Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58: Late Style, Formal Ambiguity, and Performance Considerations

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Graduate Department of Music
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, is the largest solo work of his late period. Chopin’s successful combination of the Classical and the Romantic aesthetic, which is explored in Chapter 1, results in an effective balancing of structural integrity and emotional fulfillment. Every movement of Op. 58 possesses qualities of movements in a traditional sonata cycle; however, the tendency to blend structural elements, the expansion of thematic material, and the postponement of climaxes contribute to Chopin’s distinctive treatment of the sonata genre.

The issue of late style in Chopin’s output has recently garnered considerable attention. Most writers focus on particular compositional techniques such as the blending of musical genres and the increasing importance of counterpoint and chromaticism. New expressive elements include manifestations of a dandified aesthetic as well as emotional lassitude. These discussions are primarily related to works in Chopin’s original genres, neglecting somewhat the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58. The second chapter of this dissertation examines the elements of Chopin’s late style present in Op. 58, emphasizing the sonata’s first three movements. These aspects of late
style include blurring of genres, complex use of chromaticism, intricacy of counterpoint, textural and thematic variety, dandified impertinence, emotional lassitude and polyvalence.

The employment of late stylistic features within the sonata model results in formal ambiguities, which are particularly manifest in the first movement. Chapter 3 reconsiders the movement’s thematic boundaries and especially evaluates the juncture between development and recapitulation. In Chapter 4, the last movement’s indebtedness to Chopin’s balladic model is examined. The gradual intensification of the primary theme together with the presence of a characterizing theme and dancelike episode suggest a merging of Chopin’s balladic practice with rondo form to create an end-directed hybrid structure.

This study not only encourages further research into the implications of Chopin’s late style for his larger forms but also increases the variety of interpretative choices available to performers through awareness of Chopin’s stylistic features. The final chapter suggests how insights into musical structure, style, and genre might inform performances of this sonata and how these possibilities relate to a selection of recorded performances.
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to Profs. Ryan McClelland and James Parker for their continuous guidance and support throughout the process of writing this dissertation. I would also like to thank Prof. Marietta Orlov for the inspiration to rethink the established interpretative practices of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, and Prof. Henri-Paul Sicsic for his stimulating ideas and remarks. Finally, I would like to thank my family, whose everlasting encouragement helped me immensely to achieve this stage of doctoral studies.
Table of Contents

Abstract ..............................................................................................................................................ii
Acknowledgments .............................................................................................................................iv
List of Examples ...............................................................................................................................vii

Chapter 1. Chopin and the Balance of Romantic and Classical Aesthetics ...............................1
  Influence of educational background on Chopin’s compositional aesthetic .........................2
  Role of the piano, piano music and sonata genre in Paris in 1800-1850 ...............................4
  Theoretical and analytical approaches to Sonata studies .....................................................10
  Chopin and Sonatas ..................................................................................................................20
    Evolution of the Sonata model ...............................................................................................20
    Reception and criticisms of the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58 ..............................................24
    Significance of the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58 .................................................................27
  Summary ......................................................................................................................................32


  New Compositional Techniques ...............................................................................................37
    Blend of genres .......................................................................................................................37
    Chromaticism .........................................................................................................................50
    Texture ..................................................................................................................................53

  Elements of dandified aesthetic in Op. 58 .............................................................................58

  Evolution of expression in the late style: Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58 .................................64

  Summary ......................................................................................................................................76
Chapter 3. Structural ambiguities in the first movement of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguities in the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of formal readings of the exposition</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic boundaries of the P and T areas and harmonic ambiguities of the exposition</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence of the entry of the recapitulation</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 4. Formal hybridization of the Finale of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of formal interpretations of the Finale</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balladic aspects of the Finale of Chopin’s Op. 58.</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic intensification</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic relations</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 5. Some Performance Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discography</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discography</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. “La grande coupe binaire,” of Anton Reicha</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 41-42</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 56-58</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 76-77</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 13-18</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 53-76</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 76-93</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 130-138</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8. Chopin’s Ballade in F minor, Op. 52, mm. 135-147</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 22-24</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10. Chromatic build up in S area, Mvt. 1, mm. 72-73</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11. Descending chromatic lines of melody and bass, Mvt. 4, mm. 25-27</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12. Chromatic release used in the melody of K material, Mvt. 1, mm. 84-87</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13. Chromatically descending bass line, Mvt. 3, mm. 110-112</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 28-30</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 14-24</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16a. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 41-42</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16b. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 56-57</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16c. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, m. 66</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16d. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 76-77</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.17. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 94-97</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.18. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 17-18</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.19. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 29-30</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.20. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 2, mm. 1-4</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.21. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 2, mm. 61-67</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.22. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 56-58</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.23. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 72-74</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.24. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 1-5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.25. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 18-21 .................................................................72
2.26. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 36-37 .................................................................72
2.27. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 42-45 .................................................................73
2.28. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 62-68 .................................................................73
2.29. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 95-99 .................................................................74
2.30. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 112-114 ............................................................74
2.31. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 89-91 .................................................................76
3.1. Leikin’s model of the exposition in the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 ....85
3.2. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 1-19 .................................................................87
3.3. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 16-40 .................................................................89
3.4. Dhuvabhark’s formal outline of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 ...90
3.5. Sumono’s model of the exposition of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 ....91
3.6. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 12-16 .................................................................95
3.7. Opening of Chopin’s First Piano Sonata, Op. 4, mm. 1-4.........................96
3.8. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 63-71 .................................................................99
3.9. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 130-138 .............................................................103
3.10. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 136-154 ............................................................105
3.11. Prolonged dominant preparation in the retransition and start of the recapitulation with the S area in Chopin’s Second Sonata, Op. 35, Mvt. 1, mm. 157-173 ........107
3.12. Preparation of the secondary theme in Chopin’s Op. 65, Mvt. 1, mm. 60-73 ....108
3.14. Helman’s model of Chopin’s mature sonata forms ......................................110
3.15. Suggested structural model of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 incorporating elements of Chopin’s late style .................................................................112
4.1. Schmidt-Beste’s model of a late eighteenth-century sonata-rondo ...............117
4.2. Caplin’s model of a sonata-rondo form ..........................................................118
4.3. Helman’s model of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58, with the most probable correspondence of measure numbers .................................................................121
4.4. Model representing Chomiński’s outline of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 ...121
4.5. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 49-76 .................................................................123
4.6. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 75-99 .................................................................125
4.7. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm.140-170………………………………………………………………….127
4.8. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 182-207……………………………………………………………………129
4.9. Dhuvabhark’s model of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58……………………………………………………131
4.10. Sumono’s model of the form of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58…………………………………………132
4.11. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 262-274………………………………………………………………………133
4.12. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 171-178………………………………………………………………………136
4.13. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 10-30……………………………………………………………………………137
4.14a. Beginning of the primary theme of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 9-13……………………………139
4.14b. First restatement of the primary theme of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 98-103………………139
4.14c. Final restatement of the primary theme of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 205-210……….140
4.15. Suggested model of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58…………………………………………………………141
4.16a. Second theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 3, Op. 47, mm. 65-68…………………………………….143
4.16b. Return of the second theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 3, Op. 47, mm. 154-160……………….143
4.16c. Climactic return of the second theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 3, Op. 47, mm. 173-178…………………………………………………………………………………………….144
4.16d. Opening theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 4, Op. 52, mm. 7-14……………………………………144
4.16e. Return of the opening theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 4, Op. 52, mm. 58-61……………….144
4.16f. Final return of the opening theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 4, Op. 52, mm. 151-155…..145
4.17a. Restatement of the opening theme within the A section of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 25-36……………………………………………………………………………………………………….146
4.17b. Restatement of the opening theme within the A’ section of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 115-124………………………………………………………………………………………………….146
4.17c. Restatement of the opening theme within the A’’ section of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 226-231……………………………………………………………………………………………147
4.18 Primary theme of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 9-53…………………………………………………153
4.20a. Scherzando dancelike episode in Chopin’s First Ballade, Op. 23, mm. 138-143………..158
4.20b. Leggiero dancelike episode in Chopin’s Third Ballade, Op. 47, mm. 124-134………………159
4.21. Coda from the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58, mm. 254-286………………………………………………162
5.1. Comparison of performance timings of Chopin’s Op. 58 by several internationally acclaimed pianists……………………………………………………………………………………………………167
5.2. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 18-33…………………………………………………………………………174
5.3. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 86-99……………………………………………………………………………175
5.4. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 103-120……………………………………………………………177
5.5. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 1-9……………………………………………………………………179
Chopin and the Balance of Romantic and Classical Aesthetics

Chopin lived during a dreadful time of Polish history. He grew up in an occupied country and died in exile, never experiencing living in a liberated homeland. Although this was a rather heartbreaking situation for Chopin, who openly declared his affection and care for Poland, it never caused him to enjoy life less than it allowed him. We know that he was loved and adored by women and other artists alike. He possessed a highly sensitive temperament full of brilliance and charm as well as an intellect of the “enlightened rationale.”¹ At the same time, his personality was somewhat divided into two realms: the “dreamy, imaginative” one and the “conscious, real” one. He managed to overcome them, creating a harmonious equilibrium of reality and dream.² Little is known of Chopin’s artistic thoughts. He kept them mostly to himself and the closest few. Thanks to recent research, though, there has been some new light shed on his educational upbringing, providing an insight into the contemporary aesthetic dilemmas that affected his artistic and personal choices for the rest of his life.

This chapter will consider Classical and Romantic elements of Chopin’s compositional aesthetic followed by an examination of the role of the piano and the sonata genre in the Parisian society of 1800-1850. Next, a survey of the theoretical approaches to Sonata studies will be conducted and Chopin’s innovations to the genre of the instrumental sonata will be presented. Lastly, reception and criticisms of the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58 will be addressed in an attempt

¹ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 2005), 14. Translations of Polish sources are mine unless otherwise indicated.
² Ibid., 18.
to determine the significance of the work as one of the most dramatically and compositionally refined pieces of Chopin’s late style.

**Influence of educational background on Chopin’s compositional aesthetic**

As a student of the Warsaw Conservatory, Chopin attended many classes at the Warsaw University, which helped him acquire a versatile education.³ Some of his most influential professors included Józef Elsner (composition), Feliks Bentkowski (history) and Kazimierz Brodziński (Polish literature). Elsner’s compositional ideal laid in the balance among “logic, emotional expression, and technical skill.” He was highly discontent with the contemporary superficiality of stile brilliante, urging his students to strive for a “sense of unity” in their works.⁴ Halina Goldberg describes Elsner’s immense influence on Chopin:

> The lessons learned from Elsner were not lost on Chopin. In the years to come, he discovered ways of shaping the musical narrative through motivic and harmonic procedures that were distinctively his, transforming glittery virtuoso passagework and audacious harmonies to serve his carefully thought-out narrative and expressive plan.⁵

Bentkowski, as a professor of ancient and modern history, can be credited with evoking a sense of national identity among his students, while Brodziński, for whom the aesthetic dilemma of Classical versus Romantic “held in its core the conflict between modern French and German aesthetics,” believed in promotion of Christian values and national spirit through “the veneration

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⁴ Ibid., 121.
⁵ Ibid., 123.
of innocence: poetry was not to simply speak beauty, but to serve moral and patriotic causes.”  

Although Chopin was surrounded by those ideals in his earlier years (until 1830), one cannot help but notice how deep their impact was on his personal and artistic life. Not only did he remain close to many Polish émigrés in his Parisian years, he also ‘venerated’ the nationalistic identity through the invention and stylization of folk and aristocratic dance forms (Mazurka, Polonaise) as well as the creation of Ballades, which, although without explicit programs, have often been viewed as inspired by the narration of Polish poetry. Chopin’s philosophical and artistic ideals made him an icon of Romanticism. He embraced a new artistic model of gradual transformation, extension and growing of musical concept, which gave the composition an organic character of fluidity and connection. He also managed to create his own, deeply personal “tone of expression,” letting into the music all that is personal, subjective and lyrical, even at the expense of the formal structure of the composition. In a philosophical aspect, Chopin’s beliefs put him closer to the intellectual current of romanticism propagated by Cyprian Kamil Norwid.  

Norwid’s attitude towards life “combined emotionality and emotions with reflection and the ability to remain detached.” Artistically, the ideal was realized by reconciliation of “formal perfection with spiritual excellence.” Although his affiliation with the Romantic idiom was undeniable, Chopin’s respect for and employment of the Classical elements

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6 Ibid., 137.
7 Zdzisław Jachimecki, Chopin. Rys życia i twórczości (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1949), 203.
10 Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821-1883) is known as one of the most important Polish poets of the Romantic era. He was also an active sculptor, painter, writer and philosopher.
remained consistent throughout his life. Zbigniew Skowron believes that the “classical element, which was always present in Chopin’s aesthetic consciousness, inclined him to order his stream of emotions into a well-established design, on the basis of the rhetorical models to which he was faithful from his Warsaw years until the end of his creative life.”12 This may also be a result of Chopin’s piano studies with Wojciech Żywny (Chopin’s only piano teacher), who based his teaching primarily on the works of Bach and Mozart.13 The most prominent evidence of the Classical influence on Chopin’s works is the absence of programmatic music and the presence of sonata form, not only in his sonatas, concertos and piano trio, but also within other genres (such as Ballade, Polonaise, Scherzo).14

**Role of the piano, piano music and sonata genre in Paris in 1800-1850**

Chopin’s arrival in Paris in 1831 coincided with major social and cultural reforms that began to take place as results of the July Revolution of 1830. The political establishment of a constitutional monarchy gave way to the rise of a powerful upper-middle class – the bourgeoisie – and initiated a period of cultural transformation. William Atwood, in a detailed study of Parisian life at the time of Chopin, attributes the development of the reforms during the reign of king Louis-Philippe (1830 – 1848) to the French writers and activists of the time:

> Novelists like George Sand drew attention to the many social inequities of the period, while would-be reformers like Eugène Sue and Victor Hugo spoke out against the inhumane victimization of the masses. At the same time, social prophets of the era, Charles Fourier, Auguste Comte, and the Saint-Simonians

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12 Skowron, “In search of Chopin’s immanent aesthetic,” 254.
were devising utopian communities intended to mitigate, if not erase, the socioeconomic ills of the world. Even the Catholic church began to take a more liberal stance. At Notre-Dame, priests like the abbé Lacordaire preached with new evangelical fervor about the equality of men. (…) Soon this newly awakened social consciousness expanded to embrace not only the working classes but also those who suffered exploitation and oppression, including women, children, the sick, and the handicapped. Hospital conditions were improved, and prison reforms instituted. For the first time criminals were viewed as victims of their environment, and efforts were made to rehabilitate them.\(^\text{15}\)

In the midst of the ongoing reforms, Paris, having endured a short-lived outbreak of violence, remained the cultural capital of Europe. As pointed out by Tad Szulc, by the early 1830s, a high demand for international art made the city of Paris “a magnet for writers as well as musicians of Romanticism.” Migrating artists “rapidly built contacts with many of the musicians and French writers like Hugo, Balzac, and Lamartine,” placing the city “on the receiving end of creativity born elsewhere in Europe.”\(^\text{16}\)

Gradual changes to the music scene of Paris occurred out of the necessity to accommodate growing cultural demands of the newly established bourgeoisie. Atwood observes that “with little cultural background, many of the middle class found themselves out of their depth in a vast sea of musical variety. For the new public of bankers, financiers, and industrialists, music wasn’t merely a pleasure to be cultivated and enjoyed; it was also a commodity to be bought and displayed for its social prestige.”\(^\text{17}\) This new attitude opened a new market for music. Katharine Ellis notices an increase in chamber music activity resulting in the establishment of string quartet societies with subscription concert series (such as the Société Alard/Chevillard, and Quatuor Dancla). Ellis also notes a gradual increase of the importance of

\(^{15}\) William Atwood, *The Parisian worlds of Frédéric Chopin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 5-6.


\(^{17}\) Atwood, *The Parisian worlds of Frédéric Chopin*, 159-160.
the piano on the concert scene through the inclusion of music genres requiring the use of the piano, such as the piano quintet and duo sonatas (solo piano performances of larger works remained rare). Atwood concludes, however, that even with over 180 piano manufacturers active in Paris by 1847, the piano in Parisian society was largely intended for domestic music making, “where young ladies accompanied themselves while singing the poignant romances of the period.”

Another noteworthy aspect of the cultural revolution of the first half of the nineteenth century was the increasing distinction between “serious” and “light” music. The eighteenth century’s functional approach to music started to crumble by the early 1800s, when “Romantics’ transformation of music from social amenity into a metaphysical abstraction” began to take place, forever changing the meaning of “lightness” and “seriousness” in music. While the “light” music became clearly labelled as “mundane,” the “serious” music began to signify more than just an abstractly intellectual type of music; it gained a new quality of transcendence that could be conveyed through music. This elevation of the meaning of “serious” and “light” music to a new artistic level was only a result of a deeper philosophical evolution that was taking place at the time – Romanticism. As Jagna Dankowska describes, “Romanticism brought feelings, imagination and intuition to the forefront and on the other hand it exposed the significance of will, i.e., the irrational forces of the human mind. (...) A very special place was attributed to music which was seen as an art directly representing both the essential nature of the universe and

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19 Atwood, The Parisian worlds of Frédéric Chopin, 162.
20 Ibid., 182.
the subjective world of human experience, an art capable of penetrating and expressing directly
the layers of reality which would otherwise have evaded expression.”

The significance of the evolution of “seriousness” in music cannot be underestimated. It
gave more expressive and dramatic power to “serious” genres, allowing the composers not only
to experiment with them, but also enrich their musical concepts by any emotional, religious and
philosophical ideals they felt compelled to express. They became liberated from the functional
approach to art imposed by the social standards of the late eighteenth century.

Although the evolution of artistic ideals enabled composers to produce new, more
expressive and personal forms, history provides evidence for a greatly diminished presence of
the sonata genre in Europe, and especially in France, in the first half of the nineteenth century.
This decline particularly affected the solo sonata, which, as many scholars observed, became one
of the most marginalized genres of the early Romantic era. Janet Ritterman observes a general
increase of the popularity of the piano throughout the period of 1800-1850, due to social and
economic changes. However, even for the established piano performers, “the choice of a sonata
soon became unusual – when sonatas were heard, they were usually accompanied works,
possibly because of the reservations sometimes expressed about the suitability of the piano as a
solo instrument.”

William Newman notices a general absence of the sonata genre in public
concerts before 1850. He argues that the sonata’s identification with more intimate performance
setting, “connotations of obsolescence and academicism,” and “lack of sufficient color or

21 Dankowska, “Philosophy in Chopin’s times,” 538.
22 Janet Ritterman, “Piano music and the public concert 1800-1850,” in The Cambridge Companion to Chopin,
“display” to provide enough variety throughout the length of the piece resulted in a very limited performances within the larger concert settings.23

Another reason for the decline of the sonata genre has been noted by Arnfried Edler, who concludes that by the third decade of the nineteenth century, the sonata genre lost its importance owing to the increasing popularity of variation and dance genres. Edler attributes the change to the society’s reaction against the tradition of the eighteenth century:

On one hand, musicians have tried to, in an objective way, specify the essence of the compositional genres in their theory of musical forms, culminating with the work of A.B. Marx in 1837-47. On the other hand the tradition of the genre became more symbolic, the names of genres lost their meanings. Lyricism of piano music, originating in dance genres, replaced sonata as a central type of piano music and became an antagonist of the symphonic poem. (...) On the other hand, pianistic lyricism is claimed to have a tradition in the sonata genre and its thematic-motivic type of style. After 1830’s, these mutual relations between the traditions of musical genres have been realized in a very varied fashion throughout Europe.24

Charles Rosen believes that the prestige of the sonata and its connotation with the conservative musical style prevented it from being relevant in the time of “revolutionary developments” that were occurring in the Romantic era. He describes the sonata after Beethoven as “the vehicle of the sublime. It played the same role in music as the epic in poetry, and the large historical fresco in painting.” Rosen argues that, as a form that could possess the highest dramatic powers, the sonata became “the proof of greatness” for any aspiring composer of the time.25 Anatole Leikin agrees with Rosen’s statement regarding the prestige that writing a sonata

brought on any aspiring composer of the Romantic era. Leikin suggests that through the blending of the sonata form elements (exposition, development and recapitulation; primary, transitional, secondary and closing sections), the Romantic sonata genre lost its “generative power,” which resulted in fewer sonatas being composed. He notes that “none of the Romantic or post-Romantic formal schemes have achieved the universality and prestige of a generic norm.”

Ellis describes the relative absence of the piano solo sonata in Paris of 1840s as an “uneven distribution” of serious music among the genres. She notes that in the 1840s, there is a very narrow space for the performances of piano solo sonatas. If any, performances are dominated by sonatas of Beethoven, and “played in miscellaneous or benefit concerts.” Ellis also notices an absence of composers performing their own sonatas, which “point to the solo sonata’s fragility as a musical genre.” Ellis argues that the reason for such degraded status of piano sonata lies in a complex social situation of the time. First, women, as a vast majority of piano players, were discouraged from seeking public spotlight, due to their social status, which was considered inferior to men. Ellis argues that gender inequity present in the Parisian society of the early nineteenth century began to be challenged in the early 1840s. Second, the Parisian concert stage was dominated by chamber music, which meant that even though the importance of the piano gradually increased, there was no space for individualism within the ensemble concert setting. Ellis argues that chamber music, as a formalisation of domestic music-making, disallowed any soloistic display promoting only those forms and genres that included more than

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26 Leikin, “The dissolution of sonata structure in romantic piano music (1820-1850),” 272-278.
28 Ibid., 33.
29 Ibid., 17.
one player.\textsuperscript{30} Even with the presence of duo and piano duo sonatas, there was a very limited place for performances of piano solo sonatas. Ellis believes that both the role of women and the preference for chamber music among Parisian music circles caused the piano sonata to decline.

Theoretical and analytical approaches to Sonata studies

Prior to a discussion of the evolution and significance of the piano sonata in Chopin’s oeuvre it is necessary to establish the meaning and terminology of the genre. Pivotal developments in the field of music theory regarding the sonata will be discussed, based mostly on the vast, three-volume history of the sonata by William Newman. The significance of Newman’s work cannot be overstated. It provides the most exhaustive description of the history of the sonata genre and sonata forms, including detailed accounts of the reception of most of the popular sonatas and brief historical and analytical insights into each one of them. According to his findings, by the Classical era, the term sonata referred to any type of absolute music in a solo or ensemble setting.\textsuperscript{31} He also notes that the first descriptions of the sonata from the late eighteenth century (Schulz, Scheibe, Quantz and Koch) are generally brief and coincide only in describing a contrasting, multi-movement genre, in solo or chamber setting.\textsuperscript{32} Schulz focuses on the expressive aspect of the genre, being the only one that allowed the composer to produce a variety of emotional descriptions. Scheibe and Quantz both outline the three typical Baroque movement orders (slow-fast-slow-fast, slow-fast-fast, slow-fast-minuet) but do not provide any further description of their contrasts and formal structures. Koch focuses on phrase design, in

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 23-32.
which regularity of phrases becomes a base for the creation of the form from smaller units into larger entities.\textsuperscript{33}

The evolving nature of the genre together with the variety of terminological interpretations and its quasi-synonymous connotation to abstract instrumental music created a major challenge for future generations of writers, such as Anton Reicha, Adolph Bernhard Marx and Carl Czerny, who attempted to produce a compelling definition and compositional recipes for creating sonatas. Janice Arnold colourfully notes: “Czerny and other writers were competing to put into writing what was tacitly already understood by the musically literate. Czerny was not inventing a form, he was describing (and to lesser talents prescribing) what the world already knew as a sonata. In spite of the misguided souls who aroused the wrath of critics for mislabelling their compositions ‘sonata,’ most musicians knew what to expect from a composition entitled sonata.”\textsuperscript{34} Most of the work of Reicha, Marx and Czerny focused on defining and creating a model of a sonata form, which would usually refer to the first movement of a sonata. The neglect for the other movements came from the belief that the sonata form is the defining factor in the creation of the entire genre and that the other movements are reliant on it.\textsuperscript{35} Without the presence of a movement that would possess the qualities of a sonata form, the genre would not be called sonata.

Preceding Carl Czerny’s three-volume treatise on composition published in 1848, there were two significant descriptions of the sonata genre following those made by Koch and his contemporaries. The first one was Anton Reicha’s “eight-page discussion of ‘fully-developed

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 32.
\textsuperscript{34} Janice Arnold, “The role of chromaticism in Chopin's sonata forms: A Schenkerian view” (Diss., Northwestern University, 1992), 68.
\textsuperscript{35} Newman, \textit{The Sonata since Beethoven}, 31.
binary design’ in the final volume, published in Paris in 1826, of (...) *Traité de haute composition musicale.*" It included some essential terminology (exposition, development) and discussed the basic structure and harmonic design of the form of the first movement of sonata, as shown on the diagram:

![Diagram](image.png)

Example 1.1. “La grande coupe binaire,” of Anton Reicha

The second link between the sonata’s descriptions of late-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries came from Adolph Bernhard Marx. Published in 1845, the third volume of Marx’s theoretical treatise included an “explicit,” 137-page section on the sonata genre. Newman limits

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36 Ibid., 32.
37 Chart adapted from Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven*, 33.
his observations to stating that Marx’s 1845 volume was preceded by a preliminary study of sonata in *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition* of 1838, which contained “distinctions between ‘sonata form’ and the sonata cycle in several movements, ‘sonata form’ and the rondo principle, ‘sonata form’ as a two- and as a three-part concept, the tonal course of major and of minor ‘sonata forms,’ and variants in the thematic design of ‘sonata form.’” An elaborate depiction of Marx’s theories was produced by Scott Burnham, who, in his dissertation, describes in detail Marx’s ideas and discussions of the sonata genre.\(^{39}\) Burnham points out that Marx primarily uses the examples of Beethoven sonatas in his survey of the genre and goes on to describe the scope and methodology of Marx’s study:

> Marx is almost exclusively positive in his evaluation of these works, and his discussion of them is chiefly involved in showing the deep level of their coherence, the supreme logic of Beethoven’s compositional choices. Excerpts from over twenty sonatas are presented, interspersed within a long-ranging discussion of the particulars of sonata form procedure. This discussion is divided into sections corresponding to the sections of sonata form. Thus, no one sonata movement is treated as an entirety from exposition to recapitulation. The ostensible purpose of these examples is to demonstrate the myriad possibilities of sonata form to the aspiring composer. (…) To a surprising degree he succeeds in demonstrating the presence of a generalized and underlying formal process while preserving the autonomous integrity of the individual work. It is made clear that the works are not there merely to prove the existence of a generic form, but are to be regarded on their own terms as highly individual, living exemplars of an underlying dynamic process. (…) The procedure Marx indulges in here is rather that of a sort of analysis (for the purpose of justification) of compositional decisions *from the standpoint of a composer*. The reader (student) walks along with the composer (Beethoven), stands at the same forks in the road, and attempts to understand why Beethoven chose the route he did.\(^{40}\)

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\(^{38}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{39}\) Scott Burnham, “Aesthetics, theory and history in the works of Adolph Bernhard Marx” (Diss., Brandeis University, 1988).

