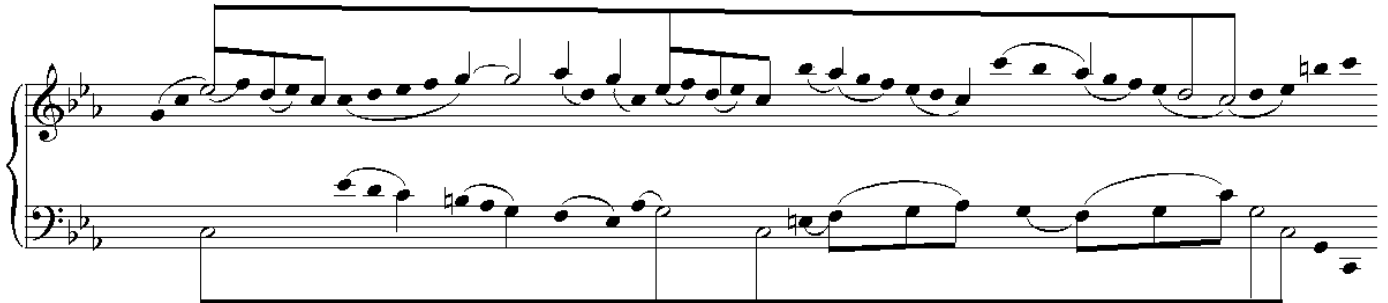


Martijn Hooning

**AN EXAMPLE OF SONATA-RONDO:  
BEETHOVEN: SONATA IN C MINOR OP.13  
(‘PATHETIQUE’), THIRD MOVEMENT  
(including  
SOME REMARKS ABOUT THE TERMS  
*SENTENCE* AND *PERIOD*)**



*January 2009*



In simple rondo's a **refrain** is alternating with a number of couplets. The refrain remains in principle unchanged, each couplet is different. The form of such a rondo can be described as: A B A C A D A E A (etc.) - A is the refrain, the others characters refer to the couplets.<sup>1</sup>

The **sonata-rondo** on the contrary has a different form, and this form probably came up because in the eighteenth century the sonata form is important enough to influence other forms. The basic schedule of sonata-rondo is A B A C A B A (followed by a Coda, in most pieces). The A B A in the beginning resemble an **exposition** in a sonata form, the A B A at the end are like the **recapitulation**; the middle section C is similar to the **development**. There are some important differences though:<sup>2</sup>

1.

the **key** scheme: in sonata form at the end of the exposition we are in the dominant key (in a piece in a major key) or in the relative major key (in a piece in a minor key). In both cases the exposition ends in another key than the home key. In sonata-rondo on the other hand the second A part **is in the home key**, so the exposition (the first A B A) of de exposition (de eerste A B A) returns to the home key.

2.

the number of '**transitory moments**': in the exposition of a sonata form we find a transition between the first and second group; in sonata-rondo form we find in the first A B A **two transitions** (*Überleitungen*): after A, and after B. In the second A B A happens the same. As we are returning to to an A-part after a second transition we could also call these second transition '**return passage**' (*Rückleitung*) - *though I believe it is not a proper english term, so I will not use it below.*

3.

In sonata-rondo for the A-part is much more momentous than the B-part; like in more simple rondo forms, we in fact encounter **only one main theme**, A. That is why I am speaking of "main theme" and "secondary theme" in the text about Beethoven's Pathétique below.

4.

The C-section *may* resemble a development section; it may also simply be a contrasting section. Even when the C-part resembles a development, it will in general be harmonically less complex, and will use fewer keys, than lots of development sections in sonata forms.

There are some similarities as well:

1.

**Keys**: like the second group in sonata form, the B-part of the exposition is *in another key* (in pieces in major: the dominant key, in pieces in minor: the relative major key). The B-part in the recapitulation is in the home key, like the second group in the recapitulation in sonata form.

2.

