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Music as a Procedural Motive in the Filmmaking of Darren Aronofsky, Sofia Coppola, and Paul Thomas Anderson

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by

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ABSTRACT

Music as a Procedural Motive in the Filmmaking of

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by

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In this dissertation, I argue that the late 1990s and early 2000s represent a particularly musical moment for certain emerging American film directors who both integrated music throughout their creative processes and framed their preoccupation with music as a way to define themselves as filmmakers. Scholars across disciplines have presented various overlapping criteria by which to group these filmmakers, from media historian Jeffrey Sconce's "Sundance Generation" to literature scholar Nicholas Rombes's "new punk cinema." I analyze the musical aspects that emerge in these groupings without strictly adhering to any one parameter. Specifically, I show how screenwriter-directors Darren Aronofsky, Sofia Coppola, and Paul Thomas Anderson challenge the boundaries between original and pre-existing music, among musical and film genres, and between the very media of music and film. I focus on the collaborations of Darren Aronofsky and former punk front man Clint Mansell on *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and *Black Swan* (2010); Sofia Coppola and punk drummer turned music supervisor Brian Reitzell on *The Virgin Suicides* (1999) and *Lost in Translation* (2003); and Paul Thomas Anderson and pop-rock music producer Jon Brion for the scores of *Magnolia* (1999), which Anderson consistently describes as an "adaptation" of Aimee Mann's songs, and *Punch-Drunk Love* (2003).

Significantly, Aronofsky, Coppola, and Anderson consistently refer to their filmmaking approaches as "musical." I do not suggest that these self-conscious descriptions offer an especially reliable interpretation of the films, but rather I turn to them for insight into the filmmakers' public image cultivation. Further, I show how these filmmakers approach music as creative inspiration and as a procedural motive by collaborating from early stages in production with non-classical composers, writing musical cues and notes into their screenplays, and structuring their films in a way they understand to be musical. Thus I put forth all iterations of the screenplay as well as the filmmaker's public descriptions of their creative methods, neither of which is usually considered in the study of film music, as necessary tools in understanding these "musical" films as multi-layered texts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Introductory Ideas and Materials 1

Theoretical Issues 9

Mechanics of Analysis and Thesis Overview 20

Chapter One: Darren Aronofsky and Clint Mansell 23

Postmodern Filmic Resonances: Punk Attitudes and Monsters 28

Requiem for a Dream 36

The Influence of Selby's Novel 40

Mansell's Main Theme: *Lux Aeterna* 45

Repetition and Hip-Hop Montages 50

Critical Responses to *Requiem for a Dream* 56

Black Swan 59

The Story of *Swan Lake* and the *Black Swan* Screenplay 62

Nina's Musical Doubling: Beth 65

Nina's Musical Doubling: Lily 67

Ambiguous Diegesis in *Black Swan* 72

Conclusion 78

Chapter Two: Sofia Coppola and Brian Reitzell 81

Defying Genre in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation* 89

The Virgin Suicides 98

Music-making as Life; Silence as Death 103

Pre-Existing Pop Songs in the Documentary Diegesis ... 113

Transference of Narrative Haze through Air's Soundtrack ... 120

Lost in Translation ... 127

Music-Making as Catalyst of Personal Connection ... 131

External Diegetic Music as a Conveyor of Characters' Experiences ... 138

Transference of Narrative Haze through Non-diegetic Alternative Pop Music ... 144

Newly Composed Music ... 149

Conclusion ... 155

Chapter Three: Paul Thomas Anderson, Aimee Mann, and Jon Brion ... 158

Magnolia and *Punch-Drunk Love* as Earnest Punk Films ... 166

Magnolia ... 178

Aimee Mann's Music as *Magnolia*'s Real Voice ... 187

Musical Knowledge as Game Show Currency ... 206

Anderson's Relationship to His Misogynist Characters ... 214

Punch-Drunk Love ... 216

The Tension Between Chaos and Order in Brion's Original Score ... 225

Music-Making in the "Fantastical Gap" as a Catalyst for Love ... 229

The Harmonium as a Symbol of Expressive Connection ... 237

Conclusion ... 244

Afterword ... 249

Appendices ... 258

Bibliography ... 306

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Act III No. 19 “Pas de six” Excerpt 73-74

Figure 2: Act II No. 13, “Dances of the Swans,” Andante Excerpt.......................76

Introduction

Introductory Ideas and Materials

Since the emergence of film studies within literature departments of academic institutions throughout the 1950s and 60s, the study of film music in the United States has been rooted in many different disciplines.[1] In his overview to the 2014 edition of *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, music theorist David Neumeyer describes film music studies as "a node between disciplines" rather than as a distinct discipline, listing film studies, language and literature studies, media (communication) studies, musicology (or music studies), philosophy (aesthetics), and psychology (cognitive studies) as the principle disciplines intersecting at this node.[2] Musicologists' contributions to the study of film music have largely focused on music's function in the final cut of a film. Their approach is usually either to transcribe the music from the final cut by ear or to rely on the composer's written musical score, which traditionally would have been applied to the edited film during post-production. While this methodology is still useful to a hermeneutical understanding of certain films, it falls short when applied to films for which no score exists in written form, or to films in which music's importance can be traced to a stage much earlier than post-production: the stage of conception. In these cases, the musicologist must expand her understanding of a musical "text," looking to new source material. I put forth the screenplay and the filmmakers' public descriptions of

[1] In the middle of the twentieth century, film began to gain acceptance as a recognized object of academic study, with scholars applying methodologies that had been developed within other disciplines to various aspects of film. Until that point, studies of film music generally took the form of manuals intended for industry professionals or popular articles for general audiences. By the 1980s, scholars had begun to focus on placing film within a historical context, replacing theory with critical analysis.

[2] David Neumeyer, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5.

their creative methods, neither of which is usually considered in the study of film music, as necessary tools in understanding certain films as multi-layered texts.

I use these screenplays and filmmakers' descriptions to explore the ways in which screenwriter-directors Darren Aronofsky, Sofia Coppola, and Paul Thomas Anderson challenge the boundaries between original and pre-existing music, among musical and film genres, and between the actual media of music and film. These filmmakers approach music as creative inspiration and as a procedural motive by collaborating from early stages in production with non-classical composers, writing musical cues and notes into their screenplays, and structuring their films in a way they understand to be musical. Specifically, this dissertation studies the collaborations of Darren Aronofsky and former punk front man Clint Mansell on *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and *Black Swan* (2010); Sofia Coppola and punk drummer turned music supervisor Brian Reitzell on *The Virgin Suicides* (1999) and *Lost in Translation* (2003); and Paul Thomas Anderson and pop-rock music producer Jon Brion for the scores of *Magnolia* (1999), which Anderson consistently describes as an "adaptation" of Aimee Mann's songs, and *Punch-Drunk Love* (2003). Significantly, Aronofsky, Coppola, and Anderson consistently refer to their filmmaking approaches as particularly "musical." I do not suggest that these self-conscious descriptions offer an especially reliable interpretation of the films, but rather I turn to them for insight into the filmmakers' public image cultivation. Thus I argue that the late 1990s and early 2000s represent a particularly musical moment for emerging American auteur directors like Aronofsky, Coppola, and Anderson, who felt compelled not only to integrate music throughout the creative process, as evidenced in their

screenplays and close collaborations with musician-composers, but to display their preoccupation with music as a way to define themselves as filmmakers.

These filmmakers' particular type of musical savvy is inextricably tied to the moment of technological development during which they emerged in the late 1990s. With the introduction of the Dolby noise-reduction system in American films beginning in the early 1970s, the role of the sound designer became an important part of a film's creation. At the time, the overwhelming reaction to this development from the musical perspective was negative, as composers were displaced from production and many lost their jobs. Roy Prendergast's trade book *Film Music: A Neglected Art*, published in 1977, is representative of the polemical opinions put forth by composers who felt threatened by the new developments in sound design.[3] By the late 1990s, when the given filmmakers on whom this dissertation focuses emerged, the overlap between sound designers and composers had made this tension quite rare, if not obsolete. Sound designers had started to be perceived as artist-technicians, a descriptor that today could also describe many film music composers and composers generally. The roles that were once distinct are now often conflated into a single position, one that has more power as a collaborator. For example, Brian Reitzell has struggled with how to credit his involvement in his collaborations with Sofia Coppola. On *The Virgin Suicides,* he was "music supervisor," since he chose the songs to include in the compilation score. But on *Lost in Translation,* Coppola decided to credit him as "music producer," a title that better represents his deep involvement from early stages of filmmaking. As Reitzell explained in a 2008 interview, "Most music supervisors aren't musicians. And music supervisors actually tend to have

[3] Roy M. Prendergast, *A Neglected Art: A Critical Study of Music in Films* (New York: New York University Press, 1977).

more power than composers, so you end up with this really weird thing where a director has to deal with all these different departments. When I work with a director it's just me and him or her."[4]

The movement toward an overlap between sound design and composition is consequently a movement away from a written film score. This type of film music poses a challenge for musicologists, who traditionally include a written score as a primary text for analysis. Neumeyer addresses this challenge as newly *apparent*, but not new:

> For music studies scholars, generational change is breaking down barriers to serious study of music outside the traditional classical canon and is rapidly naturalizing pluralism within the music studies community. In this environment, we have a better chance than ever of writing adequate historical narratives of music in the past century, narratives that do not cling to a nostalgic musical textuality based on the written score but acknowledge that recorded sound is the elephant in the room for a proper history, as it has generated the first truly musical texts, which fundamentally changed both music making and concepts about music, and did so from early on in the twentieth century.[5]

The inclusion of purely aural materials as new "truly musical texts" certainly expands the resources at musicologists' disposal and, in many cases, necessitates a reassessment of methodology. Until very recently, most scholarly books about film music have been based upon the author's access to the composer's original score, and the lack of such a written manuscript or printed copy demands exploration of music from a different

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[4] Adam Budofsky, "An Interview with Brian Reitzell," *ModernDrummer.com,* June 3, 2008, https://www.moderndrummer.com/site/2008/06/brian-reitzell/#.UyFUk1FdWGE.

[5] *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, 6.

direction. But Neumeyer's conception of the "nostalgic musical textuality" traditionally embraced by the "music studies community" neglects the long-standing role of written texts *other* than the musical score in informing a musicologist's work. Thus without diminishing the importance of sound-centric approaches in examining film music, I propose an exploration in what might be considered the opposite direction.

Musicologists usually take into account various written materials in order to frame and understand the cultural context and historical details surrounding their musical subject. Yet despite our field's dependence upon written texts in addition to musical ones, musicologists who study film have yet to adopt screenplay analysis as part of their methodology in discussing film music. I argue that in addition to correspondences, drafts, diaries, and other written sources musicologists regularly take into consideration, a film's screenplay – in various stages, from preproduction to the shooting script – can serve as a source of valuable insight. Especially in cases where the screenwriter and the director are the same person or work in close collaboration, the screenplay is a useful, even necessary tool. In using this tool, this dissertation both expands the bounds of musicology's participation in the growing literature on film music and aims to engage scholars across the many disciplines concerned with this area of study. Considering a film's screenplay in its various stages provides an opportunity to consider the film's music, similarly, as a developing, inextricable component of the whole.

It is important that I return to scholarly approaches to the film score, in order to highlight the consequences of conventional analyses. Music scholars from all disciplines traditionally have approached the score as a separate entity from the rest of the film, primarily useful as a supplement to the film's visual aspect. This understanding is

reflected in Aaron Copland's 1957 expansion upon "What to Listen For in Music," in which the composer laid out the following list of film music's possible functions:

> Creating a more convincing atmosphere of time and place…Underlining psychological refinements – the unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation…Serving as a kind of neutral background filler…Building a sense of continuity…Or underpinning the theatrical buildup of a scene, and rounding it off with a sense of finality.[6]

Claudia Gorbman, an interdisciplinary scholar of film music, reiterated the assumption behind this list thirty years later, claiming that music in narrative films is supplemental to cinema rather than an equal player among all aspects. According to Gorbman, music is "unheard" in film because its narrative functions are either folded into or readily overcome by others.[7] Gorbman's approach to understanding the role of film music makes sense when dealing with classical narrative films of the studio era, to which music was added after the film was edited and otherwise mostly complete. But this understanding of music as subordinate to film has been called into question as over the past decades, digital technology and the flexibility that came after the studio era have allowed more collaboration between composer and director. One of the most important scholarly challenges to the traditional approach came from Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert in their 2007 collection of essays, *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema.* They claimed that it was time to start taking for granted that film is not just a visual medium, but intrinsically a musical one, as well.

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[6] Aaron Copland, *What to Listen for in Music* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2011), 212-13.

[7] Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987).

Significantly, they consider film as representing *music,* rather than as being represented *by* music. Music is not simply added as a supplement to a cinematic representation of image and narrative. Yet even today, the majority of scores are composed and added to the film in post-production, without much collaboration between composer and director.

But when music is an integral part of the film's conception, it is no longer logical to approach it as a separate entity from the rest of the film, whether it is regarded as supplemental, complementary, or dominant. In these cases, the screenwriter or director – if they are not the same person – might consult the composer throughout the writing and production processes, rather than presenting them with a nearly finished product. And, as with the examples studied here, the screenwriter/director might conceive of the music in a film simultaneously with the conception of the plot and dialogue. When music plays such a prominent role in the creation of a film from the beginning stages, especially when there is no written score to analyze as a text, it is not enough for a scholar to consider only the final cut of the film and the edited soundtrack. The case studies I focus on in this dissertation are six such films.

