JACQUES IBERT: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF
THREE MOVEMENTS FROM HISTOIRES

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Although many biographical studies are available on Jacques Ibert, few contain significant analytical commentary. In this study I examine three movements from Ibert’s *Histoires* for piano which was composed between 1920 and 1921 and was premiered in 1923. The three movements are “La menuese de tortues d’or,” “Le petit âne blanc,” and “La marchande d’eau fraîche.” I primarily use Schenkerian analysis to identify characteristics of Ibert’s compositional language. Significant aspects of impressionism and Debussian influence are also identified as related elements to my analysis. Many expected elements of Schenkerian theory are absent in *Histoires*. The conclusions of this study are consistent with those of other analysts who apply Schenkerian methodology to impressionist music such as Richard Parks, Adele Katz, Felix Salzer, and Edward Laufer.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jacques Ibert’s music was a substantial contribution to French musical culture in the early
to middle twentieth century, yet there are very few analytical studies on any part of his oeuvre.
Although many have written about Ibert, their discourse is primarily biographical. The goal of
this project is to produce an analysis of three movements from Ibert’s *Histoires* for piano that
identifies characteristic techniques of his compositional language. *Histoires* is representative of
the impressionist style and is subject to the influence of other impressionist composers. In this
thesis, I have identified impressionist characteristics within the piece as well as evidence of
Debussian influence. Ten movements comprise *Histoires*. I chose, however, to look closely at
three movements. The movements I selected provide a characteristic sample of *Histoires*. To
examine more than three movements would cause this project to go beyond manageable limits
and space constraints. The movements that I examined are: “La meneuse de tortues d’or,” “Le
petit âne blanc,” and “Le marchande d’eau fraîche.” I selected these movements partly because
they exhibit impressionist qualities (Roberts 1990, 15-19). I use Schenkerian analysis
throughout this thesis as my primary method of analysis. Admittedly, I use a modified form of
Schenkerian analysis. Many traditional elements of Schenkerian analysis are absent in *Histoires*
which necessitates adapting the theory to better fit the characteristics of Ibert’s music. I have
included examples of the music and my analysis as appropriate in each of the following chapters
and a copy of each movement examined can be found in the appendices.
Jacques Ibert

Jacques Ibert was a prolific composer and admired by many who were writing about French music in the early twentieth century. He has been described as a composer capable of utilizing a variety of styles and moods (Laederich 2001, 42-44), (Wesley 1990, 15-19). He has further been described as a “complete musician” who makes extensive use of his resources and whose compositional language is capable of being picturesque, spiritual, tender, touching and tragic (Landormy 1943, 287). In addition to being a well-respected composer, Ibert also held a number of administrative positions and was an advocate for music in film (Laederich 2001, 42-44).

Ibert was first exposed to music by his mother who was a pianist and who studied at the Conservatoire de Paris. At the age of four Ibert began studying violin and, shortly afterwards, piano. Although Ibert was interested in composition, he made a living in his early career as a cinema pianist and accompanist. While working as a cinema pianist, he composed songs under the pseudonym “William Berty” (Laederich 2001, 42-44). Ibert began to study at the Conservatoire in 1910 and entered the studio of Paul Vidal in 1913.1 During his time at the Conservatoire, he met and worked alongside such notable contemporaries as Honegger and Milhaud (future members of Les Six).

Ibert achieved his greatest success beginning in 1919 when he won the Prix de Rome on his first attempt. During the years immediately prior to 1919, Ibert was prevented from composing by his service in World War I, during which he was a stretcher bearer on the front lines and later a naval officer in Dunkirk (Laederich 2001, 42-44). Ibert’s Prix de Rome success is especially impressive because he had experienced a four year gap in his compositional activity

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1 The dates in which Ibert began his studies at the Paris Conservatory are debatable. Some sources suggest that he did not enter the Conservatory until 1911 and Vidal’s studio in 1914.
during the war. Winning the Prix de Rome was the spark that ignited Ibert’s career. The 1920s ultimately became a decade of explosive popularity for Ibert’s music. *Histoires* was completed and premiered in the early portion of this decade and contributed to Ibert’s early success.

In addition to his compositional career, Ibert was director (and French ambassador) of the Academie de France at the Villa Medici from 1937 – 1960. Ibert’s involvement with the Academie was suspended during World War II because he and his music were banned by the Vichy government from 1940-1944. During this time, Ibert took refuge in southern France and Switzerland. After World War II, Ibert served as the administrator of the Réunion de Théâtres Lyriques Nationaux but held the position for less than a year due to health complications. Following his resignation from the Réunion de Théâtres Lyriques Nationaux, Ibert was elected to succeed Guy Ropartz in the Academie des Beaux-Arts (Laederich 2001, 42-44).

*Histoires*

*Histoires* is a work for piano in ten movements. The piece was completed between 1920 and 1921 and most of the movements were composed at the Villa Medici at the request of Ibert’s editor at Alphonse Leduc (Laederich 1998, 15). The piece was premiered by Paul Loyonnet on October 12, 1923 (Laederich 1998, 13-14). Although *Histoires* was completed in the early 1920s, some of the earliest sketches of the work (or portions thereof) date as far back as 1912 (Landormy 1943, 287). This date corresponds closely with the composition of Debussy’s *Préludes* (1910-1913). It is likely that the earliest sketches of *Histoires* were influenced by Debussy’s *Préludes.*² *Histoires* and the *Préludes* are both collections of short pieces for piano that reserve the title of the movement for the end rather than the beginning. Furthermore, both

² Although this seemly likely, I have not found any direct evidence confirming that *Histoires* was influenced by the *Préludes.*
collections are in the impressionist style. It is because of these preliminary observations that I chose to look to Debussy as a stylistic influence.\(^3\)

In an interview on April 19, 1929 Ibert commented on *Histoires*, saying that the collection was requested by his editor and that he “had to scrape the bottom of the barrel” and the collection contained some of the “sins of his youth” (Laederich 1998, 15). Ibert commented on *Histoires* at greater length during a talk he gave in Antibes on May 30, 1942 (Laederich 1998, 15):\(^4\)

These are stories I have written not for children, but for adults who are still children. Each one has been suggested, either by a reading, or by a memory of a trip, or by an image or a story. The little white donkey, I met for the first time in Southern Tunisia, near the oasis of Nefta. It was ridden by a scruffy kid, but handsome like a young god, carefree, a pomegranate flower in his teeth, at a steady, nonchalant trot of his mount. You will find the monotonous step of the little donkey in question, his capricious stopping, his untimely braying and slow under the atmosphere of a hot morning on the boarders of the desert…The crystal cage is a musical illustration of an image that I saw somewhere, perhaps in a dream. It is about a little princess who is shut away in a glass cage by a nasty fairy. She is sad, because every day her prince charming comes to look at her, but she is not able to speak to him, or kiss him. And it will remain this way for twenty-five years, from the date on which I composed this piece. The princess and the prince charming have unfortunately grown old…and the music too! *Bajo le mesa* in Spanish means under the table. Here is the explanation of this strange title. At a random stop in the port of Valencia, I had gone into one of the night clubs which are usually the meeting place of sailors, bad boys, and thrill seekers. The atmosphere was heavy and thundery. In the middle of the room a dancer was perched on a large oak table and her nervous legs gave rhythm, to the sound of the guitars and castanets, the traditional *zapateado*. A drunkard had rolled under this table, and was held to the floor by the enormous foot of one of the *chulos* of the port. He struggled, but the hold was strong and regardless of the cry of the fellow, the owner of the foot in question continued to quietly smoke his cigar while watching the beauty. It is this scene that I have tried to describe.\(^5\)

\(^3\) I did not limit my research to the *Préludes*, however, the *Préludes* yielded the most interesting and relevant discoveries.

\(^4\) The translation of this passage is my own.

\(^5\) Ce sont des histoires que j’ai composées non pour les enfants, mais pour les grandes personnes qui sont encore des enfants. Elles ont chacune été suggérées, soit par une lecture, soit par un souvenir de voyage, soit par une image ou un conte. *Le Petit âne blanc*, je l’ai rencontré pour la première fois dans le sud tunisien, près de l’oasis de Nefta. Il était monté par un gamin dépenaillé, mais beau comme un jeune dieu, qui s’en allait insouciant, une fleur de grenadier aux dents, au trot nonchalant et régulier de sa monture. Vous retrouverez le pas monotone du petit âne en question, ses arrêts capricieux, son braïement intempestif et lent sous l’atmosphère d’une chaude matinée aux confins du desert….*La Cage de crista l* est l’illustration musicale d’une image que j’ai vue quelque part, peut-être en rêve. C’est une petite princesse qui est enfermée par une vilaine fée dans une cage de verre. Elle est triste, car
Histories was premiered at the beginning of a decade of increasing popularity for Ibert (Wesley 1990, 15-19). Following the initial success of Histories, Ibert’s publisher, Leduc, suggested that he compose another series of pieces for piano as well as a collection for violin and piano. Many of Ibert’s manuscripts are currently inaccessible and those that are accessible are at different locations. Ibert’s manuscripts are easily identifiable. He routinely used black ink and gave careful attention to minute details such as drawing bar lines. Ibert routinely signed his work but rarely included a date (Laederich 1998, xxiii-xxiv). The original edition of Histories is for piano two hands, although there is also an early transcription for piano four hands (1922). One of the early manuscripts of the work includes a dedication to Alfred Cortot (Laederich 1998, 14-15). Histories has been arranged for a variety of instruments including flute and piano, bassoon and piano, saxophone and piano, violin and piano, cello and piano, and piano and voice. Additionally, Histories has also been arranged for saxophone quartet, wind sextet, and orchestra with piano conductor (Laederich 1998, 16).

Review of Literature

There are very few substantial studies on Ibert available in English. There are several book-length studies in French but, while they contain a wealth of biographical information, they contain little analytical commentary. Furthermore, Ibert is included in a number of French sources concerning French music in the early twentieth century. Among the most useful French sources are:

sources are *La musique française après Debussy* by Paul Landormy, *Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Jacques Ibert* (1890-1962) by M. Georges Auric, *Jacques Ibert* by Gérard Michel, *La musique en France entre le deux guerres* by René Dumesnil, and *Jacques Ibert* by Jacques Feschotte. These sources often mention *Histoires* (or portions thereof) but rarely go into specific details. These works focus primarily on Ibert’s biographical information, compositional style and characteristics (from an aesthetic point of view), and his role in early twentieth-century French musical culture.

The most significant source for *Histoires* that I have found is *Catalogue de l’oeuvre de Jacques Ibert* (1890-1962) by Alexandra Laederich, which is an expanded version of her dissertation (Laederich 1998). This source contains a great deal of information concerning the dates of *Histoires*’s composition and premiere, manuscript editions and arrangements, and recordings. The most helpful and interesting portion of this source includes commentaries from Ibert that specifically address *Histoires*. Although this source was very helpful, it does not include any analytical commentary.

The bibliography of *Catalogue de l’oeuvre de Jacques Ibert* (1890-1962) was especially helpful in finding additional sources. The sources that I have included that focus specifically on Ibert or *Histoires* were found in this bibliography. Furthermore, the bibliography also contains a number of other sources that I did not examine due their lack of relevance (or availability) to this project. The bibliography included two inaccessible sources that I believe would be relevant to this thesis. The first of these sources is a festschrift entitled *Hommage à Jacques Ibert: exposition à l’occasion du centenaire de sa naissance 1890-1990* and was a product of the French Bibliothèque nationale. The second source is *An analytic study of the flute works of*
Jacques Ibert by Francis Eugene Timlin. This source is a D.M.A dissertation from Washington University (1980) and is one of the only specifically analytical studies on Ibert to my knowledge.

Despite the lack of analytical literature about Ibert, it is still possible to benefit from the far greater amount of literature available about his stylistic contemporaries such as Debussy. The analytic literature on Debussy uses a number of analytical methods that are applicable to Ibert and suggests a wealth of information concerning his compositional influences.

In his text, *Harmony in Tonal Music. II: Chromatic Practices*, Joel Lester describes some general characteristics of impressionism (Lester 1982, 258). These characteristics include chromatic harmonies that, despite their presence in a basically tonal setting, are to a large extent non-functional. The hierarchy of harmonies is also obscured in impressionist music. Typical tonal music favors tonic, pre-dominant, and dominant functions while impressionist music, especially that of Debussy, gives equal weight to harmonies traditionally represented by the Roman numerals II, III, IV, and VI with a special emphasis on the subdominant (IV). The treatment of themes in the impressionist style is unique when compared with tonal music of the common practice period. Impressionists generally favor the combination of themes rather than their development. A final characteristic mentioned by Lester is the treatment of ostinato. Ostinatos are frequently used as pedal points in impressionist music and are often combined with upper harmonies to produce dissonant sonorities that further obscure harmonic function (Lester 1982, 259). This technique can be seen in *Histoires’s* first movement (“La meneuse de tortues d’or”) in which a reoccurring ostinato occurs in the closing measures of the movement’s first formal division (mm. 22) with seemingly independent harmonies occurring above (see Ch. 2).

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6 Chromatic harmonies are often used as independent harmonies; that is, they are not an elaboration of diatonic harmony.

7 Ostinatos also play a significant role in movements two and nine.
A variety of approaches have been adopted by analysts of impressionist music. These approaches include the use of standard tonal analysis, set theory, and Schenkerian analysis as well as hybrid combinations of two or more analytical methods. In a pair of articles about Debussy, Richard Parks uses post-tonal methods such as Fortean set theory and pitch-class set genera. The first article, entitled “Pitch Organization in Debussy: Unordered Sets in ‘Brouillards,’” describes the ordering of pitches as perceived from a listener’s point of view (Parks 1980, 119-134). Although this article presents a fascinating interpretation, possibly the most relevant portion of the article for this thesis is Parks’ opinion on what constitutes a good work of musical art. Parks states that a good piece of music makes varied use of a limited amount of material, at once economical but highly complex. (Parks 1980). This is a frequently used technique in Histoires.

A later article by Parks approaches Debussy’s music via the use of tonal analogues, that is, certain combinations of pitches native to tonality that appear in an atonal context (Parks 1985, 33-60). These patterns behave in a way that suggests tonality even though they function in an atonal environment. Although the previously mentioned articles suggest pertinent methods of analysis, the most relevant analytical study produced by Parks is his book The Music of Claude Debussy (1989). This study approaches selections of Debussy’s oeuvre via the use of both Schenkerian theory and set theory. For the purposes of this thesis, Parks’ use of Schenkerian theory is of primary concern. Parks makes it quite clear that traditional Schenkerian analysis is problematic when applied to impressionist music because of, among other considerations, the frequent absence of an Urlinie and structural bass arpeggiation. The omission of a structural

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8 In this article, Parks’s opinion on what constitutes a good piece of music is mainly in reference to the economical use of pitch content. Furthermore, Parks notes that this is not strictly an impressionist feature; it is seen throughout common practice repertoire. I have liberally applied Parks’s opinion to a broader range of compositional technique in Histoires.
bass arpeggiation is undoubtedly due to the tendency of Debussy (as well as others writing in the same style) to avoid tonic-dominant relationships. According to Parks, this lack of tonic-dominant relationships also contributes to the lack of a complete upper-line descent; if there is no structural bass arpeggiation and no tonic-dominant relationships, it is more difficult to have a complete *Urlinie*. Bass arpeggiations and linear progressions exist but are generally of only local significance. Rather than being supported by an *Ursatz*, Debussy’s music is often sustained by long-range neighbor-note figures and arpeggios.

Edward Laufer is another theorist who uses Schenkerian analysis to analyze Debussy’s music (2003, 89-134). Laufer states that applying Schenkerian analysis to music beyond the “classical masters” for whom Schenker crafted his theory requires considerable compromise (Laufer 2003, 89). Such compromises include the absence of interruptions and a structural top-line (*Urlinie*). Aside from these compromises, remaining elements of Schenkerian theory still hold a place in impressionist music, such as linear progressions, registral connections, basic triadic sonorities, and goal tones. Laufer also maintains that functional tonality is often modified or completely omitted and that neighbor note figures frequently provide the most significant long range connections. Laufer’s interpretation of the music via the use of Schenkerian theory is consistent with that of Parks.

