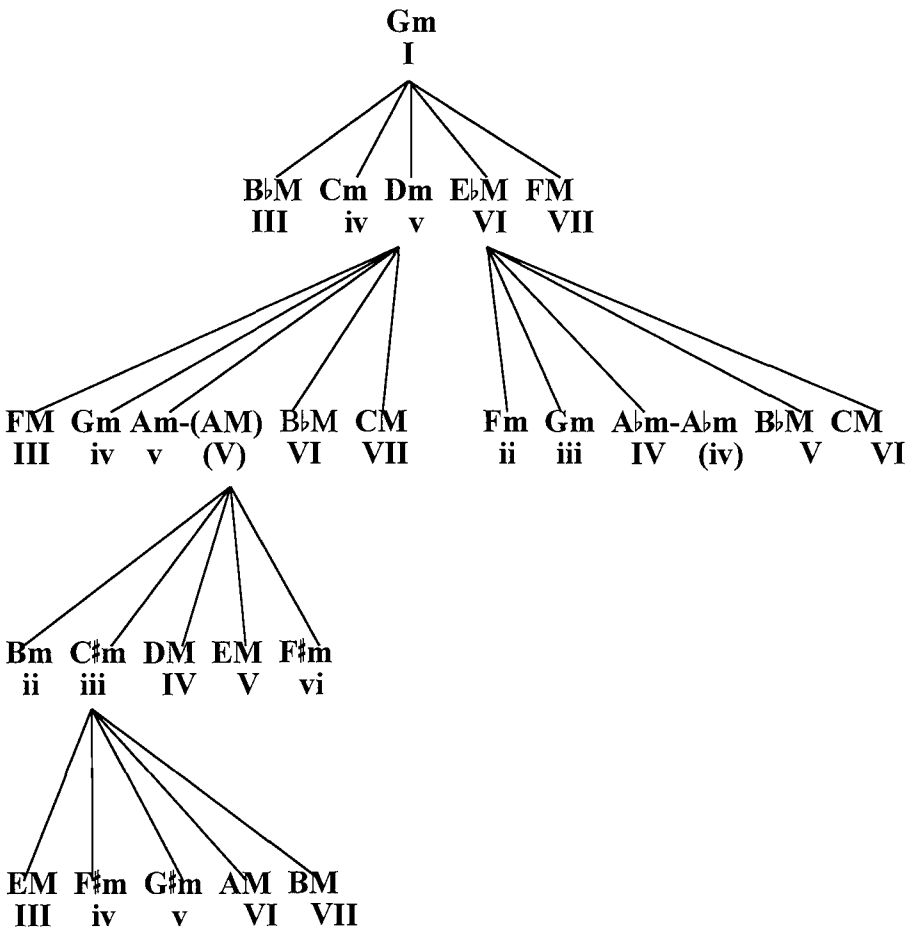


FIGURE 19. Tonal pyramid in the key of G minor showing regions related to the Ballade.

This tonal pyramid illustrates the relationships of tonal regions, which interact with each other according to a specific hierarchy. Unlike the popular cycle of fifths, the pyramid shows not only fifth relationships but also third relationships. For example, the G natural minor scale yields five diatonic chords—B♭M, Cm, Dm, E♭M, and Fm—and those diatonic chords can engender secondary regions of keys. When we repeat this procedure to create more regions downward from the new regional centers, we can create a larger diatonic pyramid. As the music moves down the pyramid, it becomes more remote from the original key and the fundamental tone.

According to Patricia Carpenter, there are two motions that constantly occur and create conflict during the discourse of tonal music: (1) the centrifugal function, which tends to move away from the tonal center (or stray lower in the tonal pyramid); and (2) the centripetal function, which halts the outward motion and re-establishes the structure's attraction to the tonal center (by going upward on the tonal pyramid).[18] In order to establish a monotonality, the centripetal function has to overcome the centrifugal function, assimilating all of the foreign regions. Figure 20 exhibits the key regions of the piece, their order of modulation, and how they relate to the specific octatonic scales in the Ballade.

When one observes the tonal scheme displayed on the tonal pyramid in Figure 18, one will notice Chopin's preference to modulate to the third-related keys B♭ major, the mediant major, and E♭ major, the submediant major, respectively. The most far-reaching region is C♯ minor, and Chopin touches G♯ minor through C♯ minor, the

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[18]Carpenter, 17.

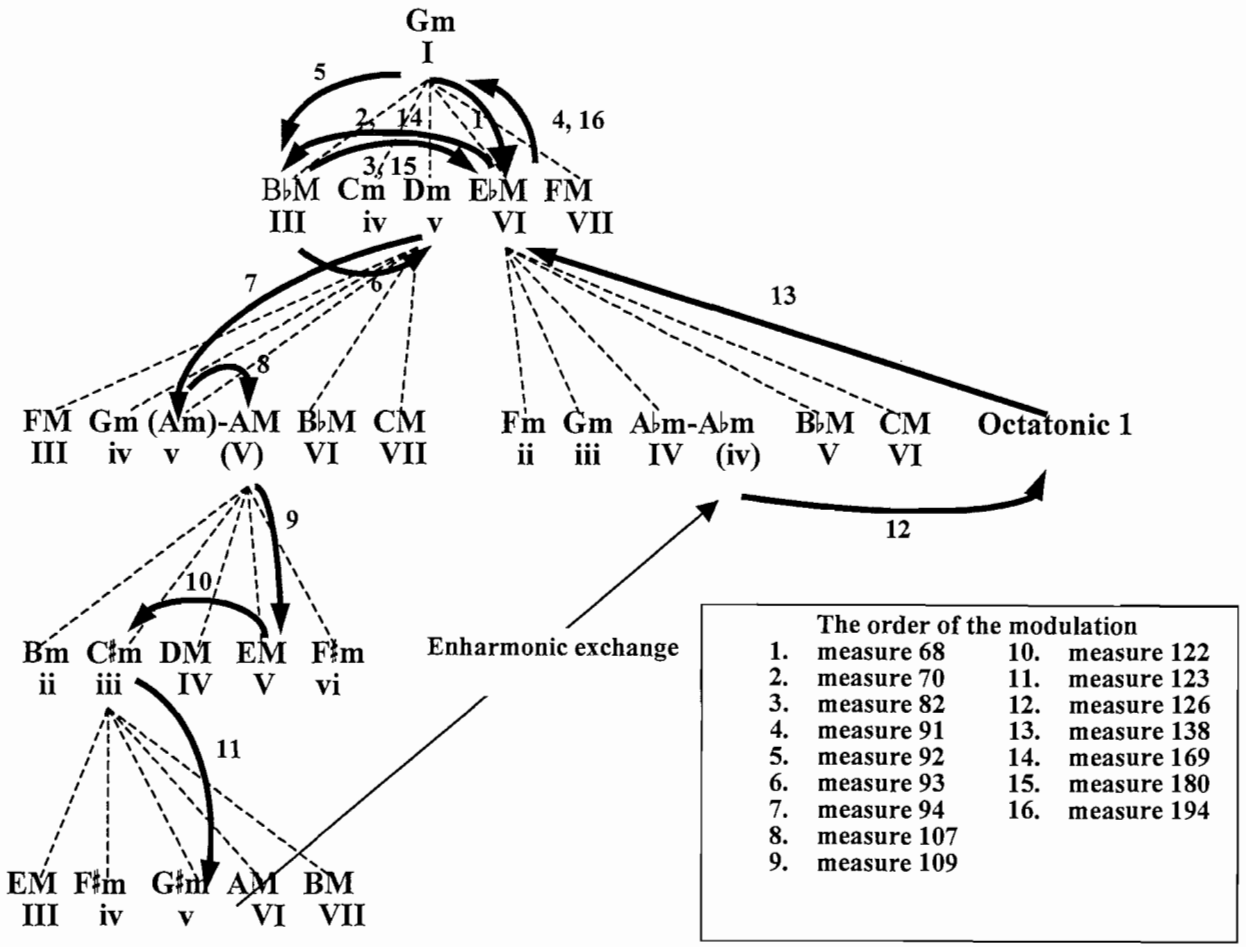

FIGURE 20. Tonal discourse of the G minor Ballade on the tonal pyramid.

dominant minor of C♯ minor. However, one can recall the G♯ minor chord from the previous section where the subdominant minor of E♭ major, A♭ minor, appeared in the secondary Theme II by modal mixture. The perceptive connection between A♭ minor and G♯ minor is the crux to connect the two remote keys, E♭ major and E major where the adventure to the foreign regions started. After an excursion to the octatonic 1 scale, Chopin returns to E♭ major, and the piece heads back to the home key G minor towards the end.

Creating Imbalances

Past analyses barely discuss the meaning of the introduction or its significance throughout the rest of the piece. For example, in Schenker's middle-ground graph, the introduction is simply ignored. Yet the introduction announces the discourse of the Ballade in an embryonic stage, and the strange events that transpire in those mere seven measures create imbalances that grow and evolve throughout the piece.

Schoenberg describes how the ambiguity of keys in tonal music creates imbalance or problems:

> Every tone which is added to a beginning tone makes the meaning of that tone doubtful. If, for instance, G follows after C, the ear may not be sure whether this expresses C major, or even F major or E minor: and the addition of other tones may or may not clarify this problem. In this manner, there is produced a state of unrest, or imbalance which grows throughout most of the piece.[19]

How, then, are the imbalances created and later resolved in Chopin's Gm Ballade?

The first imbalance is in the unaccompanied opening Largo passage marked *pesante* with *f*. The long ascending arpeggio of an A♭M 6th chord (or Neapolitan 6th of

[19]Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, 123.

G minor) in octaves begins at C in the low register. Since there is no logical explanation for the Neapolitan 6th chord between measures 1 and 5 in the opening, one cannot find a clear tonal context for this arpeggio. This creates uneasiness for the listeners.

Another problem develops in measure 7, where a dissonance in the inner voice, E♭, is juxtaposed with D in the bass. The sound of the dissonance E♭ over an otherwise usual cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chord before the dominant lingers in the ear. Only B♭ in the top voice of the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord is sustained, and the other voices, followed by a rest, decay without resolution.[20] The ambiguity of the Neapolitan 6th chord, as well as the juxtaposition of E♭ and D, creates imbalance or unrest. In the entire seven measures of the introduction, the tonic G minor is never clearly established.

Since a certain component of the tonal logic is missing, the introduction works just like the dream of a protagonist. Some important figures or concerns emerge from the subconscious level. The dream itself does not explain what the problems are and how they should be solved. However, it has a profound meaning, as if to predict the fate of the protagonist.

After the introduction, Chopin introduces the tonic G minor in $\frac{6}{4}$ and everything seems to be more tonally oriented as the music embarks on a logical chord progression. But the problems in the introduction do not disappear. Instead, they persist and even grow more urgent throughout the piece until everything is explained and settled in its rightful place. Schoenberg writes, "The method by which balance is restored seems to

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[20]Schenker's analysis does not show this E♭. David Witten thinks E♭ is resolved to D in the following measure. However, I think the rest, the double bar lines separating E♭ and D, and the tempo change indicate Chopin's intention to separate or emphasize E♭.

me the real idea of the composition."[21] Now I will analyze how the problems develop and how balance is restored at the end.

Conflict Between Minor and Major Regions in the Ballade's Early Stage

In the introduction, C-B♭-A♭-G in measure 3 appears after the strong ascending A♭ arpeggion in unison (see Figure 21). As aforementioned, until the third beat of measure 3, the tonality of the introduction is ambiguous, although the consistent flat sign applied to A implies E♭ major as its possible tonal orientation. On the fourth beat, however, F♯ emerges—later interpreted as $\hat{7}$ of G minor—and gradually the key of G minor becomes more prominent. The initial C-B♭-A♭-G is restated as C-B♭-A-G at the end of the introduction, thus establishing a minor character for the following waltz section.

Although the Theme I area is predominantly in the key of G minor, there are some subtle attempts to modulate to the key of B♭ major, the dominant of the key of E♭ major (see Figure 22). For example, an extensive improvisational figure appears over the $F^{\sharp}_{3}$ chord in measure 33, as if predicting that the major key will eventually blossom. The controversial E♭ is reinterpreted as $\hat{4}$ in the key of B♭ major. A V^{4}_{3}-I resolution in the key of B♭ major appears in measures 33-34, but Cm and D^{7} immediately follow to maintain the superiority of the key of G minor.

Throughout the piece, there are abundant examples of conflicts between the force that interprets E♭ in the major key context and another force that tries to establish

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[21] Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, 123.

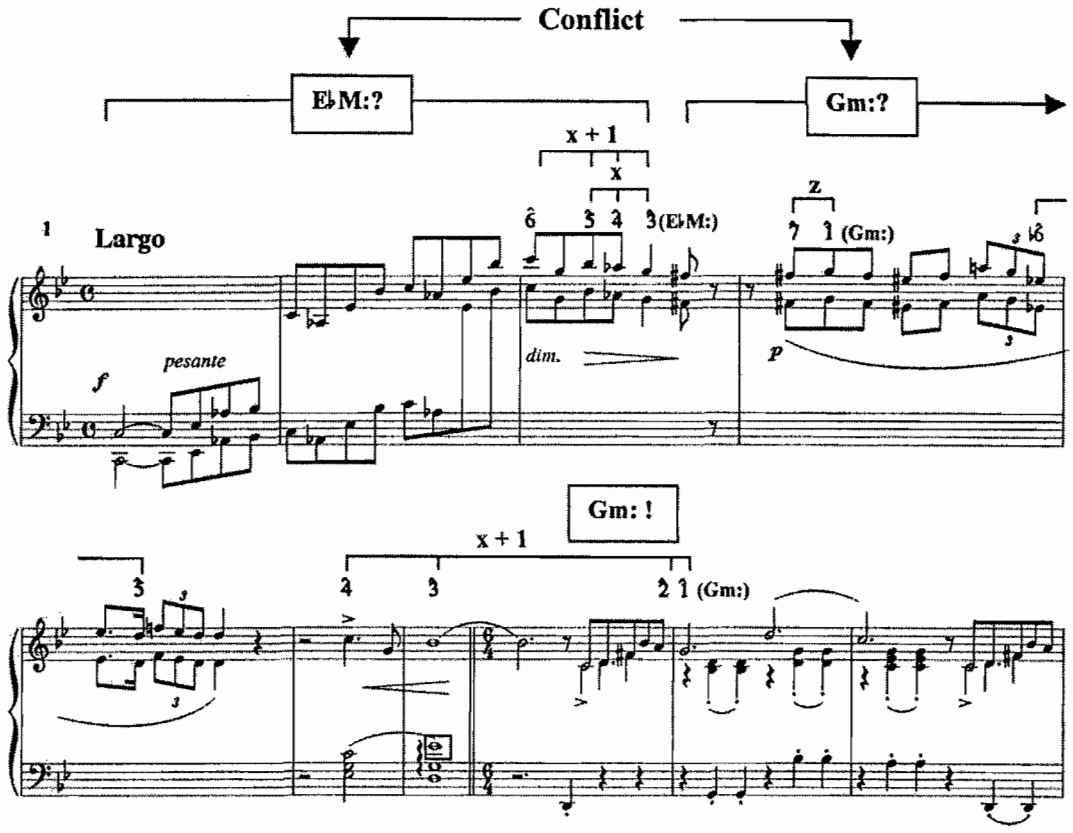

FIGURE 21. Conflict between E♭M: and Gm: in the introduction.

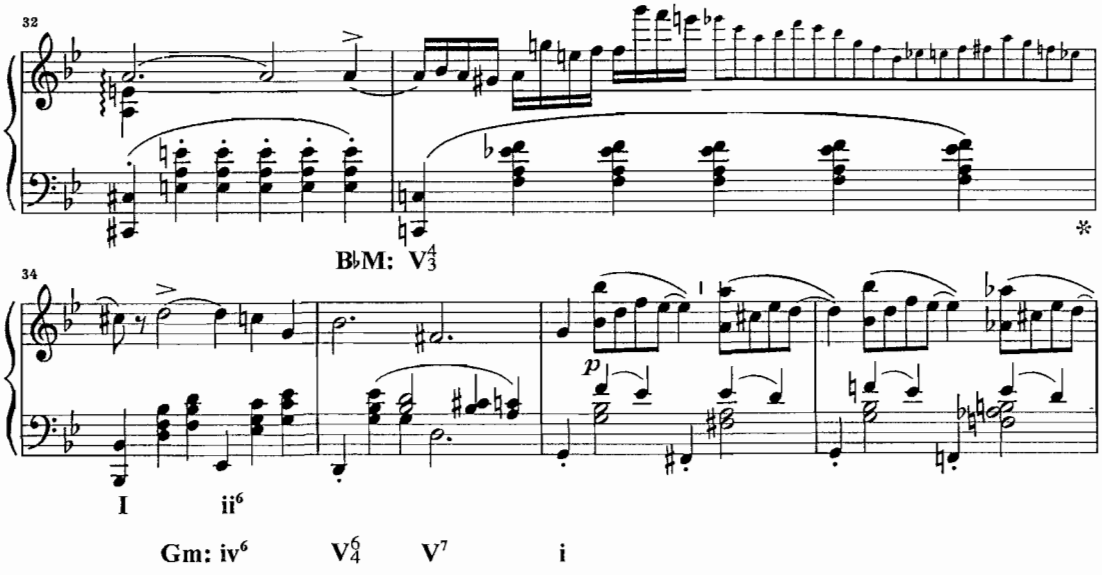

FIGURE 22. Effort to modulate to a major key in the Theme I area (mm. 32-37).

Gm as the tonic by an Eß-D resolution to counterbalance the unrest in the opening passage. Some of the early-stage resolutions between Eß and D are shown in Figure 23.

Figure 21 shows some perceptional connection between the opening of the Ballade and the transitional section after Theme I. At the end of the introduction, there are two motives that are incomplete: (1) unresolved E♭ (♭$\hat{6}$ of the key of G minor), which should be resolved to D ($\hat{5}$) in the inner voice; and (2) the C-B♭ in soprano, which eventually becomes the descending three-note figure B♭-A-G in Theme I. Altogether, there are two incomplete figures in the introduction: "x + 1" and "y^1." It is as if the protagonist in the Ballade has an encountered an omen.

In the rabid transitional section marked *piu mosso* with *f*, the vaguely suggested figures "x + 1" and "y^1" in the introduction are fully realized in powerful arpeggiation. In measures 44-48, "x + 1" is presented in the soprano, while "y^1" is in the inner voice as in the introduction. This voicing and the clear resolution from E♭-D suggest that the controversial E♭ in the introduction was not accidental but intentional.

A. The end of the introduction and the beginning of Theme I (measures 5-9)

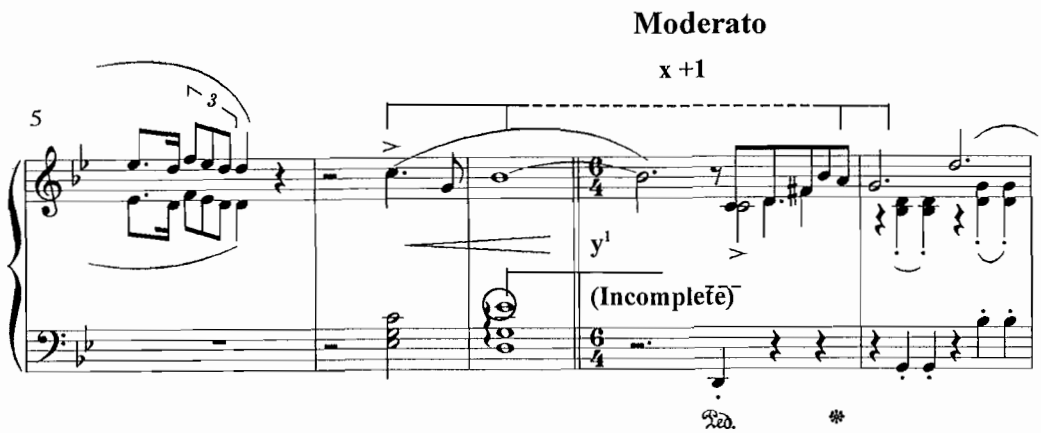

FIGURE 23. Introduction and the transitional section after Theme I: Restoring the balance.

B. Transitional section after Theme I (measures 44-55)

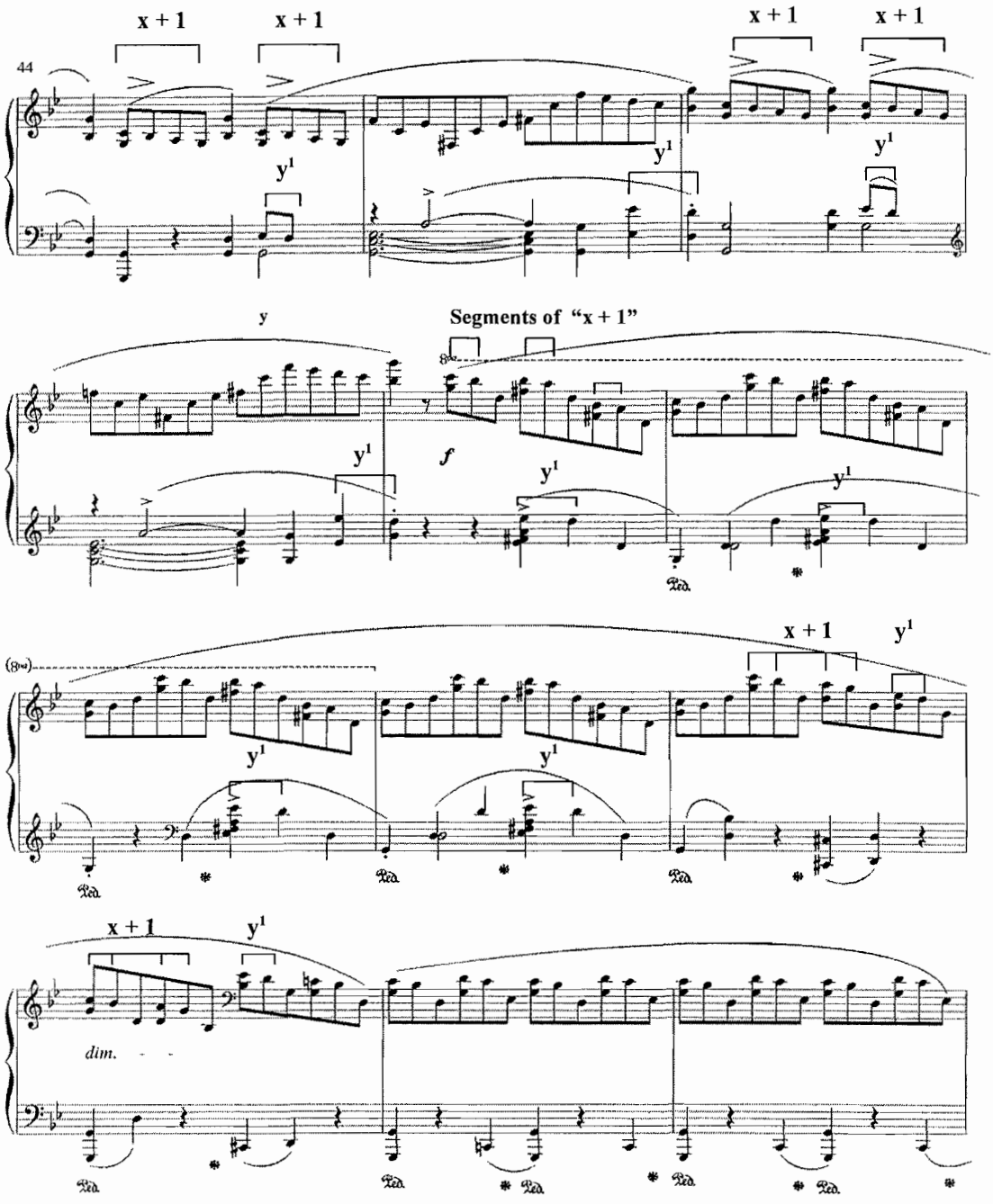

FIGURE 23. (Continued)

After measure 48, the four-note figure "x + 1" becomes fragmented, and the dyad C-B♭ and B♭-A is repeated several times along with E♭-D in the left-hand part between measures 48-51. After measure 53, the dyads C-B♭, A-G, and E♭-D are all in the right-hand part and gradually start diminishing to prepare the entrance of the measure themes.

In measures 59-60, there is a tonal cell "z" or F♯-G. "z" works as $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of G minor that confirms the supremacy of the tonic G (see Figure 24). In measures

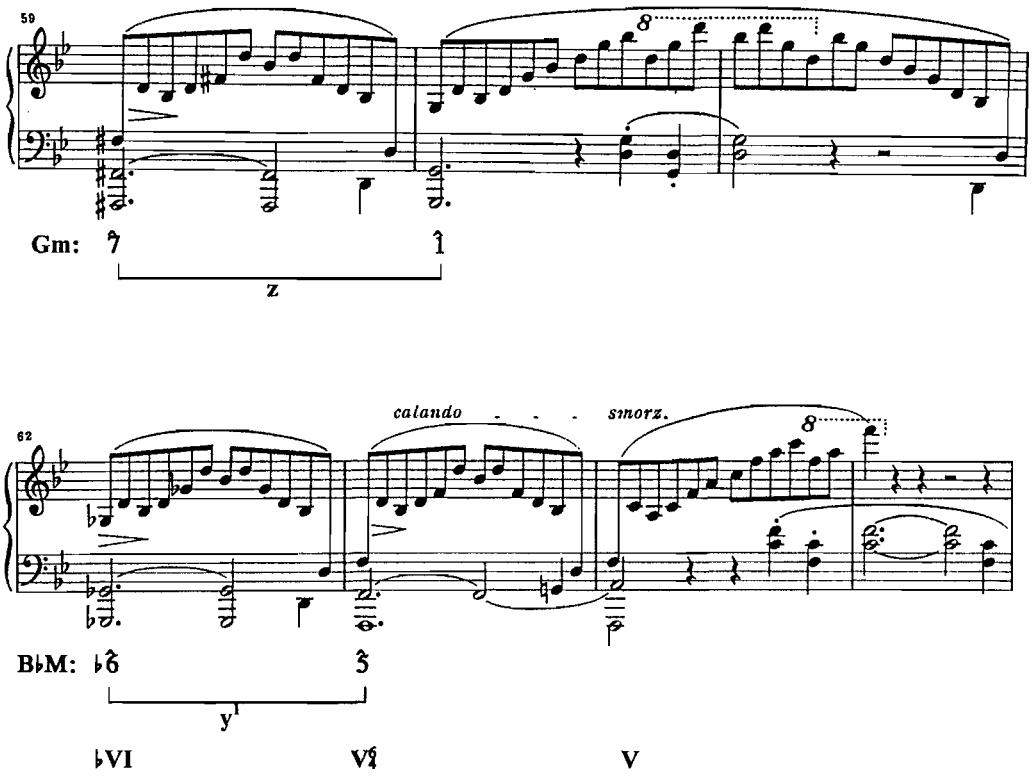

FIGURE 24. Enharmonic exchange to reinterpret F♯ ($\hat{7}$ of the key of G minor) as G♭ ($\flat\hat{6}$ of the key of B♭ major) to establish a new major key region preceding Theme II-a.

62-63, the enharmonic exchange transforms F♯ into G♭, however, and G♭ that works as ♭6th is resolved to F, making ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of B♭ major (modal mixture). This operation establishes Theme II in the new B♭ major region.

Manifestation of the Octatonic Scale

As mentioned before, one of the most striking characteristics of the piece is the manifestation of the octatonic collection. Before I point out the specifics of the octatonic manifestation in the piece, I would like to compare the octatonic scale 0 [0134679T] with the minor scales in Figure 25. I added the *Grundgestalt* of the piece at the bottom to enhance the comparison.

Although G minor scales and the octatonic scale share many common notes, the implication of this comparison shows that D is the crucial note to establish G as the tonal center in the G minor mode. Not only is D the crucial note that creates the dominant of the key of G minor, but also the tonic Gm cannot be completed without D.

G natural minor	G	A	B♭	C	**D**	E♭	F		G
G harmonic minor	G	A	B♭	C	**D**	E♭		F♯	G
G melodic minor (Ascending)	G	A	B♭	C	**D**		E	F♯	G
Octatonic 0	G	A	B♭	C	D♭	E♭	E	F♯	G
Grungestalt	G	A	B♭		(D)	E♭			

?

FIGURE 25. Comparison between minor scales and octatonic scale.

The octatonic scale 0 contains D♭ and E♭, both a half-step away from D.[22] Figure 18 shows that the *Grundgestalt* B♭-A-G and E♭ is a subset of both the G minor scales and the octatonic scale 0. This indicates that the unresolved E♭ has to be resolved to D to establish a clear centricity around the tonic Gm.

In the G minor Ballade, the manifestation of the octatonic collection appears in the middle of the piece. The transformation from the minor scales to an octatonic scale begins around measure 118 (see Figure 26). Bass E, from the previous secondary theme section in the key of E major, is held, while the harmony in the upper voices changes from an E major chord to an F♯7chord. The ascending scale spans one octave from F♯. All the notes in the scale are derived from the ascending B melodic minor scale. The sequence yields A♯-B-C♯, which is enharmonic to B♭-C♭-D♭ and the octatonic scale 1 subset. The orientation of the scale is rather ambiguous because of its starting note and the sudden harmonic shift without preparation.

Chopin sequences the next two measures and superimposes a $G♭^7$ chord on bass E, creating more tension between the bass and the upper voices. This is a typical conflict between the centripetal function and the centrifugal function in the tonal pyramid; there is an energy that resists moving from the previous tonal region E, and there is opposition in the upper voices, which tries to escape further down the tonal pyramid to create a more remote region from the fundamental tone G. The upper voices, derived from the C♯ melodic minor scale and one neighbor tone (F double sharp),

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[22]I will use "Octatonic 0," "Octatonic 1," and "Octatonic 2" to distinguish between transpositions of the octatonic scale. Octatonic 0 ascends from C (0) and repeats a semitone and a whole tone in turn. Octatonic 1 starts from C♯/D♭, and octatonic 2 starts from D. Here, I started the octatonic 0 scale from G for an easy comparison.

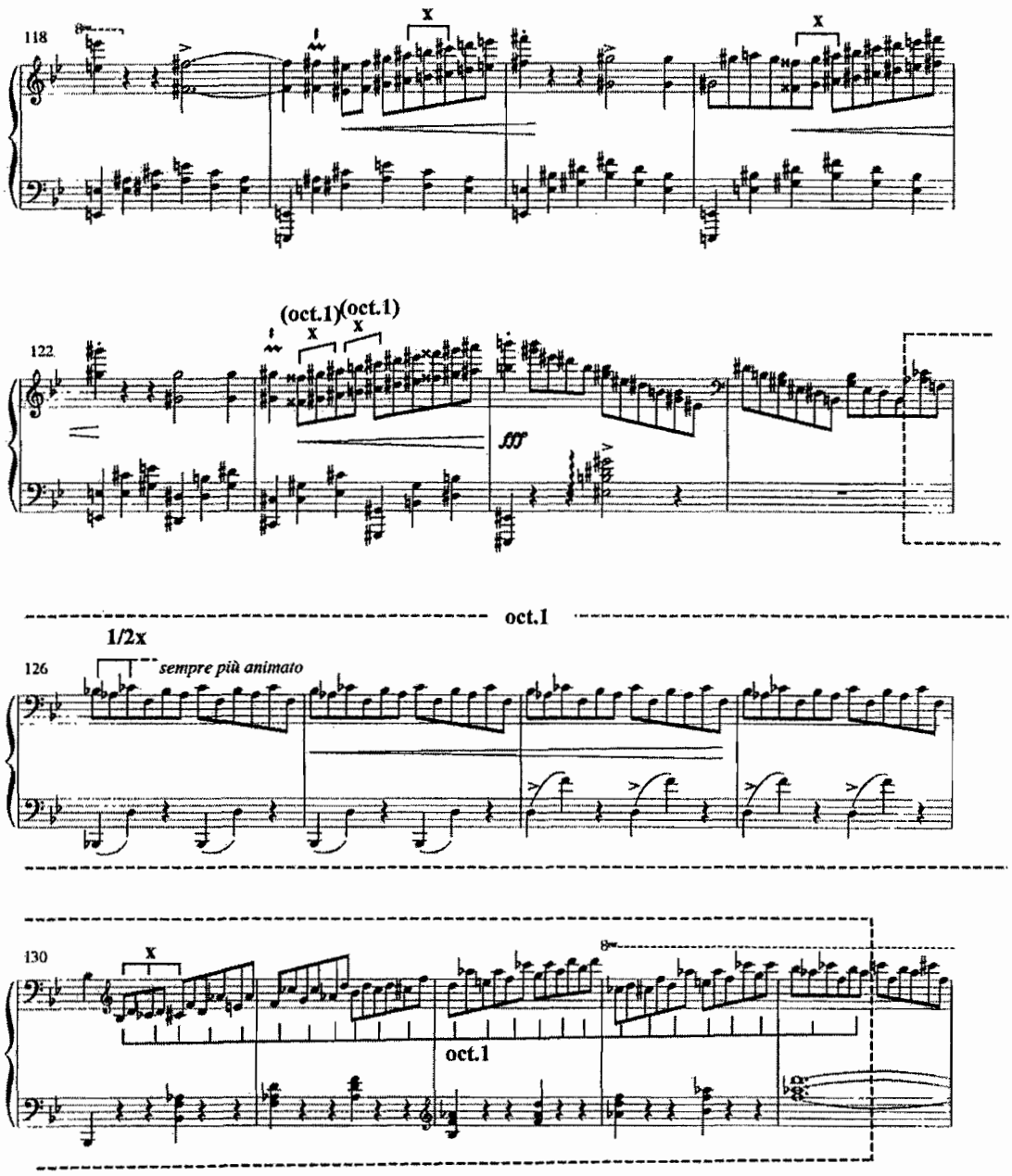

FIGURE 26. Development of "x's" and the manifestation of the octatonic scale.

creates the sequence F𝄪-G♯-A♯, which is enharmonic to G-A♭-B♭. This is another octatonic scale 1 subset.

In measure 123, Chopin begins an ascending scale that derives from G♯ melodic minor and starts on the same note as the previous scale. Now the two octatonic scale 1 subsets, F𝄪-G♯-A♯ (enharmonic to G-A♭-B♭) and A♯-B-C♯ (enharmonic to B♭-C♭-D♭), are unified, forming the sequence F𝄪-G♯-A♯-B-C♯, or G-A♭-B♭-C♭-D♭. This five-note figure connects two 3-note linear figures from the *Grundgestalt* in the Theme II-b section: G-A♭-B♭ in Theme II-b and D♭-C♭-B♭, which was in the inner voice. After B-A♭ is respelled as C♭-B♭ in measures 125 and 126 in the soprano, every note is finally derived from the octatonic 1 scale. The reversed melodic figure B♭-C♭-C♯ expands to the full ascending octatonic 1 scale, which spans three octaves starting from measure 130.

B♭-C♭-C♯ is a retrograde construction of the figure D♭-C♭-B♭ in measures 85 and 86, the Theme II-b region in the key of E♭ major (see Figure 27). Since E♭ major does not produce D♭ and C♭, Chopin employs the subdominant minor of E♭ major, or A♭m, by modal mixture.

Chopin retains $B♭^7$ in the lower voices, D diminished 7th in the upper voices, and the ascending octatonic 1 scale in the middle voices between measures 130 and 133. C♭ from the diminished 7th chord is resolved to $B♭^7$ in measures 133 and 134, creating the incomplete motive C♭-B♭ (D♭ is missing). $B♭^7$ and D^{o7} chords, subsets of both octatonic 1 scales, function as V^7 and vii^{o7} of the key of E♭ major, respectively, to create a smooth modulation back towards the fundamental tonal region. In measures 134 and 137, Chopin employs a chromatic scale in the upper voices to bridge between the octatonic scale and the E♭ major diatonic scale. In measures 136 and 137, the octatonic four-note figure is sequenced chromatically, creating octatonic 1, octatonic, 2, octatonic 0, and

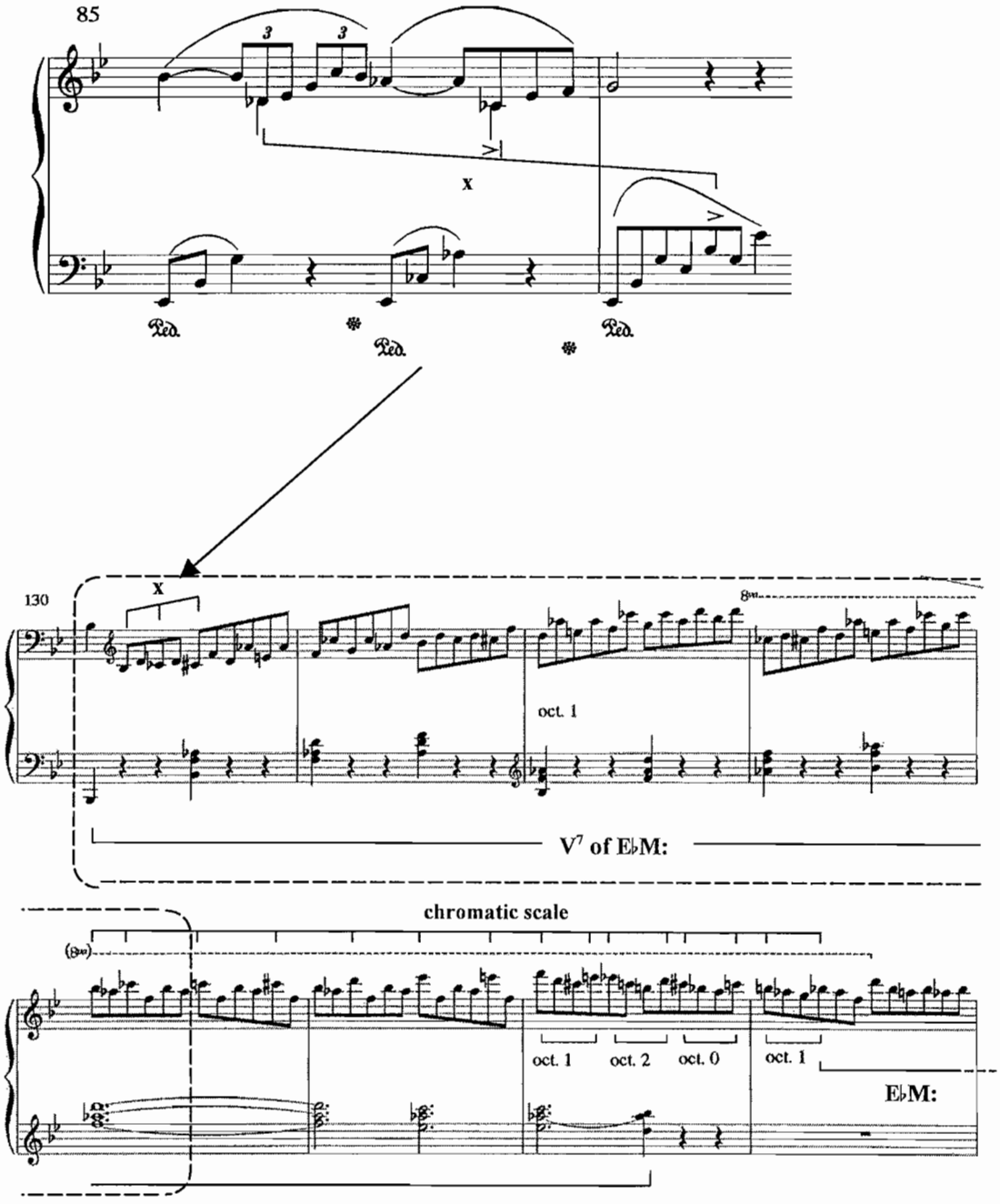

FIGURE 27. Perceptional connection between "x" in the Theme II-b area and the octatonic scale before Theme III.

octatonic 1 subsets. The octatonic subsets are assimilated completely in measure 137, resuming the key of E♭ major. The technique of keeping the dominant scale degree in the bass while having nondiatonic subsets in the upper voices is reminiscent of the later French composer Debussy.

Figure 28 illustrates the development of the *Grundgestalt* and octatonic manifestation. The excursion to the octatonic scale is shown in the tonal pyramid as well. On the tonal pyramid, C♯m is the most distant key region from the tonic Gm in the Ballade. Chopin employed EM to acquire C♯m, the submediant of EM. G♯m, the dominant minor of C♯m, was used as a pivot chord to bridge between C♯m and E♭M because G♯m is enharmonic to A♭m, the submediant minor of E♭M. Both G♯m and A♭m produce the crucial pitches A♯-B-C♯ or B♭-C♭-D♭ to create the octatonic manifestation.

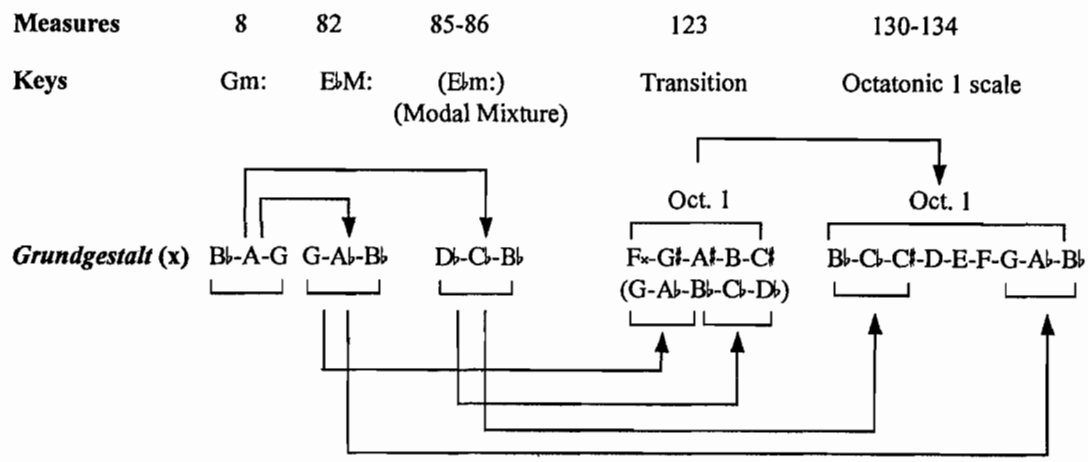

FIGURE 28. The development of the three-note figure "x" to create the manifestation of the octatonic scale.

Expansion of the Submediant Region

At the beginning of the introduction, "x + 1," C-B♭-A♭-G, following the ascending A♭ major chord, creates tonal ambiguity before the introduction is steered to the key of G minor to begin Theme I. However, the consistent A♭ in the melody implies E♭ as a possible tonal center. This assumption is justified when the same "x + 1" is realized in Theme III in the key of E♭ major. Figure 29 demonstrates how the ambiguous "x + 1" and other pitches in the introduction are reinterpreted in the key of E♭ major.

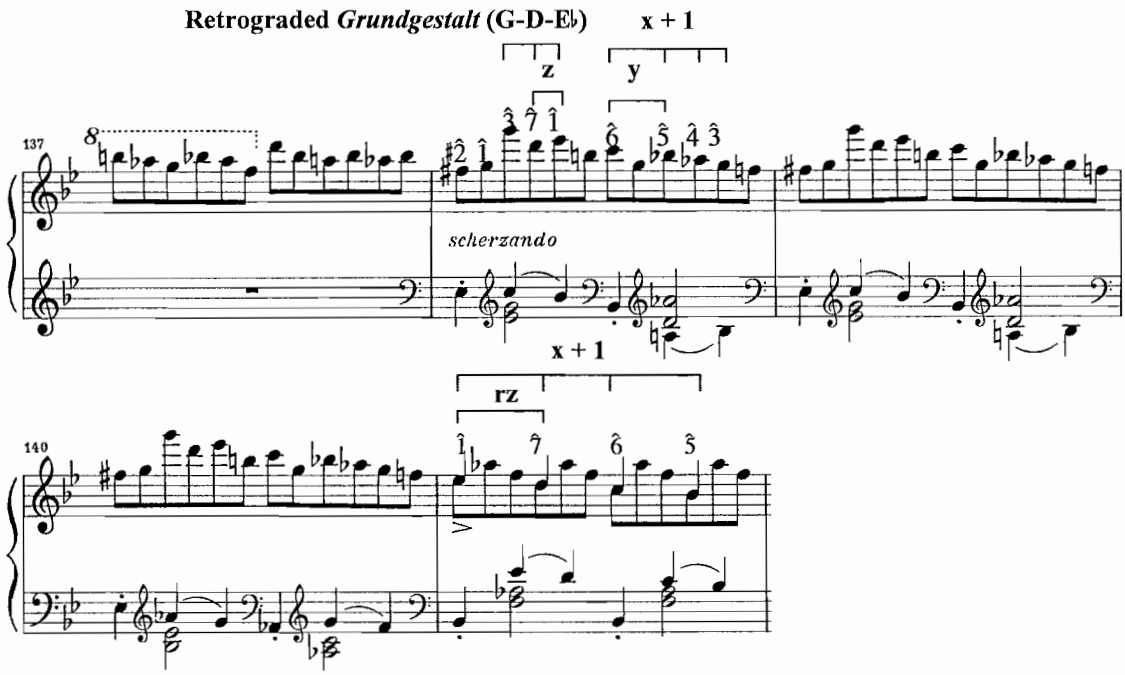

FIGURE 29. Theme III in Section B and the reinterpretation of the pitches in the introduction.

In Figure 29, F♯-G, or the $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ resolution in the key of G minor in the introduction, is now $\sharp\hat{2}$-$\hat{3}$ in Theme III. The important leading tone F♯ becomes a mere lower neighbor tone $\sharp\hat{2}$. The figure "x + 1," or C-B♭-A♭-G, is now clearly in the E♭ major

context followed by F natural. E♭-D was "y^1" or ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of G minor, but "y^1" is reversed to form "z" or $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$ in the key of E♭ major in measure 138 and "rz" without reversal in measure 141. Above all, the most crucial event in Theme III is the reinterpretation of the *Grundgestalt*. The three-note figure E♭-D-G in the opening, ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$, establishes the key of G minor. Now the retrograded *Grundgestalt* becomes $\hat{3}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$, creating centricity around the tonic E♭. The functional tonal cell E♭-D, or "y^1" (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) in the key of G minor, is reversed to form "z" ($\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$) in the key of E♭ major. Overall, Theme III represents the triumph of E♭ major and works as an antithesis against the tonic G minor. Since this section is preceded by the manifestation of the octatonic 1 scale, it may have some programmatic meaning, such as a magical moment caused by a supernatural force. The dazzling character of the theme marked *scherzando* creates a Mephisto-Waltz-like mood.

In the transition between Theme III and Theme II-a, more reinterpretations of the pitches from the introduction establish the superiority of E♭ major. In measures 157-158, an augmented 6th chord resolves to V^6_4 in E♭ major, creating ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the bass line (see Figure 30). This is a reinterpretation of ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ (E♭-D) in an E♭ major context. Then there is a repeated motion of E♭-D-E♭ in the inner voice in measures 158-162. The ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ (E♭-D), or "y^1" in the key of G minor in the introduction, is now reinterpreted as $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$ (D-E♭), or "z" in the key of E♭ major.

My Schenkerian graph in Figure 11 and Table 1 shows that Chopin reversed the order of the primary and secondary themes in Section A^1. The order of the themes in

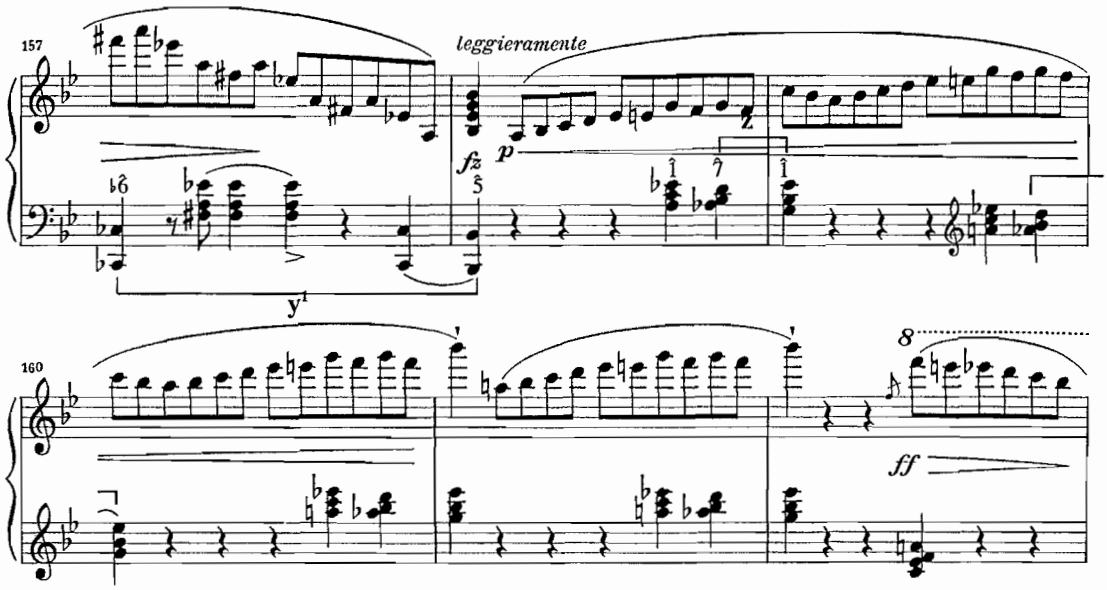

FIGURE 30. Transition between Theme III and Section A[1]: More reinterpretations of pitches declare the supremacy of E♭ major.

Section A is Theme I in the key of G minor and Themes II-a and II-b in the key of E♭ major, while the order in Section A[1] begins with Themes II-a and II-b in the key of E♭ major, followed by Theme I in the key of G minor. Since Theme III is in the key of E♭ major, the reversal of the themes in Section A[1] creates an unusually large submediant region that stretches over Themes III, II-a, and II-b.

Themes II-a and II-b in Section A[1] are forceful and full of life compared to the ones in Section A, which is expressive yet intimate and delicate (see Figure 31). The dynamics marked *ff* and the powerful block chords in the Theme II-a area as well as the *con forza* in the Theme II-b area sharply contrast with Themes II-a and II-b in Section A, which are marked *Meno Mosso* and *sotto voce*, respectively, with *pp*. Michael Klein uses the term "apotheosis" to describe the transformation of the F minor Ballade's

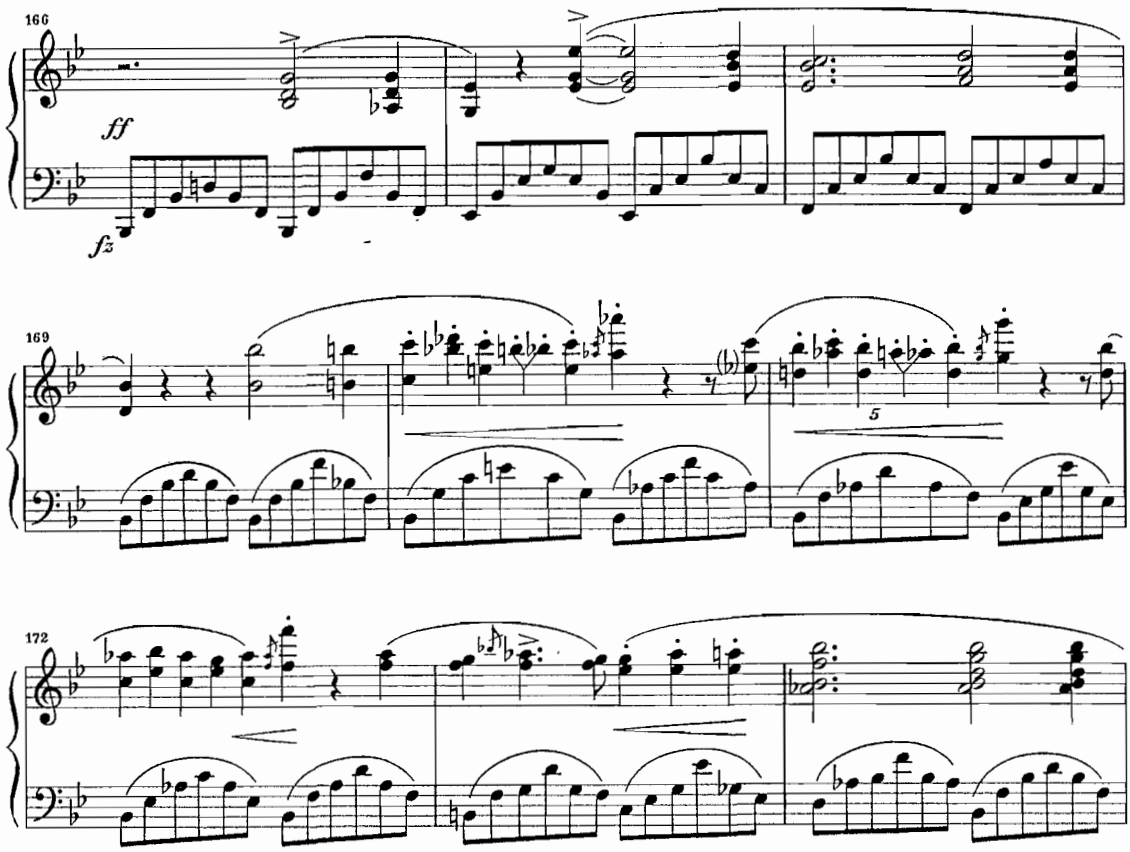

FIGURE 31. The beginning of Theme II-a in Section A[1]: "Apotheosis" of the theme.

secondary theme from exposition to reprise.[23] In the diagram of the G minor Ballade, Klein categorizes Theme II-a as an "apotheosis" and Theme II-b as a "Valedictory" expressing a farewell.

[23]Klein quotes Edward T. Cone: "In Chopin's larger works, including the ballades, formal/expressive logic is directed towards what Cone calls apotheosis, a special kind of recapitulation that reveals unexpected harmonic richness and textual excitement in the theme previously presented with a deliberately restricted harmonization and a relatively drab accompaniment." Klein, 31. Klein further elaborates, "In Chopin's larger works, an interior theme tends to be a nocturne or pastorale, whose simple accompaniment imbues it with potential for apotheosis. Often the initial appearance of such a theme is in a chorale texture, whose religious implications underscore a desired emotional state." Klein, 32.

Theme I follows the Theme II-a area. The Theme II-a area occurs over the pedal point E♭, and the Theme I area occurs over the pedal point D. This E♭-D progression creates the structural ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of G minor, and the victorious and extensive E major region is assimilated to G minor. This crucial turn is ironic because the more thriving and extensive the major key area is, the more devastating when it surrenders to its opponent. The lengthy pedal point is analagous to an irreversible fate, as if the protagonist's triumph remains elusive no matter what the melodic figures express. After Theme I, the coda gives its verdict.

Restoring the Balance

The powerful restoration of the imbalance in the opening can be found in the coda. Since the primary theme and the coda follow the expansive mediant region in Themes III, II-a, and II-b with full development, the coda contains a massive culmination of energy that counterbalances the mediant region. In measures 216 and 217, the Neapolitan 6th chord, which was not in the introduction's logical harmonic context, is now followed by V^7 and I in the key of G minor (see Figure 32). Thus, the tonal ambiguity in the opening is explained by analogy in the coda. (B♭)-A♭-G, the melodic line in measure 216, also suggests the correct source of the Neapolitan chord: the key of E♭ major.

In addition to the resolution from E♭ to D, there are other pitches resolved in the coda. Chopin included a subset of octatonic 0, A, F♯, and C♯ in the inner voice in measures 208 and 209, the opening of the coda (see Figure 33). Since the entire two measures have a Gm chord, these dissonances are resolved: A goes to B♭, F♯ goes to G,

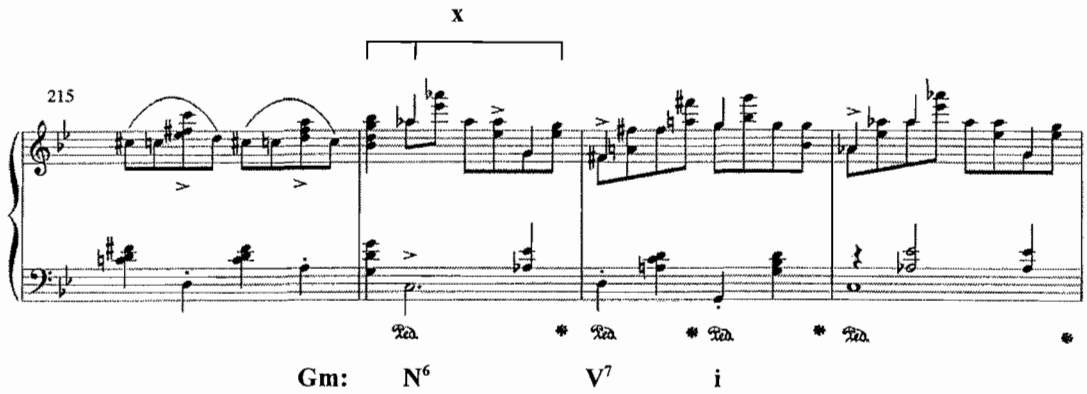

FIGURE 32. Assimilating the Neapolitan 6th chord in the G minor context in measures 216-217.

and C♯ goes to D. Chopin places an eighth rest in front of each resolution, which is reminiscent of the E♭ followed by the rest in the opening passage.

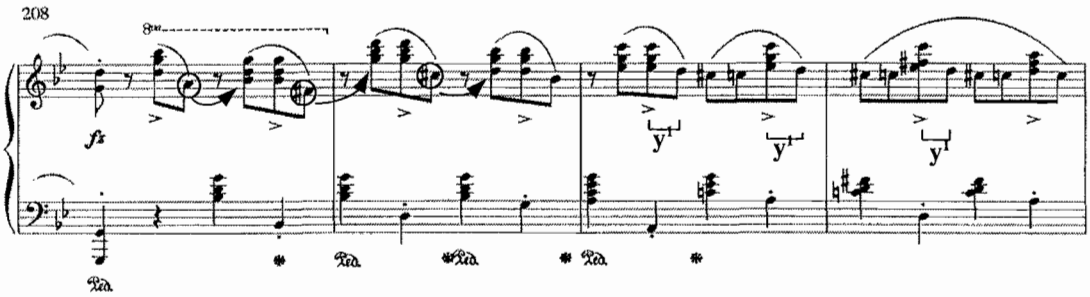

FIGURE 33. The resolution to a G minor triad to establish centricity.

