

STEELE, CHRISTOPHER DANIEL, D.M.A. Tonal and Formal Blurring in Fauré's Piano Trio Op. 120 (2012).

Directed by Dr. Andrew Harley. 30 pp.

This study presents an analytical discussion of blurring techniques found in the first movement of Fauré's Piano Trio Op. 120. After a brief overview of Fauré's compositional style and the piano trio, the analysis proceeds in two parts. The first part examines small-scale blurring within the elements of cadence, phrase structure, and sequence. The second part observes large-scale blurring within the elements of key area and formal function. The paper concludes by suggesting that Fauré's systematic blurring of structural elements results in the decreased perception of musical architecture.

TONAL AND FORMAL BLURRING
IN FAURÉ'S PIANO TRIO OP. 120

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro
2012

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Gabriel Fauré is undoubtedly a well-known composer whose many works hold a firm place in the standard repertoire. However, his reputation is largely based on the first two-thirds of his output. His late compositional period (1906–1924) is not strongly represented in performance or in analytical scholarship. One reason may be what is often described as the elusive and ambiguous quality of Fauré’s late style. Yet compared to many of his contemporaries, even his late style is rather conservative and traditional. While Debussy, Stravinsky, and Schönberg were revolutionizing the foundation of Western musical systems in the areas of functional tonality, triadic harmony, symmetrical meter, and classical forms, Fauré was essentially working with the same materials and schemes as his predecessors.¹ Unlike the music of his younger contemporaries, Fauré’s late style challenges the listener and analyst not by abandoning traditional tonal and formal structures, but by blurring them. Fauré achieved a modern sound by denying many traditional musical elements their clarity and definition, thereby neutralizing the hierarchy inherent in traditional tonal and formal systems. These compositional

¹ Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, pp. 2, 18, 20, 35, 60.

techniques have received less attention than the more revolutionary techniques of his contemporaries, and a greater understanding of them is still needed.

Methodology

The goal of this paper is to identify and explain those compositional techniques that involve the use of traditional musical elements and the variety of procedures used to blur those elements and the structures they support. The traditional musical elements examined will include functional tonality, symmetrical phrase structure, cadences, sequences, and sonata form; the blurring techniques addressed will include double tonality,² continuous development, phrase interpolation, elided cadences, and chromatic and nested sequences. This discussion will be based on an analysis of the first movement of the Piano Trio Op. 120. Analytical procedures will include harmonic analysis using Roman-numerals and Schenkerian-style reductions, as well analysis of phrase structure and form. Historical and biographical information will be limited. Since this paper will focus on certain techniques found in one piece, it will not be a comprehensive study of Fauré's late style. It will, however, contribute to the relatively small body of analytical scholarship that attempts to characterize this late style, helping to provide a more complete picture of this important composer, and perhaps promoting these neglected works.

² This concept will be discussed further on p. 15.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

Fauré's Compositional Style

Music historians have had difficulty classifying Fauré's compositional style. One reason for this is the independent nature of Fauré's development as a composer. His musical education at the École Niedermeyer rather than the Paris Conservatoire provided him with the unique influences of Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony, and modality. Unlike many French composers of his generation, he remained immune to Wagner's influence. Furthermore, his influence on other composers was minimal since he was not associated with any particular compositional school or movement.

Although Fauré forged his own compositional path, it was a path that originated in tradition. His early *mélodies* show the influence of Gounod and Massenet,³ and his early piano music is reminiscent of Chopin and Schumann. Although his early chamber music contains elements of Saint-Saëns, this genre shows some of the earliest signs of Fauré's individual style,⁴ one that would eventually earn him a reputation as a revolutionary among some of his French contemporaries.⁵ In general terms, Fauré's late

³ Noske, Frits. *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc: The Origin and Development of the Mélodie*. New York: Dover Publications, 1970, pp. 215, 269.

⁴ Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, p. 4.

⁵ Gordon, Tom. "Introduction – Rearguard or Avant-garde?" In *Regarding Fauré*, edited by Tom Gordon. New York: Gordon & Breach, 1999, p. xxi.

style is characterized by reduced textures, narrowed pitch ranges, diffused tonality via competing pitch centers or transient tonicizations, continuous development, and contextual processes that replace or supplement traditional tonal and formal processes.⁶

Piano Trio Op. 120

The Piano Trio is Fauré's penultimate work. Although it was commissioned by his publisher Jacques Durand as a trio for piano, violin, and violoncello, Fauré originally conceived the piece as a trio for piano, clarinet, and violoncello. The second movement was begun and completed in September 1922, the first movement was completed by the end of the year, and the third movement was completed in March 1923. Even though the violin (or clarinet) part in early manuscripts of both the second and third movements contain pitches below the range of the violin, the trio was ultimately published for piano and strings in June 1923. Its public premiere had taken place one month earlier on a concert of the Société Nationale de Musique on May 12, performed from the manuscript score by recent graduates of the Conservatoire de Paris. It was performed again on June 29 in Paris by Jacques Thibaud, Pablo Casals, and Alfred Cortot. Upon its premier, Fauré's friends reportedly said: "If he lives a hundred years, how far will he go?"⁷ Even in his late seventies, Fauré continued to compose music that extended the boundaries of his own personal sound and compositional technique.

