

# Multi-Strand Musical Narratives: An Introduction

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ABSTRACT: Multiplot forms as described by Garrett (1980) provide a promising route of approach for analysts addressing complex musical works. Although originally developed from a study of Victorian fiction, these forms can also illuminate music, particularly when paired with Booker's (2006) list of seven basic plot types. In this article, I present a model analysis of multiplot musical narrative through an analysis of the finale of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat major, op. 110, as well as two other Beethoven works: the "Cavatina" from the String Quartet in B-flat major, op. 130, and the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony.

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[1.1] The finale of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat major, op. 110, serves as a microcosm of the composer's late style: it includes an idiosyncratic form, marked disjunctions between broad swaths of stylistically dissimilar material, and powerful emotionality.<sup>(1)</sup> These features both invite and resist interpretation, drawing analysts in while refusing to conform neatly to Classical-period expectations. Narrative analysis provides a means of approach to this movement as it allows analysts to tie together multiple formal, structural, and expressive elements—including the recurring shifts from lyric arioso to energetic fugue—to create a reading that reflects (or even creates) logical connections at the same time it acknowledges the presence of disjunction.<sup>(2)</sup> While disjunctions are a fundamental feature of both Beethoven's late music as a whole and the op. 110 finale in particular, disjunctions in this finale are balanced by repetition—the two main formal sections are stylistically dissimilar, yet each is heard twice in the course of the finale. Repetition is just as crucial to the movement's interpretation as the disjunctions that occur between the sections, and any analyst wishing to address this movement must grapple with both.

[1.2] In literature and film featuring significant disjunctions (such as the introduction of new characters or settings), reader-listeners typically interpret the disjunction as a shift between narrative strands. For instance, we can imagine a film with two broad plotlines, each taking place in a different physical location. The filmmaker will likely toggle between the locations, presenting a bit of each story at a time. The audience knows that a shift in location signals a shift in story and does not easily become disoriented. Audiences experience the story in time but privilege out-of-

time connections, relying on memory to connect new events with previous events occurring at the same location. And while the two stories are separate and make sense on their own, they can still be tied together in many ways. Events in one plotline may intersect with the other, they may feature characters who choose opposite paths and suffer the consequences, or there may be a clear primary plot with the other plot (or plots) seeming to exist merely to support the primary one.

[1.3] These sorts of multi-strand structures, in which a single narrative can be divided into smaller constituent narrative strands, have been extremely common in literature and film. And yet, music analysts tend to default almost exclusively to narratives comprised of a single strand. This is despite the fact that music is capable of projecting these three key features of multi-strand narratives:

1. Disjunctions that mark shifts from one strand to another
2. Associations between events at a temporal remove
3. Constituent strands that are themselves narratives

My concept of multi-strand musical narratives-narratives containing multiple strands *which are themselves narratives*-is predicated on literary theorist Peter Garrett's (1980) notion of multiplot forms. According to Garrett, the term "multiplot forms" refers to a narrative that is comprised of multiple plots (at least two but with no apparent limit), none of which is consistently viewed as primary (3). He distinguishes between multiplot forms and narratives with subplots, in which a single plot serves as the center for the novel and any additional plots are always less important than the main plot. Multiplot forms have existed in literature for hundreds of years; notable early examples include Thomas Malory's *La Morte d'Arthur* (1485) and the Ming Dynasty novel *Journey to the West* (16th century). Garrett, however, notes that multiplot forms became particularly prevalent in novels of the Victorian era (1837-1901), occurring regularly in the works of prominent authors such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, William Thackeray, and Anthony Trollope. In this period authors felt a moral imperative to broaden their readers' perspectives by revealing connections among all members of society regardless of class. Multiplot forms also allowed writers to balance universal generalizations of the human condition with specific examples illustrated through the life of a single character (30).

[1.4] Multiplot forms are flexible, as they do not require a specific number of plots or a specific relationship between/among the plots. Because of this these forms are capable of a surprising degree of variety. Despite their differences, all multiplot forms are built from multiple stories that are weighted more or less equally across the narrative. Although historically critics have attempted to reduce these composite structures to a single narrative, Garrett argues that the interpretation of multiplot forms requires a new analytical mindset. The hermeneutic point of this structure is the multiplicity itself, the idea that the meaning *cannot* be contained in a single plot. Additionally, readers of multiplot works must continually compare the two plots, which yields an additional hermeneutic component. A comprehensive multiplot analysis will thus examine not just how the strands arise but also how meaning is created from their relationships.

[1.5] While there have been no thorough explorations of multi-stranded narratives in music, various scholars have examined the varying effects disjunctions have on a narrative. Hatten (1994) described several different disruptive strategies in Beethoven's late music, including disruptions that do not ultimately challenge the overarching narrative. More challenging to narrative structure include shifts in the level of discourse and tropes. A shift in the level of discourse refers to a move from direct to indirect discourse within a single agent, rather than when an external agent intrudes (174). Hatten added additional detail in 2004, writing that shifts typically involve commentary or reflection that exists outside the action of the primary narrative (2004, 47). It is important to note that shifts in the level of discourse will create a sense of moving outside the narrative proper *without* negating the established narrative. In some cases, these shifts may create only a brief digression, but if the digression is extended it could hypothetically increase in prominence, competing with the established narrative for hermeneutic priority. Tropes, on the other hand, are disjunctions between "two incompatible ideas" (Hatten 1994, 161-72). These two conflicting ideas

can potentially be reconciled by the analyst, generating readings of complex meanings resulting from the combination of competing concepts. Thus, tropes and shifts in the level of discourse offer contrasting interpretations of disjunction, particularly disjunction that involves the juxtaposition of highly contrasting material. If an analyst perceives a move from an established narrative into space outside of that narrative, they will likely interpret the disjunction as a shift in the level of discourse. This interpretation emphasizes the shift from narrative to extra-narrative material as the movement progresses through time. Alternatively, the analyst may view the two passages less as a shift between streams than as symbolizing two meanings that can be productively combined, yielding an interpretation of the disjunction as a trope. This latter interpretation differs temporally from the former, as the two meanings are lifted out of the temporal stream to be compared and combined. It doesn't matter here which is heard first, and the moment of disjunction between the two is perhaps less important than the concepts that can be created through their combination. In both cases the established narrative is not called into question; a shift in the level of discourse simply suggests the primary agent has briefly stepped out of the "action" and a trope is an opportunity to create a richer meaning from two juxtaposed musical symbols. The established narrative may be interrupted but it still is considered to be active as the movement progresses.