I use case studies – close readings of individual texts – in accordance with the reasoning that musicologist Erkki Pekkilä et. al applied broadly to musical mediation in the 2006 collection *Music, Meaning and Media*: "Since the culture of modern media is such a diverse and intricate phenomenon, musical mediation and its effects can best be studied 'inductively,' that is to say, on a case-by-case basis."[8] Further, my work joins the scholarly tradition of using case studies to inform wider questions, which has long been core to musicological method and has proven fruitful in film music scholarship over the

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[8] Erkki Pekkilä, David Neumeyer, and Richard Littlefield, ed. *Music, Meaning and Media* (Helsinki: International Semiotics Institute, 2006), vii-viii.

past few decades. In his 1996 book *Theorizing the Moving Image,* film philosopher Noël Carroll described case studies as a useful methodology when scholars seek to *theorize* about aspects of film, as I do here, rather than to use the top-down model of applying a more general "Theory."[9] In her 2014 contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, musicologist Robynn Stilwell argued that a case study could function as "an anchor, a starting point from which to explore issues that are particularly well represented in a single text."[10] The case studies included in this dissertation are the "anchor" for questions regarding media boundaries, filmmakers' personal image curation, and the definition of a musically relevant text; they are the "starting point" for future research rooted in disciplines and fields including musicology, sociology, music theory, film and media studies, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies.

The six case studies I examine are *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* by Darren Aronofsky, who closely collaborated with composer Clint Mansell; *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation* by Sofia Coppola, who depended upon music supervisor-producer-composer Brian Reitzell from the screenwriting stage; and *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* by Paul Thomas Anderson, who incorporated and emulated the work of singer-songwriter Aimee Mann in *Magnolia* and worked in a close partnership with producer-composer Jon Brion on both films. I have chosen to focus on these case studies because each shares with the others the following characteristics that, in combination, make it particularly fruitful for this study. First, the screenwriter-director's understanding of music has a significant role in their creative process from the early stage

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[9] Noël Carroll, *Theorizing the moving image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 58.

[10] Robynn Stilwell, "Case Studies: Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, ed. David Neumeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 419.

of the film's conception, and that role is clear in the film's screenplay. Second, the film depends upon the flexible role of a musician/composer/producer whose deep familiarity with popular music writing (and characteristically, a non-classical background) is combined with their use of technology to inform their work on the film, and whose relationship with the screenwriter-director is much more involved and interdependent than that of a traditional film composer. Third, the film self-consciously mediates its diegesis through a layer of unreliability for the audience – from the protagonists' mental instability in *Requiem for a Dream*, *Black Swan*, and *Punch-Drunk Love* to the third-person narration in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Magnolia* to the haze of the characters' jetlag in *Lost in Translation* – and music contributes to and highlights this mediation. Fourth, music is incorporated in the filmmaking process and in the film's narrative in ways that blur or push the boundaries between musical genres and, further, between the medium of film music and that of film. Finally, these films represent their directors' commitment to conveying themselves as particularly musically informed, a preoccupation I argue is specific to and representative of a loosely grouped cohort of American filmmakers emerging in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Theoretical Issues

Scholars have presented various overlapping criteria by which to group these same filmmakers, whose work is generally understood to reflect the particular moment in American film during which they emerged, and who variably also include Quentin Tarantino, Steven Soderbergh, David Fincher, David O. Russell, Spike Jonze, Richard Linklater, Todd Haynes, Richard Kelly, Michel Gondry, Charlie Kaufman, and others. This dissertation focuses on and specifically analyzes the musical aspects that emerge in

these groupings without strictly adhering to any one parameter, largely because of my ascription to journalist and communications specialist Jesse Fox Mayshark's 2007 assessment that, "They were an odd bunch, and not even obviously identifiable *as* a bunch. They appeared as a string of individual, stylistically distinct talents."[11]

This "odd bunch" and their films exemplify the after-effects of a major transformation within the American film industry. Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, multinational corporations had purchased every major studio. In what Sharon Waxman has referred to as "the corporate takeover of Hollywood," business professionals now ran the studios and profits loomed larger than ever.[12] Large companies saw buying a studio as a way to diversify their holdings in the media and entertainment sector, and studios prioritized movies that could easily be turned into franchises.[13] Against this backdrop, the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah emerged as a way for young filmmakers to break into the studio system after Miramax's success with Steven Soderbergh's *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* (1989). At the same time, it fostered the notion of creative independence for filmmakers, who entered into what film and media scholar Jason Sperb calls "a mutually uncomfortable power relationship with the major

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[11] Jesse Fox Mayshark, *Post-Pop Cinema: The Search for Meaning in New American Film* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 5.

[12] Sharon Waxman, *Rebels on the Backlot: Six Maverick Directors and How They Conquered the Hollywood Studio System* (New York: William Morrow, 2005), xv.

[13] Coca-Cola bought Columbia-Tristar in 1982, then sold it to the Sony Corporation in 1989; Rupert Murdoch's NewsCorp bought Twentieth Century Fox in 1986; in 1990, Italian financier Giancarlo Parretti bought MGM with the help of funds from the French government; also in 1990, Time Inc. and Warner Brothers merged; in 1991, MCA/Universal was bought by the Matsushita corporation (which then sold it to Segram in 1995, which in turn sold it to Vivendi in 2001, which then sold it to General Electric in 2003); Viacom bought Paramount in 1993; the Walt Disney Company bought the independent studio Miramax in 1993 and then bought the television network ABC in 1995; in 1994, Ted Turner bought Bob Shaye's studio New Line, which he brought with him when he joined Time-Warner in 1996; in 2000, AOL acquired Time Warner.

studios, serving as a pipeline of new talent to Southern California while benefitting from the attention and revenue that Hollywood generated for it back in Utah."[14]

Thus the labeling of the "Sundance Generation" by media historian and cultural theorist Jeffrey Sconce in his 2002 article, "Irony, Nihilism, and the New American Smart Film."[15] According to Sconce, who includes Sofia Coppola and Paul Thomas Anderson in this group, the members' films are linked by the themes of familial relations and social politics and a focus on eloquence and intellect. Sperb took Sconce's definition further, claiming that "the smart film can be thus regarded as Hollywood's quick appropriation of the post-Sundance, quasi-independent American film culture."[16] Likewise expanding upon Sconce's definition, cultural studies and film scholar Claire Perkins identified a "smart sensibility" in a "cycle" of filmmakers in her 2013 book *American Smart Cinema*. According to Perkins, the cycle's shared characteristics are ironic detachment, apathetic tone, episodic structure, strong musicality, wry sarcasm, economy of storytelling, and a focus on family as an abstract idea.[17] She argues that these "smart" screenwriter-directors combine skepticism with human connection to make a statement about modern life to a culturally literate audience. Because this approach

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[14] Jason Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood: Postmodern Media Culture and the Films of Paul Thomas Anderson* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 15.

[15] Jeffrey Sconce, "Irony, Nihilism and the New American 'Smart' Film," *Screen* 43 (2002). See also James Mottram, *The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood* (New York: Macmillan, 2007). For further reading on economic factors playing into this trend, see Peter Biskind, *Down and Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance, and the Rise of Independent Film* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004).

[16] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 16.

[17] As summarized in Claire Perkins, *American Smart Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 68.

overshadows storytelling, these "smart films" close with a reprieve rather than a happy ending.[18]

In 2005, literature scholar Nicholas Rombes put forth the term "new punk cinema" to refer to these films of the late 1990s not as a unified movement, but rather as a "tendency" in films that offer "a brutal mixture of underground, avant-garde technique and mainstream, genre-based story-telling that [weave] together cinematic traditions that included the French New Wave, Italian neorealism, and *cinéma vérité*."[19] One of the most obvious influences on new punk cinema is the French New Wave cinema of the mid-twentieth century, especially the development of lightweight, portable technology that allowed filmmakers like Chris Marker, Alain Resnais, Jean-Luc Godard, and François Truffaut to depict the world in new ways and, consequently, to "question the very idea of a coherent worldview," as Timothy Dugdale puts it in his contribution to *New Punk Cinema*.[20] One aspect of Italian neorealism to which the directors of new punk cinema do *not* strictly adhere is cultural theorist Cesare Zavattini's prescription, summarized by media scholar David A. Cook, for "[film] that would abolish contrived plots, do away with professional actors, and take to the streets for its material in order to establish a direct contact with contemporary social reality."[21] Rather, Italian neorealism's influence on new punk filmmakers is clearer in film scholar Roy Armes's 1971 description of the neo-realist director as "not a man who simply uses a movie camera to record reality: he

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[18] Emanuel Levy, *Cinema of Outsiders: The Rise of American Independent Film* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

[19] Nicholas Rombes, ed. *New Punk Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 2-3.

[20] Timothy Dugdale, "The French New Wave: New Again," in *New Punk Cinema*, ed. Nicholas Rombes (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press), 58.

[21] David A. Cook, *A History of Narrative Film* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 424.

is, in [French writer] Nathalie Sarraute's words, one who, above all… 'seiz[es] with all the sincerity of which he is capable…[and] scrutinize[s] as far as his sharpness of vision will permit him to see, what appears to him to be reality.'"[22] The "new punk" tendency is one of the lenses through which I explore the case studies from directors Darren Aronofsky, Sofia Coppola, and Paul Thomas Anderson in this study.

Significantly, in creating terms and boundaries with which to discuss this group of filmmakers, scholars refer to trends, cycles, tendencies, and sensibilities, but rarely invoke a unifying *genre* within which to categorize their film; this is especially notable because genre has always been an important part of film studies. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, film genres were outlined and solidified by film scholars like Thomas Schatz, Barry Keith Grant, and Stuart Kaminksy.[23] Their work was interdisciplinary, drawing upon that of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and literary theorist Roman Jakobson. For example, in 1986, Schatz compared the "textual system" of film genre to that of language and myth in that it "represents a set of rules of construction that are utilized to accomplish a specific communicative function."[24] But as cultural studies gained popular influence in film studies, unusual or "marked" elements came to take precedence over the more broadly structuralist approach to the generic elements of genre. As a result, genres were understood as much more culturally complex, depending on more than just the text of the film itself. In the past few decades, scholarship has shifted from using theories based on stable, formulaic conventions to focus on deconstructing those conventions and

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[22] Roy Armes, *Patterns of Realism: A Study of Italian Neo-Realist Cinema* (South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, 1971), 204.

[23] See also Stephen Neale, *Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1980).

[24] Thomas Schatz, "The Structural Influence: New Directions in Film Genre Study," in *Film Genre Reader*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 96.

highlighting instability within genres. In 1999, cinema and comparative literature scholar Rick Altman stated, "Genres are not just *post facto* categories, then, but part of the constant category-splitting/category-creating dialectic that constitutes the history of types and terminology."[25] He describes film genre as transformative, allowing for stable conventions to coexist with progressive elements.

Building upon Altman's assertion, Americanist and literature scholar Timothy E. Scheurer turns to a concept from linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky's transformational grammar to illustrate the transformation of film genres. Specifically, he employs the idea of a "kernel sentence," or what John Lyons calls "the underlying string,"[26] to which transformational rules can be applied in order to change the meaning of the sentence without losing reference to it. Scheurer suggests that with regard to film genres, a "kernel sentence" provides expectations and dramatic benchmarks. In the six case studies included in this dissertation, I adapt Scheurer's point and treat established film genres as "kernel sentences" in order to better understand the intentions of the filmmakers without shoehorning their films into specific genre classifications.

One of the most popular ways to group this generation of filmmakers is directly tied to the music videos of MTV. Darren Aronofsky, Paul Thomas Anderson, and Sofia Coppola were born in 1969, 1970, and 1971 respectively, placing them squarely in the middle of Generation X or the "MTV generation." Writing for the *Los Angeles Times* in response to the 1991 MTV documentary *MTV Generation*, Lauren Lipton pointed out that, "While much has been made about [Generation X's] lack of a single unifying theme

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[25] Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: BFI Publishing, 1999), 65.

[26] John Lyons, *Noam Chomsky*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 82.

or experience, its members seem to have one thing in common: music videos."[27] The idea that Hollywood films imitated MTV-style music videos emerged among film critics soon after MTV debuted in 1981. In 2007, communications scholar Marco Calavita identified the "MTV trope" as "references in contemporary film criticism to 'MTV visuals,' 'MTV-style editing,' 'the MTV generation,' 'post-MTV filmmaking,'" etc.[28] As Calavita explains, films marked by the MTV trope exhibit three main characteristics: a soundtrack comprising mostly non-diegetic popular songs, especially in montage sequences that advance the plot; self-conscious, conspicuous production design, especially cinematography and direction; and a frenzied pace achieved by flash-cuts, jump-cuts, and the combination of mix-matched film stocks, colors, and speeds.[29] No single film addressed in this dissertation neatly ascribes to all three of these qualities, but each film depends largely on at least one of them. As a result, critical responses to these films often demonstrate what Calavita points out as one of the main problems with the MTV trope, which is that it is often applied with negative, even "hysterical" judgments and fears regarding what the audience associated with the MTV-era might represent culturally. As film scholar Wheeler Winston Dixon lamented in his contribution to the unambiguously named 2001 collection *The End of Cinema as We Know It,* "An entire new generation of viewers became visually hooked on the assaultive grabbing power of MTV's rapid

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[27] Lauren Lipton, "The Shaping of a Shapeless Generation: Does MTV Unify a Group Known Otherwise for Its Sheer Diversity?," *Los Angeles Times,* November 10, 1991.

[28] Marco Calavita, "'MTV Aesthetics' at the Movies: Interrogating a Film Criticism Fallacy," *Journal of Film and Video* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 15. At the same time as MTV was gaining popularity in the 1980s, Hong Kong action films were building upon the international success of the Shaw Brothers and Bruce Lee; as a result, since the 1990s, American films categorized under the MTV trope have been influenced by the work of John Woo, Tsui Hark, Ringo Lam, and their contemporaries. For more, see Lisa and Michael Hoover Stokes, *City on Fire: Hong Kong Cinema* (New York: Verso, 1999), 17-37.

[29] Calavita, "'MTV Aesthetics' at the Movies," 16.

cutting."[30] We might read his use of "hooked on" as coded reference to and reflective of the now-infamous "War on Drugs" moment that shaped the childhoods of members of Generation X.