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 135.
Burnham strongly believes that Marx’s purpose was to promote a wide variety of formal structures that the sonata can support and find the reasoning behind “Beethoven’s seemingly capricious compositional choices.” According to Burnham, Marx believed that, as the exposition set the tone for the rest of the movement, the first movement set the tone for the rest of the work, thus requiring an extensive study of those sections, most times at the expense of the rest of the form. Focusing on Beethoven’s expositions, Marx attempted to find logic behind every compositional choice. Burnham describes this logic in the following way:

Each musical event is considered as a cause which brings on the effect of a subsequent event, which in turn acts as a cause to yet another effect. A left-to-right chain of cause and effect is observed throughout the musical work.

Burnham outlines several of Marx’s inclinations, most notably: a flexible treatment of harmony in tracing Beethoven’s logic; an emphasis on the opening material of the movement (in the case of the first movement of a sonata) as a determinant for the rest of the movement; a specific structure of the secondary theme (or thematic area) so that it builds “totality” with the opening theme (by providing a complementing contrast or structure); the idea of “incomplete” opening material which would provide a necessity for continuation; the idea of the thematic sections being “subordinate to the part as a whole” in an attempt to create “larger cohesive units.” Burnham concludes that for Marx, “there is no one ‘textbook’ exemplar of this form; it is rather a prototypical musical process which is realized in every particular instance.”

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41 Ibid., 174.
42 Ibid., 159-160.
43 Ibid., 174.
44 Ibid., 175.
46 Ibid., 151-153.
47 Ibid., 183.
Czerny’s elaborate description of the sonata genre appeared in his compositional treatise, *Schule der praktischen Tonsetzkunst*, Op. 600 in 1848, but he claimed to have been the first one to describe the genre “in any basic detail” in 1837, as he began to work on the Op. 600.\(^{48}\) The authoritative tone of Czerny’s writing did not escape Newman, who summarizes Czerny’s view of the sonata cycle in a following way:

Then, Czerny went on to “describe” in detail, in the forty-nine pages of his sixth chapter, what “must” go into each of the four movements (allegro, adagio or andante, scherzo or minuet, and finale or [i.e., especially] rondo). In connection with the first movement (and with a proscription against returning to the “original key” in the development section), he cautioned that “we must always proceed in a settled form. For, if this order were evaded or arbitrarily changed, the composition would no longer be a regular Sonata.” He still viewed the first movement, at least nominally, as being in “two parts.” Its first part (not called “exposition” by the translator) consists of the “principal subject,” its extension and a modulation to “the nearest related key,” a “middle subject” and its extension in the related key, and a “final melody” that closes in that key at the repeat sign. Its second part divides into two sections, a modulatory “development” (the translator’s word) of any of those ideas or a new one, ending back in the original key; and a recapitulation (not so called by the translator) that restates the first part except for abridgments and adjustments needed to remain in the original key.\(^{49}\)

Czerny’s and Marx’s descriptions of the sonata form and genre became of such importance over time that they remained a point of reference for scholars until this very day. Not only did they provide the first comprehensive studies of the genre but also included suggestions for compositional practice. Czerny’s work and confidence in the field of musical composition (most likely derived from the fact that he was a pupil of Beethoven and Clementi) caused his treatise to become immensely influential among the future generations, who would learn to use his descriptions not only in composition, but also reception of any further sonatas. Similarly,


\(^{49}\) Ibid., 30.
Marx’s work would have an impact on the compositional practices and reception of the sonata genre. He built his reputation as a music critic for the *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, and later became a professor of music at University of Berlin.\(^5\) During his life he wrote many essays and treatises on music history and pedagogy, most notably the 1859 examination of Beethoven’s oeuvre, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Leben und Schaffen*, which remained in print into the 1900s.\(^6\)

Two of the modern methods of musical analysis applied to the works of the Classical masters belonged to Donald Tovey and Heinrich Schenker. Working in the first half of the twentieth century, each one developed different analytical approaches. Tovey focused on the “bar-by-bar” and “phrase-by-phrase” analyses which included elements of hermeneutics, thus creating a “mixture of descriptive, naturalistic writing and technical information, illustrated with frequent musical examples and allocating letter-symbols to figures and themes.”\(^7\) Schenker, on the other hand, focused on analysis of voice-leading and harmonic structure, encouraging “long-range listening” in an attempt to help the reader/listener understand the work “as a complex organic whole.”\(^8\) He believed in the importance of voice-leading (passing and neighbouring tones) as the “form-generating elements.” According to Arnold, “Schenker’s concept of sonata form (...) is reaffirming the tonic-dominant polarity which shapes the form; that is, he also expects a sonata to ‘behave’ in a certain way tonally.” She also points out Schenker’s rejection of surface motivic analysis in favour of deeper-level tonal analysis.\(^9\)

\(^6\) Ian D. Bent/Anthony Pople, “Analysis, §II: History,” in Grove Music Online.
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^{10}\) Arnold, “The role of chromaticism in Chopin's sonata forms: A Schenkerian view,” 120-121.
Newman notices the absence of any major studies of the body of sonatas composed after 1850.\textsuperscript{55} However, he points out that from the beginning of the nineteenth century the knowledge of the “usual form of the sonata” was common. “Furthermore, by the time the specific explanations did appear, the references to “sonata form” were beginning to imply that it was already passé.”\textsuperscript{56} Newman mentions “resistance” and “concern” with a “textbook ‘sonata form’” among the future generations;\textsuperscript{57} however, none of it generated enough energy for creation of another vast study of the genre. In discussing the essence of the “Romantic sonata,” Newman rejects the nineteenth-century concepts of form as well as “present-day studies that already have been done,” arguing that one’s “firsthand experience” and “subjective reactions” provide the necessary tools for analysis of formal structure.\textsuperscript{58} He continues by distinguishing three major aspects of formal creation: “as a generative process, characterized by a certain corpus of style treatments or traits; (...) as a mold or standardized design, with all the conveniences of quick reference that such classifications permit; (...) as a unicum – that is, as the one and only result of a particular corpus of generative traits and/or a particular set of variants in a mold (...)). But approaching a form as a unicum puts the emphasis on everything that is \textit{a}-typical – in other words, on whatever may distinguish it from other forms.”\textsuperscript{59} Newman observes that the main characteristics of sonatas of the Romantic era included: exaggeration “from the standpoint of form as a generative process” – causing motivic and phrase expansion, enrichment of textures, distancing of tonal and harmonic relations; fulfillment of the explicitly described “sonata form” from the perspective of form as a mold – causing more rigid formal designs; a “growing

\textsuperscript{55} Newman, \textit{The Sonata since Beethoven}, 32.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 109-110.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 110-111.
dichotomy of sonatas by conservatives and absolutists as against those by progressives and programmatists” from the perspective of form as a unicum – resulting in clear division between the programmatic and absolute approach to music. ⁶⁰

The lack of any comprehensive studies of the sonata after 1850 is also evident in the work of Rosen, who, in Sonata Forms ends his survey of theoretical studies with Marx. ⁶¹ Not only does he stop there, he finds it necessary to rethink the method of defining the form with a strong belief that any previous or contemporary methodology is unsuccessful. He goes on to criticize a more modern method of studying phrases and periods (applied by Tovey):

> The general practice of a period is naturally interesting, but unmediated and uninterpreted it can define nothing. The belief that by itself it has some historical significance is based on a false analogy of music with language (…) as well as on a false psychology of the composition and reception of music. ⁶²

Instead, Rosen suggests that in order to “comprehend the structure of any individual movement, we must ask where the breaks in texture occur and how they are coordinated with the large-scale harmonic form and the thematic order.” His reasoning comes from the observation of the dependence of the “thematic order” on the interruptions in textural flow. Rosen believes these textural changes define structural schemes of larger sections or whole movements. ⁶³ Similarly, the recent study of the late eighteenth-century sonata genre by James Hepokoski and Warren

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⁶⁰ Ibid., 111-112.
⁶¹ Rosen, Sonata Forms, 4.
⁶² Ibid., 4.
⁶³ Ibid., 96-97.
Darcy suggests that the textural interruptions serve as one of the tools in determining the structural outline of the movements.\textsuperscript{64}

Rosen is also opposed to Czerny’s and Marx’s compositional suggestions, arguing that the essence of composing a successful sonata form is based on the principle of surprise and sophisticated dramatic play with listeners’ expectations.\textsuperscript{65} In his conclusion of the study of Romantic sonatas Rosen notices that, although the sonata form was codified in the 1840s and was “no longer a free development of stylistic principles, but an attempt to reach greatness by imitation of classical models,” a certain originality of compositional design arises among the sonata forms of Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn and Liszt:

The generation born around 1810 preferred to place the climax, the point of extreme tension, very near the end of the work. This makes the final area of stability of the sonata uncongenial to them. What they reject, in most cases, is the sense of climax and resolution at the end of the development and the beginning of the recapitulation. (...) The change of function at this crucial point of the form is so radical that only tradition and convenience prevent us from calling this a new form and giving it a new name.\textsuperscript{66}

The lack of research on the piano sonata of the Romantic era has inspired some modern scholars to attempt to identify the general trends that caused the evolution of the sonata genre in general and the piano sonata in particular. In regard to the study of the form, the most notable is the work of Anatole Leikin, who attempts to define a unifying pattern of structural design (“sonata norm”) that can be applied to the Classical piano sonatas of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. In his study of the Romantic sonatas of 1820-1850, Leikin observes an evolution of


\textsuperscript{65} Rosen, \textit{Sonata Forms}, 5-7.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 320-321.
the sonata form in blending and blurring of the elements of the sonata normative pattern (exposition, development and recapitulation and subsequent sections within these larger units).

He notices a presence of functional ambiguities in structural design, where “sonata form itself merges with other formal patterns,” dissolving the normative patterns of the previous era.67

Leikin also notes a gradual shift towards density of thematic content:

Analyses of Romantic sonata forms prove that the thematic material is dispersed throughout the textural strata. Most of the time this is not done via openly-imitative counterpoint, but rather through a concealed polyphony resembling earlier homophonic writing.68

In this study, the following terminology will be employed: sonata, sonata cycle or sonata genre will refer to a multi-movement work, while sonata form will refer to the structure of a particular movement, in which the thematic, harmonic and textural divisions will allow identification of principal sections.

Chopin and Sonatas:

Evolution of the Sonata model

Chopin’s relationship with the sonata began during his earlier years in Warsaw. Goldberg suggests that, while studying at the Warsaw Conservatory, Chopin was familiarized with the multi-movement genres of the Classical tradition through performing and attending private and public concerts. He was also exposed to innovative compositional thinking presented by Reicha,

68 Ibid., 280.
who encouraged “learning from the living compositional practice, rather than abstract and antiquated theoretical principles.” Chopin’s First Piano Sonata, composed in 1828 during his studies with Elsner, reveals a “young composer’s lack of experience,” but it also foreshadows Chopin’s later sonatas in its polyphonic writing and order of movements. The Second Piano Sonata, Op. 35 (1839), is a culminating point of his mature style of the Paris years. Extreme range of expressive qualities and an unorthodox treatment of the form (slow movement as a funeral march and the final movement written throughout in unison) testify to Chopin’s creative and progressive thinking of the genre. The Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, composed in the summer of 1844 has been described as “undoubtedly the most remarkable work of Chopin’s late style.” The last, Sonata for Piano and Cello, Op. 65 (1846), represents the only duo sonata in Chopin’s oeuvre. Looking at and listening to all of the sonatas, one cannot help but notice a great evolution of Chopin’s approach to the sonata’s structure, dramatic potential and expressive powers. It becomes clear that he was exploring and expanding all the musical possibilities that the genre could offer. He went further though, applying elements of the sonata to other autonomous models (Ballades, Polonaise, Barcarolle, Waltz).

Chopin’s experiments with the sonata were triggered by a necessity to renovate the genre, “to make it more spontaneous and less predictable.” Although Chopin was familiar with the sonata’s tradition and valued its merits, he “could not stand keeping its models in a slave-like fashion.” His sonatas were drawn on the classical model with four-movement structures and

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70 Ibid., 122.
74 Tomaszewski, *Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans*, 481.
traditional division of the first movement (exposition, development, recapitulation), and the functions of all movements remained within the classical model (first movement as sonata form, contrasts of characters between the movements). However, Chopin’s internal movement structure gradually departed from the traditional models. This can be seen starting with Op. 4, where Chopin exchanges the order of the movements, placing the slow movement third and the Minuetto second.\(^{75}\) Jim Samson believes that “Chopin’s model results in a slackening of the formal and tonal bonds of the classical sonata.”\(^{76}\) Zofia Helman notices the binary division of the first movements and the importance of motivic cell in unifying movements or entire genres. She also notes a variety of characteristic patterns among the sonatas – movements (except the first ones) differ significantly in terms of structure, musical ideas and expression (e.g., none of the sonatas’ Scherzos are similar).\(^{77}\) Anatole Leikin attributes Chopin’s originality in treatment of the sonata to the synthesis of the sonata model and variation procedures. He believes that “variational interconnections in Chopin’s music are so subtle and so thoroughly concealed (unlike, for instance, Liszt’s thematic transformations) that they are not immediately audible. That does not, however, lessen the enormous contribution they make to the structural unity of each movement.”\(^ {78}\) Zofia Lissa argues that Chopin’s evolution of the sonata cycle manifests itself through the process of liberation of the cycle’s movements, such as rondo and scherzo, which become independent genres.\(^ {79}\)

\(^{75}\) In this respect, Chopin seems to be following Beethoven, who also exchanges the order of the movements in such works as the Piano Sonatas Opp. 101, 106, 110 and the Symphony No. 9, Op. 125.


\(^{78}\) Leikin, “The dissolution of sonata structure in romantic piano music (1820-1850),” 194.

\(^{79}\) Zofia Lissa, Studia nad twórczością Fryderyka Chopina (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1970), 185.
Chopin’s model of the sonata cycle represents the result of an earlier, thought-out structural plan that allowed the expressivity and drama of Chopin’s style to shine throughout. Even though his style progressed significantly from his university years until the end of his life, the sonata model established in 1828 remained mostly unchanged (except for the second movement *Minuetto* of the Piano Sonata, No. 1 – in later sonatas it was replaced by *Scherzo*).

The evolution of the sonata form, though, was very significant. Leikin focuses on the development of blending of formal elements and structures (primary thematic materials, bridges, secondary thematic materials, epilogues, as well as expositions, developments and recapitulations) which diffuse the identity of the sonata form. He mentions the placements of the secondary thematic groups at the beginning of recapitulations in the mature piano sonatas (Opp. 35, 58). He argues that the lack of the repetition of the primary thematic groups “manifests a diffusion of functions within the form: instead of the primary group, the secondary section governs the recapitulation.”

Helman focuses on the progressive expansion of Chopin’s thematic material (avoiding cadences and expanding the flow of music) and the binary structure of the first movements of Opp. 35, 58, and 65. She believes that, in each of the sonatas, a lengthy exposition is counterbalanced by the development and recapitulation together. The development works as a continuum of the presented tensions while the recapitulation’s goal is to resolve them. Rosen disagrees with this view of the recapitulation. He is convinced Chopin’s purpose in sonata form is “to bring back some of the main themes with a magnified aura of brilliance, complexity, tension, violence, and pathos. Development for Chopin, consequently, does not prepare for resolution but for further excitement: it plays a role similar to stretto, and is often

81 Ibid., 216.
82 Helman, “Norma i indywiduacja w sonatach Chopina,” 56.
associated with stretto.”\textsuperscript{83} Tetiana Zolozova follows Rosen’s beliefs, stating that Chopin’s sonata forms tend to postpone the climactic moments until the recapitulation and coda, allowing the new “dramatic lyricism” to come through.\textsuperscript{84}

**Reception and criticisms of the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58**

There have been many and mixed opinions written about Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58. Tomaszewski senses the unique atmosphere around which Op. 58 was written: “one can feel that it was created with a philosophical distance to the matters of this world.”\textsuperscript{85} Chomiński discovers a great level of compositional discipline in the creation of Op. 58. He praises Chopin for searching for new expressive tools within the traditional setting of the genre.\textsuperscript{86} Tadeusz Zieliński describes Chopin’s Op. 58 as a “realization of Chopin’s ideal of the new sonata, reaching the greatness of its time – large, vast, enlightened by the brilliance of the modern harmonic and pianistic sonorities.”\textsuperscript{87} Marceli Antoni Szulc praises “exuberance of imagination, richness of ideas” in Op. 58 and Chopin’s “touching simplicity” in the slow movement, with a simultaneous recognition of “certain hesitation” in “working of the thematic material” and “lack of compliance with correctness” presented in the first two pages of the opening movement.\textsuperscript{88} The influence of the worked-out sonata models of Czerny and Marx was so significant, that many nineteenth- and twentieth-century researchers found it difficult to cope with the unorthodox inter-movement structure of Op. 58. In fact most of the criticisms of Op. 58 resulted from lack of

\textsuperscript{84} Tetiana Zolozova, “La forme sonate de Chopin,” in *Chopin and his work in the context of culture, vol. 1*, edited by Irena Poniatowska, transl. Irena Poniatowska (Kraków: Polska Akademia Chopinowska, 2003), 348.
\textsuperscript{85} Tomaszewski, *Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans*, 489.
\textsuperscript{86} Chomiński, *Sonaty Chopina*, 175.
\textsuperscript{87} Tadeusz Andrzej Zieliński, *Chopin, życie i droga twórcza* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1993), 543.
\textsuperscript{88} Marceli Antoni Szulc, *Fryderyk Chopin i utwory jego muzyczne* (Poznań: Księgarnia Jana Konstantego Żupańskiego, 1873), 184.
understanding of Chopin’s artistic process. As Newman observes, although “one of its first main reviews, in 1846, called Op. 58 a distinctly superior work, citing especially its mastery of form and rich figuration,” it also questioned “some harmonic details of voice-leading and spelling.” Newman finds another early review of Op. 58 in which the reviewer, describing the sonata as being “one of the most significant publications of the present,” focused more on Chopin than on the work, asserting “that no composer was entirely free of problems,” and that Chopin was guilty of certain (unclear) “peculiarities.” On another occasion, Newman finds that “when Pachmann played the work in London in 1883 a reviewer did find it ‘unequal in itself,’ with problems in the development section of the first movement, yet well designed to show off the performer in his ‘most favourable light.’” Most modern critiques present more specific arguments. Peter Gould sees lack of clarity in the overall structure of the first movement. He attributes it to the richness of the thematic material, which would be “sufficient for twenty-five Sonatas by a composer twenty-five years previously.” Władysław Zieliński considers the structure of the first movement unsuccessful due to insufficient development of the opening material and “illogical progress of the structural plan in the development section.” Ferdynand Hoesick argues that the motifs presented in Op. 58 are not related satisfactorily enough to provide a sense of unity. Moreover, the way they are developed contributes to the loss of “comprehensive quality” of the work, making it “difficult to solve and understand.” Herbert Weinstock criticizes the structure of the slow movement of Op. 58, sensing an imbalance in the timing of the flow of the thematic

89 Newman, The Sonata since Beethoven, 492.
material, which destabilizes not only the movement, but the entire sonata. Donald Ferguson expresses dissatisfaction with the “diffused” structure of the first movement. He acknowledges the pianistic difficulties of the work; however, the impression they make “is hardly one of spiritual satisfaction. Beethoven might have been able to strike developmental fire out of the principal subject. Chopin can only manipulate it.” He claims the lyrical second subject to be “no more poetic than the weakest of the Nocturnes, so that the chief interest lies in the connecting passages, which are often exciting in themselves, but contribute little to the whole thought.”

Criticisms of Op. 58 originated from an inadequate approach and insufficient understanding of Chopin’s compositional principle of the sonata cycle, which materialized the essence of the Romantic idiom of individualism in expression and continuous process and expansion of the established genres. Furthermore, intricate incorporation of the late style elements to the sonata design greatly complicated any traditionally oriented attempts to comprehend the formal structure of Op. 58. Czerny’s and Marx’s generated sonata model does not fully apply to Chopin’s one. It might have been a starting point, but, like many composers, Chopin never ceased to evolve and push the boundaries of convention. A more complete understanding of the work can be achieved only by keeping in mind Chopin’s Romantic aesthetic of genre evolution and analysis of his stylistic features.

Although the voices of the critics result from the application of an overly prescriptive theory, they cannot be dismissed without consideration. In the case of Op. 58, there is plenty of evidence that Chopin’s compositional inventions produced a number of structural ambiguities, which arose through the use of techniques developed before and during his late style period.

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Significance of the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58

It has been suggested that the sonata was not an important genre for Chopin,⁹⁵ and that it was not his natural musical language.⁹⁶ Rosen went further, believing that Chopin never learnt the sonata form during his studies in Warsaw.⁹⁷ Even when Jeffrey Kallberg praised Chopin for being “a master of small forms,”⁹⁸ one could sense a veiled supposition that Chopin’s larger forms suffer from lack of compositional excellence. Those opinions, however subjective, have become quite popular, often creating an incomplete view of Chopin’s compositional craft and ability to work with larger genres, particularly the sonata.

Many modern scholars make attempts to explain or clarify those opinions. A strong voice in defence of Chopin came from Goldberg, who challenged Rosen’s conviction in her study of Chopin’s musical education in Warsaw, providing evidence of Chopin’s knowledge of the “customary harmonic plan” of traditional genres, including the sonata.⁹⁹ Other researchers defend Chopin’s sonatas by redefining analytical approaches to his sonata model. Helman proposes a new method based on the individuality of formal structure.¹⁰⁰ Tomaszewski advocates a new examination of the form with a strong emphasis on expression.¹⁰¹ Leikin suggests a new analytical approach of the structurally diffusing elements present in Chopin’s mature sonatas (Opp. 35, 58, 65).¹⁰²

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⁹⁵ Kholopov, “Chopin’s musical forms within the context of the aesthetic ideas of the epoch,” 328.
⁹⁶ Samson, The music of Chopin, 129.
⁹⁷ Rosen, Sonata Forms, 319.
⁹⁹ Goldberg, Music in Chopin’s Warsaw, 123.
¹⁰⁰ Helman, “Norma i indywidualacja w sonatach Chopina,” 44.
¹⁰¹ Tomaszewski, Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans, 494.
¹⁰² Leikin, “The dissolution of sonata structure in romantic piano music (1820-1850),” 40.
The strongest defence of Chopin’s sonatas can be drawn from the works themselves. The mature piano sonatas and the cello sonata provide examples of the most refined dramatic and expressive qualities encountered in Chopin’s music. Groundbreaking treatment of the sonata form (present already in Op. 35), and incorporation of late style elements in Op. 58 (chromaticism, variety of textural display, crossing genres, dandyism and new expressive qualities) suggest not the weakness but the progress of Chopin’s concept. Chopin evolves constantly, always looking for new means of expression not only through new sonorities but also through new structure.

Before writing his mature sonatas, Chopin experimented with sonata form in a variety of other settings. Both Leikin 103 and Samson 104 notice strong influence of the sonata form in Ballades, while Leikin goes further to investigate Chopin’s Scherzo, Op. 31, Barcarolle, Op. 60, Polonaise-Fantasy, Op. 61, and Waltz, Op. 70, No. 2 observing elements of sonata form in them as well. The presence of the sonata form in many of Chopin’s works outlines the evolution of the formal design, which culminated in Chopin’s mature sonatas. This can be seen by examining the chronology of Chopin’s works. It is not accidental that the sonatas (except for Op. 4) are composed during the mature stages of his stylistic periods (1839, 1844 and 1846). Chopin uses the experience gained in other genres and applies it to his sonata model.

It is difficult to speculate what the sonata genre meant to Chopin. It is highly probable that the genre’s connotations with tradition and its prestige were as clear to Chopin as they are to us. Achievements of the Classical masters, especially Beethoven, created very high standards of compositional excellence, which all the prospective composers had to cope with. Chopin’s

103 Ibid., 193.
104 Samson, The music of Chopin, 175.
answer to that was adaptation of the classical outline of the sonata cycle (clear structural division of the movements) with his own stylistic twist. Although the element of tradition in Chopin’s sonatas is based on the incorporation of the Classical model, it is not limited to it. In his sonatas, Chopin conveys a deeper, more personal aspect of tradition. It is the tradition of his homeland, of Poland, and his experience and vision of it.

It is commonly acknowledged that Chopin expressed his nationalism through the creation of Ballades and through Polonaises, Mazurkas, Fantasy, Op. 49, and his songs. All these works have been inspired, in a variety of ways, by Polish dances, poetry or Chopin’s memories of family, friends and traditional elements of Polish culture. In a similar fashion it can be assumed that his sonatas are also an expression of those memories and traditions that he felt nostalgic about. The connection between the two traditions in a sonata setting – musical and personal, has not been sufficiently explored among scholars (especially in the case of Op. 58), most likely due to the association of the sonata genre with the German musical tradition, and the rejection of the idea that it could serve as a tool for expression of Chopin’s Polish identity. Another reason is a belief that Chopin created a musical genre of Ballade as a means of expression for his nationalistic feelings.\(^{105}\) Although there is no direct evidence that would point to the nationalistic element in his sonatas, there are traces of it in them. The most obvious hint is concealed in Op. 35.\(^{106}\) The presence of a funeral march, the volatile finale and the extreme drama of the first and second movements create a narrative, the one of a heroic journey ending in death and a memory


\(^{106}\) Lissa, *Studia nad twórczością Fryderyka Chopina*, 91.
of it carried by the wind.\textsuperscript{107} It is possible that Chopin could be telling a story of any of the countless Polish soldiers, who fought and died for freedom of Poland during the November Uprising of 1830. In the case of Op. 58, the aspect of nationalism takes on another meaning. Heroism is only presented in the opening of the first movement and throughout the finale, while the rest of the sonata represents a deeply personal side of Chopin’s emotional life, less palpable and more introverted, involving the passing of his father, Mikołaj, on 3 May 1844.

Chopin’s reaction to the news of his father’s death has been documented in the correspondence of George Sand, who described Chopin as “heartbroken” and “suffering.”\textsuperscript{108} The significance of his father’s passing, has been, if discussed at all, interpreted in several ways. Benita Eisler believes Chopin “had never been close to Nicolas.” She speculates that Chopin never cared to visit his parents (despite the Russian Tsar’s declaration of general amnesty of 1833, for those involved in the November Uprising) or help financially during the dire times after the uprising. Eisler believes Chopin was “mourning for home, the idealized home of childhood, now forever shuttered by death.”\textsuperscript{109} Adam Zamoyski shares in Eisler’s opinion, stating that Mikołaj’s death caused Fryderyk to grieve not so much for his father (Zamoyski also believes they were never close), but because “it was another link with home and family that had broken, and another death to be taken personally.”\textsuperscript{110} Tad Szulc, on the other hand, describes Chopin’s reaction to his father’s death as “extreme shock,” which resulted in a “deep depression: he locked himself in his bedroom for days, refusing to see anyone, including George.” Szulc


\textsuperscript{109} Benita Eisler, Chopin’s funeral (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 130.

argues that Fryderyk was very close to his father: “Mikołaj commented on Fryderyk’s
descriptions of his life and work in Paris; he was the confidant of his son, who opened up to him
more than to anyone else (if not always fully).”\textsuperscript{111} Although there is no evidence of Chopin’s
correspondence at the time, there exists a letter to Chopin written by his brother-in-law, Antoni
Barciński, describing the last days of Mikołaj Chopin’s life. Most likely due to the political
situation and his weakening health, Chopin could not grieve with his family in Poland, so he
requested Barciński to write a recollection of the events leading to his father’s death.

