

SCHENKER, SCHUBERT, AND THE SUBTONIC CHORD

DAVID DAMSCHRODER

Practitioners of harmonic analysis confront a bewildering diversity of views regarding even the foundational diatonic chords that constitute the tonal system.¹ For example, the existence of the supertonic as an independent harmonic entity has been questioned for centuries, while the submediant may expand I- or IV-space without asserting its independence. The mediant's very name suggests a neutral divider between tonic and dominant, yet chords routinely labeled as III may serve as upper-third extensions of the tonic, or as lower-third embellishments of the dominant. Does a distinct mediant function register in such contexts? Or would one more suitably represent these chords' roles within an extended I- or V-space? Not even I, IV, and V are immune to controversy: in some contexts the pitches of IV may be understood as the third, fifth, and seventh of II⁷ (with absent root), whereas the succession from G-C-E to G-B-D in C major elicits divergent analytical responses (an inverted I to V, versus a V graced by embellishing notes).²

Perhaps the most tenuous of all the diatonic chords are those purportedly build on the seventh scale degree. In the pioneering days of harmonic analysis, John Frederick Lampe (ca.

¹ I explore early manifestation of some of the following notions in *Thinking about Harmony: Historical Perspectives on Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See the following examples: 1.5 (Crotch employing the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$), 1.16 (Lampe, Portmann, Rey, and Halm opposing the supertonic), and 8.22 (Louis and Thuille on the mediant as an extension of the tonic and the supertonic as an extension of the subdominant). These points are also addressed in my *Harmony in Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

² Throughout this essay, harmonic (vertical) pitch combinations are indicated in order from bottom to top, and are separated with a hyphen; melodic (horizontal) pitch successions are separated with a dash. Thus, G-C-E indicates three notes that sound simultaneously, with G as the lowest; and G-C-E indicates three notes that sound one after the other, in that order.

1703–51) presented an example in which root-position and first-inversion tonic chords in C major are connected using the chord D-F-B.³ He selects G—*not* B—as its Natural Bass (root), displaying a G notehead within parentheses on a separate staff as part of a reconstituted dominant chord with seventh. His harmonic analysis, reflecting an *imaginative* (as opposed to *literalist*) perspective, reads:

K . . . 5th . . . K

(where K stands for “key note” or tonic). Although the prolific textbook author Ebenezer Prout (1835–1909) employed the literalist symbol “vii^ob” for chords such as D-F-B, he often appended the imaginative symbol “(V⁷c).” (Prout’s *b* indicates first inversion, *c* second inversion.) In C minor the subtonic chord, B^b-D-F, poses a special set of challenges that, through modal mixture, may arise in C major as well. Often this chord proceeds to an E^b-major chord, a trajectory that may support its analytical interpretation not as VII in C, but instead as V in E^b.⁴ Yet consider the alternative continuation, especially common in Schubert’s music, in which B^b-D-F proceeds to G-B^b-D-F. In this context, the B^b behaves as an errant chordal third that falls in line only when root G asserts itself. I refer to a chromatic shift of this sort as a *wobble*. (Observe that a wobbly note is not the same as a neighboring note, which by definition employs an adjacent notehead, such as an A[#] neighbor to B.) In this succession, the B^b chord’s D does not function as a leading tone, and thus labeling it with the numeral V (in E^b) would be misleading. Should B^b still be regarded the chord’s root? Or is V-space (in C) emerging in a roundabout way, with B^b-D-F serving as a chromatic variant of Lampe’s B-D-F?

³ The progression and Lampe’s analysis (from *A Plain and Compendious Method of Teaching Thorough Bass* [London: Corbett, 1737]) are reproduced as Example 1.1 in Damschroder, *Thinking about Harmony*.

⁴ When a B^b chord occurs as an internal element within a circular progression (e.g., C–F–B^b–E^b), it may have no harmonic meaning. In such contexts the analysis I () III might be appropriate.

SCHENKER AND THE SUBTONIC CHORD

From his early *Harmonielehre* onwards, Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) advocated using the numeral VII (or \flat VII in a major key) as a label for the subtonic chord.⁵ Statements in *Der freie Satz*, though brief, offer a potent mature perspective on the chord and some of its characteristic contexts.⁶ What follows are Schenker’s basic points, along with commentary and proposed amendments. (References to figures are to those in *Der freie Satz*, which are reproduced in the Appendix.)

(“In the major mode the diatonic chord which is presumably built upon the VII can be altered chromatically [Fig. 111a]” (§246, p. 90).)

G-B-D-F is analyzed as V with diatonic seventh in C major. B, the third above root G, precedes the downward-stemmed G and connects to it via an unfolding symbol. B is potentially a wobbly note: its allegiance to G as its diatonic *major* third may be forsaken temporarily when only the dominant’s third, fifth, and seventh sound. The dissonant triad B-D-F often mutates to form a more euphonious combination, its pitches concerning themselves more with the temporary juxtaposition in which they find themselves than with their eventual role within the G⁷ chord. The two viable modifications are raising F to F[♯] (Schenker shows this only with D raised to D[♯] as well), and lowering B to B \flat . In either case the alteration(s) are rescinded when the

⁵ Heinrich Schenker, *Harmonielehre (Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien I)* [Stuttgart: Cotta, 1906; facs. Vienna: Universal, 1978]; abridged trans. by Elisabeth Mann Borgese as *Harmony*, ed. Oswald Jonas (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1954). In a major key, Schenker’s VII is of diminished quality, the very chord that Lampe labels instead as 5th. Schenker occasionally places a V within parentheses beside or below the leading-tone VII, echoing Prout’s practice, mentioned above.

⁶ Heinrich Schenker, *Der freie Satz (Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien III)* (Vienna: Universal, 1935; rev. edn., ed. Oswald Jonas, Vienna: Universal, 1956); trans and ed. Ernst Oster as *Free Composition* (New York: Longman, 1979; reprinted Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001). All quoted comments come from the English edition.

dominant root arrives. In the latter case the chord that Schenker labels as \flat VII offers a consonant context for introducing the eventually dissonant pitch F. Schenker’s application of parentheses within the appended Roman-numeral analyses is inconsistent,⁷ but in one case (Fig. 111a,1, from Beethoven’s String Quartet, Op. 135) \flat VII appears within parentheses, and V^{3} outside, a visual encouragement to question the status of the chord “presumably built upon the VII” as an independent *Stufe* (scale-step). (Compare with Schenker’s Figs. 64,1 and 114,1a. Note especially Fig. 62,8, which he presents without significant commentary, and in which he places the V numeral underneath the altered leading-tone chord, describing the leading tone as the third [“Terz”] of the V *Stufe*.⁸)

I propose that in this context the \flat VII numeral be abandoned and that the progression be interpreted as a two-phase presentation of V-space. The V numeral will be positioned at the outset of V-space (just as one places V below a cadential $\frac{6}{4}$, before some of the dominant’s pitches have fallen into place), while Arabic numbers (indicating distances measured from the *root*), accidentals, and the bullet symbol (denoting an absent root) may appear to the right of the Roman numeral to track the status of the various chord components. In this notation, $B\flat$ -D-F to G - $B\flat$ -D-F would be analyzed as:

$$V_{\flat-\flat}^{7-}$$

⁷ Not only were the examples gone over to change German words and abbreviations to their English equivalents for the translation of *Free Compostion*, but some of the analytical notation was amended as well. For example, in the 1935 edition the caption below the first example in Fig. 111a reads “(=VII⁵-⁷V) I,” whereas in the English edition it reads “(=VII⁵-(V⁷) I.”

⁸ Schenker refers his readers to a passage from his analysis of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 (“Eroica”), published as “Beethovens Dritte Sinfonie zum erstenmal in ihrem wahren Inhalt dargestellt,” *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, vol. 3 (Munich: Drei Masken Verlag, 1930), 76. This passage occurs on p. 53 of the English translation by Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton (“Beethoven’s Third Symphony: Its True Content Described for the First Time,” *The Masterwork in Music: A Yearbook Vol. III (1930)*, ed. William Drabkin [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997]).