Beyond the cultural implications of a derogatory critical tone toward this particular generation of filmmakers, the assumption that the characteristics associated with the MTV trope did not emerge in American film until the 1980s is erroneous. As I mentioned earlier in reference to "new punk cinema," the effect of the French New Wave and other avant-garde filmmaking movements that emerged throughout Europe in the 1950s and 1960s is obvious in the work of American filmmakers of the 1960s and 1970s.[31] Journalist Sharon Waxman noted in 2005 that the group she calls "rebel auteurs," including all three of the directors on whose work I focus here, were indebted to 1970s "maverick" filmmakers but also 1980s auteurs like Joel and Ethan Coen.[32] Waxman characterizes the "rebel auteurs" as a group that "played with structure, wreaked havoc with traditional narrative form, fiddled with the film stock, and ushered in the whiplash editing style true to a generation of video game children. Their movies were often shockingly violent and combined their brutality with humor."[33] The generation of American filmmakers to whom these "rebel auteurs" were indebted is often referred to as the "New Generation" or "New Hollywood" directors; it includes but is not limited to

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[30] Wheeler Winston Dixon, "Twenty-five Reasons Why It's All Over," in *The End of Cinema as We Know It*, ed. Jon Lewis (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 360.

[31] Postwar experimental and avant-garde American filmmaking also influenced the New Generation. Some early examples of stylistic precursors to the New Generation include Salvador Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) and Jean Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet* (1930) and, years later, the work of Stan Brakhage, Bruce Conner, and Kenneth Anger.

[32] Waxman, *Rebels on the Backlot*, xii.

[33] Ibid., xi.

Francis Ford Coppola, Robert Altman, Dennis Hopper, William Friedkin, Brian DePalma, Martin Scorsese, George Lucas, and Steven Spielberg.[34]

The aspects of the MTV trope most noticeable in the New Generation, conspicuous editing and self-conscious technique,[35] also mark the approach of these directors as postmodern. In his 2013 book *Blossoms and Blood: Postmodern Media Culture and the Films of Paul Thomas Anderson,* Sperb characterizes postmodern films as films that "in some way reflect back on their own style, genre, or history – *movies about movies.* More precisely, they're about the aesthetic, cultural, and economic practice of *mediation* (film, TV, radio, phones), which in some way casts doubt on notions of origins and absolute truth."[36] For an audience, mediation within the bounds of a film suggests the filmmakers' own mediating power and, further, the mediation at play in all forms of storytelling, from history books to news reports. This mediation allows for the manipulation of what might otherwise be taken as absolute truth. The theme of mediation is prominent, and arguably overwhelming, in Aronofksy's *Requiem for a Dream,* in which one character's obsession with being a contestant on a specific TV show leads to her drug addiction, and the audience's experience is mediated through the various drug-addled characters' sense of reality. Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides* is framed as a documentary film mediating the narrators' memories, which in turn mediate the lives of

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[34] Older filmmakers also adopted the qualities of the European New Wave, such as Arthur Penn in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), Stanley Kubrick, John Cassavetes, Robert Altman, Mike Nichols in *The Graduate* (1967), Bob Rafaelson in *Head* (1968), and Sam Peckinpah in *The Wild Bunch* (1969). These precursors were not limited to American films at the time. For instance, Japanese filmmaker Seijun Suzuki's *Branded to Kill* (1967); *Performance* (1970) by Nicolas Roeg and Donald Cammell, English and Scottish respectively; Italian filmmaker Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1977); and *Diva* (1981) by French director Jean-Jacques Beineix.

[35] Robert B. Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 247-95.

[36] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 11.

the Lisbon family. Finally, in Anderson's *Magnolia,* the symbol of a TV set links the characters' lives as well as the scene changes, adding a suggested layer of mediation to the magical realism that permeates the film. Further, in each of the six of the films I deal with here (including Aronofsky's *Black Swan,* Coppola's *Lost in Translation,* and Anderson's *Punch-Drunk Love* in addition to the three films just mentioned), music plays a major role in the self-conscious mediation of diegesis by highlighting, or even serving as, a layer of unreliability for the audience.

Key to the understanding of postmodernism in film is the concept of recontextualization, to which I refer throughout this dissertation. It is a commonly used term in various fields, but I borrow from linguist Per Linell for its specific definition as "the dynamic transfer and transformation from one discourse/text-in-context to another," which is "never a pure transfer of a fixed meaning," but "involves transformations of meanings and meaning potentials in ways that are usually quite complex."[37] In applying it here, I am recontextualizing the very term "recontextualization" as part of what Linell would call a "sense-making practice."[38] Whereas he conceived of recontextualization with regard to discourse across academic disciplines and professions, I apply it here to the media of music and film; the "sense" I seek to "make" refers to *meaning,* although it also necessarily involves the human perceptual "senses" of sight and hearing. Thus my search for new meaning with regard to the filmmakers' recontextualization of pre-existing music and musical ideas in the six case studies of this thesis – from the creators' apparent intentions to the audiences' perceptions – is itself a recontextualization of

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[37] Per Linell, *Approaching Dialogue: Talk, Interaction and Contexts in Dialogical Perspectives* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998), 154-55.

[38] Ibid.

Linell's concept. However, my sense-making is a deliberate practice, even though I argue that in many ways, the filmmakers whose work I discuss are not always intentional, and are sometimes even haphazard, in their fusing and borrowing from various musical realms.

The trend of recontextualization has grown in popularity among film composers with the expanding availability of technological tools. The trend's initial growth coincided with the development of the "postmodern" label that was used more readily by cultural critics in the late 1970s and 1980s. Even if film music composers were not consciously participating in or deliberately adhering to postmodern trends, in retrospect their practices often reflect or refract those trends. Literature scholar Kelly Ritter has identified the tendency of 1990s filmmakers to use popular music soundtracks in order to inspire nostalgia within the audience, pointing to Paul Thomas Anderson's *Boogie Nights* as an example of what she calls a "musical film." Ritter concludes that, while *Boogie Nights* succeeded in creating new meaning through the recontextualization of existing popular songs, that meaning is superficial; in most cases, Ritter argues, using music this way only serves to establish setting within a film and to repackage songs for the purpose of soundtrack sales.[39] My work in this dissertation challenges Ritter's conclusion by approaching filmmakers' incorporations of existing popular music as an integral part of the creative process, rather than from an economic perspective.

The recontextualization of popular music is another example of a practice that screenwriter-directors emerging in the 1990s had inherited, at least in part, from the New Generation. Though some American filmmakers had been using popular music as a

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[39] Kelly Ritter, "Spectacle at the Disco: *Boogie Nights*, Soundtrack, and the New American Musical," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 28, no. 2 (Winter 2001).

cornerstone of their work as early as the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s,[40] it wasn't until the late 1960s that rock musicals, music documentaries, concert films, and films with non-diegetic pop music soundtracks became commonplace. As film scholar Jeff Smith argues, the Baby Boomer generation was primed for this incorporation of new music into film, having grown up witnessing and participating in the rise of rock 'n' roll. Even audiences slightly older than Baby Boomers, including the New Generation of American filmmakers, were comfortable with, and even expected, this kind of musical film.[41]

Mechanics of Analysis and Thesis Overview

The films I address in this dissertation are a different type of musical film, although their screenwriter-directors were building upon the traditions of the New Generation. Darren Aronofsky, Sofia Coppola, and Paul Thomas Anderson each identified a different feature that they associated with music and used that feature as the foundation for the films I have chosen as case studies. That musical feature operates both in the screenwriter-director's creation of the film and in the intended psychological effect of the film on the audience. It not only informs the creative process from the earliest stages of screenwriting, it permeates the film's visual aspect and narrative structure. It is important to note that in each case, the feature in question is not inherently musical, but rather the director's treatment of it draws upon its musical applications.

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[40] For instance, *Jailhouse Rock* (1957), *It's Trad, Dad!* (1962), *Band of Outsiders* (1964), Richard Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965).

[41]Jeff Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

Chapter One deals with *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan.* Aronofsky's chosen musical element is the idea of repetition and replication of a theme in new contexts, with slight – but important – variations. In *Requiem for a Dream,* a repeated "hip-hop montage" sequence is tied to the characters' addictive behaviors. It varies in each occurrence according to the character and the situation, with Aronofsky finally shocking the audience by breaking the pattern in the sequence. *Black Swan* is built upon the idea of doubling, or slightly imperfect replication, both in the way Clint Mansell's music reflects Tchaikovsky's score for *Swan Lake* and in the way the protagonist, Nina, sees herself reflected in her Double. Mansell's music expands upon the idea of reflection in order to blur the distinction between *Swan Lake* the ballet and *Black Swan* the film.

Sofia Coppola, in contrast, focuses on the hazy mental state that can result from experiencing atmospheric music in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost In Translation*, which are the case studies of Chapter Two. In *The Virgin Suicides*, the narrative haze is the result of imperfect memory, as the Lisbon family's tragedy is related through the lens of a group of now-grown neighborhood boys' collective point of view. Coppola created the film's diaphanous visual aesthetic to reflect the combination of Air's ethereal original music and pre-existing, nostalgia-inducing popular music. The dreamlike atmosphere of *Lost in Translation* likewise results from a mixture of pre-existing tracks, which Coppola listened to as she wrote the film, as well as newly composed music by Brian Reitzell and Brian Shields. The aural and visual effects of the film, combined with its slow pacing and lack of traditional narrative structure, transfer the characters' mental states of jet-lagged confusion to the film audience.

While Aronofsky and Coppola manipulate particular styles and genres of music, Paul Thomas Anderson identifies the potentially transformative power of spontaneous music making. I focus on two of his films, *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love,* in Chapter Three. *Magnolia* was inspired not only by the work of singer-songwriter Aimee Mann, but also by what Anderson sees as the uniquely sincere, organic experience of songwriting. In contrast to Jon Brion's dramatic orchestral score for the film, the moment when each character begins to sing Mann's "Wise Up" as a way to express their specific misery offers the audience an unexpected mode of connection to the characters' vulnerability, one that is usually practiced by singer-songwriters. Likewise, in *Punch-Drunk Love,* protagonist Barry's experimentation with music making transforms both his own perspective and the mood of the film for the audience. As Barry falls in love with Lena and overcomes his debilitating anger issues, the simple waltz melody he composes on the harmonium within the film's diegesis becomes the non-diegetic love theme. The rest of the film's non-diegetic music comprises Brion's newly composed, heavily syncopated percussion, of which Anderson played 10-minute snippets for the actors to set the hectic "tempo" of the scenes during filming. In what follows, I put forth these case studies as demonstrative of an especially musical moment for American auteur filmmakers emerging in the late 1990s and early 2000s, one that necessitates an expansion of our understanding of music in film and the texts we use to examine it.

Chapter One: Darren Aronofsky and Clint Mansell

Since his first collaboration with composer Clint Mansell on the film *π* (1998), director Darren Aronofsky has been vocal about his aspirations to challenge the boundaries between musical genres used in film, film music, and film itself. For Aronofsky, music has been a critical creative force. His close artistic relationship with Mansell, which he has jokingly described as "a bad marriage,"[42] speaks to his collaborative approach and a particular preoccupation with incorporating music from the earliest stages of filmmaking. In this chapter, I investigate how Aronofsky and his collaborators blur musical and media boundaries in *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and *Black Swan* (2010). Rather than compare these two films directly, my purpose is to approach each as a multidimensional text. I do this by turning to the films' screenplay drafts and the filmmakers' public descriptions of their work – two sources not often considered in the study of film music. The screenplay drafts offer musical insight, especially since Mansell did not create a written score for either of these films. In addition to the evidence in the screenplays, Aronofsky and his collaborators employ musical language in public discussions of his directorial approach. These sources reveal how Aronofsky uses music as a procedural motive in *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* by collaborating from an unusually early stage with Mansell, writing musical cues and notes into the screenplays, and structuring both films in ways he understands to be musical. The filmmakers' self-conscious descriptions are not meant to work as reliable interpretations of the films, but they offer important insight into both the deliberate

[42] Kevin Jagernauth, "Darren Aronofsky Confirms Clint Mansell Is Scoring 'Noah,' Discusses Their Working Relationship," *Indiewire,* December 11, 2012, http://blogs.indiewire.com/theplaylist/darren-aronofsky-confirms-clint-mansell-is-scoring-noah-discusses-their-working-relationship-20121211.

cultivation of Aronofsky's public image and the expressive potential of a relatively fluid treatment of music and film.

Aronofsky's second film, after a successful directorial debut with π (1998),[43] *Requiem for a Dream* is the story of the addiction-driven downfall of Sara Goldfarb (Ellen Burstyn), her son Harry (Jared Leto), Harry's girlfriend Marion Silver (Jennifer Connelly), and Harry's best friend Tyrone C. Love (Marlon Wayans). The characters' stories interweave as Sara becomes addicted to amphetamines in her quest to lose weight and be on TV; Harry and Tyrone support their worsening heroin addiction by selling drugs; and Marion becomes addicted to cocaine, eventually working as a prostitute to support her habit.[44] Aronofsky's lofty goals for the representational power of the film are evident in his director's commentary on the DVD: "Ultimately, this film is about… the human struggle with addiction, which we felt was an age-old story that went all the way back in time, all through human history… how you can use anything to get high off of, how *anything* can be used to fill that hole."[45] To achieve these representational goals in *Requiem for a Dream*, Aronofsky uses what he calls "hip-hop montages," a soundtrack

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[43] Despite the independent success of their first film, π (1998), Aronofsky and producer Eric Watson struggled to finance their second collaboration, *Requiem for a Dream* (2000). Eventually, they found support from Palmer West and Jonah Smith of the independent production company Thousand Words. After the film was made, an executive at Artisan Entertainment named Jeremy Bobber convinced the independent movie studio to acquire the film and distribute it internationally. See Darren Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream* (Artisan Entertainment, 2000), DVD.

