

TRANSFORMATION IN RICHARD STRAUSS'S

HORN CONCERTO NO. 1

by

PETER HARRIS RIGGS

(Under the Direction of Jean Martin-Williams)

ABSTRACT

The following document constructs a narrative analysis of Richard Strauss's *Horn Concerto No. 1* using the narratological approach of Byron Almén. It will provide an overview of Almén's strategy and its employment in this piece, and it will be supported by analyses of topic, rhythm, harmony, form, and melody. The purpose of this document is to deepen the understanding and appreciation of this work by discovering a musical narrative embedded in the musical structure. There will also be a proposed interpretation of the narrative as a biographical parallel to the composer's life at the time of composition.

INDEX WORDS: Horn, Concerto, Richard Strauss, Performance, Music Theory, Narrative Analysis, Music and Meaning, Byron Almén, Robert Hatten

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful wife, Carmen Matheny Riggs. Without her love and encouragement, I would not have been able to complete this project.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Topic

Richard Strauss's *Horn Concerto No. 1*, Op. 11 is one of the most prominent works in the horn repertoire. It has been recorded numerous times and is still used as a primary work for competitions and orchestral auditions. However, compared to Strauss's tone poems and operas, it has only been given a cursory overview in scholarly writings about his works. This is most likely due to its placement in his compositional timeline, having been written about five years before the beginning of his tone poem output, which signaled his arrival as a composer with a unique voice. This horn concerto is representative of an early transitional period in his life, both as a composer and a person.

This document will feature a variety of analyses, with the more familiar being musicological, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and formal. These strategies will play a secondary and more supportive role to the primary type of analysis that is perhaps less familiar to many trained musicians: narrative analysis. While the "narrative" that will emerge from this concerto is similar to what one would expect from a story in a book or on screen, it is treated slightly differently in a musical milieu. The details and steps that go into narrative analysis will be explained more fully below.

Narrative Analysis

The specific narrative strategy that will be employed comes from the work of music theorist Byron Almén. The connotation of the word “narrative” evokes ideas of plot, characters, settings and agency. that one would associate more commonly with media such as film, television, and literature. In the world of Western art music, the concept of narrative is typically only attached to works that have a given programmatic element. Music that lacks an established programmatic element, “absolute” music, is traditionally not thought of in narratological terms. The goal of narrative analysis is not to create a unique story aligned with the music (à la the Disney movie *Fantasia*), but rather to identify elements of the music that inherently, through their interactions, follow a common narrative archetype. Before diving into a narrative analysis of the concerto, a few terms need to be defined: *topic*, *markedness*, *rank*, and *transvaluation*.

The idea and use of topic in musical analysis emerged more prominently before narrative analysis. It was established by Leonard Ratner and later expanded on by Kofi Agawu, Michael Klein, Raymond Monelle, and Robert Hatten. Ratner’s original description of topic gives a strong sense of the concept:

From its contacts with worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of the lower classes, music in the early 18th century developed a thesaurus of characteristic figures, which formed a rich legacy for classic composers. Some of these figures were associated with various feelings and affections; others had a picturesque flavor. They are designated here as topics – subject for musical discourse.¹

A more specific example of a topic would be associating a waltz with music that has a triple meter and strongly emphasizes the downbeat. Similarly, as the horn was historically used during actual hunts, numerous composers have used hunting calls (particularly with horns) to evoke a hunt topic.

¹ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 9.

Markedness emerges from differences between characteristics of sound that can be expressed as oppositions (high vs. low, consonance vs. dissonance, diatonic vs. chromatic, etc.). These musical units can be perceived on both a *paradigmatic*² and *syntagmatic*³ level. A “marked” unit experienced on the paradigmatic level is defined by its narrower meaning, less frequent occurrence, and deviation from the unmarked norm. For example, a “major” (unmarked) tonality versus a “minor” (marked) tonality in the Classical period correlates with the opposition of “non-tragic” (unmarked) versus “tragic” (marked).⁴

While markedness evaluates a musical unit compared to its unmarked counterpart, rank is a way of determining which of the marked features would be considered the most dominant or culturally valued when compared to other surrounding marked features. From Almén, rank “assigns relative value to the distinctive features in a cultural unit...each unit exists in a particular hierarchical position.”⁵ Identifying marked features in a piece of music and determining their relative rank value is integral to crafting a narrative.

Narrative manifests itself differently depending on the medium: “Dramatic narrative is...realized by characters and settings both visually and audibly present. Literary narrative...is constructed through verbal description and dialogue...Personal narratives are psychological constructions.”⁶ Musical narrative is determined by tracing the “changes in hierarchical patterns over time,”⁷ eschewing specificity toward character or setting. James Jakób Liszka established a foundation for defining narrative: it “takes a certain set of culturally meaningful differences and

² *Paradigmatic* refers to the use of a certain feature over another, e.g. loud instead of soft.

³ *Syntagmatic* refers to the arrangement of musical units in a particular order.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁵ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 49.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

*transvalues*⁸ them by means of a sequence of action.”⁹ This transvaluation is the defining factor of the narrative journey and allows an archetype to be associated with it.

In the world of literary theory, Northrop Frye developed a concept of narrative *mythoi*, or archetypes, that emerged from his opposition of innocence and experience.¹⁰ Liszka replaced Frye’s cyclical model of archetypes with a binary one, based instead on the opposition between an order-imposing hierarchy and its transgression, and applied them to music. Byron Almén further developed Liszka’s narrative strategy, supporting it with examples of topic outlined primarily by Ratner and Hatten. It is this confluence of ideas that forms the primary method of analysis in this document. From Almén’s work, a listener can determine a narrative archetype in music through the interaction between the oppositions of order/transgression and victory/defeat.

Table 1: The Four Narrative Archetypes

Romance:	the <i>victory of an order-imposing hierarchy</i> over its transgression (<i>victory + order</i>)
Tragedy:	the <i>defeat of a transgression</i> by an order-imposing hierarchy (<i>defeat + transgression</i>)
Irony:	the <i>defeat of an order-imposing hierarchy</i> by a transgression (<i>defeat + order</i>)
Comedy:	the <i>victory of a transgression</i> over an order-imposing hierarchy (<i>victory + transgression</i>)

Typically, unmarked elements are those that are present at the outset of a piece of music (such as the starting tonality, rhythm, topic, harmony, etc.) and are associated with order.

Musical traits heard in opposition to these (marked) are then associated with transgression. Once

⁸ *Transvaluation* is the rising and falling tension caused by the changes in markedness and rank. The result of this determines the narrative trajectory in a work.

⁹ James Jakób Liszka, *The Semiotic of Myth: A Critical Study of the Symbol* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 117.

¹⁰ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 64.

these characteristics are associated with particular agents (order and transgressions), they are then combined with the actions they perform. “For Example, an agent, A, changes the condition of patient, P; if the condition of P moves from high to low rank, A is identified as a villain and P a victim; in the opposite case (where P moves from low to high rank), A is identified as a hero.”¹¹ The determination of the listener’s sympathy (siding with either order or transgression) has to do with the cultural rank value of the musical oppositions that are established. The desire of the listener to hear order or transgression as having a higher cultural value determines whether the narrative is heard as a victory or a defeat of one over another.