Following Schenker's practice, only capital Roman numerals are employed. Unadorned, they indicate diatonic chords (not major chords, as is the convention in another familiar practice that is sometimes imported to a Schenkerian context). All alterations are indicated using accidentals to the left (for the root) or to the right of the Roman numeral. Accidentals to the right that are not preceded by an Arabic number refer to the third above the root. A symbol that corresponds to two or more consecutive chords within the prolongation will be followed by a solid line. In this instance, 7 persists but • does not.⁹

“Here [Fig. 113,3a], in the case of V^{8-7} , the bass is arpeggiated a third upward, and this third is lowered so as to avoid the diminished fifth. This procedure creates a major triad. When the chromatic tone has fulfilled its function for the prolongation of this major triad, it is revoked. In this way the forthcoming seventh first appears as the fifth of such a major triad” (§248, p. 91).

Schenker's remarks underscore two points made above: (1) that the motivation for the chromatic lowering of the seventh scale degree in a major key, or in a minor key in which the leading tone has been introduced, is to prevent the occurrence of a dissonant diminished fifth; and (2) that this procedure offers a consonant context for the introduction of the pitch that ultimately will function as the dominant chord's dissonant seventh. Schenker places the number 7 within parentheses below the major triad on the subtonic pitch, suggesting that the dominant root prevails despite its temporary absence. In addition, he refrains from employing the VII numeral,

⁹ When a chord's inversion is pertinent to an analysis, a separate set of figured-bass numbers may be placed *above* the Roman numeral (or even above the bass pitch). In conventional practice the number “6” means markedly different things in the symbols I^6 and V_{4-3}^6 : in the former it denotes the chord member a sixth above the bass, and in the latter it denotes an embellishing pitch a sixth above the root. I suggest that it is important to make a distinction between these contrasting uses of numbers, and thus I reserve separate regions—above and beside the Roman numeral—for each.

either inside or outside of parentheses. Instead he shows only a prolonged dominant. Under the upper-third chord he breaks the solid line to insert left and right parentheses enclosing empty space:

$$V \text{ — () —}$$

Schenker's symbols emanate from contrasting perspectives: 5 and $\sharp\sharp\sharp\frac{5}{3}$ in Fig. 111a are literalist symbols, corresponding to intervals above the sounding bass, whereas the 7 within parentheses (twice) in Fig. 113,3a is an imaginative symbol, since it denotes an interval above an absent root (G and E, respectively). In my proposed notation, the imaginative perspective prevails. Such a three-chord prolongation of V-space would appear as:

$$V \begin{matrix} 8-7- \\ \sharp-\flat-\sharp \\ \cdot \end{matrix} \quad \text{or} \quad V \begin{matrix} 8-7- \\ \sharp-\sharp-\sharp \\ \cdot \end{matrix}$$

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“By means of an ascending and descending progression in the bass the chromatic step is avoided [Fig. 114,6]. The resulting harmony over $A\flat$ is not, however, to be considered a $\frac{5}{3}$ ” (§249, p. 92).
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This excerpt is from the development section of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in G Major, Op. 14/2, first movement, which Schenker analyzes in detail later in *Der freie Satz* (Fig. 154,6). Neither example offers a foreground Roman-numeral analysis. If F is regarded as the dominant in the tonicized key of $B\flat$ major, then the $A\flat$ chord of m. 81 is a subtonic; if D is regarded as the dominant in the tonicized key of G minor, then the F chord of m. 78 is a subtonic.¹⁰ In any event, Schenker's point is that the beamed and asterisked F–F \sharp connection is expanded via an intervening $A\flat$ chord (marked by an exclamation point). Whereas the omission of root F in an expan-

¹⁰ A productive way to interpret this passage would be that Beethoven negotiates the transfer from the tonicized region of $B\flat$ major to that of G minor through the juxtaposition of their dominants.

sion of F-A-C-E \flat might result in the sounding of a diminished triad, here A wobbles to A \flat , so that the chord is of major quality instead. Schenker not only places the number 7 below A \flat -C-E \flat , but also connects the root F of the initial F-(A)-C-E \flat chord and the E \flat of the A \flat -C-E \flat chord with a diagonal line. (That was also the case in Fig. 113,3a.) His commentary (quoted above) forcefully enunciates an imaginative perspective, despite his recent literalist reading of a similar juxtaposition in Fig. 111a, where the now shunned label $\frac{5}{3}$ in fact occurs. (A lone 5 represents $\frac{5}{3}$ in standard figured-bass practice, whereas $\frac{\sharp 5}{3}$ shows the same chord with chromatic modifications.)

[*“In the minor mode the chromatic change is inherent [Fig. 111b]” (§246, p. 90).*]

Although the subtonic pitch and the leading tone both occur in both modes, their derivations in those two contexts are the opposite: in each mode one is diatonic, the other a chromatic adjustment. Yet when the intent is to cadence on the tonic, the arrival of the dominant root will always trigger a shift in the same direction, from the subtonic pitch (if present) to the leading tone. Three distinct voice-leading strategies are available:

- (1) The two pitches may be directly juxtaposed (either in the same or different registers), as in Fig. 111a,1 (Beethoven).
- (2) The leading tone may be understood even though not present in the second chord of the succession, as in Fig. 111b,1 (Schubert), where the parentheses around C \sharp indicate that the pitch does not actually appear in the score.
- (3) Other voice-leading content may come between the two chords, as in Fig. 111b,2 (Chopin).

I often find Schenker’s graphs to be misleading or even indecipherable concerning the hierarchical relationship between the pitches a whole step and a half step below a tonic root. For example:

- (1) In the third model of Fig. 111a, B \flat is displayed as an open notehead (as are dominant root G and tonic root C), whereas the dominant's B \sharp is filled in. This seems to me to reverse the true state of affairs: B \flat is a wobbly note displacing diatonic B \sharp . In Fig. 114,1a, the reversal is complete: although Schenker places the VII numeral within parentheses and the following V $^{\times 3}$ outside parentheses, the noteheads for pitches of VII are open whereas those for V $^{\times 3}$ are filled-in.¹¹
- (2) The Beethoven example in Fig. 111a,1 shows improvement over the earlier model, since the leading tone is also presented as an open notehead.
- (3) The stemming of B \sharp and flagging of B \flat (both with filled-in noteheads) in Fig. 113,3a (the first example) seems ideal to me.
- (4) Connecting the F \flat and F \sharp in Fig. 114,6 with a beam, and omitting any indication of key or harmonic function, leaves unanswered the question of whether F \flat is a wobbly note that cedes to F \sharp , or whether instead F \sharp is a chromatic passing note between F \flat and G.
- (5) The literalist figures that accompany the last two chords of Fig. 111c seem to me to reflect poorly the voice-leading situation. (The 7–7 juxtaposition is especially awkward, as the A and F to which these numbers refer are unrelated.) For this context I propose instead:

C major: V_7^{9-8}

[

“Exx. c–f [Fig. 114,5] show two simultaneous third-progressions with the effect of VII–V (§246): while the lower of the two voices traverses the path to the root of the
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¹¹ Compare with *Free Composition*, Fig. 31a, where the D \flat of a bII chord in C appears as an open notehead, but the diatonic successor, D \sharp , is filled in. In this case the coordinating symbols reinforce the hierarchical reversal: b $\hat{2}$ appears with no parentheses and the following diatonic $\hat{2}$ within parentheses. A potential explanation for the peculiar notation in Fig. 114,1a is that Schenker retained the rhythmic values from Brahms's score: bass C \sharp corresponds to m. 7, beat 3 (where E \sharp -G \sharp -B may be interpreted imaginatively—à la Lampe!—as a C \sharp chord), F \sharp corresponds to m. 8, beats 1 and 2, and D \sharp to m. 8, beat 3.

chord which contains the chromatic tone, the upper proceeds to the chromatic tone itself. This is one of the most frequently employed means for avoiding direct chromatic successions. Yet such a case must not be regarded as a cross-relation (§250)” (§249, p. 92).