[44] Due to *Requiem for a Dream*'s sexual and disturbing content, especially in its climax, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) assigned it a rating of NC-17. Artisan challenged the rating, which would have barred the films from theaters, traditional media outlets, and advertisement in some newspapers. When the MPAA upheld its ruling, Artisan decided to release *Requiem for a Dream* as an unrated film. Eugene Hernandez and Anthony Kaufman, "Daily News: Artisan Backs Unrated "Requiem"; San Sebastian Lineup Shaping Up," *Indiewire,* August 25, 2000, http://www.indiewire.com/article/daily_news_artisan_backs_unrated_requiem_san_sebastian_lineup_shaping_up.

[45] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

that merges original and existing music, as well as structural and narrative repetition in an attempt to build musical ideas into the film from the point of conception.[46]

An analysis of the screenplay of *Requiem for a Dream* provides valuable information regarding early incorporation of musical ideas. Specifically, I use the "Third Draft" of *Requiem for a Dream*, finished in 1999.[47] Aronofsky's inclusion of "hip-hop montages" – repeated sequences of split-second, close-up shots and their accompanying sounds – in his screenplay for *Requiem for a Dream* indicates his developed intent and focus on the importance of this musically conceived editing technique, which first emerged in *π*.[48]

Ten years after *Requiem for a Dream*, and having collaborated on the divisive *The Fountain* (2006) and finding critical success with *The Wrestler* (2008), Aronofsky and Mansell worked with screenwriters Mark Heyman, Andres Heinz, and John McLaughlin on *Black Swan* (2010). To create the *Black Swan* score, Mansell and orchestrator Matt Dunkley relied heavily on Tchaikovsky's pre-existing music for *Swan Lake,* musically

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[46] Other independent American filmmakers, notably Jim Jarmusch and Jonathan Caouette, have experimented with ways to conceive a film as a musical piece in recent decades. Jarmusch's *Mystery Train* (1989), which uses music as a characterization and narrative tool, and *Dead Man* (1995), which is structured as an epic film poem, are two oft-cited examples.

[47] Darren Aronofsky, "Requiem for a Dream," (Margaret Herrick Library, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 1999).

[48] The screenplay for *π* does not indicate hip-hop montages (though the film includes them), while the *Requiem for a Dream* screenplay features written indications for this recurring device in the form of onomatopoetic words. Musicologist Danijela Kulezic-Wilson connects this technique in *π* to the narrative events and development of certain characters. As she argues, Aronofsky would develop this hip-hop montage technique to become the principal editing approach in *Requiem for a Dream.* Kulezic-Wilson describes the connection of this technique in π to protagonist Max's recurring headaches as follows: "Preceding the headache attacks are miniature montage sequences of Max taking his medicines and painkillers. Each sequence follows the same pattern consisting of a series of striking short shots rhythmically punctuated by sound effects: the bottle of pills is opened, pills are taken into the hand, swallowed, the cap is replaced on the bottle. Named by Aronofsky as "hip-hop montage," the method of audiovisual editing used in these sequences would be developed into an elaborate editing principle in his subsequent film *Requiem for a Dream* and become one of his trademarks." Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, "A Musical Approach to Filmmaking: Hip-hop and Techno Composing Techniques and Models of Structuring in Darren Aronofsky's *π*," *Music and the Moving Image* 1, no. 1 (2008): 22.

reflecting the world of *Swan Lake* in that of *Black Swan*. This mirroring, which is integral to the *Swan Lake* story through the Doubles of Odette (the White Swan) and Odile (the Black Swan), is also embedded in the film's narrative. Cast as the Swan Queen in her dance company's production of *Swan Lake*, the protagonist, Nina Sayers (Natalie Portman), loses the ability to distinguish between herself and her Double, whom she sees reflected in the other main female characters and, literally, in mirrors throughout the film. As Nina physically transforms into the Black Swan over the course of the film, reinventions of musical themes from *Swan Lake* seamlessly become the non-diegetic score of the film, taking on new meanings and associations. Specifically, excerpts from Tchaikovsky's score come to indicate Nina's connection to her company's recently dismissed lead dancer, Beth MacIntyre (Winona Ryder), whom Nina replaces as the Swan Queen, and to Lily (Mila Kunis), a new soloist from San Francisco. Thus the blurring of boundaries between pre-existing and original music and between *Swan Lake* and *Black Swan* in the filmmakers' creative process becomes a metaphorical concept applied in the narrative development of the film's protagonist.

Unlike *Requiem for a Dream,* Aronofsky did not write *Black Swan* himself. But screenwriter Mark Heyman wrote his first outline to parallel the story of *Swan Lake*, as he explained to indieWire's Eric Kohn at the 2011 Script to Screen Conference:

> *Swan Lake,* I mean, that was my starting off point for the whole thing. The first outline I wrote, half the page was the outline of the film and the second half was the *Swan Lake* break down and short of showing how the real world story was

gonna parallel the story of the ballet. So it was the *real,* real guiding influence behind everything.[49]

Given Heyman's approach, an early draft of *Black Swan*'s screenplay reveals an added layer of interpretation that is unavailable to the film viewer. Here, I use Heyman's "Shooting Draft" of *Black Swan*, dated October 5, 2009,[50] in some cases contrasting it with the later "Shooting Script," published by Newmarket in 2010.[51] I propose that using the screenplays to approach these two films will demonstrate for musicologists the usefulness of incorporating screenplays into analysis, especially in the absence of a written score.

As my study highlights, both *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* present useful cases for multimedia filmic conception where music in particular serves as a creative source for the film's expressive potential. In my analysis of this process, I have found that each film constructively inhabits the category of "new punk cinema" and also that of postmodern horror.[52] Both the categories of new punk cinema and postmodern horror include the challenge of boundaries as one of their defining characteristics. But my goal is not to determine which films ought to be considered new punk cinema or what constitutes a postmodern horror film. Though it is helpful to contextualize these films with relation to these particular restrictions, I am not interested in defining genre

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[49] Eric Kohn, *A Conversation with Mark Heyman*, *2011 Script to Screen Conference* (Independent Filmmaker Project, 2011), Video Recording.

[50] Mark Heyman, Andres Heinz, and John McLaughlin, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," (Protozoa Pictures, October 5, 2009).

[51] Mark Andres Heinz Heyman, and John McLaughlin, *Black Swan* (New York: Newmarket Press, 2010).

[52] I am using the definition of "postmodern horror" according to Isabel Cristina Piñedo and that of "new punk cinema" according to Nicholas Rombes. Isabel Cristina Piñedo, *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997); Rombes, *New Punk Cinema*.

categories or arguing over their limits here. Rather, this chapter uses *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* as case studies to explore how filmmakers like Aronofsky might be influenced by postmodernism to the extent that it shaped their films' *conception.* In these films, boundaries are blurred not just between good/evil, normal/abnormal, and other dichotomous ideas typically challenged by postmodern works, but between different realms of music – classical, hip-hop, and punk – and between the media forms of music and film.

Postmodern Filmic Resonances: Punk Attitudes and Monsters

In the introduction to his influential 2005 collection "New Punk Cinema," literature and cinema scholar Nicholas Rombes describes this phenomenon of the late 1990s not as a unified movement, but rather as a "tendency" in films that offer "a brutal mixture of underground, avant-garde technique and mainstream, genre-based story-telling that [weave] together cinematic traditions that included the French New Wave, Italian Neorealism and *cinéma vérité*."[53] Both *π* and *Requiem for a Dream* are cited as epitomizing this type of film;[54] Aronofsky and Mansell themselves often describe their first two collaborations as "punk," albeit implying a less specific definition of the term. For example, in a 2000 interview, Aronofsky told Jeff Stark of *Requiem for a Dream*, "It's a punk movie where the audience is a mosh pit of emotion."[55]

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[53] *New Punk Cinema*, 2-3.

[54] Rombes even cites Aronofsky's own description of *Requiem for a Dream* as "a punk movie." Ibid., 3. Bruno Lessard points to the mathematic code at the center of *π*'s narrative as representative of new punk films' tendency to "articulate and rehearse what it is to *decode* the various 'codes' and meanings contemporary culture displays." Bruno Lessard, "Digital Technologies and the Poetics of Performance," in *New Punk Cinema*, ed. Nicholas Rombes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 108.

[55] Jeff Stark, "It's a Punk Movie," *Salon.com,* October 13, 2000, www.salon.com/2000/10/13/aronofsky.

Mansell's descriptions of his approach to *Black Swan* (2010) suggest that this later film was also conceived as "punk." In an interview with Patrick Samuel, Mansell says of his use of Tchaikovsky's score, "On the one part you want to have respect for it but on the other, to do anything worthwhile with it you have to take a punk rock attitude and disrespect it. Strip it down and rebuild it."[56] His words closely echo those of the ballet director character in *Black Swan*, Thomas Leroy (Vincent Cassel) as he explains his own approach to *Swan Lake* to the dancers during a rehearsal: "We strip it down. Make it visceral and real."[57] This description is especially relevant when compared to the creation of punk music itself. In 1981, British sociomusicologist Simon Frith described one of the main tenets of punk musicians: "Beginning from the assumption that all music is constructed, they sought to strip it down to its foundations."[58] This idea of "stripping it down to its foundations" is reflected in Mansell's description of his work on *Black Swan*. One of the ways music is made "visceral" in both *Black Swan* and *Requiem for a Dream* is through the structural tool of what Aronofsky calls the "monster." As we might view *Requiem for a Dream* as a more obvious punk film, *Black Swan* is more akin to a horror film, but a new punk approach and the idea of a monster permeate both.

To understand the importance of horror in Aronofsky's films, we need to regard the genre's one defining characteristic as the threat of an outside monster or monstrous

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[56] Patrick Samuel, "Clint Mansell," *Static Mass Emporium,* January 20, 2011, http://staticmass.net/exclusive-interviews/clint-mansell-interview/.

[57] Heyman, *Black Swan*, 8.

[58] Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 162.

force to an otherwise peaceful, “normal” society.[59] Screenwriter Andres Heinz describes just this type of threat as his inspiration for the story that would become *Black Swan*:

> The first kernel of inspiration was watching *Repulsion* by Roman Polanski. I was looking for my next project and I thought I’d love to do something in that genre. I was completely drawn in by this horror film that instead of using some external, malevolent threat, used the internal as the device of fear. I thought it was “psychological horror” at its best.[60]

In a psychological horror film, it is not always clear where the real threat is coming from or if it has been defeated; this ambiguity is one characteristic of the postmodern horror film that has emerged over the past four decades. Like the genre itself, the conversation surrounding the boundaries of horror has also transformed considerably since its inception. As sociologist Andrew Tudor puts it, “All horror movies are variations on the ‘seek and destroy’ pattern – a monstrous threat is introduced into a stable situation; the monster rampages in the face of attempts to combat it; the monster is (perhaps) destroyed and order (perhaps) restored.”[61] On the other hand, as film scholar Stuart Kaminsky explained in 1974, “horror films are overwhelmingly concerned with the fear of death and the loss of identity in modern society.”[62] Rather than a struggle between self and some unknown, threatening Other, horror films can center on an internal struggle

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[59] For an extensive study on the development of the metaphorical monster in horror films, see Steven Schneider, "Monsters as (Uncanny) Metaphors: Freud, Lakoff, and the Representation of Monstrosity in Cinematic Horror," in *Horror Film Reader*, ed. Alain Silver and James Ursini (New York: Limelight Editions, 2000).

[60] StoryLink, "You Asked... Andres Heinz, 'Black Swan'," http://www.storylink.com/article/372.

[61] Andrew Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford: Basil and Blackwell, 1989), 81.

[62] Stuart M. Kaminsky, *American Film Genres: Approaches to a Critical Theory of Popular Film* (New York: Pflaum Publishing, 1974), 101.

between good and evil within the protagonist. These two definitions are not necessarily at odds; the "stable situation" Tudor refers to could just as easily refer to the protagonist's mental state as to a peaceful village, with the "monstrous threat" being mental disease, addiction, paranoia, or some other inner struggle instead of a vampire or werewolf.

While the monstrous threats of Universal film productions in the 1930s and '40s and the Hammer films of the '50s and '60s were almost always defeated by the film's end, this is not the case in most horror films of the past forty years.[63] In her 1997 book *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing,* sociologist Isabel Cristina Piñedo outlines the five qualities of what she calls the "postmodern horror" film genre: a violent disruption of the everyday world; a transgression and violation of all boundaries – between good and evil, normal and abnormal, etc.; a challenge to the validity of rationality, in which causal logic collapses and science and authority figures are unreliable; a repudiation of narrative closure, with the protagonists being defeated or an ambiguous ending; and a construction of "recreational terror," or a bounded experience of fear and danger that is obviously simulated.[64] Piñedo argues that these five characteristics distinguish postmodern or "contemporary" horror films – those made between 1968 and 1997 (when she published her book) – as postmodern, in contrast to their classical predecessors in the horror genre. Writing in 2004, comparative literature scholar Tania Modleski described more recent horror films as "increasingly

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[63] For a historical survey of horror film score techniques, see Neil Lerner, "Preface: Listening to Fear/Listening with Fear," in *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*, ed. Neil Lerner (New York, London: Routledge, 2005).

[64] Piñedo, *Recreational Terror*, 5; David Lidov, *Is Language a Music? Writing on Musical Form and Signification* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

open-ended… thwarting the audiences' expectations of closure."[65] One of the predominant features of this postmodern approach is the blurring of boundaries; in the postmodern horror film narrative, that blurring is threatening and even terrifying. As literature and popular culture scholar Paul Budra explains, the "threat in postmodern horror… is not the lurker on the threshold, but the very absence of thresholds."[66] This "absence of thresholds" is the source of horror in *Black Swan*, which depicts Nina's loss of self-identity and descent into fatal madness. The "monster" is what Nina becomes as she blurs the boundaries between herself and other characters, which ultimately leads to her transformation into her character of the Black Swan in *Swan Lake.*

In *Requiem for a Dream*, the "monster" is addiction. In a 2010 interview, Mansell described the repetition inherent in addiction as a built-in, narrative framework for the recurring theme: "Darren always described it as a monster movie; every time one of the characters went off the rails it was described as a victory for the monster, the addiction."[67] But beyond operating as a framework, addiction functions as a monster *character*.[68] In his foreword to the new edition of Hubert Selby Jr.'s novel *Requiem for a Dream*, Aronofsky describes how addiction features as the main character:

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[65] Tania Modleski, "The Terror of Pleasure: The Contemporary Horror Film and Postmodern Theory," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 769.

