

Form, Temporality, And Embodied Metaphors In Jennifer Higdon's Sonata For Viola
And Piano (1990): A Narrative Analysis

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DEDICATION

In memory of my dad, Dr. Carl Eugene Bledsoe. He taught me that life is a little tough sometimes, but that hard work and determination pay off.

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ABSTRACT

Dream-like motives, stuttering rhythms, disjointed gestures, surprising tonal areas, and anisochronies all add to the contrasting atmospheres created by Jennifer Higdon in her Sonata for Viola and Piano (1990). These features encourage the listener, performer, and analyst to ask questions and seek out a story. In this essay I look at the first movement of the Sonata for Viola and Piano through multiple lenses: form, temporality, embodiment, and narrative. The first three strands provide the theoretical backbone of the narrative analysis.

Byron Almén's seminal treatise, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, serves as the foundation of the narrative theory. My approach to form theory relies primarily on the recent contributions by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy. Their findings offer an extensive taxonomy of compositional choices as a means of understanding and interpreting the architecture of sonata forms. Concepts of temporality are drawn from the contributions of music theorists Jonathan Kramer (d. 2004) and Andrew Davis. Human element appears prevalently in Higdon's sonata, IMAGE SCHEMAS are identified based on the research of Johnson and Lakoff.

The three analytical strands—form, temporality, and embodiment—all carry the potential to recount human activity. In listening to and performing Higdon's sonata, I sense a drama told through the structures she creates. Narrative analysis is an effective approach to such a reading because it is well suited to weave together a variety of musical threads.

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BIOGRAPHY AND COMPOSITIONAL CONTEXT

American composer, Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962), is frequently praised for writing music that is aesthetically appealing and accessible to wide audiences. Higdon is best known for her orchestral work *blue cathedral*, written in memory of her younger brother, Andrew Blue Higdon, who died in 1998. *blue cathedral* has truly resonated with audiences. In a review in the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, *blue cathedral* is described as “a potent experience, awash in facile orchestrations and an engaging sense of journey.”¹ Higdon’s ability to take an audience on a journey or quest is one of the charms of her compositional style.

Her ability to communicate with a wide range of audiences has led to many commissions for orchestra, chamber, and solo works, in addition to many awards. In 2010 she was the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Music for her *Violin Concerto* and has won two Grammy awards for her *Percussion Concerto* (2010) and for *Viola Concerto* (2018).

Her first published composition for viola is the Sonata for Viola and Piano (1990), which she wrote as a graduate student. According to Higdon, she “explores the wonderful colors of the viola, and also allows for a substantial dialogue with the piano.”² She refers to the viola sonatas by Paul Hindemith and Rebecca Clarke as influential

¹ This quote is from a list of reviews of orchestral works on Jennifer Higdon’s personal website. <http://jenniferhigdon.com/orchestralreviews.html>

² Jennifer Higdon, liner notes. 2013. “Sonata for Viola and Piano” Molly Carr, viola and Charles Abromovic, piano. *Jennifer Higdon: Early Chamber Works*. Recorded March 2012. Gore Recital Hall, CFA Building, University of Delaware. Naxos, 2013. CD.

inspirational sources. The sonata was premiered in October 1990 by Michael Strauss, viola, and Anthony Hewitt, piano.³ Each movement contains descriptive adjectives that convey emotional states and actions that reflect elements of drama and experience. For example, the first word in the first movement is “calmly” and the first word in the second movement is “declamatory.” Higdon’s use of these words and her description of dialogue between viola and piano suggests human elements in both movements, however, the focus of this paper is the first movement.

I was initially drawn to the sonata because of the opening of the first movement. The intriguing viola melody and interaction between the viola and piano, as if the instruments were involved in a human drama, sparked my interest to know more about the work and share it with my students. This project, then, seeks to find a satisfying interpretation and bring attention to Higdon’s viola sonata by making the work more approachable to other performers.

As a performer and teacher, I always look for the ways musical elements combine to tell a story. Three analytical strands—form, temporality, and embodiment—all carry the potential to recount human activity. In listening to and performing Higdon's sonata, I sense a drama told through the structures she creates. Narrative analysis is an effective approach to such a reading because it is well suited to weave together a variety of musical threads. Most important, it allows me to convey a thoughtful and nuanced interpretation of a work I believe possesses qualities of human story-telling.

³ Higdon, Jennifer. *Sonata for Viola and Piano*. Philadelphia: Lawdon Press, 1990.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The following sections outline how theories of narrative, form, temporality, and embodiment might illuminate a meaningful performance of the Viola Sonata. For each of these threads I cite the most important related scholarship, summarize the theoretical principles, and define terms.

Narrative Theory

Byron Almén's seminal treatise, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, serves as the foundation of the theory I apply to Higdon's sonata. In Almén's conception of narrative structure, an initial condition, the *order-imposing hierarchy*, is challenged by a *transgressor*.⁴ The narrative unfolds as a succession of events during which the original hierarchical arrangement of order and transgressor undergoes transformations. Tracking the rise and fall of the fortunes of these units is termed *transvaluation*, a process of continual re-assessment of their relative valuative status, or *rank*.⁵

The outcome of the process of transvaluation, the identification of a *narrative archetype*, is based on which unit—order or transgressor—has ultimately been victorious or suffered defeat. The final arbiter of this assessment rests in the hands of the participants in the musical enterprise—composer, performer, listener, critic, or analyst—each with her own sentiments, values, and worldview. Almén has chosen “observer's

⁴ Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 41.

⁵ Almén, 49.

perspective” as a neutral term to account for both these individual insights and the inevitable differences in narrative interpretation that emerge from the reception of any musical work.⁶ The observer's contribution, then, is the final phase in designating the narrative archetype, a step that is only possible after all of the evidence has been gathered and evaluated.

Theory of Form

In his introduction to *Musical Form, Forms, Formenlehre: Three Methodological Reflections*, Pieter Bergé refers to the act of formulating a definition of musical form as a “precarious enterprise.”⁷ My own working definition regards musical form as the architecture of how a piece is organized. For the purpose of this project, then, I focus on the structural and organizational elements of the first movement of Higdon's sonata and how they serve as indicators of its narrative potential. My approach to form theory relies primarily on the recent contributions by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, which they term “Sonata Theory.”⁸ Their findings offer an extensive taxonomy of compositional choices as a means of understanding and interpreting the architecture of sonata forms.

Two aspects of Hepokoski and Darcy's approach are particularly suited to my investigation of the Viola Sonata. First is their premise that the trajectory of a sonata form unfolds a narrative plot over linear time that serves as an analogue to human activity.⁹

⁶ Almén, 40.

⁷ Pieter Bergé, “Prologue,” in *Musical Form, Forms, Formenlehre* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010), 11.

⁸ Please refer to the Bibliography.

⁹ Hepokoski and Darcy, 251.

Linear time involves the creation of expectations that earlier events imply subsequent ones and, conversely that later events are the product of earlier ones.¹⁰ Sonata form is perhaps the consummate exemplar of linearity in Western music, not only because of its teleology of cadential goals, but also because of what Hepokoski and Darcy describe as its rotational “chains of dramatic, linear modules.”¹¹ For these authors, the rotational model creates expectations that the music will cycle through thematic units in an ordered modular series of action spaces.¹²

Throughout this essay I use the abbreviations developed by Hepokoski and Darcy to label the action zones and cadences marked on the timeline in figure 1: P and S refer to primary-theme and secondary-theme zones, TR is the abbreviation for transition, and the closing zone is represented by C. There are three important structural cadences: MC, EEC, and ESC. The medial caesura (MC) is usually built around the dominant of the tonic. The MC falls between TR and S dividing the exposition into two parts—primary theme and transition and secondary theme and closing. Hepokoski and Darcy define the two obligatory cadences, EEC (essential expositional closure) and the ESC (essential structural closure), as the “first satisfactory” perfect authentic cadences that occur in S.”¹³ The cycling of these action zones is known as a rotation.

