WAYNE SHORTER'S *PEGASUS*: A MYTHICAL JAZZ NARRATIVE

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An Essay

Presented to the Faculty of the

Moores School of Music

Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

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by

Gerald Massoud

May 2019

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Abstract

This essay explores the application of narrative analysis to the genre of jazz and focuses

on the form, the semantic concepts involved in the projection of musical narrative, and

the act of transvaluation in Wayne Shorter's *Pegasus*. The narrative archetype proposed

in my research is based on the work Byron Almén and James Liszka. The application of

semiotic and narrative analysis to *Pegasus* will contribute to an understanding of how

Shorter utilizes specific motives, melodies, and compositional techniques in the

expression of musical meaning. I believe this analytic methodology will uncover aspects

of expression involving melody, improvisation, and harmony in jazz that current methods

of jazz analysis do not address. Semiotic and narrative analysis offers interpretive insights

into the creative process of the composer or improviser. This approach can potentially

inform students and teachers in constructing and developing relationships between

melody, improvisation, and harmony. While this essay is focused on the composition and

not the improvisation, I intend for my research to help others apply semiotic and narrative

analysis to both composition and improvisation in jazz.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment and thank everyone that made this essay possible. First, I need to thank my family for their continual support through this endeavor. My wife has been by my side through the entire process and made sure I had time, space, and support. I would like to also thank my mom for allowing me to pursue music and support me to become a musician.

I would also like to thank my committee for keeping me honest, humble, and hungry through this entire process. If it wasn't for Dr. Koozin, Dr. Sposato, Dr. Smith, and Noe Marmolejo, I would not have made it this far nor would I have been able tackle such a demanding topic.

I also want to thank Monica Ellis, the bassoonist for Imani Winds, and John Patitucci, the bassist for Wayne Shorter's quartet, for assisting me with constructing the score and for their guidance. After years of contact with both musicians, they not only assisted my research, but allowed me to learn more about Shorter on the bandstand-which is an invaluable resource when researching his music.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Musical Examples

Introduction, Methodology, and Biography

Introduction

   Culture is the representation of a society and is the medium through which values

are interpreted. We find significance in the morals or central themes found in art.

Specifically, music scholars have developed various methods to study central themes in

compositions and examine culture through the musical lens. In the last several decades,

narrative analysis has become a new perspective through which one can focus on the

trajectory of themes in a large work. This type of analysis allows the listener to discover

associations and as a result, connect more deeply with the music. By applying narrative

analysis, programmatic intentions and narrative trajectories are discovered in both old

and new compositions. However, most of this research has been applied to classical and

romantic art music alone.

   In my research, I address this issue and posit that narrative analysis can be applied

effectively to the jazz genre. By employing the narrative analysis techniques of Byron

Almén and James Liszka, we can uncover narrative trajectories in jazz composition and

improvisation. In this essay, I will apply narrative analysis to jazz composition, in

particular Wayne Shorter's *Pegasus* from his 2013 live album *Without a Net*. The album

features the Wayne Shorter Quartet, consisting of Shorter on tenor and soprano

saxophone, Danilo Pérez on piano, John Patitucci on bass, and Brian Blade on drums, and

features the Imani Winds, comprised of Valarie Coleman on flute, Toyin Spellman-Diaz

on oboe, Mariam Adam on clarinet, Jeff Scott on French horn, and Monica Ellis on

bassoon.[1] This large-scale work for jazz quartet and classical wind quintet is a hybrid of jazz and classical compositional elements and is an exceptional candidate for narrative analysis. Using my transcription of *Pegasus*, I will demonstrate that Wayne Shorter invokes myth as a comedy archetype in the work.

As a musician Shorter is deeply affected by Classical literature and the spiritual principles of Buddhism. During his early career writing music for Art Blakey and Miles Davis, Shorter channeled his affinity for literature, often naming his compositions after mythological characters and literary heroes while referencing concepts from religious texts.[2] After finding Buddhism, Shorter rediscovered himself as a person and musician, searching for a new direction in his life and music.[3] In 1997, working with his acoustic quartet, Shorter began to revisit older compositions, venture into cosmic topics, and, most importantly for this research, write large-scale pieces.[4]

Patricia Julien and Steven Strunk have written about Shorter's early period compositions, but no one has analyzed and published about his middle or late period works.[5] Michelle Mercer wrote the only biography of Shorter, which presents a broad

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[1] Wayne Shorter, *Without a Net*, recorded December 8, 2010, Blue Note 79516, 2013, compact disc.

[2] Wayne Shorter, *The All Seeing Eye*, recorded on October 15, 1965, Blue Note 5245432, 2000, compact disc; Wayne Shorter, *Speak No Evil,* recorded on December 24, 1964, Blue Note 4990012, 1999, compact disc; Wayne Shorter, *Second Genesis*, recorded on October 11, 1960, VeeJay Records VJ 016, 1998, compact disc. These are just three notable albums referencing literature, myth, and religious texts.

[3] Michelle Mercer, *Footprints: The Life and Work of Wayne Shorter* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2007), 64-73.

[4] Shorter, *Without a Net;* Wayne Shorter, *Beyond the Sound Barrier*, recorded between 2002 and 2004, Verve Records 9881281, 2005, compact disc; Wayne Shorter, *Alegría*, Universal/Verve Records 5435582, 2003, compact disc. These are the latest three albums, all exploring Shorter's musical vision of the unknown.

[5] Patricia Julien, "The Structural Function of Harmonic Relations in Wayne Shorter's Early Compositions: 1959-1963" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park), 2003; Steven Strunk, "Notes on Harmony in Wayne Shorter's Compositions," *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 301-332.

overview of his personal life. But much is left to explore in regard to Shorter's

compositional process. My analysis builds upon the current research by exploring the

narrative components of *Pegasus.*

I chose to analyze Pegasus using narrative analysis, even though this approach has

traditionally been applied primarily to symphonic, chamber, and piano works. Narrative

analysis seems appropriate when considering that this work shares similar traits and

components to symphonic and classical chamber pieces. But what does it mean to apply

narrative analysis to music and what are some misconceptions? Byron Almén best

explains many assumptions made about analyzing narratives in music:

> First, narrative music is often thought to be in some way problematic or
> idiosyncratic: that is, we resort to narrative interpretations when traditional
> formal, harmonic, and generic paradigms do not apply… Second, narrative
> music tends to be associated with programmaticism, dramatic or epic
> texts, evocative tales, or any of a variety of "attachments" that ready the
> listener to hear the music in a special way… Third—and most tellingly—
> narrative music is typically understood as a derivative phenomenon. Its
> formal strategies, subject matter, and critical meta-language are all
> apparently imported from literature or drama.[6]

Almén addresses three speculations about narrative music, or programmatic music, and

explains the various ways the listener attaches preconceived notions to a work's themes

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[6] Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 3.

and motives. For example, a listener would assume Claude Debussy's *La Mer* will musically depict or generalize the sea. However, narrative analysis does not address the programmatic nature of a work, but rather, it uses analytic techniques to uncover the narrative trajectory.