[66] Paul Budra, "Recurrent Monsters: Why Freddy, Michael, and Jason Keep Coming Back," in *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, ed. Paul Budra and Betty A. Schallenberg (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 190.

[67] Kiran Acharya, "Unspoilt By Progress: A Conversation with *Black Swan* Composer Clint Mansell," *The Quietus* February 9, 2011, http://thequietus.com/articles/05670-clint-mansell-interview-black-swan.

[68] Aronofsky is by no means the first director to use music to create a metaphorical monster in a film. For instance, Stanley Kubrick and music editor Gordon Stainforth achieved a similar effect using pre-existing music in *The Shining* (1980). See Jeremy Barham, "Incorporating Monsters: Music as Context, Character and Construction in Kubrick's *The Shining*," in *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema*, ed. Philip Hayward (London, Oakville: Equinox, 2009).

> While breaking it down I realized that whenever something good was supposed to happen to a character, something bad happened. Because of this, I couldn't figure out who the hero of the novel was. After sketching out all the character arcs I realized they were all upside down. So I flipped them over, and suddenly I had a "Eureka!" The hero wasn't Sara, it wasn't Harry, not Tyrone, not Marion. The hero was the characters' enemy: Addiction… I began to look at the film as a monster movie. The only difference is that the monster doesn't have a physical form. It only lives deep in the characters' heads.[69]

This description of addiction as a "monster" suggests *Requiem for a Dream*'s affinity with the horror movie category, though it is not as obvious as *Black Swan*'s. The use of music with relation to the "monster" in both films makes this association clearer and all the more powerful.

As has been well argued, music is an important part of determining the genre of a film or group of films, including horror, largely because of its use in signifying moods and situations to an audience. Musicologist, theorist, and semiotician Kofi Agawu has coined the term "listener-competence" to refer to the phenomenon that results from combining cultural coding, or a society's collective set of associations and stereotypes, and repetition.[70] Popular music scholar Anahid Kassabian explains that, "we learn through exposure what a given tempo, series of notes, key time signatures, rhythm,

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[69] Selby's novel would play a significant role in the film's conception. Darren Aronofsky, "Foreword to the New Edition," in *Requiem for a Dream* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2000), 1.

[70] Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 49.

volume, and orchestration are meant to signify."[71] Simply put, if a particular musical element is repeatedly attached to a specific context, we come to associate that motive with that context.

The use of these features has conditioned the typical American viewer to identify a horror movie soundtrack, completely divorced from any visual aspect, because of the sounds they have come to associate with that genre. In his reinvention of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* music for *Black Swan*, Mansell relies on certain horror movie music conventions such as the "dissonance – harsh, controversial, disconcerting sounds" that composer Irwin Bazelon identified in 1975 as having come to indicate "a negative factor implying neurosis, evil, agony, and pain, the opposite of good and right, sweetness and light."[72] These are just some of the musical features horror film scores traditionally employ. There are also decades-old conventions that apply when the music is tied to the monster itself. For example, meandering melodies with dramatic, unpredictable leaps and loud, dissonant chords, with minor seconds and tri-tones featured both melodically and harmonically.[73] One common motif attributed to either Hans Salter or Frank Skinner in their Universal scores in the late 1930s and early '40s, for instance, is the descending three-note pattern in a low register, often with a minor third, used to signify the monster.

It is noteworthy, however, that in *Requiem for a Dream*, Mansell does not use musical conventions to accompany the appearance of the "monster," but instead creates

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[71] Anahid Kassabian, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 23.

[72] Irwin Bazelon, *Knowing the Score: Notes on Film Music* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1975), 88.

[73] Famous examples of these melodic associations with a monster include the shark's music in *Jaws* (1975), Emperor Palpatine's leitmotif in the *Star Wars* films, the Mordor theme from the *Lord of the Rings* films, and many others. The *Swan Lake* theme itself was used in Tod Browning and Karl Freund's 1931 film *Dracula.*

the structural use of his main theme, *Lux Aeterna*, to represent the monster itself. He explains, "The monster was a central character and when something goes really bad, that's when you hear the music."[74] The use of a recurring musical theme to highlight important narrative moments is conventional in film and is not notable in itself; rather, Mansell's characterization of the musical theme as "the monster" aligns the film with the horror genre through the use of this convention.

In both films, Mansell's music works with the visual "body horror" on screen to create a visceral reaction in the audience. The history and functions of body horror have been examined from the perspectives of film theory, sociology, and gender studies, with scholars of the latter field paying particular attention to the destruction of female bodies in film.[75] As early as 1990, film philosopher Noël Carroll tied the "person-as-meat" imagery and the "extreme iconography of personal vulnerability" in horror films to the postmodern death of subjectivity.[76] Writing fifteen years later, film scholar K.J. Donnelly attributed music's contribution to this visceral audience experience to its ability to "*embody* horror, providing a demonic presence in itself."[77] This "demonic presence" is the recurring musical "monster" in *Requiem for a Dream* and the fragmented, digitally

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[74] Acharya, "Unspoilt By Progress."

[75] For an examination of the body in horror films of the 1970s and 80s rooted in cultural criticism, psychoanalytic/feminist film theory, and gender studies, see Linda Badley, *Film, Horror, and the Body Fantastic* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995). For an interdisciplinary collection of essays regarding gender, specifically as embodied in horror films, see Barry Keith Grant, ed. *The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996). For an examination rooted in Gothic literature and extending to horror films, see Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). For a collection of sociological essays on the body as a symbol more generally, see Dennis Waskul and Phillip Vannini, ed. *Body/Embodiment: Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of the Body* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

[76] Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York, London: Routledge, 1990), 211-13.

[77] K. J. Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: British Film Institute, 2005), 106.

manipulated *Swan Lake* musical samples in *Black Swan.* Indeed, the body horror in *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* is abundantly evident, from Sara's extreme weight-loss and Harry's insertion of a hypodermic needle into his infected arm in the former to Nina's dance-ravaged body and gruesome transformation into the Black Swan in the latter. In the discussion that follows, examples of body horror arise in relation to music's heightening of their effect.

Using these two films as critical case studies, in the rest of this chapter I examine the specific ways Aronofsky and his collaborators create new meaning by challenging and even ignoring the boundaries between the media of music and film. While both *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* represent attempts to incorporate music into the filmmaking process at an early stage, I explore how the filmmakers approach these projects in distinct ways.

Requiem for a Dream

Requiem for a Dream, I would argue, is a new interpretation of Nicholas Cook's idea of the music film – "a genre which begins with music, but in which the relationships between sound and image are not fixed and immutable but variable and contextual."[78] Unlike the music films that Cook's definition encompasses, such as Disney's *Fantasia* (1940), *Requiem for a Dream* was not built upon complete, unaltered pre-existing musical pieces. Rather, it was created according to the filmmakers' idea of what constitutes musical structure, pacing, and narrative; in short, the filmmakers' idea of what music *is*. Aronofsky explains in the director's commentary his desire to "make a music

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[78] Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 214.

composition that climaxed over 100 minutes";[79] one could say that the film is meant to *equal* music. The creative process is complicated by the incorporation of the written word, since the film is based on Hubert Selby Jr.'s 1978 novel of the same name. But even that source gets "musicalized." Through a close textual reading of Aronofsky's screenplay and of the film itself, I explore in this section the ways in which Aronofsky and Mansell experiment with and succeed in conceiving a film – based on a novel – as a musical piece.

After a discussion of the influence Selby and his novel had on Aronofsky's creative process, I examine the use of pre-existing music within the film's musical score and sound composition, specifically in Mansell's original main theme, *Lux Aeterna*. Recorded by the Kronos Quartet, *Lux Aeterna* includes electronically altered samples from the Mozart and Verdi requiems. Mansell's title for the theme, *Lux Aeterna,* refers to the communion antiphon of the text of a Catholic Requiem mass.[80] In addition to blurring the boundary between the realm of classical music (through the use of these famous requiems) and that of hip-hop (in the sampling and reinventing of them), *Requiem for a Dream* challenges how we might draw a line between what is music and what is film.

One of the ways in which this challenging occurs is through the use of what Aronofsky calls "hip-hop montages."[81] The recurring montages aspire to the realm of

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[79] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

[80] It also might remind us of Stanley Kubrick's use of György Ligeti's choral *Lux Aeterna* to represent the unseen alien "monster" in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).

[81] It is worth distinguishing Aronofsky's use of the term "montage" from Soviet Russian director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein's commonly referenced idea of montage put forth in his short "Statement," first published in 1928. Eisenstein and his "Statement" collaborators, Vsevolod Pudovkin and Grigori Alexandrov, argued that film music ought to be non-synchronous with the image on the screen: "Sound, treated as a new montage element (as a factor divorced from the visual image), will inevitably introduce new means of enormous power to the expression." This preference for music working in "counterpoint" to

hip-hop in their split-second, close-up camera shots and their specific accompanying sounds, while providing a sound-driven framework for the film.[82] The editing of these montages incorporates the "fracture, rupture, and interruption"[83] characteristic of hip-hop music, which is typically executed through turntable-specific techniques including punch-phrasing and scratching.[84] In the director's commentary of *Requiem for a Dream,* Aronofsky explains his "hip-hop" classification of these montages:

> Since I grew up in Brooklyn in the mid-'80s, I was really a product of hip-hop culture… And you know there's always been hip-hop music – rap – and hip-hop dance – break-dancing – and hip-hop art – graffiti – but hip-hop techniques haven't really quite made it into film and so the idea was to sort of, you know, just sample different types of shots and create some type of a story element out of it.[85]

Aronofsky's description of himself as "a product of hip-hop culture" is rather problematic; as the Jewish son of two public school teachers, he might have immersed himself in what he understood to be hip-hop culture, but clearly as an outsider. The above description nevertheless reveals that the musical effect of the repeated sequences was

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the visual aspect in film represented the opposing view from that of Rudolf Arnheim and other commentators who favored synchronized music. Aronofsky's hip-hop montages actually seem to support the synchronization of sound track with image track, since the sounds match their accompanying images so exactly that, as I will discuss below, the onomatopoetic words come to *replace* the image descriptions in the screenplay. Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), 259.

[82] For a detailed analysis of the frame-by-frame microsctructure of specific hip-hop montages in Aronofsky and Mansell's first collaboration, π, see Kulezic-Wilson, "A Musical Approach to Filmmaking."

[83] Brian Cross, *It's Not about a Salary...: Rap, Race and Resistance in Los Angeles* (London: Verso, 1993), 18.

[84] "Punch-phrasing" refers to a quick burst of sound from a record on one turntable while a record plays uninterrupted on another turntable; "scratching" is the quick backward-forward movement of a record without lifting the needle.

[85] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

created with a specific model in mind. As Mansell explains, “The roots of that are in the little transition pieces Public Enemy do on *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*. A minute, two-minute thing.”[86] Rhythm in film is often described in terms of its obvious musical counterpart;[87] here, the film rhythm emulates specific rhythmic gestures associated with hip-hop.

The integration and juxtaposition of these musical and media realms are held together by the use of repetition in the film’s narrative and its macrostructure. As a narrative theme in both the novel and the film, repetition manifests as a mental affliction driving the protagonists’ behavior. *Requiem for a Dream*’s plot focuses on the obsessive repetition inherent in addictions of all kinds, from Sara’s addiction to coffee and pills to Harry and Tyrone’s addiction to heroin to Marion’s addiction to cocaine. This focus makes it uniquely well suited to transgress the boundary between film and music; repetition serves as common ground between the film’s narrative and the musical structure it emulates. To use Cook’s terminology, repetition represents the “attribute transfer” from music to film, by which the filmmakers construct *new* meaning.[88] In what follows, I turn to Aronofsky’s screenplay as a source of insight to explore the

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[86] Acharya, "Unspoilt By Progress." Mansell refers to the 1988 album released by the American hip-hop group Public Enemy by Def Jam Recordings. One idea the duo tested out was using “She Watch Channel Zero” by Public Enemy under the scene during which Sara first comes down off her stimulant pills. See Phil De Semlyen, "Clint Mansell on Making Requiem for a Dream," *Empire Online*, http://www.empireonline.com/interviews/interview.asp?IID=1698.

[87] The French impressionist filmmakers used music as the model for film’s visual rhythm in the early twentieth century. Jean Mitry defines film rhythm as having “more to do with relationships of intensity [than duration] – but relationships of intensity contained within relationships of duration… The intensity of a shot depends on the amount of movement (physical, dramatic or psychological) contained in it and on the length of time it lasts.” Jean Mitry, *Semiotics and the Analysis of Film* (London: Athlone Press, 2000), 222.

[88] Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 115.

macrostructural blending of media, as the filmmakers incorporate musical ideas into the film's overall organization through the use of repetition.

The Influence of Selby's Novel

A key element in examining Aronofsky's approach to the creation of *Requiem for a Dream* is understanding his interpretation of music's role in the film's source: Hubert Selby, Jr.'s novel. Aronofsky discovered Hubert Selby, Jr.'s work as a college student at Harvard in the late 1980s. Specifically, he discovered *Last Exit to Brooklyn* on a shelf in the library and "from sentence one I was done, and so were my finals. I blew them off and I read. I read and I read and I screamed and I connected and I recited and I rejoiced. This was storytelling. This was understanding. This was a deep yet simple examination of what makes us human."[89] After graduating from Harvard and finishing film school at the American Film Institute, Aronofsky was excited to find *Requiem for a Dream* at a bookstore on Venice Beach in Los Angeles, California. However, he didn't finish it because he found it "so violently honest and arresting that I couldn't handle it. It was on my shelf for a long time."[90] After encouragement from Eric Watson, who had produced π and who would later produce *Requiem for a Dream* and *The Fountain,* Aronofsky finished the novel and decided it would become his next film. In fact, he made this decision right at the time Selby was independently rediscovering a script he had written for *Requiem for a Dream*, which he had subsequently misplaced. They talked on the phone and decided to combine the two projects.[91] It was within this context that a

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[89] Aronofsky, "Foreword to the New Edition," 1.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Acharya, "Unspoilt By Progress."

synthesis of Selby's novel, Mansell's music, and Aronofsky's own vision for the film became possible.