Hepokoski and Darcy identify five types of sonatas based on the number and deployment of rotations. For the purpose of my analysis of Higdon’s Viola Sonata, I only

¹⁰ Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 20.

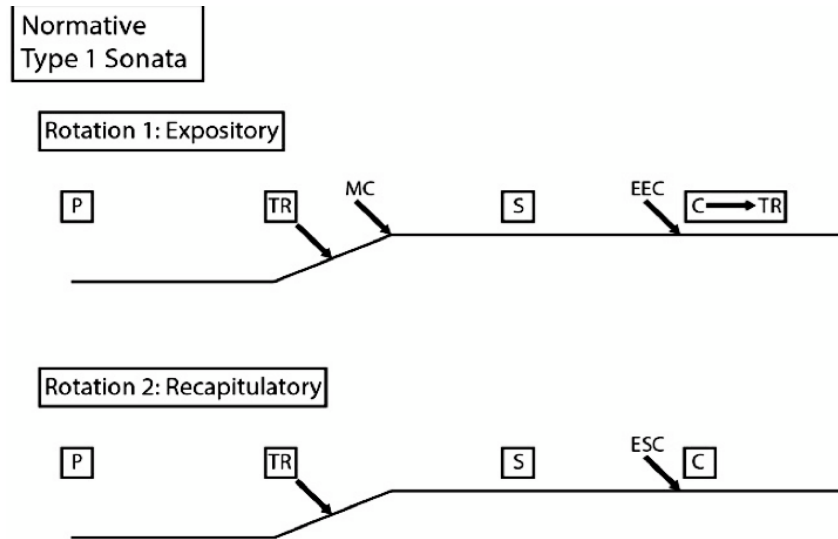
¹¹ Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 252.

¹² Hepokoski and Darcy, 16.

¹³ Hepokoski and Darcy, xxv–xxvii.

delve into the elements of one of these. I interpret the first movement to be in dialog with their Type 1 sonata, which Hepokoski and Darcy define as having a two-rotation layout with a short link between rotations as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Type 1 Sonata Timeline



In a Type 1 sonata the launch of P in the second rotation occurs at the same tonal level as the first. Because I read the first movement of Higdon's sonata to be in dialogue with the Type 1 layout, Higdon's realization of linear structures is an important element of my analysis.

Music theorist Seth Monahan has suggested that the transformed repetitions inherent in the thematic rotations of sonata form, understood as transvaluations, will likely result in meaningful narrative insights.¹⁴ The first rotation in sonata forms serves as

¹⁴ Seth Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 74–78.

the referential rotation and subsequent rotations are understood and interpreted in comparison to the first.¹⁵ An entailment of this proposition is that composer choices, even those on a local level, invite a hermeneutic interpretation from the observer.¹⁶ As in all cases in which form serves as an interpretive tool, the form will not generate a narrative plot by itself; "...they require acts of intention" from the interpreter.¹⁷ When confronting a formal type, the interpreter or analyst must draw upon previous knowledge of the procedures in question and be willing to interpret as needed when anomalies appear.

Although Sonata Theory is geared to forms created using the language of functional tonality, composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have continued to model their compositions on their Classical and Romantic predecessors, altered to fit their own compositional objectives. We can expect adaptation to traditional procedures and adjustments for the ways in which tonal centers are established and cadences composed. The reader can look forward to Higdon's take on sonata form in the section designated to form.

Theory of Temporality

I have drawn my concepts of temporality from the contributions of music theorists Jonathan Kramer (d. 2004) and Andrew Davis. In his influential book, *The Time of Music*, Kramer establishes a taxonomy of terms to address the variety of ways composers

¹⁵ Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 23 and 251–2.

¹⁶ James Hepokoski, "Sonata Theory and Dialogic Form," ed. Pieter Bergé, *Musical Form, Forms, Formenlehre* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010), 71.

¹⁷ Michael L. Klein, "Musical Story" in *Music and Narrative Since 1900*, ed. Michael L. Klein and Nicholas Reyland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 14.

in the twentieth century express time.¹⁸ Davis's chapter, "Atemporality and Narrative in Music," from his monograph *Sonata Fragments*, provides a set of terms and concepts that bring clarity to the temporal aspects of sonata forms.¹⁹ Both theorists consider the types of dualities that arise from the unfolding of time in musical compositions.

Kramer considers *linear* and *nonlinear* time to represent two complementary means by which composers configure time. According to Kramer, linear time is "the temporal continuum created by a succession of events in which earlier events imply later ones and later ones are consequences of earlier ones."²⁰ In other words, linearity is a process that unfolds over time in a successive and predictable manner.

If linear time develops associative ties among past, present, and future events, then nonlinear time creates its expectations from principles generated from within, rather than among, given time spans. Nonlinear time frustrates the listener's sense of direction and expectation among modules. While the pervasiveness of linear thinking in Western intellectual culture poses no real difficulties in understanding linearity in music, the characterization of nonlinearity is a much less familiar concept. Kramer encourages his readers to think of linear time in terms of "becoming," and nonlinear time in terms of "being."²¹ He further posits nonlinear time as an analogue to the human thought process: "Our minds can only follow but one branch of the tree of associations; we must return later if we wish to explore another branch."²² Mapping this idea onto music, moments of

¹⁸ Jonathan Kramer, 20.

¹⁹ Andrew Davis, *Sonata Fragments: Romantic Narratives in Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).

²⁰ Kramer, 20.

nonlinear temporal structures occur when there is no clear goal and segments do not appear to follow or respond to one another in predictable ways. Kramer argues that both structural types appear in all music regardless of style period, but that linearity has been the predominant force in most Western music until about 1900 when composers became increasingly attentive to nonlinear modes.²³

Davis's discussion of temporal aspects is narrative specific. He uses the opposition of *temporal* and *atemporal streams* to express the dual nature of time in narrative forms in which two versions of time can exist simultaneously or independently within a narrative.²⁴ *Temporal* stream refers to the expected linear design and includes musical events occurring at a uniform rate in chronological order, what we might call "real time" or "clock time." *Atemporal stream* describes events not developed chronologically. Deviations from the referential time may appear as accelerated or decelerated action zones, and be evident in any expansive or minute deviation in "narrative rhythm" known as "*anisochronies*."²⁵ Stories can be told in chronological order, or be told out of order. The term "*achrony*" refers to events that are "*atemporal (intemporel)*", in the sense that they remain dateless, ageless, isolated from, and independent of the larger narrative structure."²⁶

The concept of predictable linear events maps on to rotations in sonata form. As discussed in the previous section on form, rotations in sonata form are dependent upon temporal order and appear as a succession of events in linearly directed time. Since

²³ Andrew Davis, *Sonata Fragments*, 37–38.

²⁴ Davis, 38.

²⁵ Davis, 37.

sonata form is a linearly directed structure dependent on referential temporal organization, it serves as an ideal construct to observe and chart anisochronies from one rotation to the next.²⁷

Expressive meaning is derived by how events unfold throughout time. This concept in Higdon's first movement will be explained through linearity and temporal streams in the section: "Temporal and Atemporal Streams."