⁶ Sobaskie, James. "The Emergence of Gabriel Fauré's Late Musical Style and Technique." *Journal of Musicological Research* 22 (2003): p. 274.

⁷ Sobaskie, James. "Introduction." In *Fauré, Trio pour piano, violin, et violoncelle, Op. 120*. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2010, pp. III–IV.

CHAPTER III
SMALL-SCALE BLURRING

Cadences

Fauré and other French composers of his generation redefined the function of the cadence at the turn of the century, though each in their own way. Chabrier and Ravel were demoting the perfect authentic cadence by using it more often and in less significant places than in traditional practice.⁸ For Fauré, the cadence is an important element in small-scale blurring. In the first movement's 342 measures, there are only fifteen cadences,⁹ and ten of the fifteen are elided. The effect of these elisions is significant. An elided cadence serves to hide the seams between phrases, creating one long phrase and providing greater continuity of motion. Both continuity of motion and long phrases are characteristics of Fauré's style, and his treatment of the cadence plays a substantial role in these stylistic features.

Table 1 provides a form diagram of the movement, including cadence types and their locations. The cadences can best be described in terms of relative strength. Even the strongest of these, the ten imperfect authentic cadences, are weakened metrically or

⁸ Howat, Roy. "Modernization: From Chabrier and Fauré to Debussy and Ravel." In *French Music Since Berlioz*, edited by Richard Langham Smith and Caroline Potter. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006, pp. 199–203.

⁹ Due to the fast tempo and slow harmonic rhythm of one harmony per measure, it is helpful to think of this movement in a compound duple meter with a harmonic rhythm of two harmonies per measure. This eliminates the hypermetrically weak measure between each cadence and the start of the next phrase, and the resulting statistic of 15 cadences in 171 measures is less astounding, although still significant.

harmonically (or both). All six of the elided imperfect authentic cadences are delayed by two measures relative to where they are expected to occur. As such, these cadences are weakened by their lack of alignment with the quadruple hypermeter. The four non-elided imperfect authentic cadences all serve to close complete statements of the primary key area (P) theme. However, all four are weakened by a variety of blurring techniques, and two of these cadences will be discussed in detail shortly. With the exception of the final modal cadence in m. 337 ($v^7 - i$), all of the remaining cadences are elided. In addition to their weak metric placement, two are deceptive and two are plagal, both weak cadence types. There is not a single perfect authentic cadence in the entire movement.

Table 1: Cadence Types and Form

Exposition						(Development)
P		T	S		CL	(P)
	m.21	m.41	m.51	m.67	m.91	m.107
	IAC	IAC	IAC	PC	PC	DC
d: i	v	i	VI	III	III	i
			elided	elided	elided	elided
Development						(Recapitulation)
(P)			(S)		RT	(P)
	m.125	m.151	m.167			m.211
	IAC	DC	IAC			IAC
	v	i	bII			i
		elided	elided			elided
Recapitulation					Coda	
P	(T)		S		CL	
	m.230		m.251			m.291
	IAC		IAC			IAC
	i		I			i
			elided			elided
						m.307
						IAC
						i
						elided
						m.337
						ModalIAC
						i

P: primary key area
T: transition
S: secondary key area
CL: closing section
RT: retransition

IAC: imperfect authentic cadence
PC: plagal cadence
DC: deceptive cadence

The first phrase boundary of the piece, between the cadence in m. 21 and the start of the next phrase in m. 23, is blurred both rhythmically and harmonically. The rhythmic ambiguity is caused by a melodic link in the cello that recalls mm. 3–5, the first three measures of the opening phrase. At the true start of the second phrase in m. 23, the violin entrance with the same material now sounds like an imitative voice rather than the primary voice. This undermines the sense of hypermeter, as the cadence in m. 21 retroactively sounds as though it could have been a point of elision. Only as the primary theme continues in the violin (and ceases in the cello) is the original quadruple hypermeter confirmed. The cadence itself is harmonically ambiguous as well.

