A Structural Approach to the Analysis of Rock Music

Drew F. Nobile

Graduate Center, City University of New York

Recommended Citation
https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/83

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!
Follow this and additional works at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds
Part of the Music Commons
A STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF ROCK MUSIC

by

DREW F. NOBILE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2014
This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Mark Spicer, advisor

William Rothstein, first reader

L. Poundie Burstein

Christopher Doll

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

A STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF ROCK MUSIC

by

DREW F. NOBILE

Advisor: Professor Mark Spicer

This dissertation situates itself in the middle of an ongoing debate about the applicability of Schenkerian analytical techniques to the analysis of pop and rock music. In particular, it investigates ways in which the standard conceptions of voice leading, harmonic function, and counterpoint may be updated to better apply to this new repertoire. A central claim is that voice-leading structure is intimately related to formal structure such that the two domains are mutually informing.

Part I of the dissertation focuses on harmonic and melodic theory. Chapter 2, “Harmonic Syntax,” advocates for a conception of harmonic function based on syntax and form rather than the identity of specific chords. In this conception, chords other than V, such as IV, II, bVII, or even some versions of I, can often be said to function syntactically as the dominant. Chapter 3, “The Melodic-Harmonic Divorce,” explores contrapuntal paradigms in which the domains of melody and harmony seem to be operating independently. This chapter outlines three types of melodic-harmonic divorce: “hierarchy divorce,” “rotation divorce,” and “syntax divorce.” Part II of the dissertation aims to devise voice-leading models for full song forms. Chapter 4 focuses on AABA form, Chapter 5 on verse–prechorus–chorus, and
Chapter 6 on verse-chorus forms. These chapters demonstrate that these common forms are associated with general voice-leading structures that act in dialog with the specific voice-leading structures of songs that exhibit these forms. This part of the dissertation is largely analytical, and has the secondary goal of demonstrating a Schenkerian analytical methodology applied to rock music.
The roots of this dissertation go back to a seminar paper written for Mark Spicer’s Beatles class in my first year as a doctoral student at CUNY. At the time, I was expecting to write my dissertation on mathematical models for post-tonal music, but the subject of form and voice leading in rock music captivated me and, with Mark’s encouragement, I embarked on the project that culminated in this dissertation.

Foremost thanks go to Mark, whose constant encouragement from that early seminar through the last stages of dissertation work was vitally important to my ability to finish in a timely fashion without losing my mind. My first reader William Rothstein’s meticulous and insightful comments helped me refine my theories, and his keen analytical ear constantly opened my eyes to new aspects of the songs analyzed in these pages. With the addition of Poundie Burstein and Christopher Doll to round out the committee, I cannot imagine a better team of scholars to oversee a dissertation on Schenkerian approaches to pop and rock music, and I am immensely grateful to all four of them for their guidance and inspiration.

A supportive scholarly community is vital to anyone completing a dissertation, and the community of faculty and students at the CUNY Graduate Center is unrivaled in this regard. In particular, I would like to thank Joseph Straus for his mentorship in all aspects of my professional life, as well as my classmates Drew Wilson, Zack Bernstein, and Loretta Terrigno,
who provided hours of stimulating discussion and supportive friendships as we navigated the
grueling Ph.D. process together.

Finally, I express my love and thanks to my parents, Matthew Nobile and Nancy Ide, for
their unyielding encouragement through the extended adolescence that is graduate school,
and my wife-to-be, Kara Eubanks, for graciously listening to me go on and on about penta-
tonic passing tones and syntactical dominants and whose musicality and dedication to her
own work is a constant source of inspiration to me.
Abstract iv

Acknowledgements vi

List of Examples x

1 Introduction 1

The Structure of the Dissertation 5

On Pop, Pop/Rock, Pop-Rock, Pop and Rock, and Rock Music 7

Transcriptions and Graphs 9

Form: Terminology 15

Why Schenkerian Analysis? 17

1 Harmonic and Melodic Theory 19

2 Harmonic Syntax 20

Function as Chord Identity: the Riemannian Tradition 24

Towards a Syntactical Definition of Function 35

The Functional Circuit 45

Cadences and Closure 76

Conclusion 85

3 The Melodic-Harmonic Divorce 88

Type 1: Hierarchy Divorce 91

Type 2: Rotation Divorce 102

Type 3: “Syntax Divorce” 107

Looseness and Tightness 112
II  Full Song Forms

4  AABA and sr dc

Model 1: d contains PD–D; c returns to T ........................................... 125
Model 2: d contains PD; c contains D–T ........................................... 133
Model 3: d begins with a neighboring chord ...................................... 144
Bridge sections ............................................................................. 149
Small aaba ................................................................................... 159
Conclusion ..................................................................................... 163

5  Expansion of sr dc into Verse–Prechorus–Chorus

The PD–T|PD–D Schema ............................................................... 170
Phrase Rhythm ............................................................................. 175
Bridge Sections: “Private Eyes” ...................................................... 182
Expanded Verses .......................................................................... 193
aaba Structures of Verse–Prechorus–Chorus Songs ....................... 198
The Structural Importance of the Prechorus ................................. 202

6  Verse–Chorus Forms

Sectional Verse–Chorus Form ......................................................... 206
Features of Sectional Verse–Chorus Forms ................................... 219
Analytical Interlude: Minimal Verses ............................................ 225
Continuous Verse–Chorus Form ...................................................... 233
The Grand Neighbor Chord ........................................................... 246
Conclusion .................................................................................... 250

Bibliography ................................................................................. 253
# List of Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Transcription of the first verse of the Beatles’ “Please Please Me” (1963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Otis Redding, “(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay” (1968): parallel octaves underlie the outer-voice counterpoint in the verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>The Jackson 5, “ABC” (1970): pentatonic passing tones in the chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Noam Chomsky’s “tree structure” diagramming a hierarchical arrangement of constituents in the sentence “sincerity may frighten the boy.” (Adapted from Chomsky 1965, 65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The Eagles, “Lyin’ Eyes” (1975): a sixteen-bar parallel period in which V functions as dominant in the antecedent and IV functions as dominant in the consequent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Daniel Harrison’s table of scale degrees and their functional descriptions. (Reproduction of Figure 2.1 from Harrison 1994, 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Nicole Biamonte’s functional analyses of several short modal progressions in rock songs. (Reproduced from Biamonte 2010, 97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Radiohead, “Lucky” (1997), chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Recomposition of the chorus from “Lucky” with no return to tonic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Haydn, Keyboard Sonata in D major, Hob. XVI:37, I: this phrase contains examples of both ii&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt; and IV chords not functioning as pre-dominants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Mozart, Piano Sonata in F major, K. 332, II: a I–V–IV–I progression prolongs the tonic. In a syntactical definition of harmonic function, the V and IV chords do not project dominant or pre-dominant function but instead are passing chords within a tonic prolongation. A function-as-chord-identity definition would analyze this progression as T–D–S–T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>The Beatles, “All I’ve Got to Do” (1965): VI represents the initial tonic in this verse’s functional circuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>Neighboring chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>Passing chords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>Pink Floyd, “Wish You Were Here” (1975): II as syntactical dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>“Take Me to the River”: different representatives of the syntactical dominant at the end of the bridge section in versions by Al Green and the Talking Heads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.15 The I7–I cadence in the Talking Heads’ version of “Take Me to the River” exhibits directed voice leading towards 1 in the upper voices, similar to a traditional V–I cadence.


2.17 Graph of the verse–prechorus–chorus cycle of “Take Me to the River” showing a I7 chord functioning as syntactical dominant.

2.18 The Beatles, “I’ll Cry Instead” (1964), transcription of first verse.

2.19 Graph of the verse of “I’ll Cry Instead” showing the cadential I prolonging the syntactical dominant function.

2.20 Bach (arr. Schumann), Sonata No. 1 in G minor for Unaccompanied Violin, BWV 1001, IV, measures 79–82. Analysis after Cutler 2009, 197.


2.22 Bobby Darin, “Dream Lover” (1959), transcription of first verse: an srdc phrase structure in which the c phrase contains an expanded dominant progression.

2.23 Graph of “Dream Lover” showing the I–VI–IV progression as an expanded dominant progression that resolves to V.

2.24 The Beatles, “Please Please Me” (1962), transcription of first verse.

2.25 Walter Everett’s graph of the verse of “Please Please Me” showing an implied cadential six-four at the onset of the c phrase (reproduced from Everett 2001a, 132).

2.26 The Eagles, “Take it Easy” (1972): V as syntactical pre-dominant and IV as syntactical dominant in both parts of a parallel period.

2.27 The Eagles, “Lyin’ Eyes” (1975): graph of verse showing IV as both syntactical pre-dominant and syntactical dominant in the consequent phrase.

2.28 A standard twelve-bar blues progression.


2.30 Graph of “The House Is Rockin’” showing a I–V–I functional circuit.

2.31 Michael Jackson, “Black or White” (1991), second verse.

2.32 Michael Jackson, “Black Or White,” verses: A twelve-bar blues progression in which IV is the syntactical dominant and V is the syntactical pre-dominant.

2.34 Reicha’s examples of quarter and half cadences. (Reproductions of Examples K and L from Reicha 2000 [1814], 124–5.)

2.35 The Beatles, “Tomorrow Never Knows” (1966), opening of first verse: four-bar phrases are based on melodic groupings rather than harmonic elements. None of these phrases contains a cadence.

2.36 The Rolling Stones, “Get Off of My Cloud” (1965), first verse: four nearly identical phrases in which the fourth achieves a weak sense of closure by completing a sentence in the text.

2.37 The Steve Miller Band, “Take the Money and Run” (1976): four identical phrases achieve weak closure simply by virtue of occurring four times.


2.39 Graph of “Walk Away Renée” showing a half cadence on II♯ at the end of the verse and a parallel period in the chorus.

3.1 (a) The middle harmony is an “embellishing harmony” that harmonizes a melodic passing tone. (b) The same melodic passing tone can occur unharmonized, creating a dissonance. (c) However, the harmony cannot embellish while the melody does not.

3.2 The Rolling Stones, “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” (1968).

3.3 The Steve Miller Band, “Rock’n Me” (1976).

3.4 The Steve Miller Band, “Rock’n Me,” chorus 1 and chorus 2, with different vocal harmonies indicated, neither of which is consonant with the underlying harmony.

3.5 311, “All Mixed Up” (1995), first two bars of the chorus: the melody remains on the tonic during the neighboring subtonic harmony.

3.6 J. Geils Band, “Centerfold” (1981): transcription of guitar riff (top staff); harmonic reduction on lower staff showing subtonic chords as passing harmonies.

3.7 The Beatles, “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964), opening of verse 1: 5 remains in the melody over the progression I–IV–I.


3.9 Reduction of the verse of “Still Fighting It”.


(b) Reduction of (a).

3.11 The White Stripes, “We’re Going To Be Friends” (2002), first verse.


3.13 Jane’s Addiction, “Jane Says,” bridge: the melody outlines the dominant triad.
3.14 Carly Rae Jepsen, “Call Me Maybe” (2012), first phrase of chorus: one could easily substitute a number of different chord rotations for the original without affecting the melodic structure. ................................................................. 107

3.15 The Beatles, “Nowhere Man” (1965): the melodic descent doesn’t match the harmony at the cadence. ................................................................. 108


3.17 Maroon 5, “Sunday Morning” (2002).................................................................. 111

3.18 Coldplay, “The Scientist” (2002): annotated transcription of first verse. .... 113

3.19 Coldplay, “The Scientist,” reduction of verse. ......................................................... 115

3.20 Katy Perry, “Firework” (2010). Tight prechorus with loose verse and chorus. 116

4.1 The Beatles, “From Me to You” (1963): AABAABA form with an sr dc structure in each verse. ................................................................. 122

4.2 The Beatles, “From Me to You”: sr dc structure in the first verse. ............. 123

4.3 The three harmonic models for sr dc structure. “N” stands for “Neighboring chord.” ................................................................. 124

4.4 The Jackson 5, “I’ll Be There” (1970): transcription of first verse with the vocal melody on the top staff and a simplified version of the accompaniment on the lower two staves. ................................................................. 126

4.5 The Jackson 5, “I’ll Be There,” graph of verse. ......................................................... 127

4.6 The Police, “Every Breath You Take” (1983): sr dc structure in the first verse, with the melodic groupings “out of phase” with the harmonic and hypermetrical groupings. ................................................................. 128

4.7 The Police, “Every Breath You Take,” graph of verse. ......................................................... 129

4.8 The Beatles, “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964): first verse. ......................................................... 131


4.10 The Allman Brothers, “Melissa” (1972): irregular sr dc structure in the first verse. ................................................................. 134

4.11 The Allman Brothers, “Melissa,” graph of verse. ......................................................... 134

4.12 The Beatles, “From Me to You”: Model 2 for sr dc with the cadential I chord in the c phrase. ................................................................. 135


4.14 The Monkees, “Last Train to Clarksville,” graph of verse showing Model 2 for sr dc. ................................................................. 137

4.15 Tears for Fears, “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” (1985), first verse. .... 138
4.16 Tears for Fears, “Everybody Wants to Rule the World”: verse exhibits Model 2 for srdc but the pre-dominant function encroaches into the c phrase delaying the arrival of the dominant.

4.17 “Everybody Wants to Rule the World”: verse groove that carries tonic function despite not containing a tonic triad.

4.18 Harmonic reduction of “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” showing that the inner voices oscillate between the dyads A♭–C and B♭–D for the entire verse while the melody projects a 3–2–1 descent and the harmony outlines a I–II–V–I functional circuit.


4.20 Bob Dylan, “Tangled Up in Blue”: the pre-dominant IV chord arrives before the onset of the d phrase and the rhetorically-emphasized V chord that does begin d is shown as a passing chord prolonging IV.

4.21 The Beatles, “You Won’t See Me” (1965), first verse.

4.22 The Beatles, “You Won’t See Me”: Model 3 of srdc in which the d phrase’s IV chord acts as a large-scale neighboring chord within the tonic prolongation.


4.26 The chords in the d phrase of “Moondance” embellishes a IV–I neighboring progression through passing motion in the bass.

4.27 “From Me to You,” bridge.

4.28 Middleground graph of “From Me to You” showing its AABA structure with an interruption after the B section.

4.29 Trevor deClercq’s three models of “classic” bridges (reproduced from deClercq 2012, 77).

4.30 Interpretations of deClercq’s classic bridge models showing the tonic chords to be subsumed within an overall prolongation of IV.

4.31 The Beatles, “Misery” (1963), transcription and graph of bridge showing VI as pre-dominant within a PD–T|PD–D framework.

4.32 “Every Breath You Take,” bridge.

4.33 “Every Breath You Take,” graph of bridge section.

4.34 The “second bridge” in “Every Breath You Take.”

4.35 Covach’s interpretation of the form of “Every Breath You Take” as “compound ABA” form. (Reproduced from deClercq 2012, 86.)
4.36 Trevor deClercq’s alternative reading of the form of “Every Breath You Take” with an expanded bridge that comprises the “second bridge” as well as the two subsequent instrumental verses. (Reproduced from deClercq 2012, 88.)

4.37 Interpretation of “Every Breath You Take” in which the “second bridge” is an interpolation within the overall AABA framework that delays the structural close on tonic with a chromaticized neighboring progression 6♭–6–5 in an inner voice.

4.38 The Beatles, “Misery” (1963), first verse: the IV chord at the end of the r phrase is back-related and the true pre-dominant does not arrive until the d phrase.

4.39 The Beatles, “Misery,” graph of verse: the IV chords in the s and r phrases are neighboring chords prolonging tonic.


4.41 Graph of “Come and Get it” showing this verse’s small aaba structure.


5.3 Huey Lewis & the News, “Hip to be Square” (1986): first verse, prechorus, and chorus.


5.7 The Doobie Brothers, “Rockin’ Down The Highway” (1972): first verse, prechorus, and chorus.

5.8 The Doobie Brothers, “Rockin’ Down The Highway”: the dominant function is prolonged through an unfolding of V and its chromatic upper third ♭VII.


5.10 Van Halen, “Dance The Night Away,” structure of verse–prechorus–chorus cycle. The verse’s two phrases and the prechorus’s first phrase all end in half cadences, with an authentic cadence withheld until the lead-in to the chorus.


5.13 Daryl Hall & John Oates, “Private Eyes” (1981): transcription with melodic lines on the top staff, piano ostinato on the middle staff, and a simplified bass line on the bottom staff. 184
5.14 Recomposition of the chorus of “Private Eyes” to make a verse rather than a verse, prechorus, and chorus. 188
5.15 Structural interpretation of “Private Eyes” as projecting the single key of A minor. 189
5.16 Middleground and foreground graphs of “Private Eyes.” 191
5.17 Def Leppard, “Photograph” (1983): first verse, prechorus, and chorus. The verse is 16 measures long, consisting of two contrasting eight-measure phrases all over a tonic pedal. 195
5.18 Def Leppard, “Photograph”: the two keys E major and G major are equal in status with neither emerging as primary. 196
5.19 Michael Jackson, “Billie Jean” (1982): first verse, prechorus, and chorus. The verse is 20 measures long, consisting of two eight-bar phrases, the first of which is extended by four bars. 197
5.20 Billy Joel, “Uptown Girl” (1983): first verse, prechorus, and chorus. The chorus recapitulates the verse material, but functions as the chorus because of its position at the end of the functional circuit. 200
5.21 Middleground and foreground graphs of “Uptown Girl.” 201
6.1 The Jackson 5, “ABC” (1970): transcription through the first chorus 208
6.2 Graph of the chorus of “ABC” showing a cadential goal at the end of the section. 210
6.3 Simon and Garfunkel, “Homeward Bound” (1966): transcription through the first chorus. 211
6.4 Simon and Garfunkel, “Homeward Bound,” graph of verse and chorus. 212
6.5 The Eagles, “Desperado” (1973): transcription through the first chorus. 213
6.6 The Eagles, “Hotel California” (1976): transcription of first verse and chorus. 217
6.7 “Hotel California” contains no authentic cadences, and the melody remains on 5 throughout. 218
6.8 The Allman Brothers, “Ramblin’ Man” (1973): transcription of chorus and verse. The two sections are based on similar melodic and harmonic profiles. 220
6.9 Graph of the chorus of “Ramblin’ Man.” With very few alterations, this could also serve as the graph of the verse because of the two sections’ similarity. 221
6.10 Queen, “Fat Bottomed Girls” (1978): transcription of chorus and first verse. 221
6.11 Twisted Sister, “We’re Not Gonna Take It” (1984): the two sections are nearly identical (see the reduction) but the rhythm and lyrics make one sound like the chorus and the other sound like the verse.

6.12 Graph of “Fat Bottomed Girls”; both verse and chorus consist of a parallel period with an interrupted descent from 3 in the upper voice.

6.13 The Animals, “We’ve Gotta Get Out Of This Place” (1965): the verse projects C mixolydian while the chorus is firmly in F major.


6.16 a) Chordal reduction of the chorus of “Strawberry Fields”; b) Further reduction showing the underlying voice leading.

6.17 Recomposition in 4 of the cadence at the end of the chorus of “Strawberry Fields”; here, the suspension resolves before the change of harmony.


6.19 Chordal reduction of the chorus of “Rich Girl” showing that the upper-voice prolongs 1 throughout.

6.20 The harmonic and melodic structure of “Rich Girl” implies an overall form of prechorus–chorus with no verse.

6.21 The general model for continuous verse–chorus form.


6.25 “Eye of the Tiger” illustrates the voice-leading model for continuous verse–chorus.


6.27 Fleetwood Mac, “Go Your Own Way”: the PD–D progression repeats in the chorus before resolving to T.

6.28 The Beatles, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1963): these twelve measures can be considered a single verse with refrain or a verse plus a chorus.

6.29 The Beatles, “I Want to Hold Your Hand”: graph of verse–chorus cycle showing the pre-dominant expansion in the chorus.

6.30 Van Morrison, “Brown Eyed Girl” (1967), transcription of chorus and summary of harmonic structure showing the “I Want to Hold Your Hand” schema prolonging IV.
6.31 Creedence Clearwater Revival, “Have You Ever Seen the Rain?” (1970), transcription of chorus and summary of harmonic structure. ........................................... 242
6.32 The Youngbloods, “Get Together” (1967), transcription of chorus and summary of harmonic structure. ............................................................... 242
6.34 a) Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, “American Girl”: the verse’s rhythmic expansion is a result of lengthening the E–F♯ motive at the end of each phrase. b) The sixteen-measure verse is based on a twelve-measure prototype consisting of three four-bar phrases. ................................. 244
6.35 Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, “American Girl.” ........................................... 245
6.36 The grand neighbor IV chord is derived from the twelve-bar blues progression. 246
6.37 Elvis Presley, “Jailhouse Rock” (1957): a continuous verse–chorus form derived from the twelve-bar blues progression in which the chorus begins with a grand neighbor IV chord. ...................................................... 247
6.38 The Eagles, “Peaceful Easy Feeling” (1972): the chorus begins with a grand neighbor IV chord. ................................................................. 248
6.39 The Eagles, “Peaceful Easy Feeling,” graph of verse–chorus cycle showing the grand neighbor chord as a background feature. ............................... 249
6.40 The Allman Brothers, “Crazy Love” (1979), transcription of the chorus. .... 249
6.41 The IV chord in the chorus of “Crazy Love” can be interpreted either as a grand neighbor chord returning to tonic (a) or as the syntactical pre-dominant (b). 250
Music theorists finally agree that pop and rock music is worth studying. This is in evidence through the myriad contributions to the theoretical literature on this topic throughout the past decade and a half: from edited collections such as Covach and Boone 1997, Everett 2008b, Spicer and Covach 2010, and a special issue of Music Theory Online (17/3, 2011), to theoretical monographs such as Everett 1999 and 2001, Stephenson 2002, Moore 2012, and Doll (forthcoming), to numerous individual articles, it is clear that the study of this previously marginalized repertoire has finally entered the mainstream.\footnote{On the marginalization, see Covach 1998.} Despite this surge in popularity, though, a consistent methodology for the analysis of pop and rock music has yet to emerge. In particular, scholars disagree on the applicability of traditional analytical techniques to this new repertoire. (By “traditional analytical techniques” I mean techniques originally devised to study common-practice tonal music, and by “common-practice tonal music” I mean European art music composed between about 1720 and 1885, the so-called “Bach to Brahms” canon.) Especially contentious is the application of Schenkerian analysis to rock songs. While Schenkerian approaches to pop and rock music are common (see Kaminsky 1992, Brown 1997, O’Donnell 2005, Burns 2008, Koozin 2008, and numerous...
publications by Walter Everett and Naphtali Wagner), so are criticisms of this methodology (see Middleton 1990, Moore 1995 and 2001, and Stephenson 2002). These criticisms often argue that because rock music is fundamentally different from common-practice music, we cannot and should not analyze the two repertoires in the same way. Yet few authors have attempted to explain exactly how rock and common-practice tonality differ. Moore 1995 suggests that one fundamental difference is rock’s use of the “so-called ‘flattened seventh’” (i.e., $\flat V_7$ or $\flat V_7$), which Moore argues is normative and therefore should not be viewed as aberrant in this repertoire. Stephenson 2002 suggests that rock and common-practice tonality differ because their harmonic successions proceed in opposite directions, with rock preferring root motion by descending fourths and seconds as opposed to the common-practice norms of ascending fourths and seconds. Whether or not these claims are true—and I would argue that they are much less true than these authors imply—these differences are relatively minor; that we can even use the terms “flattened seventh” or “root motion” in both contexts shows that the two repertoires share some fundamental principles. But I do not wish to assert that rock and common-practice music are essentially the same; that claim is easily discredited. Rather, I would state that they share sufficient structural principles that we should not throw out common-practice analytical techniques such as Schenkerian analysis but instead should modify and update our methodology to apply to this new repertoire.

This is exactly what I aim to do with this dissertation. Specifically, I wish to investigate ways in which traditional Schenkerian analytical techniques can be updated to better reflect

---

2Though it does not deal with pop and rock music, Allen Forte’s 1995 book *The American Popular Ballad of the Golden Era, 1924–1950* is an important study in the application of Schenkerian analysis to popular music.
the stylistic tendencies of pop and rock music. Rather than modifying conventions on an
ad hoc basis, as is common, I will attempt to specify exactly how the current methodology
differs from traditional analysis, focusing on harmonic function (Chapter 2) and contrapuntal
relationships between melody and harmony (Chapter 3).

Any theorist wishing to apply Schenkerian analytical techniques to the pop and rock
repertoire must situate his or her work in relation to the theories of Walter Everett. Everett’s
Schenkerian approach to rock music goes back at least to 1985, and is particularly evident
throughout his two-volume monograph on the music of the Beatles (Everett 1999 and 2001a).
Compared to others who take this approach, including myself with this dissertation, Everett is
relatively traditional, especially in his assertion that I–V–I remains the fundamental harmonic
structure of rock music. Everett writes,

If a song seems to be based on a I–IV–I relationship, and V does not appear at all,
this does not mean that I–IV–I substitutes for I–V–I, nor does it suggest a different
underlying system. My hearing of such a structure would classify it as [a] prolongation
of tonic within an incomplete I–V–I articulation of the tonal system, and therefore
more static and less dynamic than a full hearing of the usual bass arpeggiation. If V
does not appear, it may lie dormant, or be referred to by implication (in which case it
would make sense to use V in a graph to suggest such a relationship between system
and surface), or it may be irrelevant (in which case any reference to V in a graph would
have to clearly show it is part of an unarticulated norm). (Everett 2008a, 139)

As will become evident in Chapter 2, I do not share Everett’s belief that I–V–I underlies
every rock song (even in absentia), though it is the most common tonal axis in this repertoire.
I am often inclined to hear songs based on I–IV–I to be just as complete and dynamic as
those built on I–V–I, and I find Everett’s reliance on that single axis overly restrictive. Most
other aspects of Everett’s general approach, though, are fundamentally in line with my own. I
wholeheartedly agree with Everett’s claim that “pitch relationships are of central importance” in pop and rock music (2008a, 111) despite some theorists’ argument that a focus on timbre and instrumentation, for example, is more appropriate (e.g., Zak 2001 and Blake 2012). I would, however, place form on equal footing with pitch (which Everett does not).

I also share Everett’s focus on the foreground and middleground levels and their relationships to the musical surface rather than reductions to the background level. With a few exceptions (e.g., the analysis of the *Abbey Road* medley in Everett 1999, 264–65), Everett rarely pursues voice-leading reductions to deep levels. The graphs in this dissertation will likewise show foreground and shallow middleground voice leading, only rarely positing deeper structures. Schenker’s well-known theory that pieces are derived from a small set of background structures applies to the music of a specific set of “genius” composers writing within the Austro-German tradition in a specific era (see, for example, Schenker 2004 [1921–23], 21–24). A common misinterpretation of Schenkerian theory is that every piece of music has a background structure just by virtue of being a piece of music, even though Schenker is quite clear about his belief that most composers—even most German composers—do not have possession of the background. I will avoid talk of background structures in pop and rock songs in this dissertation. However, many theorists including Everett have demonstrated the usefulness of investigating foreground and middleground prolongations in pop and rock music. These prolongations often follow the same principles as those in the common-practice tonal music described by Schenker, but there are some significant differences that must not

---

3Such techniques have been adequately defended in the literature, both explicitly (Covach 1997, Burns 2008) and implicitly (through their implementation in successful analyses), and so I do not find it necessary to provide such a defense here.
be overlooked. This dissertation, especially Part I, will attempt to codify these differences in a systematic way.

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

This dissertation is organized into two parts: the first, comprising Chapters 2 and 3, investigates ways in which we must update traditional analytical methodologies to apply to pop and rock music, and the second, comprising Chapters 4–6, investigates the interaction of large-scale voice leading and full-song formal structures. The two chapters in Part I divide into harmonic theory (Chapter 2) and melodic theory (Chapter 3). The former, entitled “Harmonic Syntax,” expands our notion of harmonic function to be based on aspects of syntax and form rather than the identity of specific chords. Though traditional notions of harmonic function often assign, for example, dominant function to a V chord because it contains the leading tone and is built on 5\#5, this chapter argues that this notion of function is inappropriate for pop and rock music, in which chords such as IV, II, bVII, or even some versions of I can be said to function, syntactically, as dominants in specific musical contexts. Pop and rock music also displays a looser relationship between melody and harmony, as described in Chapter 3, “The Melodic-Harmonic Divorce.” This chapter investigates how we might interpret the relationship between melodic and harmonic structure when they do not seem to be acting in strict counterpoint. This chapter delineates three common types of melodic-harmonic divorce, which I will call a “hierarchy divorce,” a “rotation divorce,” and a “syntax divorce.”
Part II of the dissertation investigates the voice-leading structures of the three most common full-song forms, AABA (Chapter 4), verse–prechorus–chorus (Chapter 5), and verse–chorus (Chapter 6). This part argues that these forms are associated with specific melodic and harmonic outlines such that the formal and voice-leading structures act in reference to one another. In these chapters, I develop a general voice-leading model for each of these forms; while not all songs that project these forms fit their respective models, I argue that the majority act in *dialog* with these models.

A consideration of form in terms of its relationship to voice leading reveals several interesting features, not least the realization that verse–prechorus–chorus and verse–chorus (with no prechorus) forms are fundamentally different.

Part 2 is largely analytical, containing several close readings of individual songs. As such, it serves a secondary purpose of advocating for deep analyses, even of mainstream three-and-a-half-minute pop songs. While some theorists engage in such close readings, many seem wary of applying this level of analysis to the pop and rock repertoire, perhaps out of an implicit belief that this music does not display the level of complexity nor the unity of structure of, say, a Beethoven sonata or a Schubert *lied*. As John Covach points out, sometimes it is those who staunchly defend the practice of rock analysis who end up perpetuating the notion of rock music’s inferiority to common-practice tonal music; speaking about Susan McClary’s analysis of an Earth, Wind, & Fire song (McClary 1989), Covach writes:

> What is troubling about McClary’s reading of Earth, Wind, & Fire is that she seems to have accepted uncritically the notion that popular music is uncomplicated in the traditional sense. . . . In fact, McClary seems to be saying to . . . avant-garde critics of popular music: “OK, you’re right, this stuff isn’t very interesting structurally, so here are some ways in which it *is* interesting.” (Covach 1997, 80)

---

4See Hepokoski and Darcy 2006 and Hepokoski 2009 for more on “dialogic” form.
By stating that traditional analytical techniques are inappropriate for pop and rock music, McClary and others imply that these analytical techniques cannot apply to pop and rock music. In the decade and a half since Covach wrote these words, the study of pop and rock music has gone from a fringe subject within the discipline of music theory to a burgeoning subfield, but the notion that this repertoire lacks the depth of the Classical masterworks stubbornly persists. It is my hope that the analyses in Part II will help put this notion to rest.

**ON POP, POP/ROCK, POP-ROCK, POP AND ROCK, AND ROCK MUSIC**

Whether there is a quantifiable difference between music that is best described as “pop” and that best described as “rock” is the subject of an ongoing debate. Mark Spicer traces the origins of the two terms to a shortening of “popular music” to “pop music” in the late 1950s, the latter of which was synonymous with “rock and roll” (Spicer 2011b, xii–xiv). Allan Moore claims that “rock and roll” became “rock” in the late 1960s specifically to differentiate it from “pop” (Moore 2001, 3; see also Clarke 1989, 996), with rock referring to music that is deemed *authentic*—containing “integrity, sincerity, [and] honesty” (Moore 2001, 199)—and pop referring to music whose main goal is to achieve widespread *commercial* success. The authentic/commercial differentiation is important in a sociological sense, as it has profound implications for reception, but it does not have much to say about musical style. That is, the songs produced both by authentic rockers and commercially-minded pop stars are,
For the purposes of this dissertation, then, I will generally not differentiate between pop music and rock music, treating both as equally valid subjects for analysis. I will not even treat them as separable repertoires; for this purpose, music scholars have taken to using various catchall terms for music that can be described either as pop or rock or as an amalgamation of the two, including the too-broad “popular music” as well as “pop/rock,” “pop-rock,” or simply “pop and rock.” I prefer the last of these, namely pop and rock, but I will frequently abbreviate this simply to “rock music” (as in the title of the dissertation) with the understanding that this is broadly construed to include music best categorized as pop.

The repertoire that makes up the focus of this dissertation is the subset of pop and rock music that can be considered the classic rock canon, as far as one can be defined. This repertoire can be loosely described as English-language pop and rock music that enjoyed widespread success in the United States and/or England beginning with the Beatles’ first commercial recordings in 1963 and extending to the rise of grunge music in the early 1990s. I stop in the early 90s for several reasons: first, the advent of grunge and the subsequent rise of alternative rock created such an extreme style shift, especially in harmonic and melodic structures, that many theories devised for pre-1990 rock would falter under this new paradigm; second, as John Covach notes, it takes at least twenty years for scholars to gain a reliable historical perspective on an era, and so it is likely the case that the 1990s are simply too recent (Covach 2009, 523); and third, the early 1990s was when I personally

5Beginning in the late 1970s, the term pop began being associated with keyboard and synthesizer-based songs while rock referred to songs that primarily used guitars. Yet instrumentation alone is hardly a satisfactory criterion for categorization; do we really want to say that Billy Joel is a pop artist while Bon Jovi is a true rocker?
began independently listening to contemporary popular music, and so focusing on earlier rock music avoids the possibility that personal associations will cloud my objectivity.\(^6\) That said, I will occasionally extend these repertoire boundaries on both ends, most notably into the 90s and 2000s in the discussion of chord rotations in Chapter 3, with the understanding that the songs chosen from outside this core repertoire should be understood to follow the same conventions as those within it. As a measure of “widespread success,” I will use a combination of chart performance (as measured by the *Billboard* Hot 100 and R&B charts), discussions in textbooks on the history of rock music (most notably Covach 2009), and inclusion in writings by music scholars or journalists (based informally on my own impressions). On the whole, I try to choose musical examples that few would hesitate to include in a list of canonical rock songs. For example, I consider any song recorded by the Beatles, including those that were never released as singles and therefore not individually named in the *Billboard* charts, to fit this bill, as well as songs from top-selling albums such as Fleetwood Mac’s *Rumours* (1977) or Michael Jackson’s *Thriller* (1983).\(^7\)

**Transcriptions and Graphs**

Any discussion of a particular song in this dissertation will be accompanied by a transcription of the relevant section. All transcriptions are my own from the original recordings;

---


\(^7\) While the repertoire just described is vast, there are several genres of popular music that are excluded from the current discussion, most notably country and western music, hip-hop, most forms of electronic dance music, and all types of jazz. Examples of music-theoretical studies on country music include Neal 2007 and 2008; on hip-hop, Krims 2003 and Adams 2008 and 2009; and on electronic dance music, Butler 2006. There is a large number of theoretical work on jazz—too large to list here—but I will point interested readers to Larson 2009, which analyzes jazz music through a Schenkerian lens.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Example 1.1: Transcription of the first verse of the Beatles’ “Please Please Me” (1963).

published scores were not consulted in the preparation of these transcriptions. Most transcriptions are in lead-sheet format, i.e., with the main vocal line(s) on a single staff and chord symbols above. If there are multiple vocal lines, the primary line will be written in full-sized noteheads with subsidiary lines in small noteheads. A sample transcription is shown in Example 1.1 which gives the first verse of the Beatles’ “Please Please Me” (1963). These transcriptions are intended to be as free of analytical interpretation as possible. This is sometimes difficult because, since the primary texts are recordings rather than scores, issues such as choosing a meter and key signature and assigning barlines become the responsibility of the transcriber. In these issues I aim for consistency; meter signatures and barlines are assigned based on the drumbeat, which as a general rule hits beats 2 and 4 in 4/4 time (see Moore 2001, 41–44, and deClercq 2012, 35–38). In the few songs that do not contain a drumbeat, there is usually some other percussive sound (e.g., finger snaps or an acoustic guitar strumming muted strings) that articulates the backbeat. All songs transcribed in this
dissertation articulate a \( \frac{4}{4} \) meter, though some include individual measures in other meters. Vocal lines sung by post-pubescent males will use an “octave dropped” treble clef (indicated with the numeral “8” below the clef, as in Example 1.1) while vocal lines sung by females will use the standard treble clef.

Choosing a key signature is perhaps a more nuanced decision than choosing a meter. The case can be made that rock music does not limit itself to just major and minor keys, and many theorists have argued for a modal interpretation of many rock songs. While pitch collections used in certain rock songs are often derived from modal diatonic collections, I still believe that rock songs are fundamentally either in major or minor, with the vast majority in major. The key signatures used in the transcriptions herein will therefore reflect the standard major and minor key signatures; in other words, a song whose tonic is E will have either four sharps (for E major) or one sharp (for E minor). It is sometimes difficult to discern major from minor; blues-based songs, for example, generally mix minor-pentatonic melodies with chords containing the major third above the tonic note (see, for example, Example 2.29, page 73). In these cases, I have chosen to follow the harmony; if the tonic chord contains the major third I consider the song to be fundamentally major, even if \( \flat \hat{3} \) is the more prevalent melodic pitch. In especially ambiguous cases (of which there are few), the default mode will be taken to be major.

---

8In particular, theorists note the prevalence of \( \flat \hat{7} \) and \( \flat V7 \) in an ostensibly major-mode song, thus suggesting a Mixolydian modality. See especially Moore 1995 and Biamonte 2010. Christopher Doll uses modal key signatures in his dissertation (2007); thus, for example, his transcription of Radiohead’s “Lucky,” which uses an E-minor chord as its tonic, has two sharps (Example 1.1, p. 9) reflecting the preference for C\#s rather than Cs in the melody and the fact that all chords built on A are major.

9Scale-degrees will be inflected with accidentals based on this modality; thus, in a song in E major, \( \hat{3} \) denotes G\# and \( \flat \hat{3} \) denotes G\#.

10Christopher Doll discusses various issues with the definition of “chord” in rock music in Doll 2013.
Chord symbols on the transcriptions signify the chords played by the instruments that make up the accompaniment (usually guitars and/or keyboard instruments), including the bass. In situations where the melody articulates a note that is not part of the band’s chords, this note is not reflected in the chord symbol (such situations will be discussed in Chapter 3). The symbols used are based on the standard lead-sheet symbols; for example, “D” represents a D-major triad, “Gm/D” represents a G-minor triad with a D bass note, and “A5” represents a power chord on A (i.e., a chord that consists of root and perfect fifth only). Some less commonly used symbols include “sus4” and “sus2,” signifying root/perfect fourth/perfect fifth and root/major second/perfect fifth respectively, and “add9,” representing a major or minor triad with an added ninth. In situations where the accompaniment contains a complicated texture inadequately described by chord symbols alone, a reduction of the instrumental parts is added to the transcription (see, for example, Example 2.16, page 58).

Roman numerals, as opposed to chord symbols, are interpretive, reflecting an analysis of the Stufe projected by a specific chord. In most cases, the analysis presented through a Roman-numeral label is trivial; for example, labeling the E chord at the beginning of Example 1.1 as a I chord does not require much interpretive thought. Yet this Roman numeral carries more meaning than simply labeling it “E”; calling it I states that we perceive the root of this chord to be the tonic note within an E-major tonality. The analytical element of Roman numerals comes to the fore when we call a given chord IV$^{add6}$ as opposed to II$^{6}_5$; though these two chords contain the same notes, the interpretation is different. In this dissertation,

11 Stufe is often translated as “scale-step” and refers to the diatonic scale degree that is perceived as the root of a harmony or series of harmonies.
I will use only capital Roman numerals, which will represent diatonic chords (based on the major or minor key in question) unless otherwise indicated. Thus, the G chord in measure 4 of Example 1.1 is labeled bIII and the C♯m chord in measure 11 is labeled VI. Inversions and other alterations will be indicated with standard figured-bass symbols; thus, for example, the chord A/B (i.e., an A-major triad with a B bass note) in the key of E major will be labeled V\textsuperscript{9\,7\,4}\textsuperscript{12}.

