

Variations as Thematic and Structural Analysis: A Closer Look at Mozart's K331

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Abstract

In many discussions of Classic-era variation-form compositions, including those considered to be widely known and studied, analytical attention is showered upon the theme, while its variations are comparatively neglected. Casting aside the variations may prove detrimental to our understanding of the theme: In situations in which various aspects of the theme, such as its fundamental structure, seem ambiguous or are subject to debate, careful study of the variations may reveal which features of the theme the composer found essential and, thus, worthy of preservation across the variations. The first movement of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Sonata in A, K331, is a paradigmatic example of this analytical issue, and its variations serve as the focus of my analysis. Analysts have long debated over various facets of Mozart's theme, most notably its Urlinie, whose identity is seemingly obscured by the unusual metric placement of scale degrees 3 and 5 in the upper voices. My investigation aims to demonstrate that considering the behaviour of the Urlinie in the variations and the coda may inform our perception of, and provide the composer's viewpoint on the generating theme's background structure. With these ideas in mind, I then undertake a detailed analysis of Mozart's variations and the procedures he employed in elaborating upon their shared Urlinie.

Keywords Mozart, variations, Schenker, analysis, Classical, piano, sonata, K331

“Variations can shape our conception of the theme”¹

In recent years, the Classical-period (that is, pre-Beethoven) theme and variation set as a form and genre has gradually, and most deservedly, risen in stature among musicological and analytical circles. Despite the increased attention being paid to these pieces, however, some glaring omissions remain. In many discussions, including those pertaining to widely known variation-form pieces like the first movement of Mozart's A major sonata, K331, analytical attention is showered upon the theme, while its variations are mostly left out of the discussion (Allanbrook, 2008). Thus, such scholarship does not provide analysts and listeners with a complete picture of the theme: In situations in which various thematic aspects appear ambiguous or debatable, careful study of the variations may reveal which structural, melodic or harmonic

¹ Roman Ivanovitch (2010). What's in a Theme? On the Nature of Variation. In *Gamut: Online Journal of the Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic*, 3(1), Article 3.

features of the theme the composer found important and, thus, worthy of preservation across the variations. The aforementioned first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in A, K331, is a paradigmatic example of this analytical issue.

The A major sonata, now believed to have been written in 1781, is unique among Mozart's piano pieces in this genre: It includes no actual sonata form movements; rather, its first movement is cast as a theme and variation set. Despite this distinction, the variations themselves have not drawn nearly as much attention from analysts as the movement's 18-bar *Andante grazioso* theme, which has been referred to as the most over-analysed piece of music in the repertoire (Allanbrook, 2008, p. 254). Theorists and musicologists of diverse backgrounds have long debated over the theme, most notably its Schenkerian *Urlinie* (structural melodic line), whose identity is seemingly obscured by the unusual metric placement of scale degrees 3 and 5 in the upper voices. This investigation aims to propose, among other ideas, that considering the behaviour of the *Urlinie* in the variations and the coda may inform our perception of the generating theme's background structure, in addition to revealing other salient features that may have been glossed over in the theme itself. (Such an analytical approach, as a matter of course, bases itself on Allen Forte and Steven Gilbert's view that the theme's *Urlinie* will usually be duplicated in each of the variations. (See Forte & Gilbert, 1982, p. 321; Cavett-Dunsby, 1985, p. 64.) Thus, those who neglect this theme's variations may be relinquishing the opportunity to gain valuable musical and analytical insight into this popular and enduring work.

Before delving into an analysis of the sonata's variations, it would be appropriate to revisit the aforementioned theme and the lively discussion surrounding it. A number of music theorists and musicologists have thus far contributed to analytical debates over Mozart's theme, offering varying interpretations of the *Urlinie* and, in some cases, reorganising the rhythmic structure of the piece in order to clarify or justify their readings of the fundamental melodic structure. Given that Heinrich Schenker pioneered the idea of the *Urlinie*, it seems fitting to begin by considering Schenker's background reading of Mozart's theme, as published in *Der freie Satz* (Schenker, 1979):

Mozart, Sonata in A Major, K. 331, 1st mvt., Theme

Figure 1 Schenker's background reading of the theme.