Here Schenker’s concern is with the compositional realization of the third voice-leading strategy mentioned above, in which other content comes between the subtonic and dominant chords. In his Example *c*, the $\frac{B}{G}$ dyad of A minor’s subtonic $\flat VII$ and the $\frac{G\sharp}{E}$ dyad of its dominant $V\sharp_3^5$ appear at the endpoints of two concurrent linear descents: $\frac{B-A-G\sharp}{G-F-E}$. In this manner the G and $G\sharp$ are not directly juxtaposed. (Schenker connects these pitches with a diagonal line.) Example *d* works in the same manner and also shows how the subtonic’s fifth (C) becomes the dominant’s seventh. In Example *e* the subtonic chord is of minor quality: $G-B\flat-(D)$ in A minor. Thus not only must a chromatic shift from the subtonic pitch G to leading tone $G\sharp$ occur, but $B\flat$ must yield to $B\sharp$ as well. Example *f*, which I interpret as a progression from III^{55} to $V\sharp$ in E minor, does not conform exactly to Schenker’s description, which would involve the coordinated thirds $\frac{F\sharp-E-D\sharp}{D-C-B}$ connecting $\flat VII$ and $V\sharp$. Here these lines are inverted, forming parallel sixths: $\frac{D-C-B}{F\sharp-E-D\sharp}$. Adding further interest, the B on beat 2 of the first measure functions as a suspension, delaying the arrival of A, the subtonic’s fifth.

In each of these cases I recommend interpreting the subtonic chord as the onset of V-space. The symbol $V\flat^7$, rather than $\flat VII$, may serve as an effective foundation for the harmonic analysis.

“The second example [Fig. 111b,2] shows a skip of a fifth upward from the III, giving the appearance of a connection from III to $\flat VII$, whereas in actuality the $\flat VII$ belongs to $V\sharp^3$ in the sense of an auxiliary cadence” (§246, p. 90).

A minor key's mediant and subtonic chords, both major in quality, are separated by a perfect fifth. If the mediant key is tonicized, these chords may form a tonic–dominant relationship. In the context of this example, from Chopin's Étude in E Minor, Op. 25/5, Schenker summarily dismisses any such alliance between these chords.¹² Consequently he interprets the broad succession of *Stufen* as III^{♯5}–V^{♯3}.

Just as the subtonic chord can inaugurate V-space, the mediant chord can extend I-space. In the Étude, the bass's E–F[♯]–G in mm. 4–5 (not shown in Schenker's graph) is answered by D–C–B in mm. 7–8. I am less resistant than Schenker to the notion that the connection between I and V[♯] can be negotiated through their respective upper-third chords. A similar trajectory will be explored below in the context of Schubert's "Willkommen und Abschied."

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"A descending third of this kind can even produce the effect of a ninth, while it avoids the vertical form $\widehat{9-8}$ (Fig. 64,1)" (§246, p. 90). "A ninth appears first as a minor seventh if the bass is arpeggiated a third upward [Fig. 113,3b–c]" (§248, p. 91).
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Just as the seventh of V⁷ may be introduced as the fifth of the subtonic triad, the dominant's ninth may be introduced as the subtonic's seventh.

¹² Concerning Schenker's reference to auxiliary cadence, see L. Poundie Burstein, "Unraveling Schenker's Concept of the Auxiliary Cadence," *Music Theory Spectrum* 27/2 (2005): 159–186. Burstein explains: "Schenker never claims that a VII–V motion *is* an auxiliary cadence; he merely states that a VII–V motion functions *in the manner* of an auxiliary cadence ('*nach Art einer Hilfskadenz*'). Certainly, the VII–V progression by itself cannot be regarded as an actual auxiliary cadence, for it is not based on a transference of a form of the fundamental structure" (p. 178). Compare with Fig. 39, Ex. 2, a context in which an arrow (like the one in Fig. 111b) below mm. 13–21 coordinates with a tonicization of the minor dominant key. In that context Schenker labels the subtonic chord as III (in the key of the dominant), a characteristic starting point for an auxiliary cadence. Schenker displays forms of the fundamental structure emanating from $\mathring{5}$ in Fig. 16.

SCHUBERT AND THE SUBTONIC CHORD

Schubert's musical oeuvre, rich in creative uses of third relations and chromatic shifts (requisite techniques for any subtonic–dominant connection), offers a wide range and large number of subtonic contexts, whose study not only vivifies Schenker's models, but also invites an expansion in directions not explicitly presented in his writings. In addition, a consideration of music with text offers insights into the sorts of narrative and emotional contexts the subtonic chord tends to be called upon to represent.

The 5–2–5 Permutation Disguised as 5–5–2.

The span of an octave—twelve semitones—often is segmented as {2,5,5}, that is, a major second and two perfect fourths (or their inversions). Two of tonal music's most common root progressions result from permutations of this segmentation, which in the context of C major proceed as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{C–D–G–C} & \text{and} & \text{C–F–G–C} \\ (2–5–5) & & (5–2–5) \end{array}$$

The seconds often are traversed with the aid of a 5–6 shift: C^{5–6}–D or F^{5–6}–G. That enhancement concretizes a principle that Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) codified early in the development of imaginative harmonic analysis: “whenever it is permissible to have the fundamental bass ascend a tone or a semitone, the progression of a [descending] third and [an ascending] fourth is always implied.”¹³ In practice, the 6-phase chord (i.e., the chord formed by the second part of the 5–6 motion) may appear in a range of forms. When the progression proceeds baldly from C–E–G

¹³ Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Traité de l'harmonie* (Paris: Ballard, 1722); trans. Philip Gossett as *Treatise on Harmony* (New York: Dover, 1971), 234.

through C-E-A to D-F-A, the A above C might best be understood as an anticipation, *not* as a root. Yet often A asserts itself, so that its chord warrants the label VI. (I will place such secondary harmonic analysis within parentheses below the 6 of the primary I⁵⁻⁶ analysis.) VI often undergoes chordal evolution resulting in variants that emulate a dominant (though VI remains the foundation for its analytical symbol). A-C[#]-E, C[#]-E-G-B^b, and even E^b-G-B^b-C[#] are all evolved VI chords in C major, directing the progression towards II.¹⁴

The remaining permutation of {2,5,5} is of an altogether different character, in several ways challenging to the tonic:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{C-F-B}^{\flat}\text{-C} \\ (5-5-2) \end{array}$$

First, B^b is not a member of the major-key diatonic pitch collection, and although diatonic in minor, it weakly prepares the following tonic C. As attentive listeners know, C-F-B^b often proceeds to mediant E^b, which may be tonicized, thereby putting into question the ending C chord's role: VI in E^b versus I in C.¹⁵ Second, dominant root G does not occur in the progression. Unlike the other permutations of {2,5,5}, 5-5-2 does not interlock with the most fundamental of all harmonic progressions, 7-5 (C-G-C). Only when the B^b-C whole step is filled in by a chromaticized 5-6 shift can a normative V-I cadence arise, as in:

¹⁴ I am aware, of course, that many analysts label these chords using the symbols V/ii, vii^o/ii, and Ger⁺⁶ (resolving to II), respectively, thereby emphasizing their differences. I instead focus on what these chords have in common: root A. The Arabic numbers, accidentals, and bullet symbol that I advocate placing to the right of the VI numeral precisely denote the chordal construction, and work very well in mapping the stages of chordal evolution (such as the gradual addition of the seventh and lowered ninth and omission of the root). Although this issue is peripheral to the current discussion, it is a foundational concern in my *Harmony in Schubert*.

¹⁵ In this context VI in E^b functions as an asserted I⁶, the 6-phase chord (E^b-G-C, unfurled as C-E^b-G) of an elided tonic E^b-G-B^b. In my system the symbol I⁶ never denotes a first-inversion tonic, which instead would be conveyed via a ⁶ placed *above* the Roman numeral.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{C-F-B}\flat^5 \text{B}\sharp^6\text{-C} & = & \text{C-F-G-C} \\ (5-5-2?) & & (5-2-5!) \end{array}$$

This in turn places the loyalties of F in question: is its principal function that of targeting B \flat , or does it prepare the cadential dominant, G?¹⁶ The F–G juncture is indeed a most delicate spot within tonal syntax.¹⁷ Especially when the F chord is of major quality, there is a natural tendency for the progression to proceed to B \flat , a tendency that composers often combat by inserting D into the F chord (Rameau’s chord of the added sixth, Schenker’s IV⁵⁻⁶), or by chromaticizing the F (bass ascent F–F \sharp –G), or both.