Selby was involved with the filmmaking process from the beginning, and the film closely reflects the novel not only in terms of its narrative, but also in its prose style.[92] I would argue that the content of the hip-hop montages was likely inspired by a particular passage in Selby's novel. In describing Harry and Tyrone's use of heroin, the omniscient narrator explains, "The entire routine made them feel a part of something… The entire ritual was symbolic of their life and needs."[93] Here, we want to take note of the emphasis on the characters' drug use as ritualistic. It not only points to the repetitive nature of their addiction – a routine that is beyond quotidian – but it suggests the extent to which the ritualization of drug use has a quasi-religious aspect to it, perhaps inspiring the choice of the requiem mass to which the film aspires. The narrator goes on:

> Staring at the solution in the cooker as it heated and dissolved and then stirring the cotton around with the needle then drawing the solution up and into the dropper and holding the dropper in the mouth as they tied up and found a favorite vein, usually going into a previously made hole and feeling the spurt of excitement as the needle penetrated the vein and the blood spurted up the dropper and they let go of the tie around their arm and shot the shit into their arm and waited for that first flash of heat through their body and the warm swelling in the gut and they let the dropper fill up with blood and booted and then yanked it out and put it in the glass of water and rubbed the drops of blood off their arm and sat

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[92] For more on Selby's idiosyncratic writing style and an in-depth analysis of his most famous works, including *Requiem for a Dream,* see James R. Giles, *Understanding Hubert Selby, Jr.* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

[93] Hubert Selby Jr., *Requiem for a Dream* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1978), 89.

back feeling whole and invulnerable and safe and a lot of other things, but mostly whole.[94]

The sequential imagery and lack of punctuation in this description creates the prose version of what Aronofsky envisioned for his hip-hop montages. Though Selby's prose style may have served as a model for the film's drug ingestion sequences, the "hip-hop" aspect of these montages emerges as Aronofsky's invention in the preproduction screenplay.

The hip-hop montages are indicated in Aronofsky's screenplay as sequences of sounds, which are heard as accompanying split-second close-up shots in the final cut. For example, one reads: "QUICK HIP HOP MONTAGE: Lighter FLICKS – liquid on spoon SIZZLES – tourniquet SNAPS – needle SUCKS – hand SLAPS vein – a thunderous RUSH of liquid – and finally an ecstatic SIGH;"[95] a later instance of the same montage reads: "Then there's the: FLICK, SIZZLE, SNAP, SUCK, SLAP, RUSH, SIGH…"[96] In the screenplay, Aronofsky identifies these important structural signposts with fewer and fewer words until only their onomatopoetic descriptors remain. Likewise, one of Sara's early coffee hip-hop montages reads: "Then, she makes a cup of coffee: an empty pot TINKLES into place, the coffee PERKS, the coffee DRIPS, and then Sara SLURPS, SLURPS, SLURPS."[97] After she has become addicted to amphetamines, her pill/coffee montage simply reads: "POP, HIT, GULP, SNAP and TINKLE, PERK, DRIP, SLURP,

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Aronofsky, "Requiem for a Dream," 5.

[96] Ibid., 37.

[97] Ibid., 36.

SLURP, SLURP…"[98] Thus these sequences in the film are not just visual montages of interconnected actions; their rhythmical rendering in the screenplay points to Aronofsky's clear intent to musicalize these moments in the final cut.

The screenplay also reveals the influence of Selby's novel on the film's final climactic sequence, in which the images and sounds associated with the four protagonists' particular tragedies alternate in rapid succession. Aronofsky describes the intent behind the film's climax in the DVD commentary: "I had four different stories colliding, and I wanted it to just be as insane as possible. I wanted to take it all as far as we could… and it just builds mathematically to this insane climax."[99] (For the "insane climax" as described in the preproduction script see Appendix A).[100] Though the film's direct juxtaposition of Sara's shock therapy and Marion's prostitution work at the orgy is not taken from the novel, Aronofsky's preproduction script uses Selby's language. Selby describes Sara's shock therapy by using the stream-of-consciousness technique to illustrate an intense physical sensation (See Appendix B).[101] Selby uses the stream-of-consciousness technique to illustrate an intense physical sensation. At the moment of heroin injection in the earlier excerpt, the stream of consciousness technique suggested the effect of Tyrone and Harry's drug-induced high; in this instance, it creates a sense of panic and loss of control as Sara undergoes shock therapy.

In addition to incorporating Selby's stream-of-consciousness writing style into the hip-hop montages and the climax in the screenplay, Aronofsky took advantage of his

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[98] Ibid., 39.

[99] *Requiem for a Dream*.

[100] "Requiem for a Dream," 98-101.

[101] Selby Jr., *Requiem for a Dream*, 237-38.

particular medium, film, both to literalize what he saw as "the visual style"[102] of Selby's writing and to expand upon it with "sound," specifically music. As Aronofsky explains in the director's commentary:

> I really, really wanted to capture the visual style of Selby's writing. And what that entails is entering the subjective mind of his characters because what's great about Selby's characters is that you don't know where the dreams start and where the dreams end and characters float in and out of ideas… And I think a good way of doing that is combining all the different departments, especially sound, which really brings you in."[103]

One of the ways the viewer is "really brought in" is through the use of the "SnorriCam." This technique, invented by (unrelated) Icelandic directors and photographers Einar Snorri and Eiður Snorri, involves attaching the camera to the actor's body facing her, so that her surroundings appear to move instead of the actor herself. Aronofsky adapted the SnorriCam technique for *π* and aimed to have a SnorriCam scene for each actor in *Requiem for a Dream*. Aronofsky explains, "It's the ultimate subjective camera because it freezes the actor in the center of the frame while the background moves around."[104] During one SnorriCam sequence, when Marion is walking down the hallway of her apartment building, Aronofsky comments, "My favorite sequence in the film, which is yet another reprise of the overture… the infamous SnorriCam."[105] The "reprise of the overture" he refers to is a recurrence of *Lux Aeterna.* By linking the theme to the

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[102] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

characters' subjectivity through the SnorriCam, Aronofsky imbues *Lux Aeterna* with its own subjectivity, conveying to the audience that the music does not merely accompany the characters, it represents their perspectives.

Mansell's Main Theme: *Lux Aeterna*

Requiem for a Dream's main musical theme, *Lux Aeterna,* was the result of collaboration between Aronofsky, Mansell, and the Kronos Quartet. Aronofsky convinced the Kronos Quartet to do the music for *Requiem for a Dream* by showing them a rough cut of the film with Mansell's demos. Mansell had never composed music for strings before, but he played for the Kronos Quartet what he had written on a basic synthesizer, music he describes as simply "rhythm, bass, and a melody. That's it!"[106] Aronofsky describes the process of conceiving the theme as follows:

> What happened is early on, me and Clint listened to – we bought all these requiems from Mozart, Verdi, all the great requiems and we listened to them and we chose our favorite notes, our favorite, you know, moments in the music, and Clint sampled them and then stuck them into a drum machine and then played it percussively… And when we took that to the Kronos, the Kronos got really excited because they wanted to play those sharp notes over it. So they basically arranged it and so it's this weird mixture of samples and original live music from Kronos."[107]

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[106] ScoreKeeper, "ScoreKeeper With *Fountain* Composer Clint Mansell," *Ain't It Cool News,* November 27, 2006, http://www.aintitcool.com/node/30814.

[107] In addition to the requiems, Mansell also sampled music from the 1973 Robert Clouse film *Enter the Dragon,* starring Bruce Lee. Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

This recontextualization of moments from various famous requiems totally transforms the original source of the music. It is thus more a *reinvention* of that music.

This approach to sampling and reinvention, described above by Aronofsky in somewhat vague laymen's terms, demonstrates an attitude that belongs more to the hip-hop world than to that of traditional film scoring. Aronofsky and Mansell selected specific bits of music by ear, without the use of a musical score, immediately recontextualizing that pre-existing music into the world of hip-hop-style sampling.[108] Mansell's resulting theme, though technically born of existing classical music, does not resemble the requiems to which the film aspires. One has to take Aronofsky at his word that he and Mansell sampled these pre-existing works; specific sampled moments are not recognizable to even the experienced listener, let alone to a member of the film's general audience. The music thus loses its original identity as belonging to Mozart or to Verdi, as well as all the implications that such an identity might have had for an audience member, and becomes subsumed into the vaguely classical-sounding theme. All this points to Aronofsky's privileging of the *process* of creating the theme, and of public perception of that process, over the audience's recognition of any real allusions while watching the final cut.

The occurrences of the *Lux Aeterna* theme serve as a structuring device to create aural signposts throughout the film's three segments. Each segment is demarcated by an on-screen intertitle that halts the action, labeled "Summer," "Fall," and "Winter," respectively. The film begins in "Spring," as the *Lux Aeterna* theme accompanies the

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[108] Their approach is reminiscent of the break-beat technique, which involves the looping of the catchiest fragment of a rhythmic solo to create a new canvas over which to sing or rap. See George Nelson, *Hip-Hop America* (New York: Penguin, 1998).

opening sequence. In the second segment, the jarring "Fall" intertitle follows Tyrone's escape from the car where his drug dealers have just been massacred. Aronofsky says of that moment's accompanying *Lux Aeterna* theme, "This is the fall reprise, and we go back to the same overture music."[109] Later, in the third segment, as Sara wanders down the street in drug-induced confusion after the "Winter" intertitle, Aronofsky explains in the DVD commentary, "Once again, the winter reprise: the overture, again, a new season."[110] Though the three-part structure is conventional in literature, film, and other media, Aronofsky pointedly uses the musical terms "reprise" and "overture" when describing the structure, framing it as musical. In calling it a "reprise," he points to the use of *Lux Aeterna* as a recurring theme, or leitmotif, throughout the film; likewise, in calling it an "overture," he acknowledges its function during the opening sequence. Of course, both of these uses are typical of main musical themes in film; what is notable is not the way Aronofsky uses *Lux Aeterna*, but rather the way he describes his use of it.

In addition to using musical vocabulary to describe *Lux Aeterna,* Aronofsky's choice to work with the Kronos Quartet to record the theme also demonstrates his desire for musical credibility. Both Aronofsky and Mansell publicly stress their admiration for the group, which at the time comprised violinists Daniel Harrington and John Sherba, violist Hank Dutt, and cellist Jennifer Culp.[111] In the director's commentary for *Requiem for a Dream,* Aronofsky describes how after he first saw the Kronos Quartet perform in New York, he told Mansell they were "fantastic, absolutely amazing, probably the best

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[109] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Culp, who replaced founding member Joan Jeanrenaud in 1999, was herself replaced by Jeffrey Zeigler in 2005. The current cellist is Sunny Yang, who joined the quartet in 2013.

players in the world!"[112] Mansell described the Kronos Quartet's contribution as taking his "simple refrain" and making it "live, and breathe, and cry, and exist. It comes alive at that point. I don't think there is anybody better in the world than them."[113] Aronofsky concurs: "For me, it's all about the Kronos. And Clint of course, but the Kronos… boy, do they feel."[114] This appreciation for the famous American quartet, who, in addition to *Black Swan*, collaborated with Aronofsky and Mansell on *The Fountain* (2006) and *Noah* (2013), remains integral to Aronofsky's public image. The Kronos Quartet, comprising highly trained classical artists, have worked throughout their careers to challenge the boundaries between musical genres and to thwart expected performance conventions. Since its creation in 1973, the quartet has commissioned, performed, and recorded a wide breadth of musical genres including jazz, pop, rock, a variety of experimental music, and even punk in the early 1980s, thus making their music accessible to wide audiences all the while retaining high respect in the classical music community. By aligning himself and his work with the Kronos Quartet, Aronofsky thus establishes himself as musically serious and simultaneously a bit "punk."

Since the release of *Requiem for a Dream* in 2000, *Lux Aeterna* itself has been further recontextualized, most notably serving as the soundtrack to various film trailers, including *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002). Italian digital media scholar Gianni Sibilla credits new media and "intermedial convergence" with providing "the possibility to listen to music beyond the sense of place… without knowing where the songs

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[112] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

[113] ScoreKeeper, "ScoreKeeper With *Fountain* Composer Clint Mansell."

[114] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

originate."[115] Mansell created *Lux Aeterna* by divorcing samples from classical requiems from their original "place," a locus that is further obscured when *Lux Aeterna* is expropriated in other contexts. As Sibilla points out, the American film audience is used to experiencing music in this way, and thus accepts this recontextualization. I would argue that the film audience might not even recognize it as recontextualization at all, nor would they be concerned with the music's origins beyond perhaps noting that it sounds familiar. In a 2010 interview, Mansell described his surprise at the repurposing of *Lux Aeterna:*

> To a degree it's out of your hands. You kind of make this music and it goes off to live its life. *Requiem* got picked up and somebody did a re-orchestration for *Lord of the Rings*… It's funny – I was in Los Angeles and I knew the trailer [for *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*] was playing in front of the Paul Thomas Anderson movie *Punch-Drunk Love*. I went to Grauman's Chinese Theatre in LA just to check out the trailer. Nobody else in the theater, I'm watching as the trailer for *Two Towers* comes up. And it's unbelievable, this monster sound they've created. It was illuminating, to me, it made me realize that it's just music, at the end of the day, and it can be pitched in beautiful ways.[116]

Though Mansell seems generally unbothered and even impressed with the subsequent recontextualization of *Lux Aeterna,* Aronofsky has expressed distress surrounding this issue. In a 2010 interview, he said, "It pisses me off more than Clint! It pisses the shit out

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[115] Gianni Sibilla, "'When New Media was the Big Idea': Internet and the Rethinking of Pop-Music Languages," in *Music, Meaning & Media*, ed. Erkki Pekkilä, David Neumeyer, and Richard Littlefield (Helsinki: International Semiotics Institute, 2006), 154.