Composer and Work Background

Richard Strauss wrote his *Horn Concerto No. 1*, Op. 11 in 1883, at the age of 19. Strauss was raised in a musically conservative household: “the first decade of Strauss’s endeavors as a composer was a period of filial loyalty, expressed through his devotion to his father’s beloved Austro-Germanic triumvirate...Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven (but not late Beethoven!).”¹² There are indications, however, that the maturing Strauss was starting to chafe against these old-fashioned styles and find his own voice. This piece was written during a period when Strauss had recently left, against his father’s wishes, the Munich university he was attending.¹³

The three movements of this concerto align with the typical Classical-era scheme of fast–slow–fast. Formally, however, the first movement diverges quite a bit from the traditional concerto form, having a more rhapsodic flow. Moreover, the piece as a whole is played *attaca*,

¹¹ Yayoi Uno Everett, *Reconfiguring Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Opera: Osvaldo Golijov, Kaija Saariaho, John Adams, and Tan Dun* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 19.

¹² Wayne Heisler Jr., “Maturity and indecision in the early works,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*, ed. Charles Youmans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 42-55.

¹³ Strauss only lasted one semester at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. His father urged him to attend a well-rounded university instead of a music conservatory so that he might have a viable profession in case his musical vocation was unsuccessful.

forming one large, continuous work, rather than three distinct movements. These changes came primarily from his shifting views on the music that inspired him, aligning with the Wagnerian school in Germany and adopting “Lisztian methods under the influence of Alexander Ritter.”¹⁴

When placing this first of two horn concerti¹⁵ in Strauss’s *oeuvre*, this work highlights the beginning of growth in his musical ideas and compositional techniques:

In the late 1880s, Strauss clearly underwent a transformation (his self-proclaimed “conversions”), one that is usually located in the “symphonic fantasy” *Aus Italien*, Op. 16 (1886). Still, the change was gradual and not total: Strauss never broke completely with his musical pasts, as witnessed by continuities in his technique, style, and aesthetics from the 1870s through the 1880s and beyond...softening the divide between the young, “absolutist” composer and the programmatic one of the breakout tone poems.¹⁶

While the horn concerto was written without an overt or even implied programmatic element, it lends itself well to narrative interpretation, as will be demonstrated in this document.

Methodology

The primary methodology for this study will be the narratological approach of Byron Almén. The narrative will be supplemented and supported with analyses of the piece’s rhythmic motives, tonality, form, and topic. The first layer of this analysis includes a formal, melodic, and harmonic examination of the entire work. Then, each movement will be examined for marked elements and motivic connections. These findings will be examined in combination with the other movements to build connections within the piece as a whole. From this, a list of oppositions between an order-imposing hierarchy and transgressions against it will be determined, as will a valuation of their relative ranks. After tracing the changes between order and transgression throughout the entire work, an overall narrative archetype will be discovered.

¹⁴ Ibid., 49.

¹⁵ Strauss wrote his *Horn Concerto No. 2* almost 60 years after the first.

¹⁶ Ibid., 43.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 gave an introduction to the topic and a framework for understanding the concepts described within the rest of the document. Chapter 2 will provide more in-depth information on narrative analysis and relate it to the concerto via its oppositions and overall form. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 will give an overview of the oppositions in movements one, two, and three, respectively. Finally, Chapter 6 will contain a conclusion and put forth a parallel between the narrative and the composer's biography.

CHAPTER 2

NARRATIVE AND FORMAL ANALYSIS

Narrative Analysis

In his seminal work *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye aimed to describe the “general characteristics of literary fictions, without regard to genre.”¹⁷ He argued that narratives fall into one of four archetypes: comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony/satire. For literature, each archetype involves the interactions of a protagonist and an antagonist in a societal order. “In comic narratives, according to Frye, the objectives of a hero meet resistance from an obstructing character who is often the leader of the society. A moment of *anagnorsis* (recognition) allows the hero to complete her objectives and bring about a change for the better in that society.”¹⁸

Narrative archetypes are based around a hero who rises to victory or succumbs to defeat while transgressing against an order-imposing hierarchy or defending that order from a transgression.¹⁹ In Liszka’s interpretation of Frye, “in comedy, a hero transgresses against an undesirable order, which her victory transforms for the better.”²⁰ To give a non-comedy comparison, “in romance, the hero embodies an established order, and her victory over transgression (evil) serves to underscore the desirability of that order.”²¹

¹⁷ Northrop Frye and Harold Bloom, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 162.

¹⁸ Michael Leslie Klein, “Ironic Narrative, Ironic Reading,” *Journey of Music Theory* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2009), 101.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 105

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 106

²¹ *Ibid.*, 106

When pursuing a narrative trajectory in a piece of absolute music, my first step is to simply listen to the piece and establish a “gut feeling” as to which of the four narrative archetypes best fits the music. The archetype is determined via the combination and interaction of two factors: victory/defeat and order/transgression. Determining victory or defeat, and victor and vanquished, is accomplished by first establishing musical oppositions based on marked and unmarked features. For Strauss’s *Horn Concerto No.1*, the primary oppositions between order and transgressions are provided.

Table 2: Oppositions

Order-imposing Hierarchy	Transgression
Dotted-eighth sixteenth figure	Triplet figure
Tonic Key (Eb major)	Other keys (Bb major, Ab minor)
Formal clarity	Formal flaws
March/war topic	Fanfare/brilliant topic

For example, in Strauss’s *Horn Concerto No. 1*, the initial theme *x* in both the solo horn and orchestra are presented in the form of a march topic that comes across as heavy and pedantic and can be described as trying to suppress the ascending triplet fanfares when they emerge. The listener’s sympathies through the course of the piece would tend to lean toward the transgressive elements, because order is heard to be uptight, rigid, and of low cultural value based on its march

topic carrying military associations. Conversely, the ascending triplet version of the *a* theme presented in the third movement is associated with topics such as brilliant, fanfare, and even a *Gigue*. These are of higher cultural rank value as determined by Kofi Agawu²² and, subjectively, sound more inviting to the listener. Since the listener's sympathies are with transgression, they are then listening for either a victory of transgression over order or a defeat of transgression by order (one could think of transgression in this specific example as the protagonist and order as the antagonist). As the listener traces the established oppositions through the entire work, they would hear that transgression ends up being victorious over the order-imposing hierarchy, signaling a comedic narrative archetype by Frye's and Liszka's descriptions. What is particularly interesting about a comedic narrative is that there exists the potential by which transgression, once it emerges as the victor, can establish itself through the *discursive strategy*²³ of *synthesis*²⁴ to become the new order. The musical elements that used to be in opposition are now merged when the *x* theme re-emerges in the third movement like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon.

Overarching Form

The typical Classical-era concerto contains three movements in a fast–slow–fast arrangement. Typically, the first movement is in sonata form, the second movement is often in ternary form, and the final movement is in rondo form. Richard Strauss composed the *Concerto No. 1 for Horn and Orchestra* in this framework, with one major change: the first movement largely deviates from sonata form.

²² Kofi Agawu, *Playing With Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 30.

²³ A discursive strategy is a defined framework for a specific transvaluation.

²⁴ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 207. Synthesis is one of the discursive strategies outlined by Byron Almén. This describes a transvaluation wherein previously oppositional elements of the hierarchy are combined to form a new order, particularly when accompanied by returning thematic material.

The tonal path of concerto form typically follows the journey of an established home (tonic) key through a tonal exploration into either closely or distantly related keys. The journey is concluded when the home key is reestablished and fully confirmed by the end of the piece. The motion from tonic to dominant in concerto form is usually accomplished during the transition from the primary to the secondary theme. In the recapitulation, the parallel transition to the second theme is altered by the composer to keep the music in its home key, thereby creating a sense of tonal resolution.