Schenker interprets this theme (shown here through measure 12, with bars 13-18 replicating the consequent phrase in bars 5-8) as a fifth progression, despite the fact that scale degrees 5 and 4 appear on the weak beats of the opening measures alongside scale degrees 3 and 2, respectively, on the downbeats. For Schenker, this discrepancy between the metric accent and the placement of the *Kopftön* is insignificant, since he

considers the *Ursatz* (full background structure, including the melodic and harmonic skeletons) to be arrhythmic and, thus, independent of such metrical constraints. The following examples, taken from Figure 141 of the supplement to *Der freie Satz*, trace Schenker's reading of the opening four bars from foreground to background, in the process demonstrating his willingness to shift the metrical placement of the fundamental tones in a manner that more clearly reflects their structural function:



Figure 2 Schenker's reading of the opening 4 bars, from foreground to background

In example D of this reduction, representing the foreground, the metrical placement of each non-ornamental tone is preserved. In the middleground sketch depicted in example C, Schenker has already shifted several of the fundamental tones—the third from A to C# that formerly unfolded across bar 3 into bar 4 has been shortened to match the previous unfolded thirds, and in turn, the concluding descent from scale degrees 4 to 2 has been expanded to cover bar 4. Example A, an illustration of Schenker's background reading, shows a further simplification of the melody, with the lower thirds eliminated completely and the 4-3-2 descent from bar 4 lengthened to cover two full bars (thus, strikingly, the D that lasted for a mere eighth beat in example D has been metricaly augmented to represent a whole note in example A). As these sketches demonstrate, Schenker finds it unproblematic to alter, sometimes drastically, the metrical weight and placement of the tones of the *Ursatz* in order to arrive at a melodically and harmonically coherent reading of the *Ursatz*.

In the years since Schenker's analysis of Mozart's theme was published (originally in 1935, with Oster's translation published in 1979), a number of theorists, some dissatisfied with Schenker's rhythmically free approach, have offered alternative readings, attempting to reconcile the idea of scale degree 5 as the *Kopfton* with its weakened metrical placement or, in some cases, rejecting it as the *Kopfton* entirely. The following representative analyses illustrate the wide range of interpretive possibilities that have been teased out of this short theme.

Robert P. Morgan, in his 1978 article "The Theory and Analysis of Tonal Rhythm," offers a background reading of the theme's *Ursatz* that stands in stark contrast to Schenker's analysis, privileging scale degree 3 as the *Kopfton*. To Morgan, scale degree 3's placement on the downbeats of bars 1 and 5 gives it prominence, while scale degree 5 (and, by extension, scale degrees 4 and 3 in the ensuing measures) serves as an upper

third to the *Kopfton*. His analysis of the first eight bars, presented in three progressively deeper structural levels, is reproduced here:

Figure 3 Morgan's reading of bars 1-8

Edward T. Cone approaches the theme similarly, viewing its *Urlinie* as a third-progression; however, his treatment of the upper third idea varies slightly from Morgan's. He reads the melody as the combination of two unfolding melodic lines—3-2-1-2-3 and 5-4-3—that converge on scale degree 3 in the fourth measure, thus prolonging the initial scale degree 3 and further emphasising it before its descent to scale degree 2. This illustration, taken from his *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (1968), aligns Cone's sketch of the antecedent phrase with the foreground texture:

Figure 4 Edward T. Cone's sketch, aligned with the musical foreground of bars 1-4

This uniquely notated reading gives more weight to scale degree 5 than Morgan's analysis affords it; however, the two sketches agree in that scale degree 5 ultimately becomes subservient to the prevailing scale degree 3.