Narrative analysis uncovers a narrative plot constructed by interaction of musical agents over time in a piece of music. Whether the composer intended the piece to be absolute music or programmatic music is irrelevant to the end result of a narrative analysis. What is vital to narrative analysis is the interaction of musical agents and comparing the interactions to narrative archetypes seen in literature. In my research, I am using a comedy narrative archetype to compare to the musical interactions in *Pegasus*.

Methodology

The comedy narrative archetype in music is based on the literary plot where there "is movement from an original harmonious order to its disruption and finally its restoration."[7] The dominant hierarchical order, or the established rules of social order, is challenged by a hero, whom is part of a lower social order. As the plot moves forward, the transgressing comic hero doesn't expel the dominant element, but succeeds in taking actions that bring about some sort of beneficial change or successful challenge to the ruling order. Music can adapt the same literary plot where characters in the narrative are themes and motives. As the piece moves forward, a narrative can be identified according to the same rules, characteristics, and plot lines seen in literature. A comedy archetype

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[7] James Jakób Liszka, *The Semiotic of Myth: A Critical Study of the Symbol* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 130.

presents two main types of musical agents, a transgressive element and an order-imposing

hierarchy, and articulates the victory of the transgressive element over the order-imposing

hierarchy.

Musical agents are realized characters in the narrative, capable of social

interaction. Almén defines an agent as an "anthropomorphized syntactic unit," or simply

put, a musical theme or motive that is able to have human-like interaction with other

agents.[8] This does not mean a musical agent is the realization of characters in

programmatic music. Instead, the agent is defined by its expressive musical

characteristics, which can include notes, rhythm, meter, timbre, articulation, dynamics,

and/or other musical features. Through its expressive musical characteristics, the agent

takes on a persona, similar to a human person, and the syntactic unit can be valued on its

perceived social standing in the musical narrative.

The construction of my narrative analysis model is based on Almén's musical

narrative theory. Almén organizes narrative analysis into three levels, which can be seen

in Table 1.1. Each level of narrative analysis can be described as follows: the first level

(agential) identifies specific musical agents, the second level (actantial) identifies how the

agents interact over time in the music from the beginning to the end, and the third level

(narrative) projects a story-like narrative structure based on the interactions.[9] In the

narrative level of analysis, Almen relies on James Liszka's concept of transvaluation.

This concept defines the moment in which the listener uses their own experiences to

create and understand the narrative structure of a literary work. As a result of Almen's

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[8] Almén, 5.

[9] Almén, 74.

5

work, literary archetypes can be used as the basis of analysis for musical works. Almén states Liszka's theory, which is applied to a myth, can be applied to music as "it reveals the link between the interplay of musical events and the cultural function of the resultant temporal pattern," and subsequently articulates the narrative trajectory.[10]

Table 1: Almén's Three Levels of Narrative Analysis

	First Level	**Second Level**	**Third Level**
Narrative Label	Agential	Actantial	Narrative
Meaning	Identify agents and their musical characteristics.	Observe and discern relationships between the agents over time in the piece.	Determine the narrative archetype based on the first two levels.

I want to discuss the ternary form of *Pegasus*, for it will serve as a road map. Having the form and narrative trajectory side-by-side during the narrative analysis will help with the understanding of the placement and interactions between the musical agents in the piece. The exact placement of an agent within a form influences the narrative trajectory, because the perception of the agent varies depending on the function of the section within which it occurs. If the musical agents follow or deviate from the expected formal trajectory, then the interaction between the form and the musical agents create meaning in the narrative. *Pegasus* has a ternary design with an A section, B section, and A' section.[11] The A section in *Pegasus* is constructed of a primary theme and two

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[10] Almén, 66.

[11] William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71. I will only refer to each formal section as A, B, and A'.

subordinate themes, all in the key of A-major. The B section is constructed with three

contrasting themes in different key centers, each followed by a solo section using

material from each corresponding theme to create the basis for improvisation. All three

themes of the B section are not part of the order-imposing hierarchy but is the musical

space for improvisation. The returning A' section is constructed of variations of the

primary theme and variations of other pre-existing themes from the introduction, A

section, and B section.

Figure 1: Large Form and Narrative Trajectory of *Pegasus*

Measure Number	1	5	98	114	118	136	144
Ternary Form	Introduction		Transition	A Section			
Themes	Vamp 1	Introduction Theme		Vamp 2	A1- Primary Theme	A2 - Second Theme	A3 - Third Theme
Agents			T2.1 (Horn Call)		O1 (Order-Imposing Hierarchy)		T3.1 (Quarter-Note Motive)
Key				A			

Measure Number	156	164	192	224	244	276	292
Ternary Form	B Section						Transition
Themes	B1 - First Theme	Solo 1	B2 - Second Theme	Solo 2	B3 - Third Theme	Solo 3	
Agents			T1 (Half-Step Motive)		T1		T1
Key	e			d	a		

Measure Number	334	338	248	362	382	390	394	490	494	502	510
Ternary Form	A' Section										Coda
Themes	Vamp 3	A'1 - Primary Theme	A'1 - Primary Theme		A'1 - Primary Theme	A'1 - Primary Theme	A'3 - Third Theme	Vamp 4	A'1 - Primary Theme	A'1 - Primary Theme	Vamp 5
Agents		O2 + T1	O3 + T1	T2.2	O4	O5	T3.2		O4	O6 + T1	T3.3
Key	A		b								

I will briefly discuss Wayne Shorter's biographical history, compositional history, and why most of his compositions have a clear narrative dimension. His biography is important because throughout his life he exhibits a passion for creating narratives and telling stories. In his career, Shorter worked with Art Blakey and Miles Davis, both of whom shaped his compositions and his ambitions as a creator. Both band leaders allowed Shorter to write without restrictions and challenged his performance standards and compositional process to achieve a higher level of art. After departing Miles Davis's band, Shorter spent time refining his style and eventually starting his own ensemble. His jazz quartet, which was the core ensemble of all his projects in the last two decades, experimented with the foundation of jazz and with improvisation. This experimentation led to *Pegasus*, which blends a traditional jazz quartet with a traditional wind quintet to create a piece that combines classical and jazz elements.