Most of my analyses will be accompanied by a voice-leading graph. Graphing procedures specific to the analysis of pop and rock music will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3; otherwise, the graphs in this dissertation will generally follow the conventions of Schenkerian analysis as currently practiced in North America. There are two issues that I would like to discuss here, though: parallel fifths and octaves and pentatonic progressions. Schenker occasionally allows middleground parallel fifths and octaves so long as they are obscured on the musical surface, but these traditionally forbidden contrapuntal motions pose no problem at any level in pop and rock music and are actually quite common at all levels. As Example 1.2 shows, the verse of Otis Redding’s "(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay" is based entirely on parallel octaves between bass and melody (the example shows just the first phrase, but the parallel octaves continue for most of the song). Graphs in this dissertation will frequently contain parallel fifths and octaves, and I will present these without comment with the understanding that these are entirely acceptable contrapuntal motions. Pentatonic progressions are like linear progressions but through a pentatonic rather than a diatonic scale. Given the prevalence

\textsuperscript{12}This chord is what Mark Spicer calls the “soul dominant” and is interpreted as an altered V chord, as indicated by the numeral V (Spicer 2009). I use the figures $\frac{9}{4}$ rather than $\frac{11}{4}$ to emphasize the fact that the chordal fourth substitutes for the third rather than being an upper extension.
a) First phrase of verse

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{\( G \)} & \quad \text{\( \uparrow \text{\( B \)} \quad \text{\( \uparrow \text{\( C \)} \quad \text{\( \uparrow \text{\( A \)} \}

\text{\( \downarrow \text{\( \text{Sit-tin' in the morning sun;} \quad \text{I'll be sit-tin' when the evening comes.} \)
\end{align*} \]

b) Reduction of outer-voice counterpoint

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{\( \downarrow \text{\( 8 \quad 8 \quad 8 \quad 8 \}}
\end{align*} \]


of pentatonic scales in pop and rock music, especially in melodies, one can often hear the minor thirds within these scales as steps rather than skips. Pentatonic progressions are most common when the melodic interval of a perfect fourth is filled in with a single passing tone, such as 5–6–8 or 5–♭7–8. Example 1.3 gives an example of the former progression from the chorus of the Jackson 5’s 1970 hit “ABC” (discussed in detail in Chapter 6). This chorus begins with the melodic motive Eb–F–Ab, which outlines the consonant harmonic interval from 5 to 8. The F can here be considered a pentatonic passing tone, as shown in Example 1.3b.\[13\]

\[ \text{\[13\]} \text{See also Heinzelmann 2008, 28–29 and 273, for a discussion of pentatonic progressions in Ravel.} \]
Chapter 1: Introduction

a) Beginning of chorus

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\( \frac{4}{4} \)} \\
A, & B, & C. \\
\text{Easy as one, two, three.} \\
\end{array} \]

b) Graph of upper voice showing pentatonic passing tones


Form: Terminology

Although this dissertation, especially Part II, discusses formal structure in great detail, it is not intended to provide definitions of basic formal terms, as this has been adequately achieved elsewhere (e.g., Covach 2005, Everett 2009, Summach 2012, and deClercq 2012). I will simply provide an overview of the terminology used in this dissertation here; readers are invited to consult the sources listed above for more thorough definitions.

Formal units will be described at three distinct levels: phrase, section, and section cycle. The phrase level contains the smallest self-contained melodic groupings, which are commonly four bars long. (My definition of phrase follows William Caplin’s [1998, 2004] and is not based on any tonal features, such as the common requirement that a phrase terminate with a cadence. This definition of phrase will be discussed in Chapter 2.) Phrases combine into sections, examples of which include verses, choruses, prechoruses, and bridges;
sections in turn group into *section cycles*, or simply *cycles*. Cycles denote an ordered succession of the main sections of a song; thus verse, prechorus, and chorus combine to form a verse–prechorus–chorus cycle, and verses (A sections) and bridges (B sections) combine to form an AABA cycle. Section cycles denote the core form of a song, but it is rarely the case that an entire song consists of just one single cycle; a song’s literal succession of sections might be intro–verse–verse–prechorus–chorus–verse–prechorus–chorus–guitar solo–chorus–coda, but since the succession verse–prechorus–chorus contains the core sections of the song, it will be considered the basic cycle of the song. Introductions, codas, outros, interludes, and similar sections are considered to be auxiliary and generally do not participate in a section cycle; see Summach 2012, Chapter 3, and deClercq 2012, §3.6.

The terms “verse,” “chorus,” and “prechorus,” among others, signify specific *roles* that certain sections play within a given song’s form (see deClercq 2012, Chapter 3). These roles are analogous to Caplin’s *formal functions*, in that they primarily designate a section’s relationship to the form as a whole rather than the internal organization of that section (Caplin 1998 and 2009). Labels such as *srdc* or *aaba* signify the arrangement of phrases that make up these sections. I will use lowercase and bold letters to denote phrases within a section, reserving capital letters to denote sections within a cycle (e.g., AABA). Thus, “srdc” refers to a section consisting of four phrases, beginning with a statement of a melodic motive, followed by a restatement or response, departure, and conclusion (see Chapter 4 as well as Everett 1999, 16, and 2009, 140–41). Each of these letters denotes the role a particular *phrase*

---

14 The term “cycle” is taken from Summach 2012.
15 There are, of course, internal characteristics that make verses sound like verses and choruses sound like choruses; deClercq 2012, 114–16 provides a summary of these.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

plays in the context of the entire section, while the full notation of \textit{srdc} denotes the formal type of this section as a whole (see Caplin 2009).\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Why Schenkerian Analysis?}

This question should, by all rights, be adequately answered in the analyses and theories in the following pages. Yet the aforementioned disagreement as to appropriate methodologies for pop and rock music warrants a brief visit to this question here. The question is not whether Schenkerian analysis is superior to other methodologies (it isn’t) but whether it can reveal the same sorts of relationships in this repertoire as it can in common-practice tonality. I believe that it can. I further believe that these relationships are just as fundamental to rock music’s identity as they are to the music of Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert. A frequent criticism against rock analysis is that it fails to take into account socio-cultural aspects, and that these socio-cultural aspects are so vital to the pop and rock repertoire that any discussion in which they are not at the fore is wholly inappropriate.\textsuperscript{17} This argument echoes similar criticisms leveled in the early days of the Society for Music Theory against so-called “formalist” analysis (see especially Kerman 1980), and I believe the activities of the society over the next three and a half decades have sufficiently defended such analytical practices.

\textsuperscript{16}One particularly common label for a phrase’s role within a section is “refrain”; a refrain is a single phrase, usually occurring at the end of a verse, that acts as a centralizing motive, often containing the title of the song in the lyrics and leading to a cadence. The term is widely used but definitions have been varied in the past; see deClercq 2012, 57–59. The current definition, quickly becoming standard in the music-theoretical literature, is explained in Everett 2009, 140–47.

\textsuperscript{17}This view is most explicitly laid out in several essays appearing in Middleton 2000, especially in Middleton’s introduction and Philip Tagg’s “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method, and Practice” (a reprint of Tagg 1982). See also Walter Everett’s review of this collection (Everett 2001b).
that I need not address the issue here. Other criticisms, as mentioned above, claim that form and pitch structures are not as important in this repertoire as in common-practice pieces, often arguing that a focus on timbre and instrumentation is more appropriate for rock music. Everett argues for the primacy of pitch relationships in Everett 2008a, to which I would add that while timbre and instrumentation differentiate among various pop and rock styles, form and pitch structures unify them. That is, though rock musicians often seek to create a unique sound through manipulations of timbre (through both instrumentation and studio techniques), rock music—at least the core repertoire analyzed in this study—exhibits certain conventions of pitch and form throughout its various sub-genres. Finally, the fact remains that Schenkerian analysis of rock music will never be as neat as its traditional usage simply because rock music does not exhibit the consistency of style seen in the music of the small set of composers appearing in Schenker’s own analyses. As John Covach points out, “Schenker’s writings are as powerful as they are because he was able to draw out generalizing principles from a body of musical works that he knew were related to one another before he ever began” (1997, 77). Alas, we may never find a structure in rock music as far-reaching as the *Urlinie* is for Schenker’s repertoire. Yet far from being a reason to throw out Schenkerian methodology in our study of pop and rock music, this instead presents an exciting challenge to rock analysts, one that promises to reveal key features of the rock repertoire and one that I approach with enthusiasm.

---

18 For specific rejoinders aimed at Kerman’s article, see McCreless 1997 and Agawu 2004.
19 Cf. Moore 2012, 3: “[structural analysis] is not adequate to the discussion of popular song . . . because popular song neither exhibits stylistic complexity (on the basis of which its success can be evaluated) nor necessarily results from carefully considered, artistic creation”; and O’Donnell 2006, 138–39: “it is instrumentation (including timbre and production) and attitude, rather than pitch structures, that create the apparent kinship” among various rock songs.
Part I

Harmonic and Melodic Theory
Harmonic Syntax

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “syntax” as “an orderly or systematic arrangement of parts or elements.” In linguistic syntax, these “parts or elements” are words, and the “orderly or systematic arrangement” involves assigning to these words grammatical functions within a sentence (e.g., subject, main verb, etc.; see Chomsky 1957 and 1965). Musical syntax is more complicated, first and foremost because it is not clear what the “parts or elements” that are to be arranged should be. They might be as simple as individual pitches (Boretz 1970) or as abstract as levels of tension and relaxation (Swain 1997). According to Lawrence Zbikowski, the basic elements of musical syntax vary from piece to piece (2002, 52–54 and Chapter 4). However, most discussions of syntax in music center on harmonic syntax, which uses as its basic elements individual harmonic structures, or chords. Harmonic syntax is therefore the “orderly or systematic arrangement” of these chords into formal units such as a musical phrase.

Two important elements of any theory of syntax are the notions of hierarchy and function. The presence of a hierarchy allows for relationships to exist among constituents that are not immediately adjacent. Consider Example 2.1, which is Noam Chomsky’s “tree structure” for
Example 2.1: Noam Chomsky’s “tree structure” diagramming a hierarchical arrangement of constituents in the sentence “sincerity may frighten the boy.” (Adapted from Chomsky 1965, 65.)

The sentence “sincerity may frighten the boy” (1965, 65). The hierarchical organization of this sentence is clear from this diagram: the base constituents “the” and “boy” combine to make a noun phrase (NP) that functions as the direct object of the verb “frighten.” The constituent that directly follows “frighten” is not “the” but the whole NP “the boy”; there is no direct relationship between “frighten” and “the” because they are at different levels of the hierarchy. The musical analogy to this hierarchy is grouping chords via prolongation. Thus we can say that the progressions I–V–I and I–V\(^4\)–I\(^6\)–V\(^5\)–I have equivalent syntactical structures because the first three chords of the latter progression prolong I and the next two prolong V such that at a deeper level in the hierarchy, both progressions are I–V–I. According to Charles Smith, a “prolongation vocabulary” combines with a “progression system” (i.e., a set of well-formed orderings of functions) to compose the essential elements of musical syntax (1981, 171). Though the concept of prolongation is Schenkerian in its roots, it is today employed in all corners of the music-theoretical literature.\(^1\)

---

\(^1\)There is a small faction of music theorists who attempt to construct a harmonic syntax without prolongation; see especially Tymoczko 2011. These studies end up devising rules for chord-to-chord successions that are often accompanied by statistics such as “[in rock music,] the most frequent chord to precede the tonic is IV” (de Clerq and Temperley 2011, 61). Though these studies are sometimes informative, especially as to differences among various musical styles, I do not consider them to be discussing syntax given that they...
Function is arguably the most important element of syntax. A syntactical function defines a given constituent’s role within the overall structure and implicitly defines its relationship to other constituents. For example, the word “sincerity” in the sentence from Example 2.1 functions as the subject of the sentence; knowing this, we can figure out this word’s relationship to the noun phrase “the boy” or to the verb “frighten.” Music theorists who speak of harmonic function, however, are not always using a syntactical definition of the term. Many theorists use a definition that I will call “function as chord identity,” in which individual chords are interpreted as tonic, subdominant, or dominant based not on their arrangement within a musical phrase but instead on their own internal structure. Thus, for example, a II chord is said to have subdominant function and a V chord is said to have dominant function. This definition of function derives from Hugo Riemann’s late writings, and I will discuss several theories, including Riemann’s, that rely upon this definition in the following section. However, in this chapter I wish to argue for a different definition of harmonic function, one that can truly be said to be syntactical. In this definition, chords gain their function by virtue of their formal position and their relationship to other chords rather than through any internal characteristics of the chords themselves. Thus a given V chord might function as the dominant in a phrase, not because it contains the leading tone but because it resolves to the tonic and forms an authentic cadence. Such a syntactical definition of harmonic function allows for chords besides V to function as the dominant. While chords other than V rarely fulfill the dominant function in common-practice Western tonal music, they very commonly do so in pop and rock music. For example, consider the verse to the Eagles’ 1975 hit “Liyin’ generally do not take into account form or larger contexts, nor do they consider relationships between non-adjacent chords.
Example 2.2: The Eagles, “Lyin’ Eyes” (1975): a sixteen-bar parallel period in which V functions as dominant in the antecedent and IV functions as dominant in the consequent.

Eyes,” transcribed in Example 2.2. This sixteen-measure verse follows the formal layout of a parallel period, with two similar eight-measure phrases, the first of which ends with a half cadence and the second of which ends with an authentic cadence. However, the authentic cadence that ends the second phrase is not based on the typical V–I progression but instead uses IV–I. The use of IV rather than V does not make this moment sound any less final, and so it would seem misguided to claim that this is not a true cadence. Furthermore, the argument that IV–I cadences are the norm in rock music and that a V chord would be out of place in this position is invalidated both by the antecedent phrase of this verse, which ends with a half cadence on V, and by this song’s chorus (not shown), which ends with a V–I authentic cadence. In this verse, then, the best interpretation is that the V chord in measures 7–8 functions as the dominant of the first phrase and that the IV chord in measure 14 functions as the dominant in the second phrase; these two chords have the same syntactical function despite having no tones in common.
Before detailing a syntactical definition of harmonic function, I will summarize several theories of harmonic function that are not syntactical. These theories use the terms “tonic,” “subdominant,” and “dominant” the way linguists use “noun,” “adjective,” and “verb,” namely as descriptions of some aspect of the constituent to which they refer. Following this, I will apply a syntactical definition to the analysis of pop and rock music as well as common-practice tonal music, with the goal of showing that this definition is preferable in all contexts. A final section will reconsider the notions of cadence and closure based on this syntactical definition of function.

**FUNCTION AS CHORD IDENTITY: THE RIEMANNIAN TRADITION**

Any theory of harmonic function in tonal music can ultimately trace its roots back to Riemannian *Funktionstheorie*, which in turn traces back to the theories of Jean-Phillipe Rameau. Riemann’s theory of harmonic function was not fixed throughout his career; Daniel Harrison has extracted two different strains in this theory, the first considering function to be “an abstract category to which various chords belong,” and the second considering function to be “essentially a primary triad and those chords derived from it under certain transformations” (Harrison 1994, 265–66). In the former strain—most explicitly laid out in Riemann’s first theoretical publication, “Musical Logic” (Riemann 2000 [1872])—Riemann

---

2Rameau foreshadows Riemann’s concept of the three harmonic functions $T$, $D$, and $S$ in his 1726 treatise *Nouveau système de musique théorique*, identifying three chord-types: tonique, dominante, and sous-dominante. Rameau’s theory does not link different triads under the same functional umbrella, though, as does Riemann’s: David Damschroder suggests that this idea most likely originates with Johann Friedrich Daube’s 1756 treatise *General-Bass in drey Accorden* (translated in Wallace 1983; see Damschroder 2008, 9–17).
applies the Hegelian dialectical terms *thesis*, *antithesis*, and *synthesis* to fundamental harmonic progressions, claiming that “thetic is the tonic, antithetic the lower dominant [subdominant], and synthetic the upper dominant” (Riemann 2000 [1872], 102; see also Harrison 1994, 267). These thetic functions are often carried by several chords rather than a single chord; Riemann’s “principal” cadence is the progression I–IV–I\textsuperscript{6}–V–I, in which the first I chord is *thesis*, the IV–I\textsuperscript{6} progression is *antithesis*, and the final V–I is *synthesis*. This progression can be made longer by the processes of extension, repetition, and/or embedding (Harrison’s terms), creating multiple structural levels on which these three functions operate.

Riemann’s theory of “function as abstract category” approaches a syntactical definition of harmonic function, but this theory was quickly replaced in Riemann’s writings by the “function as chord” theory, which abandons the earlier theory’s syntactical nature. It is this second, chord-based theory of function that has been adapted most by modern scholars. This theory dispenses with the dialectical labels and instead simply uses “tonic,” “dominant,” and “subdominant” as the three primary functions. Each of these functions is associated with a specific triad—I for tonic, V for dominant, and IV for subdominant—such that other, “secondary” chords are considered to be modifications or “transformations” of these primary chords. The two most common such transformations are the parallel and *leittonwechsel* (leading-tone exchange) transformations; the parallel transformation turns a major triad into the minor triad whose root is a minor third lower and a minor triad into the major triad whose root is a minor third lower.

---

3Riemann’s use of Hegelian dialectical terms represents a conscious effort to expand on the theories of Moritz Hauptmann, who had previously adapted Hegelian language to the theory of harmony.

4Ironically, Riemann’s transition away from a syntactical definition of function begins with his 1877 treatise *Musikalische Syntaxis*; see Harrison 1994, 270–73.

5This function-as-chord theory has its roots in Riemann’s *Skizze einer neuen Methode der Harmonielehre* of 1880 and is explicitly laid out in *Harmony Simplified* (1896 [1893]).
triad whose root is a minor third higher, and the leading-tone exchange turns a major triad into the minor triad whose root is a major third higher and a minor triad into the major triad whose root is a major third lower. Thus in a major key, the VI chord can be analyzed as the parallel of the tonic (symbolized by $Tp$) or the leading-tone exchange of the subdominant (symbolized $S$). Riemann’s palette of transformations is varied enough such that any chord can theoretically be labeled as based on any of the three functions; to decide which is the correct interpretation, one must take into account harmonic context. For example, a III triad in a major key would be $Dp$ if it came between V and I but would be $T$ if it came between I and IV. Yet Harrison points out that “this attempt at reviving the syntactic model of ‘Musikalische Logik’ goes no further than this textbookish prescription; the numerous occurrences of improperly sandwiched parallel chords, in both examples and exercises, are passed over without comment” (1994, 288). It is clear that Riemann is concerned primarily with labeling individual chords rather than devising a theory of chord progression and syntax.

The idea that function is an inherent property of individual chords rather than a feature of syntax and form has caught on with modern music theorists. In the remainder of this section, I will briefly summarize two such “function-as-chord-identity” theories, one by Eytan Agmon (1995) and the other by Daniel Harrison (1994), followed by a look into two adaptations of this type of theory to pop and rock music by Nicole Biamonte (2010) and Christopher Doll (2007 and forthcoming). Agmon’s theory is based on Riemann’s idea that each function is associated with one specific triad that “embodies [its] essence,” namely I for tonic function, V

---

for dominant, and IV for subdominant (Agmon 1995, 197). Agmon calls these three primary triads “prototypes” of their associated functions and analyzes all other triads based on the number of common tones they share with these prototypes. As a result, the VI chord is equally tonic and subdominant, given that it has two tones in common with both I and IV, and similarly the III chord is equally tonic and dominant. Although the II and VII chords are generally analyzed as subdominant and dominant respectively, the II chord is also “weakly dominant” and the VII chord is “weakly subdominant,” given that they share one common tone with the prototypes of these functions. An analogy is made with color categorization: we have conceptual prototypes for “red” and “orange,” and an in-between color (“burnt orange,” for example) might be strongly orange and weakly red. One of Agmon’s strongest statements in this article is that the theory of harmonic function can and should be entirely separated from the theory of harmonic progression. In other words, a chord’s function has nothing to do with the chords that precede and follow it nor with its context within a given piece of music; IV chords are always subdominants and I chords are always tonics. This statement goes farther than Riemann in defining function as an inherent property of a chord; Agmon claims that his theory is “static” such that the “T–S–D–T paradigm of functional succession (a venerable component of Funktionstheorie) is not within its scope” (204). In his published response to Agmon’s article, John Rothgeb (1996) accuses Agmon of saying nothing at all, since labeling chords with T, S, or D with no attention paid to the context is simply a less specific version of Roman-numeral analysis.

\[\text{7See also Kopp 1995, [10], who interprets Riemann’s idea of Funktion as having “next to nothing to do with chord progression.”}\]
Yet the idea that individual chords have function even in the absence of any musical context is a commonly held view. Daniel Harrison’s 1994 book *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music* outlines another such theory based not on individual chords’ similarity to prototypical triads but instead on their scale-degree content. Harrison does not entirely dispense with the idea of primary triads, though, claiming that each function “has only one pristine expression: the primary triad,” and other chords are perceived in relation to these primary triads (37). However, Harrison stresses that function and primary triad are not the same thing; function is an “attitude” of a chord (in the aeronautic sense of “orientation in reference to an axis or axes”) and thus is a “perceptual judgment on the part of the listener” (37–38). In this way, the question shifts from “how much does this chord sound like this primary triad?” (as Agmon asks) to “how similar is the expression of this chord’s functional attitude to that expressed by this primary triad?” (38–39). Harrison concludes that harmonic function “may be a product not of chords but rather of the constituents of chords,” i.e., scale degrees (41).

Each of the three primary triads contains “base,” “agent,” and “associate” scale degrees (see Example 2.3), and each of these three scale-degree roles has a specific relationship with the attitude of the function in question. For example, when the base of a function is the lowest-sounding voice of a chord, that function’s attitude will be strongly projected regardless of the pitch content of the upper voices. It is for this reason that the cadential six-four is primarily a dominant-functioning chord despite having only one tone in common with the V chord and containing all the tones of the I chord. Using this theory, Harrison is able to analyze chords as assemblies of scale degrees, which helps him achieve his goal of analyzing late-nineteenth-century chromatic music, which often contains non-triadic sonorities. These
Example 2.3: Daniel Harrison’s table of scale degrees and their functional descriptions.
(Reproduction of Figure 2.1 from Harrison 1994, 45.)

non-triadic sonorities necessarily include elements of two or more functions, and different
voicings and contexts can tip the scales towards one of these functions. The diminished
seventh chord built on the leading tone, for example, contains the agent and associate of
the dominant function as well as the base and agent of the subdominant function. Usually,
Harrison notes, stepwise bass motion ensures this sonority is heard as dominant-functioning,
but in certain uncommon situations, such as a 4–1 bass motion accompanying VII₃⁴ to I, this
chord’s subdominant qualities come to the fore. In this way, Harrison is more sensitive to
musical context and chord progression than Agmon, but Harrison’s theory remains primarily
chord-identity-based in that one can generally assign a chord its function even when removed
from its musical context. Harrison furthermore shows his disdain for syntactical definitions
of function by dismissing the terms “pre-dominant” and “dominant preparation” as “syntactic
somethings” that serve merely to connect tonic and dominant rather than representing a true
harmonic function (48–49).

Despite some scholars’ resistance to applying analytical techniques originally devised
for common-practice tonal music to the analysis of other repertoires, several theorists have
adapted Riemannian theories of harmonic function to the analysis of pop and rock music.
Nicole Biamonte’s 2010 article “Triadic Modal and Pentatonic Patterns in Rock Music”
Example 2.4: Nicole Biamonte’s functional analyses of several short modal progressions in rock songs. (Reproduced from Biamonte 2010, 97.)

updates the traditional (chord-identity-based) theory of harmonic function to apply to modal progressions—progressions that Biamonte argues are common in rock music.[8] Example 2.4 reproduced from this article, gives functional analyses of several short, repeated chord progressions in various rock songs from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. This example shows that Biamonte considers the ♭VII chord—which is common in rock music but rare in major-mode common-practice tonal music—to have dominant function because it contains versions of ♭7 and ♭2 (97; see also Doll 2007, 23–24); the progression I–♭VII–I is therefore interpreted as T–D–T.[9] The final analysis of her example, dealing with the Grateful Dead’s 1970 gospel ballad “Brokedown Palace,” is an interesting case study. Biamonte analyzes the III♯ chord in this progression to have dominant function such that the I–III♯–IV–I progression exhibits the
functional succession T–D–S–T, the opposite of the standard T–S–D–T. Biamonte does not say why she does not analyze this III♯ chord to have tonic function (seemingly allowed by her diagram on page 96), but more interesting is her analysis of the final II♯ chord as having dominant function. Her rationale for this analysis is that this chord “occupies the normal position of a dominant” and can therefore be heard as “a substitute dominant that offers the ‘wrong’ leading tone, to scale-degree 5 instead of to 1” rather than as a subdominant which would be more typical of II chords (98). This analysis is overtly syntactical: this II♯ chord is a dominant not because of any intrinsic quality but instead because of its position within a phrase. Yet this is the only time Biamonte invokes syntactical considerations in assigning functional labels to chords; in general, her theory remains in the function-as-chord-identity tradition.

While Agmon, Harrison, and Biamonte’s conceptions of harmonic function are varied, they all use a type of definition that I have called “function as chord identity.” In other words, all three of them define a chord’s function mostly in terms of intrinsic properties of that chord—whether it be the number of common tones shared with a primary triad or the chord’s scale-degree content. In contrast, Christopher Doll’s theory of harmonic function in rock music is essentially a theory of chord progression and thus approaches a syntactical definition of function (Doll 2007, Chapter 1; 2009, 96; and forthcoming, Chapters 1–2). Doll, similarly to Harrison, defines functions as “chordal effects” rather than individual chords.

Specifically, Doll’s definition of harmonic function is based on prediction and stability. If

10Although Biamonte implies that this II♯ chord concludes a self-contained chord progression, the phrase actually continues with a I–II♯–IV–I progression in its third and fourth measures. There is admittedly an articulated melodic stop over the II♯ chord in question, but this moment is not a half cadence, and so it is not entirely clear why one would “normally” find a dominant in this position.
A chord is stable enough that it does not predict resolution to a more stable chord, this chord projects tonic function; tonic-functioning chords must contain the “centric pitch class” (i.e., \( \hat{1} \)) \(^{11}\) (forthcoming, Chapter 1, “Tonic Function”). A chord that predicts resolution to tonic exhibits pre-tonic function. “Dominant” and “subdominant” are two types of pre-tonic chords, the difference stemming from their differing voice-leading motions toward a I chord: dominant chords contain some version of \( \hat{7} \) and \( \hat{2} \), which lead by step to \( \hat{1} \) or to both \( \hat{1} \) and \( \hat{3} \); subdominant chords contain some version of \( \hat{6} \), which leads by step to \( \hat{5} \) \(^{12}\) (Chapter 1, “Pre-Tonic Function”). The distinction between subdominant and dominant is a matter of chord identity, but these functions retain a syntactical aspect by being tied to pre-tonic function. A IV chord is only a subdominant if it progresses to I; if it were to progress to a V chord that then progresses to I, it would be a pre-dominant chord.

Doll stresses that pre-tonic function is not given to any chord that precedes a I chord, but only to chords that predict resolution to tonic. A listener must hold this prediction before he or she hears what chord actually follows. More specifically, “the function is not a summary rationalization of how the music happened to turn out . . . so much as it is an anticipatory impression of which notes might follow” \(^{11}\) (Chapter 1, “Pre-Tonic Function”). A listener’s predictions might change as he or she becomes more familiar with a particular song; “harmonic prediction is just as much about guessing what might happen as knowing

---

\(^{11}\) Dr. Doll was kind enough to share with me a draft of the first two chapters of his forthcoming book; this draft, though, is not paginated the way the published book will be and so I will cite quotations from this draft with the chapter number and section title rather than a page number.

\(^{12}\) Doll differentiates between dominants that contain the leading tone, which he calls “lead dominants,” and those that contain \( \hat{b}7 \), which he calls “rogue dominants.” In addition to dominant and subdominant, Doll discusses “mediant” pre-tonic chords, which are chords that contain \( \hat{7} \) but not \( \hat{2} \) (these are generally III chords of some type).
Example 2.5: Radiohead, “Lucky” (1997), chorus.

 exactly what does happen” (Chapter 2, “Additional Functions”). So, on first listen one might expect a particular IV chord to progress to V, making it a “hypo-pre-dominant,” but if it turns out that that IV chord actually progresses to I, a listener might hear that chord as projecting subdominant (pre-tonic) function on future hearings. Yet Doll’s analyses rarely analyze a chord as predicting something other than what actually follows. His first example is Radiohead’s “Lucky” (see the transcription of the chorus, in the key of E minor, in Example 2.5). In his analysis of the chorus, he claims that the A and B7 chords “are pre-tonics because they sound as though resolution to tonic is right behind them, regardless of whether their predictions turn out to be correct” (Chapter 1, “Pre-Tonic Function”). In the case of the B7 chord at the end, this analysis is not contentious; we are well aware of the V7 chord’s voice-leading pull towards I, and even though this chord does not resolve to I in the final chorus of the song, the predictive effect remains. Yet it is not so clear why the A chords (IV) predict resolution to tonic. As I will show in Chapter 6, a chorus that begins on a IV chord frequently does not lead back to tonic but instead prolongs IV, leading eventually to a dominant-functioning chord. Example 2.6 provides a recomposition of the
Example 2.6: Recomposition of the chorus from “Lucky” with no return to tonic.

chorus to “Lucky” that does exactly this: the IV chord unfolds into its chromatic upper third, $b$VI, before leading to $b$II and V, never returning to the tonic. A first-time listener would not know which version is coming upon hearing the beginning of the chorus, and so it is entirely possible that this listener would not expect IV to resolve to I. In this case, under Doll’s definition, IV would no longer have pre-tonic function. Of course, after the listener hears IV progressing to I a few times, he or she would begin to predict that this pattern will continue. And once a listener has heard the complete song once, his or her predictions are indistinguishable from the literal chord progression.

As a theory of chord progression, Doll’s is robust and informative. His distinction between subdominant and dominant in terms of their voice leading extends to larger predictive chains; thus we have pre-pretonic function, which can express either pre-dominant or pre-subdominant function depending on the type of pre-tonic chord that it leads to. And since the voice leading of these pre-pretonics can model that of a dominant or of a subdominant, we get the terms hyper pre-dominant (for dominant of the dominant) and hypo pre-dominant (for subdominant of the dominant), and so on. (For example, a IV chord that leads to V
would be a hyper pre-dominant because it contains notes a step below and a step above the root of the following V chord.) While Doll’s terminology is sometimes cumbersome, his ideas that there are two basic types of chord succession based on voice leading and that both are in common use in rock music are novel and merit further exploration. Furthermore, his three basic functions of “anchoring,” “pre-anchoring,” and “post-anchoring” allow for hierarchical interpretations of long chord progressions.

Towards a Syntactical Definition of Function

I believe that a chord-identity-based definition of function like Agmon’s, Harrison’s, or Biamonte’s is inadequate to explain the harmonic structure of pop and rock music. In this repertoire, the IV chord, for example, arises in so many different situations that it is too reductionist to label all instances of that chord “subdominant.” Conversely, there are many different chords that can precede a I chord in an authentic cadence—not just V—all of which perform the same function within a phrase; this similarity is missed by giving them different functional labels. Doll’s progression-based theory of function invokes syntactical considerations and thus accounts for rock music’s varied treatment of certain chords. However, there is one crucial aspect to a syntactical definition of function that Doll omits from his theory: form. I submit that in pop and rock music, a chord’s function is given more by formal considerations—i.e., what role it plays within the form—than by its internal structure or any specific voice-leading motion. I will call a definition that assigns function

---

13In his dissertation (2007, 34–38), Doll called these two types of motion “authentic” (for dominant-type motion) and “plagal” (for subdominant-type motion), but he abandons these terms for his monograph to avoid the implication that subdominant-type motion is inauthentic.
based on formal considerations a “function as syntax” definition. This is the type of definition that I will espouse in this dissertation. Several music theorists tend towards a syntactical definition of function rather than one based on chord identity, but this tendency often goes unacknowledged because the difference is subtle in the context of common-practice tonal music. In rock music, however, the two definitions lead to vastly different analyses, and as we will see, analyses based on a syntactical definition are far more convincing.

In a syntactical definition of harmonic function, chords may represent functions but do not inherently have specific functions. Functions are inherently “relational notions,” as Noam Chomsky put it in his seminal treatise *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Chomsky 1965). Chomsky, discussing linguistic syntax, differentiates between “grammatical function” and “grammatical category”; the latter is an inherent property of a word or group of words whereas the former is entirely dependent on context. Speaking about the sentence “sincerity may frighten the boy,” Chomsky explains:

> The notion “Subject,” as distinct from the notion “NP” [noun phrase], designates a grammatical function rather than a grammatical category. It is, in other words, an inherently relational notion. We say, in traditional terms, that in [the example sentence] *sincerity* is an NP (not that it is the NP of the sentence), and that it is (functions as) the *Subject* of the sentence (not that it is a Subject). (Chomsky 1965, 68)

Functions, according to Chomsky, only exist in reference to a specific context. The word “sincerity” might function as a subject in certain sentences, but in others it might function as direct object (e.g., “the boy may lack sincerity”). Individual words do not have innate function in the absence of a specific context; thus one cannot say that “sincerity” is a subject. The function is not entirely unrelated to the word itself, though, as “sincerity”
can never function as a main verb, for example. Yet it should be clear that functions are a result of interrelations among constituents within a given sentence rather than aspects of the constituents themselves.\textsuperscript{14}

This is also true of harmonic function when we adopt a syntactical definition. In this case, the constituents are chords as they exist within a given key—i.e., \textit{Stufen}—and the contextual analogue to a sentence is a musical phrase or other self-contained formal unit. One might argue that specifying a key is already giving these chords a context, and therefore that a Roman numeral such as “IV” is a true function since it defines a chord in relation to others. However, defining a key does not provide a syntactical context, merely a general framework for interpreting chords, not unlike choosing a language (English, French, etc.) as a framework for interpreting specific words. It is not until the chords are arranged into a phrase or group of phrases that they can be said to have a syntax.

What are the possible syntactical functions that harmonies can project once they are arranged in this way? In fact, they are not at all unfamiliar to music theorists. I will begin with the clearest example: the pre-dominant function. The pre-dominant is a wholly syntactical function; the word “pre-dominant” itself invokes syntax, as it explicitly mentions succession \textit{(pre)} and a relationship to another function \textit{(dominant)}. Furthermore, pre-dominant function can be carried by a number of different harmonies and is not linked to a specific chord; while

\textsuperscript{14}Daniel Harrison uses this same analogy to explain the difference between Riemann’s early conception of “function as abstract category” and his later conception of “function as chord.” Harrison writes, “In musical terms, the parts of speech are like fundamental-bass analyses of individual chords: any occurrence of the supertonic triad is analyzed as II, its position within a phrase notwithstanding. The analysis of logical meaning—harmonic function—\textit{does} depend on context within a phrase and is thus analogous to analysis of sentence elements [i.e., grammatical functions]” (Harrison 1994, 268).
Example 2.7: Haydn, Keyboard Sonata in D major, Hob. XVI:37, I: this phrase contains examples of both ii\(^6\) and IV chords not functioning as pre-dominants.

most theorists will admit that the II\(^6\) chord and its two triadic subsets II\(^{(6)}\) and IV are by far the most common representatives of pre-dominant function (at least in common-practice Classical music), there are numerous others that can fulfill that role, such as applied chords to V (e.g., V\(^6\)/V or VII\(^7\)/V), augmented sixth chords, VI, or other chords. Conversely, typical pre-dominants such as II\(^6\) and IV do not always represent pre-dominant function and thus cannot be said to be pre-dominants, much as “sincerity” cannot be said to be a subject (see Example 2.7). The pre-dominant is therefore a syntactical function, dependent on form and phrase structure rather than chord identity. This distinguishes it from “subdominant,” which is a non-syntactical term that can apply to chords in isolation, as discussed in the previous section.

The three primary syntactical functions are tonic (T), pre-dominant (PD), and dominant (D), which arrange themselves into the paradigmatic progression T–PD–D–T.\(^{15}\) While the term “pre-dominant” always refers to a syntactical function, “tonic” and “dominant” are the

\(^{15}\) Some theorists differentiate between the first and second iterations of tonic function, calling them “opening tonic” and “closing tonic” respectively; see Guck 1978, 34, Aldwell and Schachter 2011, 118, and Caplin 1998, 27 (Caplin calls them “initial” and “final” tonics).
same terms used by function-as-chord-identity theorists to denote non-syntactical functions. Herein lies a source of confusion in music-theoretical discourse: we have two different definitions of these two commonly used terms, one of which reflects a conception of function as chord identity and the other as syntax. In a function-as-chord-identity definition, “dominant” is something a chord is, whereas in a function-as-syntax definition, it is something a chord represents in a specific context. In the syntactical case, there are V chords that do not represent dominant function, and there may be dominant functions that are not represented by a V chord, nor even by a widely recognized variant such as VII or III. This situation rarely arises in Classical-era tonality; in this repertoire, syntactical dominant function is virtually always represented by a V or VII chord, and therefore the two definitions of “dominant” are rarely in conflict. However, in other repertoires, especially pop and rock music, other chords not necessarily derived from the V chord can represent syntactical dominant function, such as IV, II, Ⅶ, or some other chord. In these cases, it is best to separate the notion of syntactical dominant function from the V chord, the leading tone, the fifth scale degree, etc. I further submit that a separation of chord identity and syntactical function even in the analysis of common-practice repertoires will not only aid in our understanding of those repertoires but will also demonstrate the syntactical similarities between rock music and the common practice—similarities that devotees of the function-as-chord-identity definition insist do not exist.\footnote{Cf. Justin London: “It might well be said that popular music has its own set of harmonic conventions, and that we commit an analytical error in construing pop harmony in terms of common-practice chord grammar” (1990, 112); and Ken Stephenson: “With regard to harmonic succession, as with cadence placement, rock has, from its beginning, used a style opposed to that of the common practice” (2002, 103). These authors are commenting on the fact that successive root relations are often different in rock music than in the common practice. While this is not entirely untrue (though it is less true than these authors imply), I will argue that
Although syntactical considerations arise in many discussions of function, two authors have particularly robust syntactical definitions of function: William Caplin and Steven Laitz. Caplin’s theory of harmony is most prominently laid out in Chapter 2 of his treatise *Classical Form* (1998), though it comes up in his later work as well (2004, 2009). Caplin’s work, of course, focuses mostly on form rather than harmony, but this chapter, a self-described “brief Harmonielehre” (23), outlines Caplin’s views on the three harmonic functions (tonic, pre-dominant, and dominant) and differentiates among three types of harmonic progression: prolongational, cadential, and sequential. Because of Caplin’s limited repertoire—drawn exclusively from the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—he does not run into situations in which, for example, chords other than V or VII function as dominant, and therefore he can generally use both definitions of function interchangeably. However, certain of his formulations betray his syntactical bias: besides his use of the term “pre-dominant” instead of “subdominant,” his definition of dominant function as harmonies “whose primary role is to progress to the tonic” shows that he is more concerned with chord progression than identity, and his statement that dominant function “is most often represented by a major triad or a major-minor seventh chord built on the fifth scale degree” shows that he considers function to be something a chord can represent but not something it has (23; emphasis added).

Laitz’s presentation is in a pedagogical context, through his textbook *The Complete Musician* (2011), and so the theoretical aspects of his work are more implicit than explicit. Nevertheless, his concept of the “phrase model” and his inclusion of the T–PD–D–T symbols

---

*Root relationships are immaterial in musical syntax, and that a syntactical analysis will show that the two repertoires are based on the same principles.*
below standard Roman-numeral analyses clearly relate function to form and therefore to musical syntax. One of Laitz’s signature contributions to music theory pedagogy is the “second-level analysis” (the first level being traditional Roman numerals), which consists of labeling the functional progression that occurs within a phrase as T, PD, D, and T. Laitz outlines various rhythmic layouts of these functions within a four-bar phrase, which he terms “phrase models.” For Laitz, every phrase contains exactly one succession of these functions; no matter how many different chords the phrase may contain, it has at most one pre-dominant function and one dominant, each of which may be prolonged by a series of chords. Laitz’s conception of these functions as syntactical rather than chord-based is evidenced by his explanation of the pre-dominant function: he begins by defining this function as “connective tissue between the tonic and the dominant” and later states that “composers frequently choose the subdominant as the pre-dominant” (not that the subdominant is a pre-dominant) and that “the supertonic is the most common pre-dominant chord” (190–93). Laitz later discusses subdominant chords that do not function as pre-dominants (238–39) and mentions that submediant chords can function either as tonic-prolonging chords or as pre-dominants (268–73). Since these chords achieve their pre-dominant status not by virtue of their inherent properties but based on their context within the harmonic progression of a phrase, it is clear that Laitz’s definition of harmonic function is a syntactical one.