Theory of Embodiment

The joint efforts of cognitive linguist George Lakoff and social scientist and philosopher Mark Johnson laid the groundwork for a re-assessment of the long-held idea that body and mind are separate. Their early 1980 collaboration, *Metaphors We Live By*, served as a springboard for Johnson's *The Body in the Mind* a decade later.

The team's research led them to the concept of IMAGE SCHEMAS.²⁸ Referring to IMAGE SCHEMAS, Johnson states: "*A schema is a recurrent pattern, shape, and regularity in, or of, these ongoing ordering activities.* These patterns emerge as meaningful structures for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interactions."²⁹ Johnson points out that language is teeming with *embodied* expressions that have the power to signify

²⁷ Davis, 38.

²⁸ Lakoff and Johnson use small capitals to distinguish IMAGE SCHEMAS from ordinary language. This convention is often, but not always followed in the literature. For this project, I follow the authors' convention of small capitals.

²⁹ Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 29. Italics are Johnson's. Johnson mentions that IMAGE SCHEMAS provide a tool to mentally organize abstract ideas and images. In the quote used, "these" refers to the patterns and the order one chooses to organize them in.

psychological and physical awareness both in our daily lives and in music: “I am feeling *down*” or the “the viola *carries* the melody and then *passes* it to the piano.” The teleology of formal designs and the layout of balanced modules of tight-knit phrases are easily captured by SOURCE—PATH—GOAL and BALANCE schemas, respectively.

Allied with the IMAGE SCHEMA are the embodied metaphors embedded in musical gestures that evoke physical or psychological human behaviors. For example, in the first movement of Higdon's sonata, the viola repeats the same pitch over and over, as if stuttering. Although melodic gestures will play an important role in the analysis of this work, another source of embodied metaphor lies in such temporal structures.

These gestures and IMAGE SCHEMAS directly relate to the narrative of the work because their rhetorical implications often affect the rank of the order or the transgressor. An agent afflicted with a stutter or defective thought process would likely lose rank as part of the narrative transvaluation process. Because the human element appears prevalently in Higdon's sonata, in addition to identifying IMAGE SCHEMAS, I also identify moments when gestures ideate human-like characteristics or qualities. Gestures play a very important role in developing the narrative in the Viola Sonata.³⁰

FORM IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT

Understanding the formal organization of a movement provides the basis for interpreting how alterations and deformations of standard forms are used as expressive tools that create narratives. The following discussion highlights observations of form

³⁰ Seth Monahan, *Mahler's Symphonic Sonatas*, 78.

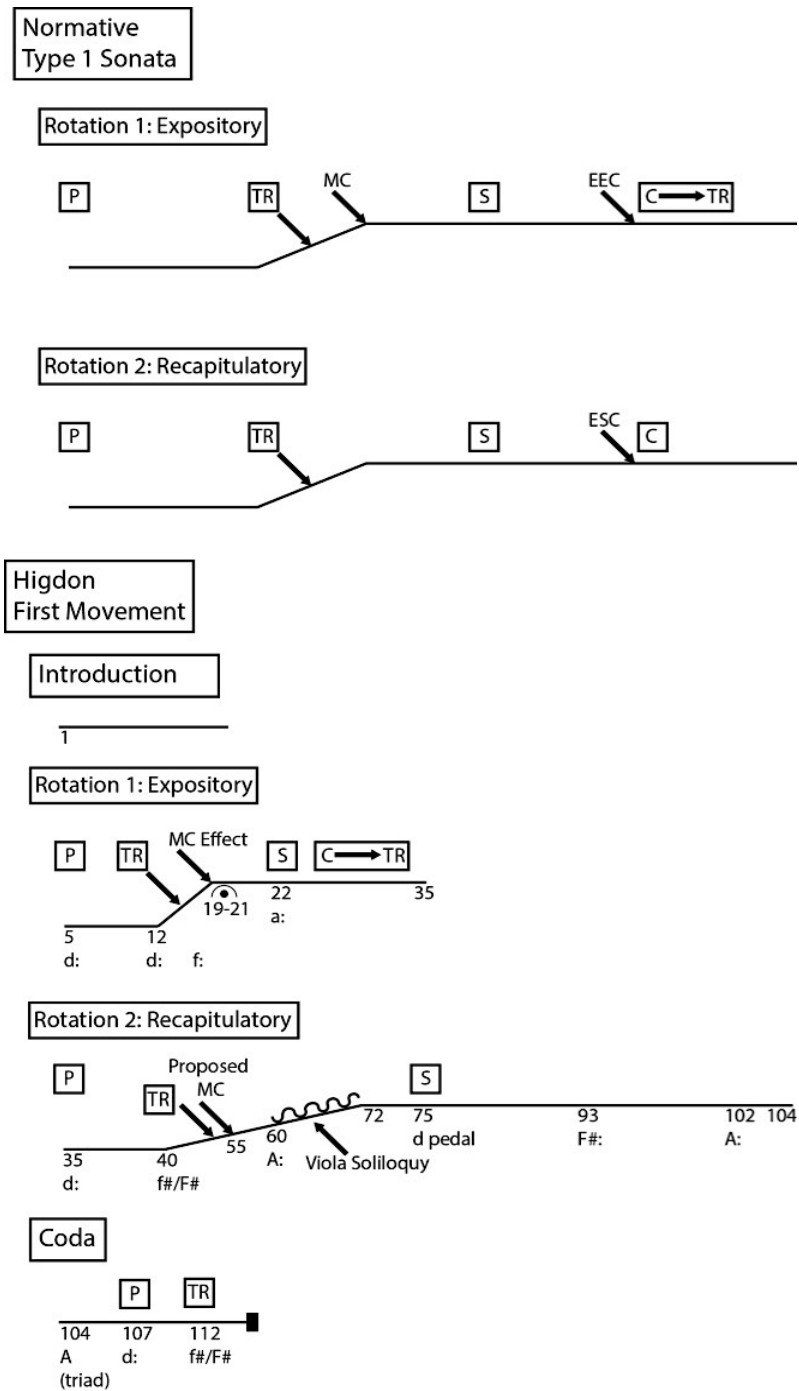
throughout the movement. This movement of the Viola Sonata appears to be in dialog with Hepokoski and Darcy's Type 1 sonata. By comparing a normative Type 1 and Higdon's first movement, one can see the similarities and differences. For most Type 1 examples, the second rotation returns to the tonic and imitates the first closely, with little embellishment. However, Hepokoski and Darcy recognize an "expanded Type 1" that features elaborations in the second rotation.³¹ This is the category into which the Higdon movement falls. Although the second rotation begins normatively, interesting accretions occur throughout the expanded second rotation especially in the latter half of the rotation. This "transformed repetition" provides especially fertile ground and material for transvaluation, as the length of the second rotation is integral to the narrative. The first timeline in figure 2 shows the structure of a normative Type 1 and the second timeline shows the structure of Higdon's first movement.

Note that the normative Type 1 and the Higdon are laid out in two rotations with themes P, TR, S, and C occurring in the same order, but that Higdon's movement differs from the normative Type 1 rotation in the length of the second rotation, as it is twice as long. The Higdon reflects the expected features of Type 1—two rotations, both of which launch with the home tonality, D, but the second rotation is seventy measures, exactly twice as long as the first. According to Hepokoski and Darcy, expansions in this variation of Type 1 usually occur in P and TR. However, in the Higdon the extension happens in zones TR and S, and the most notably longer portion is TR. In the second rotation Higdon adds a substantial viola soliloquy in measure 60. This expansion in the recapitulatory

³¹ Hepokoski and Darcy describe instances of expanded Type 1 Sonatas written by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms on pages 349–350 in *Elements of Sonata Theory*. They describe non-normative movements with expanded P and TR zones.

rotation provides a clear space for transvaluation, which I discuss in the section regarding gestures and their impact on narrative.