Biography

Wayne Shorter's creativity was encouraged during his childhood. His family did not have many resources or opportunities for growth. However, Shorter's mother encouraged Wayne and his brother Alan to explore their creativity as a source of entertainment. According to Michelle Mercer, Louise "protected them from the slings and arrows of outrageous mediocrity… it was a time for creative industry, and their state of inventive absorption was sacred."[12] Shorter's mother considered this time more important than household chores, even if it was against his father's will. Louise came home from

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[12] Mercer, 13.

work with various art supplies, fostering their imagination. This sacred creative space was the bedrock of Shorter's artistry.

Art Blakey was the catalyst in Shorter's career as a composer. Shorter was recruited from Maynard Ferguson's band in 1959 to become the tenor saxophonist with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers.[13] His work with Art Blakey fully opened the doors for Wayne Shorter and his creative process because Blakey unofficially promoted Shorter to musical director of the group. Freddie Hubbard mentioned to Blakey he wanted to be the musical director for the band. However, Blakey said it was not his time yet, inferring Shorter was the leader of the group.[14] Tasked with writing most of the music for the Jazz Messengers, Wayne Shorter was given the opportunity to explore his imagination and develop his innovative style.

From 1964 to 1970, Miles Davis changed Shorter's voice as an improvisor and composer. Shorter's time with Art Blakey helped develop his compositional style, whereas Shorter's time with Miles Davis helped refine and purify his style. Keith Waters, writing about the Miles Davis Quintet, summarizes the difference, saying, "Shorter's playing is steeped in the hard bop tradition, yet much of it commits to motive and gesture in favor of patent negotiation of the harmonies. Significant, too, is how Shorter's motivic and gestural ideas sometimes range across formal boundaries of the compositions,

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[13] Mercer, 64-73. This chapter explains the entire story of when Wayne Shorter moved from Maynard Furgeson's band to Art Blakey's band. While Shorter was on tour with Furgeson, he was convinced to switch bands by his colleagues to fill the tenor saxophone spot because the position was currently unstable and needed a new voice.

[14] Mercer, 90.

heightening the sense of formal ambiguity."[15] Wayne Shorter learned to become patient

and purposeful with his playing while working with Davis. He was able to explore

different sounds, colors, and shapes with his motives, stating, "With Miles, I felt like a

cello, I felt viola, I felt liquid."[16] Instead of being bound by form and traditional jazz

improvisational techniques, Shorter imagined himself unrestrained by the status quo,

created a new voice through imitation of other instruments, and broke through

preconceived notions of improvisation to explore free jazz. This new style distanced

Shorter from the usual hard bop sound in the 1960s and influenced his compositional

process.

Wayne Shorter approaches music through a literary point of view. While on tour

with Blakey in Japan in 1961, Shorter was confronted by Japanese reporters with the

question, "What is originality?"[17] While Shorter did not answer the question since Art

Blakey took lead in the interview, the question stuck in Shorter's mind. In an interview

with Max Dax, Shorter recalls the moment in Japan and gives his answer to the Japanese

reporters:

> I like the phrase, "the mystery of us." Not only as musicians, but also as
>
> human beings we're on this adventure called life. I always say life is the
>
> ultimate adventure of the mystery of us. I know there's people who think

---

[15] Keith Waters, *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 25.

[16] Conrad Silvert, "Wayne Shorter: Imagination Unlimited," *DownBeat* 44, no.13 (July 14, 1977): 15.

[17] Wayne Shorter, "'To Me Jazz Means: I Dare You'—Max Dax Talks to Wayne Shorter," interview by Max Dax, *Electronic Beats,* accessed February 10, 2015, https://www.electronicbeats.net/to-me-jazz-means-i-dare-you-max-dax-talks-to-wayne-shorter/.

"ultimate" means "end." But I think ultimate means "unending." No walls,

no boundaries. The question is: how do you play that?[18]

Life is full of mystery and humans should not believe there is ever an end. Music is a

vehicle to investigate life's questions and Shorter wants his music to be the exploration of

"no walls, no boundaries." Every note, rhythm, and harmony is an expression of

answering his question, "how do you play that."

Shorter's compositional process is guided by an inner narrative and not by formal

structures set by jazz tradition. In an interview with Mel Martin, Wayne Shorter explains

how movies affected his thought process:

> Musical influence for me came from movies, the way people acted on the
>
> screen or stage. I would think, "I want to do something the way Humphrey
>
> Bogart did in that movie." When Marlon Brando would do something I'd
>
> say, "Wow, play that!"… The idea is to transcend music. And also to
>
> transcend the academia of music. Something else manifests, something
>
> else takes place.[19]

Here, Shorter is commenting that his creative process is not focused on technical features

such as chord structures or melodic shapes; music is playing the action of a story and

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[18] Shorter, interview by Max Dax.

[19] Wayne Shorter, "Wayne Shorter," interview by Mel Martin, *Saxophone Journal* 16, no. 4 (January/ February 1992): 12.

giving life to a moment. Notes, rhythms, and harmonies serve the story and the performer

manifests visual action into musical events. The names of his compositions are not meant

to derive secondary meaning, but to give a snapshot of the narrative of the character. His

melodies depict a scene and his solos project the drama created by interactions of the

characters in the scene. To culminate the idea, Shorter says himself, "Well, I like to make

music that [is] musical motion pictures without movies. And life has become my own

motion picture. That's *some thing*."[20]

Wayne Shorter's compositional process is also influenced by his passion for

literature, fantasy, and myth. Shorter was influenced by comics at an early age, even

writing his own comic in 1946, and found solace in the fantasy realm.[21] When he started

to play music professionally with Art Blakey and Miles Davis, he developed a style based

on replicating action, sights, and sounds found in movies and literature. Even his

longtime friend and colleague Herbie Hancock mentions his enthusiasm for fantasy,

stating, "Wayne is kind of like Yoda. He speaks in this whimsical way, but he's also very

wise. He's like a Jedi knight! And he loves superheroes—he's totally into fantasy and

comics."[22] All of Wayne Shorter's experiences with literature, fantasy, and myth are

derived from his life and his view of the world. He even holds a massive collection of

movies, often quoting one-liners during tours with the band.[23] Shorter connects anything

and everything outside music and finds a way to "play that."