Felix Salzer also uses Schenkerian methods to analyze impressionist music. In his work *Structural Hearing: Tonal Coherence in Music*, Salzer examines Debussy’s *Bruyères* using an altered version of traditional Schenkerian analysis (Salzer 1982, 222-223 and 252-255). Salzer’s analysis suggests that *Bruyères* is not based upon an *Ursatz* but rather is structured upon a large-scale neighbor motion. This aligns with the work of Laufer and Parks who both suggest that
long-range neighbor motions are frequently of primary importance in impressionist music, especially the music of Debussy.

Adele Katz’s work, *Challenge to Musical Tradition*, approaches a variety of musical styles beginning with Bach and continuing through Stravinsky. The chapter on Debussy is consistent with the view of the previously mentioned analysts (Katz 1945, 248-293). Katz discusses a number of Debussy’s works including, most notably, *La fille aux Cheveux de lin* (*Préludes* book I). In her analysis she addresses such aspects of the music as registral connections and parallel sevenths and also includes an extended discussion on what she identifies as “the neighbor-note technique” (Katz 1945, 254). The prevalence of the neighbor figure as both a local and a structural phenomenon suggests a close parallel with Salzer as well as Laufer and Parks.

Annie Yih combines the use of set theory with Schenkerian methodologies to approach Debussy’s music (Yih 2000, 203-229). She maintains that a Schenkerian approach is possible but problematic (as do Laufer and Parks). Schenkerian analysis vividly explains the tonal aspects of the music but does not adequately explain passages of extended chromaticism or atonality. To explain such passages, Yih uses set theory. The result is a hybrid (but in my opinion convincing) analysis that uses very different techniques to account for the entirety of the piece.

In addition to atonal and hybrid methods of analysis, there are a number of efforts to explain impressionist music using tonal methods outside of Schenkerian analysis. Mark McFarland makes a unique use of a technique first developed by Edward Cone (Cone 1972, 155-194). Whereas Cone developed the technique for the music of Stravinsky, McFarland applies it to Debussy. This method uses techniques called stratification, interlock, and synthesis to explain
the occurrence and organization of key musical fragments within a composition. Stratification is identified by the fragmentation of musical elements while interlock is the act of connecting those musical fragments. Synthesis is the process by which the listener ties the fragments into meaningful wholes. According to McFarland, Debussy’s use of this method was borrowed from techniques used in the construction of film. Although it seems to have little relevance for Histoires, it does suggest another influential source for Ibert. Debussy was keenly interested in film and believed that applying cinema techniques to music was a way to revive public taste for symphonic music (McFarland 2004). Similarly, as detailed by Alexandra Laederich, Ibert was also intensely interested in film music (Laederich 2001, 42-44). Ibert worked as a cinema pianist in his early career and remained an active supporter of film music throughout his life (Laederich 2001, 44).

Daniel Sachs examines Debussy’s music from the viewpoint of significant patterns as perceived by the listener (2011). In his analysis of Brouillards and Voiles, Sachs explains the music in terms of the juxtaposition of contrasting elements, one considered stable, the other, unstable. These elements can include rhythm and harmony as well as broader aspects of the music such as form and key regions. For example, the harmony of a piece may represent the stable portion of the music while an additional element provides a simultaneous contradiction. Sachs presents his theory from the perspective of reductive analysis in that he details how the juxtaposition of elements is present on a variety of structural levels ranging from the surface to the very deep middleground.

Robert Wesley briefly addresses Histoires in his article, “Jacques Ibert’s Piano Music” (Wesley 1990, 15-19). This source does not contain any analytical commentary but does identify some relevant aspects of Histoires. Wesley indicates that some of the early sketches of the work
date back to Ibert’s time as a student in the Paris Conservatoire. Furthermore, Wesley makes an interesting connection between *Histoires* and Debussy’s *Préludes*. In both works the composer reserves the title of the movements for the end rather than placing them at the beginning. This suggests an instance of Debussian influence for Ibert. Also, Wesley suggests that “La meneuse de tortues d’or,” “Le petit âne blanc,” “La marchande d’eau fraîche,” and “Le cortege de Balkis” all exhibit impressionist characteristics. Wesley’s comments on *Histoires* are consistent with those of Laederich.

Method

I chose to use a modified form of Schenkerian analysis as my primary method of analysis in this thesis based on the results of my literature review and my preliminary analytical results. These modifications follow a certain tradition of adapting traditional Schenkerian methodology to post-tonal idioms; other theorists who have done so include Felix Salzer, Edward Laufer, Richard Parks, and Ollie Vaisala. Reductive analysis has proven to be a reliable method when examining music that is clearly tonal, though not in a traditional sense, but does not rely on traditional harmonic function. *Histoires* is an example of such a work, as is much of the impressionist oeuvre. When the harmonic function of *Histoires* breaks down, the voice leading continues to provide valuable insight into the local as well as the overall structure of the piece. This makes Schenkerian analysis a logical if not obvious choice. Although I refer to characteristics of *Histoires*, my conclusions are based on an examination of three movements.

Although I am referring to my primary method of analysis as Schenkerian analysis, many elements of traditional Schenkerian analysis are absent. This is a distinction made by many theorists working with similar styles of music including Richard Parks (1989), Felix Salzer
(1982), and Edward Laufer (2003) who all acknowledge that applying Schenkerian methodology to a repertoire outside of that from which Schenker developed his method requires a number of concessions. In *Histoires* these concessions most notably include the absence of an *Ursatz*, and, from a more broadly tonal focus, the frequent absence of traditional cadential formulae and functional harmonic progressions. My findings are consistent with those of the above-mentioned theorists.

While many elements of Schenkerian analysis are absent from *Histoires*, there are also many that remain active. These elements include registral connections, long-range voice-leading connections, linear progressions, and basic sonorities whose projection throughout a movement provides the most significance background feature. Linear features (such as arpeggios and neighbor motions) that provide local interest in common practice repertoire frequently provide the most significant structural features in *Histoires*, as well as in much impressionist music (Parks 1989, 4).

**Impressionist Features**

*Histoires* is a work that demonstrates impressionist characteristics. For this reason I am including a summary of the impressionist features that can be seen in *Histoires*. The most immediately obvious feature is that chords often include dissonant chord tones, frequently reaching the 9\textsuperscript{th} or 11\textsuperscript{th}. This serves to obscure the harmonic function of the chords and contributes to the flowing harmonic quality that is characteristic of the impressionist style. Furthermore, chromaticism in *Histoires* is rarely an elaboration of diatonic harmony. Additional important impressionist characteristics seen in *Histoires* are the reduced role of dominant
harmony and the elevated prominence of subdominant harmony. These are favorite compositional techniques of Debussy.

From a formal perspective, *Histoires* embraces the impressionist tendency toward simple large-scale forms, such as ABA. Furthermore, Ibert tends to combine and overlap melodies rather than developing them. Often melodies will occur over ostinato pedal points resulting in dissonant upper harmonies. Parallel harmonies including fifths and octaves occur frequently and sometimes participate in middleground structure.

Although this short summary does not include every single instance of impressionism in *Histoires*, it does contain the most significant features. The above mentioned features are active in *Histoires* as well as a number of other impressionist works documented by Richard Parks (1989), Edward Laufer (2003), Adele Katz (1945), and Felix Salzer (1982).
CHAPTER 2

“LA MENEUSE DE TORTUES D’OR”

“La meneuse de tortues d’or” is the first of the ten movements of Histoires and can be translated as “The leader of the golden tortoises.” There is evidence, however, that this movement was originally titled “La princesse aux tortues d’or” (The princess of the golden tortoises) (Laederich 1998, 13). The exact reason for the change of title is unknown although it is possible that the original title did not fit Ibert’s mental image for the movement. Ibert is known throughout his oeuvre as a composer capable of arousing vivid imagery from his compositions (Roberts 1990, 15-19). In “La meneuse de tortues d’or,” there is evidence of Debussian influence as well as, more generally, characteristics of the impressionist style.

“La meneuse de tortues d’or” operates under the conventions of tonality, although some traditional tonal idioms are absent. These absent idioms include expected cadential formulae and functional chord progressions. Because functional chord progressions (such as tonic-predominant-dominant) are absent, Roman numeral analysis provides little relevant information. Tonal idioms that remain in “La meneuse de tortues d’or” include voice leading, sequential motion, and the establishment of D minor as a tonal center. The harmonies present within the movement often contain extended or dissonant chord tones. This yields a number of dissonant sonorities, which often occur over structural pedal points or arpeggiation.

Motivic Structure and Form

The most obvious analytical discoveries I have made in “La meneuse de tortues d’or” relate to the form of the movement and Ibert’s treatment of motives. Richard Parks comments in his article “Pitch Organization in Debussy: Unordered Sets in ‘Brouillards’” that a successful
musical composition makes varied use of a limited amount of material and is both economical in the use of musical materials and also highly complex (Parks 1980, 120).\(^9\) This quality can be seen in Ibert’s treatment of motives in the first movement of *Histoires*. “La meneuse de tortues d’or” is supported by four main related motivic ideas. Motive 1 enters at the beginning of the piece and is immediately followed by a consequent second phrase. See Example 2.1.

Example 2.1: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or.” Motive 1 – Antecedent/Consequent.

![Example 2.1: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or.” Motive 1 – Antecedent/Consequent.](image)

As can be seen in Example 2.1, the second phrase is derived from the first. The ambitus of the first phrase falls within the A\(^4\)-A\(^5\) octave (plagal) while the ambitus of the second phrase extends to D\(^6\), emphasizing the range of the authentic form of the mode. The use of both forms of the mode helps to distinguish the two phrases without losing the antecedent/consequent connection. The rhythmic patterns used in the two phrases, though not exact, are very similar. Both phrases open with a leap within the D minor triad that helps to define the tonality of the movement and each is contained within a four measure unit. The pair of four measure units combines to produce a parallel period that consists, as expected, of antecedent and consequent phrases. The

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\(^9\) In this article Parks is referring to a complex yet economical use of pitch resources. I have applied his idea to compositional material in a broader sense.
antecedent phrase suggests the home key of D minor even though the movement actually begins on subdominant harmony and proceeds to minor dominant harmony in m. 4. The consequent phrase moves to the relative major (III) in m. 8. Although the antecedent phrase supplies an off-tonic beginning, the melody in the right hand is surely suggestive of tonic harmony (the same melody is actually harmonized with tonic harmony later in the movement). Example 2.1 shows only the right-hand portion of the music. The left hand begins with a G minor harmony (providing the off-tonic beginning) and arrives on an F (at first $F^4$ and then descending an octave to $F^3$) in the final measure of the consequent phrase, thus confirming the motion to the relative major (see Appendix A). This type of harmonic motion is very typical of tonal pieces in the minor mode.

Motive 2 follows in m. 9 and is related to the first motive. See Example 2.2.

Example 2.2: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Motive 2.

In Example 2.2 the second motive shares a register similar to the consequent phrase of Motive 1 but contains considerably more leaps in contrast to the mostly stepwise contour of Motive 1. As can be seen in Example 2.3, the repeat of Motive 2 includes an extension.

Example 2.3: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Motive 2 Repeat and Extension.
The extension of Motive 2 reverts back to stepwise voice leading and then evolves to form Motive 3, which becomes a sequential subject throughout the movement. See Example 2.4.

Example 2.4: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Motive 3 (Sequential).

Notice in Example 2.4 that the recurring sequential motive is derived from the extension of Motive 2 (Example 2.3). Similar to the relationship between Motives 2 and 3, Motive 3 inspires Motive 4. Motive 4 is as an ostinato that closes the first formal section of the movement and is later used as a transitional idea between the second and third major formal divisions. See Example 2.5.

Example 2.5: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Motive 4.

This motive is derived from the sequential motive (Motive 3) that immediately precedes it. The rhythm seen in this motive is the same as that of Motive 3. Just as the rhythm of Motive 2 became Motive 3, the rhythm of Motive 3 continues to help form Motive 4. Additionally, pitches used in this motive are derived from Motive 2 (A-D-C). Ibert apparently derived the four motives from a single musical idea. Even though I have given each motive its
own number, they seem to be transformations of the core idea rather than separate though related entities.

These motives make up the first formal section of “La meneuse de tortues d’or” as well as the remainder of the movement. In subsequent formal sections, the same motivic ideas are used; sometimes exactly as they first appear and at other times as transpositions or otherwise altered forms. The length of each motivic unit decreases by one measure with each motive. Motive 1, both antecedent and consequent, is eight measures (subdivided into 4+4 measures), Motive 2 is three measures, Motive 3 is two measures, and finally the length of Motive 4 is one measure. This represents a diminishing (in length) motivic progression that supplies much of the interest of the opening measures of “La meneuse de tortues d’or.”

Now that the motives have been identified, it is possible to consider the formal design of the movement. The motives play a vital role in the form of the piece, each occurring multiple times directly repeated, transposed, or fragmented. The movement is divided into three major formal sections which can be seen in the form chart on the following page (Example 2.6).

Example 2.6 shows how the motivic content contributes to the formal interest of the movement. Section A (mm. 1-35) begins with the presentation of Motive 1 and ends with Motive 4. Motives 2 and 3 are also present and contribute to the motivic progression that was mentioned earlier. Section B (mm. 36-64) is very similar to Section A but with some significant alterations. Motive 1 occurs in much the same way as in Section A with one noticeable exception, it is combined with Motive 4 (bass ostinato). This addition of Motive 4 to the beginning of Section B gives the transition between sections a sense of cohesiveness.
Example 2.6: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Form Chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>mm. 1 – 8</th>
<th>mm. 9 – 15</th>
<th>mm. 16 – 21</th>
<th>mm. 22 – 35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivic units</td>
<td>(4 + 4)</td>
<td>(3 + 4)</td>
<td>(2 + 2 + 2)</td>
<td>(14x1 measure unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Measures 1-35</td>
<td>Motive 1 – Ant.+Cons</td>
<td>Motive 2 + extension (repeated)</td>
<td>Sequential Motive (3)</td>
<td>Motive 4 – ostinato pedal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>mm. 36 – 43</th>
<th>mm. 44 – 50</th>
<th>mm. 51 – 56</th>
<th>mm. 57 – 64</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivic units</td>
<td>(4)/* + 4</td>
<td>(3 + [4])/*</td>
<td>(2 + 2 + [2])/*</td>
<td>(6x1 measure unit + [2])/*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Measures 36-64</td>
<td>Motive 1 – Ant.+Cons</td>
<td>Motive 2 + extension (repeated)</td>
<td>Sequential Motive (3)</td>
<td>Movement 4 – ostinato pedal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*combined with motive 4 in the bass
*Transposed down whole step
*End whole step Transposition
*Final 2 measures in augmentation – 2 measures occupy 1 motivic unit.

*begin transposition down by 5th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>mm. 65 – 72</th>
<th>mm. 73 – 80</th>
<th>mm. 81 – 89</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivic units</td>
<td>(2 + 2 + 2 + 2)</td>
<td>(4 + 4)*</td>
<td>([1 + 1 + 2]* + 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Measures 65 – 89</td>
<td>Motive 1 – altered fragment</td>
<td>Motive 1 + extension</td>
<td>Fragmented Motive 2 + closing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* First motive down an octave and displaced by a dotted quarter note in measure 73.
* Inverted fragment of motive 2.
* Open 5th in bass.
* Final 4 measures have open 5th – ends on Tonic (D).

The restatement of Motive 1 makes Section B easily identifiable, both visually and aurally, while the continuation of the Motive 4 ostinato pedal heard only moments before provides both a connection with Section A and an addition to Motive 1 that is unique to Section B. The combination of motives also conforms to what Lester identifies in his text, *Harmony in Tonal Music. II: Chromatic Practices*, as a compositional technique of Debussy (and by association
many other composers of the impressionist style). Debussy tended to resist developing a theme; instead he preferred to combine themes and motivic ideas (Lester 1982, 260).

The presentation of Motive 2 (Section B) begins as it did in Section A but is transposed down a major second before its completion (m. 47). This transposition continues through the majority of Motive 3 until the final two measures where the transpositional relationship changes. Motive 3 (m. 55) is now transposed down a perfect fifth from its initial presentation (m. 20) in Section A. The transposition of Motive 3 in Section B applies primarily to the accompanying harmonies. Motive 4 is considerably shorter in Section B and maintains the transposition (this time occurring as up by perfect fourth rather than down by perfect fifth). The final two measures of Section B occur in augmentation; two measures now equal one motivic unit.