Figure 2: Normative Type 1 Sonata compared to Higdon's First Movement



In addition to the two rotations of the sonata form proper, Higdon includes both an introduction and a discursive coda, which frame sonata space. These two zones do not impact the designation of a Type 1 sonata label, nor do they contribute to the teleology within sonata form. The introduction and coda, however, do provide additional areas for narrative interpretation.

One should note, that while there are similarities between a Classical or Romantic sonata as described by Hepokoski and Darcy and Higdon's formal organization, there are key differences in how tonality is established and cadences are constructed and realized in each of these style periods and the contemporary Higdon. Therefore, the observer can expect to find similarities with earlier formal procedures while simultaneously using newer techniques in establishing cadences and tonal centers. As shown in the timeline in figure 2, a difference in the two timelines is the appearance of cadences. Higdon does not provide either of Hepokoski and Darcy's obligatory cadences, the EEC or ESC, and I discuss the narrative implications of their absence in the section on gesture and narrative.

According to Joseph Straus, in the absence of functional harmony and traditional voice leading, composers use a variety of contextual means of reinforcement. Many times, tonal areas are prioritized and indicated by repeated or sustained pitches within a single voice, extremes use of register, loudly sounded pitches, rhythmically or metrically stressed first and last notes, and pedals.³²

Higdon uses some of the techniques to prioritize pitches that Straus discusses to indicate tonal centers in the Viola Sonata including repeated pitches, loudly sustained

³² Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* 4th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 228.

notes, and pedals. The following discussion outlines how three of these techniques—repetitive pitches supported by prominent notes, pedals, and loudly sustained pitches—indicate tonal areas.

Throughout the movement, Higdon uses repetitive gestures and pitches, particularly in the viola part, to indicate prominent pitch sets. The first instance occurs early in movement when the viola enters in m. 5 with a gesture of repeated Ds, a gesture I refer to as the “fixated sputter.”

The “fixated sputter” motive can be divided into two parts, head and tail. The head and tail are treated differently in the various iterations. Viewed over the course of the movement the head suggests a prioritization of the pitch class represented by the repeated notes.

The sputter is the most common motive throughout the movement and likely the most aurally identifiable. From the beginning to the end of the movement, the sputter occurs on carefully selected pitches—D, F, A, and E. In conjunction with support from the bass line, these privileged sputter pitches are connected with the tonal plan associated with sonata-form tonal plans: tonic (D), Schenker’s third divider (F), and dominant (A and E, when supported by A in the bass). Example 1 shows the sputtering gesture.

Example 1: Measures 5–6. The “sputter” on D.



Note: circle: head of sputter, square: tail of sputter

The repetition of pitch class, D introduces the sputter as an integral gesture and the first implied tonal area. Although the repetition of Ds alone does not establish the

tonal center, the Ds in the viola are privileged pitches because of the viola's role as the protagonist and details of voice-leading. The importance of the viola's voice as the protagonist will be discussed in the narrative section, however, acknowledging her influence raises the importance of the repeated note in the head of the sputter.

Within the first twelve measures, the prominence of pitches spelling an A dominant-seventh chord—A-C-sharp-E-G reinforces D as tonic. Example 2 shows m. 4–12, note the two instances of the D sputter, the starred As in the piano throughout the passage, the D-minor triad circled in m. 7 in the viola line, and the highest sustained pitch—G—in the piano in m. 11.

Example 2: Measures 4–13. Reinforcing D

Example 2: Measures 4–13. Reinforcing D. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. Measure 4: Vocal line starts with a half note D4, followed by a triplet of eighth notes D4-E4-F#4, then a half note G4. Piano accompaniment starts with a half note D3, followed by a triplet of eighth notes D3-E3-F#3, then a half note G3. Measure 7: Vocal line has a half note D4, followed by a half note E4, then a half note F#4. Piano accompaniment has a half note D3, followed by a half note E3, then a half note F#3. Measure 11: Vocal line has a half note D4, followed by a half note E4, then a half note F#4. Piano accompaniment has a half note D3, followed by a half note E3, then a half note F#3. Annotations include 'molto rit.', 'a tempo', 'mp', 'ff', 'highest sustained piano note', and stars marking specific notes.

In addition to repetitive pitches, additional Straus techniques Higdon uses include very loud dynamics on sustained notes and pedal points. Straus notes that loud dynamics can indicate an important pitch or chord.³³ The triple forte in the viola in conjunction with the sforzando in the piano are the loudest collective dynamic markings in the first movement. The loud dynamics reinforce the importance of the A chord. In measure 104, the piano and viola arrive at a very loud A major chord shown in example 3.

Example 3: Measures 102—108. Pedal establishes a dominant pedal

102 **Closing** *poco a poco molto vib.*

rit. *sfz*

ritardandos, rests, chords sustained over several beats or by fermatas, and changes in texture

105 *pp* *poco - - - accel. - - - al - - -* *p* **Tempo Primo**

poco - - - accel. - - - al - - - *mp* *mf* **Tempo Primo**

The piano holds the chords for three full bars before releasing and giving way to the gesture in the viola. Higdon sustains the A major chord with a C-sharp that eventually

³³ Straus, 232.

resolves to D in m. 107 in the right hand of the piano. Caplin refers to a type of pedal that prolongs the dominant pitch beyond a half cadence as “standing on the dominant.”³⁴ Here the pedal functions as signal to return to D.

TEMPORAL AND ATEMPORAL STREAMS

The sonata form design involves a linearly-directed process that drives towards two obligatory teleological goals—the essential expositional and structural closures. The rotational principle—that is, the cycling through an ordered series of action spaces—P, TR, S, and C, and their associated thematic material—is at the heart of this process. This rotational principle is of particular interest to the present discussion.

The expositional rotation sets both the order of the themes and the pace at which these modules unfold. With the arrival of subsequent rotations, the observer will experience both narrative time (the time of the telling of the tale) and story time (the time signified within the tale) in the context of the referential arrangement. Disruptions to the normative ordering and pace set by the exposition necessarily alters the observer’s sense of time. Such disturbances in this temporal stream, known as “achronies,” include thematic expansions, interpolations, and abrupt tempo changes. These atemporal disruptions serve important expressive purposes caused by the resulting disengagement from the established linear sonata-story time.

In the section above, I argued that Higdon cast the first movement of her viola

³⁴ William E. Caplin, *Classical Forms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 16.

sonata as a two-rotational Expanded Type 1 sonata. The return of P in m. 35 declares the launch of the second rotation, drawing the listener into the expectation of linear processes familiar from the first rotation. This assumption is quickly dispelled by the breadth of the second rotation, in which performance time (narrative time) doubles.

Two key achronies occur in the second rotation. The first is an interpolation in the viola soliloquy beginning at m. 60. The second is cued by the solemn change of tempo at m. 88, marked a stately Maestoso.

Example 4 shows the preparation for the viola soliloquy. The right hand is fixed on an A major chord in mm. 55–59 while the left hand descends until the cadence is prepared by the B-flat in the last dotted eighth of m. 59. This sonority, marked for attention with a *sforzando*, signals the beginning of a cadential passage. Following events in the first rotation, the two voices are at odds and cannot seem to agree on where the cadence should occur and eventually resolve.