In measures 240 and 241, in addition to the resolutions from F♯ to G, and C♯ to D, there is also one from E natural to D (see Figure 34). E is also a prominent pitch in both bass and soprano parts in the Theme I area in the key of A minor. In my Schenkerian graph, E♭-D is marked y^1 and E-D is marked y. The Schenkerian graph in Figure 11 illustrates a "contraction" in Schenkerian terms, which means a repetition at a lower structural level.

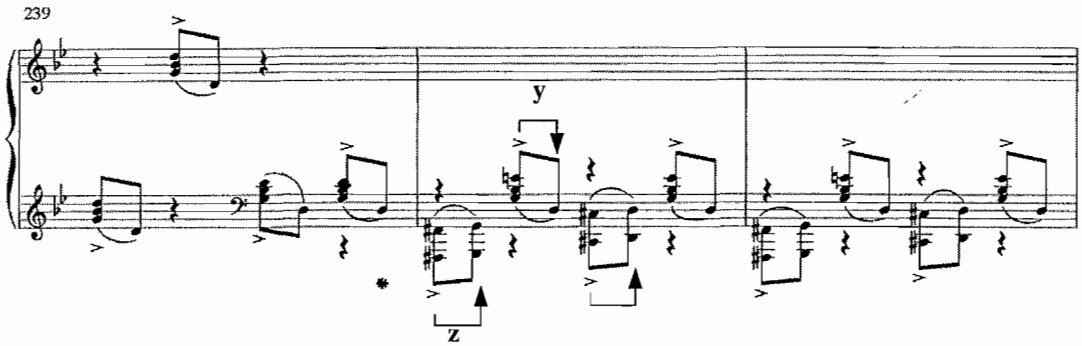

FIGURE 34. The resolutions from E-D ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) and C♯-D ($\sharp\hat{4}$-$\hat{5}$), which emphasize the dominant D ($\hat{5}$), and $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$, which emphasize the tonic to establish centricity in the key of G minor.

Some of the above resolutions occur in the key of G minor in the diatonic context, but some of them also offset the tension between the octatonic scale and the G minor scale. Figure 35 illustrates the resolutions between octatonic 0 and the G minor scale.

The coda not only provides solutions to the problems, but also introduces more conflicts between opposing forces, transforming the entire section into a fierce battlefield (see Figure 36). Between measures 242 and 245, the inner voices played by the left hand form octatonic 0, while the bass in measure 242 contains a strong

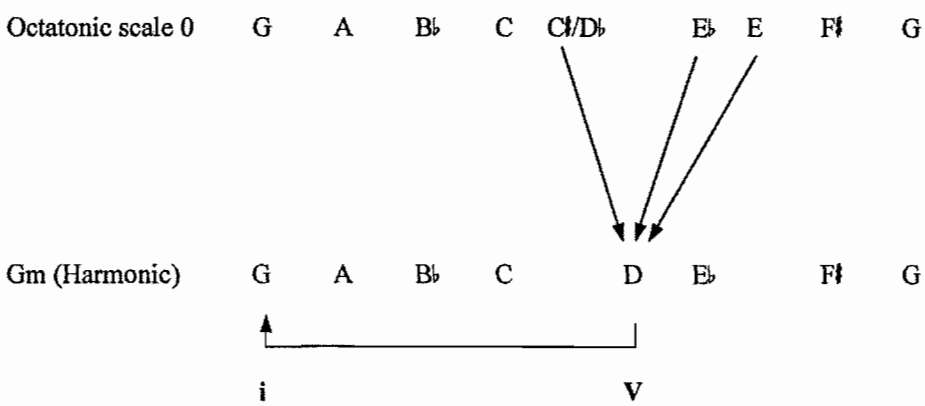

FIGURE 35. Centripetal function in the coda to establish the tonic of G minor.

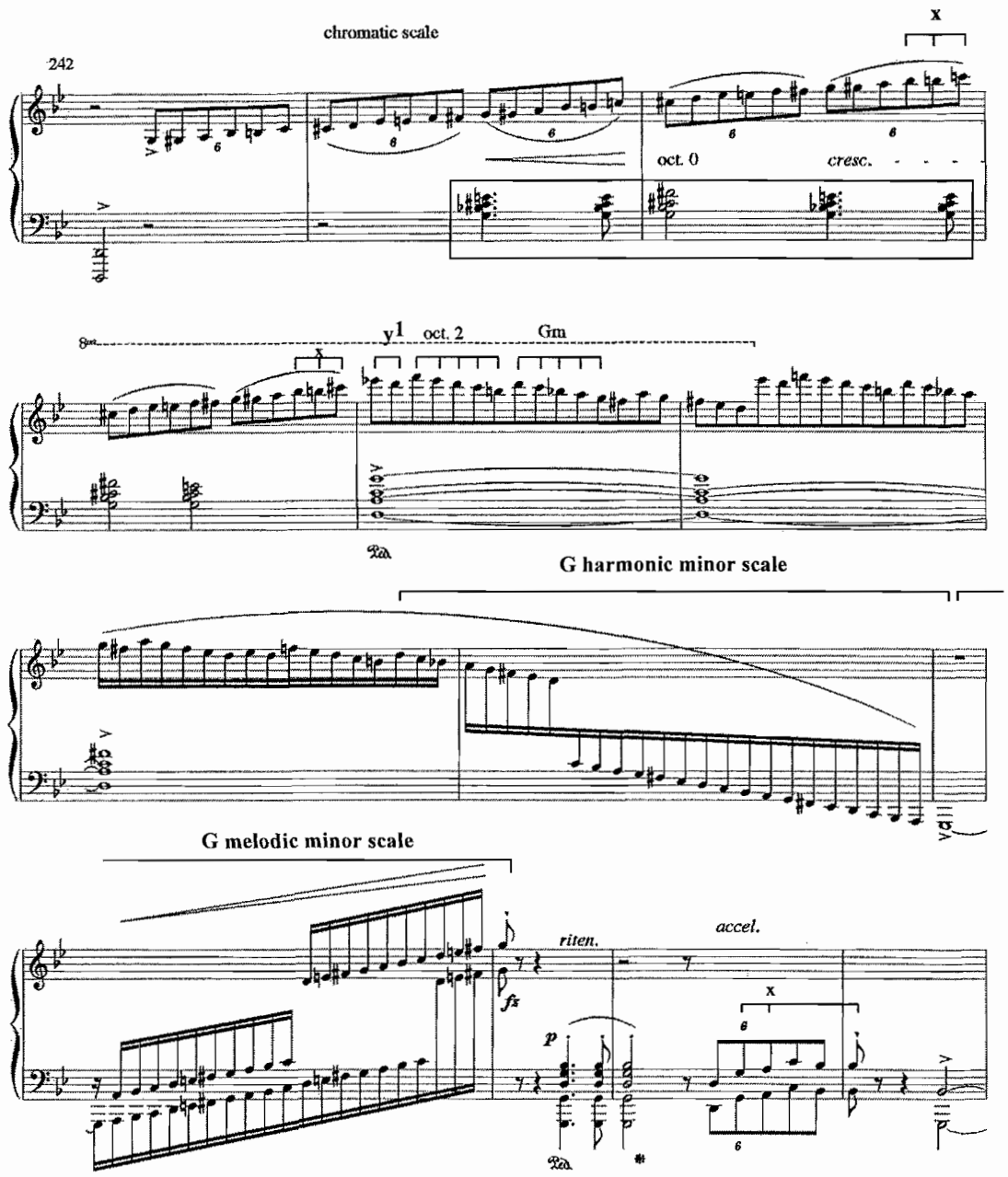

FIGURE 36. Assimilation of the oppositional forces to the key of G minor in the coda.

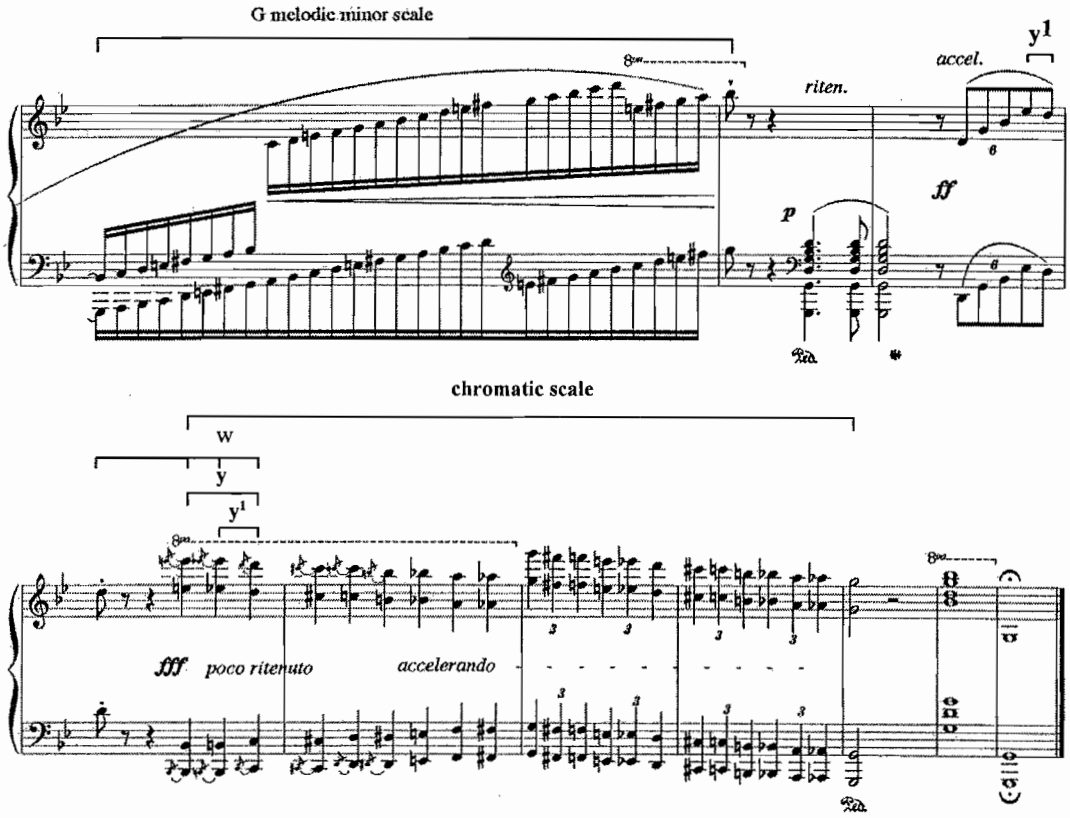

FIGURE 36. (Continued)

statement of D, the dominant of Gm, which is marked *fz*. To heighten the drama, the right hand plays an ascending chromatic scale with a crescendo, a super set of both diatonic G minor and octatonic 0.

The conflict continues in measures 245 to 247. There is an octatonic subset B♭-B-C♯ at the end of the chromatic scale, which reminds the listeners of the beginning of the ascending octatonic scale 1 between measures 130 and 134, immediately followed by the resolution between E♭-D to assert the key of Gm. The following descending scale is a hybrid of octatonic 2 and G natural minor, creating a tug of war between the octatonic pitch collection and the diatonic pitch collection. After the struggle, the G harmonic minor scale is finally established in measure 249.

In the following measures, G minor triumphs. A strong ascending G melodic minor scale is followed by the G minor chord in the root position and the arch-shaped figure that resembles Theme I, with the emphasis on G-A-B♭. This is followed by an even longer ascending G melodic minor scale in tenths, a G minor chord, and the arch-shaped figure, emphasizing E♭-D this time. At this point, it seems that all the problems are solved and the balance is restored. A strong statement of the tonic Gm and the clear resolution from E♭ to D means the victory of the home key over the other keys and the pitch collections that grew out of them.

The most striking event at the end of the piece, however, is the chromatic scale that pours down to the tonic G, an avalanche that swallows up all the foreign forces—not only diatonic scales in tonal key regions distinct from G minor, but also octatonic scales. The chromatic scale, the super set of all the diatonic scales, also buries the G minor scale, which represents the home key of the piece, and the last measure reduces everything to a single pitch (G), played in octaves. Metaphorically, the protagonist does not conquer all enemies and obstacles; instead, the piece ends as if ill fate (e.g., foreign key regions and octatonic scales) has caught up with the protagonist (tonic Gm) and conquered him.

The descending chromatic scale in octaves starts from E-E♭-D in the right hand in measure 258. Together with the D at the beginning of the measure, it forms another contraction marked "w" in my Schenkerian graph (Figure 11). In my Schenkerian graph, the first D represents the structural soprano of Theme I in section A, E is another structural soprano of Theme I in section B, E♭ is the structural soprano for Theme III and Theme II-a that follows, and the last D is the soprano of Theme I in section A^1. Altogether, "w" stretches the entire soprano line from the beginning of section A to the beginning of section A^1, as if describing a long journey of the protagonist.

This contraction implies that the protagonist recalls the discourse of his life while facing the consequence of his fate. The last measure's octaves, which land on the single pitch G in the low register, are reminiscent of the octaves in the opening of the introduction, which sound in the same low register. This final declamation implies that the omen of the introduction is now realized. The dramatic ending is not only tragic, but also unique in the Romantic piano literature.

Conclusion

There are two important issues in Chopin's Gm ballade. One is the role of the *Grundgestalt*, which creates all the conflicts and resolutions in the discourse of the piece. The source of the problems is E♭, which yields the subdominant major, or ambiguous Neapolitan of G minor, and the subdominant minor that provides the subset of octatonic scale 1. In addition, E♭ is the source of thriving interior themes that establish an expansive major region from the middle of Section B to the beginning of Section A^1, challenging the supremacy of G minor. Unfolding throughout the piece is a struggle between the desire to establish the key of E♭ major and the forceful power to resolve E♭ to D and thereby establish the centricity of G minor. Thus, the unresolved E♭ in the introduction becomes the crux of all the oppositions and resolutions in the piece.

The three-note figure B♭-A-G from the *Grundgestalt* also plays a major role. Chopin unifies the piece with this three-note figure by developing all the themes economically. The three-note figures are also used to modulate from one section to another, creating the tonal scheme and harmonic structure shown in the Schenkerian graph.

Patricia Carpenter's "*Grundgestalt* as Tonal Function" proves that the *Grundgestalt* provides not only the work's motivic development but also its harmonic

functions. My analysis of Chopin's Ballade indicates that the role of the *Grundgestalt* may extend even further; it appears integral to the creation of problems and solutions in the relationship between diatonic pitch collections and nondiatonic pitch collections—e.g., octatonic scales.

The second significant issue in this piece is Chopin's employment of the octatonic scales in the 1830s. Chopin's use of the octatonic scale has scarcely been analyzed. As seen in the tonal pyramid, Chopin's key scheme is relatively conservative compared to the works of other Romantic composers such as Liszt. It is interesting to note, however, that all the tonic roots that represent the different key regions in the Gm ballade are derived from octatonic 0 subset G, A, B♭, E♭, and E. To complete the picture, C♯ minor appears in the transitional section, the crucial pitch that differentiates the octatonic scale from the diatonic one (see the Schenkerian graph). As the tonal pyramid shows, C♯ minor is the most distant key from the tonic Gm in the Ballade, and along with G♯ minor, the dominant minor of C♯ minor and enharmonic to A♭ minor, it leads to the manifestation of the octatonic scale. Thus, C♯ minor becomes the destination of the centrifugal function.

The octatonic scale is mostly used melodically in Chopin's Gm ballade, except for the tonal scheme. Although the use of the octatonic scale is limited compared to the works of later composers, both the exposure of the full three octaves of the octatonic scale and the way the *Grundgestalt* is deeply ingrained to create the octatonic scale demonstrate Chopin's clear intention to integrate the octatonic scale into his compositional idea. He seamlessly exploits the common pitches or pitch-sets between diatonic minor scales and octatonic scales, and then unifies all the scales by the chromatic super-set.

Taruskin wrote, "most writers who looked for the origins of the (octatonic) scale—whether in Stravinsky, in Messiaen, or simply in general—have fastened on melodically embellished diminished and diminished-seventh chords."[24] Taruskin states that such a practice is just a "fortuitous veneer" on the surface of common practice. Chopin's use of octatonic scales in the Gm ballade is one of the early models that does not generate specific octatonic chord progressions. Taruskin further contends that the root of the octatonic scale is a minor third modulation connected by passing notes. On the other hand, my analysis suggests that the source of these octatonic materials could be an alteration of the minor scale as well. More research is necessary to determine the historical sources of octatonic collections in Chopin's music, but it is significant that the analytical tools developed by Schoenberg—*Grundgestalt* and tonal network—connect every detail of the piece, including the tonal schemes and octatonic scales.

[24]Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Marva* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

CHAPTER III

F MAJOR BALLADE, OP. 38

Chopin's second Ballade, Op. 38, was published in 1840. Chopin dedicated Op. 38 to Schumann, who listened to a few different versions before publication. Schumann wrote that the piece finished in the key of F major when he first heard it in 1836 instead of A minor in the published version.[1] Since the publication, its "two-key scheme" has not only fascinated scholars, performers and listeners, but has also kindled extensive arguments to determine whether the piece is in F major, A minor, or both. How can monotonal theory, such as Schenkerian analysis and Schoenberg's idea of tonal network, deal with this problem?

John Rink writes, "Other Schenker-inspired writers have puzzled over the problematic second Ballade, in which Schenker's notion of unified tonal structure is seriously undermined by an F major/A minor tonal polarity."[2] He groups past analytical strategies to interpret this tonal polarity into the following categories: (1) "directional tonality" (two tonics operate in succession); and (2) "two-key scheme" (two tonics function simultaneously, also known as "tonal pairing" or the "double tonic complex").

Wai-Ling Cheong's dissertation "Structural Coherence and the Two-Key Scheme: A Study of Selected Cases from the Nineteenth Century" explains the above categories in more detail. According to Cheong, the idea of "directional tonality," which

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[1]Alan Rawsthorne, 'Ballades, Fantasy, and Scherzos', *The Chopin Companion; Profiles of the Man and the Musician*, ed. Alan Walker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 50.

[2]Rink, 103.

starts and ends in different keys and is typically found in late-nineteenth-century music, was addressed by Robert Bailey as a part of his theory of the "double-tonic complex." Bailey defined "double-tonic complex" as the coexistence of two tonics.[3] Bailey's idea of "tonal pairing" is another phenomenon in some post-Wagnerian tonal structures, in which two tonics are not in opposition but co-existent, and it penetrates to the deepest structural level. Two tonics in "tonal pairing" either alternate rapidly or are textually overlaid in the foreground and middle-ground. Bailey thinks the simultaneous existence of two tonics in "tonal pairing" is more important than directional tonality. A similar idea is discussed in Newlin's "progressive tonality."

Harold Krebs' analysis of Chopin's F major Ballade belongs to the first category, "directional tonality" (see Figure 37).[4] He states, "An example of a non-monotonal instrumental work is Chopin's Ballade, Opus 38, which begins in the key of F and ends in A minor." In his analysis, the piece starts in the key of F major, and the key of A minor is not clearly established until much later in the piece. Conversely, F major becomes progressively weaker and the piece concludes in A minor. In his graph, there are two tonics: F major (between measures 1-82) and A minor (between measures 36-196).

Although they overlap in the middle, the structural cadence V-I in F major is concluded in measure 82, while the resolution to the structural tonic in A minor occurs in measure 168, thus providing two tonal centers in equal weight. As Rink points out, this differs from Schenker's graph, in which F major is assimilated to A minor as VI.[5] It

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[3]Wai-Ling Cheong, "Structural Coherence and the Two-Key Scheme: A Study of Selected Cases from the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge, 1988), 7-8.

[4]Krebs, 1-16.

[5]See the graph in Samson, *Four Ballades,* 80.

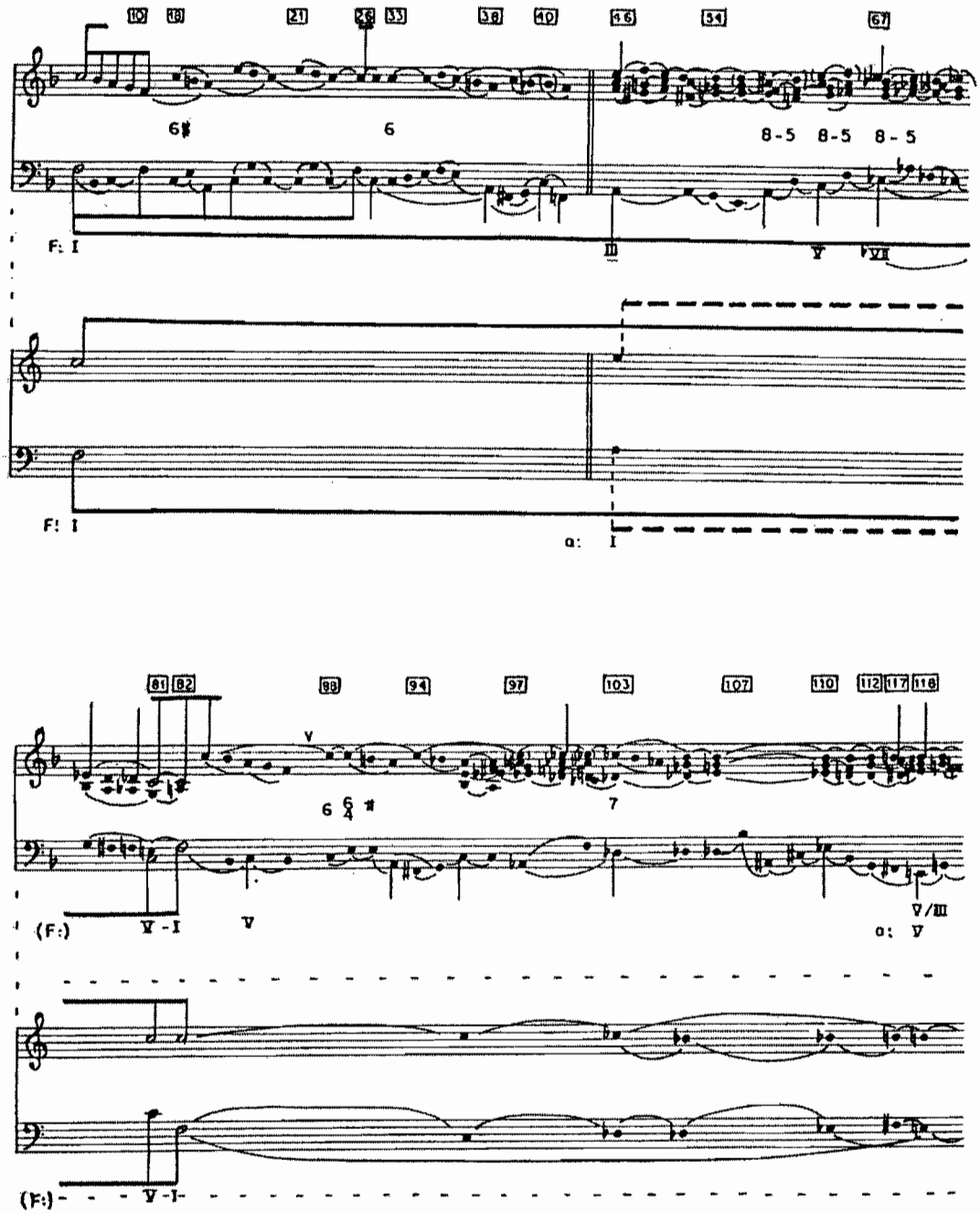

FIGURE 37. Harold Krebs' Schenkerian graph displays his idea of "interlocking of the large-scale F-major and A-minor triads." Source: Harold Krebs, "Alternatives to Monotonality in Early Nineteenth-Century Music," *Journal of Music Theory* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 12.

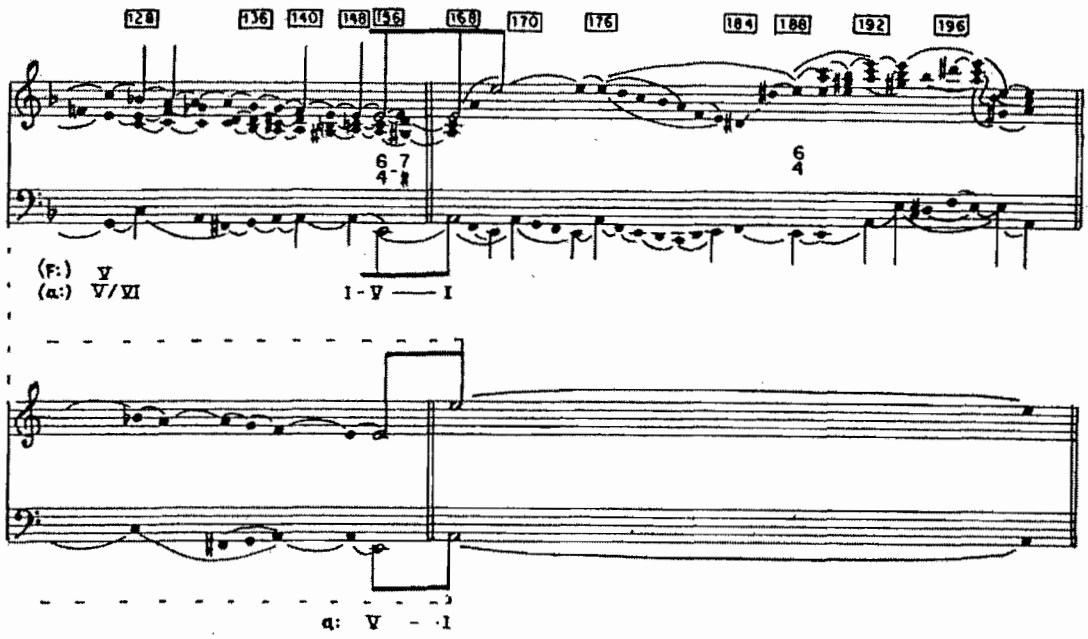

FIGURE 37. (Continued)

is interesting to note that the two *Kopftone*, C as $\hat{5}$ of F major and E as $\hat{5}$ of A minor, do not descend to their tonics at their structural cadences and remain throughout the piece in Krebs' graph; Krebs thinks the entire tonal structure of the Ballade is a presentation of two equally weighted triads—F major and A minor, respectively.

Charles Rosen thinks that relative keys are more or less in the same key. Since Op. 38 has the mediant key instead of the submediant, however, he thinks that a central tonality is not Chopin's focus. He writes,

> to interpret Chopin's two-key works as being based on the mixture of two tonalities is problematic. In his two-key works, Chopin is deliberately making a strong contrast of tonal areas. It is precisely the distinct centralizing pull of each key that adds drama to the works. The sharp focus of the individual tonality is of prime importance in shaping the music.[6]

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[6]Cheong, 12. Taken from Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), 295-96.

Jim Samson also focuses on the contrast rather than a superiority of one key over the other:

> The essential dynamics of the Second Ballade are set up by contrast between its two principal ideas, the first (Theme I) a siciliano melody in F major, which conceals its art beneath a deceptively innocent lilting surface, and the second (Theme II) a bravura figuration in A minor. Although contrast is the primary aim—and it is articulated by rhythm, texture, and register as well as by tonal and thematic substance—Chopin establishes coherence by highlighting common ground between the two ideas.[7]

For David Witten, however, the second Ballade is a monotonal work. Like Schenker, he thinks the piece is in the key of A minor because one perceives the key of F major as VI of A minor retroactively. He fortifies his argument by quoting Brahms, who was one of the editors of Breikopf & Härtel, which published Chopin's Ballades. Brahms referred to Op. 38 as the "A minor Ballade" in his correspondence.[8] The figure below is extracted from Witten's article and shows how F major is assimilated to A minor as its mediant (see Figure 38). Witten also refers to Chopin's fascination with the interplay of F-E by adding the example taken from the Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4; he points out how Chopin obscures the central tonality A minor at the opening of the piece and only implies the tonic A minor by the first-inversion F major chord, which he interprets as an A minor chord with an unresolved F.

Finally, there is another interpretation that explains the two-key scheme by means of the connection between Chopin's Ballade and literary ballads. Dorota Zakrzewska's analysis reveals some close resemblances between the Ballade and the

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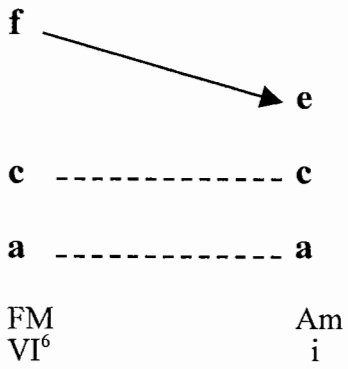
[7]Samson, *Four Ballades,* 51.

[8]Witten, *Coda Wagging the Dog*, 140.



(modified Witten's example 5.29)

FIGURE 38. Witten's example showing how the F major region is assimilated to the A minor region.[9]

literary model.[10] She states that the Ballade is "highly sectional, with unusually sudden leaps between contrasting sections," which is "reminiscent to the alternating stanza pattern of a literary ballad." She also suggests that the large structure of the ballade, which forms symmetry by the placement of the first theme, is typical in the literary ballad.[11]

The above literature review presents some conflicting ideas, such as two-key scheme vs. monotonality, or structural analysis vs. narratives. In this chapter, I investigate how the *Grundgestalt* creates unity and conflict that contribute to the idea of the Ballade. My hypothesis is that the *Grundgestalt* is the source of the opposite keys—F major and A minor, respectively—similar to the way the *Grundgestalt* generates

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[9]Ibid.

[10]Dorota Zakrewska, "Alienation and Powerlessness: Adam Mickiewicz's 'Ballady' and Chopin's Ballades," *Music Research Forum* 15 (2000): 60. Zakrewska mentions that the first theme frames each secondary theme section, and the piece concludes with a minor version of the first theme.

[11]Samson, *Four Ballades*, 51.

different key regions and octatonics in the G minor Ballade. The story of the Ballade will unfold as the transformation of keys progresses. The main focus of this analysis is not to determine which key is superior or which key dominates the piece. Rather, I will focus on what F major and A minor signify and how those keys interact throughout the piece. In my analysis, I will display that the piece is unified not by a single tonal center but by a single motivic idea, the *Grundgestalt*, and the idea of the Ballade is a drama created by oppositions: F major and A minor.

Form and Structure of the Ballade

The structure of the Ballade is shown in Table 3. The overall form is ABAB and coda. There are clear distinctions between the A and B sections. Section A, mostly in the key of F major, is an Andantino with lilting motions. Section B, on the other hand, is marked *presto con fuoco* and contains etude-like arpeggiations. However, there are subtle exchanges between the key of F major and A minor in each section, which are described in detail later in this chapter.

The key signature does not change until the coda, even though Section B's key (A minor) before the coda strongly contrasts with Section A's key (F major) and progressively the key of A minor becomes dominant. This indicates that there is a conflict between F major and A minor, and there is strong resistance against, as well as hope for, supporting F major as the tonic until the coda. The coda, marked *Agitato*, enables A minor to triumph. At the end of the coda, there is a small segment of Theme I in the key of A minor instead of F major, as if the original Theme I has been captured by A minor. Perhaps it suggests a metamorphosis of the major theme. This is a unique programmatic feature of this particular Ballade and one that is not found in most other repertoire.

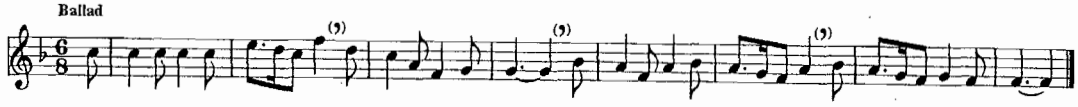
TABLE 3. Formal Structure of the F Major Ballade, Op. 38

Sections (Theme)	Tempo/		Motives	Measures	Keys	Remarks
A (FM:) (Theme I)	*Andantino*	a	a-1	0-5	FM:	Antecedent
			a-2	5-9	FM:	Consequent
			a-1[1]	9-13	FM:	Antecedent
			a-2	13-17	FM:	Consequent
		b	b-1	17-19	Am:	
			b-2	19-21	CM:	
			a-2	21-26	CM:	
		a	a-1	26-29	FM:	Antecedent
			a-2	29-32	FM:	Consequent
			a-2	32-37	Am:	Consequent
			a-3	37-39	FM:	
			a-3	39-45	FM:	
B (Am:) (Theme II)	*Presto con fuoco*	c	c-1	46-53	Am:	
			c-1[1]	54-61	Gm:	
			c-2	62-63 64-65 66-	Dm: Fm: A♭m:---	
A[1] (FM:) (Theme I)	*Tempo* I	a	a-1	82-85	FM:	Antecedent
			½ a-2	85-87	FM:	Consequent
			a-2	88-91	Am:	Consequent
			1½ a-3	91-94	FM:	
		d	d-1	95-107	D♭M:- G♭M:	oct.0, oct.2
			d-2	107-110	oct. 0	*stretto, piu mosso*
			d-3	110-114	B♭:-	
			d-4	114-132	EM:-CM:- (FM:)	oct.1
			d-2	132-135	oct. 2	*stretto, piu mosso*
			d-3	135-139	Gm:-	oct. 1, oct.0
B[1] (Am:) (Theme II)	*Presto con fuoco*	c	c-1	140-147	Dm:/A	
			c-1	148-155	Am:	
			c-3	156-167	V of Am:	
Coda (Am:)	*Agitato*	e	e-1	168-175	Am:	
			e-2	176-183	Am:	
			e-3	184-187	Am:	
			e-4	188-196	Am:	
A	*Tempo* I	a	½ a-2	196-203	Am:	Consequent

Section A and the Presentation of the *Grundgestalt* as a Source of Coherence

Section A, marked Andantino in 6/8 and called a *siciliano* by Jim Samson,[12] has a calm and peaceful atmosphere, as if representing the ideal pastoral setting typical in literary ballads. The repeated C at the opening is ambiguous until the tonic of F major appears in measure 2. In addition to the lack of chordal support, the rhythm and duration of the repeated C is unstable, and it obscures a clear sense of the entry to the opening theme. According to William Rothstein, the original version of the opening was more straightforward metrically, but the addition of two extra notes makes the rhythmic orientation more ambiguous when one listens to the section aurally (see Figure 39).[13]

The "original version" of theme I



The final version of theme I

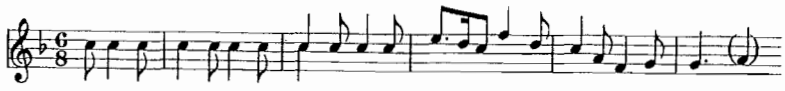


FIGURE 39. The opening of the F Major Ballade, Op. 38. Source: William Rothstein, "Ambiguity in the Themes of Chopin's First, Second, and Fourth Ballades," *Intégral* 8 (1994): 15.

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[12]Ibid.

[13]William Rothstein, "Ambiguity in the Themes of Chopin's First, Second, and Fourth Ballades," *Integral* 8 (1994): 15.

The repeated single tone at the opening is used in other pieces by Chopin. For example, the *Grand Waltz Brilliante* in E♭ major starts with a repeated B♭ (see Figure 40). In this short introduction, which consists of only one pitch, the hemiola lends urgency and heightens one's expectation of the theme that enters shortly thereafter. Conversely, the longer-than-usual repeated notes at the opening of the Ballade create an illusion of the long distant past emerging gradually from one's memory.

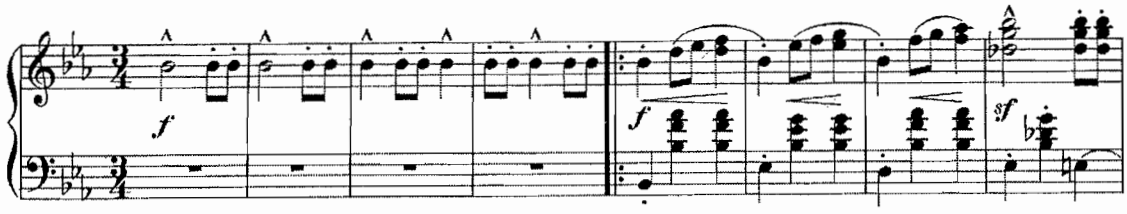


FIGURE 40. The repeated notes without accompaniment at the opening of the *Grand Waltz Brilliante* in E♭ major (Op. 18).

The opening C that starts from the weak beats in the middle of measure 0 is reminiscent of the G minor Ballade's introduction, which starts with C as well. In the case of the G minor Ballade, C was interpreted as the third of the A♭ major chord that is later identified as Neapolitan 6th in the key of G minor. There is another example of a repeated "C" that leads to the secondary theme in the third Ballade in A♭ major, Op. 38 (see Figure 41). These examples suggest that C indicates some perceptive and programmatic connection between the Ballades.

Theme I in the A section of the F major Ballade consists of two phrases as an antecedent and a consequent (see Figure 42). While the melodic line of the antecedent has a memorable arch shape, the consequent mostly lingers between two pitches, A and

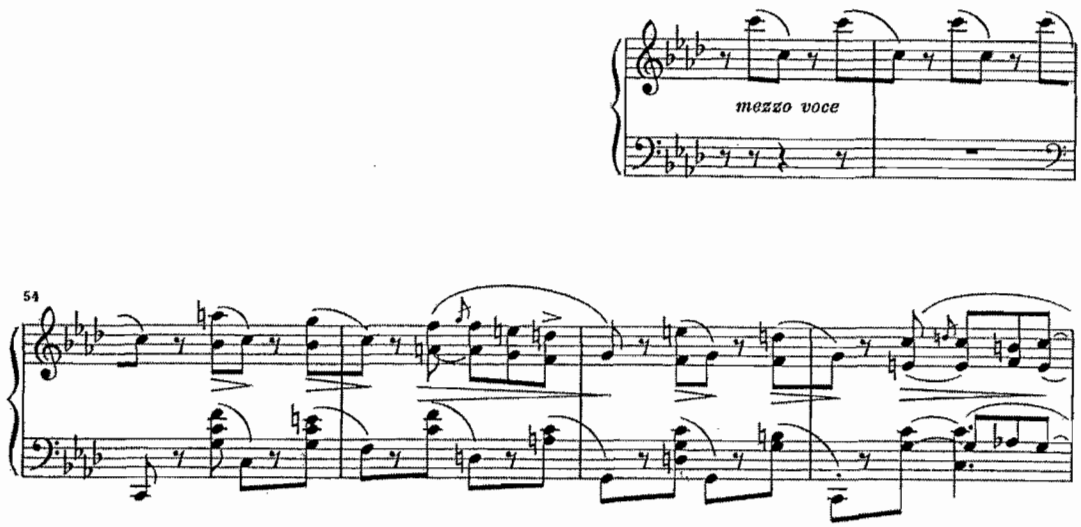


FIGURE 41. Repeated "C" leading to Theme II in the A♭ major Ballade.

F. There are motives "x," a three-note linear figure, and "y" ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) and "y[1]" ($\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$), which are whole-step and half-step dyads, respectively.

In the antecedent, after the gentle repetition of C, the ascending three-note figure gradually emerges and climbs to the tonic F. Jim Samson describes this pastoral theme as "deceptively innocent," and its simple rocking motion creates optimism, hope, and nostalgia. The ascent to the top of the arch in the antecedent is symbolically idealistic against the descent in Theme II in A minor that appears later. In the consequent, there is a confirmation of the tonic F by a step-wise descending motion.

Figure 43 displays more detailed motivic ideas of the A section in the Ballade. The structural notes in the opening antecedent are C-E-F, or $\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of F major. I think this three-note motive is the *Grundgestalt* of the piece. The motion of the ascent and the strong resolution from the leading tone E to the tonic F in the key of F major establishes clear centricity and superiority of the tonic F major, the important statement that begins the Ballade.

Theme I

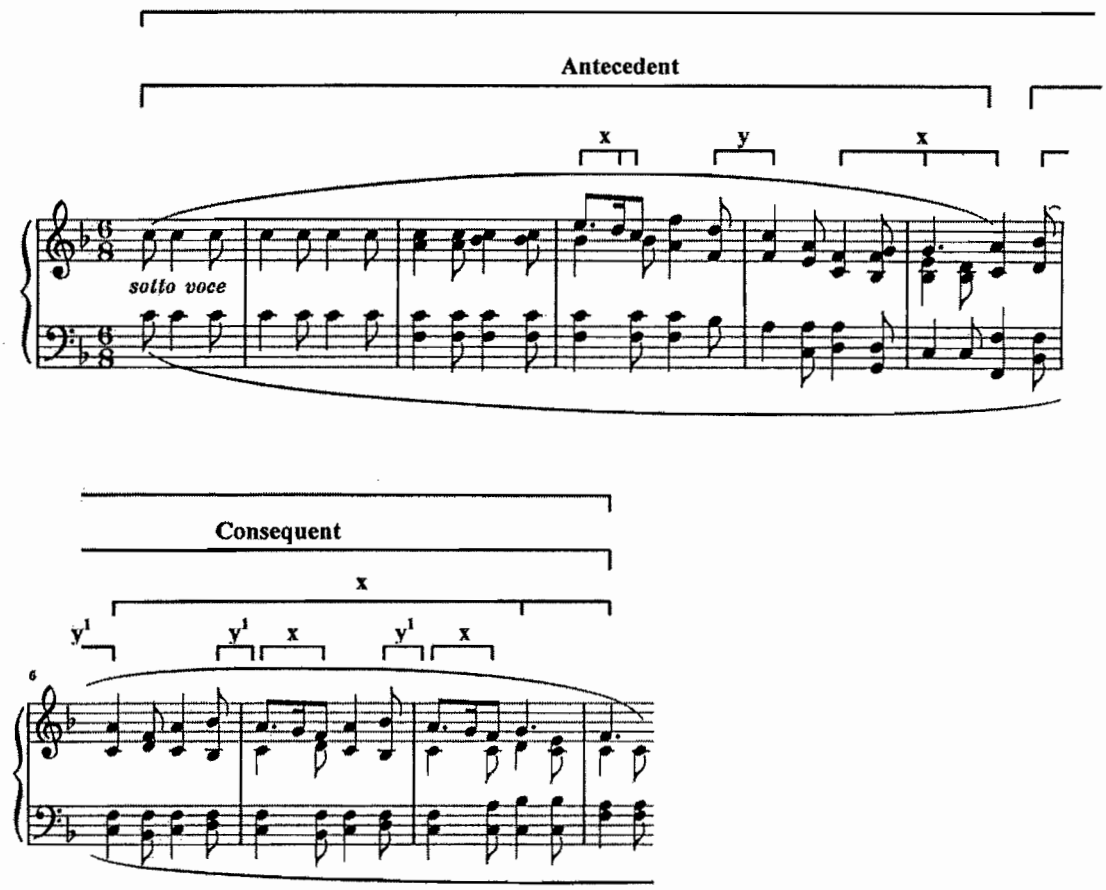
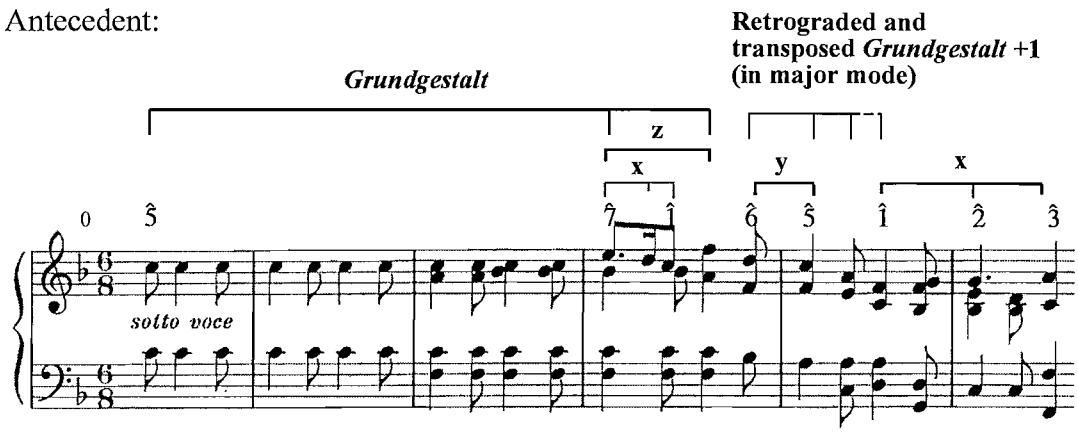


FIGURE 42. Theme I in Section A: Antecedent and consequent.

The *Grundgestalt* is developed in the antecedent. After reaching to F in measure 3, the melodic line starts descending, creating an arch form. The soprano D-C-A-F, or $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{1}$ in measures 3-4, is an extension of the "basic shape," or the *Grundgestalt*; the first three notes D-C-A ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$) represent a reversion and transposition of the original shape $\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$, although there is a modification from a half-step ($\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$) to a whole step ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$). The

Antecedent:



Consequent:

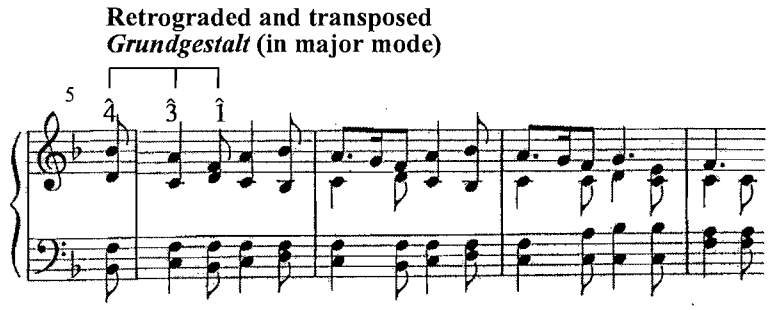


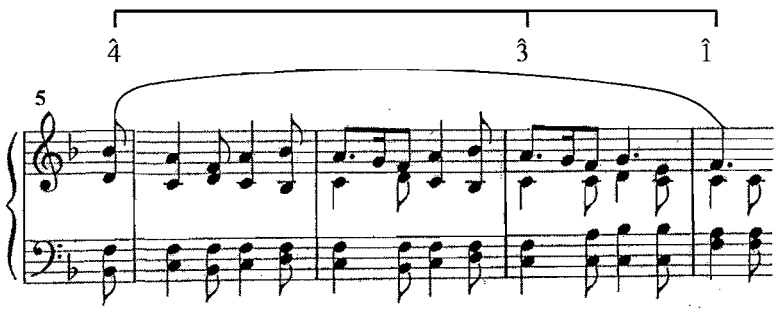
FIGURE 43. *Grundgestalt* (C-E-F), $\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$, and its development in the key of F major in Theme I.

descending motion D-C-A-F reiterates the tonic F, but it returns to A at the end of the antecedent, forming "x," as if questioning the authority of the tonic F.

The *Grundgestalt* $\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$, or C-E-F, in the antecedent is reversed and transposed (t = -7), forming $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{1}$, or B♭-A-F, in the consequent in Theme I. Although the B♭-A resolution reinforces the third of the tonic F major, as soon as A descends to F, it returns to A as if there is resistance to settling on the tonic F major. After a tug of war between A and F, finally the melodic line gravitates towards $\hat{1}$ of F major in measure 9.

The same consequent is modulated to the key of C major between measurese 21 and 25 (see Figure 44). This modulation creates the retrograde of the *Grundgestalt* without any transposition, F-E-C. The three note figure further falls onto A in measure 26 and yields a four-note figure F-E-C-A that replicates the opening pitches of Theme II

A. Measures 5-9



B. Measures 21-26

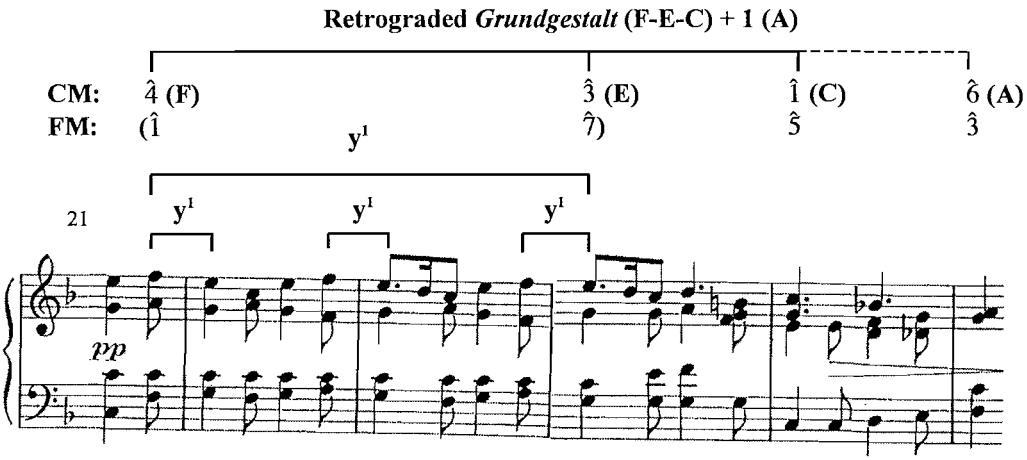


FIGURE 44. The retrograded *Grundgestalt* in Section A.

in the B section. While the original *Grundgestalt* stresses the superiority of the tonic F by creating an ascending motion from the leading tone E to the tonic F, the retrograded *Grundgestalt* weakens the centricity around F by the descending motion from F to E. This reinterpretation of the two prominent pitches in the *Grundgestalt*, "z" ($\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ or E-F in the key of F major) to "y^1" ($\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ or F-E in the key of A minor), will be further developed in Section B later.

Although the conflict between F major and A minor is clearly displayed between Section A and Section B, there is a quiet shift and a hidden struggle beneath the surface already in Section A. The first appearance of A minor is in measures 17-19, dropping a hint of the future problem in the course of the Ballade (see Figure 45). However, the A minor phrase is sequenced by its relative major, C major. C major functions as V of F major, and is assimilated to the home key F major in the next phrase. Chopin emphasizes this sequential motion with dynamic marks.

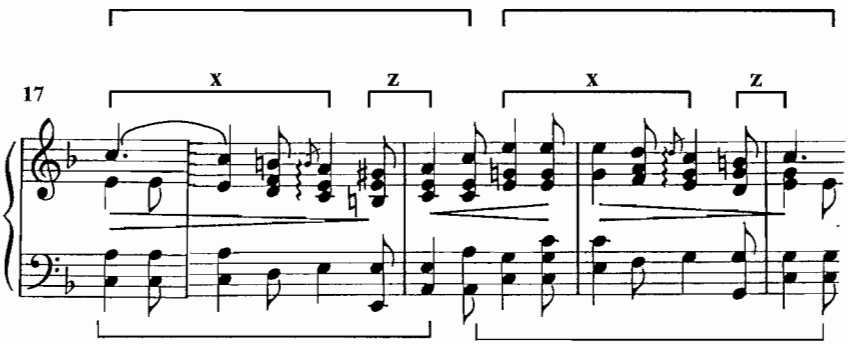


FIGURE 45. Sequences in the key of A minor and the key of C major in the Theme I area.

Theme I in the home key of F major begins again in measure 26. However, the consequent of Theme I in the key of F major is halted, and the last note of the

consequence, tonic F, never appears (see Figure 46). Instead, the consequence is restated in the key of A minor, and finds completion this time by landing on the tonic A. Chopin marks the entrance of the A minor consequence with a *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, stressing the tension of A minor overwhelming F major.

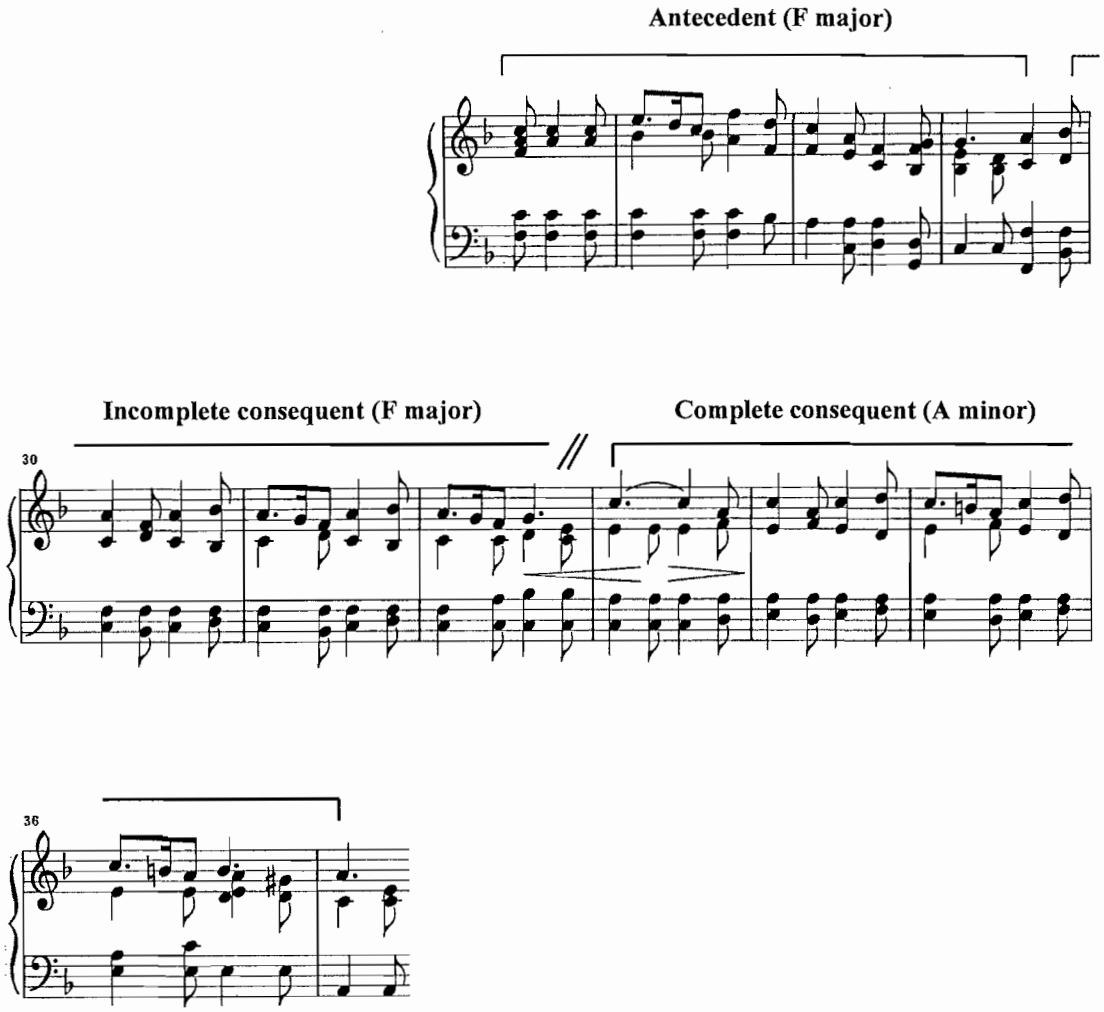


FIGURE 46. Incomplete consequent in the key of F major and restated consequent in the key of A minor in measures 26-37.

After the consequent is stated in the key of A minor, F major returns to conclude Section A (see Figure 47). The perfect authentic cadence in the key of F major is

repeated many times at the end, as if the listener needs strong assurance of its sovereignty. E-F—marked as "z," or $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of F major—is repeated urgently as well in the inner voice to affirm the superiority of the key of F major. In the soprano, the retrograded *Grundgestalt* B♭-A-F is repeated twice, and then it is shortened to a dyad A-F, repeating many times until it fades.

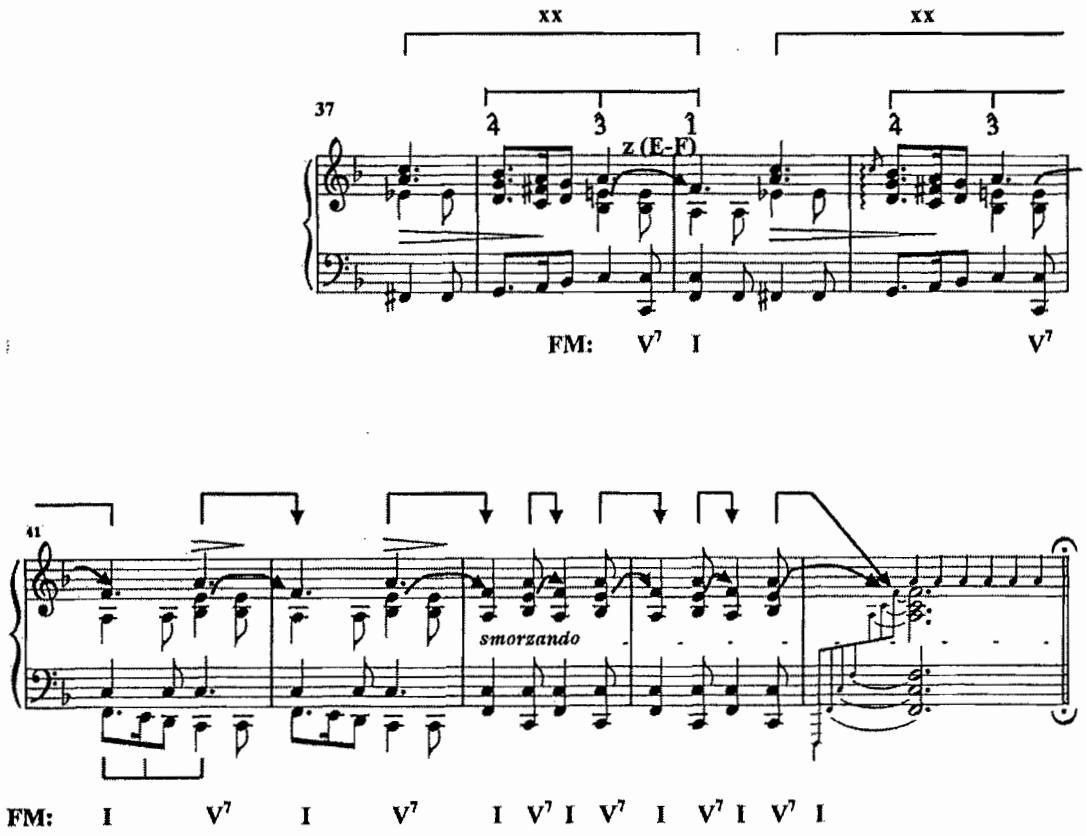


FIGURE 47. The authentic cadence in the key of F major and the gravity towards tonic F in upper voices to emphasize the superiority of F major at the end of Section A.

