

Fugue Analysis

Here are some questions which might help to focus a fugue analysis. Note that not all questions will be applicable to all fugues. Furthermore, these should be taken as a general guide, and needn't be answered one after another.

I. Subject

- A. How long is the subject?
- B. What is the subject's range of pitch?
- C. To what extent does the subject move conjunctly?
- D. Is the subject divisible into parts? If it is divisible into individual motives, how are they related or contrasting or both?
- E. What scale degrees lie at the basis of the subject melody? (That is, how would you reduce the subject to its essential pitches, and what fundamental structure do these articulate?)
- F. What are the most obvious harmonic implications of the subject?
- G. What distinctive melodic or rhythmic features does the subject have?
- H. How would you describe the expressive character of the subject?

II. Fugue Texture

- A. The fugal texture comprises how many voices?
- B. Are all voices brought into play consistently, or infrequently?

III. Answer

- A. Is the first answer real or tonal? If tonal, where are the adjustments made?
- B. If the answer is real, how and where is the tonic restored in preparation for the third entry?

IV. Countersubjects and Counterpoints

- A. Is the answer accompanied by free counterpoint or by a countersubject?
- B. Is the countersubject motivically related to the subject?
- C. Is there an additional countersubject?
- D. How does the countersubject contrast with or complement the subject and its answer?
- E. In counterpoints to subject entries, trace the origins of their motives to the subject or countersubject whenever possible.

V. Exposition

- A. Where does the exposition end? Is there an additional entry in the starting voice?
- B. What is the order of voice entries in the exposition?
- C. Is there a transitional episode during the exposition?
- D. Is there a full or partial counterexposition?

VI. Subject Entries

- A. Mark all post-exposition entries "real" or "tonal" as applicable.
- B. Are there subject groups or internal expositions in related keys?
- C. Locate the final entry or entries of the subject in the tonic.

VII. Episodes

- A. Mark all episodes and determine any directions of modulation.
- B. In the episodes, find examples of sequence, identifying their basic pattern and the direction and number of transpositions of the pattern.
- C. Are there instances of melodic sequence independent of parallel harmonic movement?
- D. Determine the sources of motives developed in the episodes.

VIII. Miscellaneous

- A. What is the fugue's tonal range?
- B. Is there any use of pedal points? Tonic or dominant? Where?

- C. Is there stretto? What is the order of voice entries in the stretto, and at what time interval? Is stretto particularly prevalent? Does the stretto engage all voices of the fugal texture?
 - D. In subject recurrences, look for examples of augmentation, diminution, mirror inversion, rhythmic alterations, retrograde, and other variants.
 - E. Find examples of double or other multiple counterpoint. At what interval is the inversion?
 - F. Do you find canonic procedure other than in subject imitation? At what harmonic and time intervals?
 - G. Is the fugue distinctly sectional? Locate cadences and evaluate their properties of punctuation and continuity of motion.
 - H. To what extent is the fugue taken up with the subject material? With full subject entries? Is much of the fugue, on the other hand, episodic?
 - I. Is the fugue anomalous in any way? What if any particularly striking or unusual characteristics do you observe in the fugue as a whole?
- IX. Coda
- A. Is there a coda?
 - B. If there is a coda, what does it contain? Subject? Pedal? Reduction or thickening of texture? Use of the dominant or the subdominant?