These competing interpretations create a hierarchical quandary. Despite a temptation to interpret B \flat –B \sharp –C in the same manner as C–C \sharp –D and F–F \sharp –G in the other permutations of {2,5,5}, the 7–5 (C–G–C) arpeggiation—Schenker’s “sacred triangle”—is such a fundamental component of tonal syntax that we instead may interpret B \sharp as the correction of a wayward B \flat , just as in the progression from the Phrygian II (Neapolitan) to the dominant a wayward D \flat yields to normative D \sharp .¹⁸ 5–5–2 does not cohere as a viable permutation because the internal pitch within its whole step (B \flat –B \sharp –C) is hierarchically deeper than its predecessor. Thus what on the surface may appear as 5–5–2 functions as a variant of 5–2–5.

¹⁶ Schenker acknowledges both possibilities. Fig. 39,2 of *Der freie Satz* shows a D–G–C–A progression from tonic to dominant (mm. 1–21) in D minor in which G (a chord of major quality with minor seventh) is slurred to the adjacent C and in which IV does *not* appear in the Roman-numeral analysis; whereas Fig. 64,1 shows a D–G–C–A progression, also in D minor, in which G (a chord of minor quality without seventh) relates explicitly to A: the first of two graphs displays the \sharp VII numeral below C within parentheses, while the second graph proceeds directly from G to A (IV to V). Of course, such hierarchical thinking was not yet so pronounced in Schenker’s early writings. In his *Harmonielehre*, Ex. 298 (missing from the abridged English translation), the root progression C–A–D–B–E in E minor is analyzed using the numerals VI–IV–VII–V–I.

¹⁷ Exploring the workings of a I–IV–V–I progression in his *Harmonielehre* (Leipzig: Göschen, 1900), August Halm asserts the dominance of two descending fifths (a I–IV statement that challenges tonic’s authority, followed by a V–I answer that restores that authority). Between these two-chord successions lies a fissure (*Kluft*), which he indicates in the music examples using two vertical lines (like Schenker’s interruption symbol!). In the printing of 1925, this discussion appears on pp. 15–18 and is illustrated by Example 3.

¹⁸ Of course, D \sharp will rarely follow D \flat in the same voice, and might even be omitted from the chord. Compare Schenker’s treatment of \flat II and \flat VII in *Der freie Satz*, Fig. 74,1 and Fig. 111a (third model).

In “Willkommen und Abschied” (D. 767) Schubert employs the subtonic chord C-E-G in a most characteristic context, as consonant support for $\hat{4}$ in D major; see Figure 1. When the dominant’s root A arrives, G becomes a dissonant seventh, propelling the melody’s downward course. In this lied the upper-third initiation of V-space complements an earlier upper-third extension of I-space. In both cases, major triads a minor third apart are juxtaposed. (Figure 1 is conceived from the broad perspective of the entire phrase, and thus D major is operative throughout. Stems mark the noteheads corresponding to a diatonic I–IV–V–I progression in D major.) Because both the initial tonic D and the dominant A are paired with chords a minor third higher (represented by unfolding symbols in the graph), an alternative tonal plane defined by an $F\flat-C\flat$ fifth emerges. $\hat{5}_D$ morphs into $\hat{3}_F$; a tonic-to-dominant progression ensues, from $\hat{3}_F$ to $\hat{2}_C$; a “standing on the dominant” passage prolongs $\hat{2}_C$ (see Figure 2);¹⁹ $\hat{2}_C$ morphs into $\hat{4}_A$, restoring the sense of D as tonic; and the phrase concludes in D major, as graphed. Thus in addition to the primary analysis in D major, Figure 1 proposes a tonicization of F major in mm. 12–16. This tonal diversion coincides with the protagonist’s taking notice of a gigantic oak tree in the evening mist, a diversion from his hurried ride to his lover and her kisses. The presence of alien F major within D major underscores the eerie and immense natural world through which the horse and rider pass.

In coming to terms with creative composition at the level Schubert achieved, our focus on permutations of {2,5,5} should be regarded as no more formulaic than an artist deciding to represent a windmill or a ballerina or the Last Supper. These are all familiar ways to shape a

¹⁹ Whereas here bass $D\flat$ functions as an upper neighbor to the dominant root C in F major, in mm. 29 and 30 $E\flat$ functions as an upper neighbor to the dominant root D in G minor, the minor subdominant key, which Schubert tonicizes for text describing a hazy moon and spine-chilling wind.

painting—or a tonic prolongation. In each case something concrete regulates the creative process and ensures comprehensibility. Yet much freedom remains. In the 5–2–5 permutation disguised as 5–5–2, Schubert’s creative acumen is tested in several ways:

(1) *How is the progression of the ascending fourths (or descending fifths) executed?*

Considerable forward momentum results when a chord’s quality is major and its seventh is present and of minor quality. (The forward thrust of such chordal constructions may be indicated using an arrow: →.) Schubert follows this prescription with $G \rightarrow C\sharp$ in mm. 13–14 of “Willkommen und Abschied” (Figure 1), but not for the preceding D–G fourth. As stated above, two progressions vie for recognition, both engaging G: D–G–A (5–2) in the broader perspective of mm. 10–17, and $F-G \rightarrow C$ (2–5) in the local perspective of mm. 12–16. These chords are merged as $D-F-\underline{G} \rightarrow C-A$, whose one direct fifth-relation (underlined) is propelled by a major-minor seventh chord on G.

In “Die Sterne” (D. 313), Schubert deviously initiates a 5–2–5 permutation (disguised as 5–5–2) in what seems to be the onset of a 2–5–5 permutation; see Figure 3. The chromaticism through $B\sharp$ to C in mm. 10–11 potentially indicates a tonic 6 phase (with G as root of dominant-emulating $G-B\sharp-D-F$) to supertonic within a $B\flat^{5-6}-C-(F-B\flat)$ progression. Yet Schubert ingeniously leads inner-voice C downwards to $B\flat$, inducing a reassessment of the alleged C chord. From a broader perspective, an $E\flat$ subdominant chord takes shape as the second entity within the progression $B\flat-E\flat \rightarrow^{A\flat-A\sharp} F-B\flat$.²⁰ (This symbology conveys the notion that, although $A\flat$ may at

²⁰ Schenkerian analysis is a vital component of Murray Perahia’s creative life as a concert pianist. In a recent interview he commented about events that seem meant to happen but do not: “[Perahia] confessed to one reservation about Schenkerian analysis, namely its inability to depict ‘disappointment in something. When you see a graph, you think that it was always intended to go [that way. . . .] It looks inevitable,’ whereas the music itself has a more ‘philosophical dimension: life is always changing and it will never reach the fulfillment, never reach the paradise.’ He again demonstrated the difference between what the music does and ‘what it is *meant* to do. You won’t see that in a Schenkerian graph’ because it doesn’t exist” (John Rink, “Perahia’s Musical Dialogue,” *The Musical Times* 142/1877 [2001], 13).

first seem to function as a root, ultimately the $A\flat$ -to- $A\sharp$ strand corresponds to root F's upper third.) Despite various deformations, the essence of the tonic-to-subdominant connection is an ascending 5–6 sequence, as noted in the figure.²¹ In the first 6-phase chord, $F\sharp$ substitutes for G in a chromatic variant of tonic's upper-third chord, while in the third 6-phase chord, $B\flat$ is elided. The $IV \rightarrow$ chord enters V-space at the dominant's upper-third chord (m. 12). In the first stanza, that chord supports the word *Bläue* (blue), the distant and mysterious heavens. Schubert's star-studded text implores Ida to gaze upwards at a range of constellations (seven are named in the second stanza). To this end Schubert employs some distinctive ascending lines: an ascending inner-voice strand starts on F at the outset and continues through m. 11 (see Figure 3), and an astonishing stepwise-ascending twelfth ($B\flat$ to F) in the bass fills the span from the opening tonic through the final cadential dominant. Although these pitches function at diverse structural levels, and although two downward register transfers occur to keep within the normative bass range, all the steps within this twelfth appear.