Both Caplin and Laitz employ a specific conception of prolongation—a hallmark of syntactical analysis. Prolongation, of course, has deep roots in Schenkerian theory, and

---

17 Laitz does allow for “embedded phrase models,” which are apparent T–PD–D–T progressions that occur within a phrase and prolong the tonic (see pp. 251–53). Laitz, however, minimizes these progressions by calling them “noncadential” and subsuming them within the main phrase model’s initial tonic (T).

18 Laitz generally uses the term “contrapuntal expansion” rather than prolongation.
both authors reveal Schenker’s influence in their formulations. Yet the addition of functional considerations adds an extra layer of complexity: in Schenkerian analysis, the elements that are prolonged are *tones* and *Stufen*, but we can now talk of the prolongation of *functions*.\(^{19}\)

The difference is subtle but important: while tones are the same type of thing as the literal elements of the score (the notes), functions are fundamentally different entities. As Charles Smith points out, “prolongations do not necessarily contain a literal manifestation of the thing prolonged,” and “in certain kinds of prolongations the thing prolonged is not even comparable to any set of events in the segments in question” (1981, 144). Tones are prolonged by tones (i.e., the thing prolonged is of the same type as the things doing the prolonging), but functions are prolonged by chords (i.e., the thing prolonged is *not* the same type as the things doing the prolonging).\(^{20}\) Chords within a functional prolongation are either *representatives* of the function (e.g., a I chord usually represents tonic function) or *prolongational* chords (e.g., neighboring and passing chords). Prolongational chords do not project any of the three syntactical functions (T, PD, D) and reside at a lower level than functional representatives; as Marion Guck puts it, “some common means of prolongation, e.g. neighboring and passing chords, are considered not as functional but rather as linear successions” (Guck 1978, 34 n. 3). Thus the V\(^6\) chord in the first measure of Example 2.8 is not a syntactical dominant but a passing chord. Similarly, the IV chord in measure 2 is not a pre-dominant chord but a passing chord within the overall motion from I to I\(^6\)\(^{21}\).

---

19 According to Joseph Dubiel, in *Counterpoint* (Schenker 1987 [1910/1922]) “the kind of entity that gets prolonged is a *rule*” as opposed to “the standard latter-day application of the concept to pitches and harmonies” (Dubiel 1990, 293).

20 Smith gives the example of formal functions, such as “A” or “second-theme group,” as examples of prolonged things that are different than the things doing the prolonging (1981, 144).

21 As discussed in the following section, I employ William Caplin’s definition of passing chords, in which a literal passing motion is not necessarily present in any voice; see Caplin 1998, 25. In Example 2.8, the
Example 2.8: Mozart, Piano Sonata in F major, K. 332, II: a I–V–IV–I progression prolongs the tonic. In a syntactical definition of harmonic function, the V and IV chords do not project dominant or pre-dominant function but instead are passing chords within a tonic prolongation. A function-as-chord-identity definition would analyze this progression as T–D–S–T.

are representatives of tonic function. This short passage can be interpreted to prolong three different entities: the bass tone B♭, the I Stufe, and the tonic function.

A function-as-chord-identity definition, on the other hand, would assign dominant function to the V⁶ chord and subdominant function to the IV chord in Example 2.8 such that the “progression” is T–D–S–T. Some theorists point to passages such as these as proof that the T–S–D–T (or T–PD–D–T) paradigm is faulty (e.g., Tymoczko 2011). But this is a result of mixing the two definitions of function: as we saw in the previous section, a function-as-chord-identity theory generally makes no prescriptions about chord progression. In a function-as-syntax definition, the T–PD–D–T order “is not reversible,” as Laitz asserts (2011, 203). This does not mean that progressions such as I–V–IV–I are disallowed, though; they can be interpreted as prolongational as above, or, if this progression were to last an entire phrase, the V chord could represent pre-dominant function and the IV chord could
represent dominant function. While this particular arrangement is rare, the idea that the T–PD–D–T arrangement is conceptually prior to literal chord progressions allows us to interpret chord progressions in pop and rock music as syntactical even though they seem to violate prescriptive rules based on chord succession in Classical-era tonal music.

Syntactical functions are analogous to Caplin’s concept of “formal functions,” which stand in contrast to “formal types” (Caplin 1998 and 2009). An example of a formal function is “main theme” and an example of a formal type is “sentence”; the primary difference between the two is that formal functions are defined in relationship to a larger whole, while formal types are inherent properties of the passage in question. For example, the first eight measures of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata Op. 2, No. 1 can be said to be a sentence, but they function as the main theme of the first movement (rather than being a main theme). This is the same distinction referred to in relation to linguistic syntax—“sincerity” is a noun phrase but functions as the subject of the sentence “sincerity may frighten the boy”—and is also the same as the distinction between function-as-chord-identity (a IV chord is a subdominant) and function-as-syntax (a particular IV chord functions as the pre-dominant). Formal functions gain their meaning by a combination of their internal features and their context. Thus a main theme generally contains certain features that identify it as thematic—e.g., containing a tight-knit formal type or (more abstractly) containing a beginning, middle, and end—but a main theme can never appear after a subordinate theme within a sonata exposition, for example. In the same way, the pre-dominant function can be associated with certain internal characteristics of chords—e.g., IV and II are more likely heard as pre-dominants, while I chords are virtually never heard as such—but it can never follow the syntactical
dominant function. Just as formal functions are defined in relation to a whole (e.g., main theme in relation to sonata exposition or antecedent in relation to parallel period), syntactical functions are defined in relation to a single expression of the T–PD–D–T sequence. While many theorists (Laitz included) would define this sequence as a phrase, it will be useful to separate the notion of harmonic completion and phrase structure. I will instead use the term “functional circuit” to refer to a complete formal-harmonic structure.

The Functional Circuit

In some of his writings, Schenker uses the term *Stufenkreis* to refer to progressions that begin and end on the same harmony and consist of “circular motion comprising the two phases of departure and return,” as described by Robert Snarrenberg (1997, 28). The specific progressions described as *Stufenkreise* are usually either I–IV–V–I or I–II–V–I; Schenker occasionally uses the term for longer progressions such as I–IV–II–V–I, but it never refers to just I–V–I.\(^\text{22}\) In other words, a *Stufenkreis* always includes initial tonic, pre-dominant, dominant, and final tonic. For Schenker—who does not use these functional terms—the members of a *Stufenkreis* are specific *Stufen* (often translated as “scale-step”), not syntactical functions as I am defining them. If we adapt the terminology to refer to functions rather than *Stufen*, we might use the term *Funktionskreis*, which we could loosely translate to

---

\(^{22}\)Schenker uses “*Stufenkreis*” to refer to a I–IV–V–I progression in Schenker 1994 [1925], 9 and 54, and Schenker 1996 [1926], 89, and to refer to a I–IV–II–V–I progression in Schenker 1994 [1925], 63. See also Schenker 1954 [1906], 216–17, for a discussion of the same phenomenon. Schenker’s later writings prefer the terms *Stufenrund* or *Kadenzrund* for this concept; all three of these terms emphasize the circular nature of the progression.
become “functional circuit.” A functional circuit (or simply circuit) is therefore defined as a complete statement of the syntactical functions T–PD–D–T. We can also define a functional half-circuit (for half cadences) that ends on the syntactical dominant—i.e., T–PD–D. (Half cadences will be discussed later in this section.)

The concept of the functional circuit is level-specific, meaning that it applies only to progressions that span a complete formal unit. Generally a circuit will cover one section (e.g., a verse or chorus), but often several sections will contain a single circuit; as we will see in Chapter 5, this is common in a verse–prechorus–chorus cycle. Foreground progressions that span shorter passages will be interpreted as prolongational; the only exception occurs when a single section contains a period structure, in which case the section will contain two circuits, the first of which will generally be a half-circuit. In the graphs throughout this dissertation, the main representatives of each function within a circuit will be indicated with open noteheads in the bass staff, and the pre-dominant representative will be flagged (following Schenker’s practice with Stufenkreise), as shown in Example 2.9. In this example, which graphs the verse to the Beatles’ “Nowhere Man” from Rubber Soul (1965), the opening I–V–IV–I progression is interpreted as prolongational, just like the I–V–IV–I progression in the Mozart example above (Example 2.8), and the overall functional circuit is I as tonic, II as pre-dominant, IV♯ as syntactical dominant, and then back to I as the closing tonic. These chords are the primary representatives of the syntactical functions; the primary representative of a syntactical function is the most stable harmony within that function’s span. Other chords

---

23 I use the word “circuit” rather than the more literal translation of kreis to “circle” to emphasize the completion of the circuit that occurs when the tonic returns after PD and D.
he's a nowhere sitting in nowhere making nowhere for no-body real man his land all his plans


within that span can therefore be considered to be subsidiary to the primary representative of the tonic function.

This example’s functional circuit supports an upper-voice descent through the octave from 8 to 1, in which the syntactical dominant IV\(^\flat\) supports 3 (as accented passing tone) and 2 (as locally stable tone); the idea that a IV chord can support 2 as a locally stable tone is what I will call a “syntax divorce” between melody and harmony, and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Tonic function and prolongational progressions

Out of the three main syntactical functions, tonic function is the most closely associated with a specific chord, in that it is most often represented by a triad built on the first scale degree (i.e., a I chord). Caplin points out that a VI chord can also have tonic function as a primary representative.

Different analyses will sometimes lead to different choices for the primary representative of a given syntactical function. For example, in an overall I–VI–IV–V progression, one could choose IV as the primary representative of the pre-dominant, thus encompassing VI within a tonic prolongation, or one could choose VI as the primary representative of the pre-dominant, which would be prolonged by the following IV chord via a 5–6 shift. Even though the former analysis is more in line with traditional analytical thought, if the VI chord is particularly emphasized rhetorically the latter might be the more appropriate. See, for example, my analyses of the Beatles’ “Ticket to Ride” (Example 6.23, page 235) and Fleetwood Mac’s “Go Your Own Way” (Example 6.27, page 238) in Chapter 6.
a) Transcription of first verse

```
Verse

When ever I want you a round yeah, all I got ta do is

call you on the phone and you’ll come run ning home; yeah, that’s all I got ta do.
```

b) Voice-leading graph

```
VI    II   IVv I
```

**Example 2.10**: The Beatles, “All I’ve Got to Do” (1965): VI represents the initial tonic in this verse’s functional circuit.

substitute for I (1998, 23), especially as the deceptive resolution of a V chord. The VI chord is the most common representative (besides I) of the initial tonic of a functional circuit as well, as in the Beatles’ “All I’ve Got To Do” from their 1965 album *A Hard Day’s Night*, transcribed and graphed in Example 2.10. The C♯-minor chord that opens the verse might at first be heard as a I chord, as the ambiguous augmented chord that opens the track could easily lead to a song in C♯ minor. As the verse proceeds, however, E major emerges as the true tonal center, solidified by the IV²–I progression supporting the title of the song in the
lyrics and the completion of a stepwise descent to $\hat{1}$ in the upper voice. This progression is the cadence of the section, and the minor IV chord represents the syntactical dominant function. Even though the opening C$^{\#}$-minor chord is later revealed not to be a I chord, it still represents syntactical tonic function in this verse’s functional circuit. The full circuit is therefore VI–II–IV$^{\natural}$–I, representing T–PD–D–T.

The most common way to prolong the tonic function is through the use of neighboring and passing chords. These prolongational chords do not represent a syntactical function but connect two chords that do. My concept of neighboring and passing chords is based on Caplin’s, in which these prolongational chords are not necessarily a result of neighbor and passing tones in the bass but are instead defined based on what chords they connect. Neighboring chords are prolongational chords that occur between two instances of the same chord with the same bass note. Caplin points out that in a neighboring progression, “a melodic neighbor-tone motion is usually (but not necessarily) present in one or more of the voices” (1998, 25). Two common neighboring progressions in both Classical and rock idioms are I–IV–I and I–V–I (see Caplin’s Examples 2.2a and 2.2e, p. 24); another common progression in rock that is rare in the Classical style is I–bVII–I. Examples of all three of these neighboring progressions are shown in Example 2.11. In the voice-leading graphs in this example and in all subsequent graphs in this dissertation, a complete neighboring progression will be slurred.

\footnote{Caplin generally considers V chords that occur between two root-position I chords to be neighboring chords, stating that I–V–I progressions are “often better understood to be prolongational” (25). While he does not explicitly say that these neighboring V chords do not have dominant function, he clearly implies that these V chords are fundamentally different from V chords that participate in a cadential progression (i.e., V chords that represent the syntactical dominant).}
together in the bass staff, even if the bass voice does not display a literal neighbor tone, and the bass note of the neighboring chord will be flagged.

Passing chords are just like neighboring chords except that they connect two *different* chords. Passing chords can arise between two different inversions of the same chord (Example 2.12a) or between two different representatives of the same function (Example 2.12b). Passing chords can also connect representatives of two *different* functions, as in the “softening” IV chord inserted between V (as syntactical dominant) and I (as tonic) at the end of some twelve-bar blues progressions (Example 2.12c; see also Everett 2004, §18, and 2009, 228–30, and Doll, 2009, 14–16). Passing and neighboring chords are sometimes nested such that an overall neighboring progression, such as I–IV–I, is filled in with passing chords (Example 2.12d). As with neighboring chords, passing chords do not necessarily contain a literal passing motion in any voice (as Caplin points out).

**Dominant function**

In rock music, it is very common for the primary representative of the syntactical dominant to be a chord other than V. We saw this earlier in “Nowhere Man” and “All I’ve Got To

---

26In rock music, the bass line 1–2–3 is most often harmonized by I–II(7)–I6, as in Example 2.12a, as opposed to the Classical-style I–VII6–I6 or I–V43–I6. The rock harmonization is not unheard of in Classical music, though, and represents what eighteenth-century German theorists called “the chord of the stationary seventh” given that its seventh does not resolve. Caplin allows this progression as well (see his Example 2.3c, p. 24), but cautions that the passing chord “should not be analyzed as a II7 harmony” because of the unresolved seventh and because the progression I–II7–I is “nonfunctional” (25). Caplin is probably citing the historical prohibition of II–I progressions, as there is nothing in his own theory that would necessarily define I–II–I to be nonfunctional. Since II–I progressions are not uncommon in rock music and the resolution of sevenths is not adhered to as strictly as in Classical music, I have no qualms with labeling this passing chord II7 in the current context.

27The function of the IV chord in V–IV–I progressions is a subject of heated debate among rock-music scholars and will be discussed in more detail below.

Transcription of verse

Harmonic structure

b) IV and ♭VII chords as neighboring chords to I: The Beatles, “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964)

Transcription of beginning of verse

Harmonic structure

Example 2.11: Neighboring chords.
a) Passing chords between two inversions of the same harmony: The Allman Brothers Band, “Melissa” (1972)

\[ E \quad F\sharp m7 \quad E\text{maj}7/G\# \quad F\#m7 \]

Crossroads seems will come and go, yeah.

b) Passing chords between two representatives of the same function: Bob Marley and the Wailers, “No Woman No Cry” (1974; live version 1975)

\[ D\flat \quad A\flat/C \quad Bm \quad G\flat \quad D\flat \]

Said I re-mem-ber when we used to sit.

c) Passing chords connecting two different harmonic functions: last two measures of a twelve-bar blues progression

\[ V \quad I \]

d) Nested passing and neighboring chords: The Beatles, “Here, There, and Everywhere” (1966)

\[ G \quad A\text{m} \quad Bm \quad C \quad G \]

Here, ma-king each day of the year.

Example 2.12: Passing chords
Do” (Examples 2.9 and 2.10), both of which contained a minor IV chord functioning as the syntactical dominant. A chord’s status as a representative of the syntactical dominant function is earned not by any intrinsic characteristics (e.g., the presence of a leading tone) but by its position in the overall progression. Syntactical dominants are those chords that resolve to the tonic to complete a formal unit and a functional circuit. Certain chords are more likely to function in this way than others—V is still the most common in rock music, with IV common as well—but theoretically any chord has the potential to represent the syntactical dominant (even I, as we will see later). Example 2.13, which transcribes and graphs the main section of Pink Floyd’s “Wish You Were Here” (1975), gives an example of II functioning as syntactical dominant. This section begins with an auxiliary progression IV–(V)–II–I leading to the opening tonic of the circuit; this auxiliary progression foreshadows the PD–D–T progression IV–II–I that follows.\footnote{The fact that the pre-dominant and dominant chords (IV and II) have two tones in common does not diminish the feeling of functional progression; II has a tonic-predicting function that IV does not, given the resolution of the melodic suspension D to C—the first unstable structural tone—in measure 7 as well as the fact that II arrives in the third bar of a four-bar phrase, so we expect a cadence in the following measure. One could replace that II chord with virtually any other chord without changing the functional analysis (even another IV chord, in which case IV would be the representative of both pre-dominant and dominant functions!).}

Chords other than V, IV, II, and bVII—the last of which we have not discussed but is commonly cited as a common dominant chord in rock music (see Moore 1995, Doll 2007, and

\footnote{See Burstein 2005 for a discussion of auxiliary cadences.}
a) Transcription of main section (primary vocal line only)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{starts at 3:15} \\
&\text{C} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{Am} \\
&\text{How I wish, how I wish you were here.} \\
&\text{We’re just two lost souls swim-} \\
&\text{ming in a fish-bowl} \\
&\text{G} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{C} \\
&\text{year after year,} \\
&\text{run-nin’ over the same old ground.} \\
&\text{What have we found?} \\
&\text{The same old} \\
&\text{fears; wish you were here.}
\end{align*}
\]

b) Graph of this section, showing II as the syntactical dominant

a) Al Green (1974)

Bridge

\[ \text{C}^\#m \quad \text{A}^7 \quad \text{C}^\#m \quad \text{A}^7 \]

\[ \text{C}^\#m \quad \text{A}^7 \quad \text{C}^\#m \quad \text{A}^7 \]

Hold me, love me, please me, tease me

\[ \text{G/D} \quad \text{B}^7 \]

'till I can't, 'till I can't, can't take no more ah ah!

b) Talking Heads (1978)

Bridge

\[ \text{C}^\#m \quad \text{A}^7 \quad \text{C}^\#m \quad \text{A}^7 \]

\[ \text{Em7} \quad \text{Em} \]

'till I can't, 'till I can't, I can't take no more. Dip me in the wa-ter

Example 2.14: “Take Me to the River”: different representatives of the syntactical dominant at the end of the bridge section in versions by Al Green and the Talking Heads.

Biamonte 2010)—less frequently represent the syntactical dominant function. They are not unheard of as dominant representatives, however; even a I chord can sometimes fulfill this role. For an example, consider the Talking Heads’ 1978 cover of Al Green’s “Take Me to the River.” The bridge sections of both the Talking Heads’ version and Al Green’s original are transcribed in Example 2.14. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, bridge sections in rock songs typically end with a retransitional dominant, which is nearly always represented by a V chord.\(^{29}\) Al Green’s version fits this trend, ending the bridge with a V\(^7\) chord (B7) with \(\hat{2}\) in the melody. Yet in the Talking Heads’ version, the bridge ends with an extended I\(^7\) chord.

\(^{29}\)See also Everett 2009, 147–49, for a discussion of the harmonic aspects of bridge sections in early rock music.
Example 2.15: The I⁷–I cadence in the Talking Heads' version of “Take Me to the River” exhibits directed voice leading towards ¹ in the upper voices, similar to a traditional V–I cadence. (Em7) over which the melody composes out the third between G and E. This Em7 chord functions as the syntactical dominant in this bridge. Out of context, it might seem like an unmistakeable tonic chord, but its placement at the end of the bridge imbues it with so much tension that it is entirely unstable. Adding to this tension are the frantic lyrics (“’till I can’t ... ’till I can’t ... I can’t take no more!”); the drums, which replace their standard rock beat with incessant eighth notes on the bass drum and hi-hat; and the guitar and organ’s sustained fourth D–G. This fourth fulfills the same voice-leading function as a V chord’s ² and ³, with the D (♭²) resolving upward by step to E (¹) and the G (♭³) resolving downward by pentatonic step to E (see Example 2.15). Christopher Doll (2007, 23) argues that ♭³ can “predict stepwise resolution downward to ¹” since it lies just one step away from ¹ in the minor pentatonic scale.³⁰

The bridge is not the only place in which the Talking Heads use a I⁷ chord as the syntactical dominant in “Take Me to the River.” This same chord acts as the syntactical dominant in the functional circuit that spans the verse–prechorus–chorus cycle. This cycle is

³⁰Doll mentions that, by the same logic, ⁶ can predict stepwise resolution upwards to ¹ within the major pentatonic scale. Jeremy Day-O’Connell (2009) calls a ⁶ that leads to ¹ the “plagal leading tone” and discusses its use in Debussy’s music. Melodic motion from ⁶ to ¹ is common at cadences in rock music, even when the progression is V–I.
transcribed in Example 2.16 with an accompanying voice-leading graph in Example 2.17. The verses of this song are relatively static harmonically, with the signature bass riff accompanying essentially a single chord, which is indicated as Em even though both G♮ and G♯ appear in the organ part. The prechorus begins with a C chord (VI), which functions as the syntactical pre-dominant and is prolonged by motion to its upper fifth (G) and sixth (A). The prechorus ends with the same Em7 chord that ended the bridge, along with the sustained D–G fourth in the organ. This chord is the syntactical dominant of the circuit and resolves to the syntactical tonic—a very similar Em chord—on the downbeat of the chorus. The outline of tonic in the verse, pre-dominant to dominant in the prechorus, and a resolution to tonic at the downbeat of the chorus is the standard layout of a functional circuit in a verse–prechorus–chorus cycle, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. Over this circuit, the upper voice expresses the overall neighboring motion 1–3–1, which as discussed above derives from the minor pentatonic scale. The neighboring quality of this melodic line is not undermined by the 3–1 motion at the cadence being filled in by a diatonic passing tone 2 (F♯), just as a whole-step neighbor remains a neighboring tone even if the whole step is filled in chromatically. It is interesting to note that, as in the bridge, Al Green’s original version does not use Em7 as the syntactical dominant at this point, but instead uses an A7 chord.

31 Split-third chords such as this are frequently found in blues-based keyboard riffs, as for example in Paul McCartney’s “Maybe I’m Amazed” (at 0:53 in the original recording from the 1970 album McCartney).
32 This is, admittedly, only one of several plausible analyses of the prechorus section. An alternative would be to read III as the primary representative of the pre-dominant (i.e., the G chord in measure 10), with the VI chord (C) that opens the prechorus functioning as an appoggiatura chord resolving to III. This would give the prechorus some symmetry in its harmonic organization, with the falling fourth from VI to III answered by IV–I7, with the first chord of both acting as a neighboring chord to the second. I prefer the analysis given in Example 2.17 largely because of the melody, which remains on E over the G chord in measure 10, thus suggesting that this chord might be at a lower structural level than the preceding C chord (see the discussion of “hierarchy divorce” in Chapter 3).
Example 2.17: Graph of the verse–prechorus–chorus cycle of “Take Me to the River” showing a I\(^7\) chord functioning as syntactical dominant.

(IV). While Green’s chords are more typical of 70s pop and rock music, it is noteworthy that the Talking Heads’ substitutions do not change the overall syntactical progression.

Prolongation of the syntactical dominant

In common-practice music, the most common embellishment of the dominant occurs through the use of the cadential six-four chord delaying the arrival of the complete V chord, which is always the primary representative of dominant function in this style (see Caplin 1998, 27). In rock music, the primary representative of dominant function is often embellished in a similar way, but the cadential six-four is far less common than it is in the Classical style (though it is certainly not unheard of; see Everett 2009, 208–209, for some early examples). More common is for the delaying chord to be a root-position I chord, which I have previously called the “cadential I” (Nobile 2011, §3). The cadential I most often behaves exactly like a cadential six-four, appearing on a metrically (or hypermetrically) strong beat and leading to a root-position V chord on a weaker beat. A classic example is the verse of the Beatles’
“I’ll Cry Instead,” transcribed in Example 2.18 whose cadential phrase (measures 13–16) occurs over the progression I–V–I. Because the preceding phrase (measures 9–12) prolonged the syntactical pre-dominant (represented by the IV chord), the I chord in measure 13 is not a return to syntactical tonic but an example of the cadential I. In other words, this I chord is unstable and resolves to the following V chord, which is the primary representative of the syntactical dominant. The dominant prolongation begins with this cadential I chord in measure 13, just as a dominant prolongation might begin with a cadential six-four chord. In voice-leading graphs, I will indicate the cadential I with an upward stem along with a bracketed Roman numeral under the staff, as shown in Example 2.19.\(^\text{33}\)

The concept of the cadential I arises in Walter Everett’s discussion of Bob Dylan’s 1983 song “License to Kill” (Everett 2008a, 153) and also relates to the idea of the “inverted cadential six-four” discussed by William Rothstein (2006) and Timothy Cutler (2009).\(^\text{34}\)

\(^{33}\)See Nobile 2011 for more examples of the cadential I in early Beatles songs.

\(^{34}\)See also Doll 2007, 112–30, who discusses IV–I–V progressions in which the I chord can be considered a “passing plagal pre-dominant” elaborating an underlying IV–V progression.
Example 2.19: Graph of the verse of “I’ll Cry Instead” showing the cadential I prolonging the syntactical dominant function.

Rothstein and Cutler, who discuss exclusively common-practice repertoire, note that certain first-inversion and root-position I chords are best interpreted as cadential six-fours with the “wrong” voice in the bass, usually resulting from a voice exchange. An example comes from Schumann’s harmonization of Bach’s G-minor Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin, in which an apparent I\textsuperscript{6} chord represents a cadential six-four and thus dominant function (see Example 2.20).\footnote{This example was originally cited in Rothstein’s earlier article “On Implied Tones” (1991) and was later resurrected in Cutler 2009.} Rothstein traces the idea that a cadential six-four can be inverted to a passage from Schenker’s original (unpublished) draft of Der freie Satz. In that draft, Schenker writes, “Thus, for example, even a root-position triad, five-three, can under certain circumstances denote nothing other than a six-four suspension, owing to the progression of the Stufen.”\footnote{Translation by William Rothstein (2006, 272). The original (German) quote from the early version of Der freie Satz can be found in the Oster Collection at the New York Public Library, file 51, items 1328–29.} As Schenker’s last clause implies, the overall progression—the Stufenkreis—can dictate whether a root-position I chord stands for a true tonic or an inverted cadential six-four. In our current terminology, this means that a I chord that follows a pre-dominant

prolongation and precedes a chord representing the syntactical dominant is potentially a cadential I. This is the case in “I’ll Cry Instead”: in that example, the cadential I occurs after a pre-dominant IV chord and before a dominant V chord, and thus participates in a prolongation of the dominant function.

The concept of the cadential I can extend to larger chord progressions. Rothstein 2006 and Cutler 2009 both cite a passage from Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto in which an entire I–VI–II–V progression represents a prolonged dominant (see Example 2.21). Both Cutler and Rothstein analyze the I$^6$ chord on the downbeat of measure 7 as an inverted cadential six-four; neither, however, mentions the intervening VI and II$^6$ chords between this inverted cadential six-four and its resolution at the end of the measure. Though I certainly agree with their analysis that dominant function arrives at this downbeat, a contrapuntal explanation

---

37 Of course, there are other factors that must be taken into account before settling on such an analysis, such as metrical placement and melodic structure.

38 Though the cadential I generally leads to V as primary representative of the syntactical dominant, it occasionally resolves to other chords instead, as is the case in the Beatles’ “The Night Before” (1964), where a cadential I resolves to IV as syntactical dominant; see Nobile 2011, [4.6] and Example 14.
Example 2.21: Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37, III. Rothstein and Cutler interpret a I\(^6\)–VI–II\(^6\)–V progression as a composed-out V\(^{6-5}\).

is not as convincing in this case as it is when an inverted cadential six-four leads directly to V. Such an explanation requires us to hear all three chords (I\(^6\), VI, and II\(^6\)) essentially to contain non-chord tones within a prolonged V chord. A more satisfying explanation is based on the syntax of the progression: because of the pre-dominant in measure 6, we expect the (syntactical) dominant at the downbeat of measure 7—specifically at the downbeat because of the prevailing harmonic rhythm of one chord per bar. When the apparent tonic I\(^6\) appears, it is inherently unstable because it does not fulfill the expected dominant function. This instability applies to the entire progression I–VI–II\(^6\), with the stable dominant chord not appearing until the V chord on the last eighth note of the measure. In this way we can consider the I–VI–II\(^6\) progression to “resolve” to the V, not contrapuntally as non-chord tones to chord tones, but syntactically as unstable chords to a stable one.

If this were a rock song, any of the four chords in measure 7 could represent the syntactical dominant, but the Classical style in which Beethoven was composing does not allow for any chord other than V (with the possible exception of VII) to represent the dominant.
Example 2.22: Bobby Darin, “Dream Lover” (1959), transcription of first verse: an srdc phrase structure in which the c phrase contains an expanded dominant progression.

An example of this kind of “expanded dominant progression” in rock music comes from Bobby Darin’s 1959 hit single “Dream Lover,” the first verse of which is transcribed in Example 2.22. This verse is in srdc form, meaning that there are four phrases, the first two of which are similar (statement and restatement), the third of which increases the tension (departure), and the last of which comes to a conclusion (these phrase boundaries are indicated above the staff in the transcription). The s and r phrases contain a tonic prolongation via an alternation of I and VI chords, with the VI chord acting as a neighboring chord. This tonic prolongation continues into the d phrase, with a I–V7–I progression in stop time, leading to the pre-dominant IV chord in measure 12 accompanying the melodic peak on F. The I–VI–IV–V7 progression in measures 13–14 is an expanded dominant progression:

\[ V \]

The term srdc is Walter Everett’s and refers to the pop/rock version of the classical sentence. See Everett 1999, 16, and 2009, 140–41. This form and its associated voice-leading models will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.
because they follow the pre-dominant, the first three chords of this progression are unstable and resolve into the V$^7$ chord, which represents the syntactical dominant. This progression furthermore summarizes the harmonic material of the earlier phrases: I to VI echoes the neighboring progression from the s and r phrases, and IV echoes the syntactical pre-dominant from the end of the d phrase. In this way, the c phrase encapsulates the verse’s entire functional circuit within a prolongation of the syntactical dominant. The entire verse is graphed in Example 2.23; the syntactical functions are given below the graph, showing that the prolongation of the syntactical dominant begins at the onset of the c phrase.

The Beatles’ “Please Please Me” (1962) offers a similar example of an expanded dominant progression in its c phrase. The first verse is transcribed in Example 2.24. Walter Everett offers a graph of this verse in the first book of his two-volume set *The Beatles as Musicians*; his graph is reproduced here as Example 2.25 (Everett 2001a, 132). Everett interprets the c phrase (after the single barline in his graph) to contain an inverted cadential six-four (the

Example 2.23: Graph of “Dream Lover” showing the I–VI–IV progression as an expanded dominant progression that resolves to V.

\[\text{Example 2.24:} \text{ The Beatles’ “Please Please Me” (1962) offers a similar example of an expanded dominant progression in its c phrase. The first verse is transcribed in Example 2.24. Walter Everett offers a graph of this verse in the first book of his two-volume set *The Beatles as Musicians*; his graph is reproduced here as Example 2.25 (Everett 2001a, 132). Everett interprets the c phrase (after the single barline in his graph) to contain an inverted cadential six-four (the}\]
Example 2.24: The Beatles, “Please Please Me” (1962), transcription of first verse.

Example 2.25: Walter Everett’s graph of the verse of “Please Please Me” showing an implied cadential six-four at the onset of the c phrase (reproduced from Everett 2001a, 132).
E chord in measure 13) followed by a neighboring IV chord (the A chord in measure 14) and finally a resolution to V that cadences to I (measures 14–15). With this analysis, Everett recognizes that the I chord in measure 13 is not a true tonic chord but is instead part of a dominant prolongation that spans measures 13–14. I am not so sure, however, that Everett is justified in positing an implied bass note B (5) below this I chord. First, the cadential six-four itself is not particularly stylistic in early 60s rock ‘n’ roll; Everett himself points out that a true cadential six-four does not appear in the Beatles’ repertoire until 1965, at the end of the bridge section of Rubber Soul’s “I’m Looking Through You” (Everett 2001a, 324).

I prefer a syntactical explanation for the instability of the I and IV chords in this phrase, allowing that their “true” bass notes are the roots but that they resolve to the eventual V chord in a syntactical sense. The entire progression thus prolongs the syntactical dominant.

**Pre-dominant function**

The syntactical nature of the pre-dominant function is already evident in discussions that relate to common-practice tonality. As most theorists note, the main purpose of the pre-dominant function is to connect the tonic and dominant; in the syntax of the progression, the pre-dominant function represents the simultaneous states of no-longer-tonic and not-yet-dominant. Most theorists discussing the pre-dominant have related it to chords whose bass note is 4, such as IV, II6, and II6 (in the function-as-chord-identity manner), but many allow that several other chords can fulfill the pre-dominant role. Marion Guck, who calls this function “P” for “post-tonic/plagal/pre-dominant,” claims that “no one chord is particularly characteristic of P” and that, compared to T and D, “P is the most context-determined and
least convention-constrained” (1978, 37). Guck implies that any chord besides I and V has the potential to function as P, but a chord’s status as P-functioning is given by context rather than its identity. (Guck states, for example, that III is “often found as P in large-scale progressions” [36] but later analyzes III♯ as part of an expansion of D [41].) Charles Smith’s definition of “dominant preparation” (DP) function is essentially equivalent to Guck’s definition of P function (Smith 1981). An interesting extension in Smith’s article, though, is his positing of a parallel “plagal chord progression system,” in which the three functions are tonic (T), plagal (P), and plagal preparation (PP), as opposed to tonic, dominant, and dominant preparation (165). In this system, plagal function is carried primarily by the IV chord, and possible plagal preparation chords are III, V, and ♭VII. Thus the progression I–V–IV–I could represent the functional progression T–PP–P–T. By presenting the plagal system as parallel to the tonal system, Smith is essentially equating the syntactical functions plagal and dominant, and plagal preparation and dominant preparation; the difference between his P and D is entirely chord-identity-based. Using the current (syntactical) definition of T, PD, and D functions, we could describe a I–V–IV–I progression to outline a functional circuit in which V represents the syntactical pre-dominant and IV represents the syntactical dominant. While this might seem an outlandish proposition to classically minded readers, there are many passages in pop and rock music in which this analysis is appropriate. Example 2.26 gives one instance in the verse of the Eagles’ “Take it Easy” from 1972. This verse has a period structure in which both phrases use IV to represent the syntactical dominant preceded by V as syntactical pre-dominant; the harmonic rhythm, which places V on a weaker (hyper)beat than IV in both phrases, ensures that V is heard as an intermediate chord between I and
a) Transcription of verse

\[ q = 136 \]

\[ \begin{align*}
&\text{Well I'm a - run-nin' down the road tryin' to loo-sen my load, I've got se - ven wo-men on my mind.} \\
&\text{Four} \\
&\text{that want to own me, two} \\
&\text{that want to stone me, one says she's a friend of mine.}
\end{align*} \]

b) Harmonic structure

Example 2.26: The Eagles, “Take it Easy” (1972): V as syntactical pre-dominant and IV as syntactical dominant in both parts of a parallel period.

IV. This situation stands in contrast to the typical twelve-bar blues progression, in which V is on a stronger beat than IV such that IV is generally heard as a prolongational chord between V (the syntactical dominant) and I.

The Schenkerian concept of “intermediate” harmonies is related to pre-dominant function but is not entirely the same.\(^{41}\) For one, intermediate harmonies exist at a shallower level of structure than tonic and dominant harmonies, whereas T, PD, and D are equivalent in status (even though PD is sometimes omitted in a functional circuit). Specifically, intermediate harmonies come about via “contrapuntal-melodic prolongation in the ascending

\(^{41}\)Schenker himself does not use this term, but it comes from Allen Cadwallader and David Gagné’s description of Schenker’s theories in their textbook *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach* (2011).
arpeggiation,” i.e., filling in the overall bass motion from 1 to 5 (Schenker 1979 [1935], 29). Possible intermediate harmonies between I and V include II, II\(^6\), and IV (the common pre-dominants), but also diatonic and chromatic versions of III and even I\(^6\) (see Schenker 1979 [1935], 29–33 and Figures 14–16). Given that Schenker allows for chords whose root is 1 to function as intermediate harmonies, it would be imprudent to disallow chords built on 1 to represent the the pre-dominant in our syntactical definition of the term (though I have not encountered a situation in which such an analysis seems justified). In other words, any Stufe can theoretically represent the syntactical pre-dominant, just as any Stufe can theoretically represent the syntactical dominant as discussed above.

It is even sometimes the case that the primary representatives of the syntactical pre-dominant and dominant functions are the same chord in a single functional circuit. In these cases, rhythmic and melodic considerations alone differentiate the functions. When the same chord fulfills both functions, there is usually a prolongational chord progression that separates the two instances such that the change in function from pre-dominant to dominant accompanies a return to this chord. Consider the Eagles’ “Lyin’ Eyes,” which we encountered briefly at the beginning of this chapter (see the transcription in Example 2.2, page 23). In the verse—a parallel period—the antecedent phrase contains a standard I–IV–II–V progression, with the IV chord turning into a II chord via a 5–6 shift and V representing the syntactical dominant. The consequent phrase contains the same 5–6 shift, but the II chord leads this time to another IV chord, which represents the syntactical dominant. Example 2.27 graphs this verse; the consequent’s functional circuit is I–IV–IV–I, but the two IV chords are separated
Example 2.27: The Eagles, “Lyin’ Eyes” (1975): graph of verse showing IV as both syntactical pre-dominant and syntactical dominant in the consequent phrase.

by a II chord in the foreground, so the change in function is emphasized rhetorically with a change in harmony.

The twelve-bar blues progression

As the previous example shows, the IV chord is one of the most versatile chords in rock music, being commonly used as a neighboring chord to I, a pre-dominant chord, and a dominant chord. Another common usage of the IV chord is as a “softener” of a V–I cadence, as is common in twelve-bar blues progressions. Example 2.28 gives the layout of the standard twelve-bar blues progression; the chord sequence in question is V–IV–I in measures 9–11. “Softening” is Walter Everett’s term, and it results from an interpretation of this V–IV–I progression as an elaboration of V–I (Everett 2004, [18], and 2009, 228–30; see also Doll 2007, 151–52, and forthcoming, Chapter 2). This interpretation has proven controversial within the music-theoretical community, with many scholars insisting that the descending-fourths motion of the IV–I progression is primary and that the V chord does not progress directly
Example 2.28: A standard twelve-bar blues progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

to I at any level. Ken Stephenson even uses this chord progression as evidence that chord successions in rock music follow the opposite patterns from their common-practice counterparts, calling rock’s successions “retrogressions” (2002, 102–104). Stephenson and others accuse scholars such as Everett of artificially privileging V–I progressions in a repertoire that does not depend on them and suggests that the descending-fourth progression IV–I is more stylistically representative.

Since the V–IV–I progression at the end of a twelve-bar blues is generally cadential, the disagreement boils down to which of the two chords, V or IV, represents the syntactical dominant. What we must realize when discussing the twelve-bar blues is that it is simply a chord progression and does not necessarily produce the same analysis every time it occurs. As with the sentence “I saw the man in the park with a telescope”—was I in the park or was the man?—the syntax of the blues progression can be analyzed in multiple ways depending on context.

Evidence to counter this claim comes from the myriad rock songs that follow typical norms of common-practice chord succession, as well as the many songs that freely mix these successions with so-called “retrogressions” (such as “Lyin’ Eyes” [Example 2.27]).

Mark Spicer sums up this disagreement in his review of Everett 2001a by first agreeing with Everett that V most naturally progresses to I but then playing devil’s advocate to argue that, given the ubiquity of double-plagal (♭VII–IV–I) progressions, “surely it is the falling fourths in the bass rather than the successive neighboring motions in the upper voices that command the driver’s seat in such a progression.” Spicer then asks, “might then the V chord of the similarly bass-driven V–IV–I progression ending a 12-bar blues function instead as a large upper neighbor to the IV chord?” (Spicer 2005, [8]).