[1.6] Conversely, Nicholas Reyland (2012, 39) surveys multiple types of "narrative negation," including literary theorist Brian Richardson's (2006) theory of denarration. Denarration refers to contradictions within a text that make the reader-listener doubt what they had believed about the text (Richardson 2006, 88). In some cases, this can so disturb their beliefs that they begin to doubt that a narrative interpretation is at all helpful. In other, less disruptive, cases contradictions may signal a shift from one narrative strand to another. The contradiction in this instance is not that the previous narrative is somehow false but that it is not the only (or most important) story the piece "wants" to tell. In these situations the reader-listener may begin to view certain events as belonging to a distinct narrative strand that may be related to but is not identical with the original strand. If this new strand seems to be an aside it could be interpreted as a shift in the level of discourse, as per Hatten, but denarration more strongly suggests the possibility that the new strand may be just as important as the first strand—not merely an aside, but a new narrative in its own right that exists side-by-side with the first narrative. Thus, while disjunctions do not necessarily negate an established narrative, disjunctions can also signal a shift between narrative strands. These disjunctions are of an intermediate type—they affect the narrative structure in a fundamental way without destroying the sense that the piece does in fact project a narrative. Disjunctions interpreted as denarration, then, could potentially lead an analyst towards a multi-strand reading of a work, but they do not guarantee the presence of a multi-strand structure.

[1.7] A great deal of analytical attention has been paid to disjunction in music, and rightfully so: it is a fundamental challenge for scholars interested in developing theories of musical narrativity. But in addition to disjunctions such as denarration that mark shifts from one strand to another, multi-strand narratives require the reader/listener to perceive that events within a single narrative strand hang together in some way—the analyst must be able to recognize the resumption of a strand after it is displaced by a competing strand.<sup>(3)</sup> In the case of the op. 110 finale, the multi-strand structure is predicated on the alternation between extended passages featuring highly contrasting styles of arioso and fugue. The return of the arioso and fugal styles is quite easy to perceive, encouraging an out-of-time hearing that connects arioso to arioso and fugue to fugue. The return of each style after interruption by the other is a key "problem" of this movement. In fact, one of my earliest analytical queries about the finale was "why return to the arioso after the entrance of the fugue?" The ability to balance disjunction and repetition is a significant benefit of multi-strand narrative structures.

[1.8] If multiplot forms are easily identified and followed in literature and film, and if music is capable of both projecting a narrative and supporting a temporality that involves recognizing connections between passages that are far apart in time, it is reasonable to assume that music is capable of projecting multi-strand forms. Further, I believe that multi-strand forms can provide important benefits for music analysis. Although no music theorist has proposed a theory of multi-strand narratives, several scholars have addressed the topic, at least obliquely. John Paul Ito's (2013) analysis of Beethoven's op. 132 provides the clearest example of a multi-stranded narrative analysis that draws on the work of Northrop Frye (1957) as transmitted through Almén and

describes two intertwined *mythoi* in Beethoven's "Heiliger Dankgesang." Ito's final interpretation, thought provoking and well supported, states that the quartet describes "spiritual transcendence that is closely linked to dissolution and failure in worldly terms" (2013, 334). This analysis provides an example of a multi-stranded narrative interpretation shedding light on a complex work. Ito, however, declines to explore the theoretical ramifications of such a structure as it is unrelated to his primary goal of exploring spirituality in Beethoven's music.

[1.9] In the chapter mentioned earlier Nicholas Reyland also briefly discusses bifurcated narratives, a specific subtype of multi-strand narrative structures in a musical context as developed by literary theorist Alan Soldofsky (2003). Bifurcated narratives include two strands, one of which is clearly primary and the other clearly secondary, often providing an illustration of the point of the primary narrative. Soldofsky originally developed the concept to aid in analyses of complex contemporary poetry; Reyland in turn suggested that Berio's *Rendering* could be productively interpreted as a bifurcated narrative. Intrigued by this comment I explored the idea through an analysis of Schnittke's *Concerto Grosso No. 1* as a multi-strand narrative structure, in which a secondary narrative strand arises in the Rondo movement and comments on the primary narrative that spans the entire work (Ofcarcik 2017). The discovery that bifurcated structures could indeed be found in music is a crucial one, yet it only exposes the tip of the iceberg.

[1.10] A few other scholars have begun exploring more complex narrative structures that have important resonances with multiplot narratives. Hatten and Almén's (2013) chapter in *Music and Narrative Since 1900* discusses two concepts that are similar to but not identical with multiplot structures. The first of these is stratification, in which multiple narrative events are taking place at the same time. One might imagine multiple characters on a stage, each engrossed in their own activity. In this type of temporality everything is presented at the same time—the audience sees/hears the characters all at once. While stratification may co-occur with multi-strand structures, stratification of *events* does not necessarily mean that several *plots* are in play. The authors also discuss what they term *tropological narrative*, which at first glance appears to be synonymous with multiplot structures:

If multiple narrative strands are juxtaposed in a way that emphasizes their similarity or difference, a troping akin to metaphor may create emergent meaning out of the connections among otherwise separate strands. (2013, 71)

Further reading shows that they are using the term "narrative strands" differently—for them, "narrative strands" refers to layers of meaning that contribute to a narrative interpretation rather than being narratives in their own right. This is apparent in their brief analysis of Britten's *War Requiem*, in which they identify three strands: one is associated with the solo passages and is termed "lyrical," one is associated with the boys' choir and is "quasi narrative," and one refers to the mass itself and is termed "ritual." These "strands" are combined to create the overall interpretation, but the final narrative interpretation does not include three separate *narratives*. Instead, contradictions and similarities among the layers of meanings inform the single-strand narrative. At the same time, these concepts acknowledge the potential complexity of interpretation resulting from multiple sources of narrative information. A simpler example of this is found in Michael Klein's (2015, 94) analysis of Debussy's *Cello Sonata*. In his (very brief) summary of the climax of the sonata, Klein identifies multiple streams that he calls "temporal streams," which are similar to Hatten and Almén's narrative strands: these streams are based on associations of musical events with the past, present, and future. No stream (for instance, the events that call to mind the past) is a narrative in itself; rather, it is their combination that is significant from a hermeneutic perspective. Together they create additional layers of meaning that add interpretive richness to the overarching narrative, in this case reflecting Debussy's musical explication of the multiplicities of time. Tropological narratives have layers of meanings that can be separated out and discussed both individually and in combination to one another, but these layers are *not* necessarily narratives themselves. While these scholars do not explicitly study multi-strands forms, their analyses demonstrate how multiple layers may be combined to create richer, more complex hermeneutic readings.

[1.11] Andrew Davis's (2017, 18) discussion of temporal streams, informed by Gérard Genette (1983), addresses what I call narrative strands by interpreting events as either part of the main narrative, in which case they are called "temporal," or outside the main narrative, in which case they are called "atemporal." A narrative can have multiple temporal streams, with some streams existing apart from the main narrative. Although atemporal musical events are separate from the main narrative their presence never challenges the interpretation of the work *as narrative*. On the surface this theory may seem to result in a multi-strand structure, but the atemporal strand is not necessarily a narrative. It *could* rise to the level of narrative, but it also could simply include brief digressions that never coalesce into a stand-alone story. So again, although this theory specifically examines narrative strands, it seems to assume that each work has a single main narrative; atemporal events may not be true narrative strands, and even if they are, they are subordinate to the main narrative.