Section C (mm. 65-89) is concerned primarily with Motive 1. It begins with an altered form of Motive 1 and is accompanied by descending chromatic harmonies. The fragment is repeated three additional times. Motive 1 is then presented almost exactly as it was in the opening measures of the movement but is transposed down an octave and rhythmically displaced by a dotted quarter note in m. 73. Following the re-statement of the first motive is an inverted fragment of Motive 2 (mm. 81-84). The final four measures of the movement are comprised of harmonies occurring in parallel open fifths that represent a neighbor figure ending on a D sonority.

Overall Structure

One of the most basic principles of Schenkerian analysis is the presence of an *Ursatz* that most commonly includes an upper line descent (*Urlinie*) and structural bass arpeggiation (*Bassbrechung*). As such notable theorists, including Felix Salzer (1982, 222), Richard Parks
(1989, 4), and Adele Katz (1945, 255), have suggested, works in the impressionist style often provide a notable exception by not containing a structural *Ursatz*. “La meneuse de tortues d’or” has at its foundational level a structural neighbor motion (SNM) in the upper voice that is frequently replicated on levels closer to the surface. The movement also contains several linear descents that contribute heavily to the movement’s foreground structure but are ultimately always subordinated to the large-scale neighbor motion. Example 2.7 shows a middleground sketch of the movement. Although I will frequently supplement the following discussion with more foreground examples, it will often be necessary to refer to the Example 2.7 sketch in order to maintain a larger perspective of the movement.

The first part of the three-part neighbor motion is presented almost immediately in the right hand in m. 1. Although $A^5$ is not immediately consonant, it participates in the opening sonority as a chordal 9th. This is not at all unusual; Ibert routinely uses extended chord tones throughout *Histoires* which contribute to the impressionist quality of the work. In addition to initiating the structural neighbor motion, $A^5$ is also the first pitch of the movement’s first significant descending line. See example 2.8.

Example 2.8: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” $A^5$ as Beginning of SNM and First Descent.

The $A^5$ initiates both the SNM (as shown in Example 2.7) and the first descent that comprises the movement’s first four measures. The left hand during these measures is absent from the example but will be discussed later in relation to the movement’s off-tonic beginning (Example 2.19).
Example 2.7: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Middleground Sketch.
The initial $A^5$ ultimately connects with $A^5$ in m. 14 although it is further elaborated with additional descents from $D^6$ (m. 5) and $E^6$ (mm. 9 and 12) respectively. See Example 2.9.

Example 2.9: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Prolongation of $A^5$ with elaborative descents.

Notice in Example 2.9 that $A^5$ in m. 14 connects with $A^5$ in m. 1. Observe also that although the $A^5$ of mm. 1 and 14 is structurally the most important voice, the descents from $D^6$ and $E^6$ provide the most local interest. The asterisks placed above the upper notes of the descending lines in mm. 5, 9, and 12 indicate an important relationship. There is an obvious register connection but the most significant aspect of these upper tones is realized in the “B” section of the movement and will be discussed shortly.

The upper structural tone ($A^5$) descends an octave via an arpeggiated triad beginning in m. 14. This descent occurs over a six-measure sequence (discussed earlier) with each sequential unit moving down by third. A significant impressionist feature can be seen in this passage: parallel octaves (Lewin 1987, 59-72), (Salzer 1982, 252-255). The parallel octaves are most clearly seen in a deeper level of analysis. See Example 2.10. Following the descending arpeggio, the structural tone (still the initial tone of a three-note structural neighbor motive) settles on $A^4$ in m. 22. From m. 22 to the end of the section (m.35) there is an ostinato in the left hand with subdominant and minor dominant harmonies occurring above. Although harmonies on A and G are seen in the highest voices, this passage is a prolongation of $i^6_4$ harmony that both closes Section A and begins Section B.
Example 2.10: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Parallel octaves in descending 3rd sequence.

The upper harmonies of the passage stop in m. 30 leaving the final five measures of the section to pass the tonic-6/4 ostinato between both the treble and bass staves.

The passage that concludes the A section suggests two important characteristics: one of the movement and one of Ibert’s compositional (Histoires) style in a broader sense. The first of these characteristics is the combination of harmonies built on A and G in mm. 25-30. This in a subtle way relates to the overall neighbor motion between A and G (refer to Example 2.7) that provides the most significant structural motion for the movement. The second characteristic is Ibert’s tendency to end a given section by simply letting the melodic and harmonic fabric of the piece dissipate. By letting the compositional fabric of the piece disintegrate, Ibert is able to transition from one section to another without coming to a formal close. This aspect of Ibert’s compositional language will be elaborated further in subsequent chapters.

Section B is structurally very similar to Section A with some significant alterations. The section begins in the same way as the previous section, regaining the A5 reminiscent of the movement’s opening measures. The left hand of Section B begins not as it did in the beginning but rather by continuing the ostinato that closed Section A. See Example 2.11.
Example 2.11: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Bass ostinato connecting Sections A and B.

Observe in Example 2.11 that the beginning of Section B is partially disguised by the continuation of the bass ostinato. Obscuring the transition between sections is a frequently used impressionist compositional strategy. The right hand of Section B is the same as Section A, containing the same structural A\(^5\) and elaborative descents, until m. 47. What was seen in Section A as a repeat of the stepwise descent from E\(^6\) (m. 12) is now transposed down a whole step to descend from D\(^6\) (m. 47). This prepares the second portion of the large-scale structural neighbor motion; A-G-A. See Example 2.12.

Example 2.12: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or. Comparison of m. 47 and m. 12.
In Example 2.12, m. 47 presents a descending line beginning on D\textsuperscript{6} rather than on E\textsuperscript{6} as in Section A. The goal of the descent presents the second portion of the SNM. After the presentation of the structural neighbor tone (G), Section B continues in a way similar to Section A, only transposed down a whole step. The same descending arpeggio can be found and, as in Section A, reduced to parallel octaves in the outer voices (refer back to Example 2.10).

The major-second transposition ends in m. 55 where the transpositional relationship between Sections A (m. 20) and B (m. 55) becomes down by fifth. Melodically there remains a significant relationship between the two sections. Beginning in m. 57 is a bass ostinato that serves a purpose similar to the ostinato found in the closing measures of Section A. This time, however, the ostinato is transposed up a fourth to emphasize subdominant harmony whereas the first time (m. 22) it emphasized tonic harmony. See Example 2.13.

Example 2.13: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Bass ostinato over subdominant harmony
Just as in Section A, the ostinato in Section B initially occurs beneath right-hand harmonies but quickly settles to just the ostinato melody passed between both the treble and bass staves. Like Section A, Section B concludes not in an easily identifiable manner.

The music reduces down to only the bass ostinato but occurs with register transfers and in augmentation in the final two measures of the section (mm. 63-64). It is worthy to note that the subdominant harmony (G) is not simply the harmony supporting the structural neighbor note, but is a favorite harmony of impressionist composers (perhaps most notably Debussy) due to its functional ambiguity with the tonic. For example, from the tonic scale degree to the subdominant scale degree is the same distance as the interval (P4th) between dominant and tonic scale degrees; therefore, from tonic to subdominant can sound like I-IV in the tonic key or V-I in the key of the subdominant (Parks 1989, 10). In attributing a greater significance to subdominant harmony, impressionists frequently downgrade the significance of the dominant, which contributes to the lack of a structural bass arpeggiation, such as I-V-I, or in Schenkerian terms, bassbrechung (Parks 1989, 40). Making the subdominant especially ambiguous with tonic harmony in this instance is the fact that it is in 6/4 (the most unstable) position, putting the tonic pitch in the bass. Further significance of 6/4 sonorities will be explored shortly.

The final portion of the SNM arrives with Section C. Although Section C has many similarities to the previous sections, it is unique in its treatment of the melodic motives and harmonies. From a voice-leading perspective, the beginning of Section C is connected with m.56 of Section B. See Example 2.14. The bass of m. 56 moves by step to connect with the bass in m. 65. The open arrow head shows movement by major second while the solid arrow heads show movement by minor second. From a formal perspective, this is a valid connection. The remainder of Section B is a prolongation of subdominant harmony.
Example 2.14: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Voice-leading connection between B and C.

Example 2.14 shows only the first sonority of m. 56. A second sonority is found on beat 4 of m.56 (F major) but is simply an incomplete neighbor (when considering the connection between mm. 56 and 65) to the G major harmony seen in Example 2.14 (refer to Appendix A for a complete illustration of m. 56). The G major harmony is given greater significance because it represents the tonal area being expressed at the end of Section B.

The third portion of the SNM (A^4) is achieved in m. 65 via the use of a melodic gesture similar to that which was used to present the first portion of the SNM in m. 1. The melodic gesture to which I am referring is a three-note unit beginning on a D that rises a perfect fifth and then descends a fourth (perfect or diminished). A^4 is maintained until it connects with A^5 in m. 81. See example 2.15.

Example 2.15: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Presentation and prolongation of A^4.
Notice in the above example that, even though Section C is notably independent from the previous sections, the final structural A is achieved through the use of a familiar melodic gesture. Also, notice that $A^4$ in m. 65 connects with $A^5$ in m. 81. The melodic content in the measures between the initial presentation of $A^4$ and its octave transposition is similar to the melodic content in Sections A and B. The major difference between Section C and Sections A and B is the way the melody is harmonized. Ibert harmonizes the melody in Section C with parallel open fifths; a characteristic unique to Section C.

Measures 81-84 have a dual purpose. First, as previously mentioned, the $A^5$ of m. 81 is a further prolongation of the previous $A^4$ in m. 65. Second, the right-hand material is reminiscent (see brackets of Example 2.16) of the melodic material (both in pitch content and register) first seen in m. 9 and later in mm. 44. See example 2.16.

Example 2.16: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Melodic material in mm. 9, 44, and 81.

![Example 2.16](image)

There is an undeniable similarity between the melodic materials from each section. The presence of this gesture in the final measures of “La meneuse de tortues d’or” serves to give the movement a sense of cohesiveness as well as to delay the final four measures which affirm the D minor tonality and also provide an additional surface-level neighbor motion (bass D-C-D). The final two measures are comprised of a single open fifth D sonority. This sonority is exclusively in the bass staff; however, the highest sounding pitch is $A^3$. Although this $A^3$ is lower than any

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10 Section C uses much of the same material from previous sections, however, characteristics including chromatic harmonies (mm. 65-69) and parallel open fifths (mm. 73-80) give the section its independence.
of the previous structural A’s, it is still the highest sounding voice, thus connecting with $A^5$ of m. 65. See example 2.17.

Example 2.17: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Deep middleground sketch.

The above example is a deep middleground sketch of “La meneuse de tortues d’or.” Notice how the final $A^3$ is connected with the previous structural A’s. This sketch shows how the SNM (upper voice half notes) is present throughout the movement. The half notes in the bass staff highlight the tonal areas that support the SNM. The overall i-IV-i motion is foreshadowed in the opening of the movement which begins on the subdominant and then moves to the tonic in m. 5. The multiple register transfers of the structural neighbor formation provide an additional example of Debussian influence. Concerning Debussy’s *La Fille Aux Cheveux de Lin* from the first book of *Préludes*, Adele Katz notes the frequent use of register transfer to elaborate a structural neighbor motion (Katz 1945, 255).

Despite my insistence on the significance of the structural neighbor motion, there is an alternate way to interpret the final measures of the movement. It is possible to read the final
descent from A⁴ to D⁴ that occurs in mm. 73-79 as structurally most significant, giving the remaining measures of the movement a coda-like function. See Example 2.18.

Example 2.18: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Alternate reading of the end of Section C.

Notice in Example 2.18 that reading the fifth descent as more significant than the neighbor motion requires a number of concessions. The register of mm. 81-85 has been condensed to illustrate the relationships better. The A⁵ (seen above as A⁴) in m. 81 would have to be downgraded as subordinate to the D⁴ of m. 79. Admittedly, this reading would be closer to a traditional Schenkerian interpretation; however, I believe the evidence for a structural neighbor motion is stronger. By reading a SNM, one is able to attribute proper significance to mm. 81-84 which, given their register in relation to the remainder of Section C, seem to demand attention. Furthermore, the SNM reading is strengthened by the presence of an actual (not implied) ending pitch. Additionally, a number of notable theorists including Salzer (1982, 222), Katz (1945, 254), and Parks (1989, 4) have suggested that neighbor motions frequently provide the most structural significance in impressionist music.
Harmony and Related Elements

The harmonies in “La meneuse de tortues d’or” are characteristic of the impressionist style, often containing extended chord tones. Given the non-functional tendency of the movement’s harmonies, Roman numerals provide little relevant information and will to a large extent be absent from my analysis. I will not provide a strenuous chord by chord discussion of the harmony; rather I will discuss the important and interesting passages.

The first four measures, constituting the first phrase of the movement, provide the first interesting harmonic passage. The movement does not start on tonic (d minor) harmony as might be expected; it begins with a subdominant sonority that proceeds to a minor dominant harmony in m. 4. See Example 2.19.

Example 2.19: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Off-tonic beginning.

In Example 2.19 the movement begins on a subdominant rather than tonic sonority. Furthermore, the subdominant sonority is a minor seventh chord. From the very beginning the movement seems to emphasize unstable elements which contribute to its impressionistic sound. Although the off-tonic beginning is not initially relevant to the movement as a whole, a retrospective view of the movement after examining it in its entirety suggests a very significant connection. As I demonstrated in the prior section, the overall structure of the movement is
designed around a structural neighbor motion. The neighboring sonority in the overall structure
highlights the subdominant in mm. 49-64 (review Example 2.12). The arrival of the structural
subdominant sonority certainly references the off-tonic beginning of the movement’s first phrase.
Such a connection strengthens the significance of the subdominant harmony which, in turn, also
strengthens the movement’s impressionistic classification. The off-tonic beginning as an
interesting harmonic passage is further highlighted with the beginning of Section B (m. 36).
Although the sections share right-hand melodic material, Section B begins on tonic harmony
rather than subdominant harmony.

One of the most prevalent elements of harmony in the movement is the position of the
harmonies, most notably the 6/4 inversion. As previously mentioned, the opening harmony of
the movement is in inversion (6/5), making the arrival of the first tonic harmony in m. 5 even
more pronounced since it is in root position. The 6/4 inversion becomes especially prevalent in
m. 16 of Section A which begins the first sequence of the movement. The inversion is
maintained with each sequential unit and continues throughout the remainder of the section (see
Example 2.20). Notice in Example 2.20 that the 6/4 inversion is especially prevalent in most of
Section A. The asterisks indicate a longer range connection between the two D₆₄ sonorities. The
ostinato that begins in m. 22 provides a meaningful connection between Sections A and B and is
prolongation of tonic harmony in second inversion.

Section B (m. 36) begins with a harmony that is not in root position. Section B continues
the second-inversion tonic harmony through m. 40. The sequence in Section B corresponds to
the one in Section A and, even though it is at a different pitch level, the harmonies are still in 6/4
position. The final portion of the sequence (mm. 55-56), however, is in root position rather than
second inversion.
Example 2.20: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” 6/4 inversions in Section A.

This serves to highlight the structural neighboring sonority by differentiating it from the corresponding measures in Section A (mm. 20-21). See Example 2.21.

Example 2.21: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Root position structural subdominant sonority.

The 6/4 position returns in m. 57 to conclude the section with the familiar ostinato in second inversion over subdominant harmony.
Section C (m. 65) not only provides the final segment of the structural neighbor motion but also has some noteworthy harmonic elements, the first of which is in m. 65. The melodic segment in the right hand is the same as the one that began both Section A and B but has an altered tone; E-natural becomes E♭ (see Example 2.22). This modal alteration continues through m. 72 before being corrected in m. 73.

Example 2.22: Ibert, “La meneuse de tortues d’or:” Modal alteration in Section C.

Notice in Example 2.22 that the melodic segment in the right hand contains an E♭ rather than the expected E-natural. This contrast is not unique to Section C although it is emphasized more than in previous sections given its longer duration. The E-natural/E♭ contrast is first seen in mm. 9 and 12 and also in m. 44 of Section B. The upper note of these measures supplies the E-natural while the preceding grace note supplies the E♭ (spelled enharmonically as D♯). The material found in mm. 9, 12, and 44 is seen again in m. 81-84 following the prolonged presentation of the E♭ beginning in m. 65. Refer back to Example 2.16 for an illustration of the material in mm. 9, 44, and 81.