The repetition gradually fades away during the *smorzando*, and there are some subtle hints that portend uneasiness (see Figure 48). In the soprano, the pitch F, the tonic of F major, and pitch A, which is juxtaposed over the dominant chord as a dissonance, compete with each other for the conclusion of the melody. In the bass, the

descending motion F-E-C with a passing note D, or $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of F major, works as an omen of F-E-C, or $\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$ in the key of A minor, which appears in the soprano at the entrance of the following Section B. The problematic "A" in the soprano lingers, and it overrides the resolution F in the soprano in measure 45 with quarter-note triplets. Section A ceases in the silence elongated by a fermata.

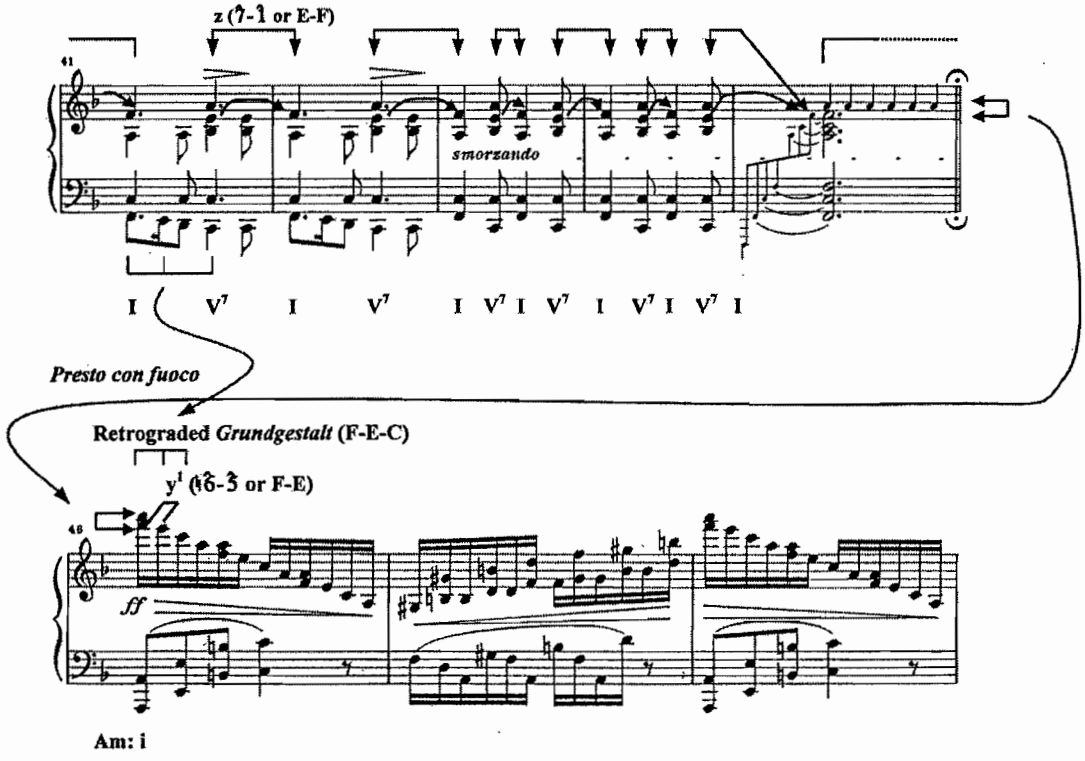


FIGURE 48. The conflict between F and A at the end of Section A and the beginning of Section B and reinterpretation of pitches.

Reinterpretation of the *Grundgestalt* and Section B

Figure 49 shows the beginning of Section B. After the pause, the hierarchy between two confronting pitches, F and A, is dramatically reversed. The vertically juxtaposed F and A in the soprano at the end of the Section A appear at the beginning of the Section B in a higher register to start the new section. However, the problematic pitch "A" at the end of Section A is empowered in Section B. The powerful descending motion, marked *presto con fuoco,* forces pitch "F" to step down to pitch "E." The previous tonic F is now reinterpreted as ♭$\hat{6}$ of the key of A minor, and assimilated to E, $\hat{5}$ by a descending "y^1." Thus, the *Grundgestalt*, the ascending three-note figure C-E-F introduced in Theme I, now becomes a retrograde F-E-C.

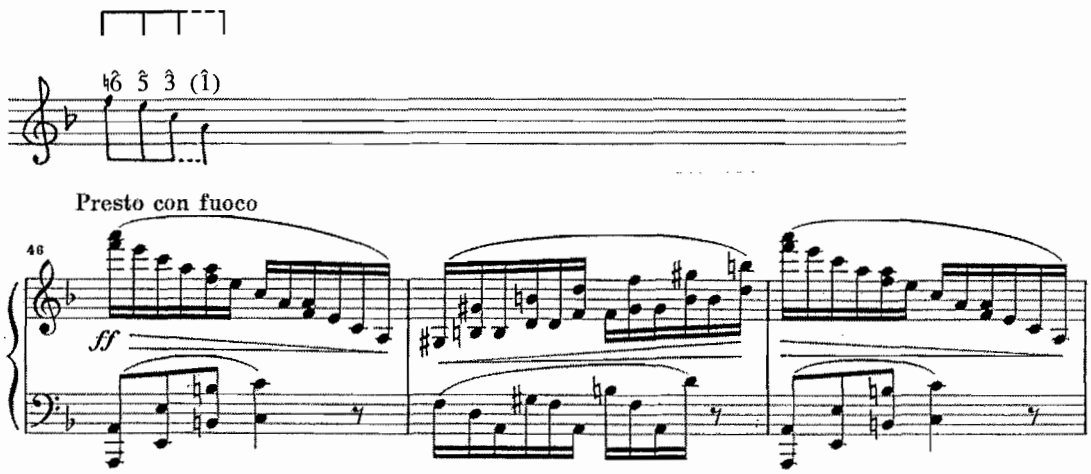


FIGURE 49. The retrograded *Grundgestalt* F-E-C as ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$ in the key of A minor in Section B.

The most interesting aspect of this reversal of the *Grundgestalt* is reinterpretation of the pitches (see Figure 50). In theme I, C-E-F is interpreted as $\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$. Pitch E is a leading tone of F major and resolves to the tonic F via strong gravitation. In

Theme 2, however, F-E-C is interpreted as ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$. Pitch F, which is ♭$\hat{6}$ of A minor, gravitates toward the more structural note E, which is the dominant of A minor, and thus F is assimilated to the tonic of A minor. This not only provides a thematic opposition against Theme I, but also predicts the course of the Ballade structurally; the key of F major is eventually assimilated to the key of A minor.

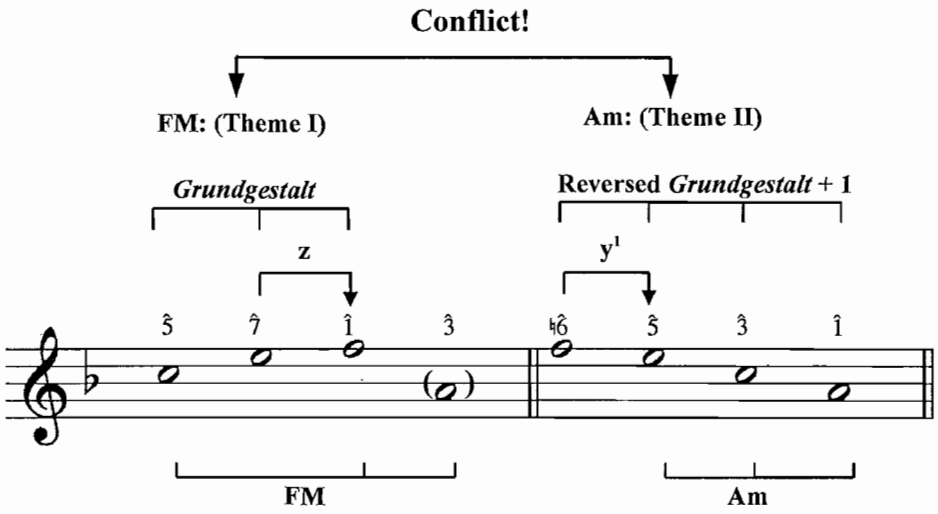


FIGURE 50. Conflict created by the reinterpretation of the *Grundgestalt.*

Although the opposition is created by the contrasting tempi, a reversed arch form, and dynamics, Theme A and Theme B are strikingly similar motivically. The four-note figure F-E-C-A (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{1}$) in Theme II is a minor version of D-C-A-F ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{1}$) in measures 3-4 in Section A, created from the original *Grundgestalt.* The first three notes F-E-C not only represent the retrograde of C-E-F from the antecedent of Theme I but also a transposition of B♭-A-F in the consequent of Theme I. Therefore, Theme I and Theme II are the opposite sides of the same coin, closely related via the *Grundgestalt.*

The change in tempo markings from *Andantino* to *Presto con fuoco*, dynamics from *pp* to *ff*, and texture from rocking barcarole to bravura figuration all contribute to the dramatic turn of the piece. Contrary to the rhapsodic mood in Section B, however, the harmony lingers on the stationary bass A between measures 46 and 52 (see Figure 51); after the tonic arpeggio in measure 46 with emphasis on the $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ resolution in the right-hand part, vii^{o7} is juxtaposed on the tonic bass A. The motion between the tonic and the diminished 7th on the static bass is repeated twice. Instead of securing the key of A minor by a cadence from the dominant to tonic, the key modulates from A minor to G minor. The harmonic motion, i-vii^{o7}/i-i-vii^{o7}/I, on the tonic bass is similar to Theme I in the F minor Ballade (see Figure 52). In both cases, the tonic is stated not by an authentic cadence but by the prolongation of the tonic.

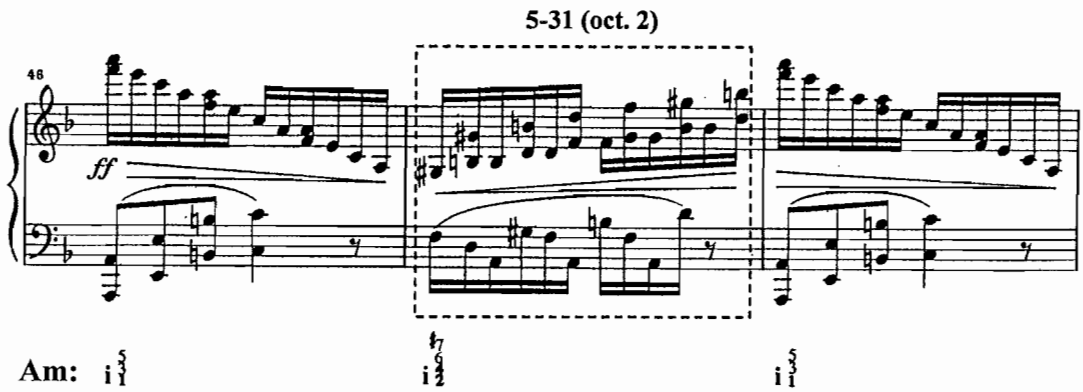


FIGURE 51. Theme II and its harmonic progression (measures 46-49).

The diminished 7th chord over the tonic bass creates a pitch class set 5-31, the octatonic subset. Another octatonic set is observed in the bass line G♯-A-B natural-C-D-D♯ fueled by A and E from the A minor triad in measures 50 and 51 (see Figure 53).

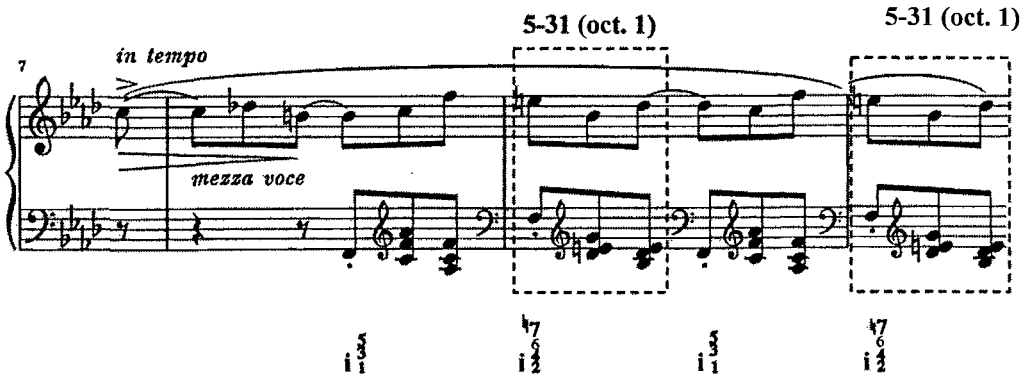


FIGURE 52. Primary theme in the F minor Ballade, Op. 52, and its chord progression (measures 7-10).

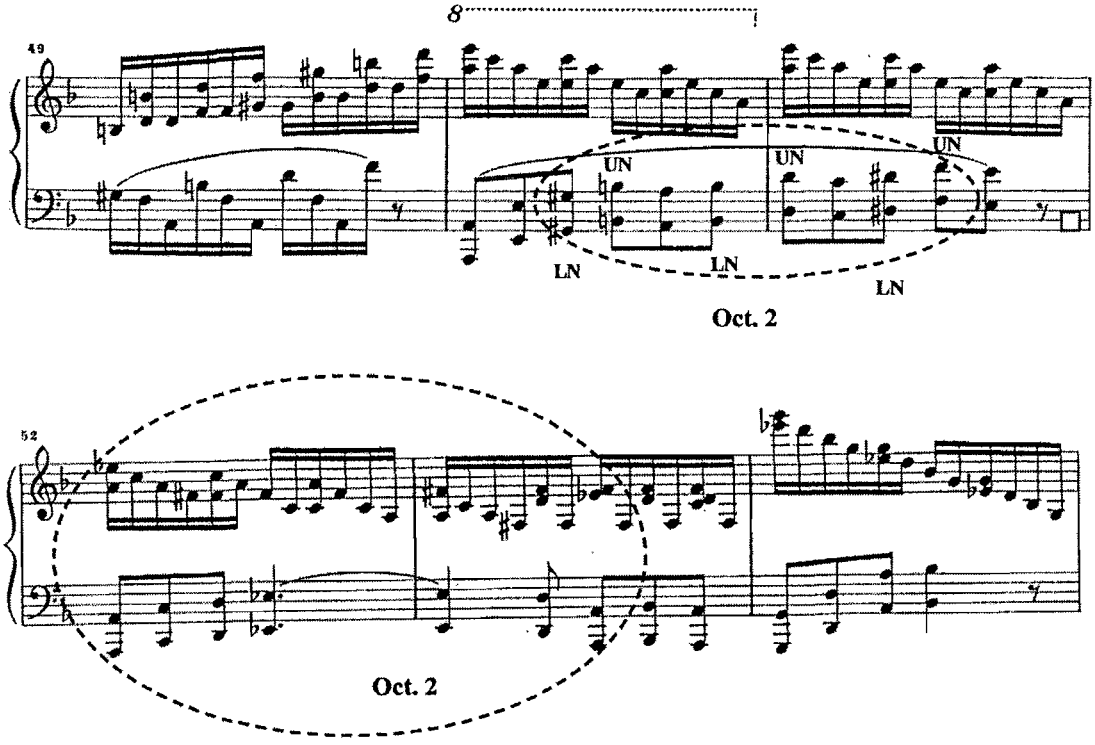


FIGURE 53. Octatonic subsets in the A minor context in Section B (measures 49-53).

Although the right-hand part is clearly derived from an A minor triad, the left-hand part, elaborated with double neighbor-tones that could be derived from both minor mode and

the octatonic scale, renders the impact of the minor key against Theme I more powerful. In measures 52 and and 53, another octatonic subset is created in the bass line while the upper voices transform into a more ambiguous diminished 7th chord. Instead of establishing the key of A minor with a clear cadence, the key shifts from A minor to G minor via the stepwise motion A-G in the bass line in measure 54. Theme II is then sequenced in the key of G minor.

The transition starts from measure 62 (see Figure 54). The key modulates from D minor to F minor, from F minor to A♭ minor, although all the tonics are on the dominant basses instead of rooted on the tonic basses. There are several instances of the three-note figure "x," emphasizing the orientation of each key where it belongs. The minor-oriented dyads are instances of "y[1]" and are reminiscent of F-E, or ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$, at the beginning of Theme II, based on the reinterpretation of the *Grundgestalt.* The bass line A-C-E♭ as well as the soprano A-B natural- C-D-E♭, marked as "xx," form octatonic 2 subsets, creating tonal instability in the transient section.

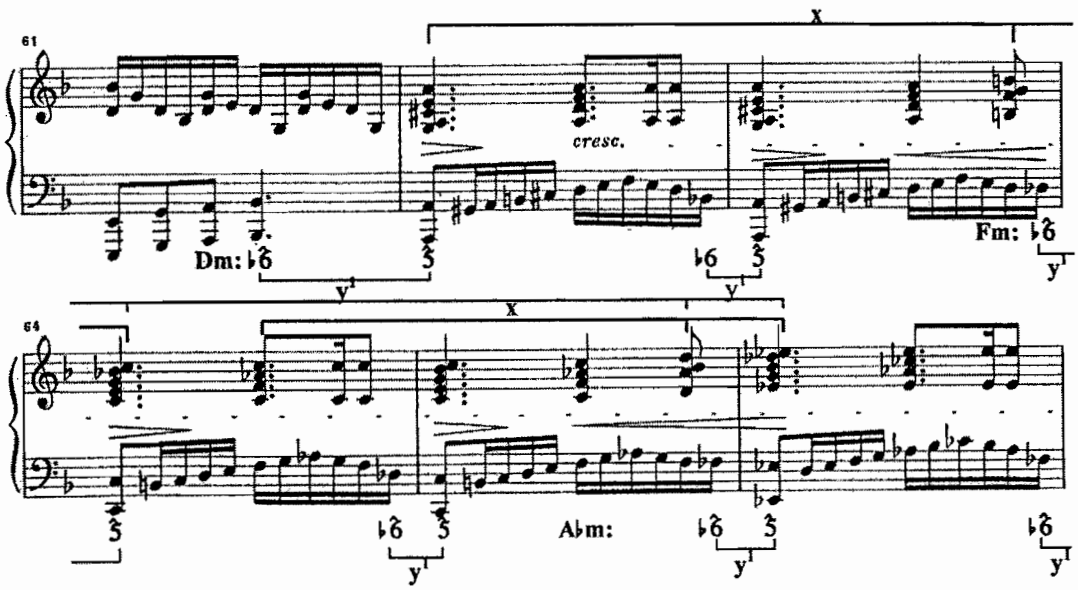


FIGURE 54. Reinterpretation of the tonal cells from the *Grundgestalt.*

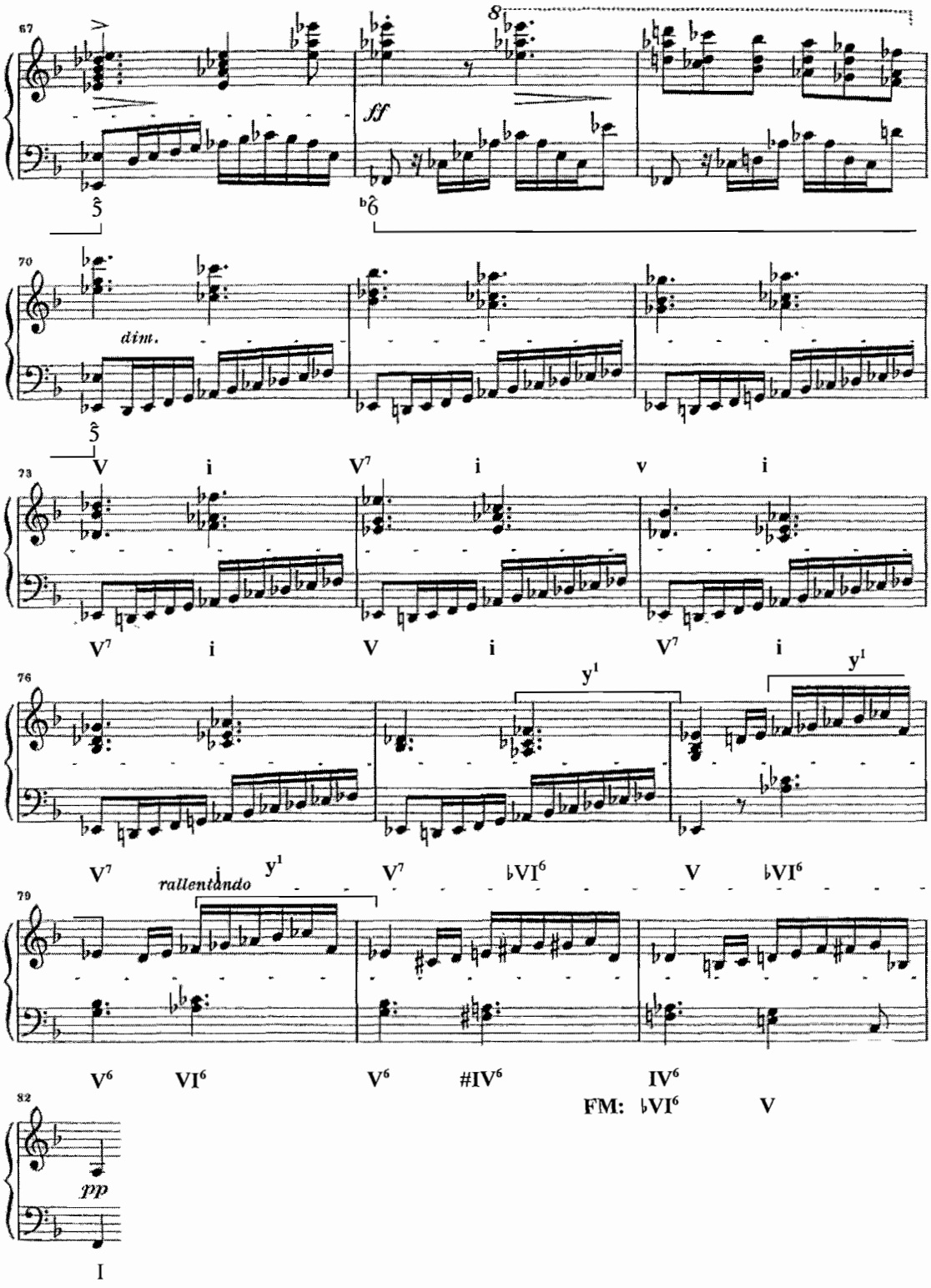


FIGURE 54. (Continued)

After the transition between measures 62-82, Theme I in the key of F major is recalled between measures 82-87. The duration of the entire theme is presented under a single slur this time, and is shorter than the theme in the previous section because the consequent of the theme is incomplete and followed by a rest with a fermata (see Figure 55).

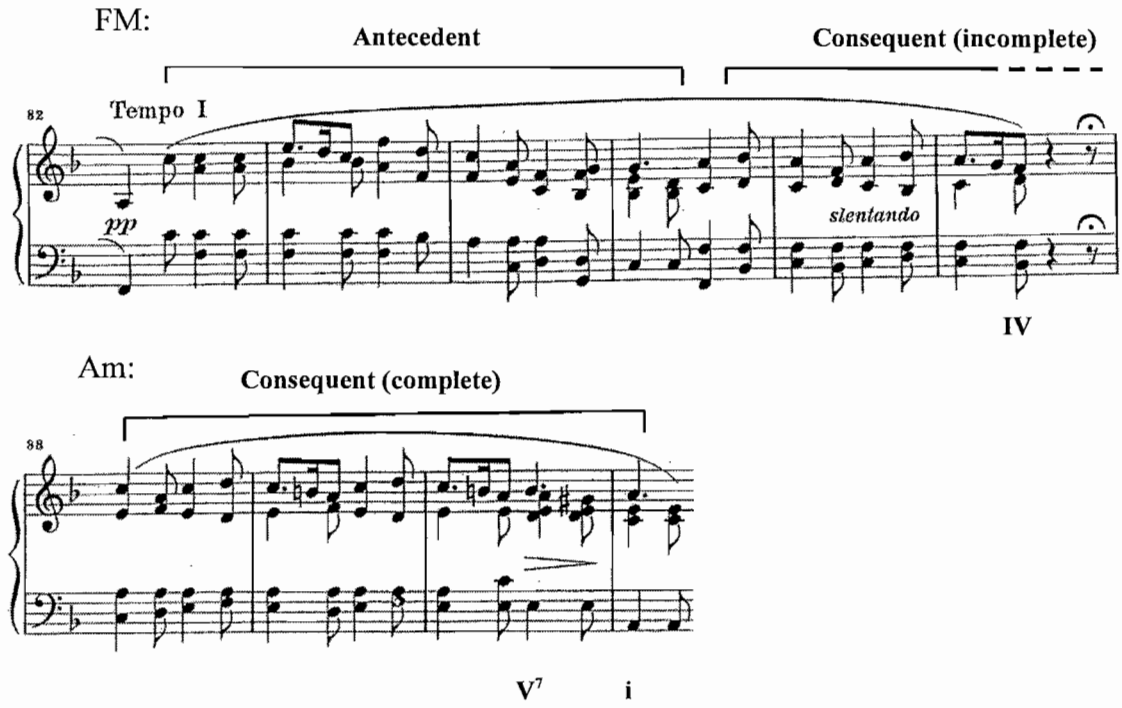


FIGURE 55. Incomplete consequent in F major and restated consequent in A minor.

The consequent is restated in the key of A minor between measures 88-91. The concluding phrase of section A, "xx," follows (see Figure 56); "xx," the linear descending motion $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$, provides assurance of the tonic F major in the first Section A, which neutralizes the preceding A minor phrase. The difference between the first Section A and Section A^1 is that the second "xx" lands on F♯ instead F in measure

95, creating $\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}\sharp$, the octatonic 0 subset. This alteration leads to the end of Section A^1 on an F♯ diminished chord, an octatonic subset, whereupon the piece progresses to a region that is tonally unstable.

Figure 56 shows that motive "t" in Theme I is altered to create an octatonic subset "t^1" and its modulation in measures 95-96 and 102. In this transition, there is an alternation of tonally stable areas and tonally unstable areas (octatonic subsets). In the tonally stable area, there are some canonic motions of "s^1," a four-note linear descent ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$), between different voices. The orientation of the four-note figure is major

Measures 0-9

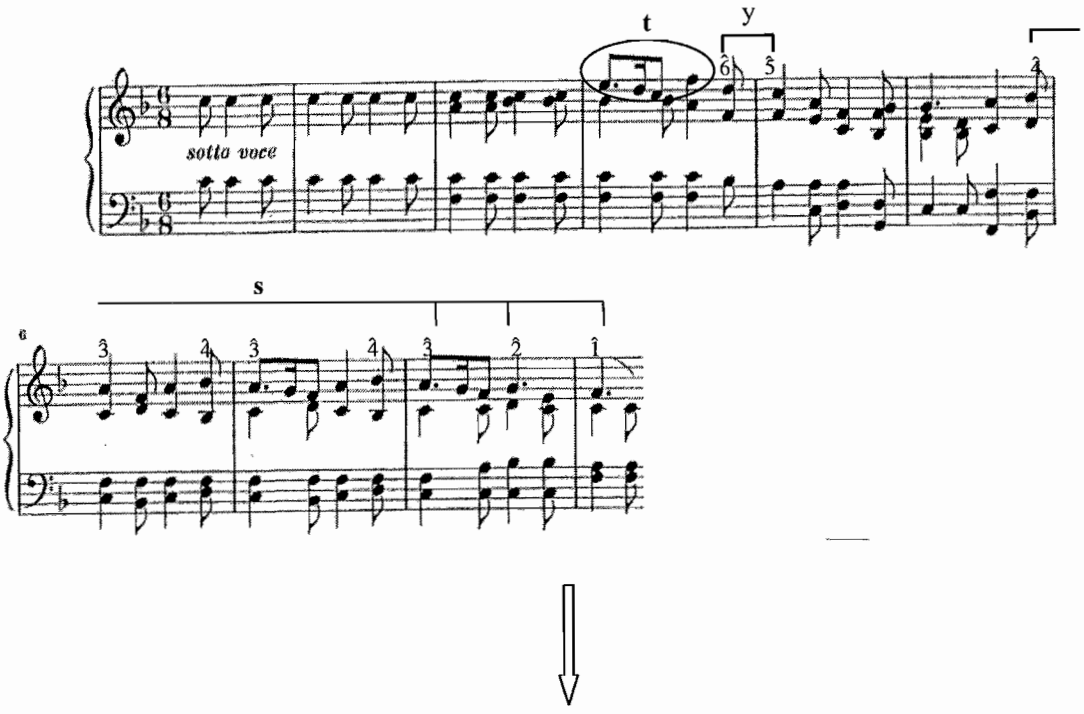


FIGURE 56. Transition to the octatonic episode and the motivic transformation from Theme I.

Measures 88-107

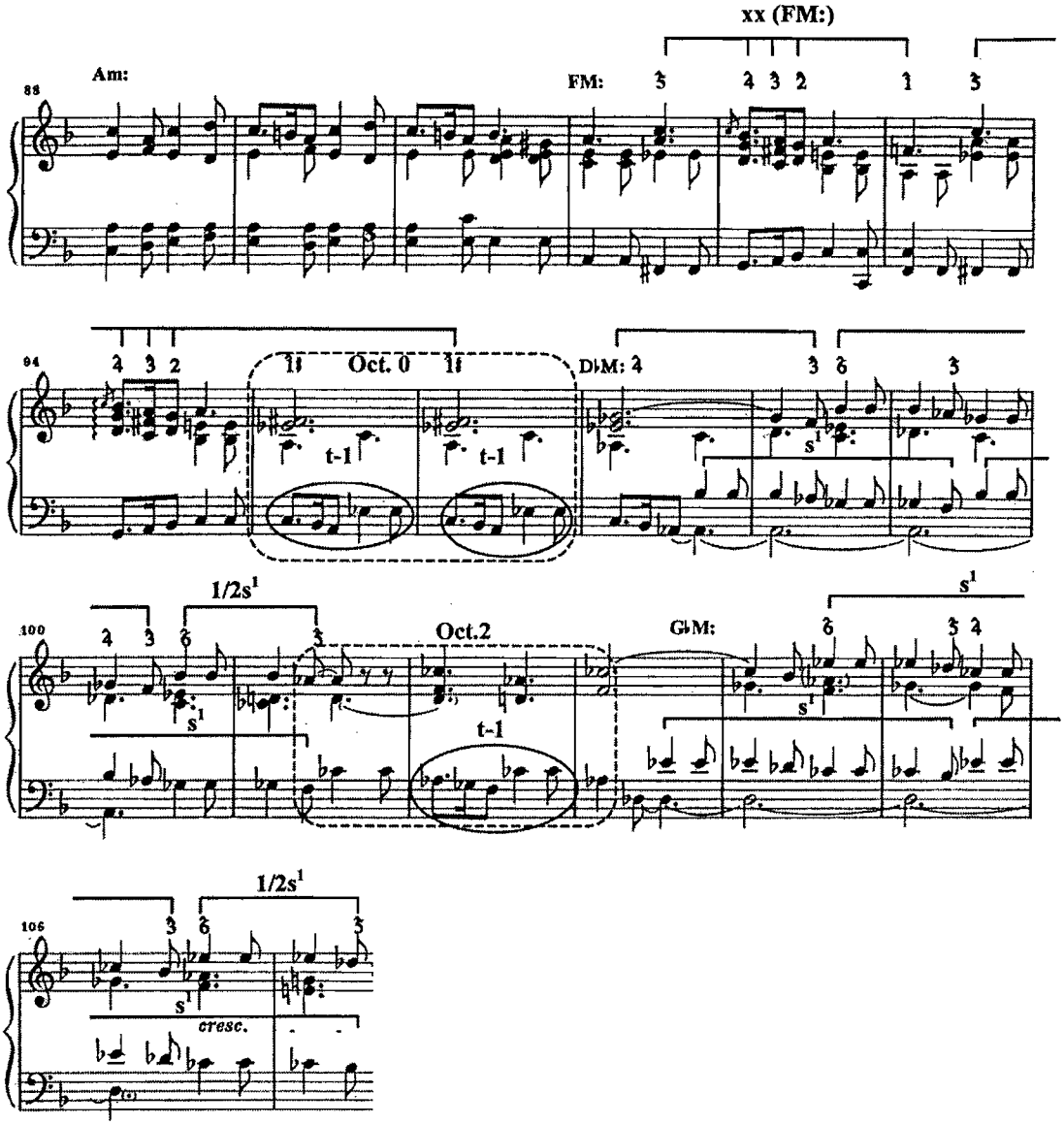


FIGURE 56. (Continued)

because of $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ and $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$, but the figure is on the dominant bass without resolution to the tonic—as if the serenity of the major-oriented phrase is not real but something one dreams of.

After the incompletion of Theme I in the key of F major with the silence created by the rest with a fermata in measure 87, the motive from Theme I begins transformation as if the protagonist is lost or in a dream-like state. The tonal instability created by the octatonic sets seems to produce a programmatic effect related to a mysterious or supernatural atmosphere, an evocation commonly observed in literary ballads.[14] This section is magical and works as if the protagonist is spared from reality; the octatonic section creates a safe haven from the major/minor conflict created between Theme I and Theme II.

The intensive chromatic ascending motion in the right-hand part begins in measure 107 (see Figure 57). On the first, third, fourth, and sixth beats between measures 107-110, the soprano forms 8-28, or G-A-A♯-C-C♯-E♭-E♮-F♯-G-A-B♭, a full octatonic 0 scale. The chromatic octatonic passage marked *stretto, piu mosso* is intensified with a *crescendo* that leads to *ff*. The harmonic structure of this passage is a prolongation of the diminished 7th chord connected by chromatic passing notes. The effect of this extended diminished 7th chord is significant in this section. Motive "t," which originated in Theme I, is modified to "t^1," the octatonic subset, and repeated several times in the lower voice.

After tonicizing both B♭ major and G minor between measures 111-113, the chromatic voice-leading yields B^7 in measure 114, which is resolved to its tonic E major, which is V of the key of A minor (see Figure 58). There is no resolution to the tonic of A minor, however, and the key of C major, which is V of F major, follows.

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[14]According to Steven Baur, Taruskin wrote that whole-tone and octatonic scales were used to evoke the evil and supernatural beings while diatonic and modes were used to depict folk characters and other human beings. Steven Baur, "Ravel's 'Russian' period: Octatonicism in His Early Works, 1893-1908," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 541.

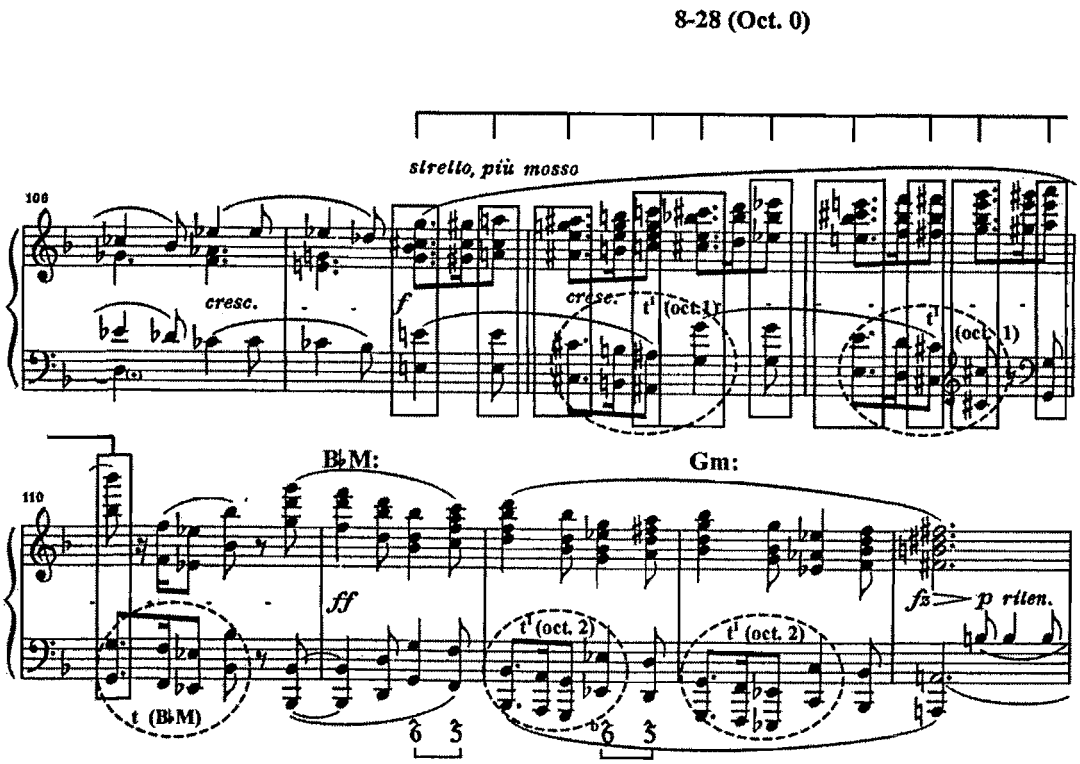


FIGURE 57. The octatonic episode and the motivic development of "t."

Between measures 115-122, more complete thematic material from the antecedent of Theme I is presented, first in the inner voice, and then in the bass line. Another canonic motion follows, repeating "s^1."

Between measures 122-126, figure s^1 ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$) is repeated and the resolution V7-I takes place in the upper voices, but the bass remains on the dominant, preventing realization of the tonic C major. After a brief intervention of the octatonic set in measure 127, the F major segments are sequenced on the dominant bass without attaining the resolution to the tonic. From measure 132, the transposed 8-28 (t = -1), the octatonic ascending motion, interrupts the dream-like F major section with strong intensity (see Figure 59). After the minor-oriented sequences in measures 135-138,

marked *ff*, chromatic descent in the bass line in measure 139 neutralizes the preceding octatonic region and leads to section B^1.

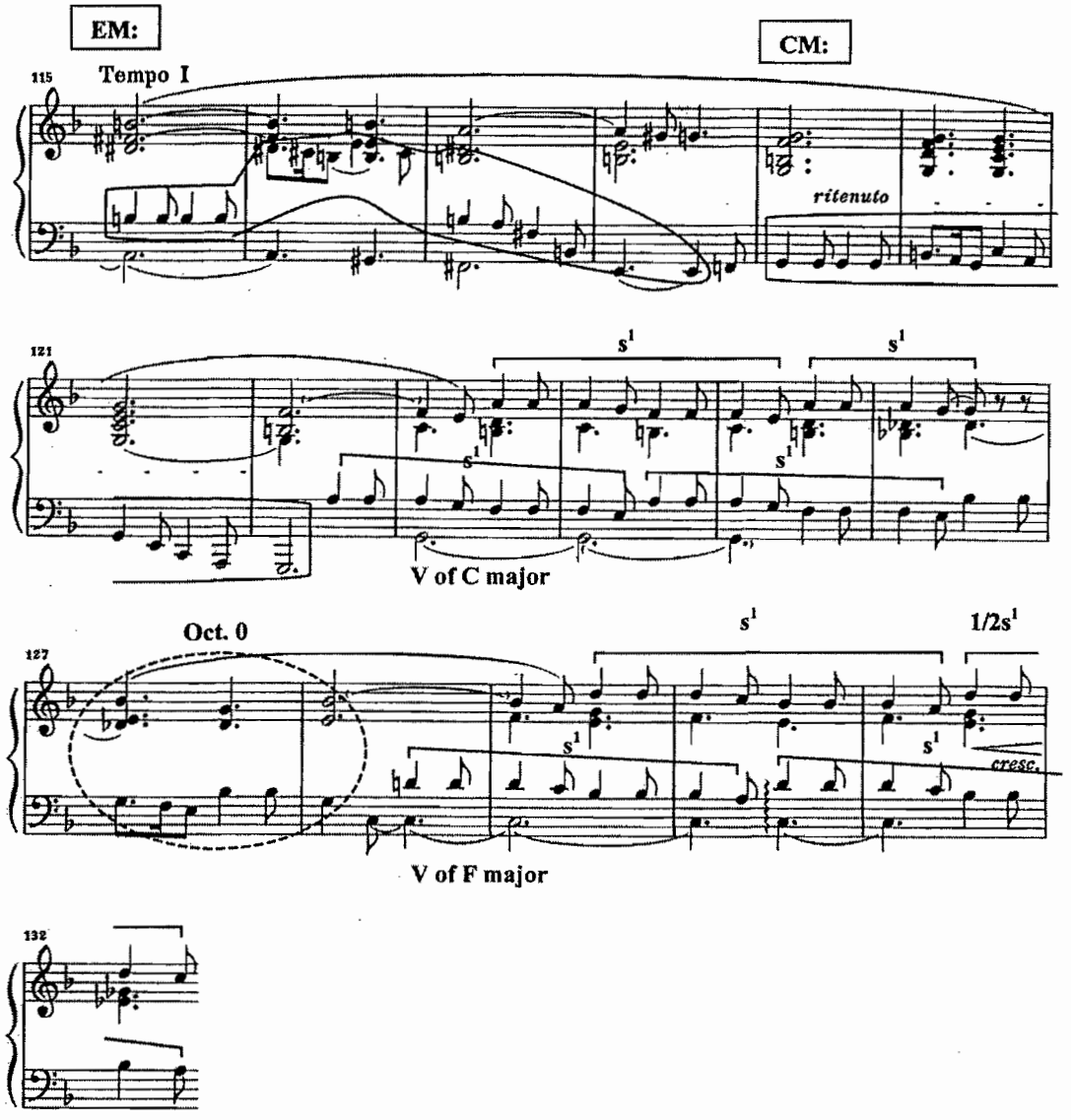


FIGURE 58. Canon in major-oriented section between octatonic phrases.

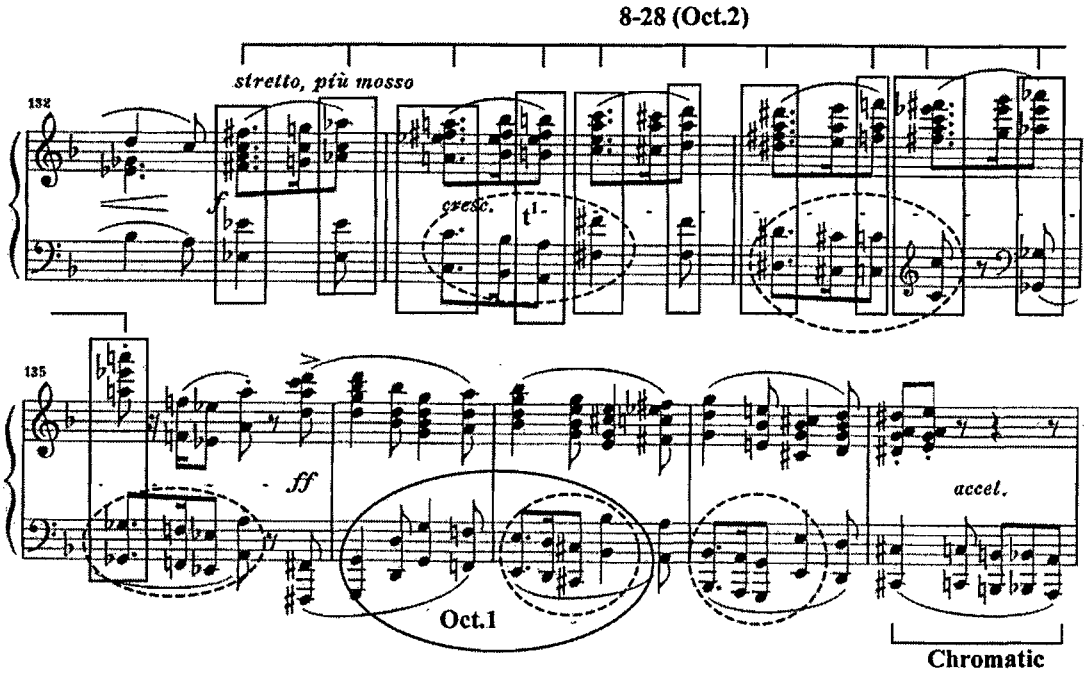


FIGURE 59. Second 8-28 (Oct. 2) and motivic development of "t."

Figure 60 shows the beginning of section B^1. Instead of starting with the tonic of Am, Chopin applies the second inversion of a Dm triad on the dominant bass A. The Dm triad is embellished by $V\flat^{9/7}$ but is never established as the tonic of the key of D minor. Instead, the entire section between measures 140-147 works as a prolongation of the $i\frac{6}{4}$ chord of the key of A minor.

David Witten explains how the second inversion of the Dm chord is assimilated within the key of A minor (Figure 61). Not only is $\hat{6}$ resolved to $\hat{5}$, as we observed in Section B, but $\hat{4}$ also descends to $\hat{3}$ to form the tonic Am.

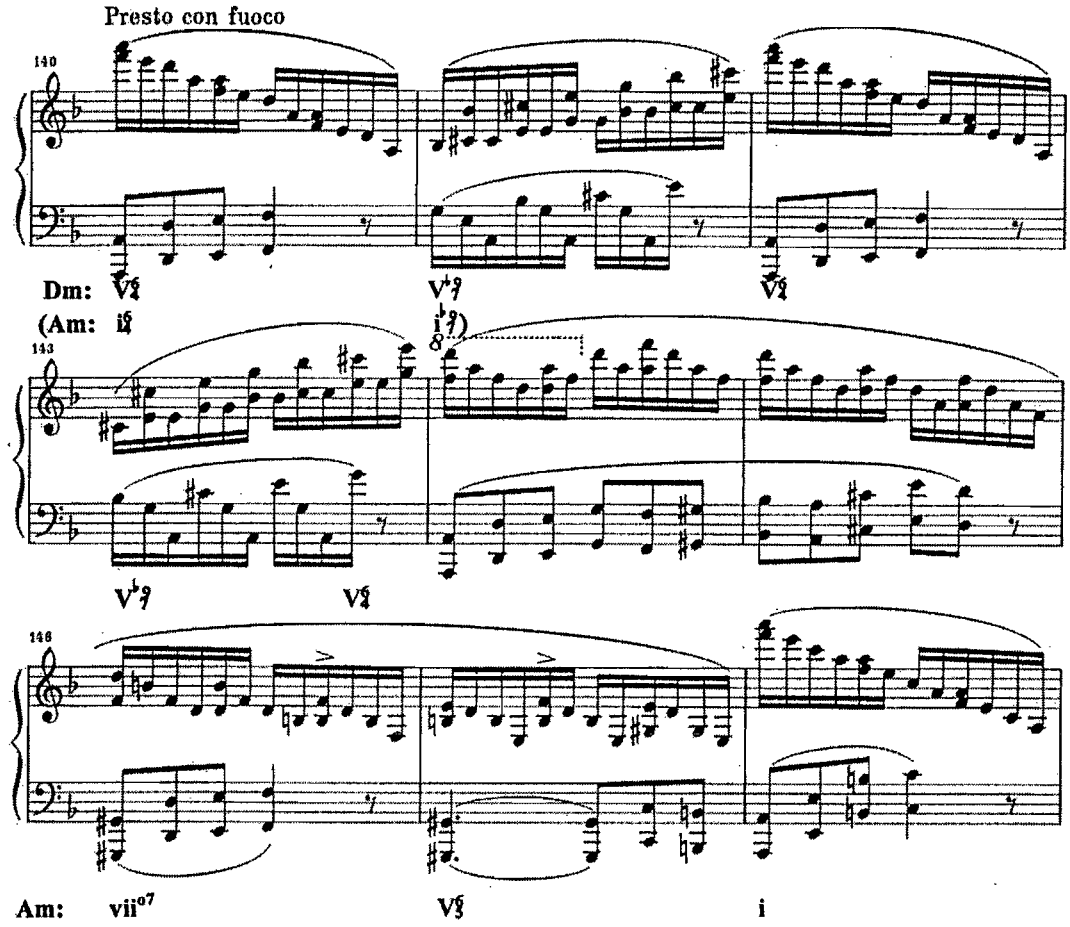


FIGURE 60. Section B[1]: Theme II in the key of D minor.

The appearance of D minor is ironic. D minor is vi of F major, which is supposed to be assimilated in the F major context. By analogy, the ally of F major is seized by A minor, creating a strong blow to F major. Figure 62 is a hypothetical scenario from the opposite point of view, one that favors the key of F major.

In measures 155-156, the bass line descends from F to E. forming $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of A minor (See Figure 63). A trill-like figuration in the soprano goes back and forth between E and F, the two crucial pitches from the *Grundgestalt* in measures 156-157. If

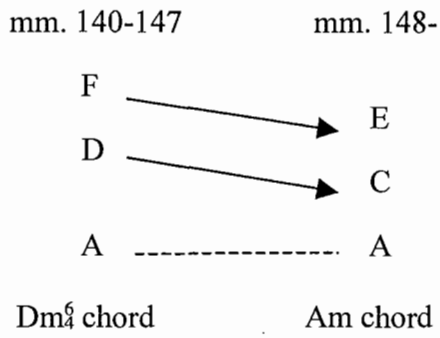


FIGURE 61. Assimilation of the $Dm^{6/4}$ chord in Section B^1. Source: Adapted from David Witten, "The Coda Wagging the Dog: Tails and Wedges in the Chopin Ballades," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music: Essays in Performance and Analysis*, ed. David Witten (New York: Garland, 1997), 144.

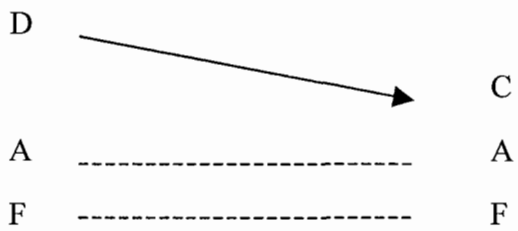


FIGURE 62. Hypothetical scenario for the dominance of F major.

F major declares its superiority, E is interpreted as $\hat{7}$, and establishes the tonic F in the major context. If A minor triumphs, F is reinterpreted as $\hat{6}$ and descends to E^, $\hat{5}$ of the key of A minor. The tension is built up with a *crescendo* while the altered motive from Theme I is repeated in the bass line. In the inner voice, the modified motive "x" in the A minor context is repeated as well. The suspenseful moment reaches its peak when the pitch E in octaves starts descending towards the tonic A by stepwise motion in measures 166-167. The long tremolo works like a drum roll to heighten a decisive moment.

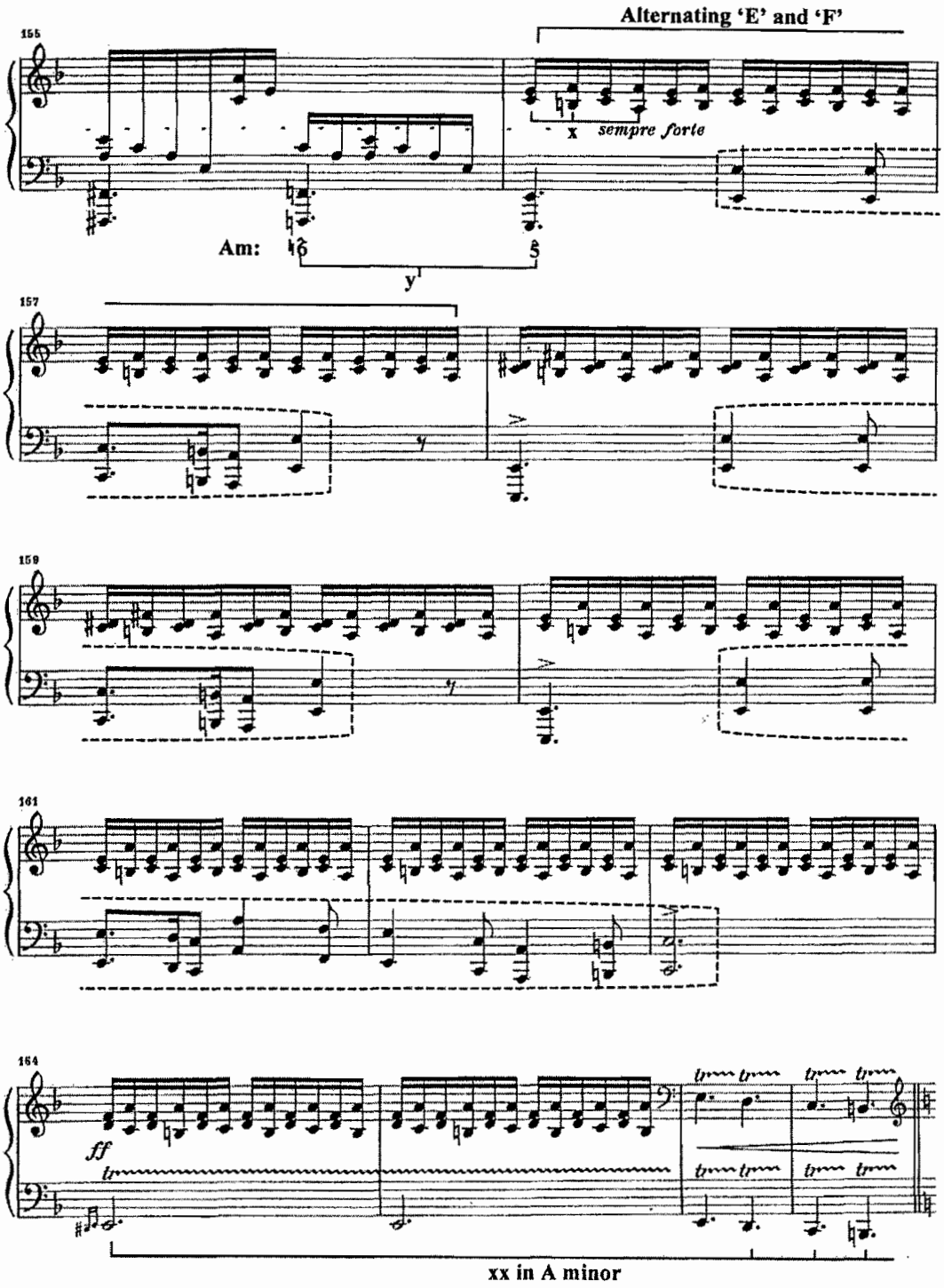


FIGURE 63. Preparation for the coda (measures 155-167).

The coda starts from the first inversion of an F major triad, but immediately F is interpreted as an upper neighbor note, and it is assimilated to the A minor triad (see Figure 64). There are many attempts to assimilate F to E, creating y^1 or $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of A minor. Although the tonal context is predominantly A minor, there is no strong cadence to establish the tonic, and thus the struggle continues. In measure 171, an F major triad is briefly established but taken over by the dominant of A minor at the end of the measure.

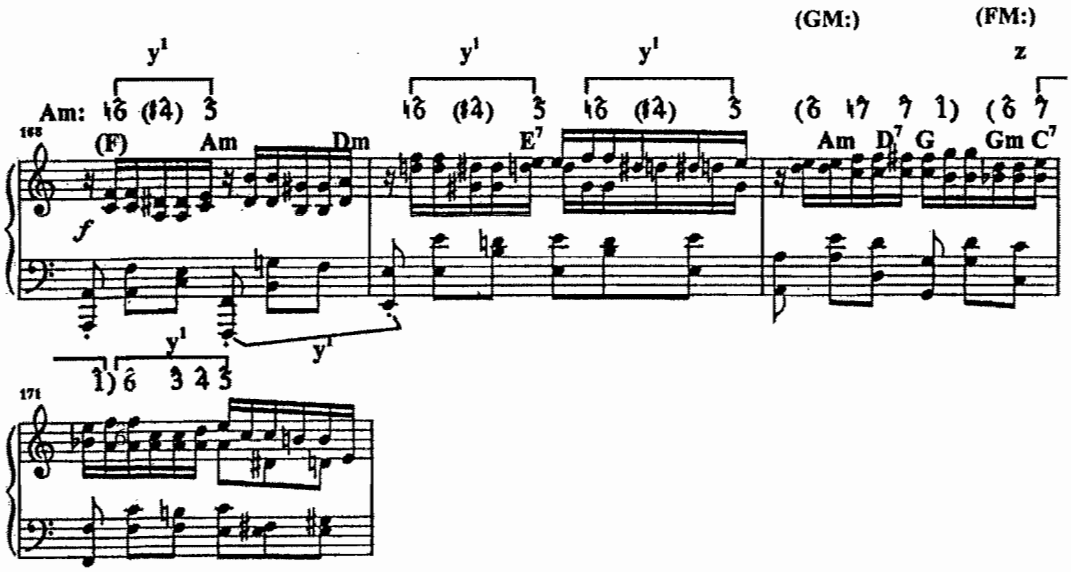


FIGURE 64. Beginning of the coda dominated by $y^1(\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5})$ in the key of A minor and the attempt to establish the key of F major. Scale degree numbers in the first parenthesis are in the key of G major, and the ones in the second parenthesis are in the key of F major.

In measures 174 and 175 in Figure 65, another attempt is made to establish F major; a "z" or $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ resolution occurs to replace the Am triad at the beginning of measure 174, and an F major triad is established at the beginning of measure 175. However, the F major triad is reinterpreted as VI of A minor, and more y^1's follow.

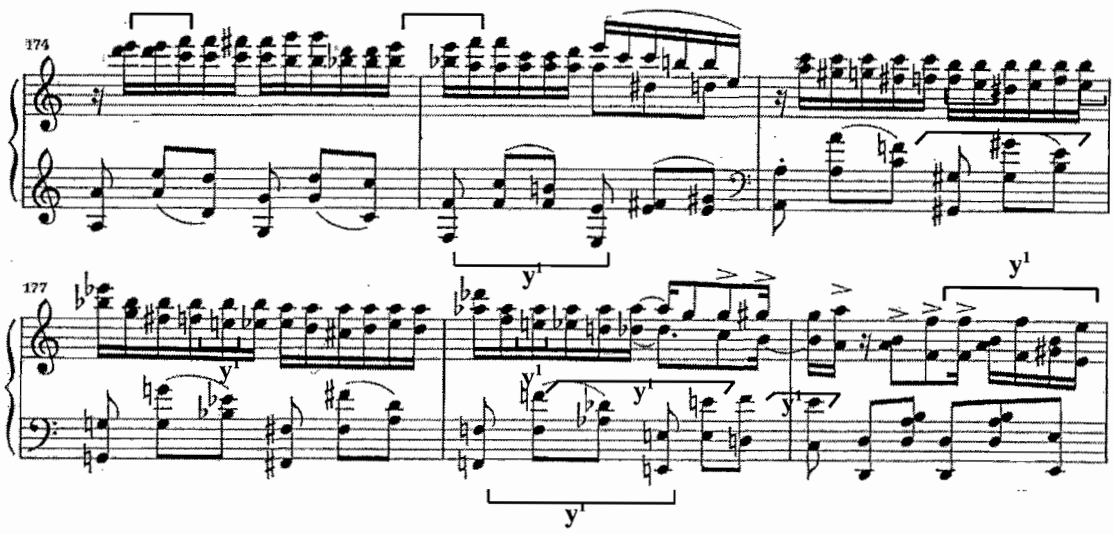


FIGURE 65. More conflict between F and E.