[1.12] The concept of temporal streams also appear in the works of Christopher Lewis (1996) and Joseph Kraus (2001), yet temporal streams for these scholars differ from Davis's in that they are not as closely tied to narratives. Whereas Davis classifies streams as temporal (i.e., narrative) or atemporal (i.e., not part of the main narrative), Lewis associates temporal streams with tonality/harmonic progressions. Each tonality can be interpreted as a temporal stream that contributes to the overall experience and meaning of the work. He provides an example from Verdi's opera *Otello*, in which C major is associated with Iago's manipulation of Otello (1996, 117). Listeners can associate music in this key with a particular idea from the opera, adding an extra level to their reading of the plot. This is analogous to Hatten's troping, in which local tonal disjunctions create a web of associations that increase the richness of hermeneutic interpretation, and thus will not, on its own, result in a multi-strand reading. Kraus also traces tonal disjunctions that create temporal streams—without yielding a multi-strand reading—in his chapter on musical time in Bruckner's Eighth Symphony. Kraus describes the resulting temporal structure as an example of Jonathan Kramer's (1988) theory of multiply-directed time, extending its application from twentieth-century works to tonal works (2001, 259). Both Lewis and Kraus grapple with works that fluidly combine disjunction and connection, forcing the analyst to reconstruct a narrative from a musical surface that at times seems to lack temporal coherence. And while neither Lewis nor Kraus addresses *narrative* strands, it is easy to see how the temporal streams they identify could, in certain works, rise to the level of narrative strands.

[1.13] The basic pattern of multi-strand structures—Plot A is introduced then suspended as Plot B is introduced; A is then picked back up and developed before being suspended again as B is developed in turn—is so familiar that audiences rarely even notice when it occurs. Yet when music analysts encounter the sorts of disjunctions that signal shifts between narrative strands in other media, they tend to reconcile them within a single-stranded narrative focused on conflict between two entities rather than evidence of a structure containing two intertwined stories. At the same time, "disjunction + repetition" will not always result in a multi-strand narrative structure. In the remainder of this article, I will present three analyses of Beethoven's music that demonstrate the process of determining whether it would be fruitful to organize narrative events within a multi-strand structure. One movement will be interpreted as a complete multi-strand structure, one hints at a multi-strand structure without fully developing it, and one is better understood as a single-strand narrative with digressions. Through these examples I will illustrate the utility of these structures for hermeneutic interpretation while also exploring the challenges they present.

## II. Sample Analyses

[2.1] Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat major, op. 110, begins with an unusual opening gambit, a slow movement in place of the normal up-tempo sonata-form movement. In keeping with the atypical start to the sonata, the finale that draws the entire work to a close is also unusual—no sign here of an energetic rondo or sparkling variations. Instead, a somber motif in B-flat minor and at a reserved tempo (*Adagio ma non troppo*) announces the start of the finale, and as the movement unfolds, the listener is continually surprised by the presence of unexpected features across multiple domains, including tempo but also tonality, form, and genre. In addition to the slow start to the

movement, unexpectedly slow tempos continue to appear in unusual locations. Although the opening section is revealed to be an introduction, the "real" theme that follows is *also* at a slow tempo. When the ensuing fugue finally introduces the expected faster tempo, it may appear that the aria section was part of a (very) extended introduction. But when the slow aria theme returns, interrupting the fugue after an attempted cadence in A♭ major, the confusion resurfaces. Only in the final section of the movement can the fugue reach and maintain a tempo in line with expectations for finales of multi-movement sonatas.

[2.2] Surprises in the domain of tempo are paired with an unconventional tonal scheme: the movement begins in the key of B♭ minor rather than the sonata's home key of A♭ major and moves through multiple tonal digressions (including A♭ minor, G minor, and G major) before finally achieving firm closure in A♭ major with the final fugue. When combined, the deformations in tempo and key yield an idiosyncratic form that cannot be reconciled with *Formenlehre* types (**Example 1**). Altogether, then, this movement is highly unexpected: a finale to a multi-movement sonata that is permeated by slow tempos and unusual key relationships and exhibits a form that does not fit any conventional label. The complexity of this movement, which serves as a microcosm of the late style, encourages nuanced analytical engagement.

[2.3] Kinderman's (1992) analysis of the op. 110 finale presents single-stranded narrative readings of both the finale and the sonata as a whole. He draws out numerous motivic connections that span the movements, with the finale serving as the culmination of a process of motivic transformation. While the inter-movement connections are compelling, they are not necessary for understanding the finale, and thus I will focus here primarily on his narrative of that movement. I am presenting this analysis in some detail because it is a particularly successful example of a single-stranded narrative analysis that will serve as a counterexample to the multi-strand analysis I will develop below.

[2.4] Kinderman's narrative of the finale traces the alternation of states represented by the formal and stylistic divisions of the movement. The *Adagio ma non troppo* that opens the movement serves as a turning point for the sonata as a whole, analogous to the transition from the *Praeludium* to the "Benedictus" in the *Missa solemnis*—a work he believes shares many features with this sonata (114). This introduction leads to formal sections that alternate between *Arioso* and fugue, which Kinderman maps onto the ideas of "earthly pain" and "consolation and inward strength" (127). The first fugue is technically much simpler than the second and ends with the enharmonic reinterpretation of a V7 in the home key of A♭ major that resolves as a Ger+6 in G minor. This failed attempt at a PAC results because, in Kinderman's words, the fugue "lack[s] the energy, or spiritual strength, to resist the depressive forces embodied in the *Arioso dolente*" (129). This interpretation suggests that the narrative relies on the sort of transvaluation that is at the core of Almén's (2008) theory of musical narrative: at the beginning it appears that the pain represented by the *Arioso* sections is stronger than the hope represented by the fugue. When the cadence at the end of Fugue 1 fails, it is interpreted as the fugue being overpowered by the *Arioso*. Eventually, however, the "consolation" of the fugue wins out over the pain of the *Arioso*: the movement ends with a triumphant arrival five measures from the end, with the attainment of the highest pitch heard so far, supported with an A♭ major harmony that ties together the entire sonata (Kinderman 1992, 127–28).<sup>(4)</sup> While this moment seals the victory of consolation over despair, Kinderman intriguingly states that "the true conclusion lies beyond this chord in a rapport with silence" (128). This suggests that the true goal of the narrative was not victory over an opponent but rather achieving a state of rest, free from conflict. Overall the analysis is thoughtful and musically sensitive, but its unidirectional progress through the movement sometimes underemphasizes features that contribute as much to the work's expressivity as the many features that Kinderman does account for.

[2.5] While the juxtaposition of aria and fugue is crucial to the expressive profile of this finale, it is equally interesting that each style appears *twice* in the movement: the listener does not move exclusively forward in time from aria to fugue, but also moves backwards to return to material that has been heard before. Returning to material heard previously encourages the listener to note connections between similar sections as well as disjunctions between aria and fugue. It is this out-

of-time comparison that I feel is under-emphasized in single-strand narratives. What happens when we allow the arias to reside side-by-side in our minds, as we likely would if this were a film and not a musical work? Could we hear a narrative pause when Fugue 1 fails to close and resume with the entrance of the second fugue section? The analysis that follows explores this possibility, drawing on the work of both Garrett (1980) and Christopher Booker (2006), a contemporary literary theorist interested in plot.