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[20] Mercer, 271.

[21] Mercer, 23-24.

[22] Herbie Hancock and Lisa Dickey, *Possibilities* (New York: Viking, 2014), 79.

[23] Mercer, 259-261.

Wayne Shorter's works during the 1960s explore his departure from bebop into new territory. *The All Seeing Eye*, a record released in 1965 during his time with Miles Davis, marks a definite change in Shorter's compositions. In the liner notes to the album, Shorter tells Nat Hentoff, "Once you begin thinking about the nature of the universe and the nature of man, there's no way of stopping… It's all open, without finite limits."[24] Although mentioned previously that Shorter took a life time to answer the Japanese reporter's question, "What is originality?" there is no doubt this album indicates Shorter's departure from the hard bop idiom and into his own category of reflecting on literature, fantasy, and myth.

Wayne Shorter's compositions can be broken down into three periods. His early period is from 1959 to 1974, which was during his time with Art Blakey, Miles Davis, and Weather Report. These compositions were generally centered around literature and abstract moments, such as: "Tom Thumb," "Beauty and the Beast," and the album *The All Seeing Eye*—which is an album devoted to Christian biblical references.[25] His second period, from 1974 to 1997, was a period of self reflection when he revisited his older compositions from his years with Miles Davis, worked on collaborations with Herbie Hancock, and experimented with electronic instruments. Shorter's late period, from 1997 to present day, is a shift to his vision of the unknown.

The concept of the unknown lacks direction and information; but through Wayne Shorter's perspective, he strives to create music expressing his vision of the unknown.

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[24] Nat Hentoff, liner notes to *The All Seeing Eye*, Wayne Shorter, Blue Note BLP 4219, 1965, vinyl.

[25] Wayne Shorter, *The All Seeing Eye.*

When Shorter began practicing Nichiren Buddhism in 1973, he was on tour with Weather

Report opening for Santana in Japan.[26] After spending most of that year learning the

Lotus Sutras and committing himself to practicing Buddhism, Shorter started a journey to

shed himself from his past and began to focus on the unknown. In an interview with

Larry Appelbaum in 2012, Shorter describes the unknown:

> But it doesn't take courage to show what you know. It takes courage to go
>
> beyond what you know. Because how can you rehearse the unknown? This
>
> is where the world is at today. There's no confidence. Scared what's going
>
> to happen tomorrow. I said, "We have to create a new singularity in the
>
> arts and everything, a singularity where we learn to deal with the
>
> unexpected, we negotiate we dialogue with the unexpected; we don't
>
> dialogue with something that's supposed to work, with formula, and use
>
> that formula to attack...to tame the unknown." I say, "we take the best
>
> from the past, and discard what's only a casing, clothing for the...and we
>
> use it as a flashlight to shine into the darkness of the unknown."[27]

The albums released since 1997 with his quartet challenge our perception of the unknown

by creating new work that question the boundaries of jazz by reimagining his older

compositions. Since Shorter has previously written music about literature and fantasy, his

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[26] Mercer, 153.

[27] Wayne Shorter, "Interview with Wayne Shorter," interview with Larry Appelbaum, accessed February 15, 2015, https://larryappelbaum.wordpress.com/2013/02/03/interview-with-wayne-shorter-pt-1/.

composition *Pegasus* fits into the later period while connecting with his entire canon. While his earlier works during his first two periods were limited by instrumentation and orchestration, this composition incorporates a wind quintet to fill out the dense harmonic language, allowing Shorter to express his vision of the unknown. The combination of the two ensembles, together with a new compositional approach in the jazz genre, enables Shorter to create a musical framework that invites the listener to venture into his musical conceptualization of the unknown.

Narrative Analysis of *Pegasus*

In this analysis, there are four musical agents that I will discuss. One agent is the order-imposing hierarchy and the other three agents are transgressive elements. I will identify the theme that depicts the order-imposing hierarchy and the three motives that portray the transgressive elements in the first level, the agential level. Then I will examine the second level, the actantial level, using the synthesis discursive strategy, which charts out the important interactions between the agents over time from the beginning to the end of the work. In the final level, the narrative level, I will explain transvaluation, its importance to understanding the narrative level, and the overall events that lead to the transgressive elements defeat of the order-imposing hierarchy.

Agential Level

Almén articulates that the initial order-imposing hierarchy developed in a comedy archetype is "presented as flawed, limiting, or overly rigid."[28] The primary theme of the A

28 Almén, 189.

16

section, labeled O1 in Example 1, symbolizes the order-imposing hierarchy. Later variations will be labeled O2 through O6.

Example 1: Shorter, *Pegasus*, Order-Imposing Hierarchy, O1[29]

O1 features a rising melody in A-Major starting on E and reaches B, creating an open interval on the final note against the root/bass of the E (sus 4) harmony. This agent is supported by a static ostinato bass line outlining an A-Major triad, infusing a pastoral quality to the theme. O1 can be split into two parts: the first five measures, Part 1, a melodic rise to B with a short fall to C#, and the final three measures, Part 2, a rapid rise from E to B. In the actantial level of analysis, the alterations to the second half of the theme play a vital role in the eventual victory of the transgression over the order-imposing hierarchy.
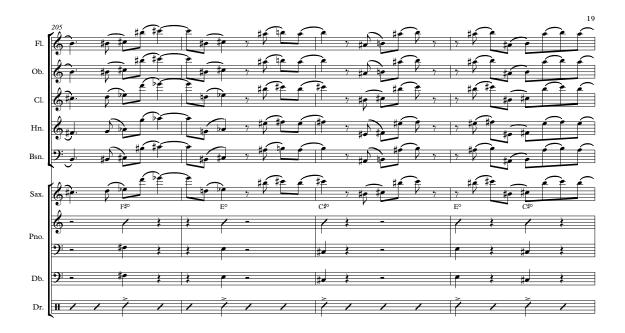
---

[29] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

17

The order-imposing hierarchy in *Pegasus* is considered limiting and rigid because it never changes range, pitch, rhythm, articulation, dynamics, or harmony during the A section. A comedy archetype requires the order-imposing hierarchy to present itself in this manner so that the transgressive elements can cause a reversal of the perceived social landscape in the narrative.