In the last page of the coda, the music becomes increasingly chaotic (see Figure 66). Between measures 186 and 187, the harmonic rhythm accelerates, and the chromatic bass line prevents creation of any decisive cadence. The forceful descent in the soprano line and the octaves in the bass from measure 188 create more instances of y^1, but it doesn't result in any final cadences. The bass line starts ascending from measure 194, and there is a final attempt to include "E" to "F" in measure 195. However, because of the succession of diminished 7th chords in the upper voice, "E"-"F" in the bass line cannot be interpreted as $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ as a way of establishing the key of F major. The chromatic chord progression between measures 194 and 196 is tonally unstable, creating a few octatonic pitch-sets; B^7 and $D\sharp^{o7}$ in measure 194 produce an octatonic 2 subset, E^{o7} and F^{o7} produce an octatonic 1 subset, and the French 6th chord in measure 196 produces an octatonic 2 subset.

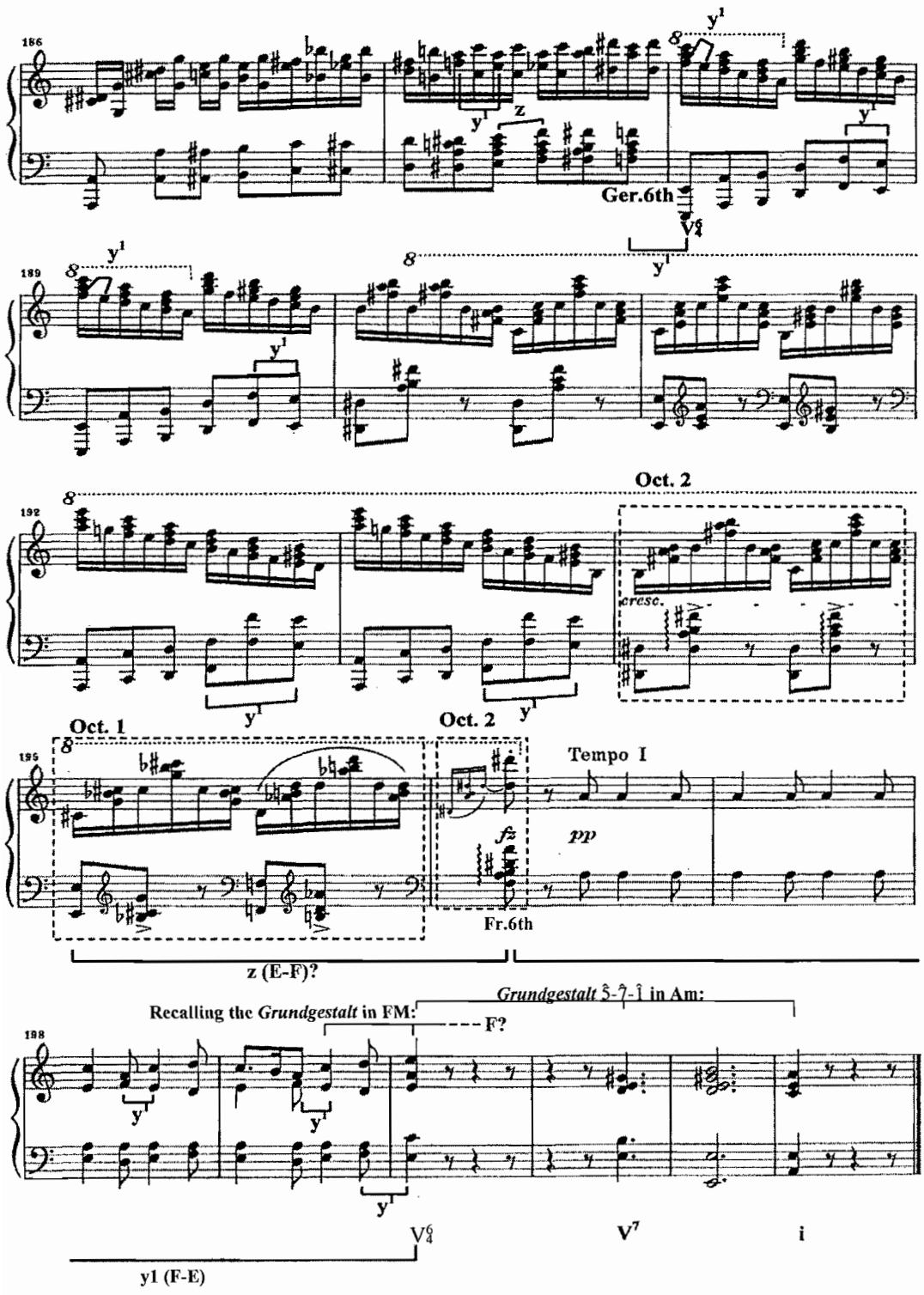


FIGURE 66. End of the coda: Chaotic battle and the metamorphosis of Theme I.

The F diminished 7th chord in measure 195 is followed by an F augmented 6th chord marked *fz* in measure 196. When the French 6th chord is about to be resolved to the dominant of A minor so as to establish its tonic, a surprise event occurs. Suddenly the resolution is curtailed and the highly charged music grinds to a halt.

Thereafter, the consequent of Theme I, marked *pp* and *Tempo primo*, appears as if surrendering to its enemies—not in the original key of F major, but in the key of A minor associated with the *presto con fuoco* theme in Section B. The V^6_4 chord in the key of A minor, the resolution of the augmented 6th chord, reluctantly follows. While the bass-line forms y^1, or F-E, on A minor's terms, the soprano ascends from C to E, recalling the opening's *Grundgestalt* C-E-F in the key of F major. Finally, after a pause, an authentic cadence in the key of A minor is quietly established.

The ending of the Ballade is unique and unexpected. The resolution to the tonic A minor is indirect. The abrupt halt of the emotionally agitating coda insinuates that the tale of the Ballade derives from the distant past, and the consequence of the tragedy is narrated through Theme I in a distant manner. The *Grundgestalt* in the opening theme, C-E-F, or $\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of F major, is transposed in measures 200-203, creating E-G♯-A, or $\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of A minor, to conclude the piece.

Conclusion

The above analysis of the F major Ballade shows interactions between two themes through a reinterpretation of the *Grundgestalt*. The *Grundgestalt* is the source of the two themes, which strongly contrast with one another on the surface. Although the themes seem to have nothing in common, close observation reveals that they are generated from a single *Grundgestalt*. The piece is therefore unified by means of the

common "basic shape." Notwithstanding, one question remains: How can one explain the fact that the piece starts in one key and ends in another? How is it perceived by listeners and performers? Figure 67 shows how Theme I in the key of F major gradually loses ground to A minor, until Am finally takes over and transforms Theme I. Figure 67 also shows how F major in the Theme I area is progressively shortened and finally replaced by A minor. Figure 67-A has the full antecedent and consequent. Figure 67-B's consequent stops at the V^7 chord without a resolution to the tonic. Figure 67-C is even shorter; the consequent stops at IV before the V^7 chord. Finally, at the end of the Ballade, Theme I remains entirely in the key of A minor.

A. Theme I with a full consequent in F major (measures 0-9)

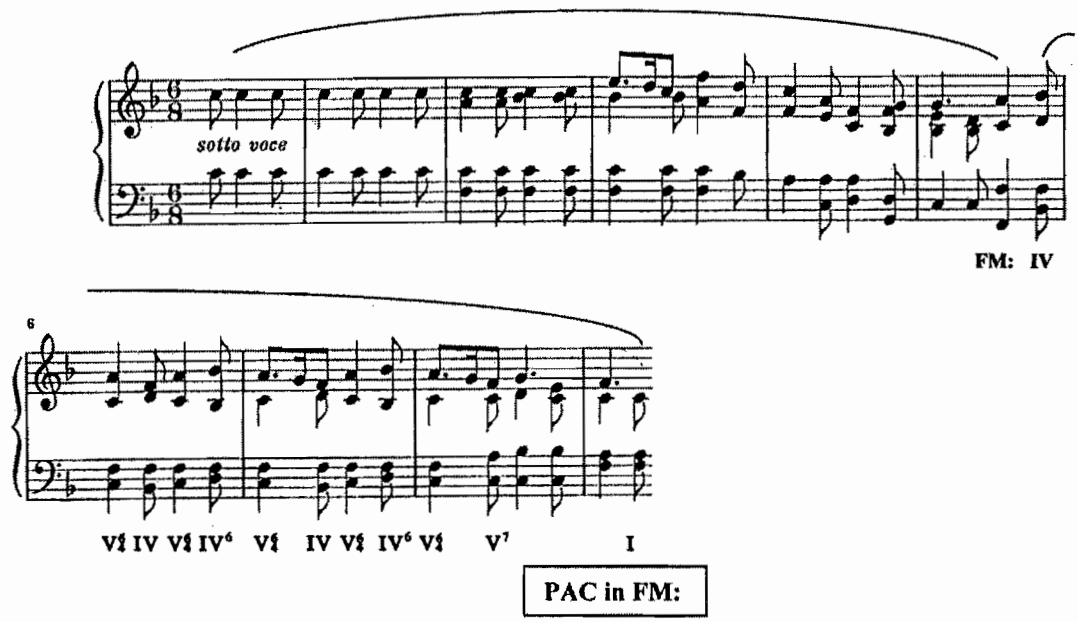
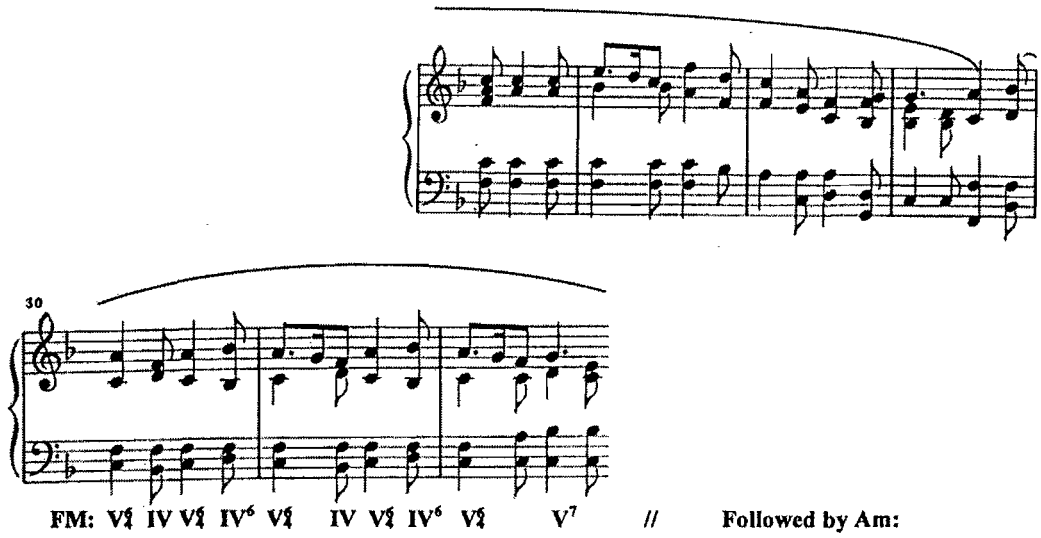
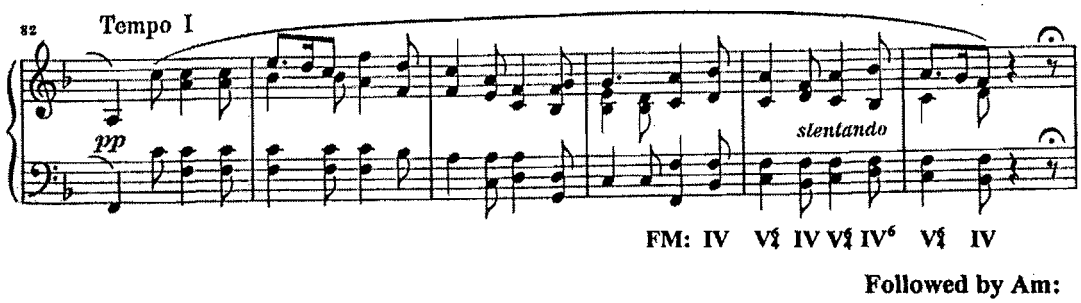


FIGURE 67. The diminution of Theme I.

B. Theme I with an incomplete consequent in F major (measures26-32)



C. Theme I with an incomplete consequent in F major (measures 82-87)



D. Theme I in A minor (measures 196-203)

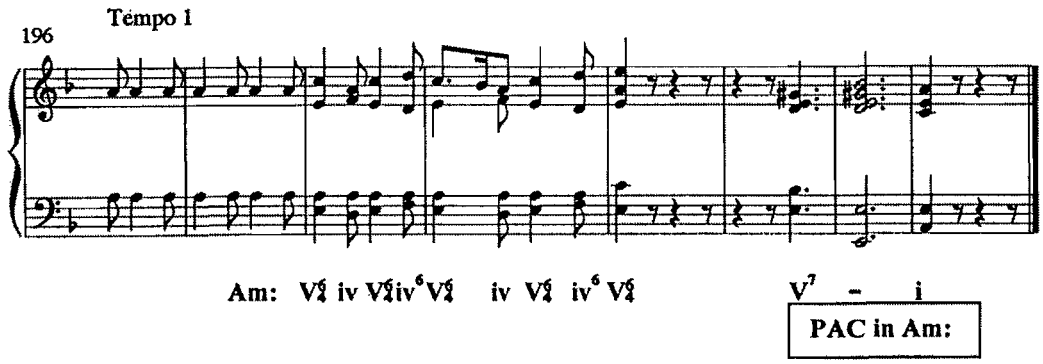
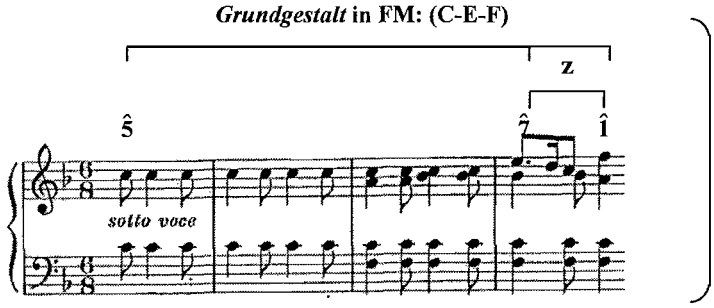


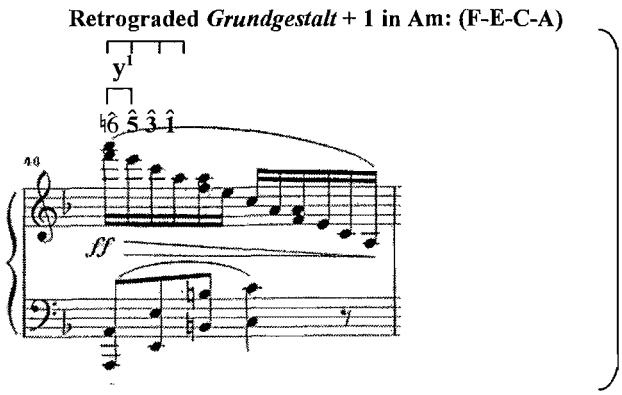
FIGURE 67. (Continued)

How does Chopin maintain coherence in the Ballade while applying a "two-key scheme"? Figure 68 shows the three stages of the Ballade: the thesis, in which Theme I

A. Thesis: Theme I in F major



B. Antithesis: Theme II in A minor



conflict

Unity

C. Synthesis: Theme I in A minor

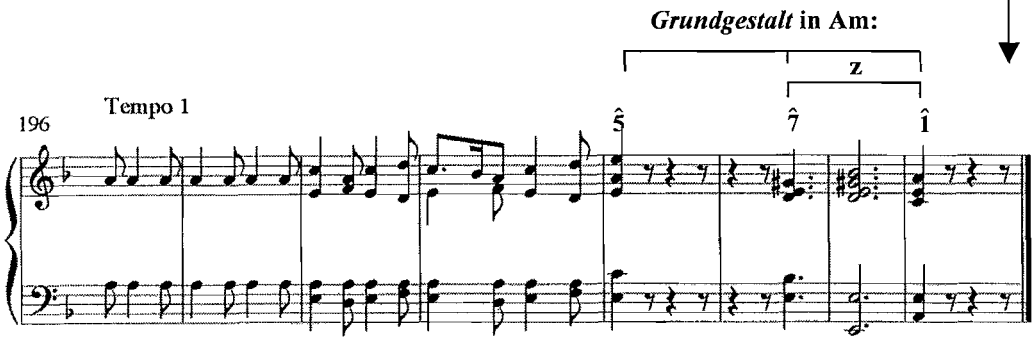


FIGURE 68. Three stages of the development of the Ballade.

is presented; the antithesis, where the oppositional force enters; and the synthesis, which is the metamorphosis of Theme 1. Since Chopin never disclosed whether his Ballades were based on any literary models, any plot attributed to them would be purely speculative. However, the title "Ballade" itself invites the listener's imagination. For example, metaphorically, the protagonist's beloved homeland (thesis) has experienced many setbacks that have caused a great deal of suffering (antithesis). Thus, he knows his country will never be the same (synthesis).

It is interesting and informative that Chopin replays Theme I at the end in the opposing key. The imbalance created by the key scheme is unified thematically. First, Chopin creates a perfect symmetry through application of the *Grundgestalt* C-E-F in the key of F major and its retrograde F-E-C in the key of A minor. Then he creates a synthesis of two keys through its thematic unity. These two strategies solve the problem of the "two-key scheme" and contribute to expressing the tragic nature of the Ballade.

CHAPTER IV

F MINOR BALLADE, OP. 52

Introduction: Background of the Ballade

Chopin's Fm Ballade, Op. 52, was the last of four Ballades he composed during his lifetime. Jim Samson, whose extensive research covers historical background as well as theoretical analyses, defines the period between 1836-1842 as Chopin's most productive years. He composed the fourth Ballade in 1842,[1] about six years after the publication of the first Ballade, Op. 23. In 1842, Chopin also produced the last Scherzo, Op. 54, in E major, the last Polonaise, Op. 53, in A♭ major, and the last Impromptu, Op. 51, in G♭ major.

According to Samson, Chopin became increasingly critical of his own compositions in the 1840s, resulting in a diminution of his output during his last years.[2] A comparison of Op. 23 with Op. 52 suggests that a stylistic evolution occurred from the mid-1830s to the early 1840s: the organization and motivic development of Op. 52 demonstrate more complexity, and the listener experiences a few unexpected subsidiary episodes that are absent in Op. 23.

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[1]Samson, *Four Ballades*, 14.

[2]Ibid., 17.

Formal Organization and the Ballade's Hidden "Two-Key Scheme": FM: vs. Fm:

The overall structure of the Fm Ballade is shown in Table 4. Section A includes an introduction, Theme I, and Theme II. In Section B, Chopin extensively transforms the motives "x" and "y" found in the introduction and Theme I of Section A. Section B is short (about 28 bars), and Themes I and II are not directly recognizable. A reprise of Section A^1 follows Section B. Section A^1 includes the introduction and Themes I and II, but the introduction and Theme II are in keys different from those found in Section A. At the end of Section A^1, a significant dominant pedal over C anticipates the arrival of a substantial coda in the key of F minor.

Although Chopin's music is not programmatic in the manner of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*,[3] many people would agree that the Ballade is telling a story.[4] However, because Chopin's Ballades are purely instrumental works and the composer does not disclose any model of literature as their foundation, the following questions can be raised: what is the plot and how does it unfold?

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[3]Samson writes that "the ballad settings by Schubert, Loewe, and others were frequently presented in a 'narrative' 6/8 or 6/4 metre, borrowing freely from a convention commonly associated with pastoral music of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." He also adds, "the lyric poem and its musical setting expressed an emotion, while the ballad and its musical setting told a story." However, Samson states that Chopin avoided programmatic association by shunning any attempt to express the world of external reality (as opposed to inner emotional reality) through his music, unlike Berlioz and Schumann, who already wrote instrumental works inspired by literature before 1835. Samson, *Four Ballades*, 11-12.

[4]For example, David Witten summarizes the piece with metaphor: "Poetically, this Ballade describes a hero who suffers many setbacks but struggles to overcome them and emerges victorious. Analytically, it narrates the story of a tonality (I) that continuously slips down a fifth below to its subdominant (IV), but ultimately discovers a path towards home (V-I) via the submediant (VI)." Witten, "Coda Wagging the Dog," 162.

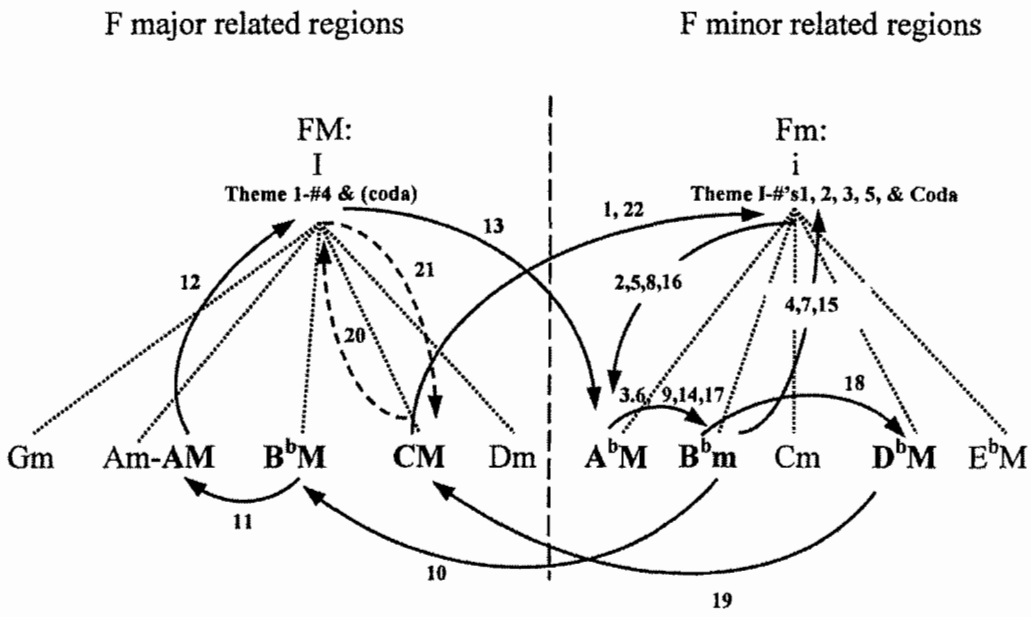
TABLE 4. Formal Structure of the F Minor Ballade, Op. 52

Sections	Themes	Measures	Keys	Remarks	"y" (major) or "y^{1}" (minor)
A	Introduction	1-7	**CM: (as V of FM:)**	Motives "x," "y," "z"	y ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Theme I-1 (a + b)	7-22	**FM: - A♭M: - B♭m: (FM:) – B♭m:**	Motives "x," "y^{1}" (opposition) Modal mixture	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Theme I-2 (a + b)	23-37	**Fm: - A♭M: - B♭m: (FM:) - B♭m**	Variation 1 Modal mixture	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Episode	38-46	G♭M – F♭M	Pentatonic	y ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
		46-57	Cycle of 5th— B♭m:	Transformation of "x," "y^{1}"	y ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Theme I-3 (a + b)	58-71	**Fm: - A♭M: - B♭m: (FM:)**	Variation 2 Modal mixture	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
		72-80	——**F^{7}** ↙	V^{7} of B♭M:	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) y ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Theme II-1	80-99	**B♭M: (IV of FM:)**	Emphasis on $\hat{3}$	y ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
(B)	"Development"	99-107	Gm: - Am:	Transformation of "x," "y^{1}" Enharmonic change	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
		108-120	Gm: - Fm: - D♭M: - A♭M: - D♭M:		
		121-128	D♭m: - A♭M: - Fm – EM(F♭M)		
A^{1}	"Introduction 2"	129-134	**AM: (III of FM:)**	Modal mixture "x," "y," "z"	y ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Theme I-4 (a + b)	135-151	(Dm:) - **FM:** - (Fm:) - **A♭M: - B♭m: (FM:) – B♭m:**	Variation 3 Canon, 3-3's Modal mixture	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Theme I-5 (a + b)	152-164	**Fm: - A♭M: - B♭m: (FM:)**	Variation 4 Modal mixture	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
		164-168	**$F_{7}^{♭9}$** ↓	6-27 (Oct. 2) 3-3's (A vs. A♭)	
	Theme II-2	169-191	**D♭M: (♭VI of Fm:)**	**♭VI of Fm:**	y ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
	Preparation for the coda	191-202	**D♭M-CM**	**♭VI-V in Fm:**	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)
		202-210	**CM (V of Fm:/FM:)**	Reduction of the intro.	Neither "y" nor "y^{1}"
Coda		211-239	**Fm:-(FM:) –Fm:**	3-3's (F-G♯-A) 7-31 (Oct. 1) **V^{7}-i in Fm:**	y^{1} (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$)

*In resolution "y," $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ indicates a major diatonic scale and ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ indicates a minor diatonic scale as its referential collection. Octatonic O stands for [0134679T], octatonic 1 stands for [124578TE], and octatonic 2 stands for [235689E0] (0 = C, 1 = C♭/D♭, 2 = D, etc.).

My analysis reveals a conflict between F major and F minor throughout the piece, as if a two-key scheme lies hidden just below the surface. As this musical story unfolds, F minor gradually emerges and finally triumphs over F major at the end of the Ballade. Therefore, it appears that the unique quality of this key scheme, rather than the form, speaks as Chopin's primary idea in the Ballade. This analytic approach suggests that the composer intended to convey a succession of events and their consequence. The key scheme not only expresses the mood of each section, but also gives the piece coherent direction. The tonal discourse of the themes is illustrated in the tonal pyramid, which shows the order of the modulations in the thematic areas. The tonal pyramid also shows two tonal centers—FM: and Fm:—projected in the introduction and Theme I, respectively (see Figure 69).

The tonal pyramid displays Chopin's preference for third-related keys. In Theme I, whose recurrence dominates the piece, the key of A♭ major (♭III) always assimilates the preceding F minor. The second introduction in Section A^1 is in the key of A major, which is a mediant (III) of F major. The key of D♭ major, submediant major (♭VI) of F minor, is chosen for Theme II in Section A^1, and A major and D♭ major dance symmetrically around the tonic F. The order of A major and D♭ major symbolizes the development of the plot as well; after the appearance of D♭ major, which is ♭VI of F minor, the course of the piece clearly steers towards the final destination, F minor, via the resolution from ♭VI to V.



* Arabic numerals represent the order of modulation.

FIGURE 69. The overall key scheme of the thematic areas on the tonal pyramid. Arabic numerals represent the order of modulation.

Other prominent keys are B♭ major and B♭ minor, the subdominant key regions of both F major and F minor. B♭m exerts a strong presence in Theme I, including the theme's conclusion. Theme II in Section A is in the key of B♭ major. The parallel keys in the subdominant area mirror the major/minor conflict between F minor and F major in the tonic area. Conversely, the dominant is mostly absent, except in the introduction, which is detached from Theme I by a fermata. This structure renders the arrival of the dominant before the coda even more aurally dramatic and decisive.

The *Grundgestalt* and the Introduction's Tonal Problem: Implicating F Major as the Tonic

The F minor Ballade's introductory section (mm. 1-7) emphasizes C major and functions as the dominant for the following section, which begins with an F minor triad. Three important melodic motives appear in the introduction: (1) a descending linear three-note motive E-D-C, or "x" (mm. 1-2), presented in the left-hand part; (2) a descending melodic five-note motive G-F-E-D-C in the right hand part, or "xx" (that is, two x's, G-F-E and E-D-C, combined); and (3) the descending major second, "y," which is $\hat{6}$ to $\hat{5}$ in the dominant key, C major (see Figure 70).

A detailed analysis of the introduction, however, reveals a curiosity. As soon as the F major triad is tonicized by its dominant C^7 chord in measure 2, the secondary dominant G^7 chord in measure 3 counterbalances the initial tonicization in an attempt to establish the key of C major. All three melodic motives are oriented toward C major. Motives "x," E-D-C, and "xx," G-F-E-D-C, descend to C by stepwise motion, stressing the superiority of C as the apparent tonic. However, E is added to the end of motive "xx," completing the melody G-F-E-D-C-E in the first phrase of the right-hand part, as if raising a question. In the second phrase, not only "xx" but also "x" returns to E, resulting in the melodic sequence E-D-C-E. The introductory phrase concludes by reducing the melody to nothing more than a single E.

The added "E" after every descent to C in "x" and "xx" renders the melody's tonal orientation ambiguous and forces the following speculation: is "E" going to be interpreted as $\hat{7}$ eventually and resolve to $\hat{1}$ in the key of F major? The unresolved "E" is reminiscent of the controversial "E♭" ($\flat\hat{6}$ of the key of G minor) in the introduction of the Gm Ballade (see Figure 71). I will use "z" to imply the implied half-step upward motion from $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ shown in Figure 70.

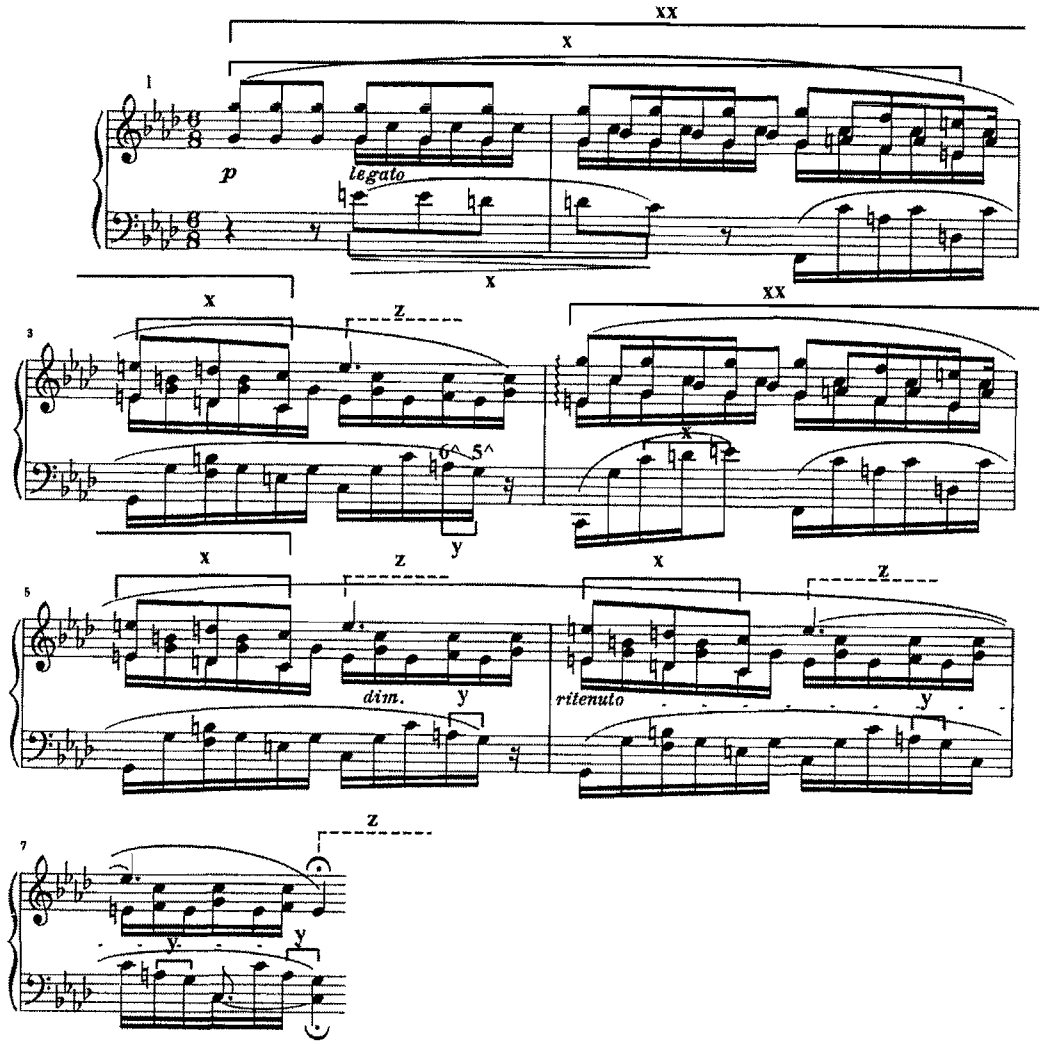


FIGURE 70. Tonal cells "x", "y" and "z" in the introduction (measures 1-7).

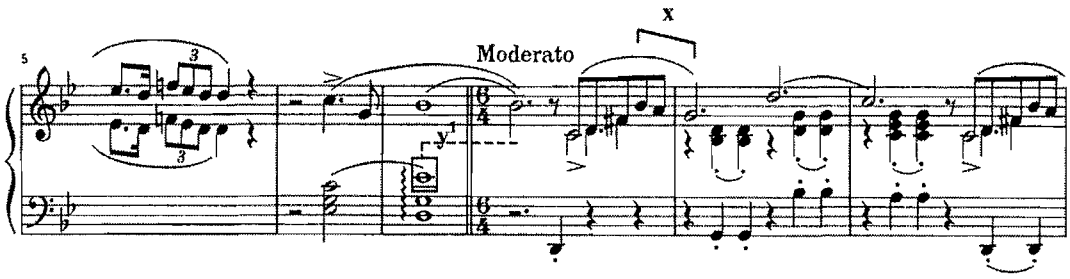


FIGURE 71. G minor Ballade (measures 5-10).

In measure 3 of Figure 70, motive "y" descends from A to G, creating a $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ sequence in the key of C major and assimilating an F major triad as the subdominant first inversion resolved to C major. I think the pitch "A," $\hat{6}$ of C major, is another component of the *Grundgestalt*. Although the introduction concludes with a C major triad, the $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ C major sequence recurs several times at the end of the introduction, echoing the initial F major triad in the opening, until the introduction fades away.

If one can interpret "E" as $\hat{7}$ and seek the resolution $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ in the course of the Ballade, it is not unreasonable to reinterpret A-G as $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$ and speculate the expansion of "y" from a dyad to a three-note motive. The last two pitches in the inner voice A-G (y) in the introduction might possibly be expanded to A-G-F, $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$, emerging from "y" to "x" in an F major context. Thus, both uncompleted "z" and uncompleted "y" suggest F major as a possible tonic.[5] The Schenkerian graph shown in Figure 72 summarizes the motives and the ambiguity of the introduction's key.

Metaphorically, what does the key of F major represent? The mood of the introduction evokes a lovely springtime atmosphere. By returning to "E," the phrase is like an innocent child asking a question. The key of F major could be an idealized pastoral vision of one's homeland, or something that the protagonist always dreams of: love, happiness, or a fond reminiscence of the past. However, F major is merely suggested, not realized, in the introduction. And the question lingers not only in the

[5]Witten also points out the ambiguity of the beginning of the Ballade. He writes, "Is this phrase in the key of C or F? On the one hand, the repetitions of C major continue until measure 7. But the 9-8 struck suspension in measures 2 and 4 are an expressively persuasive argument for F major; also tiny plagal cadences act as "filler" after each phrase, and keep the sonority of F in [the] ears." Witten, "Coda Wagging the Dog," 162.

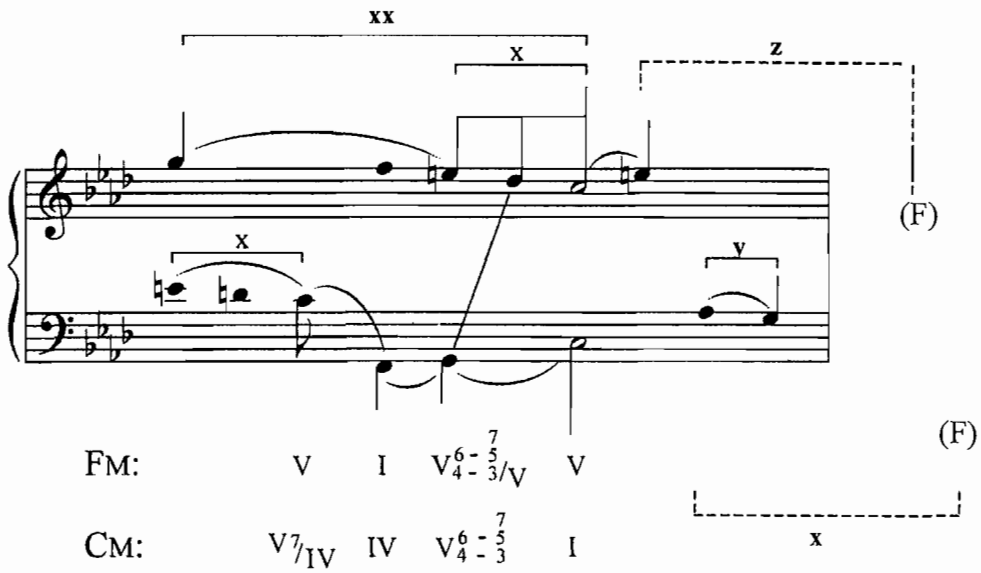


FIGURE 72. Schenkerian graph of the introduction.

introduction, but also throughout the piece. Does the protagonist's dream come true? Next, I will demonstrate how the projection of the F major chord in the introduction and the F minor chord in the primary theme area become problematic, creating conflict throughout the piece.[6]

Another *Grundgestalt* and Ambiguous Chromatic Chords in Theme I: The Fm Chord as an Opposition and Presentation of the Octatonic Subsets

The introduction begins to fade with the diminuendo and ritenuto marked in bars 5 and 6, and it concludes with the fermata. A clear change occurs in the texture and rhythm as well. Theme I begins as a waltz in 6/8 meter, but like the opening of the G minor Ballade, the accompaniment is absent (in the first half of measure 8). No voice

[6]Michael Klein also points out an opposition between major and minor keys, mainly between the primary theme (minor) and the secondary themes (major). He writes, "The narrating presence in the Fourth Ballade idealizes the pastorale in opposition to the waltz, which stands as a synecdoche for the urban life of the salon." Klein, 49.

leading resolves "E" in the soprano at the end of the introduction. This suggests that the introduction is somehow detached from Theme I in the following section. It renders ambiguous the connection between the C major triad at the end of the introduction and the F minor triad at the beginning of Theme I, thus creating a juxtaposition: the protagonist's longing for the key of F major in the introduction, as opposed to the intrusion of "reality" represented by the key of F minor. The mood of Theme I stifles the nostalgic dream in the introduction and replaces it with a melancholic atmosphere.

Theme I, or the primary theme, is divided into two distinctive phrases: "a" and "b." In phrase "a," the $\hat{5}$ of the key of Fm, or C, is prolonged and embellished by the upper and lower neighbor tones (see Figure 73). Phrase "b" manifests a strong tonal direction to establish the relative key, A♭ major. The soprano of phrase "b" consists of "x" and "xx," generated from the motives in the introduction.

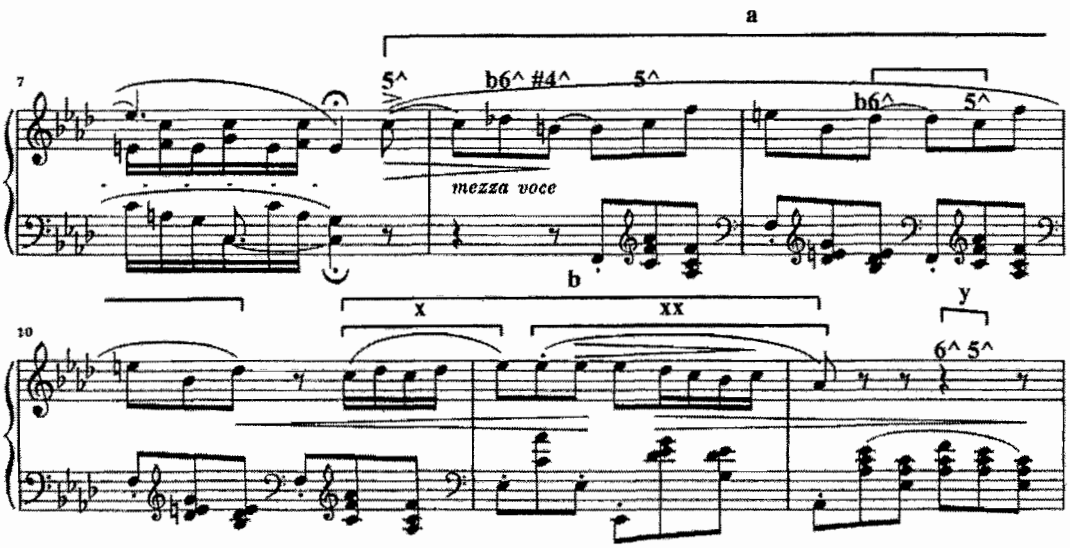


FIGURE 73. Antecedent and consequent in Theme I (measures 7-12).

Figure 74 shows my Schenkerian graph of phrases "a" and "b" in the Theme I area. Phrase "a" is static and creates uneasiness because of the chromatic/octatonic

subset embellishing the F minor chord. Conversely, phrase "b" concludes with a perfect authentic cadence to establish A♭ major, the relative major of F minor, by assimilating the F minor triad as submediant. The insinuated major key and the clear cadence of A♭ major counterbalance the uneasiness in phrase "a," creating a $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ sequence. The upper neighbor D♭ is stressed rhythmically by anticipation in measure 9, and then resolved to C. This structure forms figure "y^1" by the motion from $\flat\hat{6}$ to $\hat{5}$ in F minor.

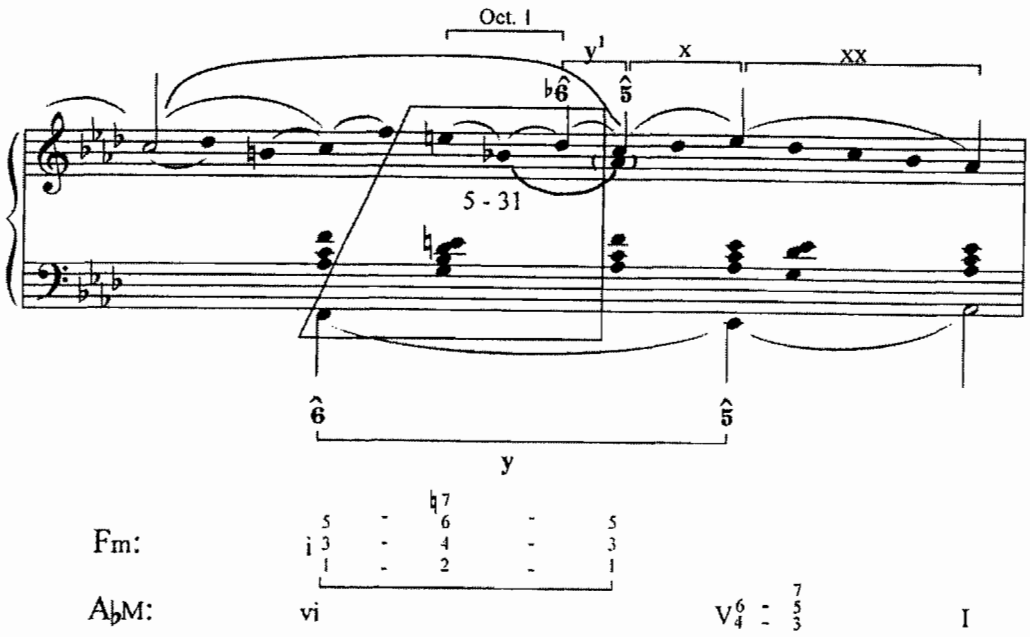


FIGURE 74. Schenkerian graph of Theme I.

I think $\flat\hat{6}$ or D♭ is another *Grundgestalt* that represents the key of F minor and creates opposition against the tonic F major suggested in the introduction. First, D♭ doesn't belong to the key of F major; therefore, its presence creates a problem. Second, D♭ calls for a resolution to C, the dominant of F minor, to establish its tonic in the minor

mode. Therefore, D♭ represents the identity of the F minor mode that counteracts the F major mode originally projected in the introduction.

There are three harmonically functional components of the *Grundgestalt* presented at the beginning of the Fm Ballade: (1) the leading tone "E," which has to be resolved to F; (2) an "A," which resolves to G to create $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of C major, as well as $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$ in the key of F major; and (3) "D♭", the ♭$\hat{6}$ of F minor resolved to $\hat{5}$, which is the oppositional force that prevents the establishment of the key of F major, steering the direction of the piece to F minor instead. "A", "E", and "D♭" all gravitate towards more structural pitches, creating stepwise motions "y" ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$), "y^{1}" (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$), and "z" ($\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$), respectively.

Figure 75 illustrates the two conflicting scenarios created by the *Grundgestalt*. Scenario 1 establishes the key of F major projected in the introduction. Scenario 2 establishes the Fm tonality suggested in Theme I.

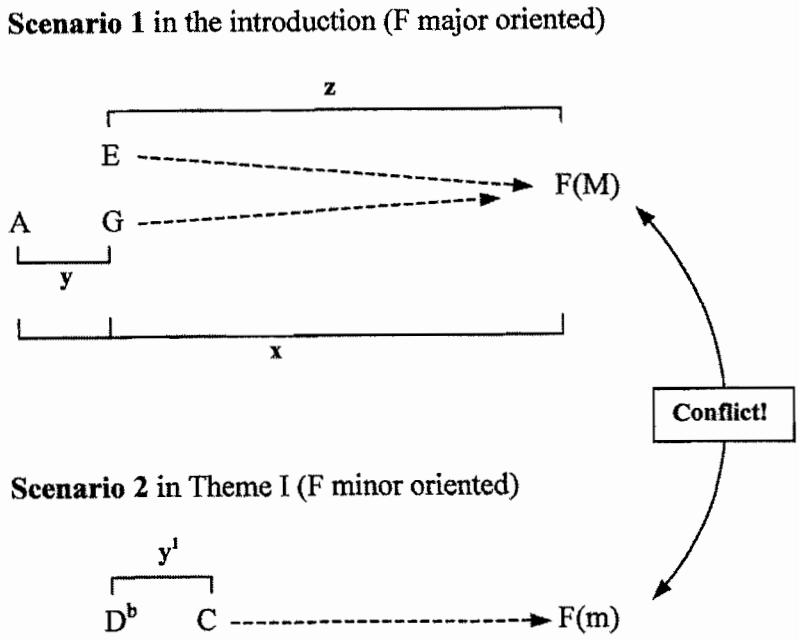


FIGURE 75. Conflicting scenarios: "y" in the introduction and y^{1} in Theme I.

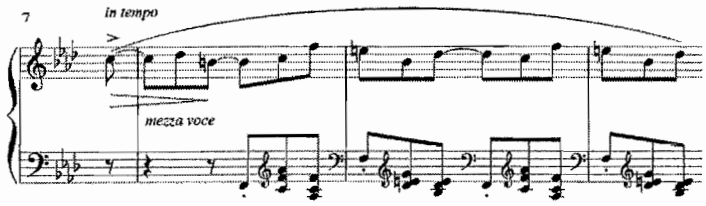
In addition to the melodic tension and resolution between ♭6 and $\hat{5}$, there exists a harmonic tension and resolution in the same measures. The $viio_7$ chord juxtaposed with the bass F on the downbeat in measures 9 and 10 creates 5-31[1457T],[7] which is a diatonic/octatonic subset. This juxtaposition creates dissonances over the bass F. Thus, tension exists not only between ♭$\hat{6}$ and $\hat{5}$, but also between vii^{o7} and i in the key of F minor. Although the entire phrase "a" is derived from the Fm harmonic scale, the effect of employing the chromatic chord, which is the common subset between the diatonic collection and the octatonic collection, adds a specific color to the primary theme and works as a "seed" that grows into a larger conflict later.

Figure 76 summarizes phrase "a's" from the Theme I area (mm. 7-22) and displays the referential collections behind the melodic and harmonic structure as well as the octatonic sets created.

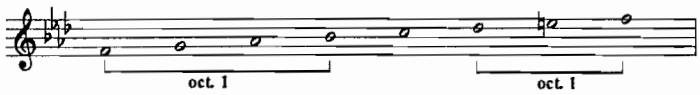
The characteristic of the Theme I phrase "a" area is strongly affected by the diminished chords juxtaposed over the tonic bass to create octatonic sets through a modal mixture. While a-1 starts from the F minor triad, a-2 and a-3 start the phrase with major triads A♭M and FM, respectively. However, neither major triad has the freedom to express its major mode character, because each major triad is tainted with a minor character by the modal mixture, as if held hostage within the minor boundary. Even more confining is the F major triad's interpretation as the dominant of B♭ minor, the subdominant of F minor. Combined with chromatic/octatonic chords, which are

[7]I will use the following symbols for three transpositions of the octatonic scale: octatonic 0 [0134679T], octatonic 1 [124578TE], and octatonic 2 [235689E0]. The numbers represent pitches: 0 = C, 1 = C♯/D♭, 2 = D, etc.

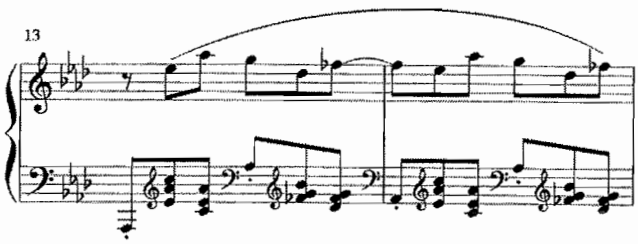
a-1



Referencial collection: F harmonic minor scale

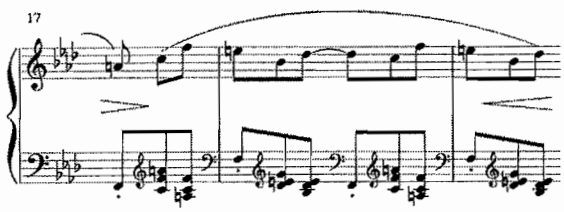


a-2



Referential collection: A♭ major/minor scale

a-3



Referential collection: F major/minor scale

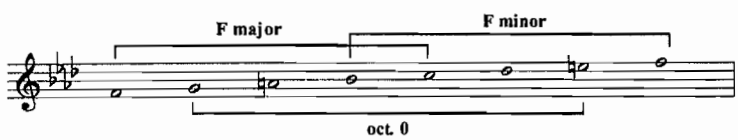


FIGURE 76. Modal mixture and referential collections in Theme I, phrase "a's."

juxtaposed over the tonic bass, and an irregular harmonic rhythm, the entire Theme I area creates an uneasy, disoriented, and melancholic air.[8]

Grundgestalt and the Pentatonic Episode

There is an episode in which Chopin employs the pentatonic scale between measures 37 and 46 (see Figure 77). The source of the pentatonic scales $\hat{1}$- $\hat{2}$- $\hat{3}$- $\hat{5}$- $\hat{6}$ between measures 37 and 47 is the introduction; if one combines $\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$ from "x" in measures 1-2, and $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ from "y^1" in measure 3, the pentatonic scale $\hat{1}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{6}$ is formed.[9] Thus, Chopin embellishes the G♭ major triad with the G♭ pentatonic scale, and the F♭ major triad with the F♭ pentatonic scale (see Figure 78).

In measure 37, the descending motive "x" B♭-A♭-G♭ bridges the key of B♭ minor and the key of G♭ major. While the right-hand part stations on the G♭ major triad with slow repetitions between measures 38 and 41, the left-hand part casts a melodic figuration with the octave doubling. The G♭ major arpeggiated chord in the left hand part is embellished by its neighboring notes E♭ (as an escape tone) and A♭ (as a lower neighbor tone). This embellishment of the G♭ major chord results in a full G♭ pentatonic scale, G♭, A♭, B♭, D♭, and E♭ between measures 37 and 41.

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[8]According to Zakrzewska, feelings of alienation, powerlessness, and morbid anxiety were common among Polish emigrants, especially after the failed Warsaw Uprising in 1831, which promoted the Great Emigration. Zakrzewska, 31-35. She suggests that this emotion is expressed in both Chopin's Ballades and his countryman and poet Mickiewicz's ballads. I think the waltz sections in both the G minor and F minor Ballades might reflect Chopin's feeling of loneliness and disorientation living in a foreign land.

[9]This was pointed out by Dr. Jack Boss, my dissertation advisor, in one of the meetings.

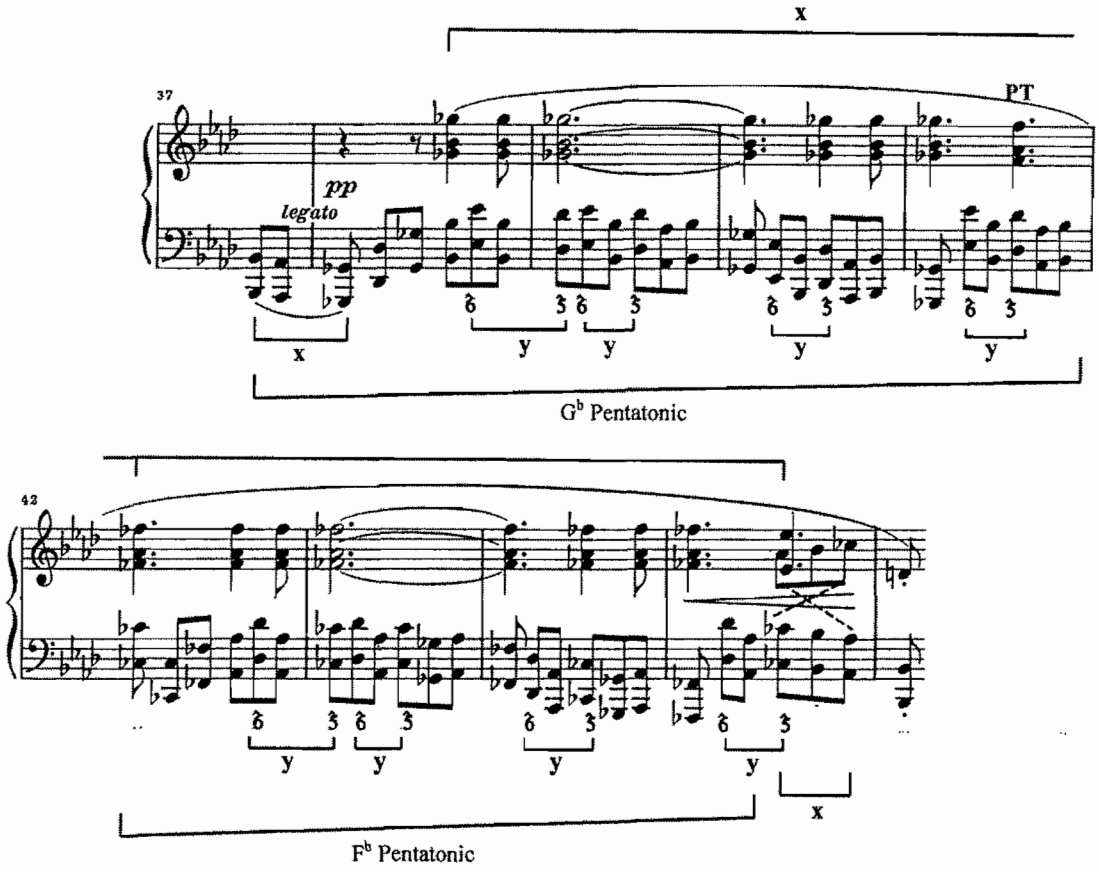


FIGURE 77. Pentatonic subsets in the transition between measures 37-46.

The three-note figure E♭-B♭-D marked in Figure 79 has a contour relationship with the three-note figure E♮-B♭-D♭ from Theme I. The difference, however, is the intervallic relations among the pitches in the figures. E natural-B♭-D♭ is a diminished triad, and an octatonic subset. Conversely, E♭-B♭-D♭ is a pentatonic subset derived from the major diatonic scale without leading tones. Since there is no half-step in the pentatonic scale, the whole section is spared the influence of ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$, the negative force against a major key. The lack of leading tones or half-steps counterbalances the

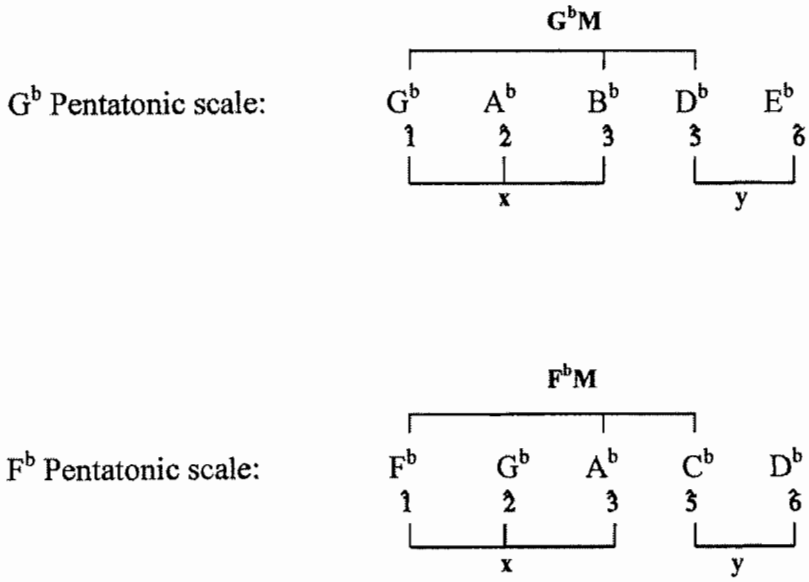


FIGURE 78. Tonal cells "x" and "y" in G♭ and F♭ pentatonic scales.

hierarchy created in the usual diatonic scale, creating a peaceful pastoral atmosphere. Along with the relaxed barcarolle-like rocking motion of the right-hand part and slow harmonic rhythm, the section creates a safe haven from the oppositional forces represented by the minor and octatonic scales.