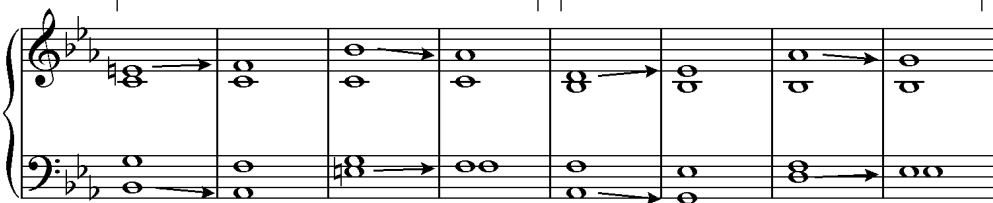
Like the development section in sonata form, the C-section very ends with a **dominant pedal point** in the main key.

On the next pages you see a scheme of the form of the last movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata op.13. In this piece, finding the *main theme* - the A-part - is not difficult at all. On the other hand, it is not clear at first sight which bars we should consider as *secondary theme* (B-part), and which bars as belonging to one of the transitions. Maybe that is what the composer is aiming at: the listener is left in doubt sometimes a little, and will in some passages be unable to predict when exactly the main theme will return, and sometimes is not able to distinguish between a B-part and a transition. In the scheme I indicated which passages I mean.

---

1 In Michiel Schuijjer's reader you find some examples of this type of rondo form. See class 18: Rondo. I have also attached to this text another example by Couperin: *La Favorit* from the *Pièces de Clavecin, Troisième Ordre*. The piece starts with a "Rondeau" (=refrain); after each "Couplet" the Rondeau must be repeated, so the form of the piece is A B A C A D A (etc.).

2 The remarks on this page refer to the Classical Sonata-rondo. After the Classical era often the key scheme is different.

<i>bar</i>	<i>section</i>	<i>key</i>																					
<b>1-17</b>	<b>A-PART / MAIN THEME</b>																						
1 - 8 9 - 12 13 - 17	Consists of an eight-bar <b>period</b> <sup>3</sup> , followed by a repeat of the consequent (bar 9-12), and a closing phrase (13-17). The <i>actual</i> theme spans only the first eight bars - the rest of the A-part can be described as addition. <sup>4</sup>	c																					
<b>18-25</b>	<b>transition</b>																						
	This short transition consists of two bar groups of four bars each, containing a <b>model</b> and a <b>sequence</b> . <sup>5</sup> The first four bars (18-21) <i>seem</i> to modulate to f minor; but the final goal of the modulation is Eb major - the sequence in bars 22-25, and after that the B-part, are in the key of Eb major key. The f minor chord is the <b>pivot</b> <sup>6</sup> in the modulation: the chord can (still) be heard as IV in c minor, and at the same time (already) as II in Eb major. See the keys / degrees in harmonic reduction:	c--> Eb																					
	<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span>model</span> <span>sequence</span> </div>  </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">[</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">in f:</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">V2</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">I6</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">V6/5</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">I</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">]</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">in c:</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">(V2)</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">IV6</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">(V6/5)</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">IV</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">in Eb:</td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">II</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">V2</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">I6</td> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">V6/5 I</td> </tr> </table> </div>	[	in f:	V2	I6	V6/5	I	]		in c:	(V2)	IV6	(V6/5)	IV			in Eb:		II	V2	I6	V6/5 I	
[	in f:	V2	I6	V6/5	I	]																	
	in c:	(V2)	IV6	(V6/5)	IV																		
	in Eb:		II	V2	I6	V6/5 I																	
<b>26-51</b>	<b>B-PART / SECONDARY THEME</b>																						
	The B-part (or 'secondary theme') is arising in a hardly perceptible way from the transition. The actual starting point is on the second beat of bar 25 (a long upbeat to bar 26 <sup>7</sup> ). I propose the following subdivision:	Eb																					
26 – 33	<u>first element</u> : a rather 'loosely fixed' eight-bar phrase ( 4 + 4 ). From bar 30 leading to the dominant (the key is temporarily changing to eb minor!																						
34 – 43	<u>second element</u> : a likewise rather 'loosely fixed' ten-bar ( 4 + 6 ). In bar 36 the key is - hardly audible - changing back to Eb major (see the tone g in the right hand). This element is ending with a <b>complete authentic cadence</b> in Eb major <sup>8</sup> .																						