The terrible loss of a father and inability to grieve with his family aggrevated Chopin’s
ongoing internal struggle. Ideologically he could not return to Poland as it would signify
acceptance of the Russian regime. On the other hand, although surrounded by many friends, he
was alone, without his family. In this emotional state he left for Nohant where he would only
describes the moments of physical and emotional agony of the early summer of 1844:

Chopin, Sand, Maurice, and Solange arrived in Nohant on May 30. But rather
than recover from the shock of his father’s death, Fryderyk came down
immediately with an acute dental infection... He was in bed with high fever for a
week and, as George recalled, he hallucinated in his sleeplessness about the
ghosts of his father and Jaś Matuszyński, often confusing them. As it had in
childhood and adolescence, in Vienna and in Stuttgart, death was haunting and
stalking Chopin again.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{111} Szulc, \textit{Chopin in Paris: the life and times of the great composer}, 286.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 291.
The ethereal and hypnotic qualities of the Berceuse might portray a design of a mechanical music box, but they could also serve as a tool for grieving his loss. The choice to write a piano sonata, instead of any other genre, during such a painful time suggests a strong connection to the genre and its expressive powers. Abundance of the thematic material, incomparable beauty of all melodic lines, metaphysical quality - those are the elements that reflect many aspects of Chopin’s personality: memories, struggle, healing, longing; they can be heard in every movement of Op. 58.

Summary

While Classical influence remained strong throughout his life, Chopin followed the new Romantic ideology of nationalism, transformation, expansion and individualisation, which resulted in an organic fluidity of his works. Chopin’s successful combination of two aesthetic ideals resulted in equilibrium of structural integrity and emotional fulfillment.

Although the cultural reforms initiated in Paris in the 1830s provided a new market for ‘serious’ music, there was no space for the piano music in the public concert setting. In spite of its growing popularity, the piano remained mostly an accompanying tool for chamber music. Rare performances of piano solo sonatas resulted from the inadequateness of the piano as a solo instrument; lack of sufficient tone color; loss of interest in the genres of the past; loss of the

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sonata’s normative pattern due to the evolution of the genre; lack of place for individualism in concert settings; presence of gender inequity in Parisian society, which disallowed women (who constituted majority of piano players) any soloistic display.

Theories regarding the sonata genre have been mostly concerned with sonata form, due to its decisive influence on the rest of the cycle. The first major treatises describing sonata form were written in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Based on observations of sonata forms of the Classical era, Reicha, Marx and Czerny created sonata form models and compositional principles. Those included: specific harmonic and structural outlines; importance of the opening thematic material; idea of the thematic sections as subordinates to the unity of the work; a specific complementary structure of the secondary thematic material.

Some of the modern approaches to sonata form were inspired by the absence of studies of the Romantic sonatas. Newman notices trends of exaggeration, fulfillment of the sonata form and dichotomy between the absolute and programmatic approach. Rosen suggest rethinking of the traditional method of formal analysis, by viewing textural interruptions as pivotal points in structural identification. Leikin observes an evolution of the formal design and blending of the structural elements, causing functional ambiguities.

Chopin adapts the Classical outline in his sonatas. Although, the order of the second and third movements is exchanged, all the movements possess the qualities expected from the traditional model. Chopin’s evolution of the sonata cycle manifests itself through individualisation of the design, employment of variation procedures and liberation of the cycle’s movements. Chopin’s development of sonata form is expressed through blurring of formal elements, expansion of thematic material, and postponement of climaxes.
Many criticisms of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58 were caused by inadequate understanding of Chopin’s compositional aesthetic. His sonata model represents a synthesis of traditional elements and stylistic features, which, in the case of Op. 58, create formal ambiguities.

The genre of the sonata was an essential part of Chopin’s oeuvre. Although he composed only three sonatas for piano solo, the two mature piano sonatas represent not only the peak of Chopin’s stylistic development, but can also be seen as an expression of nationalism (Op. 35) or grief and consolation after the loss of his father (Op. 58).
Chapter 2

Musical language of Chopin’s late style and its manifestations in the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58

Chopin’s late style is believed to have originated in the beginning of the 1840s. Due to the progressive nature of the creative process, it is impossible to determine when the evolution took a major leap into a new direction. However, scholars have shed some light on the issue by examining events in Chopin’s life at the time. Mieczysław Tomaszewski suggests that the late style was triggered by a deepening personal crisis developed as early as in the summer of 1841. He finds traces of Chopin’s “disappointment with the course of his personal history” in correspondence with a friend and confidant Julian Fontana and in the choice of tragic texts for two of the songs written at the time (The Lovers and Faded and Vanished). Tomaszewski claims the crisis brought out a period of artistic reassessment in Chopin’s life.\(^1\) Jeffrey Kallberg observes that Chopin’s re-examination of his compositional craft began in 1842 with a study of counterpoint treatises by Cherubini and Kastner. This resulted in Chopin’s canonic writing, which “appeared frequently, and independent part-writing became the rule.”\(^2\) Kallberg notices restraint in the use of ornamentation, which became structurally important, an increased role of rhythm in building tension, and blend of musical genres, which he investigates within the Polonaise – Fantasy, Op. 61. Charles Rosen observes that Chopin’s late style reached beyond the Classical functions of homophony by creating a heterophonic accompaniment. He believes Chopin learnt this technique from Bach’s contrapuntal writing.\(^3\) Lawrence Kramer goes further


\(^2\) Kallberg, Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre, 90.

\(^3\) Rosen, Sonata Forms, 390-391.
to implement Chopin’s dandyism as one of the major factors in the development of the late style. This is expressed in the pursuit of gracefulness which, in later years, became more impudent and excessive. As a musical manifestation of this aesthetic Kramer points out the presence of structurally ambiguous “rogue pitches” in Mazurkas, Op. 59. Bohdan Pociej believes Chopin’s late style manifests dualism of the creative process, presented by “both activeness and lassitude.” Pociej dwells on new aspects of expression, which include emotional polyvalence, reflective and contemplative elements, metaphysical qualities which surpass pessimism and optimism of the world and human efforts in it. Without presenting any specific examples he attributes these qualities to new compositional techniques developed by Chopin, such as extension of time, expansion and diversification of space, enrichment of the set of tonal nuances, prolongation of melody and harmony.

This chapter will examine innovations of Chopin’s late style and their manifestations in the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58. First, a summary of new compositional techniques and their influence will be presented in the context of Op. 58. Second, the new direction in expression of Chopin’s dandified aesthetic will be discussed within the scope of the first movement (marked Allegro maestoso) and the second movement (Scherzo). Third, an attempt to analyse new expressive elements of the late style will follow based on the unconventional resolutions of musical intensity in the secondary thematic area of the first movement and emotional polarity expressed in the third movement (Largo). Many of Chopin’s late style features are consistent with those of other composers’ late styles, proving that the late style can provide a broader view

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5 Pociej, “Chopin’s late style. Late style: lassitude and innovation,” in Chopin’s musical worlds: 1840s, 330.
6 Ibid., 335-336.
of similarities in the developments of compositional aesthetics among a wide spectrum of composers, as has been recently described by Joseph Straus.\footnote{Joseph Straus, “Disability and ‘Late Style’ in Music,” \textit{The Journal of Musicology}, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 3-45.}

For the purpose of clarity I will use the following abbreviations for the structural sections of the first movement: P area – indicating the primary thematic area (mm. 1-16), S area – indicating the secondary thematic area (mm. 41-75 and 151-185), K – indicating the closing material of the exposition and recapitulation (mm. 76-89 and 186-197). In establishing this division of the formal elements I followed Rosen’s approach of identification by observation of textural, thematic and harmonic interruptions.\footnote{Rosen, \textit{Sonata Forms}, 96-97.} Although this method might produce disputable results, due to the abundance of these contents present in the first movement of Op. 58, Rosen’s method of identification appears the most appropriate. A detailed discussion of structural design of the movement and its ambiguities will follow in the next chapter.

**New Compositional Techniques:**

**Blend of genres**

At the beginning of the 1840s, Chopin began employing new compositional techniques in his works. A major one was blending genres. Although there are some isolated examples of Chopin’s earlier works that employed this procedure (most notably in Nocturne in G minor, Op. 15, No. 3),\footnote{Kallberg, \textit{Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre}, 3-29.} genre crossing became much more significant during Chopin’s late period. Chopin used this technique most prominently in the Polonaise – Fantasy, Op. 61, and in Op. 58 as well. While the abundant genre idiosyncrasies of Op. 61 caused Chopin to name it Polonaise –
Fantasy, similar features present in the first and last movements of Op. 58 did not make a case for adding ‘Fantasy’ to the title of the sonata (unlike Beethoven, who named Sonata – Fantasy both of his piano sonatas Op. 27). Throughout Op. 58 scholars noticed aspects of many types of compositions juxtaposed in the same formal framework. Lissa finds elements of a nocturne in the course of the S area in the first movement,\textsuperscript{10} while Tomaszewski perceives features of a ballade in the opening and closing movements.\textsuperscript{11}

The piano nocturne originated with John Field in the early nineteenth century and refers to a work of a “quiet and meditative” character, which could also include emotionally intense sections. Chopin’s contribution to the genre included expansion of the “harmonic accompanying patterns beyond those of the Alberti bass,” and creation of a new model of melodic lines, which “transferred to the keyboard the cantilena of Italian opera.”\textsuperscript{12} The general tendency to produce a poetic effect in Chopin’s nocturnes, which “adopt a variety of formal types,” was achieved by employing stylisations of vocal techniques, flexibility of melodic lines, “widened arpeggiation in the accompaniment” and sustaining pedal.\textsuperscript{13}

The presence of the nocturne element can be noticed in the S areas of the first movement, where Chopin introduces a long melodic line in a high register accompanied by steadily flowing harmonic figures and sustained by a long pedal (Example 2.1).

\textsuperscript{10} Lissa, \textit{Studia nad twórczością Fryderyka Chopina}, 175.
\textsuperscript{11} Tomaszewski, \textit{Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans}, 489.
\textsuperscript{12} Maurice J.E. Brown and Kenneth L. Hamilton, “Nocturne,” in Grove Music Online.
\textsuperscript{13} Samson, \textit{The music of Chopin}, 83-84.
Example 2.1. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 41-42.

The texture of this example resembles that of a nocturne; however it is not the only nocturne influence present in the S area. After the first section of the S area (mm. 41-55) Chopin subtly continues nocturne-like textural element throughout the following part (mm. 56-65, Example 2.2), which, although rhythmically intensified and absent of pedal, evolves from the opening material of the S area:

Example 2.2. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 56-58.

The first melodic gesture of the right hand is clearly derived from the opening melodic line in m. 41. Also the accompanying figures, even though rhythmically diminished, relate to the directional intervallic contour of the accompanying gestures of mm. 41-55.

The features of a nocturne are also noticeable in the K areas of the first movement. Although Chopin disguises the melody by intertwining it with the rising passages in the
accompaniment, the texture of this section together with the rhythmic stability and overall character (*dolce*) once again establish a connection with the nocturne (see Example 2.3).

Example 2.3. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 76-77.

The presence of a nocturne within the sonata form was used by Chopin in order to emphasize the thematic contrast between the P and S areas and introduce an element of stability, even if temporary, amongst the various materials. That contrast would prove emotionally releasing and provide grounds for contemplative and introverted expression, another characteristic of Chopin’s late style.

The instrumental ballade was Chopin’s invention that aimed at producing a new narrative structure in which the story of the Romantic poetic ballad could be translated into music. As James Parakilas points out, the poetic ballad represented a story of a human act of defiance, the process of developing a guilty conscience and an act of reckoning. Those elements set the tone for the narrative structure of the literary ballads and form a model on which Chopin based his piano Ballades. In their extended studies of Chopin’s four piano Ballades, Parakilas and Samson discover several universal features that define Chopin’s model of the instrumental ballade. Both scholars notice an overall “end-directed” structure, in which the gradual rhythmic

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and textural intensification continues “sustaining unresolved tensions until the very end,”\textsuperscript{15} and brings the delayed affirmation of the tonic “in a moment of catharsis.”\textsuperscript{16} Samson and Parakilas also observe Chopin’s unique use of the compound duple meters 6/4 and 6/8 in the Ballades. Samson believes that “in each ballade the simple, steady tread of the compound duple metre acts as a thread linking the events of an unfolding drama. As a foreground ‘presence’ the metre is especially prominent in the earlier, texturally uncluttered stages of the ballades, receding into the background at the more climactic, densely textured moments.”\textsuperscript{17} Parakilas, based on the study of the poetic ballad’s prosody and melody, suggests that Chopin’s choice of 6/4 or 6/8 meter, even though unique to the musical genre, “was not required by the poetic meter of any particular poetic model.”\textsuperscript{18} Other features of the instrumental ballade pointed out by Samson include: segmentation of the thematic material, which contributes to intensification of the thematic groups, transitions and thematic synthesis;\textsuperscript{19} connection to the sonata-form design in a “harmonically directional structure where variation and transformation are seminal functions;”\textsuperscript{20} a preference for the third-related tonal regions and avoidance of the dominant in the harmonic design;\textsuperscript{21} an unpredictable succession of the dramatic content, which creates an impression of a structurally unfolding “event-series.”\textsuperscript{22} Parakilas notices that Chopin’s Ballades, even though they share some similarities in structural design, do not create a fixed formal model. However, he observes that “Chopin’s ballade structure seems to require three musical events: statement of themes, transformation of themes and resolution. He may or may not use those three events to

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{18} Parakilas, \textit{Ballads without words}; Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade, 41.
\textsuperscript{19} Samson, \textit{Chopin: The Four Ballades}, 77.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 84.
organize the ballade into three-part musical form.”23 Parakilas describes the structure of the ballad process as a “structure, in which the initial event contains the seed of the conclusion and the conclusion answers directly to the initial event.”24 He believes that the primary themes of Chopin’s Ballades have a key role in determining the overall characters of the works, subsequently affecting the other themes and the returns of all thematic material.25 Consequently, the unifying influence of thematic transformations, which “demonstrate the closeness of the apparently remote,” is highlighted. It is worth noting that this approach is reminiscent of Marx’s emphasis on the decisive role of the opening material in a sonata form.26 Parakilas notes the difference between the return of the thematic material in the Ballade setting and the recapitulation of a sonata form, the first one being an element of the poetic narrative of stanza repetition, where each repetition brings in new text (i.e. new thematic development/transformation), thus not functioning as a recapitulation of the beginning.27 He also observes rapid changes in the unfolding of musical events28 and the structural importance of virtuosic passages, particularly near the end of the Ballades, where they tend to transform the thematic material “beyond recognition.”29

Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata is a work with abundant references to the genre of the instrumental ballade. Although balladic aspects might not be easy to perceive, they are present throughout the P and S areas and the development of the first movement as well as in the last movement.

23 Parakilas, Ballads without words; Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade, 72.
24 Ibid., 39.
25 Ibid., 64-65.
26 As discussed in the previous chapter (p. 14).
27 Parakilas, Ballads without words; Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade, 83-86.
28 Ibid., 45.
29 Ibid., 56.
The first instance of the influence of Chopin’s balladic model can be spotted within the \( P \) area of the first movement. Beginning at m.12 Chopin fragments the opening material and modifies it, using only the falling harmonic outline of the beginning:

![Example 2.4. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 13-18.](image)

After the second descent, Chopin intensifies the rhythmic energy by half, compressing the chromatically rising sequence and substituting the *tenuto* half-note arrival points with *staccato* eighth notes (see Example 2.4).

Intensification and segmentation in this context can be attributed to Chopin’s balladic method of working out the thematic material, but those techniques also are present in several
Classical sonata forms.\textsuperscript{30} What makes this moment more balladic is a sudden interruption of the build up and arrival of a completely new material (m.17) which does not relate to any previous material thematically or rhythmically, creating an effect of an event-series rather than a natural, organic continuation.

Another example of the influence of the instrumental ballade occurs in the S areas of the first movement (mm. 56-76, also recapitulation, mm. 166-186). Surprising dramatic progress can be felt as the musical material rapidly changes its mood, taking unexpected turns (see Example 2.5).

\textsuperscript{30} This kind of procedure is notable in the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in D major, Op. 10, No. 3, mm. 1-17 and 193-200.
With the cadential figure in m. 55, Chopin prepares the arrival of the F# minor tonality which is expected to continue; however, just a moment later (m. 57), he takes the listener into another tonal area of A7 and D major. This unforeseen shift is followed by a section which intensifies, through variation, the material of mm. 61-62 only to suspend it in m. 65. At this point Chopin introduces another episode, which, in modulatory character, takes yet another turn intensifying its flow through shortening of subphrases, chromaticism (mm. 72-73), and, eventually, rhythmic ‘quasi’ suspension (mm. 74-75). This series ends with the closing material, which also undergoes gradual intensification, climax and a release resulting in a complete halt of musical flow (first ending, m. 90, Example 2.6).
What is particularly interesting in regards to the balladic aspect of the S areas in the first movement of Op. 58 is the fact that three out of four phrases build in the S and K areas (mm. 56-
65, 66-75, and 76-90) share some common balladic features: rhythmic, textural and dynamic gradual intensification; climax including an element of suspension (mostly rhythmic); and a surprising resolution, which introduces new material with unexpected tonal centres and few references to the previous material (e.g. right-hand descending triplets in mm. 50, 62, 79 – all possess similar rhetorical quality). The unpredictability of the dramatic outcome is the key element linking the S area and the instrumental ballade. Chopin departs from the traditional conventions with the use of multiple thematic material and tonal digressions (especially in mm. 66-75).

The next instance of balladic influence in Op. 58 can be noticed at the end of the development in the first movement. Chopin suddenly suspends the flow, and, with the following passage, reworks the thematic material of the S area (m. 57). Through the improvisatory character, he creates an impression of a starting point which eventually builds up, preparing a return of the material from the exposition (mm. 133-137, Example 2.7).
A similar procedure takes place in Chopin’s Fourth Ballade, Op. 52, where the imitative element works out a melodic fragment, which, following two attempts, reaches the point of return/repetition of the main thematic idea (Example 2.8).
The presence of the balladic element can be also observed in the fourth movement (marked *Finale*) of Op. 58. While many scholars, including Chomiński, do not notice any influence, Tomaszewski considers the 6/8 meter and the *agitato* character as a reference point to Chopin’s balladic model. He describes the movement as possessing a “balladic drama.” Through the observation of each reoccurrence of the main theme, Tomaszewski notices thematic “transformation, leading to a culmination and coda played out in the major mode of the main tonality.” This rather general remark does not fully illustrate the significance of the balladic aspects in the finale. The connection occurs not only in the 6/8 meter and thematic transformation, which gradually intensifies the material throughout the movement. Reference to the ballade is also manifested through a similar formal structure (“end-directed” design), avoidance of the dominant tonality within larger sections, segmentation of the thematic material and structural importance of virtuosic passages, especially in the coda. Influence of Chopin’s ballade model on the *Finale* is immense. Its formal implications are intricate and, as a source of structural ambiguities, will be closely examined in Chapter 4.

**Chromaticism**

Another innovation of Chopin’s late style discussed by scholars is an extended use of chromatic elements. Janice Arnold concludes that, in the case of Op. 58, chromaticism plays a vital role:

> In Opus 58, a more Romantic work, which exhibits both more confidence in the handling of the form and more masterly thematic manipulation, chromaticism plays a greater role in generating form. Much of the chromaticism of the development section derives from the mixture of major and minor elements in the

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middleground – specifically, the raised sixth scale degree. In this work, Chopin seems to have turned a corner in his use of chromatic elements.\textsuperscript{32}

Arnold also points out an increased importance of enharmonicism. She believes its contribution in loosening diatonic relations is groundbreaking in making way to future theories of “equality for all tones.”\textsuperscript{33} Chromaticism can be seen throughout Op. 58 as an important element in building tension and defining structure. It is especially present in unstable moments of the outer movements, like bridges and cadences, as well as throughout the entire development of the first movement. Rosen suggests the chromatic passagework in mm. 23-28 of the first movement serves as a tool in an attempt to blur the harmonic sense of the form, thus making the appearance of the S area in a relative key of D major seem natural.\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\caption{Example 2.9. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 22-24.}
\end{figure}

This argument is only partially compelling since Chopin could have achieved the D major key in a more natural way without any harmonic blurring. As Chopin was following a traditional tonal design of the sonata form, in which, if the P area belonged in the minor mode, the S area appeared in the relative major mode,\textsuperscript{35} he could have written something more ordinary, or, in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[33] Ibid., 215.
\item[34] Rosen, \textit{Sonata Forms}, 319.
\item[35] James Webster, “Sonata form,” in Grove Music Online.
\end{footnotes}
fact, omit that six-bar phrase (mm. 23-28) altogether, just like he does in the recapitulation. It is more likely that Chopin used the chromaticism of the bass line to convey an expressive idea of instability and anticipation (right hand relates melodically to the first thematic material of the S area, Example 2.1).

Chopin successfully deploys chromaticism in building and releasing tension throughout the piece. The strongest examples of chromatic build up can be noticed in the P area (mm. 12-16, Example 2.4) and S area (mm. 72-73 [Example 2.10], 180-181) of the first movement, endings of the outer sections of the second movement (mm. 53-56, 209-212), middle part of the third movement (mm. 61-67), and throughout the fourth movement - in bridges and within thematic areas (e.g. mm. 1-8, 18-20, 24-27 [Example 2.11], 60-64, 90-95, 262-267, 270-281).

Example 2.10. Chromatic build up in S area, Mvt. 1, mm. 72-73.

Example 2.11. Descending chromatic lines of melody and bass, Mvt. 4, mm. 25-27.
The most prominent examples of chromaticism as a release are found in the K material of the first movement (mm. 84-88 [Example 2.12], 192-195) and the coda from the third movement (mm. 111-113, Example 2.13).

Example 2.12. Chromatic release used in the melody of K material, Mvt. 1, mm. 84-87.

Example 2.13. Chromatically descending bass line, Mvt. 3, mm. 110-112.

The significance of the use of chromaticism in these examples supports Arnold’s argument. Decisive moments of structural importance incorporate elements of chromatic display, be it through gradual intensification or release. The fact that Chopin uses this technique in such versatile settings demonstrates his compositional and stylistic development and the daring concept of the sonata genre – modern, open and absorbent of new ideas.

**Texture**

Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, presents an important study in textural development of the late style. Chopin’s aforementioned interest in contrapuntal writing together
with the abundance of textural variety and expressive use of figuration contribute to the original spirit of the work. Jeremy Siepmann notices a strong influence of polyphonic writing in Op. 58:

No work by Chopin is more riddled with polyphonic devices, or more rooted in the aesthetics of a bygone age. Here, almost certainly, is to be found the explanation for the unusually impersonal character of the work’s opening section and its later transformations.\(^\text{36}\)

Rosen goes further to suggest that Chopin’s preoccupation with independent part-writing resulted in the creation of heterophonic accompaniment, in which every line strongly recalls the melodic line. Rosen’s belief is that this kind of writing “preserves the supremacy of the Italian-style melody while allowing a rich polyphonic elaboration. It also allows the accompaniment to become melody at any moment, and maintains the implicit existence of melody in the subsidiary layers.”\(^\text{37}\) Although it is an interesting technique, Chopin constrains it to the middle part of the third movement (see Example 2.14).

![Example 2.14. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 28-30.](image)

Also Chomiński observes an unorthodox use of figuration in this section, which confirms Rosen’s statement. Chomiński believes that the triplet eighth-note patterns are vital in


establishing the expressive context of the section. The steadiness of unusually slow figuration creates a melodic, rather than a harmonic effect.\(^{38}\)

Another noteworthy aspect of Chopin’s innovation is the variety of textural writing associated with the richness of thematic material. Chopin often changes the style of writing even within one line of music. It is especially eminent in the first movement, where, in mm. 14-24 (Example 2.15), changes of the texture occur five times (mirroring hands ‘closing passages;’ chordal and octave passage; running notes and chordal descent, accentuated chord progression; chromatic ascent of the left hand outlining canonic lines in the right hand). The high rate of short and sudden textural transformations condense the material, adding the drama of the unexpected.

\(^{38}\) Chomiński, *Sonaty Chopina*, 228.

While the other movements employ moderation in the diversity of thematic material, the first movement has been described as being “packed with material sufficient for twenty-five Sonatas by a composer twenty-five years previously."\(^{39}\) It can be seen in the course of the S area and K material, where four thematic groups can be accounted for (see Example 2.16).

Example 2.16a. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 41-42.  
Example 2.16b. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 56-57.

The unusually large variety of thematic material is unprecedented in any of Chopin’s sonatas. Even though there is a sense of the harmonic centre (D major), Chopin manages to create an impression of improvisatory character through synchronization of sudden textural and thematic shifts.

Chopin’s interest in imitative writing influenced the creative process of Op. 58. He uses it in moments of instability, enforcing the effect of uncertainty and searching. The first instance appears at the beginning of the development section (mm. 93-97, Example 2.17), where the left-hand material from the end of K (mm. 88-89, Example 2.12) becomes a theme for a short fugato passage:
The second example of Chopin’s application of older techniques happens at the end of the development (mm. 133-135, Example 2.7), where the hint of canonic writing creates an impression of wonder and searching.

Chopin’s textural innovations influenced the structural outline of the first movement of Op. 58. Similarly to other compositional techniques involved in the process, textural variety contributes to the ambiguity in perception of the formal model of the movement.