[2.6] The introduction of the finale of Beethoven's op. 110 is marked by instability—constantly shifting keys, lack of clear meter, and changing texture. Temporal changes, some subtle and some more overt, result in a constantly shifting musical landscape that is punctuated by an extended recitative. The presence of a recitative in the midst of this section is literally dramatic, suggesting the emergence of an actor or narrator who is announcing the start of a play, priming the listener to hear the following music as narrative. The monodic texture draws attention to the melody, creating the sense of a new voice entering while also intensifying the perceived instability. The introduction does not participate directly in the plots that follow, but sets up an environment of uncertainty that sparks two separate journeys towards stability. The introduction ends with a monophonic passage that I will return to below in the context of the plot analyses.

[2.7] Rather than moving straight through the movement from the first measure to the last, I will first present my analysis of the aria sections and the plot they project before moving on to the fugue. The first *Arioso* is in the key of A♭ minor; since the sonata began in A♭ major, this section has the expected tonic but an unexpected mode. The melody is marked by broad leaps and sweeping contour changes, constantly leaping upwards in an apparent desire to reach the upper register, yet just as consistently falling back to the register in which it began. **Example 2** illustrates this motion in the first phrase, which includes a dramatic leap from G♯ to F♯, a further push to A♭ that turns out to be unsustainable, and a fall to B♭ in the opening register. The second phrase moves even more resolutely into the high register, beginning with a scale and dramatically seizing the high A♭ in m. 15. This ascent seems to be successful, cadencing on a high C♯ harmonized by a C♯ major chord (**Example 3**). At this moment the melody has reached both a high register and a major tonality, but the key has shifted from the expected A♭ major (the home key of the sonata, where we would expect the finale to end) to C♯ major, undercutting the melody's triumph. The second half of the aria attempts to recreate the ascent achieved in m. 15 but is constantly stymied. The section ends with a fall back to the low register, supported by an A♭ minor harmony. Despite the great effort expended over the course of the section, the agent was unable to change the state represented by return to the lower register and A♭ minor tonality (**Example 4**).

[2.8] *Arioso* 2 moves along similar lines, with a few notable differences including the key, which is now G minor rather than A♭ minor. While this has fewer flats than A♭ minor—and thus might be seen as brighter—it is also a half step below the original tonic, suggesting the agent is starting from a lower point than before. The melody is more fractured and syncopated, suggesting an even greater emotion and, perhaps, less self-control. This section includes two crucial moments for the narrative. First, while the original aria section included an octave ascent from C♯5 to C♯6 (**Example 5.1**), the melody at the analogous location in the second aria struggles to achieve this feat (**Example 5.2**). The ascent begins in m. 120 and rises a sixth, but immediately before the cadence it falls dramatically by more than an octave to close in the register in which the section began.

[2.9] The wide leaps accompanying the return to the home key suggest the fall was unintentional; gravity appears to have overridden the protagonist's arduous strivings. The final phrase of the second aria is similar to the final phrase of the first aria, as both end in a minor key in the register in which the sections began. The second aria's close, however, is accompanied by several additional signals of failure: rhythmic and melodic fragmentation, suggesting the protagonist can no longer complete a full utterance; pervasive syncopation, suggesting the protagonist can no longer time its gestures appropriately; and metric dissonance, in which the left-hand groupings are offset from the established meter (**Example 6**). Not only do these features suggest the failure of the protagonist, they also bring to mind the instability of the introduction—the state from which the protagonist wished to escape.

[2.10] In order to explore this further, I will make use of the seven basic plot types suggested by Booker (2006). These plot types are particularly useful due to his emphasis on *how* a plot is worked out, in addition to recognizing overall categories. Booker posits that these plots underlie all stories, including those appearing in literature, myth, and film (Example 7). I believe that music can express three of his seven plots: the quest, voyage and return, and tragedy. The others—overcoming the monster, rags to riches, comedy, and rebirth—include specific requirements about content that would seem to require the semantic specificity of words. For instance, overcoming the monster requires interpreters to identify a monster that the protagonist ultimately vanquishes. While ideas of "victory" and "defeat" are generally accepted as able to be communicated by music, the idea of "monster" is likely too specific to be communicated by music without text. Booker's description of each plot type includes a list of necessary features or functions that must be present in order to establish the plot, providing the analyst with a clear guide for identifying the constituent elements in a sample musical work. This clarity supports intersubjectivity without negating the need for imaginative interpretations, as many of the story elements include both actions and abstract expressive components.

[2.11] The events of the aria sections discussed above map onto the events of Booker's tragedy plot (Example 8). The "Anticipation" stage takes place in the introduction, where the "incompleteness" of the protagonist is signaled by the tonal instability—the protagonist yearns for the solid grounding of a home key. With the introduction of the E♭ in m. 7, the protagonist discovers a possible pathway to tonal stability. In the "Dream" stage, the protagonist commits to the journey by reaching a cadence in A♭ minor at the end of the first phrase. It should be noted, however, that this is only a half cadence, meaning the goal has not been conclusively reached. The move to C♭ major in mm 9–16 accompanied by the soaring melody represents the point at which "things go almost improbably well": the protagonist has not just firmly established a key, but it is a major key, and the high register suggests triumph and attainment of a goal.

[2.12] Unfortunately, as in Booker's plot the where the "Frustration" stage inevitably follows the "Dream" stage, the triumph is short-lived. The first phrase is repeated, dictating a return to A♭ minor, but if the protagonist can manage a second move to C♭ major, the first aria section will end in a major key. This time, though, the phrase remains in A♭ minor to close out the section. Further, the melody is unable to rise out of the lower register, ending on the same pitch with which this phrase began. After the disappointing PAC in m. 24 the texture is stripped down to a single voice, and a brief passage confirms the minor key in a very low register.

[2.13] In Booker's "Nightmare" stage, things begin "slipping seriously out of the hero's control," which is represented here by the opening key of the second aria—the pitch has now "slipped" down from A♭ to G minor, signaling the protagonist's downward slide away from its goal. The pathos of the melody is heightened by the addition of embellishments and increasing syncopation. Although the protagonist somehow manages to accomplish a turn to the relative major, it is imperfect compared to the one in the first aria: here the melody attempts an ascent, but it breaks off abruptly into a steep fall in m. 122, and the phrase closes two octaves below the goal pitch (see again, Example 5). The "Destruction" stage follows swiftly upon the nightmare of the failed second phrase. As in the first aria, the second period begins like the first. But in this case, the melody undergoes a process of progressive fragmentation, eventually limping to a close in m. 131. The final cadence is in G minor with the melody a half step lower compared to its ending in the first aria. Additionally, the harmonic rhythm becomes unmoored from the meter in mm. 129–131, creating a further sense of dissolution—and even a return to the instability of the introduction. The protagonist has attempted to achieve a better situation but finds itself returned to a place uncomfortably close to its opening state. Booker's tragedy plot maps quite neatly onto the arias in this movement; we will see, however, that this will not always be the case when translating the plots from literature to music, necessitating modifications to the plot layouts.