3 See page 9-11 for further explanation of the term *period*.

4 This is becoming more clear when we look at the other A-parts of this Rondo: in bars 62-78 we find a *literal* quote of the theme, but in bars 121-128 and 171-178 only the first eight bars stay intact.

5 See for the term Sequence Michiel Schuijjer's reader (Class 7).

6 See my text about Mozart: String Quartet in D ("Where is the beginning of the second theme?"), page 8, bottom.

7 In German such situations (the upbeat is starting right after the first beat) can be called **Generalauftakt**.

8 Complete authentic cadence: a (harmonic) cadence consisting of subdominant, dominant and tonic (in this order). In this case: subdominant, a dominant and a tonic. In dit geval (vanaf maat 41): IV | I6/4 (=dominant-6/4) V7 | I

44 – 52

third element: an eight-bar period, 4 bars antecedent (with semicadence on V), and 4 bars consequent (with perfect authentic cadence on I)<sup>9</sup>. In *the second* B-part of this movement this third element is extended, and used to return to the main theme.<sup>10</sup>

This subdivision is somewhat problematic (probably every subdivision of this B-part will turn out that way...):

- the first and second element on the one hand, and the third element on the other hand are very *contrasting*; maybe for that reason the first two elements belong together?
- the third element seems more 'thematic' than the other two - probably the first two elements will hardly be heard as thematic, as they mainly consist of figuration. This might be a reason to believe the B-part is starting not earlier than in bar 44 (it would be *very* short though..). Bars 26-43 would then be still part of the transition. As bars 26-43 return in the *recapitulation* essentially unchanged, apart from being transposed to C major (from bar 134), I decided not to subdivide this way.

52-61

**transition**

These bars modulate back to the home key c minor. The actual modulation is in bar 56 (see b natural instead of b flat). Beethoven is using a nice technique: in the left several times an Ab is leading to a G. At first these tones are used as 4 and 3 in the key of Eb major, but the last time (from bar 56) the function of these tones changes to 6 and 5 in the key of c minor. At the same time both tones are *prolonged*:

in Eb: V2 I6 V2 I6 VI IV V7 I V2 I6 V2 I6

in c: VII4/3 becomes V7

As visible in the reduction this section is ending with a long 'colon' on V7, announcing the return of the main theme.

62-78

**A-PART / MAIN THEME**

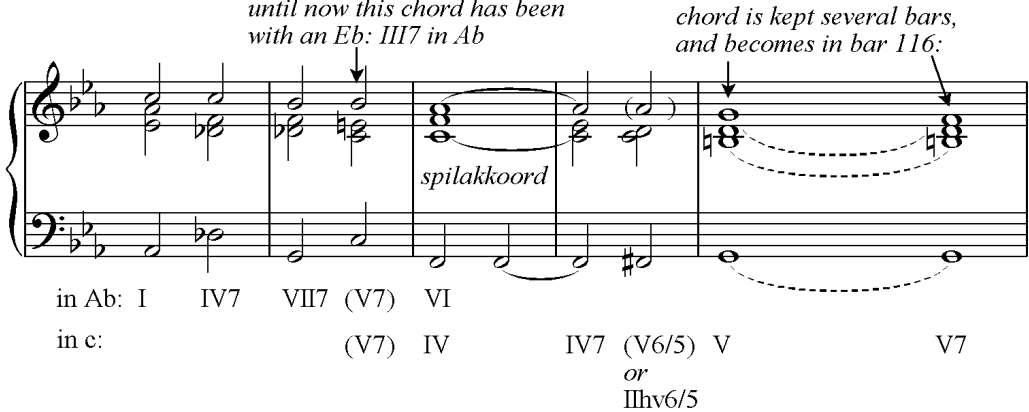
62 – 69  
70 – 73  
74 – 78

literal repeat of the main theme.