A more straightforward $IV-V$ succession occurs in the postlude of "Die Sterne." The $E\flat$ - G - $B\flat$ subdominant of m. 17 absorbs a C in m. 18 (thus IV^{5-6}), forestalling a repetition of the earlier $IV \rightarrow$ trajectory. The cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ that follows is unfurled into $\frac{6}{3}$ position in m. 19, before the final cadence.

(2) *To what extent does the (lowered) mediant key assert itself as an alternative tonal center?* In "Willkommen und Abschied" (Figure 1), F-A-C is more than the fleeing sounding of the D-major tonic's chromatic upper-third chord: it asserts itself, remaining viable as an alterna-

²¹ I explore this sequence type in detail in "Schubert, Chromaticism, and the Ascending 5–6 Sequence," *Journal of Music Theory* 50/2 (2006): 253–275.

tive tonal center for several measures. The local F–G→C progression corresponds to the first three chords of a 2–5–5 permutation, lacking only its cadential conclusion on F.

In Schubert’s *Valse noble* in A Minor (D. 969, No. 9), a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord on subtonic G resolves to $\frac{7}{5}$ before leading tone G \sharp enters (mm. 22–24). Thus for a moment it seems that a circular progression (A–D→G→C) is in progress, with the mediant key (C major) as its goal. In that the span from the D chord’s root to its third is filled in chromatically, an extended ascending chromatic trajectory results:²²

Bass:	A	D	D \sharp	E	F	F \sharp	G	G \sharp	A
Root:	A	D	—————				(G?)	E	A

At bass G we experience a moment of extraordinary tension. Which of two viable continuations will prevail: that offered by the large-scale A–D→G→ . . . descending-fifths motion that would continue to C, or that offered by the D–D \sharp –E–F–F \sharp –G– . . . chromatic half-steps motion that would continue to G \sharp ? The latter alternative prevails, and the resulting progression is shaped as A–D→^{G–G \sharp} /E→A. The listener may feel disappointment in that the potential release to the happier world of C major is snatched away, with a restored A minor persisting until the close. Because the subtonic’s position within the tonal system inherently represents such a fork in the road—its third a leading tone, or its “root” about to morph into a leading tone—it is a poignant means of representing heartbreak, as exploited here by Schubert.

In the first movement of Schubert’s Piano Sonata in D Major (D. 850), what one might reasonably interpret as a cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ on bass C \flat (within a D→G→C→F circular progression) is

²² Schubert employs a similar chromatic bass during the first movement of the “Trout” Quintet (D. 667, mm. 46–58).

FIGURE 4. Analysis of Schubert, Piano Sonata in D Major (D. 850), first movement, mm. 5–16

m. 5 6 7 8 12 14 15

D Major: I $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ \# \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} 7 \\ \# \end{matrix}$ IV $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ \# \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} 7 \\ \# \end{matrix}$ V $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ \# \\ 6 \\ \# \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} 7 \\ 5 \end{matrix}$ I

instead of

D Major: V $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ \# \\ 6 \\ \# \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} 7 \\ 5 \end{matrix}$ I

prolonged during mm. 8–11; see Figure 4.²³ That progression does not reach its goal, for C instead morphs into C \sharp , leading the progression back to D (within the progression D→G→C \sharp /A→D). A collision occurs: during what appears to be a routine resolution of the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ ($\begin{matrix} A-A\flat-G \\ F-F-E \end{matrix}$), bass C is displaced by C \sharp —a breathtaking anticipation of the dominant’s third, arriving before the subtonic has fully fallen into place. Schubert makes the most of this moment: spelling

²³ Schenker’s analysis of this passage (*Harmonielehre*, Ex. 303; *Harmony*, Ex. 236) asserts that the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord at m. 8 functions not as embellishment of a subtonic C-E-G chord whose realization is sabotaged (my Figure 4) but as a mediant chord in second inversion, followed in m. 12 by a major chord on the leading tone. I am not swayed by the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord’s unfurling into $\frac{6}{3}$ and $\frac{5}{3}$ positions during its prolongation. That is a common occurrence in Schubert’s music. Schenker’s view seems to coincide with the second model presented in *Der freie Satz*, Fig. 111a, while mine coincides with the third model.

the graph's C[♯] anticipation, F suspension, and A[♭] chromatic passing note as C[♯]–E[♯]–G[♯], he reiterates the chord numerous times in an ascending arpeggiation during mm. 12–13.

(3) *How are the subtonic and dominant chords connected?* Opening up V-space through the gradual introduction of the dominant chord's pitches, the subtonic–dominant link may be traversed directly, as in “Gretchen am Spinnrade” (D. 118, mm. 11–12),²⁴ or in a more developed construction. “Willkommen und Abschied” employs the simplest of all embellishments, a passing note (B[♭] coming between C[♭] and A in Figure 1, mm. 16–17). Schenker explores additional passing contexts in several examples discussed above. (Fig. 114,5c and 5d display the most normative cases.) He also shows what amounts to a tonicization of the dominant: the root progression C–E–A is interpreted as III–V–I in a tonicization of D minor's dominant key, A minor, in his Fig. 39,2.

Looking again at the subtonic–dominant connection in “Willkommen und Abschied” (Figure 1), we observe that although the subtonic root, C[♭], is understood to persist while passing note B[♭] leads downwards to the dominant root, A, in fact the only pitches sounding at that moment (end of m. 16) are B[♭], E, and G. In this case Schubert allows that diminished triad to persist. In “Wonne der Wehmuth” (D. 260, shown in Figure 5), subtonic B[♭] and dominant G are connected by passing note A[♭] in m. 15. Again the subtonic pitch is absent as the passing note sounds. In this case the temporary juxtaposition of the pitches A[♭], D, and F is rejected: neither its diminished quality nor its inversionsal placement is retained. Schubert intervenes in two ways—with a wobble from D to D[♭] (creating a sonority of major quality) and with the placement of an F doubling in the bass.²⁵ In Schenker's analysis of a similar passage from Liszt's Sonata in B

²⁴ See Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, Fig. 111,b1.

²⁵ I reject the prospect of a tonic return as early as m. 14. That C chord occurs mid-phrase in the context of a pianissimo dynamic. The following D[♭] chord is more potently presented, as a goal of passing motion in three voices

FIGURE 5. Analysis of Schubert, “Wonne der Wehmuth” (D. 260), mm. 9–17

m. 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

$\hat{3}$ IN $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$

cresc. fp *pp* *f* *p* *p*

C Minor: I () IV^{9_b} V⁷ I

Minor, the word *durchgehend* (passing) appears beside a \flat II numeral (corresponding to m. 15 of “Wonne der Wehmuth”).²⁶ Here that chord is a voice-leading connection between the dominant’s upper-third chord and the root-position dominant ninth chord, at which point the wobbly $D\flat$ reverts to $D\sharp$. What sort of text induced Schubert to call such an unusual progression into service, juxtaposing major triads on $B\flat$, $D\flat$, and G ?²⁷ “Trocknet nicht, trocknet nicht, Thränen unglücklicher Liebe!” (Do not dry, do not dry, tears of unhappy love!)²⁸

The subdominant–subtonic link thus plays a distinctive role within the tonal system. It is a more “natural” progression (descending fifth) than the direct stepwise ascent from subdominant

and with a suddenly increased dynamic. I likewise reject the prospect of a $B\flat$ arrival as early as m. 11. Again the dynamic markings assist in projecting the passage through, rather than to, the first $B\flat$ chord (m. 11). Only at m. 12, an arrival point in the text followed by a rest in the vocal line, does $B\flat$ stabilize. The $A\sharp$ - $E\flat$ - $G\flat$ chord (over $B\flat$ pedal) in m. 11 represents root F, the second chord of a 5–2–5 permutation disguised as a 5–5–2 permutation. Bass $B\flat$ in m. 11 is an anticipation of the forthcoming harmony. Like bass $C\sharp$ in m. 12 of Example 4, it arrives in the midst of a linear initiative.