An analogy arises with the so-called “deceptive cadence,” a V–VI progression whose multiple possible interpretations are discussed in Schachter 2006. Schachter provides several different analyses of this progression but gives no general rules as to which is the most “correct”; the best analysis is always dependent on context.
functions as the syntactical dominant: those twelve-bar blues songs that skip the IV chord such that the V chord lasts for two measures and leads directly to I. A classic example is Stevie Ray Vaughan’s “The House Is Rockin’” from his 1989 album In Step, the first verse of which is transcribed in Example 2.29. This song, like most of Vaughan’s, is based on the twelve-bar blues progression, but the V chord in measure 9 does not lead to IV, instead lasting for two measures and leading straight back to I. Example 2.30 graphs this verse, showing that the functional circuit is I–V–I with no syntactical pre-dominant and V as syntactical dominant.\footnote{Other twelve-bar blues songs that end with V–I progressions include Chuck Berry’s “Rock And Roll Music” and “Johnny B. Goode” (both later recorded by the Beatles). Another Chuck Berry song, “No Particular Place To Go,” omits the IV chord in the verses but includes it underneath the guitar solos.}

In general, I consider the progression of “The House Is Rockin’” to be the basic twelve-bar blues progression. The IV chord that is often inserted between V and I is heard as an insertion
that does not alter the fundamental syntax of the progression. In most cases, therefore, I agree with Walter Everett that the IV chord serves to “soften” the V–I cadence. Rarely, though, melodic considerations give more emphasis to the IV chord and encourage hearing V as syntactical pre-dominant and IV as syntactical dominant. One of the least blues-sounding twelve-bar blues songs, Michael Jackson’s 1991 single “Black Or White” (Example 2.31), may serve as an example. While this song lacks the dominant seventh chords and minor-pentatonic melodies characteristic of blues songs, the chord progression is a typical twelve-bar blues that includes IV between V and I at the end. Example 2.32 graphs the verse of this song; the example shows that the functional circuit is I–V–IV–I, with V as pre-dominant and IV as dominant. The justification for this analysis lies in the melody: the cadential gesture 2–1 occurs with the title lyric “black or white,” harmonized with backup singers. This gesture is the melodic goal of the verse and occurs over the IV–I progression; one can conclude both that the IV–I progression represents the cadence and that melodic 2 does not resolve to 1 when V moves to IV but instead remains active until the I chord occurs.46

Example 2.30: Graph of “The House Is Rockin’” showing a I–V–I functional circuit.

---

46This F♯ could be considered an added sixth to IV, which resolves down rather than up, or could be seen to represent a “syntax divorce” between melody and harmony, in which melody and harmony approach
They print my message in the Saturday Sun.

I had to tell them I ain’t second to none, and I told about equality, and it’s true, either you’re wrong or you’re right.

But if you’re thin-kin’ about my baby, it don’t matter if you’re black or white.

**Example 2.31:** Michael Jackson, “Black or White” (1991), second verse.

**Example 2.32:** Michael Jackson, “Black Or White,” verses: A twelve-bar blues progression in which IV is the syntactical dominant and V is the syntactical pre-dominant.
A syntactical definition of harmonic function allows us to interpret several progressions as *cadences* that under traditional definitions would not be classified as such. In this definition, any progression from syntactical dominant to tonic that closes a functional circuit represents an authentic cadence, even if there is no V–I motion. Yet a cadence is not exclusively a harmonic phenomenon; in order to have a true cadence, the melody must complete some structural motion as well. In general, this melodic motion involves an interval of the tonic triad composed out linearly, such as 3–2–1, 5–4–3, or 5–6–7–8. While the Schenkerian models of linear descents to 1 remain common in pop and rock music, there are many instances where the upper voice leads to some other tone and/or is based on a linear *ascent* rather than a descent. Non-linear upper-voice motions are also possible, such as a neighboring progression (e.g., 3–4–3) or an arpeggiation (e.g., 3–5–8). For these reasons, the distinction between “perfect” and “imperfect” authentic cadences is not as meaningful in this repertoire as it is in common-practice tonality, since an authentic cadence whose upper voice ends on 3, for example, can provide closure that is just as strong as if it ended on 1.

A syntactical definition of function, in addition to expanding our database of cadences, also allows us to *disqualify* certain moments from being cadences. Consider the opening of Schubert’s song “Am Meer,” which appears as Example 2.33. After a two-measure introduction, measures 3–10 contain a parallel period, with the antecedent phrase ending in a half their cadential goal in different ways (see Chapter 3). The melody on the lyric “black or white” could easily have been harmonized with a V–I progression rather than IV–I by adding a B chord in the second half of measure 10. In this case, the IV chord would be considered a neighboring chord to V.

cadence in measure 6 and the consequent phrase ending in a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in measure 10. That is an obvious analysis; also obvious to the trained analyst is that the V–I progressions in measures 4 and 8 are not PACs, even though they fit the definition given by most undergraduate theory textbooks. A syntactical definition, on the other hand, requires that a cadence end some formal unit; as Caplin puts it, “while the presence of a cadential progression is a necessary condition for cadential function, it is not a sufficient one” (1998, 43). Caplin continues that a cadence must “represent the structural end of broader harmonic, melodic, and phrase-structural processes.” The progression in measure 4 of “Am Meer” simply

Indeed, as if to avoid the issue, Kostka and Payne’s *Tonal Harmony* text allows that a student “might hear two-measure phrases in this excerpt instead of the four-measure phrases we have analyzed,” in which case “this would be a parallel *double* period” (Kostka & Payne 2013, 155). This concession reveals a fundamental flaw in this textbook’s definition of cadence: analyzing these eight measures to contain four phrases is highly unsatisfying, yet a definition of cadence based on chord progression does not differentiate between measures 4 and 10.

Heinrich Schenker claims, similarly, that measures 4 and 6 of “Am Meer” do not contain a final conclusion because the voice-leading structure is not complete; see Schenker 1994 [1925], 199–200.
comes too early in the phrase to be a cadence, whether the explanation for that is rhythmic (it comes after only two bars) or form-functional (we do not have initiating, medial, and cadential functions).

The idea of defining cadence as a formal characteristic of music is not new; it goes back at least as far as Antón Reicha’s 1814 *Treatise on Melody* (Reicha 2000 [1814]). In Reicha’s formulation, formal position trumps harmonic/melodic profile in determining cadence types. For example, a passage that resembles a “perfect cadence” (by ending on ˆI and containing root-position V–I motion) can in fact represent a half cadence if it occurs in the fourth bar of an eight-bar period (Example 2.34a) or a “quarter cadence” if it occurs in the second bar of an eight-bar period (Example 2.34b). More recently, Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983) speak of a “cadenced group” consisting of two elements, the second of which is a cadence; a cadence cannot exist unless it groups in this way. In other words, “a cadence must be a cadence of something; a group that consisted only of the articulation of its ending would be unsatisfying” (168). Caplin 2004 represents the most significant discussion of a formal definition of cadence to date, in which he holds that “cadence is best understood as a syntactical component of music, as distinguished from the wide variety of musical forces that are, broadly speaking, rhetorical in function” (52). Yet a formal definition of cadence has not taken hold in the instructional literature; in Ann Blombach’s survey of textbook definitions of “cadence,” she remarks that only five percent mention completion of a formal unit, while 70 percent mention chord progression (Blombach 1987, 227).48

48 Admittedly, several new textbooks have been published since Blombach’s article was written, but an informal survey of these shows that the definition has not changed much since 1987.
**Example 2.34:** Reicha’s examples of quarter and half cadences. (Reproductions of Examples K and L from Reicha 2000 [1814], 124–5.)

**Phrases**

On the other hand, 54 percent of the textbooks in Blombach’s sample mention “end of phrase” in their definition of cadence. Yet Blombach also notes that 48 percent of these same textbooks define a phrase as something that is “terminated by [a] cadence” (228). While it is mathematically possible that very few of these definitions overlap, the reality is that these two concepts are often defined circularly in terms of each other, as Blombach herself points out (226–27; see also Schmalfeldt 1997). I will not provide an overview of theorists’ various definitions of phrase here (for that, see Schmalfeldt 1997); I will simply state that for the purposes of this dissertation, I follow Caplin in divorcing the concepts of phrase and cadence. For Caplin, cadence is “a manifestation of formal functionality,” whereas phrase is “a functionally neutral term for grouping structure (embracing approximately four measures of music)” (2004, 59). The concept of phrase does not carry with it any specific harmonic or
Example 2.35: The Beatles, “Tomorrow Never Knows” (1966), opening of first verse: four-bar phrases are based on melodic groupings rather than harmonic elements. None of these phrases contains a cadence.

melodic implications but refers instead to rhythmic and melodic groupings. Thus the melodic groups in Example 2.35 are phrases despite containing only a single chord and no structural melodic motion. Even though the melody occasionally ends in the third bar of these groups, they all represent four-bar phrases by virtue of their rhythmic spans.[49]

Closure

A cadence provides a strong measure of closure to a phrase or formal unit, but “not all closure in music is cadential,” as Caplin asserts (2004, 56). Consider the verse of the Rolling Stones’ 1965 single “Get Off of My Cloud,” transcribed in Example 2.36. This verse consists of four four-bar phrases that are nearly identical in their melodies, all occurring over a repeating I–

[49] A prime example of the opposite definition of phrase—one based on harmonic and melodic completion—can be found in Rothstein 1989, Chapter 1. See also Attas 2011 for a discussion of phrases in rock music.
Example 2.36: The Rolling Stones, “Get Off of My Cloud” (1965), first verse: four nearly identical phrases in which the fourth achieves a weak sense of closure by completing a sentence in the text.
IV–V–IV progression prolonging the tonic. Yet at the end of the fourth phrase we feel that this verse has come to some sort of a close and that we are ready for something new; the song obliges by leading us into the chorus at this point. The closure that we perceive at the end of this verse does not come from the completion of a functional circuit or through any other harmonic/melodic means, since there has been no structural motion at all, but comes from rhythmic elements as well as the text. It is not until the fourth line of text that we understand what the singer is talking about; after this line, we know that the singer is complaining about an unwelcome salesman who invades his daydreaming. This both concludes the verse’s lyrics and sets up the chorus’s, which consist of the plea to “get off of my cloud!” (also the title of the song). Yet some measure of closure is obtained simply by presenting a set of four phrases; even without this textual conclusion, this verse would have sounded somewhat complete in measure 16. The chorus to the Steve Miller Band’s “Take the Money and Run,” from their 1976 album *Fly Like an Eagle*, has four identical two-bar phrases that present the same harmony, melody, and text (see the transcription in Example 2.37). Although there is nothing to distinguish one phrase from the next (besides some minor ornamentations), the fourth phrase sounds relatively final simply by virtue of being the fourth phrase. The magical quality of the number 4 in metrical grouping is seen at several levels: $\frac{4}{4}$ is the most common time signature, and four bars is the most common phrase length. This reflects the more general understanding that *binary* divisions of meter and hypermeter are more common than others; as William Rothstein points out, “most theorists, whatever their conceptual framework and vocabulary, have recognized that phrases of two, four, eight, and sixteen

---

50 Christopher Doll traces this common tonic-prolonging progression to the Kingsmen’s 1963 single “Louie Louie” in Doll 2011b.
Example 2.37: The Steve Miller Band, “Take the Money and Run” (1976): four identical phrases achieve weak closure simply by virtue of occurring four times.

measures enjoy a privileged status in tonal music” (1989, 33). Theorists do not agree on why this is the case; some have posited corporeal reasons, noting the binary cycle of the human heartbeat and the symmetry of the human body, while others relate the phenomenon to dance music; see Rothstein 1989, 34. The specific primacy of groupings of four phrases reflects the impression that a group of two phrases is underdeveloped while a group of eight phrases is too long (imagine if there were eight repetitions of the phrase in “Take the Money and Run”!)

Half cadences

A half cadence occurs when a functional circuit ends on the syntactical dominant and does not contain a concluding tonic, thus becoming a functional half-circuit. There are two situations in which functional half-circuits typically occur: at the end of a section that is not the main section of the song, such as a bridge or a verse that leads to a chorus; or halfway through a section, splitting it into two circuits and generally creating a period structure. Traditional bridge sections nearly always end with a half cadence via their “retransitional dominant,”
And when I see the sign that points one way,
the love we used to pass by every day.

Just walk away, Renée,
you won’t see me follow you back home.

The empty side walks on my block are not the same.
You’re not to blame.

Example 2.39: Graph of “Walk Away Renée” showing a half cadence on II♯ at the end of the verse and a parallel period in the chorus.

In this case, 3 is harmonized by the cadential I in measure 12. The consequent phrase begins just like the antecedent, but after arriving on the pre-dominant IV chord the harmony sinks to a confusing III chord (measure 16) with the melody following in parallel octaves. The next two measures (measures 17–18) contain an authentic cadence to the tonic, this time with IV representing the syntactical dominant. The melody beats the harmony to its goal, arriving at 1 in measure 17 over the dominant IV chord and skipping over 2. In this verse–chorus cycle, we see three different harmonies represent the syntactical dominant: II♯ at the end of the verse, V in the antecedent of the chorus, and IV in the consequent.

**Conclusion**

I have argued in this chapter for the separation of the notions of harmonic function and chord identity, preferring to conceive of harmonic function as purely syntactical. This reconsideration gives us a functional framework through which to analyze pop and rock songs that do not adhere to common-practice norms of chord succession. Yet removing any notion
of chord identity from the definition of harmonic function raises several questions that are perhaps not satisfactorily answered in this chapter. What is it that makes a chord function as a pre-dominant if it isn’t its scale-degree content or similarity to the IV chord? Earlier, I claimed that the pre-dominant function represents the syntactical state of no-longer-tonic and not-yet-dominant. But what makes us perceive this syntactical state? Our perception results from a variety of factors, including melodic, harmonic, phrase-rhythmic, and lyrical procedures, all of which combine to give us the impression that we have departed from our initial syntactical state (tonic). It is my hope that further research will investigate the specific ways in which these factors create this impression, thus exploring the *qualia* of the pre-dominant function.

It is not my intention to claim that the application of a syntactical definition of harmonic function is restricted to discussions of popular music. I claim, more broadly, that these definitions are preferable in discussions of *all* Western tonal repertoires. Rock music simply forces our hand: since this repertoire’s specific chord progressions are far less uniform than those of common-practice tonality, we find that labeling all IV chords as subdominants, for example, or restricting our definition of structural cadence to V–I progressions yields unsatisfactory analytical results. It is my hope that the evidence from rock music leads us to employ syntactical definitions of function and cadence in discussions of common-practice tonal music as well. These definitions will not change many of the specific labels we use—those V–I progressions in Mozart and Beethoven will still be cadences, and we will most likely

---

51 *Qualia* is a philosophical term referring to, loosely, the way things seem (in this case, to a listener perceiving pre-dominant function). The concept of qualia is familiar to music theorists through Boretz 1995 and, more recently, Rings 2011 (neither of whom use the term in relation to harmonic function).
never label a IV chord as the dominant in Schubert—but they will shift our understanding of exactly *why* these elements are labeled as they are. We have already seen a shift toward a syntactical understanding of these concepts in the work of William Caplin and Steven Laitz, among others. Yet these authors still retain several elements of the function-as-chord definition, and as a result the syntactical features of their theories are largely unacknowledged even within their own work. The analyses of pop and rock songs in this chapter and the chapters that follow are intended to reveal the benefit of a full separation of syntactical and chord-identity-based definitions of harmonic function. This chapter further seeks to demonstrate that if we focus on syntax rather than chord-to-chord succession, we will find that the structures of rock music and common-practice tonal music are not so different.
CHAPTER 3

THE MELODIC-HARMONIC DIVORCE

It has been noted several times that the relationship of melody to harmony is looser in popular music than in common-practice tonal music. Allan Moore (1995, 189) is the first to refer to this as a “divorce,” noting its prevalence in blues songs. Several other authors have discussed the divorce, including Ken Stephenson (2002, 74–82), who shows that ¹ and ⁵ often act as stable tones even if they are dissonant with the underlying chords, and Peter van der Merwe (1989, 225–32), who offers a more historical approach that traces the origins of the melodic-harmonic divorce back to nineteenth-century Viennese music.¹ In the most extensive study of the topic to date, David Temperley (2007) attempts to enumerate the specific conditions under which this divorce usually occurs. Specifically, Temperley claims that the divorce is most common “in pentatonically based melodies, and in verses rather than choruses” (323). What is missing from these studies, however, is a systematic method of interpreting the melodic-harmonic divorce: since the traditional rules of counterpoint do not apply in these situations, what processes, if any, govern melodic and harmonic structure?

¹See also Stoia 2008, 34–40, for a discussion of dissonance treatment in blues songs.
To answer this question, I will outline three types of melodic-harmonic divorce; each type gives rise to its own voice-leading interpretation. Type 1, which I will call a “hierarchy divorce,” is the most common and occurs when the melody exists at a deeper level of structure than the harmony. In other words, the foreground chords participate in embellishments while the melody continues to outline a prolonged harmony. (Such phenomena in jazz and ragtime are discussed in Winkler 1978, 16–18.) Type 2, which I will call a “rotation divorce,” arises when the harmony contains a “chord rotation”—a progression of two to four chords that leads back to its own beginning. The lack of goal-oriented harmonic motion in these songs places the onus on the melody to create formal structure and delineate phrases independently of the underlying chords. And Type 3, which I will call a “syntax divorce,” arises when both melody and harmony participate in a cadence or other structural motion, but in incompatible ways; for example, when a IV–I cadence supports 2–1 in the upper voice.

All three types have one thing in common: when the melodic-harmonic divorce exists, the melody nearly always revolves around the tonic triad. This combines Stephenson’s claim that 1 and 5 are the most common melodic “pedals” above a changing harmonic backdrop and Temperley’s claim that melodies that are divorced from harmony are generally pentatonic in nature: to Stephenson’s 1 and 5 I add 3, and Temperley’s pentatonic melodies I interpret as the tonic triad with embellishing tones. Essentially this means that the notes of the tonic triad, which are always stable at the deepest structural level, can under certain circumstances act as stable tones even if they are dissonant with the foreground harmonies.
The melodic-harmonic divorce is often a structurally significant feature of a rock song, and often a song’s progression between “loose” and “tight” melodic-harmonic relationships (i.e., more divorced or more in sync) can have formal significance. The terms “loose” and “tight” regarding the melodic-harmonic divorce are Temperley’s, used specifically in his claim that songs often contain “loose verses” and “tight choruses” (2007, 335–40). As we will see, though, there are several examples that do not follow the loose verse/tight chorus paradigm, such that this principle does not hold as a general theory. What is often true, however, is that the moment at which the melodic-harmonic relationship “tightens” coincides with an important formal event, such as a cadence. The final section of this chapter will discuss the rhetorical effect of loosening and tightening the melodic-harmonic relationship.

Before discussing the three types of melodic-harmonic divorce, I would like to clarify the meaning of the term “melodic-harmonic divorce.” This term is potentially problematic. First, it assumes that melody and harmony are separable layers of a piece of music. In Temperley’s article, it is clear that by “harmony” he means the chord progression that is implied by the accompaniment alone without taking into account the vocal melody. The divorce occurs when the melody does not follow this chord progression (e.g., by not resolving non-chord tones by step). The word “divorce” is also problematic, as it implies both that the melody and accompaniment are not related at all (which is rarely the case) and that they were at some prior point “married.” The latter assumes a historical lineage from common-practice tonality to rock music—a lineage that is dubious at best (this assumption surfaces in van der Merwe 1989). To avoid multiple terms for the same concept, I will retain the term “melodic-
harmonic divorce” with the understanding that I am using it to mean a stratification of the melodic and accompanimental layers.

**Type 1: Hierarchy Divorce**

In classical harmony, we recognize that harmonies can serve an embellishing function akin to melodic passing and neighboring tones. There is an important difference, though, between embellishing harmonies and melodic embellishments: the latter can occur without harmonic support, while the former must support a locally stable melodic tone. Consider Example 3.1 in Example 3.1a, we have a typical embellishing progression, with the melodic passing tone D (♯2) harmonized by V₆⁻⁵, embellishing the tonic. In this case, both melody and harmony participate in the embellishment. In Example 3.1b, the melody participates in the embellishment with its passing tone, but the harmony does not—a typical occurrence as well. Example 3.1c shows the opposite: the harmony participates in the embellishment, but the melody does not. This is considered incorrect in Classical practice due to the unresolved non-harmonic tone over the second chord (marked with an asterisk in Example 3.1).

Some theorists recognize the possibility of pedal tones in non-bass voices (sometimes called “inverted pedals”) within the Classical repertoire, and so this C could possibly be explained in this manner if it remained stationary when the tonic chord returns. Because this voice moves to an E, however, this interpretation is not possible in this case.

In pop and rock music, however, this process is common and is responsible for the first type of melodic-harmonic divorce.

Let me illustrate this point with two examples, both of which are mentioned in Temperley 2007: “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” by the Rolling Stones (1968) and “Rock’n Me” by the Steve
Example 3.1: (a) The middle harmony is an “embellishing harmony” that harmonizes a melodic passing tone. (b) The same melodic passing tone can occur unharmonized, creating a dissonance. (c) However, the harmony cannot embellish while the melody does not.

Miller Band (1976). The first verse of “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” is transcribed in Example 3.2 a)

The verses of this song alternate between a tonic triad and a bVII chord with no third over a tonic pedal[4]. The latter chords are clearly embellishing chords, functioning as neighboring harmonies to the tonic on weak beats in the hypermeter. The melody does not participate in this neighboring motion, remaining on b3 throughout. Example 3.2 b gives a voice-leading reduction of the verse, which shows the A5 chord to be a product of inner-voice neighboring tones. The b3 in the melody is therefore consonant with the prolonged harmony, and the apparent subtonic chord contains the non-chord tones.

In “Jumpin’ Jack Flash,” the harmonic embellishment is at a very surface level—it is over a tonic pedal and returns to the chord that preceded it—and so it is not difficult to hear the melody as consonant with the underlying harmonic progression (or lack thereof, since a first-

---

[4]This transcription differs from Temperley’s in several ways: most noticeably, mine is in B major while his is in Bb minor. The original recording is about halfway between Bb and B, but videos of the Rolling Stones in concert show that they play it in B. I consider this song to be in major despite the blues-inflected b3 and b7 that frequently occur in both melody and harmony because the tonic chords are always major; Temperley transcribes them as “Bb5,” but most of the time (though not every time) the major third is heard in the guitars.

[4]The notation “A5” stands for a chord whose root is A that contains only root and fifth; such chords are common in guitar-based rock music.
a) Transcription of verse 1


(b) Reduction of verse 1

level reduction would show the verse containing the tonic chord throughout). “Rock’n Me” contains an example of a more prominent embellishing harmony that connects two different chords (see Example 3.3). Temperley characterizes the melody of this song’s verse as “freely traversing the pentatonic scale without much regard for the underlying chord changes” (2007, 331). However, as the transcription in Example 3.3a shows, the melody is consonant with the underlying harmonies with the exception of the A5 chord in the third and fourth measures. In these measures, the melody seems to outline the tonic triad (embellished with pentatonic neighbor and passing tones) while the harmony has proceeded to the subtonic. This melodic-
a) Transcription of verse 1

b) Reduction of verse 1, showing the A5 chord as a harmonized passing seventh in the bass prolonging the tonic harmony


harmonic divorce suggests that the A5 chord is an embellishing harmony and that the basic progression of the verse is I for four bars, IV for two bars, and back to I for the final two bars. Example 3.3b gives a reduction of this verse showing the A5 harmony as a harmonized passing seventh connecting I and IV but ultimately prolonging the tonic harmony. The divorce continues into the chorus, which contains the same chord progression as the verse with three-part vocal harmonies over the main melodic line (see Example 3.4). Interestingly, the vocal harmonies are different in the first and second choruses over the A5 chord, and in neither chorus do they match the underlying chord. The harmony in the second chorus reflects the analysis given in Example 3.3b (with the tonic prolonged for four bars), but the harmony in the first chorus suggests that perhaps the subdominant harmony arrives in
CHORUS 1

CHORUS 2

Example 3.4: The Steve Miller Band, “Rock’n Me,” chorus 1 and chorus 2, with different vocal harmonies indicated, neither of which is consonant with the underlying harmony.

Indeed, even in the third bar, with the A5 harmony acting as an appoggiatura chord.\footnote{This interpretation is at odds with the hypermeter, though; appoggiaturas are generally on stronger hyperbeats than their resolutions, but measure 3 is weaker than measure 5, the latter being the downbeat of a four-bar hypermeasure.} The melody hints at the E-major harmony in measure 3 with its G♯–B motion before returning to outline the tonic triad. Whichever interpretation one prefers, it is clear that the A5 chord represents a transition between the B and E chords in both harmony and melody.

Examples like “Jumpin’ Jack Flash” and “Rock’n Me” demonstrate situations in which the melody exists at a deeper level of structure than the harmony. This phenomenon therefore
Example 3.5: 311, “All Mixed Up” (1995), first two bars of the chorus: the melody remains on the tonic during the neighboring subtonic harmony.

Example 3.6: J. Geils Band, “Centerfold” (1981): transcription of guitar riff (top staff); harmonic reduction on lower staff showing subtonic chords as passing harmonies.

sheds light on the harmonic organization of the passage as a whole by helping to identify which harmonies are structural and which are embellishments. In both examples given above, a subtonic chord was shown to be an embellishment of the tonic harmony, either as a neighboring harmony (“Jumpin’ Jack Flash”) or a passing harmony (“Rock’n Me”). The subtonic is a common embellishing harmony, especially in one of these two progressions, and frequently participates in a melodic-harmonic divorce. Some other examples of its use as a neighboring harmony include the chorus of 311’s 1995 single “All Mixed Up” (Example 3.5) and the verses of Sublime’s “Wrong Way” from the following year. Examples of its use as a passing harmony between I and IV include the coda to the Beatles’ “Hey Jude” (1968) and the J. Geils Band’s “Centerfold” (1981); in the latter, bVII is used as a passing harmony from I to IV and also from IV back to I (see Example 3.6).
Example 3.7: The Beatles, “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964), opening of verse 1: 5 remains in the melody over the progression I–IV–I.

Besides bVII, the most common embellishing chord is IV acting as a neighboring chord to the tonic. This chord usually occurs in a weak hypermetric position and the melody often remains on the tonic. An early example is the opening of the Beatles’ “A Hard Day’s Night” (1964), in which the melody remains on 5 over the progression I–IV–I (Example 3.7). A more elaborate example is found in Ben Folds’ “Still Fighting It” from his 2001 album Rockin’ the Suburbs. The first verse of this song is transcribed in Example 3.8. In the first seven measures, the harmony essentially alternates tonic and subdominant chords in various inversions (the second-inversion tonic in measure 5 is a consonant I6). The melody, however, remains on notes of the tonic chord throughout these eight measures, outlining the sixth between G and E. We can therefore interpret the subdominant chords, all of which are hypermetrically weak, to be neighboring chords prolonging the tonic harmony. We probably do not need the melodic-harmonic divorce to come to this conclusion. However, this hierarchy divorce sets up the moment when the structural pre-dominant arrives (measure 10), which is also the moment that the divorce ends and the melody moves for the first time to an unstable tone (4). The effect of this re-marriage of melody and harmony is a strengthening of the pre-dominant function of the IV chord: measures 9–12 contain what Caplin would call an “expanded cadential progression” (1998 and 2004), beginning with a first-inversion
tonic chord and proceeding through IV functioning as pre-dominant to the dominant, which is here represented by a cadential six-four that only half resolves. The achievement of the melodic peak in measure 9 sets up the end of the divorce in measure 10, in which IV supports 4. Although we have already heard the IV chord numerous times in this verse, this time it brings the melody along with it, causing this IV chord to be heard as more than a simple neighboring harmony and instead as the representative of the pre-dominant function, driving the music toward the cadence. Example 3.9 gives a reduction of the verse, showing a tonic prolongation through the climactic achievement of the Kopfton 5 in measure 9, leading into the cadence.

It is not always the case that the structural harmony occurs on hypermetrically strong beats; Examples 3.10 and 3.11 give examples of hypermetrically accented IV chords that embellish the tonic. In Example 3.10 from the chorus of Third Eye Blind’s “Losing A Whole Year” (1997), the IV chord acts as an appoggiatura chord to the following I chord; above this IV chord, the melody holds 3, which is consonant with the “resolution” of IV to I in the harmony. The reduction in Example 3.10b shows the basic progression of this passage as I–V supporting 3–2. Example 3.11 transcribes the first verse of the White Stripes’ 2002 song “We’re Going To Be Friends.” This verse contains a twelve-bar blues progression over six bars instead of twelve; the final two bars are repeated to create an eight-bar phrase. The song itself is not very bluesy, though, since the melody and harmony remain strictly within the tonic

---

6 The verses use the Dominantparallel (i.e., a V chord with a sixth substituting for its fifth; see Riemann 1896 [1893]) twice, as 3 seems unwilling to descend to 2. The melody in the chorus then centers on 2 (even over tonic and subdominant harmonies) and finally descends to 1 at the end, though over a IV chord. In this way, the verse’s half cadence extends into the chorus, which prolongs the dominant, creating a sense of continuity from the beginning of the verse through the end of the chorus.

Example 3.9: Reduction of the verse of “Still Fighting It”.
major scale. The IV chord in the third measure of the example embellishes the tonic while
the melody above it continues to outline the third 5–3, creating another hierarchy divorce.
This neighboring function of IV is common to most twelve-bar blues progressions, and it is
common for the melodic phrase over this chord to be identical to that of the first phrase
over a tonic chord. The melodic-harmonic divorce ends at the refrain in the fifth measure,
when the head motive 5–4–3 appears in rhythmic augmentation supported by V–IV–I. The
simplicity of the melody reflects the text’s youthful innocence: the narrator, a boy excited
about meeting a new friend at the beginning of a school year, is not hardened enough to sing
♭3 or even ♭7 (which would be typical in a blues song), but instead manages only a simple
third-progression outlining the tonic triad.

In the above examples, the melodic-harmonic divorce comes about by the two domains
existing on different levels of structure. Specifically, the melody projects a deeper level than
the harmony. In this interpretation, the two are not “divorced” per se; their marriage might

---

(b) Reduction of (a).

---

7 Temperley (2007, 332) discusses this phenomenon in relation to the melodic-harmonic divorce, citing Titon 1994 as well.
be going through a rough period, but in the large scale they work together. The chords that participate in the divorce are analogous to melodic non-chord tones and are either prepared by or resolve into the structural harmony. While I have not discussed “rules” for the preparation and/or resolution of these embellishing harmonies like those for melodic non-chord tones, the resolutions shown in the examples (root motion down by fourth or up by whole step) are the most common, though others are possible as well (for example, root motion down by third might indicate a 5–6 shift). As mentioned, when the melodic-harmonic divorce exists, the melody most often outlines the tonic triad. In other words, when the melody and harmony exist at different structural levels it is usually within an overall tonic prolongation; during pre-dominant and dominant prolongations, the melody is much more likely to be consonant with the foreground chords. (A significant exception is when IV supports 2 in a cadence, which is common in a syntax divorce, discussed below.)
Type 2: Rotation Divorce

Rock songs are often based on repeated sequences of two to four chords that lead back to their own beginning rather than to any sort of structural goal. This phenomenon is often called a “vamp” or a “loop” (see Tagg 2009, 199), but in this dissertation I will prefer the term chord rotation to emphasize the circular nature of these progressions. Chord rotations go against the usual model of goal-directed harmonic progression in that they do not really “end,” instead simply circling endlessly. These rotations are more metrical than tonal in their structure: a four-chord rotation acts similarly to a four-beat measure or hypermeasure in that both move away from and towards their initiating points; they are not progressions from point A to point B, but instead from point A back to point A (see also Rothstein 1989, 28). There is a distinct beginning—the downbeat—but no real end. Chord rotations became more and more common in rock music throughout the 1970s and 80s so that by the 90s it was not uncommon for an entire song to consist of a single repeated rotation. In these cases, because of the constant repetition, the harmony is not very effective at generating form. The formal structure is therefore often generated by the melody alone with no harmonic support. This is the process that underlies Type 2 of the melodic-harmonic divorce, which I call a “rotation divorce”: the melody delineates phrases and sections through voice-leading and motivic means while the harmony is static. A divorce is therefore necessary; otherwise the melody and harmony would both rotate forever, and the result would risk being formless and monotonous.
a) Transcription of verse 1

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G A G</td>
<td>G A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A G A</td>
<td>A G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G A</td>
<td>G A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Jane says, “I’m done with Sergi-o.”
He treats me like a rag-doll.”
She hides the television.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G A G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Says, “I don’t owe him nothin’.”
But if he comes back again,
tell him to wait right here for me.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G A G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G A G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or try again tomorrow
I’m gon-na kick tomorrow
I’m gon-na kick tomorrow.”

b) The structure of the melody projects a descent from 5 to 1 in the verse

```
\[ \hat{5} \hat{4} \hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{1} \]
```


A striking example is Jane’s Addiction’s “Jane Says” from their 1988 album *Nothing’s Shocking*. This song contains the chord progression G–A for the entire song (a half-measure per chord), and so the harmony does little to clarify the phrase structure. Nevertheless, the vocal line in the verse projects an overall srdc phrase structure, as shown in Example 3.12a.

The srdc phrase structure is most clearly seen in the motivic content, as s and r both begin with the head motive A–F♯, d fragments the motivic units to a length of one measure each,

A live version of the song was released on their self-titled debut album the previous year, but the studio recording is better known.
and c is the refrain. This melody is distinctly in D major, despite the absence of a D-major chord throughout the song, as it revolves around the D-major triad and uses the D-major scale exclusively. The melody’s voice leading further projects its srdc structure: the s and r phrases outline the tonic triad, focusing on the third between A and F♯; the d phrase moves to unstable melodic tones, now outlining the third between G and E before returning to the A–F♯ motive in measure 12; and the c phrase outlines the dyad A to E, with B acting as an upper-neighbor to A. The gesture in the verse’s final measure, which moves to the leading tone C♯, to my ear implies a resolution to D, making an authentic cadence despite the fact that this tonic note does not literally appear. From this melody alone, then, we can interpret an overall linear descent from 5 to 1, as shown in Example 3.12b. One can easily imagine a reharmonization of this melody in which the chords follow the melody’s voice-leading structure, prolonging I in the s and r phrases, II in the d phrase, and V–I in the c phrase. Yet the fact that the harmony does not follow the melody but instead simply shuttles back and forth between IV and V triads does not remove the impression of the upper voice’s goal-directed descent; in this song, the melody simply runs the show on its own, creating form with no help from the harmony.

“Jane Says” shows a true divorce between melody and harmony. The chord rotation does not participate in the phrase structure and essentially acts as a groove, like a drum beat, that doesn’t generate form. Even at moments when the melody arrives on a note that is consonant with the underlying chord, we don’t hear the two as working together;
we’ve essentially decided to let the melody run the show on its own, with everything else simply providing the texture. Further evidence of this structure occurs in the bridge section, transcribed in Example 3.13. As this example shows, the melody in the bridge outlines the V chord—A major—while the harmony remains stuck in the same two-chord loop. Although one of the two chords in this loop is indeed an A-major chord, this bridge section does not constitute a remarriage of melody and harmony, as it is clear that the melody is following its own path, ignoring the chords. Outlining the dominant in the bridge is furthermore consistent with conventional voice-leading patterns, as bridge sections almost always end with a “dominant retransition” and frequently prolong a V chord throughout (see Nobile 2011 and Everett 2009). “Jane Says” thus creates a full AABA form in which the verses contain srdc phrase structures with absolutely no harmonic differentiation, all by virtue of its melodic-harmonic divorce.

Chord rotations are especially common in pop music of the last fifteen years, and as a result this repertoire provides copious examples of this type of melodic-harmonic divorce. In these songs, the specific chords that make up the rotation are generally of secondary
importance, and one can often substitute a different rotation without significantly affecting the song’s structure. To demonstrate, let us consider the song that became the pop anthem of 2012: Carly Rae Jepsen’s “Call Me Maybe.” The melody of the first phrase of the chorus is transcribed in Example 3.14 as shown in the transcription, this melody essentially outlines the tonic triad with ˆ3 on top, ending with a ˆ3–2–1 descent. In the original release of this song, the chord progression is similar to “Jane Says”: essentially a shuttle between IV and V chords, in this case with a few connecting chords inserted in between, as shown above the transcription. This chord progression repeats throughout the entire song and thus acts as a chord rotation. Below the staff are four alternative chord rotations that could easily substitute for the original without altering the overall melodic structure of a descent from ˆ3 in the key of G major. The first alternative is what journalist Marc Hirsh famously dubbed the “Sensitive Female Progression”: VI–IV–I–V, with one chord per measure (Hirsh 2008). The second alternative is the same as the first but shifted to start on the I chord—a common rotation as well (heard for example in U2’s “With or Without You” [1987]). The third breaks out of the G-major diatonic scale with a ♭VII chord in the second measure, creating an intense amount of dissonance with the melody; however, because of the divorce this dissonance goes largely unnoticed. Finally, the fourth alternative is again the Sensitive Female Progression but with a doubled harmonic rhythm such that the rotation occurs twice rather than once in this phrase. These rotations are very different from the original chord progression, but the

---

11 This progression, especially when used as a chord rotation, is very common, especially in the 1990s, and not only in songs sung by sensitive females. It is a favorite chord progression of the 90s pop-punk band The Offspring, heard in most of their singles (e.g., “Self Esteem” [1994], “All I Want” [1996], “The Kids Aren’t Alright” [1999], and even their more recent “You’re Gonna Go Far, Kid” [2008]), and so it could have just as easily been called the “Angry Male Progression.”

12 This progression is the same as in “Rock’n Me” (Example 3.3 page 94), with a similar dissonance over the ♭VII chord.
Example 3.14: Carly Rae Jepsen, “Call Me Maybe” (2012), first phrase of chorus: one could easily substitute a number of different chord rotations for the original without affecting the melodic structure.

A melody’s structure remains the same over all of them, further demonstrating that melody and harmony are completely divorced in this song.

**Type 3: “Syntax Divorce”**

Sometimes when both melody and harmony exhibit structural motion—such as a descent to H in the melody and a cadence in the harmony—the two do not work together. Consider the Beatles’ “Nowhere Man” from their 1965 album *Rubber Soul*, which we encountered briefly in Chapter 2; the graph of this verse is reproduced in Example 3.15. As this example shows, the melody descends from H to H throughout the verse, while the harmony expresses the functional circuit I–II–IV°–I. For most of the verse, the melodic descent has consonant harmonic support: H–H–H–H is supported by I–V–IV–I on the surface, while at a deeper level this harmonic progression prolongs the tonic while the melody composes out the fourth H–H. As the piece move towards the cadence, however, the melody and harmony are not so
Example 3.15: The Beatles, “Nowhere Man” (1965): the melodic descent doesn’t match the harmony at the cadence.

synchronized. The pre-dominant II chord supports ˆ4, which is consonant, but the syntactical dominant IV♮ chord occurs under ˆ3–ˆ2, neither of which is consonant. Yet both melody and harmony achieve the same structural motion: the melody completes its descent to ˆ1 and the harmony completes its functional circuit.\(^{13}\) In this way, although melody and harmony are contrapuntally divorced, they are syntactically consonant; in other words, they are participating in the same syntactical process, namely a cadence.

A more recent example comes from the chorus of Alanis Morissette’s “You Learn” from her 1995 breakout album Jagged Little Pill. Ken Stephenson (2002, 80) discusses the ˆ1–ˆ5 pedal tones in the coda of this song over the progression I–VI–V–IV as an example of the melodic-harmonic divorce.\(^{14}\) The chorus proper, however, contains a more subtle divorce similar to that in “Nowhere Man.” Example 3.16a transcribes the first phrase of the chorus

\(^{13}\)In Classical harmony, the dominant would certainly be V\(^6\)-\(^5\)-\(^3\) rather than IV\(^5\) supporting ˆ3–ˆ2, and ˆ3 would be considered an accented passing tone, albeit an important one that is necessary to connect 4 to 2.