Schenker's, Morgan's and Cone's analyses of the theme's *Urlinie* offer just a glimpse of the ongoing analytical debate surrounding the background structure of this piece (Allanbrook, 2008; Morgan, 1978; Schachter, 1987; Smith, 2013). What is striking about these analyses (as well as, more generally about the volumes of published discourse devoted to this theme, Schenkerian in nature or otherwise) is that

at no point are the variations—indeed, the feature from which the form gets its name!—ever mentioned. Taking into account Forte and Gilbert’s assumption that (at least in the High Classical tradition) the *Ursatz* of a given theme tends to be reproduced faithfully in each of its variations (1982, p.321), it stands to reason that a comparison of the composer’s treatment of middleground and foreground events in each variation may shed light on his idea of the ‘essential’ components of the theme (including, on a more subconscious level, the *Ursatz*) and, thus, reveal the composer’s viewpoint on how to hear it structurally. This discussion will now turn to the variations of Mozart’s sonata movement, taking into consideration their projections of the harmonic and melodic structure and how they may reinforce, or even subvert, our notion of the theme’s *Ursatz*.

The variations of K331’s first movement, like many of Mozart’s variations, employ a combination of melodic-outline and constant-harmony variation techniques. Echoes of Mozart’s favoured “interlacing” technique (Ivanovitch, 2008, p.202), in which the two halves of the binary form are rendered in contrasting textures (resulting in the perception of two distinct variations within one), appear throughout this variation set as well, albeit at the phrase level. Mozart’s use of melodic-outline and constant-harmony variation techniques (which enjoyed a great deal of popularity among a host of composers in the late eighteenth century) (detailed in Cavett-Dunsby, 1985) allows him to base each variation on an identical *Ursatz*, if he so chooses; thus, the middleground and foreground events can be understood as elaborating upon or, more importantly, clarifying the established structural framework.

The first of K331’s variations, as with many High Classical-period first variations, employs rhythmic diminution in sixteenth notes within a texture that invites comparisons to string quartet writing. The antecedent phrase elaborates upon the melody, akin to the first violin, but the variation abruptly changes texture at the start of the consequent phrase, moving the sixteenth-note motion into the bass (cello) line with the melody continuing to unfold in a chordal texture. This textural contrast evokes the aforementioned interlacing technique. In measure 9 of the variation, which marks the beginning of the digression, Mozart returns to the initial texture and maintains it through the evaded cadence in bar 16. At bar 17, Mozart recalls the cello-based texture and supplies the concluding full cadence.

Structurally, this variation seems to remain almost completely faithful to its prototype, with a few relatively minor middleground alterations setting it apart: Mozart omits the cadential six-four in the antecedent phrase, jumps to a root-position dominant in place of the consequent’s initial neighbour V^6 , and replaces the neighbouring bass 7-1 motion in the digression with an upward 2-3 before the tonicised half cadence. These modifications do not affect the fundamental harmonies or the structural melody; thus, the background harmonic structure laid out in the theme remains uncontested over the course of this variation and the *Ursatz* remains in doubt. My own graph of Variation I is shown below:

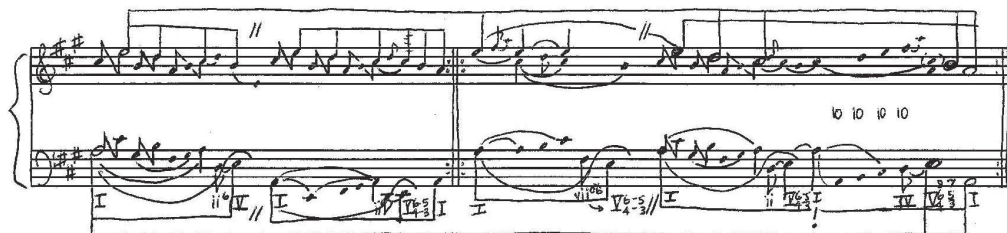


Figure 5 Voice-leading graph of Variation 1

One surface feature absent from the graph that may ultimately prove telling is the curious manner in which Mozart employs neighbour-note diminutions around scale degrees 3 and 5. The initial scale degree 3 (and, thus, 2 and 1 in the subsequent bars) is elaborated with a chromatic lower neighbour, yet scale degree 5 (along with, consequently, 4), after being approached via a lower chromatic appoggiatura, receives a diatonic upper neighbour, as shown in the first three measures of the score:



Figure 6 Opening 3 bars of Variation 1. This and all subsequent score excerpts are taken from the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe/Barenreiter Urtext* edition (2006)

This subtle difference in ornamentation seems to draw the ear towards scale degrees 5 and 4 of the melody, despite their placement on the weaker beats. Although this variation seems to favour scale degree 5 (albeit subtly), the evidence towards scale degree 5 as the *Kopftön* is not conclusive; thus, a similarly close analysis of the subsequent variations must be undertaken.