The E♭ is corrected in m. 73 and is accompanied by an additional harmonic feature. Measure 73 begins the motive that was initially expected in the beginning of Section C (also seen
in Sections A and B) but the harmonic support is not what might be expected. Rather than presenting the familiar motive over tonic harmony, Ibert substitutes submediant harmony creating a deceptive beginning.\textsuperscript{11} This serves to add variety to a motive that has been seen many times throughout the movement as well as to give Section C a similar but unique character. The harmony following the deceptive beginning occurs in parallel open fifths in the left hand. These parallel fifths continue through m. 80 and are highly characteristic of the impressionist style. Although the left hand is in open fifths, the third sometimes occurs in the right hand. The movement concludes with a presentation and elaboration (neighbor motion) of a root-position tonic harmony.

Ibert seems to reserve root position tonic harmonies for especially important points in the movement. Root position tonic harmony is first seen in m. 5 with the presentation of the first D minor harmony of the movement and again in m. 86 and 88 with the final D minor harmony. Other root position D minor sonorities can be found throughout the movement but are frequently incomplete and are always subordinated to other simultaneous melodic or harmonic elements (see m. 74).

Conclusion

“La meneuse de tortues d’or” is the opening movement of \textit{Histoires} and is supported by an overall neighboring structure that is elaborated with multiple descending lines. The movement contains a number of impressionistic characteristics including parallel perfect intervals, extended chordal sonorities whose function is often obscured, and an emphasis on the subdominant harmony. Similarly, the movement embraces the technique of making extensive

\textsuperscript{11} In this instance deceptive refers to Ibert’s substitution of submediant harmony for tonic harmony; as in a deceptive cadence represented by the Roman numerals V-VI.
use of a limited amount of material (Parks 1980, 120). Such a technique helps to give the movement a sense of cohesiveness by providing significant long range connections via the use of familiar material in multiple contexts. Many of these characteristics will continue to be a part of Ibert’s compositional style in further movements of *Histoires*. 
CHAPTER 3

“LE PETIT ÂNE BLANC”

“Le petit âne blanc” (The little white donkey) is the second of the ten movements of *Histoires*. The inspiration for this movement comes from a trip that Ibert took to northern Africa.

In a talk he gave in Antibes in May of 1942 Ibert commented on his inspiration for this movement (Laederich 1998, 15):

The little white donkey, I met for the first time in Southern Tunisia, near the oasis of Nefta. It was ridden by a scruffy kid, but handsome like a young god, carefree, a pomegranate flower in his teeth, at a steady, nonchalant trot of his mount. You will find the monotonous step of the little donkey in question, his capricious stopping, his untimely braying and slow under the atmosphere of a hot morning on the borders of the desert.\(^{12}\)

This comment, as will later become apparent, is useful for gaining a general understanding and appreciation of the compositional elements within the movement and helps to clarify some longer range connections in the music. The details of Ibert’s comments on “Le petit âne blanc” are well represented in the music, particularly the “monotonous step of the little donkey” and the “untimely braying” of the little white donkey.

Similar to the first movement of *Histoires*, “Le petit âne blanc” is tonal in the sense that it has a general gravitation to a particular tonal area; in this case F# pentatonic. Many elements of analysis including cadential formulae, functional chord progressions, and, from a Schenkerian perspective, a complete *Ursatz* are absent. An examination of the movement’s linear structure as well as some vertical sonorities reveals what I believe to be the most interesting discoveries.

\(^{12}\) *Le petit âne blanc*, je l’ai rencontré pour la première fois dans le sud tunisien, près de l’oasis de Nefta. Il était monté par un gamin dépenaillé, mais beau comme un jeune dieu, qui s’en allait insouciant, une fleur de grenadier aux dents, au trot nonchalant et régulier de sa monture. Vous retrouverez le pas monotone du petit âne en question, ses arrêts capricieux, son braiement intempestif et lent sous l’atmosphère d’une chaude matinée aux confins du désert...
Structure and Form

Although the first movement of *Histoires* ("La meneuse de tortues d’or) had an interesting and unique organization of motives that contributed to the overall form, “Le petit âne blanc” contains no significant treatment of motives (from a formal perspective). I am not suggesting that the movement is lacking in formal design, it is simply that the phrase structure and motivic organization did not heavily influence my analysis and are to a large extent absent from my discussion. The overall formal scheme of the movement is A B A’. More importantly, and perhaps more appropriately, the formal sections can be characterized as being stable or unstable. The A and A’ sections represent the stable portions of the movement while Section B provides an unstable contrast. This will soon be examined in detail.

As mentioned earlier, this movement does not contain a structural *Ursatz* as might be expected in conventional Schenkerian analysis. Similar to the previous movement, “Le petit âne blanc” is based upon a structural neighbor motion (SNM). Although this characteristic is shared with the previous movement, Ibert’s treatment of the SNM in “Le petit âne blanc” is much more complex. The SNM occurs in parallel fifths and is accompanied by a pair of voice exchanges in the final measures of Section B; characteristics that add to the sophistication of the movement. Although the SNM is the central structural element, the surface of the music is frequently decorated with linear descents and local neighbor motions. The following example (Example 3.1 on the next page) provides a middleground sketch of “Le petit âne blanc.” Although my discussion will include numerous foreground illustrations, it will frequently be necessary to refer back to Example 3.1.

The first portion of the SNM, F#\textsuperscript{2}, is presented immediately in the left hand of m.1. F#\textsuperscript{2} participates in an ostinato bass line that is present throughout much of the movement and
represents the “monotonous step of the donkey” of which Ibert spoke in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter (Laederich 1998, 15). See Example 3.2.

Example 3.2: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Structural F# as part of bass ostinato.

Example 3.2 shows that F# is the first pitch of the entire movement and is part of an ostinato bass pattern that comprises most of the left hand in Sections A and A’ (see Appendix B for a complete copy of the movement). An additional feature of the bass ostinato is that it is comprised of two separate local neighbor motions. The first neighbor motion is seen in Example 3.2 with stems down, elaborating the structural F#, while the second is an inner voice (stems up) that elaborates C#. Each measure of the ostinato bass pattern represents a local neighbor motion that is similar to the SNM. As can be seen in the middleground sketch of Example 3.1, the SNM is comprised of an F#-C# perfect fifth (mm. 3 and 54) elaborated with an E-B perfect fifth (m. 47) neighbor. Each measure of the ostinato bass pattern is comprised of an F#-C# perfect fifth where each tone is elaborated with its own neighbor. The neighboring tones to the F#-C# perfect fifth are rhythmically dislocated; they do not occur as a simultaneous vertical sonority. Both local neighbor motions suggest a motivic parallelism with the SNM.

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13 In this and future instances, F#-C# (as well as other pitch pairings) refers to a vertical combination of pitches where the first given pitch is below the second. For example, F#-C# indicates a vertical sonority with F# on the bottom and C# on the top.
Following the presentation of the first structural F# (m. 1) in the bass is the first structural C# in the soprano (m. 3). This C# both completes the first structural sonority (F#-C# perfect fifth) and initiates the first descending linear motion. See Example 3.3.

Example 3.3: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Structural C# and first linear descent.

Example 3.3 shows the presentation of the first structural C# in m. 3 and the first linear descent to F# (m. 5). The initial C# (m. 3) connects with C# in m. 6 and then returns again to C# in m. 8. Multiple register transfers in an impressionistic work that is structured upon a neighbor motive are well documented. Both Edward Laufer (2003, 89) and Adele Katz (1945, 255) acknowledge the use of register transfers in pieces (Debussy’s *Canope* and *La fille aux cheveux de lin*) that exhibit structural neighbor motions. After the C# is regained in m. 8, a second descent to F# follows but is elaborated with escape tones. See Example 3.4.

Example 3.4: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Second linear descent with escape tones.
The presence of a second descending line within such a short time seems to suggest that linear descents are of primary importance; especially since the neighbor motions that accompany the second descent are incomplete (suggesting that they are subordinate elements). An examination of the whole movement, however, clarifies that neighbor motions have the greatest long range significance (refer back to Example 3.1). Example 3.4 does not include the bass staff; however, it is still recycling the one-measure ostinato pattern that can be seen in Example 3.2.

Measure 11 presents the first contrasting element of the movement. If the previous material (m. 1-10) represents the “monotonous step of the donkey,” mm. 11-14 (as well as mm. 16-19) surely represent the “untimely braying” of the donkey. These measures provide a dissonant contrast to the previous material but maintain a sense of cohesion via the use of neighbor motions. These neighbor motions are connected with an additional linear descent. See Example 3.5.

Example 3.5: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” mm. 11-14 as a Dissonant Contrast.

Example 3.5 shows the dissonant material in mm. 11-14 in the actual register. Notice that the neighbor motions are accompanied by a register transfer between the first and third portions of the figure. The two neighbor motions are comprised of the same sonorities although they are
separated by an octave. Also, the short descent that connects the two neighbor motions is similar to yet contrasts with the linear descents found in the first 10 measures. Whereas the descents in mm. 1-10 begin on C# and move down a perfect fifth to F#, the descent in mm. 11-14 begins on F# and moves down a perfect 4th to C#. The neighbor motions within mm. 11-14 are discerned most easily when the registers are regularized. See Example 3.6.

Example 3.6: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” mm.11-14 Neighbor motions in regularized register.

Example 3.6 shows how the dissonant neighboring figures of mm. 11-14 interact without registral displacement. The arrows indicate the voice leading to and from each portion of the neighbor figures. The descent from F#5 to C#5 seen in Example 3.5 has been omitted in order to show the voice leading within the neighbor figures. An additional element of the previous two examples is the change in the bass ostinato. Rather than continuing the ostinato pattern that was seen in mm. 1-10, the bass in mm. 11-14 is modified to eliminate the D# that functions as an upper neighbor to C#. Even though the bass pattern changes, the neighbor motion between F#2 and G#2 (stems down) is maintained.

Although mm. 11-14 provide an interesting and significant part of the musical surface, they can be regarded as insertions on deeper levels of analysis and, therefore, are omitted from
my middleground analysis. I have chosen to consider these measures as insertions because, on levels below the surface, they can easily be omitted without affecting the middleground structure. Furthermore, there is a clear voice leading connection when the insertions are omitted. Measures 10 and 15 connect together when the insertions are eliminated. See example 3.7.

Example 3.7: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Elimination of Dissonant Insertions.

The bass in mm. 15 reverts back to the original ostinato pattern (m. 10) and the soprano F#⁴ of m. 10 connects with the F#⁴ in m. 15. Measures 16-19 present a repeat of mm. 11-14 and can be treated similarly.

Following the dissonant insertions, the structural C# is regained in m. 20 although it has again moved down an octave to C#⁴ (refer back to Example 3.7). The bass voice resumes the ostinato pattern seen in the beginning of the movement. Even though the bass pattern changed during the insertion measures (mm. 11-14 and 16-19), F#² was never lost. The bass pattern breaks in m. 23 to ascend via an F# pentatonic scale to the structural C# (m. 25) in the original register (C#⁴). See Example 3.8.
Example 3.8: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” F# pentatonic scale ascending to structural C#⁵.

The remaining measures of Section A provide the movement’s second contrasting section. See Example 3.9.

Example 3.9: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Final Measures of Section A.

Example 3.9 is a foreground sketch of the final 5 measures of Section A. The structural C#⁵ is maintained throughout the section and is accompanied by a linear descent in the final two measures (mm. 28-29). Also, the structural bass F#² is absent for the first time in the movement (m. 25) and is replaced with a D#m⁷ harmony. D#m⁷ is elaborated with E#⁷ and G#⁷ harmonies but the most significant aspect of the passage is that the outer voices move in parallel 7ths. The parallel 7ths persist through the descending line (mm. 28-29) that ends the section. The pitches in parentheses in the above example represent what seems like the expected goal of the line, however, the pitches are not resolved as they appear in Example 3.9. The final measures of
Section A represents a compositional technique that has thus far been very active in *Histoires*, Ibert’s tendency to let sections dissipate rather than come to a formal close. Although the rhythms are still very active in these measures (25-30), the melodic content has been reduced to parallel 7ths in the outer voices. The outer voices evade resolution by avoiding the expected final tones leading into Section B. See Example 3.10.

Example 3.10: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Dissipation of Section A.

The use of parallel 7th chords at the end of Section A provides a significant reference to Debussy. Adele Katz notes the use of 7th chords in her analysis of *La fille aux cheveux de lin* and comments that passing 7th chords are very typical throughout Debussy’s oeuvre (Katz 1945, 258).

Section B begins in m. 30 and provides a contrast to Section A (and later Section A’). If Sections A and A’ represent the stable elements of the movement, Section B certainly represents the most significant unstable element. The evaded resolution of Section A is realized in Section B to be a deceptive resolution. In this case “deceptive resolution” suggests that the suspected resolution is avoided or that tones are resolved in a way other than what is expected, not in the sense of dominant harmony moving to submediant harmony (V-VI). See Example 3.11.
Example 3.11: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Deceptive Resolution of Section A.

As shown in Example 3.11, the tones expected at the end of the descending line in parallel 7ths are in fact present at the beginning of Section B although not in the register expected. The arrows show the expected resolutions of Section A.

The arrival of Section B is, due to its unstable contrast with Section A and use of more extreme dissonance, an aurally unexpected event. Despite its aural surprise, the first sonority in Section B can be explained by its relation to past musical events. The F♯ and G♯ are simply the displaced resolutions of the descending lines from Section A (refer again to Example 3.11). The A and D, however, come from less obvious origins. Ultimately, the A and D are references to the dissonant insertions of Section A. The dissonant passages of Section A (mm. 11-14 and 16-19) represent the most significant prior occurrences of the pitch A and the only prior occurrences of the pitch D. This reference helps to establish a significant connection between Sections A and B. Section B is certainly the most significant unstable element of the movement and begins by referencing the smaller, initial unstable elements of Section A.

After the (somewhat shocking) initial sonority of Section B the bass moves in parallel chords to the next significant structural tone (B³). The bass voice is accompanied by a right-hand descent that settles on a structural E⁴ in m. 34. See Example 3.12.

The $A^4$ that is needed to completely fill in the descending right-hand line is represented by the parenthesis in m. 33. Although $A^4$ is not part of the right hand, it is present at the appropriate place in m. 33 in the lower staff. Similarly, the $E^4$ in m. 34 of the above example is in parentheses because it is not actually placed in the right hand. $E^4$ is presented in the left hand but retains the same register as in the above example. I have chosen to show the $E^4$ in the treble staff to emphasize its position as an upper structural tone. A voice exchange exists between mm. 31 and 33. Although this is not a true voice exchange in the strictest sense, given that the exchange is not between the same voice pairs, it is nevertheless a relevant aspect of the music since voice exchanges are a significant part of the end Section B.

When the second portion of the SNM occurs in m. 34 it is in an inverted position (refer back to Example 3.1). The correct position would have an E in lowest voice and a B in the highest voice. The inverted position contributes to the unstable character of Section B. Despite the inverted form, E and B are surely the most emphasized tones within the section. The emphasis of these tones as well as the inverted position of the structural neighbor sonority are
both linked to the predominance of an $E^4_3$ chord that is almost constantly present throughout Section B. See Example 3.13.


In the above example the goal of parallel $E^6_3$ chords is an $E^4_3$ chord. Notice that the $E^4_3$ sonority is present through m. 45. The first presentation of the $E^4_3$ chord is in m. 34, however, m. 34 is only a foreground arrival point. The deeper-level arrival of the $E^4_3$ is m. 38 (refer back to Example 3.13). By serving a similar purpose to the insertions seen in Section A (see Example 3.5), the insertions of Section B (unstable section) provide an additional reference to the unstable elements in Section A. I have chosen to label mm. 34-37 and mm. 42-44 as insertions based on the same factors that influenced my decision regarding the Section A insertions. These measures provide a clear dissonance against the surrounding material and can be eliminated without affecting the middleground structure. Furthermore, a strong voice leading connection is still present when the insertions are omitted. The right hand sonority in mm. 34 (comprised of E#, C#, and G#) provides an obvious dissonance against the underlying $E^4_3$ chord and moves to a similarly dissonant sonority (comprised of B, A, F#). Following the insertion of mm. 34-37 is the middleground arrival of the $E^4_3$ in m. 38 which connects with m. 33. See Example 3.14.
Example 3.14: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Connection between mm. 33 and 38.