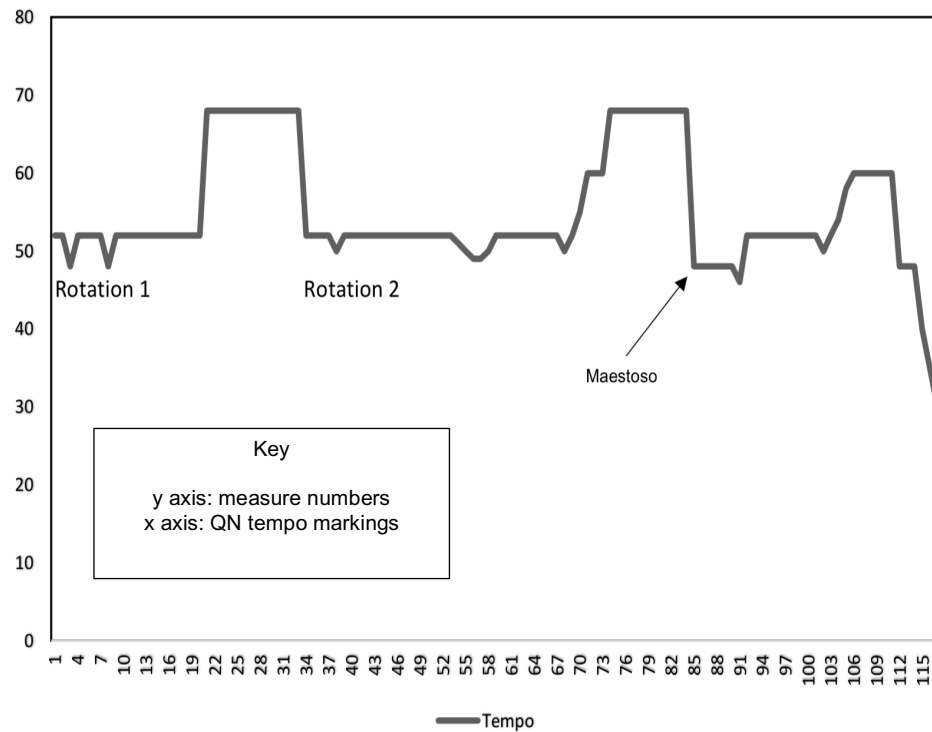
The violist, lost in her own world, ignores these signals, ending her line and thoughts in m. 59. Although the viola attempts to affect the proposed MC with the fifth of the chord, she does not release her idea at this time. Instead of launching into S space, the viola begins a twelve-measure ruminating monologue that expands the TR zone of the second rotation significantly. Her change-of-mind disengages the linearity of the observer's sense of sonata-time and enters an atemporal stream.

A second achrony—this time an unexpected change in tempo—disrupts the temporal stream in S. Figure 3 shows the abrupt shift from a quarter note equals seventy-two to a quarter note equals forty-eight at m. 88.

Example 4: Measures 55–59. Transition between P and S

The musical score for measures 55–59 features three staves: Viola, Piano, and Viola. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The tempo is marked 'rit.' (ritardando) at the beginning of measure 55. The Piano part includes a 'sfz' (sforzando) marking in measure 56 and a 'rit. decresc.' (ritardando, decrescendo) marking in measure 57. The Viola part includes a 'decresc.' (decrescendo) marking in measure 56 and a 'pp' (pianissimo) marking in measure 57. The Piano part includes a 'p' (piano) marking in measure 58 and a 'mp' (mezzo-piano) marking in measure 59.

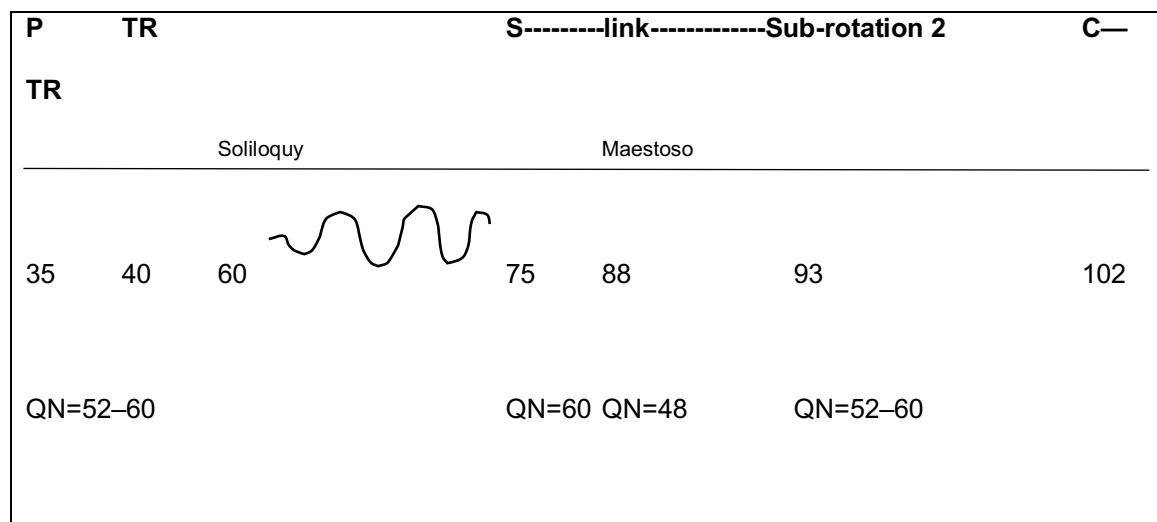
Figure 3: Tempo Chart



For the first time in the movement, Higdon writes heavily double dotted eighth

notes in the piano to invoke the French Overture topic.³⁵ As shown in figure 4, the *Maestoso* occurs in the middle of a link to the second very unstable subrotation in S. By expanding S with new material, the linear expectations set forth in the first rotation are now disrupted beyond recognition. The sense of narrative time takes a turn in the *Maestoso*. In addition to the length, the sudden change in tempo and loss of energy stymies the narrative and temporal expectations of the listener. The presence of the double dotted rhythms invokes the French Overture topic. A more detailed discussion of the narrative implications of the gesture created by double dotted rhythms can be found in the section on gestures.³⁶

Figure 4: Expansions in S



The next section on narrative delves into the intricacies of gestures, such as the

³⁵ Andrew Haringer, “Hunt, Military, and Pastoral Topics” in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 200–201.

³⁶ V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 30.

achronies discussed above, and their impact on the narrative. The ground work laid by the formal and temporal aspects of the movement are integral in following the storyline created in the first movement.

GETURE AND NARRATIVE

Almén's narrative theory relies on the intersection of an order-imposing hierarchy—representing a normative status quo—and a transgressor that challenges that order. The narrative unfolds as the listener follows the conflict to a resolution in which one of the elements prevails over the other. As I understand the trajectory of the first movement, the narrative opposition lies in the conflict between a grounded and stable order-imposing hierarchy and an ungrounded and unstable transgressor. In order to create a sense of grounded and ungrounded elements, Higdon uses specific kinds of melodic and rhythmic gestures. Grounded elements include emanating projections of fifths (mm. 1–5), stable rhythms, such as strong down beats, and consonances. Ungrounded elements are marked by rhythmic instability, the viola's fixated sputter of repeated notes (mm. 5–6), and dissonant pitches, chords, and harmonies.

Almén brings to bear other refinements to the analysis of narrative that bring about further distinction and definition beyond the umbrella of the four principal archetypes: comedy, irony, tragedy, and romance.³⁷ Each archetype is characterized by which element, order or transgressor, achieves victory or defeat. I believe the first movement of the sonata is a romance, also known as a quest narrative, where the

³⁷ Almén, 93.

grounded properties eventually prevail and conquer defeat.