The second variation continues on the established path of rhythmic diminution, placing the ornamented melody over a swift broken-chord accompaniment in sixteenth-note triplets. Here, Mozart temporarily dispenses with the previous variation's string quartet texture in favour of a decidedly more pianistic style. He does, however, preserve the textural inversion scheme of the first variation, and this time in a more literal sense, by passing the broken chord figuration to the right hand in the consequent phrase and in the final cadential measures. (Interestingly, the textural inversion seems itself an inversion of the first variation's textures: While the first variation placed the initial diminution in the soprano, alternating it with bass diminutions, this variation begins with bass diminution that is then passed to the soprano. In this sense, the first two variations could be acting as a set of paired variations, despite the difference in implied instrumentation.) The harmonic alterations are, again, quite minor: The bass in the antecedent phrase returns to the structural tone in the last eighth beat after articulating the upper third (a feature not seen in the theme or first variation) and, as in the first

variation, the bass G# in the digression is replaced with B (however, instead of filling out a stepwise ascent to C#, the B acts as an upper neighbour to A). As in the first variation, the harmonic background remains intact.

Mozart's foreground treatment of the melody in this variation is somewhat curious, providing another hint of possible differentiation between scale degrees 3 and 5. In the first bar (shown below in Fig. 7) scale degree 3 is articulated in repeated eighth notes, yet scale degree 5 (also an eighth note) is followed by a rest.



Figure 7 Opening of Variation 2

Though it would be reasonable to state that scale degree 3 is being privileged here, given that it is immediately repeated, the rest in the fifth beat seems to redirect the aural center of gravity to the scale degree 5 that precedes it. Mozart could have easily chosen to ornament scale degrees 3 and 5 identically; thus, his decision to differentiate them merits further inquiry. It is quite possible that Mozart intended to recreate the sense of hierarchical ambiguity that was present in the theme, thereby leaving the astute listener in want of a clear-cut melodic solution as the variations continue to unfold.

Mozart's third variation serves as the nearly obligatory *minore* setting, which opens up the piece's tonal and emotional palette while still recalling the generating theme. This variation shares the pianistic quality of the previous one, yet it reverses the trajectory of the first two variations' rhythmic diminution by reverting to a calmer texture of flowing sixteenth notes. Mozart also departs from the inversion scheme laid out in the earlier variations, instead adding octave doublings in the right hand to mark the consequent phrase and the final cadence. Structurally and harmonically, this variation deviates from the theme to the greatest degree seen thus far in the piece. These modifications, which act upon not only the surface figuration but also the *Urfinie*, may sway analysts (and attentive listeners) towards a more definite conception of the generating theme's *Urfinie*.

The surface diminutions in this variation consistently gravitate toward scale degree 5, giving it a degree of prominence not previously conveyed in this set (Peter H. Smith, in a larger comparative discussion of Mozart and Beethoven themes, also notes the significance of scale degree 5 in this variation in Smith, 2013, pp.

11-12.).² The first nine bars of this variation are reproduced below:

² It is worth noting here that at the time I originally completed this paper in late 2009, Smith's analysis (2013) had not yet been published; thus, I was not aware of it until early 2015, when I decided to revisit this paper, and we undertook our analyses independently. Since our readings of Variation 3 and Variation 6 substantially agree, I will not reproduce his graphs here.

