



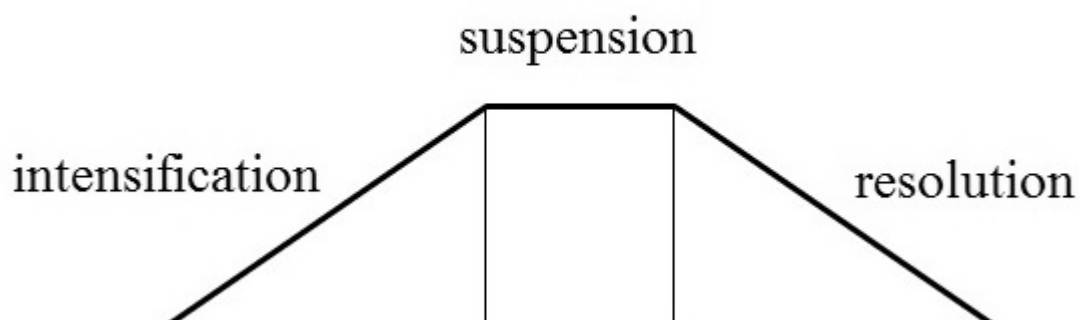
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MTO 28.2 Examples: Lee, Rotational Principle as Teleological Genesis in the “Annunciation of Death” Scene from Wagner’s *Die Walküre*

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

<https://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.22.28.2/mto.22.28.2.lee.html>

Example 1. Dramatic structure as *ABA'* form



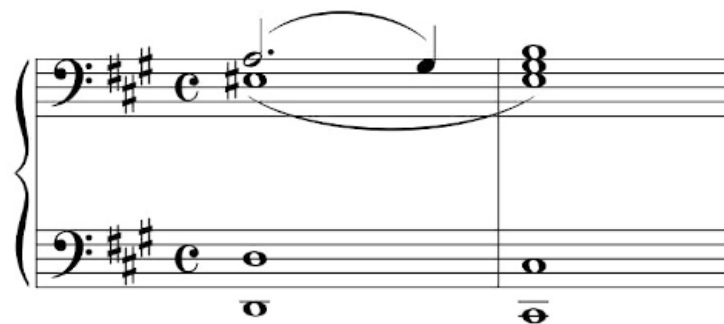
Example 2. Three-part structure of the Annunciation of Death scene

Three-part structure	Formal division	Rotational function based on leitmotifs		Narrative mastery	Tension trajectory
A: Stage 1 (152/4–159/1/1)	Prologue + Rotations 1–6 + epilogue	Each rotation consists of Siegmund's Question motive paired with Brünnhilde's divinity-related motive(s).		Brünnhilde	Intensification
B: Stage 2 (159/1/2–164/1)	Section 1	<i>a b a'</i>	Suspension of rotational operation	Stalemate	Suspension/stalemate
	Section 2	Dialogue in recitative texture	Absence of the Question motive		
	Section 3	Siegmund's declamation			
A': Stage 3 (164/2/1–172/4)	Prologue + Rotations 7–10, including orchestral postlude and scenic change; telos proper in R10	Each rotation starts with the Question motive, followed by the Freia or the Love motive; the Question motive is carried by Siegmund first, then by (or accompanying) Brünnhilde.		Siegmund	Resolution

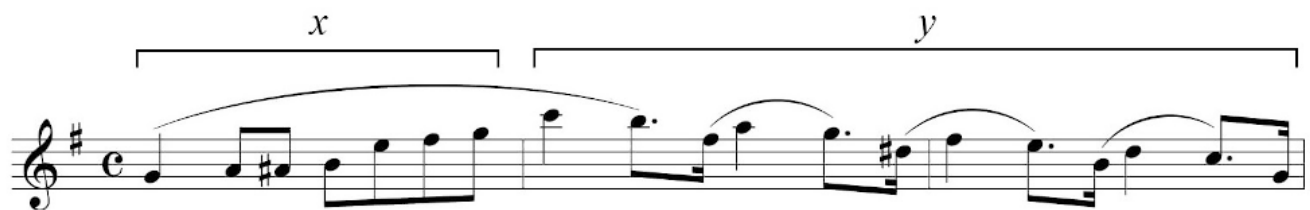
Example 3a. Question motive



Example 3b. Fate motive



Example 4. Freia motive consisting of x and y (mm. 1–4 correspond to y in the Freia motive; z is new material)



Example 5. Love motive, from the Freia motive Motivic abbreviations: F=Fate; Q=Question; V=Valhalla; W=Walküre; L=Love