Figure 1: The First Cadence (m. 21)

Strong Weak Strong Weak Strong

19 23

a: i^6 vii°

d: vii° V (VI^{add6}) iv^7 i^6

F: $ii^7 (V\frac{3}{2})$ I^{add6}

Although this first phrase begins in D minor, the listener is prepared for a cadence in A minor in m. 21. When the final chord of the cadence turns out to be the dominant A-major triad, the imperfect authentic cadence (with Picardy third) has the potential to sound like a tonicized half cadence. This new aural interpretation is somewhat confirmed

by the resolution in m. 22 to what could be heard initially as a B \flat major added-6th chord (VI^{add6}), a deceptive resolution of the dominant.¹⁰ However, it is immediately undermined by m. 22, which inserts a predominant harmony between the dominant in m. 21 and the tonic in m. 23, and replaces the leading tone C \sharp with a passing subtonic C \flat . The potential interpretation of this cadence in m. 21 as a tonicized half cadence in D minor conflicts with the strong preparation for an authentic cadence in A minor in mm. 15–20. Thus, this very first formal boundary of the piece causes the listener to doubt its harmonic and rhythmic identity, making it difficult to assign it a formal function in the musical architecture.

One of the most ambiguous cadences in the movement occurs at the close of the exposition in mm. 105–107, shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Cadence Between Development and Recapitulation (m.107)

F: I ⁷	IV ₃ ⁴	V ⁷ /iii	$\frac{6}{5}$ (V ⁴⁵ /iii or I)	I ⁶
a: \flat II ₃ ⁴	V ⁷	$\frac{6}{5}$ (V ⁴⁵ /i or vi)	vi ⁶	iv ₄ ⁴
d: VI ₃ ⁴	ct ^{dom7}			i ₄ ⁶

¹⁰ The ambiguity of this harmony in m. 22 will be discussed in detail on p. 17.

Although F major has been the active key for the last forty measures, Fauré quickly prepares for a cadence in A minor via $\flat\text{II}_3^4 - \text{V}^7$. The resolution of this dominant is best examined one voice at a time. The bass voice in the piano resolves as expected ($\text{G}^\# - \text{A}$, $\hat{7} - \hat{1}$ in A minor). The soprano voice in the violin resolves to the expected pitch, but one beat early ($\text{D} - \text{C}$, $\hat{4} - \hat{3}$ in A minor). Thus, when the cello moves up to F rather than staying on E, the result is a deceptive cadence in A minor. However, the violin C immediately moves back up to D, producing a D-minor triad, and the P theme that began on the downbeat proceeds in D minor, not A minor. There are precedents for this passage that suggest two different D-minor readings. If the violin C in mm. 106–107 is considered a lower neighbor, then mm. 104–107 can be read as $\flat\text{VI}_3^4 - \text{ct}^{\text{dom}7} - \text{i}_4^6$. This $\text{ct}^{\text{dom}7} - \text{i}_4^6$ harmonic motion has already occurred in D \flat major in mm. 58–59.¹¹ In this case, the seventh of the $\text{ct}^{\text{dom}7}$ is a common tone with the root of the tonic chord that follows. If the violin C in m. 107 is considered a chord tone, then mm. 104–107 can be read as $\flat\text{VI}_3^4 - \text{V}^7/\text{V} - \text{VI}/\text{V} (= \text{III}) - \text{i}_4^6$. This $\text{V}^7/\text{V} - \text{VI}/\text{V} (= \text{III})$ progression has also already occurred several times in a sequential passage in mm. 84–85, 86–87, and 88–89.¹² All of these involve the deceptive resolution of a functional secondary dominant. Thus, the cadence alludes to both D minor and A minor, even though the entire preceding section has been in F major. And though the few measures surrounding the cadence do

¹¹ In the D \flat major excerpt, the $\text{ct}^{\text{dom}7}$ resolves to a root-position tonic triad instead of a second-inversion one.

¹² In these three passages, the V^7/V resolves to a first-inversion triad.

not suggest F major, the precise point of cadence is on an F-major triad that no longer sounds like the tonic.

Phrase Structure

Another example of small-scale blurring is found in Fauré’s approach to phrase structure. With the first cadence established in mm. 21–22, and disregarding the two-measure piano introduction, the first phrase would appear to be twenty measures in length. As shown in Figure 3, it consists of ten two-measure units, all but one ending with a half note on beat two of the second measure.