Table 3: Beginning and Ending Keys for Each Movement

Movement 1 “Exposition”	Movement 2 “Development”	Movement 3 “Recapitulation”
E _b – B _b	a _b – a _b	E _b – E _b
Tonic – Dominant	Minor subdominant	Tonic

As can be seen in the chart above, the return to tonic does not occur at the end of the first movement. The key relationship in this movement is more akin to the exposition of the first movement of a concerto. Moreover, the final confirmation of tonic does not occur until the end of the third movement. It is, therefore, more accurate to think of the whole work as having a large, single-movement concerto form. As will be discussed further below, movements one and three share a connecting melodic thread, akin to the relationship between the exposition and recapitulation in concerto form. Moreover, it matches the tonal relationship described above in typical concerto form, with the second movement acting as a pseudo-development section. While

the concerto's detailed structure does not match every equivalent part of a first movement concerto form, this macro lens gives the piece a cohesive narrative.

In most pieces of Western tonal music, the overall journey of a piece begins in one key, causes tension by moving into other key areas, and finally provides resolution through a return to the home key. This concerto follows suit by beginning and ending in E \flat major. In this instance, even though the piece begins and ends in the same key, the initial E \flat and ending E \flat are heard in different contexts. While the confirmation of E \flat major in the third movement signals a resolution of the overall tonal journey, it comes with a fundamental change in rhythm, meter, form, and topic. If comparing this to the plot of a story from literature or visual media, this might be a similar idea to a protagonist going through some major change in the middle of the movie that forever transforms who they are, even if, on the surface, they are still the same.

There are some key areas that stand in opposition to the tonic home key. The primary transgressors are the dominant and the minor subdominant. Michael Klein discusses how key areas can be interpreted as representing a temporal spectrum in music. If we establish the tonic as being the present, he proposes that a shift to a dominant key is looking toward the future, while a shift to the subdominant is looking toward the past or even a longed-for state.²⁵ Similarly, Charles Rosen described how a dominant key can be heard as active, while a subdominant key can be heard as passive.²⁶

When looking at the piece on a large scale, it parallels the essential elements of concerto form that typically comprise only the first movement. The first movement in this piece does not satisfactorily fit into concerto form for many reasons, but the primary reason is the lack of a

²⁵ Michael Leslie Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 23-56.

²⁶ Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971).

return to the home key. The return to the home key and overall resolution of the piece does not occur until the final movement. This is not a unique concept to multi-movement works – most final movements act as resolutions to the entire work – but the element that makes this concerto different and links these two movements as an exposition and recapitulation is the altered *x* theme that is the melodic backbone of both movements.

There are sections in each movement of the piece that, while both interesting and worthy of analysis, have little bearing on the overall narrative development. Section B in the first movement, for example, introduces a lyrical theme that many would consider the primary melody of the first movement. When looking at the piece as a whole, however, this theme never returns and is only very briefly referenced in the second movement. While these sections will occasionally be referenced to reinforce an idea, they will not be discussed unless relevant to the narrative analysis.

CHAPTER 3
MOVEMENT ONE

Form

Table 4: Formal Diagram of Movement One

Theme:	A	B	A'	C' C''	A''
Key:	E ^b I	E ^b I	E ^b – g I – iii	g – B ^b c – B ^b iii – V vi – V	B ^b – a ^b V – iv
Measure #:	1	29	64	76 108	131

As can be seen in Table 4 above, the first movement lends itself more to a 5-part rondo form than a concerto form based on structural and tonal expectation. Motivically, the first movement fits even less well with concerto form. The primary theme introduced in the opening measures by the solo horn is echoed immediately by the orchestra. This refrain returns three times throughout the first movement, with a few contrasting themes between refrains.

The pseudo-rondo form of the first movement is an indicator of the battle waging between order and transgression. In this instance, order is represented by a clear form, what one would expect from a typical first movement of a concerto. Any flaws in this formal expectation are then associated with transgression, standing in opposition to order. As the first movement

unfolds and the form continues to be less clear with each new section, it becomes clear that transgression is increasing in its standing. This is evidenced by the many sections of the first movement that are elided (when the new section interrupts the one that came before it). This elision makes it difficult for the listener to distinguish different phrase beginnings and endings in the music. The primary example of this is in section C where one could hear mm. 76–130 as one large section, two medium sections, or even four smaller sections. While transgression represents an unusual form in the first movement, it will eventually prevail by the third movement and become the new order when it's revealed that the work as a whole has a clear concerto form as outlined in Table 3.



Example 1: Mm. 1–5, Theme *x*, Solo Horn

Tonality

When the initial *x* theme is introduced at the beginning of the piece, it is set in the home key of E \flat major. This is, therefore, associated with the side of order – the establishment. The first two formal sections of the music are firmly established in this key signature. By the end of A', the key begins to shift. Throughout the movement, as transgression gains in standing, the key moves further away from home, and by the end of the movement, the dominant key of B \flat major has been established. As previously mentioned, motion to the dominant key can be thought of as

“active” and “looking toward the future.” This parallels the narrative trajectory of transgression attempting to overthrow the established order. If these two forces can have motivations attached to them, perhaps transgression is dissatisfied with the current order (the way things have been) and, in considering the future, believes that it would have more success if it were to become a new order instead. In this way, the dominant key of B \flat major is not only indicative of the narrative arc moving in a forward direction, but is in fact attached to transgression as one of its defining elements.

Topic

The initial A section/refrain in the first movement has a march/military topic. The dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm is the main signifier of this characterization (indicated by red brackets in Ex. 1), but it is also indicated through the pedantic and repetitive character heard in the music. The transgressive triplets that emerge (indicated by blue brackets in Ex. 2) are more associated with a fanfare topic that has some overlap with a march or military topic. Therefore, these fanfare interruptions do not sound that distinct from the march rhythms that surround it until later on in the movement when they become the dominant rhythm and are then juxtaposed with the dotted-eighth sixteenths. When the music shifts to showcase the solo horn in the episodes between refrains (sections B and C', for instance), the music is presented in a contrasting singing style that can be thought of more as “plot filler” to our primary narrative struggle. Section C'' takes on a somewhat brilliant style (indicated by blue brackets in Ex. 5), while still containing some elements of fanfare.

Rhythm

The most direct opposition is between the dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm (unmarked) and the triplet rhythm (marked). For the rest of this document, order will be represented by red brackets and transgression in blue brackets. This is the primary differentiating feature between iterations of the *x* theme in its development between the first and third movements. The rhythms are at odds with each other in their musical signification: the dotted-eighth sixteenth equaling a beat subdivided into four even sixteenth notes and the triplet equaling a beat subdivided into three even eighth notes. The dotted-eighth sixteenth tends to sound more rigid and “square” in performance practice, while the triplet tends to have a more relaxed and “lilting” feel.

The dotted-eighth sixteenth figure is heard from the outset of the work. It is the primary rhythm of the solo horn’s *x* theme that is immediately echoed by the orchestra. This rhythm is particularly saturated in section A: 19 of the 28 (about 70%) measures contain at least one dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm. The triplet rhythm that transgresses against it first emerges in m. 18 as an ascending fanfare and is also repeated in m. 21 (Ex. 2, blue brackets). In m. 18, the fanfare functions as an interruption of the *x* theme, indicated by a pedantic quarter note sequence that follows it. While both rhythms are equally juxtaposed with a call and response gesture in mm. 25–26 (Ex. 2), order is still ascendant in its overall rhythmic saturation. Strauss would later use this same rhythmic integration in the very opening of his tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*. This expansive melody played by horns and celli is an example of the two rhythms working together, both a part of the ordered hierarchy (Ex. 3). In the *Horn Concerto No. 1*, however, the rhythms are placed in opposition to each other, based on the way they interact and change throughout the work.