More Development of the Oppositional Forces in Theme I #3

How are the oppositional forces against F major, represented by D♭ or ♭6 of F minor in the Theme I section, developed in the rest of the piece? Chopin continuously transforms phrase "b" throughout the piece. Figure 80 shows a further transformation of "b" in the transitional section. In measures 46 and 47, the melody forms an octatonic subset 6-27 [23568E] over $B♭^7$ and $F^{ø7}$. In measures 48 and 49, another octatonic subset 6-27 [023569] is created over $B♭^7$ and F^7 to form a sequence. Chopin applies modal mixtures to obtain G♭ for both.

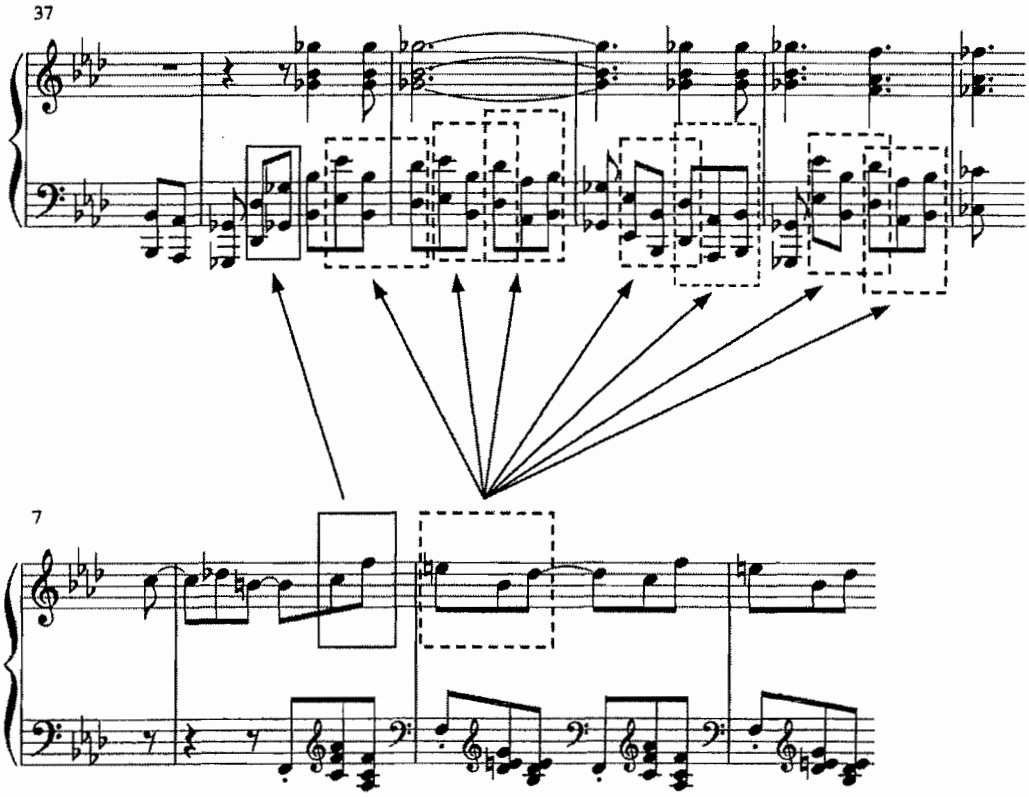


FIGURE 79. Motivic relationship between Theme I and the pentatonic episode.

The Transition to Theme II in the Key of B♭M, the Subdominant of FM, Creates a Safe Haven Against the Oppositional Force

Between measures 68 and 71, at the end of the third cycle of the Theme I section, the tension grows over the bass F. Figure 81 illustrates the octatonic 0 subsets created with increasing dynamics and more forceful octaves in both hands. There is also an emphasis on G♭, the flat 6th of B♭ minor, as well as E♭, the 7th of the F^7 triad, to signal the usual modulation to B♭ minor and conclude the Theme I section. However, the F not only withstands the pressure to move to B♭m, which is the subdominant of

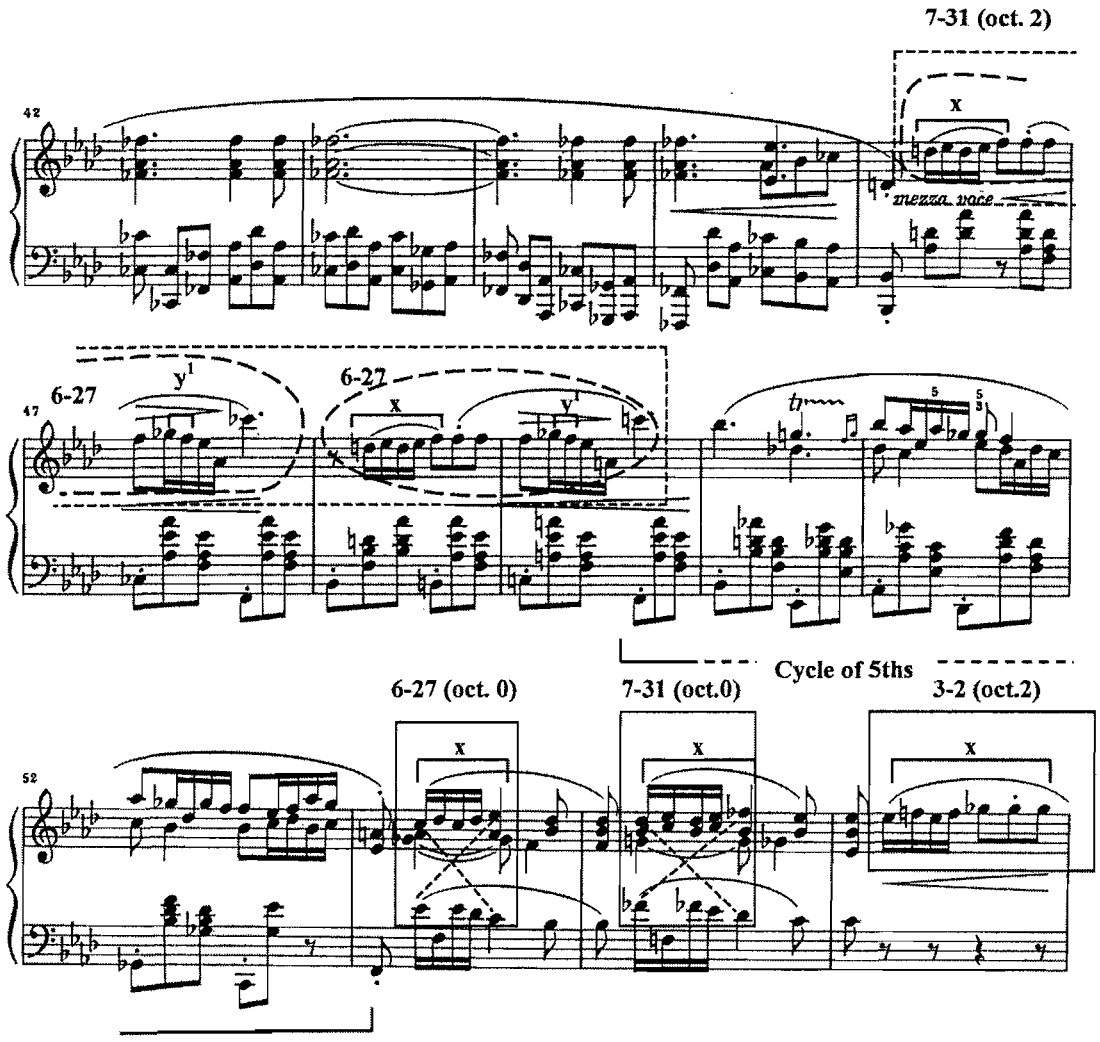


FIGURE 80. Octatoic sets in the transition between measures 46-55.

F minor, but it also directs the course to F major territory. After a chromatic modulation in sequences, Chopin alternates ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ (G♭-F) and $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ (G-F) in rapid motion with an *accelerando* and *diminuendo*, signaling minor to major modulation. F^7 is then resolved to B♭ major, the subdominant of F major, to create the Theme II area, a kind of safe haven from the oppositional forces.

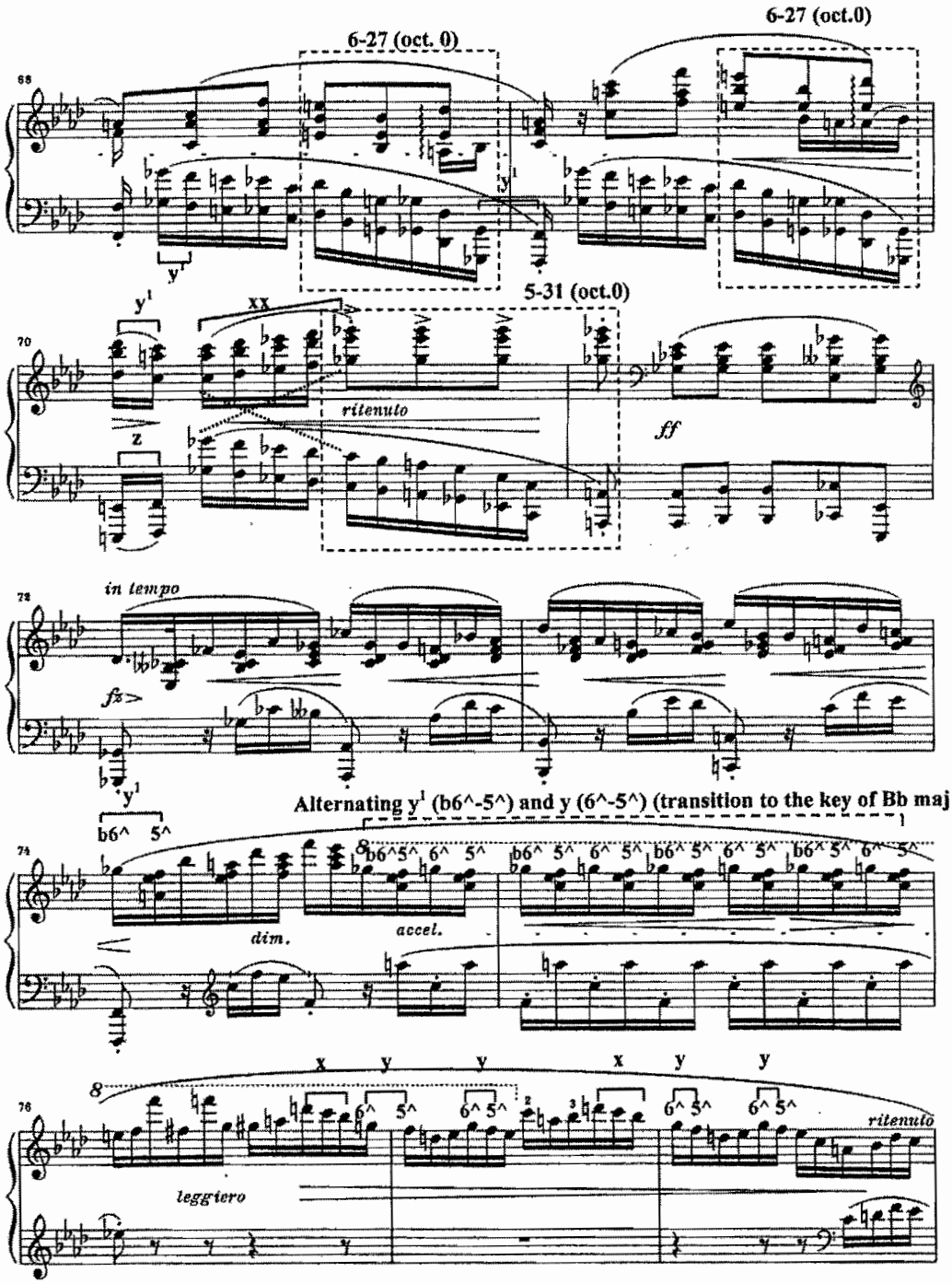


FIGURE 81. Transition to Theme II-1.

Theme II in the Subdominant of F Major: Creating a Safe Haven Against the Oppositional Force

Although Theme II contrasts with Theme I, there exist some similarities between the two (see Figure 82). Some of the stepwise motions around $\hat{5}$—e.g., $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ and $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{5}$—are reminiscent of "a" in Theme I (mm. 86-87). In measure 91, the inner voice A natural-D natural-C-G-A natural mimics the contour of the opening of "a": C-F-E natural-B♭-D♭. However, there are some contrasting elements as well. For example, at the beginning of the theme between measures 80-84, the melody line emphasizes $\hat{3}$ above the root position of the bass, featuring its major orientation. The Theme I section stresses $\hat{5}$ instead of $\hat{3}$. When $\hat{5}$ is emphasized in the Theme II area, it is embellished by $\hat{6}$ instead of $\flat\hat{6}$ to ensure the superiority of the major key. When there is a half-step descent, it forms $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ instead of $\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$; in addition, "z", the E-F resolution, is reinterpreted from $\hat{7}$-$\hat{8}$ to natural $\hat{4}$-$\hat{5}$ in measure 87.

Jim Samson usually attributes the slow major thematic section in Chopin's Ballades to either siciliano or barcarolle. The Theme II section in the F minor Ballade, which Samson describes as a siciliano, resembles most closely the F major theme in the second Ballade, Op. 38 (see Figure 83). They are both written in 6/8 meter, and the lilting or rocking style, as well as the distribution of the voices, is shared by both.

Development Section: Pilgrimage Towards F Major

Section B, or the development section between measures 99 and 128, consists of an extensive thematic transformation of motives. In measures 100-101, motive "y^1," or E♭-D, is emphasized in the key of G minor (see Figure 84). There are ascending thirds,

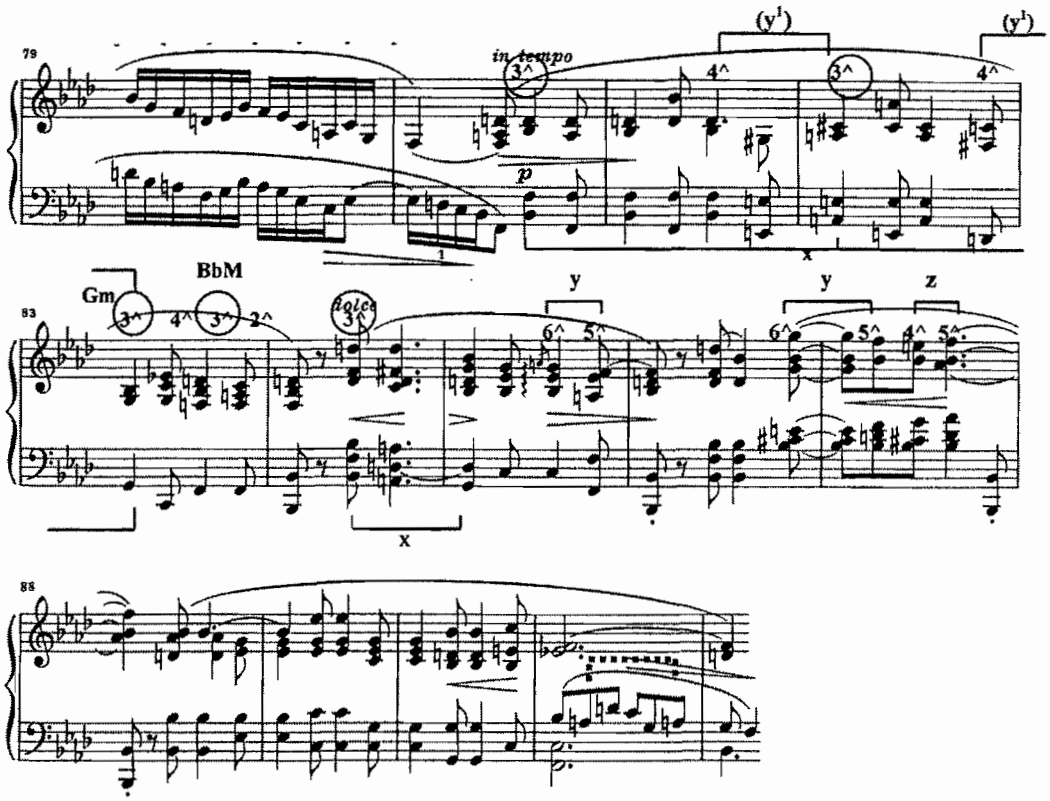


FIGURE 82. Theme II-1 in the key of B♭ major.

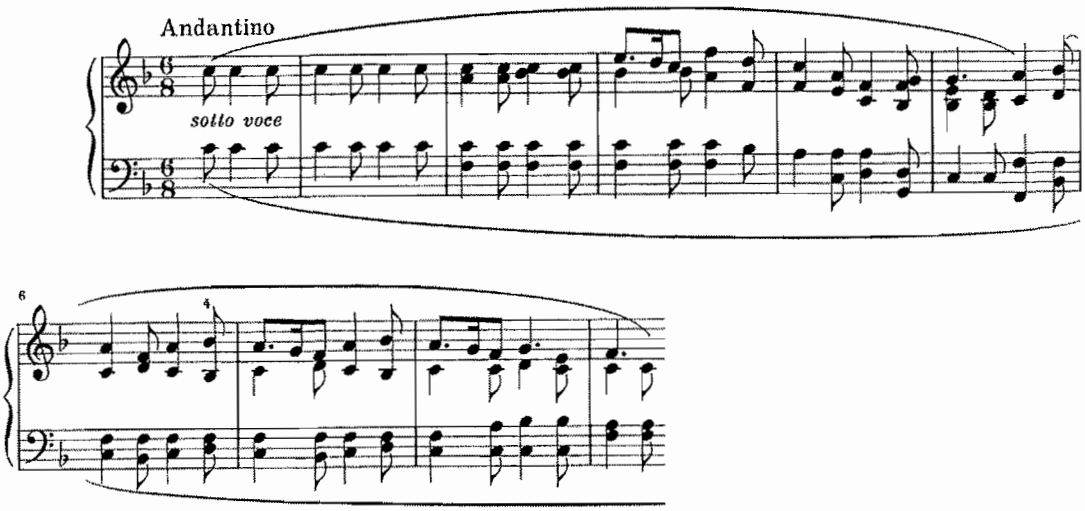


FIGURE 83. F major Ballade, Op. 38, measures 0-9.

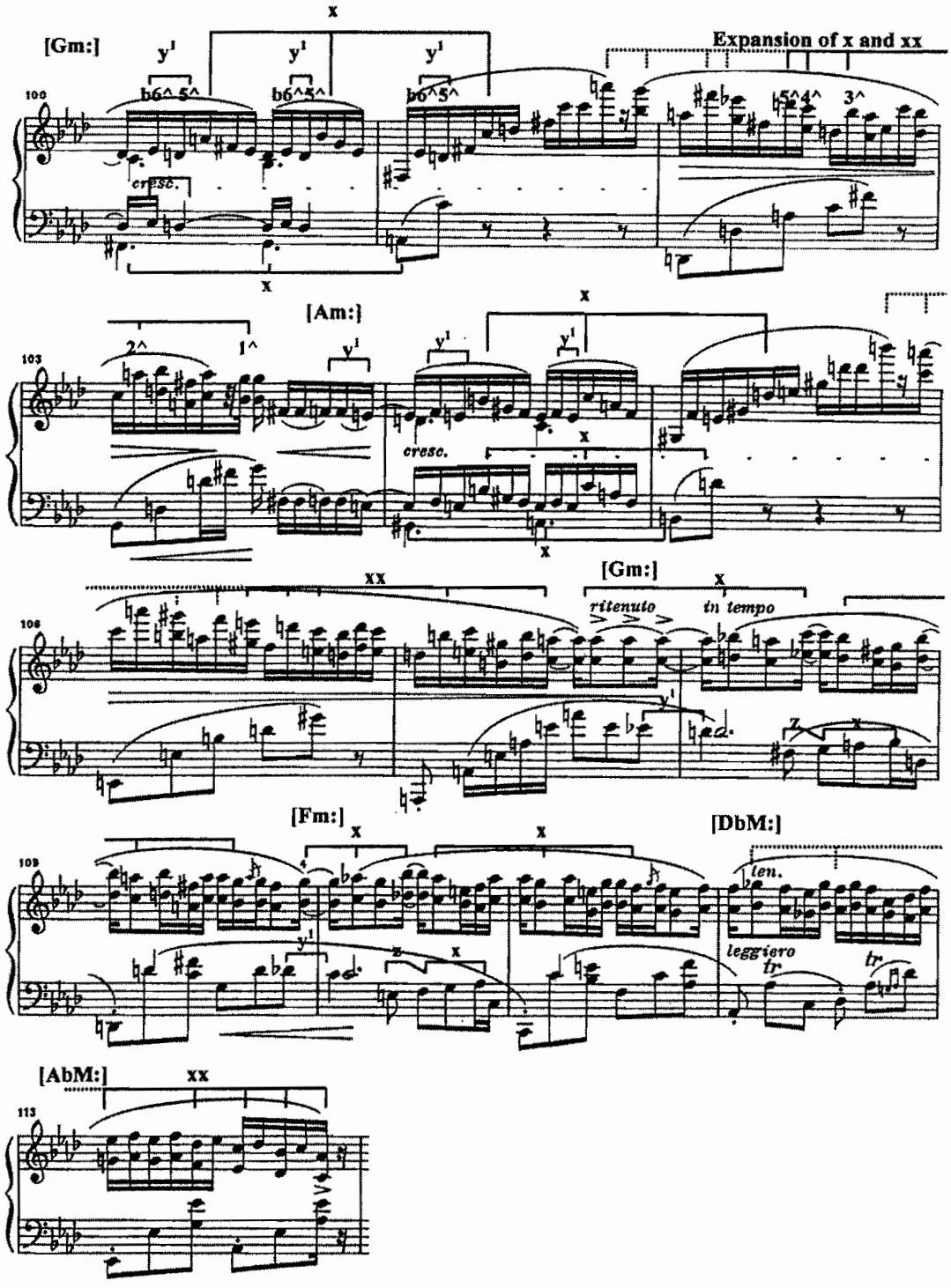


FIGURE 84. Thematic transformation between measures 100-113.

"x's," in the bass and soprano: F♯-G-A ($\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$-$\hat{2}$) natural A-B♭-C ($\hat{2}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{4}$), respectively. A stepwise descending motion starts from pitch A in measure 101, stretching more than one octave to reach its tonic G. This could be viewed as an expansion of motives "x" and "xx." Chopin modulates the same phrase to the key of A minor between measures 103 and 107, creating sequences.

After more transformations of "x" and "y," the repeated-note rhythmic motive from the opening of the introduction emerges gradually for the transition between measures 121 and 128 (see Figure 85). The right-hand part initiates some repetitive motion in measure 121 to mimic the motion at the opening of the introduction. The contour of the bass line in measure 121 and measure 123 is reminiscent of the contour of "a" from Theme I. In measures 125-128, the contour and the rhythmic motion of the right-hand part tends progressively closer to the introduction. The pitch A♭ is enharmonically exchanged for G♯ in measure 128, creating the third of an EM chord (enharmonic to F♭M), the Neapolitan of the key of E♭ minor. Then the EM chord is reinterpreted as the dominant of AM, the key of the second introduction.

Theme 1

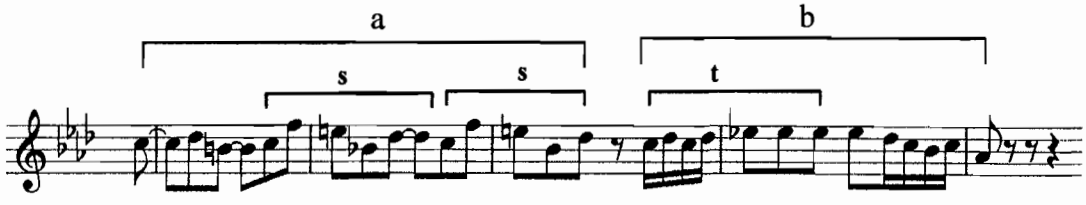


FIGURE 85. Thematic transformation: Contour and rhythmic relationship between the motives in the introduction and Theme I and melodic figures in Section B, Theme I.

Section B mm. 119- 128

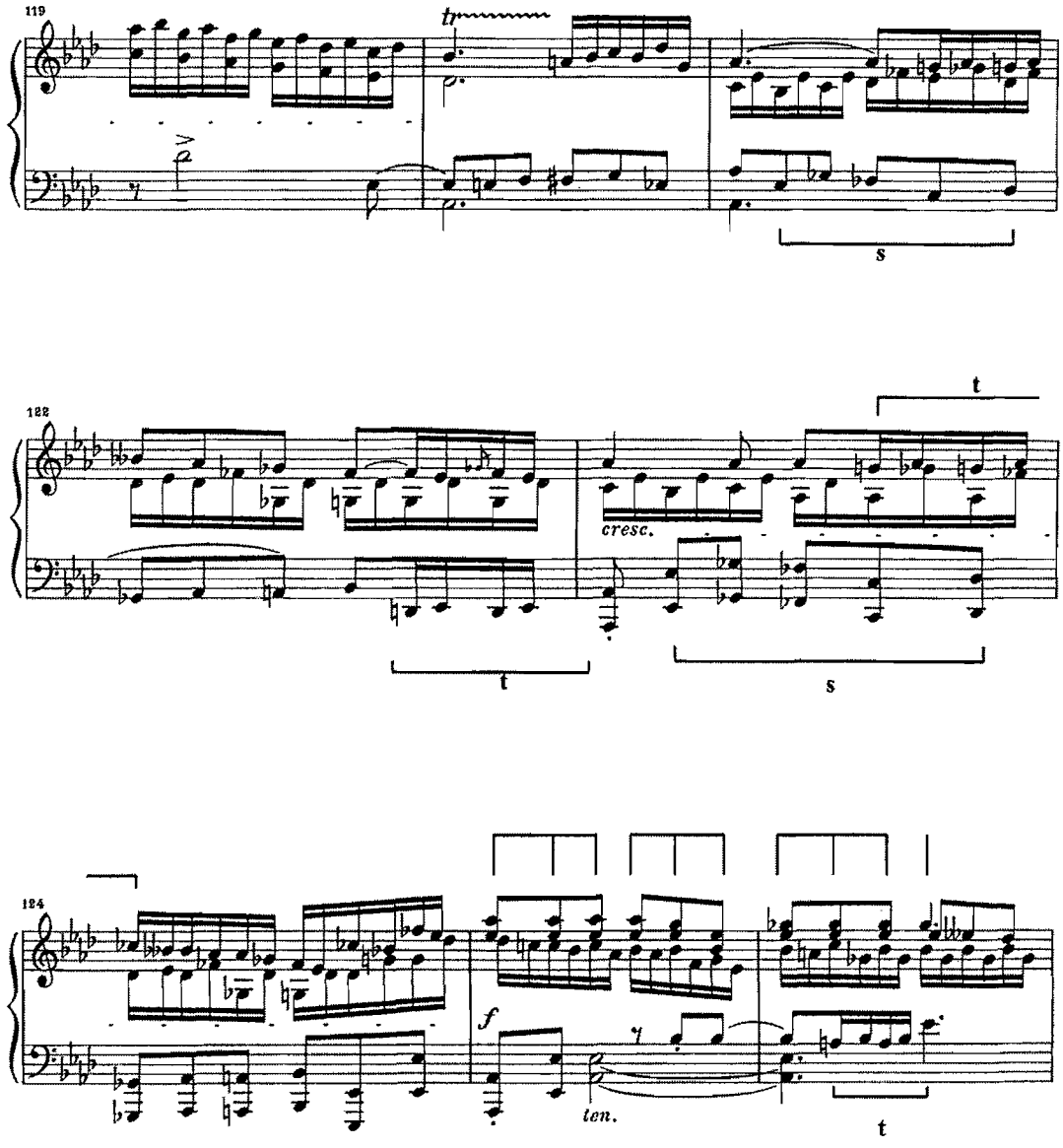
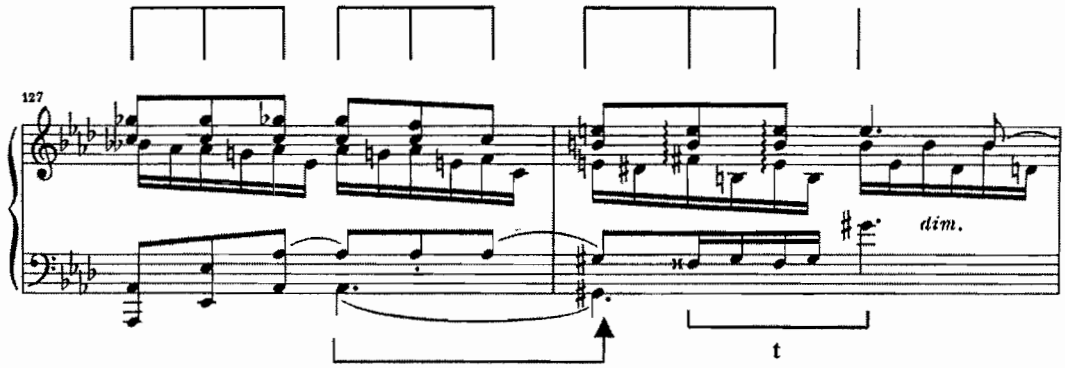


FIGURE 85. (Continued)



The second introduction

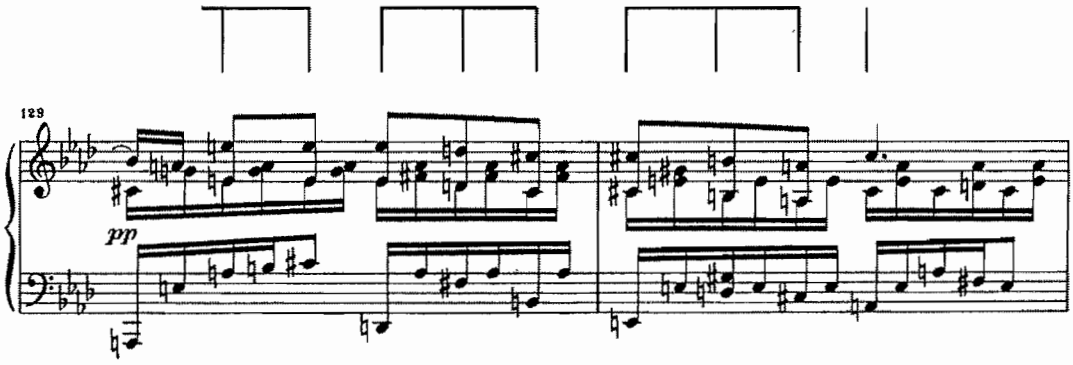


FIGURE 85. (Continued)

The Oasis in the Middle Creates a Magical Moment: The Second Introduction in the Key of A Major and the Unification of the Conflicting Pitches

Chopin now recalls the introduction in an unexpected key, A major, at the beginning of section A^1 (see Figure 86). Embedding the key of A major in the middle of the piece is symbolic. The root of AM, the pitch A, is one of the *Grundgestalt* pitches presented in the introduction as $\hat{6}$ of CM. The third of AM, C♯, is enharmonic to D♭,

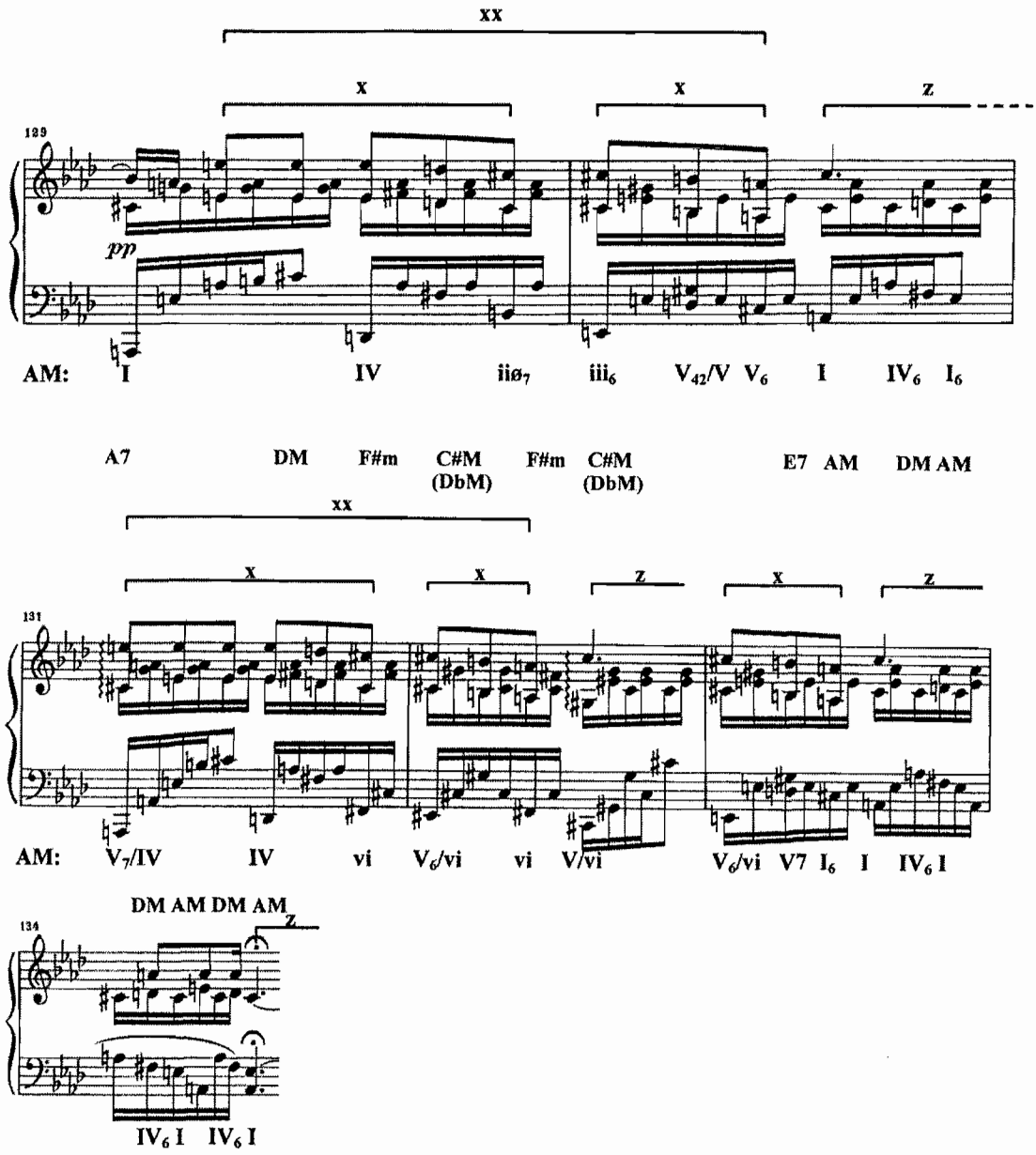


FIGURE 86. The second introduction (measures 129-134).

another pitch in the *Grundgestalt*, which is derived from the oppositional force of Fm as ♭$\hat{6}$. Finally, the fifth of A major is the pitch "E," $\hat{7}$ of FM/Fm, another pitch in the *Grundgestalt*. Now all three prominent pitches in the *Grundgestalt* at the beginning of

the Ballade are reinterpreted and united in one harmony, losing their original tonal function. The conflict between F major and F minor vanishes. I think the unification of the oppositional pitches symbolizes a moment of repose, a ceasefire.

The key of A major is the mediant (III) of the key of F major. When we observe the tonal discourse of the Ballade, the second introduction exists as if there were an oasis in the desert. The peaceful, spring-like major mode represents wistfulness. Nevertheless, hidden in this context are signs of future conflicts: a modulation to F♯ minor occurs in measure 132, and the following progression to the C♯ major chord forms a half cadence in the middle of the introduction. The flavor of the minor key and the existence of C♯ major, which is enharmonic to D♭ major, subtly suggest a potential wrong turn towards the second half of the Ballade.

Since the new introduction concludes in the key of A major, C♯, enharmonic to D♭, calls for its resolution to D major. A substantial cadenza-like A major arpeggio follows. Chopin embellishes the A major chord with neighbor tones, stressing its ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ resolution, F natural to E, by modal mixture. This not only creates the tonal ambiguity of a major/minor orientation, but also produces octatonic 1 subsets, 4-3 (F-E-D-C♯) and 5-10 (G-F-E-D-C♯; see Figure 87). This arpeggiation, marked *dolciss.* and highlighted by the octatonic subsets, creates a mysterious mood and disorientation, as if the protagonist sees an illusion.

Theme I in the Reprise: A Brief Encounter with FM: and the Beginning of a New Course in the Ballade

A variation of Theme I follows in canon in measure 135 (see Figure 88). All the pitches of phrase "a" in measures 135 and 136 are derived from a D harmonic minor

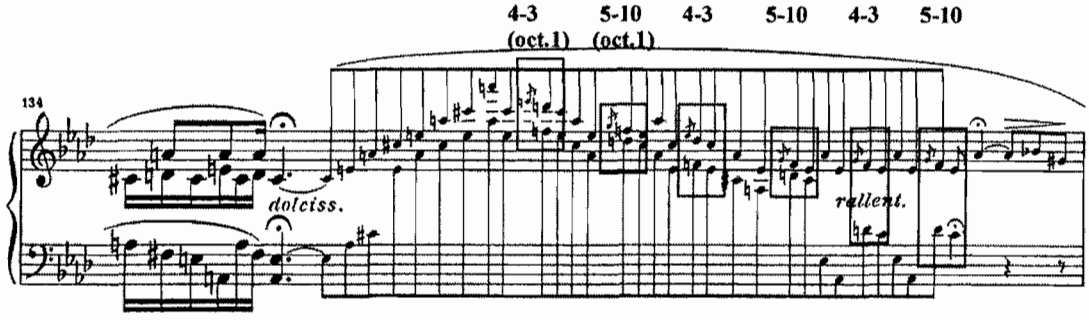


FIGURE 87. Modal mixture and octatonic sets: Creating the magical moment.

scale, but unlike the A section, the tonic Dm is never clearly established. Instead there is an additional ♭6̂ after A natural on the downbeat in measure 135, which conversely emphasizes ♭6̂ instead of 5̂ throughout phrase "a." Figure 88 also displays a chain of 3-3's, which are octatonic subsets that create tonal ambiguity.

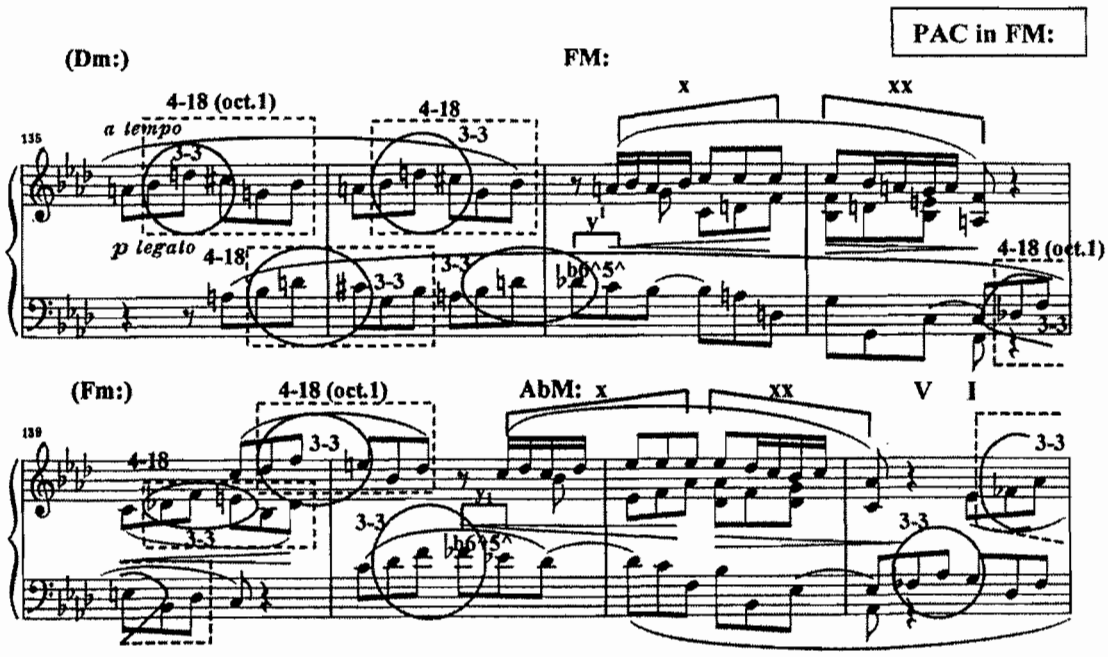


FIGURE 88. Theme I in canon: The dreamlike moment and an encounter with FM: (measures 135-142).

Pitch-set 3-3 was a favorite in the second Viennese school and among other twentieth-century composers. For example, Schoenberg's monumental atonal work *The Book of Hanging Gardens*, Op. 15, starts from a prominent 3-3 in the bass. The characteristic of the set is its property of major and minor thirds. It resembles pitch-set 3-11, which represents either the major or minor triad. The difference, however, is another crucial interval: a perfect 5th (4th) owned by 3-11. The perfect fifth makes the triad tonally stable, whereas 3-3, in contrast, has a half-step instead, which produces tonal ambiguity and instability.

Chopin repeats 3-3 in different voices in canonic motion, as if to create waves that obscure their tonal orientation. Along with the avoidance of the clear tonic in the designated key in phrase "a" and the lack of supporting accompaniment, this device creates a mysterious mood. C♯, the leading tone in the key of D minor in phrase "a," is reinterpreted as D♭ in measure 137 by another enharmonic exchange. D♭ is then resolved to C, creating ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of F minor, but the phrase "b" is modulated to the key of F major instead because phrase "a" and phrase "b" are supposed to be in relative minor/major keys (D minor to F major), as demonstrated in Section A. This is the first and last time that F major is clearly realized in the Ballade.[10] Since the *Grundgestalt* of

[10]Some theorists dismiss the modulation to F major in the reprise of Theme I. William Rothstein writes, "This measure [measure 134], which immediately precedes the wrong-key 'recapitulation' of the principal theme, corresponds closely to m. 7 at the end of the introduction." Rothstein, 38. Rothstein doesn't elaborate why F major is the wrong key. David Witten writes, "The canonic return of the opening theme presents an imitative texture rare for Chopin, but harmonically familiar from the original version of the theme: I, III, and IV. Of course, the I on F has no structural significance because it was not properly prepared by a structural dominant—it was, shall we say, 'convenient.'" Witten, "Coda Wagging the Dog," 166. In fact, F major was established by a perfect authentic cadence in measure 138. Witten doesn't explain that I is not minor but major; however, I think there is more than just a "convenient" reason why Chopin carefully prepared and realized F major in the midst of the piece, and this is one

the piece produces F major/F minor conflicts, it is significant that F major appears in the middle of the piece, as if projecting the protagonist's dream.

The canon continues, and phrase "a" is now in the key of Fm in measures 138-140, followed by its relative major, A♭ major. The encounter of both F major and F minor is seamless because the chord progression was already preset in Theme I of Section A, and transposition of the introduction to the key of A major originated this encounter. The enharmonic exchanges and modal mixtures in the section are full of surprises and twists that function to realize the aforementioned chord progressions. Subsequently, the canon is gradually replaced by more harmonically oriented accompaniment as before, as if losing its magical power, and the chord progression resumes the pattern originally presented in Theme I of Section A. After this moment, more extensive variations of Theme I follow.

Empowerment of the Oppositional Forces and Octatonic Subsets in Theme I #4 and #5

Figure 89 shows elaborate diatonic/octatonic subsets created over the bass F between measures 162 and 168, positioned at the end of Theme I #5 and Theme II #2 in the A^1 section. In measures 162 and 163, Chopin embellishes the F major chord with an E^{o7}th with an added E♭, which is reminiscent of the opening's Theme I in F minor, though it is much larger in scale. The E^{o7}, with an added E♭ major chord, creates 6-27, an octatonic 0 subset. In measures 164 and 165, Chopin creates more 6-27's, which are octatonic 2 subsets.

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of the reasons I think the opposition is between F major and F minor rather than F minor and Bb minor.

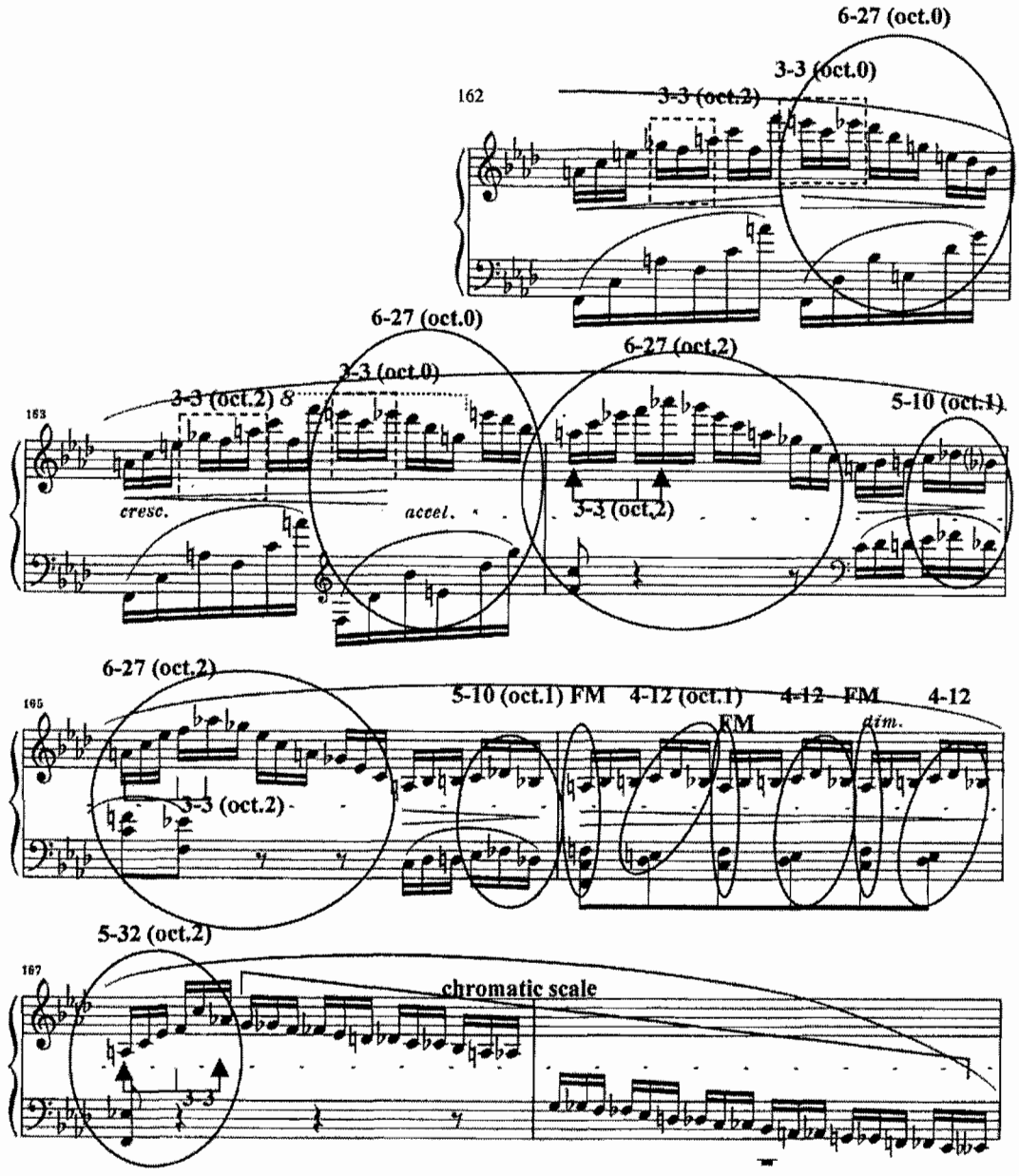


FIGURE 89. Measures 162-168: Prolongation of the F major chord and the confrontation between A and A♭ at the end of Theme I #5.

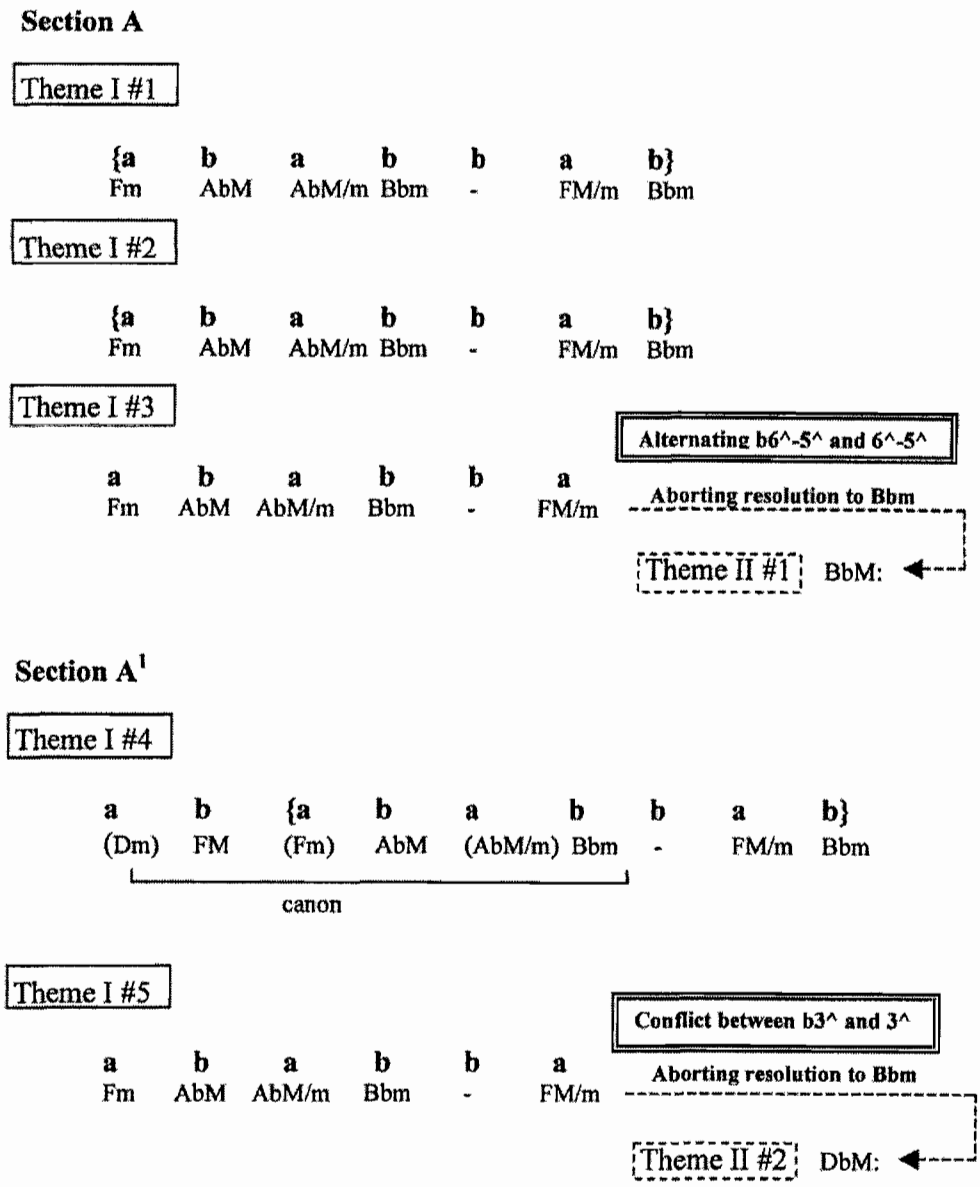
If we focus on smaller pitch-sets, there are some 3-3's originally introduced in the Theme I #4 area in canon following the second introduction. The first 3-3's, E natural-C-E flat, are found at the beginning of 6-27's in measures 162 and 163,

displaying a major (E-C)/minor (C-E♭) conflict. In measures 164, 165, and 167, Chopin juxtaposes A♭ against A, creating another major (F-A)/minor (F-A♭) conflict, the opposition created in the *Grundgestalt* in the opening D♭ against A. This is the first time a confrontation occurs between A ($\hat{3}$ of F major) and A♭ ($\hat{3}$ of F minor); it is more direct and thus more powerful than A ($\hat{3}$ of F major) against D♭ (♭$\hat{6}$ of F minor). Chopin marks the arpeggiation of the chords with *cresc.* and *accel.* to highlight the intensity of this clash between opposite forces.

Chopin neutralizes the effect of the interaction of diatonic/octatonic subsets by a long chromatic descending scale in measures 167 and 168, which is a super set of both diatonic and octatonic collections. This is the technique that Chopin used in the G minor Ballade as well.[11] B♭m at the end of Theme I is aborted, and Theme II-2 in the key of D♭ major follows.

Figure 90 summarizes how Theme I's #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 areas are concluded. While Theme I #1, #2, and #4 are concluded in the key of B♭m from its dominant FM/m, FM/m resists the resolution to B♭m in Theme I #3 and #5. A tug of war ensues between minor and major at the end of Theme I #3, and the resolution to B♭ minor is aborted. Then there is an alternation of ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ and $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ before the secondary Theme II. The analogy of this is that FM withstands the pressure to resolve to B♭m and instead changes the resolution to B♭ major, the subdominant of F major. The

[11]In the Gm Ballade, between the 4th beat of measure 134 and measure 136, Chopin applied a chromatic scale to neutralize the previous octatonic collection.



{ } indicates a full cycle of theme I (a - b- a- b- b - a)

FIGURE 90. Summary of the development of Theme I #1-#5.

minor/major conflict becomes more intense in Theme I-#5, in which ♭$\hat{3}$ and $\hat{3}$, the crucial third over the bass F, have a direct confrontation. After the struggle, D♭M emerges instead of B♭m.

The Extensive Development of the Major Theme in VI of F Minor: A Crucial Turning Point Toward Establishing the F Minor Mode

Because the Ballade begins with a major/minor conflict and the major represents wistfulness, the modulation to the major key area is an ostensibly positive development. The second Theme II area is much more extensive than the first, which was rather simple and naïve. The second theme expresses its passion in flamboyant melodic figures and flourishes taken to their maximum potential.

However, the bass line reveals a sign of decline in the midst of the melodic development; D♭-C, the source of the oppositional forces, emerges in the bass line in measures 177 to 180, reminding us that the source of the major key D♭ major is not F major, but F minor. Even though the secondary theme is in the lyrical major key, the direction of the piece is now headed towards the key of F minor. Increasing the intensity, the bass line forms a hidden F minor scale between measures 185 to 189: B♭-C-D♭-E♮-F-G-A♭. Then A♭ is interpreted as the dominant of the following D♭ major.

Between measures 191-194, the prolonged bass D♭ is elaborated by the ascending inner voice A♭-A-B♭-B natural-C: first juxtaposing the conflicting minor 3rd and major 3rd in measures 191-192, F-A♭ and F-A, respectively, and then heightening the tension by the dominant preparation iv to the French 6th chord in measures 193-194 (see Figure 91). In measure 195, the arrival of the dramatic structural V^6_4 chord of F minor creates ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$, or D♭-C, in the bass line, heightening the drama. This creates a

hidden repetition of the D♭-C: one in the melody of Theme I #1 at the opening and the structural D♭-C from Theme II #2 (♭VI) to V in the following section before the coda.

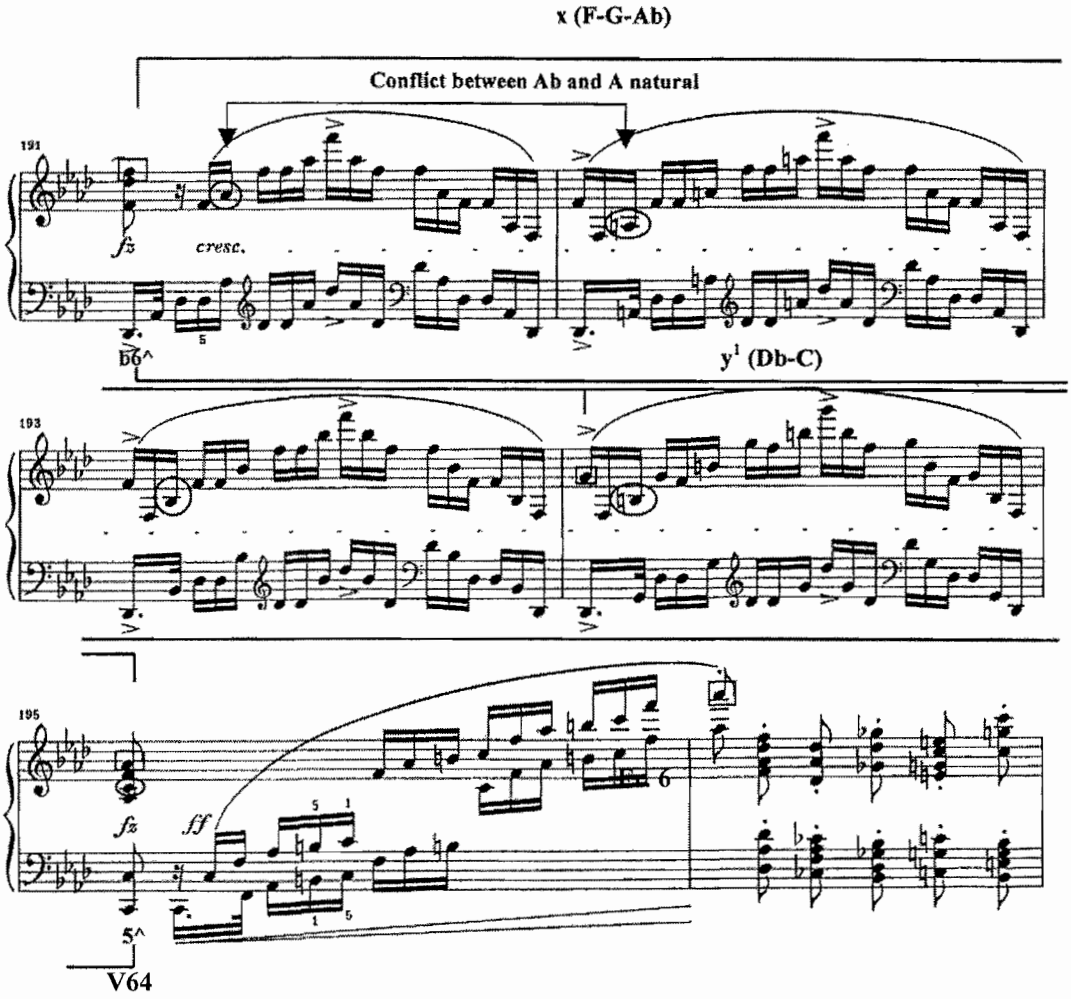


FIGURE 91. Emphasis on D♭-C in the bass in measures 191-196.