c

9 See footnote 9 in my text about Mozart: String Quartet in D (“Where is the beginning of the second theme?”).

10 Compare bars 154-170 .

79-120	<b>C-PART - 'development'</b>	
79 – 94	<p>The middle section starts in Ab major; the key change from C minor is without any transition. A <u>new element</u> appears, mainly characterized by jumps in fourths and fifths in both upper voice and bass, resulting in a <b>sequence of falling fifths</b>: I IV VII III VI II ..... V .</p> <p>Bars 79-94 consist of four groups of four bars each, all ending with a <i>semicadence</i>. From the fifth bar the upper and lower voice get exchanged partly, which is repeated from the thirteenth bar (bar 91), thus leading to the following bar grouping:</p> $\begin{array}{ccccccc} & & 8 & & + & & 8 \\ ( & 4 & + & 4 & ) & + & ( & 4 & + & 4 & ) \end{array}$	Ab
95 – 98	From bar 95 we find a short <b>connection</b> .	
99 – 107	<p>In bar 99 starts a repeat (variation) of the beginning of the middle section. The first four bars (99-102) can be seen as a <i>quotation</i>, but the second bar group (from bar 103) is ending different: it gets prolonged to five bars, and we find a modulation back to the home key C minor. The harmony is aiming at V of C minor, see the chromatic line F -F# - G in the bass:</p>	Ab --> c
	 <p style="text-align: center;">until now this chord has been with an Eb: III7 in Ab</p> <p style="text-align: center;">chord is kept several bars, and becomes in bar 116:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">spilakkoord</p> <p style="text-align: center;">in Ab: I IV7 VII7 (V7) VI in c: (V7) IV IV7 (V6/5) V or IIIv6/5 V7</p>	
108 -120	<p>The remaining bars of this middle section form a <b>dominant pedal point</b>: V in c minor is encircled for quite some time, keeping the tone G in the bass permanently. I believe this pedal point is the main reason we can hear the C-part as 'development-like': this pedal point could well have been the final stage of a development section in a sonata form.</p> <p>Until bar 107 the C-part is not like a typical development section: modulations are hardly used, and no real re-use of thematic material of the A- or B-parts can be found.</p>	c (pedal point on V)
121-128	<p><b>A-PART / MAIN THEME</b></p> <p>The main theme gets <i>shortened</i> here for the first time: only the first eight bars are kept (of course these are the most important bars...)</p>	c

<p><b>129-134</b></p>	<p><b>transition (using material of the A-part)</b></p> <p>This transition differs essentially from the first transition between A and B (from bar 18): this time the <i>consequent of the main theme</i> is used. So the repeat of the consequent <i>is</i> actually in place here, like in bars 9-12. But here the repeat of the consequent is functioning as connection between the A- and B-parts, and therefore ending on V (semicadence) instead of I (as in bar 12). It is also two bars longer than in bars 9-12.</p> <p><i>One</i> reason for changing the transition is of course that the key of the B-part is different (C major instead of Eb major). It is an interesting fact that, by the re-interpretation of the consequent of the main theme in the transition, the connection between the main theme and the transition gets much stronger than in bars 17/18 of the exposition.</p>	<p>c</p>
<p><b>135-157</b></p>	<p><b>B-PART / SECONDARY THEME</b></p> <p>Like in the main theme, the recapitulation of the secondary theme things are left out:</p> <p>135 – 143 the <u>first element</u> is almost the same as in the exposition, but that the second bar group gets prolonged with one bar (bar 142 is an 'extra' bar) ( 4 + 5 );</p> <p>144 – 153 the beginning of the <u>second element</u> is left out (the bars 34-37 are missing); on the other hand the remaining of the second element is <i>extended</i> - so in the end a group of ten bars is achieved (as in the exposition);</p> <p>154 – 157 the <u>third element</u> starts as in the exposition, but from the fifth bar it is clear we are in a modulation - and therefore I believe we are in a transition from bar 158. From the procedure used is similar to the transition in bars 129-134: at first it seems we are listening to a repeat or consequent of a theme, but then the passage is developing to a transition.</p>	<p>C</p>
<p><b>158-170</b></p>	<p><b>transition</b></p> <p>Here we return to c minor, using the final part of the third element of the B-part (sequences, music aiming at the dominant from bar 166):</p>	<p>c – [Eb] – [ g ] - c</p>

in c: V2 I6 IV6 in c: VII4/3  
 in Eb: II6 V2 I6  
 in g: II6 V2 I6 VII4/3 I6

sequence of shortened sequence (!) repeat 'prolonging the shortened sequence' (?) start of main theme