**Elements of dandified aesthetic in Op. 58**

Chopin’s well-rounded education and manners carried from earlier years spent in Warsaw proved to be of great help once he arrived in Paris. As Goldberg observes, Chopin’s experience of salon gatherings in Poland was extensive and he was surrounded by high-cultured, progressive bourgeoisie, many of which included families of the elite of Polish intelligentsia. This background had a crucial impact on the formation of Chopin’s personality. Lawrence Kramer observes many aspects of Chopin’s personality, among them a presence of elements of “a prominent social type, that of the dandy, the beautiful young man always decked out in the height of elegant fashion, immaculate and well-barbered, untouched by the vulgar and the ordinary.” Benita Eisler notices Chopin’s concern for style, grace and perfection in art as an expression of his dandyism. She argues that it provided him with much-needed “flight from the lure of darkness, from rage and melancholy.” Kramer points out that dandyism as an aesthetic

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41 Kramer, “Rogue pitches, the cult of the dandy and Chopin’s later style,” in *Chopin’s musical worlds: 1840s*, 293.
42 Eisler, *Chopin’s funeral*, 135.
demonstrated a duality in preoccupation with external beauty and contempt, which played an important role in affecting Chopin’s output:

The fluctuating movement of grace and impertinence is important in understanding Chopin’s dandified aesthetic for two reasons. First, Chopin’s dandyism expresses itself less by creating music of conspicuous gracefulness than by troubling the gracefulness it has itself created. The dandyism of Chopin’s earlier style tends toward the graceful; his later style tends – increasingly – toward the impertinent, though this formula cannot be applied rigidly or without allowance for exceptions. Second, one of the things that impertinence disdains is the effort to unify nature and artifice. By many accounts, this effort is the heart of dandy’s enterprise. (...) Instead of the mark of an ideal, latter-day dandyism had become the mark of the absence of any ideal other than dandyism itself.\textsuperscript{43}

Based on his observations of three Mazurkas, Op. 59, Kramer argues the presence of “persistent dissonances that defy resolution by ordinary tonal procedures” or rogue pitches to be a manifestation of impertinence of Chopin’s dandified aesthetic.\textsuperscript{44} By appearing in structurally vulnerable places (transitions, bridges and cadences) they represent the dandy’s rebellious ego and extremity of artifice. Rogue pitches fail to be classified in a satisfactory manner within the scope of modern analytical means: they are meant to be arbitrary. Kramer also believes that later in his life, Chopin, as a reluctant celebrity dependent on public approval, felt the need to distance himself from the popular ideas of art as self-expression by injecting elements of resistance into his own music, thus revealing the impertinent side of dandified aesthetic.\textsuperscript{45}

If Chopin’s dandified aesthetic manifests itself in the Mazurkas, Op. 59, it also does so in the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58. However, Chopin does not reveal it through a series of rebellious and persistent rogue pitches. Instead, possibly due to the more rigorous nature of the formal

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 296.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 300.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 300-314.
structure, he presents it in a very refined and subtle way. The *rogue pitches* become harmonic digressions, often limited to a few measures that provide an invaluable insight into the creative process and expressive invention of Chopin’s late style.

The most obvious example of Chopin’s dandified aesthetic appears in the exposition of the first movement of Op. 58, particularly mm.17-18 (Example 2.18). The sudden arrival of the key of B♭ major together with a new rhythmic motive (triplet) shock and pose questions of their purpose.

Leikin believes that the fragment represents a dancelike variant of the opening motif and functions as part of the transition, while Samson considers it a “tonal deflection” into G minor. Although both scholars provide reasonable explanations, they seem rather unfulfilling. Melodically, rhythmically and texturally, the opening of the movement differs significantly from mm. 17-18, while the “tonal deflection” gives only a general idea of the nature of the fragment.

Also both Chomiński’s convoluted explanation of parallel connections between the secondary dominants of B minor key, and Arnold’s belief in its goal in preparing the D major

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key area (appearing with the S area)\textsuperscript{49} seem to be more like excuses than satisfying answers to the reason behind Chopin’s thinking. Chomiński finds a distant enharmonic relation between the secondary dominant of B minor (C# major) and the key of B♭ major (as a parallel of B♭ minor, which is a relative of D♭ major, or enharmonically C# major) as a source of connection between the key areas. He suggests sudden change of tonal area as an indication of the beginning of a bridge between the P and S areas. Arnold reasons that the appearance of B♭ major area is a pivotal point in preparation of the S area of D major, 25 measures later. Her argument is most likely derived from the fact that in the recapitulation, the transposed B♭ major area plays that role there (m. 135 onwards). However, this explanation is only partially compelling, due to the presence of highly chromatic, tonally unstable sections appearing as early as m. 19 and the emergence of another unique tonal diversion in mm. 29-30, where Chopin briefly dwells on the key of E♭ major (see Example 2.19).

![Example 2.19. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 29-30.](image)

This leads to the conclusion that both analytical insights, as valid as they may be, provide only a limited understanding of the presence of this two-measure-long outburst of creative forces. In both cases we are presented with short-spanned tonal digressions which appear in

\textsuperscript{49} Arnold, “The role of chromaticism in Chopin's sonata forms: A Schenkerian view,” 183-184.
places of structural instability. Chopin carefully prepares and flawlessly arrives at these diversions, thus empowering the effect of surprise. Even notational spelling (B♭ and E♭ instead of A# and D#) together with a unique use of triplets as a rhythmic device prove that Chopin specifically designed them to surprise and astonish. It is also worth mentioning that the recapitulation transposes the B♭ major area into G# minor as a bridge preceding the S area, and omits the repetition of mm. 29-30. The reason behind it might lay in the fact that the initial moment of surprise is lost once the public heard the excursions (especially if the exposition is repeated). However, mm. 17 and 18 provide a structural recognition point (start of the bridge between the P and S areas) and become useful in establishing the beginning of the recapitulation and tonal preparation of the S area which, after the harmonically adventurous development, is most needed. This procedure could be jeopardized by the presence of another tonal diversion; hence Chopin omits the second one completely. It is safe to assume that these harmonic excursions are reflections of Chopin’s dandified aesthetic. They represent the impertinent and rebellious side of his late style in a very sophisticated yet identifiable manner.

Perhaps the clearest example of an excess in gracefulness and obsession with perfection of Chopin’s dandyism in Op. 58 is the second movement: Scherzo. Through the surprising choice of a distant key (E♭ major), lightness of character, wide-range volatile movement, regularity of phrasing of the outer sections (eight-bar phrases) and simplicity of harmonic and formal structure Chopin managed to create a masterpiece filled with a surplus of emotional ease and elegance (see Example 2.20).
As Chomiński observes, “fast-paced figuration does not allow any larger tension to form,” despite the melodic line being filled with chromaticisms, passing and neighboring notes. Even the polyphonic middle section of the movement remains harmonically stable, thus disabling any significant build up of intensity (Example 2.21). The character of the music changes, yet it lacks dramatic effect. Chomiński, Zieliński and Tomaszewski notice elements of folk music in the “ceremonial” character of the melody, “unique features of rhythm,” modest “melodic motives” and texture of “folk pipes.”

The rustic character of the middle section, straightforwardness of the outer sections, excess of fluidity, preoccupation with the regularity and lack of extreme contrasts become major

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51 Ibid., 221.
52 Zieliński, *Chopin, życie i droga twórcza*, 546.
features of the movement. They generate an extraordinary image of Chopin’s dandified aesthetic, the one of excess and sophistication in subtlety, which follows in the path of the Berceuse, Op. 57 - the peak of refined gracefulness among Chopin’s later oeuvres.

Evolution of expression in the late style:

Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58

The aspect of expression in Chopin’s late style has been neglected by music scholars, most likely due to the semantic entanglements of the topic. While reviewing the studies of researchers one can only come across general laconic references in regard to expression present in particular works or throughout the style. Most of them (Kallberg, Chomiński, Zieliński, Lissa, Rosen, Szulc, Smendzianka) focus on newly embraced compositional techniques without adequate discussion of their implications to the expressive content of the works. There is a general notion that Chopin’s late style brought a shift in expressivity from “stormy and extroverted” to “reflective and restrained.”

Tomaszewski, as one of a few, expands on the idea claiming that the late style’s essence is a “deepened and internalized fulfillment of the previous phase. (...) In the former, expansion and dynamism prevailed, in this one – it is interiorization and stability.” He notices a growing importance of sound color and harmonic subtlety, increased role of chromaticism as well as of improvisatory elements. Tomaszewski also points out a decrease in the number of expressive markings present in Chopin’s works starting in the

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54 Zieliński, *Chopin, życie i droga twórcza*, 543.
56 Ibid., 717-722.
early 1840s and claims it to be a beginning of a “crystallization of expression, which becomes almost classical. From now on it needs to be interpreted from the score rather than the words.”

Pociej, in his unique study on expression in Chopin’s late style, believes that Chopin’s later works represent a stylistic dialectic, exposed through the places of “melodic narration, harmonic flow, nuances and contrasts of motion, rhythm and consistency of sound.” He explains these places in two ways: first, “as manifestations of innovation, revealing new horizons, breaking new ground, pointing the ways forward for the development of music;” second, “as symptoms of lassitude, of an exhaustion of creative forces.”

Drawing on the example of Mahler’s late style, Pociej suggests emotional weariness of Chopin’s life experience as a symptom of lassitude in his music. Chopin’s aforementioned personal turmoil of the early 1840s together with the loss of his beloved father in May 1844 (the summer he completed Op. 58) present a convincing argument for Pociej’s case. His focus on lassitude leads to a belief in the presence of a metaphysical element in Chopin’s music of the time:

> It is expressed most fully and most profoundly in slow tempos, in adagio states, in moments of inner calm, when music quietens down, descends, as it were, deep into itself; states suggesting contemplation, meditation, reflection, consideration, in which music opens itself outwards, transcends its own being in sound, in the perspective of infinity, in the presentiment (perhaps) of infinity.

Pociej is convinced that Chopin, similarly to Mahler, managed to surpass the strongest human dialectic of pessimism and optimism and transcend the both, through his music, into “a state of the highest sublimation.” As mentioned before, Pociej attributes these qualities to some of the

57 Ibid., 635.
58 Pociej, “Chopin’s late style. Late style: lassitude and innovation,” in Chopin’s musical worlds: 1840s, 329.
59 Ibid., 337.
60 Ibid., 342.
new compositional techniques used by Chopin: extension of time, expansion and diversification of space, enrichment of the set of tonal nuances, prolongation of melody and harmony, reduction of harmony, tonal ambivalence and deceptiveness.\footnote{Ibid., 335-336.}

The Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, presents itself as an example of one of Chopin’s most sophisticated works with intricate and diverse expressive elements. It manifests many of the elements mentioned by Tomaszewski and Pociej and due to the complexity of genre makes a particularly interesting study of expressive innovation of Chopin’s late style.

Throughout Op. 58 one can notice only eleven different expressive markings. Chopin’s sparseness of interpretative indication might not be innovative, although this compositional strategy creates a new challenge for the performer. Limitation of expressive markings can imply that either these markings convey more of the composer’s intentions, transcending the meanings of each indication into a larger expressive content, or they simply provide a basic interpretative guideline to several particular places, overall working together with tempo, dynamics and articulation markings. Tomaszewski’s belief that one needs to go further into the score and find the essence of expressive content between the notes seems valid; however one might fall into the trap of underestimating the significance of all performance markings. In finding a complete picture of expressive content one needs to take into consideration not only the score but all of the performance indications. It may be obvious; however it still poses many interpretative challenges, due to multiple meanings of some of the markings. As Annabelle Paetsch notices, Chopin’s indications carry a particular set of practical performance implications that often
expand over to the other aspects of interpretation. The clearest example may be Chopin’s use of *sostenuto*, which Paetsch attributes to pathos, “sustained, singing touch” and “slight relaxation of tempo” over entire sections. However, due to the sparseness of expressive symbols in Op. 58, one ought, in order to comprehend new expressive elements, follow Tomaszewski’s advice and immerse oneself into the score.

The first clear example of expressive novelty of Chopin’s late style in Op. 58 happens in the S area of the first movement. Chopin decidedly breaks the conventions with a series of unexpected musical twists. Within the span of forty-two measures belonging to S area (mm.41 - 83) he surprises the listener three times, promising one outcome of the phrase and delivering a stunning and astonishing finish. The first twist happens in m. 56, after the outspoken ending of the first part of the second subject (Example 2.22).

![Example 2.22. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 56-58.](image)

With a leap of an octave in the melodic line and increase of energy in the rhythmic flow of the left hand, Chopin makes a promise of bringing out a highly energetic and emotionally charged phrase (like in the case of the Second Piano Sonata, Op. 35, both Piano Concerti and other earlier sonata forms). This expectation is shattered when at the downbeat of m. 57 Chopin suddenly

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62 Annabelle Paetsch, “Performance practices in Chopin's piano sonatas, Opp. 35 and 58: A critical study of nineteenth-century manuscript and printed sources” (Diss., The University of Western Ontario, 2001), 122-226.

63 Ibid., 168.
drops the dynamic and the dramatic key of F# minor. A new melody in the right hand and a return to the secondary key of D major change the character of the phrase entirely. Only the left hand provides a sense of increased movement and musical continuity. This unexpected twist followed by a slowly evolving and expanding phrase creates a feeling of a sophisticated improvisation, which is continued throughout the section. After a four-measure build up (mm. 61-64, Example 2.5), where the range expands and dynamics and rhythm intensify, Chopin again promises a rhythmically and emotionally dynamic passage which is not delivered. Instead, he lingers on the diminished seventh chord and takes the music through a cascade of harmonic surprises in a swift section marked *leggiero* (Example 2.5). The very presence of the *leggiero* marking indicates how important the surprising character and subtlety of this passage was to Chopin. Paetsch’s interpretation of this *leggiero* marking suggests not only light touch and quick release, but also signifies the beginning of a new section with a “thematic shift.”\(^{64}\) This inventive section is developed for the next several measures until, with the help of an ascending progression of chromatic two-beat-units, it reaches a climax and a long-lasting cadence at mm. 74 (see Example 2.23).

This is perhaps the biggest surprise Chopin unveiled in the S area. In being creative, not only does he lighten up the texture in arriving at the climax (after a rising chromatic build up),

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 166.
rejects the use of lower register in prolonging the bass line, but also does not reach the harmonic resolution until the start of the K material (m. 76, Example 2.5). In addition, he marks an extra hair-pin cresc. in m. 73 (on top of the previously marked cresc. in m. 72), where it becomes impractical without a strong bass foundation. This cresc. transcends level of mere volume. It indicates an ascent of emotion and intensity, pointing out an expressive, prolonged culmination of the phrase. Here is where Brahms, Liszt and Schumann would write molto espressivo, yet Chopin conveys it without words. The entire cadential passage creates an impression of a searching journey. Chopin exchanges a powerful climax for a reflective one, filled with subtle motion and harmonic wandering. The cadential figure is followed by the closing material marked in tempo and dolce (m. 76). At this point Chopin creates one of the most outstanding musical moments in his oeuvre but also continues his exploration of new expressive possibilities. It seems that nothing can stir up the peaceful and dolce mood of mm. 76-79; in fact they are so convincing that Chopin decides to repeat them. However, the second time he chooses not to wind the phrase down but instead produces the last increase in intensity, culminating with a continuous emotional release (mm. 84-89, Example 2.6). Through chromaticism in a long descending melody, pedal point and masterly crafted ascending passages of the left hand, Chopin carves out a remarkable duality in the character of this section. On the one hand, there is an overpowering sense of a gradual relief; on the other, the left hand provides a reminiscence of struggle and unease. This final expressive discharge presents a metaphysical quality of an attempt to resolve the tensions and emotional struggles incurred in the music.

Chopin’s approach to the S area provides an invaluable insight into the new expressive aspects of his late style. It is safe to assume that the expression takes over the form. It is also clear that musical narration becomes a priority and flow and continuity provide a necessary
background. Dramatic contrasts are replaced with subtleness and variety of tonal nuances contributing to the overall sensation of an improvisatory, reflective character which lasts through the S area. The variety of expressive nuances is emphasized by the presence of three well-prepared climaxes, which provide turning points for emotional exploration. There is a new treatment of climaxes, particularly the one leading to K (mm. 74-75), where Chopin almost stops the flow and withholds the stream of energy presented in the build up. In doing so, he achieves an introspective, contemplative, yet emotionally charged expression. This defines a new way of working through the culminating points, which Chopin might have adapted from late Beethoven.65

The third movement (marked Largo) from Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, has been described as the “central point” of the piece.66 The presence of only four expressive markings once again requires a thorough study of the music in order to find new elements of expression, which eventually become visible in each of the movement’s three sections. The opening is viewed by Tomaszewski as a continuation of the second movement (Scherzo), which “gives way to nocturnal cantabile in B major.”67 Already in the third measure, Chopin subtly experiments with harmonies in introducing the main subject (Example 2.24).

66 Tomaszewski, Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans, 492.
67 Ibid., 492.
This astonishing moment is a sign of Chopin’s tonal expansion, where sonorities of the chords overpower their harmonic context of preparing the arrival of the tonic. The A section is built around one of the most beautiful melodies written by Chopin, which, according to Rosen, is an homage to Bellini’s style of operatic writing.\(^6\)

Structurally, the A section consists of four short phrases (mm. 5-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17-19), which are linked together by a melody and continuity of the accompaniment’s rhythmic pattern. The main climax happens in the second phrase (m. 11), where a brief modulation takes place. The third phrase is constructed of rather free melodic gestures taken on a harmonic journey through the keys of C# minor and G# minor. The last phrase is a repetition of the first one with an additional quasi-ostinato figure in the middle voice. Melodic flow continues throughout the opening until a sudden interruption in m. 19 (Example 2.25).

The following questioning figures of the right hand in mm. 19 and 21 invite contemplative responses, which are elaborated and transformed into the *sostenuto* B section. Continuity and repetitiveness of the new material together with subtlety of harmonic progression pose a question of their expressive purpose. Described by Smendzianka as “contemplative”\(^{69}\) and by Tomaszewski as “a philosophical discourse,”\(^ {70}\) the middle section of the *Largo* consists of four smoothly connected phrases. Each is built with two statements: one introducing a new static melody in the left hand under a right-hand flow of descending harmonic figures (mm. 29-35), another presenting an evolving series of ascending arpeggio lines which end with chordal suspensions (e.g. mm. 36-37, Example 2.26) and return to the material of the first statement in a relative minor mode (mm. 42-44, Example 2.27).


\(^{70}\) Tomaszewski, *Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans*, 492.
Example 2.27. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 42-45.

The first two phrases (mm. 29-44 and 45-60) are almost identical (except for the last two measures, which take different turns preparing forthcoming material). The third phrase evolves to become a climactic passage of the B section with a daring harmonic exploration and use of chromaticism in approaching the $f$ dynamics (see Example 2.28).

Example 2.28. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 62-68.

The final phrase brings back the material of the begging of the \textit{sostenuto} section. It uses the last measures to discover new sounds in harmonic exploration, which suspends all motion at the dominant seventh chord of B major (m. 98, Example 2.29).
The last part of the movement, marked *dolcissimo*, is a shorter and embellished version of the opening A section. The left hand is now moving in triplets, giving the melody a stronger sense of direction. Several measures of harmonic wandering lead to a coda (m. 113 onwards, Example 2.30), which, with the right-hand melody and left-hand accompanying figures, recalls the B section.

The third movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 depicts new expressive elements of his late style. Through simplicity of structural design, lack of dynamic extremes and repetitiveness of the material Chopin created a unique work that opens doors to understanding his late style’s aesthetic.

The long melody of the A section resembles vocal arias and nocturnes, but the repetitive rhythmic structure of the accompaniment is a constant reminder of the movement’s dramatic
opening. The beauty and delight of the melody are therefore marred by an underlying shadow of pathos. Both simultaneously expressed feelings of positive and negative create an emotional polarity, which reflects Chopin’s concerns and struggles of the time. Moreover, the climactic ending of the section (mm. 19-28) reinforces the drama and gradually releases the tension into the *sostenuto* part, transcending all emotions expressed so far. It is important to realize how disguised the struggle is. Chopin hardly uses any expressive or performance markings – furthermore, at the place of emotional climax he stops musical flow entirely, limiting his writing to a series of simple rhetorical figures and harmonic responses (Example 2.25). By imposing an expressive climax onto the epilogue of the A section, he opens up a new possibility for presenting the middle part. Chomiński believes that a gradual increase of intensity throughout the A section is essential in achieving the calming character of the *sostenuto* section.\(^{71}\)

The question of the expressive purpose of such structuring brings back Pociej’s argument. Chopin’s ongoing intensification of the material can be perceived as an idiom of internal struggle; contemplation of the positive and negative eventually leads to a highly dramatic climax. The struggle is not resolved, it is rather accepted, thus enabling one to transcend the realm of human emotions. A mystical journey from human to unearthly realms takes place. The *sostenuto* section depicts an expressive exploration of unknown territory. “A state of highest sublimation”\(^{72}\) is maintained throughout the entire middle part of the movement. Repetitiveness of the material reflects endlessness while consistency of motion contributes to the feeling of meditation. Simple and straightforward treatment of musical material suggests withdrawal and surrender to the unending power of serenity. The music’s aura seems

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\(^{71}\) Chomiński, *Sonaty Chopina*, 228.

\(^{72}\) Pociej, “Chopin’s late style. Late style: lassitude and innovation,” in *Chopin’s musical worlds: 1840s*, 342.
unstoppable, although after a long time it is interrupted by a distant echo of a dramatic peak of
the A section (Example 2.31).

Example 2.31. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 3, mm. 89-91.

The following moments of awakening suspend after the harmonic search ends with the
arrival of the $V^7$ chord of B major (m. 98, Example 2.29). Return of the A section brings peace to
the opening struggle with the help of left-hand triplets, which successfully ease previously
encountered tensions and provide continuity to the musical flow. The movement’s coda is a
reminder of the middle section in the simplicity of textural design and resembles the outer parts
in the employment of a long melodic line.

The aspect of expression in late Chopin poses a difficulty. Lack of in-depth studies on the
topic and Chopin’s own restraint in discussing his music make the issue very challenging.
Tomaszewski’s method of immersing into the score provides only a restricted tool for
investigation, partly due to a limitation of performance markings. Another intricacy comes from
the shift of compositional writing that Chopin employed. Repetitiveness of the material,
expansion of melody and harmony, and subtlety of changes make the expressive aspects often
difficult to portray. Therefore, the result of any study on the topic will always be incomplete.
However, it is necessary to provide new perspectives on the subject and open doors for
discussions and ideas that need to be developed in an attempt to fully understand the aesthetic of Chopin’s late style.

Summary

Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, presents an extraordinary study of new compositional techniques as well as expressive elements associated with his late style. Chopin’s stylistic developments resulted in a multi-genre thinking, growing importance of counterpoint, ground-breaking use of chromaticism in build up and release, large variety of textural writing and innovative use of figuration. As presented above, all of these traits made an impact on the structure of Op. 58. The presence of these techniques reinforces Chopin’s idea of the evolution of the sonata genre and form, which breaks with conventions, becoming more personal and closely reflective of his own aesthetic.

Due to the more rigid formal design of the sonata form, Chopin, in contrast to Mazurkas, Op. 59, did not reveal dandyism through the selection of rogue pitches. Instead, he exposed his dandified aesthetic on a macro scale: first, by expressing impertinence through the use of brief tonal digressions in the first movement; second, by approaching the second movement with a highly exaggerated idea of gracefulness.

Expression in late Chopin is an intricate issue, due to Chopin’s restraint in discussing his music and a limited number of expressive markings employed throughout his scores. Therefore, in order to understand new aspects of expression, one is required to focus on the score and all performance markings, looking for unorthodox treatment of musical material. As observed
above, in the case of Op. 58, Pociej’s argument of lassitude is valid. The presence of metaphysical elements can be seen in the climax of the S area of the first movement as well as throughout the third movement, particularly in the middle section.
Chapter 3

Structural ambiguities in the first movement of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58

Ambiguity in music has been a theme of broad discussion for many decades now. Most musicologists focus on analysis of ambiguous situations in the works of particular composers, although several scholars also attempt to define ambiguity’s universal importance and meaning in music. One of the first notable works among general studies of ambiguity in music belongs to William Thomson, who describes functional ambiguity as “a music event (...) implying no clear syntactic meaning or two or more potential meanings,” due to its “successive or simultaneous conflicting properties.”¹ He states that the functional ambiguity is “a latent potential” when, within a larger section of the work, at least two of the musical parameters (melody, texture, harmony, pitch register or rhythm) are “noncongruent.” He believes ambiguity becomes audible when the “pairs of noncongruent properties coincide, either simultaneously or serially.”² Thomson applies his concept in a study of Chopin’s Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 4, where he notices tonal, rhythmic and phrasing ambiguities present in its otherwise straightforward ABA formal design.³ Kofi Agawu expands Thomson’s ideas by focusing on the context of the ambiguous situation: “if I claim to perceive an event or set of events as ambiguous, I must not only specify but justify the context that I have constructed to enable that perception.” He also notes that perception of ambiguity “depends on the kind of baggage that I bring or wish to bring to the auditing process.”⁴ Agawu criticizes Thomson’s theory of ‘parametric noncongruence’ as a source of ambiguity in music, stating that ‘parametric noncongruence’ “is in fact the norm of

² Ibid., 15.
³ Ibid., 18-23.
musical structure,” becoming “the inescapable condition of any expressive art.” Agawu’s final thoughts include: conviction in analysis as a source of resolution of “ambiguities at all levels of structure;” and a belief that although ambiguity “may exist as an abstract phenomenon, it does not exist in concrete musical situations; in situations of competing meanings, the alternatives are always formed hierarchically, making all such situations decidable without denying the existence of multiple meanings.”

Although Thomson’s and Agawu’s explanations of musical ambiguity differ significantly, they represent ambiguity as a valid, and aesthetically rewarding, concept, which is an important aspect of Chopin’s compositional aesthetic.

Chopin’s music is rich in various types of ambiguities. Wherever some musical parameters do not correspond to the formal, tonal or rhythmic context in which they are set, ambiguity can arise. Most of the debate concerning ambiguity in Chopin’s music is only hinted at in studies of particular works or sets of works. There are, though, some studies that discuss particular works from the perspective of ambiguity. Harald Krebs focuses on formal and tonal structure in the Scherzo, Op. 31, noticing elements of sonata form and a duality of tonal structure (B♭ and D♭ as tonal centers). Lissa traces the formal and tonal design of the Fantasy, Op. 49, and this reveals a multiplicity of structural and tonal elements in the work. Carl Schachter also discusses the tonal design of Fantasy, Op. 49, noticing the dual tonality of the work (F minor and A♭ major). Kallberg observes the ambiguity of genre in Chopin’s Nocturne in G minor, Op. 15, No. 3, perceiving rhythmic and tonal aspects of a mazurka. Both Charles Fisk and Anthony

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5 Ibid., 100-101.
6 Ibid., 107.
8 Lissa, *Studia nad twórczością Fryderyka Chopina*, 114-165.
10 Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre*, 3-29.
Newcomb\textsuperscript{12} devote their attention to the Polonaise-Fantasy, Op. 61, discovering tonal, harmonic and formal ambiguities, the latter of which is also pursued in William Rothstein’s study of the work.\textsuperscript{13} In an essay on Chopin’s Ballades, Rothstein describes tonal and rhythmic ambiguity in the First (Op. 23), phrasing ambiguity in the Second (Op. 38) and metric ambiguity in the Fourth (Op. 52). He believes the element of ambiguity is Chopin’s sign of “a supremely self-aware and self-critical composer ensuring that his music would remain forever inexhaustible.”\textsuperscript{14} By adapting the poetic phrase models (prosodic analysis) to thematic study, Rothstein notices that metric schemes of thematic materials in the Second and Fourth Ballades do not correspond to the traditional poetic ballad meter. The result is a potential ambiguity of phrase design. Rothstein also points out the formal ambiguity of the Fourth Ballade in that it possesses elements of variation and sonata form.\textsuperscript{15}

Edward Cone’s survey of diverse types of ambiguities in nocturnes, mazurkas, polonaises and ballades offers an enriching insight into the topic of Chopin’s ambiguity. Cone believes that the main characteristic of Chopin’s ambiguity is “combination of persistence (in musical time) and penetration (of musical texture).”\textsuperscript{16} He argues that due to the modern “desire to demonstrate tonal unity wherever possible,” a listener is inclined to disregard any dubious harmonic elements rather than question them. This procedure results in an incomplete image of composer’s

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
  \bibitem{Ibid} Ibid., 14-26.
\end{thebibliography}
aesthetic.\textsuperscript{17} Cone believes that Chopin deliberately resorted in ambiguity, which “permeates every level of his musical thought.”\textsuperscript{18} In his study, Cone distinguishes three types of harmonic ambiguity. The first type involves a harmony that has more than one function, such as the diminished seventh chord and its multiple possible resolutions. Cone notes that not only chords but also keys can be subjected to reinterpretation, in fact “the reinterpreted chord often entails a new key.”\textsuperscript{19} The second type includes “passages which invite contrasting and linear interpretations.”\textsuperscript{20} Cone’s third type of harmonic ambiguity, cadential reorientation, “destabilises a cadence by calling into question its rhythmic weight and its harmonic significance. The use of the technique is often signalled by phrase markings which blur cadential points.” Cone also notices the elements of rhythmic dislocation and alteration in metric periodicity resulting from the “cadential reorientation.” He argues that this effect creates a conflict between “a free melodic-rhythmic phraseology and the regular harmonic-metrical pattern.” Cone’s analysis of formal ambiguities in Chopin’s newer genres briefly discusses tonal ambiguities (Fantasy, Op. 49; Scherzo, Op. 31; Ballade, Op. 38), elements of incompleteness in the design (Mazurka, Op. 41 No. 3, Nocturne Op. 15 No. 3 and Prelude Op. 28 No. 2), and elements of ambiguity “occasioned by the proliferation of contrast” (Polonaise, Op. 44, where the middle ‘drumming’ section can initially be perceived as a trio and not as a transition).\textsuperscript{21}

As observed, the vast majority of research on ambiguity in Chopin’s music regards the smaller and the more forward-looking larger forms. This is not particularly surprising given the circumstance and purpose of these genres. Ballades, Preludes, Polonaises, Scherzos, Mazurkas

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\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 141.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{19} Cone’s example of this type of reinterpretation is present in Mazurka, Op. 56, No. 1, mm. 102-103, where the previously postponed modulation unexpectedly reaches its goal (Ibid., 146).
\textsuperscript{20} Here Cone observes multiple interpretations of ambiguous passages in Polonaise, Op. 21, No. 1; Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2; and Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 2 (Ibid., 147-149).
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 154-160.
and Nocturnes were all created in order to express the essentially romantic ideals of Chopin. They expand and experiment with older designs in search of new means of expression. As Chopin’s aesthetic evolved, so did the forms, gradually becoming more intricate. This resulted in larger and more complex numbers of ambiguities, which eventually penetrated Chopin’s larger works in Classical designs, such as sonata forms.