[116] Acharya, "Unspoilt By Progress."

of me… It's our music that we did.[117] This public outrage reveals the extent to which Aronofsky wants to send the message that he and Mansell created something *new* using pre-existing music, a *reinvention*, rather than an amalgamation of classical music from the requiems of other composers. Significantly, he uses the words "our music," referring to himself as a musical creator alongside Mansell and the Kronos Quartet. Claiming ownership of *Lux Aeterna* contributes to Aronofsky's cultivation of his "musical" reputation and his compositional role – an issue I further unpack later in this chapter.

Repetition and Hip-Hop Montages

I return now to Aronofsky's preproduction screenplay; this source best reveals the use and meaning of the hip-hop montages and offers insight into the importance of repetition within them, especially with relation to the break in their pattern. This repetition is evident in the nature of the hip-hop montages themselves, as well as in their structural use in building to the film's climax. Aronofsky thus uses repetition to evoke expectation in the audience member, reminiscent of the ritualistic addictions of the characters themselves, only to shatter that expectation after the film's climax.

The longest, most prominent hip-hop montage sequence in the film is used to illustrate Harry and Tyrone's short-lived success dealing drugs. (For this sequence in the screenplay see Appendix C.)[118] Here, the onomatopoetic words "CRACKLE, SLAP, SLIP, SWISH, CLINK, SLAP!" demonstrate the importance of the aural aspect in the

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[117] Robert Beames, "Interview: Darren Aronofsky on *Black Swan, The Wrestler, The Fountain* & More!," (January 21, 2010), http://whatculture.com/film/interview-darren-aronofsky-on-black-swan-the-wrestler-the-fountain-more.php.

[118] Aronofsky, "Requiem for a Dream," 33-34.

hip-hop montages. Furthermore, Aronofsky self-consciously describes the repetition of these words: “Again. And again.”

It is in the repetition of the hip-hop montages, with slight variances each time, that *Requiem for a Dream*’s structure most clearly emulates that of a musical piece. The three acts, or movements, of *Requiem for a Dream* have a narrative progression, contrasting in mood but linked by thematic material: from a musical perspective, the “thematic material” comprises the *Lux Aeterna* theme, which remains constant, and the hip-hop montages, which vary in detail throughout the film. If *Lux Aeterna* can be described using the oft-employed leitmotif comparison, the structural use of hip-hop montages demands a more interesting musical analogy. Specifically, the hip-hop montages loosely parallel a musical ritornello, a refrain that can recur recontextualized in full, or sometimes in fragments. Like ritornelli, the hip-hop montages are recognizable in contrast to the surrounding material, but have differences and are varied in each instance: Sara’s coffee, tea, and pill montages include different aural-visual material than Harry and Tyrone’s heroin montages or Marion’s cocaine montages. Sometimes, the different montages elide seamlessly. To extend the analogy, these essential distinctions in content can be understood as the different keys, instruments, registers, or modes of the ritornello’s recurrences. In the director’s commentary to the film, Aronofsky explains the deliberate intent of the hip-hop montages with regard to repetition:

> In *Requiem,* since addiction is so much about obsession, [the hip-hop montage technique] really, really comes to fruition because it connects all the different drugs; it shows you that these pills are the same as the heroin, which is the same as coffee, which is the same as the TV; that they’re all deeply connected because

I'm shooting them in the same type of way. And that was a big point of the film. And also I wanted to show how addictive they were, and how addiction is about repetition and about obsession… and then combining that with Brian Emrich's work, our sound designer, which is basically taking normal sounds of different shots and then really warping them out as the film gets more and more warped.[119]

This repetition builds to the aural and visual climactic sequence, which is accompanied by the *Lux Aeterna* theme.

Leading up to the film's climax, the audience comes to recognize the pattern of the hip-hop montage ritornello and expects some version of the complete sequence. Thus when the pattern is broken – as Harry's hip-hop montage is interrupted – the effect is startling. The break in the pattern happens during the scene in which Tyrone and Harry are driving to Florida, in hopes of acquiring more drugs to sell after the violent cut off of their supply in New York. Aronofsky describes this moment in the screenplay as follows:

INT. PONTIAC VENTURA PARKED IN HO JO LOT

FLICK, SIZZLE, SNAP, SUCK, SLAP, RUSH, SIGH…

Tyrone leans against the driver's door—high.

Harry rolls up his sleeve. Right in the crotch of his arm is a nasty hole from shooting too much. It's infected and rings of red surround it.

…FLICK, SIZZLE, SNAP, SUCK, SLAP—break from the montage.

For the first time we see a TIGHT CLOSE UP of a needle going into the hole, then we end the montage—RUSH, SIGH…[120]

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[119] *Requiem for a Dream*.

[120] "Requiem for a Dream," 83.

Here, Aronofsky interrupts the onomatopoetic description of the hip-hop montage with the underlined direction: "break from the montage." In the final cut it is just a momentary break, followed by the expected close-up shots of Harry's billowing blood stream and his dilating pupil: the RUSH and the SIGH, respectively. This break in the pattern – to continue the musical analogy, almost like a deceptive cadence used for prolongation – begins the buildup to the "insane climax."[121]

Another scene along the way to the "insane climax" in *Requiem for a Dream* is that of Sara's mental break, which uses aural repetition to blur the boundary between the real and the imagined. During this scene, Sara's refrigerator, which has been threatening her more and more aggressively as her pill addiction worsens, finally seems to attack her. Tappy Tibbons, the host of the TV show for which she is preparing by losing weight, and a thin, glamorous version of herself (called "Red Sara" because of her red dress) emerge from the TV set, followed by the "FREAKS AND CREW" from the show, and begin maniacally dancing around Sara.[122] During this scene, which leads into the "Winter" intertitle, Sara completely loses touch with reality. (For Aronofsky's description of this moment in the preproduction screenplay see Appendix D.)[123] Sara's mental break, demonstrated for the audience by the emergence of characters from the TV into Sara's living room and the coming to life of the inanimate refrigerator, is enforced by the repetition of "FEED ME." Though this repetition occurs within the diegesis of the film,

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[121] *Requiem for a Dream*.

[122] In his review of the film in *The Threepenny Review,* critic Steve Vineberg expressed surprise that this moment is effective: "Holograms leak out of Sara's TV set and dance around her apartment – good God, it should be a disaster. Instead it's stunning: harrowing, terrifying, simultaneously pitiful and pitiless." Steve Vineberg, "Something New," *The Threepenny Review*, no. 86 (2001): 22.

[123] Aronofsky, "Requiem for a Dream," 76-79.

the audience literally *hears* it as Sara hears it. Thus as Sara becomes overwhelmed, the aural repetition is overwhelming for the audience member, too. This scene creates a direct tie between repetition – in this case, the repetition inherent in Sara's obsession with food, hunger, and losing weight – and madness. The psychological effect of repetition works on Sara and on the audience as well, who must endure the refrigerator's chant of "FEED ME!"

During the climax sequence, aural repetition serves to unite the individual crises of Sara and Marion; the screenplay suggests this link was intentional on Aronofksy's part. Here, electric shock therapy and orgasm, both usually private experiences, are accompanied by the repeated cheering of crowds. The crowd in Marion's scene is the group of men who have paid to watch her have sex; in Sara's case, the crowd from Tappy Tibbons' show exists only in her mind. The chant of "Cum! Cum! Cum!" repeated by PERVERT AND ALL THE MEN in the climactic sequence is reminiscent of the cry of "Feed me! FEED ME!" with which Sara's refrigerator assaulted her a few scenes earlier. But beyond the aural repetition to which the film audience is privy, Aronofsky's choice of language in the screenplay connects Sara's experience to that of Marion. Specifically, his description of Sara's "arched and stiffened body," which "looks as if fire has just shot through her body" as "her mind screams AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH…" could just as easily be describing Marion's orgasm.[124]

After the climax, Aronofsky denies the audience catharsis. From a narrative perspective, negative consequences of drug addiction lead to disaster for the four protagonists, and then the film ends. At least partly, as Aronofsky explains in the DVD

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[124] Ibid., 100-01.

commentary, this was in order to adhere to Selby's novel: "I think it would have been undermining Selby's morality and Selby's message to in any way soften or lighten this film."[125] In a 2000 interview with *Salon.com,* Aronofsky described this lack of catharsis in elaborate metaphors, calling the film's ending a "nose dive… into the sub-basement of hell," "the second you realize you forgot your parachute," and "a roller coaster that smashes into a brick wall."[126] These specific, physical metaphors demonstrate Aronofksy's intention to inspire a visceral reaction within the audience through the breaking of the hip-hop montage pattern and the subsequent climactic sequence. Musicologist Danijela Kulezic-Wilson attributes this effect on the viewer to "the doubling of the musical and visual accents,"[127] referring to the marked reoccurrence of the hip-hop montage, which itself comprises musical and visual accents, and the intense shot of Harry inserting the needle into his infected arm, respectively. In her essay about Aronofsky and Mansell's use of hip-hop montages in *π*, Kulezic-Wilson claims:

> The same approach was used in *Requiem for a Dream*, in which a pattern of taking drugs is suddenly broken in the third act, announcing dramatic changes in both the plot and the destiny of its protagonists. The reasoning is that by repeating the same pattern throughout the film the audience gets used to the routine of an action (taking drugs) and is more alert to the moment when the pattern breaks and change breaks through.[128]

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[125] *Requiem for a Dream*.

[126] Stark, "It's a Punk Movie."

[127] Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, "The Musicality of Film Rhythm," in *National Cinema and Beyond: Studies in Irish Film*, ed. Kevin Rockett and John Hill (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 119.

[128] "A Musical Approach to Filmmaking," 26.

In a way, the audience member becomes addicted to the repetition, and its disruption can personally affect them. As Aronofsky puts it, "Clint [Mansell] uses a lot of repetition in his music in the same way that I use a lot of repetition in my images. We both feel that through repetition you can actually create a whole different level of emotional response from your audience."[129] Much like they would in a musical piece, audiences are meant to experience the emotional result of the structural, obsessive repetition, rather than merely observing the characters as *they* experience it.

Critical Responses to *Requiem for a Dream*

Though critical response is not always a reliable indicator of a film's quality, here it is useful evidence of the film's ability to achieve the specific goal of the hip-hop montages, as well as the musical intent of the entire film. *Requiem for a Dream* became a cult classic in the years immediately following its release.[130] Many critical responses to *Requiem for a Dream* identify the hip-hop montages as moments of success, especially with regard to the film's ability to emotionally affect its viewers. For example, Roger Ebert, who reviewed the film positively in *The Chicago Sun-Times*, never names the term "hip-hop montage," but describes the "extreme close ups… all done with acute exaggeration of sounds" as a main strength in the film.[131] In a 2000 *Salon.com* review, critic Andrew O'Hehir expresses reservations about the film generally, calling it "banal and highly original at the same time," but describes the hip-hop montages with clear admiration:

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[129] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

[130] According to Selby, who was in attendance when the film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, it received a standing ovation. Stephen Lemons, "*Requiem for a Dream* Author Hubert Selby, Jr.," (October 26, 2000), www.salon.com/2000/10/26/selby_2.

[131] Roger Ebert, "Requiem for a Dream," *Chicago Sun-Times,* November 3, 2000.

> There's a rapid-fire montage in "Requiem for a Dream" that repeats, with minor variations, every time [Aronofsky's] drug-addled characters prepare to get high… When he eventually repeats this sequence using a Mr. Coffee machine rather than verboten drug paraphernalia, the point is made far more delicately than it could ever be with dialogue. Texture, rhythm and pace are everything in Aronofsky's movies: his overloaded images, split screens, fast motion, slow motion and stop motion; his intertitles that come crashing down with the sound of a garage door closing. Whatever Aronofsky has to express lies in this promiscuous display, not in the didactic and overly familiar tale he has to offer here.

O'Hehir stresses that "texture, rhythm and pace," specifically with regard to the integration of sound and visual aspects, are where Aronofsky is most successful. Thus he does not praise the film's music (for instance, the *Lux Aeterna* theme), but rather what he sees as Aronofsky's musical approach.

Some critical responses to the film's climax call into question whether Aronofsky achieved his intended goal while others praise the uncomfortable effect on the audience as a success. Jonathan Rosenbaum experienced the intensity of the film, especially the climax, as alienating: "The final stretches of this story… in which heaps of abuse and injury are shoveled onto the characters, [destroy] our capacity to respond in any way except flinching."[132] Paul Tatara advised readers of his review that, "The best approach is to just lean back, cover up, and let the director flail away until it's all over. That's not the way movies are supposed to work, by the way. You're supposed to get lost in a film, not

[132] Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Family Values," *Chicago Reader,* November 30, 2000, http://m.chicagoreader.com/chicago/family-values/Content?oid=904043.

steel yourself to endure it."[133] In contrast, Steve Vineberg called the last twenty minutes of the film "unbearable" in a satisfying way, admitting, "I looked away during the graphic depiction of Harry's abscessed arm and during the shock treatments administered to Sara once her public behavior becomes alarming."[134] In *Salon.com*, Jeff Stark explained his own reaction to the climactic sequence as follows: "At certain points, the seductively beautiful film is so hard to watch that you want to shield your eyes and beg for release. And right at that point, Aronofsky makes it even harder to bear."[135]

Perhaps most telling is critics' tendency to adopt Aronofsky's own musical language in describing *Requiem for a Dream*, whether or not their reviews are positive. Michael Atkonson describes the build up and the climax in *The Village Voice* with reference to the last opera of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*: "The entire movie is contents under pressure, tear-assing toward a climactic Götterdämmerung montage split four ways."[136] Ebert referred to the collision of all the characters' stories as a "virtuoso closing sequence."[137] Even O'Hehir observes that, "Other filmmakers are said to think like musicians, but Aronofsky genuinely appears to."[138]

The longevity of the film's popularity and most contemporary critical responses suggest that the repetition leading up to the final climax was successful in producing a

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[133] Paul Tatara, "Just Say No to *Requiem for a Dream*," October 9, 2000, http://archives.cnn.com/2000/SHOWBIZ/Movies/10/09/review.requiem.dream/index.html.