\(^{14}\)Stephenson’s text claims that the divorce occurs in the chorus, but the lyrics he quotes are from the coda, which takes the ˆ1–ˆ5 motive from the chorus and repeats it over the entire progression. Stephenson does not use the term “melodic-harmonic divorce,” but he is discussing the same phenomenon.
a) Transcription of the first phrase of the chorus.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ab} & \quad Fm & \quad Eb & \quad Db & \quad Ab \\
\text{You live, you learn, you love, you learn, you cry, you learn, you lose, you learn}
\end{align*}
\]

b) Reduction of (a).

\[
\begin{align*}
\hat{3} & \hat{2} \hat{1} \\
I & IV & I
\end{align*}
\]


of “You Learn,” the vocal part of which contains a melody and a descant harmony above it. The \(\hat{1}-\hat{5}\) motive that Stephenson mentions repeats in each of the first two measures. Then the melody begins to climb, to \(\hat{2}\) over V in measure 3 and to its peak, \(\hat{3}\) over IV in measure 4. Following the arrival on \(\hat{3}\), the melody reverses course and quickly descends stepwise to \(\hat{1}\) over the title lyric “you learn.” This \(\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}\) descent is the structural motion of the phrase, as shown in the reduction in Example 3.16b. Nevertheless, neither of the descent’s first two tones is consonant with the harmony: as in “Nowhere Man,” \(\hat{3}\) and \(\hat{2}\) occur over a IV chord. This IV chord is furthermore a structural harmony, participating in the overall progression I–IV–I. So although at this moment the melody and harmony are divorced, both are participating in the same structure, namely directed motion toward the tonic. Once again, as in “Nowhere Man,” the two are contrapuntally divorced but syntactically consonant.

In both of the previous examples, one might be inclined to analyze \(\hat{3}\) as an accented non-chord tone and \(\hat{2}\) as a true chord tone, making the harmony not IV but II\(_5\). Alternatively,
one could consider it to be an added-sixth chord, $\text{IV}^{\text{add}6}$, making what Rameau would call an “irregular cadence” (later, “imperfect cadence”) leading back to the tonic (see Rameau 1971 [1722], 74–75). These explanations are unsatisfying, though, because both consider this chord to be dissonant: calling it $\text{II}^{6}_{5}$ indicates that the E in Example 3.15, as the seventh, would tend to resolve downwards, and calling it $\text{IV}^{\text{add}6}$ indicates that the $F^\#$, as the added sixth, would tend to resolve upwards. While it is not the case that rock music always follows the traditional rules for resolving dissonances, these rules at least represent inclinations of tones, and in the case of “Nowhere Man,” these inclinations do not reflect the musical structure. Furthermore, it is often the case that considering the melodic notes to be true chord tones creates unwieldy analyses. Consider Maroon 5’s “Sunday Morning” from their 2002 album Songs About Jane. This song contains a II–V–I progression (often with various chord extensions added) throughout. In the chorus, transcribed in Example 3.17a, the first three iterations of this chord progression occur under the melodic figure $\hat{5}–\hat{3}–\hat{1}$, as shown in Example 3.17b. The melodic-harmonic divorce is apparent here, as the first two melodic tones are not supported by the chords. However, both melody and harmony participate in a similar structure: a three-step process directed toward the tonic. The melody does this by arpeggiating the tonic triad downward, aiming toward $\hat{1}$, and the harmony does it by expressing a typical II–V–I progression. So although melody and harmony do not work together contrapuntally, they have parallel structures that lead toward the same goal—in

---

15There are two versions of this album: its original release in 2002 and a rerelease from the following year, the latter of which is better known. The original version is currently available as the second disc of the 2012 tenth anniversary edition of Songs About Jane, with all songs labeled as “demo.” There are a few notable differences between the choruses of the two versions of “Sunday Morning”; in the original, the piano chords are simpler (often just two notes) and the lowest vocal line of Example 3.17a is an octave higher and is more prominent in the mix. Example 3.17a transcribes the later release.
a) Transcription of the chorus

\[ \text{Chorus} \]

\[ \text{Dm7} \quad \text{G7} \quad \text{Cmaj7} \]

\[ \text{That may be all I need.} \quad \text{In darkness she is all I see.} \]

\[ \text{Cmaj7} \quad \text{Dm7} \quad \text{G7} \quad \text{Cmaj7} \]

\[ \text{Come and rest your bones with me.} \quad \text{Dri-vin' slow on Sunday morn-ing, and I ne-ver want to leave.} \]

b) Reduction of the first measure, showing that both melody and harmony present a three-step process directed towards the tonic, but the two do not work together

\[ \text{Example 3.17: Maroon 5, “Sunday Morning” (2002).} \]

other words, they participate in a syntax divorce. Considering these melodic tones to be chord extensions and thus a part of the harmony overlooks the melody’s structure as a tonic arpeggiation; in other words, considering the G to be a eleventh and the E to be a thirteenth, both unresolved, really seems to miss the point. Moreover, the backup vocal harmonies also arpeggiate the tonic triad, so the entire triad is heard at all times, as shown in Example 3.17b. It is much more likely that one would hear the melody’s arpeggiation of the tonic triad as stable tones divorced from the harmonies than as dissonant chord extensions.
LOoseness and Tightness

Most songs that exhibit a melodic-harmonic divorce do not do so for the entire song; songs like “Jane Says” are rare, and most songs will “tighten” the relationship between melody and harmony at some point. (As mentioned above, the loose/tight metaphor is taken from David Temperley [2007, 335ff.].) This tightening point often occurs at an important structural moment; Temperley gives several examples where the relationship tightens for the chorus after a loose verse, but there are several examples of the opposite situation as well—tight verse/loose chorus, as is the case in “You Learn” (Example 3.16 page 109). A particularly common schema, which I will discuss later in this section, is a loose verse, tight prechorus, and loose chorus. However, I would first like to look at a song in which the progression from looseness to tightness occurs within a single section. Two previous examples from this chapter exhibit this layout: “Still Fighting It” (Example 3.8 page 99) and “We’re Going to be Friends” (Example 3.11 page 101). In “Still Fighting It,” the melody and harmony come together on the pre-dominant IV chord within an “expanded cadential progression”; in “We’re Going to be Friends,” they come together for the final cadence. The verses of Coldplay’s “The Scientist” from their 2002 album *A Rush of Blood to the Head* follow a similar pattern, beginning with a divorced melody and harmony that ultimately remarry for the final cadence. The first verse of this song is transcribed in Example 3.18. (This song contains no chorus, but simply consists of two verses followed by an extended instrumental outro.) This verse is in ssrrddc form—srdc where s, r, and d each occur twice—and features a chord rotation in the s and r phrases. This chord rotation is based on the standard VI–IV–I–V progression—the “Sensitive
**S/R (×2):** melody outlines tonic triad, divorced from the chord progression

![Sheet music for S/R (x2)](image)

**D (×2):** divorce continues; melody remains on tonic triad, with pentatonic passing tone D inserted between F and C

![Sheet music for D (x2)](image)

**C: melodic-harmonic relationship “tightens” for the cadence**

![Sheet music for C]  

Female Progression” mentioned earlier—though the last chord, which contains F, G, and C over an F bass note, is a sort of hybrid I/V chord; because of its basis in the VI–IV–I–V rotation, I analyze this chord as $V_3^5$ over a tonic pedal (Csus4/F) rather than $I_2^5$ (Fsus2).\(^{16}\)

Over this chord rotation in the s and r phrases, the melody continually outlines the tonic triad and doesn’t follow the chord progression—in other words, we have a rotation divorce. At the onset of the d phrase, measure 5, the harmony moves to an emphasized IV chord for the first two measures and then recapitulates the final two chords from s and r’s rotation. Although the melody includes $\hat{6}$ (D) over the IV chord, that tone acts as a pentatonic passing tone from F to C, suggesting that the melody hasn’t given up the tonic triad yet. The d phrase thus contains a hierarchy divorce, as the IV chord ultimately functions as a neighboring chord to the tonic. At the onset of the c phrase, the harmony moves to V in root position for the first time and the melody joins, landing on $\hat{7}$ (E). This marks the first appearance of the leading tone in either melody or harmony, and also the first time the melody ventures outside the tonic pentatonic scale.\(^{17}\) It is also the first time the melody articulates the downbeat of a phrase. From $\hat{7}$, the melody leaps up to $\hat{4}$ (B♭, the only diatonic tone yet unheard in the melody), which then descends to $\hat{3}$ (A) as the harmony cadences to I. Example 3.19 gives a reduction of this verse, showing a tonic prolongation through the s and r phrases (via the chord rotation) and interpreting the IV chord at the beginning of the d phrase as a large-scale neighbor to the tonic.

\(^{16}\)In later verses, synthesized strings sometimes play $\hat{7}$ (E) over this chord, making it sound much more V-like.\(^{17}\)Naphtali Wagner (2004) has discussed such “suppressed notes” that appear for the first time in structurally significant locations in reference to the music of the Beatles. Like “The Scientist,” Wagner’s Beatles examples usually stick to the pentatonic scale at first, “suppressing” the remaining two notes of the diatonic scale and then emphasizing them in some way when they finally do appear.
As mentioned above, a particularly common schema is for a song in verse–prechorus–
chorus form to begin with a loose verse, tighten for the prechorus, and eventually loosen
again for the chorus. This layout is expressed in an interesting way by Katy Perry’s 2010 pop
hit “Firework.” Example 3.20 transcribes the first verse, prechorus, and chorus of this song.
This entire song is based on chord rotations: I–♭VII–VI–IV in the verse, and the similar
I–II–VI–IV in the prechorus and chorus. During the verse, the melody projects an aaba
phrase structure—similar to srdc in which c recaps s and r—and revolves around the tonic
triad divorced from the chords, thus exhibiting a rotation divorce. The melodic-harmonic
relationship tightens in the pre-chorus, as the melody’s long notes generally correspond with
the harmony (with the possible exception of measure 15). The tightening at the pre-chorus
allows the melody to rise by step from its static position in the lower vocal register, gaining
tension and driving the music toward the chorus. In the final measure of the pre-chorus
(measure 20), the melodic goal of D♭ is at first denied as the melody arpeggiates downward
from C to F, but then the melody shoots above it to E♭ in the anacrusis to the chorus.
This climactic moment was set up by the dissolution of the melodic-harmonic divorce at the
Verse (aaba)

Ab
Gb
Fm
D\textsuperscript{sus2}

Do you e-\textsuperscript{ver} feel, like a plas-tic bag, drift-\textsuperscript{ing} through the wind, want-\textsuperscript{ing} to start a\textsuperscript{-gain}?

Ab
Gb
Fm
D\textsuperscript{sus2}

Do you e-\textsuperscript{ver} feel, feel so pa-\textsuperscript{per} thin, like a house of cards, one blow from ca\textsuperscript{-ving} in?

Ab
Gb
Fm
D\textsuperscript{sus2}

Do you know that there's still a chance for you? 'Cause there's a spark in you, you just got-ta ig-nite the light and let it shine, just own the night like the fourth of Ju\textsuperscript{-ly} 'Cause ba\textsuperscript{-by} you're a

Chorus (parallel period)

Ab
B\textsuperscript{bm}
Fm
Db
Ab
B\textsuperscript{bm}
Fm
Db
Ab

fi\textsuperscript{-re\textsuperscript{-work}}, come on show 'em what you're worth Make 'em go "oh, oh, oh"
fi\textsuperscript{-re\textsuperscript{-work}}, come on let your co\textsuperscript{-\textsuperscript{lores} burst Make 'em go "oh, oh, oh"

B\textsuperscript{bm}
1. Fm
Db
2. Fm

as you shoot a\textsuperscript{-cross} the sky \textsuperscript{-y-y} Ba\textsuperscript{-by} you're a awe awe awe

onset of the pre-chorus, which allowed the melody to climb to a higher register and achieve its climactic peak. Once this register is achieved, the divorce reappears for the chorus. The apparent parallel ninths in measures 21–22 show the divorce: the $B_\flat$ on the downbeat of measure 21 is a long suspension that resolves to $A_\flat$ on the third beat, which then skips up to $C$. This $C$ is stable because it is part of the tonic triad, despite being dissonant with the underlying II chord. The chorus proceeds to express a parallel period structure in the melody while the chords keep rotating around their four-chord module: the antecedent ends unstably on $\hat{2}$ in measure 27, while the consequent completes the descent to $\hat{1}$ in the final measure. The looseness and tightness of the melodic-harmonic relationship is thus responsible for the phrase structure of this song, giving it shape despite the relatively inane lyrics and repetitive chord progression.

The three types of melodic-harmonic divorce described above provide a first step toward understanding the structural origins of the divorce itself. Rather than conclude that songs that exhibit the divorce lack large-scale structural motion, we should ask ourselves what structural process gives rise to such a conflict. In a hierarchy divorce, the divorce arises from a conflict of structural levels. While the melody lives in a deep middleground, swimming around the stable tonic triad, the harmony engages in foreground embellishments. This is a true conflict to be sure, but in such cases we are only one or two reductive steps away from resolving the conflict, showing that the two musical domains are perfectly compatible at a deeper level. In a rotation divorce, we find that while the harmony is stuck in a rotation the

---

18 By “structural origins,” I do not mean to imply any historical or chronological process, but instead a conceptual process akin to the Schenkerian process in which foreground phenomena “originate” in the background.
melody makes up for it by creating its own independent structure. This conflict is usually resolved when the harmony escapes its rotation and joins the melody’s structural motion. A syntax divorce gives us a conflict that extends into the deepest structural levels, when structural motion in melody and harmony do not line up contrapuntally. To resolve this conflict, we must invoke the concept of syntactical function: melody and harmony might not be contrapuntally consonant, but when they are participating in motion toward the same goal, they are consonant in their syntax.
Part II

Full Song Forms
THE FINAL THREE CHAPTERS of this dissertation explore the relationship of voice-leading structure and large forms with the goal of devising a methodology for deep analysis of pop and rock songs. The current chapter focuses on AABA form—a particularly common form in rock music of the late 1950s and 1960s, tracing its roots back to Tin Pan Alley songs, which were virtually always in 32-bar AABA form. Rock’s AABA structures consist of verses (the A sections) and bridges (the B sections), the latter of which are sometimes called the “middle eight” (even when the section is not eight bars long). As Walter Everett points out, rock songs generally extend their core AABA structure by repeating some of the sections at the end, making the full form AABABA or sometimes AABAABA (2009, 143). The early music of the Beatles (defined to begin with their first EMI recordings in late 1962 through their 1965 album *Rubber Soul*) makes particular use of extended AABA forms, and due to the Beatles’ broad influence, these forms came to define the pre-psychedelic era of rock music. The forms certainly did not disappear in later decades, but their popularity was supplanted by verse–chorus and verse–prechorus–chorus forms, which, as Jay Summach

\footnote{See Covach 2005, 69–71, and Everett 2009, 141–45, for more on AABA form in rock music. Covach includes a brief discussion of the similarities and differences between the AABA forms of rock and Tin Pan Alley.}
points out, increased their share of the *Billboard* Annual Top 20 from about 30% in 1960–65 to about 90% in 1985–89 (Summach 2011, §24 and Example 26).

The AABA forms employed by the Beatles tend to follow a specific pattern in their verses: a four-phrase structure that Walter Everett has called “Statement–Restatement–Departure–Conclusion,” or \textbf{srdc} (Recall that lowercase bold letters denote phrases within sections, such as the \textit{s} phrase within \textbf{srdc}, whereas capital letters are reserved for full sections, such as the \textit{A} section.) In a typical \textbf{srdc} structure, a phrase is stated (\textit{s}) and restated (\textit{r}), possibly with variations, followed by a third phrase that departs from the first two (\textit{d}) and a concluding phrase (\textit{c}), which often contains the title of the song in the lyrics. The \textit{c} phrase usually corresponds to what is commonly called the “refrain,” though sometimes the refrain comprises both the \textit{d} and \textit{c} phrases. Everett points out that AABA is a type of large-scale \textbf{srdc}; AABA forms in which the \textit{A} sections exhibit the \textbf{srdc} pattern thus maintain a hierarchical consistency in their formal structure.

For an example, consider the Beatles’ 1963 single “From Me to You,” one of their first hits. The formal plan of the entire song is given in Example 4.1. The overall form is AABAABA, flanked by an intro and outro; the form extends the song’s 32-bar AABA core by adding a harmonica solo and repeating the bridge and final \textit{A} sections. The first verse is transcribed in Example 4.2, which explicitly shows its \textbf{srdc} structure. In this verse, each of the four phrases is two measures long, with the melodic groupings beginning on the pickup beat. The \textit{s} phrase

---

2Everett’s earliest definition of \textbf{srdc} is in Everett 1999, 16. He discusses it in reference to the Beatles’ music throughout that volume as well as in Everett 2001a, and more generally in Everett 2009, especially 140–41.

3In a previous article, I called this “\textbf{srdc}–B” form (Nobile 2011). That article is an investigation of the relationship between voice leading and form in the music of the early Beatles; the current chapter is an expansion of that article.
Example 4.1: The Beatles, “From Me to You” (1963): AABAABA form with an \texttt{srdc} structure in each verse.
Example 4.2: The Beatles, “From Me to You”: srdc structure in the first verse.

is restated as the r phrase, with variations to its second half, followed by a contrasting and fragmented d phrase and a concluding c phrase that contains the title lyric and serves as the refrain. This form is also reflected in the lyrics: the first two lines express the same idea (“If there’s anything that you want, / if there’s anything I can do”), the third continues this idea (“just call on me, and I’ll send it along”), and the fourth concludes it (“with love, from me to you.”).

Discussions of srdc structure, such as Everett 1999, 2001a, and 2009 and Summach 2011, generally consider this phrase structure to be based primarily on melodic groupings and thematic relationships. There is, of course, an implicit rhythmic element, as each phrase is generally the same length, usually two or four bars, combining to make an eight- or sixteen-bar section (this is discussed briefly in Summach 2011). However, srdc structures also give rise to a harmonic structure that supports the melodic and rhythmic profile. In general, s and r prolong the tonic, d destabilizes the tonic (usually through motion to the pre-dominant), and c cadences.

This general model gives rise to three specific models, which are shown

---

4This is analogous to BaileyShea 2004’s “essential features” of the Classical sentence—of which srdc is essentially the rock version—which are that s/r is the “presentation,” d provides “momentum,” and c provides
Example 4.3: The three harmonic models for srdc structure. “N” stands for “Neighboring chord.”

in Example 4.3 (These models assume an authentic cadence rather than a half cadence at the end of the section, which is by far the more common situation.) In all three models, s and r prolong the tonic, while the ensuing PD–D–T progression is arranged in various ways. In Model 1, the d phrase contains both pre-dominant and dominant functions, with the final tonic coinciding with the beginning of the c phrase. Model 2 is similar to Model 1, but d contains only the pre-dominant, with c containing the dominant and tonic of the final cadence. In Model 3, d begins off-tonic but returns shortly thereafter, with the first chord acting as an accented neighboring chord. After the return to tonic, the d phrase may or may not proceed to a pre-dominant, with the c phrase containing the dominant–tonic cadence.

This chapter will investigate these three harmonic models for srdc in detail, with several representative analyses demonstrating each model. Some of these analyses will not fit any model perfectly, and it will be instructive to study the ways in which these songs depart from

“completion.” BaileyShea, like Everett and Summach, is mainly concerned with thematic relationships, but his form-functional language can easily be adapted to apply to harmonic function.
the models. It is my contention that, in general, sections that exhibit an \textit{srdc} structure are at least in \textit{dialog} with one or more of these models, and those that depart from the models are heard as deviations from a norm. After discussing the three models for \textit{srdc}, I will conclude this chapter by considering the voice-leading structure of bridge sections; in combination with the \textit{srdc} models, this will give us a framework for analyzing complete songs that follow an overall AABA form.

\textbf{Model 1: d contains PD–D; c returns to T}

In Model 1 for \textit{srdc}, the cadence occurs on the downbeat of the \textit{c} phrase such that the \textit{d} phrase contains both pre-dominant and dominant functions. The entire \textit{srdc} verse generally spans eight measures, with two measures per phrase, though a sixteen-bar verse with four-measure phrases is not uncommon. A prototypical case is offered by the Jackson 5’s 1970 single “I’ll Be There,” the first verse of which is transcribed in Example 4.4. In this verse, the \textit{r} phrase is not an exact repetition of the \textit{s} phrase but is instead a sequential repetition transposed down by a diatonic third, effecting a descending 5–6 sequence with a stepwise descent in the bass\footnote{The stepwise descent breaks in measures 3–4, where the bass moves a fourth from D to A (filled in with foreground passing tones). This A is essentially a “cast-out” root, and this root-position III chord is best considered to substitute for a $\frac{5}{3}$ chord with C in bass, which would be consistent with the sequence. This implied C is shown in the graph in Example 4.5.} The sequence ends in measure 5, which is the beginning of the \textit{d} phrase and contains a 5–6 shift above $\hat{4}$ in the bass, prolonging the pre-dominant IV harmony, as shown in the graph in Example 4.5. Measures 6–7 contain $\hat{5}$–$\hat{1}$ in the bass, representing the cadence, and the moment of cadential arrival—the downbeat of measure 7—coincides with
Example 4.4: The Jackson 5, “I’ll Be There” (1970): transcription of first verse with the vocal melody on the top staff and a simplified version of the accompaniment on the lower two staves.

The cadence in this example is somewhat unconventional and merits brief discussion. The inner voices in measure 6, shown in the middle staff of Example 4.4, outline a G-minor triad, which, when combined with the bass note C, creates a V⁹ chord with no third; this chord represents the syntactical dominant in the cadence.⁶ The ninth of this chord, D, seems to

⁶This chord is a version of what Mark Spicer calls a “soul dominant,” which in its most typical form is a IV triad over a 5 bass note (Spicer 2009). The main difference between this and its current incarnation—a II triad over 5—is the absence of 1 in the dominant chord.
Example 4.5: The Jackson 5, “I’ll Be There,” graph of verse.

substitute for the leading tone, resolving up a minor third to ı rather than down by step.\footnote{The voice leading 6–ı is common in rock cadences, even over \textit{V–I} progressions, and has roots in the pentatonic scale. Day-O’Connell 2009 calls a 6 that rises to ı the “plagal leading tone” and notes its prevalence in Debussy’s music.}

The voice leading of the cadence is shown in the lower staff of Example 4.5 with arrows; the upward resolution of the ninth is explicit in the melody over the title lyric “I’ll be there.” The melody further complicates the situation with its emphasized A on the downbeat of measure 6, which might imply a cadential six-four in the absence of any other harmonic cues. In the current context, however, this A is best considered an accented passing tone, effecting a 6–5 motion over the bass note C. The resolution of A to G is, of course, merely implied in the melodic voice, though G is present in the accompaniment. This situation is akin to the more typical melodic figure 3–7–1 over \textit{V}^6_5–3–I, in which case an implied 2 (likely present in the accompaniment) would certainly be read over the second chord.

The Police’s “Every Breath You Take” from their 1983 album \textit{Synchronicity} offers a slight variation on Model 1. As John Covach (2005, 75) points out, this song represents a
Example 4.6: The Police, “Every Breath You Take” (1983): srdc structure in the first verse, with the melodic groupings “out of phase” with the harmonic and hypermetrical groupings.

clear pastiche of a older style in its 1950s-esque I–VI–IV–V progression and its standard 32-bar AABA form (though this form is complicated somewhat through the addition of a second, contrasting bridge section, discussed later in this chapter). In the eight-bar verses, each phrase of the srdc structure is two bars long, though the melodic groupings are out of phase with the harmonic groupings, beginning three beats before the harmonies, as shown in Example 4.6. The harmonies follow the metrical structure, with chord changes occurring every two measures on strong hyperbeats, and so the melody’s pickups are best considered to “belong” to the following chord. For example, the melody’s prolongation of the note C (5) in the pickup measure is supported by the A₇(9) chord in measure 1 even though these do not occur at the same time (see the graph in Example 4.7). By the time the c phrase comes around, the melody is so out of phase with the harmony that it completes its entire phrase before the c phrase’s harmony arrives: the lyric “I’ll be watching you” constitutes the

\[ q = 118 \]

\[ \text{S} \]

\[ \text{R} \]

\[ \text{D} \]

\[ \text{C} \]

\[ \text{S} \]

Very breath you take, every move you make, every bond you break,

every step you take, I’ll be watching you.

Every single day,

\[ \text{D₇(9)} \]

\[ \text{E₇(9)} \]

\[ \text{F₉(9)} \]

\[ \text{A₇(9)} \]

\[ \text{E₇(9)} \]

\[ \text{F₉(9)} \]

\[ \text{A₇(9)} \]

c phrase, but this line occurs in measure 6, whereas the c phrase proper does not begin until measure 7. It would be misguided to analyze this melodic line to belong to the d phrase since its text is clearly conclusive and the two previous lines, “every bond you break, every step you take,” group together as a fragmentation of the s and r phrases, which is typical of d phrases (see Summach 2011).

This verse’s s and r phrases are essentially identical in their melodies, but the r phrase contains a VI chord (Fm\(^{\text{add9}}\)) rather than a I chord. This is a common occurrence in srdc verses; I–VI progressions in s and r generally lead to IV at the beginning of the d phrase, making a bass arpeggiation 1–6–4 connecting the initial tonic to the pre-dominant IV chord. Otherwise, “Every Breath You Take” generally follows the harmonic structure of Model 1 of srdc, prolonging tonic through s and r followed by pre-dominant and dominant in d (see Example 4.7). There is one exception, however: at the c phrase, the dominant V chord resolves deceptively to VI, which in this case merely delays the appearance of I and does not represent a “failed” cadence. (At the end of the second verse, the c phrase contains a I chord, expressing a more conventional perfect authentic cadence.) This VI chord is best
considered a neighboring chord, with its root F resolving to E♭, the fifth of the following I chord, as shown in the graph. The melodic structure also follows the general trends of Model 1, though as mentioned above the melody is out of phase with the harmony and so its motion tends to precede the chord changes. The upper-voice tone 3 is prolonged through s and r, moving to an upper neighbor 4 in d over the IV chord, which passes down to 2 over the V chord and resolves to 1 in the c phrase on the lyric “I’ll be watching you.” (Notice that this overall 3–4–3–2–1 melodic shape is replicated in the foreground in the first two lines of text.) Because the melody is out of phase with the harmony, its resolution to 1 precedes the deceptive harmonic progression to VI, and so we actually perceive an authentic cadence in measure 6 before we realize that the harmony does not cooperate.

Because the cadence in srdc verses that express Model 1 occurs on the downbeat of the c phrase, that phrase does not contain any internal structural motion, instead simply prolonging the final tonic of the functional circuit. In both of the examples seen so far (“I’ll Be There” and “Every Breath You Take”), the melody is complete on the downbeat of the c phrase and the harmony simply extends the final chord for two measures. Some songs, however, engage in “postcadential” material within the c phrase, defined by William Caplin as “music that follows the point of cadential arrival,” prolonging the final harmony of the preceding cadence—in this case, the tonic (Caplin 1998, 16). For example, the Beatles’ “A Hard Day’s Night” from their 1964 album of the same name contains a postcadential I–IV–I progression in its c phrase that prolongs the tonic through a neighboring motion (see the transcription in Example 4.8). This verse is twelve measures long, with four-measure s and r
phrases prolonging the tonic followed by shortened two-measure d and c phrases. Following the typical outline for Model 1, the d phrase contains the progression IV–V, representing pre-dominant and dominant functions, leading to a resolution on tonic on the downbeat of the c phrase in measure 11. Because the c phrase begins with a return to tonic after the syntactical dominant, this moment represents the completion of this verse’s functional circuit, and so the ensuing I–IV♭7–I progression is best interpreted as postcadential. The graph in Example 4.9 shows this structure: the I–IV–I progression in the c phrase prolongs the final tonic, and the structural cadence is the V–I progression from the d phrase into the c phrase (measures 10–11). The upper voice projects an overall ascent from 5 to 8: 5 in s


9Recall the “hierarchy divorce” between melody and harmony in the I–IV–I progressions in s and r, as the melody remains on 5 over the neighboring IV chord, as discussed in the previous chapter.
10Temperley 2011 considers this final IV–I progression to be the structural cadence because it accompanies the end of the vocal phrase. However, this I–IV–I progression echoes the same progression at the beginning of the s and r phrases, which was a clear neighboring progression prolonging tonic.
and r, 6–7 in d, and 8 in c.\footnote{Structural ascents in common-practice tonal music have been discussed by David Neumeyer (1987), who posits that, in particular, 5–6–7–8 as a background structure has “both theoretical and contrapuntal justification” (275).} This final 8 does not literally appear in the vocal line but represents the implied resolution of the leading tone in measure 10; the lead-in to the bridge after the second verse contains a high G representing the delayed realization of this implied 8 (on the lyric “when I’m home”).

My final example of a Model-1 srdc verse is longer than the others, at sixteen measures, and furthermore does not divide into four phrases of equal length. Example 4.10 transcribes the first verse to the Allman Brothers’ “Melissa” from their 1972 album Eat a Peach; as this example shows, the s phrase is four measures long, followed by a truncated r phrase that lasts only two measures before being interrupted by a six-bar d phrase leading to a four-bar c phrase. There are several pieces of evidence that support reading the d phrase to begin in measure 7 rather than measure 9 (the latter of which would produce four equal phrases): the harmonic rhythm doubles in measure 7 to two chords per measure from one, and the three two-bar units that begin at this point group together by virtue of their three rhyming
lines of text: “knowing many, loving none / bearing sorrow, having fun / but back home he’ll always run.” Furthermore, measure 7 represents the onset of a pre-dominant prolongation via a bass ascent through the octave from A to A (♩ to ♪) in measures 7–10. The graph in Example 4.11 shows that this irregular srdc structure outlines the voice leading of Model 1: s and r prolong tonic, d begins with the pre-dominant and ultimately leads to the dominant (V), cadencing to I at the onset of c over the title lyric “to sweet Melissa.”

**Model 2: d contains PD; c contains D–T**

Model 2 is probably the most common layout for srdc structures, especially in longer verses (16 measures or more). In this model, the d phrase prolongs the pre-dominant for the entire phrase, with the syntactical dominant not arriving until the onset of the c phrase. “From Me to You,” seen earlier in Examples 4.1 and 4.2 (pages 122 and 123), has this structure in its verses. Example 4.12 graphs this song’s srdc verse; the example shows the tonic prolonged through s and r, with pre-dominant IV arriving at the beginning of the d phrase, and c containing dominant–tonic. The syntactical dominant function, which is properly carried by the V chord, is prolonged by an initial “cadential I” chord, which as readers will recall from Chapter 2 acts as an inverted cadential six-four chord and does not represent the syntactical tonic\(^\text{12}\) The use of the cadential I is particularly common in the srdc structures of the early Beatles that follow Model 2, such as “I’ll Cry Instead” (Example ??, page ??) and “The Night Before,” graphed and discussed in Nobile 2011; in “The Night

\(^{12}\) As noted in Chapter 2, the concept of an inverted cadential six-four is discussed in Rothstein 2006 and Cutler 2009. Everett 2008a mentions root-position tonic chords acting as cadential six-fours in pop and rock music.


**Example 4.12:** The Beatles, “From Me to You”: Model 2 for srdc with the cadential I chord in the c phrase.

Before,” the cadential I resolves to a IV chord, which functions as syntactical dominant in the verse, rather than to a V chord.

While “From Me To You”’s verses are eight measures long—essentially the shortest possible length for a full srdc structure—verses that follow Model 2 are often significantly longer, with each phrase lasting four or more bars. This is because Model 2, unlike Model 1, is conducive to a longer c phrase: recall that in Model 1, the c phrase contains no structural motion, since the final tonic arrives at its onset, making a long c phrase uncommon, whereas in Model 2, the c phrase contains the structural motion from syntactical dominant to tonic, and therefore can better support a longer phrase. The Monkees’ 1966 single “Last Train to Clarksville” contains an srdc verse that lasts a total of 33 measures, transcribed in Example 4.13. This 33-bar verse is based on a 16-bar prototype, with four four-measure phrases, but in which the d and c phrases are expanded to last six bars each and srd is

---

13Due to the fast tempo, readers might be inclined to hear every two measures of Example 4.13 as one single measure; recall, however, that measures are usually defined by the drum beat, which hits beats 2 and 4 on the snare drum and in this case corresponds to the note values in Example 4.13.

repeated before proceeding to c. There are only three chords in this entire verse: I, IV, and V, all of which are major-minor seventh chords as is typical in blues-influenced songs. This verse furthermore follows Model 2’s voice leading: the s and r phrases contain tonic throughout, while d contains IV (as PD) and c contains V–I (D–T). Over this slow harmonic rhythm, the melody creates interest via register coupling in the s, r, and d phrases (see the graph in Example 4.14: it begins on F♯ (♭7), which is prolonged for five measures before descending stepwise through the octave, bisected by B (♭3), finally resolving to E in the lower register at the onset of the d phrase in measure 9. This E arpeggiates up to C and then, 14

14 The initial ♭7 in the melody is best considered a passing tone from an implied 8 (as shown in Example 4.14), which is present in the guitar riff in the instrumental introduction that precedes this verse, shown in Example 4.13.

in the two-bar extension that makes d last six bars instead of four, all the way up to E an octave higher. At this point, the s, r, and d phrases repeat with a new set of lyrics that explain why the narrator’s lover—he is presumably talking to his lover—must take the last train to Clarksville. The c phrase that follows contains the cadential V–I progression and a quick stepwise descent in the melody from 5 to 1 which in Jay Summach’s words “settles the formal debt” (2011, [17]). This c phrase lasts six measures, but as Summach points out, the last four measures repeat the instrumental opening and may be considered an “interlude” between the verses rather than simply an extension of the c phrase (see Covach 2005, 73–74). In either interpretation, there is a hypermetrical reinterpretation at measure 20 such that this measure begins a new four-bar hypermeasure (shown below the staff in Example 4.13).

15Summach 2011 discusses some text/music relations in this song ([17]).

While the layout of “From Me to You” and “Last Train to Clarksville” is the most common for Model 2, with the pre-dominant arriving at the beginning of d and the dominant arriving at the beginning of c, some variations of this schema exist. One common variation is for the pre-dominant to encroach upon the beginning of the c phrase, delaying the arrival of the dominant and giving c an overall PD–D–T progression. An example of this is Tears for Fears’ 1985 hit “Everybody Wants to Rule the World,” the first verse of which is transcribed in Example 4.15 and graphed in Example 4.16. The d phrase of this verse begins on the pre-dominant II\(^7\) chord, which is expanded through a passing motion up to IV and then back down again. The c phrase begins on the return to II\(^7\) over the title lyric, at which point the passing motion resumes upward from II\(^7\) to III to IV, this time pushing ahead to V, which falls to I for the cadence.

The upper voice of “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” has an abnormal structure: rather than moving to an unstable melodic tone in the d phrase over the pre-dominant harmony, the high G (3) remains as an upper-voice pedal, which is dissonant with the pre-
Example 4.16: Tears for Fears, “Everybody Wants to Rule the World”: verse exhibits Model 2 for \textit{srdc} but the pre-dominant function encroaches into the \textit{c} phrase delaying the arrival of the dominant.

dominant $\text{II}^7$ chord. In fact, the melodic structure of the \textit{s}, \textit{r}, and \textit{d} phrases is rather static, with the high G remaining suspended over an inner-voice oscillation between C and B♭. At the cadence, on the lyric “rule the world,” $\hat{3}$ is thrown an octave lower and moves for the first time, completing a quick $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ descent. Despite the melody’s static voice leading, the rhythm and text patterns provide some interest. The \textit{s} and \textit{r} phrases begin with three five-syllable lines of text that alternate strong and weak syllables (“WEL-come TO your LIFE / THERE’S no TUR-ning BACK / E-ven WHILE we SLEEP”) which are arranged rhythmically as upbeat patterns such that their final syllable arrives on a hyperdownbeat. The fourth line also follows this structure but its final syllable elides to become the first syllable of the \textit{d} phrase: “WE will FIND you AC-” elides with “AC-ting ON your BEST be-HA-vior.” In a clever poetic trick, this elided syllable “AC-” provides the rhyme to “BACK” from the second line. The \textit{d} phrase’s text consists of two eight-syllable lines in trochaic tetrameter (“AC-ting ON your BEST be-HA-vior / TURN your BACK on MO-ther NA-ture”), shortening the length of rhyming couplets from eight bars to four (as is common in \textit{d} phrases) and increasing the
rhythmic activity by omitting any rest between adjacent lines of text. Because of the elision at the beginning of d, the poetic lines shift from being end-accented in s and r to beginning-accented in d. The c phrase consists of one single line of text, the non-rhyming title lyric “E-very-BO-dy WANTS to RULE the WORLD,” which adds a ninth syllable to the trochaic tetrameter of the d phrase’s lines, thus ensuring that the cadence will arrive on a strong beat. This final line of text is both beginning- and end-accented, as a hypermetrical reinterpretation causes both measures 13 and 15 to be hyperdownbeats, which—as mentioned above in the discussion of “Last Train to Clarksville”—is a rather common occurrence in Model 2.

Another interesting feature of “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” is that the tonic triad does not appear at all in this verse. In fact, both the initial and final tonics of the functional circuit are carried by the groove transcribed in Example 4.17. Of course, the tonic pedal in the bass strongly projects tonic function, and the fact that the upper voices do not round out the triad should not be taken to mean that the tonic function is absent or even “fragile,” in Spicer 2009’s terms. Rather, the groove shown in Example 4.17 carries the full weight of tonic function, and the cadence in measure 15 is indeed of the perfect authentic variety. The upper-voice pedal tone that persists in s, r, and d is technically dissonant with the inner voices (chords on roots of F and A♭) but it nevertheless acts as the primary tone, and the background third-progression 3–2–1 should be considered to outline a consonant harmonic interval even though the chord that contains this interval does not appear on the musical surface. This demonstrates that syntactical tonic function is fundamentally distinct from a tonic chord (see Chapter 2). The inner-voice oscillation between the dyads A♭–C and B♭–D continues into the d phrase, which now prolongs the pre-dominant II chord, while the
Example 4.17: “Everybody Wants to Rule the World”: verse groove that carries tonic function despite not containing a tonic triad.

Example 4.18: Harmonic reduction of “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” showing that the inner voices oscillate between the dyads A♭–C and B♭–D for the entire verse while the melody projects a 3–2–1 descent and the harmony outlines a I–II–V–I functional circuit.

upper voice remains on 3 (see the reduction in Example 4.18). The functional circuit and melodic structure are entirely carried by the outer voices while the inner voices remain stuck in this oscillation; even the inner voice implied by the melody, which alternates C (6) and B♭ (5), follows this oscillation. The graph in Example 4.16 shows that this inner voice prolongs C for s, r, and d, only resolving down to B♭ when the harmony arrives at the syntactical dominant V in the c phrase.

Just as the pre-dominant function can encroach forward into the c phrase, as in “Everybody Wants to Rule the World,” it can likewise encroach backward into the r phrase. In my final analysis exhibiting Model 2, the d phrase begins on a V chord, but as we will see,
Early one morning the sun was shining.
I was layin’ in bed,

won’erin’ if she’d changed at all, if her hair was still red.
Her folks they set our lives to-ge-ther,
sure was gon-na be rough.
They ne-ver did like ma-ma’s home-made dress, pa-pa’s bank book was – n’t big e-nough.