Figure 3: Melodic Content of the First Phrase (mm. 3–22)



These uniform melodic units of asymmetrical number do not project a clear hierarchical structure. However, melodic similarity between some adjacent two-measure units suggests larger four-measure units, particularly mm. 7–10, mm. 11–14, and mm. 15–18. Now looking at four-measure units, harmonic analysis reveals a hierarchy within this asymmetrical structure. Measures 3–6 alternate tonic and predominant harmonies, mm. 7–10 present what will become the signature $ii^\circ - I$ (sometimes $III - ii^\circ - i$) harmonic motion, mm. 15–18 present the signature harmonic motion in reverse order, and mm. 19–

21 facilitate the cadence with only dominant and tonic harmonies in A minor. But mm. 11–14 present the greatest challenge to traditional Roman-numeral analysis. As Figure 4 shows, this four-measure unit is a non-functional prolongation of the A-minor triad that surrounds it. This passage helps to secure the new key of A minor, which had originally only been reached by a simple sequential transposition of the tonic D-minor triad (mm. 7–8 to mm. 9–10).

Figure 4: Reduction of Phrase 1 Interpolation (mm. 11–14)

11 14

P N P

6 6 5 6 6 6

d: v a: i

The linear chromaticism of these four measures simultaneously blurs the point of modulation and makes room for the new key by negating any lingering sense of the old key. And by molding an interpolation in the likeness of the constituent parts of the phrase proper, Fauré achieves a subtle kind of blurred phrase structure wherein the expectation for symmetry is thwarted without revealing how and when the phrase expansion occurred.

Harmonic Sequences

Harmonic sequences whose transpositions symmetrically divide the octave contribute to both structural and harmonic ambiguity. They are often described as

passages of tonal parenthesis, and as such suspend any expectation associated with traditional harmonic progression and momentarily blur the sense of tonality.¹³ Sequences can have a similar effect on musical structure at the phrase level. They result from adherence to a pattern that is sometimes contrary to more normative harmony, voice leading, phrase structure, and metric structure. The fragmentary melodic patterning, non-functional harmonic patterning, and unchanging harmonic rhythm in a typical sequence often create phrase rhythms that conflict with those of non-sequential passages.¹⁴ In non-sequential passages, functional tonality and the formal function of melodic units within a phrase create certain expectations for the listener that encourage some level of predictability as to the structure of that phrase. The contrasting effect of sequential passages is one of an increased rhythmic momentum and continuity, but a decreased sense of goal orientation – and the more chromatic the sequence, the less predictable the goal may be.¹⁵ As Table 2 shows, this movement contains nine separate sequential passages, and all nine are chromatic sequences. On the two occasions of adjacent sequences, the two sequences either have different intervals of transposition or different-sized models. Of the 342 measures in this movement, a full 118 of them are occupied by sequential activity. Fauré's affinity for sequences, and particularly chromatic sequences, may be understood as another method of achieving continuity while avoiding the long-

¹³ Laitz, Steven G. *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 830.

¹⁴ Rothstein, William. *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*. Ann Arbor: Musicalia Press, 2007, pp. 74–75.

¹⁵ Laitz, Steven G. *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 830.

range predictability that allows the musical structure to be clearly perceived during the listening process.¹⁶

Table 2: Classification of Harmonic Sequences

<u>mm. nos.</u>	<u>Grouping structure</u>	<u>Sequential motion</u>	<u>Tonality/harmony</u>
mm. 51–58:	4+4	asc. m3	B ^b : I – bIII
mm. 67–82:	8+8	asc. m3	F: I – bIII
mm. 83–90:	2+2+2+2	asc. m3	F: bV – VI [#] – I – bIII
mm. 127–150:	8+8+8	asc. P5	d: i – v – ii
mm. 183–198:	8+8	asc. m3	A: I – bIII
mm. 199–202:	2+2	asc. m3	A: bV – VI [#]
mm. 203–211:	4+4	asc. m2	d: bV ⁺ – \natural V ⁺
mm. 275–290:	8+8	asc. m2	d: V ⁺ /bV – V ⁺ / \natural V
<u>Nested Sequence</u>			
mm. 167–183:	(4+4)+(4+4)+2	asc. m3	(I – bIII) (I – bIII) (I –
	8 + 8 + 2	desc. m3	d: bII – VII – V

Fauré takes this long-range harmonic unpredictability even further in a passage that utilizes chromatic sequences on two levels, shown in Figure 5.¹⁷ On one level, mm. 167–170 is a two-chord model in E^b (I – vii^{♯4}/V) that itself contains melodic imitation up a minor third. This model is then transposed up a minor third to G^b (mm. 171–174), although the second harmony and the final melodic note of the transposition are altered (I – vii^{♭7}). On another level, the entire eight-measure passage is subsequently transposed

¹⁶ Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, p. 62.