²⁶ Schenker, *Harmonielehre*, Ex. 62. This passage is corrupted in the translation, *Harmony*, Ex. 55, through both the curious disappearance of natural signs beside the bass C noteheads at \sharp VII and the absence of the word “passing” (translation of *durchgehend*) to the left of the “ \flat II (phryg.)” numeral.

²⁷ Compare with Beethoven’s juxtaposition of major triads on F, $A\flat$, and D in the passage presented in *Free Composition*, Fig. 114.6, discussed above.

²⁸ In Liszt’s Sonata such unhappy thoughts are kept in abeyance in part because the passage is in a major key, in part because a thirds-cascade provides a momentum through which the subtonic arrives in a most natural and seemingly inevitable way. In contrast, Schubert’s subtonic in “Wonne der Wehmuth” is prepared via a diminished-seventh A -(C)- $E\flat$ - $G\flat$ over $B\flat$.

to dominant, and it brings about, to a greater or lesser degree, a sense of an impending mediant arrival, which may induce a special poignancy when that trajectory is renounced. Through that renouncement and continuation to V, the legitimacy and authority of the reigning tonic are powerfully confirmed.

The 2–5–5 Permutation.

In the 5–5–2 permutation of {2,5,5}, the subtonic emerges naturally from the flow of descending fifths or ascending fourths, while the dominant resides “within” the ascending second. Because it is indispensable to tonal syntax, the dominant is sought out, and what we initially might interpret as the onset of a 5–5–2 permutation will, in retrospect, be understood as a 5–2–5 permutation. The opposite situation prevails in the 2–5–5 permutation: the dominant occurs naturally (the result of 2–5), while the subtonic resides “within,” through a division of the first 5 (rendered as a descending fifth) into two thirds:

$$\begin{array}{c} C - D - G - C \text{ becomes} \\ C - D-B\flat-G - C \end{array}$$

Because the subtonic is dispensable, it is only occasionally sought out. In major keys it results from a wobble within the diatonic diminished triad that may occur in that position, creating a distinctive onset of V-space. (Diatonic B-D-F, in contrast, is totally contained within V⁷.)

In “Liebesrauch” (D. 179), Schubert employs this progression in a context that is contorted nearly to the breaking point. In addition to the introduction of the subtonic within the initial fifth of 2–5–5, the initiating second is subdivided conventionally into a descending third followed by an ascending fourth (descending fifth). Thus the progression proceeds:

G – E – A – F \flat – D – G

(Inner-voice chromaticism—G–G \sharp –A—results, as shown in Figure 6.) Countering the conventional tonal hierarchy, these six chords are partitioned into two groups of three in Schubert’s setting:

G – E – A | F \flat – D – G

The precedent of the first group, where G–E–A will be interpreted as an expansion of G–A, exerts enormous pressure for the second group to be interpreted as F \flat –G. The dominant D internal to this second group is marginalized to the point that the large-scale 2–5–5 pattern is put into question, and 2–8–2 emerges as an alternative partitioning of the octave. The parallelism between these segments would urge that inner-voice F \sharp (m. 13) be perceived as a chromatic passing note between F \flat and G (as was G \sharp between G and A), whereas the diatonic tonal syntax in G major would urge instead that F \flat be perceived as a chromatic passing note between E and F \sharp (as graphed).²⁹

FIGURE 6. Analysis of Schubert, “Liebesrauch” (D. 179), mm. 11–14

m. 11 12 13 14

G Major: I^{5—6} II V^{7—#} I
 (= VI \sharp)

vs. G A F \flat G

²⁹ Schubert reprises this structure in “Beim Wind” (D. 669, mm. 69–76), where B–B \sharp –C \sharp and A \flat –A \sharp –B are juxtaposed in the bass. Perhaps coincidentally, both texts make reference to the breast (*Brust*, *Busen*). I explore this topic further in *Harmony in Schubert*, in the portion of Chapter 1 titled “Peculiar juxtapositions.”

One feature of “Liebesrauch” not fully on display in my graph is the fact that the bass proceeds as a chain of descending thirds, with the A and G chords preceded by their first inversions:

G – E – C – A – F \sharp – D – B – G

Each third except for A–F \sharp , which is presented as an ascending sixth (marking the separation between the two-measure segments), is filled in with a passing note. This construction, which places the subtonic chord in a position of extraordinary prominence, supports the text:

<i>Dein Name nur in heil'gen Tönen</i>	Your name in pure sacred tones
<i>Hat meine kühne Brust gefüllt</i>	Hath filled my audacious breast

The emphasis upon the subtonic chord (at the first syllable of *meine*) does not appear to reflect the text in any special way. Schubert might have had a more general goal: representing the omnipresence of the lover’s name by means of a two-octave descent in thirds. By segmenting that line into two halves and placing the second half beside rather than below the first, Schubert replicates the functioning of the protagonist’s lungs (“audacious breast”), which both exhale (two drawn-out descending sevenths) and inhale (a quick ascending sixth).

Direct Connection between the Tonic and Subtonic Chords.

Permutations of {2,5,5} provide contexts in which the subtonic may emerge naturally, through a descending-fifth succession from IV or as a divider between II and V. Such progressions likely acclimatized the ears of our musical forebears to the occasional presence of the subtonic, its legitimacy certified not so much through diatonic pedigree (lacking in major keys) as through exemplary behavior. A sign of this acceptance is its occasional occurrence in direct succession from tonic. Schubert does this without qualm. Yet the absence of a preceding II or IV

makes the subtonic all the more susceptible to interpretation within a tonicized mediant key. In “Sehnsucht” (D. 123, mm. 18–24), Schubert leads from a G-minor tonic chord to four measures on F (initially with minor seventh), then proceeds to dominant D major and tonic G minor. Immediately thereafter the F^7 chord returns (in $\frac{6}{5}$ position), this time resolving to $B\flat$ major.

The reverse occurs as well: the subtonic chord may function as the dominant of the mediant, and later as upper third of the dominant. The last movement of Schubert’s String Quartet in A Major (D. 804) offers a characteristic example. The movement is in A major, but a memorable sixteen-measure episode (mm. 254–269) tonicizes $F\sharp$ minor. Because A major sounds just before this episode, the tendency for E to resolve to A (locally the mediant of $F\sharp$) is especially strong. That occurs when the E chord appears in mm. 259–260, in a $\frac{6-7}{4-3}$ configuration at the onset of a local A-major tonicization within the $F\sharp$ minor region. Near the end of the episode, however, the same $F\sharp$ -to-E bass motion (where E persists only through its $\frac{6}{4}$ phase, the $\frac{5}{3}$ being elided) leads to $C\sharp^7$, cadencing on tonic $F\sharp$.

The Path between $\hat{5}$ and $(\hat{\#})\hat{7}$.

