



MTO 26.2 Examples: Ofcarcik, Multi-Strand Musical Narratives: An Introduction

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ofcarcik.html>

Example 1. Beethoven, Piano Sonata in A-flat major, op. 110, finale, form

Formal Section	Location (mm.)	Key(s)
Introduction	1–8	Begins in B \flat minor although tonally unstable
Aria 1	9–24	A \flat minor \rightarrow C \flat major—A \flat minor
Aria Codetta 1*	25–26a	
Fugue 1	26b–113a	Begins in A \flat major
Aria 2	113b–131	G minor \rightarrow B \flat major \rightarrow G minor
Aria Codetta 2	132–136a	
Fugue 2	136b–213	G major \rightarrow A \flat major

* Each aria is followed by extensive closing material. These sections are long enough that I have given them their own rows on the table even though they will be discussed with the aria sections.

Example 2. Aria 1 (*Arioso*), mm. 9–12, melody of the first phrase



Example 3. Measures 13–16; circles show scalar ascent



Example 4. Aria 1 (*Arioso*), mm. 21–24, melody of final phrase



Example 5. Comparison of scalar ascents in the Aria sections (scalar ascents are circled in green)

Example 5.1. Measures 13–16



Example 5.2. Analogous location in Aria 2, mm. 120–123



Example 6. Aria 2, metric dissolution at the end

Melody struggles to ascend

Harmonic rhythm creates metric conflict

Melodic fragmentation

Melody closes in original octave

Attacks avoid the beat

The musical score is written for piano in 12/8 time. It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows a melody in the right hand that struggles to ascend, with harmonic rhythm creating metric conflict, and melodic fragmentation. The second system shows the melody closing in the original octave, with attacks avoiding the beat. The third system shows the melody continuing with a crescendo and a final measure marked with a circled 135.

Example 7. Booker's (2006) seven plot types

Plot Type	Summary
Overcoming the Monster	A hero is "called to face and overcome a terrible and deadly personification of evil" (48)
Rags to Riches	"The journey of a human being from unformed childhood to a final state of complete personal maturity" (63)
The Quest	"The pull of the hero towards some distant, all-important goal" (83)
Voyage and Return	Involves "the hero or heroine being abruptly transported out of their 'normal' world into an abnormal world, and eventually back to where they began" (105)
Comedy	A community of some kind becomes estranged, possibly due to an external force, creating a "nightmarish tangle" that is suddenly (even "miraculously") sorted out and the community begins to function happily again (150)
Tragedy	"The hero or heroine [becomes] separated from other people," often by death (177)
Rebirth	The hero or heroine is liberated from a dark force (205)

Example 8. Chart of the tragedy plot

Plot Event	Location	Booker Description	Musical Description
Anticipation Stage	Intro, mm. 7–8 * All quotes in this table from Booker 2006: 156	"The hero is in some way incomplete or unfulfilled ... the object of desire or course of action presents itself, and his energies have found a focus. "*	Incompletion and lack of fulfillment expressed through harmonic instability of the introduction. The protagonist finds a focus when the E \flat (5) pedal emerges in m. 7.
Dream Stage	Aria 1, mm. 9–16	"He becomes in some way committed to his course of action ... and for a while things go almost improbably well "	Commitment signaled by cadence in A \flat minor. Things take an "improbably positive" turn at the modulation to C \flat confirmed by PAC in m. 16. This turn to the relative major is accompanied by a soaring melody that reaches into the upper registers of the piano.
Frustration Stage	Aria 1, mm. 17–26	"Almost imperceptibly things begin to go wrong. The hero cannot find a point of rest. ... [the hero] may feel compelled to further 'dark acts' "	The phrase structure restarts, with the same HC in A \flat minor. But this time the turn to C \flat is thwarted and the second phrase remains in A \flat minor. Further, the ends on the same pitch on which this phrase began. After the tragic PAC in m. 24 the texture is stripped down and a brief passage confirms A \flat minor in a very low register.
Nightmare Stage	Aria 2, mm. 116–123	"Things are now slipping seriously out of the hero's control. He has a mounting sense of threat and despair. Forces of opposition and fate are closing in on him. "	Key has "slipped" down to G minor, a half step lower than the home key. This is a tragic move downward, signaling the protagonist's sliding towards doom. The melody is more emotional, with embellishments and an increase in syncopation. A turn to the relative major occurs but it is imperfect compared to the one in the first aria: here the melody attempts an ascent but it breaks off abruptly into a precipitous fall in m. 122 and the phrase closes two octaves below the goal pitch.
Destruction or Death Wish Stage	Aria 2, mm. 124–131	"Either by the forces he has aroused against him, or by some final act of violence ... the hero is destroyed. "	Second phrase structure begins but the melody becomes continually fragmented, eventually limping to a close in m. 131. This close is in G minor and the melody ends a half step lower in pitch space compared to its ending in the first aria. In addition to the "limping" melody, the harmonic rhythm becomes unmoored from the meter in mm. 129–131, creating a further sense of dissolution.