¹⁷ Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, p. 62.

down a minor third to C major/E \flat major (mm. 175–182). This larger-scale model is transposed one more time, down a minor third to A major, at which point the sequence breaks off in m. 187. The effect of this nested sequence is a decreased harmonic focus. This effect is balanced by the saturation of this passage with a fragment of the familiar S theme. This four-measure fragment is treated to overlapping imitation at two-measure intervals, and is thus heard ten times within these twenty measures.

Figure 5: Nested Sequence (mm. 167–183)

The musical score for Figure 5: Nested Sequence (mm. 167–183) is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 167–182) is for Violin & Cello and Piano. The second system (mm. 175–183) is for Violin & Viola and Piano. The score is in 3/4 time and features a nested sequence of chords and intervals. Harmonic annotations include 'E-flat:', 'Asc. m3', 'G-flat:', 'Desc. m3', 'C:', and 'A:'.

CHAPTER IV
LARGE-SCALE BLURRING

Double Tonality

The juxtaposition of two different keys throughout a piece of music – as opposed to the unchallenged prominence of a single key – creates a large-scale harmonic ambiguity referred to as double tonality. This technique, a feature of many late-nineteenth-century works, often juxtaposes two relative keys, although this need not be the case.¹⁸ The large-scale harmonic ambiguity between relative keys found in this movement (D minor and F major) is relevant to a discussion of structural blurring insofar as formal structure is at least partially defined by key area.¹⁹ The first movement begins immediately with harmonic ambiguity. The introduction in the piano uses only F and A for the first two measures (the F is a pedal tone for the first four measures), which suggests a root-position F-major chord as the opening harmony. Only the entrance of the cello in m. 3 establishes a root-position D-minor harmony as tonic. The opposition between two keys is a traditional aspect of sonata form, but the ambiguity regarding which of these two key areas is active at any given point is a more modern element. Fauré achieves this ambiguity primarily through the suggestive use of pedal tones (as in mm. 1–4), half-diminished seventh chords, and added-sixth chord.

¹⁸ Laitz, Steven G. *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 806.

¹⁹ Caplin, William E. *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 23.

The harmonic motion in mm. 7–8, shown in Figure 6, is the first of many suggestive usages of the diminished triad (or later, half-diminished seventh chord). This motion $ii^\circ - i$ in D minor, a weak harmonic motion to begin with, is further weakened by the modal approach to the tonic pitch (B \flat – C – D) in which the subtonic C is an accented passing tone. In the alternate F-major reading of that passage, the deceptive motion is still a relatively weak progression ($vii^\circ - vi$), but the accented passing tone is now the more tonally stable $\hat{5}$.

Figure 6: Double Tonality (mm. 7–8)

d:	ii°	i
F:	vii°	vi

This ambiguity is exploited throughout the movement, both by the frequent occurrence of this same ambiguous harmonic motion, as well as by frequent unequivocal occurrences of both $ii^\circ - i$ and $vii^\circ - vi$ at other points in the movement, making both readings equally valid and aurally familiar.²⁰

²⁰ Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, p. 36.

Approaching the repeat of the first theme in m. 23, ambiguity between relative keys is once again achieved, this time aided by the addition of the violin and the resulting thicker harmonic possibilities. As shown in Figure 7, $iv^7 - i^6$ in D minor is a valid interpretation, but an F-major reading ($ii^7 - I^{add6}$) is also possible.²¹ With F in the bass and the prominent metric position of the C, the repeat of the opening theme seems to start with I^{add6} . This harmony is approached by ii^7 , which has already been noted as one of the most prominent harmonic motions in the entire movement. This suggestion of F major is supported by mm. 27–28, also shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Double Tonality (mm. 22–23 and 27–28)

d:	iv^7	i^6	$ii^{\flat 7}$	i^6
F:	ii^7	I^{add6}	$vii^{\flat 7}$	I^{add6}

This passage, $ii^{\flat 7} - i^6$ in D minor, can also be heard as $vii^{\flat 7} - I^{add6}$ in F major with the strong descending-stepwise arrival on F in the bass.

The next complete statement of the primary theme occurs at the recapitulation in m. 211. As shown in Figure 8, the same ambiguity between relative keys is present, but

²¹ Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, p. 64.

for different reasons. The i^6 in D minor in m. 211 is approached by V^{+5} in second inversion, keeping the familiar F-pedal in the bass.

Figure 8: Double Tonality (mm. 210–213)

d:	V^{+5}	i^6	(ii°)	iv^7
F:	I^{+5-6}	6	(V^7)	ii^7

With the strong arrival of the recapitulation supported by an F-pedal, this arrival could be heard in F major as I^{+5-6} , thus invoking the I^{add6} again. Because of the addition of a descending D-minor scale in the violin, the new pitch C in m. 212 follows the I^{add6} with V^7 over a tonic pedal, furthering the suggestion of F major. In the measures that immediately follow, D minor regains prominence, but the suggestion of F major at such an important harmonic and formal boundary is significant.