Example 6. Analysis of Stage 1 (152/4–159/1/1) Motivic abbreviations: F=Fate; Q=Question; L=Love

Section	Measures	Motivic module (Siegmund // Brünnhilde)	Dramatic action
Prologue (<i>aa' b</i> form)	152/4–154/1/2	<i>a</i> : F F Q <i>a'</i> : F F Q <i>b</i> : V F F	Brünnhilde appears onstage and awakens Siegmund.
Rotation 1	154/1/3–154/4/4	Q (V7/Bm) // F F V (IAC in Db)	S : asks Brünnhilde's identity. B : states her divine duty as a messenger.
Transition	154/4/5–155/2/3	n/a	n/a
Rotation 2	155/2/4–155/4/4	Q // V (IAC in E)	S : asks where she leads him. B : talks up the afterlife in Valhalla.
Rotation 3	155/4/5–156/2	Q (V/F) // V W (PAC in D)	S : asks whether he will see Wotan alone there. B : answers that other heroes will welcome him.
Rotation 4	156/3–156/4/2	Q (V7/E) // V (PAC in C)	S : asks whether he will see his father. B : says yes.
Rotation 5	156/4/3–157/3/3	Q (V7/D) // V W (PAC in Ab)	S : asks whether a woman greet him. B : answers that Wotan's daughters will wait for him.
Transition	157/3/4–157/5/4	n/a	S : asks for a final question to be answered
Rotation 6	157/5/5–158/3/1	Q (V7/Bm, then V7/E) // no motive (PAC in Ebm)	S : asks whether he will be with Sieglinde. B : says no.
Epilogue	158/3/1–159/1/1	L V	Siegmund summarizes Brünnhilde's statements.

Example 7. Analysis of Stage 2 (159/1/2–164/1)

Section	Measures	Leitmotivic module	Dramatic action
Sec. 1 (<i>aba'</i>)	159/1/2–160/4/3	<i>a</i> (159/1/2–159/3) : F F Q	Siegmund declares that he will not follow Brünnhilde to Valhalla; Brünnhilde repeats his inescapable fate.
		<i>b</i> (159/4–160/2/2): L F F (evaded cadence in C#m)	
		<i>a'</i> (160/2/3–160/4/3): F F Q (PAC in Cm)	
Sec. 2	160/4/4–162/3	Fate motive prevalent; Nothing motive appears at the end.	Siegmund asks who will defeat him, and whether Brünnhilde knows of his sword; she reveals that the magic on the sword has been removed by its creator.
Sec. 3	162/4–164/1	Only Siegmund sings; the Love motive appears at the beginning and the Freia motive at the end—both distorted.	Siegmund decries the forces against him and Sieglinde; declares again that he will not go alone to Valhalla, but to hell.

Example 8. Love motive, distorted (m. 1 corresponds to x in the original form; mm. 2–3 to y)



Example 9. Freia motive, distorted Motivic abbreviations: F=Fate; Fr=Freia; Q=Question;
L=Love; SW=Sword



Example 10. Analysis of Stage 3 (164/2/1–172/4)

Section	Measures	Motivic module (Brünnhilde // Siegmund)	Dramatic action
Prologue	164/2/1–164/4	F F Fr (V7/F#m)	B: asks whether Sieglinde means everything to Siegmund.
Rotation 7	165/1–166/3/2	Q Fr Q Fr (evaded cadence in E, then V/Am)	S: admonishes Brünnhilde as cold and merciless.
Rotation 8	166/3–167/2	Q (evaded cadence in D) // Fr	B: suggests that she guide Sieglinde. S: rejects the offer.
Rotation 9	167/3–168/4/2	Q L (V/Am) // Fr SW	B: suggests that she guide Sieglinde and unborn baby. S: rejects the offer again, and attempts to kill Sieglinde and himself.
Rotation 10 (Telos)	168/4/3–172/4	Q Fr Then F and L during scenic change	B: declares that Siegmund and Sieglinde shall live, together; promises Siegmund victory in the battle.

Example 11. Analysis of Rotation 7 (165/1/1–166/2/4)

Section	Motivic module	Musical features
165/1/1–165/2/1	Question (2+2 mm.)	F# minor; consists of a two-measure diminution of the Question motive (Variant 1), and a two-measure extension (Variant 2) resembling the Glance motive
165/2/2–165/3/2	Freia (2+2 mm.)	Motivic diminution and its sequential repetition
165/3/3–165/4/3	Question (2+2 mm.)	B minor; sequential repetition of the first four measures
166/1/1–166/1/2	Freia (1+1 mm.)	Motivic truncation to ascending scalar figure only
166/1/3–166/2/2.1	Siegmund's cadential attempt	Attempts cadence in E minor; evaded by the premature Freia motive
166/2/2–166/2/4	Freia (3 mm.)	Full motivic statement; anacrusis to the next rotation

Example 12. Rotation 10 (168/4/3–172/4)

BRÜNNH.