[2.14] The fugue sections in this movement, first heard in *rectus* then *inversus* form, are quite typical, following clearly in the traditions of Baroque composers. In this tradition, fugues typically end with a return to the original subject, followed by a conclusive cadence in the original key; between the first and last appearances of the subject it will be appear in a variety of guises—sped

up, slowed down, flipped, and layered over itself. These expectations form the basis of the plot I hear in this movement: I expect the subject to return in its original form at the end of the section, with the original key confirmed by a strong cadence. Manipulations of the subject and tonal digressions represent challenges that must be overcome in order to have that clear presentation of the subject in the home key at the end. The fugue sections of op. 110 do eventually succeed in presenting the subject in its original form, followed by cadential closure in A♭ major, and thus describe a plot that contrasts significantly with the tragedy heard in the aria.

[2.15] Fugue 1 begins in m. 26; its subject is comprised of a series of rising fourths in the key of A♭ major (**Example 9**). Kinderman (1992, 117) notes connections between this subject and the first theme of the first movement, with the fugue subject presenting a "crystallization" of the first theme. This subject arises out of a monophonic passage that closes the first aria, a passage that is very similar to the monophonic passage that was noted at the end of the introduction. In that appearance it is a monophonic line in the key of A♭ minor that ends with a descending fifth from  $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$ . This motion sounds very emphatic, and the stripping away of other voices draws attention to this passage. This monophonic gesture is loosely echoed two more times in the movement, first at the conclusion of the first aria and then at the conclusion of the second aria. Interestingly, this means that the motive is used to lead into the aria once and into the fugues twice. It also seems to carry a dual function, both closing the preceding section and leading into the next. For instance, in its first appearance it certainly seems to be the end of the recitative, giving it a concluding function. But the E♭ that it lands on is picked up in the introduction to the aria that follows, moving seamlessly into that section. Similarly, its first reappearance, in the pick-up to m. 25, concludes the first aria by repeating the cadence in A♭ minor, but also leads smoothly into Fugue 1—the first note of the fugue note sounds like a fourth repetition of the A♭ that closed the motive.

[2.16] Motion toward the goal is first challenged by the episode of Fugue 1. This episode introduces new melodic material while emphasizing C minor (iii), creating both a tonal and melodic obstacle the quest protagonist must overcome. Additional obstacles include a *stretto* in mm. 93–95 and 101–105 and diminution in mm. 107–108, building in technical complexity as we approach the expected cadence. Complications of this type tax the listener's attention as she attempts to follow the subject. During *stretti*, multiple voices are competing for attention from the listener, and diminution and augmentation both require the listener to work at least a little harder to discern the subject within the texture. When *stretti* involve diminution and augmentation, as happens in this section, the listener's ear is challenged even further. While some listeners will simply give up on tracking the subject, I believe most listeners (and performers) will attempt to follow it as closely as possible, as this is a large part of the "game" of listening to fugues. Additionally, increasing complexity requires increased listening effort, which listeners may then interpret as representing increased effort on the part of the imaginary protagonist. Moreover, listeners who understand fugal techniques know that it requires intellectual effort in order to compose them and thus have an additional reason to interpret these moments as effortful. These techniques, combined with tonal motion, create the sense of meeting—and hopefully overcoming—challenges.

[2.17] The return to the subject in m. 101 could be a plausible end to the quest, but motion to a conclusion is undermined in two ways—first, by the entrance of another voice in *stretto*, competing with the statement in the bass; and a tonal twist following the setup of a strong cadence. An emphatic dominant arrival in m. 98 seems to imply a strong cadence in the home key of A♭, but this cadence never reaches closure—instead, it is undercut in a striking series of moves. First, the dominant is attained, as expected (m. 98); this first dominant then moves through a progression that involves a deceptive resolution, necessitating a second arrival on V (m. 110). A V7 is then sustained through an arpeggiation that lasts several bars, much longer than expected. It is re-struck in preparation for the final move to the tonic, but then resolves unexpectedly as a Ger+6 in the key of G minor to prepare the second aria section (mm. 114, **Example 10**).

[2.18] Fugue 2 is ushered in by the final appearance of the monophonic passage from the introduction. Measures 132–136 begin by reiterating the cadence in G minor, but on the final resolution B♭ is inflected to B♯; the now-major triad is repeated several more times before moving into an arpeggio that leads into the first note of the inverted fugue subject at the start of Fugue 2.

Kinderman calls the inflection a sign of "miraculous discovery" (1992, 127), and this makes sense for a narrative implying a single agent, as it suggests an impetus for moving from the aria environment to the fugue environment—the agent discovered something new and unexpected, and it changed its path. In a multiplot narrative, though, these transitions between sections function as a musical fade out/fade in, in which the end of one "scene" blends gently into the start of the next. The monophonic texture allows this sleight of hand, as it ensures a smooth transition to the single voice that begins each fugue, as well as the slowly building harmonies that open each aria.

[2.19] At the outset of Fugue 2, the implied protagonist is presented with two new and difficult challenges: the subject is now inverted, and in the wrong key (G major instead of A♭ major) (**Example 11**). The protagonist must work to "correct" this subject, returning it to its original intervallic arrangement and key. Rectifying the inversion occurs quickly, with the original form reappearing in m. 153. But, just as it seems that the protagonist is one step closer to its goal, a new challenge arises in the form of a flurry of sixteenth notes in constantly shifting metric locations, featuring a loose diminution of the theme.

[2.20] In fact, Fugue 2 includes many more moments of technical complexity compared to the first. This makes sense temporally, because complexity appears to pile up near the end of sections, and this fugue is also the end of the movement. Both the key and the rhythmic/metric problem are dealt with in a single passage spanning mm. 168–173, and the fugue finally achieves its goal in m. 174: the subject is heard in its original form and original key, with an accompaniment of steady sixteenths that consistently reinforce the meter (**Example 12**). In the measures leading up to the return of the original fugue subject other versions of the subject swirl through the texture—we hear an augmentation in the bass in m. 160, in *stretto* with diminution in the right hand; a doubly-diminished version in the soprano voice in m. 168; and the inverted version in the inner voice of the right hand in m. 170. The return of the subject in m. 174 brings relief as the texture clears, as well as a sense of excitement—the bass register recalls for me the massive return of the first subject in the pedals towards the end of Bach's "St. Anne" Fugue (BWV 552) and suggests both grounding and the potential of building through the texture one last time.