Another instance of double tonality occurs in mm. 126–134. This one is partly a result of the ambiguity between i^6 and I^{add6} , but mostly a result of pedal tones. In the opening of this movement, an F-pedal turns out to be $\hat{3}$ in D minor rather than $\hat{1}$ in F major, but its suggestion of F major is still perceived. This same technique is taken even further in mm. 126–134, shown in Figure 9. An eight-measure subphrase, which is the model for an ascending-fifth sequence (see Table 2 on p. 12), begins in m. 127 on i^6 in D

minor. While there is no C present, m. 127 could be perceived as $I^{\text{add}6}$ in F major for two reasons.

Figure 9: Double Tonality (mm. 126–131)

126 131

d:	$V_{\frac{3}{4}}$	vi^6 (i^6)	$iv_{\frac{3}{4}}$	$i_{\frac{3}{4}}$	$V_{\frac{3}{4}}$	VII^6
	III					
F:	$V_{\frac{3}{4}}$	$I^{\text{add}6}$	ii	vi	V	V^6
			tonic ped _____			

The harmony that precedes it (G – B \flat – C) suggests $V_{\frac{3}{4}}$ in F major, and the measures that follow it continue the F-pedal with an arpeggiation through C. This suggestion of a Do – Sol – Do bass line in F major helps explain the contrapuntally questionable D-minor reading of $iv_{\frac{3}{4}}^{\frac{3}{4}} - i_{\frac{3}{4}}^{\frac{3}{4}} - V_{\frac{3}{4}}^{\frac{3}{4}}/VII^6$ in mm. 128–130. Further corroboration of this F-major reading follows with the tonicization of C major (the dominant of F major). Double tonality is at work again while approaching the first transposition up a fifth. Measures 133–135 approach A minor via $III^6 - ii^{\frac{3}{4}} - i^6$, a progression used in whole and in part throughout this movement. But coming from C major, the passage could be heard as $I^6 - vii^{\frac{3}{4}} - I^{\text{add}6}$. Thus, the next transposition in the sequence exploits the ambiguity between the relative keys of A minor and C major, a perfect fifth higher than the original D minor and F major. This process is repeated once more in the final transposition to E minor/G major in mm. 143–150. Interestingly, this sequential passage treats every scale degree in

the key of D minor as tonic except for B \flat , which is the key arrived at upon completion of the sequence in m. 151 to begin the next section based on the secondary theme.

Formal Function

Analyzing this movement as an instance of sonata form presents formidable challenges. The presence of the secondary theme in the tonic key near the end of the piece does not necessarily negate the many formal peculiarities. Tait acknowledges the sonata-like recapitulation of the secondary theme, but denies that this is a true sonata form.²² The factors in this formal ambiguity are the blurring of the transition and secondary key area, the scattering of developmental function, the stabilization of the development section, the repurposing of thematic material, and thematic fusion.

The most notable example of large-scale formal blurring involves the boundary between the transition (T) and the secondary key area (S) within the exposition, shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Form Chart of Exposition

Exposition										(Dev.)		
P	P		T ^P		S		(S) ^T		CL/RT ^T		(P)	
m.21	m.41		m.51		m.67		m.91		m.107			
d: i	v	i	i	i	VI	VI	III	III	-sequ-	III	III	i

Parentheses: developmental
 Superscript: external theme incorporated

²² Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, p. 275.

But clarity of formal function ends here. The tightly structured parallel period in mm. 43–51 is perhaps not the transition one would have expected after the two long, freely flowing, and asymmetrical phrases that constitute the primary key area (P) in mm. 1–42. This transition has more characteristics of a P section than the actual P section.²³ However, this section does fulfill the modulating function of a transition, closing with a very weak imperfect authentic cadence in B♭ major (VI). The next section, presumably the S section, consists of two eight-measure units. The second unit closes with a ♭III – ii – I elided plagal cadence in F major (III). Thus, these first two sections after P both exhibit transitional functions and have their own themes. The following third section, still in the key of F major, forges a new melody with the head derived from the S theme and the tail derived from the T theme and proceeds to develop it through sequence. The first eight measures (mm. 67–74) are transposed up a minor third to A♭ major. Then a two-measure fragment is similarly transposed up to C♭ major, D major, F major, and finally A♭ major. This section closes with an elision approached by the familiar ♭III – ii – I plagal motion. This third section clearly has a developmental function, but it is the only section that ends in the key in which it started. The fourth and final section sounds like a closing section with its repetitive presentation of two different four-measure cadential units. However, it closes with perhaps the most ambiguous cadence in the whole movement (discussed on p. 8) without having confirmed the key of F major, the key that has been active for the last forty measures without an authentic cadence. Thus, between