The goal of the descending line of mm. 30-33 is the E\(^4\) that occurs in m. 38, rather than the E\(^4\) of m. 34.

Proceeding from m. 38, the E\(^4\)_\(^3\) chord occurs in the right hand and is accompanied or, put more appropriately, accompanies a left-hand melody. The left-hand melody is especially significant when considered alongside mm. 42-44. See Example 3.15.

Example 3.15: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Left-hand melody and second Section B insertion.

Notice that the left-hand melody and following insertion emphasize F\# (designated by asterisks) in addition to the structural tones found within the E\(^4\)_\(^3\) chord. The presence of F\# in section B
can be traced back to the *forte* chord in m. 30 (beginning of Section B). Despite its presence throughout Section B, F# assumes a subordinate role to the structural tones (E and B). As the music nears the end of Section B, F# begins to regain significance. As will be illustrated shortly, F# regains its position as a structural tone in the closing measures of Section B.

The insertion of mm. 42-44 is unique to the movement in that it is not dissonant against the surrounding material (refer back to Example 3.15). I have chosen to consider mm. 42-44 as an insertion based on several factors. The most significant reason is that these measures do not contribute to the structural significance of the movement and can be omitted without affecting the middleground structure. A secondary reason is that, aside from the inversion of the right and left hands, mm. 42-44 are visually and aurally recognizable as a re-use of the material from the first Section B insertion in mm. 34-37. See Example 3.16.

Example 3.16: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Comparison of Section B Insertions.

![Example 3.16: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Comparison of Section B Insertions.](image)

An additional consideration for regarding mm. 42-44 as an insertion is that it allows Section B to have two insertions. This is consistent with the number of insertions in both Sections A and A’. Although mm. 42-44 are excluded from my middleground realizations, they play a significant role in foreground activities by helping to place renewed emphasis on F#.
Following the mm. 42-44 insertion is an ascending scale (B Dorian – refer to the music in Appendix B) in the bass of m. 45 that leads to the most interesting and complex eight measures of the entire movement. See Example 3.17.

Example 3.17: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Final eight measures of Section B.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccc}
\text{mm. 46} & 47 & 48 & 49 & 50 & 51 & 52 & 53 & 54 \\
\end{array}
\]

In the above example a voice exchange exists between mm. 46 and 47. The E⁴ in m. 46 of the above sketch is an implied tone (shown in parentheses). The E⁴ is not present in m. 46 in the actual music but is retained from the previous measure. Similarly, the E⁴ shown in the bass clef of m. 47 is also shown in parenthesis. This is because the E⁴ of m. 47 actually occurs in the right hand. It is, however, in the register shown in Example 3.17. Both the E⁴ in the right hand and B³ in the left hand of m. 46 represent the neighboring portion of the SNM but are still in an inverted position. The voice exchange corrects the position, making m. 47 the true arrival of the E-B portion of the SNM. The material between the segments of the voice exchange is no less interesting than the structural tones it mediates. Following the implied E⁴ in m. 46 is an E#⁴. This E#⁴ marks the point in the music where E-natural ceases to be a right-hand structural tone and also represents a local neighbor motion (refer back to Example 3.17). The return to E⁴-
natural completes the local neighbor figure and marks the correct position of this portion of the SNM; E\(^4\) is the lowest sounding voice.

Accompanying the E\(#^4\) in m. 46 is a C\(#^5\). This C\(#^5\) has a dual purpose. First, it functions as a neighbor to the correct position of the B\(^4\) structural neighbor tone of m. 47.\(^{14}\) The second purpose of this C\(#^5\) is to foreshadow the re-establishment of C\# as an upper structural tone in m. 54. The correct position of the structural E-B pairing is maintained through m. 48. In m. 49, the briefly experienced correct position of the E-B structural sonority has moved to a variation of the final portion of the SNM. Just as the E-B portion of the SNM was first seen in an inverted form, so too is the re-establishment of the F\#-C\# sonority (refer back to Example 3.17).

Notice in m. 49 of Example 3.17 that the C\(#^5\) that occurs in the right hand has been moved (visually; the register remains unchanged) into the lower staff to illustrate better the relationship between it and F\(#^5\) in the highest voice. The B’s that occur in the remainder of the section are in the same register as the structural B of mm. 47 and 48 but are now subordinated to C\(#^5\) and F\(#^5\). A brief look at the music of Appendix B raises the question: why is C\(#^5\) privileged over B in m. 49 but not in m. 46? It is appropriate to privilege C\(#^5\) over B\(^4\) m. 49 because it is combined with F\(#^5\) (the highest sounding pitch). This combination suggests the completion of the SNM (structural neighbor motion – see Example 3.1). Although F\# has previously been present in Section B, it gains a special significance in m. 49 by being put in the highest voice and combined with C\#. It is interesting to note that E and B (representing the second portion of the SNM) are still present in m. 49; however, the two tones have re-assumed their inverted position (E\(^4\), B\(^3\)) and have thus taken a subordinate role. The correct position of the E-B pairing in mm. 47-

\(^{14}\) Although the C\(#^4\) initially looks like an incomplete neighbor, it is actually a complete neighbor between B\(^3\) in m. 46 and B\(^4\) in m. 47. The neighbor motion is accompanied by a register transfer.
48 is the strongest position for these tones in this movement; reverting to a weaker position is a sign of subordination.

The C#5 and F#5 in the weaker, inverted position are maintained for the remainder of Section B and ultimately supply the first portion of a second voice exchange (with a significant register transfer) leading to Section A’ that corrects the position of the C#-F# pairing (refer back to Example 3.17). Notice that the correct position of the F#-C# structural sonority is actually seen in the final two measures (mm. 52-53) of Section B. Although the F# does actually occur beneath C#, F#5 is not yet in the lowest voice and cannot be regarded as the goal of the voice exchange.

The final 8 measures of Section B are analytically the most complex of the entire movement. The primary elements of these measures are the arrival of the correct position of the E-B structural sonority via a voice exchange from a weaker position (B-E) and the re-establishment of the F#-C# structural sonority, also via a voice exchange from a weaker position (C#-F#). See Example 3.18.

Example 3.18: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Background structure of “Le petit âne blanc.”
Example 3.18 shows a background sketch of the movement. The structural tones and voice exchanges can be clearly seen. The final measures of Section B, due to their structural activity and complexity, occupy a large portion of the above example (mm. 46-49).

An additional element of the final measures of Section B is a compositional technique Ibert uses frequently, which I call melodic dissipation.\textsuperscript{15} Although the material in mm. 46-53 is structurally very significant, the melodic material is very repetitive and the music seems to simply dissipate the closer it gets to Section A’. See Example 3.19.

Example 3.19: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Melodic dissipation in Section B.

Observe that the melodic material becomes very repetitive and is eventually restricted to only the right hand. Furthermore, the final four measures are comprised of a single sonority presented in the same metric position within each measure. These measures are reminiscent of mm. 28-35 of the first movement of Histoires (“La meneuse de tortues d’or” – see Appendix A) where the material is ultimately reduced to a single ostinato pattern occurring in the left hand.

Section A’ begins in m. 54 and is nearly identical to Section A. The SNM is completed via the voice exchange described above and local neighbor motions continue to play a significant role.

\textsuperscript{15} My application of the term “dissipation” in this thesis most closely resembles the definition of the term used in science, specifically physics, which refers to the loss of energy. See pg. 103 for a more detailed description. Furthermore, my term “dissipation” is similar to what Schoenberg called “liquidation” (Schoenberg 1967, 58).
role in the motivic content of the section. One noticeable difference between Sections A and A’ is that Section A’ occurs an octave higher (in the right hand) than Section A until the first dissonant insertion (m. 62). Beginning in m. 62, the register between the two sections is the same. An additional difference between the two sections is that the C# that begins the right hand (m. 54) is held longer in Section A’. See Example 3.20.

Example 3.20: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Comparison of beginnings of Sections A and A’.

Since the two sections are (aside the previously mentioned exception) basically identical, I will not repeat my detailed discussion of Section A but rather skip to the end of the movement where the two sections are significantly different.

The parallel 7ths of Section A that lead to a deceptive resolution in the beginning of Section B (refer to Examples 3.10 and 3.11) are again present in Section A’ (mm. 79-80). Similar to Section A, the parallel motion of mm. 79-80 is not conclusively resolved. Measures
81-82 serve to delay the resolution of m. 80 as well as to provide a final reference to Section B. See Example 3.21.

Example 3.21: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” mm. 80-84.

The material in m. 81 is reminiscent of Section B. The D\(^2\)-A\(^2\) perfect fifth in the bass of m. 81 is similar to the D-A perfect fifth seen in the treble of the first measure of Section B (m. 30). Furthermore, m. 30 and m. 81 share some additional similarities. Both measures make use of a sforzando and require the use of pedal (refer to Appendix B). The use of pedal and sforzando chords are two compositional elements that are used sparingly in the movement. Their presence in mm. 46 and 81 strengthens a clear connection. D\(^5\), C\(^5\), and E\(^#\)\(^4\) in m. 81 represent the same pitch classes seen in m. 46, although the pitches are transposed down an octave and re-arranged from their first appearance.
By combining material from two of the most significant portions of Section B, Ibert delays the final resolution of the movement and gives the listener one last reminder of the movement’s unstable section (B). When m. 81 and most of m. 82 are omitted, the resolution of m. 80 is easier to see. The tones in parenthesis in m. 81 of Example 3.21 represent the goals of m. 80. The arrows show how each of the expected tones is realized in the final sonority. The implied $B^3$ in m. 81 is elided while the other tones are simply delayed. The three delayed tones are present in the final sonority (shown with solid arrow heads) and the elided $B^3$ is not. Rather than appearing in the final sonority, the expected $B^3$ resolves up by major second to $C^#$. The implied $B$ cannot be a part of the final sonority because it is not a part of the $F#$ pentatonic collection that concludes the movement. Each tone of the $F#$ major pentatonic scale is present within this last chord. Just as the cluster of tones in mm. 81-82 suggested Section B, the pentatonic cluster of the final two measures suggests both Section A and A’, which were tonally centered around $F#$ major pentatonic.

Harmony

Although “Le petit âne blanc” has a fairly complex and active linear structure, its harmonic content is significantly less active. This relates to the “monotonous step of the donkey” that Ibert mentioned in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter. The harmonic structure of the movement is monotonous in that it is focused almost entirely around $F#$ pentatonic in two of the three formal sections. The contrast of Section B breaks the monotony; however, Section A’ re-establishes $F#$ major pentatonic. Sections A and A’ represent the largest harmonic events in “Le petit âne blanc.” The ostinato bass pattern in these sections exclusively uses tones from $F#$ major pentatonic and the right-hand melodies are heavily dependent upon $F#$
major pentatonic. Measure 24 even includes a complete F# major pentatonic scale that moves through both the treble and bass staves. Admittedly, the right hand does occasionally use tones that do not lie within the F# major pentatonic scale; however, these tones obviously play a secondary role, frequently occurring as passing tones in linear progressions. See Example 3.22.

Example 3.22: Ibert, “Le petit âne blanc:” Linear progression utilizing tones outside of F# pent.

Notice in the above example that the only tone that does not fall within F# major pentatonic (B) participates as a passing tone within a linear progression. Although the above example shows only a single passage that uses B as a subordinate pitch in a linear progression, many other passages throughout the movement use B in the same way.

The major exceptions to the F# major pentatonic tonal center are the insertions of mm. 11-14 and mm. 16-19 (refer back to Example 3.5). As was previously mentioned, these contrasting measures are comprised of tones that lay outside of F# major pentatonic and provide an obvious dissonance to the surrounding Section A material. To achieve this Ibert either includes tones that would traditionally be absent from F# major pentatonic (B and E) or tones that are chromatically altered beyond their diatonic counterparts (A, C, D).16 It is obvious that mm. 11-14 and mm. 16-19 were designed to be a contrast, an “untimely braying” as Ibert might say, to the otherwise continuous F# major pentatonic content of Section A.

16 I am using the term diatonic to refer to tones that occur naturally within F# major pentatonic.
Section B abandons the focus on F# major pentatonic to provide a more extended contrast with the two surrounding stable sections. Ibert achieves this contrast by emphasizing two tones that are absent from F# pentatonic; E and B (E₄). The deceptive resolution of m. 30 that begins Section B suggests the next significant harmonic event. Although the D harmony that arrives in m. 30 is short, it is still a significant harmonic event. After the 29 measures of stable F# major pentatonic harmony of Section A, the unexpected and aurally shocking D sonority suggests a change in the harmonic structure of the movement. The function of the D harmony is to allow the music to move from F# major pentatonic in Section A to the predominant harmony of Section B; E. The exact quality of the E harmony in Section B is not clearly identified because there is rarely a 3rd of the chord. The frequent absence of the chordal 3rd combined with the fact that the E chord is in ⁴₃ position contributes to the overall unstable function of Section B.

Beginning in m. 34 the predominant harmony is E; thus, the harmonic motion up to this point in the movement is: F#-D-E. The E harmony persists through the end of Section B. Even though the F# and C# structural tones are regained before the conclusion of Section B, E₄ is still present although it eventually assumes a subordinate function. F# major pentatonic harmony is re-established in m. 54 and continues through the end of the movement. Although Section A’ (m. 54) is subject to the same dissonant passages (dissonant in that the tones do not occur naturally within F# major pentatonic) as in Section A, F# major pentatonic remains the primary tonal focus for the remainder of the movement. When F# major pentatonic is re-established in m. 54, the overall harmonic scheme of the movement is complete: F# (mm. 1-29) – D (m. 30-33) – E (mm. 34-53) – F# (mm. 54-84). The D portion of the harmonic structure serves a transitional function, leading from F# to E, and can ultimately be reduced from the overall harmonic scheme. After the omission of the D portion, the overall harmonic motion is F#-E-F#.
The F#-E-F# harmonic motion of “Le petit âne blanc” is reflective of the SNM upon which the movement is built. The harmonic structure F#-E-F# strengthens the validity of neighbor motions as significant compositional elements. The movement is founded upon neighbor motions; both as a structural linear phenomenon and a vertical harmonic phenomenon. Furthermore, the neighbor motive is present within all levels of analysis. The neighbor figure participates in the motivic structure of the piece on a local level as well as the overall structure in deeper levels.

The frequent presence of F# major pentatonic and significant neighbor figures is significant in two respects. First, the motivic parallelism of the neighbor motion is consistent with traditional Schenkerian analysis in that the background structure is replicated on a level closer to the surface (see Example 3.2). Second, the presence and function of F# major pentatonic aligns with Edward Laufer’s analysis of Debussy’s *Canope* from the second book of *Préludes*. Laufer, like many other theorists, recognizes the limitations of Schenkerian analysis when applied to impressionist music (Laufer 2003, 89). In *Canope*, Laufer suggests that a prime sonority is projected throughout the movement, participates in the motivic structure, and is present at the end of the work. He continues to illustrate that the work is built upon a structural neighbor motion with subordinate linear descents (Laufer 2003, 90, 98).

Each of these elements is present within “Le petit âne blanc.” F# pentatonic can easily be seen as the prime sonority that influences motivic structure via melodic lines that are almost entirely comprised of tones within F# pentatonic (Sections A and A’) as well the multi-level manifestations of the neighbor figure. Furthermore, F# pentatonic is projected throughout the movement and is seen as the final sonority. Even Section B is suggestive of F# pentatonic. The function of Section B is to provide an unstable contrast to Sections A and A’. This is realized via
the neighboring portion of the SNM which emphasizes the two tones absent from F# pentatonic; E and B. Section B suggests F# pentatonic not by the presence of the sonority but by its absence as a contrast to Sections A and A’. Additionally, both Canope and “Le petit âne blanc” are built upon a SNM with subordinate linear descents.

Laufer’s opinions could easily be applied to the first movement of Histoires (“La meneuse de tortues d’or”). It is, in fact, especially compelling to do so given that both “La meneuse de tortues d’or” and Canope are, in addition to their other similar characteristics, focused around the same tonal center (D minor). While I think that applying Laufer’s method of analysis to “La meneuse de tortues d’or” would not be inappropriate, the copious number of foreground motivic elaborations of the F#-C# pairing (derived from the prime sonority) in “Le petit âne blanc” make the second movement a more appropriate parallel to Laufer’s analysis.