[2.21] The fugue subject has now returned in the correct position and in the correct key, but the plot is not quite complete. While the tonal, motivic, technical, and rhythmic/metric work has been accomplished, the movement has not yet reached a rhetorically satisfying close (**Example 13**). The diminished seventh chords over the tonic pedal provide a last point of tension before the final and most effective resolution, accompanied by a tonic arpeggio, reminiscent of the dominant arpeggio that ended Fugue 1. The sixteenth notes ripple through the entire breadth of the keyboard, soaring to seize the tonic in a dramatic ascent to declare victory.<sup>(5)</sup> Above I hypothesized that the plot of the fugal sections was concerned with a return to the original form of the subject and firm tonal closure in the home key. This was based primarily on generic expectations, but it seems particularly convincing in this movement. The return to the rectus version of the fugue subject is clearly emphasized, even celebrated, and the firm cadential closure is reinforced with a discharge of rhythmic energy that suggests a satisfactory end to a tonal process.<sup>(6)</sup>

[2.22] **Example 14** presents the events Booker deems necessary for a quest plot to be identified and illustrates their musical correlates in this movement. While it is generally possible to map musical events onto these categories, a closer look is in order. Some of Booker's descriptions work quite well, eloquently summing up what is heard in the music. For instance, Booker's description of "Arrival and Frustration" neatly reflects what happens at the end of Fugue 1, where it appears that the goal has been reached but a final tonal twist wrenches the key down a half step and the fugue is temporarily abandoned. Also, the idea of "renewed life" included in "The Goal" works nicely for tonal music—when this finale eventually closes in the home key of the movement, it indeed is in position to "renew" its life because in a tonal sense it has returned to its starting position.

[2.23] Others work less tidily, with "The Call" and "The Journey" being problematic for this movement. In Booker's theory, quest plots begin with a vision of the goal, and that is often true in literature and film, but I do not think that is the case in this movement. One could say that since the goal I suggested for the fugues was a return to the fugue subject in its original form, and of course

we heard it in its original form, a "Call" exists. However, that seems facile, as all fugues include an initial statement of the theme. I do like the idea of a "Call" and think it is possible in music, but I would hesitate to say this movement is *not* a quest simply because it doesn't include one.

Ultimately, I believe that the "Call" is not necessary for a quest, rather an option. Similarly, Booker's conception of "The Journey" is highly specific, saying that the protagonist faces "life-threatening ordeals." But what is life-threatening to music? Tonality is certainly of utmost importance in music from the Common Practice period, but to call modulation "life-threatening" seems unnecessarily extreme. Overall, I enjoy the detail that Booker provides and his emphasis on *how* plots are worked out. But if it is followed exactly, very little music will follow his plot types even if we hear it as a quest or tragedy. It seems better to use plots as a starting point, noting points of intersection and diversion, and not insisting on a perfect fit.

[2.24] Multiplot interpretation provides three important benefits for analyzing this movement. First, a multiplot interpretation requires more analytical detail in the aria sections. Kinderman addressed some of these details in the arias but focused primarily on the fugue—if a narrative is centered on conflict between two forces, discovering how the eventual victor won is more interesting than delving into the force that was overcome. Of course, analysts may and sometimes do present a robust picture of the "losing" force, but it is not *required* in the same way that it is in a multiplot reading. In a multiplot reading, the analyst must look at each section in some detail because you must flesh out two narratives. This does not guarantee that the final reading will be noticeably more detail-rich, but as an analyst I found that it changed the way I heard and studied the movement. I certainly attended to more details in the aria when constructing this plot than when I first encountered the piece and assumed that the aria was relatively static compared to the fugue.

[2.25] The second strength is that it supports revealing out-of-time comparisons. Again, these sorts of comparisons are not impossible with single stranded narrative structures, but they are less essential than the effects of moving straight through the piece. In this movement, drawing the arias together in my mind reinforced both the importance of the upward ascents and the intensification of failure in the second aria. These comparisons brought out subtle features that may not have seemed so important on the first hearing but nevertheless contribute to the movement's expressive profile.

[2.26] Finally, in my reading of the movement, two intertwined plots emerge from an unstable introduction, yet the quest journey ends by achieving its goal while the tragedy ends with a return to its opening state. This brings to light an important question that would otherwise have gone unasked: why did one musical journey end in success and the other in failure? Several potential interpretations can provide an answer to this question. First, the tragedy protagonist appears to be working alone, as the texture and melodic character suggests a single agent. Fugues, though, are by nature polyphonic, built from a multiplicity of voices. Perhaps the quest protagonist can be viewed as more comfortably enmeshed in society, and thus better supported in its journey. This has the benefit of reflecting the values of Victorian multiplot narratives, which imply that individual endeavors depend at least partly on the support of society as a whole. Second, the two aria sections are much more closely linked than the two fugue sections: the tragedy protagonist essentially reworks the same material in the second aria, preserving the overall melodic line and phrase structure. The fugue sections evince more variety in tonal, melodic, and rhythmic domains—in particular, the inversion and transposition of the fugue theme at the start of Fugue 2—suggesting the quest protagonist may be more creative when meeting challenges compared to the more conservative tragedy protagonist. Multiplot forms force analysts to reckon with aspects of the piece that otherwise might have been glossed over or seen as inconsequential to the narrative. The variation basis of the second aria, for instance, might have originally been viewed as simply a sign of stasis and thus unlikely to contribute to an overall narrative, but now it can be seen as a key component of the tragedy plot that helps to explain the failure of its protagonist.

[2.27] The repetition of styles in this particular movement supports a multiplot interpretation. This movement is not *just* about contrast, moving from one style to another, but also about returning to things heard before. This is exactly the sort of structure we experience regularly in film and that we

interpret consistently as a sign of multi-strand narratives. While music and film are not equivalent, and of course Beethoven wrote this movement well before the advent of television and film, I feel that the movement is still particularly amenable to that sort of reading. The repetition is just as integral to the movement as the contrasts, and multiplot analysis represents this structure better than a single strand.

[3.1] The following two analyses provide additional information about multiplot structures in Beethoven's instrumental works. The analyses are necessarily concise but highlight both benefits of multiplot analyses and further questions that may arise when creating and evaluating multiplot readings.

#### Beethoven, String Quartet in B-flat major, op. 130, V. "Cavatina"

[3.2] My next analysis addresses a brief but intriguing example of a multiplot structure found in the "Cavatina" of Beethoven's op. 130, a movement that is both short and strange. It projects two narrative strands, with the famous *beklemmt* section creating its own narrative that is ultimately left incomplete.<sup>(7)</sup> This highly contrasting section is surprising for several reasons, including its key (C $\flat$  major,  $\flat$ VI in the home key of E $\flat$  major) and the fragmented melody that sounds as though it is choked with emotion. Further, the first 39 bars of the movement sound thoroughly complete, laying out a binary form that begins and ends in E $\flat$  major (Example 15). In fact, the A and C sections are quite closely related from a harmonic standpoint, and although the melody is new the similarities between A and C allow the C section to function as a convincing end. The appearance of any material after this close—let alone such highly contrasting material—would be unexpected. To have the movement continue with the actual material from mm. 40–47 is shocking.