Preparation for the Coda: Setting the Stage for the Decisive Battle Between F Major and F Minor

At the end of the extensive chromatic chain of harmonies in measures 198-201, Chopin brings out the pitches from the *Grundgestalt* in the soprano: E goes to F, and D♭

goes to C, setting up the superiority of the key of F minor in measures 200 and 201 (see Figure 92). The C major chord is established in measure 202 following the three-note figure C-D♭-F in the Theme I area, which recalls the mysterious C-D♭-F in canon in measures 138-140 following the previous F major tonality. Retrograded "y^{1}" and "z" and repeated "G" from the introduction are combined in this short phrase.

The C major triad, the dominant of F major/F minor, is emphasized in measure 202 followed by a fermata. The following lengthy prolongation of the C major chord awaits quietly with *pp* in measures 203-210, as if expressing a profound silence before a deadly storm. The stretch of eight measures works as a reduction of the introduction; the motive "x," the three-note figure E-D-C, is recalled from the introduction. The awkward minor 7th leap in the soprano at the end not only calls attention to the following E natural, but also recalls the same E at the end of the introduction in the same register, which is still searching for its resolution to F major. However, what is missing in this stretch is $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$, the important background to indicate the key of F major. Furthermore, B♭, the 7th of the C major triad, appears in measures 205 and 206, yearning for its resolution. Now everything is set for the final verdict to determine if F major overcomes all its obstacles and becomes the tonic of the Ballade, or if F minor overpowers F major and declares victory over its rival mode.

Coda: A Fierce Battle, Heroic Resistance, and the Final Triumph of F Minor

The coda starts with a strong and swift statement of F minor in measure 211, emphasizing a D♭-C resolution in both the soprano and bass (see Figure 93).

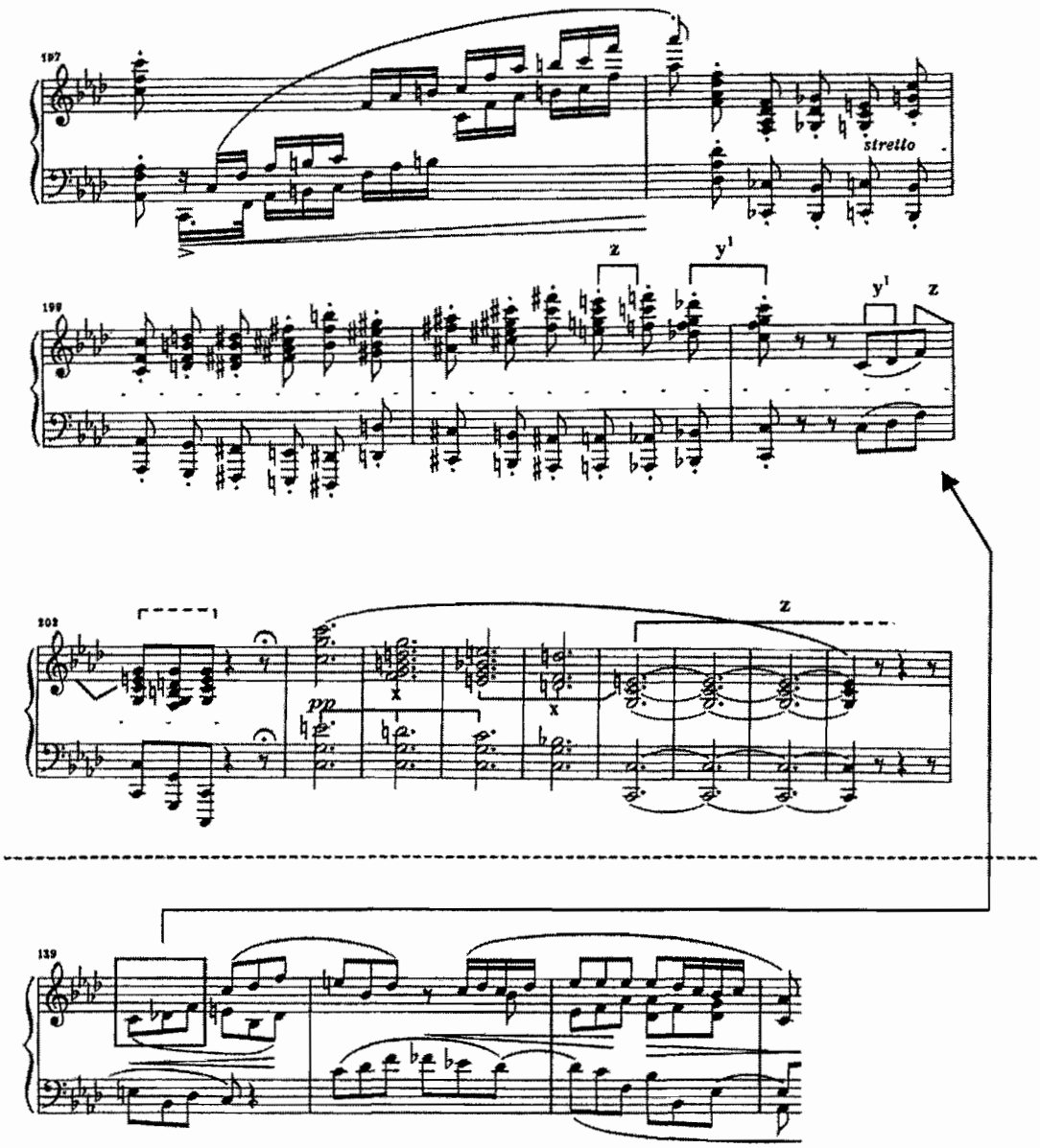


FIGURE 92. Suspenseful moment before the coda and motivic relationship between the reprise of Theme I and the pre-coda section in measures 197-210.

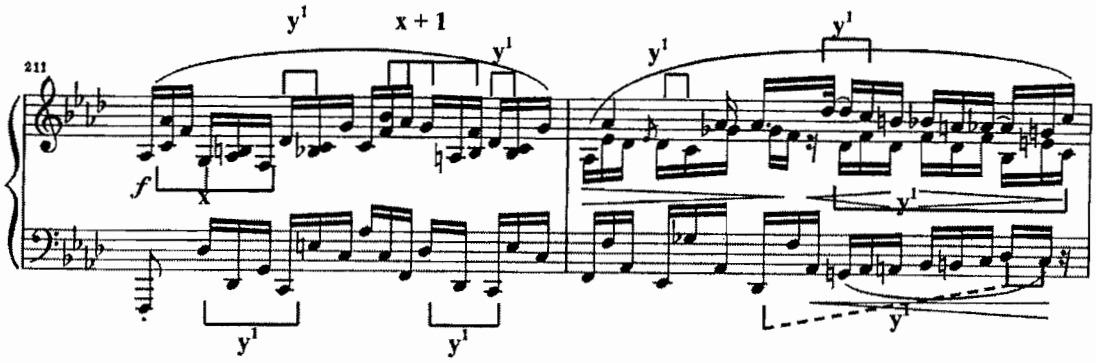


FIGURE 93. Emphasis on "x" and "y1" in the F minor context in measures 211-212.

There is a small octatonic passage in measures 215 and 216 with chromatic passing notes (see Figure 94), creating a powerful whirlwind motion. This stunning effect is created by neighboring diminished seventh chords and is marked *fz,* followed by *crescendo,* to express increasing intensity. The dynamics and nondiatonic scales, the octatonic scale and chromatic scale, heighten the tension.

In measures 218 to 221, the harmonic rhythm moves rapidly, as if describing a fierce battle between F major and F minor. In measure 218, the progression from $V^{6/4}$ to V sets up a cadence to establish its tonic F minor, a passage marked as *marcato* (see Figure 95). But instead of establishing its tonic, the chord progression starts slipping away while accenting B♭M-A♭M-GM-FM chords in measure 219. In this measure, the F minor chord appears on the weak beat, in a less prominent position than F major. However, the F major triad, established temporarily with the bass line E-F resolution, is immediately replaced by the D♭ major triad, which proceeds immediately to $ii^{ø7}$-V in F minor. The resolution from the CM triad (V) in measure 119 is resolved to FM on the first beat in measure 220, as if it were another attempt to establish the key of F major,

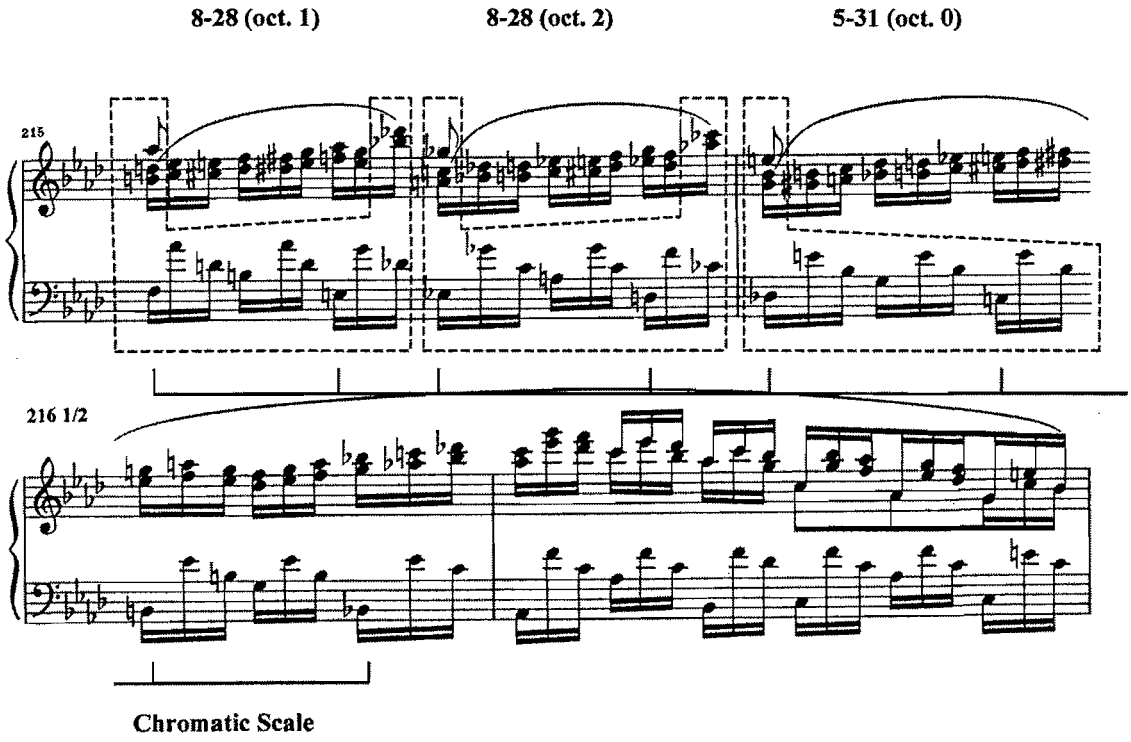


FIGURE 94. Chromatic ascending motion in the bass line and the octatonic sets in measures 215-216.

but it is forced to become F^7, the dominant 7th of B♭ minor, following the norm in the Theme I areas. The struggle continues between F major and F minor.

In measure 222, there are more resolutions from ♭6-$\hat{5}$, or D♭-C. The transposed "y^1," A♭-G, is extended to "x," or A♭-G-F, in the bass between measures 222-223, steering the following cadence toward F minor, not F major. Measure 222 is dominated by the massive force of F minor, and it seems to be approaching the final cadence. However, when the dominant 7th of F minor is about to be resolved to its tonic Fm at the end of measure 222, a miracle occurs. The A♭, the third crucial to establishing the

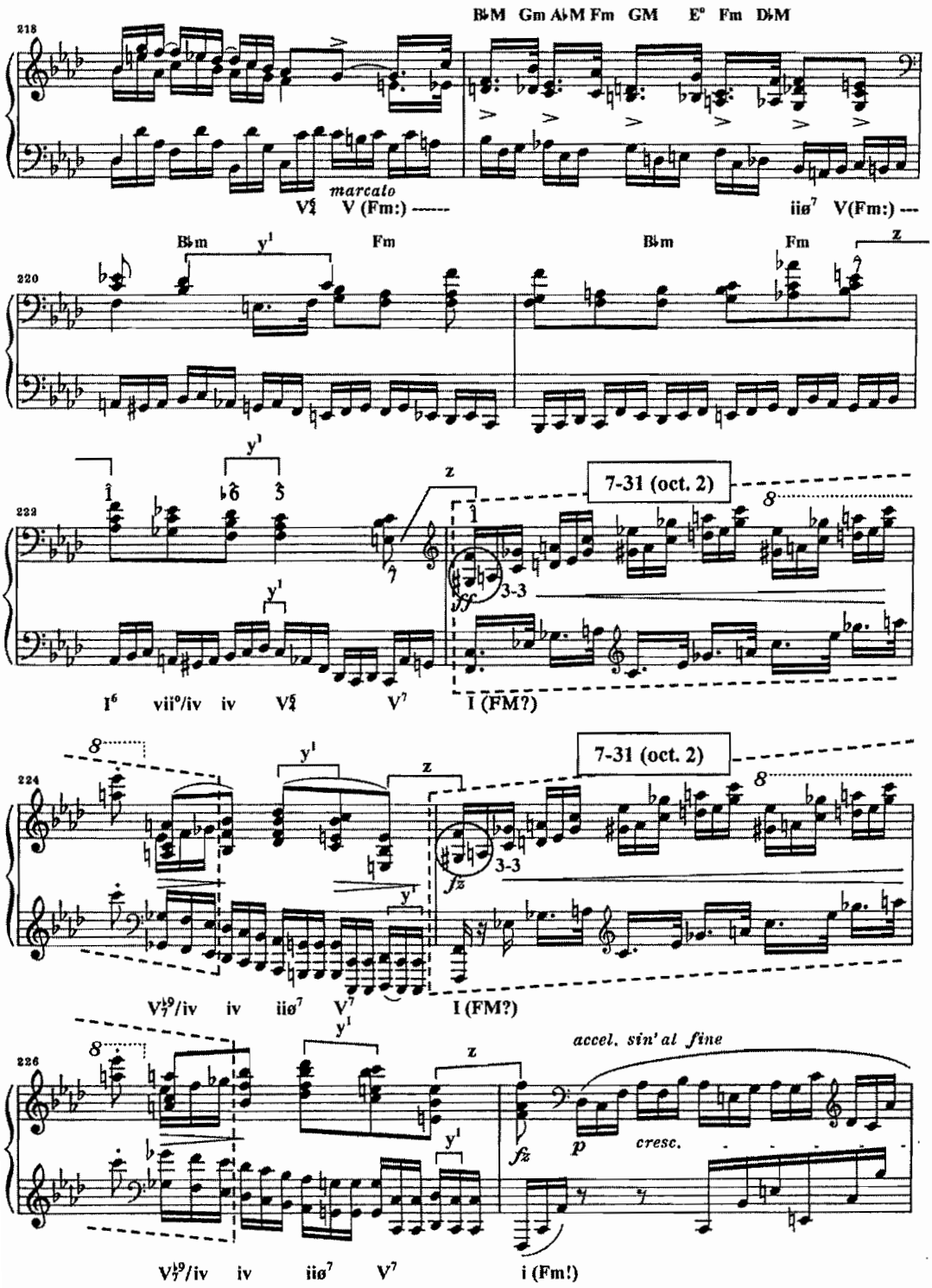


FIGURE 95. Crucial moment in the coda.

F minor chord, is altered to G♯, and G♯ is resolved to A natural, creating an F major chord instead.

The first three notes in the right-hand part—F, G♯, A—form 3-3 at the beginning of measure 223, and the symbolic major/minor opposition in this crucial moment shifts in favor of F major. This moment is like a heroic uprising struggling to reverse the course of fate. However, the massive arpeggiation of the octatonic 2 subset, 7-31, immediately swallows the F major chord.[12] The chaotic ascending figure 7-31, involving the G♯-A resolution a few times, is then reinterpreted from the octatonic set to the dominant of B♭ minor (iv), followed by $G^{\emptyset 7}$ and C^7 in another attempt to establish F minor.[13]

The more powerful attempt to establish the tonic F minor occurs in measure 224. This time, the octaves A♭-G create a forceful motion in the bass line that counteracts the A-G in the introduction, as well as D♭-C in both bass and soprano. The leading tone E in the soprano, which is in the same register found in the introduction, waits for its resolution. Does F minor win this time? A♭ is replaced by G♯, and FM reappears. The same octatonic 2 subset, 7-31, swallows the F major chord, and there is a third attempt

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[12]Roy Howat's article "Chopin's Influence on the *Fin de Siécle* and Beyond" displays some of Chopin's octatonic phrases, including measure 223, and discusses Chopin's influence on later composers—e.g., Ravel and Debussy. He comments that the origin of the octatonic scale is a diminished 7th chord with a passing note. Regarding measure 223, he writes, "Chopin has gone beyond this, strategically placing the passing notes to produce clashes of major against minor, as well as abrupt juxtaposition of diatonically distant keys." Howat, 278. However, he doesn't elaborate further to explain what major/minor keys clash, how the conflict occurs, and how it relates to the rest of the piece.

[13]I think Artur Rubinstein's 1960 recording of the F minor Ballade highlights the impact of the crush between F minor and F major; the powerful ascending arpeggio of 7-31 and the ensuing violent octaves in the left-hand part, which establish F minor, creating a dramatic effect in the coda.

to resolve the dominant 7th chord to F minor in measure 227. The third time, the resolution finally comes through, and the F minor chord is established as the tonic of the Ballade in measure 227.

After the catastrophic loss of F major, the music accelerates towards the end to declare the victory of F minor. The alternating chords between C major and F minor harbor a strong emphasis on D♭-C (y^1) and A♭-G, which is a transfigured "y," A-G, in the ascending figure in the right-hand part (see Figure 96). In measures 231 and 232, there is another alternation between Fm and its ♭6th chord D♭M while the descending scale presents "x" and "xx" in F minor. The final descent in the right-hand part (between mm. 233 and 236) has the greatest concentration of D♭-C, the original *Grundgestalt* in the F minor context. Another component of the *Grundgestalt*, "z," is presented in the soprano in the same register found in the introduction, and the piece concludes with a strong cadence in the key of F minor.

Conclusion

The above analysis explicates the overall structure, the motivic development, and the diatonic/octatonic interaction in Chopin's Fm Ballade, Op. 52. Although its form has some similarities to sonata form, the thematic material is continuously and extensively transformed, and the structure and the key scheme suggest that the discourse of the music and the plot of the Ballade is not explained by the form, but by the specific "meaning" associated with each key region. The meaning of the reprise is not a return to formerly explored territory, but rather an arrival at something unexperienced in the previous section. Figure 97 delineates the tonal discourse of the Ballade's themes as well as a possible plot.

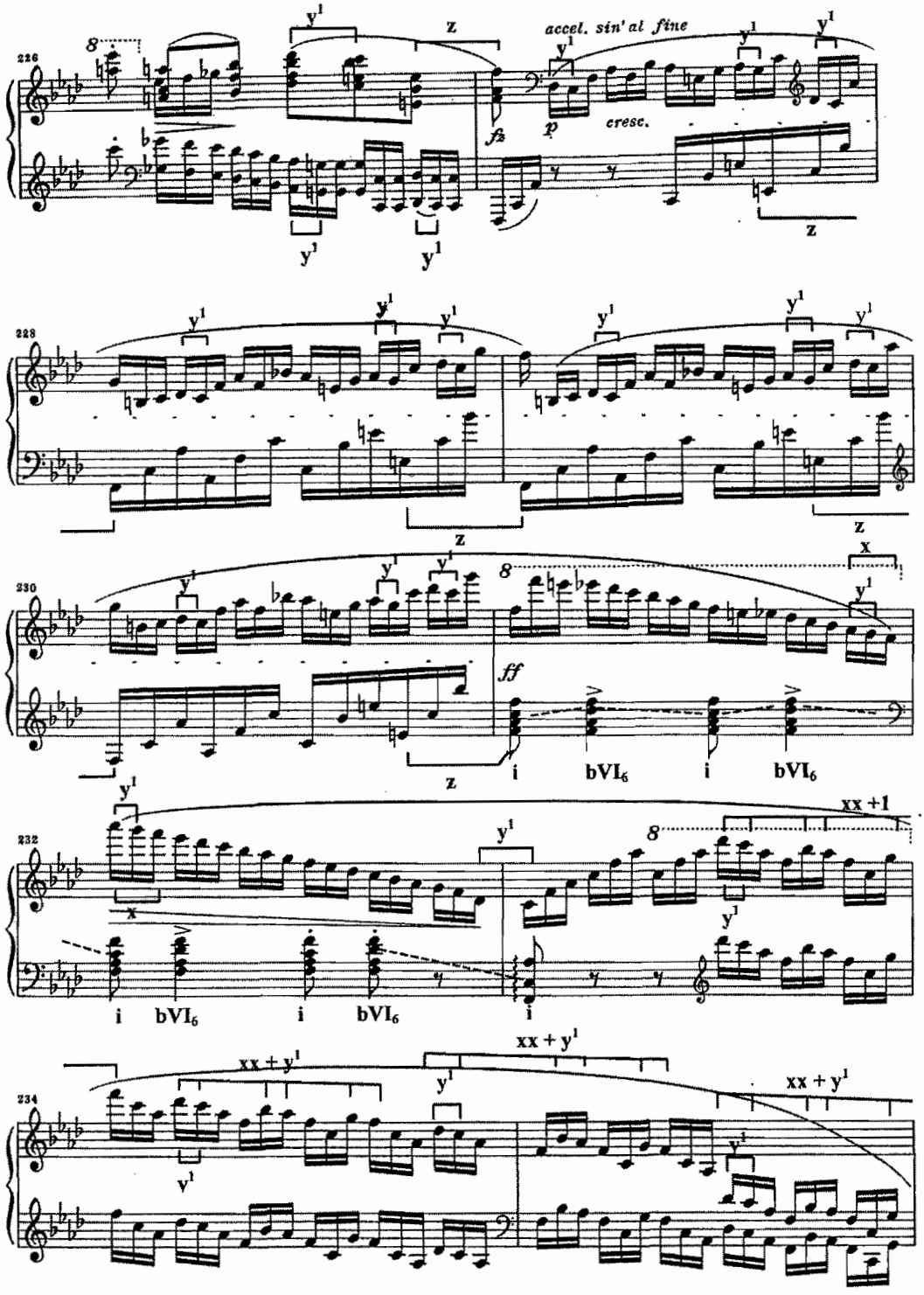


FIGURE 96. End of the coda.

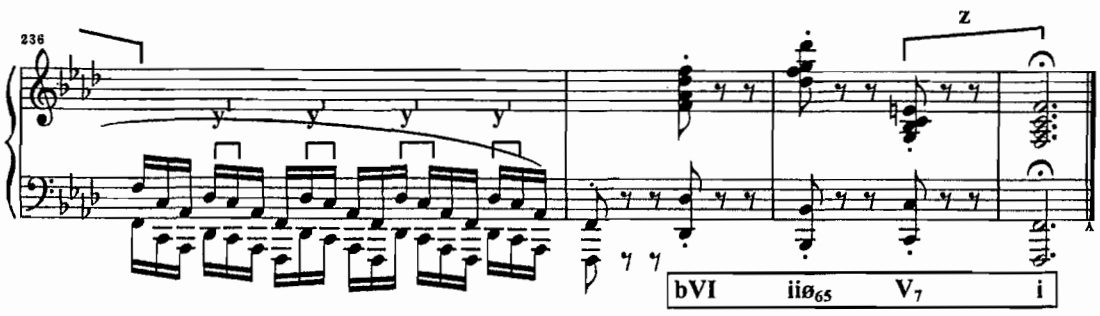


FIGURE 96. (Continued)

The exposure of the key of F major is small compared to the key of F minor, but it plays a big role in the tonal discourse. I would also like to suggest some similarity between the phrase in the F major section in the reprise and the phrase in the F major section in the F major Ballade, Op. 38 (see Figure 98).

In addition to the similarity of "xx" phrases in the F major and F minor Ballades, Chopin's conclusion to the F minor Ballade's introduction, which fades out with repeated notes, is reminiscent of the end of the opening F major section in the F major Ballade (see Figure 99). These resemblances imply a possible programmatic connection between the F minor Ballade and the F major Ballade; one can speculate that the metaphor of F major in Op. 38 might be recalled in Op. 52.

How does the *Grundgestalt* work to organize the piece? There are three elements of the Grundgestalt—"x," "y," and "z"—at the beginning of the piece. As mentioned before, there seems to be a hidden "two-key scheme," and while "x" and "z" work as unifying devices for both F major and F minor, "y^1," which represents the key of F minor, works in opposition against "y," the representative of F major. Schoenberg writes,

> A real composer does not compose merely one or more themes, but a whole piece. In an apple tree's blossoms, even in the bud, the whole future apple is present in all its details—they have only to mature, to

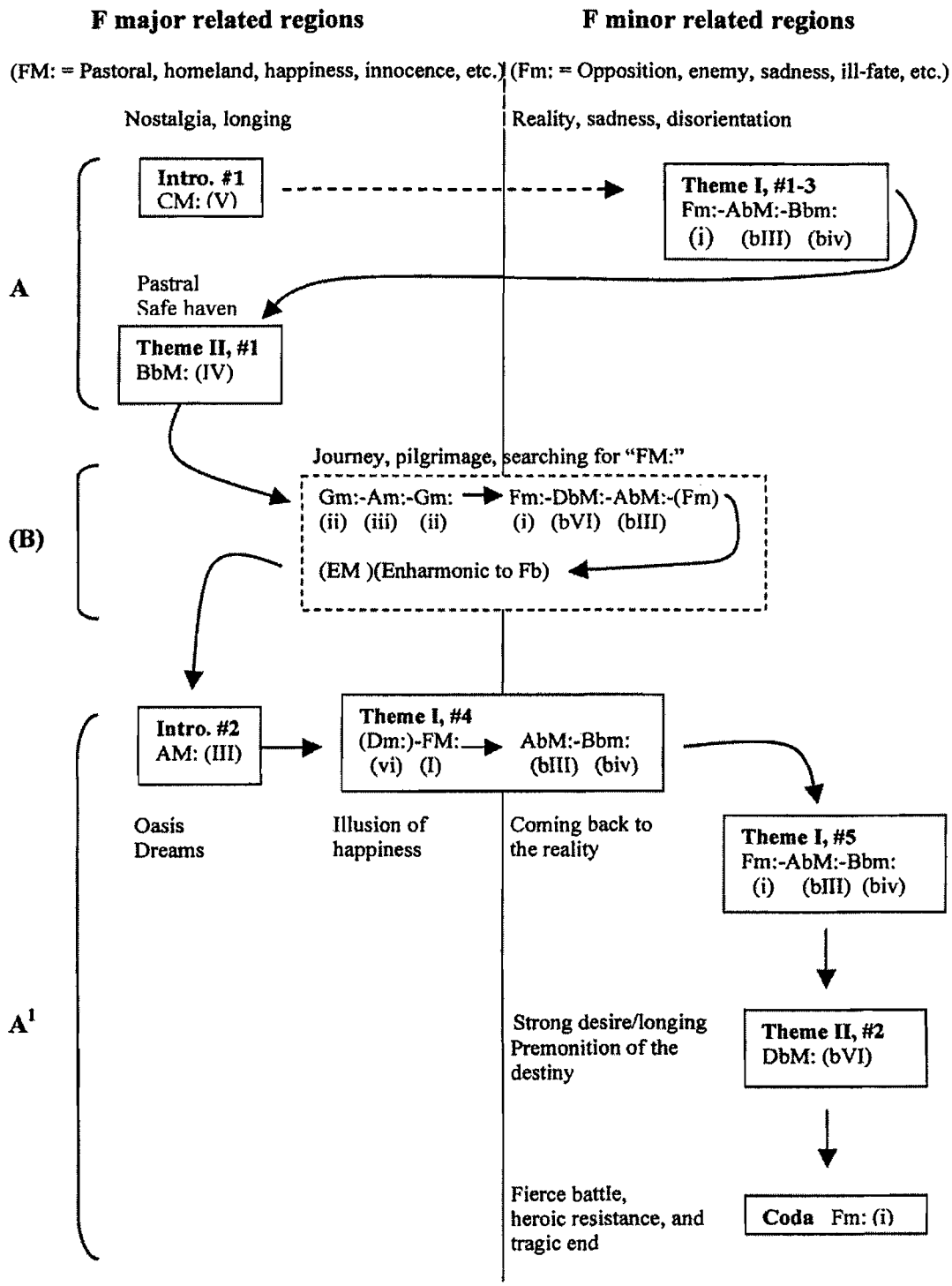
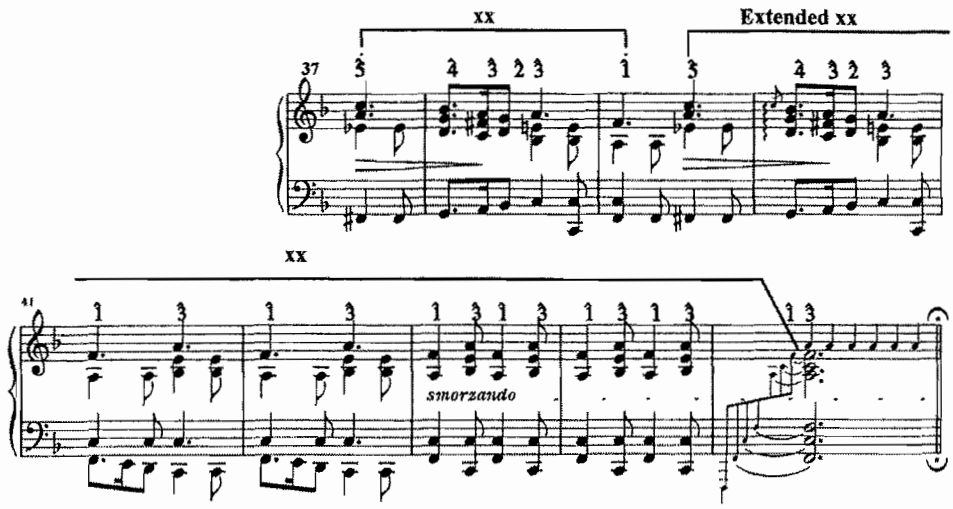


FIGURE 97. Tonal discourse of the F minor Ballade's themes.

A. F major Ballade Op. 38 measures 37-45.



B. F minor Ballade measures 135-138

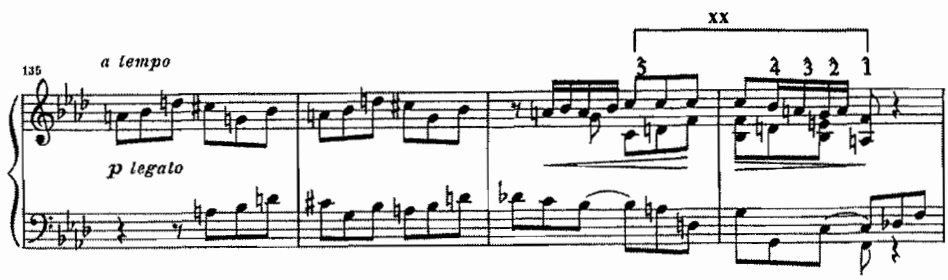
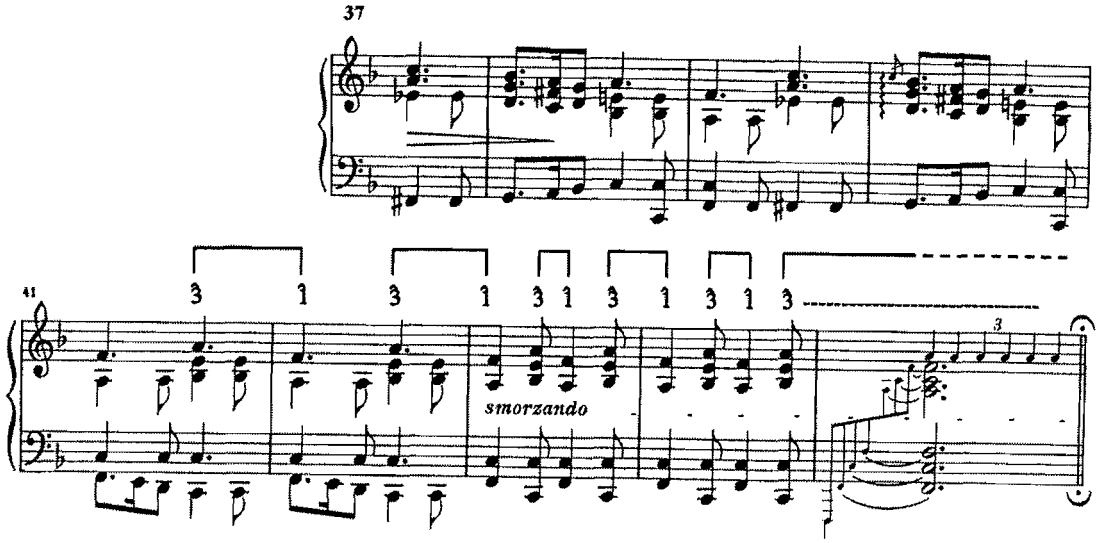


FIGURE 98. Motivic and tonal connection between the F major Ballade and F minor Ballade.

grow, to become the apple, the apple tree, and its power of reproduction. Similarly, a real composer's musical conception, like the physical, is one single act, comprising the totality of the product.[14]

[14]Arnold Schoenberg, "Folk-Music and Nationalism," *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, edited by Leonard Stein, translated by Leo Black (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 165.

A. F major Ballade measures 37-45



B. Fm Ballade measures 5-7

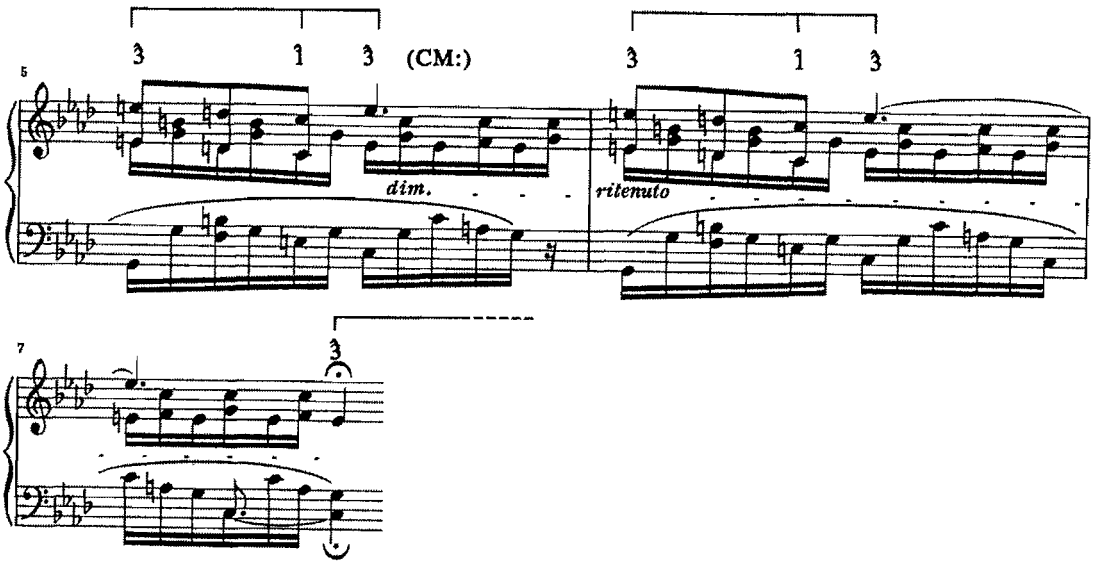


FIGURE 99. The perceptive connection between Theme I in the F major Ballade and the Introduction of the F major Ballade.

If I use the analogy of the apple tree, both "y" ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) and "y^1" ($\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) are seeds at the opening of the piece. Both of them want to grow, but space is limited and can accommodate only one of them. At the beginning, both *Grundgestalten* are still subtle and small, although Fm seems to be more prominent than FM. In the middle of the piece—with the appearance of a second introduction, this time in A major—the *Grundgestalten* appear to be balanced, sharing equal space. But in the second half of the piece, more conflicts emerge, and while the growth of the FM seed is stunted, the Fm seed begins to grow. After the struggle of the last cycle of Theme I, Theme II #2 appears in the key of D♭ major. This is supposed to be an apotheosis of the major key, but harmonically it is ♭6 of F minor and suggests the destiny of the protagonist.

Grundgestalt also affects the structure of the Ballade. The *Grundgestalt* D♭-C, or "y^1," in which D♭ represents the oppositional forces that include both the key of F minor and the octatonic subsets, can be expanded to the motive B♭-D♭-C-(F) in measure 9 (see Figure 73). This not only relates to the bass line in the last three measures of the Ballade, D♭-B♭-C-F, but also to the structure. The bass B♭ can be prolonged from the Theme I areas in the key of B♭ minor through the Theme II area in the key of B♭ major, further reaching to Theme I areas in the reprise. After the D♭ in Theme II #2, the big dominant section over bass C follows. Although there is an attempt to overturn the superiority of F minor in the coda, the final cadence is concluded by the tonic of F minor on bass F. This structural bass line B♭-D♭-C-F in large scale is already presented in the motive in the first cycle of Theme I, creating hidden repetitions; B♭-D♭-C-(F) works as a premonition of fate in the discourse of the Ballade, revealing D♭ as the source of the tonal conflict.

Throughout the piece, "x" is primarily used for thematic development, while "y" and its opposition, "y^1," are used harmonically, creating the Ballade's unique key scheme.[15] On the other hand, "z" is prolonged for the entire piece, calling for its resolution. Figure 100 displays how "z" is strategically positioned to heighten the drama's suspense.

How does the diatonic/octatonic interaction contribute to the Ballade? There are several techniques that Chopin used to incorporate octatonic collections in his diatonic language. For example, in measure 134, Chopin unexpectedly applied major/minor modal mixtures to create octatonic subsets in the midst of the major mode (see Figure 101). Figure 101 shows the common subset between a major/minor hybrid scale and the corresponding octatonic scale. The modal mixture enables an A major chord to interact with a minor/octatonic subset that includes D♭, or ♭$\hat{6}$ (enharmonic to C♯), the important pitch from the *Grundgestalt*.

Another technique Chopin applied to create an octatonic scale is the embellishment of chromatic chords, such as $V^{7\flat9}$, and the diminished 7th and half-diminished 7th. The octatonic scale is also called the diminished scale because of its close association with the diminished chords. By adding neighboring tones to a diminished 7th chord—thus creating an alternation of a half-step and a whole step, for

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[15]The *Grundgestalt* D♭-C, or "y^1," in which D♭ represents the oppositional forces that include both the key of F minor and the octatonic subsets, can be expanded to the motive B♭-D♭-C-F in measure 9. This not only relates to the bass line in the last three measures of the Ballade, D♭-B♭-C-F, but also to the structure. The bass B♭ can be prolonged from the Theme I areas in the key of B♭ minor through the Theme II area in the key of B♭ major, further reaching to Theme I areas in the reprise. The second Theme II area is in the key of D♭ major, followed by C major, and finally resolves to F minor in the coda. This structural bass line B♭-D♭-C-F is already presented in large scale in the motive in the first cycle of Theme I, creating hidden repetitions.

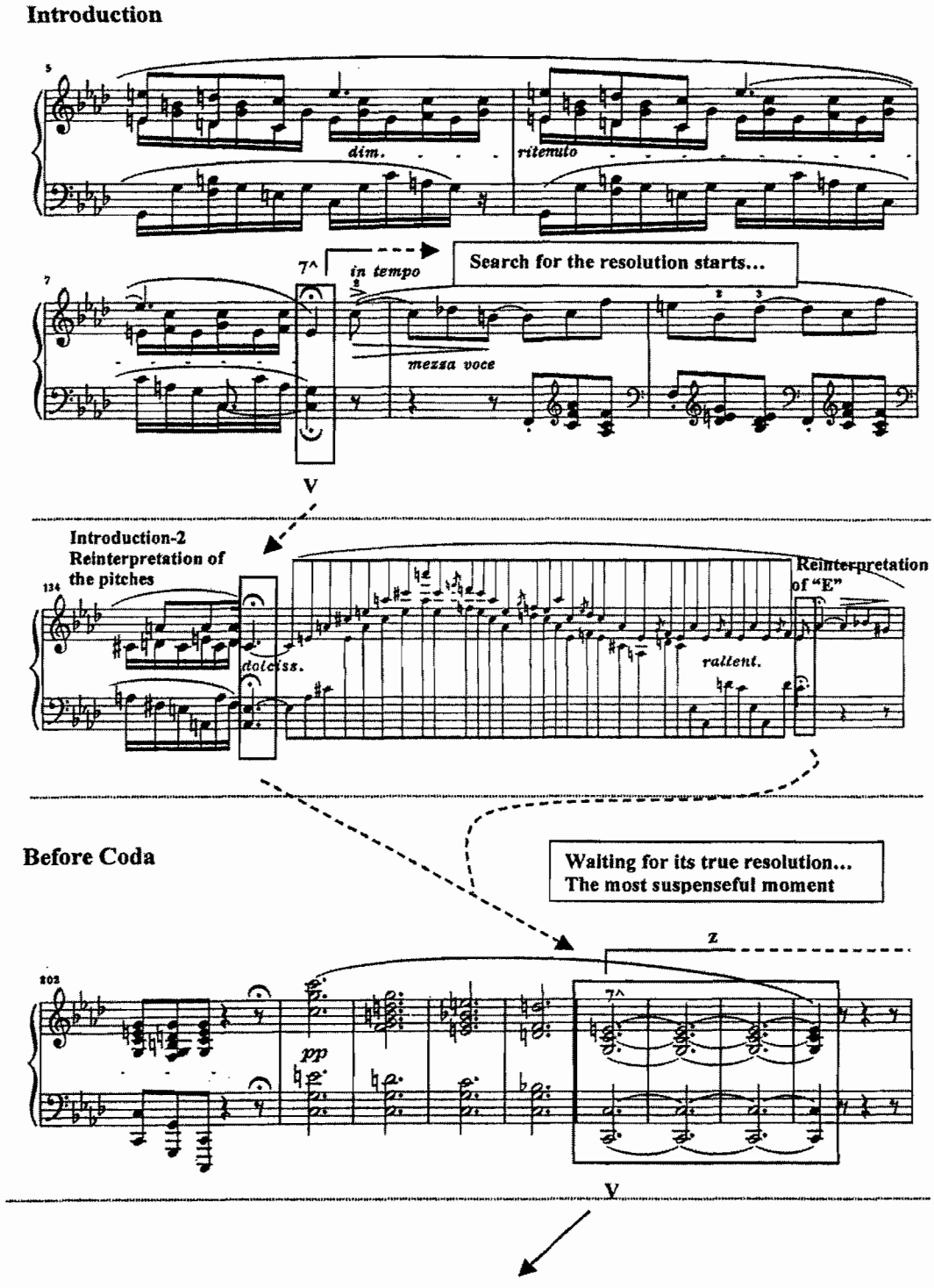


FIGURE 100. Prolongation of the resolution from E natural to F ("z").

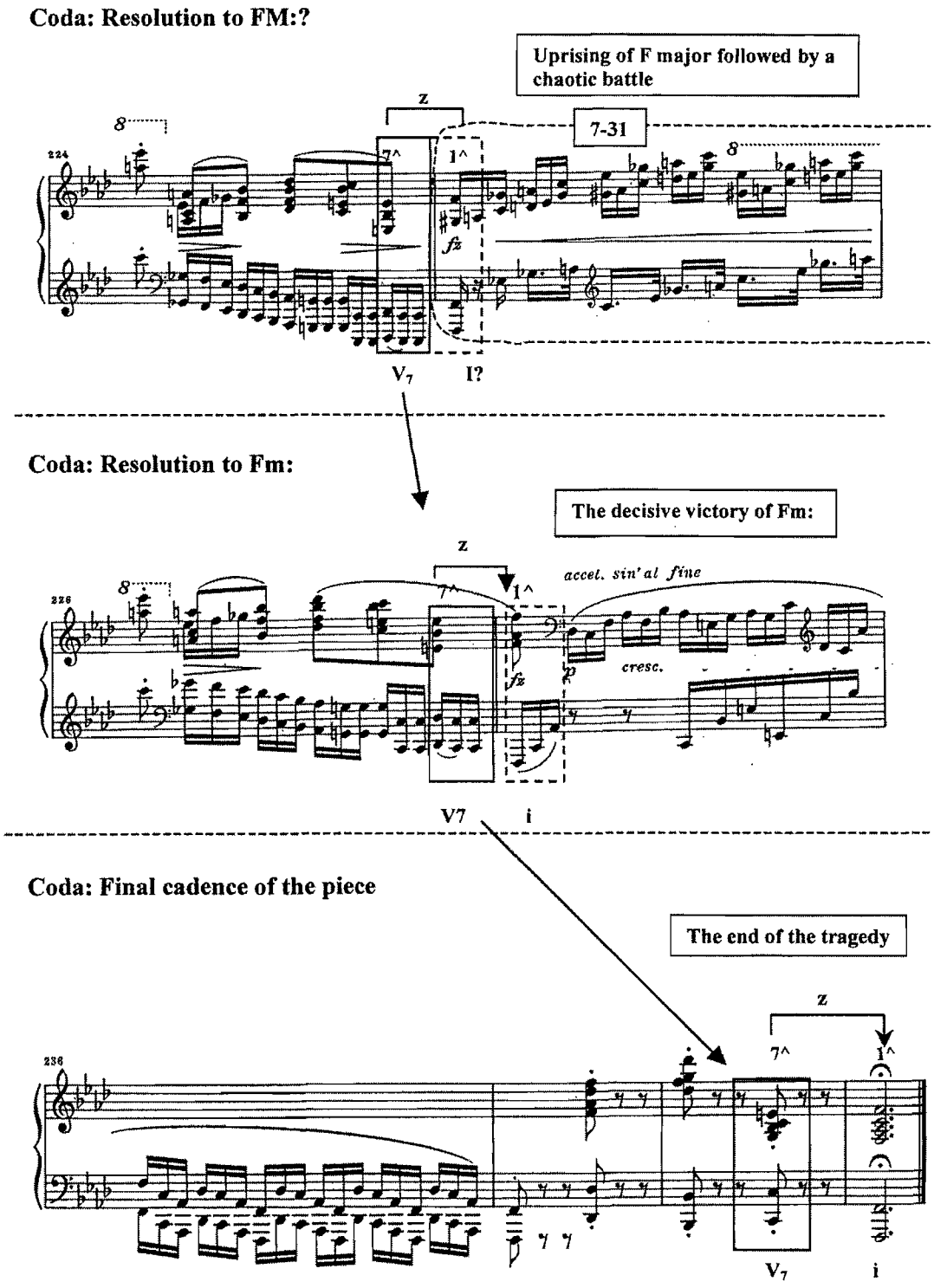


FIGURE 100. (Continued)

example—one could create an octatonic subset. Chopin exploited the property of the diminished 7th-related chord, especially in the coda. Figure 102 illustrates the structure of the $F_7^{\flat 9}$ chord and its neighbor tones, which form 7-31 for the most dramatic moment.

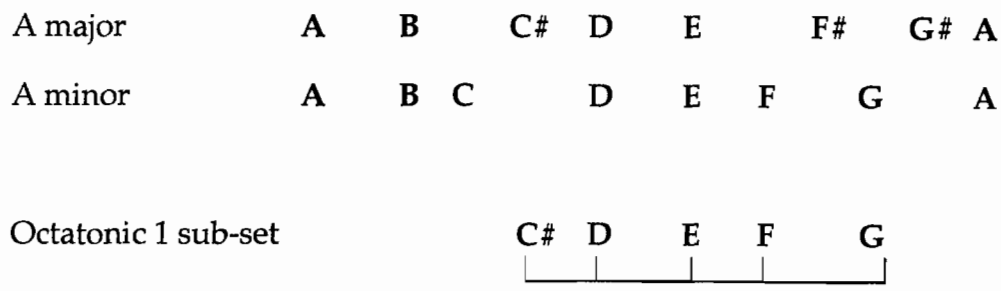


FIGURE 101. Modal mixture and the octatonic subset.

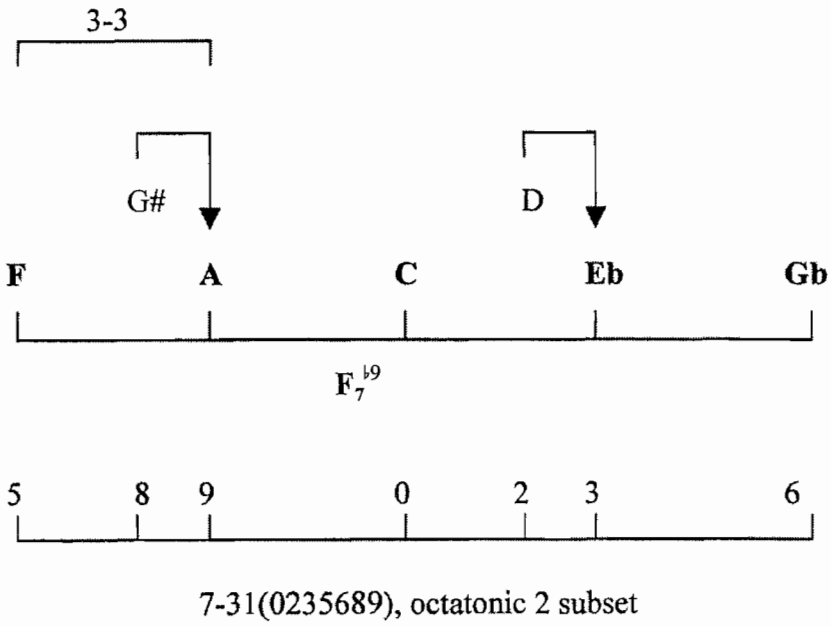


FIGURE 102. Structure of the octatonic 2 subset 7-31 in measure 223.

Chopin's application of the octatonic scale is not expansive. However, in Op. 52, Chopin demonstrated that, though his usage of octatonic collection did not amount to a large number of octatonic passages or penetrate deeper into the structure, they are nevertheless important to the narrative of the piece. The application of 7-31 facilitated the most crucial moment in the coda, the major/minor conflict created by the *Grundgestalt* at the beginning and accumulating throughout the piece.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In Chapters II through IV, I give a detailed analysis of three Ballades: Op. 23, Op. 38, and Op. 52, respectively. Although each piece has its unique character and a different outcome in the coda, or conclusion to the drama, there are some common elements in these three Ballades. In addition to similarities such as meter (6/4 or 6/8), structural organization (quasi-sonata form), emphasis on mediant keys, and delayed V-I resolution, I would like to point out some motivic and tonal relationships common to all four Ballades in this conclusion.

The functional *Grundgestalt* is responsible for the key scheme and structural development of these compositions and is comprised of tonal cells. Tonal cells are either dyads or three-note linear figures that are the smallest pitch-sets to represent tonality. For example, "x," a third with a passing note, is a conjunct three-note subset of a major or minor scale; "y" or "y^1" indicates a descending leading tone and its resolution; "y" indicates a whole step, and it is either $\hat{4}$-$\flat\hat{3}$ in the minor context or $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the major context, and "y^1" is a half step and therefore is either $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ in the major context or $\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the minor context. Finally, "z" indicates the ascending leading tone $\hat{7}$, which gravitates towards its tonic $\hat{1}$. While "x" is used as a component of melody, "y", "y^1" and "z" create a strong gravity towards the tonic.

In my analysis of each Ballade, the function of the *Grundgestalt* is determined by the tonal cells, "y", "y^1", and "z". In the following examples, I summarize the *Grundgestalten* and tonal cells in the Ballades' themes and conclude how changes in the tonal context of the *Grundgestalten* lead to various key areas. In addition, I illustrate the relationship between the *Grundgestalten* over all four Ballades.

Figure 103 displays the *Grundgestalt* from the G minor Ballade, presented at the opening of the piece. The *Grundgestalt* consists of two tonal cells, "x" and "y^1"; "x" is the source of all the thematic development, while "y^1" is the source of the Ballade's tonal scheme. The unresolved dissonance E♭ at the end of the introduction is unstable because there is no harmonic support. There is an implied resolution to D in the melody of Theme I, and G at the end of the phrase. Since the resolution from E♭ to D is indirect, the story of the Ballade unfolds as E♭ gradually becomes more prominent and finally establishes itself as the structural ♭VI in the secondary theme area. Not only is the secondary Theme II-b (see Table 1 in Chapter II) in the tonic key of E♭ major, but the entire theme also occurs on the pedal point E♭. Then Chopin strategically reverses the order of Theme I and Theme II-b in the recapitulation. As a result, Theme I follows ThemeII-b in Section A^1, and Theme I also occurs on the pedal point D. The E♭-D pedal point creates a powerful structural $\hat{\flat 6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the bass line as well as in the key regions, and one feels as if it is the point of no return. The culmination of energy explodes in the coda, heading for its final destination, the tonic of G minor.

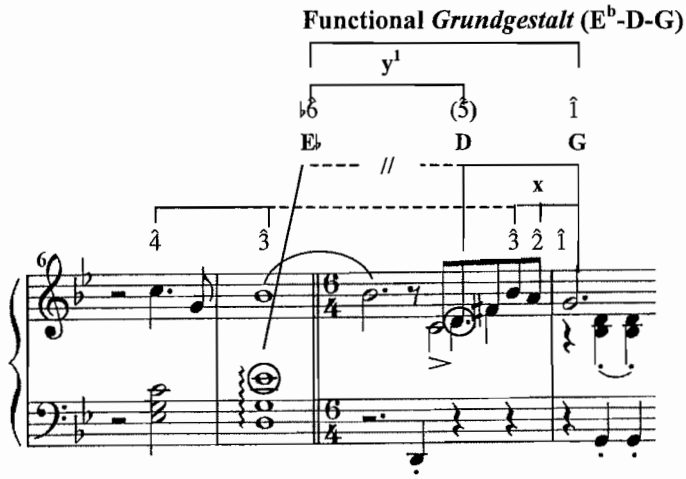


FIGURE 103. The *Grundgestalt* from the G minor Ballade: Introduction to Theme I. The dotted lines show the indirect connection.

The source of the large-scale structural bass line E♭-D-G in Figure 10 in Chapter I (my Schenkerian graph) is the functional *Grundgestalt,* ♭6̂-5̂-Î in the opening. As an analogy, the *Grundgestalt* works as a premonition of the "protagonist" and, through its eventual realization, significantly contributes to the Ballade's entire drama. The idea of the Ballade is how the missing link between ♭6̂-5̂—i.e., the premonition at the beginning of the piece—is established. Therefore, the *Grundgestalt* also relates to the Ballade's narrative nature, not by extra-musical elements, but by creating a plot as a musical discourse. This is an example of the functional *Grundgestalt*, which is responsible for the structural development of the piece.

The functional *Grundgestalt* also works as a unifying device. In the Theme II area, the same pitches from the original *Grundgestalt* in the Theme I area are reinterpreted and assigned a different function (see Figure 104, Theme II). For example, E♭ is ♭6, D is 5̂, and G is Î in the Theme I area that is in the key of G minor. However, in

the Theme II-a area, G works as $\hat{3}$ in measure 68, an escape-tone, and E♭ in measure 69 becomes the tonic of E♭ major. Thereupon the same "E♭" is re-interpreted as $\hat{4}$ followed by "D" in measures 69 and 70, creating $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$, and is assimilated into the key of B♭ major.

Theme II-a: Reinterpretation of E♭-D as $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ in the key of B♭ major

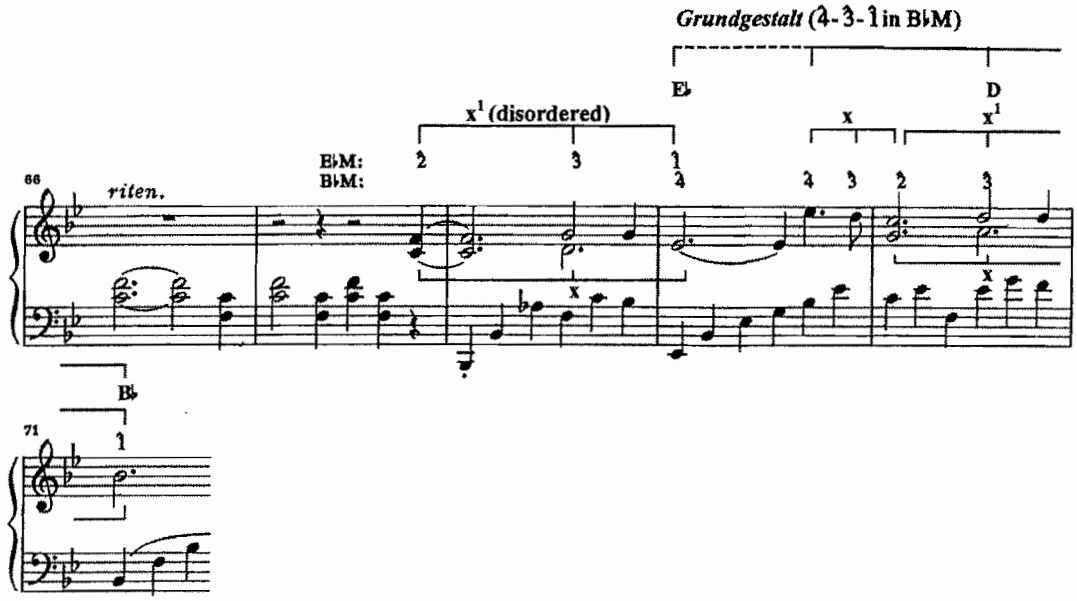


FIGURE 104. Theme II-a area and reinterpretation of the pitches.

Theme III contains the retrograde *Grundgestalt*, G-D-E♭, which completely reverses the role of the three pitches that originated from Theme I; G is interpreted as $\hat{3}$, D as $\hat{7}$, and E♭ as $\hat{1}$ (see Figure 105). In addition, there is a motivic connection between Theme I and Theme III. The reinterpretation of the four-note motive from the Theme I area, C-B♭-A-G, $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of G minor, is modified to $\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$ in measure 138. "x + 1" in the Theme III area becomes C-B♭-A♭-G, the original four-note motive in measure 3 in the introduction. Since the introduction implies the E♭ major/G minor

conflict discussed in Chapter II, Theme III is the realization of E♭ major suggested in the introduction. Theme III in the key of E♭ major thus becomes the antithesis of the original *Grundgestalt*, claiming its triumph over the opening tonic G minor.