Conclusion

“Le petit âne blanc” was inspired by a trip Ibert took to Tunisia. In many respects the composer’s recollections of his voyage are reflected in the music. The “monotonous step” of the little white donkey is vividly represented via Ibert’s treatment of F# major pentatonic as the movement’s primary harmonic focus. The dissonant insertions in Sections A and A’ represent the “untimely braying” of the little white donkey. Analytically the movement is built upon a structural neighbor motion (accompanied by subordinate linear descents) that occurs in perfect fifths. The SNM (structural neighbor motion) is reflected in the overall harmonic motion of the movement and is manifested in the motivic structure of the foreground. These findings are consistent with those presented by a number of analysts working with music in the same style and performance medium. Such analysts (and pieces) include Adele Katz on Debussy’s La fille
aux cheveux de lin, (Katz 1945, 254), Felix Salzer on Debussy’s Bruyères (Salzer 1982, 252-255), and Edward Laufer on Debussy’s Canope (Laufer 2003, 90-98).

In addition to the similarities with the above mentioned pieces, “Le petit âne blanc” also has much in common with the first movement of Histoires, “La meneuse de tortues d’or.” Both movements make extensive use of a structural neighbor motion with subordinate linear descents and also contain register connections, ostinato bass patterns, a three-part formal design, deceptive resolutions, and formal sections that avoid clear conclusions in favor of dissipating melodic or harmonic elements. A more detailed description of the compositional characteristics shared between Histories’ movements can be found in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 4

“LA MARCHANDE D’EAU FRAÎCHE”

“La marchande d’eau fraîche” (The cool water merchant) is the ninth of Histoires’s ten movements. In addition to being the longest movement of the collection, “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is a notable contrast to the previously discussed movements. I have included this movement because it contrasts with the others but retains some of the same elements of Ibert’s compositional style. The presence of these compositional techniques in this contrasting movement helps to distinguish them as elements of Ibert’s compositional language.

Some of the most significant techniques shared between “La marchande d’eau fraîche” and previous movements include the general focus on a particular tonal area (in this case F# minor), the dissipation of melodic and harmonic material, the use of pentatonicism and ostinato, a three-part large-scale form, and a contrast between stable and unstable elements. Furthermore, traditional elements of Schenkerian theory that are consistently absent from impressionist works (including other movements from Histoires) are also absent from this movement. The primary contrasting elements between this and other movements are the absence of a structural neighbor motion and an extended focus on the dominant as a key area. I will refer to the differences and some similarities between this and other movements; however, a detailed description of the compositional characteristics shared between Histoires’s movements will be reserved for Chapter 5.

17 As mentioned in previous chapters, such absent elements most notably include a structural Ursatz, traditional cadence formulae, and functional chord progressions.
Structure and Form

Like the previously discussed movements, “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is structured upon a three-part overall formal design: A (mm. 1-56) B (mm. 57-100) A (mm. 101-144). Whereas “La meneuse de tortues d’or” and “Le petit âne blanc” both have a large-scale structural neighbor motions as their background structure, “La marchande d’eau fraîche” does not. This movement, in fact, does not have a discernible large-scale linear motion. Consequently, my structural and formal analysis will focus primarily on the juxtaposition of formal sections in relation to their interesting or significant qualities. Example 4.1 is a middleground sketch of “La marchande d’eau fraîche.” As usual, I will supplement my discussion with foreground examples but it will frequently be necessary to refer to Example 4.1 to gain an understanding of movement’s large-scale structure.

The movement begins with a two-bar motive that is an elaboration of a harmonic minor seventh via two neighbor motions. See Example 4.2.

Example 4.2: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Neighbor motions and outer voice sevenths.
In Example 4.2, the neighbor motions are most easily identifiable by the outer voices although, as the block chords in the example illustrate, there are neighbor motions between all voices in this passage. This movement is immediately identifiable as relating to previous movements of *Histoires* as well as, more generally, the impressionist style. The neighbor motive has been used extensively in both previously examined movements and the prevalence of harmonic sevenths is identified by Adele Katz as a technique favored by Debussy (Katz 1945, 258). The material from mm. 1-2 occurs frequently throughout the movement as a rhythmically active, ostinato-like interjection between smoother passages. This can be seen clearly in the movement’s first two phrases (mm. 1-8). See Example 4.3.

Example 4.3: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” First two phrases.
In Example 4.3, the first eight measures of “La marchande d’eau fraîche” make up the movement’s first formal period. Notice that the inserted passage (seen above in brackets) of Example 4.2 appears twice, contrasting with a pair of similar two-measure melodic ideas (mm. 3-4 and 7-8). The material in mm. 3-4 and 7-8, although less rhythmically active, is derived from mm. 1-2 (5-6). See Example 4.4.

Example 4.4: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Neighbors in the first eight measures.

Measures 3-4 retain the same upper-voice neighbor motion (between E₅ and D₅) as in mm. 1-2, although the figure occurs within a shorter rhythmic duration. The material in the lowest voice of mm. 1-2 and 5-6 is rhythmically different in mm. 3-4 but the lower-voice neighbor motion is retained. Measures 7-8 are similar to mm. 3-4 but the lowest voice neighbor motion is replaced with a linear progression. The frequent and continuous neighbor motions in the outer voices provide an ostinato-like elaboration of the first period (as well as future periods).

Measures 7-8 are similar to mm. 3-4 (and therefore, are also similar to mm. 1-2) but serve a different function than the previous measures. The stems-down material in m. 7 is the same as
m. 3 and the stems-up material is similar but with a slight alteration. It is m. 8 that distinguishes these measures as different from the preceding measures. See Example 4.5.

Example 4.5: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” mm. 7 – 8

The preceding measures were focused around the tonic key of F# minor. The function of mm. 7-8 is to move the music to the minor dominant key area. In Example 4.5 this is accomplished by a linear fifth progression from F#⁴ to C#⁵. A similar motion can be inferred in the top voice from E⁵ to B⁵. Although the two lines suggest motion in parallel 7ths, the vertical intervals are offset slightly and the A⁵ needed to completely fill in the upper line is implied.

The following seven measures are an exact transposition of the first seven. The first period of the movement is in the tonic (F# minor) while the second period is in the minor dominant (C# minor). The same relationships found in the beginning of the movement can again be seen in mm. 9-15 but are transposed up a perfect fifth. Measure 16 marks the point in the music where the second period is no longer an exact transposition of the first. See Example 4.6. In Example 4.6, the fifth relationship between the first two periods is necessarily abandoned in order to avoid moving up another perfect fifth. Rather than moving to the dominant of the dominant (supertonic), Ibert prolongs the minor dominant key area through m. 20.
Example 4.6: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Comparison of mm. 7-8 and 15-16.

The process by which he prolongs the dominant key area supplies the first significantly different passage of the movement. See Example 4.7.

Example 4.7: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Prolongation of minor dominant key area.

Notice in the above example that Ibert uses an E major pentatonic collection (E PENT) to prolong the focus on the minor dominant. The pentatonic collection uses the same rhythms that have been active in the movement and leads to octave C#’s in m. 19. This is a definite arrival
point in the music and will be expanded upon in Section B. The descending contour of the preceding material seems to tumble towards m. 19, and after the C# goal is reached there is a short silence before the next entrance. The cluster of pitches at the end of m. 19 and m. 20 is clearly designed to be dissonant with the surrounding material but still retains the sense of C#. Ibert tames the dissonance slightly by separating $F^X$ and G# by more than an octave. This dissonant cluster of pitches is similar to the dissonant interjections seen in Histoires’s second movement, “Le petit âne blanc” (Ch. 3).

Measure 21 returns to the tonic key (F# minor) and the familiar material seen in the very beginning of the movement but is now transposed an octave lower. The bass voice enters for the first time in m. 20 and helps to emphasize the return to F#. See Example 4.8.

Example 4.8: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” First bass entrance.

In Example 4.8, the bass enters with a pickup to m. 21 that emphasizes the return to tonic. From mm. 21 – 39, the music is an exact repeat of mm. 1-19 but is transposed down an octave. Ibert uses a limited amount of compositional material in the first thirty-nine measures of “La marchande d’eau fraîche.” This technique is identified by Richard Parks as a characteristic of a high-quality musical composition (Parks 1980, 120). Essentially, Ibert is using parallel sevenths
and neighbor motives as the primary compositional material in these measures. The parallel sevenths and neighbor figures are further divided into short melodies separated by a recurring two-measure interjection (which also uses harmonic sevenths and neighbor figures). Ibert further elaborates this limited amount of material by transposing it up a perfect fifth on two separate occasions.

Measure 40 (along with a pickup from m. 39) leads to the most tonally unstable portion of Section A. Measures 41-56 are a clear contrast to the preceding material and provide an unstable design change. Although this passage contrasts with the previous forty measures, many of the same linear elements remain active. See Example 4.9.

Example 4.9: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Unstable design change.
In Example 4.9, neighbor motions are still very frequent and dissonant pitch clusters can also be found (mm. 45, 46, 49, 50). The linear events are all in relation to important harmonic arrivals and the leap of a fourth is especially prevalent in this transitional passage. The leap of a fourth is first seen in mm. 42-43.

The unstable portion of Section A begins with a B major harmony (m. 41). The B major harmony is initiated by the octave B’s in the bass staff but the harmony doesn’t fill out until m. 43 with the arrival of an inner-voice D#⁴ (refer back to Example 4.9). The highest voice ascends to E⁶ but soon descends to settle on B⁴ in m. 44. The descent from E⁶ beginning in m. 42 uses multiple leaps of a fourth. The harmony changes from B major to G major in m. 45. The bass retains the B from m. 43 but moves up an octave to B³. B³ continues until m. 47 where

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18 The harmony is frequently defined by the lower and middle voices.
it descends chromatically to $G^\#$ and the next significant harmony: E major (see Example 4.9).

Just as with the B major harmony, the inner voices help to define the E harmony in m. 48.

The upper voice primarily focuses on $B^3$ through the first beat of m. 48 but also has some interjecting tones (mm. 45, 46) that are dissonant against the underlying harmony. These dissonances are similar to the interjections in mm. 19-20 (refer back to Example 4.7). Although the two passages are clearly related, they are significantly different. The dissonant passages are at different pitch levels but the most significant difference is the organization of the pitches. The material in mm. 19-20 separates the dissonant tones ($F^x-G^\#$) by a minor ninth whereas the interjections in mm. 45-46 place the dissonance ($E^\#-F^\#$) as a minor second. See Example 4.10.

Example 4.10: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Comparison of mm. 19-20 and mm. 45-46.

By reducing the minor ninth of mm. 19-20 to a minor second in mm. 45-46, Ibert makes the dissonance more intense. This helps to make the design change less stable (mm. 41-57).
B\(^3\) eventually moves by fourth to E\(^5\) on beat two of m. 48 (refer back to Example 4.9) which coincides with the bass’s movement to G\(^#3\). After arriving on the E major harmony in m. 48, the highest voice behaves in way similar to mm. 44-46 but is transposed up a fourth; a prolonged E\(^5\) is elaborated with dissonant interjections in mm. 49-50. The E major harmony (with G\(^#\) in the bass) in m. 48 is elaborated with two lower neighbors and then ascends (linearly) to C\(^4\) to initiate the next significant harmony: A minor. The A minor harmony is elaborated in the bass with ascending and descending linear third progressions to and from subordinate F major harmonies. The highest voice is mostly dissonant against the other voices and descends by fourths in mm. 54-56 to the next significant harmony; E minor. The bass voice descends a linear fourth in mm. 54-56 to arrive on G\(^3\) which corresponds with the highest voice’s descent to E\(^4\).

The linear events throughout this unstable design change (mm. 41-56) are primarily neighbor motions and short linear progressions. Even though neighbor motions do not serve a structural purpose in “La marchande d’eau fraîche,” they are almost constantly present on the foreground and help to relate this movement to others in Histories. Furthermore, the leap of a fourth is frequently found in this passage and helps to move the upper voice quickly from dissonant to consonant chord tones. The primary purpose of this portion of the movement is to transition from Section A, which is stable and focused around F# minor, to Section B, which is also stable but centered on C# major. The design change provides a contrast to these sections by expanding the harmonic focus to include several frequently changing harmonies and a more intensely dissonant upper line. Although this passage is a clear movement away from more stable elements, many elements (including dissonant tone clusters and neighbor motions) remain that relate it to the preceding forty measures.
Section B begins in m. 57 with the arrival of a C# major harmony. This section is approached by a chromatic voice exchange from the last measure (m. 56) of Section A. See Example 4.11.


In Example 4.11, the first beat of m. 57 in both the highest and lowest voice is approached by a linear third progression from the first beat of m. 56. The use of a voice exchange between major formal divisions also occurs in Histoires’s second movement, “Le petit âne blanc.” The voice exchanges in “Le petit âne blanc” play a larger structural role whereas the smaller chromatic voice exchange in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is a local phenomenon. Despite their presence on different structural levels, these two voice exchanges suggest a correlation between Histoires’s movements and are an element of Ibert’s compositional style.

Section B is focused almost exclusively on major dominant harmony (C#). This prolonged focus on the dominant contrasts with previous movements as well as, more generally, the impressionist style. Richard Parks acknowledges the reduction in the prominence of the dominant harmony in Debussy’s music (Parks 1989, 40). Accordingly, “La meneuse de tortues d’or” and “Le petit âne blanc” both avoid a prolonged focus on dominant harmony.
When Section B begins in m. 57, the upper voice is a prolongation of G#⁴. See Example 4.12.

Example 4.12: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Beginning of Section B.

In Example 4.12, the upper line prolongs G#⁴ until m. 61 where it moves to C#, which is then prolonged through m. 72. During the prolongation of C#⁵ in mm. 61-64, additional dissonant interjections occur that are a combination of the previously mentioned dissonant passages. See Example 4.13. The dissonant interjections in Section B (mm. 61-62) are comprised of the pitches F⁸ and G#. This is reminiscent of mm. 19-20. The same pitches are used in both passages; however, they are spaced a minor ninth apart in mm. 19-20 and a minor second apart in mm. 61-62. The distance between the dissonant tones in mm. 61-62 is similar to mm. 45-46 although the actual pitches are different. The pitches of mm. 19-20 combined with the spacing of mm. 45-46 yields the dissonant interjections of Section B in mm. 61-62. During the upper-voice activity in mm. 57-61, the lower voices oscillate between C# major and A# minor harmonies via alternating third progressions (refer to Example 4.12). In mm. 61-64, the A# harmony is omitted and C# major (dominant) harmony is prolonged by neighbor motions.
Example 4.13: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Dissonant interjections in section B.

Following the dissonant portions of mm. 61-62, the melodic material is immediately reduced to only the C# pitch class. See Example 4.14.

This type of melodic dissipation is seen frequently in *Histoires* but is normally found near formal transitions. Using melodic dissipation in the middle of a section is another instance of Ibert’s use of previously established compositional techniques (in *Histoires*) in new ways to create a contrasting yet similar movement. Admittedly, the dissipation in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is more sudden than in previous movements. Rather than slowly reducing melodic elements, Ibert removes all melodic material except for the C# pitch class and alternates between the C#3, C#4, C#5, and C#6 octaves. In mm. 70-71 the melodic material is further reduced to only the C#4 and C#5 octaves.

A new melodic idea begins leading into m. 73. The melody begins with a linear fifth progression from C#5 to G#5. See Example 4.15.

Example 4.15: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” New melody, m. 72-78.

![Example 4.15: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” New melody, m. 72-78.](image)

After the ascending fifth progression, G#5 moves to C#6 in m. 74. This movement by a leap of a fourth is similar to what was seen in the transitional passage of mm. 41-56 (refer back to Example 4.9) but is now part of C#-G#-C# dominant outline. The melody is repeated beginning in m. 78 but is slightly altered. See Example 4.16.

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19 The frequent use of melodic dissipation in *Histoires* will be discussed in chapter 5.
Example 4.16: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Alteration of new melody, mm. 78-83.

In Example 4.16, the repeated melody moves from G♯⁵ to D♯⁶ (m. 80) rather than C♯⁶. This and a few other small alterations are indicated by boxes in the above example. Aside from these differences the melody is the same as it was in mm. 72-78 until m. 83 where it concludes. Measures 83-84 sustain the resolution of the new melody and lead to the concluding portion of Section B. The lower voices in both versions of the melody prolong C♯⁴.