²³ Rothstein's description of the phrase rhythms traditionally associated with thematic versus non-thematic formal sections reveals the extent to which Fauré has blurred these formal functions. Rothstein, William. *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*. Ann Arbor: Musicalia Press, 2007, p. 99.

the close of the P section in mm. 41–42 and the close of the exposition in mm. 105–106, we have experienced four different sections, three different themes, two different keys, and only one authentic cadence (in the key that was only active for mm. 49–64). While this blurring of the T and S functions in sonata-form movements is not uncommon, the extent to which the themes and formal functions have been combined and repurposed is extensive. And Fauré’s treatment of the closing section as more of a retransition (and a very ambiguous one at that, lacking as it does an authentic cadence in the S key) is slightly less common.

Another example of large-scale formal blurring is the technique of continuous development.²⁴ As Table 4 shows, there are two salient features of this movement that are a result of this technique. First, no section of this movement is repeated without alteration. The P theme is presented intact four times in the tonic key, but each subsequent statement contains significant additions or alterations in countermelodies and harmony. The T section only appears once, as it is replaced by a transitional P theme in both the development²⁵ and the recapitulation. The S theme is never presented the same way twice, each presentation differing in phrase structure, length, key, or sequential pattern. The closing theme also only appears once, since the S theme assumes the closing/retransitional function in the development and the P theme achieves the same in the recapitulation.

²⁴ Tait, Robin. *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989, pp. 250, 254, 258, 265–67, 268–69, 272, 274–78.

²⁵ This is to be expected, but the structural similarity between the exposition, development, and recapitulation in this movement is not expected and requires a closer comparison than usual.

Table 4: Form Chart of Entire Movement

Exposition

<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>T^P</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>(S)^T</u>	<u>CL/RT^T</u>
m.21	m.41	m.51	m.67	m.91	m.107
d: i	v i	i i	VI VI	III III -sequ-	III III i

Development

<u>P</u>	<u>(P)</u>	<u>(S)^{T,P}</u>	<u>(S)</u>	<u>RT^S</u>
m.125	m.151	m.167	m.202	m.211
i	v i -sequ- i	VI bII	bII -sequ- bII	V -sequ- i

Recapitulation

<u>P</u>	<u>(P)</u>	<u>(S)</u>	<u>RT^P</u>
m.230	m.251	m.274	m.291
i	i i i	I vii	vii -sequ- i

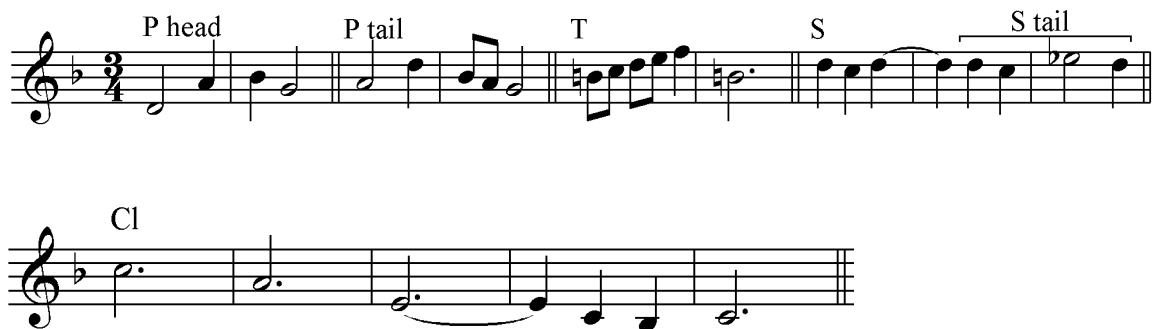
Coda

<u>(P)</u>	<u>(S)^P</u>	<u>P/S fusion</u>
m.306	m.319	m.337
i i	i i	i i

All of the developmental sections that are scattered throughout the movement are dissimilar. Second, since developmental function is spread across the whole movement, the development section proper does not stand out as such, especially since it presents the P and S themes virtually intact and in the same order as the exposition. Together, these factors result in another large-scale formal blurring: the development section sounds less developmental and more like a varied repeat of the exposition. The dramatic hierarchy of sonata form is somewhat neutralized by both the scattering of developmental function throughout the movement and the relative tonal stability of the actual development section.