All three transgressive elements in the narrative trajectory of *Pegasus* are a contrast to the order-imposing hierarchy. Instead of being seen as "flawed, limiting, or overly rigid," the transgressive elements are viewed as adaptable.[30] Adaptability, in the context of narrative analysis and the comedy narrative archetype, means the transgressive element is able to achieve a higher status in the perceived social landscape. Because comedy narratives often address the rejection of social limits and value change, the inevitable transformation to the perceived social landscape in a comedy narrative archetype can only be achieved with adaptable transgressive elements. The characteristics of a transgressive element can be based on any of the musical characteristics that define a musical agent: melody, rhythm, harmony, etc. All three transgressive elements embody change and are able to combine with other themes and motives throughout the piece. They are also often distanced from the order-imposing hierarchy in the form, highlighting the discordant social landscape of the narrative trajectory. The transgressive elements are discussed and labeled in order of importance, not in the order in which they appear in the formal trajectory.

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[30] Almén, 189.

The most important transgressive element in the narrative trajectory of *Pegasus* is seen in the second theme of the B section, B2. It is labeled T1 and can be seen in Example 2.

Example 2:Shorter, *Pegasus*, Transgressive Element 1, T1[31]

The agent is articulated by a rising half-step and is used extensively to develop the second and third theme in the B section. It also creates chromaticism within melodies and variations of themes, which is a contrast to the order-imposing hierarchy. T1 is the most important transgressive element in the narrative trajectory because of its repetitive use in the B section and the A' section. This agent also is the first and last transgressive element to disrupt and combine with the order-imposing hierarchy. The transgressive function of

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[31] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

T1 is to disrupt the melodic line and to create instability. T1 is highly adaptable because it is a simple musical idea and combines with different themes throughout *Pegasus*.

     The second most important transgressive element is the horn call from the introduction, seen in Example 3 and is labeled T2. In the first iteration of T2, it ushers in the A section just as a fanfare would introduce a person of importance.

Example 3: Shorter, *Pegasus*, Transgressive Element 2, T2.1[32]

This horn call is articulated like a fanfare, bound melodically by a perfect fifth, excluding the short appoggiatura, while also suggesting a pastoral quality through the treatment of rhythm and orchestration, using brass, woodwind, and percussion in a large range of
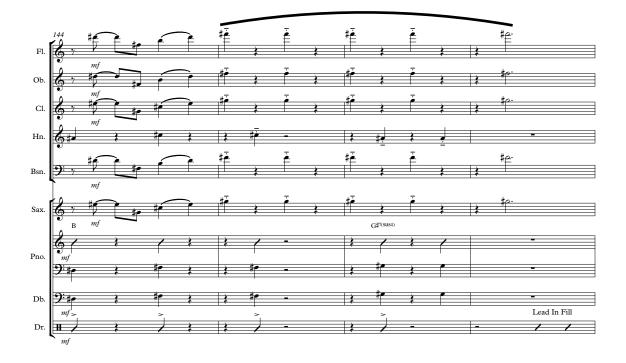
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[32] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

parallel octaves.[33] T2 is the second most important transgressive element because it dictates changes in the formal and narrative trajectory in A'. T2 is considered a transgressive element in the narrative because the horn call interrupts the formal trajectory of the A' section. The formal trajectory in A' is to complete the same cycle of themes as A. When T2 returns after the B section, instead of preceding the first statement of the primary theme in A', T2 is relocated into the middle of A'. After O2 and O3, T2 emerges when the expectation is to hear the second theme of A. The fact that T2 is able to move its formal location and disrupt the narrative trajectory illustrates its adaptability, another trait of a transgressive element.

The third most important transgressive element is the repeated quarter-note rhythm used in the third theme of the A section, seen in Example 4 and is labeled T3. T3 involves an expressive character that is important to the sound of the transgressive element. Of all the musical agents involved in the analysis, T3's expressiveness is a contrast to the order-imposing hierarchy because T3's character is based on rhythm instead of pitch. Repeated notes on strong beats, whether three or more, are used throughout *Pegasus*. Each note is often slightly staccato and deliberate within the phrasing. In its first appearance, the quarter notes repeat and are placed higher in the register of the flute, oboe, clarinet, and soprano sax. T3 is the third most important transgressive element because the agent only appears briefly in the A section and creates one interruption in the narrative trajectory during A'. T3 is considered a transgressive element because it returns in A' with an expansive and developing section. When T3 is

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[33] I include piano as a percussion instrument in the orchestration due to its sound quality in this particular moment. With the piano placed octaves above the lower voices, it resembles a bell more than a piano in a traditional performance.

introduced in the A section, it is a part of an eight-measure phrase. In T3's return in the A'

section, it is a part of a ninety-six measure section, demonstrating the transgressive

element's adaptability and ability to develop a wedge in the narrative trajectory.

Example 4: Shorter, *Pegasus*, Transgressive Element 3, T3.1[34]

The interactions of these four agents, the order-imposing hierarchy and three

transgressive elements, articulate a narrative design. The establishment of the order-

imposing hierarchy and the impending change brought about by the transgressive

elements will be discussed in the next level of analysis. The actantial level of analysis

focuses on the presentation of agents over time from the introduction to the B section,

which sets up the conflict during the returning A' section.

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[34] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

22

Actantial Level

The second level of analysis, the actantial level, will utilize Almén's synthesis discursive strategy to map out the interactions of the musical agents in the narrative trajectory. This strategy states that the transgressive elements gradually combine with the order-imposing hierarchy from which they were previously excluded.[35] Victory over the order-imposing hierarchy is achieved in the narrative trajectory through reconciliation and a new society is created that includes all four agents.[36] As mentioned before during the agential level, the order-imposing hierarchy is rigid and unable to change. In contrast, the transgressive elements are more adaptable and flexible, allowing the elements to achieve higher rank in the social landscape by rejecting the limits of the order-imposing hierarchy.[37] By the end of the narrative trajectory, the transgressive elements do not overthrow the order-imposing hierarchy, but instead change the rigidity and perceived social rank of the order-imposing hierarchy.