Example 2: Mm. 19–28, Orchestra (Piano Reduction by R. Strauss)

Example 2: Mm. 19–28, Orchestra (Piano Reduction by R. Strauss)

Horn 1

Example 3: Mm. 1–4, *Ein Heldenleben*

The following A' section begins by reconfirming the order's dominance with a repeat of the dotted-eighth sixteenth motive featured in section A. In this section, the first appearance of the triplet transgression in m. 68 proves again to be disruptive. While the previous transgressive rhythm was merely followed by ponderous chords from the order-imposing hierarchy, this transgression is met with a change in key, ultimately pivoting to the mediant key of G minor (Ex. 5). Moreover, the frequency of the dotted-eighth sixteenth increases in the ensuing measures as order over-corrects to confirm its supremacy (mm.72–75).

Eb: iii V⁷
 I — vi — g: iv — iiø⁷ V⁷

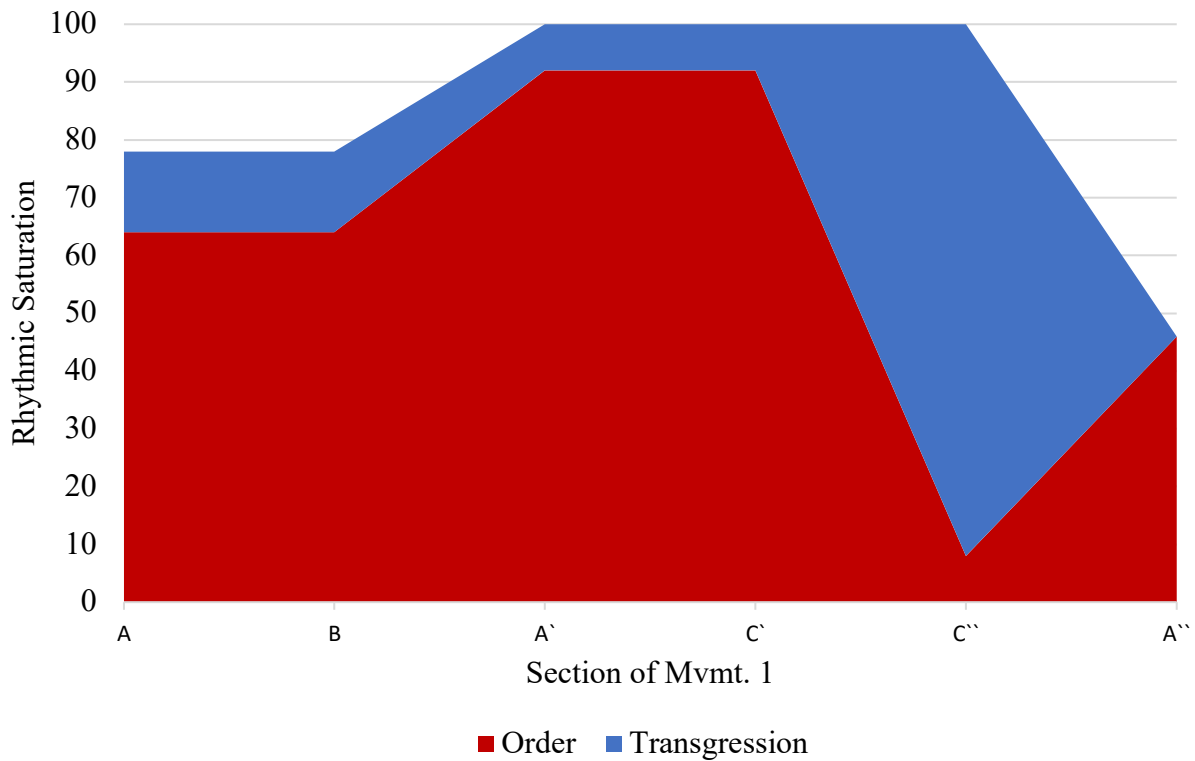
Example 4: Mm. 64–75, Orchestra (Piano Reduction)

Other than a dotted-eighth sixteenth in the solo horn line in m. 76, the following section, C', does not feature either rhythm. At C'', however, both the solo horn and orchestra contain ascending triplet fragments that are arpeggiated like the fanfares from the previous A sections (Ex. 6). This section is highly saturated with triplet figures, representing transgression's increasing challenge against the established order. Following another set of repeated quarter notes in horn and orchestra, order makes a final stand in m. 125 by repeating the melody from C', containing a dotted rhythm (Ex. 7). The transgressive triplet is too well established, however, and returns swiftly in m. 129 to shepherd the music into the final A'' section. Featuring a preview of the third movement, the orchestra continues developing the melodic material from C'', which in turn was a modified fragment of the *x* theme. Triplet and dotted-eighth sixteenth figures alternate from m. 147 to the end of the movement, leading *attaca* into the second movement.

Example 5: Mm. 108–115, Solo Horn and Orchestra (Piano Reduction)

The graph below (Table 5) shows the overall rhythmic journey in the first movement. It is clear that order (in red) starts as the dominant rhythm and even increases in frequency after the initial transgressions. Transgression (in blue) is eventually able to gain a foothold in the conflict by section C''. By the end of the movement the two rhythms are evenly divided, neither having successfully emerged over the other.

Table 5: Rhythmic Saturation of Order and Transgression, Mvmt. 1



CHAPTER 4
MOVEMENT TWO

Form

Table 6: Formal Diagram of Movement Two

Theme:	A	B	A'
Key: Relative to tonic:	ab iv	E – Ab # I – IV	ab iv
Measure #:	164	218	253

The second movement, in the minor subdominant key, looks to the past and has a very clearly defined ternary form. This is in contrast to the unclear form that was highly prevalent in movement one and associated with transgression. It is therefore expressed as an element of order, the only remnant of order that will actually be retained in this movement.

Tonality

This movement sounds self-contained in its overall tonal scope, beginning and ending in the same key of Ab minor. As previously noted, a shift to the subdominant has typically been connected with a look into the past in musical narrative. In this instance, the shift is not only to

the subdominant, but the parallel minor mode of the subdominant. This might imply that the look into the past has a melancholic or despondent characterization.

The B section of the second movement can be thought of as the structural center of the entire piece. While the overall arc of the concerto has E \flat major as tonic, this section features a tonal shift to E major, a key that is one half step higher and almost completely opposite of E \flat major on the circle of fifths. This shift from the previous A \flat minor is accomplished by a wonderfully smooth modulation using a neo-Riemannian leading-tone exchange (Ex. 6). When combined with the heroic-sounding melody that motivically references the melody from section B of the first movement, this can be interpreted as musically expressing an altered form of the established order. Put another way, this is akin to a shift in a story to an alternate universe where the main character sees their life or self as they might have been under different circumstances, such as in the Charles Dickens' novel *A Christmas Carol*. This of sections A, B, and A' as the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future, respectively.

Example 6: Mm. 217–219, Solo Horn and Orchestra (Piano Reduction)

Topic

The second movement begins and ends with a slow, sarabande-like dance that has a high style and sounds both lamenting and possibly *religioso*. This is distinctly different from the march topic of the first movement and further cements the music as being far removed from order. The middle of this movement features a shift to a heroic style, signaling a moment of euphoria and clarity for the protagonist in their look toward the past. The melody in section B also begins with the same intervallic contour as the melody in section B of the first movement. While the section B melody from movement one is played much more lyrically and in a *cantabile* style, the second movement B section melody sounds more bold and heroic because of its accents and articulations, having more in common with the musical character of the opening horn fanfare of the piece. As the movement seems like it is coming to a close, there is a final leap up to a high-written G \flat in the solo horn to reference the heroic theme from the B section, but it ends as soon as it begins and stands simply as a final glance back at what could have been.