Theme III: Retrograde E♭-D (y^1) as D- E♭ (z) to establish the key of E♭ major

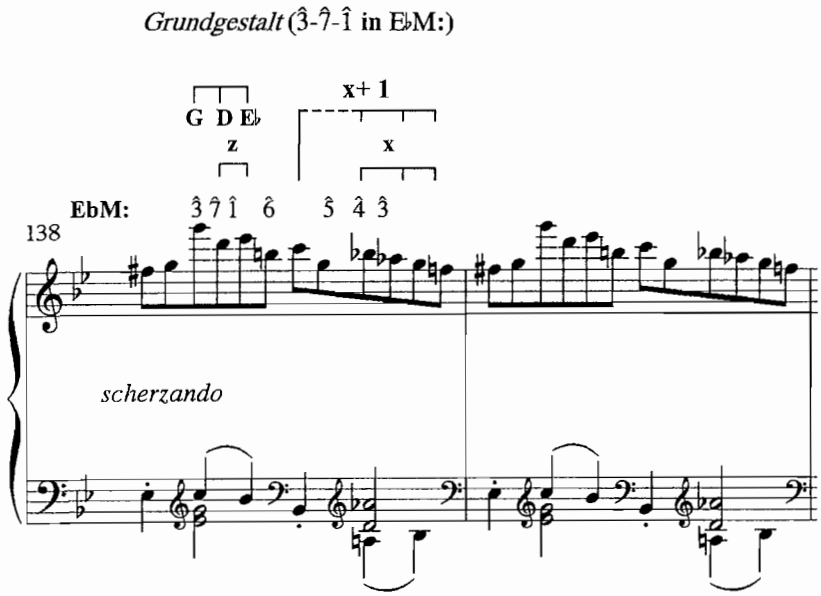


FIGURE 105. *Grundgestalt* in Theme III in the G minor Ballade: The reinterpretation of the dyad E♭-D to create the E♭ major region.

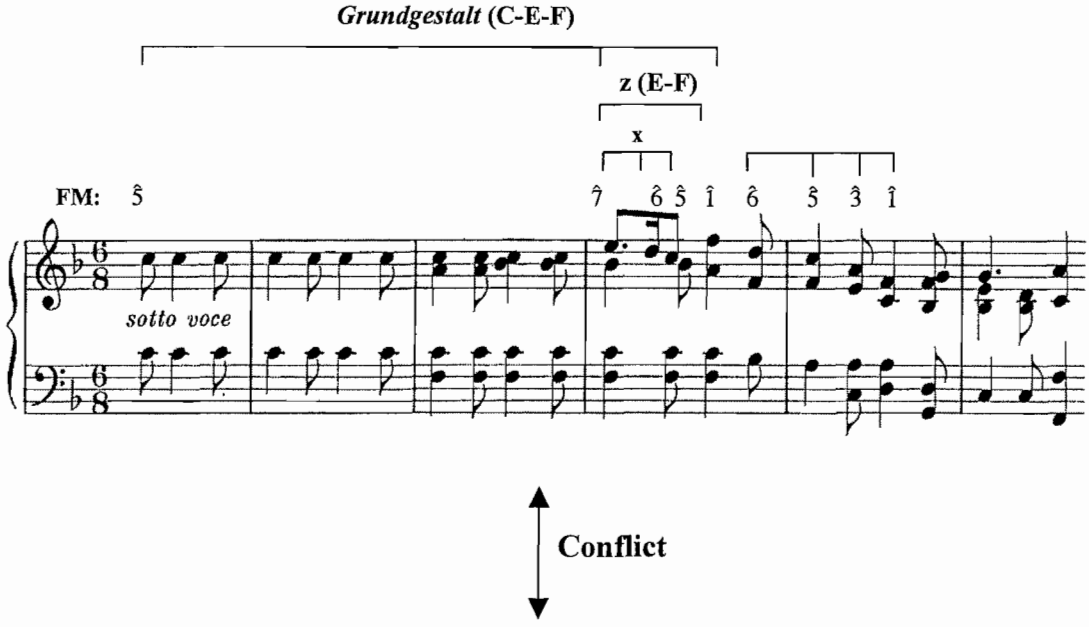
The thematic and harmonic development of the G minor Ballade reveals an interesting aspect of its nature through the *Grundgestalt*. It not only provides coherence through the "basic shape" of the themes, but it also creates opposition by reinterpretation of the pitches. As my figures above demonstrate, the tonal cells of the *Grundgestalt* play an important role in this process. In the original *Grundgestalt* in the key of G minor, E♭-D functions as "y", or ♭6̂-5̂. This not only indicates the minor orientation of the referential scale, but also points towards its tonic G minor. In Theme

III, the dyad E♭-D is reversed to D-E♭ and reinterpreted as "z," or $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$. Now the tonic E♭ is established. The key of E♭ major works in opposition to the key of G minor. Throughout the course of the Ballade, Chopin tells a story in which the submediant region gradually emerges and soars, but is finally assimilated into the tonic G minor. I think it likely that the tonal cells in the *Grundgestalt* determine how the large-scale key scheme is designed.

A more intense conflict is projected by the *Grundgestalt* in the F major Ballade, Op. 38. Once again, Chopin employs a reinterpretation of the pitches to create an oppositional force against the tonic F major. In theme I, "E," $\hat{7}$ of the key of F major, is resolved to the tonic F (see Figure 106). The dyad E to F, or $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ ("z"), is reversed in the A minor region and reinterpreted as (♮)$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ (y^1) in the key of A minor. This process is the same as the contention created between Theme I and Theme III in the G minor Ballade, but the change is more abrupt in the F major Ballade and generates a crushing impact between the two contrasting themes.

In contrast to the high level of tension in the Op. 38 Ballade, Chopin applied a "variation-like" thematic transformation in the third Ballade, Op. 47 (see Figure 107). The *Grundgestalt* C-F-E♭, or $\hat{3}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of A♭ major, is repeated many times throughout the piece with embellishment, not only in the thematic areas but also in the transitional sections. The home key A♭ major then modulates to the relative minor F minor in the first Theme II area. Surprisingly, the same pitches C-F-E♭ ($\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$), in the

A. Theme I: Establishing the key of F major through the functional tonal cell "z" (E-F)



B. Theme II: Reversing the dyad E-F, and creating y^1 (F-E) to produce the key of A minor.

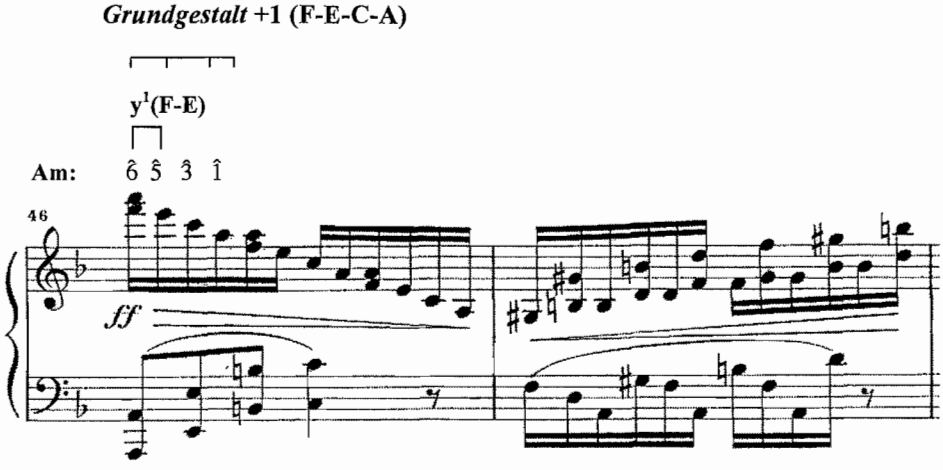


FIGURE 106. Creating a strong conflict by reinterpretation of the dyad E and F in Theme I and Theme II in the F major Ballade.

same order (not reversed), are also used for the secondary theme in the key of F minor, creating a sense of unity. This reinterpretation of the pitches, however, does not produce the same dramatic effect that one experiences in the second Ballade. The reason for this less dramatic effect is that F-E♭ is in the same order, and F-E♭ in the F minor context does not yield strong magnetism toward its tonic. Thus, the contrast is created by only other elements instead of pitches, such as keys (major vs. minor), rhythm, texture, etc.

A. Theme I: Reinterpretation of the same functions ($\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$): "y[1]"(F-E) in A minor in Theme II of the F major Ballade is reinterpreted to create "y"(F-E♭) in Theme I in the context of A♭ major

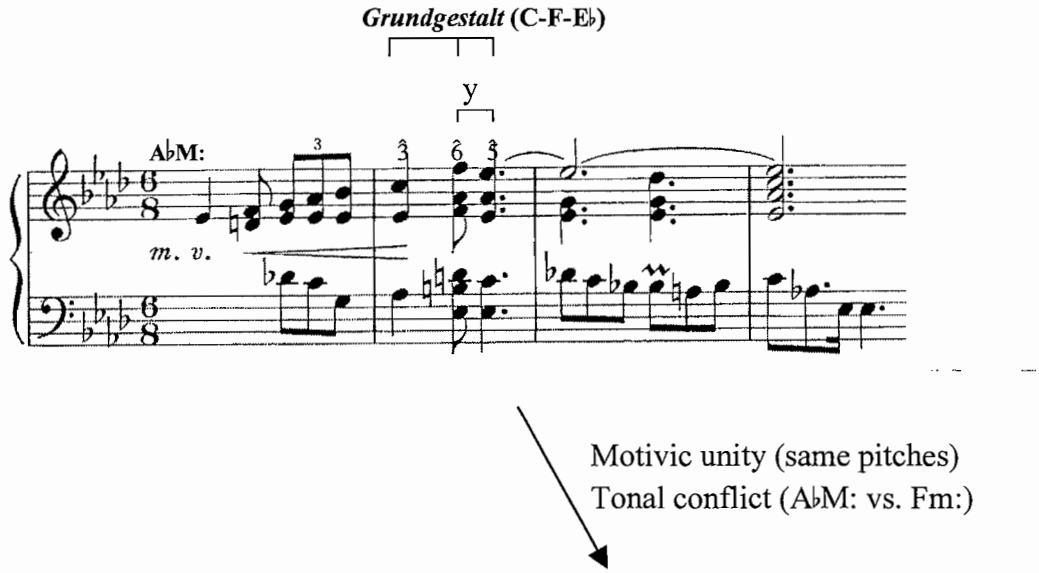
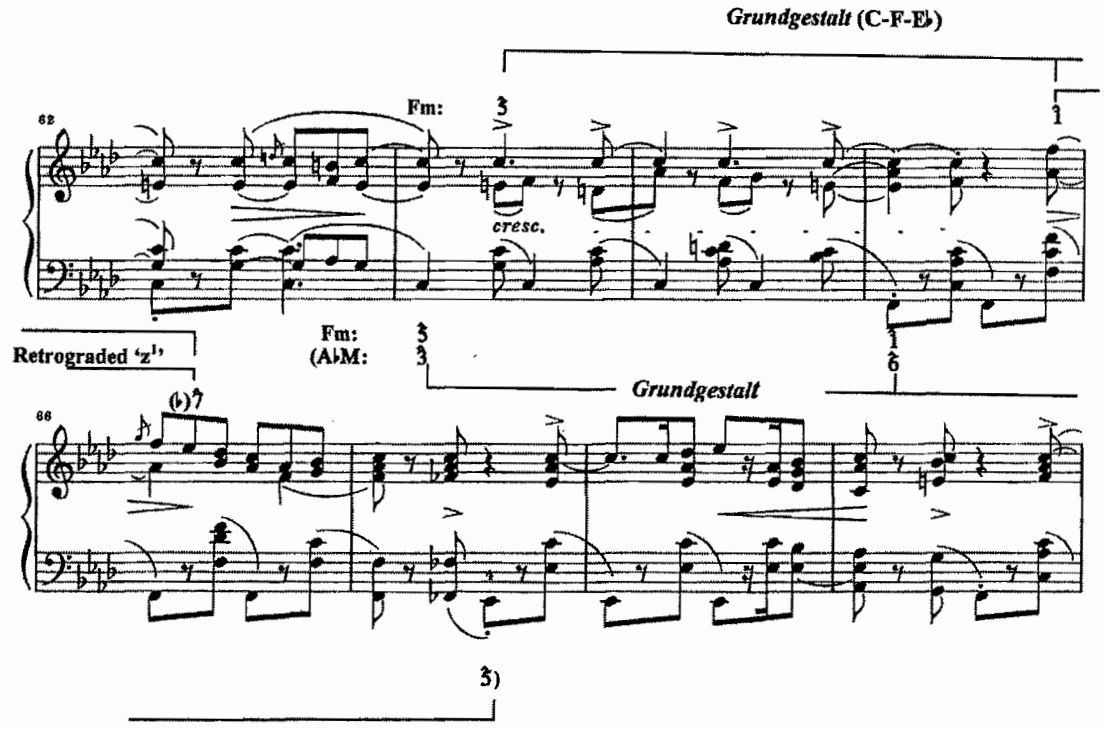


FIGURE 107. The *Grundgestalt* in Theme I in the A♭ major Ballade and its thematic development.

B. Theme II-2: Reinterpretation of the same pitches (C-F-E♭) to create Theme II in the key of F minor



C. Theme III

Motivic unity (same pitches)

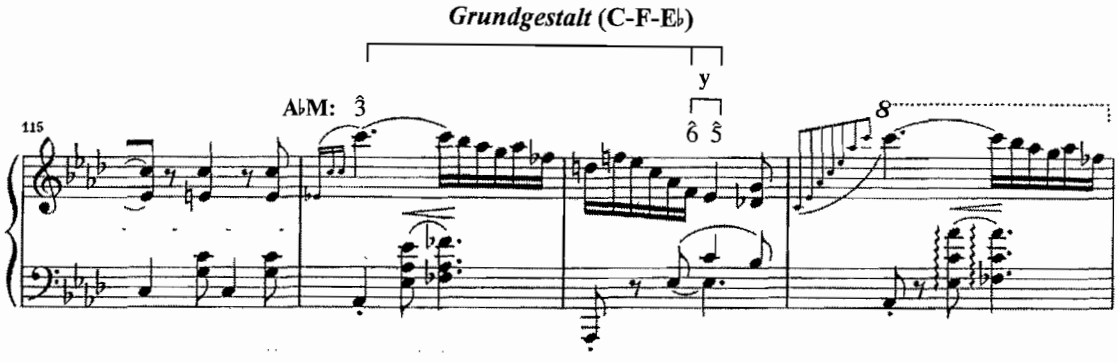


FIGURE 107. (Continued)

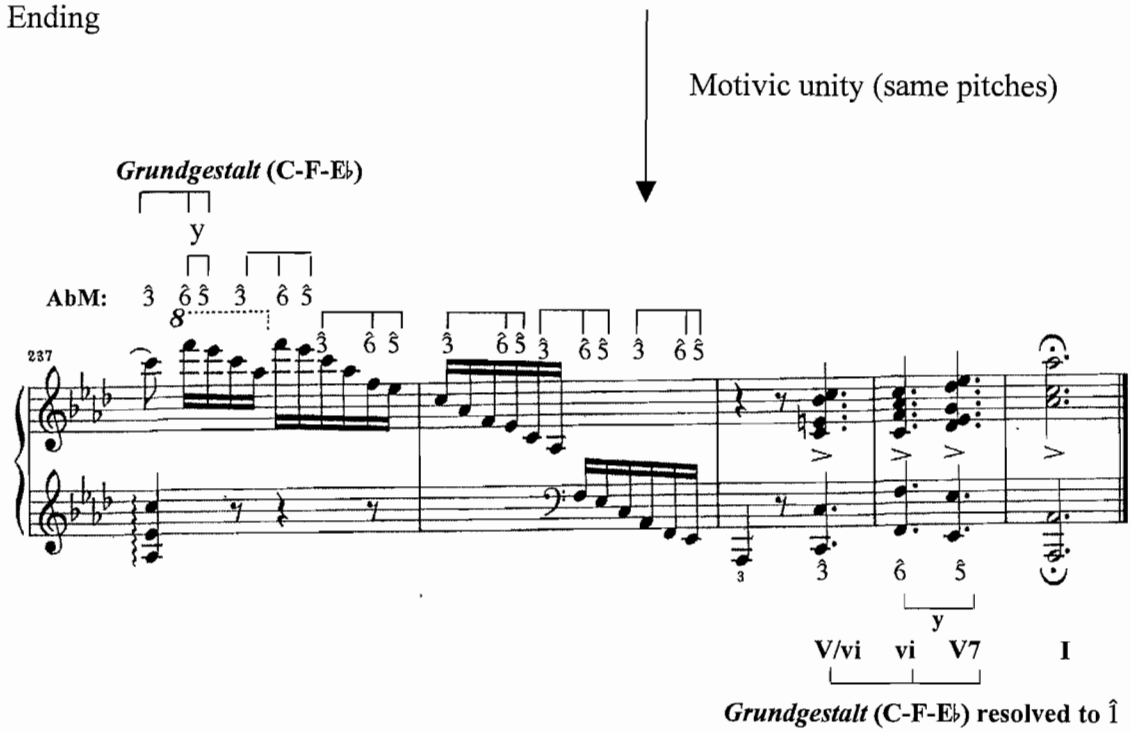


FIGURE 107. (Continued)

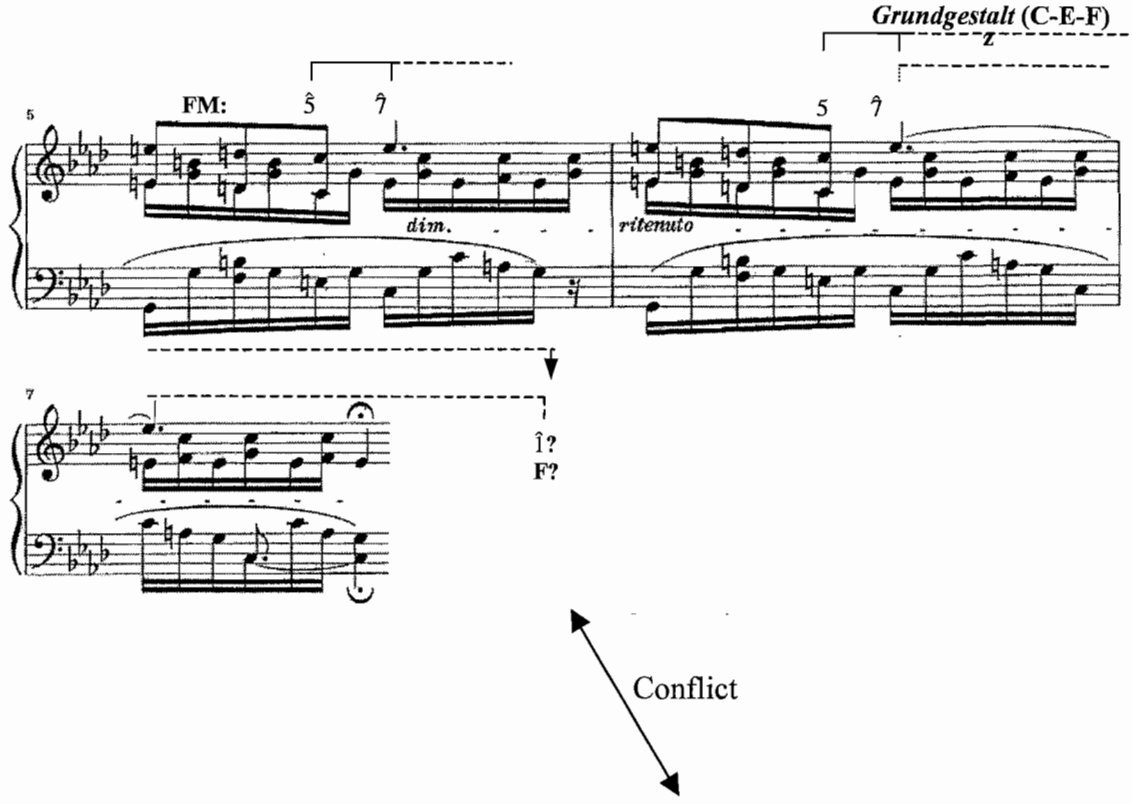
Theme III has the same pitches C-F-E♭ in the key of A♭ major again, but with more elaborate ornamentation. The same theme is repeated at the end between measures 231-236 to prepare the final cadence in the key of A♭ major, thus asserting the original figure, $\hat{3}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in A♭. The three-note figure C-F-E♭ is presented in the bass line and finally resolved to A♭ to conclude the piece. It seems that the entire design of the music depends on one's expectation of the direct resolution from the *Grundgestalt* $\hat{3}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ in the key of A♭ major, and one's desire is finally fulfilled at the end.

The F minor Ballade, Op. 52, is probably Chopin's most ambitious work among the four Ballades. The interaction between the thematic materials is more complex and sophisticated. Although the introduction implies the *Grundgestalt* C-E-F ($\hat{5}$-$\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$) from

the F major Ballade, the real functional *Grundgestalt* of the piece is the one in the Theme I area (see Figure 108). The motive of Theme 1, C-F-E♮-B♭-D♭, represents interlocking three-note figures that are all related by their shapes. The three-note figure C-F-E♮ ($\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$) in Theme I is related to the *Grundgestalt* of the A♭ major Ballade C-F-E♭ by the pitches and contour. The function of the leading tone E is weakened through descending motion, instead of seeking a resolution to the tonic. The following E-B♭-D♭ forms a "deformed" *Grundgestalt*, which is a subset of the octatonic 1 collection. Finally the work's "real" *Grundgestalt*, D♭-C-F ($\hat{\flat 6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$), which includes the crucial "y^1," or $\hat{\flat 6}$-$\hat{5}$, to establish its tonic in the minor context, concludes the chain of motives. The analogy to this motive is the disorientation of the "protagonist," who loses confidence in his ability to regain the beautiful pastorale (i.e., the F major theme from the second Ballade) and feels anxiety regarding the possible destination—the tragic F minor.

Close observation reveals, however, that it is not Chopin's intention to give out the real *Grundgestalt* in Theme I immediately (see Figure 109). Although D♭-C-F is realized in the antecedent of the theme, since motive "a" is repeated twice, D♭ may be perceived as being somewhat detached from C and F because of phrasing and harmony. C and F constitute the beginning of the second "a." At the end of the antecedent, D♭ is left alone. The consequent starts from C, but since the consequent is in the key of A♭ major, "D♭" is reinterpreted as $\hat{4}$. Thus, the resolution from $\hat{\flat 6}$ to $\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of

Introduction: Recalling the *Grundgestalt* (C-E-F) of Theme I in the F major Ballade



Theme I: Denying F major by reversing E-F to create the retrograded "z" and suggesting F minor as the new destination by the *Grundgestalt* D♭-C-F.

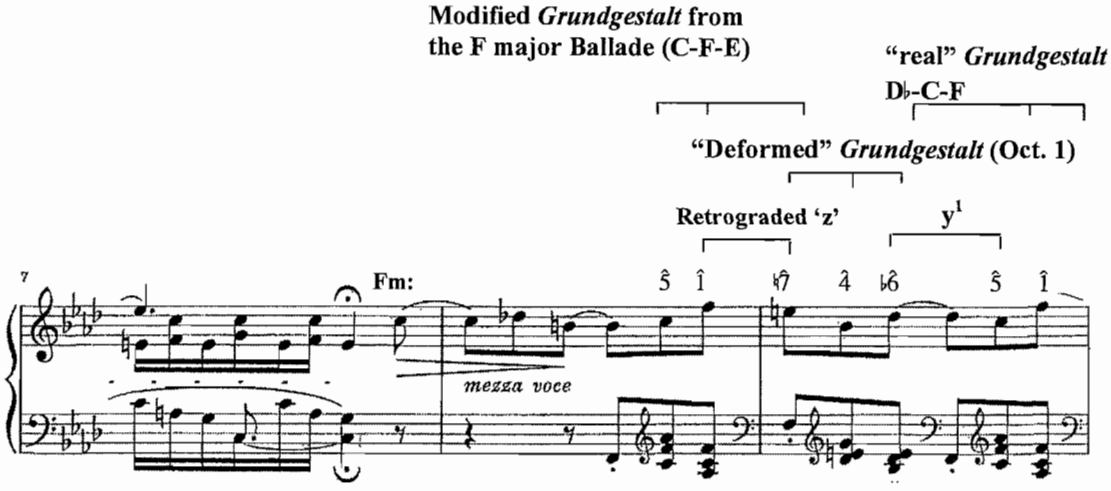


FIGURE 108. *Grundgestalten* in the F minor Ballade.

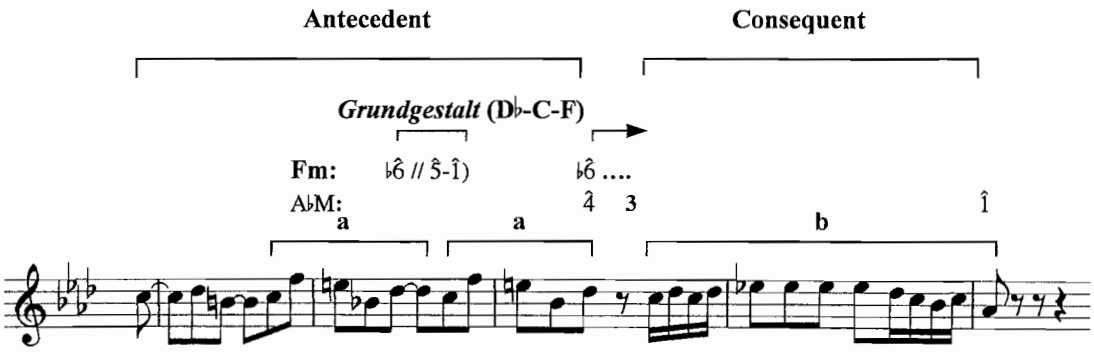
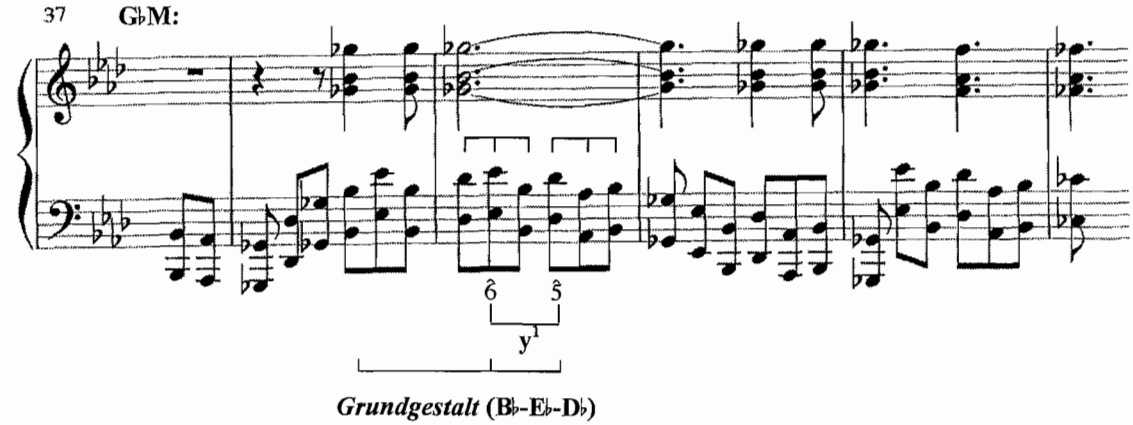


FIGURE 109. The structure of the melody of Theme I and implied *Grundgestalt* D♭-C-F.

F minor is evaded, and the entire piece must transpire before the real resolution to the tonic occurs. This incomplete *Grundgestalt* (D♭ detached from C and F) in the key of F minor is a parallel to the incomplete *Grundgestalt* in the key of F major (C and E detached from the resolution F) in the introduction, and the conflict between the two *Grundgestalten* develops into an intense drama, as shown in Chapter IV.

Figure 110-A displays the *Grundgestalt* (B♭-E♭-D♭) in the G♭ major mode, which works as an antithesis to the "deformed *Grundgestalt*" in Oct. 1 (E-B♭-D♭) and the "real *Grundgestalt*" to establish the key of F minor (D♭-C-F) from the Theme 1 area. B♭-E♭-D♭ is also a transposition of the *Grundgestalt* (C-F-E♭) from the primary theme in the third Ballade in A♭ major, Op. 47, creating a perceptive connection between the last two Ballades. The same *Grundgestalt* is further developed to generate Theme II in the key of B♭ major (see Figure 110-B). This is another transposition of 3̂-6̂-5̂ (D-G-F), which also serves to establish unity in the piece.

A. Pentatonic episode



Unity

B. Theme II

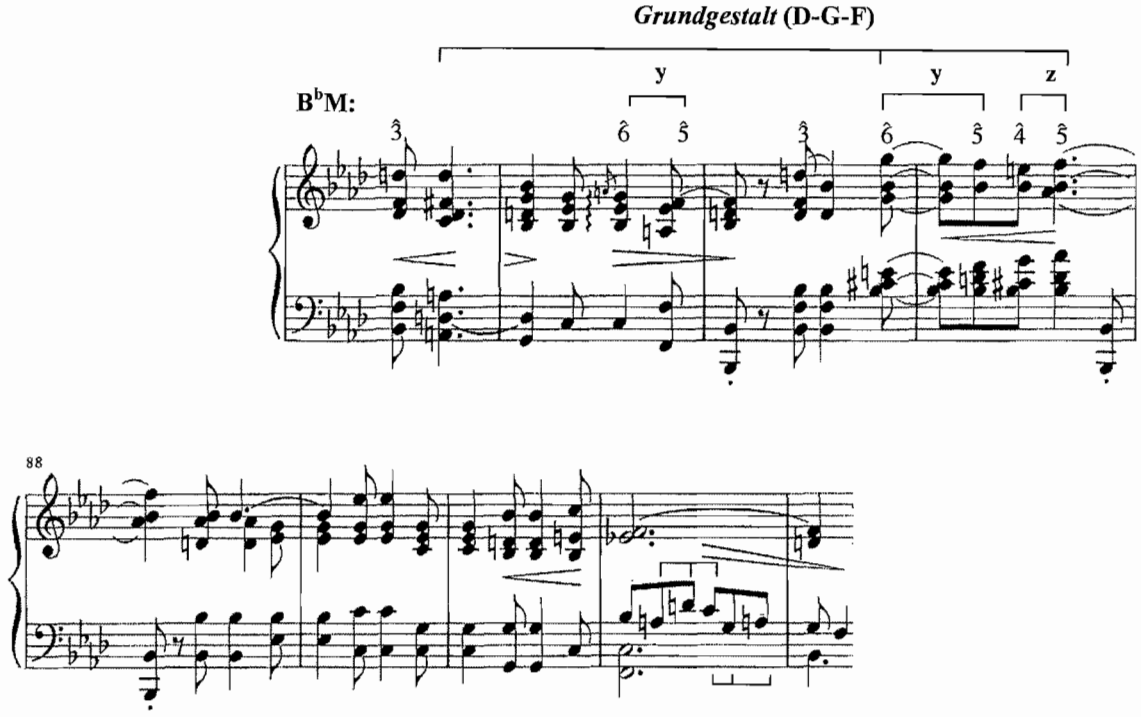
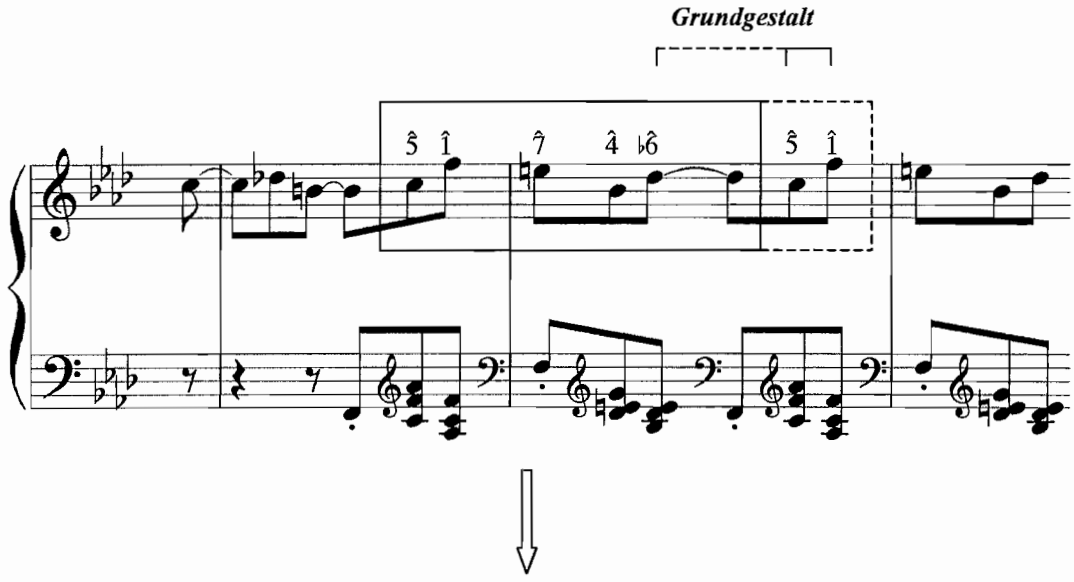


FIGURE 110. The pentatonic episode as the antithesis to the "deformed *Grundgestalt*" in Oct. 1 (E-B♭-D♭) and Theme II.

The most striking aspect of the F minor Ballade, however, is that one can predict the approximate large-scale tonal discourse from the primary theme. Figure 111 suggests the pitches from the motive of the primary theme and corresponding tonal regions. It also provides the octatonic subset that is later developed.

F minor Ballade Theme I



The corresponding tonal regions in the Ballade to create a hidden repetition

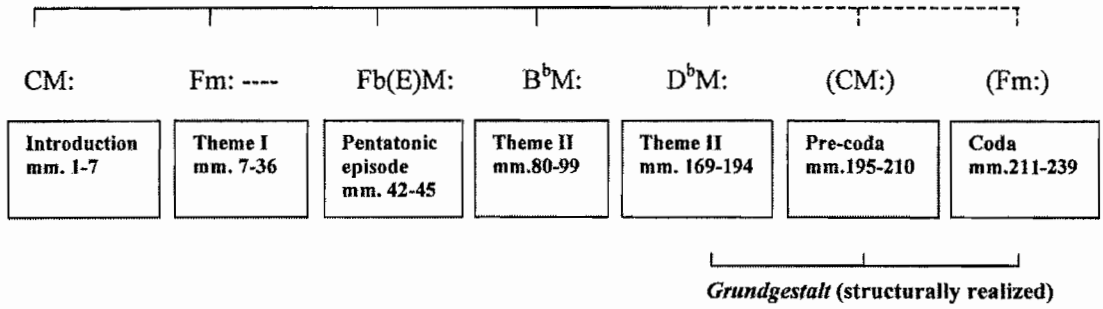


FIGURE 111. The motive of Theme I and its corresponding tonal regions: A hidden repetition between the pitches of the motive "a" of Theme I (C-F-E-B♭-D♭) and the tonal scheme of the Ballade.

In addition to providing the conflict between the F-major-oriented introduction and the F-minor-oriented opening of Theme I, the *Grundgestalt* provides unity among the thematic materials of the Ballade. Figure 110 shows that part of the pentatonic episode, B♭-E♭-D♭ ($\hat{3}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$), is a transposition of one of the *Grundgestalten* in Theme I, C-F-E natural, in the major context. Theme II also has the same contour, D-G-F ($\hat{3}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$), which is a transposition from the one in the pentatonic episode. The above observation demonstrates not only that all the themes from the F minor Ballade are related, but also that there is a thematic connection between the F minor Ballade and the A♭ major Ballade.

Figures 103-111 summarize the functional *Grundgestalten* in Chopin's Ballades Op. 23, Op. 38, Op. 47, and Op. 52, respectively. When one compares the *Grundgestalten* of Chopin's Ballades, one will notice a striking resemblance between the "basic shapes." In other words, the first *Grundgestalt* presented in the G minor Ballade is further developed in the other Ballades, and therefore the four Ballades are strongly bound by a common *Grundgestalt*. The common *Grundgestalt* in the Ballades is a three-note figure mostly in arch form or inverted arch form, and there are specific intervallic relationships between the pitches—e.g., a perfect 4th and major/minor seconds (see Figure 112). Figure 112 illustrates the thematic development and interaction between the *Grundgestalten* of the four Ballades, such as oppositions and affiliates. For example, the *Grundgestalt* E♭-D-G in the Theme I area of the G minor

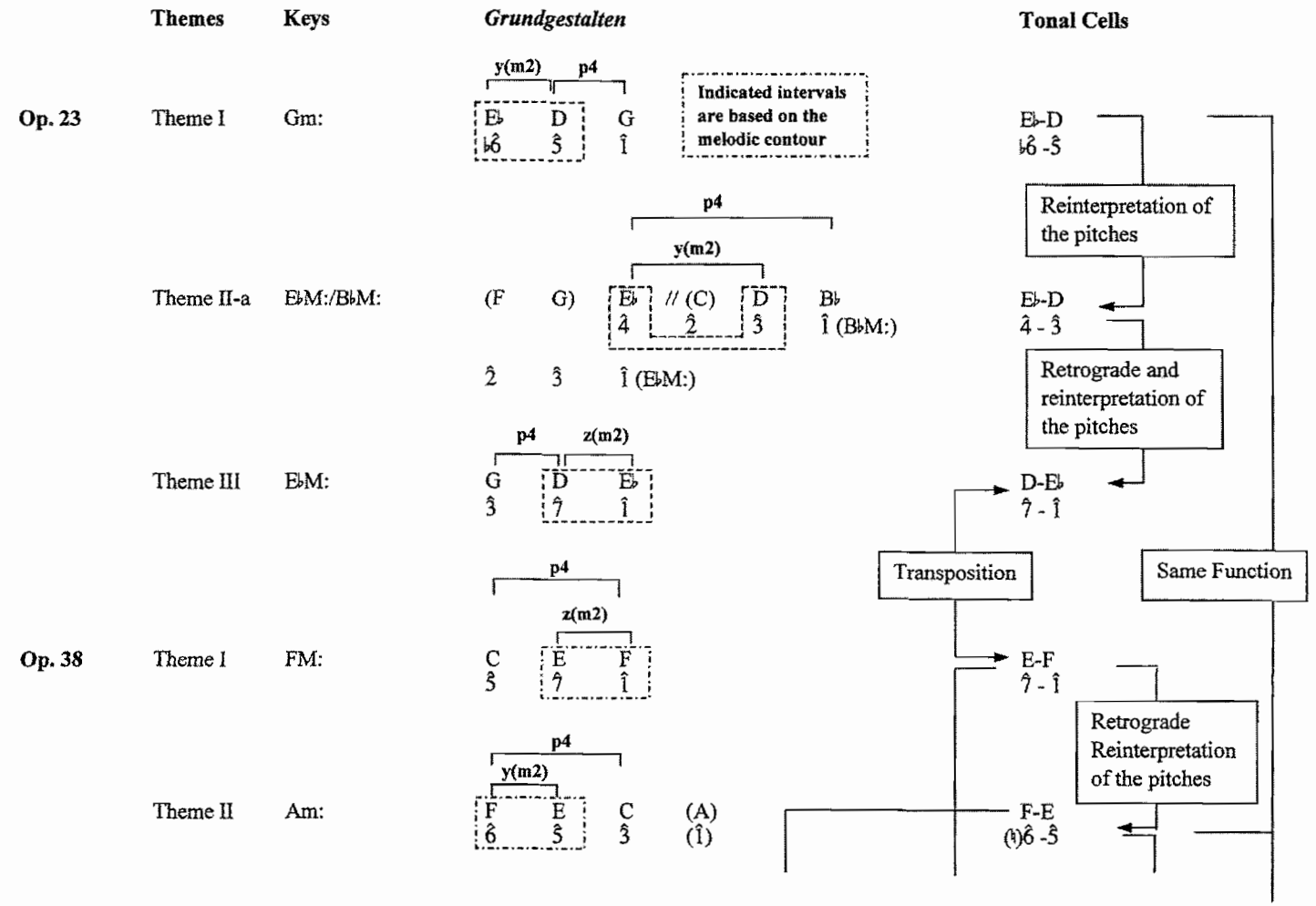


FIGURE 112. The development of the functional *Grundgestalt* in all four Ballades: Common tonal cells and reinterpretation of pitches and/or functions.

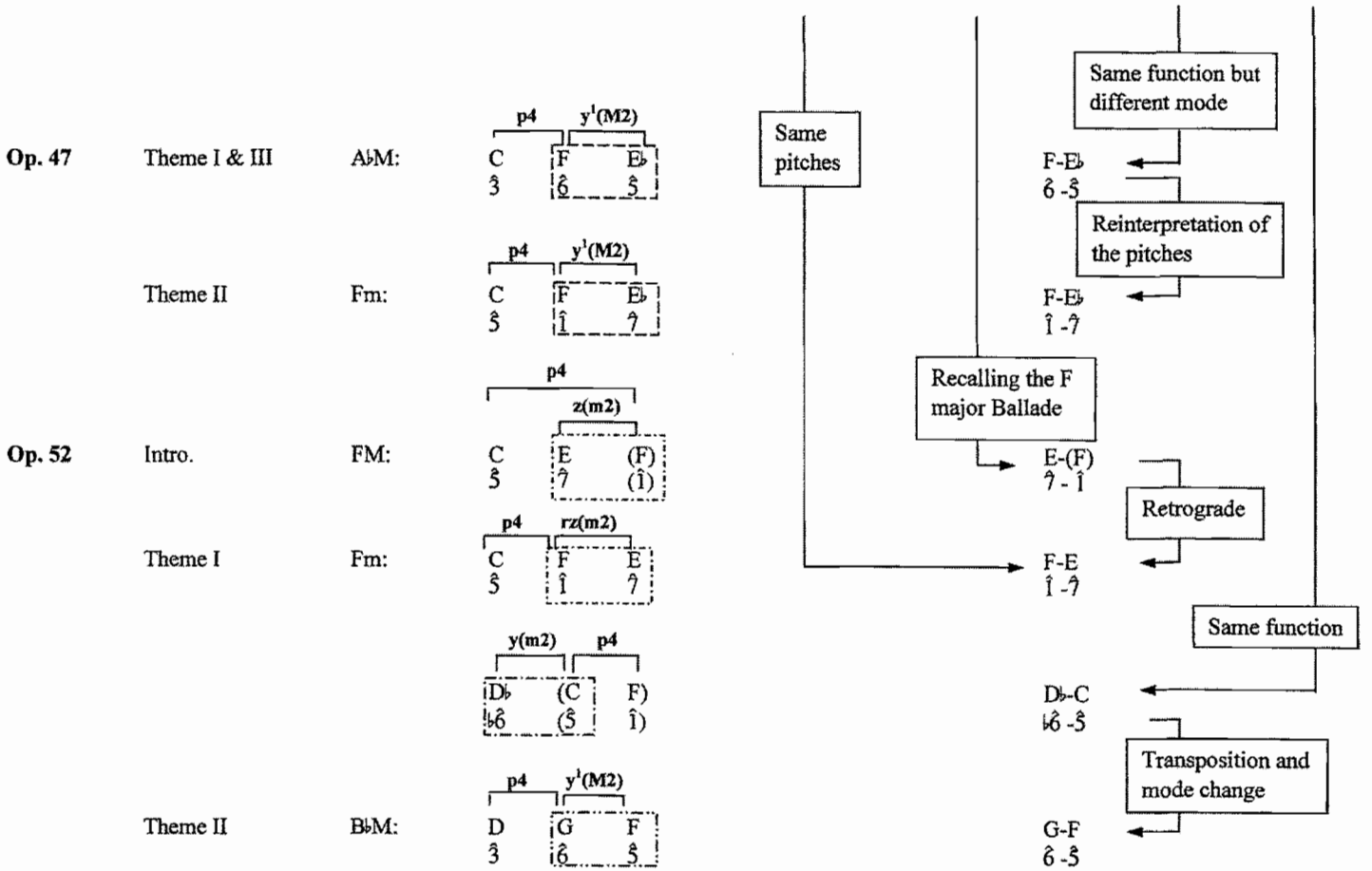


FIGURE 112. (Continued)

Ballade becomes a source of conflict when the original *Grundgestalt* is reversed and creates G-D-E♭ in the Theme III area. This happens because the same pitches have different functions when the order is reversed. E♭-D in the key of G minor functions as ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ (y^1), while D-E♭ is perceived as $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ (z) in the key of E♭ major. Therefore, the operation to reverse the functional tonal cells of the *Grundgestalt* creates two tonics in a monotonal work where only one tonic can survive in the end.

The same operation is further developed in the second Ballade, Op. 38. The two-key scheme is created by the reinterpretation of two pitches, E-F ("z," or $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ in the key of F major) in theme I, and its retrograde F-E (y^1 or ♮$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the key of A minor) in Theme II, thus stressing two conflicting tonics. Although the contrasts and unity are affected by other factors such as tempo, texture, rhythm, dynamics, etc., the *Grundgestalt* reveals more fundamental compositional ideas that can penetrate to the large-scale tonal structure as well as on the surface level.

In the F minor Ballade, Chopin changes his strategy. The introduction implies a connection between the F major Ballade and F minor Ballade. The implied dyad E-F indicates $\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$ (z) in the key of F major, but the reversed dyad F-E, $\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$ (reversed "z" instead of a change in function to "y^1"), in the *Grundgestalt* in the Theme I area doesn't necessarily establish any specific tonal center immediately. Instead, it leads to the entire motive C-F-E-B♭-D♭ and thus suggests the future tonal structure of the Ballade. Metaphorically the entire motive works as if it is the omen or premonition of the protagonist.

The last note of the motive, D♭, plays a large role in the F minor Ballade as the ♭$\hat{6}$ of F minor intended for resolution to $\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$, and the resolution "z" is realized not in the F major context implied in the introduction, but in the F minor context at the end of the Ballade. The plot of the F minor Ballade is therefore more complex and tortuous than the other Ballade's programmes, but the same *Grundgestalt*, ♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$ in the G minor Ballade, becomes a focal point of the piece.

The above observations suggest that the most powerful oppositional tensions are created when the functional dyad of the *Grundgestalt* is reversed and reinterpreted from "y^1" to "z" or from "z" to "y^1." This operation is possible between tonic and third-related keys (e.g., Gm:/ E♭M:, FM:/Am:). Conversely, a unifying effect among different tonal areas is observed when the *Grundgestalt* is transposed without changing the functional dyads.

Figure 113 shows the similarities between *Grundgestalten* in the four Ballades. The *Grundgestalten* of the A♭ major Ballade are the retrograde transposition of the *Grundgestalt* of the G minor Ballade, although there is a half-step difference between the dyads in the A♭ major Ballade and the G minor Ballade because one is in a major key and the other in a minor key. The A♭ major Ballade also has another contour relationship with the F minor Ballade. The *Grundgestalt* of the F major Ballade and the first *Grundgestalt* of the F minor Ballade consist of the same pitches.

There are other similarities in addition to the relations between the *Grundgestalten.* Figure 114 displays the ambiguous tonicizations in the Theme II area

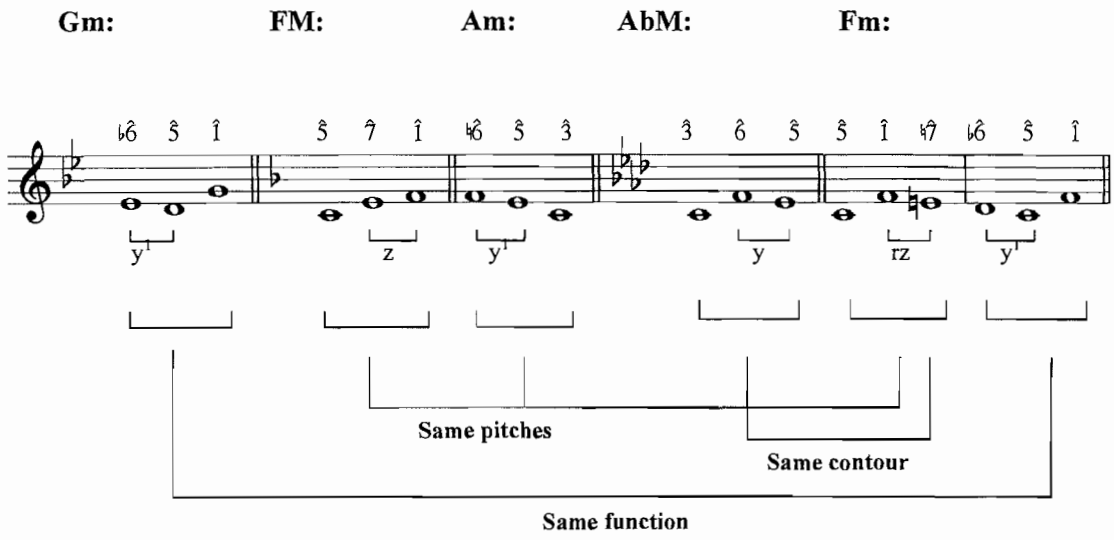
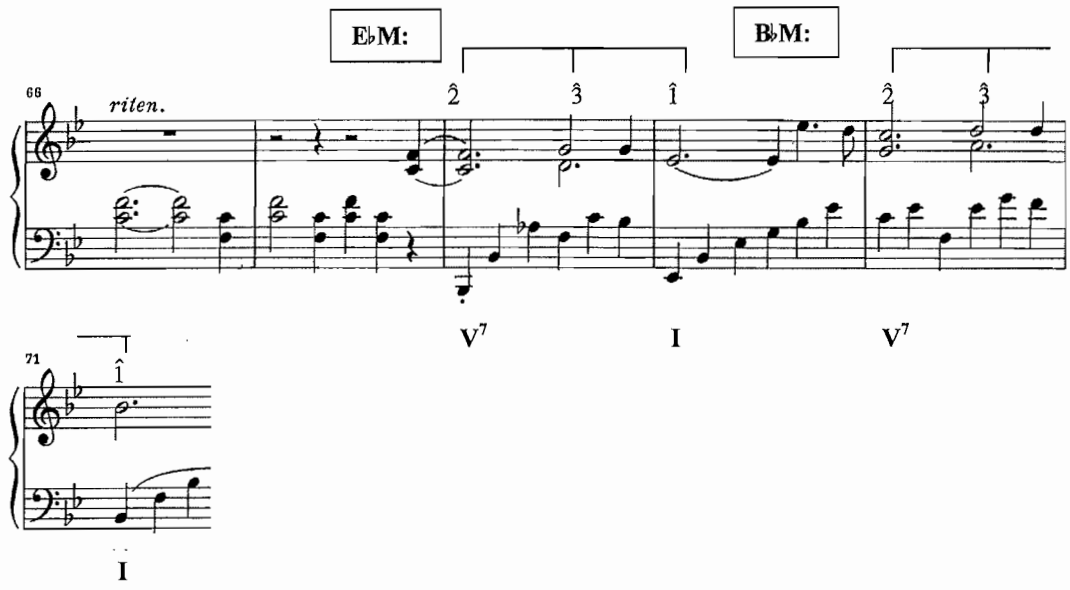


FIGURE 113. The similarities between the *Grundgestalten* in the primary themes of the Ballades.

of the G minor Ballade and the one in the bridge theme in the A♭ major Ballade. In both cases, there is one tonicization after another to emphasize two dominant-related keys with equal weight. Melodically it sequences x^1's in the G minor Ballade and x's in the A♭ major Ballade, stressing its tonic.

Figure 115 below shows a perceptive connection between the A♭ major Ballade and F minor Ballade; Chopin took advantage of the relative major/minor relationship between them. The first Theme II area starts from an F minor triad, and the chord progression of the beginning of the Theme II area is V^7-i (Fm:) – V^7-I (A♭M:). The same chord progression is repeated at the end of the A♭ major Ballade. Then Chopin repeats the same progression in the F minor Ballade. The tonal design of the introduction to the

A. G minor Ballade Theme II (measure 66-71)



B. A♭ major Ballade bridge theme (measures 53-57)

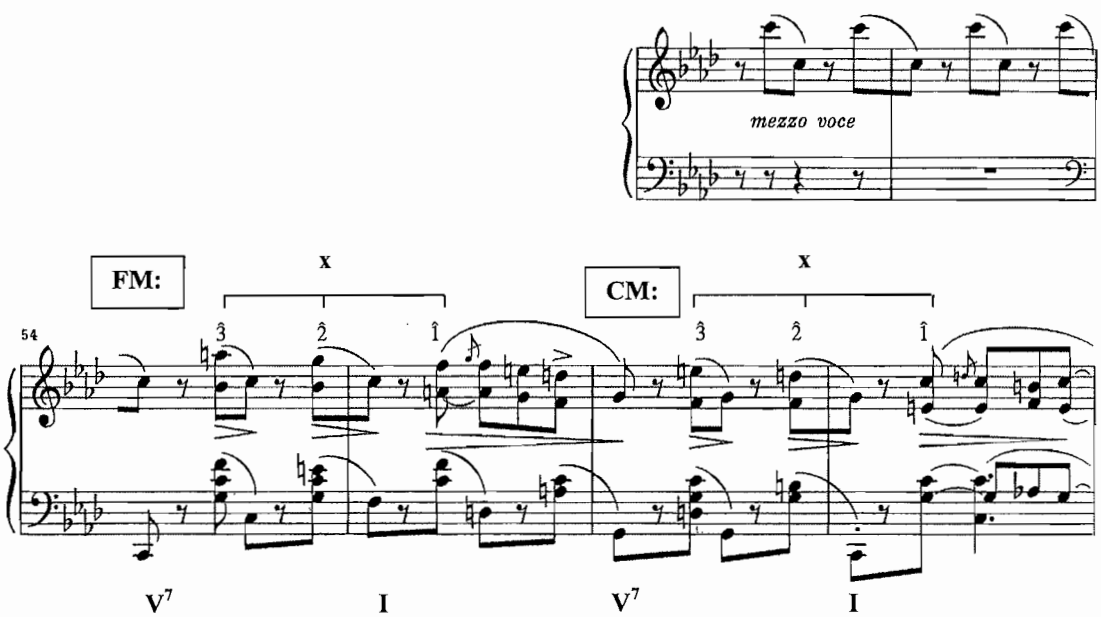
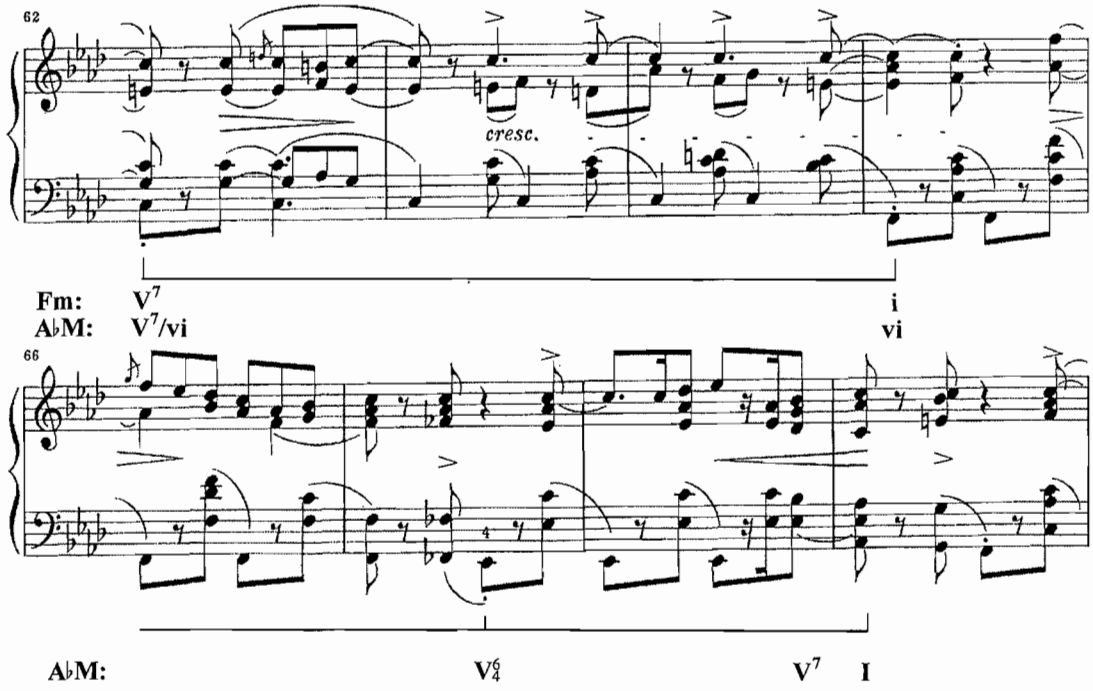


FIGURE 114. Similarity in the ambiguous key areas in the G minor Ballade and the A♭ major Ballade.

A♭ major Ballade Theme II (measures 62-69)



A♭ major Ballade ending (measures 237-241)

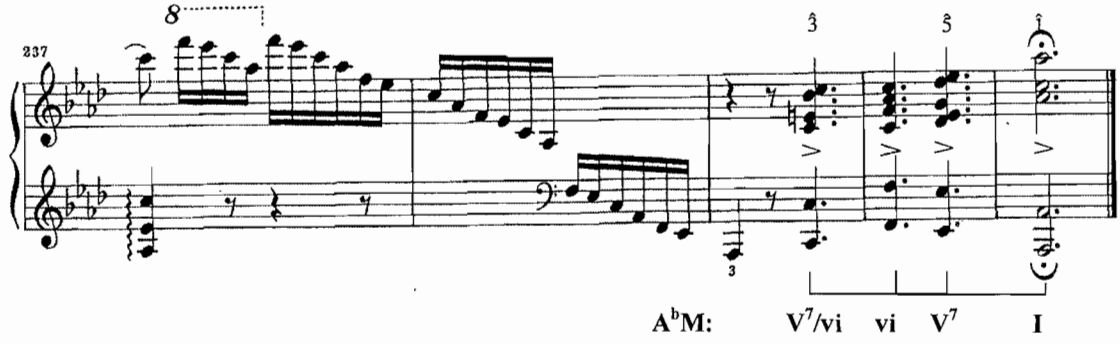


FIGURE 115. Harmonic connection between the A♭ major Ballade and the F minor Ballade.