As mentioned in the first chapter, Chopin’s mature piano sonatas have been frequently discussed. However, in regards to matters of ambiguity, the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58 remains only partially studied. Most of the analytical efforts have been devoted to the first movement, providing multiple interpretations of formal, thematic and harmonic designs. Less consideration has been given to the last movement, which also brings forward an ambiguity of structural reading, as will be explored in the next chapter.

This chapter will discuss the formal and tonal ambiguities of the first movement of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, demonstrating how the majority of ambiguous situations result from the incorporation of Chopin’s late stylistic features. It will include a study of two levels of structural ambiguities: local (within/between phrases or sections) and global (affecting the entire movement). First, the multiple interpretations of formal design of the movement will be presented, followed by a study of the thematic borders of the first subject and the transition area. An instance of harmonic ambiguity in the secondary thematic area and its purpose will then be discussed, followed by analysis of the entry of the recapitulation. At the end of the discussion, a structural model demonstrating influence of the late style features on the opening movement of Op. 58 will be suggested.
Ambiguities in the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58:

Variety of formal readings of the exposition

The majority of analytical research has produced diverse interpretations of the formal structure of the opening movement of Op. 58. One of the most notable discrepancies is in the first part of the exposition (P area and transition (T)). Leikin considers the transition to be entirely “absorbed into the primary section” as a display of the “variants of the basic motive.”

His argument is derived from an observation of the romantic composers injecting “developmental techniques into the exposition,” thus blurring the meaning and function of the larger sections within the traditional design of the sonata form. Leikin presents the following model of the exposition, highlighting “monotertial” tonal relations, which he defines as “a more complicated version of parallel keys, where instead of a common tonic and fifth degree, two tonalities are related by a common third.”

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23 Ibid., 166.
24 Ibid., 178.
Leikin’s argument attempts to clarify and explain the appearance of distant tonalities of B♭ and E♭ as a tonal and motivic developmental procedure of the opening, naturally occurring as a consequence of the romantic aesthetic. However, similarly to the arguments of Arnold and Chomiński (described in the previous chapter), this statement seems only partially convincing. What is particularly pertinent to this discussion, though, is that Leikin’s model does not suggest where the transition might begin. The question of the thematic boundary seems irrelevant to his argument, in which, by incorporating developmental features in both P and T areas, the first part of the exposition creates one larger section with smaller, codependent groups. Chomiński is also convinced that “there is no need to draw the borders of the first subject in the opening movement of the Sonata in B minor.” He believes the “subject has no borders; as a dynamic process it is directed outwardly and gradually evolves into its transitional material until its primary forces

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25 Adapted from *Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 179.
26 Despite the hint that the sequence of thematic variants begins in m. 17 (Ibid., 176).
deplete, when the movement reaches a new level of evolution.” In his analysis of the P area, Chomiński notes the evolutionary character of the first thematic period ending on the dominant of E minor (m. 8, Example 3.2). He questions the independence of the primary theme (mm. 1-8), stating that the difficulty in interpreting it lies in the arrival of a new phrase in the subdominant tonality (m. 9), which would usually start a new formal section; however, the lack of “decisive thematic transformation” signifies its belonging to the primary theme. Chomiński discovers a “direct connection” of the material of mm. 9-12 to the opening phrase, considering it so “obvious,” that despite the harmonic diversion into the subdominant, one “must” identify this phrase as a continuation of the theme. He regards the following modulatory passage (mm. 12-16) as a “partial evolution” of the opening motif, which is eventually depleted of its “primary forces” and at last “overcome” by the “new melodic material” in m. 17.28

27 Chomiński, Sonaty Chopina, 180.
28 Ibid., 177-180.
Chomiński discovers ambiguity in the preparation of the appearance of the B♭ major tonality in m. 17. He recognizes the “openness of the primary subject” in the fact that it ends on its dominant (m. 16), thus possessing a potential to lead to the tonic (B minor), which is not delivered. Chomiński considers m. 17 as the beginning of the bridge between the P and S areas. He believes it is conceived as an introduction of an episodic material with a new expressive quality, which emphasizes an idea of thematic conflict already at the start of the movement. Chomiński argues that this procedure represents a “sonata form of a wider concept than the traditional one.”

Samson regards mm. 17-18 as a “tonal deflection” towards G minor, emphasizing the process of continuous development and transformation of thematic material present already in the P area and the double meaning of the F#7 chord in m. 16 as a “dominant seventh” functioning as an augmented sixth chord, which introduces new material at m. 17. He is convinced that the “entire passage from bar 17 to bar 33 has been an extended flatwards ‘scenic

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29 Chomiński elaborates stating that in this new concept, the sonata form reaches beyond the traditional model, in which the main conflict is exhibited through the contrasting qualities of the secondary material (Ibid., 181-184).
route' from tonic to relative major. It is only with the second subject at bar 41 that tonality is stabilised and there is a real sense of structural downbeat:”}

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30 It is more likely that Samson means that the ‘route’ leads not to the relative major but to the dominant of the relative major, which is fully confirmed in m. 38 (Samson, The music of Chopin, 134-135).
Example 3.3. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 1, mm. 16-40.
Even though Samson briefly describes each smaller section within the entire first half of the exposition, he refuses to suggest a structural outline for the P and T areas. He considers the exposition as an “unbroken thread spun of related ideas,” and concludes that “any attempt to demonstrate the nature of this bar-by-bar evolutionary process will inevitably appear clumsy.”

Janida Dhuvabhark also decides not to embark on the journey, defining neither thematic borders nor harmonic and textural developments in the P and T areas, limiting her observations to a general remark of “First theme – long transition” embodied within mm. 1-40:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Keys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Allegro maestoso</td>
<td>1-93</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-First theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-long transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Second theme groups</td>
<td>sostenuto (e molto espressivo)*</td>
<td>41-56</td>
<td>D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61-65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66-71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-bridge passage</td>
<td></td>
<td>72-75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Closing theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>76-93</td>
<td>D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>94-150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-summary of exposition’s long transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td></td>
<td>151-204</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Second theme</td>
<td>sostenuto</td>
<td>151-185</td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>186-197</td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Closing theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>198-204</td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Codetta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3.4. Dhuvabhark’s formal outline of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58.

Both Walker and Helman consider m. 23 as a starting point of the transition. While Walker stresses the melodic anticipation of the secondary subject material and presence of the

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31 Ibid., 133.
“chromatically rising bass,” Helman regards the previous material as an expansion and “harmonic evolution” of the primary theme. Arnold and Jenny Sumono imply that the boundary of the P area is crossed in m. 17, with the “sudden harmonic and thematic change” and the emergence of the “march fragment.” Sumono’s model of the exposition of the first movement of Op. 58 proves to be more descriptive than that of Dhuvabhark:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Keys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>Principal theme</td>
<td>1-16</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maestoso</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E minor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extended</td>
<td></td>
<td>17-40</td>
<td>Bb major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G minor</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Eb major</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sostenuto</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>groups:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2a</td>
<td></td>
<td>41-55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2b</td>
<td></td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2c</td>
<td></td>
<td>61-65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>66-71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chromatic</td>
<td></td>
<td>72-75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>passage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td></td>
<td>76-93</td>
<td>D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3.5. Sumono’s model of the exposition of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58.

These structural interpretations of the first part of the exposition reveal the ambiguity of the thematic boundaries. It is particularly evident in mm. 17 and 23 where significant modifications of texture, rhythmic pattern and harmony occur simultaneously. Leikin’s focus on the melodic connection between the opening gesture and that of m. 17 (which he considers to be

34 Helman, “Norma i indywiduacja w sonatach Chopina,” 60.
37 Ibid., 24.
a variation of the opening material) together with a disregard for the rhythmic and dynamic
changes in m.17 (triplets, strong presence of the even pulse in quarter notes, arrival of forte) puts
into question the soundness of his argument. In overlooking those important aspects of musical
structure, even a reasonable theory explaining the appearance of B♭ major key (as monotonically
related to B minor) seems to capture only a partial image of the situation. Despite sharing
Leikin’s view of ‘no need to define thematic borders,’ Chomiński does recognize an introduction
of new material in m. 17, considering it a bridge leading to the “proper transition” in m. 23.38 His
explanation is also more inclusive of the harmonic changes, providing a more complete image of
the ambiguous resolution of the dominant seventh of B minor in m. 16. Chomiński briefly
elaborates on the meaning and expressive purpose of this new material, describing it as a “release
of tension and agitation.”39 Samson’s explanation of the material from mm. 17-18 as a “tonal
deflection” and the entire section of mm. 17-33 as a “scenic route” does not offer much input
into the essence of ambiguity of the thematic boundary. Walker and Helman both follow in
Chomiński’s footsteps, considering m. 23 as a starting point of the transition. Although
Chomiński40 and Samson41 regard the melodic imitation passage of mm. 23-28 as an elaboration
of the opening melodic gesture of the movement, Walker recognizes this transition material as
both variation on the opening motif and anticipation of the secondary theme.42

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39 Ibid., 181.
40 Ibid., 185.
Thematic boundaries of the P and T areas and harmonic ambiguities of the exposition

The main challenge in defining the thematic borders of the first half of the exposition of Op. 58 can be attributed to Chopin’s innovations of form (through individualisation of the structure, blurring of formal elements and avoidance of cadences) and employment of late style features (genre-crossing, chromaticism, variety of textural display, impertinent expression of dandyism and new expressive qualities), resulting in a number of ambiguous situations throughout the P and T areas. In order to define the ambiguities of the thematic borders it is necessary to review the meaning and purpose of both the primary theme and transition. Modern studies of the traditional sonata model by Rosen and Schmidt-Beste describe the purpose of the first thematic group as an “establishment of the home key” which can be “emphasized by two successive performances of the opening theme.” Schmidt-Beste highlights the fact that the primary thematic area does not linger on the subdominant tonality. Hepokoski and Darcy consider the opening tonic as a “proposition to be undermined (or unfolded) on the way to reaching a higher level of closure” and distinguish tonally “open” and “closed” P areas, in which “closed” are the themes concluded by authentic cadences in home keys. The transition is then a “bridge” to the secondary key area, exhibiting “variety in terms of harmony” and “motivic treatment.” William Caplin focuses on the tonally destabilizing function of the transition “so that the subordinate key can emerge as a competing tonality in the exposition.” This is usually

44 Rosen, Sonata Forms, 230.
45 Hepokoski and Darcy, Elements of sonata theory: norms, types, and deformations in the late eighteenth-century sonata, 73.
46 Schmidt-Beste, The Sonata, 71.
achieved through modulation, more flexible organization of the material, rhythmic continuity and increase in dynamic and rhythmic energy.\textsuperscript{47}

From the traditional perspective, the exposition of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 exhibits examples of ambiguous situations throughout the P and T areas. The first ambiguity appears in the restatement of the opening phrase (mm. 5-8 – Example 3.2), where the $B^7$ harmony and the entry of the E minor question the thematic boundary and the purpose of modulation into the subdominant tonality. Primarily, the restatement of the theme should lead either to the tonic or dominant; however, the tonic is not going to be re-established again throughout the exposition nor is the dominant until the end of m. 16 (Example 3.2). Traditionally then, the boundary of the thematic area would be drawn at the end of m. 16, but, in the case of Op. 58 it does not involve a cadential figure, although a dominant pedal has been present since the middle of m. 14. It is necessary, at this point, to consider the developmental nature of the chromatically rising sequence of mm. 12-16:

Tonal destabilization of the thematically derived material potentially signifies its belonging to the transition, which would retrospectively imply that the first subject ended with its restatement (m. 8). This interpretation may be validated by the dynamic drop (into piano) and reoccurrence of the opening theme (mm. 1-4); however the presence of the subdominant tonality does not reaffirm this statement. There are two possible explanations of this situation, which, despite Agawu’s belief, cannot be “hierarchically” formed: the first is that of the first theme ending in m. 8; the second is that of its end in m. 16. Contextually, both scenarios differ. The first option offers a cadentially prepared resolution together with the restatement of the thematic material in an unorthodox key (m. 9), followed by a modulatory passage. The second option presents a chromatic build up and arrival of the new thematic material in a distant key (m. 17), also followed by a modulatory passage. Both scenarios exhibit an unexpected tonal outcome and subsequent modulatory passage, implementing functional ambiguity which, following Thomson, implies in both cases either the start of the transition or a continuation of the first theme.

From the aforementioned research it is noticeable that no one, except for Chomiński, considers the possibility of ending the first theme in m. 8. Perhaps the reason is that it appears inconceivable for Chopin to construct such a short subject. After all, he made us used to long melodic lines, and the idea of the main theme of a large sonata form lasting only several
measures seems more Beethovenian than Chopinesque. In this regard, Chopin’s Op. 58 is much closer to his first sonata, Op. 4, than Op. 35:

\[ \text{Example 3.7. Opening of Chopin’s First Piano Sonata, Op. 4, mm. 1-4.} \]

The presence of late style features such as chromaticism, counterpoint, imitation and textural variety result in a strong evolutionary motion introduced in m. 8. Notwithstanding the moments of apparent stability, this modulatory character comes to an end only with the arrival of the secondary thematic material in m. 41 (Example 2.1). Given the constantly changing setting, it becomes extremely difficult to define the structural boundaries. The distinctive character of the material of mm. 17-18 is convincing enough for Sumono and Arnold to call it the beginning of the transition, a view that I share. Chomiński regards it as a “bridge” to the transition while Helman treats it as an expansion of the opening material. The variety of interpretations is a result of a unique function that this two-measure fragment plays. The previous chapter described the puzzling presence of the B♭-tonality as an expression of Chopin’s impertinent dandyism. Chomiński’s idea of release of tension, although valid, is short-lived. As if confirming the impudent side of the dandy, Chopin’s sudden dynamic eruption in m. 19 releases a stream of adventurous figuration, which rapidly ascends in register in order to accumulate the energy needed to reach the next phrase (m. 23). The presence of a sforzato diminished seventh chord on the downbeat of m. 19 is a clear indication of intentional ambiguity. As a deceptive resolution to the cadence in G minor, the diminished seventh with a sudden accent invokes multiple
meanings.\textsuperscript{48} Even though, with the presence of the inverted B♭\textsuperscript{7} chord (first beat of m. 20), the following measures briefly indicate a tonal goal of E♭, it is not delivered until m. 29. Instead, Chopin introduces new material in m. 23. As mentioned, Helman, Chomiński and Walker consider this moment as an initiation of the transition. Also here, the duality of thematic function is apparent, although it is only one reason for consideration of this phrase as the start of the transition. The length of the phrase (six measures) and the regularity of the hypermetric pattern (2+2+2) introduce an element of stability to the musical flow. In comparison, the hypermeter of the preceding phrase (mm. 17-22) produced irregularity. When considering the phrase markings together with the tonal and melodic modulation of mm. 17-22, competing interpretations of hypermetric structure arise: 2+3+1, 2+1+2+1. The stabilizing effect of the following phrase (mm. 23-29), achieved through the regularity of texture and rhythm contributes greatly to the introduction of new material. Despite the chromatic ascents of the left hand and gradual evolution of the imitative melodic lines, the rhythmic steadiness of melodic line and accompaniment emphasize the element of stability in this section, which is why it can be perceived as a beginning of a new section.

The deceptive resolution of the implied cadence in G minor (m. 28) into the E♭ tonality produces another puzzling moment, which can be explained in a variety of ways. Chomiński describes it as a “release of accumulated tension,”\textsuperscript{49} while Samson refers to this two-measure moment as a “‘buffer’ of arch-shaped figuration.”\textsuperscript{50} Arnold considers this a result of the previous B♭ fragment, describing its harmonic meaning as “an alteration of the fourth scale step, E,” which

\textsuperscript{48} The first type of Cone’s local harmonic ambiguities in Chopin.
\textsuperscript{49} Chomiński, \textit{Sonaty Chopina}, 186.
\textsuperscript{50} Samson, \textit{The music of Chopin}, 135.
needs to resolve into D.\textsuperscript{51} Although all interpretations are not mutually exclusive, they provide only a partial understanding of this phrase. It seems that Chopin inserts this two-measure fragment to stir-up the musical flow by tonal expansion. The presence of loud dynamics (\textit{forte}), triplets, accents and pedal make it sound more than just a “buffer” or “release.” The use of triplets echoes mm. 17-18, while the sudden shift of harmony, rhythmic pattern and texture introduces the next phrase (m. 31). Once again Chopin uses the structural idea of a bridge connecting two phrases and turns it into an emotional outburst, which announces its importance. The previous chapter described this moment similarly to mm. 17-18: as an expression of Chopin’s dandified aesthetic. Notwithstanding the possibility of multiple interpretations, this explanation seems the most convincing in this case. The following measures (31-40) have been commonly regarded as the final stage in preparation for the arrival of the secondary theme. A strong presence of the dominant pedal point (mm. 33ff.) and the delayed presentation of the dominant chord of the new key (A\textsuperscript{7} – m. 38) can be observed.\textsuperscript{52}

The secondary thematic area presents only one instant of local ambiguity, exhibited in m. 65 (Example 3.8). Arrival of the diminished 6/5 chord (F\#, A, C, D\#) as a resolution to the diminished 4/3 chord (G, B\textsubscript{b}, C\#, E) creates an interesting aural phenomenon, where the following entrance of the B\textsuperscript{6/5} chord (m. 66) sounds more consonant rather than dissonant:

\textsuperscript{51} Arnold, “The role of chromaticism in Chopin's sonata forms: A Schenkerian view,” 185.
\textsuperscript{52} Interestingly, Chomiński notices the weakening of the intensity in the final stage of the transition area (\textit{Sonaty Chopina}, 188). Perhaps this is a result of the repetitive character of mm. 35-37 and reduction of the texture, which, by m. 40, is represented by only a single voice.

The diminished 6/5 chord on the downbeat of m. 65 is easily understood as a chromatic substitution for the expected D major 6/3 chord, and a voice exchange between alto (D#-E-F#) and bass (F#-E-D#) smoothly introduces the B⁶/⁵ chord at the next downbeat. This progression brings to mind Cone’s third type of harmonic ambiguity, in which harmonic stability is put into question by an unorthodox treatment of the cadential material. The resolution of the diminished 4/3 chord into a diminished 6/5 chord intensifies the arrival of a climax (downbeat of m. 65), which then slides into the B⁶/⁵ chord. Chomiński avoids attributing any tonal area to this passage, but Leikin’s model sets mm. 65-66 in the key of E minor. Sumono ascribes m. 65 to D major,
while m. 66 is regarded as a start of a transition. In fact, the entire leggiero episode (mm. 66-75, Example 2.5, 3.10) consists of rather straightforward circle-of-fifths sequences headed always back towards D major (mm. 69, 71). The purpose of this procedure can be attributed to the delay of the cadence in D major, which is resolved only at the end of the section (mm. 74-76). Chopin defers the secondary key cadence in order to increase the range of expressive qualities and continue harmonic tension until the highly chromatic build up, which eventually gives way to the closing material – the most emotionally stable moment of the exposition.

**Ambivalence of the entry of the recapitulation**

Hepokoski and Darcy consider the final task of the development in the Classical era as a preparation for the “return of the tonic (retransition), usually by deploying an active dominant (locking onto the structural dominant, almost always V of the tonic-to-come) and proceeding forward with it, often gaining energy in the process.” They also believe that the recapitulation cannot begin with a transition or S material. Rosen agrees with this view, stating that the recapitulation might begin with any part of the primary thematic group. Schmidt-Beste elaborates stating that the treatment of the recapitulation involves an element of surprise: “precisely because composers can assume that the audience has heard it all before and ‘knows what is coming,’ they can play with the resulting expectations even more effectively than elsewhere in the form.” He further observes that the final part of the development would often include a “turning point,” an arrival which signified the end of the development and start of the

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54 Ibid., 232.

retransition. Caplin defines the retransition as a passage that modulates “back to the home key in preparation of the return of some previous material.” The retransition usually consists of “a complete phrase, or even a full themelike unit, that follows the cadential articulation of a development key. At times, the retransition may consist of the home-key dominant exclusively, but only when that harmony directly follows the dominant of the preceding development key.”

Regarding the entry of the recapitulation (re-entry), Schmidt-Beste considers the harmony as the decisive factor in locating the moment of the re-entry: “Crucial in deciding where the recapitulation begins is not the return of the first theme, but the return of the tonic.” He describes some of the modifications to the usual re-entry scenario (with a clearly stated return of the primary material): “concealed recapitulation,” comprised of “concealment of the first theme beneath copious figurations or the surreptitious return to the tonic within one of the common successions of sequential chords;” and “recapitulation with transition or second-group material,” which “follows an elaborate retransition, or unfolds in the context of a concealed re-entry.”

Contrary to Schmidt-Beste’s opinion, Hepokoski and Darcy believe that the recapitulation cannot begin with the T or S areas. Their system of organizing sonata forms into types based on the principle of rotation of the thematic material advocates considerations of “thematic function and arrangement” within the section in defining structural boundaries. If the sonata does not recapitulate the P area (Type 2 sonatas), Hepokoski and Darcy consider the stabilization of the home-key during the S area, often a decisive factor in drawing structural boundaries, not as a recapitulatory factor but as a “tonal resolution, the second portion of the second rotation.”

56 Schmidt-Beste, The sonata, 80-83.
58 Schmidt-Beste, The sonata, 84-86.
suggesting that this type of sonata forms “do not have recapitulations at all... instead, their
second rotations have developmental spaces grafted onto tonal resolutions.”

The placing of the recapitulation in the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 varies among
scholars. Most writers (Helman, Arnold, Sumono, Dhuvabhark, Gould, Walker) situate the re-
entry in m. 151, where the S area returns in B major. However, Leikin believes that “although
the last portion of the development dwells on the subordinate theme, the recapitulation still opens
with a preparation of the same theme in D major,” suggesting mm. 137 or 142 (Examples 3.9,
3.10) as moments of re-entry. Chomiński and Zieliński argue that the reprise begins in m. 137,
where the music reaches B major tonality. This lack of agreement can be attributed to the
ambiguity of Chopin’s writing, which produces ‘noncongruence’ of musical parameters in regard
to the structural expectations. First, Chopin does not bring back the opening theme (mm. 1-8) nor
does he refer to the opening motif (descending harmonic figure of the upbeat to m. 1) in its
original or transposed form. Second, true tonal stability is not reached until the appearance of
the secondary theme in m. 151. Although Chopin’s treatment of the re-entry involves Schmidt-
Beste’s “recapitulation with transition or second-group material,” it is not entirely clear whether
it is the transition or the secondary group that starts the reprise. Neither does Chopin’s writing
match the Type 2 sonata form described by Hepokoski and Darcy. In order to define the
structural boundaries of the development and recapitulation, three matters need to be considered:
first, the presence of the retransition within the development section; second, the appearance of
the tonic; third, the thematic relation of mm. 135-150 to the P and T area of the exposition.

59 Hepokoski and Darcy, Elements of sonata theory: norms, types, and deformations in the late eighteenth-century
sonata, 344-354.
61 Chomiński, Sonaty Chopina, 213; Zieliński, Chopin, życie i droga twórcza, 546.
62 Chopin briefly returns to the opening idea only in the coda (mm. 198-201).
According to Caplin, the retransition can function tonally in two ways: first, as a strong prolonged presence of the home dominant; second, as a modulatory passage or phrase leading to the home tonic. Schmidt-Beste elaborates on the meaning of retransition as a “structural caesura – a breathing place,” which, as an arrival point within the development, would usually include a momentary halt or turn in musical flow. In the case of the development of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58, the junction between the development and retransition occurs in m. 133, where the second part of the development (based on the secondary thematic material of the S area, mm. 117-132) closes.


63 Schmidt-Beste, The sonata, 81.
The sudden shift of texture and interruption of the rhythmic pattern testify that the music enters a
new path. Chopin’s use of imitative counterpoint with emphasis on chromaticism creates the
impression of an improvisatory character, which gradually intensifies rhythmic energy and
textural thickness in a quasi *stretto* passage (mm. 135-136). The accumulated energy is released
in m. 137, where the brief arrival of the B major harmony is immediately interrupted by a G#
minor modulatory passage (mm. 137-139), which itself quickly veers towards E major. The
entire section seems to fulfill elements of both Caplin’s and Schmidt-Beste’s scenarios of
retransition.

The brief arrival of the B major tonality in m. 137 has caused some confusion among
scholars. While Arnold points out the presence of G# minor as a confirmation of the B major
tonality, she is convinced that mm. 137-150 function as a retransition “dovetailing secondary
material from the first thematic group.”64 Chomiński argues the importance of the B major
arrival (in m. 137) as a starting point of the recapitulation. He believes that the mere occurrence
of the S area in the B major tonality does not justify the claims stating that the recapitulation
begins only with the secondary subject. In support of his idea Chomiński notices references to
the B minor/major harmonies within the mm. 137-150:

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The troubling arrival and references to the B minor/major tonalities can be interpreted in two ways: first, as a confirmation of the actual recapitulation; second, as a passing quality which serves as a retransitional tool in the eventual establishment of the dominant pedal and tonality (mm. 144-150). Defining the more appropriate interpretation in this situation requires a closer examination of the thematic relation between the material of the aforementioned section and the P and T areas of the exposition.