Rhythm

The second movement emerges seamlessly from the first by continuing with the same musical material from the first three beats of the last two measures of movement one and letting the fourth beat simply fall away in movement two (Ex. 7). While the tempo of the “beat” stays the same, the valuation of the beat shifts from a quarter note to an eighth. In practical terms for this opposition, it means that the ascending triplet figure on beat two continues unimpeded, but the dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm from beat four simply disappears during the move to 3/8 time. This movement does not feature the rhythmic opposition from the first, but as a continuation of movement one, it is completely filled with triplets, emphasizing transgression. This is

particularly notable because 3/8 is an inherently simple meter, so Strauss has to go out of his way to consistently add triplet sixteenths within the eighth note beat to make it sound like a compound meter.²⁷

Movement Two

Example 7: Mm. 162–165, Orchestra (Piano Reduction)

²⁷ While there are technically “dotted-eighth sixteenth” rhythms in this movement, the 3/8 meter makes it so that the equivalent rhythm needed to sound the same as the figure from movement one would be a “dotted-sixteenth thirty-second,” since the big beat has been halved in value.

CHAPTER 5
MOVEMENT THREE

Form

Table 7: Formal Diagram of Movement Three

Theme:	Trans.	A	B	A'	B'	A''	Coda
Key:	E \flat I	E \flat I	B \flat V	E \flat I	A \flat – E – a \flat IV – #I – iv	E \flat I	E \flat I
Measure #:	277	285	321	405	421	474	522

The third movement is a more concise and clarified version of the first movement as a 5-part rondo. It also better resembles a traditional rondo in the tonal areas for each episode and the use of melodic material. This clearer form was previously indicative of order in the first movement, but due to the overriding unclear form of transgression, not heard for very long. The formal clarity throughout this third movement is associated with the newly established order that, as will be seen below and in Table 7, has been blended with previously transgressive elements.

Tonality

This movement begins and ends in E \flat major, bringing closure to the movement and the piece. Since transgression has now become order, E \flat major is now an element of the new order and is the only element of the old order to remain. While not directly meaningful to the narrative journey, it is interesting to note that within the third movement, Strauss moves through the same sequence of keys from movements one and two in the B sections of movement three.

Topic

The shift into the third movement reorients the listener to the march/military topic from movement one and also adds a sense of foreboding with a descending, chromatic bass line. However, after the dotted-eighth sixteenth figure disappears, the music begins a shift toward a brilliant/fanfare style that signals a victory by transgression and the establishment of a new order by combining the new topics with the familiar *x* theme.

Rhythm

The third movement begins where the first movement left off, back in 4/4 time, but now pivoting back to E \flat major. Rhythmically, it continues the back and forth between the triplet and dotted-eighth sixteenth figures found at the end of movement one (Ex. 8, red vs. blue brackets). By the last two bars of this introduction, it becomes clear that the triplet transgressor has taken over as the primary rhythm and the dotted-eighth sixteenth falls away entirely in m. 283 (Ex. 8).

Example 8: Mm. 277–284, Orchestra (Piano Reduction)

The melody introduced in the solo horn line in m. 285 is a variation of the initial *x* theme from movement one. The *x* theme takes off as a pickup into the third movement, now in 6/8 time, an inherently compound meter (Ex. 9). Note the transformation of the red bracket of movement one to the purple bracket (red + blue) of movement three, representing the fusion of the elements of order and transgression contained in the third movement version of theme *x*. The triplet rhythm is unchallenged for the first few episodes of the movement.

Movement One

Movement Three

Example 9: Mm. 1-5, Mm. 284–288, Theme *x*, Solo Horn

In m. 405 there is an abrupt, momentum-slowng callback to the dotted-eighth sixteenth version of the *x* theme and a shift back to 4/4 time that is an exact fragment of the very first fanfare from the solo horn in the first movement (Ex. 10)²⁸. The tempo slows and the final measure of this phrase is held briefly by a fermata in the horn and orchestra, as if taking a moment to remember what used to be. Without transition, the orchestra restarts the energetic 6/8 time with a continuation of the *x* theme in the newly established order. The dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm is never heard from again and the piece closes in a flourish of triplets.

Example 10: Mm. 404–407, Solo Horn and Orchestra (Piano Reduction)

²⁸ The labeling of order and transgression in Ex. 10 is reflective of their oppositional relationship in movement one. By the third movement, the triplet is no longer transgressive and has become a part of the ordered hierarchy.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Composer as Protagonist

A detailed narrative (featuring elements such as locations and characters) is not necessary when discussing a musical narrative, but it can be an illuminating exploration and may provide the listener with more connections between abstract musical concepts. While nothing about this work overtly suggests that Richard Strauss wrote this work with himself or any protagonist in mind, there are some parallels between its narrative and Strauss's personal biography. There is both speculation and evidence of his having inserted himself into two of his tone poems written about 15–20 years after this concerto. The first autobiographical interpretation comes from *Ein Heldenleben*, even though Strauss claimed not to be the “hero” in the music. The second piece is *Symphonia Domestica*, which Strauss deliberately wrote to musically depict the many elements of his life at that time. While Strauss's *Horn Concerto No. 1* has no claim of being autobiographical or about a hero, heroic topics are heard throughout, and Strauss himself said he used horns to represent heroism.²⁹ For these reasons, it seems acceptable to hypothesize a version of this narrative with young Richard as the hero of his own journey.

As was briefly touched on in the biographical section of Chapter 1, Richard was raised in a musically conservative household. This was led by his father, Franz Strauss, a notable horn player at the time. The primary musical shift in Strauss's late teenage years was the eventual

²⁹ Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, Vol. 1 (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1962), 21.

acceptance of the music of Richard Wagner. Richard Strauss had firsthand exposure to Wagner's music as Franz was the principal horn player for Wagner's opera orchestra. The primary musical influencers in Strauss's life after his father were Hans von Bülow and Alexander Ritter.³⁰ Through their guidance and his correspondences with other contemporary composers, he began to expand his musical horizons. Wagner's music was eventually not only valued, but admired and influential for Strauss's own compositional techniques. Strauss had also recently started attending a university (as opposed to a music conservatory) and was thus given more personal freedom. It is in this developmental context and time period that Strauss wrote the *Horn Concerto No. 1*, and this is the basis for the biographical interpretation of the musical narrative it contains.

In the first movement, the contemporary version of Strauss is associated with an order-imposing hierarchy: the rigid, march-like rhythms, the defined tonal center of Eb major (same as Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3* "Eroica"), and a clear formal structure. This last quality indicates that Strauss may be questioning certain elements of his life or future. The ascending triplet fanfare stands out as a marked element from the established order and could perhaps be an external or internal transgressive force that is trying to be expressed. As the music shifts more toward the future (dominant key), transgression becomes undeniable and Strauss's order is briefly thrown aside. By the end of the movement, both order and transgression are equal in their influence on Strauss and he seems unsure of which path to follow. This leads to a look inward, back to this past, in the second movement.

In movement two, Strauss recalls memories about his past and reflects on the powerful influence his father had on his musical upbringing. He has feelings of loss at the conservative

³⁰ Bryan Gilliam. *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 50.

worldview that he readily embraced, and he imagines an alternate version of his life (section B) where more cutting-edge composers like Liszt and Wagner are valued along with the classics like Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. While the movement finishes with a reminder of the reality that was his life, there is a brief moment where Strauss recalls his alternate past and, as will be seen in the next movement, makes a decision about how to shape his future.