The first transgressive musical agent to appear in the form is T2, the horn call, during the transition of the introduction. As the music moves from the slow introduction to a steady, upbeat tempo, T2 announces the upcoming entrance of the order-imposing hierarchy. In contrast to the constant change in key centers and local tonicizations seen in the slow introduction, T2 features a simple melody in A-flat over a static B-flat minor chord. Combined with the formal demarcation and the announcement from the horn call, something important to the form and narrative will follow.

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[35] Almén, 188.
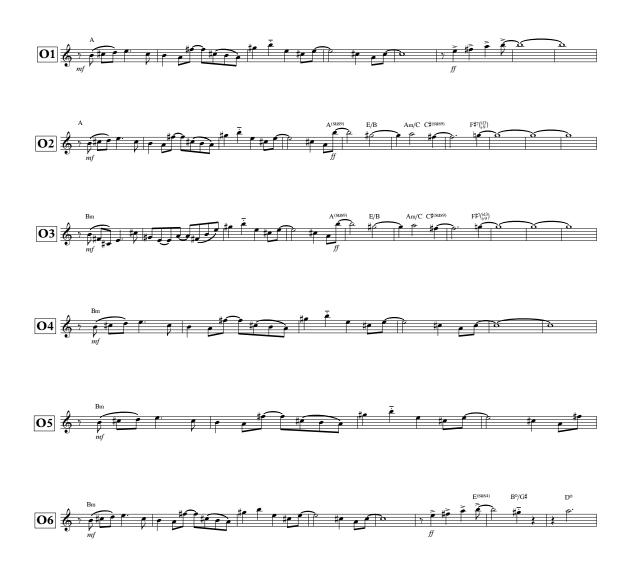
[36] Almén, 188.

[37] Almén, 189.

23

O1, the order-imposing hierarchy, establishing itself as the rigid and limited agent, follows the horn call. The two presentations of O1 are important to the narrative trajectory because they establish the rank of the order-imposing hierarchy through repetition. It is also the only time we hear O1 without variations in A-major because the key center moves to B-minor during A'. As explained before, the order-imposing hierarchy is considered limiting and rigid because it never changes range, pitch, rhythm, articulation, dynamics, or harmony during the A section.

Shortly after the order-imposing hierarchy presents itself, the third transgressive element T3, the quarter note rhythm, appears in the third theme of the A section. It is the first time the music breaks from the ostinato bass line in A-major and its rhythm. The supporting harmony shifts to the first inversion of a B-major chord for four measures and then returns to a first inversion of A-major. It is also a break for the melody to move to a higher register, flying above the B in the flute to the high A. T3 is signaling change in the narrative trajectory because it alters the melody, harmony, bass line, and advances the music towards the B section.

After the first solo section ends, the woodwind quintet and the soprano sax perform T1. It moves to the forefront of the narrative after it is used as a tool to develop the second theme of the B section, which does not include the order-imposing hierarchy. In the first iteration of T1, it is less noticeable as a transgressive element because it is a simple half-step musical idea. Using a short motive to develop a theme is a common technique and that makes T1 seem less noticeable as a transgressive element. As time passes during the B section and into A', the half-step idea becomes more prominent as a musical agent in the narrative. T1 combines with the third theme of the B section,

portions of the improvisation, and the transition from the B section to A'. Its relentless and jarring effects, bouncing between registers and timbres of each instrument, define it clearly as a transgressive element.

Example 5: Shorter, *Pegasus*, Six Versions of Order-Imposing Hierarchy, O1 - O6[38]

The beginning of A' includes the first sign of the integration of the order-imposing hierarchy and the transgressive elements. The first presentation of the order-imposing
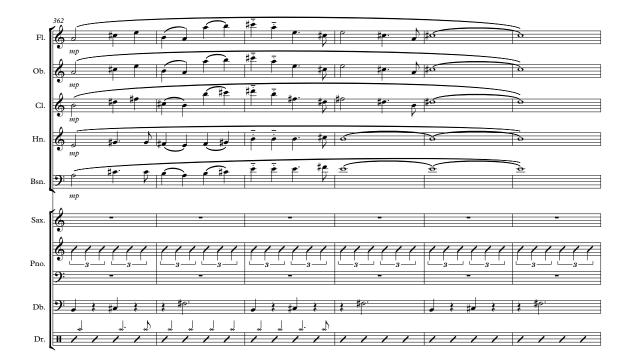
[38] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

hierarchy in A', labeled O2 in Example 4, is altered in the final three measures. Instead of a steady mostly stepwise rise to the high B, two occurrences of T1's rising half-step motive alters the ending of the phrase of O2 (G# to A and F# to G). This phrase is lengthened by the alterations, creating a ten-measure phrase, and the supporting harmony and rhythm mirror the adjustments. O2 cadences on an F# altered dominant chord, with a lowered ninth and lowered thirteenth, which initiates a change to the new key of B minor in the next variation, O3.

The first two measures of O3 are altered, in comparison to O1 and O2, and it incorporates the same phrase ending as O2, which signals an acceptance of the transgressive element into the order-imposing hierarchy. The alterations to the beginning of the phrase of O3 are melodic, outlining a suspended F-sharp chord with a lowered seventh over the B-minor ostinato bass line. By avoiding the triadic outline and keeping the new phrase ending seen in O2, this illustrates a major change in perceived social landscape. The order-imposing hierarchy is accepting the changes from the transgressive elements by allowing T1 to coexist in the same musical space.

After the statement of O3, the expectation is to hear the subordinate themes of the A section, but instead T2, the horn call, is presented. Even though there are alterations to the O theme, the presence of O2 and O3 create expectation that the second and third theme of the A section will return. When T2 enters after O2 and O3, the transgressive element T2 breaks down the assumptions of both the trajectory of the form and the role of T2 in the narrative. While T2 signaled the entrance of the order-imposing hierarchy in the beginning of the piece, T2 now creates chaos and a misdirection.

Example 6: Shorter, *Pegasus*, Transgressive Element 2, T2.2[39]

The order-imposing hierarchy is unable to move to the subordinate themes and complete the expected formal trajectory established in the A section. Instead, the presentation of T2 will lead to further statements of the order. Once again, a transgressive element is interrupting the order-imposing hierarchy.