I was stan-din’ on the side of the road, rain fall-in’ on my shoes, hea-din’ out for the East coast, Lord

knows I’ve paid some dues gettin’ through.


this V chord can be analyzed as subordinate to an overarching prolongation of IV beginning before the onset of d. Example 4.19 gives a transcription of the first verse of Bob Dylan’s “Tangled Up in Blue” from his 1975 album Blood on the Tracks. This verse contains a sixteen-measure srdc structure but with an extended c phrase containing a two-level (hyper)metrical reinterpretation (3=1 on both the quarter-note level and the bar level, both shown below the staff in Example 4.19). The s and r phrases both contain a simple tonic prolongation for three bars and a IV chord for their fourth bar. In the s phrase, this IV chord acts as a neighboring chord, returning to I at the beginning of r, but this is not the case at
Example 4.20: Bob Dylan, “Tangled Up in Blue”: the pre-dominant IV chord arrives before the onset of the d phrase and the rhetorically-emphasized V chord that does begin d is show as a passing chord prolonging IV.

the end of the r phrase since d does not return to I. In fact, the IV chord at the end of r represents the syntactical pre-dominant, which arrives earlier than expected. The emphasized V chord at the beginning of d might initially sound like the syntactical dominant, but as the phrase progresses we become aware that IV is still active at a deeper level (see the graph in Example 4.20). When the IV chord returns at the end of measure 11, we realize that the chord progression from measures 8–10, IV–V–VI–I–IV, results from a composing-out of the IV triad in the bass with the V chord harmonizing a passing tone between 4 and 6, as shown in Example 4.20. Furthermore, the upper voice in this passage outlines the fourth-progression from A to D (1 to 4), which culminates in the delayed realization of the implied neighbor tone to the earlier primary tone C♯ (3). Therefore, the metrically emphasized V chord that begins the d phrase actually represents a passing chord that ultimately prolongs IV; it is not until measure 13, the onset of the c phrase, that the syntactical dominant arrives. Once

16Notice that in measures 11–12, which repeat measures 9–10, Dylan’s vocal line does not articulate this D but instead reaches above it to E (on the lyric “dues”). Dylan is known for a free treatment of pitch and rhythm, and this E can be adequately analyzed as an upper neighbor that never resolves down to the more stable D.
this syntactical dominant arrives, we get the cadence on the title lyric, accompanied by the bluesy “double plagal” progression bVII–IV–I, which in this case embellishes the “softening” V–IV–I progression discussed in Chapter 2 that ultimately represents motion from V to I.

**Model 3: d begins with a neighboring chord**

One aspect of srdc’s harmonic structure that is common to all three models is that the d phrase begins off-tonic. In Model 3, unlike Models 1 and 2, this off-tonic chord does not represent the arrival of the syntactical pre-dominant function but acts instead as a large-scale neighboring chord that returns to tonic. In other words, the large-scale tonic prolongation does not end at the beginning of d but extends beyond it. Nevertheless, the rhetorical emphasis on a non-tonic chord at the beginning of d provides harmonic momentum—one of BaileyShea 2004’s “essential” features of the continuation phrase of a (classical) sentence—driving the music forward toward the eventual cadence. Consider the Beatles’ “You Won’t See Me” from their 1965 album *Rubber Soul*, the first verse of which is transcribed in Example 4.21. The d phrase of this song begins with a destabilized tonic chord, V⁶⁵/IV, resolving to IV, which returns to I after turning into a minor triad (see the graph in Example 4.22). This progression supports two upper voices moving in parallel sixths, the highest voice moving E–D–C♯, representing 5–4–3 of the background descent,

---


18 This is a different interpretation of this verse from that in Nobile 2011, where I interpreted the I chord in measures 12–13 not as a return to tonic but instead as the upper fifth of IV. In that interpretation, the d phrase does prolong the pre-dominant, making this verse an example of Model 2 rather than Model 3. Although both readings are my own, I prefer the current reading because of the parallelism between measures 13–14 and 1–2, which supports reading measure 13 as a true tonic.
Example 4.21: The Beatles, “You Won’t See Me” (1965), first verse.

and the middle voice moving chromatically G♯–F♯–F♯–E, as shown in Example 4.22. These parallel sixths continue into the c phrase, as the inner voice continues its chromatic descent from E to D♯, then D♯, and finally to C♯ for the cadence while the upper voice completes its descent to 1.

“You Won’t See Me” is based on a 16-bar srdc structure, but there is a question as to where the c phrase begins. On the one hand, this verse divides neatly into four four-bar phrases, which would place the beginning of the c phrase at measure 13. Measure 13 seems to return to the melody of the s and r phrases (“and I will lose my mind” = “when I call you up” and “I have had enough”), and this reading would make the srdc structure similar to a small-scale aaba (discussed later in this chapter). However, measures 15–16 contain the title lyric, add a vocal harmony, and have a clear cadence (with IV acting as syntactical dominant), suggesting that measure 15 is the beginning of the c phrase. The fact

19 Note the “syntax divorce” between melody and harmony for the cadence, in which IV–I supports 2–1; see Chapter 3.
Example 4.22: The Beatles, “You Won’t See Me”: Model 3 of srdc in which the d phrase’s IV chord acts as a large-scale neighboring chord within the tonic prolongation.

that this two-measure idea is repeated in measures 17–18 supports this reading, as it allows for measure 15 to be retrospectively heard as the downbeat of a four-bar hypermeasure. On first hearing, one might be tempted to read measure 13 as the beginning of the c phrase, but measure 15 would most likely overturn that hearing, making the “final” hearing one that contains a six-measure d phrase.20

The title track of Van Morrison’s 1970 album Moondance contains a 32-bar srdc structure in its verses demonstrating a larger example of Model-3 voice leading. The first verse of this song is transcribed in Example 4.23. Example 4.24 shows that the verse’s 32-bar structure is a result of each of the four srdc phrases occurring twice, making an overall ssrrdccc

Followers of Janet Schmalfeldt’s process-based theory of form might say that measures 13–14 “become” an extension of the d phrase; see Schmalfeldt 2011. The idea of form as the process of becoming essentially rejects the container-based approach to form in which we must settle on a single, “final” reading rather than the more phenomenological approach in which our analyses of past, present, and future events are constantly in flux as we listen in time. According to Schmalfeldt, a passage that at first projects one formal function but is later retrospectively heard as a different one is at its core in the process of “becoming” and should not be analyzed as entirely one or the other formal function.

---

20Followers of Janet Schmalfeldt’s process-based theory of form might say that measures 13–14 “become” an extension of the d phrase; see Schmalfeldt 2011. The idea of form as the process of becoming essentially rejects the container-based approach to form in which we must settle on a single, “final” reading rather than the more phenomenological approach in which our analyses of past, present, and future events are constantly in flux as we listen in time. According to Schmalfeldt, a passage that at first projects one formal function but is later retrospectively heard as a different one is at its core in the process of “becoming” and should not be analyzed as entirely one or the other formal function.
Well it’s a marvelous night for a moondance, with the stars up above in your eyes.  
A fantabulous night to make romance ’neath the cover of October skies.

And all the leaves on the trees are falling to the sound of the breezes that blow.  
And I’m trying to please to the calling of your heart-strings that play soft and low.

You know the night’s magic seems to whisper and hush.  
You know the soft moonlight seems to shine in your blush.

Can I just have one more moondance with you, my love?  
Can I just make some more romance with you, my love?  


Outline. In the s and r phrases, the minor tonic is embellished by a neighboring II chord  
(both chords are minor-seventh chords following Morrison’s jazzy style) while the melody  
composes out the third between 3 and 1 (see the graph in Example 4.25). The d phrase begins  
with the chord progression Dm6–G9–Am7, which is an embellishment of a IV–I neighboring  
progression. “Dm6” refers to a D-minor triad with added major sixth (i.e., D–F–A–B) and  
so would normally represent a II65 chord, but in this case it is best analyzed as IVadd6  
because it returns to I21. The G9 chord that follows it is not a functional chord; rather, it  
arises from a passing motion in the bass while holding the upper voices static, as shown in  
Example 4.26. The graph in Example 4.25 therefore omits reference to the G9 chords. Over  
the Dm6–(G9)–Am7 progression, which occurs three times in the d phrase, the melody leaps  
up to 6 acting as a large-scale appoggiatura resolving down to 5. The fourth time that the  
Dm6 chord appears (measure 23), it leads to V7, making it a true II65 chord functioning as  
syntactical pre-dominant. At the downbeat of the c phrase, the dominant V7 chord resolves  
to I for the cadence, as the melody leaps up to 8, decorated with a subtonic neighbor tone.

21This is what Rameau would call an “irregular” (later “imperfect”) cadence; see Rameau 1971 [1722].

Example 4.26: The chords in the d phrase of “Moondance” embellishes a IV–I neighboring progression through passing motion in the bass.

The melodic line of this verse outlines an ascending arpeggiation 3–5–8 rather than a more typical linear progression.

Bridge sections

In terms of their harmonic structure, bridge sections are less varied than verses and other main sections. The main function of a bridge section in AABA forms is to provide contrast to the verses (A sections) in multiple domains: texture, melody, key, lyrics, etc. (see Everett 2009, 147–48). In the harmonic realm, this contrast is generally achieved by beginning
the section away from the tonic and leading to a dominant retransition on V. The overall functional progression of the bridge is therefore syntactical pre-dominant to dominant, and this dominant generally represents a half-cadence and a large-scale interruption not unlike the dominant retransition at the end of a development section of a sonata-form movement. As Everett 2009 points out, the presence of a V chord at the end of a bridge section is one of the more universal harmonic features of 1960s rock music (148); furthermore, this V chord is often tonicized through the use of $\sharp 4$ (within $II^\sharp$, or V/V), intensifying the half cadence and the retransitional nature of the end of the bridge section. This tonicization of V often balances a tonicization of IV (using $b7$) at the beginning of the bridge; in Everett’s words, “the dual alterations allow the bridge to take a relaxed initial step back from the major scale, falling flat to emphasize IV, as if to recoil for a farther jump through a raised scale degree to move up two fifths . . . to the sharp side, emphasizing V” (148). “From Me to You,” whose verse was analyzed above, does exactly this in its bridge section, transcribed in Example 4.27: the first four-bar phrase contains a II–V–I progression tonicizing F major, which is IV of the home key of C major, while the second phrase contains a V–I progression in G major (V). (Note that the typical length for a bridge section is eight bars, hence its alternative name “middle eight,” and it generally divides into two four-bar phrases.)

“From Me to You”’s bridge exemplifies the overall PD–D structure that is typical of bridge sections in AABA forms. By coupling the analysis of this bridge section with the analysis of

---

22 Several theorists have pointed out this general schema, including Everett 2009, 147–49, Stephan-Robinson 2009, 161–62, and deClercq 2012, 70–85.

23 This bridge section exhibits the pattern that Joseph Riepel called a Monte: a sequential pattern that first tonicizes IV and then V, with the second half transposed up a step from the first. This pattern is best known today via Robert Gjerdingen’s study of mid-18th century schemata entitled Music in the Galant Style (2007).
the verse shown in Example 4.12 (page 135), we can arrive at a structural analysis of the entire song, given in Example 4.28. AABA forms are, for the most part, “sectional” forms, meaning that each individual section is harmonically closed (in other words, ends with a perfect authentic cadence). This, of course, does not apply to the bridge section, which ends on a harmonically open half cadence, but the A sections (verses) are closed in the tonic key. What this means in terms of large-scale voice leading is that the first two A sections will prolong the tonic and the primary upper-voice tone through complete middleground progressions—what Schmalfeldt 1991 (following Schenker) would call “Ursatz replicas”—and the B section (bridge) will connect this prolonged tonic to its pre-dominant and dominant, ending with an interruption in the background structure. The final A section will then restart the background progression and complete it with a structural close on tonic. Raising the final A section’s cadence to the background level even though it is a literal repetition of the earlier A sections, which lived in the middleground, demonstrates that the structure cannot be complete until the verses have been tested by the contrasting bridge section. Accordingly, Example 4.28 shows that “From Me to You”’s first two verses and bridge end with an interruption and that

---

Example 4.27: “From Me to You,” bridge.
Example 4.28: Middleground graph of “From Me to You” showing its AABA structure with an interruption after the B section.

the final A section contains the entire second branch. This graph interprets the complete form to be AABA, even though the literal form is AABAABA (recall Example 4.1, page 122); the final ABA (the first A of which is partly instrumental) essentially repeats the form da capo without repeating the verse, as is typical in common-practice dance movements, such as the minuet, that contain da capo repeats.

A common elaboration of the typical PD–D structure of bridge sections is a return to tonic at the end of the first phrase, giving an overall structure of PD–T|PD–D. Trevor deClercq discusses this structure at length (2012, 74–81), citing three common schemas which he calls “classic” bridges, shown in Example 4.29. DeClercq cites several examples of songs that contain one of these exact chord progressions, most of which were released in rock’s foundational years between 1955 and 1963. As deClercq notes, even though a return

25The chromatic motion from 2 of the interruption back up to the primary tone 3 is an example of what Yosef Goldenberg (2012) calls an “interruption-fill.”

26It is likely that these schemas trace their influence to country and western music of the early 1950s rather than to earlier blues or R & B, as they are widely used in the music of Hank Williams and his contemporaries.
“is downplayed with regard to its placement within the section overall” (79), as it always arrives in a weak hypermetrical position and subsequently returns to the pre-dominant. In a structural interpretation, then, these I chords are best considered to participate in an overall prolongation of the pre-dominant function, which in all three cases is represented by IV, making the I chords act as the latter chord’s upper fifth (see Example 4.30). In deClercq’s second model, IV–I–V/V–V, the harmonies unfold two fifths, first prolonging IV and then V (see Example 4.30b). Sometimes the IV chord in a classic bridge is replaced by a different pre-dominant chord, such as VI (as in the Beatles’ “Misery,” shown in Example 4.31), but it is rarely the case that the final chord of a classic bridge section is anything other than V.

“Every Breath You Take” contains a classic bridge that follows deClercq’s second classic bridge schema (Example 4.29b), as shown transcribed in Example 4.32. The only deviation from the model chord progression is the addition of a bIII chord in measure 2, which is a foreground embellishment that connects IV to I (this chord is so easy to miss that deClercq actually leaves it out of his transcription [2012, 86]). This bridge is graphed in Example 4.33.
Example 4.30: Interpretations of deClercq’s classic bridge models showing the tonic chords to be subsumed within an overall prolongation of IV.

a) Transcription

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Bridge} & \\
\text{Bridge} & \\
\text{Bridge} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

Example 4.31: The Beatles, “Misery” (1963), transcription and graph of bridge showing VI as pre-dominant within a PD–T|PD–D framework.
which shows the unfolded fifths characteristic of classic bridges in the lower staff. The upper voice is slightly more complicated than the bass, as the overall third-progression from \( \hat{4} \) to \( \hat{2} \) is obscured by inner voices reaching over this main voice and a shift in register making structural \( \hat{2} \) the melodic peak of the entire song.

Sting and the Police could have constructed a tight-knit AABA form out of the verse shown in Example 4.6 (page 128) and the bridge shown in Example 4.32 that would, in 1983, have been an appropriate homage to the pre-psychedelic rock music of the early Beatles and others. However, their song contains what seems to be a second bridge section after the AABA form is complete; this second bridge is much more in the style of early-80s New
Example 4.34: The “second bridge” in “Every Breath You Take.”

Wave music than the other sections of this song (see the transcription in Example 4.34). This section contrasts with the others in timbre, with its distorted electric guitars; harmony, with its focus on the chromatic submediant; and lyrics, shifting to a personal plea for salvation (“baby, baby, please!”) from the verses’ more aggressive and threatening tone. Because of the stark contrast between this second bridge and the other sections, John Covach describes the overall form of this song as “compound ABA,” with each of the large A sections containing a full AABA structure and large B section comprising the second bridge (see Example 4.35, which is deClercq’s example summarizing Covach’s interpretation; see deClercq 2012, 86, and Covach 2005, 75). Trevor deClercq, on the other hand, considers this second bridge to be only the beginning of the large-scale bridge, which in his interpretation also includes the next two verses, both of them instrumental. DeClercq defends his interpretation by claiming that “this organization (AABA–instrumental–BA) is quite common for songs from the 1950s and ’60s” (88), thus further linking this song with earlier styles. What neither Covach nor deClercq mentions, however, is that the first AABA structure that precedes the second
To begin with, the song contains a prototypical classic bridge section (as shown in Example 3.4.13). This classic bridge section is made apparent through its melodic phrase structure, its use of the standard $S–T–S–D$ harmonic background (specifically, the realization shown in Example 3.4.05b), as well as its placement within a 32-bar AABA core pattern of 8-bar units. Example 3.4.14 shows the section labels used by Covach (2005, 75), in which this classic bridge is labeled as "Bridge 1." (The introductory and closing materials will not be discussed here and are thus omitted from the form chart.) Additionally, the closely interlocked relationship of this classic bridge and the A section that follows is audibly conspicuous; when the A material returns at 1:06, it feels like the natural consequent of the preceding bridge.

Example 3.4.13: "Every Breath You Take" (The Police, 1983); classic bridge

Example 3.4.14: "Every Breath You Take" (The Police, 1983); form chart in Covach 2005 (75)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:17</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:33</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:49</td>
<td>Bridge 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:06</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:22</td>
<td>Bridge 2</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:43</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:59</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>Bridge 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:32</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, the song contains other material that also seems to demand a bridge label. The most obvious candidate— which Covach labels as "Bridge 2"—is shown in Example 3.4.15. This second bridge section starkly contrasts with the rest of the song. Instead of the restrained and controlled textures heard through most of the song, this second bridge opens up dramatically: the melody explores a higher register, the voice quality is less  

Example 4.35: Covach’s interpretation of the form of “Every Breath You Take” as “compound ABA” form. (Reproduced from deClercq 2012, 86.)

bridge is harmonically incomplete: the third verse (the third A) ends deceptively on a VI chord that leads right into bridge 2, which begins on $bVI$. (This third verse has the same chord progression as the first verse, which was shown in Example 4.6.) The second bridge then oscillates between $bVI$ and $bVII$ before eliding into the next (instrumental) verse with a resolution to I. Since a final tonic was withheld at the end of the third verse, the resolution at the end of the second bridge represents the delayed conclusion of the functional circuit spanning the entire AABA structure. This suggests that this second bridge is not really a “bridge” but an interpolation within the AABA framework that serves to compose out a deceptive cadence, delaying the structural close on tonic at the end of the final A section.

This interpretation of the second bridge is shown in Example 4.37 which gives a middle-ground graph of “Every Breath You Take.” This graph interprets the second bridge (marked “B2”) as a prolongation of $bVI$ representing a chromatic inflection of the previous VI chord. The progression VI-$bVI$-I contains the inner-voice motion $\hat{6}$-$b\hat{6}$-$5$, with $5$ arriving over the final I chord. This is similar to the $\hat{6}$-$5$ neighboring motion seen from the end of the first A section into the second. In other words, the second bridge is subsumed within the V-I
AABA group is repeated. Yet the label of compound ABA makes the form of this song seem more atypical—and more unrelated to other songs—than might be appropriate.

An alternative grouping structure for “Every Breath You Take” is shown in Example 3.4.16. This grouping structure shows that the form of this song is only slightly different from a standard AABA song with abbreviated reprise. In particular, note that the return of the BA unit from the AABA core (at 2:15) also includes a repeat of the lyrics from the initial appearance of the BA unit. This repeat of lyrics is a standard attribute of an abbreviated reprise, as seen in previous examples. In the case of “Handy Man,” we also found an instrumental section over harmonies from the A material prior to the abbreviated reprise itself. This organization (AABA—instrumental—BA) is quite common for songs from the 1950s and ’60s (e.g., Willie Dixon songs: “Violent Love” [The Big Three, 1951], “Pain in My Heart” [Willie Dixon, 1955], and “When the Lights Go Out” [Jimmy Witherspoon, 1954]). As a result, the form of “Every Breath You Take” seems relatively typical. The only difference is that a modern-style vocal bridge has been inserted between the end of the AABA core and the instrumental section prior to the abbreviated reprise (as shown in the “Subgroup” column of Example 3.4.16).

Example 3.4.16: Trevor deClercq’s alternative reading of the form of “Every Breath You Take” with an expanded bridge that comprises the “second bridge” as well as the two subsequent instrumental verses. (Reproduced from deClercq 2012, 88.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Lyrics</th>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:17</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>“Every breath you take...”</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:33</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>“Every single day...”</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:49</td>
<td>Bridge 1</td>
<td>“Oh can’t you se...”</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:06</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>“Every move you make...”</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:22</td>
<td>Bridge 2</td>
<td>“Since you’ve gone...”</td>
<td>Modern Bridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:43</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Instrumental Bridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:59</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Instrumental Bridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>Bridge 1</td>
<td>“Oh can’t you se...”</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>abbreviated reprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:32</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>“Every move you make...”</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on our deepened understanding of the term “bridge,” in fact, we might posit other types of bridge quality in this song as well. For example, the non-texted material that lies between the modern bridge and the abbreviated reprise could be considered as not simply an instrumental section but as an instrumental bridge. Admittedly, this instrumental bridge does not provide any harmonic contrast from the rest of the song. Yet from a textural standpoint, it provides great contrast, as it is the only area within the main body of the song that lacks a lead vocal. We could also say that the modern bridge and the instrumental bridge together provide aural relief between the AABA core and its abbreviated reprise (as shown in the rightmost column of Example 3.4.16). In this regard, the entire span of music from 1:22 to 2:32 represents a structural interpolation within the song’s overall AABA form.

Cadence in the final A section and therefore represents a structural interpolation within the song’s overall AABA form.

After the second bridge gives way to the return of the vocal-less verse, we get the entire AABA pattern again without the interpolated second bridge. In this cycle, the final A section still ends deceptively on VI, but it leads to a coda that provides the closing tonic (beginning at 3:00). In the interpretation given in Example 4.37, this repeat of the AABA structure essentially prolongs the final tonic and does not represent background structural motion, similarly to how the final ABA in “From Me To You” was considered a da capo repeat. Therefore, the overall structure of “Every Breath You Take” is essentially AABA, with “B2” subsumed within the final A section. One final feature to notice about this song is that the 3–4–3–2–1 motive is present at three structural levels: it is the background structure to both structural branches, with the first branch interrupted after reaching 2; it exists in the middleground in the first two A sections; and the title lyric “every breath you take”
Example 4.37: Interpretation of “Every Breath You Take” in which the “second bridge” is an interpolation within the overall AABA framework that delays the structural close on tonic with a chromaticized neighboring progression $\hat{6}-\hat{b}6-\hat{5}$ in an inner voice. that begins the first verse—and is repeated twice in each verse with various lyrics—sets this motive in the foreground.

Small aaba

It is not uncommon for the $r$ phrase of an srdc verse to be harmonically open, ending on a V chord or other non-tonic harmony. We saw this earlier in “From Me to You” (Example 4.2 page 123). In these cases, the V chord that ends the $r$ phrase is back-related such that the pre-dominant chord that follows in the $d$ phrase connects to the opening tonic rather than to this V chord.\footnote{Compare Cadwallader & Gagné 2011’s analysis of the first eight bars of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata, Op. 26 (54–56). Based on the definition of cadence offered in Chapter 2, the presence of a back-related dominant does not necessarily signal a half cadence since it often does not coincide with a formal end.} The interpretation of this chord as back-related has more to do with its formal position than its voice leading; a similar situation occurs in the Beatles’ “Misery,” in
Example 4.38: The Beatles, “Misery” (1963), first verse: the IV chord at the end of the r phrase is back-related and the true pre-dominant does not arrive until the d phrase.

Example 4.39: The Beatles, “Misery,” graph of verse: the IV chords in the s and r phrases are neighboring chords prolonging tonic.

which the s and r phrases end with a back-related IV chord followed by another IV chord at the beginning of the d phrase (see the transcription in Example 4.38). Although there is no change of harmony in measures 4–5, the arrival of the pre-dominant function occurs at the phrase boundary in measure 5; the IV chord in measure 4 functions the same way as the IV chord in measure 2, as a neighboring chord to the tonic (see the graph in Example 4.39).

When both the s and r phrases end off-tonic, the srdc structure sometimes turns into a small-scale aaba structure in which the final a phrase—which is also the c phrase—answers
the first two harmonically open a phrases by ending conclusively on tonic. Although the small aaba begins just like an srdc verse, its overall voice-leading structure is more akin to large AABA than to small srdc because the b phrase generally ends with a half cadence, suggesting an interrupted structure with two branches. The four phrases in small aaba function as antecedent–antecedent–short bridge–consequent, making a sixteen-bar verse.

An example of small aaba is Badfinger’s 1969 single “Come and Get It”—written and produced by Paul McCartney—the first verse of which is transcribed in Example 4.40. The first two phrases of this verse are basically identical, both ending inconclusively on V. The third phrase functions as a bridge, beginning on the chromatic submediant and progressing through bII to a half cadence in measure 12. (The I chord in the first half of measure 12 is an example of the “cadential I” and elaborates the following V chord.) The final phrase is a recapitulation of the first phrase, but it leads to a perfect authentic cadence rather than a half cadence.

The graph of this verse in Example 4.41 is similar in overall structure to the graphs of large AABA forms such as “From Me to You” (Example 4.28) and “Every Breath You Take” (Example 4.37), except that in the small aaba, the first two a sections are harmonically open, meaning that the final a phrase is not an exact repetition of the earlier phrases because it is harmonically closed on the tonic. This difference is significant because it means that small

---


29 This layout does not appear in William Caplin’s theory of formal functions for Classical-era instrumental music (1998) but is essentially a mixture of his “small ternary” and “small binary.” The former must, in Caplin’s theory, end with a perfect authentic cadence (which is not the case above), while the latter must not contain any sense of recapitulation (which the final a phrase certainly does). In comparing small aaba to Caplin’s taxonomy, I am equating “bridge” function with Caplin’s “contrasting middle,” although the correspondence is not perfect.

\textbf{aaba} coheres into a single section—\textit{with the final} \textbf{a} phrase answering the questions of the first two—\textit{whereas large AABA consists of four self-contained sections}. The harmonically open \textbf{a} phrases at the beginning of the section are more like the \textbf{s} and \textbf{r} phrases of an \textbf{srdc} verse; even when \textbf{s} and \textbf{r} end on tonic, as they usually do, this tonic is not part of a cadence and so these phrases do not sound complete on their own. The \textbf{b} phrase begins the same as would a \textbf{d} phrase, but its clear half cadence—which in the case of “Come and Get It” is emphasized by a written-out fermata in measure 13—\textit{ensures that this phrase has bridge function}. Small \textbf{aaba} is therefore a true hybrid of \textbf{srdc} and large AABA; the overall form of “Come and Get It” reflects this hybridity, as it contains no large-scale bridge section but consists of two run-throughs of the small \textbf{aaba} plus a coda that recalls the \textbf{b} phrase’s modal

\textsuperscript{30}Jay Summach (2012) uses the word “module” for what I call a section. In his theory the difference between a phrase and a module is one of length, as modules cannot be shorter than eight bars (16).
Example 4.41: Graph of “Come and Get it” showing this verse’s small aaba structure.

mixture. In this song, the small aaba is self-contained enough not to require a contrasting bridge section, but it still needs to be repeated as a strophe rather than only partially, as in the AABABA-types derived from large AABA.

Conclusion

AABA and srdc structures abound in early rock music. While AABA is ultimately inherited from Tin Pan Alley, rock music made this form its own in the 1960s, aided by its ubiquity in the early music of the Beatles. Although rock songs approach this form in myriad ways, there are certain harmonic and melodic shapes that can be regarded as normative in the genre. This chapter represents an attempt to model these normative shapes and demonstrate the relationship between these forms and their voice-leading structures. A main contention of this dissertation is that the standard rock forms are associated with specific voice-leading structures; consequently, an understanding of the voice leading/form relationship is vital to a
thorough understanding of the genre. While the main focus of this chapter was large AABA form, the focus on the \textit{srdc} structures that underlie many A sections will come in handy in the following two chapters, as the three models for \textit{srdc} relate to several models of larger forms, specifically those that include a chorus section. As Jay Summach (2011) has pointed out, by the end of the 1960s the \textit{srdc} structure had expanded to encompass not one but three distinct sections. This expansion gives rise to verse–prechorus–chorus form, which is the subject of the following chapter.
As the presence of a full-fledged chorus became more and more common beginning in the mid-60s, the sr(1)(c) phrase structure expanded to accommodate this new trend. Specifically, the sr(1)(c) model grew to comprise a verse, a prechorus, and a chorus. Jay Summach (2011) traces this expansion throughout the decade, from early enlargements of d phrases through the invention of the prechorus in 1964 and the continued expansion thereafter. While the standard sr(1)(c) phrase structure generally applies to a single section (usually a verse), its expanded form spans three sections. In this expansion, the s and r phrases make up the verse, the d phrase is the prechorus, and c is, of course, the culminating chorus. As we will see, the d and/or c phrases are usually proportionally enlarged so that their lengths are roughly the same as the length of s and r combined—in other words, the lengths of verse, prechorus, and chorus are equalized.

1 According to Summach 2012 (231), the percentage of songs with chorus in the Billboard annual top 20 increased from 27% in the decade from 1955–1964 to 84% in the 1980s.

2 The relationship between the sr(1)(c) pattern and verse–prechorus–chorus form was first pointed out by Walter Everett, who notes that “in songs that do not contain a chorus, ... the Departure-gesture [i.e., d] that precedes each refrain [i.e., c] ... has the same formal function as a prechorus, but clearly the stage is smaller” (Everett 2009, 146–7). Everett is also the author who cites 1964 as the invention of the prechorus; Summach instead considers there to be a continuum ranging from simple d phrases on one end to prechoruses on the other, with most 60s examples falling somewhere in the middle.
The expansion of srdc into verse–prechorus–chorus is not just a question of length, though; both srdc and verse–prechorus–chorus are built on the same voice-leading model. The previous chapter showed that an srdc verse contains one functional circuit in which the initial tonic is prolonged throughout the s and r phrases, the predominant arrives at the onset of the d phrase, and the cadence occurs in the c phrase (the exact placement of the cadence is different in the three models). When srdc expands into verse–prechorus–chorus, this same general outline applies: the verse prolongs an initial tonic, the prechorus begins on a predominant and the completion of the functional circuit occurs in the chorus. More specifically, the voice-leading layout of verse–prechorus–chorus cycles follows Model 1, in which the syntactical dominant arrives within the prechorus and resolves to tonic at the downbeat of the chorus. The chorus, therefore, prolongs this final tonic throughout the entire section and does not contain any internal structural motion. As we will see, this distinguishes verse–prechorus–chorus forms from verse–chorus forms that do not contain a prechorus; in the latter, the structural goal arrives at the end of the chorus rather than the beginning.

For an early example of the expansion of srdc, consider the Who’s 1966 single “Substitute.” The first cycle (verse–prechorus–chorus) of the song is transcribed in Example 5.1. In this song, an eight-measure verse is followed by a ten-measure prechorus and a ten-measure chorus. The verse divides into two four-measure phrases that are identical except for the different lyrics, thus demonstrating its relationship to s and r phrases. The prechorus begins with four similar two-measure ideas, exhibiting the fragmentation typical of both prechoruses and d phrases. These eight measures contain a single chord, the pre-dominant ii chord, which leads to the dominant V chord in the final two measures of the prechorus. This
You think we look pretty good together. You think my shoes are made of leather. But I’m a substitute for another guy I look pretty tall but my heels are high. The simple things you see are all complicated.

look pretty young but I’m just backdated yeah. Substitute your lies for fact I see right through your plastic mac. I look all white but my dad was black. My fine loo’kin’ suit’s really made outta sack.

V chord resolves to I when the chorus begins. The chorus, like the prechorus, consists of a two-measure idea repeated four times; this section is entirely over a tonic pedal and does not contain a cadence or other structural motion.

“Substitute” is a good example of an expanded srdc overlaying a verse–prechorus–chorus cycle. The verse’s two four-measure phrases could easily be the s and r phrases of an srdc verse. With its expansion to last ten measures, the d phrase then becomes its own separate section rather than a continuation within a verse. When we arrive at the chorus, then, we are not expecting a refrain, which usually contains simply a short cadential progression, but instead we expect a full culminating section. Also evident in this section is a voice-leading structure following Model 1 for srdc as discussed in the previous chapter. Specifically, the verse (=sr) prolongs the tonic, the prechorus (=d) begins on a pre-dominant and moves to a dominant, and the chorus (=c) prolongs the tonic. In “Substitute,” the verse’s progression I–IV–V–I, repeated twice, prolongs the tonic; the prechorus contains only two chords: first the pre-dominant ii, which lasts eight measures, and then the dominant V for the last two measures; and the chorus’s tonic pedal, of course, prolongs the tonic. This structure is shown graphically in Example 5.2; note this example’s similarity to graphs of srdc verses in the previous chapter, such as “Every Breath You Take” (Example 4.6, page 128). The upper voice follows the srdc model as well: the primary tone 3 moves to the unstable 2 in the prechorus, which descends to 1 at the beginning of the chorus.

This 3–2–1 descent is not as obvious on the foreground as it could be. Although 3 seems to be in an inner voice during the verses, in these sections I consider the middle vocal line to represent the main melody, while the upper line is a descant harmony and the lower line, though it is sung by lead singer Roger Daltrey, is a lower harmony. Similarly, in the chorus, the main melodic line is the one given on the lower staff in Example 5.1. This melodic line essentially contains the linear progression D–C♯–B–A, prolonging 1, although it begins

One thing to notice about the verse–prechorus–chorus model is that the chorus does not contain any structural motion; the functional circuit has completed with the arrival of the initial tonic of the section, and the remainder of the section functions structurally as a coda. Since the chorus is the most memorable part of the song, one might expect it to be structurally significant, but in general it serves simply to prolong the final tonic chord. Choruses in verse–prechorus–chorus songs generally do not end with a cadence, nor do they contain structures such as periods or a small *srdc*. This is because the chorus itself is the structural goal of the song, and upon arriving at the chorus the structural motion is complete (this is in contrast to verse–chorus songs without a prechorus, in which the structural goal is often at the *end* of the chorus; see the following chapter). In other words, in verse–prechorus–chorus songs, the buildup to the chorus is more significant than the chorus itself. The chorus therefore acts as what James Hepokoski (1993, 78) would call a “telos theme,” in that its initial moment functions both as a structural end, as the completion of the song’s functional circuit, and a formal beginning, as the onset of the principal section of the song. This antithesis of structural halfway through this progression: the D and C♯ are contained in the lower backing vocal line on the lyric “substitute,” shown on the top staff. The lead vocal presents the complete melodic figure in measures 21–22.
end and formal beginning becomes a remarkable synthesis in which the climactic moment is prolonged throughout the entire section. The energy of the song begins low in the verse, increasing through the prechorus and reaching its climax at the onset of the chorus. The telos section itself is constructed as a musical plateau, neither increasing nor decreasing the musical energy. Such choruses therefore often repeat a small motive or phrase several times as a sort of reaffirmation of the structural tonic. This is the case in “Substitute”: the chorus consists of four repetitions of a two-measure motive and does not lead to a cadence or any culminating gesture. A more extreme example of this from two decades later is Huey Lewis & the News’s “Hip To Be Square” from their 1986 album *Fore!*.

The first verse, prechorus, and chorus of this song are transcribed in Example 5.3. The chorus of this song is practically over as soon as it begins: the title line “it’s hip to be square” is anacrustic, with the final syllable “square” arriving on the downbeat of the chorus. The chorus itself consists of four measures of the same groove as the verse (with the texture thickened by the addition of the organ) and a repetition of the title line. It is particularly clear in this case that the arrival of the chorus is the structural goal, and the chorus itself does not contain any structural motion.

**The PD–T|PD–D Schema**

Due to the lack of melodic interest in the chorus of “Hip to be Square,” one might be tempted to analyze measures 17–20 as a refrain instead, calling the entirety of Example 5.3 a verse in srdc form. The prechorus, however, is too expansive to be considered simply a d
phrase and has the structure of an entire section. These eight measures divide into two four-measure phrases: the first begins on a pre-dominant IV chord, as expected, but then returns to I in its fourth measure (measure 12). The second phrase continues the tonic prolongation with a passing chord between I and I₆ before returning to the pre-dominant IV chord in measure 15 and leading to the dominant V chord in measure 16. This illustrates a common schema in prechoruses, especially those that divide into two phrases of equal length: the first half contains PD–T and the second half contains PD–D⁴ The I chord in measure 12 seems

---

Example 5.3: Huey Lewis & the News, “Hip to be Square” (1986): first verse, prechorus, and chorus.

---

⁴Trevor deClercq (2012, 76) describes a similar schema applying to bridge sections. Prechorus and bridge sections are similar in structure, but the main difference between them is that bridge sections typically end

like a stable return to tonic harmony; the unstable G♯ resolves back to G♯, and the lyrics arrive at the end of a sentence. Yet this moment does not complete a functional circuit—there is no cadence, since this is not a formal end—and so it cannot represent a return to the syntactical tonic function on a deeper level (see Chapter 2). This I chord is therefore best interpreted to be subsumed within a prolongation of the syntactical pre-dominant function, which begins at the onset of the prechorus (measure 9) and lasts through measure 15 before giving way to the syntactical dominant. Example 5.4 gives a voice-leading graph of the entire cycle showing the PD–T|PD–D schema in the prechorus. In the upper voice, the primary tone 3 descends to ♯3 for the prechorus, which represents the seventh of IV. This ♯3 fails to resolve at first, and “wobbles” back up to ♯3 when the harmony returns to the tonic. When IV returns in the second phrase, 3 falls back down to ♯3 and this time successfully resolves to 2 over the V chord. Notice that the earlier B-major chord in measure 11 does not support with a half cadence (i.e., an interruption, usually on a V chord), whereas the dominant that ends a prechorus resolves to the tonic chord in the chorus as part of an authentic cadence.

5The term “wobble,” which refers to a chromatic shift of a scale degree, is David Damschroder’s; see Damschroder 2010.
a chord tone in the upper voice—this B-major chord embellishes the motion from A major (IV) to E major (I), and so this is an a hierarchy divorce (Chapter 3), in which the harmony contains embellishments while the melody exists on a deeper structural level.

Genesis’s “Invisible Touch” from their 1986 album of the same name has a similar PD–T|PD–D progression in its prechorus. Example 5.5 transcribes the first cycle of this song. The eight-measure prechorus starts with a four-bar phrase that begins on a pre-dominant chord and ends back on I (measures 9–12), as in “Hip to be Square.” In this case, the initial pre-dominant II♯ dissolves into its upper (diatonic) third IV before continuing to I—a common chord progression that supports the melodic line ♯4–♭4–♭3. The next two measures, measures 13–14, repeat the previous two measures, measures 11–12, which continues the prolongation of I; the final two measures of the prechorus, measures 15–16, then return to the pre-dominant IV and lead to the dominant that sets up the chorus. Example 5.6 gives a structural graph of the verse–prechorus–chorus cycle. The graph shows a pre-dominant prolongation in the prechorus throughout the PD–T|PD–D progression. Note that when the pre-dominant returns after the intervening I chord, it is a IV chord rather than a major II chord as it was initially; this large-scale motion echoes the foreground II♯–IV progression in the first three measures of the prechorus (measures 9–11).

The graph in Example 5.6 shows the verse of “Invisible Touch” to be tonic-prolonging despite beginning and ending off-tonic. The two parallel phrases in this verse both begin with a VI–IV–III progression; the first phrase concludes with a I chord and the second concludes

---

6Everett 1992, 28–31, points out this contrapuntal progression as a common device in early Beatles songs such as “Eight Days A Week” and “You Won’t See Me.”
Well I've been waiting, waiting here so long
But thinking nothing.

Verse

Prechorus

Chorus


with a V chord. The final chord of each phrase is the goal, and so the main harmonic motion is I in the first phrase to V in the second phrase. The V chord at the end of the second phrase is back-relating and ultimately participates in the tonic prolongation over the s and r phrases (compare the analysis of the verse of “From Me to You” in the previous section [Example 4.12 page 135]). The pre-dominant harmony that begins the prechorus therefore continues the functional circuit that began with the tonic in the verse. This circuit concludes at the downbeat of the chorus with the arrival of the tonic supporting I. The chorus, as usual,

does not stray far from the tonic in either melody or harmony, as the structural motion has completed its journey when the chorus begins.

PhRASE Rhythm

The prototypical length of a verse–prechorus–chorus cycle as defined above is 24 measures, with each of the three sections lasting eight measures. In general, each eight-measure section divides into two four-measure phrases. The verse’s two phrases are generally similar, since they derive from the s and r phrases of an srdc verse. The chorus also usually repeats the same phrase twice, sometimes even repeating a single two-measure idea four times. The prechorus’s two phrases, however, are generally not the same. As we saw above, one common model is for the two phrases to express the PD–T|PD–D schema. In both “Hip To Be Square” and “Invisible Touch,” the prechorus’s first four-measure phrase begins on a predominant and ends on the tonic, after which the tonic prolongation pushes through the beginning of the second phrase before returning to the pre-dominant followed by the dominant. A simpler
Example 5.7: The Doobie Brothers, “Rockin’ Down The Highway” (1972): first verse, prechorus, and chorus.