I6 VII4/3 I6 VII4/3 becomes ----- V7 I

**171-182 A-PART / MAIN THEME**

171 – 178 The first eight bars are quoted (almost) literary.

179 - 182 The repeat of the consequent is quite different.

We could say the external extension is developing to a coda – and therefore maybe it is not clear at first sight where the coda is starting (I prefer bar 13, because thereafter no more real starting point can be found).

c

**183-210 CODA**

183-193 first part of the Coda. In the first bars the harmony resembles the harmony of the external extension in bars 13-17: in both spots the start is (V7) --> IV .

The bar grouping is:

4 + 7

( 1 + 1 ) + 2 ( 1 + 1 ) + 5

*motif repeat.* *motif repeat.*

A strong cadence can be found in bars 185/186 and bars 192/193. Both cadences end on I (authentic ending). The seven-bar group is an extended (and therefore more tense?) repeat of the four-bar group.

194-210 second part of the Coda. As here the harmony is quite special, a last harmonic reduction. The bar grouping is deductable from the brackets:

c



in c: I6 II6/5 V7 I6 II6/5 V7 I6

in c: bII6  
in Ab: IV6 V6/5 V6/5 I

in c: VI #IVdv6/5 I6/4 V7 I  
in Ab: I

I would like to add a few remarks about the structure of the **main theme** of this Beethoven-Rondo. At the beginning of the scheme (page 4) I stated that the first eight bars form a *period*. I will start to give some explanation of this term, and of the *Sentence*, before returning to the Beethoven piece.<sup>11</sup>

The terms **period** and **sentence** are used as descriptions of two different 'species' of musical phrases; sentence and period are more or less *opposites*. It is practical to use *archetypes* - in other words, a Sentence and a period in which 'everything is exactly right'. In lots of scores this is (of course) not the case, as musical structures are differing from the archetypes, or are even not describable with one of these two terms.

We can best describe a **period** as: a musical phrase of in principle eight (or four, or sixteen) bars, subdivided in two halves of equal length, which can be called **antecedent** and **consequent**. The antecedent (the first four of eight bars) is 'posing a musical question', the consequent is 'giving the answer'. We perceive the fourth bar as a question, and the eighth bar as an answer to that question because of the *harmony*: at the end of the antecedent in principle a **semicadence**<sup>12</sup> is standing, and at the end of the consequent a **full cadence**<sup>13</sup>. In an 'ideal' period we will find strong **motivic**

11 See also the Chapter about Classical Syntax in Michiel Schuijjer's reader (Class 9).

12 Semicadence: 'provisional' ending on the dominant, mostly V.

13 Full cadence: 'definite' ending on the tonic, I. When a group of eight bars ends with a **dedeptive cadence**, it could

**resemblance between antecedent and consequent.** Assuming a period of eight bars, normally the first two bars of the antecedent present a motif; this motif is repeated in the first two bars of the *consequent*. The last two bars of the antecedent then correspond in a similar way with two last two bars of the consequent - though in this case there *must* be some difference, as antecedent and consequent have different harmonic endings:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & 4 & & + & & 4 \\
 ( & 2 & + & 2 & ) & ( & 2 & + & 2 & ) \\
 & & & \text{half slot} & & & \text{heel slot} & & & \\
 \text{motif } a & & & \text{motif } b & & \text{motif } a & & \text{motif } b' & & 
 \end{array}$$

(The accent behind the second motif b is indicating it differs from the first motif b).