The first gaze at the score provides plenty of evidence of thematic reference between the T area of the exposition and the section under discussion (mm. 137-150). In fact, the entire section is a cut and transposed repetition of material from the initial transition (mm. 17-40). Other than the obvious absence of the primary subject, mm. 137-150 omit the imitative passage of mm. 23-28 as well as the following two-measure eruption of E♭ (mm. 29-30). The following phrase (mm. 31-40) has been entirely repeated and adapted to the new harmonic scheme (F# major as a dominant – mm. 142-150). Even though it is not uncommon for the retransition to be based on the primary or transitional material, it is difficult to consider mm. 137-150 a part of the development, due to the thematic likeness of this section to the transition material of the exposition. One of the arguments in support of the thesis of the recapitulation starting with the S area was put forward by Helman, who considers m. 137 as a doubtful beginning of the recapitulation, due to lack of a “prolonged dominant preparation,” which is “characteristic of all Chopin sonatas.” She believes that the stabilizing effect of the S area serves the major purpose of recapitulation in resolving previously encountered tensions, which P or T materials would continue.65 The “prolonged dominant preparation” is present in the retransition of the first

65 Helman believes that in all three of Chopin’s mature sonatas the start of the first movements’ recapitulations begins with the secondary subject in a major tonic mode (“Norma i indywiduala w sonatach Chopina,” 57-61).
movement of Chopin’s Op. 35 and Op. 65. In both cases the secondary theme is delivered, but in Op. 65 a transposed repetition of the exposition’s transition material is used in preparation of the arrival of the secondary theme, similarly to Op. 58:

Example 3.11. Prolonged dominant preparation in the retransition and start of the recapitulation with the S area in Chopin’s Second Sonata, Op. 35, Mvt. 1, mm. 157-173.
Helman interprets the repetition of the transition material in both settings (Opp. 58, 65) as a preparation for the arrival of the secondary theme (recapitulation). At the same time she stresses the variety of formal models that Chopin has employed in his mature sonatas, which contributed to the individuation of “dramatic concept” in his sonata forms.\textsuperscript{66}

As observed from the example the repetition of the previous material in the case of Op. 65 is not preceded by the arrival of the tonic. In addition it is introduced after a musical halt

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 67.
(“turning point”), thus suggesting a retransition. However in Op. 58, the repeated material not only refers to the tonic, it is also prepared by a brief passage enforcing the B major tonality (mm. 135-136; see Example 3.9). Amidst the improvisatory chromatic journey of mm. 133-135, Chopin’s tonal goal is reached in the middle of m. 135, where the B major chord briefly sounds. At that moment the music stops modulating, confirming the tonality by melodic repetition and rhythmic intensification. The subtle establishment of B major is achieved through avoidance of the V-I root motion of the bass line and careful placement of the B major chords within the rhythmic structure. Throughout the entire section (mm. 133-137) Chopin refuses to clarify his harmonic intention by offering even a hint of a pedal point. Additionally, he never places the B major chords on the downbeat (until m. 137), suggesting their possible passing quality. Despite the lack of the prolonged pedal point, mm. 135-136 might function as a “dominant preparation” for the recapitulation. This is realized by gradual rhythmic, textural and dynamic intensification and the harmonic shift towards F# major harmony. Chopin’s intentional avoidance of the F# major chord in root position results from the polyphonic writing, which gives the left hand a melodic quality and independence from the right hand. Eventually the strands merge in the approach to m. 137. Even though Chopin averts from writing a root position F# major chord, he insists on the leading tone in the left hand (A#), which is accompanied by the seventh of the F# chord in the top voice. Those two elements enforce a sense of tonal longing for B major, which is finally delivered on the downbeat of m. 137.

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67 Although there is a short appearance of the B major chord on the third and fourth beat of m. 135, it is only momentary, lasting in both instances a mere eighth note. The next measure produces a different effect, in which Chopin implies the B major tonality, but leaves it unfulfilled by delaying the dominant resolutions on the first and third beats.
The arrival of the B major is fulfilling, due to the rhythmic and dynamic resolution (downbeat in *forte*). However, the immediate motion away from the tonic questions the previous build up and resolution. This is the reason for the disagreement regarding the structural boundary between the development and the recapitulation. It is Chopin’s play with listeners’ expectations that is potentially misleading. Helman considers the purpose of the recapitulation in Chopin’s sonata forms to be a resolution of all accumulated tensions. In her view, the stabilizing effect of the S area provides a perfect setting for the start of the recapitulation. Therefore she disregards the arrival of the B major tonality and further exact repetition of the transition material as a signal of a structural boundary. Helman’s rejection of the possibility of the start of the recapitulation based on the transitional material and insistence on the clarity of the dominant preparation establishes Chopin as a rather predictable composer, who, after applying one variation of the sonata form in Op. 35 (Example 11), does not experiment further in his handling of this formal juncture. In her model of Chopin’s mature sonata forms, Helman seems, by generalization, to diminish Chopin’s structural creativity, namely the tendency towards expansion and diversity particularly present during his late style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st subject – in minor tonic</td>
<td>2nd subject – in relative major</td>
<td>Bipartite – ending on V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd subject – in relative major</td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd subject – in major tonic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue – in relative major</td>
<td></td>
<td>Epilogue – in major tonic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bringing back element of the 1st subject – in major tonic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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68 Helman, “Norma i indywidualność w sonatach Chopina,” 57.
Analysis of mm. 130-150 of the first movement of Op. 58 exhibits ambiguity in defining formal boundaries between the development and recapitulation. It is certainly uncommon for Chopin to begin the recapitulation with transitional material, especially the one that immediately modulates away from the tonic, but it testifies to his innovations of the genre. In terms of expression, the arrival of the recapitulation coincides with the reappearance of the ‘dandified’ fragment of the exposition (mm. 17-18). The initial exhibition of the impertinent expression of Chopin’s dandyism signified a break, eruption of new texture, melody and harmony. Emotionally then, the recurrence of this moment empowers a similar sensation of the structural interruption in mm. 137-138. Also, the presence of the ‘dandified’ fragment in B major in mm. 137-138 might suggest Chopin’s effort of resolving the tonal remoteness of the earlier B♭ major.

By employment of the transitional material at the start of the reprise Chopin shifts the structural importance from the primary subject to the transition. By doing so, he emphasizes the significance of the developmental aspects of the thematic material (already exposed in the P area). This innovation together with the presence of late style features resulted in interpretational ambiguities and criticisms. In order to better illustrate the influence of Chopin’s late style on the sonata form of the first movement of Op. 58, the following model combines the structural and harmonic outline with the late style element:

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69 Although, as Schmidt-Beste notices, this procedure has been previously employed by Mozart in the first movement of his Piano Sonata in D major, K. 311; however, the first theme eventually appears in its entirety at the end of the movement (Schmidt-Beste, The sonata, 86).

70 See Chapter 1, p. 24.
First Movement of Chopin’s Piano Sonata in B minor, Op.58

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sa</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>K</th>
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<td>9 – 16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal area</td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>E minor</td>
<td>B♭ major</td>
<td>D/G minor</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
<td>V/D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Style feature</td>
<td>Counterpoint, chromaticism, textural variety</td>
<td>Impertinence of dandified aesthetic, textural and thematic variety, chromaticism,</td>
<td>Genre-crossing (nocturne - texture, ballade - employment of rhythmic, textural and dynamic intensification), chromaticism, metaphysical expressive qualities, thematic diversity</td>
<td>Genre-crossing (nocturne - texture), chromaticism resolving tension</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>(P)</th>
<th>(Sb)</th>
<th>retransition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Tonal area</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
<td>D♭ major</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Style feature</td>
<td>Chromaticism, counterpoint and imitation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chromaticism, Genre-crossing (ballade - employment of rhythmic, textural and dynamic intensification), imitation and counterpoint</td>
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</table>

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<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>Coda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure number</td>
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<td>142 – 150</td>
<td>151 – 166</td>
<td>167 – 175</td>
<td>176 – 185</td>
<td>186 – 193</td>
<td>194 - 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal area</td>
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<td>V/B major</td>
<td>B major</td>
<td>B major</td>
<td>B major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Style feature</td>
<td>Shift of formal balance from P to T area, impertinence of dandified aesthetic, textural variety</td>
<td>Genre-crossing (nocturne - texture, ballade - employment of rhythmic, textural and dynamic intensification), chromaticism, metaphysical expressive qualities, thematic diversity</td>
<td>Genre-crossing (nocturne - texture), chromaticism resolving tension</td>
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Example 3.15. Suggested structural model of the first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 incorporating elements of Chopin’s late style.
Summary

Musical ambiguity proves to be an important part of musical composition, which enables us to experience composers’ creativity and celebrate their aesthetic ideals. Studies of ambiguity provide an insight into composers’ forward-looking ideas and help performers understand and project the various possible intentions to the public.

Interpretation of the formal design of the opening movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 resulted in a variety of structural models. Most of the debate concerned the P and T areas of the exposition where Chopin’s employment of late style features (counterpoint, tonal expansion, chromaticism and textural diversity) produced ambiguity in thematic boundaries.

Analysis of the first half of the exposition exposed an intricate structure, where considerable changes of the texture, harmony, rhythm and motive allow a discovery of a sectional design, in which the primary theme unconventionally modulates to the subdominant and chromatically reaches the dominant (m. 16). Although there is no cadential figure, the occurrence of the dominant harmony marks the following m. 17 as the start of the transition.

Several harmonic ambiguities present in the exposition produce unexpected results, affecting the interpretation of structural boundaries.

In spite of the tendency to consider the start of the recapitulation in the first movements of Chopin’s mature sonatas with the repetition of the secondary subject in the tonic, the first movement of Op. 58 requires an individual approach. The conciseness of the development’s retransition and lack of the V-I bass line can seem inadequate, but return to the tonic is validated by the dominant preparation and appearance of the B major chord in m. 137. The following two
sections are exactly transposed transitional segments which suggest their recapitulatory function, notwithstanding the initial lack of tonal confirmation.
Chapter 4

Formal hybridization of the Finale of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58

The form of the finale of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata has been described in a variety of ways. A majority of scholars agrees that the finale’s basic thematic outline is governed by the principle of a rondo, in the sense that it is “a series of sections, the first of which (the main section or refrain) recurs, normally in the home key, between subsidiary sections (couplets, episodes) before returning finally to conclude, or round off, the composition.”¹ While some end their discussion there (Samson, Zieliński, Tomaszewski, Chomiński, Helman, Schmalfeldt), others consider the form of the last movement of Op. 58 to be a sonata-rondo (Leikin, Walker, Sumono, Dhuvabhark, Bélza). Chopin’s employment of elaborate compositional techniques produced a structural ambivalence. Although the presence of recurring sections marks the similarity of the overall structure to that of a rondo, it is not entirely clear whether the movement primarily references a rondo, sonata-rondo, or, perhaps, another form.

The purpose of applying rondo as the formal guide for the last movements of sonata cycles resulted from its predisposition to facilitate the necessary characteristics expected from the final movements: fast tempo, “strong emphasis on the home key in the themes as well as their elaboration,” sectional design of thematically contrasting material and a frequent use of “fugato passages.”² The usual rondo design of the late eighteenth century included not more than three differentiated episodes surrounded by the reappearances of the refrain (reprise, main theme). The treatment of harmony was flexible, except for the refrain, which “is invariably in tonic.” The

¹ Malcolm Cole, “Rondo,” in Grove Music Online.
² Schmidt-Beste, The Sonata, 97.
common structural patterns can be described as: ABACABA, or ABACADABA,\textsuperscript{3} where the material could be somewhat varied when restated. The usual design of the refrain is a “tight-knit theme closing in the home key with a perfect authentic cadence,” while the first couplet would normally be “organized as either a subordinate-theme complex (consisting of a transition, subordinate-theme group, closing section, and retransition) or an interior theme. In the first case, the first refrain and couplet constitute a sonata exposition... the interior theme of a rondo can be structured in diverse ways... usually that form is complete, after which a retransition leads back to the home key in preparation for the return of the main theme.”\textsuperscript{4} While the reprise brings back the home key, the second couplet usually introduces an “interior theme, especially when the first couplet is a subordinate-theme complex,” and it might also “resemble a development.” After the appearance of all the subsequent episodes, the final restatement of the refrain might be followed by a coda, which “may be quite extensive,” possessing “strong developmental qualities” or either introduce new material or refer to the earlier ones.\textsuperscript{5} In terms of harmonic outline, the “episodes of the rondo usually explore contrasting keys and/or modes... these contrasting keys generally enter without preparation.”\textsuperscript{6}

The genealogy of the sonata-rondo has been traced by Malcolm Cole, who concludes that sonata-rondo combines the elements of sonata form with rondo form “to produce a hybrid. In theoretical terms, the tonal and recapitulatory arrangement characteristic of the sonata form

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., 97-98.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 232-235.
\textsuperscript{6} Hepokoski and Darcy, \textit{Elements of sonata theory: norms, types, and deformations in the late eighteenth-century sonata}, 398.
unites with the characteristic rondo principle of return to an initial idea.”

He considers the sonata-rondo forms of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, noticing similarities in the return of the reprise usually in the tonic key; the contrast of the first couplet to the reprise; return of the modified, abridged, or full-length reprise directly after the exposition of the first contrasting section (couplet); the developmental nature of the second couplet; possible omission of the following return of the reprise; return to the tonic key with the repetition of the first couplet; and possible replacement of the final reprise with a coda. Schmidt-Beste notes practical similarities between the sonata-rondo and sonata form, where “the refrain functions as ‘first group’ and the first couplet as ‘second group’.” He continues stating that the “crucial difference between the classical rondo and the sonata rondo is found in the second episode, which is no longer a section of thematic contrast, but one in which previously introduced material is adapted and transformed.” Schmidt-Beste concludes his discussion with the presentation of the following formal scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ‘sonata rondo’</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>E1</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>E2</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>E3 = E1</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rondo</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sonata Form</strong></td>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>1st group</td>
<td>2nd group</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>1st group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tonality</strong></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 4.1. Schmidt-Beste’s model of a late eighteenth-century sonata-rondo.

Caplin considers the presence of a coda in the sonata-rondo as a “required element.” He argues that the coda’s purpose is to bring back the return of the main theme after “the recapitulation of the subordinate-theme complex.” He notes the potential problematic nature of

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8 Ibid., 181-182.
the interpretative placing of the coda, as it appears after the recapitulation: “it would seem, then, that there is no consistent relation between the beginning of the coda and the beginning of the final refrain.” He continues, stating that “the coda of a sonata-rondo can be said to start... at that point where the music of the recapitulation stops corresponding to the exposition. In this view, the rondo refrain always appears somewhere in the coda, often at its very beginning, but sometimes only after the coda is under way.”

Caplin’s view of sonata-rondo form is encapsulated in Example 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rondo Term</th>
<th>Formal Function</th>
<th>Tonal Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>refrain 1 (A)</td>
<td>exposition of main theme</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>couplet 1 (B)</td>
<td>exposition of subordinate-theme complex</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refrain 2 (A)</td>
<td>first return of main theme</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>couplet 2 (C)</td>
<td>development or interior theme</td>
<td>various or IV, VI, minore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refrain 3 (A)</td>
<td>recapitulation of main theme</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>couplet 3 (B)</td>
<td>recapitulation of subordinate-theme complex</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refrain 4 (A)</td>
<td>coda (including final return of main theme)</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 4.2. Caplin’s model of a sonata-rondo form.

By the time of late Chopin, the overall structures of sonata cycles grew to such an extent that the rondo and sonata-rondo forms of the final movements were greatly modified, often including material from previous movements, “localised harmonic flexibility,” employment of sophisticated counterpoint, virtuosity, and extended codas. Those changes were imposed due to the increasing complexity of the cycle, in which every movement began to incorporate more intricate expressive qualities. Those, often being not fully resolved, needed a substantial final

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10 Caplin, *Classical form: a theory of formal functions for the instrumental music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*, 239.
movement that would “conclude what has gone before.” This can also be attributed to a more general nineteenth-century practice, which tended to place the climaxes towards the end of the movement or cycle, often in the coda (Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Op. 125, represents an important example of a work shifting the culminating point from the first movement to the finale).

This chapter will discuss ambiguities of the formal structure of the last movement of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58. First, the formal models described by various scholars will be presented and evaluated. Second, an analysis of the finale will be undertaken and its relation to the traditional model of rondo/sonata-rondo forms will be assessed followed by presentation of a structural model incorporating results of the investigation. Third, the influence of Chopin’s tendency to blend genres, especially in his later music, on the formal design of finale will be examined. Most scholars do not provide detailed discussions of the formal structure of the movement. This, in turn, will limit their relevance to this study. However, the views of the ones that scrutinise the finale (especially Chomiński) will be presented and discussed extensively.

Diversity of formal interpretations of the Finale

The last movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 exhibits ambiguity of formal interpretation. Although some researchers perceive elements of a sonata-rondo design, it is reasonable to consider the finale primarily as a rondo. Samson laconically describes the movement as a “goal–directed” rondo, in which “Chopin risks crudity in the interest of a relentless, driving

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11 Schmidt-Beste, The Sonata, 139.
momentum, one-dimensional in presentation.” Zieliński goes further noticing the developmental aspects of the returns of the refrain (textural and rhythmic). He also notes the thematic similarities between the reprise and the episodes (which contain energetic, rhythmic motifs surrounded by virtuosic passages). Tomaszewski believes the finale is best described as an “ABA1B1A2+Coda” rondo structure, in which the gradual increase of intensity is present throughout the movement until its resolution in the coda. He associates the growth of intensity with the “dramatic element of a ballade,” which is reinforced by the “balladic meter” of 6/8. Unfortunately none of those scholars provide a thorough elaboration of the formal outline of the movement.

Janet Schmalfeldt, in her brief discussion of the finale of Op. 58, follows Tomaszewski’s structural view, noticing similarities to Chopin’s earlier independent rondo forms (Opp. 5, 16 and the last movement of the F minor Piano Concerto, Op. 21), and importance of the i-III-V progression (“ascending-thirds progression”) present within the thematic and transitional areas. She notes the functional ambiguity of mm. 52-75 (Example 4.5) as “deceiving us into thinking that perhaps a genuine sonata-rondo will unfold.” Schmalfeldt notes that only at the moment of the return to the tonic, in m. 84 (Example 4.6) “the prospect of a genuine sonata-form secondary theme all but vanishes...”

Helman’s model loosely follows Tomaszewski’s. However, since she does not provide any explanation, one can only speculate on the exact locations of the structural sections.

Immediately noticeable is the lack of introduction and retransition back to the refrain (mm. 90-13

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14 Zieliński, Chopin, życie i droga twórcza, 550.
15 Tomaszewski, Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans, 493.
99, see Example 4.4). Also, her reading of the harmonic scheme of the B part seems to incorporate the leggiero section (‘c’ subsection) within the B major tonal framework originating in m. 52. The following example presents Helman’s model with the most probable correspondence of measure numbers added:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B (b+c)</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B (b+c)</th>
<th>bridge</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Coda (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tonality</td>
<td>b minor</td>
<td>B major</td>
<td>e minor</td>
<td>E♭ major</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
<td>b minor</td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>9 – 51</td>
<td>52 – 75 +</td>
<td>100 – 142</td>
<td>143 – 166 +</td>
<td>183 – 206</td>
<td>207 – 253</td>
<td>254 – 286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76 – 89</td>
<td>167 – 182</td>
<td>167 – 182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 4.3. Helman’s model of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58, with the most probable correspondence of measure numbers.

Chomiński argues that the form of the final movement is a “simple rondo” ABABACoda. He focuses on the innovative character of the returns of the reprise, where each return is a variation of the opening refrain, effectively “blending the rondo with the variation form.”

Chomiński’s formal outline can be described in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Epilogue - Retransition</th>
<th>A’</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>B’</th>
<th>Epilogue - Retransition</th>
<th>A’</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>9-51</td>
<td>52-75</td>
<td>76-95</td>
<td>96-99</td>
<td>100-142</td>
<td>143-166</td>
<td>167-195</td>
<td>195-206</td>
<td>207-253</td>
<td>254-286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Chomiński reads mm. 52-75 as a transition, noting the importance of this section as “derived from the theme,” and emphasizing its continuity and prolongation of the refrain’s

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17 Adapted from Helman, “Norma i indywidualna w sonatach Chopina,” 64.
18 Chomiński, Sonaty Chopina, 234-249.
expressive character. Despite the fact that mm. 52-75 break with the B minor (shifting into B major in m. 52) and contain contrasting thematic material, Chomiński rejects the possibility of lifting this section’s formal status to a couplet level. His decision is governed by the observation of the lack of a long melodic line, fragmented phrasing, developmental through-composed writing, expressive qualities of “impatience and madness,” modulatory character (from tonic to dominant). The relevant section appears in Example 4.5:

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19 Ibid., 243.
20 Ibid., 243-244.
Following his explanation of mm. 52-75, Chomiński describes the first couplet (mm. 76-99) as a “figurating episode,” in which virtuosic right-hand melodic passages contribute, through their swiftness, to a gradual “release of accumulated energy.” Interestingly, Chomiński also points out the through-composed and modulatory nature of this episode, which, in the previous section (mm. 52-75), made an argument for its consideration as a transition. Here, he neglects to discuss

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21 Ibid., 245.
the harmonic shift from F# major back into B major already by m. 84 and suggests the start of the retransition in m. 96 and not in m. 90, where the B7 is initiated (see Example 4.6).  

22 Chomiński’s interpretation of the start of retransition seems to overlook Chopin’s treatment of the subsequent restatement of the episode (mm. 166-181), where the material of mm. 90-99 is restated in m. 195, after the insertion of the mm. 52-75-related passage (Example 4.8), suggesting its retransitional quality.
The subsequent refrain reveals modulation into E minor and presence of a new polyrhythmic texture, which is attributed to the developmental aspect of a variation form. However, the following reappearance of the transition in E♭ major (mm. 143-166) is explained as a sudden harmonic shift, which, despite the similarity to the originally displayed material (see Example 4.5), results in an overall lack of modulation (regardless of the internal shift to G minor and C minor).  

The following Example 4.7 provides the relevant fragment:

\[ \text{Example 4.6. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 75-99.} \]

\[ \text{Example 4.7.}\]

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\[ 23 \text{ Chomiński considers the abruptness of the modulation so expressively and harmonically stunning, that any further modulation becomes unnecessary (Ibid., 247).} \]
The next episode (mm. 167-195) incorporates elements of the transition (particularly in the right hand, mm. 183-195, Example 4.8), and again is presented as an example of the evolutionary aspect of the variation form. Surprisingly, Chomiński considers the transition-echoing mm. 183-195 to belong to the episode and not a retransition, despite their rather transitory character (sequentially chromatic shift, dominant preparation and dynamic build-up). It is unclear where Chomiński finds the start of the final retransition, but a brief mention of the role of “figuration” in bringing back the refrain suggests the retransition originates in m. 195 (perhaps the arrival of the F# dominant contributes to this statement, although it is not pointed out – see Example 4.8).
Chomiński’s final remarks concern the coda, which he describes as a three-part “crowning of the dynamic intensification and discharge.” He focuses on the texture and melody, noticing the importance of chromatic pitches in the right-hand passages, which generate a compound effect of “dissonant frictions” within the melody.\(^{24}\)

Some scholars do not consider the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 as a mere rondo. They notice structural elements that can be attributed to the sonata-rondo design and focus their discussions on them. Walker argues that “the finale is one of the few sonata-rondos in musical history where the main theme returns out of the tonic key.”\(^{25}\) He concentrates on mm. 52-75, which he considers as a “violently contrasted second subject.”\(^{26}\) Also Igor Bélza believes that mm. 52-75 contain the second theme, while the subsequent leggiero section functions as closing material.\(^{27}\) Both Walker’s and Bélza’s views of mm. 52-75 are non-classical in the sense that, harmonically speaking, in a classical model the subordinate theme can never be articulated by a mere change of mode, it always requires an established change of tonic.\(^{28}\) Their interpretations

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 248-249.
\(^{25}\) Walker most likely refers to mm. 100-142 (“Chopin and Musical Structure,” 256).
\(^{26}\) Ibid., 256.
\(^{28}\) Caplin, Classical form: a theory of formal functions for the instrumental music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, 97.
may be based on the late nineteenth-century conceptions of sonata form, where the thematic contrasts, being increasingly stronger, take over the traditional models of tonal expectation.  

Dhuvabhark’s ambiguous consideration of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 follows Walker’s argument of the sonata-rondo design and, simultaneously, refers to it as a rondo. Dhuvabhark produces a structural outline that clearly indicates a rondo form (Example 4.9). In a brief description of the structure, she notes that “most the B section (mm. 52-95, Example 4.5, 4.6) is passage work, serving as the bridge between the section.” It is not entirely clear what she means by the “bridge” as well as the “section” which it is supposed to connect, although it seems likely that the “section” refers to the restatement of the refrain. In addition, corresponding to Chomiński, Dhuvabhark situates the start of the transition (retransition in Chomiński’s description) in m. 96 (see Example 4.6), although her placement of the final transition is correct (mm. 183-206, see Example 4.8). The following is Dhuvabhark’s model of the finale:

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31 Ibid., 62.
32 Ibid., 60.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Keys</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Presto, non tanto</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Agitato</td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>9-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (8ve higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>28-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba</td>
<td></td>
<td>B major</td>
<td>52-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>Leggiero</td>
<td>F sharp major</td>
<td>76-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>96-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>E minor</td>
<td>100-118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (8ve higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td>E minor</td>
<td>119-142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba</td>
<td></td>
<td>E flat major</td>
<td>143-166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>Leggiero</td>
<td>E flat major</td>
<td>167-182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>183-206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>207-225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (8ve higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td>B minor</td>
<td>226-253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
<td>B major</td>
<td>254-286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sumono’s interpretation of the thematic material differs from those of Walker, Dhuvabhark and Bêlza. Similarly to Chomiński, she regards mm. 52-75 as a transition between the primary and secondary themes (secondary theme being the leggiero part). She also shares in Chomiński’s and Dhuvabhark’s placing of the post-B-section transition in m. 96 (Example 4.6). Sumono continues focusing on the appearance of the E♭ major tonality in the return of the leggiero section (mm. 167-182), which is written “in a mediant key... (E♭ is used as a substitute for D#).” In conclusion, she presents the following model:

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34 Sumono’s model contains a formatting error – the Retransition should appear next to mm. 183-206.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Keys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Presto, non tanto</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Pedal F# (prepare for B minor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition: A (repeated an 8th higher)</td>
<td>Agitato</td>
<td>9-27</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28-51</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>52-75</td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D# major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D# minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F# major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Leggiero</td>
<td>76-95</td>
<td>F# major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>96-99</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development: A (repeated an 8th higher)</td>
<td>100-118</td>
<td>119-142</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>143-166</td>
<td>Bb major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eb major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Leggiero</td>
<td>167-182</td>
<td>Bb major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retransition (with V pedal)</td>
<td></td>
<td>183-206</td>
<td>Ab major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Db major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ab major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation: A (repeated an 8th higher)</td>
<td>207-225</td>
<td>226-253</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C# minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D# minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C# minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 4.10. Sumono’s model of the form of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58.  