Phrase division in the prechorus is for the first phrase to prolong the pre-dominant and the second phrase to prolong the dominant. This is illustrated in the Doobie Brothers’ “Rockin’ Down The Highway” from their 1972 album *Toulouse Street*, the first cycle of which is transcribed in Example 5.7. The first phrase of the prechorus (measures 9–12) begins on bVI, which functions as pre-dominant. This chord morphs into a German sixth in measure 11 (“F7” in the transcription), strengthening its status as pre-dominant with a dissonance that resolves into the dominant V chord in measure 13. This V chord begins the second phrase of
Example 5.8: The Doobie Brothers, “Rockin’ Down The Highway”: the dominant function is prolonged through an unfolding of V and its chromatic upper third bVII.

the prechorus; its dominant function is prolonged throughout this phrase by unfolding into its chromatic upper third bVII (see Example 5.8). Several authors have pointed out that bVII is frequently used as a dominant substitute in rock music, especially Allan Moore (1995), who claims that this chord and the associated scale-degree b7 are so common that they should be viewed neither as aberrations nor departures from the norm, as well as Christopher Doll (2007), who dubs chords that include b7 “rogue dominants,” which function in the same way as traditional dominants that include ♯7. In “Rockin’ Down The Highway,” V and bVII are juxtaposed and both participate in the prolongation of the syntactical dominant that ends the prechorus. Despite having just one common tone, the two chords can be considered contrapuntal variants of one another, and they generally carry the same function.7

Although it is rare for a prechorus to contain two parallel phrases, it is not unheard of; in such cases, both phrases usually move from the pre-dominant to the dominant, with the dominant at the end of the second phrase ultimately cadencing to the tonic at the beginning of the chorus. This is exactly what happens in Van Halen’s “Dance The Night Away” from their 1979 album Van Halen II, the first cycle of which is transcribed in Example 5.9. The

7As Example 5.7 shows, the lower vocal harmony adds an F♯ to the G-major chord in measure 16, making it a seventh chord. This F♯ at a deeper level represents the flattened ninth of the V chord, resolving to E in the next measure.

The first phrase of the prechorus begins on VI and ends on V, with the melody portraying the characteristic gesture of $\hat{2}$ embellished by a hanging upper-neighbor $\hat{3}$. The second phrase begins the same way as the first phrase, but the melody in measures 16–17 ensures that this phrase’s V chord is heard to cadence to I. This authentic cadence was denied not only in the first phrase of the prechorus but also in both of the verse’s phrases; all three of these end with miniature half cadences on V accompanied by an interrupted descent in the melody from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{2}$ (see the graph in Example 5.10).

The verse’s two phrases and the prechorus’s first phrase all end in half cadences, with an authentic cadence withheld until the lead-in to the chorus.

While the basic length of each section is eight measures, it is common for the prechorus in particular to be expanded beyond the length of the verse and chorus. We have already seen an example of this in “Substitute” (Example 5.1), in which the prechorus is ten measures long while verse and chorus each span eight measures. As we observed, this prechorus consists of four repetitions of a two-measure melodic idea over a II chord followed by two measures of V. The two “extra” measures arise from the repeated idea occurring one too many times; the section could be “normalized” by having this two-measure idea repeat three times. This would result in six measures of pre-dominant followed by two measures of dominant for an eight-measure prechorus. A more significant expansion is seen in Bob Dylan’s 1965 single “Like A Rolling Stone” (Example 5.11), in which the prechorus is expanded to twelve measures. This expansion results from this prechorus’s consisting of three four-measure phrases rather

---

8For more on the concept of phrase expansion and rhythmic normalization, see Rothstein 1989 (Chapter 3) and 1990.

than the typical two. The first two of these phrases consist of a two-measure idea repeated twice, and both prolong the pre-dominant, while the third has two measures of pre-dominant followed by two measures of dominant. So in a sense, both the first and second phrases function as the first phrase of a prechorus; therefore, the expansion can be seen to arise from the prechorus having two first halves.

The graph in Example 5.12 shows the expansive pre-dominant prolongation through the expanded prechorus of “Like A Rolling Stone.” The three phrases of the prechorus are

separated with dotted barlines. The melodic structure shown in this example is interesting: in the large scale, there is an ascent from $\hat{1}$ in the verse to $\hat{3}$ in the chorus, with $\hat{2}$ supported by the dominant V chord that ends the prechorus. The goal of this ascent, $\hat{3}$, does not arrive in the large-scale structure until the chorus, but nevertheless occurs prominently in both the verse and prechorus, though in neither case is it supported by a tonic chord. In the verse, the melody ends each phrase with $\hat{3}$ over a V chord (on “didn’t you” and “kiddin’ you,” measures 3 and 7). While it is possible to consider this note to be a thirteenth or perhaps an added sixth, because the guitar and piano are playing a simple G-major triad I am more inclined to consider this to be an example of a hierarchy divorce between melody and harmony (see Chapter 3). Specifically, the voice outlines the third $\hat{1}$–$\hat{3}$, as shown in Example 5.12 which is consonant with the overall tonic prolongation but dissonant with the foreground chords—not only when $\hat{3}$ occurs over a V chord, but also when $\hat{1}$ is sustained over a III chord in the first half of measures 2 and 6. When the prechorus begins on a IV chord, the voice remains on $\hat{3}$—in this case, this melodic tone is best considered to be the
seventh of the chord rather than another instance of a hierarchy divorce because it is not consonant with a prolonged harmony. This seventh resolves correctly, moving down to 2 over the neighboring V chord and eventually down to 1 as the fifth of the prolonged IV chord, at which point the seventh disappears from the musical surface and IV becomes a simple triad. The emphasis on 3 in the verse and prechorus suggests a search for a structural 3 supported by I that is ultimately fulfilled only in the chorus. As is typical of choruses in verse–prechorus–chorus songs, this one does not develop or lead to a cadence, but simply repeats the anacrustic motive five times, creating a ten-measure section.

BRIDGE SECTIONS: “PRIVATE EYES”

When srdc expands into verse–prechorus–chorus, a bridge section becomes less necessary to complete the form. There is enough contrast within these three sections that it is not too monotonous if they carry all of the melodic material of the entire song. Nevertheless, few verse–prechorus–chorus songs simply repeat the cycle as a strophic song—only one example from this chapter, “Like A Rolling Stone,” proceeds in this way. Most songs in this form move to a contrasting section after two iterations of the verse–prechorus–chorus cycle, but this section often does not function as a bridge. This section is usually instrumental only, with a guitar or other instrument playing a solo line and an accompaniment identical or

9 In a larger scale, the seventh of IV remains active throughout the span of this IV chord, ultimately resolving to 2 over the V chord at the end of the prechorus.
10 Subsequent choruses repeat the motive six times, making a twelve-measure chorus. Adding or subtracting repetitions of the motive does not change the basic structure of the chorus, and most listeners probably will never notice that the first chorus is shorter than later choruses. The basic structure of the chorus is that the two-measure motive repeats until it arrives at the lyric “Like a rolling stone,” which signals the last repetition. How many iterations of the motive there are is irrelevant.
similar to that of the verse. These sections function more to give the singer a break than to create formal contrast. This type of instrumental section occurs in all of the examples from this chapter except “Like A Rolling Stone”: in “Substitute,” the vocal lines are omitted in the third verse, and they pick up again in the subsequent prechorus; “Hip To Be Square” has an extended saxophone solo, first over a static tonic chord, then over the verse accompaniment, between the second and third iterations of the cycle; “Invisible Touch” leads from the second chorus into a synthesizer solo revolving around the $\text{♭VII}$ chord, recalling Genesis’s earlier days as a progressive rock band; “Rockin’ Down The Highway” contains almost a real bridge, as it begins on a pre-dominant II chord and includes a dominant retransition, but this formal function is weakened because the vocals are tacit; and “Dance The Night Away” simply alternates V and IV for eight measures after the second chorus.

There are, however, some verse–prechorus–chorus songs that do include a bona fide bridge section. In Daryl Hall & John Oates’ “Private Eyes” from their 1981 album of the same name, the bridge section helps resolve an ambiguity as to what key the song is in. This song juxtaposes verses in C major with choruses in A minor, and it is at first unclear which key, if any, is more structurally significant. Example 5.13 transcribes the song, with the melodic lines on the top staff, the piano ostinato on the middle staff, and a slightly simplified bass line on the bottom staff. The overall form of this song is intro–verse–prechorus–chorus–verse–prechorus–chorus–bridge–chorus. If we group each verse–prechorus–chorus cycle into a single compound section, this form resembles AABA, but the final A section consists only of the chorus. These verse–prechorus–chorus cycles arise from expanded srdc structures, as expected, but the expansion is less extreme than in the examples seen so far. In the previous
Example 5.13: Daryl Hall & John Oates, “Private Eyes” (1981): transcription with melodic lines on the top staff, piano ostinato on the middle staff, and a simplified bass line on the bottom staff.
Example 5.13 (cont’d)
Go back to chorus, repeat, and fade

Example 5.13 (cont’d)
examples, the prechorus was at least as long as the verse, representing an expanded d phrase. “Private Eyes” does not contain such an expansion; s, r, and d are each four measures long. It is instead the expansion of the c phrase into a nine-measure chorus that puts this song into the verse–prechorus–chorus category rather than srdc. This expanded chorus is furthermore in a different key than the verse: the former is in A minor while the latter is in C major. The prechorus, though it ultimately leads to the chorus’s A-minor key, could easily have led instead to C major; the arrival at A minor is unexpected. One can imagine a situation in which the chorus remains in C major and is not expanded, making this whole passage an srdc verse rather than a verse, prechorus, and chorus. Example 5.14 provides a recomposition of the chorus as a c phrase that remains in C major. In this recomposition, the prechorus remains as in the original, but the chorus simply cadences to C major from its “soul dominant”—a IV triad on top of a 5 bass note—over the title lyric “private eyes.” This line becomes a refrain rather than a chorus, and the next four measures simply remain on the tonic chord.

But the soul dominant does not cadence to C major, and instead leads to the nine-measure chorus in A minor, solidifying the previous four measures’ role as prechorus rather than a d phrase. The chorus’s strong A-minor tonality raises the question as to what the true tonic of the song is: is it the A minor of the chorus, the C major of the verse, or both, creating what Robert Bailey (1985) would call a “double-tonic complex”? In a double-tonic complex, the tonic would be represented by the four-note chord containing A, C, E, and G; this chord’s two triadic subsets—A, C, E and C, E, G—could each be central for stretches, but neither

11The term “soul dominant” is Mark Spicer’s, from Spicer 2009.
Example 5.14: Recomposition of the chorus of “Private Eyes” to make an srdc verse rather than a verse, prechorus, and chorus.

would emerge as superior to the other. This is an apt description of the verse–prechorus–chorus cycle of “Private Eyes”: the song begins with an introduction in A minor, but the verse unequivocally projects C major, expressing the mixture-laden progression I–♭VI–♭VII–I. The ensuing prechorus does not contradict the verse’s C-major tonality; furthermore, the chord progression that ends it (measures 20–21) is A♭–F/G, which can be interpreted only as ♭VI–V7 in C major. The resolution of the latter chord—the soul dominant mentioned above—to A minor is therefore unexpected. It is more than just a deceptive cadence, however; the structural weight of the downbeat of the chorus makes this sound like a syntactical dominant–tonic progression. It is not such a stretch for the F/G chord to function as dominant of A

See also Krebs 1996.
Example 5.15: Structural interpretation of “Private Eyes” as projecting the single key of A minor.

minor—this chord is a type of bVII chord, which many authors claim actually functions as dominant more often than V in rock music, as mentioned above. Yet the inclusion of Ab in the A-minor chorus undermines A minor’s tonic status; these Ab can only be interpreted as mode-mixture within the key of C major. Further supporting a reading of a double-tonic complex is the chorus’s final cadence to an Am7 chord in measure 31—a full statement of the four-note tonic chord.

The bridge section, however, seems to support A minor as global tonic. As discussed in Chapter 4, bridge sections commonly end with a retransitional dominant, usually represented by a V chord regardless of the chords that function as syntactical dominant in the earlier sections. In “Private Eyes,” the bridge ends on a strong V7 of A minor (measure 48). This V7 leads back to A minor for the chorus; this is the only strong V–I motion in the entire song, and seems to solidify A minor as the primary tonic of the song. A monotonal interpretation in the key of A minor would give us the structure outlined in Example 5.15. This example shows a functional circuit that begins in the introduction and ends at the chorus, where the

---

13The soul dominant built on b7 also appears in C major at the end of the introduction (measures 7–8). In this passage, the chord Ab/Bb functions as syntactical dominant of C major leading into the verse. The mode mixture of this chord foreshadows the mixture in the verse and prechorus, all of which involve an Ab-major triad in some way.

14According to Gottfried Weber, the keys of A minor and C minor are both only one step removed from C major, while C minor bears no direct relation to A minor (Weber 1851 [1832], 307–317).
initial tonic unfolds into its upper third for the verse. With the exception of the soul dominant built on $b\hat{7}$ in the prechorus, this deep structure is a rather orthodox progression in A minor. However, as we examine the progression from this deep middleground to the foreground, we see some unconventional prolongation techniques. Example 5.16 gives middleground and foreground graphs of the song, interpreted in the single key of A minor. Looking first at the middleground graph (on the upper staff), we see that this generally reflects the deeper structure of Example 5.15 with a few additions: first, the progression from the A-minor harmony of the introduction to the C-major harmony of the verse is filled in with a passing B♭ in the bass voice. This B♭ corresponds to the $b\text{VII}_9$ chord of C major—the soul dominant discussed above. The upper voice tone of this chord is shown as D♯ rather than E♭ because it is interpreted as a passing tone from C to E, the latter being the primary tone of the song. Interpreting it as a D♯ also shows this motion as a transformation of parallel tenths; more typical would be the upper-voice motion C–D♮–E supported by A–B♮–C, but the upper-voice motion instead divides into an augmented second and a minor second, with the soul dominant harmonizing the outer-voice interval of an augmented tenth. This same chord appears at the end of the chorus, but this time resolves to A minor rather than C major. The middleground graph shows chromatic neighbor tones in contrary motion in the outer voices: E–D♯–E in the upper voice and A–B♭–A in the bass voice. The foreground graph at the bottom of Example 5.16 shows that this chord is part of a miniature circuit in A minor in which it functions as the syntactical dominant; one could interpret this chord as an altered tritone substitute for V.
Example 5.16: Middleground and foreground graphs of “Private Eyes.”
The foreground graph also shows an interesting prolongation of the pre-dominant IV chord in the prechorus. The graph shows that this IV chord (Dm7) unfolds to its altered fifth A♭ before proceeding to the soul dominant built on G, which functions as the syntactical dominant. It is surprising to see an A♭-major chord in the context of A minor; however, this A♭-major chord makes sense in the local context of C major as ♭VI. We have already heard this chord in a C-major context twice in the verse. Nevertheless, the foreground chord progression is odd: the chord progression Em7–A♭ is highly chromatic—the two are what neo-Riemannian theorists call “hexatonic poles” because they have no common tones and together contain all members of a hexatonic scale.\footnote{The hexatonic pole relation occurs between the triads Em and A♭, without sevenths. The term “hexatonic pole” was first used in this context by Richard Cohn (1996). Cohn notes that a triad can connect to its hexatonic pole by moving each of its three pitch-classes by a semitone.}

The bridge section of this song is eight measures long but contains relatively little harmonic motion (see measures 41–48 in Example 5.13): the first four measures contain a Dm7 chord with an E in the melody, combining to make a Dm9 chord, while the next four measures move from a G-minor chord to an E7 chord, the latter representing the dominant retransition discussed above. The foreground graph in Example 5.16 shows that the G-minor chord represents an altered upper third of the E7 chord, and so the overall progression is IV\(^9\)–V\(^7\) of A minor, as shown in the middleground graph. The upper-voice tone 5 (E), which is suspended as the ninth of the IV chord, resolves to 4, which is also dissonant as the seventh of V\(^7\). This seventh does not get a chance to resolve, however, as the chorus takes the upper voice back up to the primary tone 5. As we saw in the voice-leading model for AABA form described earlier this chapter, the dominant retransition at the end of a bridge
section generally functions as a half cadence rather than an elided authentic cadence into the next section, and so interpreting an interruption here, as shown in Example 5.16, is consistent with the model. Following the bridge, however, we do not get a recapitulation of verse–prechorus–chorus, but instead we get only the chorus, which repeats and fades out. This means that after the interruption, we do not have a full functional circuit but rather a looping progression that prolongs $\hat{5}_1$, the primary tone over the tonic.

**Expanded Verses**

In the examples seen so far, the general model has been that each section—verse, prechorus, and chorus—is eight measures long such that the whole cycle contains a total of 24 measures. This model is an expansion of a 16-measure srdc section that arises by doubling the size of the d and c phrases from four to eight measures each. Sometimes the verse’s s+r phrase structure is also subject to expansion such that each of these two phrases is eight rather than four bars long. In such cases, the resultant verse–prechorus–chorus form is double the length of an srdc verse—32 measures. The expansion of the verse from eight to 16 measures often involves more than simply lengthening the phrases: two common processes are for the second phrase to contrast with the first while continuing the overall tonic prolongation, or for each of the two phrases to contain contrasting subphrases of four measures each.

The first of these processes is demonstrated in Def Leppard’s 1983 hit single “Photograph” off of their album *Pyromania*. The first verse, prechorus, and chorus of this song are

---

16Out of the examples seen so far, only “Invisible Touch” and “Dance the Night Away” fit this model exactly; all of the others are expanded or contracted in some way.
transcribed in Example 5.17; these sections fit the 32-bar model, containing a 16-bar verse, an eight-bar prechorus, and an eight-bar chorus. The verse’s two eight-bar phrases, indicated on the transcription, contain contrasting melodic material over the same accompaniment. (In the first verse, the bass does not enter until the second phrase, but in later verses it plays throughout, and so I interpret the tonic pedal as existing conceptually in the first phrase as well as the second.) Structurally, the contrast between the two phrases allows the melody to rise to the primary tone 5 in the second phrase, as shown in the graph in Example 5.18.

This graph points out an interesting feature of this song: the two key areas of the song, E major in the verse and G major in the prechorus and chorus, are equal in status with neither emerging as primary. Because of the verse’s expansion, each key takes up the same amount of time (16 measures); the strength of the verse’s E-major tonality—the tonic pedals throughout—makes it difficult to hear it as VI leading to an auxiliary cadence in G major, but the chorus completes the functional circuit with a strong V–I cadence in G major, which undermines E major as the global tonic. (The chorus’s chord progression does not contain a root-position tonic triad, but nevertheless effectively prolongs the tonic Stufe.) Due to the equal status of these two keys, I consider this song, unlike “Private Eyes” above, to be an example of Capuzzo’s “sectional tonality” (2009), in which two equal keys govern distinct sections of a song with neither emerging as primary. In this case, the primary tone B (5) serves as the link between these two keys and arguably the unifying element of the entire song.\footnote{Compare Peter Kaminsky’s analysis of Schumann’s Davidsbündlertanz (1989, 216–25), in which he notes the unifying role of the pitch B4 linking the keys of G major and B minor/major. See also William Rothstein’s analysis of the second-act finale of Bellini’s Norma (2012, 266–77).}
Example 5.17: Def Leppard, “Photograph” (1983): first verse, prechorus, and chorus. The verse is 16 measures long, consisting of two contrasting eight-measure phrases all over a tonic pedal.
Example 5.18: Def Leppard, “Photograph”: the two keys E major and G major are equal in status with neither emerging as primary.

Michael Jackson’s pop hit “Billie Jean” from his 1982 album *Thriller* demonstrates an expanded verse in which each of its two eight-measure phrases divides into four-measure subphrases. Example 5.19 transcribes the first verse, prechorus, and chorus of this song. In fact, the verses of this song are *twenty* measures long, due to a four-measure extension at the end of the first eight-measure phrase (measures 9–12) resulting from a repetition of the second subphrase. The two subphrases follow the harmonic pattern of the first eight measures of a twelve-bar blues pattern: four measures of I (first subphrase, measures 1–4), followed by two measures of IV and two measures of I (second subphrase, measures 5–8). This 20-measure verse is followed by an eight-measure prechorus that expresses the progression VI–V (PD–D) leading into the chorus which resolves this V to the tonic.
Example 5.19: Michael Jackson, “Billie Jean” (1982): first verse, prechorus, and chorus. The verse is 20 measures long, consisting of two eight-bar phrases, the first of which is extended by four bars.
The observant reader might have noticed that the chorus of “Billie Jean” is similar in both melody and harmony to the verse. The accompaniment is the same (with a thicker texture and louder dynamic, but over the same signature bass riff) and the melody is generally different, although it contains the same lyrical/melodic motive “I am the one” in measures 32 and 36 that appeared previously in measures 4, 8, and 16. Furthermore, the chorus’s 12 measures result from the same repetition of the second subphrase (measures 37–40) that occurred in the verse’s first phrase (measures 9–12). This structure is akin to an overall aaba structure, which is a particular subtype of srdc discussed in Chapter 4. Since verse–prechorus–chorus songs arise from expansion of srdc sections, it follows that a subtype of verse–prechorus–chorus form would be an expansion of aaba. “Billie Jean” is an example of the most common instantiation of this, in which the verse and chorus share the same harmonic content but with different melodic material.\footnote{Some other more recent examples of this include Sarah McLachlan’s “Building a Mystery” (1997) and Katy Perry’s “Firework” (2010), the latter of which was analyzed in Chapter 3.} Rarely, however, a chorus will contain the same harmonic and melodic material from the verse, presenting a true AABA phrase structure. In such cases, the prechorus functions as a contrasting middle section that connects instances of the same material, not unlike a bridge section in the AABA songs of the 60s, as discussed in the previous chapter.\footnote{I should point out an important difference between verse–prechorus–chorus as expanded aaba and 60s-style AABA songs: the bridge in the 60s AABA songs ends with an interruption such that its dominant retransition does not resolve to the tonic in the final A section, whereas the prechorus’s dominant does resolve to I into the chorus. So, although both sections are notated with the letter “B,” their structural functions are different.}
An excellent example of this is Billy Joel’s “Uptown Girl” from his 1983 album *An Innocent Man*. As the transcription in Example 5.20 shows, the chorus recapitulates the melodic and harmonic material from the verse nearly exactly (with varied lyrics). In this case, what is it that makes it a chorus rather than just another verse? The answer lies in the voice-leading structure: the verse’s tonic prolongation initiates the functional circuit, which as expected continues in the prechorus with a pre-dominant to dominant progression, and completes at the beginning of the chorus (see Example 5.21). The chorus is therefore a structural *end* while the verse is a structural *beginning*. Given the aaba phrase structure, one might be tempted to read an interruption in measure 28 at the end of the prechorus, but that interpretation is contradicted by the melody, which clearly shows measure 28’s V chord resolving to the I chord that begins the chorus as part of an *authentic* cadence.

The cycle transcribed in Example 5.20 is 44 measures long, but is based on the 32-measure model described above. The verse is 16 measures long, consisting of *four* similar four-bar phrases, which group 2+2 to make two eight-bar halves, each of which starts with the title lyric “uptown girl.”20 The prechorus is *twelve* measures long, divided into three four-bar phrases. The expansion from the expected eight bars comes out of a search for the “right” V chord on which to end. As shown in the foreground graph in Example 5.21, each of the prechorus’s three four-bar phrases ends on the V chord of a different key: the first on V of C, the second on V7 of A, and the third on V of the tonic E. The second phrase’s E7 chord—the second “wrong” V chord—resolves to A major (IV), which continues the pre-dominant

---

20In the second verse (out of only two total), the verse is only eight bars long, making the second cycle based on the 24-bar model rather than the 32-bar model.
Example 5.20: Billy Joel, “Uptown Girl” (1983): first verse, prechorus, and chorus. The chorus recapitulates the verse material, but functions as the chorus because of its position at the end of the functional circuit.
prolongation from C major (♭VI) at the beginning of the section; both of these pre-dominant chords are local key areas. A major modulates back to E major by chromatically shifting its II chord (B minor) to become V of E (B major) in measures 27–28, which allows the chorus to enter by completing the functional circuit. The chorus lasts the expected eight measures, but is expanded by an eight-measure “post-chorus” that recalls the B minor/B major duality seen at the end of the prechorus.\footnote{The origin of the term “post-chorus” is unknown, but it has entered the music theoretical lexicon, seen recently in both Spicer 2011a and Summach 2012.}
The Structural Importance of the Prechorus

The expansion of a 16-measure srdc section to become a 24- or 32-measure verse–prechorus–chorus cycle occurs in multiple dimensions. Several authors, especially Summach 2011, have pointed out the temporal expansion of the d phrase to become a prechorus section. The current study shows that the srdc voice-leading model also expands to overlay verse–prechorus–chorus forms. Specifically, the form projects a single functional circuit in which the verse prolongs the initial tonic, the prechorus begins on a pre-dominant and ends on a dominant, and the chorus concludes with the final tonic, which is based on Model 1 as described in Chapter 4. Interpreting a verse–prechorus–chorus cycle to contain a single circuit has two important implications: first, it implies that the dominant at the end of the prechorus is not a half cadence but instead resolves to the tonic in the chorus to effect an authentic cadence. Jocelyn Neal has suggested that prechorus sections end with “dramatic half cadence[s] and harmonic interruption,” which implies that the chorus’s opening tonic chord begins a new functional circuit, presumably concluding at the end of the chorus with a cadence (Neal 2007, 45). However, as we have seen, chorus sections that follow a prechorus generally do not contain full functional circuits, and often contain very little melodic or harmonic interest at all (recall especially “Hip to be Square,” page 171). This alone does not mean that the end of the prechorus is not a half cadence, though: more solid evidence comes from the melodic structure. Specifically, the melody projects a goal-oriented progression from the verse to the chorus; this progression is not interrupted at the end of the

prechorus, but instead continues to reach its goal at the onset of the chorus. Most often, this progression is a descending linear progression from $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{5}$—i.e., a Schenkerian *Urlinie*—as seen in “Substitute,” “Hip to be Square,” “Invisible Touch,” and “Dance The Night Away.” In these cases, an interpretation of an authentic cadence from the end of the prechorus into the chorus is strongly supported by the melodic motion from $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$. In other cases in which the principal melodic motion is *not* a descending linear progression to $\hat{1}$, it is still the case that the melodic goal arrives at the beginning of the chorus, as seen in “Like A Rolling Stone,” in which the ascending progression $\hat{1}–\hat{2}–\hat{3}$ reaches its final tone over the line “how does it feel?,” and “Uptown Girl,” which contains the neighboring progression $\hat{1}–\hat{7}–\hat{1}$ concluding at the beginning of the chorus.

The second implication of the single-circuit model for verse–prechorus–chorus forms is that these forms are fundamentally different from verse–chorus forms that do not contain a prechorus. Verse–chorus forms are the subject of the next chapter, which will show that when there is no prechorus, the structural goal of the song generally occurs at the *end* of the chorus. Sometimes the verse and chorus together contain a single functional circuit, but more often each of the two sections contains its own circuit—in other words, they are *closed* sections. We have seen that when there is a prechorus, however, each section is *open* and the structural goal is at the *beginning* of the chorus. There is therefore a significant difference between chorus sections that follow a prechorus and those that do not: those that do not

---

In “Uptown Girl” in particular, the melody strongly connects the V at the end of the prechorus to the I at the beginning of the chorus. Reading a half cadence at the end of the prechorus is especially difficult in this example. Burstein 2014 investigates cases from the classical repertoire in which it is difficult to distinguish half cadences from authentic cadences.
lead towards a cadential goal at the end, while those that do act as codas with no large-scale structural motion.

As Trevor deClercq points out, several writings on form in pop and rock music omit any reference to the prechorus at all (2012, 89–90). Covach 2005, a self-described “primer” on form terminology, does not mention it, nor do earlier works such as Moore 2001 and Stephenson 2002. While the term has more recently found its way into the music-theoretical lexicon, theorists that discuss the prechorus generally do so only as an afterthought. Walter Everett dismisses the prechorus as “a very common way of joining separate verse and chorus” (Everett 2009, 146), implying that a song would work perfectly well if its prechorus were omitted and the verse proceeded directly to the chorus. However, by considering verse–prechorus–chorus forms as fundamentally distinct from verse–chorus forms with no prechorus, we can see the structural importance of the prechorus section and the effect its presence has on the verse and chorus sections surrounding it. This distinction, along with the general voice-leading model for verse–chorus forms, is the subject of the following chapter.
Though most music theorists consider verse–prechorus–chorus to be simply a subtype of general verse–chorus forms, the previous chapter showed that the former exhibits a significantly different voice-leading structure than the latter such that the two are best considered fundamentally distinct. In the current chapter, I will investigate the structure of verse–chorus songs that do not contain a prechorus. I will show not only that verse–chorus form is fundamentally different from verse–prechorus–chorus, but also that there are two types of verse–chorus forms that have entirely different harmonic and melodic structures. I will call these two types “sectional” and “continuous” verse–chorus forms, the main difference between them having to do with whether the chorus continues the harmonic and melodic structure begun by the verse or contains its own complete structure. Specifically, chorus sections in continuous verse–chorus forms begin with the pre-dominant function—which connects backwards to the verse’s tonic—while choruses in sectional verse–chorus forms begin on the tonic. Continuous verse–chorus songs therefore contain a single functional circuit from

1The terms “sectional” and “continuous” in reference to formal types are originally Douglass Green’s; see Green 1979. In Green’s definition, sectional forms occur when each section is closed in its tonic key, whereas continuous forms exist when at least one section is “open,” i.e., does not end with a PAC in the key in which it began.
the beginning of the verse through the end of the chorus, whereas sectional verse–chorus songs exhibit a full circuit in the chorus alone. Both types of verse–chorus position their structural goal at the end of the chorus section, as opposed to verse–prechorus–chorus form, which places it at the beginning of the chorus.

Sectional Verse–Chorus Form

Sectional verse–chorus is the most common type of verse–chorus form. In sectional verse–chorus form, both verse and chorus are self-contained sections; in other words, they both begin with what William Caplin (1998) would call an “initiating” formal function and achieve some measure of closure at their end. In general, the closure that ends the chorus will be stronger than that ending the verse; usually the chorus will end in a cadence, while the verse often will not (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of cadences and closure in rock music). This layout contrasts with the model for verse–prechorus–chorus form discussed in the previous chapter, in which neither the verse nor the chorus is self-contained, but the entire verse–prechorus–chorus cycle participates in a single functional circuit concluding at the downbeat of the chorus. In those cases, structural closure arrives at the onset of the chorus, and the chorus itself does not end with a cadence or other concluding gesture. However, in sectional verse–chorus forms, where each section is self-contained, the structural closure arrives at the end of the chorus. Verses and choruses in songs exhibiting sectional verse–chorus form are therefore fundamentally different from those in verse–prechorus–chorus songs.
The Jackson 5’s 1970 number-one single “ABC” expresses typical sectional verse–chorus form. Example 6.1 transcribes this song through the end of its first chorus. The example shows an eight-measure verse and an eight-measure chorus preceded by a two-measure introduction. A tonic pedal persists in the bass throughout the verse, while the piano chords alternate tonic and neighboring subdominant triads. This, of course, means that there is no cadence at the end of the verse; the verse achieves weak closure by virtue of containing four phrases, but since neither melody nor harmony ends conclusively, the end of the verse also points forward toward the chorus. (The text, though it completes a sentence at the end of the verse, also points toward the chorus with the implied colon after “All you gotta do is repeat after me[:].”) The chorus begins with the first bass motion, a simple scale from ˆ1 (A♭) to ˆ3 (C), in rhythmic unison with the title lyric “A, B, C.” This three-note motive is the basis for the entire chorus, occurring at the beginning of measures 11, 12, and 13, and then fragmented and inverted in measures 13–14. This melodic motive sets the three-syllable lyric fragments “A, B, C,” “one, two, three,” “do, re, mi,” and “you and me”; the fact that all four of these combinations are set to the same motive reinforces the idea that “you and me” belong together just like “A, B, C” and the others, representing the singer’s main point. The punch line “you and me” also creates a cadence both melodically, by descending to ˆ1, and harmonically, supported by IV–V–I. (Measures 11–14 represent the complete chorus; these four measures are repeated in measures 15–18 with a thicker texture to make the chorus last eight measures, but it is essentially a four-measure section cadencing in measure 14.) The end of the chorus is therefore the structural goal of the song; this moment completes
Example 6.1: The Jackson 5, “ABC” (1970): transcription through the first chorus
the functional circuit and melodic descent while providing the lyrical climax. Example 6.2 demonstrates this with a voice-leading graph of the chorus.²

“ABC” illustrates the typical model for verse–chorus form: a verse that ends with weak closure leads to a chorus that begins with a clear initiating function and ends with a cadence to effect strong closure. While both sections are self-contained in a general sense, they also combine to make a cohesive whole. The cadence at the end of the chorus of “ABC” completes the functional circuit that began at the onset of the chorus (as shown in Example 6.2), but it also completes a harmonic process that began at the beginning of the verse. The closure at

²As Mark Spicer points out, this song contains an early example of a “postchorus” section following the chorus proper; see Spicer 2011a, [9]. The postchorus is analogous to a codetta and follows the structural close of a verse–chorus cycle.
Example 6.2: Graph of the chorus of “ABC” showing a cadential goal at the end of the section.

the end of the verse was weak, and therefore the formal process was not finished at that point. The chorus, therefore, completes the formal process begun at the onset of the verse. Verses are not always as simple as in “ABC,” with its tonic pedal throughout; Simon and Garfunkel’s 1966 single “Homeward Bound” provides an example of a more harmonically active verse that nevertheless follows the same general plan as “ABC.” Example 6.3 transcribes this song through the end of its first chorus.

In the verse of this song, the tonic B♭ harmony is flanked by its upper and lower neighbor chords Cm and A♭ before returning in measure 9. Up to this point, the melody has remained in the lower vocal register, mostly decorating F3, but in measure 10 it begins to rise through the B♭ major triad, ultimately reaching D4 while the band crescendos in anticipation of the chorus.\(^3\) This D4 is the primary tone of the song, reappearing in measure 15 and ultimately descending to B♭4 in measures 18–19; its appearance at the end of the verse serves to

---

\(^3\)Although Art Garfunkel’s descant harmony is consistently the literal upper voice, it is clear that Paul Simon’s lower vocal line is the main melody and therefore carries the functional upper voice. The main voice is indicated with full-sized noteheads, while the subsidiary lines have smaller noteheads.

Connect the voice leading of the two sections. Example 6.4 gives a voice-leading graph of the verse–chorus cycle, demonstrating that although the verse is somewhat closed off by the return to the tonic harmony in measure 9, it also leads smoothly into the chorus through its arpeggiation to the primary tone.

It is not uncommon for both verse and chorus to end in cadences. When this occurs, the chorus’s cadence is generally more emphatic than the verse’s, keeping with the general trend that a chorus has stronger closure than the verse that precedes it. One way for the chorus to achieve a more emphatic cadence than the verse is for the chorus’s cadence to end on

\[D4–C4–B34\]

a hypermetrically stronger beat than the verse’s. While the standard model for a four- or eight-bar phrase has the cadence arriving on the final bar, which as a rule is hypermetrically weak, it is often the case that a particularly important cadence will be delayed by one measure, thus landing on a hypermetrically strong beat. (This is often accompanied by a phrase elision, or “grouping overlap” to use Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1983’s term, where this strong beat simultaneously functions as the end of one phrase and the beginning of the next.) For example, the important perfect authentic cadence that ends the second theme of a sonata-form movement, which Hepokoski & Darcy 2006 call the “essential expositional close,” often occurs on a strong hyperbeat, while any cadences internal to the first or second theme tend to occur on the normative weak hyperbeats (see Temperley 2003 for a discussion and examples of this phenomenon).

The Eagles’ “Desperado,” from their 1973 album of the same name, provides an interesting example of this process. This song consists of two main sections, which I will call A and B, as well as an introduction and coda, both containing the song’s signature piano riff, such that
the overall form is Intro–ABABA–Coda. The introduction and first AB cycle are transcribed in Example 6.5. While it is tempting to call A the verse and B the chorus, there are several reasons to avoid this analysis. First, the lyrics of the B sections are different in each iteration, while choruses generally repeat the same lyrics each time through. (Walter Everett cites the repetition of lyrics as the “primary difference” between choruses and verses, which generally do not repeat lyrics [2009, 145], though Ken Stephenson rightly points out that repetition of lyrics “is an inefficient indicator of form for the listener” since one does not know that
the lyrics repeat until the second time through, whereas “most listeners are able to identify choruses intuitively as they begin” [2002, 125].) Second, the song ends with an A section (before the coda), whereas in most verse–chorus songs the final section is the chorus. Third, the harmonic profile of the B section is PD–T|PD–D (with VI functioning as pre-dominant), which as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 is most commonly seen in bridge and prechorus sections. The B section is certainly not a prechorus—it does not lead to a chorus and the preceding verse is closed off with a cadence, an uncommon occurrence in verses that lead to prechoruses—and though it is somewhat plausible to call it a bridge, it would be odd for a bridge to arrive after just one verse. Furthermore, the cadence that ends this section is not a half cadence, which would be expected in a bridge section, but rather a PAC that elides into the beginning of the next A section.

The cadences on their own, though, do support interpreting the B sections as choruses and the A sections as verses. The introduction and first A section consist of four-measure phrases whose cadences arrive on the third beat of their respective fourth measures.\(^5\) This A section is a parallel period, with a half cadence in measure 8 and a PAC in measure 12, giving the verse strong closure.\(^6\) Measure 12 is extended by two beats to become a \(\frac{3}{2}\) measure, resulting from the addition of a passing V\(^6\) chord between the I chord that ends the verse and

\(^5\) Theorists following the ideas of Heinrich Christoph Koch (1793) would claim that these ostensibly four-measure phrases are actually eight-measure phrases and the “real” meter is \(\frac{3}{4}\) because, according to Koch, cadences must occur on downbeats. While it is certainly plausible to transcribe this song in \(\frac{3}{4}\) (which would obviate the awkward meter changes in measures 12–13), this would contradict the snare drum (entering in the second chorus), which as a general rule hits beats 2 and 4.

\(^6\) The cadences are somewhat weakened by the rhythmic displacement of melody and harmony; the melody arrives at the goal note an eighth note before the harmony cadences, and so the melody is actually silent at the literal moment of cadential arrival. This displacement is very common in popular and rock music, so the weakening of the cadences is fairly minimal.
the VI chord that begins the chorus. (The beginning of the chorus is certainly a downbeat; this is especially clear in the second chorus, as the drum beat enters at this moment.) The B section is similar in design to the A section, with two parallel four-bar phrases, but there are some significant differences. First, the B section’s first phrase ends on the downbeat rather than the third beat of its fourth bar (measure 16), and ends on the tonic rather than the dominant, though this weak IV–I progression functions like a half cadence in the form (see Chapter 2). A second and more important difference between the two sections lies in their second phrases: at first, it seems as though the B section’s second phrase will be parallel to its first, with a cadence on the downbeat of measure 20. This measure contains a V chord, with a suspension chord C/D on the downbeat, which would make this moment a very weak cadence if a cadence at all. Nevertheless, the text at this point seems complete: the sentence “Now it seems to me some fine things have been laid upon your table, but you only want the ones that you can’t get” is syntactically complete, with its final syllable “get” rhyming with the end of the first phrase, “bet.” However, the sentence becomes extended to include the word “desperado,” which also extends the melodic phrase to the beginning of the next measure, effecting a perfect authentic cadence. This cadence arrives on the fifth measure of the phrase, a hypermetrically strong measure that also functions as the first measure of the second A section. (This phrase elision beautifully parallels a text elision in which the word “desperado” simultaneously ends the sentence “…you only want the ones that you can’t get, desperado.” and begins the sentence “Desperado, no you ain’t gettin’ no younger.”) The

7The chord C/D sometimes represents the “soul dominant,” but since in this case it ultimately resolves to a D-major triad it is best considered as a suspension chord. The soul dominant would furthermore be atypical of the Eagles’ country-rock style.
placement of the B section’s final PAC on a hyperdownbeat provides stronger closure than the A section’s weak-beat cadence, illustrating the general trend that even when a verse ends with a strong cadence, the chorus will end with a yet stronger one.