Below you see a 'perfect' example, the first eight bars of the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in A major:

The first eight bars of Haydn's Sonata in D, Hob. XVI:37<sup>14</sup> form a likewise 'perfect' example of period.

In a period the **harmony ranks first**: when a phrase does not show a question/answer-relation between antecedent and consequent, the phrase is no period. It is possible though that

- instead of the semicadence another 'non-perfect ending' is used
- (sometimes) the consequent of a period is modulating (and then is called: **modulating period**).

A nice example of both phenomena is in Nr.15 (in As groot) of Brahms's *Walzer Op.39* (see the score at the end of this text). The first eight bars of this piece form a period. But: in bar 4 stands an **imperfect authentic cadence**<sup>15</sup>. And in bar 8 it shows there has been a modulation to C minor. (The cadence in bar 8 is imperfect *again* - so we might perceive the whole phrase as a period mainly because of the bar grouping maybe?)

still be a period -but after bar 8 the phrase will need to be *prolonged*, to get to a full cadence in the end.

14 See my text about Mozart: String Quartet in D ("Where is the beginning of the second theme?"), page 10 and 11.

15 Imperfect authentic cadence: ending on I, the upper voice not having the root, but the fifth or the third of the chord, thus creating a less 'definite' ending.

Unlike in period in a **sentence** not the harmony, but **motivic development ranks first**. A sentence does not contain a question/answer-relation between two bargroups, therefore we have a good reason *not* to speak of antecedent and consequent, but for example of **presentation** (or **presentation phrase**) and **continuation** (or **continuation phrase**).<sup>16</sup>

An 'ideal' sentence (of 8 bars) will show motivic development this way:

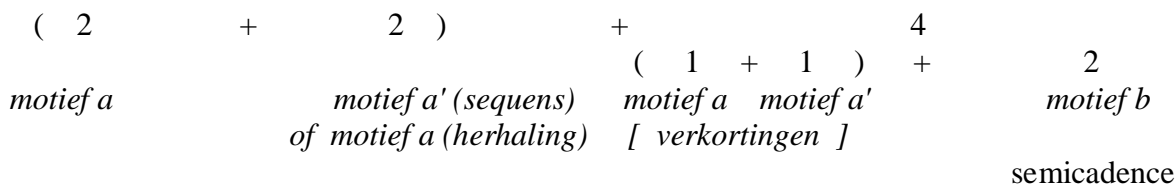
- bars 1 and 2 present a **motif** (or group of motifs)
- bars 3 and 4 present a **sequence** or a **repeat** of this motif

Together these first four bars form the presentation

- in bar 5 and in bar 6 the motifs of bars 1-2 and 3-4 respectively are **shortened** (bar 5 is corresponding with bars 1-2, bar 6 with bars 3-4).
- in bars 7 and 8 the sentence ends with **further development of the motif**, or with a kind of **'conclusion'**.

Together these four bars form the continuation.

An **open ending** of a sentence (semicadence) is preferred:



Here is an example of a 'perfect' sentence (the beginning of the first movement of Beethoven's first Piano Sonata, Op.2,1):<sup>17</sup>

**Allegro**

The musical score is in G major, 3/4 time, and consists of two systems of four bars each. The first system (bars 1-4) shows the initial presentation: bar 1 (motif 'a'), bar 2 (motif 'a'), bar 3 (motif 'a' with a triplet), and bar 4 (motif 'a' with a triplet). The second system (bars 5-8) shows the continuation: bar 5 (shortened motif 'a'), bar 6 (shortened motif 'a' with a triplet), bar 7 (further development of motif 'a' with a triplet), and bar 8 (conclusion of motif 'a' with a triplet). Labels 't' and 'D' are placed below the staff to indicate these structural elements. Dynamics include *p*, *sf* [cresc], *sf*, *ff*, and *p*. The piece ends with a fermata and the marking '(ei)'.

<sup>16</sup> See also Michiel Schuijjer's reader, chapter Classical Syntax (Class 9).

<sup>17</sup> When you like: compare this theme with the first theme of the first movement of Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata.