In movement three, Strauss returns to his present, where there was previously a back-and-forth battle for dominance between order and transgression. It is revealed quickly, however, that Strauss has decided to embrace a future where he allows himself to engage in many different kinds of music and expand his horizons (represented by the fusion of elements in the *x* theme). There is a moment near the end of the movement where he has a moment of quiet reflection on his old life, perhaps wondering if he made the right choice. Almost immediately, however, he continues on with his new journey, never to look back again. It is important to remember that Strauss (order) is still the same hero from the beginning of the story. Through a musical transformation, an order-imposing hierarchy is challenged by transgression and is ultimately synthesized into a new order.

Having a narrative outline is not necessary to enjoy or appreciate this Strauss concerto. This framework simply serves to enhance the listener's experience and the reader's understanding of the musical journey. This narrative study of Richard Strauss *Horn Concerto No. 1* can serve as a starting point for the application of this analysis to his other compositions, even programmatic ones. With Strauss's penchant for referencing his own music in other works, there lies the potential to discover narrative relationships not only within other works, but amongst them.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Discursive strategy: A category of narrative trajectories defined through a similarity of actantial organization.³¹

Markedness: The asymmetrical valuation of an opposition (in musical structure, language, culture). For musical meaning, markedness of structural oppositions correlates with markedness of (expressive or other) oppositions among cultural units.³²

Oppositions: Musical elements that are heard in contrast to each other.³³

Order-imposing hierarchy: A hierarchical figure defined by unmarked features in a musical structure that is transgressed against.³⁴

Paradigmatic: This refers to the use of a certain feature over another, e.g. loud instead of soft.³⁵

Rank: The relative value of the distinctive features of a semantic unit in relation to other units within the signifying system.³⁶

Syntagmatic: This refers to the arrangement of musical units in a particular order.³⁷

Synthesis: This describes a transvaluation wherein previously oppositional elements of the hierarchy are combined to form a new order, particularly when accompanied by returning thematic material.³⁸

Topic: From its contacts with worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of the lower classes, music in the early 18th century developed a thesaurus of characteristic figures, which formed a rich legacy for classic composers. Some of

³¹ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 229.

³² Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) 291-92.

³³ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 45-6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 229.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 230.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

these figures were associated with various feelings and affections; others had a picturesque flavor. They are designated here as topics – subject for musical discourse.³⁹

Transgression: Marked features that oppose an ordered hierarchy.⁴⁰

Transvaluation: A rule-like semiosis is which reevaluates the perceived, imagined, or conceived markedness and rank relations of a referent as delimited by the rank and markedness relations of the system of its signans and the teleology of the sign user.⁴¹

³⁹ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 9.

⁴⁰ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 230.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 231.

APPENDIX B
LECTURE RECITAL SCRIPT

Slide – Title

Richard Strauss's *Horn Concerto No. 1, Op. 11* is one of the most prominent works in the horn repertoire. However, compared to Strauss's tone poems and operas, it has only been given a cursory overview in scholarly writings about his works. This is most likely due to its placement in his compositional timeline, having been written about five years before the beginning of his tone poem output, which signaled his arrival as a composer with a unique voice.

This lecture recital will feature a variety of analyses, with the more familiar being musicological, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, formal, etc. These strategies will play a secondary and more supportive role to the primary type of analysis that is less familiar, maybe even to many trained musicians: narrative analysis. While the “narrative” that will emerge from this concerto is similar to what one would expect from a story in a book or on screen, it is treated slightly differently in a musical setting. **Click.**

Slide – Narrative in Music

Click. The connotation of the word “narrative” evokes ideas of plot, characters, settings, agency, etc. that one would associate more commonly with media such as film, television, and literature. **Click.** The specific narrative strategy that will be employed comes from the work of music theorist Byron Almén. In the world of Western art music, the concept of narrative is typically only attached to works that have a given programmatic element. Music that lacks an

established programmatic element, “absolute” music, is traditionally not thought of in narratological terms. **Click.** The goal of this narrative analysis is not to create a unique story aligned with the music (à la the Disney movie *Fantasia*), but rather to identify elements of the music that inherently, through their interactions, follow a common narrative archetype. Before diving into a narrative analysis of the concerto, a few terms need to be defined and understood: *topic, markedness, rank, and transvaluation.* **Click.**

Slide – Topic

Click. Leonard Ratner’s original description of topic gives a strong sense of the concept:

From its contacts with worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of the lower classes, music in the early 18th century developed a thesaurus of characteristic figures, which formed a rich legacy for classic composers. Some of these figures were associated with various feelings and affections; others had a picturesque flavor. They are designated here as topics – subject for musical discourse.

Click. A more specific example of a topic would be associating a waltz with music that has a triple meter and strongly emphasizes the downbeat. **Click.** Similarly, as the horn was historically used during actual hunts, numerous composers have used hunting calls (particularly with horns) to evoke a hunt topic. **Click.**

Slide – Hunting Calls

On the screen are a variety of actual, historical melodies used during the hunt as a form of communication across long distances. For example, this first tune “La Vue” signals to the other people involved that a hunter has caught sight of the animal being hunted. **Click. Click.**

Slide – Markedness

Click. Markedness emerges from differences between characteristics of sound that can be expressed as oppositions. **Click.** A “marked” unit is defined by its **Click.** less frequent occurrence, **Click.** narrower meaning, **Click.** and deviation from the unmarked norm.

Slide – Markedness Examples

Click. For example, a “major” (unmarked) tonality versus a “minor” (marked) tonality in the Classical period correlates with the opposition of “non-tragic” (unmarked) versus “tragic” (marked). Other examples would be unmarked consonance vs marked dissonance and unmarked diatonic music to marked chromatic music.

Slide – Rank

While markedness evaluates a musical unit compared to its unmarked counterpart, **Click.** rank is a way of determining which of the marked features would be considered **Click.** the most dominant or culturally valued when compared to other surrounding marked features. **Click.** From Almén, rank “assigns relative value to the distinctive features in a cultural unit...each unit exists in a particular hierarchical position.” **Click.**

Slide – Transvaluation

Musical narrative is determined by tracing the “changes in hierarchical patterns over time,” eschewing specificity toward character or setting. **Click.** It is the rising and falling of markedness and rank relations that determines a narrative trajectory. James Jakób Liszka established a foundation for defining narrative: it “takes a certain set of culturally meaningful differences and *transvalues* them by means of a sequence of action.” **Click.** This transvaluation is the defining factor of the narrative journey and allows an archetype to be associated with it. **Click.**

Slide – Narrative Archetypes (includes Table 1)

Click. Narrative archetypes are based on the opposition between an order-imposing hierarchy and its transgression. From Almén’s work, a listener can determine a narrative

archetype in music through the interaction between the oppositions of order/transgression and victory/defeat. **Click.** The four narrative archetypes are Romance, Tragedy, Irony, and Comedy.

Typically, unmarked elements are those that are present at the outset of a piece of music (such as the starting tonality, rhythm, topic, harmony, etc.) and are associated with order. Musical traits heard in opposition to these (marked) are then associated with transgression. Once these characteristics are associated with particular agents (order and transgressions), they are then combined with the actions they perform. The determination of the listener's sympathy (siding with either order or transgression) has to do with the cultural rank value of the musical oppositions that are established. The desire of the listener to hear order or transgression as having a higher cultural value determines whether the narrative is heard as a victory or a defeat of one over another.