F minor Ballade theme I (measures 7-12)

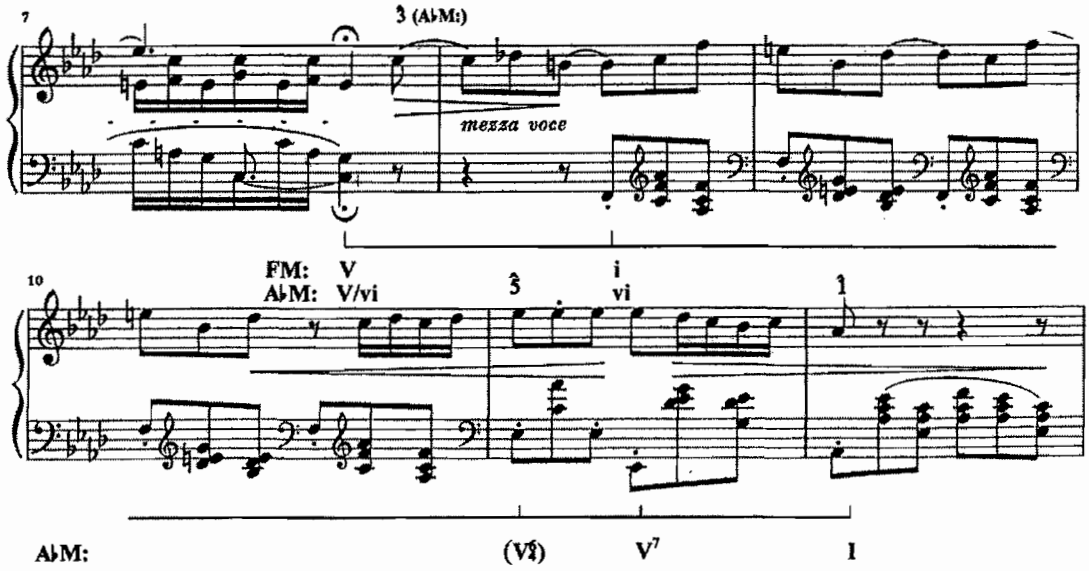
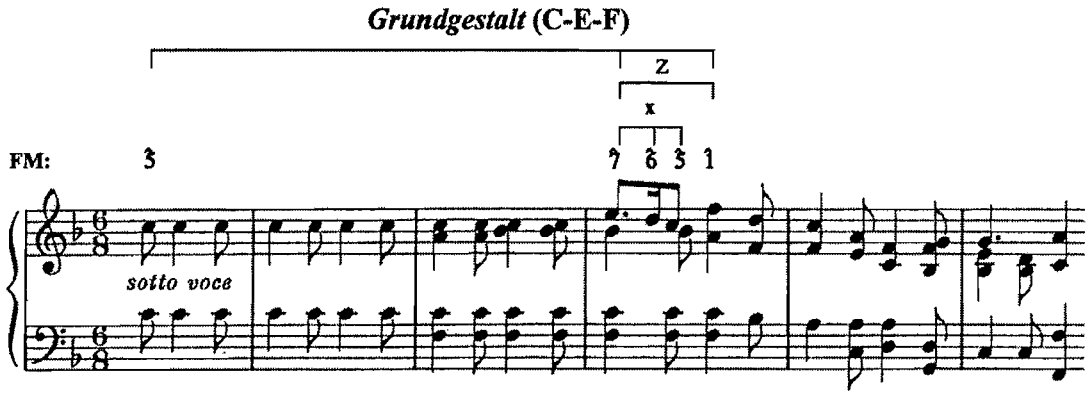


FIGURE 115. (Continued)

Theme I area is C-Fm-E♭^{7}-A♭M. This indicates perceptive and/or programmatic connections, and justifies the performance of the four Ballades in sequence.

Another connection can be found between the F major Ballade and F minor Ballade. As I suggested in Chapter IV, the nostalgic feeling in the introduction suggests yearning for the key of F major. In the introduction of the F minor Ballade, the *Grundgestalt* C-E-(F), or 5̂-7̂-1̂, is merely implied rather than clearly presented. If one looks back at the previous Ballades, however, one can spot the *Grundgestalt* C-E-F in the F major Ballade. I think there might be a programmatic connection between the F major and F minor Ballades (see Figure 116).

A. F major Ballade Theme I (measures 0-5)



B. F minor Ballade introduction (measures5-7): Recalling the *Grundgestalt* (C-E-F) of theme I in the F major Ballade

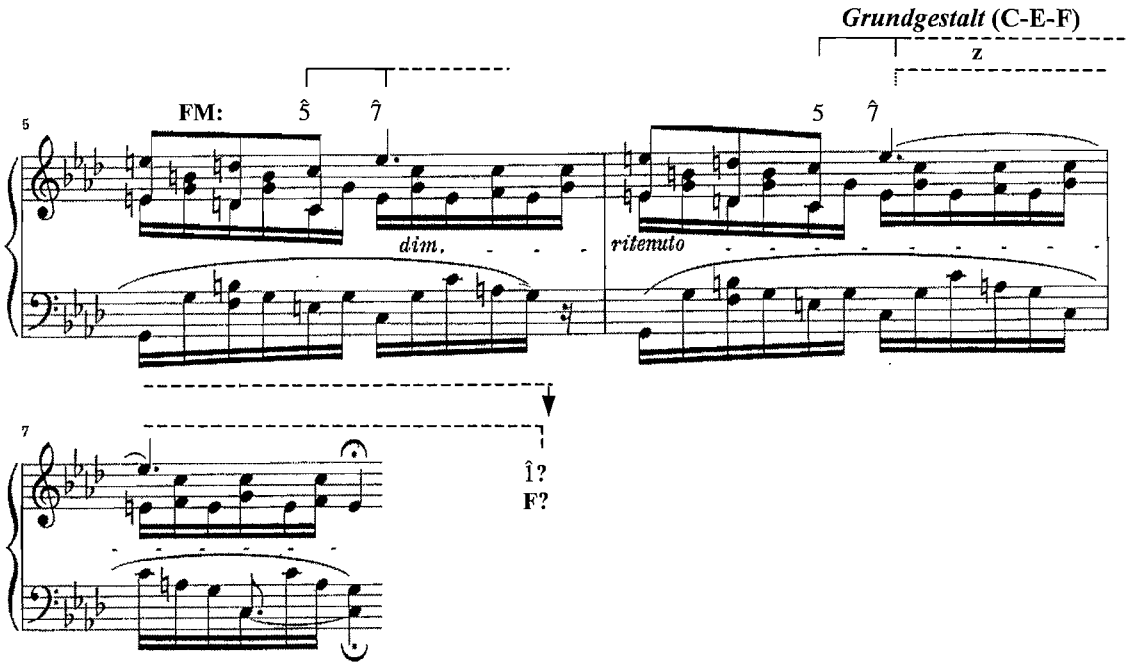


FIGURE 116. Perceptual connection between the F major Ballade and F minor Ballade.

Although never proven, the connection between the second Ballade and Mickiewicz's ballad has often been the object of past speculated. Jim Samson writes,

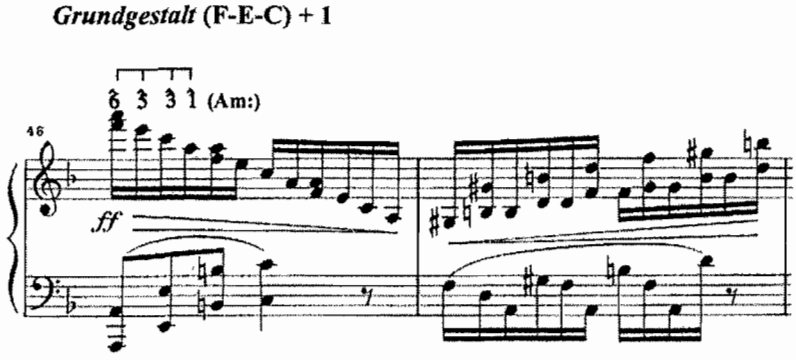
> More precise documentation has proved elusive, but tradition has it that the Second Ballade was inspired by Mickiewicz's ballad *Switez,* which recounts how the maidens of a Polish village were besieged by Russian soldiers. They pray that they might be swallowed by the earth, and when their wish is granted they are transformed into beautiful flowers which adorn the site of the village.[1]

If the key of F major represents a protagonist, or protagonists, the interaction between the *Grundgestalten* and the key scheme dictates that the A minor sections in the F major Ballade and F minor sections of the F minor Ballade are oppositions against F major. As shown in the comparison of the *Grundgestalten* in Figure 112, there is less conflict in the A♭ major Ballade. While all the other Ballades have conflicting tonal cells such as E-F ($\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$) and F-E ($\flat\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$), the A♭ major Ballade has the same pitches and coutour in contrasting themes. This indicates that the A♭ major Ballade is spared serious struggles, and the entire Ballade works in the same way that the secondary themes work in the G minor and F minor Ballades. Figure 117 illustrates how the turbulent A minor theme in the second Ballade is reinterpreted in the A♭ major Ballade.

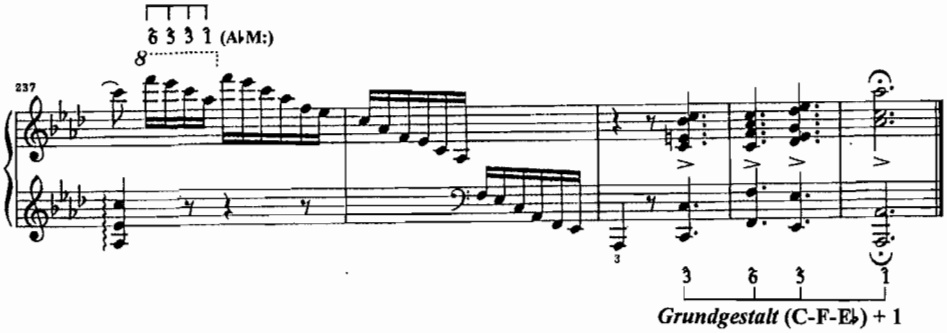
Oddly, the A♭ major Ballade is spared from the stress created by oppositional forces, but since the tonic of A♭ major is the minor third of F major, the plot of the

[1]Samson, *Four Ballades*, 16.

A. Theme II in the F major Ballade



B. The final descending arpeggiation in the A♭ major Ballade



C. Theme I in the F minor Ballade

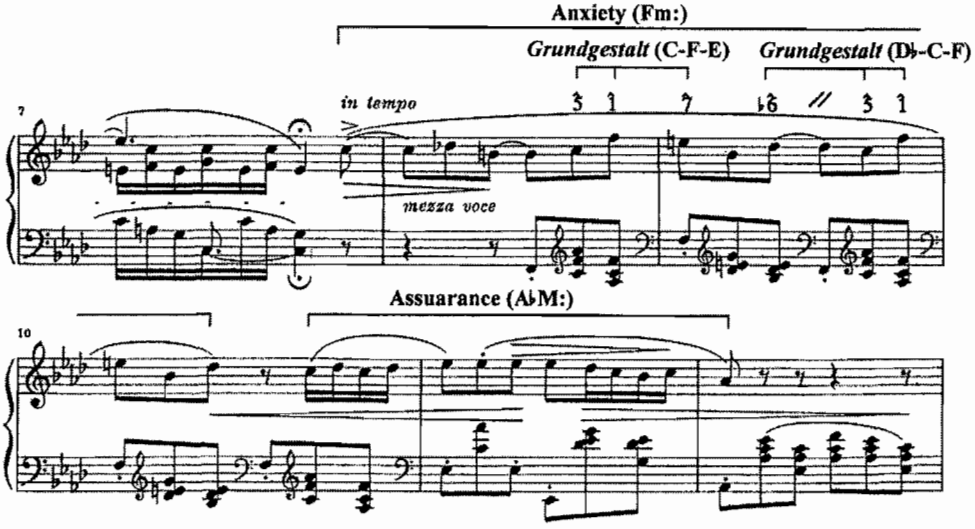
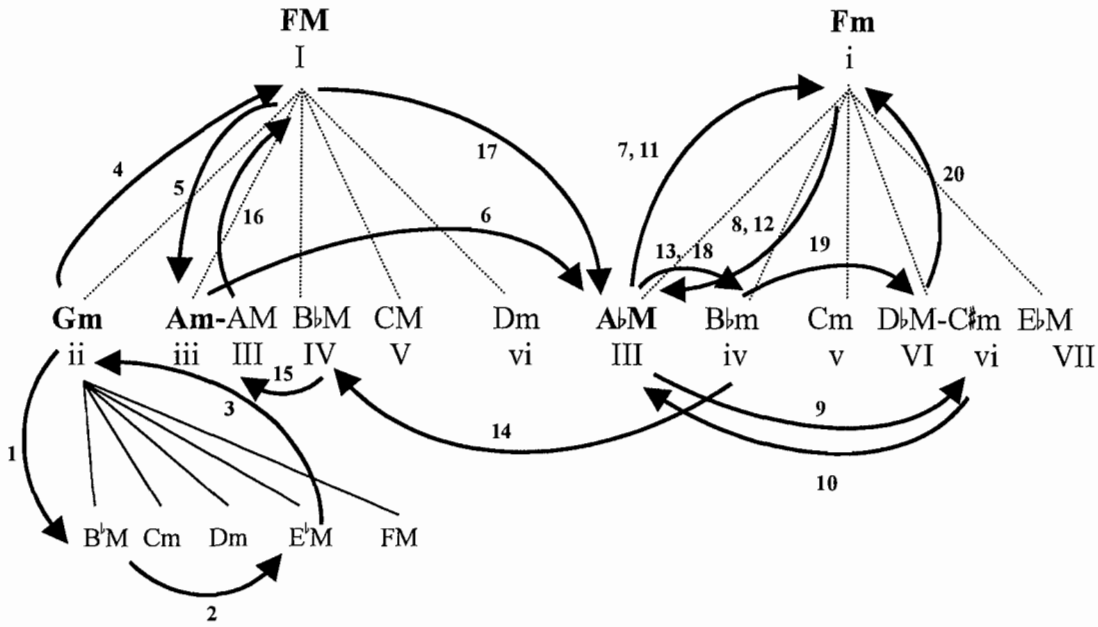


FIGURE 117. Perceptual connections linking the F major, A♭ major, and F minor Ballades.

Ballades is moving in the wrong direction. The *Grundgestalt* in the bass C-F-E♭ ($\hat{3}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$) in the A♭ major Ballade is altered to create a tragic Theme I in the F minor Ballade by reinterpreting the *Grundgestalt* in a minor context, and creating C-F-♮E ($\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$-$\hat{7}$) and Db-C-F (♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$). The culmination of energy in the dramatic ending of the F minor Ballade is large enough to conclude the four ballades, which are related by the *Grundgestalt*.

Although other elements contribute to the way in which Chopin's Ballades communicate with audiences—e.g., rhythm, tempo, dynamics, texture, etc.—this dissertation has focused on pitch organization and key scheme to investigate how the Ballades unfold their stories. It has also examined the specific compositional techniques Chopin applied to make these substantial instrumental works coherent when the sonata principle and other forms inherited from the previous era were beginning to dissolve. My analysis proves that there is a unifying device, the *Grundgestalt*, which creates both opposition and unity. This unifying device dictates both thematic development and tonal organization. The *Grundgestalt* not only governs each Ballade, but it connects all four Ballades with common elements. The tonality is essential to the Ballades because each key represents an important role or development of musical events, and the various stories of the Ballades unfold while the key areas interact with one another.

Figure 118 illustrates the simplified tonal discourse of the four Ballades on tonal pyramids. As shown in the tonal pyramids, the narrative of the Ballades continues throughout the entire cycle of the Ballades by means of a tonal discourse. There is a



***Arabic numerals represent the order of modulation.**

#1, #2, and #3: Modulations in the G minor Ballade, Op. 23 (Theme I in Gm:, Theme II-1 in EbM:/B♭M:, Themes II-2 and III in E♭M:.

#4: G minor Ballade followed by F major Ballade

#5: F major Ballade, Op 38 (Theme I in FM:, Theme II in Am:)

#6: F major Ballade followed by A♭ major Ballade

#7, #8, #9, and #10: A♭ major Ballade Op. 47 (Theme I in A♭M:, Theme II-1 in Fm:, Theme II-2 in C♯m.

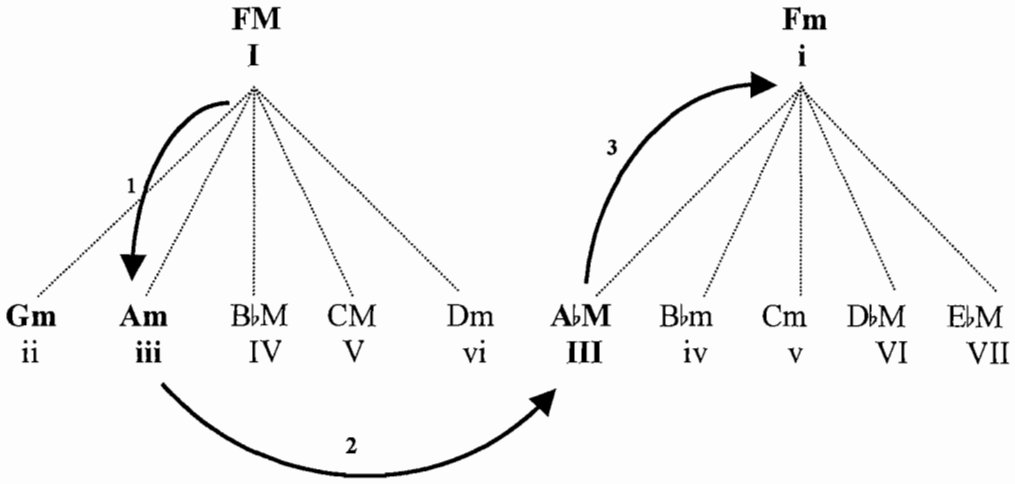
#11 A♭M Ballade followed by Fm Ballade.

#12-#20: Fm Ballade Op. 52 (Theme I in Fm:-A♭M-B♭m:, Theme II-1 in B♭M:, and Theme II-2 in D♭M:.

FIGURE 118. The tonal discourse in the four Ballades on tonal pyramids.

strong emphasis on the tonic F in the last three Ballades. The key of A minor in the second Ballade works as an antithesis to F major. The key of A♭ major becomes the

antithesis of A minor in the third Ballade, thereby enabling the major mode to regain its supremacy. In the F minor Ballade, however, A♭ major is assimilated into the minor context. The tonic F regains its supremacy, but in a minor context. I propose that the problem of the two-key scheme in the second Ballade, as focused upon in previous analyses, is solved when one perceives the second Ballade as a part of the entire cycle of Ballades. The tonal pyramids in Figure 119 display the simplified path from the F major to the F minor Ballade, and how Chopin exploited their mediant regions. The modulations in Figure 119 are directed by the functional *Grundgestalten* and their tonal cells. In other words, the tonal cells influence the direction of the harmonic structure and create a specific path in the plot.



FM: The first tonic of the second Ballade
Am: The second tonic of the second Ballade
A$^{\beta}$M: The tonic of the third Ballade
Fm: The tonic of the fourth Ballade

FIGURE 119. The exploitation of the mediant regions: Simplified tonal plan between the second and fourth Ballades.

Here is a literary analogy based on the development of "F" as a main character in the last three Ballade. In the F major Ballade, "F" is portrayed as an ideal, such as a beautiful pastorale, or innocent childhood, for which one longs. The assault against "F" by "Am" follows. At the end of the second Ballade, "F" surrenders with sorrow. Then "F" is gently steered to E♭ to find itself in a safe haven in the new major key of A♭. After the triumph of A♭ major, the F minor Ballade follows. As shown in my analysis of the F minor Ballade, there is a strong nostalgic feeling towards F major in the introduction. Instead, "D♭," ♭$\hat{6}$ of F minor, emerges in Theme I, and A♭ major is assimilated into the F minor context. While "D♭" is realized later as the second Theme II in a major context that is reminiscent of the pastorale, the destiny of "F" is determined when "D♭" functions as ♭$\hat{6}$ of the key of F minor. The ideal F major is never recovered, and the tragedy ends when the tonic of F minor is established at the end of the fourth Ballade.

Another significant issue in this piece is Chopin's employment of the octatonic scale in the 1830s. Since Arthur Berger published his article "Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky" in 1963,[2] scholars such as Richard Taruskin, Pieter van den Toorn, Dmitri Tymoczko, Wai-Ling Cheong, Allen Forte, and others have written extensively on this subject, mainly analyzing Russian composers' works from the end

[2]Arthur Berger, "Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky," *Perspectives of New Music* 2, no. 1 (1963): 11-42. Berger's discovery of the octatonic scale as an organizational tool of Stravinsky's compositions changed people's perception of Stravinsky's music.

of the nineteenth century and after. Some works of French composers—e.g., Debussy, Messiaen, and Ravel—have also been studied in this context.

As shown in Anatoly Leikin's dissertation and Roy Howat's article, Chopin is one of the composers who applied octatonic collections in his compositions. This indicates that employment of octatonic scales during the Romantic period occurred earlier than most of the octatonic compositions previously studied. Now I will summarize the application of the octatonic collections in Chopin's Ballades.

In the G minor Ballade, the ascending octatonic scale leads to Theme III in E♭ major, the pinnacle of the Ballade and the antithesis to Theme I in the key of G minor. Prior to the octatonic section, the tonality in the Theme II-1 area in the key of E major becomes increasingly unstable, and the octatonic section is used as a bridge to establish the key of E♭ major (see Figure 120).

Taruskin writes, "they [whole-tone scale and octatonic scale] were functional equivalents: both were outgrowths of mediant interval cycles, both first appeared as descending basses, both were originaly used as modulatory devices, and both, for Russian composers, were evocative of evil magic."[3]

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[3]Taruskin, 267. Taruskin also quotes Rimsky-Korsakov's autobiography *My Musical Life*, in which the composer describes the application of octatonics in his opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. "The introduction—picture of the calmly surging sea—contains the harmonic and modulatory basis of the beginning of Liszt's "*Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*" (modulation by a minor third downward). The beginning of the Allegro ¾, depicting Sadko's fall into the sea and his being dragged to the depth by the Sea King, is, in method, reminiscent of the moment where Lyudmila is spirited away by Chernomor in Act 1 of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. However, Glinka's scale, descending by whole tones, has been replaced by another descending scale of semitone, whole tone, semitone, whole tone—a scale which subsequently played an important part in many of my compositions." Taruskin, 266.

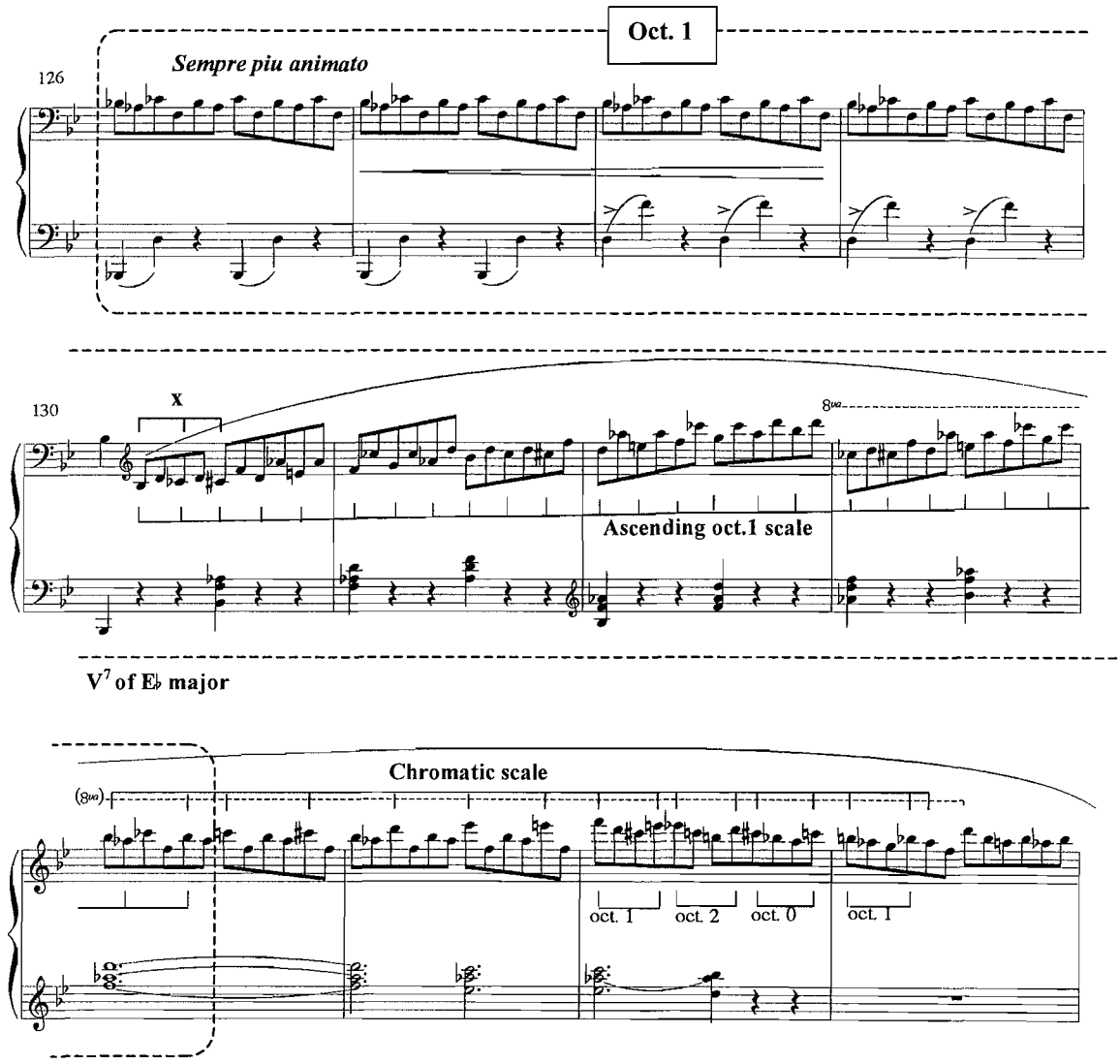

FIGURE 120. Chopin's application of the octatonic scale in the G minor Ballade.

I think there are some similarities between Chopin's application of the octatonic scale in the G minor Ballade and the above description by Taruskin. First, the octatonic scale enhances the modulation between E major and E♭ major, and analogously, it magically materializes Theme III as the complete antithesis to the G minor theme at the

height of the Ballade; E♭ is merely suggested at the introduction. Chopin applied the ascending octatonic 1 scale with crescendo and *animato*, which ascends energetically at dazzling speed to express excitement and emphasize Theme III. Figure 121 illustrates the tonal design and the role of the octatonic scale in the Ballade.

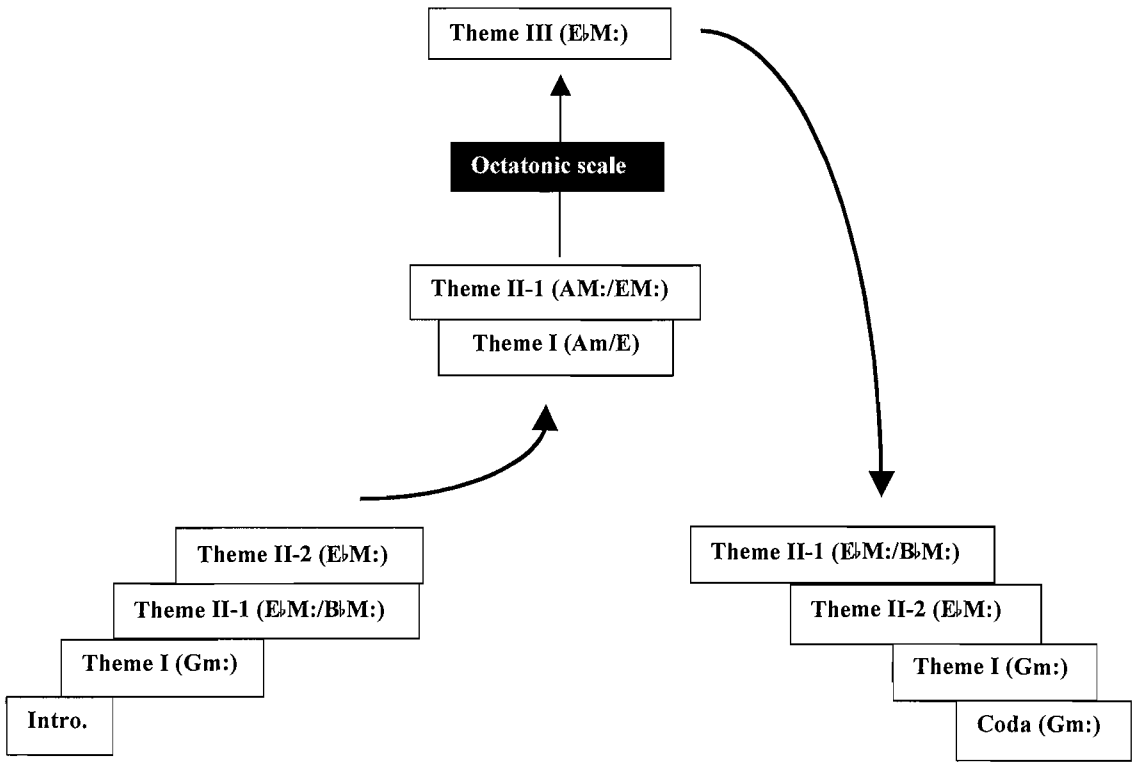

FIGURE 121. The thematic structure of the G minor Ballade and the octatonic scale.

According to Taruskin's study, however, there were various cases of octatonic segments employed in compositions even earlier in Western music history, including

some of the works of J. S. Bach.[4] Sylvia Kahan writes, "True octatonicism, defined by Taruskin, is identified as the supplanting of functions generated by movement within the circle of fifths by a rotation of thirds or by a tonally stable diminished harmony."[5] In other words, true octatonicism is achieved only by the bass line that moves via the cycle of minor thirds. Figure 122 is Taruskin's example of "true" octatonicism, as shown in Liszt's composition.

According to Taruskin, Liszt sketched his first symphonic poem, *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, in 1848. The above example shows a descending minor third connected by passing notes in the bass to support a succession of triads related by thirds. It completes an entire cycle in one octave from E♭ to E♭, creating a symmetrical functional rotation. This score is considered to be an historic innovation by Liszt because each node of the diminished 7th chord is harmonized.

Chopin's usage of octatonic scales is a "fortuitous" type, according to Taruskin's definition. However, Chopin's octatonic phrases often grow from a small subset to larger ones, and are often integrated into the development of the music. As

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[4]Ibid., 269. According to Taruskin, most early examples of octatonicism are melodically embellished diminished chords and are common in virtuoso keyboard music.

[5]Sylvia Kahan, "'Rien de la tonalite usuelle': Edmond de Polignac and the Octatonic Scale in Nineteenth-Century France," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 19, no. 2 (2005): 98.

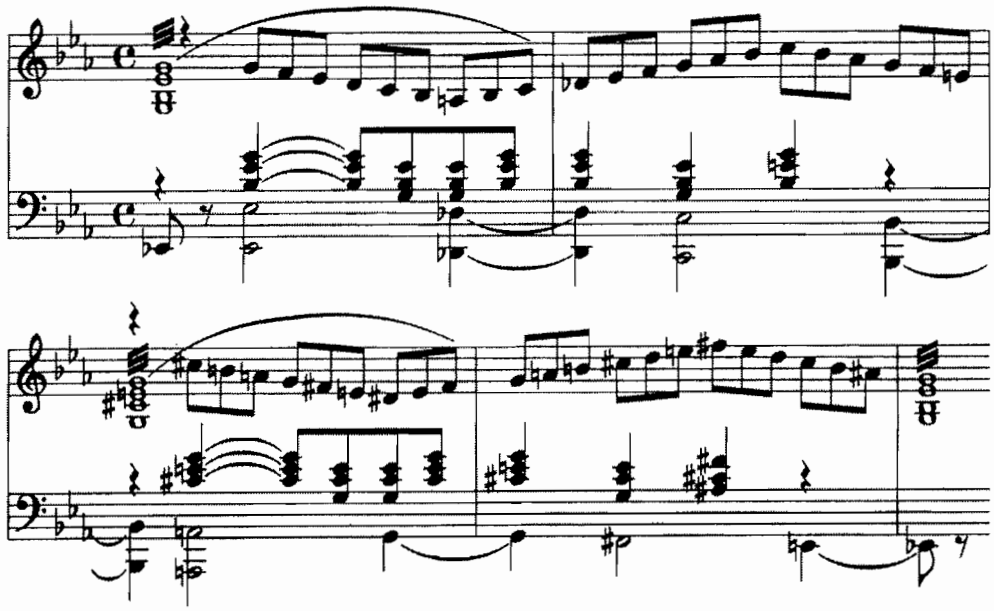


FIGURE 122. Taruskin's example of Liszt's octatonic application in *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, 16 before Y". Source: Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through Marva* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 267.

shown in my analysis of Chopin's G minor Ballade (see Figure 27), the three-note figure "D♭-C♭-B♭" created by a modal mixture in the secondary theme area starts growing in the development section and finally inclines into the full octatonic scale. The rapid octatonic passage leads to Theme III, which is a perfect antithesis in the key of E♭ major against the original G minor by the reinterpretation of the pitches in the *Grundgestalt*. Theme III appears only once—in the pinnacle of the Ballade, which indicates that the use of the octatonic scale may have some programmatic meaning.

In the case of the F major Ballade, a sizable octatonic passage is repeated twice between measures 107-110 and 132-135 in different keys. They are placed in the midst of the Ballade between the second pastoral theme in the key of F major and the

tempestuous *presto* theme in the key of A minor (see Figure 123). In this section, the pastoral theme undergoes an expansive thematic transformation. The major octatonic segment appears as an expanded ascending diminished chord each time, and becomes a bridge between two distant keys. The effect of the octatonic phrases and the segment of major scales surrounding the octatonic phrases is to avoid the direct conflict between F major and A minor in the middle of a battleground—a refuge from fierce combat. There is a motivic connection between the antecedent in Theme I in F major at the opening and in the octatonic section in the bass, which is marked "t."

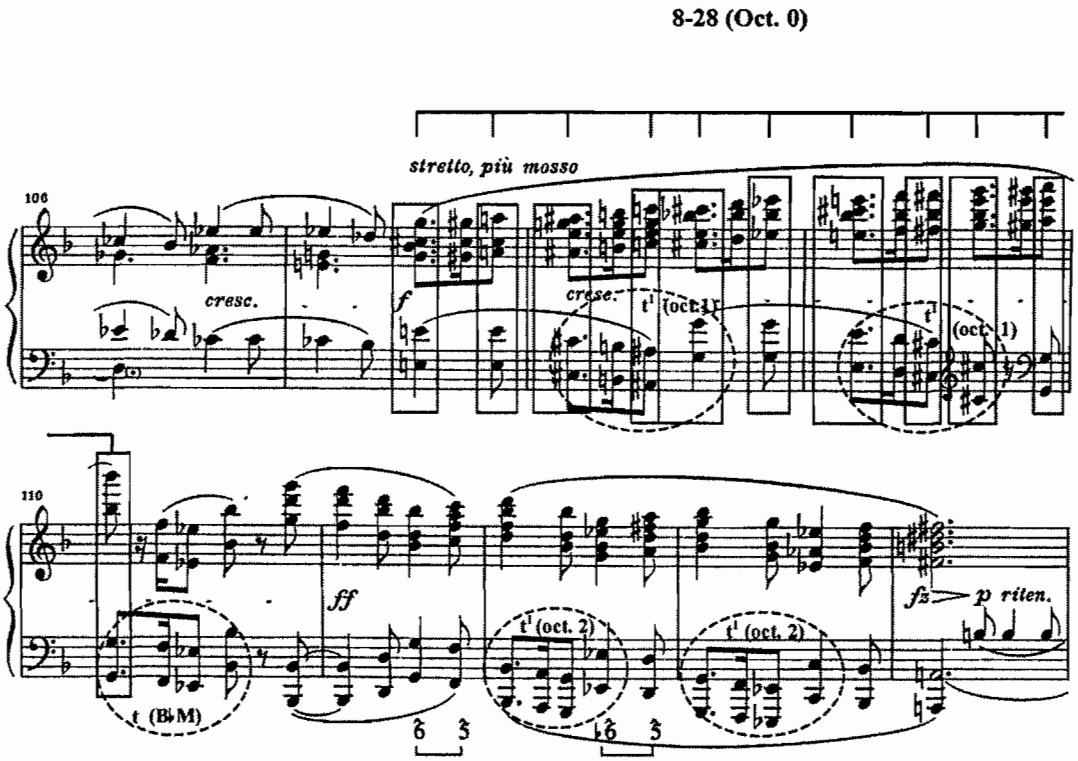


FIGURE 123. The octatonic ascending motion in the F major Ballade.

The placement of the octatonic scales in the F major Ballade is similar to the application of the G minor Ballade. They appear where the thematic transformation of Theme 1 occurs, and because of the tonal flexibility of the diminished chords they embellish, the new key areas are established. This becomes a safe haven from the direct conflict between F major and A minor. Figure 124 illustrates the tonal scheme of the F major Ballade and the appearances of the octatonic scales.

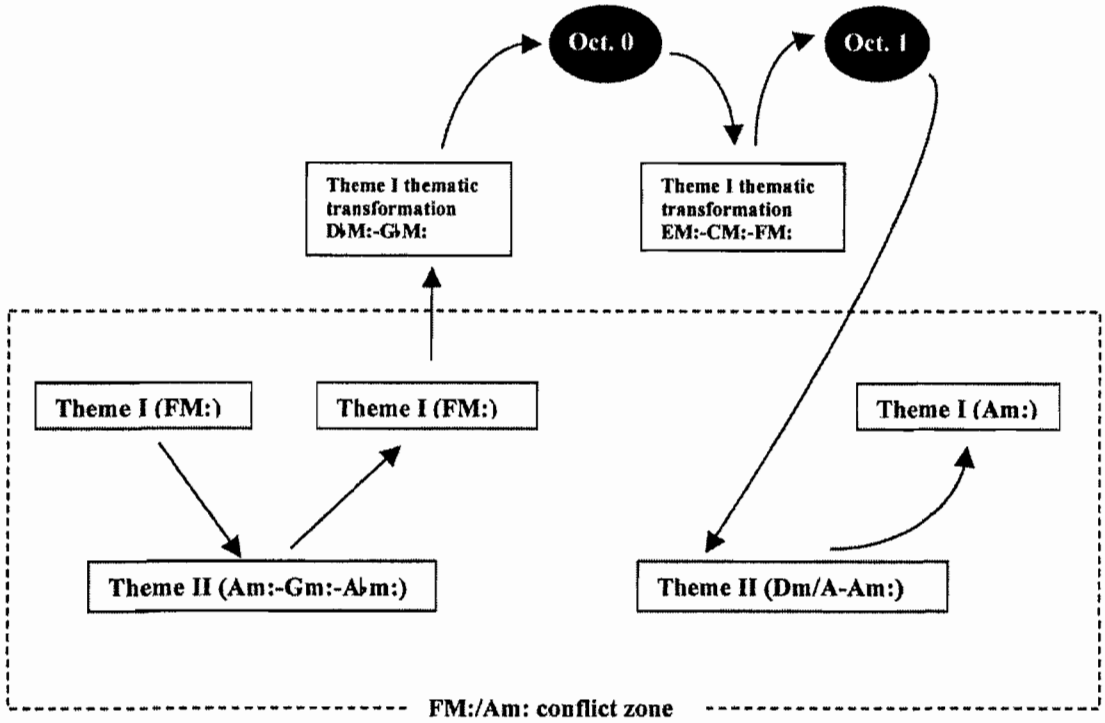


FIGURE 124. Octatonic passages and tonal scheme of the F major Ballade.

Chopin is more ambitious in the F minor Ballade. He employed octatonic subsets to gradually develop a sense of tension between major and minor modes

throughout the piece by juxtaposing major/minor thirds (e.g. F-A and F-A♭) that are a property of the octatonic scale (see Figure 125). This conflict is developed gradually

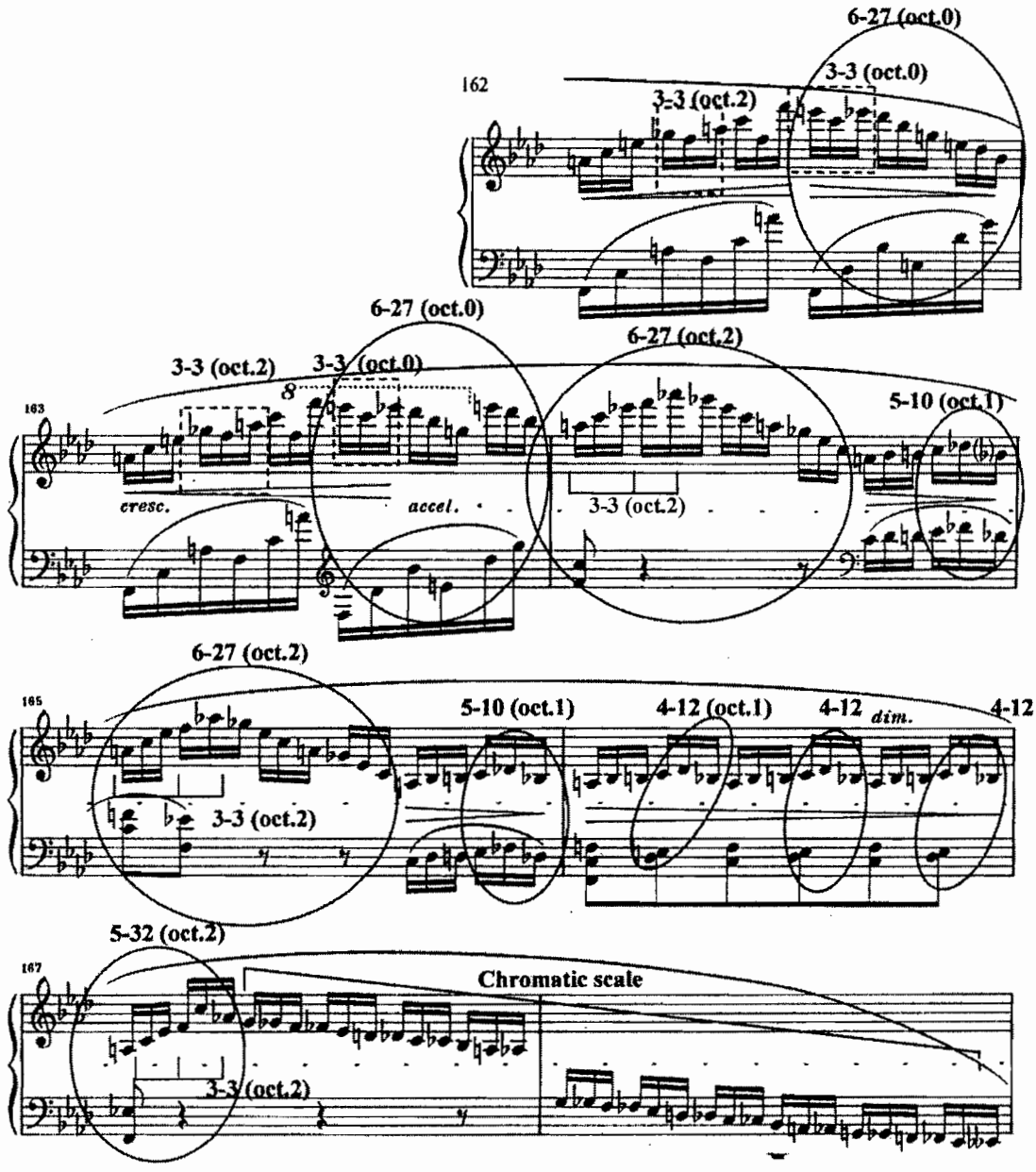


FIGURE 125. Prolongation of the F major chord and the confrontation between major and minor in 3-3's.

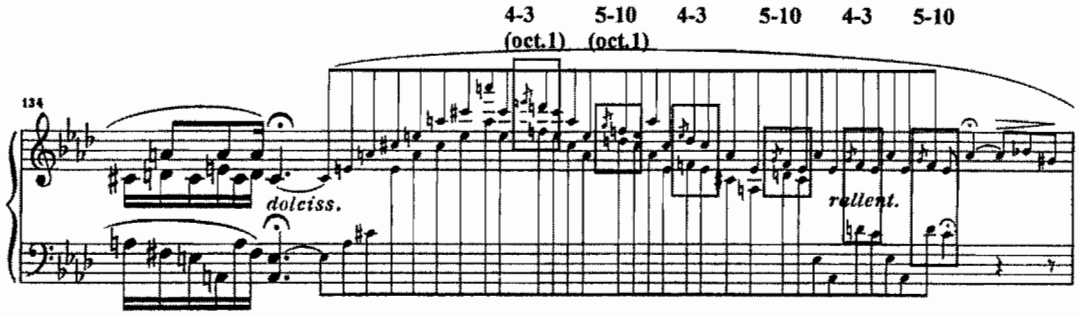
through the octatonic subset 3-3 in the Theme I area in the key of F minor. The final catastrophic crash is in the substantial coda where the key of F minor declares its victory.

Other important octatonic sets are found at the end of the second introduction and at the beginning of the "recapitulation" (see Figure126). The cadenza-like arpeggiation at the end of the second introduction has a major/minor modal mixture, and the octatonic subsets 4-3 and 5-10 create tonal ambiguity as well as a magical effect. The following Theme I area begins as a canon where the subset 3-3 creates further tonal instability and emphasizes the key of F major suggested in the first introduction.

The largest octatonic subset is placed in the coda at the decisive moment in order to portray the fierce battle between F major and F minor, in which the minor mode declares its victory; Chopin takes advantage of the octatonic subset 3-3, which can juxtapose major/minor thirds to create tension between the key of F major suggested in the introduction and the key of F minor in Theme I (see Figure 127).

The above observations suggest that the octatonic segments in Chopin's Ballades often have some programmatic meaning (such as a magical or supernatural being or event), and by prolonging the chromatic chord(s) with melodic elaboration, they create special effects where other diatonic scales alone could not generate them. This happens when the octatonic subsets are placed in the transitional sections before the important themes or key regions, leading to their unexpected appearances. The

The end of the second introduction



The beginning of Theme I area in the "recapitulation"

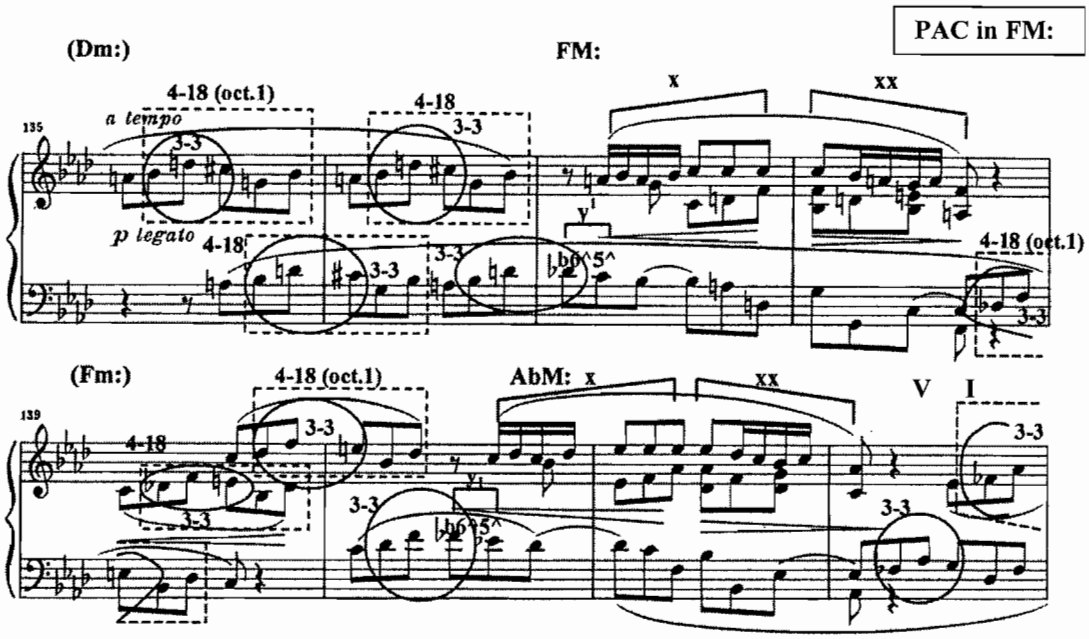


FIGURE 126. End of the second introduction and the beginning of the "recapitulation": "Magically" bringing out the key of F major.

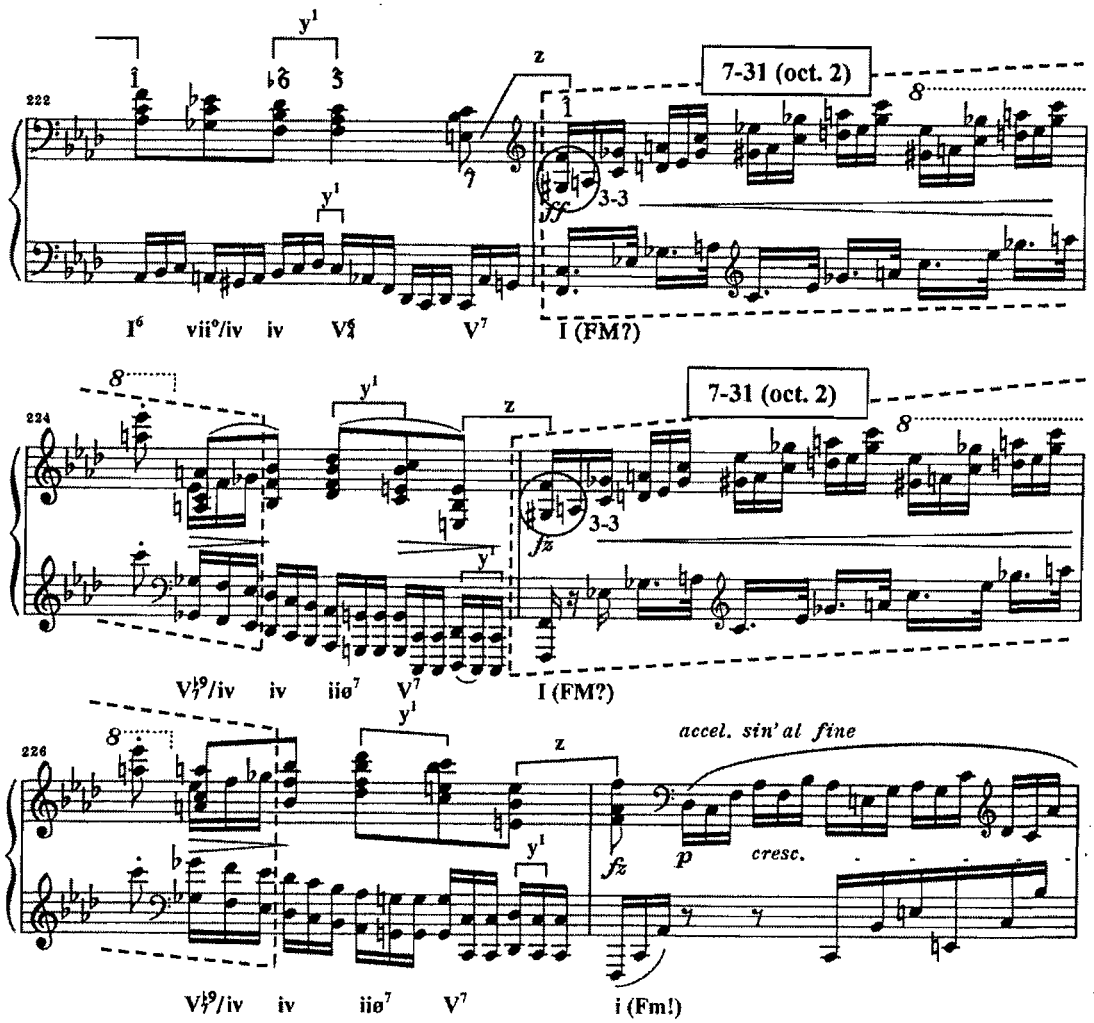


FIGURE 127. Octatonic subsets expressing the major-minor conflict in the coda.

octatonic scale also stands out where there are sharp oppositions between two tonal areas by major/minor thirds. Thus, the octatonic scale can either expand these oppositional forces through its unique pitch properties or by providing a haven wherein tonal conflicts in the diatonic context are avoided.

Paul Badura-Skoda quotes Schumann's remark at the beginning of his article "Chopin's Influence": "Chopin's works are guns buried in flowers."[6] Badura-Scoda himself writes,

> Indeed, Chopin is a truly revolutionary composer. The "gunpowder" of his bold innovations had the most far-reaching result on the development of music up to the twentieth century. Yet at the same time he used his new musical language with such a classical restraint, with such a unique sense for balance of form and expression and with such a grace that the "guns" became invisible and many of his most original inventions could pass unnoticed by the general public.[7]

I have attempted to expound upon some of Chopin's most innovative musical ideas as expressed in his Ballades. The narrative of the Ballades unfolds through the character of the themes and transitions, and the plots of the Ballades are determined by their key schemes. The *Grundgestalten* are the sources of the themes and help to determine the tonal discourses of the Ballades. The overall feeling of unity created by the *Grundgestalten* spans not only throughout each Ballade, but also over the four Ballades as a complete cycle. Although they are subtle, the octatonic subsets produce colors, contribute to the narrative of the Ballades, and are smoothly integrated within Chopin's elegant style of writing.

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[6]Paul Badura-Skoda, "Chopin's Influence," in *The Chopin Companion: Profiles of the Man and the Musician*, ed. Alan Walker (New York: Barrie & Rockliff, 1966), 258.

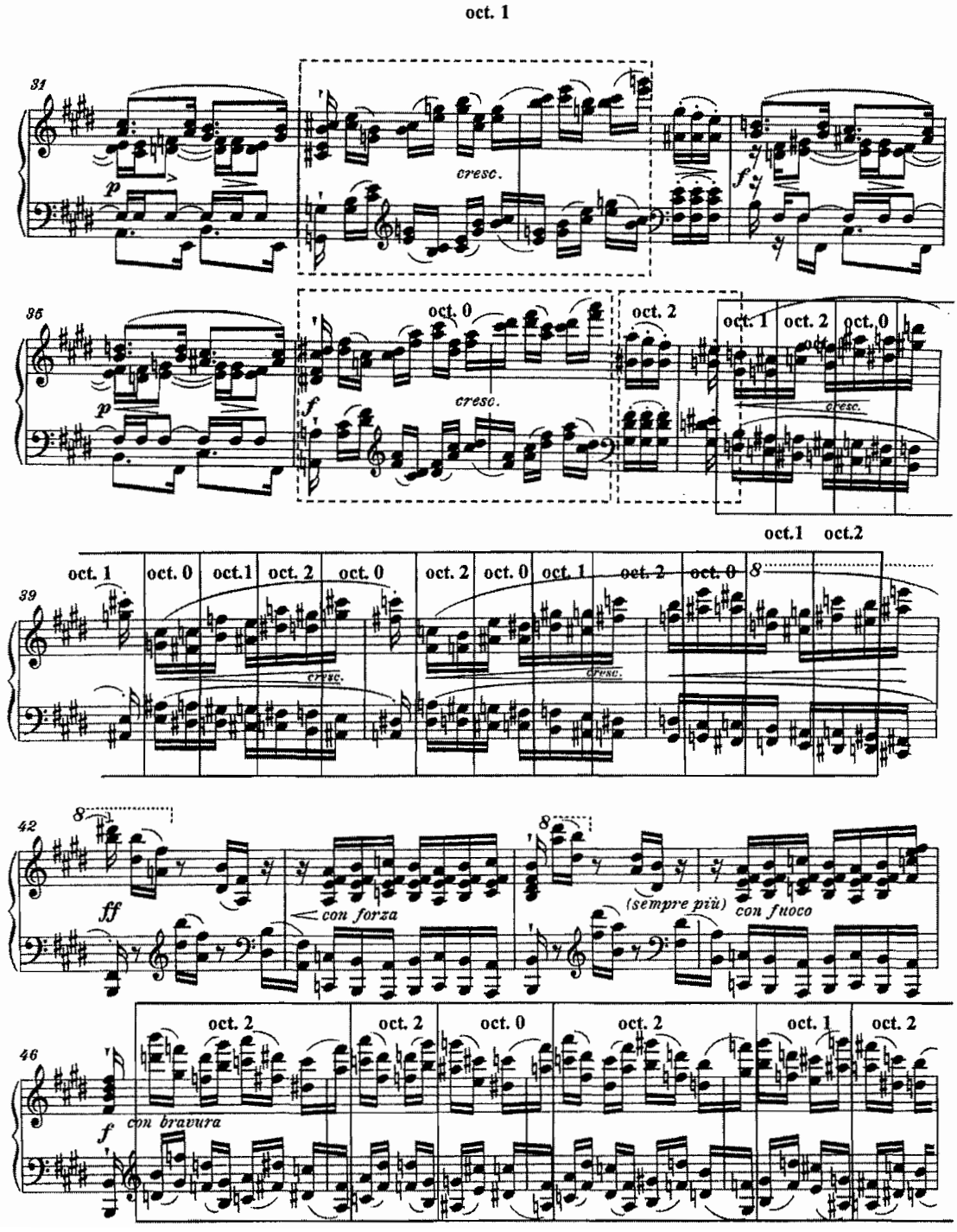
[7]Ibid.

APPENDIX

OCTATONIC REGIONS IN OTHER REPERTOIRE BY CHOPIN

Below is an example of Chopin's use of octatonic sets in other repertoire. Op. 10 #3, the Etude in E major, has an extensive octatonic section in the middle, which makes a striking contrast with the lyrical tonal section in E major (see Figure 91). The entire middle section is a succession of diminished 7th chords in which the combination of two different diminished 7th chords creates the full octatonic scale 8-28. The chromatic motion of the octatonic region is seamlessly connected to the tonally oriented sections in this composition from Chopin's early period.

Octatonic regions in Etude Op. 10 #3 (measures 31-57)



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