Sumono’s consideration of harmonic changes in the coda requires re-evaluation.

Throughout mm. 254-286 there is no single moment where any key (except for B major) would be strongly established and prolonged, suggesting a modulation. Momentary arrivals of the C# minor and D# minor harmonies (mm. 262-274) are immediately interrupted by constant

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35 Ibid., 39.
chromatically ascending melodic patterns and descending bass line together with evolving harmonic outlines of the left hand. These procedures reinforce the passing quality of this build-up section (see Example 4.11).

Example 4.11. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 262-274.
In terms of the structural outline, Leikin’s observations fit into Sumono’s model. However, his examination of the finale emphasizes harmonic deviations from the traditional model of the sonata-rondo. He argues that the first surprise happens in m. 84, where the second half of the “subordinate theme” is transposed to B major. Leikin suggests that despite the presence of B major at the final part of the secondary theme, the retransition “modulates up a fourth as customary,” reaching E minor, at which point the primary theme is restated (mm. 100ff.). He continues his argument with an examination of the E♭ major appearance in the restatement of the secondary subject in m. 167. Leikin believes Chopin uses E♭ major in order to prevent the arrival of B major, which would harmonically indicate the start of the recapitulation: “If the subordinate theme were to return in the home key of B, there would be no recapitulatory rapprochement at all. Chopin’s solution is paradoxical: E♭ major for the reprise of the secondary section. As remote from the tonic as this tonality is, it nonetheless performs a recapitulatory function: E♭ is the monotertial major to the E minor used in the first restatement of the principal section. Only in the last iteration of the principal theme is the home key of B minor restored.”

It is noteworthy that both Sumono’s and Leikin’s discussions of the finale fail to notice an absence of the development section. A closer look at mm. 100-143 (Examples 4.14b, 4.17b and 4.7), which Sumono marks as the development, shows a restatement of the opening theme in its full length. There is a lack of melodic manipulation, thematic segmentation or fugato-like texture, which are common developmental practices employed by Chopin. The only developmental aspect of this section is exhibited in the left hand, where rhythmic intensification

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creates a polyrhythmic texture, which, in the context of the ongoing gradual rhythmic intensification of the primary theme, does not refer to the sonata form.

The major inconsistency among scholars’ interpretations concerns mm. 52-75 (Example 4.5). Given the sudden harmonic shift at m. 52 and the presence of strongly contrasting thematic material, this section poses an analytical dilemma. Chomiński’s consideration of this section as a transitory one is not fully convincing. His argument of the lack of long melodic line, fragmented phrasing and modulatory character can be disputed. The absence of a substantially long melodic line here cannot fully contribute to the formal interpretation of this section. Similarly to the primary theme of the first movement, Chopin’s treatment of the melody in mm. 52-75 of the finale also demonstrates a shorter design (in both cases thematic materials are contained within four-measure phrases), which does not suggest a transitory character. In terms of the fragmented phrasing, Chomiński’s argument also seems a bit exaggerated. The only moment where phrases become fragmented occurs in the middle of the section (mm. 60-64) and is followed by a four-measure release (mm. 64-67) leading directly into the return of the material from the beginning of the section (mm. 68-76). The momentary fragmentation of the thematic material in mm. 60-64 does not necessarily imply a transitory nature of the entire section, but a mere development of an idea, its resolution and restatement. This is also emphasized by a rather regular four-measure phrase structure of the entire section, which adds to the metric stability (despite the phrases’ overlap – each ending of the phrase also serves as the beginning of a new one). Regarding the section’s modulatory character, Chomiński seems to overlook the fact that the subsequent leggiero section also modulates, this time back to B major and later into E minor (mm. 84-99, Example 4.6), weakening his argument. The future restatement of mm. 52-75 (in mm. 143-166, Example 4.7) does not modulate overall. Chomiński believes this is due to the overwhelming
surprising effect brought by the sudden shift into E♭. This reasoning does not appear persuasive enough, as the sudden shift into E♭ can sound not much more surprising than the arrival of the parallel B major in m. 52. However, in the case of the E♭ section (mm. 143-166) the subsequent restatement of the leggiero part modulates in the same fashion as its original statement (a fourth up into A♭ - m.175), once again putting into question the transitory function of 52-75, as shown in Example 4.12:


Walker’s, Bélza’s and Dhuvabhark’s treatment of mm. 52-75 places it as a part of the secondary thematic group. Sumono follows in Chomiński’s footsteps regarding this section as a transition. In her model she lists all the passing appearances of various keys in mm. 52-75 and 143-166, disregarding the brief harmonic shifts within the refrain (D major, F♯ major as well as chromaticism):
Introduction of a local modulatory element into the main thematic material affects the perception of future modulatory procedures. As a result, tonal shifts become a part of thematic identity present throughout the entire movement.

Interestingly, Bēlza considers the *leggiero* section as a closing material, while Dhuvabhark and Leikin regard it as a second part of the secondary thematic area. Both sections (mm. 52-75 and mm. 76-99) possess strong individual characteristics. While mm. 52-75 include a rather vertical organization of the material (defined by clear breaks in musical flow) and
rhythmic contrast of eighth notes versus sixteenth notes, mm. 76-99 feature an uninterrupted display of virtuosic sixteenth notes accompanied by a steady stream of left-hand triplets outlining the harmonic progression (as opposed to the left-hand chords in the previous section). Moreover, both parts introduce new thematic ideas, adding to the ambiguity of their formal interpretation. Some scholars doubt the concept of closing material. Caplin states that “a closing theme can most often be identified as either a true subordinate theme (usually the last of a group) or a collection of codettas following the final subordinate theme. Indeed, it is not normally possible to identify a specific theme-type that should be considered a closing theme, as opposed to a subordinate theme.” Other scholars believe in the traditional notion of separate zones for the second and closing themes. Hepokoski and Darcy regard the secondary thematic area to be either “occupied completely by S or, more commonly” subdivided into “secondary-theme zone” and closing material. Usually secondary thematic area lasts until the appearance of the perfect authentic cadence confirming the secondary key. “All else that follows is normally to be regarded as C (closing material).”

Considering the form of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 from the Classical perspective, one general trait is evident: the presence of rondo and variation elements. The rondo element is clearly articulated by the recurrences of the opening theme; however the odd presentation of the theme in the subdominant (E minor, mm. 100-142, see Example 4.14b below) defies the major principle of the rondo form (refrain’s return to tonic) and shows no similarity to his earlier independent rondos (Opp. 1, 5, 16, 73). The variation techniques have been previously

37 Caplin, Classical form: a theory of formal functions for the instrumental music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, 122.
38 Hepokoski and Darcy, Elements of sonata theory: norms, types, and deformations in the late eighteenth-century sonata, 117.
employed in Chopin’s rondos, although, in the case of Op. 58, Chopin provides a more unique application of them. Instead of keeping the steady and unvaried left hand over the evolving right hand (Opp. 5, 16), Chopin gradually intensifies the rhythm of accompanying figures, enhancing the musical momentum towards the end of the movement. Also, unlike Opp. 5 and 16, the treatment of the thematic material in the right hand shows much restraint, with the final variation initially outlining only the melodic line. These procedures are illustrated in Example 4.14.


Example 4.14b. First restatement of the primary theme of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 98-103.

Another puzzling aspect of the finale of Op. 58 is the harmonic progression of the thematic material. The aforementioned recurrence of the opening theme in the subdominant as well as the presence of the tonic in the contrasting material (mm. 52-99, Example 4.5, 4.6) put in question the rondo aspect (where contrasting material is set in contrasting key), and, together with the lack of a development section, eliminate the possibility of a sonata-rondo design (there is no space for the tonic in the exposition of the secondary theme). Given the modulatory nature of the contrasting material and a clear thematic separation between the mm. 52-75 and 76-99, the following outline of the movement can be drawn:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Harmony</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1 – 8</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>9 – 51</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>52 – 75</td>
<td>B major ⇒ F# major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76 – 89</td>
<td>F# major ⇒ B major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Example 4.15. Suggested model of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition (B)</th>
<th>183 – 195</th>
<th>A♭ major ⇒ F#7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>100 – 142</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B’</td>
<td>143 – 166</td>
<td>E♭ major → E♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C’</td>
<td>167 – 182</td>
<td>E♭ major ⇒ A♭ major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition (B)</td>
<td>183 – 195</td>
<td>A♭ major ⇒ F#7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>195 – 206</td>
<td>F#7 ⇒ B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’’</td>
<td>207 – 253</td>
<td>B minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>254 – 286</td>
<td>B major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model is based on the harmonic and thematic progression of the finale. Although the proposed B section could be interpreted as a transition into the couplet of a rondo form (mostly due to its sequential design and lack of the initial shift into a contrasting key\textsuperscript{39}), the return back to the tonic within the C section disqualifies it as a couplet (from the traditional theoretical perspective), encouraging a re-evaluation of the B section. Also, strong thematic contrasts between the A, B and C sections suggest a more independent interpretation. Despite the fact that all sections are directly connected and structured to appear as natural consequences of musical and expressive flow, they do possess distinct characteristics (thematic, rhythmic, dynamic and textural), which allow the interpreter to consider them as individual thematic regions (B section being the second theme and C section the third theme). The finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 could still be regarded as a rondo form; however, this view would appear limiting and inadequate to the

\textsuperscript{39} This is a particularly interesting situation, given the fact that the future restatement of the B section begins in a contrasting key of E♭ major (see Example 4.7).
musical proceedings. The aforementioned harmonic and thematic aspects suggest an element of a genre which allows much more flexibility, such as an instrumental ballade.

**Balladic aspects of the Finale of Chopin’s Op. 58:**

As noted in the second chapter of this dissertation, the element of ballade in the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 has been associated with the 6/8 meter, *agitato* character, “balladic drama,” thematic “transformation”\(^{40}\) and an overall end-directed design. The present discussion will focus on two balladic aspects of the finale: thematic intensification and thematic relationships.

**Thematic intensification**

Gradual rhythmic and textural intensification of the recurring opening theme presents a strong connection to Chopin’s balladic practice. As Samson points out, the structure of a Chopin ballade is always “end-weighted, with a rising intensity curve culminating in a reprise which is more apotheosis than synthesis.”\(^{41}\) Parakilas elaborates further, stating that “a Chopin Ballade is like many other nineteenth-century works in its end-directed form – that is, in sustaining unresolved tensions until the very end; but it is distinctive in both the way it sustains tension (through continuously increasing rhythmic momentum and through long suppression of themes) and the way it resolves it (by bringing back long-suppressed material from the opening, usually in a fiery reckoning that transforms that material almost beyond recognition).”\(^{42}\) He considers the primary themes of the Ballades, which are “constructed so that they suggest both the incessantly

\(^{40}\) Tomaszewski, *Chopin: człowiek, dzieło, rezonans*, 492-493.
\(^{42}\) Parakilas, *Ballads without words; Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade*, 87.
repeating stanza structure of the song and one episode of the story, return with a difference, suggesting the ever-repeating tune of a ballad now bearing different words, relating a later episode." Gradual rhythmic and textural intensification of the thematic material associated with Chopin’s Ballades can be seen in Example 4.16:


Ibid., 86.

Example 4.16d. Opening theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 4, Op. 52, mm. 7-14.

Example 4.16e. Return of the opening theme of Chopin’s Ballade No. 4, Op. 52, mm. 58-61.
The compound meter of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 hints at the narrative steadiness of the ballade, while the *agitato* points to some sort of restlessness present within the opening theme. Future recurrences of the primary theme amplify this feeling by intensification of the rhythmic structure of the accompanying figures under the consistent and steadily unfolding melodic line, as shown in Example 4.14. The initial presentation of the opening subject (Example 4.14a) employs a straightforward two-line structure with stable rhythmic momentum in both parts. The restatement of the material (mm. 28-51, Example 4.17a) raises the register of both parts by an octave and strengthens the harmonic progression by inserting octave doublings in the right hand and additional chord tones in both hands. This internal intensification of the opening primary theme (mm. 9-51, section A) increases the dynamic and expressive build up, which resolves in the following B section (mm. 52-75, Example 4.5). Subsequent appearances of the A section employ the same techniques of textural and harmonic intensification in the restatements of the thematic material; however, the gradual rhythmic diminution of the

respective accompanying figures contributes to the overall ongoing intensification of the entire movement (see Example 4.17).

Example 4.17a. Restatement of the opening theme within the A section of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 25-36.

Example 4.17b. Restatement of the opening theme within the A’ section of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 115-124.
The first recurrence of the A section (Example 4.14b, 4.17b) exhibits a polyrhythmic texture of left-hand quadruplets against the eighth notes in the right hand, while the final reappearance of the opening theme (Example 4.14c, 4.17c) presents a diminution of the initial eighth notes into sixteenth notes of the accompanying left-hand figures, exposing a clear melodic line in the right hand. Interestingly, in both returns of the primary theme, the accompanying figures adapt rhythmic patterns and melodic contours of the accompaniment of transitions, linking both sections, suggesting the theme “now bearing different words, relating a later episode.”

Also, from the tonal perspective, every recurrence of the primary theme adapts to the third theme’s (section C) tonal expectations, affecting the overall tonal design of the movement (e.g. first appearance of the third theme on the B7 chord, which is prolonged by the transition and resolved by the return of the primary theme in m. 100 – Example 4.6 and 4.14b).

Chopin shows restraint in the treatment of the melodic material of the finale of Op. 58. In comparison, the final progression of the opening theme of Op. 52 (Example 4.16f) exhibits a

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Ibid., 86.
distinct embellishment of melodic line, while the climactic restatement of the secondary theme of Op. 47 (Example 4.16c) conceals the melody in the top voice of the chordal passage. In both Ballades (Opp. 47, 52) the gradual rhythmic intensification goes in hand with the textural one. The initial, relatively simple textural designs are gradually transformed into unstoppable, complex structures. This procedure is also employed in the treatment of the opening theme of the finale of Op. 58, resulting in an end-directed structure for the movement. Every return of the opening theme brings back the same idea set in a different context, affected by what has happened in between the theme’s recurrences.

**Thematic relations**

The finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 shows reference to his Ballades through similar relations between the thematic materials. Rothstein briefly describes Chopin’s Ballades as “bithematic, employing principal and subordinate themes of differing characters; except in the Second Ballade, the degree of thematic contrast is moderate.” Samson points out an overall avoidance of the dominant and a preference for the third-related tonal regions between the themes of Chopin’s Ballades. He also notes the presence of “waltz” episodes in the First and Third Ballades (Opp. 23, 47, see Example 4.20). Parakilas considers the role of the secondary themes in the Ballades as “a counterpoise to the primary themes: if the primary themes principally represent the narrating function, the secondary themes serve more of a characterizing function, suggesting one of the forces at conflict in a story (in the first Ballade it could be a love relationship, in the second Ballade some destructive force).” He notes that “the secondary theme

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45 Rothstein, “Ambiguity in the Themes of Chopin’s First, Second, and Fourth Ballades,” 2.
47 Ibid., 9, 61.
is always presented in a secondary key.” Parakilas also notices “dancelike or songlike” shorter themes in the First Ballade, Op. 23 (mm. 36-44, 138-154), suggesting that their meaning lies in the relation to the “passages in ballad texts... that give the action its ‘precipitous development,’” and their goal is “a quickening of action by their active rhythms, their rising sequences, their increasing volume or speed.”\textsuperscript{48} Adrianna Ponce describes the structure of the secondary thematic materials in Chopin’s Ballades as “usually built from two regular basic phrases,” where the first one is “often harmonically open and the second one harmonically closed.” She further states that the function of the secondary themes is “less determinant: it establishes a contrasting or antithetical point through which the process unfolds.”\textsuperscript{49}

Taking into account contrasts between the themes as well as the introduction of the secondary key with the secondary subject, it is possible to notice a relation in thematic treatment between Chopin’s Ballades and a traditional sonata form. Samson explains the difference between the two models claiming that “in the Ballade, sonata-based formal functions have clearly been reinterpreted in the light of a particular dramatic and expressive aim, a ‘plot archetype’ shared by other early nineteenth-century works.”\textsuperscript{50} He elaborates, stating that despite the shared method of segmentation and recomposition of the thematic material, the application of these techniques in a ballade “is directed at different ends.” Samson believes segmentations of themes in a ballade setting have a more local role (in intensification of thematic groups or transitions), as opposed to the sonata form, in which “they are major devices of temporal progression, taking us from one area of relative structural stability to another.”\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{48} Parakilas, \textit{Ballads without words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade}, 65.
\textsuperscript{49} Adrianna Ponce, “Chopin’s Ballades: A Study of Romantic Form and Time” (Diss., Brandeis University, 1998), 94.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 77.
notices that the themes of Chopin’s Ballades “are modeled on song themes rather than on the rhetorical themes of sonatas.”

He also focuses on the difference in the treatment of the thematic material in a balladic setting: “In sonata form the reworking of thematic material in the middle (development) leads to a new relationship – especially a new resolution of the tonal ‘contrast’ – between themes at the end (recapitulation), while in Chopin Ballade the creation of new relationships between themes (especially new dissolutions of the apparent ‘contrasts’ between themes) is concentrated in the middle, leading to the crucial reworking of – reckoning with – thematic material at the end.”

He also argues that the essence of the return of thematic material is “both a resumption and a continuation, but far from a recapitulation. Resumption is suggested in a moment of return, when the theme is reiterated or transposed very exactly; the new stage of narrative is suggested just afterward.”

Ponce argues that the tonal plan of Chopin’s Ballades differs from the one of a traditional sonata form in that the “secondary key area varies from one work to the next and so do the order and the key areas of the final restatement of the thematic material.” She points out the absence of full recapitulations and lack of “sections of the necessary dramatic and structural weight to fulfill the formal function of a development section.”

The relationships among the three thematic sections of the finale resemble the narrative process of Chopin’s Ballades. Similarly to the Ballades, the opening theme of the finale provides the tension which is initially suppressed and through the gradual intensification resolved in a highly climactic coda. The suppression of the theme’s intensity can be associated with the harmonic and metric process present in the theme. Lack of harmonic stability, irregularity of

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52 Parakilas, Ballads without words: Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade, 86.
53 Ibid., 87.
54 Ibid., 86.
56 Ibid., 39.
phrasing and absence of an adequate resolution seem to emphasize the agitato character, which, in turn, does not allow any element of steadiness or resolve. Throughout the opening material, Chopin momentarily highlights D major, and F# major and employs chromaticism, successfully enforcing the effect of uncertainty. Even the appearance of the dominant (F# major, m. 24), although it is essentially followed by the shift to the tonic (m. 28), does not seem to initially guarantee the arrival of the tonic several measures later, due to the destabilizing quality of chromaticism (mm. 25-27). The phrase structure of the opening theme adds to the sensation of suppression of the material, through the irregularity of the phrase groupings of mm. 9-51, which can be read as 3+4+2+2½+3½+4 + 3+4+2+2½+4½+4+4. Lack of resolution of the accumulated intensity can be noticed in m. 52, where Chopin surprisingly arrives at B major. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the ambiguity of this moment has triggered a variety of formal interpretations; however, from the context of narrative progression, m. 52 marks a clear shift in the unfolding of musical process. A similar situation occurs in the first restatement of the opening theme, which ends with the arrival of E♭ major in m. 143 (Example 4.7), articulating a sudden harmonic and thematic shift. These rather unexpected moments of abruptness in the narrative resemble the balladic model of Chopin in two ways: first, they provides no resolution of the opening theme, suppressing its internal tensions until the coda; second, the unpredictability of the narrative process present in the finale of Op. 58 is an essential feature of all of Chopin’s Ballades. These aspects of the opening theme (mm. 9-51) can be noticed in Example 4.18.

57 Samson, Chopin: The Four Ballades, 84.
Example 4.18 Primary theme of Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 9-53.
The secondary theme of the finale of Op. 58 provides a strong rhythmic, textural and thematic contrast to the opening theme. Although it does not initially introduce a contrasting key, its “characterizing” and therefore “less determinant” function suggests a connection to Chopin’s Ballades. The secondary theme of Op. 58 (mm. 52-75, Example 4.5) shows more similarity in the level of dynamic and rhythmic intensity to the secondary theme of the Second Ballade, Op. 38, than to those of the other Ballades (see Example 4.19).
The structure of the secondary theme of Op. 38 resembles the secondary theme of the finale of Op. 58. In Op. 38 the first two-measure unit is repeated and followed by the four-measure elaboration of the material. Then, with the arrival of the new key (G minor, m. 55) the opening sequence of events is repeated, though with a slight modification at the end (m. 61 is
repeated in 62). The secondary theme of the finale of Op. 58 opens with a four-measure phrase structure (mm. 52-55, Example 4.5), which is, similarly to Op. 38, repeated (mm. 56-59) and elaborated (in this case by an eight-measure phrase, mm. 60-67), subsequently retrieving the sequence of the 4+4 measure phrase structure of the beginning of the theme (mm. 68-75). This return to the opening material of the secondary theme is cut short by the insertion of the third thematic material in m. 76. The overall structure of the secondary theme of the finale can be described as a two-phrase construction, where the first phrase consists of mm. 52-67 (exposition and elaboration of the material) and the second of mm. 68-75 (restatement of the beginning), or three-phrase, where each phrase contains eight measures (mm. 52-59, 60-67, and 68-75). The further restatement of the secondary theme assumes the same structural shape (mm. 143-166, Example 4.7).

Parakilas’s idea of a secondary theme fulfilling a “characterizing” function in regards to “one of the forces at conflict in a story” seems to be traceable within the finale of Op. 58. The “characterizing” of that “force at conflict” can be seen primarily by the sequential structure of the theme, in which the constantly changing harmonic progression implies an elaboration of the same idea (introduced in mm. 52-55, Example 4.5). In terms of defining the essence of the “force at conflict” it is necessary to consider the relation of the primary opening theme to the secondary theme. As mentioned before, the intensity build up of the primary theme remains unresolved until the final restatement and coda. The sudden dramatic shifts at the arrivals of the secondary theme (mm. 52 and 143) suggest a departure of the narrative into different scenery. While the primary theme consisted of longer, smoothly connected and gradually intensified phrases, the secondary theme shows an element of abruptness articulated by constantly interchanging two-

58 Parakilas, Ballads without words; Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade, 65.
measure statements (except for the middle part of the theme, where a short intensification of the material takes place, e.g. mm. 60-64). The initiating statements are usually exposed in a lower register and consist of a short melodic cell (e.g. mm. 52-53) followed by a harmonic questioning figure (consisting of an eighth note with a quarter note separated from the initial cell by an eighth-note rest, e.g. mm. 53-54). The answering statements (e.g. mm. 54-55) employ a high-register descending figuration over the left-hand harmonic accompaniment, which tonally resolves, responding to the previously encountered figures of the initiating statements. The lack of linear continuity in the unfolding of the musical process enforces the contrast to the primary theme, while multiple climaxes and releases of the intensity within the secondary theme suggest a compression of the drama in the unfolding of the narrative. In addition, the dynamic marking of \textit{ff} that is implied for most of the secondary theme suggests a powerful or passionate type of expression. Although we can only speculate on expression in Chopin’s works, in the context of the thematic progression in the finale of Op. 58, the contrast between the continuous, expansive primary theme and compressed, abrupt thematic idea shaping the secondary theme seems to indicate an emotional turmoil, a struggle, a “force at conflict,” which is painstakingly elaborated upon through a series of searching tonal modulations.

The third theme of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 (section C, C’ mm. 76-89, 167-182, Examples 4.6 and 4.12) possesses a “dancelike” character, which projects a contrast to the secondary theme in terms of the dramatic process. As noted earlier, the intensity of the compressed material is replaced by a continuous, rapid linear motion of the right hand accompanied by steady eighth notes outlining the harmonies. The \textit{leggiero} marking indicates a strong contrast to the \textit{ff} dynamic of the secondary theme, while the fast tempo disallows any
significant build up of intensity, despite the presence of the passing chromaticism (e.g. m. 77). The structure of the theme consists of two phrases (in the first presentation of the theme they are mm. 76-83 and 84-89, in the second appearance they are even in length: mm. 167-174 and 175-182) which are almost identical, separated only by a harmonic shift (up a perfect fourth). The strongest reference to the “dancelike” character is exposed in the left-hand figures. The dotted quarter note of the bass line outlines the cadential motion vi-ii-V-I, while the remaining upper notes of the figures supply the other chord tones. This texture is reminiscent of Chopin’s Waltzes. The steadiness of the left-hand figuration together with the sequential design of the two-phrase section fits Parakilas’s description of the sequential, “precipitating” theme encountered in Chopin’s Ballades, manifesting similarity to the scherzando episode of the First Ballade (mm. 138-154, Example 4.20a) and leggiero episode of the Third Ballade (mm. 124-135, Example 4.20b).


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59 Chomiński believes the figuration of “swift cascade of notes” in the right hand gives this passage a “coloristic” quality, anticipating the impressionistic techniques of the future composers (Sonaty Chopina, 245-246).

60 Particularly the “Minute” Waltz in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1.
Example 4.20b. Leggiero dancelike episode in Chopin’s Third Ballade, Op. 47, mm. 124-134.

Despite the fact that these “dancelike or songlike” themes “never return,”⁶¹ the waltz-like leggiero section of the finale of Op. 58 is repeated in its entirety together with its preceding material (section B’, mm. 143-166, Example 4.7). The repetition of the C section can be explained as an affirmation of the rondo element in the movement, which, from the dramatic point of view, disallows any larger accumulation of tension in the middle part of the movement, also providing an important break in the unfolding of the movement’s dramatic content.

The suppression of the primary theme and compression of drama in the secondary theme contribute to the continuous increase of tension throughout the movement. This setting resembles Parakilas’s observation of Chopin’s Ballades, which are “uninterrupted spans of music with

⁶¹ Parakilas, Ballads without words; Chopin and the Tradition of the Instrumental Ballade, 65.
patterns of increasing momentum leading to a climax at the end." This observation fully applies to the musical proceedings of the finale of Op. 58, where the coda produces an ultimate resolve of accumulated tensions. The coda consists of three sections, each addressing a specific aspect of the movement, and possibly the entire work. The first section (mm. 254-261, see Example 4.21 below) reasserts B major as the triumphant tonic, also possibly commenting on the B minor/B major issue present in the first movement (particularly the ambiguous start of recapitulation in B major in m. 137, Example 3.9). The second section of the coda (mm. 262-273) refers to the third theme of the finale (reworking the “dancelike” character in the left hand– mm. 262-267), and the secondary theme (with abrupt, unpredictable harmonic figures resembling the questioning figures of the initiating statements of the theme – mm. 268-273). The third section of the coda addresses the primary theme of the movement, particularly in the left hand, where the F#-G#-F#-D# top line of the passage (mm. 274-276) seems to fulfill the initial melodic movement of F#-G-A#-B (emphasized in the final restatement of the theme, mm. 207ff, Example 4.14c) which kept migrating to different keys. Here, at last, it is finally reassured with the final leap onto D#, enforcing the B major as the goal of the movement.

\[\text{Example 4.14c}\]

\[\text{Example 3.9}\]

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\[\text{Example 4.21}\]

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\[\text{Ibid., 53.}\]
One of the most interesting aspects of the coda is Chopin’s use of virtuosic passagework, which shows resemblance to his Ballades through the transformation of the thematic material “beyond recognition.” As Chomiński points out, the coda of the finale of Op. 58 is based on virtuosic figuration, which unfolds in three stages: the first consists of “chordal figuration,” the second is “increasingly chromatic of the melodic type,” and the third is “descending chromatic.” Although he does not provide specific locations for those sections we can notice that they line up with the aforementioned structure of the coda. The intricacy of the virtuosic passagework is in fact so complex that the only clue in relation to the thematic material that Chopin gives during the passages comes from the left hand, and so, the only traceable links to the previous themes can be found in the second section (waltz-like figures) and the third section (melodic line of the chordal passage).