[3.3] The use of simple binary, a less common type of binary form, complicates the form somewhat. The listener would surely have expected rounded binary, meaning the new melody for the C sections is unexpectedly digressive (although not jarring). In hindsight, this small departure from the norm may be understood as foreshadowing the larger digression that follows, but before the entry of the *beklemmt* section all signs point to the movement having reached its end. In addition to tonal and formal closure, narrative cues project a complete narrative that can be interpreted as a simplified instance of Booker's quest. The chart below provides a brief summary of narrative events in mm. 1–39 (Example 16). As can be seen in the chart, the narrative arises primarily from melodic motion, specifically a prolonged journey to the melodic apex of  $\hat{3}$ . The narrative begins with the head motive, which is first heard in mm. 1–3. This motive eventually leads to  $\hat{2}$ , functioning as a covering tone, then continues to push upward until it reaches  $\hat{1}\hat{3}$  in m. 6. The final section of the primary narrative begins in m. 23 with a new melody that unspools slowly, making use of immediate repetition that sounds to summon its strength before leaping up to the high  $\hat{3}$  in m. 27 (Violin I). The large leap (up a tenth) and *forte* dynamic draw attention to this move, which is followed by a clear IAC in m. 30. The entire phrase repeats nearly exactly, but now ending with a PAC in m. 39. The lack of changes in the second presentation suggests the achievement of a goal—no new material was necessary.<sup>(8)</sup>

[3.4] The first 39 bars of this movement are thus complete formally, tonally, and narratively. What then to make of the sudden appearance of the *beklemmt* section in m. 40? As this material follows a complete narrative, it seems reasonable to assume the music that follows introduces a new narrative strand. In this interpretation, the events starting in m. 40 initiate a new plot that is ultimately left incomplete. First, triplets pulse on a unison E $\flat$  which was the tonic of the preceding passage; it is soon recontextualized as  $\hat{3}$  of C $\flat$  major with the entrance of the G $\flat$  in m. 41 (the first chromatic pitch in this section). During this passage the lower three voices are in rhythmic conflict with Violin I, whose fragmented line sobs brokenly over the accompaniment. The melody line combined with the text "*beklemmt*," suggests the protagonist is distraught, an interpretation reinforced when the section ends with a Phrygian half cadence implying A $\flat$  minor. All of this conforms to the start of Booker's quest, in which "life in some city of destruction has become untenable." Of course, it is not completely clear which plot type is present so early in the narrative, but we can recognize that a new plot is starting. Davis has explored the Romantic interest in fragments, particularly literary fragments, noting that they can represent "a larger work of which

we have only a broken remnant, or a work begun but not yet completed, or perhaps even . . . a work finished but not yet begun" (2017, 27) The word *beklemmt* fits the first description—it hints at a complete world that exists beyond the brief glimpse we receive, and it is the fragmentary nature of this section that makes the "Cavatina" so intriguing. The "Cavatina" ends with material that recalls the binary form section, creating a bookend that draws the movement to a close.<sup>(9)</sup> This material would not have been necessary without the *beklemmt* section, once again suggesting that the latter didn't well up from within the movement but rather represented a startling continuation of a work that was already ostensibly complete. The final section manages to put a firm stop to the movement—an additional instance of closure that would not have been necessary without the *beklemmt* section.

[3.5] Neither narrative strand in the "Cavatina" corresponds exactly to any of Booker's plot types, but they each suggest the features of a quest. Given that this movement is not a perfect fit for any of Booker's plots, some scholars may argue against invoking his plot types. However, it is not surprising to find that an individual musical work does not match exactly with plot types intended to address literature. In fact, it would not be surprising to find a work of literature that did not fit one of Booker's plot types exactly—surely some stories imply particular plots without hitting every single event. And although I do not believe that each stage of Booker's plots is essential in every story, the level of detail he provides is admirable. Ultimately, this narrative resembles Booker's quest without corresponding to it exactly, a fact perhaps resulting from the simplicity of mm. 1–39. The primary complication in this movement arises from the inclusion of contrasting material in the *beklemmt* section, which is still to come.

[3.6] If the movement were analyzed as a single plot the *beklemmt* section would have to be subsumed into the larger narrative.<sup>(10)</sup> A multi-strand interpretation for this movement clearly acknowledges the dramatic effect of the *beklemmt* material. And while the first part ultimately returns, it does not feel like the resolution of something left incomplete but rather like a response to the surprising digression that requires the repetition of closure. Although one plot is incomplete, we can apprehend the presence of two plots, and multiplot structures allow us to describe this.<sup>(11)</sup>

#### Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C minor, op. 67, II. *Andante con moto*

[3.7] The slow movement of Beethoven's fifth symphony is a set of variations on alternating themes. Double variations of this type would seem to be an obvious candidate for analysis as a multi-strand narrative, as the alternation pattern yields both the requisite disjunction and repetition, but the third requirement of multi-strand narratives—that each strand be a narrative—is not inherent in the form. Analysts thus must determine whether the variations on each theme truly project a distinct narrative, or whether the movement would be more productively considered as a single-strand structure. **Example 17** shows the form of the movement.<sup>(12)</sup> Considered as a group, the variations on Theme A contain a progressive rhythmic acceleration typical of variations from the Classical period. This accelerative process grinds to a halt at the third variation (although one may plausibly ask whether it could continue past the thirty-second notes in Variation 2). The third variation stands out for other reasons, as well—in fact, determining this section's formal label is one of the primary analytical challenges of the movement. This section features only the first motive from the theme—the previous variations on A material corresponded much more closely to the theme. At the same time, it has little in common with the two episodes that appear in the movement: it has a clear phrase structure and motivic profile while both episodes are developmental, fragmented, and modulatory. Perhaps a clue to its status is found in its key—it is in the parallel minor of the theme, making it an opposite mode variation; these variations are common in Classical variation sets and often quite distinct from the other variations. For these reasons, I have labeled it as the third variation on A.

[3.8] The fourth variation on A returns to a close correspondence with the theme, as does the coda that follows. If an analyst were looking for a narrative within the variations on Theme A, they might describe a process of acceleration disrupted by an opposite-mode variation that is distant enough from the theme to be almost episodic, presenting a challenge to the forward motion of the variations. This challenge is met with at least partial success, as the theme returns clearly and in its

original mode in the fourth variation; this return is confirmed in the coda. Further, one might add that the process of acceleration had already reached a reasonable conclusion with the thirty-second notes of Variation 2, and the "outlier" Variation 3 arrived to stop the progression before it reached unwieldy proportions. Variation 4 then is a sort of restoration of reason and normality, confirmed and celebrated by the coda. It seems, therefore, that the A material could be analyzed as a single strand within a multi-strand narrative structure.