Two more statements of the order-imposing hierarchy, labeled O4 and O5, follow the presentation of T2. These versions of the order are also altered, but differently than before. In O4, the melody returns to the original five-measure beginning, but excludes the three-measure ending to reach the high B. Instead, the melody stays on C# for two measures and moves to the next statement of the order-imposing hierarchy, O5. In O5, the melody repeats the original five-measure beginning, yet the ending is again presented

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[39] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

differently. Instead of the melody reaching C#, the form and the narrative instantaneously switch to a new section. The flute soars up to high F# and the soprano sax begins playing T3. Immediately, the progression toward completing the formal trajectory is again halted and the narrative takes another turn.

Over the next ninety-six measures, the transgressive element T3 redirects and controls the narrative. This section alters the narrative trajectory by creating an expansive space to distance the listener from the order-imposing hierarchy. Instead of T3 modifying the melody, harmony, or rhythm of the order-imposing hierarchy, T3 drives a wedge in the narrative trajectory and again halts the formal trajectory to complete its design.

Example 7: Shorter, *Pegasus*, Transgressive Element 3, T3.2[40]

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[40] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

After the variations on T3, the order-imposing hierarchy returns with a repeat of O4 and a new variation, O6. O4 returns and brings a sense of momentary stability by repeating previous material. Then O6, the final version of the order-imposing hierarchy, is presented. This variation mirrors the original statement of the theme from the A section, except there is additional music added to the end of the phrase. T1 returns, but instead of ending on an open-ended B, the phrase concludes by encircling and ending on the tonic pitch A.
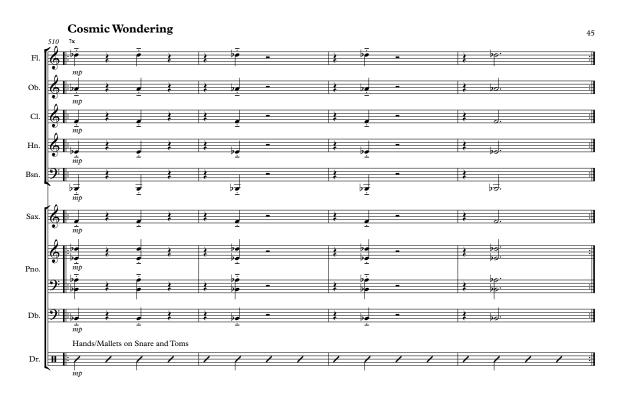
The O6 presentation of the order at the end of A' has two implications. First, the order-imposing hierarchy has continually strived to end on a stable pitch in connection to the supporting harmony. Every previous version of the order has ended on an open interval or a non-diatonic pitch in relation to the harmony, but this version melodically ends on the tonic. One might then surmise that the order has finally achieved dominance. However, in a bit of irony, while the final phrase ends on a tonic pitch for A-major, but the final chord of A' ends on a D diminished chord in the key of B-minor. Thus, this moment leaves the order-imposing hierarchy unable to find tonic, further fortifying its inability to keep the perceived social hierarchy.

Second, T1 changes the final narrative outcome of the order-imposing hierarchy. As each different transgressive element has changed the order-imposing hierarchy over A', it is T1 that ultimately combines with the order-imposing hierarchy to end the A' section. Instead of jumping into another expansive section or summoning T2, the horn call, O6 halts all attempts at finishing the formal trajectory.

The coda launches after the end of A' and brings the music back to familiar harmony and rhythm. Lacking any melody, the coda moves away from the conflict of the

A' section and focuses on quartal harmony. The suspended B-flat minor chord, which is built by stacking perfect fourths over each other from B-flat up to D-flat, reminds us of the harmony in the introduction vamp. If the order-imposing hierarchy was victorious in the narrative, the coda would have returned to the key of A-major. Instead, after the influence of the transgressive elements, the harmony is void of A-major and replicates the quartal harmony seen in the introduction. The rhythm is similar to T3 and is developed with one last variation. Using T3 during the coda emphasizes the incorporation of the transgressive elements with the order-imposing hierarchy, highlighting the narrative trajectory of the comic archetype. And *Pegasus* ends as it began: with a vamp void of a tonic.

Example 8: Shorter, *Pegasus*, Transgressive Element 3, T3.3[41]

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[41] Shorter, *Without a Net.*

Narrative Level

Narrative plots in myth require an act of transvaluation to form an interpretation of the interaction of agents. Liszka defines transvaluation:

> In its most general form, *transvaluation is a rule-like semiosis which revaluates the perceived, imagined, or conceived markedness and rank relations of a referent as delimited by the rank and markedness relations of the system of its signans and the teleology of the sign user.*[42]

I agree with Almén's interpretation of transvaluation as a three part definition: (1) "Transvaluation is a rule-like semiosis which revaluates the perceived, imagined, or conceived markedness and rank relations of a referent," (2) "as delimited by the rank and markedness relations of the system of its signans," (3) "and the teleology of the sign user."[43]

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[42] Liszka, 71. Italics original.

[43] Almén, 51.

Table 2: Liszka's Definition of Transvaluation with Almen's Interpretation

Definition	Interpretation
"Transvaluation is a rule-like semiosis which revaluates the perceived, imagined, or conceived markedness and rank relations of a referent"	A perceived social landscape in which certain components are either more dominant or subordinate.
"as delimited by the rank and markedness relations of the system of its signans"	The perceived social rank and markedness is determined by revaluating the entire system.
"and the teleology of the sign user"	The observer uses their own experiences and context to interpret the revaluation.

The first segment of the definition establishes a perceived social landscape in which certain components are either more dominant than others while the second segment explores how the different perceived social rank and markedness is determined by revaluating the entire system. In the third segment, the observer uses their own experiences and context to interpret the revaluation. Music works in the same manner and, as Tarasti notes, "that *narrative is essentially an act of transvaluation*."[44]

The act of transvaluation is an individual experience, but is found through common traits in the music. One of the most common and relatable trait in music is form. While our ears may not immediately discern the exact notes and rhythms in real time, we are able to remember when parts of the music returns to us through the work. As when reading a myth, music can create a narrative plot, but without visual aspects or vocal narration. Tarasti claims that, "the unity of myth and music is made possible only by

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[44] Almén, 51. Italics original.

various 'figurations' and plays on related meanings."[45] Through the marking of figurations, or the agents, over time in a work, we find a plot through form.