A common and effective procedure for prolonging the dominant harmony is to connect the dominant’s root and the leading tone in the bass. The dominant chord may be of major quality from the outset, or it may be transformed from minor to major during the prolongation. Especially in a minor key, this route often will pass through the subtonic pitch, where a passing $\frac{5}{3}$ chord may occur. The voice-leading requires careful attention, because the most direct linear route results in parallel fifths (Figure 7a). A chromaticized sequential ascent (alternating 5- and 6-phase chords) offers a simple yet elegant fix (Figure 7b, which would continue to the 5-phase

FIGURE 7. Models for chord progressions with bass ascending from dominant root to leading tone

(a) $5 \quad 5 \quad 5-6$

(b) $5-6 \quad 5-6 \quad 5-6$

(c) $5-6 \quad 5-6$

(d) $5-6 \quad 5-6 \quad 4$

(e) $5-6 \quad 5-6 \text{ (for } \frac{6}{4} \text{ for } 3(\#))$

(f) $5-6 \quad 5-6 \quad 5-6$
4 4 4

(g) $5 \quad \frac{6}{4} \quad 7 \quad \frac{6}{5}$

(h) $7 \quad 7 \quad \frac{6}{4} \quad 7 \quad \frac{6}{5}$

chord on C).³⁰ Schubert's voice-leading in "Lorma" (D. 376, mm. 30–34) follows this model: words about friendship ("Wer ist mein Freund, als Aldo?") coordinate with melodic lines working their way upwards in tandem. In a deformation of this path, one may suppress the sixth scale degree in the bass, retaining the dominant root while either a $\frac{6}{3}$ or a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord supports the melody's ascent through the third scale degree above it (Figures 7c and 7d). Consider the Trio from the third movement of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major (D. 959), whose middle section (Figure 8) amounts to a prolongation of the dominant achieved as in Figure 7c. The model of Figure 7d

³⁰ Though generally the 5-phase chords within an ascending 5–6 sequence are hierarchically deeper than the intervening 6-phase chords, there is a special relationship between the first and sixth chords of such a sequence, which will either share the same pitch classes or be closely related (as in G-B \flat -D to B \sharp -D-G). Consequently the six chords taken together often may be interpreted as the prolongation of a single harmony.

FIGURE 8. Schubert, Piano Sonata in A Major (D. 959), third movement, mm. 88–101

FIGURE 9. Schubert, “Mignon II” (D. 727), mm. 28–30

corresponds to “Mignon II” (D. 727), where Schubert unfurls the passing $\frac{6}{4}$ chord into $\frac{5}{3}$ position (Figure 9). An interesting deformation of Figure 7c results when the leading tone arrives in the bass at the third—rather than the fourth—chord (Figure 7e). This model corresponds to a passage from the first of Schubert’s *Moments musicaux* (D. 780), where the juxtaposition of C-major (tonic) and E-major chords in mm. 8–10 is matched by the juxtaposition of G-major (dominant) and B-major chords in mm. 12–15 (Figure 10). Note that B-D-G, reinstating the dominant in first inversion, does not follow B-D \sharp -F \sharp . (I suggest that B should be retained mentally as bass in mm. 18–19.) Nor does Schubert retain D \sharp with G and B to form an augmented dominant.

FIGURE 10. Schubert, *Moments musicaux*, No. 1 in C Major (D. 780), mm. 7–21

7

fp

[C⁵ C⁶ E⁵ E⁶] [G⁵

13

f *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz* *fz*

G⁶ B⁵ (N) (N)

18

p *decresc.* *pp*

B₄⁶ (for ₃^{6/4})]

FIGURE 11. Schubert, “Das Grab” (D. 330), mm. 1–2

Chor.

Langsam. 1

Das Grab ist tief und stille, und
Das Lied der Nacht-tigallen tönt

C ————— F

FIGURE 12. Schubert, “Der Hirt auf dem Felsen” (D. 965), mm. 173–177

173

seh - nend klang es durch

fp *fp*

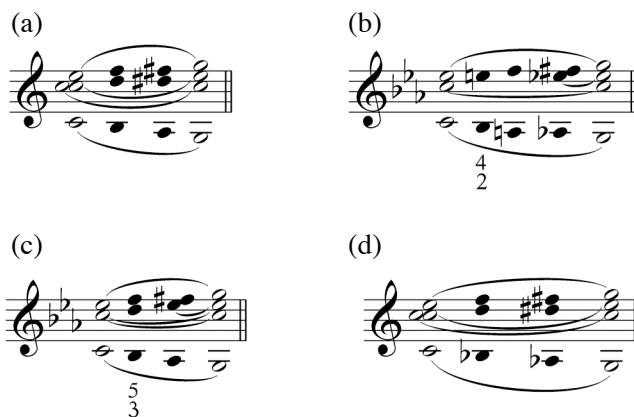
Instead, $D\sharp$ rises to E (m. 18) as an anticipation of the following tonic's third.³¹ Finally, an amalgamation of features from Figures 7d and 7e results in Figure 7f. That concoction corresponds to the introduction (mm. 1–18) of Schubert's String Quintet in C Major (D. 956), fourth movement.

All of the preceding examples of dominant prolongation employ voice-leading that moves upwards in all principal parts. Another strategy involves contrary motion creating a chromaticized voice exchange (Figure 7g). In this case the passing chord over the subtonic bass will contain a seventh. In "Das Grab" (D. 330), Schubert employs the subtonic of the subtonic! F major, which is tonicized for several measures, is subtonic within the work's G minor tonality, the third component in a descending circle of fifths that defines the entire song: $G-C \rightarrow \underline{F}-B\flat \rightarrow E\flat-A(C)-D \rightarrow G$.³² In the local connection between C and F (presented in Figure 11), C is prolonged via the passage from root C through subtonic $E\flat$ to leading tone $E\sharp$. Observe that the $\frac{6}{4}$ chord of Figure 7g appears in Figure 11 as a $\frac{5}{3}$ chord, as Schubert is *descending* from C to $E\sharp$ rather than ascending. A chromatic expansion of Figure 7g appears in Figure 7h (nowadays often called an omnibus progression), where all the chromatic pitches between the root and third of a dominant seventh chord are traversed in both directions.³³ That progression works equally well in reverse. In "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen" (D. 965) Schubert connects leading tone $F\sharp$ and dominant root D in the bass, with the subtonic pitch $F\flat$ (supporting a seventh chord) passing in between (Figure 12).

³¹ Schubert accomplishes this in a context that raises yet another expectation: that $\frac{G}{E}$ will instead function as a double neighbor, returning to $\frac{F\sharp}{D\sharp}$, as happened twice in mm. 15 and 16.

³² I explore this work in detail in *Thinking about Harmony* (2008), 238–243.

³³ See Paula Telesco's "Enharmonicism and the Omnibus Progression in Classical-Era Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 20/2 (1998): 242–279.

FIGURE 13. Models for chord progressions with bass descending from tonic root to dominant root

The Path from $\hat{8}$ to $\hat{5}$.

The path from $\hat{8}$ to $\hat{5}$ in the bass offers an opportunity similar to that between $\hat{5}$ and $(\#)\hat{7}$ for the deployment of $\flat\hat{7}$. A basic model in C major (Figure 13a) displays how, through linear connections among the tonic triad's chord members, the simultaneous filling-in of a descending fourth (bass) and two ascending thirds (upper voices) may lead to chromaticism. When the mode is minor, the subtonic pitch may support a chord in $\frac{4}{2}$ position (Figure 13b, which Schubert employs near the close of “Der Wegweiser” from *Winterreise*, D. 911, No. 20), or instead a chord in $\frac{5}{3}$ position (Figure 13c)—the subtonic. In the context of modal mixture this $\frac{5}{3}$ chord may appear in a major key as well (Figure 13d).


In these examples the internal chords are a by-product of the linear initiatives in multiple voices, rather than the product of functional harmonic thinking. Observe, for example, that the second chord of Figure 13a does not behave as we would expect a chord with diminished fifth to behave in a major key: it appears baldly in root position, and the diminished fifth does not resolve conventionally. Likewise the third chord (A-C-D \sharp -F \sharp) does not resolve as a harmonic chord, but instead as what is often called a “common-tone diminished seventh” chord—with C


Connection between $\hat{8}$ and $\hat{6}$.


In “Herbst” (D. 945), tonic E minor’s diatonic lower-third chord, C major, puts in a conspicuous appearance even during the introduction: the E-minor triad’s B ascends to C at the peak of a crescendo marking, in a melodic line evocative of rushing wind. That hint leads to a full-fledged succession from the tonic to the submediant once the voice enters. A conventional linear connection might follow the contour of Figure 15a without significant modification or embellishment. In Schubert’s creative version this span is navigated via a chromaticized descending 5–6 sequence (Figure 15b), an unhurried, tonally deviant, and pronouncedly sinister means of connecting I and VI. (The model’s $\frac{6}{3}$ chords are unfurled into $\frac{5}{3}$ position in Schubert’s keyboard accompaniment.) The linear patterning, wherein mm. 7–8 mimic mm. 5–6 a whole step lower, results in a D *minor* subtonic chord. In the first stanza it supports the words *verödet die Flüren*, an evocation of deserted, desolate fields; in the second stanza it supports the words *verschwunden die Sterne*, an evocation of a starless sky. In the third stanza this music of desolation and darkness supports the revelation of what pervades the speaker’s mind: *die Geliebte*, the loved one. Just as the bounty of nature perishes in the autumnal cold, so has he lost the springtime relationship that gave his life warmth and light.