Among the four archetypes there are five “rhetorical modes,” based on the human plane on which the plot plays out—intrapsychic, interpersonal, social, metonymic, and non-actorial. Of significance to Higdon's sonata is the intrapsychic mode, which involves narrative conflict and resolution within the psyche of a single persona.³⁸ It is on that basis that I consider first movement an intrapsychic quest narrative that takes place within the protagonist's dream. According to psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, C.G. Jung (1875–1961), a dream reflects the dreamer in “symbolic form” through the unconscious.³⁹ In a collection of essays written on dream analysis Jung further explains his approach:

The whole dream-work is essentially subjective, and a dream is a theatre in which the dreamer is himself the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public, and the critic. This simple truth forms the basis for a conception of the dream's meaning which I have called interpretation on the subjective level. Such an interpretation, as the term implies, conceives all the figures in the dream as personified features of the dreamer's own personality.⁴⁰

The first time I heard the sonata, I was struck by the ethereal quality of the opening. The viola and piano emerge in such a nebulous way that I was immediately reminded of the sensation of dreaming. As I listened further and started analyzing the work, a dream-scape came into view. This particular dream conveys the violist's thoughts, trials, and tribulations. The protagonist's struggles originate in the real world, but the worry and grappling are carried over into the dream space. While in the dream her

³⁸ Almén, 162–64.

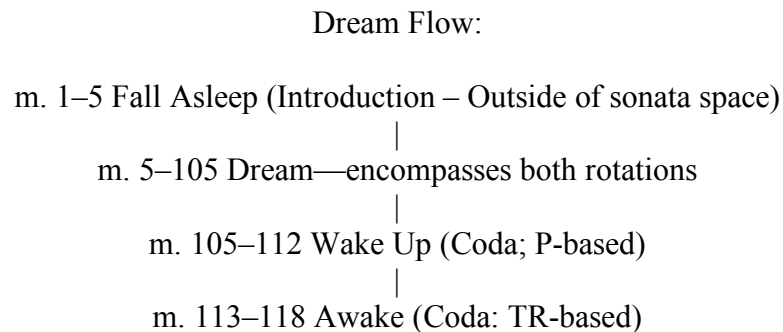
³⁹ C. G. Jung, “General Aspects of Dream Psychology” paragraph 505, in *Dreams: From Volumes 4, 8, 12, and 16 of The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Accessed September 11, 2019. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴⁰ C. G. Jung, “General Aspects of Dream Psychology” paragraph 509.

unconscious mind seeks to find grounding and make sense of and solve her real-life problems, overcoming transgressive obstacles throughout the events of her dream-journey. Her quest, through the mechanism of her dream, is to return to a reality in which the obsession with her real-life problems have been steadied.

The chart in figure 5 shows the flow of the dream segmented by measure number and placement within the formal layout. The dream-state sets the scene as the curtain goes up for the drama. This is not a fairy tale. This dream is akin to the dreams humans actually experience: disjointed, somewhat fuzzy, with a story-line that may or may not make logical sense.

Figure 5: Dream flow chart



In pursuing the process of narrative analysis, one should determine where they start from on the spectrum of being grounded/ungrounded. To do so, one must weigh a number of factors, properties, and features of the two agents. As a listener and performer, I prefer the grounded condition, and hope the transgressive elements do not prevail. The listener's relationship and sympathies towards transgressive elements, calm, and chaos

are important in determining narrative. The chart in figure 6 shows the elements used to determine grounded vs. ungrounded elements.

Figure 6: Grounded and Ungrounded Properties

Feeling:	Order = grounded	Transgressor = ungrounded
	stable	unstable
	strong downbeats	lack of downbeats
	consonance	dissonance
	fifths or fourths	
	ascending line	descending line
	middle register	extreme registers
	clear rhythms	obscured rhythms
	voices join and work together	voices do not relate
		obsessive repetitions-sputter

The initial condition is balanced and slightly more grounded than ungrounded. The chords built on fifths are grounded within themselves, but since they are planed there is an element of instability adding to the feeling of a dream. The troubled intrusion of the viola line into an environment of uneasy calm represents the first appearance of a transgressive element. The transgressors are represented by anything that disrupts the order and lowers the rank of tranquility resulting in feeling ungrounded. Rank is determined by how the pervasive elements in the story struggle to stabilize and find a sense of grounding instead of feeling ungrounded. Within the first twelve measures of the

movement more than one transgressive agent appears – obsessive notes in the viola, unstable rhythms in the piano, the inability of the two instruments to play at the same time, and unclear downbeats in the piano.

The viola is privileged and important whether displaying order-imposing or transgressive qualities because she is the sole persona of the dream. The sputter is also privileged due to its significance in indicating tonal centers that are congruent with sonata-form norms. At the middleground level, the sputter, along with bass-line support, articulates the expected from a Type 1 tonal plan.

In the opening piano gesture, a solo line of ascending fifths, there are contradictory elements leading to feelings of being both grounded and ungrounded. These elements recreate the hazy, nebulous state experienced when one is falling asleep and is caught between being fully awake, fully sleep, and dreaming. Although the piano line ascends in the first few measures, a positive aspect of the opening gesture, the rhythm, presents as a negative property.

These measures lack clear downbeats and strong sense of meter making it feel ungrounded. The arpeggiated fifths are grounded. However, planing and tied rhythms over the bar line contribute to the dream-like feeling of the opening scene being set by the piano, and to the feeling of being ungrounded. In m. 5, the viola wanders into the dreamy environment with the sputtering, repetitive motive on the pitch-class D also shown on the following page in example 5.

In cases, like this one, where there are contradictory signs the observer must weigh which element or side prevails: grounded or ungrounded. The piano's gesture features both grounded and ungrounded properties. In the case of the piano opening, the

number of grounded properties: ascending line, fifths, consonant harmonies, and middle range outweigh the ungrounded properties present.

Example 5: Measures 1–6. Gestures Introduced

Calmly ♩ = ca. 52-60

Viola

Calmly ♩ = ca. 52-60

Piano

mp

4

molto rit.

a tempo

mp

niente

a tempo

molto rit.

The dream begins with the entrance of the protagonist, the viola, presenting an important gesture, the sputter. Amidst the atmosphere created by the piano, the viola emerges as a single voice, drawing the observer’s awareness and empathy to her.⁴¹ The fixation of the repetitive notes indicates ungrounded unrest and entanglement. The sputter is obsessive and rhythmically disturbed. Example 6 shows the initial statement of the

⁴¹ In her article “Gesture and Texture in Jennifer Higdon’s Music 1998–2003,” <http://www.ex-tempore.org/MusicalStoriesx.pdf>, Deborah Rifkin describes how Higdon’s use of a solo voice in a work can represent the protagonist of the story.

sputter in the viola in m. 5–10.

Example 6: Measures 5–10. In the Dream

The image displays a musical score for measures 5–10 of a piece titled "In the Dream". The score is written for three staves: a single staff at the top (likely Viola) and a grand staff (Treble and Bass clefs) at the bottom (Piano). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 5–6, and the second system covers measures 7–8. In the first system, the Viola part (top staff) begins with a measure rest, followed by a melodic line starting in measure 6. This line is marked "a tempo" and "mp" (mezzo-piano). A bracket indicates a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment (bottom staves) begins with a measure rest, followed by a melodic line starting in measure 6. This line is also marked "a tempo". A bracket indicates a triplet of eighth notes. The piano part features a sustained bass line in the left hand. In the second system, the Viola part continues its melodic line, marked "a tempo" and "mp". The piano accompaniment continues with its melodic line, marked "a tempo". A bracket indicates a triplet of eighth notes. The piano part features a sustained bass line in the left hand. The score concludes with a measure rest in the Viola part and a final chord in the piano accompaniment.