Cadences that end sections are not always authentic cadences. As one might expect, it is common for verses to end with a half cadence, which is answered by an authentic cadence in the chorus; the Beatles’ “All You Need is Love” (1967) and Queen’s “We Are The Champions” (1977) are typical examples of this technique. However, it is not unusual for both verse and chorus to end with half cadences. The lack of harmonic resolution in such songs often reflects some element of the text. Another Eagles song, their signature hit “Hotel California” (1976), beautifully exemplifies this. The lyrics describe a mystical place that lures the protagonist with its seductive appearance but ultimately reveals itself as a prison from which, as the song’s last line cries, “you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave!” This mystical place, dubbed the “Hotel California,” refers to Los Angeles and its hedonistic allure in the mid-70s. Example 6.6 transcribes the first verse–chorus cycle of this song, showing that both sections end with a half cadence (in measure 16 and measure 24). These half cadences give the sense that the song is never-ending, reflecting the protagonist’s gradual realization that his temporary resting place is ultimately inescapable.

Example 6.7 graphs the voice leading of the verse and chorus of “Hotel California.” In addition to the half cadences, the graph shows that the melody prolongs the single tone F♯ (5) throughout the entire cycle. In the verse, this F♯ persists even when the harmony does not

---

8Certainly “his,” since even though the listener might not associate the narrator with singer Don Henley himself, it would be far-fetched to consider the narrator to be female given that the singer is male.
Example 6.7: “Hotel California” contains no authentic cadences, and the melody remains on 5 throughout.

support it—an example of a hierarchy divorce (see Chapter 3). In measure 7, the F♯ drops to E (4), which normally would continue to descend to D (3), but instead it stubbornly rises back up to F♯ in parallel octaves with the bass. The chorus begins with a IV–I auxiliary progression in D major, giving hope that the song might move away from its minor tonic to this more uplifting key. Hopes are dashed, however, as the phrase sinks back to the somber B-minor tonic in measures 19–20. The second attempt (measures 21–24) is similarly fruitless; the E-minor harmony in measure 23 might at first be interpreted as II in D major supporting E (2) in the melody, setting up a PAC in D major. Instead, the melody returns to the pesky F♯ and the bass follows suit, rising to a V chord in the home key of B minor for a half cadence, just as in the verse. With a text describing a place that “could be heaven or ... could be hell” but ultimately in which “we are all just prisoners ... of our own device,” the chorus’s tease of a possible D-major “heavenly” resolution that is thwarted indicates that

9Doll 2011a discusses modulations to the relative major from verse to chorus.
the Hotel California is in reality more hell than heaven, supported by the incessant melodic F♯ from which “you can never leave.”

**Features of Sectional Verse–Chorus Forms**

Unlike in verse–prechorus–chorus forms, the chorus in a sectional verse–chorus song is a self-contained section, beginning with an “initiating” function (Caplin 1998) and ending with strong closure (usually a cadence). As a result of this, some songs actually begin with the chorus section as a sort of overture before beginning the form proper, which would be far less likely in a typical verse–prechorus–chorus song. (In such cases, the cycle should still be considered to consist first of the verse followed by the chorus.) Although this design could conceivably be applied to any sectional verse–chorus song, it is particularly common when the verse and chorus have similar melodic and harmonic profiles. Three archetypal examples are the Allman Brothers’ “Ramblin’ Man” (1973), Queen’s “Fat Bottomed Girls” (1978), and Twisted Sister’s “We’re Not Gonna Take It” (1984). “Ramblin’ Man”’s chorus begins the song (after a four-measure instrumental introduction) and declares itself as the chorus rather than the verse through the use of three-part harmony (absent in the ensuing verse) and the presence of the title lyric “ramblin’ man” at the end of the first and last lines of text (see the transcription in Example 6.8). The ensuing verse is based on a chord progression nearly identical to the chorus’s (omitting only the embellishing bVII chord in the second measure).

---

10 The text also helps ensure that the first section is heard as the chorus, in that this section’s lyrics make general statements rather than telling a story, as the verse’s text does. The distinction is analogous to Raymond Monelle’s distinction between “lyric time,” in which time is arrested, and “narrative time,” in which time is passing (Monelle 2000, 115–21; see also Klein 2004, 37–44). It is common for choruses to exemplify lyric time and verses to exemplify narrative time.

The two sections are based on similar melodic and harmonic profiles.

and a similar melodic contour. Example 6.9 graphs the chorus of “Ramblin’ Man”; with only slight alterations, this graph could easily be the graph of the verse. (Notice the presence of the “cadential I” acting as an inverted cadential six-four; see Chapter 2 for a discussion of this chord.)

“Fat Bottomed Girls” and “We’re Not Gonna Take It,” like “Ramblin’ Man,” begin with the chorus and lead to a verse that is melodically and harmonically similar to the chorus (see the transcriptions in Examples 6.10 and 6.11). In addition, the opening choruses in “Fat Bottomed Girls” and “We’re Not Gonna Take It” are sung without instrumental accompaniment (except for the drums in “We’re Not Gonna Take It”), further confirming
Example 6.9: Graph of the chorus of “Ramblin’ Man.” With very few alterations, this could also serve as the graph of the verse because of the two sections’ similarity.

we’re not gonna take it!

Chorus

We’re not gonna take it! No, we ain’t gonna take it! We’re not gonna take it any more!

Verse

We’ve got the right to choose it; there ain’t no way we’ll lose it. This is our life, this is our song.

Reduction

I V I IV I V I

Example 6.11: Twisted Sister, “We’re Not Gonna Take It” (1984): the two sections are nearly identical (see the reduction) but the rhythm and lyrics make one sound like the chorus and the other sound like the verse.

despite the foreground differences between the two sections, though, their basic structure is the same: a parallel period which moves from $\text{I}^{\frac{3}{2}}$ to $\text{V}^{\frac{2}{3}}$ in the antecedent and $\text{I}^{\frac{3-5}{1-V-1}}$ in the consequent (see the graph in Example 6.12). As this graph shows, the cadential I embellishes the consequent’s V chord. “We’re Not Gonna Take It”’s two sections, on the other hand, are nearly identical (see Example 6.11). What differentiates chorus and verse in this case is the rhythm—the chorus’s melodic lines begin on downbeats, whereas the verse’s begin on beat 2—and the text—the chorus essentially contains three versions of the title lyric “we’re not gonna take it,” whereas the verse contains less memorable lyrics.
Example 6.12: Graph of “Fat Bottomed Girls”; both verse and chorus consist of a parallel period with an interrupted descent from 3 in the upper voice.

A common way to differentiate sections in sectional verse–chorus forms is for the verse and chorus to be in different keys. Doll 2011a lists several examples of songs that change keys from verse to chorus and ascertains that modulations upward by three and five semitones are the most common. Doll claims that such songs exemplify what Capuzzo 2009 calls “sectional tonality,” but I believe the reality is slightly more complicated. Capuzzo’s definition of sectional tonality requires both that two or more sections of a given song are in different keys and also that “the overall key succession is not governed by a single tonic” (157–58). While several of Doll’s examples exhibit sectional tonality according to this definition, some songs that modulate from verse to chorus do cohere under the umbrella of a single overall tonic. This is particularly common when the key of the verse is a perfect fifth above the key of the chorus (i.e., the modulation is upwards by five semitones). In such cases, the verse can often be considered to compose out V of the chorus’s tonic, making the chorus’s key the overall key of the piece. Furthermore, the verses in these songs typically emphasize the minor seventh degree of their tonic, creating a mixolydian context that may eventually be reinterpreted
Example 6.13: The Animals, “We’ve Gotta Get Out Of This Place” (1965): the verse projects C mixolydian while the chorus is firmly in F major.

as $V^7$ of the global tonic. The Animals’ 1965 single “We’ve Gotta Get Out Of This Place” exemplifies this: the verses contain an ostinato bass figure outlining a C-mixolydian modality, while the chorus is firmly in F major (see the transcription in Example 6.13). The overall motion of the song can therefore be considered to be $V^7(I)$ in F major.

In these situations, it is important to distinguish between global and local functions. For example, the verses of “We’ve Gotta Get Out Of This Place” are not in F major but rather

---

$^{11}$A similar example is the Vogues’ 1965 single “Five O’Clock World,” which appears as Doll’s Example 8. The verses of this song alternate E-major and D-major chords, providing an E-mixolydian context, and the choruses alternate A-major and D-major triads, providing an A-major context. Doll relegates any mention of the possibility that the global tonic is actually A major to a footnote, and even there he dismisses this reading as implausible because “so much time is spent emphasizing E” (¶10). While it is true that more clock time is spent in E mixolydian, the rhetorical emphasis on A major more than makes up for that, especially given that the song’s first A-major chord supports the title of the song in the lyrics. I do not believe that the amount of time spent emphasizing a given key is a good indicator of its structural weight, and in the case of “Five O’Clock World” I find the reading of A major as the global tonic the more convincing.
C mixolydian, and the C7 chords represent tonic harmony. It is only in the global context of the entire song that this local key represents V of F major. A familiar and analogous situation occurs in Classical sonata-form movements: the second theme in a typical piece in C major is in G major; G-major triads within this theme are I chords, not V chords. In the global context, however, the key of G major functions as V of the overall C-major tonality. A classically minded theorist might argue that the presence of the minor seventh B♭ in the verses of “We’ve Gotta Get Out Of This Place” makes C sound like V rather than I, but mixolydian modality is quite common in rock music, and so the presence of B♭ does not destabilize C as tonic (see especially Moore 1995 and Tagg 2009). It is true, however, that when a mixolydian key proceeds to a major key whose tonic is a perfect fifth lower, this change will generally be heard as a resolution and the latter key will be heard as more stable.

**Analytical Interlude: Minimal Verses**

My next two analyses look at verse–chorus songs in which the verses carry little structural weight, so that the chorus is the sole focal point of the entire song. In both examples, the chorus comes first and the subsequent verses begin off-tonic and do not contain a full functional circuit. The first example is the Beatles’ 1967 single “Strawberry Fields Forever”; in this song, a short introduction that foreshadows the verse’s chord progression leads straight into the first chorus. The first chorus and first verse are transcribed in Example 6.14. Although the chorus is only slightly longer than the verse—ten versus eight measures—
it is clear that the chorus carries the main thematic material of the song, while the verses seem more like interludes between successive choruses than full-fledged sections. As shown in the graph in Example 6.15, the verse composes out a large-scale V–I progression supporting 2–1 in the upper voice. The V harmony is initially prolonged through deceptive motion to VI, ultimately leading down to IV before returning to V in measure 17. The IV harmony, which acts as a middleground neighboring chord to V, is prolonged by the progression IV–V–I–VI–IV, which as Walter Everett suggests is derived from “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1999, 83). This progression—a common way of prolonging IV in continuous verse–chorus songs—will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Whereas the verse represents an auxiliary V–I cadence, the chorus contains a full functional circuit with some very active voice leading. Example 6.16 gives a chordal reduction of

The first four measures of this reduction are straightforward, but measures 5–6 require some explanation. The transcription shows the chord in these measures as G7♭9, and indeed the bass plays a G while the upper voices play B–D–F–Ab. However, the melodic line Ab–B♭–C♭ over the lyric “nothing is real” suggests that the interval from Ab to B♭9/C♭ is a minor third rather than an augmented second; this seems clear given the parallel motives on “Strawberry fields” (measures 3–4) and “nothing is real.” If this note is heard as C♭ and not a B♭9, then the chord in measures 5–6 is a fully diminished seventh chord on D with an added G in the bass. Since this chord leads to an E♭-major chord in measure 7, we can interpret it as VII♭6/IV, with the bass’s G substituting for F as an escape tone. Example 6.16b shows the underlying voice leading of the chorus following this interpretation. Yet the impression of some sort of G-major harmony in measures 5–6 is strong, especially in the first verse, which omits the horns’ Ab in this chord. Furthermore, an unequivocal G7 chord occurs only three beats later (measure 8), suggesting the possibility that VI♭ is prolonged from measures 5–8 via a 5–6–5 motion along with what David Damschroder (2010) calls a “wobbly” third.
Example 6.16: a) Chordal reduction of the chorus of “Strawberry Fields”; b) Further reduction showing the underlying voice leading.

In some sense, the chord in measures 5–6 is simultaneously a G-major sonority (containing B♮) and a D diminished-seventh sonority, containing C♭, reflecting the sense that “nothing is real.”

The G7 chord in measure 8 leads ostensibly to an E♭ major seventh chord in measure 9. However, as suggested in Example 6.16a, the seventh of this chord (D) is best thought of as a suspension that resolves to C on the downbeat of measure 10. In fact, this resolution would have been within the purview of the E♭ bass note if it weren’t for the shifting meter; the recomposition in Example 6.17 gives a normalized version of the cadence that remains in 4\(\frac{4}{4}\) time. In this recomposition, the B♭ chord arrives after the suspended D resolves to C resulting in the chord progression II\(^7\)\(^{5-6}\)–I. In the actual song, though, the B♭ chord
Example 6.17: Recomposition in $\frac{4}{4}$ of the cadence at the end of the chorus of “Strawberry Fields”; here, the suspension resolves before the change of harmony.

encroaches backwards, making measure 9 a $\frac{6}{8}$ measure and making the C arrive over the Bb chord. Nevertheless, this C “belongs” to measure 9, meaning that the apparent IV$^7$ chord in this measure is actually a II$^6_5$ supporting $\hat{2}$, as shown in Example 6.16b. The G7 chord in measure 8, therefore, acts as V$^7$/II and resolves with jazzy voice leading to a minor seventh chord, with the leading tone $B^\#$ progressing chromatically downward to $B_b$. The II$^6_5$ chord in measure 9 is the syntactical dominant of this chorus as it supports $\hat{2}$ at the cadence (with the rhythmic shift described above) within an overall descent from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{1}$.

On the surface, Daryl Hall and John Oates’ 1977 single “Rich Girl” is similar to “Strawberry Fields Forever” in its construction, but as we will see its harmonic-melodic structure suggests a fundamentally different formal procedure. The first chorus and verse from this song are transcribed in Example 6.18; there is no introduction, so this transcription begins at the very beginning of the track. As was the case in “Strawberry Fields,” the chorus contains the main thematic material of the song with the verse clearly fulfilling a subsidiary role. In “Rich Girl,” the verse contains no root-position tonic chords and essentially composes out a IV$^7$–V progression throughout. The chorus, however, unlike that of “Strawberry Fields,” does
not contain a full functional circuit, as it does not end with a cadence and the upper voice essentially prolongs 1 throughout, as shown in the reduction in Example 6.19. This reduction shows two instances of a hierarchy divorce between melody and harmony (see Chapter 3): the second half of measure 1 contains an Am7 chord but the voice remains on F, suggesting that this chord substitutes for F/A (I); and the second half of measure 3 contains the chord F/A which is a consonant harmonization of the bass’s passing tone A within a pre-dominant prolongation, but the voice continues to sound D in addition to F, expressing the prolonged
Example 6.19: Chordal reduction of the chorus of “Rich Girl” showing that the upper-voice prolongs 1 throughout.

pre-dominant itself. The first four measures of this section can thus be thought of as an antecedent phrase even though the upper voice remains on 1 throughout (culminating in the “soul dominant” in the second half of measure 4). The following phrase, which begins as the consequent to this antecedent, does not end with a cadence; although there is harmonic motion to the tonic in measures 8–9, the melody does not cooperate and peters out, with the prolonged 1 never moving at all.

In this way, “Rich Girl”’s chorus is not typical of sectional verse–chorus forms, whose choruses usually end with a strong cadence as discussed above. Neither is this section typical of continuous verse–chorus forms, in which the chorus generally begins on the pre-dominant (as we will see in the following section). This chorus’s structure is more typical of verse–prechorus–chorus songs, in which the structural cadence arrives at the downbeat of the chorus such that the chorus itself simply prolongs 1 throughout, as discussed in the previous chapter. But this song is not a verse–prechorus–chorus song; there are only two distinct sections, one of which is obviously the chorus, and so this song seems to be a verse–chorus form with no prechorus. However, if we look closely at the harmonic and melodic profiles
Example 6.20: The harmonic and melodic structure of “Rich Girl” implies an overall form of prechorus–chorus with no verse.

of the non-chorus section—labeled “Verse” in Example 6.18—we see that this section has more in common with a typical prechorus section than with a typical verse. Specifically, it begins on the pre-dominant—in this case, IV7—and ends on the dominant—in this case, V—which resolves to tonic on the downbeat of the following chorus. Example 6.20 shows this progression graphically. At the beginning of this section we get the primary tone 3, which is dissonantly supported by IV7. This primary tone remains in the upper voice as the bass passes up to D (VI) and then back to B♭ (IV7); the melodic line then descends to 2 over the V chord in measure 18, finally resolving to 1 for the chorus. Given this harmonic-melodic structure, “Rich Girl” seems to have the extremely atypical form of prechorus–chorus with no verse sections at all.
In contrast to sectional verse–chorus form, in which both verse and chorus are relatively self-contained, continuous verse–chorus form involves a verse–chorus cycle in which neither section is complete on its own but both combine to project a single, complete functional circuit. In such songs, the chorus begins not on the tonic but on the syntactical pre-dominant, moving to the dominant and finally to tonic for the cadence. The verse provides the opening tonic of this circuit, and so the general outline is as given in Example 6.21. Like their sectional counterparts, continuous verse–chorus songs reach their structural goal at the end of the chorus, but unlike sectional verse–chorus songs, they are derived from an expansion of srdc, in which the four phrases of srdc cleave into two separate sections, with sr making up the verse and dc making up the chorus. (Compare verse–prechorus–chorus form, also derived from srdc, but in which the chorus is an expansion of the c phrase only, and the structural goal of the song arrives at the beginning of the chorus; see the previous chapter).

Trevor DeClercq (2012, 161–65) discusses this process in reference to two early Beatles songs, “Ticket to Ride” (Help!, 1965) and “Drive My Car” (Rubber Soul, 1965). In “Ticket to Ride,” the eight-measure verse divides into two similar phrases of four measures each, followed

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{verse} & \text{chorus} \\
T & PD & D & T \\
\end{array}
\]

**Example 6.21:** The general model for continuous verse–chorus form.


by an eight-measure chorus (see Example 6.22). The verse prolongs the tonic—its second phrase ends with a back-related V chord, common in r phrases (see Chapter 4)—and the chorus begins on the pre-dominant VI harmony, which leads to the final V–I cadence in measures 15–16 (see the voice-leading graph in Example 6.23). This harmonic outline is exactly like Model 2 for srdc as defined in Chapter 4; the melody also follows this model, remaining on primary tone 5 for the verse (=s/r), moving to the unstable 6 at the beginning of the chorus (=d), and continuing to ascend stepwise to 8 via the “structural blue note” b7 (see Wagner 2003). As deClercq points out (2012, 161-62), some authors consider the sixteen measures shown in Example 6.22 to consist entirely of verse material, making a true srdc verse rather than a verse and chorus (see Pollack 2001, #65, and Stephenson 2002, Wagner 2003’s graph of this song considers the IV chord in measure 10 to be the syntactical pre-dominant harmony (p. 361). While this reading is plausible, I prefer to read the VI chord as prolonged through this IV chord (via a 5–6 motion with a cast-out root) because of its hypermetrical emphasis and because the melody consistently outlines the fourth C♯–F♯, which would conflict with a IV harmony but is consonant with VI.

---

12 The verses of continuous verse–chorus songs, because of their roots in s and r phrases, tend to contain two phrases, whereas the verses of sectional verse–chorus songs more often contain four.

13 Wagner 2003’s graph of this song considers the IV chord in measure 10 to be the syntactical pre-dominant harmony (p. 361). While this reading is plausible, I prefer to read the VI chord as prolonged through this IV chord (via a 5–6 motion with a cast-out root) because of its hypermetrical emphasis and because the melody consistently outlines the fourth C♯–F♯, which would conflict with a IV harmony but is consonant with VI.

32). I ultimately agree with Everett 2001a (283–84) and Moore 2001 (52–53) that this song includes both verse and chorus, but the fact that there is any disagreement at all shows the affinity between continuous verse–chorus and srdc verses.

Survivor’s 1982 arena rock hit “Eye of the Tiger” (best known as the theme song to the film Rocky III) provides an example of continuous verse–chorus form in which the presence of two distinct sections is less disputable. Example 6.24 transcribes the first and second verses and the first chorus of this song. (I consider there to be two verses before the first chorus—a common occurrence in rock songs—with each verse lasting eight measures, rather than a single 16-measure verse. Subsequent choruses are preceded by a single eight-measure section.) The first verse, which follows a long introduction based on the song’s signature guitar riff, prolongs the C-minor tonic through the common minor-mode progression I–♭VI–♭VII–I all over a tonic pedal (in subsequent verses the bass abandons the tonic pedal and all chords appear in root position). The chorus then begins on a pre-dominant IV chord accompanying the first occurrence of the title lyric; the next occurrence of this lyric, at
the end of the chorus, is at the cadence, which appears to be a bVI–I progression. While it would be perfectly acceptable to consider the bVI harmony to function as syntactical dominant in this functional circuit (as does Temperley 2011), I am inclined to read an implied B♭ (bVII) harmony at the end of measure 16. The band stops playing the Ab (bVI) chord halfway through the third beat of this measure (indicated by “N.C.” for “No Chord” in Example 6.24), and so the vocal line on the final beat of this measure is unaccompanied. This vocal line embellishes the note F, which does not belong to the Ab harmony. This moment could, of course, be considered to be an instance of a syntax divorce, in which melody and harmony take different routes to their structural goal (see Chapter 3). However, each two-measure unit of the chorus thus far has begun on an F-minor harmony with Ab in the melody and has ended on a B♭ harmony with F in the melody. This final two-measure
Example 6.25: “Eye of the Tiger” illustrates the voice-leading model for continuous verse–chorus.

unit (measures 15–16) begins the same way and ends with no harmony and F in the melody. Because of this precedent, I believe that a B♭ chord is strongly implied on the last beat of measure 17, functioning as the syntactical dominant of this verse–chorus cycle’s functional circuit. The first three of the chorus’s four two-measure units therefore foreshadow the PD–D progression of this circuit, leaving the syntactical dominant bVII unresolved until the final cadence in measure 18. This interpretation is shown graphically in Example 6.25.

Repeating the PD–D progression several times before resolving to T at the cadence is a common way of prolonging the pre-dominant function that begins a chorus. It is uncommon for a chorus to contain only the three chords representing the structural PD, D, and T harmonies, and it is the PD function that is most often expanded with several chords (recall from the discussion in Chapter 5 that the pre-dominant is also commonly expanded in pre-chorus sections). Fleetwood Mac’s “Go Your Own Way,” from their 1977 signature album Rumours, gives an example of this. The chorus is transcribed in Example 6.26.

14 Although this verse–chorus cycle coheres in C minor, the chorus hints at E♭ major, especially in the melody. The chorus seems like a parallel period in E♭ major, with an interruption on 2 in measure 12 and a descent to 1 concluding in measure 17. If the final C-minor chord were replaced with E♭ major, this entire section would most likely be heard in the key of E♭. While my interpretation comes down firmly on the C-minor side, there is perhaps an element of a double-tonic complex in this cycle (compare the analysis of “Private Eyes” in Chapter 5; see also Bailey 1985 and Krebs 1996).

Example 6.27: Fleetwood Mac, “Go Your Own Way”: the PD–D progression repeats in the chorus before resolving to T.

section contains three similar four-bar phrases over the chord progression VI–IV–V. In this progression, the VI chord (Dm) functions as the pre-dominant and V (C) functions as the dominant, with IV (B♭) prolonging VI via a 5–6 shift, as shown in Example 6.27. (Note the hierarchy divorce over the IV chord, as the melody remains on 3 and outlines the tonic triad with leaps to C and F.) The PD–D progression is stated three times, resolving to tonic on the hypermetrically strong 13th measure of the chorus, which is simultaneously the first measure of the second verse via a phrase elision. That this chorus contains three phrases rather than the more typical four is hardly noticeable on first hearing, owing to the repetition of the
Example 6.28: The Beatles, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1963): these twelve measures can be considered a single verse with refrain or a verse plus a chorus.

PD–D progression in the manner of a chord rotation (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of chord rotations). Significantly, at the end of the song the chorus loops without resolving to the tonic and then fades out; during this loop, the phrases group in pairs as the lyrics “you can go your own way” and “you can call it another lonely day” alternate one phrase each.

A particularly common method of prolonging the syntactical pre-dominant involves a specific chord progression that most likely originates with the Beatles’ 1963 single “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” their breakout hit in the United States, which ultimately propelled them to world fame (see the transcription in Example 6.28). The progression in question is IV–V–I–VI–IV–V–I, which occurs in measures 9–12. In this progression, the first three chords hint at a PD–D–T progression but in a noncadential (hence inconclusive) manner, as the melody devolves into a long melisma in two-part harmony in measure 10. Following this, the harmony arpeggiates back down to IV (via VI) and tries again, this time achieving a IV–V–I cadence in measure 12. Example 6.29 graphs this passage, showing that the I chord in measure 10 is not a true return to tonic, but that the pre-dominant IV chord is prolonged.

\[ ^{15} \text{Walter Everett (2001a, 201–2) relates this progression to some earlier Beatles songs (several of them covers).} \]
Example 6.29: The Beatles, “I Want to Hold Your Hand”: graph of verse–chorus cycle showing the pre-dominant expansion in the chorus.

over the failed cadence in measure 10 through its recurrence in measure 11. This song, even more so than “Ticket to Ride,” lies in the gray area between srdc and continuous verse–chorus form: the twelve measures transcribed in Example 6.28 can be considered a single verse, ending with a four-measure refrain (following Everett 2001a, 200–1), or instead as two sections comprising an eight-measure verse and a short four-measure chorus.

The chord progression that underlies the chorus/refrain of “I Want to Hold Your Hand” became a schema, appearing in several songs in the 60s and 70s. When it appears in the chorus of a continuous verse–chorus song, the interpretation is generally the same as in “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (prolonging IV through motion to its upper fifth and back). This is the case with Van Morrison’s “Brown Eyed Girl” from 1967 and Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Have You Ever Seen the Rain?” from 1970 (see Examples 6.30 and 6.31). In the latter example, the IV–V–I–VI progression occurs twice before cadencing on the third iteration

---

16Everett (2001a, 199) also graphs this song, and my reading of the upper voice is essentially the same as his. Our interpretations of the harmonic structure differ somewhat, as Everett seems to read a return to structural tonic in measure 10.
Harmonic structure:

Example 6.30: Van Morrison, “Brown Eyed Girl” (1967), transcription of chorus and summary of harmonic structure showing the “I Want to Hold Your Hand” schema prolonging IV.

(this is similar to the chorus of “Go Your Own Way,” discussed above). The chorus of the Youngbloods’ 1967 folk-rock anthem “Get Together” contains a similar harmonic structure (omitting the VI chord) but within the confines of a single phrase whose cadence arrives on the downbeat of its fifth measure (see Example 6.32).17

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers’ “American Girl,” from their 1977 self-titled debut album, contains this same IV–V–I–VI–IV–V–I progression in its chorus (see the transcription in Example 6.33), but it is the verse section that contains the most analytical interest. This verse is sixteen measures long, but it contains only three phrases: a four-measure phrase (measures 1–4) followed by a five-measure phrase (measures 5–9) followed by a seven-measure phrase (measures 10–16). Each of these phrases begins on a I chord and ends on a V chord. Furthermore, every one of these phrases ends with the melodic motive E–F♯ (♯2–♯3) over the V chord. In the first phrase, this motive is contained within a single measure (measure 4),

17This song was most likely written before “I Want to Hold Your Hand” was released in November of 1963; the earliest commercial recording seems to be on the Kingston Trio’s June, 1964 album Back in Town, but it is likely that songwriter Chet Powers had completed the song significantly earlier that that.
Chapter 6: Verse–Chorus Forms

**Chorus**

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Come on peop-le now, s-mile on your bro-ther, e-very-bo-
dy get to-ge-ther, try to love one a-no-ther right now.}
\end{array}
\]

**Harmonic structure:**

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{verse} \quad \text{chorus}
\end{array}
\]


**Chorus**

\[
\begin{array}{c}
I \_ \_ \_ \_ wan-na know, have you e-\_ \_ \_ \_ seen the rain I \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ wan-na know, have you e-\_ \_ \_ \_ seen the rain co-ming down_ sun-ny day?
\end{array}
\]

**Harmonic structure:**

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{verse} \quad \text{chorus}
\end{array}
\]


but in the second phrase the motive expands to two measures (measures 8–9), lengthening this phrase to five measures instead of four. In the third phrase, the E–F♯ motive is doubled yet again to last four measures: measures 13–14 prolong E and measures 15–16 prolong F♯, both embellished with their upper neighbors. Example 6.34a gives a durational reduction of the verse, with each of the reduction’s quarter notes representing a full measure of the transcription. This reduction shows that the verse is based on three four-bar phrases (creating three hypermeasures), with the fourth measure of the second and third phrases expanded as a result of lengthening the E–F♯ motive over the V chord. The enlargement of the fourth measure of the third phrase (measures 13–16) creates a four-bar hypermeasure of its own on the surface, despite its function as a single measure at a deeper level (see the normalized
Example 6.34: a) Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, “American Girl”: the verse’s rhythmic expansion is a result of lengthening the E–F♯ motive at the end of each phrase. b) The sixteen-measure verse is based on a twelve-measure prototype consisting of three four-bar phrases.

version in Example 6.34b). This is an example of what Schenker calls a Dehnung (expansion) (Schenker 1979 [1935], 124–5), a topic discussed in Schachter 1999 (62–65); Schachter’s analysis of the trio section of a Mozart minuet may be compared to my Example 6.34.

The verse of “American Girl” is based on the s and r phrases of srdc, as is typical in a continuous verse–chorus song. In this song a third phrase is added, creating a srr structure; this third phrase (measures 10–16) is a slight variation of the first two phrases in which the second and third chords are switched. One might at first be tempted to call measures 10–16 the prechorus instead of the third phrase of the verse, but its similarity to the previous two phrases and its prolongation of tonic rather than pre-dominant make this a dubious reading.

Following the reduction in Example 6.34b, we can see that the upper voice essentially rises by step from D to F♯ (1 to 3) in each of these three phrases. This F♯ is not contained in the A-major harmony that sounds underneath it, but because of the prominence of the E–F♯ motive in this song, it seems misguided to dismiss this note as a mere escape tone. One could

18See also Rothstein 1989, Chapter 3, for a discussion of phrase expansion in tonal music.
instead consider this $F^\#$ to be the primary tone $\hat{3}$, rhythmically displaced from its supporting tonic harmony. This would be an example of a hierarchy divorce (see Chapter 3), in which the melody is consonant with the prolonged tonic harmony but not with the foreground chords. The E that precedes this $F^\#$, although it is consonant with the foreground harmony, actually functions as a middleground passing tone within the initial ascent D–E–$F^\#$; see the voice-leading graph in Example 6.35. The chorus then begins by inverting the E–$F^\#$ motive to $F^\#–E$, bringing the fundamental line down to $\hat{2}$. This $\hat{2}$ occurs over the pre-dominant IV chord, so technically it is unsupported. However, it is so common for $\hat{2}$ to occur over a IV chord in rock music that this does not sound out of place, as discussed in Chapter 3 in reference to the syntax divorce. As mentioned, the chorus contains the same chord progression as the choruses of “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” “Brown Eyed Girl,” and “Have You Ever Seen the Rain,” with the same prolongational interpretation, shown in Example 6.35. In the upper voice, the E–$F^\#$ motive from the verse appears in several guises, shown with brackets in Example 6.35 furthermore, the overall upper-voice motion in the chorus is the neighboring figure E–$F^\#–E$, which rises back up to $F^\#$ over the dominant V chord before falling to D to
Example 6.36: The grand neighbor IV chord is derived from the twelve-bar blues progression.

complete the fundamental line. Interestingly, despite the prominence of F♯ in the melody, it is never supported by a structural tonic harmony.

The Grand Neighbor Chord

Often, the chorus section of a verse–chorus song will begin on a IV chord, but this IV chord will subsequently return to the tonic and thus act as a neighboring harmony rather than the syntactical pre-dominant. This situation is more akin to continuous verse–chorus than sectional verse–chorus form, even though the chorus does not begin with a move to the syntactical pre-dominant, because the rhetorical emphasis on the grand neighbor IV chord gives the beginning of the chorus a medial rather than an initiating formal function (see Caplin 1998). Furthermore, this pattern derives from Model 3 of srdc, in which the d phrase begins on a neighboring chord and returns to tonic before proceeding to PD–D–T (see Chapter 4). The grand neighbor chord is almost always IV, demonstrating this pattern’s roots in blues progressions: the second phrase of a typical twelve-bar blues begins on a hypermetrically accented IV chord that subsequently returns to tonic (see Example 6.36).19

Elvis Presley’s 1957 single “Jailhouse Rock” (composed by Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller)

---

19Minor-mode songs occasionally begin the chorus with a neighboring (b)VII chord rather than IV; an example is Bob Seger’s “Turn the Page” (1973).
Example 6.37: Elvis Presley, “Jailhouse Rock” (1957): a continuous verse–chorus form derived from the twelve-bar blues progression in which the chorus begins with a grand neighbor IV chord. Demonstrates this relationship (see Example 6.37): the first four measures of the blues progression are extended to eight measures, creating a sixteen-bar blues progression. These sixteen measures divide into a verse and chorus, each eight measures long, with the chorus beginning on the grand neighbor IV chord. Because the entire verse–chorus cycle expresses a single blues progression, the two sections are not self-contained, and so this song is best considered an example of continuous rather than sectional verse–chorus form. Although Covach 2005 analyzes these sixteen measures as a single verse rather than a verse plus a chorus (68–69), Doll 2011a argues convincingly that the textural shift from stop time to a standard rock-shuffle beat and the lyric “let’s rock” demarcate the two halves as distinct sections.

The Eagles’ soft country-rock song “Peaceful Easy Feeling,” from their 1972 eponymous debut album, gives an example of the use of the grand neighbor chord in a non-blues setting. Example 6.38 transcribes the first verse–chorus cycle of this song. The verse consists of
two eight-measure antecedent phrases (both end identically on a V chord, so this is not a parallel period) containing several hypermetrically weak IV chords, which function either as neighboring chords to the tonic (in measures 2, 4, 10, and 12) or as pre-dominant chords leading to half cadences (in measures 6 and 14). The harmonic rhythm slows from one chord per measure to one chord every two measures in the chorus, which begins on a hypermetrically strong IV chord that resolves back to tonic (measures 17–20). This is the grand neighbor chord, and it marks this moment as the beginning of the chorus, accompanying the title lyric as well as the melodic climax on C♯. The chorus, like the verse, divides into two eight-measure phrases; the first (measures 17–24) ends in a half cadence on V and the second (measures 25–32) ends with a V–I PAC, the first of the song. Example 6.39 graphs this 20


---

20This PAC arrives on the downbeat of the fifth measure of this eight-measure phrase, making it hypermetrically accented (as is common for a chorus-ending cadence as discussed above) but also making this eight-measure phrase feel like it is much shorter than the others.
Example 6.39: The Eagles, “Peaceful Easy Feeling,” graph of verse–chorus cycle showing the grand neighbor chord as a background feature.


verse–chorus cycle, showing the grand neighbor IV chord as a background feature by virtue of its privileged position within the form.

When a chorus begins with a IV chord, it is sometimes unclear whether this is a grand neighbor chord or the syntactical pre-dominant, especially if the chord lasts for several measures. For example, the chorus of the Allman Brothers’ “Crazy Love,” from their 1979 post-reunion album *Enlightened Rogues*, begins with four measures of IV, followed by I–V–I (see the transcription in Example 6.40). At first glance, this IV chord seems to function
**Example 6.41:** The IV chord in the chorus of “Crazy Love” can be interpreted either as a grand neighbor chord returning to tonic (a) or as the syntactical pre-dominant (b).

as a grand neighbor chord, especially given this song’s strong blues influence. However, the return to tonic in measure 5 is fleeting, lasting only one measure compared to the IV chord’s four measures, and it leads immediately to the V–I cadence. It is possible to consider the I chord in measure 5 not to be a true return to tonic but as an example of the “cadential I,” a root-position tonic chord that functions as an inverted cadential six-four, as discussed in Chapter 2. The I–V–I–I progression in the last four bars of this chorus (measures 5–9) recalls similar progressions in the Beatles’ “I Saw Her Standing There” and “From Me to You,” both of which contain the cadential I (see Example 4.12 page 135 and Nobile 2011, Examples 7 and 8). Both interpretations are shown in Example 6.41. I prefer the interpretation that includes the cadential I, as shown in Example 6.41b, but both readings are valid.

**Conclusion**

The discussion in the last two chapters has I hope made the case that there is no single “verse–chorus” form, but instead that the various voice-leading structures of songs based on the verse–chorus paradigm give rise to several different harmonic-melodic layouts.
I have identified three such layouts that are particularly common in canonical pop and rock music, namely verse–prechorus–chorus, sectional verse–chorus, and continuous verse–chorus forms. Though the thematic profiles of all three are based on the contrast between verse and chorus sections, the ways in which these sections align with the overall harmonic and melodic structure is entirely different among them. It is therefore an oversimplification to label them all as simply “verse–chorus”; despite their similar thematic groupings, these forms differ at a fundamental level. Verse–prechorus–chorus sets itself apart from the other two by containing an entirely different teleology, affecting the structure of all sections involved. In these songs, the structural goal occurs at the beginning of the chorus such that the chorus acts as a telos theme (Hepokoski 1993). These choruses generally involve harmonic and melodic stasis, simply prolonging the final arrival point of the functional circuit rather than leading to a cadence or other structural goal. Sectional and continuous verse–chorus songs, on the other hand, place their structural goal at the end of the chorus. Yet the chorus sections of these two forms are not the same; choruses in sectional forms cohere as independent sections, containing a complete functional circuit and melodic structure, while choruses in continuous forms begin in the middle with the syntactical pre-dominant, continuing a process begun in the verse rather than starting anew. The mere presence of verse and chorus sections provides only a superficial link among these three forms; their differing voice-leading structures ensure that they are three fundamentally distinct forms.

This can be considered a main contention of this dissertation as a whole: form in pop and rock music is created as much by voice leading structure as by thematic relationships, instrumentation, lyrics, etc. Yet the influence runs both ways; as we saw in detail in Chapter 2,
formal structure defines the three main syntactical harmonic functions—tonic, pre-dominant, and dominant. The result is an intertwining of these various musical domains so that no single element emerges as conceptually prior to the others. Charles Smith has argued for the mutual influence of formal and voice-leading structures in common-practice music; Smith writes,

In selecting a background configuration for a passage, we should be at least as sensitive to formal shape as we are to contrapuntal configuration; the ideal procedure is to begin with formal instincts, to design structural paradigms so as to represent them as clearly as possible, and then to reconsider the formal pictures on the basis of what we learn from putting together background structures. (Smith 1996, 241)

If we begin to consider melody, harmony, and form not as three separable aspects of music but as a single complex in which all elements are interdependent, we will find that we arrive at more insightful analyses and a deeper understanding of the inner workings of musical structure. Especially in pop and rock music—with its free treatment of counterpoint, frequent avoidance of the I–V axis as tonal determinant, and considerable use of non-goal-oriented chord progressions such as chord rotations—we must be wary of discussions of harmonic or melodic structure that do not take into account form, and vice versa. It is my hope that the theories and analyses presented in these pages will provide the methodological groundwork for future studies involving a holistic view of musical structure. In particular, studies that extend this methodology beyond the classic rock canon (as much as one can be defined) promise to reveal interesting stylistic features of various other genres. I believe that the structural approach undertaken here is not limited to pop and rock music, but that its application to the analysis of common-practice tonal music and other repertoires will prove equally rewarding.


——. 2008a. “Pitch Down the Middle.” In Everett 2008b, 111–74.


________. 2011a. “(Per)Form in(g) Rock: A Response.” *Music Theory Online* 17/3.


Tymoczko, Dmitri. 2011. “Noneuclidean Perspectives on the Classical Style.” Presentation at the annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory, Minneapolis, MN.