The submediant chord of m. 9 is prolonged through m. 11. A diatonic connection in the context of the tonicized submediant key, C major, might proceed as shown in Figure 15c. Schubert instead shapes the lines with hints of a potential cadence in E minor (Figure 15d). The downbeat of m. 11 is a critical moment: will B cap the ascending motion, or will the line continue onward to C? The latter turns out to be the case. The passage exudes an even greater sense of mystery because Schubert positions the prolongation’s concluding B–C in the bass and D \sharp –E in the soprano (Figure 15e), thereby inverting the outer-voice structure of Figure 15d in


FIGURE 15. Analysis of Schubert, “Herbst” (D. 945), mm. 5–11

(a)  Musical notation for measures 5-6. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Bass clef. Fingerings: 10-10-10. Chord analysis: E Minor: I^{5-()-6} (= VI)

(b)  Musical notation for measures 7-9. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Bass clef. Measure numbers: m. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Fingerings: 5-6, 5-6, 5. Chord analysis: E Minor: I^{5-()-6} (= VI)

(c)  Musical notation for measure 10. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Bass clef. Fingerings: 5-6, 5-6, 5-6. Chord analysis: E Minor: VI

(d)  Musical notation for measures 10-11. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Bass clef. Measure numbers: m. 5, 7, 9, 10, 11. Fingerings: 5-6, 5-6, 5-6. Chord analysis: E Minor: I^{5-()-6} (= VI) [E Minor: V^{7-#} I]

(e)  Musical notation for measures 9-11. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Bass clef. Lyrics: blu - - - mi - gen Au - en! du son -
wie - - - die Ge - stir - ne am Him -
ü - - - ber den Hü - gel rauscht, Win -
Chord analysis: C⁵ C⁶ D⁵ D^{#6} E⁵ E⁶

mid-progression, resulting in the VI chord’s reinstatement in root position. Bass B–C recalls the similar bass motion to C during the introduction (m. 2), likewise capping a stepwise ascending melody.³⁶ This motion serves to prolong a single *Stufe* (VI). The protagonist contemplates the

³⁶ Compare with the V[#]–VI succession of mm. 15 and 16, where bass C arrives on the downbeat and soprano E is delayed. B–C recurs during the coda (m. 24).

former springtime setting (both the place and the emotional state) amidst a howling wind and drifting clouds.

Thus two subtonic chords—D minor and D major—occur in close proximity in “Herbst.” Because they are motivated by linear forces (either connecting two *Stufen* or within the prolongation of a single *Stufe*), they are without *harmonic* significance within the passage’s structure.



In the course of our exploration we have encountered a wide range of subtonic usages, in contexts extending well beyond what a reading of Schenker’s *Harmonielehre* and *Der freie Satz* might lead one to expect. The chord is employed especially at moments of peak emotional intensity, fulfilling its supporting role most often in the vicinity of the dominant *Stufe*. Linear progressions of various sorts diversify the contexts in which it occurs. Although many analysts employ the labels VII (in minor keys) and \flat VII (in major keys) for the subtonic chord, I propose that often a melodic—rather than harmonic—derivation may offer greater insight: the subtonic pitch may be a wobbly note, temporarily displacing the dominant’s leading tone and thus residing within V-space; or it may be internal to a melodic connection such as $\hat{5}-\hat{7}$, $\hat{8}-\hat{5}$, or $\hat{8}-\hat{6}$. In these contexts the subtonic chord is not an independent *Stufe*. Indeed, the centuries-old scale-step perspective remains a powerful and incisive tool for analysis—as long as not every chord is interpreted as a scale-step.

APPENDIX

CITED FIGURES FROM SCHENKER, *FREE COMPOSITION (DER FREIE SATZ)*

(NB: All figures cited in the main text are reproduced here; those cited only in the footnotes are not included.)

FIGURE 39,2

Beethoven, Sonata op. 10 no. 3, 2nd mvt.

FIGURE 62,8

Beethoven, Third Symphony,
4th mvt., mm. 1-11

FIGURE 64,1

Handel, Suite No. 3 in D Minor, Prelude

FIGURE 111A

in major

(=VII⁵ - (V⁷)) I (=VII^{#5} - V^{#7}) (=bVII⁵ - V^{#7})

FIGURE 111A,1

Beethoven, Quartet op. 135, 2nd mvt.

m. 1 17 23/24 32

F major: I - (bVII) - V^{#3} - I

FIGURE 111B

in minor

Schubert, "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (D. 118)

1 m. 11 12 13

(=d minor: bVII - V^{#3}) I

Chopin, Étude op. 25 no. 5, mm. 5 ff.

e minor: III^{#5} (=bVII - V^{#3})

FIGURE 111C

9 - 8 7 - 7

FIGURE 113,3

in major: *a)* *b)* *c)* Chopin, Polonaise op. 26 no. 1
 m. 33 (2) 34 41

$V_{\#5}^{\#3} (=7) \quad \#7$
 $V_{\#5}^{\#3} (=7) \quad \#7$
 $V_{\#5}^{\#3} (=b9 \text{---} 8) \quad \#5$
 $V_{\#5}^{\#3} (=b9 \text{---} 8) \quad \#5$

FIGURE 114,1A

Brahms, Waltz op. 39 no. 3
 m. 1 8

g# minor: I (=IV VII) -V*3

FIGURE 114,5

C.P.E. Bach, Generalbass VI/1 § 10 b
 J.S. Bach-Schemelli, "Mein Jesu, was vor Seelen Weh" (69 Songs, no. 19) mm. 6-8

c) (*- -*) *d)* (*- -*)

$(=4VII) \quad V_{\#3/5}^{\#5}$
 $(=4VII^5) \quad V_{\#3}^{\#7}$

Chopin, Mazurka op. 17 no. 4, mm. 42-43
 C.P.E. Bach, Generalbass VI/2, § 2

e) (*- -*) *f)* (*- -*)

$A \frac{6}{4} \quad 5 \frac{3}{3}$

FIGURE 114,6

Beethoven, Sonata op. 14 no. 2, 1st mvt., Development

m. 78 79 80 81 83 84 86

(* -) (!) (-*)
(=7-6-5)

FIGURE 154,6

Beethoven, Sonata op. 14 no. 2, 1st mvt., Development (cf. Fig. 47,2)

m. 64 68 74 78 84 86 90 91 92 93 99 101 104 105 106 107 115 118 122

(see Fig. 114,6) (Recap.)
(arpeg.) (arpeg.)
G major: I II V⁸⁻ - (8) - 47 I

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ABSTRACT

A close reading and critique of Heinrich Schenker's treatment of the subtonic chord (for example, B \flat -D-F in C major or C minor) serves as the foundation for a detailed assessment of the diverse contexts in which it was employed by Franz Schubert. Numerous analyses of musical excerpts by Schubert help to reveal the relationship between the subtonic chord and the dominant *Stufe* (scale-step) and to demonstrate various linear contexts in which it may arise. Although the chord often is labeled as VII in C minor or as \flat VII in C major, its subsidiary role within the projection or connection of more foundational *Stufen* warrants a less overtly harmonic interpretation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Having explored the early development of harmonic analysis in *Thinking about Harmony: Historical Perspectives on Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), David Damschroder currently is reformulating harmonic theory in the context of focused studies on individual composers, a project that will include *Harmony in Schubert* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), *Harmony in Haydn and Mozart* (in preparation), and more. He teaches at the University of Minnesota.

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