Another example of formal blurring is found in the treatment of themes. The presence of themes in sections other than those in which they were originally presented blurs the perception of form. It is possible to link this thematic displacement to another larger process at work over the course of this movement: thematic blurring, or more accurately, thematic fusion. In the exposition, there are four distinct themes (P, T, S, CL), shown in Figure 10. In the development, the P theme commandeers the transitional function, and the T theme is only present in fragments within the S section (see Table 4 on p. 23). As expected, there is no CL section in the development, and the CL theme is likewise absent. But there is an expected retransition, which uses the S theme. In the recapitulation, only two themes, P and S, are presented.

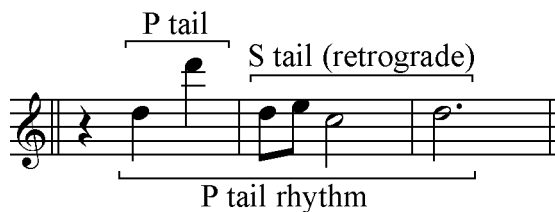
Figure 10: Classification of Themes



The P theme is once again used for transitional function, but the T theme is also absent from the S section. Unlike in the development, a closing section with the same CL theme is expected in the recapitulation. Instead, the recapitulation closes with a retransitional passage similar to the RT section in the development with its ascending minor 2nd sequence of an augmented triad. But here, the P theme has also taken over this section in

place of the S theme. An important harmonic process also reaches its goal during the recapitulation. As expected, the S theme, mostly in the key of F major (III) in the exposition, is presented in the key of D major (I) in the recapitulation. In the development, the S theme is primarily in the key of E \flat major (\flat II). Thus, the S theme approaches the key of the P theme over the course of the movement via a variation of the signature harmonic motion (III – \flat II – I). Of the four sections within the recapitulation, three contain the P theme, and the only complete statement of either theme is the first statement of the P theme. Thus, the P theme is the stronger of the two themes, and the fusion of the P and S themes will occur in the coda. The coda begins with the P theme and is followed by a section that alternates fragments of the P and S themes. The final section beginning in m. 323 presents the P theme in its original form, then in inversion, then significantly altered in m. 332. As shown in Figure 11, the altered tail-portion of this fragment, including its delayed final note in m. 337, is the tail of the original S theme in retrograde.

Figure 11: Fusion of P and S Themes (mm. 335–337)



The head of this final statement is still derived from the P theme, thus these two remaining themes have merged in the final measures of the movement. However, since

the key and the rhythm of this merged fragment are associated with the P theme, it may be more accurate to consider the S theme as having been subsumed into the P theme.

This technique of thematic fusion, a manifestation of continuous thematic development, serves an additional role. Considering the extent to which Fauré has negated the dramatic elements inherent in sonata form in this movement, this thematic process provides an alternative dramatic narrative that is not reliant on the sonata structure.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

All of the elements that have been examined here are components of traditional tonal and formal systems, and most of the blurring techniques applied to them are also not Fauré's invention. Elided cadences, phrase interpolations, chromatic sequences, double tonality, ambiguity between T and S sections, and continuous development are all concepts that appear in the works of other composers, some of these as early as the Baroque period. The use of nested sequences, however, is a unique application of sequential techniques. It is not so much the fact that these techniques are used, but rather the extent to which they are used that causes this music to sound more modern and elusive than its traditional components would suggest. The extensive use of these techniques is in keeping with a composer's intent to blur formal boundaries and to keep the perception of musical architecture from being a prominent aspect of the listening experience. The aural effect of the small-scale blurring techniques is a decreased perception of musical structure at the phrase level. Nearly constant phrase elision eliminates the caesura effect of the cadence, allowing for continuous melodic motion. Skillfully crafted interpolations create longer melodic units with a seamless asymmetry that avoids predictability. And chromatic and nested sequences cultivate long-range harmonic unpredictability and provide a melodic organizational style that contrasts that of non-sequential passages.

The aural effect of the large-scale blurring techniques is a decreased perception of the overall form of the movement and the resulting neutralization of the dramatic narrative that is traditionally dependent upon the perception of large-scale formal processes. The tension typically associated with the opposing key areas in sonata form is somewhat lessened when those opposing key areas are at times so loosely defined that one can be mistaken for the other. The ambiguity between the transition and the secondary key area contribute an element of unpredictability to the otherwise very familiar sonata-form construct. The scattering of developmental function and stabilization of the true development section also contribute to this formal unpredictability, but perhaps more importantly they neutralize the dramatic hierarchy of the entire movement. Collectively, these compositional decisions result in a musical style characterized by continuity of melodic line and rhythmic motion combined with a subtlety of expression that lacks the weightiness of formal rhetoric. With these stylistic features, Fauré achieves a sound that distinguishes his music from that of his predecessors without relinquishing the basic tools that he inherited from them.

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