R10. a section
rl

Halt' ein! Wäl - sung!

nimm sie mit ei - nem Streich!

f *cresc.* *ff* *ff* *molto acceler.*

4

Hö - re mein

embellished Var. 2

sempre ff Var. 3

Var. 2

7

Wort! Sieg - lin - de le - - be,

inversion of FR's x

più f

10 **BRÜNNH.** *r2*

und Sieg - - - mund

Sehr lebhaft. Var. 4

ff *p* *molto cresc.*

3

3

3

13 *r3*

le - be mit ihr!

inversion of FR's x

ff *p* *p*

3

3

3

3

*V*₄⁷

16 *r4*

Be - schlos - sen ist's;

inversion of FR's x

molto cresc. *ff* *dim.* *mf* *molto cresc.*

3

3

3

3

19

das Schlacht - loos wend' ich: dir, - - -

f *dim.* *p* *cresc.*

3

3

3

3

22

BRÜNNH.

Sieg - mund, schaff' ich Se - gen

from the first four notes of Var. 4

più cresc.

FR's x

A: V4

b section: declamatory singing in recitative texture

25

und Sieg! Hörst du den Ruf?

ff

p

cresc.

V7

29

Nun rüs - te dich, Held! Trau - e dem Schwert, und schwing' es ge - trost: treu

f

p

cresc.

33

hält dir die Wehr, wie die Wal - kü - re treu dich

f

p

38 **BRÜNNH.**

schützt! — Leb' wohl, Sieg - mund, se - lig - ster

FR's x y x y y

p fp *stringendo* *cresc.*

41 **a' section**
r5

Held! Auf der Wal - statt seh' ich dich wie - der!

FR's x Var. 4

f *mf* *f con fuoco*

A: V₄ (ii⁶) V⁷

45

sempre f embellished Var. 2

48

più f inversion of FR's x

51 *ff* *r6* Var. 4 FR's y

*V*₄

54 *f* *r7* Var. 4

57 *ff* embellished Var. 2

60 *ff* FR's y *V*₄

63 *dim.* *p* embellished Var. 2 *V*₇ *V*₄

66

cresc.

dim.

69

FR's y

Fate

p dolce

più p

p

73

Fate

Love's z

p sf

pp

pp

più p

Example 13. Analysis of Rotation 10 (168/4/3–172/4) Motivic abbreviations: Q=Question; Fr=Freia; F=Fate; L=Love

Section		Motivic module	Musical features
Sec. <i>a</i>	<i>r</i> 1 (168/4/3–169/2/2; mm. 3–10 in Example 6)	Q (Var. 4, 2, 3), Fr (inversion of <i>x</i>)	<i>Molto accelerando</i> ; extreme alteration of the Question motive
	<i>r</i> 2 (169/2/3–169/3/2; mm. 11–14)	Q (Var. 4), Fr (inversion of <i>x</i>)	<i>Sehr lebhaft</i> ; starts with cadential 6/4 in F# major
	<i>r</i> 3 (169/3/3–169/4/1; mm. 15–17)	Q (Var. 4), Fr (inversion of <i>x</i>)	From <i>piano</i> to <i>fortissimo</i> ; unstable key
	<i>r</i> 4 (169/4/2–170/2/1; mm. 18–25)	Q (Var. 4), Fr (<i>x</i>)	Ends with V7/A
Sec. <i>b</i>	170/2/2–171/1/3; mm. 26–43	Absence of motivic play at the beginning, then FR at 170/4/4 (m. 38)	Declamatory singing in recitative texture; ends with cadential 6/4 to V7 in A major.
Sec. <i>a'</i>	<i>r</i> 5 (171/1/4–171/3/1; mm. 44–50)	Q (Var. 4, 2), Fr (inversion of <i>x</i>)	Start of the orchestral postlude in A major, but without the tonic confirmation
	<i>r</i> 6 (171/3/2–171/4/1; mm. 51–54)	Q (Var. 4), Fr (<i>y</i>)	Starts with cadential 6/4, but has no resolution.
	<i>r</i> 7 (171/4/2–172/4; mm. 55–78)	Q (Var. 4, 2), Fr (<i>y</i>); then F and L (<i>z</i>) during the scenic change	No cadential confirmation via PAC; smooth transition to Act 2 Scene 5