VAR. III

Figure 8 Bars 1-9 of Variation 3

As in the preceding variations, Mozart uses distinct ornamentation techniques to differentiate the initial scale degrees 3 and 5. Scale degree 3 generates a stepwise lower third prolongation, whose articulation of another chord tone weakens the relative presence of that scale degree, while scale degree 5 is prolonged with a chromatic double neighbour figure. By choosing a more prominent surface diminution for scale degree 5, Mozart is highlighting this tone, making it more likely that listeners might perceive it as essential to the identity of the theme (which, especially in a *minore* variation, is expected to be at least partially obfuscated). Scale degree 5 is further emphasised in bar 3, albeit in a new incarnation, now as a superimposed inner voice while the bass articulates the original unfolding third of the theme's melody. The corresponding measures in the consequent phrase (bars 7-8) place a still stronger emphasis on scale degree 5, using it as the pivot for an octave transfer during the scalar ascent that concludes the phrase. (This too represents a superimposed inner voice, as the graph in Fig. 9 indicates.) That the inner-voice E is projected so blatantly seems telling: Perhaps the heavily manipulated surface events in this *minore* variation, thus far the most radical departure from the theme, are functioning as a means of revealing the essence of the theme.

Due in part to the aforementioned inner-voice superimpositions, the *Ursatz* of the third variation, shown in Fig. 9, diverges in some respects from that of the theme:

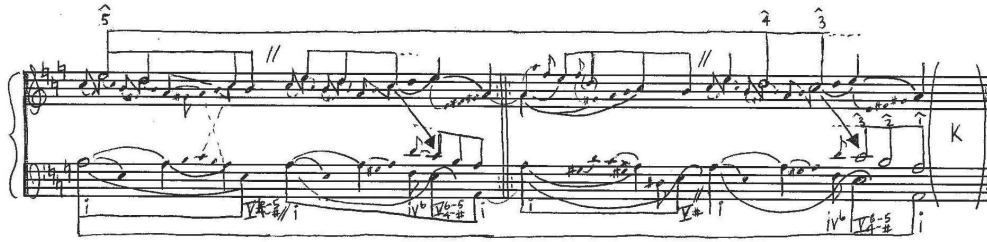


Figure 9 Voice-leading graph of Variation 3

As would be expected in an opposite-mode variation, some harmonic alterations have been made. The neighbour motion in the antecedent's bass has been eliminated (with good reason—the F# would have sounded rather clumsy in the minor mode) and replaced with root-position motion. The predominant preceding the half-cadence has also been scrapped in favour of a tonic prolongation via voice exchange. Interestingly, in the reappearance of the consequent phrase, which has thus far evaded the cadence and necessitated a restatement of the final two bars, Mozart actually arrives at a full cadence, yet he preserves the subsequent bars, which now serve as a codetta, modified only by means of the aforementioned octave doubling. The most striking difference between this variation and the theme, however, lies in the consequent phrase's handling of the linear descent. As a result of the inner-voice superimposition in the right hand, the *Urlinie* is forced to unfold in another voice, in this case, the alto (represented by the highest register in the left hand). This registral switch occurs in measure 8 on scale degree 3, prepared by a D in the alto voice. Mozart's redistribution of the *Urlinie* to the alto is perceptually striking, since the alto had previously remained stationary on scale degree 5 and this descent marks the first appearance of melodic motion in that register. Though not unheard of, the idea of the *Urlinie* passing into an inner voice with such clarity is not often encountered, so Mozart's somewhat unorthodox decision to bury the linear descent and place the superimposed scale degree 5 in the soprano is a bit unusual. It appears that this variation is intentionally drawing attention to scale degree 5—and doing so in an almost exaggerated manner—to refer back to the theme and help clarify the ambiguity between scale degrees 3 and 5 that, to this point, has not been completely addressed.

The fourth variation refers to the theme's melody in a more abstract manner than that which was presented in the other variations; however (or perhaps as a result of its abstraction), it still has much to say about the ambiguities surrounding the linear descent. The first eight bars of the variation are reproduced below:

The image shows the opening 8 bars of Variation 4 from Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 11. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of four bars each. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system is labeled 'VAR. IV' and 'm. 5'. The second system is labeled '5'. The music features a dense, symphonic texture with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The first system is marked 'p' (piano) and 'm. 5'. The second system is marked '5'.