The two musical ideas presented by the viola and the piano are very different, each instrument seems concerned with its own ideas, seemingly ignoring the other. The two dream agents perform independent gestures within a framework that does not possess a strong sense of stability. The piano gesture creates the environment for the dream-space to allow the viola protagonist to move within the dream.

The viola line falls between the two hands of the piano in the musical texture as the dreamer is in the middle of the dreamscape, placing the viola inside the scenery. The piano opens the tonal space in its introduction and introduction serves as the scenery in which the protagonist, the viola, acts. The placement of the viola within the middle of the

two hands of the piano suggests that the viola, the left hand, and right hand of the piano often work independently of one another. This independence is quite prevalent at the onset of “Very Terse” in m. 22.

Our tranquil, yet uneasy calm environment hurls further into crisis as the musical events go through a disturbing and agitated downward trajectory beginning in m. 22 with rhythmic discontinuity and a new iteration of the sputter. Although the new theme labeled “Very Terse,” presents the clearest tonal area thus far: A, the two entities encounter new problems which overpower the strong tonal arrival. At measure 22, shown in example 7, the atmosphere of no-man’s dreamland is abruptly interrupted by new material: the “very terse” theme carried by the combination of the left-hand of the piano and the viola. The piano right hand plays high above the viola as if hysterically mocking the original sputter from measure five in a more sinister manner. The Rectangle indicates lack of strong downbeats in piano and very low register.

Example 7: Measures 22–23. “Very Terse”

The image shows a musical score for measures 22 and 23 of a piece titled "Piu Mosso - Very Terse". The score is written for three staves: a single staff at the top, a grand staff (treble and bass clef) in the middle, and a single bass staff at the bottom. The top staff is marked with a box containing the number 22 and the dynamic *mf*. It features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The middle grand staff also has a box with 22 and *mf*, and shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a more complex, rhythmic line. The bottom staff is marked with a box containing 22, *mf*, and an 8va symbol, indicating an octave shift. It contains a very low, rhythmic line. A large rectangle encloses the bottom staff and the lower portion of the middle staff's bass clef part. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it in the middle staff's treble clef part.

Both our protagonist and her environment become increasingly agitated,

disturbed, and ungrounded. A move from an uneasy calm in a tranquil dream to a more distressing nightmare scenario overtakes the dreamer. As if the situation could not become direr, the viola and piano sink into further turmoil at the end of the first rotation as the feeling of instability becomes even more pronounced.

Issues with the EEC contribute to the sense of ungroundedness. Hepokoski and Darcy argue that in difficult cases, identifying closing rhetoric can be helpful in locating the EEC. They consider the P-based C a high-level default that can often help the analyst identify the onset of C. According to Hepokoski and Darcy the loud dynamics are an identifier of a P-based closing.⁴² Typically closing areas of Type 1 sonatas are expected to conclude with a PAC and then proceed via a short link to the second rotation. On that basis, since the EEC occurs just before the onset of the closing, we might posit m. 32, just before the viola and piano start to sputter together, as a natural location for the EEC. However, as shown in example 8, the downbeat of m. 32 does not satisfy the harmonic requirements for an EEC. Instead the viola and piano join to launch a normative P-based closing in a Closing-Link merge.⁴³ The *ff* marks the return of the sputtering fixation with a distinct sinking motion encompassing a twelfth including a glissando. The glissando signals the link material and the *ff* alerts the observer to the P-based closing.⁴⁴ C dovetails into the second rotation with the overlapping link, or a merge. Just as in a dream, the sections blend together with no clear and decisive stopping points as the closing drifts

⁴²Hepokoski and Darcy, 123–136.

⁴³ Hepokoski and Darcy, 106–108, 143–145, 162, 184–185, 282, 369, and 650. Hepokoski and Darcy recognize several types of merges or dovetails from one section or zone to the next. Although they do not specifically mention a merge of the closing material into the second rotation, using their principles this is a similar instance of one section dovetailing into the next.

⁴⁴ Hepokoski and Darcy, 185.

into the second rotation in m. 35.

Instead of one voice carrying the repetitive gesture, the viola and the piano join forces to close the first rotation with the sputtering material as a way to get back to the tempo primo in m. 35 which launches the second rotation. This joining of forces of the viola and piano as an indicator that our dreamer may actually be giving in to the nightmare, wrestling with herself and with her environment.

Example 8: Measures 32–35. Closing and transition—leading into the Second Rotation

The image displays a musical score for measures 32 through 35. The score is written for piano (p) and viola (ff). Measure 32 is marked with a forte (ff) dynamic. An oval highlights the beginning of a dissonant sequence in measure 32, showing half steps between the piano and viola. Measure 34 is marked with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. A starred rectangle highlights a moment of hope in measure 34, where the piano and viola play in unison. The tempo is marked 'Tempo Primo' in measure 35. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Note: Oval: show start of dissonance with half steps. Starred rectangle: a moment of hope with an E in unison, quickly dashed

The two instruments almost always lie a minor second apart beginning with the

clash of A natural in the viola with the A-flat in the upper voice in the right hand of the piano adding to the feeling of ungroundedness. In addition to the merge mirroring a dream state, fluidly changing from one scene to the next, the lack of EEC allows for a transition that avoids the expected closure.⁴⁵ This iteration of the fixation gesture features only repetition with no melodic material following it as seen in other instances of the sputter. At this point the gesture is ungrounded and very dissonant as the viola and piano descend from A–E.

At this particular moment, the viola protagonist and the piano atmosphere, become increasingly more entangled, through the use of similar rhythms, but ungrounded through the use of dissonant harmonies and syncopated rhythms, as shown in example 8. A brief sparkle of hope occurs when for a fleeting moment the two play the same pitches, making the observer believe the protagonist might be about to experience a bit of fortune. Note the star and rectangle in example 8, which marks the point that the two instruments play the same pitch—E. But our hopes are quickly destroyed, and the dissonances continue.

As hopes are dashed, the second rotation begins. The thematic modules of the recapitulatory rotation strictly follow the same order at the first. The elaborations in the second rotation indicate the lesson common option: an extended Type 1. The most striking feature is the viola solo that appears in mm. 60–73 shown in example 9. The protagonist ventures out alone in a soliloquy, as if she is ruminating and grappling with the chaos of her dream.

⁴⁵ The absence of an EEC is a deformation and provides an opportunity to apply meaning.

The solo theme is derived from stutter gestures from P. Beginning on E instead of D, the viola starts the head of the stutter then extends the tail in a winding breathless melody. Here the tail changes in contour, length, rhythm and pitch content from earlier iterations of the sputter gesture. After ruminating over the span of a dozen measures, the viola returns to the sputtering gesture, now on F.

Example 9: Measures 60–74. Viola Soliloquy

Viola Soliloquy
m. 60-74

Viola

63

66

68

70

72

p cresc. mp

a piacere

cresc. ff

poco accel. e agitato

dim. marcato cresc.

f

QN=60

From other instances of the sputter, one expects to have the head and the tail, but here there is a change in tempo and in character as the violist agitatedly plays three iterations of an altered sputter that begins with an accented triplet. On the third try, the viola is released from the trance of the sputter and the piano joins at m. 75, the launch of S.