Example 9. Beethoven, op. 110, fugue subject (mm. 26–30)

Allegro ma non troppo.

Example 10. Fugue 1, dominant arrivals at end, with enharmonic resolution into G minor

Dominant pedal

Return of theme, but in E_b

Dominant pedal resumes

L'istesso tempo di Arioso.

Arrival 6/4!

$A^b: V^7$
 $g: Ger^{+6}$

Example 11. Fugue 2, subject (mm. 136–140)

Nach und nach wieder auflebend.

sempre una corda
L'inversione della Fuga. (Die Umkehrung)

Example 12. Return of the subject in the rectus form and in A \flat major with sixteenth-note accompaniment, mm. 173–178

più moto
wieder geschwinder

f m.d.
Fugue subject returns

Example 13. Closing rhetoric in mm. 209–213

ff
210
213

Example 14. Chart of the quest plot

Plot Event	Location	Booker Description	Musical Description
The Call	Intro, mm. 6–7	“Life in some ‘City of Destruction’ has become oppressive and intolerable; hero is given supernatural or visionary direction as to the distant, life-renewing goal he must aim for.”*	Movement begins with tonal and rhythmic instability, an untenable situation. Protagonist receives direction from end of recitative that foreshadows motivic elements of fugue subject, as well as key of fugue.
The Journey	Fugue 1, mm. 26b–105	Hero encounters “a series of life-threatening ordeals ... each ends with a ‘thrilling escape’, and the ordeals alternate with periods of respite”	Protagonist sets out on journey through fugue; primary complication is episode that emphasizes C minor, beginning m. 66
Arrival and Frustration	Fugue 1, mm. 106–114	“The hero arrives within sight of his goal [but] on the edge of the goal, he sees a new and terrible series of obstacles looming up between him and his prize”	Protagonist arrives at strong dominant but motion to tonic is thwarted multiple times; eventually V resolves enharmonically as Ger ⁺⁶ in G minor
The Final Ordeals	Fugue 2, mm. 136b–212	“The hero has to undergo a last series of tests ... This culminates in a last great battle or ordeal which may be the most threatening of all.”	Protagonist faces three final ordeals: inverted subject must be rectified; wrong key must be corrected; irregular rhythms must be regularized
The Goal	Fugue 2, m. 213	“After a last ‘thrilling escape from death’, the kingdom, the ‘Princess’ or the life-transforming treasure are finally won: with an assurance of renewed life stretching indefinitely into the future.”	Tonic arrival with $\hat{1}$ over I, on strong beat, after dramatic ascent

* All quotes in this table from Booker 2006, 83.

Example 15. Beethoven, String Quartet, op. 130, “Cavatina,” form, mm. 1–39

Formal Section	Location (mm.)	Key
A	1–9 (A)	E \flat
B	11–22	Tonicizes cm (vi), ends on V/E \flat
C C'	23–31 32–39	E \flat

Example 16. Beethoven, String Quartet, op. 130, “Cavatina,” narrative events in mm. 1–39

Measures 1–9	Agent uses head motive to reach covering tone of high $\hat{2}$ but falls back down
mm. 10–17	Agent tries new path to reach $\hat{3}$ but this attempt fails and results in modulation to vi
mm. 17–22	$\flat\hat{3}$ achieved—right scale degree, wrong inflection
mm. 23–30 and mm. 32–39	Agent abandons head motive, this new motive successfully leads to diatonic $\hat{3}$ on third attempt.

Example 17. Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C minor, op. 67, II. *Andante con moto*, form chart

Formal Section	Location (mm.)
A Theme	1–22
B Theme	23–49
A Var. 1	50–71
B Var. 1	72–98
A Var. 2	99–123
Episode 1	124–147
B Var. 2	148–166
A Var. 3	167–176
Episode 2	177–184
A Var. 4	185–204
Coda	204–247