The texture of Section B changes in m. 85. The harmonic focus is still on the dominant but the rhythms become more active. The rhythms begin with a combination of eighth and sixteenth notes in mm. 85-92 but then move to constant sixteenths in m. 93. The combination of eighths and sixteenths prepares for the return of the straight sixteenth rhythm in m. 93, which is the same rhythm that occurs in the beginning of the movement. The rhythmic activity seems to propel the music through the remainder of Section B and suggests a rhythmic re-transition to Section A’ (see Example 4.17). In Example 4.17, C♯⁴ is the focus, ornamented with upper and lower neighbors, from m. 85 to m. 88. Afterwards, G♯⁴ becomes the primary pitch and is also ornamented with upper and lower neighbors. C⁴ and G⁴ emphasize a tonic/dominant relationship in Section B which is a reflection of the overall harmonic scheme of the movement.

The rhythms become even more active in m. 93 by returning to the rhythm from the beginning of the movement. Additionally, the harmony begins to become convoluted in mm. 95-96 by briefly focusing on tonic. The constant flow of sixteenth notes helps to obscure the tonic harmony. See Example 4.18.

Example 4.18: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Harmony in final measures of Section B.

The harmony in mm. 95-96 seems to emphasize tonic rather than dominant harmony. Prior to m. 95, F♯ and A were upper and lower neighbors to G♯. In mm. 95-96, G♯ becomes a subordinate passing tone between A and F♯. F♯ signals the end of tonic harmony in m. 97. Dominant harmony reasserts itself but the chromatic tones (F♯ and B♯) in between C♯ and G♯ undermine
any aural sense of dominant harmony. Section B concludes in m. 100. Section A’ is approached via contrary linear motions in the outer voices. See Example 4.19.

Example 4.19: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Chromatic wedge transition to Section A’.

![Example 4.19](image)

The outer voices that lead to Section A’ are a chromatic wedge that moves from a perfect fourth in m. 98 to a minor seventh in m. 101. C♯⁵ moves to E⁵ through a rising chromatic third progression and G♯⁴ moves to F♯⁴ via a descending chromatic linear second.

Section B focuses specifically on the pitches C♯ and G#. These pitches were foreshadowed in mm. 19 and 39 at the conclusion of phrases in the minor dominant. Ibert omits the third from the chord in these measures so as to provide an appropriate reference forward to Section B without contradicting the quality of the dominant harmony. Furthermore, Section B incorporates compositional techniques that relate it to other sections of “La marchande d’eau fraîche” as well as other movements from Histoires. Similarities between Section B and Section A include dissonant interjections and perfect fourth leaps; while similarities such as dissonant interjections, voice exchanges, and melodic dissipation suggest a parallel between a “La marchande d’eau fraîche” and previous movements from Histoires. As a contrast to both Section

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20 Section B focuses on the major dominant while the preceding references (mm. 19 and 39) are found at the conclusion of phrases in the minor dominant.
A and past movements of *Histoires*, Section B of “La marchande d’eau fraîche” focuses heavily on dominant harmony. Ibert’s prolonged focus on dominant harmony in this movement also contrasts with the impressionist tendency to avoid emphasis on the dominant.

Section A’ begins in m. 101 and is very similar to Section A. The main difference between the two sections is the register of the melody. See Example 4.20.

Example 4.20: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Difference between Sections A and A’.

![Example 4.20: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Difference between Sections A and A’](image)

The melody in Section A’ is an octave higher than its first occurrence in Section A. While the melody is transposed up an octave in Section A’, the accompaniment retains the original register from Section A. In m.121, the melody returns to the original register and remains there through the end of the movement. Although the register of the melody is different for a portion of Section A’, the previous characteristics of Section A remain active. These include a two-measure, ostinato-like motive that interrupts short melodic passages, the transposition of periods (up a fifth), the return of the tonic key area in a lower octave, and the brief use of pentatonicism. Since the two sections are so similar and contain the same compositional techniques, I will not repeat my discussion but rather skip to the end of the movement where the two sections differ significantly.
Section A’ continues as expected (e.g. like Section A) through m. 138. Measure 138 corresponds to m. 38 in Section A but does not lead to the same goal. See Example 4.21.

Example 4.21: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” End of Section A’.

The material seen in m. 39 is expected in m. 139; both measures are preceded by the same material. In m. 139, Ibert avoids the resolution of the previous measure. The end of Section A’ in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is reminiscent of m. 81 in the second movement of *Histoires*, “Le petit âne blanc,” where Ibert evades the expected resolution by replacing the material with rests (see Chapter 3).

Following the evaded resolution in m. 139, Ibert repeats the material from m. 138 (and m. 38) but transposes it down a perfect fifth. Ibert transposes and repeats the material so as to end the movement on tonic rather than dominant.21 Keeping the same basic rhythmic and melodic

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21 Section A’ follows the same harmonic pattern as Section A, which ends on the minor dominant. To end the movement on tonic, Ibert repeats and “corrects” the material.
figure allows Ibert to connect the end of the movement with the end of both Sections A and A'.

See Example 4.22.


By transposing m. 140 a perfect fifth down from m. 138, Ibert is able to resolve m. 138. The B\(^3\) at the end of m. 138 resolves to C\(^\#\)\(^3\) in m. 140. Admittedly, this resolution is weakened by the change in register and the intervening rests. Measure 140 leads to a resolution in the tonic in the following measure. Measures 140-143 closely resemble mm. 18-20 (see Example 4.23). Observe in Example 4.23 that the resolution of m. 140 is not the precise resolution expected in m. 139.\(^{22}\) The neighbor motion is maintained (and doubled at the octave) but is rhythmically augmented.

\(^{22}\) The resolution expected in m. 139 is similar to m. 19 transposed down a perfect fifth.

The dissonant cluster in mm. 142-143 is similar to those in mm. 19-20 but is transposed down a fifth to be in the tonic key rather than the minor dominant. Measures 142-143 are a final reference to mm. 19-20 and mm. 119-120.

The ending of “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is very similar to the ending of “Le petit âne blanc.” Both movements have an evaded resolution followed by a dissonant cluster of tones that reference prior sections of the movement. Following the dissonant references, both movements conclude with tonic harmony.

Harmony and Related Elements

“La marchande d’eau fraîche” is, like “Le petit âne blanc,” centered around an F# tonal area. While “Le petit âne blanc” is mostly pentatonic, this movement is clearly in the minor mode with a small amount of pentatonicism. In contrast to previous movements of Histoires, “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is more traditionally tonal, although admittedly much of the

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23 Measures 142-143 also relate to mm. 45-46 and mm. 49-50 via the use of dissonant interjections.
melody is comprised of dissonant chord tones. Cadences still play a limited role in the movement but tonal areas in relation to the formal scheme are of a more predictable nature. The two A sections are centered on tonic harmony and the B section is centered on dominant harmony.

The movement begins on a i\(^7\) (F\(^#\)m\(^7\)) harmony which is maintained through m. 7. Beginning in m. 9, the previous measures are repeated but transposed up a perfect fifth, emphasizing the minor dominant (v\(^7\)). See Example 4.24.


The repetition of the music in the minor dominant continues through m. 15. Measure 16 marks the point where the music is no longer transposed exactly from the preceding material (m. 8). Refer again to Example 4.6. The reason for the change is that Ibert is moving back to tonic harmony. If Ibert retained the interval of transposition, the music would move to the supertonic key area. Measures 16-20 use an E major pentatonic collection to continue melodic interest without moving away from C# minor (refer back to Example 4.7).

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24 Ibert uses dominant harmony very freely in this movement; sometimes he uses the minor dominant and at other times the major dominant.
The descending E major pentatonic collection arrives at a C# sonority (omitting the third of the chord) in m. 19. This sonority is a clear arrival point and emphasizes two tones (C# and G#) that later help to define Section B. The dissonant cluster of tones that follows the arrival on C# and G# continues to emphasize the minor dominant (refer back to Example 4.7). The C#⁶ and G#⁶ are members of a C# minor harmony while the F⁷ is clearly intended to be dissonant with the above tones. By omitting the third from the chord in the harmonies of mm. 19-20 Ibert does not explicitly emphasize the minor dominant; there have been no previous E#'s and a copious number of E naturals.

Tonic harmony is reestablished in m. 21. The following material is a repetition of mm. 1-19 but is transposed down an octave. The tonic/minor dominant relationship is maintained. The lower octave transposition persists through the first beat of m. 39. At this point Ibert is moving the music towards a portion of the movement that is characterized by an unstable design change that transitions to Section B.

The unstable design change begins in m. 41 on subdominant (IV) harmony. Although B major harmony does not fully materialize until m. 43, the bass B¹ - B³ octave suggests that the harmony begins in m. 41. Refer back to Example 4.9. Following the B major (subdominant) harmony in mm. 41-44 is a G major (Neapolitan) harmony beginning in m. 45. The upper line corresponds with the Neapolitan harmony and the interjections in the highest voice provide a clear dissonance against the underlying harmony. This is consistent with the nature of dissonant interjections in this movement as well as in previous movements from *Histoires*. G major harmony is maintained until the second beat of m. 48 where it is replaced with an E major harmony. Initially, it seems that the goal of the descending bass line in mm. 47 – 49 is the D
major harmony in m. 49, however, a closer examination of the bass voice suggests otherwise.

See Example 4.25.25

Example 4.25: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Unstable design change, mm. 45-52.

In Example 4.25, the B\(^3\) (in the bass) that is part of the G major harmony in m. 45 is ornamented with two upper neighbors and then descends to the third of the E major harmony. Similarly, as a mirror image, G\(^#3\) in m. 48 is ornamented with two lower neighbors and then ascends to the third (C\(^4\)) of the next harmony, A minor. Furthermore, E\(^5\) in the upper voice in m. 48 is emphasized by its higher register. The register difference and the fact that E\(^5\) is approached by leap help to emphasize the arrival of the E harmony.

An A\(^6\) minor harmony is established in m. 52 and is prolonged with linear third motions to and from a subordinate F major harmony. The A\(^6\) minor harmony in m. 54 moves to an E\(^6\) harmony in m. 56 via a descending linear progression. The harmonies throughout the section are all in first inversion. The inversions help to characterize the section as an unstable design change. See Example 4.26.

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25 This example is an excerpt from the actual music. I have annotated the bass voice with stems, flags and slurs where appropriate.
Example 4.26: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Linear descent to E harmony.

Notice in Example 4.26 that the linear descent (C-B-A-G\#-G) to the E harmony in m. 56 is an inversion of the linear motion (G\#-A-B-C) that approached the A minor harmony (m. 52).

Although E major harmony initiated the ascending progression in m. 50, it does not serve as the goal of the descent in mm. 54-56. E minor is established on the downbeat of m. 56 after a brief statement of E major. The E minor harmony in m. 56 then moves to a C# major harmony in m. 57 (Section B) via the chromatic voice exchange mentioned earlier.

The harmonic activity as well as the linear aspects of the upper voices makes mm. 41-56 an unstable contrast to the preceding material. Additionally, the harmonies are all in first inversion which contributes to their instability and suggests a connection with Histories’s second movement, “Le petit âne blanc” (see Example 3.13). In “Le petit âne blanc,” mm. 30 – 34 provide a transition between key areas via the use of descending harmonies in first inversion.

Section B begins in m. 57 and is focused almost exclusively on dominant harmony. Consistent with the end of Section A, the C\# major harmony in m. 57 is in first inversion. See Example 4.27. C\#6 harmony persists through m. 64 but is frequently ornamented with linear third progressions (to and from root position harmony) and neighbor figures. The motion between first inversion and root position harmony continues in a manner similar to Example 4.27.
Example 4.27: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Beginning of Section B.

First inversion harmony moves to root position harmony in m. 65 which is then prolonged through m. 88 (see Appendix C). This is indicated by the constant presence of C$\sharp^4$ as the lowest sounding pitch throughout the passage.

C$\sharp^4$ is replaced with G$\#^4$ as the lowest pitch in m. 89. See Example 4.28.

Example 4.28: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” G# as lowest pitch in m. 89.

Although the root is replaced with the fifth of the dominant harmony (thereby putting it in the less stable second inversion) in mm. 89 – 94, the aural sense of C$\#$ major remains strong. C$\#$ returns in m. 95 but the harmonic emphasis changes. See Example 4.29.
In Example 4.29, when C# returns it is part of tonic harmony. C# and G# regain focus in m. 97 but the sense of dominant harmony is obscured by the frequent chromaticism in mm. 97-100. C# and G# eventually move (mm. 98-101) chromatically in contrary motion to a minor seventh (F#/E) in mm. 101. The harmony gradually changes in mm. 94-101. Measure 94 clearly emphasizes dominant harmony while the following tonic harmony is less clearly emphasized. The following measures move toward the restatement of tonic harmony in m. 101 without explicitly emphasizing a specific harmony. It is the expanding chromatic wedge (see Example 4.19), not the harmonic activity, that drives Section B into Section A’.

Sections A and A’ highlight the minor dominant key area but the presence of the third (E) of the chord is used sparingly. The most significant use of E is in mm. 16-18 (as well as cognate measures 36-38 and 116-118). See Example 4.30. In Example 4.30, the E’s are seen in boxes. Notice that this pitch functions as a part of an E major pentatonic collection that serves to prolong the minor dominant. E# is first seen in m. 57 as a clear indication of the major dominant harmony. As Section B comes to a close, Ibert avoids using a chordal third so as to prepare the minor dominant portions of Section A’.
Example 4.30: Ibert, “La marchande d’eau fraîche:” Use of E in Section A.

Tonic harmony is reestablished in m. 101 with the arrival of Section A’. The harmonic relationships for this section are identical to those of Section A. The sections only differ substantially in the final five measures of the movement. As previously mentioned, m. 139 evades the resolution of m. 138 but is still in the minor dominant (refer back to Example 4.21). Measure 140 is similar to m. 138 but is transposed down a perfect fifth (see Example 4.22) and proceeds to resolve in the tonic key area (Example 4.23). The movement then concludes with a fully voiced F♯ minor chord.

Conclusion

“La marchande d’eau fraîche” is the ninth and longest movement of Histoires. The movement contrasts with previous movements by not containing a significant structural neighbor motion on the middleground. Instead of a structural neighbor motion, the movement focuses on harmony as it relates to the overall form: A(tonic) – B(dominant) – A’(tonic). Furthermore,
dominant harmony (both major and minor) plays a more extensive role in this movement than in previous movements. Ibert’s emphasis on the dominant not only contrasts with previous movements of *Histoires* but also with characteristic impressionist tendencies. While this movement is a clear contrast to “La meneuse de tortues d’or” and “Le petit âne blanc,” certain common characteristics can be seen in all three movements. These characteristics include the use of neighbor figures, a three-part overall form, and melodic or harmonic dissipation. The presence of similar compositional techniques in all three movements helps to highlight those techniques as part of Ibert’s compositional language in *Histoires*. Elements of Ibert’s compositional language in *Histoires* will be further developed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF COMPOSITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The previous chapters have each focused on a specific movement from *Histoires* and have included evidence of impressionist characteristics and Debussian influence as well as my own analytical commentaries. Although each movement can be examined independently,\(^\text{26}\) it is helpful to compare multiple movements. In this chapter I will illustrate some of the most significant and frequently used techniques in *Histoires* that help to define Ibert’s compositional language.

Formal Structure and Neighbor Motions

In each of the three movements I examined, Ibert uses a three-part formal design. In “Le petit âne blanc” and “La marchande d’eau fraîche,” the form can be further specified as A-B-A’. Three-part forms are not exclusively an impressionist characteristic; however, impressionist tendencies regarding melodic development seem to be well-suited for ternary forms. Debussy is known for his tendency to avoid thematic developments; he preferred to combine melodies in various ways to achieve his desired tonal colors (Lester 1982, 260). Using a three-part form allows Ibert to make frugal use of a limited number of melodies and motivic ideas. He uses nearly the same compositional material (often in the exact same way) in the A and A’ sections and inserts a contrasting B section in the middle. Ibert avoids any obligations to develop melodic material for the sake of interest by separating sections A and A’ with Section B. A detailed analysis of the formal elements of these movements can be seen in Chapters 2-4.