Through the presentation of strong downbeats, the piano reenters with a more grounded and locked in version of “very agitated” at m. 75. Something has changed for both the piano force and protagonist. Note in example 10 how beats are steadier and stronger than in the first rotation when “very terse” appears in measure 22. Instead of the piano rumbling on off-beats as in m. 22, here in m. 75 the piano plays clear rhythms on beats one and two. This shift to rhythmic stability and the return to the original tonal center, D, assists the viola and piano and signifies a shift towards a sense of more stability and grounding.

Example 10: Measures 75–80. Very Terse

Very Terse ♩ = 68-72

75

Very Terse ♩ = 68-72

78

The musical score for measures 75-80, titled 'Very Terse', is presented in two systems. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 68-72. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff. The piano part features a steady rhythm on beats one and two, highlighted by rectangles. The first system covers measures 75 and 76, and the second system covers measures 77 and 78. The piano part is characterized by clear rhythms on beats one and two, contrasting with the 'very agitated' nature of the section.

Note: rectangles show strong 1st and 2nd beats in piano left and right hands

Although a sense of stability has begun to be restored in a chaotic dreamscape, the brakes are firmly set when Higdon lowers the tempo to a forty-eight beats per minute from a quarter note equals sixty-eight to seventy-two in m. 86. As discussed in the Temporal and Atemporal Streams section, the loss of tempo in the Maestoso is a disruption in the temporal stream, which moves uniformly in real time and is set forth in the referential rotation. The disruption is an anisochrony, or a disturbance in the pace.⁴⁶ Another way the listener's sense of time is misconstrued is by the presence of double dotted rhythms and the slow, grave tempo marking which invokes the French overture topic. According to Leonard Ratner and Andrew Haringer, the presence of the French Overture topic implies a ceremonious and theatric gesture.⁴⁷ This element not only disrupts the temporal stream, it implies that the end of the movement is near—the slow and dignified rhythm of the French Overture signifies a march towards the end of the protagonist's journey. The topic is signified by the slow and heavy rhythm indicated with double dotted rhythms and signifies a march towards the end of the protagonist's journey.

As with the closing of the first rotation (a non-resolving exposition), the second rotation fails to find closure with a distinct ESC. According to Hepokoski and Darcy, if the exposition fails, the second attempt many times “is also doomed to failure.”⁴⁸ In both rotations, the sputter launches a section that follows S. One can therefore posit it is a P-based closing. One might have expected the ESC just prior to the sputter, but there is no ESC. This A major chord is preceded by a B flat in the piano (a signal of a strong

⁴⁶ Davis, 37–38.

⁴⁷ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 20.

Andrew Haringer, 200–201.

⁴⁸ Hepokoski and Darcy, 178.

articulation). Because an ESC does not materialize at the end of S and instead keeps going, this recapitulatory rotation does not resolve. According to Hepokoski and Darcy “a ‘failed’ recapitulation is a strong expressive gesture—a deformation—and the expected cadence, and tonal closure for the piece, is deferred beyond sonata-space into a coda.”⁴⁹

Although the expected cadences are not achieved, this inability to find closure brings the potential to “convey extreme expressive situations.”⁵⁰ Beginning in measure 102, the viola begins repeated E’s from the sputter gesture. This iteration of the sputter is one of the most expressive gestures, as Higdon indicates for it to be performed with *molto vibrato*. The addition of intense vibrato creates the sense of slight pitch alteration and intensity. In my interpretation of the dream, the repetitions represent the final stage of the dream where the protagonist wails one last time before being awakened by a familiar calming gesture. The closing of the dream occurs outside of sonata space. In m. 105 the viola begins playing falling fifths. This is significant as it is similar to the rising fifths in the piano from the beginning of the movement.

A notable aspect of the falling fifths occurs in two brief instances in mm. 108–110, when the gesture appears with harmonics that sound an octave above the open strings on the instrument. These harmonics mark a shift in the dream. My interpretation of the harmonics, with their ethereal quality, places the dreamer beginning to awaken and finds herself in the space between sleep and wakefulness. The open strings represent openness and the end of the dream. Note the brackets in example 11 around the pitches F-C-F-Bb in the viola. The interjection of these non-harmonic notes amongst the harmonics

⁴⁹ Hepokoski and Darcy, 245.

⁵⁰ Hepokoski and Darcy, 178.

signifies the dream coming to an end as Higdon returns to a calm condition originally set forth by the emanating fifths in the piano in the first four measures of the movement. In the version with the viola playing harmonics, the timbre is softened and the vibrations and tones are airier and more ethereal.

The piano returns with the fixated sputtering gesture in octaves, an octave above where the viola plays in measure five. This return of the original statement in a high register suggests that a transformation has finally occurred. The reconciliation needed in the dream has shifted to the violist and the fixation on one note now appears to afflict the piano dream-space. The harmonics shown in example 11 in the viola now create the environment and the piano is the character walking through the space coming out of the dream that is now grounded by fifths and more discernable rhythmic stability.

Example 11: Measures 105–112. Coming out of the Dream

The musical score for measures 105–112, titled "Coming out of the Dream", is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 105–108) features a piano (p) part in the upper staff and a viola part in the lower staff. The piano part begins with a *pp* dynamic and a *poco accel.* marking, leading to a *p* dynamic. The viola part features a sputtering gesture in octaves, marked *mp* and *mf*. The second system (measures 109–112) continues the piano part with a *Tempo Primo* marking and the viola part with a sputtering gesture in octaves. The score includes various articulation markings and dynamic changes throughout the measures.

Although the story and the movement could end here, Higdon provides another section. The dreamer is now awake and our protagonist escapes the turmoil from within the dream. Notice in example 12 that this section is marked by an oscillation between an arpeggiation of F-sharp minor and F-sharp major.

Example 12: Measures 112–end. Grounded resolution—fully awake

The musical score for Example 12 consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 112-113) shows a vocal line with a triplet of eighth notes and a piano accompaniment with arpeggiated chords. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 48$. The second system (measures 114-115) continues the piano accompaniment with a more complex arpeggiated pattern. The third system (measures 116 to the end) includes a vocal line with a *poco meno mosso* marking and a piano accompaniment with a *molto rit.* marking. The final measure is circled, showing a resolution to a piano (*p*) chord.

These changes in mode show a significant shift and departure from the tonal area of D that the listener has been used to hearing during the dream. The two tonal areas create a sense of reflection of the odd dream and signify wakefulness. The piano takes over until m. 117, when the arpeggiation finally rises as the violist has the final word with a similar contour and gesture from earlier in the piece. It is as if she is looking back and reminiscing on the dream, satisfied with the outcome. The final chord is played in fifths: F# and C#.

This dream ends with satisfaction and the violist overcoming any distress within the dream. These elements indicate that our story is indeed a quest narrative, meaning that the transgressive elements are controlled or at the least, managed by the end of the movement.

Conclusion

By weaving the intricate nuances in form, temporality, and embodied gestures a story emerges in the first movement of Higdon's Viola Sonata. As humans, our struggles in daily life find their way into the subconscious mind. The relatable shared experience of falling asleep, dreaming, and waking to remember the dream comes alive in this work. The way in which Higdon uses sonata form, plays with the observers sense of time, and provides empathetic human-like gestures come together to form an approachable and relatable narrative. Higdon's music is often considered approachable by a wide range of audiences, and I believe her ability to tell stories through music, specifically in the Viola Sonata is an excellent example of her style and narrative ability.

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