[3.9] Theme B is stylistically similar to Theme A and is characterized by a gradual melodic ascent throughout the theme that is accompanied by a turn from Theme A's key of A♭ major to the distantly-related C major, before falling back to the home key. One might hypothesize that this internal process, seemingly directed towards the attainment of a high C over the local tonic, could continue through the variations, creating a second narrative strand. However, the variations on Theme B differ little in any significant way from the theme itself. There is thus a stasis across the variations in which the same process is attempted over and over, with little change and no difference in results. To call this a narrative would stretch the reader-listener's credulity, and without a second narrative strand this movement cannot be analyzed as a multi-strand narrative.

[3.10] Therefore, although variation sets with two themes seem to be obvious candidates for analysis as multi-strand structures, that is not necessarily the case. In this movement, material based on Theme B does not yield its own narrative strand. This *Andante*, then, would be better analyzed as a single narrative, reading the movement from "left to right," and focusing on the alternation between themes. Notably, this would still allow the outlier Variation 3 (on Theme A) to serve as a turning point for the movement—not only does it mark the end of the rhythmic acceleration in A—based variations, it also marks the disappearance of Theme B. From here on out, Theme A dominates. The requirement that each strand must be a narrative in itself is thus a useful restriction when evaluating works that feature two contrasting and recurring ideas.

## Conclusion

[4.1] Narrative analysis has grown in prominence within the discipline of music theory, and it is likely to retain our interest for the foreseeable future. Although many scholars have been attracted to the benefits of this methodology, the narratives we have produced to date have been overwhelmingly similar in terms of structure. This is surprising given the wide variety of narrative structures we encounter each day in other media. Analysts seem to assume that musical narratives will contain only a single narrative strand; any passages that do not appear to contribute to that narrative are seen as parentheses, existing "outside the narrative," with little (if any) consideration given to the question of whether the piece could include more than one narrative. Perhaps this is because of the relatively recent arrival of narrative theory within the field of *music* theory—we first must explore *what* narrative is before we can explore specific types of narratives. However, I would argue that we cannot wait too long to explore these differing types, or our early assumptions and demarcations will become ossified within the discipline. When speaking of abstract narrative "types" we have tied type to content, as in Frye's *mythoi* (the outcome of the story determines the type).<sup>(13)</sup> Now it is time to look at another aspect of narrative structure: how is the narrative built from constituent parts? Multi-strand narrative structures in other media are quite diverse and understanding how these structures are unspooled across a work gives us insight into the *experience* of the story that is crucial for interpretation. Simply put, a single-strand narrative is experienced quite differently than a multi-strand narrative, even if they are built from the same constituent components.

[4.2] In addition to raising questions about the nature of narrative and how it works across media, multi-strand narrative structures have immediate and concrete benefits for analysts. When multi-strand structures are on the table, analysts have one more option within which to organize their hermeneutic insights. Acknowledging the potential for multi-strand structures allows analysts to make interpretive decisions beyond "narrative" and "non-narrative" and explore in a more nuanced way how events may be contributing to a narrative even if it isn't the primary narrative of the movement. And recognizing multiplicity in a movement does not negate the possibility that the narrative strands combine to tell a single story. Although the analysis of the op. 110 finale that I

posed above is comprised of two contrasting narrative strands, the composite narrative of the movement really seems to be one of successful completion of a quest—the failures of the tragic arioso narrative only serve to heighten the success of the fugue. And as mentioned above, multi-strand structures reflect both narrative content and how that narrative is experienced by the listener. By analyzing the op. 130 "Cavatina" as a multi-strand structure I am able to highlight the "otherness" of the *beklemmt* section, and not just the surface-level contrasts. It sounds as though something truly new has begun that is then interrupted by the return of previously-heard material. Analyzing this section as the start of a narrative that is ultimately left incomplete uniquely reflects the experience of listening to the movement.

[4.3] Narrative analysis has been embraced by music analysts for its ability to combine a broad range of musical events into a cohesive interpretation. Narratives can reflect how it *feels* to listen to a piece, even when those insights aren't obviously supported by traditional formal and tonal data. It provides a way of balancing musical "fact" and musical experience in a subjective interpretation that can maintain a degree of intersubjectivity. Acknowledging, exploring, and evaluating the potential for multi-strand musical narrative structures is an important step for scholars interested in continuing to plumb the depths of musical narrative. These structures open up new avenues for analysis in the present while also raising questions that will refine our understanding of musical narrative in the future.

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#### Footnotes

1. [Sullivan 1927](#), [Kerman 1979](#), [Dahlhaus \[1987\] 1994](#), [Hatten 1994](#), [Chua 1995](#), and [Spitzer 2006](#) all address key features of the composer's late style and include thought-provoking analyses of the late works.

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2. Hatten (2011) argues compellingly for the use of narrative analysis to interpret works whose disjunctions resist other traditional methodologies.

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3. Lewis (1996) addresses the combination of disjunction and continuity when perceiving multiple streams (whether these streams are narratives or not). If an analyst wanted to identify specific connections, particularly in a piece where they are less obvious compared to the op. 110 finale, Dora Hanninen's (2012) theory of associative sets provides a conceptual framework for associating new material with previously-heard material to yield an out-of-time map of connections within the piece.

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4. Kinderman also interprets this moment—particularly the overcoming of the pitch ceiling that continually blocked upward ascents at F or G♭—as the culmination of the sonata-spanning narrative.

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5. Hatten (1994, 87) also hears this rhetoric as confirming victory.

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6. Hatten (2004, 254) uses the term “plenitude” to refer to the saturated texture heard at this moment.

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7. The word *beklemmt* actually appears in the score starting with the Breitkopf & Hartel complete edition. This neologism resonates with both the German *beklommen* (anxious, oppressed) as well as the Yiddish *verklempt* (overcome by emotion). While the origins are unknown, the term may even be a (perhaps unintentional) combination of the two.

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8. One can hear multiple resonances between the *beklemmt* section of op. 130 and the second arioso in the op. 110 finale; see [Rosen 1997](#), 498.

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9. The final form of the movement is A–B–A’–coda, with A made up of a nested binary form and B encompassing the *beklemmt* section. This is a typical rounded binary form—from a thematic standpoint, at least. The proportions are much less typical, with the first A section coming in at 39 bars and the B and return of A eight bars each, making the first A section nearly five times as long as either.

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10. In fact, Hatten does analyze the *beklemmt* section as “parenthetical” (1994, 35–36).

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11. Nicholas Marston summarizes the multiplicities of this movement neatly: “Nor should one neglect all that in Op. 130 which resists the Forsterian imperative ‘only connect’” (2000, 99).

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12. The form of this movement-double variations, with an extended formal section that falls somewhere between episode and variation on Theme A—is very similar to the slow movement of the composer's Ninth Symphony.

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13. While exploring the way a listener's sympathies alter the selection of appropriate *mythoi*, Hatten (2018, 213–16) adds nuance to Frye's *mythoi* by suggesting that the victor will not always be clear. This loosens the process of *mythoi*-based narrative analysis in a very necessary and beneficial way, yet Hatten still assumes any narrative heard in music will have a single strand.

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