Slide - Composer and Work Background

Before we dive into the narrative analysis, let me give you some context for the writing of this piece. **Click.** Richard Strauss wrote his *Horn Concerto No. 1, Op. 11* in 1883, at the age of 19. **Click.** Strauss was raised in a musically conservative household: “the first decade of Strauss's endeavors as a composer was a period of filial loyalty, expressed through his devotion to his father's beloved Austro-Germanic triumvirate...Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven (but not late Beethoven!).” **Click.** There are indications, however, that the maturing Strauss was starting to chafe against these old-fashioned styles and find his own voice.

Slide – Concerto Form

Click. The three movements of this concerto align with the typical Classical-era scheme of fast–slow–fast. **Click.** Formally, however, the first movement diverges quite a bit from the traditional concerto form, having a more rhapsodic flow. **Click.** Moreover, the piece as a whole

is played *attaca*, forming one large, continuous work, rather than three distinct movements. These changes came primarily from his shifting views on the music that inspired him, aligning with the Wagnerian school in Germany and adopting “Lisztian methods under the influence of Alexander Ritter.” When placing this first of two horn concerti in Strauss’s *oeuvre*, this work highlights the beginning of growth in his musical ideas and compositional techniques:

In the late 1880s, Strauss clearly underwent a transformation (his self-proclaimed “conversions”), one that is usually located in the “symphonic fantasy” *Aus Italien*, Op. 16 (1886). Still, the change was gradual and not total: Strauss never broke completely with his musical pasts, as witnessed by continuities in his technique, style, and aesthetics from the 1870s through the 1880s and beyond...softening the divide between the young, “absolutist” composer and the programmatic one of the breakout tone poems.

While the horn concerto was written without an overt or even implied programmatic element, it lends itself well to narrative interpretation, as will be demonstrated in this document. **Click.**

Slide – Oppositions (Table 2)

When pursuing a narrative trajectory in a piece of absolute music, the first step is to simply listen to the piece and establish a “gut feeling” as to which of the four narrative archetypes best fits the music. **Click.** The archetype is determined via the combination and interaction of two factors: victory/defeat and order/transgression. Determining victory or defeat, and victor and vanquished, is accomplished by first establishing musical oppositions based on marked and unmarked features. For Strauss’s *Horn Concerto No.1*, the primary oppositions between order and transgression are rhythmic (a dotted-eighth sixteenth figure vs. a triplet figure), tonal (tonic key vs. other keys, primarily the dominant and minor subdominant), formal (formal clarity vs. formal flaws), and topical (march/war topic vs a fanfare/hunt topic). **Click.**

Slide – Overarching Form (Table 3) with Time

The typical Classical-era concerto contained three movements in a fast–slow–fast arrangement. Richard Strauss composed the *Concerto No. 1 for Horn and Orchestra* in this framework, with one major change: the first movement largely deviates from its typical form.

Click. The tonal path of a first movement concerto form typically follows the journey of an established home key (tonic) through a tonal exploration into either closely or distantly related keys. The journey is concluded when the home key is reestablished and fully confirmed by the end of the piece. As can be seen in the chart above, the return to tonic does not occur at the end of the first movement. The key relationship in this first movement is more akin to the exposition typical of a first movement. Moreover, the final confirmation of tonic does not occur until the end of the third movement. It is, therefore, more accurate to think of the whole work as having a large, single-movement concerto form. Movements one and three also share a connecting melodic thread (the B theme that we’ll listen to later) akin to the relationship between the exposition and recapitulation in a first movement form.

Even though the piece begins and ends in the same key, the initial E \flat and ending E \flat are heard in different contexts. While the confirmation of E \flat major in the third movement signals a resolution of the overall tonal journey, it comes with a fundamental change in rhythm, meter, form, and topic. If comparing this to the plot of a story from literature or visual media, this might be a similar idea to a protagonist going through some major change in the middle of the movie that forever transforms who they are, even if, on the surface, they are still the same.

There are a few key areas that stand in opposition to the tonic home key. The primary transgressors are the dominant and the minor subdominant. The music theorist Michael Klein discusses how key areas can be interpreted as representing a temporal spectrum in music. If we establish the tonic as being the present, he proposes that a shift to a dominant key (the end of

movement one) is looking toward the future, while a shift to the subdominant (movement two) is looking toward the past or even a longed-for state. Similarly, Charles Rosen described how a dominant key can be heard as active, while a subdominant key can be heard as passive. **Click.**

Slide – Movement One Form Diagram (Table 4)

Click. The pseudo-rondo form of the first movement is an indicator of the battle waging between order and transgression. In this instance, order is represented by a clear form.

Transgression, then, is represented by an unclear form, attempting to undermine the ordered hierarchy.

The beginning of the piece is set in the home key of E \flat major. This is, therefore, associated with the side of order – think the establishment. The first two formal sections of the music are firmly established in this key signature. By the end of A', the key begins to shift away from tonic. Throughout the movement, as transgression gains in standing, the key moves further away from home, and by the end of the movement, the dominant key of B \flat major has been established. As previously mentioned, motion to the dominant key can be thought of as “active” and “looking toward the future.” This parallels the narrative trajectory of transgression attempting to overthrow the established order. If these two forces can have motivations attached to them, perhaps transgression is dissatisfied with the current order (the way things have been) and, in considering the future, believes that it would have more success if it were to become the order instead. **Click.**

Slide – Topic

For each musical example on the screen moving forward, elements that are surrounded by red parentheses are associated and those associated with transgression are associated with blue.

The initial A section/refrain in the first movement has an overall march/military topic. The dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm is the main signifier of this characterization, but it is also indicated through the pedantic and repetitive character heard in the music. The transgressive triplet figure that emerges at the end of this example are more associated with a fanfare or hunt topic. When the music shifts to showcase the solo horn in the episodes between refrains (sections B and C¹, for instance), the music is presented in a contrasting singing style that can be thought of more as “plot filler” to our primary narrative struggle. Let’s listen to the first half of section A of movement one. **Click. Click.**

Slide – Rhythm

The most direct opposition in this piece is between the dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm (unmarked) and the triplet rhythm (marked). The rhythms are at odds with each other in their musical signification: the dotted-eighth sixteenth equaling a beat subdivided into four even sixteenth notes and the triplet equaling a beat subdivided into three even eighth notes. The dotted-eighth sixteenth tends to sound more rigid and “square” in performance practice, while the triplet tends to have a more relaxed and “lilting” feel.

The dotted-eighth sixteenth figure is heard from the outset of the work. It is the primary rhythm of the solo horn’s opening theme that is immediately echoed by the orchestra. This rhythm is particularly saturated in section A: about 70% measures contain at least one dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm. The triplet rhythms that emerge in the second half of the A section to challenge order are indicated in blue. Let’s listen to the rhythmic interplay between order and transgression. **Click. Click.**

Slide – A¹

The following A` section begins by reconfirming order's dominance with a repeat of the dotted-eighth sixteenth motive featured in section A. In this section, the first appearance of the triplet transgression in m. 68 proves again to be disruptive. This instance of transgression seems to trigger even more of a change in the music, beginning a modulation to G minor. Let's listen to transgression gain more of a foothold in this section. **Click. Click.**

Slide – C^{II}

At C^{II} both the solo horn and orchestra contain ascending triplet fanfares that are a clear link to the previous A sections (Ex. 6). This section is highly saturated with triplet figures, representing transgression's increasing challenge against the established order. **Click. Click.**

Slide – Graph (Table 5)

The graph on the screen shows the overall rhythmic journey in the first movement. It is clear that order (in red) starts as the dominant rhythm and even increases in frequency after the initial transgressions. Transgression (blue) is eventually able to gain a foothold in the conflict by section C^{II}. However, by the end of the movement, the two rhythms are evenly divided, neither having successfully emerged over the other. **Click.**

Slide – Movement Two Form Diagram (Table 6)

Click. The second movement has a very clearly defined ternary form. While this is an element of order, everything else in the movement is attached to transgression.