Almén states a comedy narrative archetype requires a transgressive element to successfully change an order-imposing hierarchy. This archetype involves three steps to complete the narrative design. First, the order-imposing hierarchy is presented as flawed or unable to change. Second, the transgressive elements are portrayed as adaptable compared to the order-imposing hierarchy. Lastly, the transgressive elements challenge the order-imposing hierarchy and overturn the perceived social landscape. The comedy narrative in *Pegasus* uses the synthesis discursive strategy to map the interactions of the order-imposing hierarchy and the transgressive elements.[46] After integration with the order-imposing hierarchy, the transgressive elements achieve victory through reconciliation and results in a synthesis with the order-imposing hierarchy.

The three transgressive elements: T1, T2, and T3, raise their rank during A' by creating a new society in which the order-imposing hierarchy's perceived social rank is diminished. By the end of *Pegasus*, T1 integrates with the order-imposing hierarchy to create a new social landscape.

The victory of the transgressive elements occurs in the final statement of the order-imposing hierarchy, O6. Over the course of A', the perceived rigidity and limits of the order-imposing hierarchy are weakened by the addition of the transgressive elements. The order-imposing hierarchy was stable in the key of A-major and did not have any interference by other the transgressive elements. Much has changed during A', including

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[45] Eero Tarasti, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 61.

[46] Almén, 188.

a new key center and multiple variations of the order-imposing hierarchy. The transgressive elements successfully challenge the rank of the order-imposing hierarchy and assert their higher standing through synthesis of all four musical agents.

After establishing the musical agents involved in the narrative and showing how each agent interacts over time through the ternary form, I conclude the narrative archetype to be a comedy. The premise of the comedy archetype is the victory of the transgressive element over an order-imposing hierarchy. The three different transgressive elements alter the order-imposing hierarchy, ultimately fusing together during the returning A'. Unveiling the comedy archetype in *Pegasus* illustrates Shorter's ability to write music that reflects his passion for literature and film, fulfilling his artistic goal to create "musical motion pictures without movies."

Conclusion

I began this essay with the goal of finding new analysis methodologies to explain modern jazz compositions and improvisation. Due to my own fondness of Wayne Shorter and both jazz and classical music, applying narrative analysis to *Pegasus* was logical. His passion for literature, seen at a young age, is what I feel to be his driving motive in compositions. Instead of writing absolute music, Shorter composes music infused with narrative and emotion. *Pegasus* is not his first programmatic work, but it is one of his longest, most complex, and fully developed narratives.

Shorter was influenced by musicians, literature, and Buddhism. All three changed how he writes and performs music. Shorter's early career was dominated by Art Blakey and Miles Davis. These two musicians shaped Shorter's compositional process and

changed the trajectory of his performing career. After converting to Buddhism, Shorter

committed himself to changing his life and his music. By reconfiguring his mind and

body, Shorter was free to explore jazz by incorporating different musical styles, forms,

and arranging techniques to his compositions.[47] Shorter's exploration of Buddhism led to

his creative conceptualization of "the unknown," which metaphorically embodies

dimensions of an archetypal mythical quest, driven by youthful imagination and the need

achieve self-realization. "To me there's no such thing as beginning or end… I always say

don't discard the past completely because you have to bring with you the most valuable

elements of experience, to be sort of like a flashlight. A flashlight into the unknown."[48]

My analysis illustrates the literary nature of *Pegasus* and provides a framework to

understand the expressive design of the music. The A and B sections of *Pegasus* give the

listener a chance to evaluate each musical agent, determining their character, sound, and

value. After the transition to the A' section, the transgressive elements begin to interact

with the order imposing hierarchy. The disruption is something the listener can hear and

feel because of the contrast of the order imposing hierarchy and the transgressive

elements. While the listener is not conscious of the narrative created by the conflict, the

turmoil is real and changes the perception of each musical agent for the listener.

The end of *Pegasus* reconciles the turmoil, completing a narrative trajectory

through which each listener can gain their own interpretation of the piece. My analysis

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[47] Mercer, 151-157. After fully converting to Buddhism and creating a regular daily practice, Shorter stopped drinking and hanging out at clubs all night after gigs. His alcoholism became an issue with venues and bandmates during tours, but never affected his performances. Shorter also felt he returned to the teenager version of himself and did not like what he saw. This reconfiguration took years, but was the point for Shorter to find himself.

[48] Nate Chinen, "Major Jazz Eminence, Little Grise: Wayne Shorter's New Album is 'Without a Net'," *New York Times*, February 3, 2013, AR9.

organizes agential interactions and categorizes the narrative structure of the music. By identifying the comedy narrative archetype in *Pegasus,* the listener can better understand the expressiveness created by the music. The turmoil created in the A' section can be understood on a deeper level and future performers of *Pegasus* can better prepare their performance strategies to reflect this expressive design in the music.

After uncovering the narrative plot to *Pegasus*, I realize my interpretation of *Pegasus* and my research will be different than your own. The essence of transvaluation is the moment of understanding and our own experiences shaping the conclusion of our understanding. While I stand by my conclusion that *Pegasus* is a comedy narrative archetype, I believe narrative constructs created in literature and storytelling mediums and applying both to music gives value to our own interpretation.

This research is a beginning in the application of narrative analysis to the jazz genre. While there are others that have analyzed Wayne Shorter's music, their work focuses on harmony and the relationship between melody and harmony.[49] The application of narrative analysis contributes to the understanding of the large-scale organization and expressive trajectory in Wayne Shorter's *Pegasus*. By examining agential and actantial levels of narrative design as an interpretive technique, future performers and analysts may gain a richer understanding of expressive dimensions and formal coherence in jazz works.

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[49] Patricia Julien and Steven Strunk have done extensive research on the use of harmony in Wayne Shorter's early composition, most notably during the 1950s and 1960s. Their research proved valuable to understand how Shorter used harmony to prolong phrases, avoid cadential material, and add effects to the melody. See Patricia Julien, "The Structural Function of Harmonic Relations in Wayne Shorter's Early Compositions: 1959-1963" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park), 2003: 34-189; See Steven Strunk, "Notes on Harmony in Wayne Shorter's Compositions," *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 301-332.

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