Figure 10 Opening 8 bars of Variation 4

The A section unfolds in a lush, almost symphonic texture that retains the background harmonic trajectory of the theme while projecting the melody in a less explicit fashion. This variation also marks the first instance (after the theme) in which Mozart renders the antecedent and consequent phrases in identical textures. In order to compensate for this, however, Mozart radically alters the orchestration in the digression, using idiomatic solo piano figuration to provide textural contrast. (The juxtaposition of the more orchestral A section with the more pianistic digression invites comparison to a genre very dear to Mozart—the piano concerto.) Harmonically, this variation unfolds similarly to the third, replacing the antecedent’s neighbour-note gesture in the bass with root motion and dispensing with the half-cadence’s predominant. Unlike its predecessor, however, this variation preserves the theme’s evasion of the cadence in bar 16, weakening it even further by leaving out the expected A in the bass. Interestingly, this variation’s alternation of a densely orchestrated A section with a solo in the digression inverts the textural relationships in the third variation, which began soloistically and later added the octave doublings in the consequent. It seems that Mozart has, albeit somewhat abstractly, conceived Variations 3 and 4 as a pair, just as he had paired the first two.

Although this variation contains a great deal of textural interest, its rendering of the melody is even more compelling from a Schenkerian perspective. It is here that scale degree 5 appears most explicitly within the *Urlinie*. (The importance of scale degree 5 was, of course, implied via the previous variation’s continual superimposition of the inner-voice E, but most of that emphasis was conveyed outside the confines of the *Urlinie* itself.) Mozart immediately weakens scale degree 3 by leaving it out of the downbeat in the uppermost register, which then picks it up on the far weaker second beat. The line ascends in parallel thirds, arriving on scale degree 5 on the fourth beat. Since the fourth beat lies in a far stronger metrical position than the off-beat on which the C# entered, the ear automatically perceives E as being accented here, along with D in the following bar. This configuration provides the most compelling musical evidence thus far towards reading scale degree 5 as the generating theme’s *Kopftön*. A graph of Variation 4 is shown here:

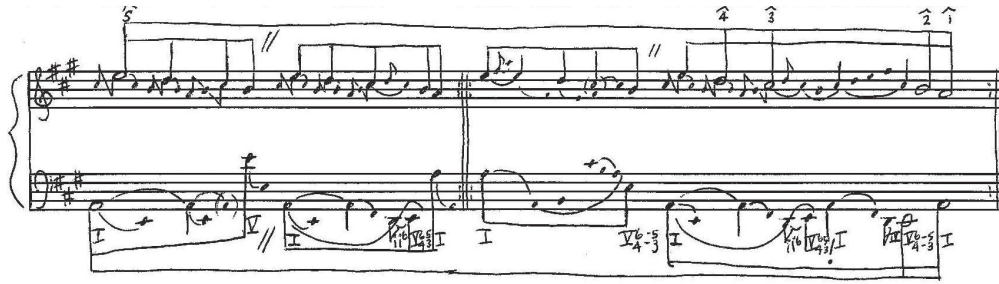


Figure 11 Voice-leading graph of Variation 4

The fifth variation of this movement functions as the traditional penultimate *Adagio*, relaxing the work's musical pace before launching into the final *Allegro* variation. It is decidedly vocal in character, unsurprising within a piece whose composer is so highly regarded for his operas. This variation also marks a return to some of the compositional strategies employed in the first two variations—its florid surface diminutions seemingly resume the logical progression established in Variations 1 and 2. The textural contrast employed in those variations also appears in the *Adagio*, albeit in a slightly different form. In place of literal textural inversion, Mozart replaces the Alberti bass and bel canto melody in the antecedent phrase with a more cello-like, repeated-note accompaniment in the consequent; here he also articulates the melody in parallel thirds and includes a first-violin-like scalar flourish, another nod to string quartet writing. In the return of the consequent phrase, as in the other variations, Mozart recalls the initial instrumentation, though in place of changing the texture in bars 17 and 18, he renders the melody even more idiomatically for the voice, inserting runs that would seem at home in a coloratura soprano's aria.