This movement is self-contained in its overall tonal scope, beginning and ending in the same key of a \flat minor. As previously noted, a shift to the subdominant has typically been connected with a look into the past in musical narrative. In this instance, the shift is not only to the subdominant, but the parallel minor mode of the subdominant. This might imply that the look into the past has a melancholic or despondent characterization. **Click.**

Slide - Topic

The melody in section B begins with the same intervallic contour as the melody in section B of the first movement. While the section B melody from movement one is played much more lyrically and in a *cantabile* style, the second movement B section melody sounds more bold and heroic because of its accents and articulations, having more in common with the musical character of the opening fanfare of the piece. In our narrative, this could perhaps be a vision of the transformed version of order from the first movement. Let's listen and compare the two themes. **Click.**

Slide – Rhythm (musical example)

The second movement emerges seamlessly from the first by continuing with the same musical material from the first three beats of the last two measures of movement one and letting the fourth beat simply fall away in movement two. **Click.** While the tempo of the “beat” stays the same, the valuation of the beat shifts from a quarter note to an eighth. In practical terms for this opposition, it means that the ascending triplet figure on beat two continues unimpeded, but the dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm from beat four simply disappears during the move to 3/8 time. This movement does not feature the rhythmic opposition from the first, but as a continuation of movement one, it is completely filled with triplets, emphasizing transgression. **Click.**

Slide – Movement Three Form Diagram (Table 7)

The third movement is a more concise and clarified version of the first movement as a 5-part rondo. It also better resembles a traditional rondo in the tonal areas for each episode and the use of melodic material. This clearer form is associated with the newly established order.

This movement also begins and ends in E_b major, bringing closure to both the movement and the piece. Since transgression has now become order, E_b major is now an element of the new

order and is the only element of the old order to remain. While not directly meaningful to the narrative journey, it is interesting to note that within the third movement, Strauss revisits the same sequence of keys from movements one and two in both of the B sections of movement three. **Click.**

Slide – Topic

The shift back into the third movement reorients the listener to the march/military topic from movement. However, after the dotted-eighth sixteenth disappears (where the big blue parantheses takes over on the second line), the music begins a shift toward a brilliant/fanfare topic that signals a victory by transgression and the establishment of a new order by combining the new topics with the opening theme in the horn. **Click. Click.**

Slide – Rhythm (opening of movement)

The melody introduced in the beginning of movement three by the solo horn is a retooling of the very opening theme from movement one. Let's listen to how Strauss transforms this theme between movements. The new theme takes off as a pickup into the third movement, now in 6/8 time. The formerly transgressive triplet figure is unchallenged for the first few episodes of the movement. **Click.**

Slide – Recalling the Past

In m. 405 there is an abrupt, momentum-slowng callback to the dotted-eighth sixteenth version of the theme we just heard and a shift back to 4/4 time that is an exact fragment of the old version. The tempo slows and the final measure of this phrase is held briefly by a fermata in the horn and orchestra, as if taking a moment to remember what used to be. Without transition, the orchestra restarts the energetic 6/8 time with a continuation of the new version of the theme

in the newly established order. The dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythm is never heard from again and the piece closes in a flourish of triplets. **Click. Click.**

Slide – Conclusion

Click. After following the journey of this piece of music, we can determine that this follows a comedic narrative archetype. **Click.** As a reminder, this is the archetype wherein transgression is victorious over order. **Click.** In the example of a comedic narrative, after transgression triumphs over order, it often, in turn, becomes the new order. We can see this clearly in the third movement with the combination of the previously “transgressive” triplets being fused with the theme that was once associated with the dotted-eighth sixteenth and the old order.

Slide – Composer as Protagonist

A defined narrative (featuring elements such as locations and characters) is not necessary when discussing a musical narrative, but it can be an illuminating exploration and may provide the listener with more connections between abstract musical concepts. While nothing about this work overtly suggests that Richard Strauss wrote this work with himself or any protagonist in mind, there are some parallels between its narrative and Strauss’s personal biography. There is both speculation and evidence of his having inserted himself into two of his tone poems written about 15–20 years after this concerto. The first autobiographical interpretation comes from *Ein Heldenleben*, even though Strauss claimed not to be the “hero” in the music. The second piece is *Symphonia Domestica*, which Strauss deliberately wrote to musically depict the many elements of his life at that time. While Strauss’s *Horn Concerto No. 1* has no claim of being autobiographical or about a hero, heroic topics are heard throughout, and Strauss himself said he

used horns to represent heroism. For these reasons, it seems acceptable to hypothesize a version of this narrative with young Richard as the hero of his own journey.

If you recall, young Richard was raised in a musically conservative household. This was led by his father, Franz Strauss, a notable horn player of the time. The primary musical shift in Strauss's late teenage years was the eventual acceptance of the music of Richard Wagner. This emerged through the guidance of mentors and his correspondences with contemporary composers. It is in this developmental context and time period that Strauss wrote the *Horn Concerto No. 1*, and this is the basis for the biographical interpretation of the musical narrative it contains.

In the first movement, the contemporary version of Strauss is associated with an order-imposing hierarchy: the rigid, march-like rhythms, the defined tonal center of Eb major (same as Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3* "Eroica"), and a clear formal structure. The ascending triplet fanfare stands out as a marked element from the established order and could perhaps be an external or internal transgressive force that is trying to be expressed. As the music shifts more toward the future (dominant key), transgression becomes undeniable and Strauss's order is briefly thrown aside. By the end of the movement, both order and transgression are equal in their influence on Strauss and he seems unsure of which path to follow. This leads to a look inward, back to this past, in the second movement.

In movement two, Strauss recalls memories about his past and reflects on the powerful influence his father had on his musical upbringing. He has feelings of loss at the conservative worldview that he readily embraced, and he imagines an alternate version of his life (section B) where more cutting-edge composers like Liszt and Wagner are valued along with the classics like Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. While the movement finishes with a reminder of the

reality that was his life, there is a brief moment where Strauss recalls his alternate past and, as will be seen in the next movement, makes a decision about how to shape his future.

In movement three, Strauss returns to his present, where there was previously a back-and-forth battle for dominance between order and transgression. It is revealed quickly, however, that Strauss has decided to embrace a future where he allows himself to engage in many different kinds of music and expand his horizons. There is a moment near the end of the movement where he has a moment of quiet reflection on his old life, perhaps wondering if he made the right choice. Almost immediately, however, he continues on with his new journey, never to look back again.

It is important to remember that Strauss (order) is still the same hero from the beginning of the story. Through a musical metamorphosis, an order-imposing hierarchy is challenged by transgression and is ultimately synthesized into a new order. Having a narrative outline is not necessary to enjoy or appreciate this Strauss concerto. This framework simply serves to enhance the listener's experience and the reader's understanding of the musical journey. **Click.**

Slide – Thank you

Thank you for engaging in this lecture on narrative in this piece of music. We will now perform it for you in its entirety with the hope that you may listen to it with new ears and a stronger sense of musical understanding. There will be an opportunity for questions after the performance. **Click.**

Slide – Form Chart