**Summary**

The majority of interpretations of the structural design of the finale of Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, consider the movement as a rondo or sonata-rondo form. Although the rondo and variation elements are strongly articulated by the recurrences and modifications of the opening theme, the unorthodox restatement of the theme in the subdominant defies the principal aspect of a rondo form, while the presence of the tonic in the contrasting sections eliminate the possibility of the sonata-rondo form, as does the lack of a development section. These observations, together with the strong thematic and textural contrasts between the sections of the movement encourage a new interpretation of the formal design of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58.

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63 Ibid., 65.
64 Chomiński, *Sonaty Chopina*, 248.
which includes a discovery of the elements of genre hybridization of rondo form and Chopin’s balladic practice.

The primary balladic influence present in the finale of Op. 58 can be associated with thematic intensification, which is manifested within the primary theme (through thickening of texture, increase in dynamics and ascent of register) and its recurrences (through gradual rhythmic diminution of the accompanying figures increasing the rhythmic momentum). This procedure results in an “end-weighted” structure.

Another balladic aspect of the finale of Op. 58 involves thematic relations within the movement. The sudden dramatic shift associated with the appearance of the secondary theme and its sequential design suggest a “characterizing” function within the balladic narrative, while the presence of the dancelike leggiero third theme provides a temporary distraction from the intensity of the main story.

A final reference to Chopin’s balladic model can be found in the coda of the movement, where the virtuosic passages resemble Chopin’s Ballades in the transformation of the thematic material to such an extent that the only remainders of the original themes occur in the accompanying figures. Also, similarly to Chopin’s Ballades, the coda of the finale of Op. 58 addresses every thematic component, providing an ultimate resolution to the ongoing build up of tension throughout the movement.
Chapter 5

Some Performance Considerations

The preceding examination of the influence of Chopin late stylistic features on the Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58, exposes formal ambiguities, which may pose interpretative challenges. Every performer preparing Chopin’s Op. 58, or any other work, primarily focuses on the discovery of the structural, intellectual and emotional content of the work.¹ This process typically involves creation of an interpretative model that expresses the performer’s understanding of the work in terms of structure and emotion. Usually, when the performer encounters genres that provide multiple sources of extra-musical reference (such as physical motion in the case of dances) it is generally easier to create an interpretative model. Although without extra-musical references, the sonata falls into the category of familiar genres, which most music students can thoroughly describe in terms of structural and tonal expectations. This knowledge of generic norms can facilitate the interpretation of any sonata. The main challenge lies in identification of the structurally determinant sections (themes, transitions, etc.), which, once overcome, opens the door for examination of the expressive content. However, in the case of Chopin’s Op. 58 (and the sonatas of other Romantics such as Liszt and Schumann), due to the evolution of the genre, producing a cohesive interpretation becomes more challenging. Chopin’s individuation of the sonata redefines the nature of the genre. The incorporation of his stylistic

features into the traditional model results in a series of formal ambiguities that need to be carefully studied in an attempt to create a convincing interpretation.

The major interpretative challenge of Chopin’s Op. 58 is the identification of the structurally determinant sections in the work’s opening and closing movements. As discussed in the third and fourth chapters, unconventional treatment of the thematic material produces an ambiguity in thematic boundaries in the first movement, while the fourth movement blends the rondo form with Chopin’s balladic practice. Through a careful and thorough analysis of both movements, one is able to create a structural outline of the movements and become aware of how the elements of Chopin’s late style affect each movement. Having conquered that, the performer needs to confront the problematic nature of incorporation of all these aspects into performance.

This chapter will suggest some interpretative choices informed by the observations made in the preceding chapters. Although it will focus principally on the sonata’s opening and closing movements, the chapter will offer a few thoughts on the performance of the inner movements as well. The recorded history of performance shows that such an intricate works as Chopin’s Op. 58 admits a wide variety of interpretations, many of which vividly bring to light the structural ambiguities and late stylistic aspects of the sonata. In the following discussion, the recordings of several internationally acclaimed pianists will be referred to in order to aid with the musical presentation of the suggestions for the performance of Chopin’s Op. 58. I have selected a variety of distinctive interpretations of the sonata from many different time periods, ranging from 1947 until 2010. The following table shows the overall similarity of the performances in terms of timings of every movement of Op. 58 (for the most cases, the similarities end with the timing of the movements).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performer</th>
<th>First Movement</th>
<th>Second Movement</th>
<th>Third Movement</th>
<th>Fourth Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dinu Lipatti (1947)</td>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>2:28</td>
<td>8:44</td>
<td>4:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Kapell (1953)</td>
<td>8:51</td>
<td>2:19</td>
<td>8:41</td>
<td>4:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Argerich (1965)</td>
<td>8:50</td>
<td>2:41</td>
<td>9:08</td>
<td>4:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrick Ohlsson (1970)</td>
<td>8:36</td>
<td>2:24</td>
<td>8:43</td>
<td>4:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Bolet (1970s)</td>
<td>10:22</td>
<td>2:21</td>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>5:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivo Pogorelic (1983)</td>
<td>9:50</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>9:34</td>
<td>4:30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>repeat of the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>exposition)</td>
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<td>repeat of the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exposition)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafał Blechacz (2005)</td>
<td>8:37</td>
<td>2:33</td>
<td>8:48</td>
<td>5:04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 5.1. Comparison of performance timings of Chopin’s Op. 58 by several internationally acclaimed pianists.

The first movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 presents the biggest interpretative challenge of the cycle. The thematic boundary between the primary theme and transition (m. 17, Example 3.2) requires to be articulated in a manner that would suggest a sudden outburst of Chopin’s dandified
impertinence. It is important to consider the difference between this fragment and the opening of the movement. They should not be expressively related, and the start of transition should not bring back the energy or expressive quality of the opening. If the opening of the movement relates to the steadiness and impeccable energy of a majestic march, the dandified fragment should suggest impertinence, abruptness or restlessness. This can be achieved through a rhythmic compression and a sense of direction (moving forward) of the transition’s opening. This interpretation is reflected, for instance, in a 1947 recording by Dinu Lipatti.

The exposition’s transition poses an interpretative difficulty due to its length and somewhat disjointed design (interrupted by two dandified tonal digressions, mm. 17-18, 29-30, Example 3.3). In order to articulate the instability of the section one can take advantage of the left-hand crescendo markings in mm. 23-28 that emphasize the anxiousness of the ascending chromaticism. A particular challenge is to assert the Eb arrival as surprising rather than expected. This can be expressed by keeping the tempo throughout the digressive fragment (mm. 29-30, Example 2.12), with only a slight emphasis on the accented notes in m. 30. The following passage tends to pose some difficulty in terms of rhythmic punctuation. Chopin’s eighth-note rhythmic displacement initiated in m. 33 challenges the performer. A common rendition is to hold the downbeat eighth-note chord for the duration of a quarter note (which can be encouraged by a sforzato marking in some of the editions, such as Paderewski’s), thus depriving the flow from the intended displacement. This practice diminishes the effect of rhythmic displacement, which Chopin employs in anticipation of the arrival of the peaceful and steady secondary theme. In order to avoid that and enforce the contrast between the sections a minimal repose on the downbeat of m. 33 is encouraged, so that the unsettling eighth-note rhythmic displacement can
be clearly articulated. The 1965 recording of Martha Argerich performs the transition in this manner.

The secondary theme brings into light Chopin’s practice of blurring genres, exposing an element of a nocturne intertwined with the unpredictability of balladic narration. The start of the theme (m. 41, Example 2.1) should therefore provide a sense of peace and emotional resolution, contrasting to the previous section. This can be expressed by a modest relaxation of the tempo and complete evenness of the accompanying figures. In addition, lightness of the touch in the left hand and attention to the dynamic shape of the voice-like melody of the right hand should be carried out throughout the entire theme. The balladic aspect of the thematic design includes unexpected thematic, harmonic and melodic twists, which Chopin employs in order to postpone the final cadence in the secondary key (mm. 74-75, Example 2.5). Articulation of the turning points of narration is strongly encouraged. The most prominent of them happens in m. 65, where the preceding, rhythmically and dynamically intensified phrase (mm. 56-64) is suddenly interrupted, taking the music into an entirely different direction (leggiero section, mm. 66-75). It might be advised to linger rhythmically on the turning material of m. 65 in a spirit of hesitation or contemplation, as it seems that Chopin’s intention was to insert an improvisatory quality to the musical flow. The following leggiero section possesses a rather precipitate character, which is reminiscent of the balladic precipitate themes (of dancelike or songlike character). It is therefore musically justified to perform this section in a swift fashion, with gentle touch and clear articulation, without overemphasizing the brief cadential figure in the middle of the section (m. 69). The performer should keep in mind that the purpose of this section is to provide the necessary drive to the final cadence in mm. 74-75. Being aware of it should help prevent any
undesirable slowing down. The recordings of Lipatti and Murray Perahia (1988) admirably reflect the constantly shifting musical character throughout this lengthy cadential approach.²

The closing material of the exposition (mm. 76-89, Example 2.6) once again draws inspiration from Chopin’s nocturnes, exposing the melodic line intertwined with the harp-like accompanying figures. The main challenge of this section is finding a balance between maintaining the tempo and expressing the improvisatory dolce character. Although Chopin indicates the moments of suspension (usually with addition of grace notes or interruption of accompaniment at cadential points, e.g. mm. 79, 81) the question of how much freedom one has remains unclear. It seems reasonable to maintain a sense of continuity throughout the section; however the strong reference to the narrative quality of Chopin’s balladic practice encourages a high level of interpretative freedom, which can produce very satisfying results (as in the case of William Kapell’s recording of 1953).

The balladic aspect is also strongly present at the end of the development. The turning point in m. 133 halts the musical flow and begins a searching journey, employing imitation that empowers the sense of improvisation (Example 3.9). The performer is given an opportunity to indulge in this journey, creating a rhythmic suspense at the start, followed by a gradual accelerando and crescendo leading to the recapitulation in m. 137. The major challenge for the performer lies in careful articulation of the multiple voices in mm. 133-134, giving each one its own purpose that creates a dialogue between the voices. Rafał Blechacz’s recording from the XV

² Interestingly, the recording of Jorge Bolet (1970s) incorporates the alternative variant of the cadential figure of mm. 74-75 originally present in the first French and English editions, nowadays almost entirely forgotten (despite its mention in all modern editions). John Ferri, in his dissertation, investigates practices of the editors of Chopin’s music and their immense influence on the performance practice, including the omission of the alternative cadence in mm. 74-75 of the first movement’s exposition of Op. 58 (Ferri, “Performance indications and the analysis of Chopin’s music,” 118-137).
International Chopin Competition in Warsaw (2005) encompasses both the balladic improvisatory character and individual treatment of each voice present in the turning point of the development.

The boundary between the development and recapitulation has caused some debate among scholars. As mentioned in the third chapter of this dissertation, the source of this ambiguity lies in Chopin’s unorthodox employment of the transition’s material as a starting point of the recapitulation in m. 137 (Example 3.10). From the performer’s perspective, this might cause a dilemma: given the passing nature of the transition, it is impossible to strongly emphasize the start of the new structural section. But perhaps Chopin’s structural anomaly argues against the type of clear-cut highlighting of form the performer typically engages in at this formal boundary. Maybe it is more in the spirit of this movement--more in keeping with Chopin’s individuation of the sonata genre--to bring the listener along unsuspectingly to the recapitulation, whose arrival is clarified only slightly after it has already begun. This tactic suggests the performer take advantage of the dynamic build up of the previous measures (in mm. 135-136) by slight exaggeration of the crescendo and the arriving forte dynamic. Once the impertinent fragment is reached (mm. 137-138), it should be performed in a similar fashion as the previous one (mm. 17-18), incorporating the same type of emotion. Both of these practices can help the audience notice the start of the recapitulation, enriching their understanding of Chopin’s evolution of sonata form. Argerich’s recording incorporates the described performance techniques, exposing the structural boundary around m. 137.

In the second movement of Chopin’s Op. 58, one of the major interpretative challenges lies in maintaining the consistency of fast tempo with the clarity of articulation in leggiero
character throughout the movement’s outer sections. As an expression of an extreme
gracefulness in Chopin’s dandified aesthetic, the Scherzo requires the performer to evenly
articulate every note of the right hand, and, at the same time, dynamically shape the melodic
passages. The idea is to make sure that the articulation of individual notes does not produce a
mechanical effect, but still serves a musical purpose of exploration of higher registers of piano
and different harmonic colors supported by the left hand, which needs to remain softer than the
right hand, fulfilling its rather suggestive role (expressed through limited presence and lack of
root-position chords on the downbeats, Example 2.13). Another challenge of the Scherzo lies in
the transition between the opening and middle sections of movement. A tendency to slow down
the tempo (part of the tradition of performing the trio sections of scherzos in a slower tempo) has
its musical justifications (change of character and texture), but it should not be significant
enough to exaggerate the already striking contrast. As mentioned in the second chapter, the
character of this section evokes elements of folk music and should possess the fluidity of pulse
that encompasses them, without any excess of intensity. Bolet’s impeccable performance of the
opening section of the second movement illustrates the presented performance suggestions, while
Blechacz’s recording displays the fluidity of the transition into the middle part of the movement.

The third movement of Chopin’s Op. 58 requires a great level of maturity and
imagination from the performer. Immediately from the start of the movement, Chopin poses a
quasi-philosophical question, expressed by the rhythmic and dynamic strength of the opening
measures (mm. 1-5, Example 2.17), followed by a meditative elaboration in preparation of the
main melodic thought. The main challenge of the opening theme (mm. 5-28) is projection of the
struggle between the peacefulness of the aria-like melody and its rhythmically activated
accompaniment (reminiscent of the opening figures). By focusing on maintaining these two
aspects simultaneously, the performer can not only maintain the intensity throughout the theme but also indulge in an exploration of two philosophical extremes of positive and negative suggested by the individual parts of both hands. If one hopes that the interaction between them would produce some sense of resolution, one could not be more wrong. Chopin rejects the idea of resolution; instead, he suspends the musical flow and in a series of rhetorical gestures transports the music into "a state of highest sublimation" (in the sostenuto section, mm. 29-98, Example 5.2). In the process of transporting the music, Chopin first reaches a moment of acceptance of the struggle (arriving at the tonic in m. 27), which should not be treated as a final resolution. In order to portray this only a minimal ritardando in m. 26 is encouraged, letting the music unfold continuously into the middle section.

\[\text{Example 5.2}\]

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3 Pociej, “Chopin’s late style. Late style: lassitude and innovation,” in Chopin’s musical worlds: 1840s, 342.
The length of the phrases together with the fluidity of the right-hand texture requires a more forward-moving tempo, although without giving the listener a sense of the music being faster. It seems beneficial to think of the middle section in half notes, rather than the quarters, as is suggested by Chopin’s beaming. The entire section will result in a harmonic and rhythmic relaxation while the musical flow will be continuous. The meditative, transcendent aspect of the sostenuto section is an intricate and personal one and therefore needs to be discovered by every artist individually. However, as in the case of late Beethoven sonatas (Opp. 101-111), it seems that the key to understanding of metaphysical elements is an emotional surrender to the musical proceedings. It is in that moment of surrender that one can learn to accept the presence of the
forces beyond one’s own powers. Once this emotional state is achieved, the music can guide the performer and the listener into a metaphysical “state of highest sublimation.”

The final moments of the *sostenuto* section returns the music from the timeless philosophical exploration back into reality, expressed by a series of rhetorical figures reminiscent of the final measures of the opening section (mm. 89-98, Example 5.3). The following return of the opening theme (m. 99) brings an emotional relief and a sense of reconciliation (or perhaps accommodation) between the melodic line and the triplet-flowing accompaniment.

Chopin's Op. 58, Mvt. 3,

Chopin transforms the opening rhythmic punctuation of the left-hand patterns into gentle fluid figures that resemble a lullaby in character. It seems that the dreamy mood cannot be
interrupted, yet Chopin once again brings back the rhetorical figures in mm. 105-112, as if to remind the listener that the initial philosophical quest has not been resolved. He does not attempt to resolve it here either. On the contrary, Chopin seems content to accept it, hoping that this will yet again transport him into “a state of highest sublimation.” Unfortunately though, the epilogue of the movement seems to exhibit more of a memory of the metaphysical, rather than the metaphysical itself. The fluidity of the coda is eventually broken and the final closure brings an element of restlessness (by the presence of G♮ instead of reassuring F# in m. 119, Example 5.4), in anticipation of the final movement (F# moving to G♮ becomes an integral part of its melodic line, see Example 4.14a).
From the performer’s perspective, it is important to maintain the fluidity of the left-hand figures during mm. 99-105, so that the steadiness of the character remains undisturbed. This will generate a more significant contrast to the following sequence of rhetorical gestures, creating a more powerful reminder of the unsolved. The epilogue relates to both, the *sostenuto* mystical mood (left-hand uninterrupted figures) and the opening theme’s aria-type melody (right-hand long line with voice-like ornamentation). The performer should attempt to express both in a way
suggestive of a distant memory. This can be accomplished by application of the same touches used in both sections and by giving the music a rhythmic space, letting it unfold, rather than pursuing it through a strong sense of direction. The final thought of mm. 119-120 requires careful but clear voicing of the resolving G♮ to the F#. In order to achieve a better sense of ending once should take full advantage of the fermata over the final B major chord. The longer the chord can be sustained, the stronger the sense of closure and contrast to the final movement.

The finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 poses challenges resulting from blurring of genres. The thematic repetitiveness of the rondo is affected by the balladic aspects of gradual intensification and thematic relationships. Before discussing the performance practices that would help project the structural complexity of the movement, it seems relevant to address the introduction. The finale’s opening (mm. 1-8, Example 5.5) generates a great level of intensity (with the use of dynamics and chromaticism) and drama (by contrasting the end of the slow movement and the main theme of the finale), that prepares the listener for the subsequent theme. In order to portray this dramatic effect, it is helpful for the performer to feel a strong sense of direction, rhythmically pushing the music towards the climax in m. 8, followed by a slight rhythmic relaxation accompanying the D-C# resolution. This application of rubato will amplify the dynamic crescendo, adding to the overall build up of intensity during the introduction. A clear example of such practice is demonstrated by Blechacz’s recording.
Example 5.5. Chopin’s Op. 58, Mvt. 4, mm. 1-9.

The balladic aspect of the opening theme can be best achieved if the opening agitato character is not expressed through an extremely fast tempo. Chopin’s indication of Presto, ma non tanto should be taken quite literally, as the excess of speed might only cause confusion and blur the effect of gradual intensification (if the tempos of subsequent returns vary significantly). The theme’s tempo should allow the rhythmic and dynamic intensification of subsequent returns to be expressed with clarity and cohesion. That can be achieved by taking advantage of the non tanto indication and careful use of pedal, which, in the lower register of the piano, might obscure the rhythmic clarity of the accompanying figures. What can be helpful for the performer is to keep in mind that the effect of the final return of the theme will be more powerful if the rhythmic aspect of intensification (diminution of the left-hand figures) is exposed with clarity, allowing the audience to appreciate fully the balladic treatment of the theme. Perhaps the clearest examples of such a performance belong to Evgeni Bozhanov (2010 recording from the XVI International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw) and Arthur Rubinstein (recording from 1962).

Although Jackson’s remarks concern the Finale of Op. 35, his observations of the relation between the choice of tempo and resulting clarity of structure are also valid in the case of the Finale of Op. 58. Jackson advocates for a slower performance that will allow the listener to hear the structure of the movement with cohesion (Jackson, “Concerning Chopin’s ‘Enigmatical’ Finale in the Sonata in B flat Minor, Op. 35,” 28). Similarly, employment of a steady tempo at the opening of the Finale of Op. 58 will allow the balladic aspects of the movement to be audible.
The thematic relationships of the finale of Chopin’s Op. 58 exhibit another connection to Chopin’s balladic practice. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a strong reference of the finale’s thematic material to the “characterizing” and dancelike passages of the balladic narrative. The secondary theme of the finale (mm. 52-75, Example 4.5) serves as the “characterizing” theme, commenting on the preceding theme. Despite the arrival of the ff dynamic in m. 52, the tempo of the entire section should not change. The performer is encouraged to focus on the harmonic changes as they are the essence of the “characterizing” function of the secondary theme. The hesitant moment in the middle (mm. 60-64) can momentarily bring back the agitato character of the opening theme, yet it should quickly disperse (mm. 64-68). The right-hand running figures need not to be rushed as they comment on the harmonic proceedings, always leading into resolutions. The dancelike leggiero theme of the finale (mm. 76-89, Example 4.6) possesses a passing quality, precipitating the action from the repetitive “characterizing” theme into the return of the opening material in m. 100. The lightness of touch is clearly suggested by Chopin; however, clear articulation of the right-hand passages together with dynamic shaping will enhance the effect of moving forward. In addition, the tempo of this theme should not slow down. Even if the preparation of the theme (m. 75) involves a brief retardation (indicating the arrival of a new theme), the tempo should be restored directly at the start of the theme (m. 76). In general, minimal or no use of rubato in this section is encouraged, as any tempo fluctuation might affect the flow of the sixteenth notes (especially in the transition, mm. 90-99). The recordings of Lipatti and Kapell illustrate the described practices.

The tempo relations between the finale's themes can include minor alterations, in order to help express the structural design of the movement. However, instead of simply changing the tempos at new structural regions, these alterations can be expressed more subtly by the use of
rubato. This will create a more organic feel to the structure, making the themes more connected and relevant to each other (similarly to balladic narrative). For instance, if the performer would like to emphasize the arrival of the secondary theme in ff dynamic at m. 52, one could broaden the second chord of the measure, rhythmically articulating its structural importance as the start of the new thematic unit. In order to compensate for the stolen time, the performer can slightly accelerate the virtuoso answering figure in mm. 54-55. Even if the overall tempo of the secondary theme will be significantly different from the opening theme, the audience might not notice it, due to rubato's concealment of the change of tempo. This practice can help provide a clearer image of the thematic division, as in the 1983 recording of Ivo Pogorelich.

Other structurally important moments include transitions and the coda. In the case of transitions, it is a common practice to emphasize the reappearances of the opening theme by employing ritardando at the last couple of measures before the returns of the theme (mm. 98-99, 205-206, Example 4.6, 4.8). This practice is very beneficial in aiding the presentation of the thematic arrival; however, it is especially successful if it does not result in slower tempo of the returning theme (in relation to the initial tempo of the theme). As mentioned before, the tempo of the opening theme should remain steady throughout the recurrences, in order to express the balladic intensification of rhythmic momentum. In order to avoid slowing down the returns of the opening theme, the performers are encouraged to make the ritardando at the end of the transitions proportional to the increase of speed employed throughout the third themes. Such practices prove successful in emphasizing the balladic aspects of the finale, as presented in the recording of Lipatti.
The coda of the finale provides closure to the movement and to the entire work. As discussed in the previous chapter, the size and tri-sectional design likely refer to several aspects of the entire work, producing a final conclusion and resolution of the sonata. It seems beneficial, from the performer's point of view, to ensure that the harmonic progressions are clearly articulated (asserting the B major as the tonic) and, despite the technical difficulty, the virtuoso passages provide the highest state of excitement and anticipation. This can be achieved by a strong sense of direction and clarity of articulation in the right hand, which will generate a rhythmic intensity and brilliancy of the virtuosic sweep. The final melodic gesture of the left hand (related to the melodic line of the opening theme of the finale – top notes of the chords in mm. 274-276, Example 4.21) can benefit greatly from the use of modest tenuto on each chord, enhancing the sense of final closure. The performer can take advantage of the fermata indicated over the last chord. It seems that the longer the final B major chord sounds, the more sense of resolution one projects, as suggested in the recording of Bolet.

The performance practice of Chopin’s music has changed significantly since the time of the composer. At the beginning of the last century, the acceptable level of interpretative freedom was much higher than today, allowing the performers to alter the score in order to “enhance” its musical effects. It is particularly visible in the Chopin recordings of Theodor Leschetizky and Moriz Rosenthal. An example relevant to this study comes from one of the most famous twentieth-century pianists and Chopin interpreters, Benno Moiseiwitsch. In an essay on “Playing in the Grand Style,” Moiseiwitsch reveals his process of creating an interpretation of a musical work. He discusses the discovery of the emotional connection between the third and fourth movements of Chopin’s Op. 58, and how it affected the way he played the work:
I incline to be stubborn about divining and recreating musical meaning. I do not arrive at interpretive conclusions without thought; I hover over a work for days-weeks-trying shades of meaning. And once I have worked out a satisfying (if not standardized) interpretation, I am hard to sway from it. One evening last summer, I played Chopin’s B Minor Sonata, the Largo of which is among the loveliest slow movements we know. One always plays best alone at home, and this night I reveled in the beauty and sentiment of that movement. When I had finished it, I was startled to find myself sliding straight into the theme of the last movement, omitting the introductory chords. It was in no sense intentional; I simply could not break the mood of the beautiful slow movement by playing chords, and immediately it came to me that those chords do not relate to the transition between the third and final movements. I was greatly excited by the thought and determined (against advice) to try playing the work this way in public. I finally did, and was gratified when the critics, who might have condemned me, approved the alteration. On principle, I am against taking liberties with the masters; I never seek to change texts. But when changes of this kind come to me, when they fit, and when I have exercised thought and reason upon them, then I feel they must be right!  

Moiseiwitsch’s account highlights the expressive and emotional connection between the movements. Many of his Chopin recordings (especially Ballades) exhibit several alterations, most of which are additions of bass lines or even voices (e.g. 1947 recording of Ballade No. 4, Op. 52). Although most modern performers choose not to enhance the musical effects by the means of alteration, Moiseiwitsch’s method of exercising many interpretative possibilities in search of one’s own satisfying interpretation is as relevant to modern musicians as it was to the masters of the “Grand Style.” One should always be encouraged to pursue and explore new possibilities, despite the restrictions of today’s acceptable standards. After all, pianists should draw inspiration from the masters of the bygone age. Their relative closeness to Chopin’s time and his teaching can help us acquire a better understanding of his compositional aesthetic and performance approach.

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5 Benno Moiseiwitsch, “Playing in the Grand Style (1950),” *Etude, the music magazine* 68, No. 2 (February 1950).
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