As in the first two variations, the *Adagio* finds scale degrees 3 and 5 ornamented differently, though without the degree of bias towards scale degree 5 conveyed by the fourth variation. The first eight bars of the *Adagio* are illustrated below:





Figure 12 First 8 bars of Variation 5 (Adagio)

In the antecedent phrase, both scale degrees 3 and 5 are repeated, though scale degree 5 is approached by an appoggiatura and a rest separates its two articulations. (As a result of a suspended C# leading into bar 2, the B seems to receive an appoggiatura as well, further blurring the distinction between the 3-2 and the 5-4.) In the initial consequent, scale degrees 5 and 4 are followed by ascending runs and not repeated at all. It appears that in this A section, the music is trying not to emphasise scale degree 5—perhaps it seems simply unnecessary after the tone was projected so clearly in the previous two variations; or perhaps this design is intentional, leading the listener to doubt the assertion that scale degree 5 is of special importance in the piece. (The variation does, however, give scale degrees 5 and 4 an ornamented upper octave transfer in the return of the consequent phrase, demonstrating that they are not to be disregarded completely.) This discussion will now turn to Variation 6 and the coda, which conclude the piece and, thus, may also offer a conclusive solution to the ongoing *Kopfton* debate.

The sixth and final variation is marked by a shift in both meter and tempo, as was traditional of concluding variations at the time, and the prevailing 6/8 *Andante* is replaced with a comparatively swift *Allegro* tempo marking in common time. These changes give the variation a markedly different character from those of its predecessors, so much so that it comes across as almost a different piece. It does, however, share the contrasts in texture demonstrated by each variation, seemingly recalling the orchestra/solo piano juxtaposition implied by the fourth variation. The first 10 bars of the *Allegro* are shown in Figure 13:

VAR. VI
Allegro

Figure 13 First 10 bars of Variation 6 (Allegro)

The antecedent phrase is set comparatively simply, dispensing with the thirty-second note figuration of the *Adagio* and calling to mind a pared-down chamber ensemble stating the principal theme. At the start of the consequent phrase, the piano soloist charges in with rolled chords and brilliant passagework in sixteenth notes. The digression suggests the union of soloist and the orchestra, allowing the rapid right-hand passagework to continue over the Alberti bass. As in the other variations, the return of the consequent phrase takes on the orchestration of the antecedent, waiting until the cadential bars to call upon the piano soloist once again.

Melodically, the antecedent phrase seems to gravitate toward scale degree 3, in stark contrast to the third and fourth variations, whose antecedents so strongly implied scale degree 5. The projection of scale degree 3 is achieved by articulating it on the downbeat and decorating it with a turn figure, leaving only an upper appoggiatura for scale degree 5, which then becomes part of a four-note descent back to scale degree 3 by the end of the first measure. This may contribute to the sense that this variation feels like a different piece, since the other variations' surface diminutions convey either an ambiguous *Kopftón* or a more clearly articulated scale degree 5. This shift in gravity to scale degree 3 could be functioning as another facet of variation in this piece, offering a variant of the perceived *Kopftón*; Mozart could also be using the *Allegro* to mitigate the strong presence of scale degree 5 in the middle variations and prolong the sense of ambiguity surrounding the *Kopftón*.

The final variation is followed by a coda that, though spanning only eight and a half measures, plays a pivotal role in clarifying the trajectory of the piece's linear descent (also detailed in Smith, 2013, p.12). The coda, beginning with the elided cadence on

beat 3 of the *Allegro* variation's second ending, is illustrated below along with its graph:

The figure displays a musical score for the coda of an *Allegro* variation, consisting of three systems of piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) and a voice-leading graph below. The score begins at measure 18, marked with a first ending bracket and a repeat sign. The second ending starts at measure 20, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The coda concludes at measure 23. The voice-leading graph below the score shows the melodic lines in both hands, with fingerings and intervallic relationships indicated. Above the graph, the notes are labeled with circled numbers: 5, (5) 4 3 2 1. Below the graph, the intervallic structure is detailed with Roman numerals and numbers: I 6 5 4 3 4 3 II 6-4 4-2 I 6-6 II 6-5 4-3 I.