\(^{26}\) It is likely that Ibert conceived some of the movements without the intention of combining them with others to form a collection. There is evidence to suggest that Ibert began writing some of the movements, or portions thereof, as early as 1912 (Landormy 1943, 287). The collection was not completed until 1921 and was at the request of Ibert’s editor (Laederich 1998, 15).
To further elaborate the three-part form, Ibert frequently contrasts stable elements with less stable elements. This juxtaposition often corresponds with formal divisions. As can be seen in Chapter 3, Section B of “Le petit âne blanc” contrasts with Sections A and A’. Both Section A and Section A’ are comprised of material focused around F♯ major pentatonic with small dissonant interjections. Although the dissonant interjections clearly contrast with the surrounding material, they are easily heard as part of an overall stable section. The dissonant interjections are ultimately references to Section B where Ibert abandons F♯ major pentatonic to focus on two tones that are not part of the pentatonic sonority: E and B.

Ibert also contrasts stable elements with unstable elements in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.” The stable sections are again represented by Sections A and A’. Rather than using Section B as a less stable element, Ibert adds an unstable design change to the end of Section A (mm. 41-56). See Chapter 4 for specific details regarding the unstable design change. The purpose of the unstable element in this movement is to transition from Section A to Section B. Section A is, aside from the design change that is in question, highly stable and even predictable. Section B is very different from the other sections but is also very stable. Placing two stable sections together without using techniques such as motivic development would not yield the same compositional interest that Ibert works into each movement of *Histoires*. The design change permits Ibert to add interest and variety that would not be possible without an unstable contrast to the mostly stable large formal divisions.

Although a traditional Schenkerian *Ursatz* is not found in these movements, long-range linear motions are used as fundamental structures in two of the three movements. In “La meneuse de tortues d’or” and “Le petit âne blanc,” large-scale neighbor motions are the most significant background features. See Example 5.1.
Example 5.1: Ibert, *Histoires*: Fundamental structure of movements 1 and 2.

“La meneuse de tortues d’or”

Notice in Example 5.1 that the complexity of the neighbor structure in each of the movements varies. “La meneuse de tortues d’or” uses a simple neighbor motion (with a register transfer) while “Le petit âne blanc” uses a highly complex neighbor motion (in parallel fifths) facilitated by a pair of voice exchanges. Structural neighbor motions are not only a part of Ibert’s compositional language; they are also used by Debussy. Richard Parks notes that neighbor
motions and arpeggios often provide the most relevant structural significance in Debussy’s music (Parks 1989, 4). Additionally, theorists such as Adele Katz (1945), Felix Salzer (1982), and Edward Laufer (2003) have made similar observations regarding neighbor motions in works by Debussy.

In addition to their structural significance in “La meneuse de tortues d’or” and “Le petit âne blanc,” neighbor motions are frequently found on the foreground in “Le petit âne blanc” and “La marchande d’eau fraîche.” See Example 5.2.

Example 5.2: Ibert, *Histoires*: Local neighbor motions.

“Le petit âne blanc”

“La marchande d’eau fraîche”
In example 5.2, neighbor motions are present in the outer voices and are very active on the musical surface of each of these movements. Although neighbor figures do not provide the background structure in “La marchande d’eau fraîche,” they are in copious supply on the foreground and often provide the most significant local interest. Although neighbor motions are obviously not found exclusively in impressionist music, they are given a more prominent role by impressionist composers (Debussy and Ibert) who use them as fundamental structures as well as foreground elaborations of deeper-level events.

Voice Exchanges

Voice exchanges are used in specific places in two of the three movements that I examined. As illustrated in Example 5.1 (and explained at length in Chapter 3), the structural neighbor motion in “Le petit âne blanc” is in parallel fifths in the outer voices and uses a voice exchange to approach the correct position of the neighboring portion of the structural neighbor motion. Furthermore, a voice exchange is used similarly at the end of Section B to correct the position of the outer voices leading into Section A’. This voice exchange plays an important role in the transition between formal sections.

A similar voice exchange exists in “Le marchande d’eau fraîche.” See Example 5.3.

Example 5.3: Ibert, Histoires: Voice exchange in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.”
The voice exchange in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” does not carry the same significance as the one in “Le petit âne blanc” because it is more local but does help to transition from one formal section to another. This voice exchange is especially interesting because it is chromatic. Although the voice exchanges in these two movements differ significantly in importance, they are similar in that they both help to transition between formal sections. The voice exchanges are likely a result of Ibert’s tendency to avoid cadential closure between formal divisions. Ibert avoids cadencing at the end of sections by using linear elements, such as the voice exchange, to move directly from one section to the next.

“La meneuse de tortues d’or” does not use a voice exchange between formal sections but still avoids cadencing at the end of formal sections. See Example 5.4.

Example 5.4: Ibert, *Histoires*: Transition between Sections A and B in “La meneuse de tortues d’or.”

In Example 5.4, Ibert does not come to a stop at the end of Section A. He continues the previous bass ostinato well into Section B, which allows for continued forward motion, but brings the highest voice in with a repetition of the material seen in movement’s opening measures (see Chapter 2 for a complete discussion). This allows Ibert to highlight the beginning of Section B
without explicitly defining the end of Section A. This process, combined with voice exchanges and melodic dissipation (to be discussed shortly) helps define an additional element of Ibert’s compositional language, the obscuring of formal transitions. In each of the three movements I examined, the division between formal sections is not explicitly pronounced but the arrival of a new section is nonetheless easily identifiable.

Dissipation

Ibert frequently uses a technique which involves the gradual reduction of melodic or harmonic elements. I call this technique “dissipation”. My use of the term most closely resembles the definition as used in physics. According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, the definition of dissipation (as related to physics) is: “loss of energy, esp. by its conversion into heat”. Melodic or harmonic dissipation occurs in each of the three movements that served as the basis for this project. Melodic dissipation is used in “La meneuse de tortues d’or” to bridge the gap between Section B and Section C. See Example 5.5.

Example 5.5: Ibert, *Histoires*: Dissipation in “La meneuse de tortues d’or.”

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In the measures immediately preceding Section C (mm. 58-64), the melodic material is reduced to only the bass ostinato pattern. The pattern is further reduced to only the right hand and is augmented in mm. 63-64. The melodic material continues to be reduced and the forward motion continues to slow down until the beginning of Section C (m. 65). This makes the beginning of Section C easily identifiable but does not permit Section B to come to a formal close.

Dissipation is used similarly in “Le petit âne blanc” but is more complex than in “La meneuse de tortues d’or.” The first occurrence of dissipation in “Le petit âne blanc” is in mm. 25-29 where the music is moving from Section A to Section B. See Example 5.6.

Example 5.6: Ibert, *Histoires*: First occurrence of dissipation in “Le petit âne blanc.”

The ascending F# major pentatonic scale in m. 24 is a continuation of the previous F# major pentatonic focus. In m. 25, the previously seen melodic ostinato in the bass is omitted and combined with the upper voice (the goal of the pentatonic scale) to produce parallel sevenths between the outer voices in mm. 25-30. Although the rhythms are still quite active, the
harmonic and melodic material has been reduced from the preceding material. The second occurrence of dissipation in this movement is in mm. 46-53. See Example 5.7.

Example 5.7: Ibert, “Histoires:” Second occurrence of dissipation in “Le petit âne blanc.”

This instance of dissipation again serves to move between formal sections; in this case Section B and Section A’. The melodic material becomes very repetitive and is eventually restricted to only the right hand. Furthermore, the final four measures are comprised of a single sonority presented in the same metric position within each measure.

Ibert uses dissipation in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” but not in the same way as in “La meneuse de tortues d’or” and “Le petit âne blanc.” In this movement, dissipation does not aid in the transition between sections and the dissipation of elements is more severe. See Example 5.8.

Example 5.8: Ibert, “Histoires:” Dissipation in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.”
Dissipation occurs in the middle of Section B and reduces the music from a full C\(^6\) harmony to simply the root of the harmony (C\(^#\)) in four different octaves. In previous instances, dissipation involved a reduction in material but often maintained a whole chord or a melodic line. In “La marchande d’eau fraîche” the dissipation involves a sudden and extreme reduction of material.

In addition to its use in *Histoires*, melodic dissipation is also seen in common practice repertoire. Chopin uses melodic dissipation in mm. 209-222 of his Mazurka in B minor (Op. 33, no. 4). During these measures Chopin gradually reduces a Neapolitan chord to its most basic elements. Furthermore, what I call melodic dissipation is referred to by Arnold Schoenberg as “liquidation” in his text *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* (1967, 58).

**Ostinato**

Ostinato is a significant part of Ibert’s compositional language in *Histoires* and is used in each of the three movements I examined. In “La meneuse de tortues d’or,” ostinato is used at the end of Section A and leads into Section B. The ostinato is in the bass of mm. 22-35 but is most clearly seen in mm. 31-35. During these measures the bass ostinato is the primary melodic focus and helps continue forward motion into Section B. See Example 5.9.

Example 5.9: Ibert, “*Histoires*” Ostinato in “La meneuse de tortues d’or.”
In “Le petit âne blanc,” ostinato is used much more than in the previous movement but is still in the bass. The ostinato in this movement begins in m. 1. See Example 5.10.

Example 5.10: Ibert, *Histoires:* Ostinato in “Le petit âne blanc.”

The one-measure bass ostinato pattern persists through the majority of Sections A and A’ and contributes to what Ibert calls the “monotonous step of the little white donkey” (see Chapter 3). The ostinato in this movement does not serve a transitional function or participate directly in dissipation like the ostinato in “La meneuse de tortues d’or” but does play a more active role in the foreground of the bass.

The ostinato pattern in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” is, similar to “Le petit âne blanc,” present in both Section A and Section A’ and begins in m. 1. See Example 5.11. As was explained in detail in Chapter 4, the ostinato in this movement is a two-measure motive that breaks up shorter, less rhythmically active melodic ideas. Although the notated rhythms are different, the lower voice of the ostinato continues through the melodic passages (mm. 3-4 and 7-9) as an accompaniment to the above melody. This pattern occurs in both tonic and dominant key areas and provides much of the movement’s foreground melodic interest.
Example 5.11: Ibert, “Histoires:” Two-voice ostinato in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.”

Parallel 6 Harmonies

Ibert uses first inversion harmonies in very specific (but not exclusive) situations in *Histoires*. In “Le petit âne blanc” and “La marchande d’eau fraîche,” Ibert uses parallel first inversion harmonies in transitional or unstable sections. In “Le petit âne blanc,” first inversion harmonies are used in mm. 30-34. See Example 5.12.

Example 5.12: Ibert, “Histoires:” First inversion harmonies in “Le petit âne blanc.”
Although m. 30 is the beginning of Section B, mm. 32-34 serve a transitional function. The string of first inversion harmonies in this passage shifts the harmonic emphasis away from the striking D⁶ sonority towards the less stable E⁴₃ harmony in m. 35. First inversion harmonies are used in a similar way in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.” See Example 5.13.

Example 5.13: Ibert, “Histoires:” First inversion harmonies in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.”

This passage in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” functions as a transition between harmonically stable formal divisions and makes extensive use of inverted harmonies. The passage moves the music from F♭ minor in Section A to C♭ major in Section B. First inversion harmonies are used sparingly throughout the remainder of the movement which suggests that they are meant to
create instability in this passage (mm. 41-57). Ibert does not reserve first inversion harmonies in *Histoires* exclusively for unstable sections but does use them consistently in sections designed to be less stable than the surrounding material.

**Evaded Resolutions**

Evaded resolutions are used in “Le petit âne blanc” and “La marchande d’eau fraîche.” Both movements use evaded resolutions in the same way at similar formal points. In “Le petit âne blanc,” Ibert avoids the resolution of a descending line in parallel sevenths near the end of the movement. See Example 5.14.

Example 5.14: Ibert, *Histoires:* Evaded resolution in “Le petit âne blanc.”

![Example 5.14](image)

Rather than continuing the descending line to the expected resolution (seen in parentheses), Ibert evades the resolution and follows the silence by a pair of sonorities that bring the movement to a close. Similarly, in “La marchande d’eau fraîche,” Ibert again evades an expected resolution near the end of the movement (see Example 5.15). Observe in Example 5.15 that m. 138 is not resolved in m. 139 (the expected resolutions are in parentheses). Although B⁴ in m. 138 eventually resolves to C♯³ in m. 140, the resolution is weakened by the silence and register transfer. The movement concludes shortly after the evaded resolution. Evaded resolutions occur near the end of both movements and bring the music to an abrupt, unexpected stop.
Example 5.15: Ibert, “Histoires:” Evaded resolution in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.”

Following the rest, Ibert references some previously seen material and concludes the movement. For a detailed discussion of these elements, see Chapters 3 and 4.

Dissonant Interjections

In addition to evaded resolutions, “Le petit âne blanc” and “La marchande d’eau fraîche” share another element of Ibert’s compositional language. In both movements, Ibert uses small, dissonant interjections to contrast with surrounding material. In “Le petit âne blanc” the dissonant interjections represent the “untimely braying” of the little white donkey and are an obvious contrast to the otherwise constant focus on F# major pentatonic in Sections A and A’.

See Example 5.16.

Example 5.16: Ibert, “Histoires:” Dissonant interjections in “Le petit âne blanc.”

In Example 5.16, three of the four interjecting tones are altered a minor second from their diatonic (F# major pentatonic) versions.
The dissonant interjections in “La marchande d’eau fraîche” also contrast with surrounding material. See Example 5.17.

Example 5.17: Ibert, “Histoires:” Dissonant interjections in “La marchande d’eau fraîche.”

A

B

Notice that dissonant interjections occur in two ways in this movement. In both instances the function of the dissonance is the same. In Example 5.17-A the dissonant chord includes two consonant chord tones (C♯ and G♯) but contains a minor ninth between the outer voices. The chord contrasts the C♯ harmony that preceded it as well as the F♯ harmony that follows. This dissonant cluster of tones prepares the return to F♯ harmony by signaling the end of C♯ harmony. The dissonant interjections in Example 15.17-B provide a more intense dissonance by placing
the offending tones as a minor second rather than a minor ninth. The asterisks in Example 5.17 indicate places in the music where the actual pitches differ but the dissonant tones function in the same way (as an altered seventh of the underlying chord).

Common Practice Characteristics

Many elements of Ibert’s compositional language in *Histoires* are rooted in common practice techniques. Most notable among these elements is Ibert’s focus on a tonal center in each of the movements I examined. Additional elements include an A-B-A form, voice exchanges, neighbor motions, dissipation (or, in Schoenberg’s terms, liquidation), and ostinato. Elements of *Histoires* such as voice exchanges and the focus on a tonal center are central to Schenkerian analysis while elements such as an A-B-A form and ostinato are characteristics of the common practice period but not central to Schenkerian analysis. Schenkerian analysis works well in *Histoires* because of its common practice characteristics. Such characteristics allow the work to more closely resemble the repertoire from which Schenker developed his theory. Although many techniques used in *Histoires* closely resemble previously established compositional practices, certain elements of the work distinguish it from common practice compositions. These elements include the increased prominence of the subdominant, the reduced role of the dominant, the presence of parallel perfect intervals, and the use of a structural neighbor motion as the most significant large-scale linear event.

Conclusion

Ibert’s compositional language in *Histoires* is partially characterized by the common compositional tendencies mentioned above. Further study of the remaining movements from the
work would surely highlight other characteristics; however, given the practical limitations of this project, I will not pursue any further analysis. The three movements I examined not only suggest characteristics of Ibert’s compositional style in *Histoires* but also possess characteristics of impressionism and provide evidence of Debussian influence.

Analytical study of Ibert’s work is, given his prominence in early twentieth-century French musical culture, severely underrepresented. Many biographical studies are available but few include analytical commentary. It is my hope that this project will make a worthy contribution to the analytic study of Ibert. Furthermore, I hope that my research will stimulate interest in the academic community by showing that Ibert is a composer of great artistic merit and is worthy of scholarly attention.
APPENDIX A

“LA MENEUSE DE TORTUES D’OR”

Reproduce with permission from Editions Musicales Alphonse Leduc.
APPENDIX B

“LE PETIT ÂNE BLANC”

Reproduce with permission from Editions Musicales Alphonse Leduc.
(Le petit âne blanc.....)
(小さな薬～薬房...)
APPENDIX C

“LA MARCHANDE D’EAU FRAÎCHE”

Reproduce with permission from Editions Musicales Alphonse Leduc.
D'un petit pas égal et monotone

La m. g. par dessus
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