Figure 14 Coda (after the repeat sign) followed by a voice-leading graph of the coda only

This coda concludes the piece with an unmistakable fifth-progression whose interrupted descent mirrors that of the theme and, in turn, the six variations. It may seem to a Schenkerian that Mozart has purposely waited until the last possible moment to elucidate the structure of the piece, cleverly ensuring that the structurally-minded listener's attention would be held throughout the variation set. Though it is his

successor, Ludwig van Beethoven, who is better known for his inclusion of structurally and formally obligatory codas, Mozart has also been noted to place significant musical events within codas (Cavett-Dunsby, 1988).

This coda possesses multiple curious features that seemingly allude to the theme: Aside from the aforementioned interrupted structure, the coda unfolds in such a manner that scale degrees 5 and 3 fall on the notated third beats, a reference to the off-beat presentation of scale degree 5 in the theme. It should be noted, however, that the metrical oddities in the coda are quite easily explained when it is taken into account that the coda begins on an elided cadence, which happens to fall on the third beat of the second ending's measure. Thus, if that third beat is considered the initial downbeat of the coda, scale degree 5 would fall on the downbeat of the coda's third bar, thereby receiving even greater emphasis. Despite this incongruence between the notated and perceived metrical accents, the fifth progression is still abundantly clear: The absence of the unfolded thirds between C#-E and B-D leave no other solution as to the location of the originating tone. The coda's clear statement of an interrupted fifth progression, along with the various allusions to the fifth already uncovered in the variations, provides compelling evidence towards adopting scale degree 5 as the *Kopfton*, in accordance with Schenker's original interpretation of the theme.

Having traversed all six of Mozart's variations, we may now begin to construct a more complete analytical picture of the movement and its structural underpinnings. Though Variations 1 and 2 do not unanimously privilege either scale degree 3 or 5 as the *Kopfton*, Variations 3 and 4 give greater weight to scale degree 5 as the movement proceeds. Variation 5 remains rather indecisive on the matter; however, in Variation 6 and the subsequent coda, the structural fifth emerges decisively as the *Kopfton*. This supports Schenker's original reading of the theme (which took 5 as the *Kopfton*) and suggests that Morgan's and Cone's projected 3-line *Urlinien* are not convincingly retained through the variations. Thus, in this particular case, analysing each of the variations allows us to clear up much of the ambiguity surrounding the thematic structure, an aim that would not have been possible if the investigation had only considered the theme itself. Certainly, nearly 225 years after his death, we cannot ask Mozart if he was deliberately playing a game with his listeners by offering two possible structural hearings. However, engaging in a close reading of each of his variations greatly enriches our own understanding and appreciation of the whole work as listeners, and it is through this perspective that the variations bear analytical fruit.

As this discussion has endeavoured to demonstrate, the variations over a given theme should not be disregarded when considering musical events that take place in that theme; indeed, they may prove quite helpful as a means of reconciling, reinforcing, or even refuting musical propositions put forth by the theme. Given that the most revered composers of variation form (a group in which Mozart is indisputably to be counted) may be reasonably expected to possess a thorough working knowledge of their themes, their treatment of the variations should reflect the structural qualities of the themes as they, the composers, conceive them. Thus, a careful reading of a theme's variations should bring the analyst closer to the composer's viewpoint on how the thematic content should be heard as the variations unfold. As this investigation of Mozart's K331 suggests, it would do analysts well to consult first the variations

of a given piece when grappling with issues relating to the theme. By approaching a variation set in this manner, we may prevent ourselves from falling victim to analytical “tunnel vision” and gain a broader and more complete understanding of each variation set as a compositional whole.

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Biography

Nicole E. DiPaolo is a PhD student in music theory at Indiana University, where she was also an Associate Instructor for five years. She holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Nicole’s previous conference papers span over 400 years of tonality (from Giovanni Gabrieli to Rachmaninoff) and have been presented in the USA and internationally. Her other research interests include music theory pedagogy; perception and cognition; form and phrase structure; schema theory; and the Romantic-era composer Giovanni Sgambati. Nicole is still active as a pianist and composer, and she spent the 2013-2014 academic year touring

Europe and the Americas as half of the *Duo del Mare* violin and piano ensemble, living and performing on board two Holland America cruise ships.
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