[134] Vineberg, "Something New."

[135] Stark, "It's a Punk Movie."

[136] Michael Atkonson, "Dose of Reality," *The Village Voice,* October 3, 2000, http://www.villagevoice.com/2000-10-03/film/dose-of-reality/1/.

[137] Ebert, "Requiem for a Dream."

[138] Andrew O'Hehir, "Requiem for a Dream," October 10, 2000, www.salon.com/2000/10/20/requiem.

visceral empathy within audiences. I contend that this is possible in part because Aronofsky and Mansell's incorporation of music from the earliest stages of *Requiem for a Dream*'s conception represents a new interpretation of the "music film" classification. Returning to Nicholas Cook's definition, he references the *Rite of Spring* sequence in Disney's *Fantasia* as an example for defining "music film" in *Analysing Musical Multimedia.* He writes of this example that it is "the construction of a fundamentally new experience, one whose limits are set not by Stravinsky nor even by Disney… but by anybody who watches – and listens to – *Fantasia.*"[139] *Requiem for a Dream* is not a music film in the same sense as Disney's *Fantasia* is: among other distinctions, its pre-existing music does not remain intact but is completely reinvented, and, most obviously, it is a live-action, narrative film. But in reinventing pre-existing classical music, appropriating hip-hop techniques, and employing the results in structural repetition throughout the film, Aronofsky and Mansell "create a whole different level of emotional response from [their] audience,"[140] whose limits are defined not by its constituent parts, but by the audience member.

<u>*Black Swan*</u>

With *Black Swan*, we see how ten years after making *Requiem for a Dream,* Aronofsky continued to prioritize music as a creative force in his films. Aronofsky, Mansell, and their collaborators used the *Swan Lake* story and Tchaikovsky's music to merge the ballet at the center of the film's plot with the narrative of the film. To create the *Black Swan* score, Mansell and orchestrator Matt Dunkley relied heavily on

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[139] Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 214.

[140] Aronofsky, *Requiem for a Dream*.

Tchaikovsky's pre-existing music for *Swan Lake.* Whereas Aronofsky and Mansell had worked together in New Orleans on *Requiem for a Dream*,[141] Mansell worked on the *Black Swan* score in Los Angeles, communicating with Aronofsky, who was based in New York, mostly via Skype.[142] Dunkley's orchestrated score, which comprises seventy minutes of music, was then recorded at AIR Studios in London by an 80-piece orchestra over the course of three days.[143] In the film, the music is used to reflect the world of *Swan Lake* in that of *Black Swan*. This mirroring was written in from the level of the shooting draft of the screenplay, which, in addition to an earlier draft and the filmmakers' descriptions of their intentions for the film, I use as my primary source for understanding the conceptual role of music in *Black Swan*.

By employing the visual symbol of the mirror as a motif in the actual film, Aronofsky extends the mirroring of *Swan Lake* in his creative process to become a major narrative metaphor. When Nina sees her Double reflected in mirrors throughout the film, the audience hears Mansell's version of specific musical moments from *Swan Lake*, linking this music to Nina's identity crisis. The mirror is a typical metonymic device in film and, of course, always present in ballet studios. Aronofsky wanted to "do something new with" the symbol of the mirror, and "try to make it more compelling, more different, and more freaky."[144] One of the ways the filmmakers make the mirrors "more compelling" is by tying them to Tchaikovsky's music. Certain themes stand out as

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[141] Mansell had moved to New Orleans in order to live and work at the studio of his friend and musical collaborator, Trent Reznor of Nothing Records and Nine Inch Nails. Louis Pattison, "Clint Mansell: From Pop Will Eat Itself to Hollywood Royalty," *TheGuardian.com,* February 22, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/feb/22/clint-mansell-stoker-soundtrack.

[142] Acharya, "Unspoilt By Progress."

[143] Samuel, "Clint Mansell."

[144] Darren Aronofsky, *Black Swan: Metamorphosis* (Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2010).

indicating Nina's loss of her sense of self with relation to the two characters who become her Double, Beth (the dance company's recently dismissed prima ballerina, whom Nina replaces as the Swan Queen) and Lily (a new soloist from San Francisco who is cast as Nina's understudy, whom Nina is both intimidated by and attracted to).

Black Swan offers another rich example of Aronofsky's tendency toward boundary blurring and subjective playing with identity. Mansell's reinvention of Tchaikovsky's music is the main contributing factor to Nina's confusion between herself and her Double, but more broadly, it also blurs the boundary between what is real and what is imagined for the audience. In the film, Tchaikovsky's music functions both diegetically – accompanying the dancers during rehearsals for *Swan Lake* and in the ballet company's performance – and non-diegetically – accompanying Nina's world outside of the production. Looking at two examples of musical themes from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* score, I examine the ways Mansell uses them to indicate Nina's loss of her sense of self as she confuses the boundaries between herself and her Double. Then I examine the introduction and finale of the film, in which it is unclear whether Tchaikovsky's music is diegetic or not. My consideration of these specific musical moments takes into account not just the text of the film, but that of Heyman, Heinz, and McLaughlin's screenplay draft as well as the filmmakers' descriptions of their approach to reflecting the world of *Swan Lake* in that of *Black Swan.*

Normative comparisons between *Black Swan's* score and the original music and choreography from *Swan Lake* would not do justice to understanding the creative source of music in this film. We must remember that Mansell did not create the music for *Black Swan* with the written score of *Swan Lake* in mind; rather, he chose aspects of

Tchaikovsky's music based on his own aural experience. In describing Mansell's approach, Aronofsky stresses the importance of music to the conception of the film:

> One of the major reasons I did the film was for Clint [Mansell]. I was just excited about how you take a masterpiece like *Swan Lake* and turn it into movie music… I knew it was going to be a big challenge to make it fresh and reinvent it for the film. He just basically took it and listened to it and deconstructed it and then kind of reassembled it and made it scarier.[145]

Mansell aurally chose themes and motifs that appealed to him when he listened to Tchaikovsky's score and then he and Dunkley developed those moments into *Black Swan*'s musical themes, carrying meanings separate from their original ones. The examples I focus on here are rather inconspicuous in their original context in *Swan Lake*; they are not memorable relative to the surrounding music and they do not function as main themes. But in *Black Swan,* these motifs stand out as heralding the collapsing boundary between Nina and her Double. Given Mansell's compositional approach, it would be impossible to identify all the recontextualized instances of Tchaikovsky's score in the soundtrack to *Black Swan.* Rather, I focus on two non-diegetic musical motifs that Mansell developed into recurring passages in the film in order to demonstrate the specific ways in which the concept of the Double is not only reflected in the film's music, but is built into the shooting draft of the screenplay.

The Story of *Swan Lake* and the *Black Swan* Screenplay

Unlike *Requiem for a Dream*, Aronofsky did not write the screenplay for *Black Swan,* but he remained a principal force of influence in the film's production. The film

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[145] Robert Beames, "Interview: Darren Aronofsky on *Black Swan, The Wrestler, The Fountain* & More!" *WhatCulture.com* (January 21, 2010).

was inspired by Andres Heinz's screenplay *The Understudy*, which had caught Aronofsky's eye right after the completion of π in 1998. After considering making *The Understudy* his second project, Aronofsky decided to focus on *Requiem for a Dream* instead. During work on *The Fountain* (2006), he returned to *The Understudy*, this time enlisting John McLaughlin to rewrite the plot – which was set in the world of off-Broadway theater – and to recontextualize it for the ballet.[146] McLaughlin reports writing six outlines and four drafts before Aronofsky turned to Mark Heyman to take over the writing process.[147] After taking over the *Black Swan* screenplay from McLaughlin, Heyman went through eight or nine drafts before production began. Aronofsky was involved with Heyman's screenwriting process from the beginning, and likewise, Heyman stayed involved throughout the film's production.[148]

When Heyman took over writing the *Black Swan* screenplay, *Swan Lake* became much more of a central influence than any of the script's previous drafts. He told Sean Glass at IONCINEMA.com, "Every character in the script comes out of a character in *Swan Lake.* The essential story comes out of *Swan Lake.* And so that was sort of our starting off point."[149] An instance of Heyman's parallelism with regard to characterization is evident in the screenplay. Although the name of Nina's terrifyingly overbearing mother, Erica, is never mentioned in the film, her name directly links her to

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[146] Kohn, *A Conversation with Mark Heyman*.

[147] Joe Belcastro, "Interview with *Black Swan* Scribe John McLaughlin," *Shockya.com,* January 26, 2000, http://www.shockya.com/news/2011/01/26/interview-with-black-swan-scribe-john-mclaughlin/.

[148] Aronofsky had met Heyman while guest teaching at New York University during Heyman's last year in the graduate film program there. Heyman never graduated from NYU, instead beginning work as Aronofsky's assistant through the end of work on *The Fountain* (2006). He eventually became director of development for Aronofsky's production company Prøtøzøa Pictures and co-produced *The Wrestler* (2008). Kohn, *A Conversation with Mark Heyman*.

[149] Sean Glass, *Audio Interview: Mark Heyman* (IONCINEMA.com, 2012).

the demon character in the *Swan Lake* ballet, Erich von Rothbart. Heyman makes the analogy that Erica is a "somewhat evil force that's trapping her daughter," just as Erich von Rothbart traps the White Swan in *Swan Lake*.[150] Though Heyman stresses his independence from the original drafts, one of the elements that remained from Heinz's screenplay was the concept of the Double.

Much like Heinz, Aronofsky had been interested in the idea of a character's Double as a main plot device; this was one of the main reasons he was drawn to Heinz's screenplay. Aronofsky reports that he had been reading Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Double* when he first attended a ballet production of *Swan Lake*, which itself centers around the Doubles of Odette, the White Swan, and Odile, the Black Swan. He describes it as an "aha! moment."[151] Heinz, too, found inspiration in Dostoyevsky's *The Double,* but also in Edgar Allen Poe's *William Wilson.*[152] In the following quotation from an online forum conversation, Heinz elaborates on his attraction to the idea of the Double or "doppelganger":

> I started thinking about doppelgangers, and that the ultimate nightmare is in fact facing what is in yourself. Doubles have a long history, across many cultures. Most believe that if you see your double, it's a bad omen, that they are harbingers of death. I thought this would make for a fantastic psychological horror, where

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[150] Kohn, *A Conversation with Mark Heyman*.

[151] Aronofsky, *Black Swan: Metamorphosis*.

[152] The parallels between the film *Black Swan* and *William Wilson* are perhaps the most obvious: in *William Wilson,* the eponymous protagonist ends up fighting his double against a wall, killing him, and turning around to see in a broken mirror and that he's actually stabbed himself. The climax of *Black Swan* involves a similar scene.

our character, in her spiral into madness, has to confront a darker version of herself.[153]

In Heyman's final version of the screenplay, and as remained in the final cut of the film, Nina ends up with two characters who become her Double: Beth and Lily. In what follows, I examine Heyman's shooting draft from October, 2009 and his final shooting script to show the ways in which Mansell took this idea of the Double as inspiration for his reinvention of the *Swan Lake* music for the film.

Nina's Musical Doubling: Beth

A re-orchestration of an excerpt from Tchaikovsky's music from Act III No. 19 "Pas de six," Andante con moto, marks the progression of Nina's relationship to Beth. Throughout the film, Mansell uses this music to punctuate moments that are meaningful to this relationship, leading up to the scene where Beth becomes Nina's Double. I will refer to this melody simply as "Pas de six":

Figure 3: Act III No. 19 "Pas de six" Excerpt.[154]

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[153] StoryLink, "You Asked... Andres Heinz, 'Black Swan'".

[154] These parts are excerpted. Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, "The Swan Lake Ballet (Le Lac Des Cynes), Grand Ballet En 4 Actes, Op. 20," (New York: Broude Brothers, 1951), 425.

Tchaikovsky's melody in the music from which this excerpt is drawn is for the oboe and bassoon, but Dunkley orchestrates the same music for piano and strings. It is first used in the final cut after we see Nina arrive at the theater for the first time. She is sitting in the dressing room and overhears some of the other dancers gossiping about Beth. One of the dancers suggests that the director of the ballet, Thomas, needs someone new to replace Beth, and we see Nina look at herself in the mirror. This moment is not indicated in the shooting draft; but in the final cut, the symbol of the mirror creates an obvious link between Nina and Beth during this conversation.

After seemingly failing her audition for the Swan Queen, Nina decides to emulate Beth by putting on the older ballerina's stolen lipstick and trying to seduce Thomas (whose character is named Michael Brennan in the early shooting draft) into giving her the role. In the film, this scene is not obviously linked to Beth in any way other than the "Pas de six" music; Beth's romantic relationship with Leroy has not yet been confirmed for the audience, so Nina's behavior seems desperate but is not obviously an imitation of Beth. However, the shooting draft indicates that Heyman intended this scene to connect the two characters. (See Appendix E.)[155] Though the shooting draft suggests that Beth's presence should loom large in Brennan's (Leroy's) office, in the film, there is no emphasis of posters on the wall. But Leroy clearly has Beth's role in mind for Nina: he kisses her, and she reacts by biting his lip in a panic. That action is enough to convince Leroy that she has what it takes to replace Beth as the Swan Queen and as his paramour.

Nina's overlapping identity with Beth's reaches a climax after Beth is hit by a car, permanently ending her dancing career by critically injuring her leg. Nina visits Beth in

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[155] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 21.

the hospital twice; the second time, she goes with the intention of returning certain items she has stolen from Beth's dressing room. Nina explains to Beth, who is looking exhausted and decrepit in a wheelchair, that she knows how Beth feels now that Lily is attempting to replace her, and that she stole Beth's things because she wanted to be perfect, like Beth. The "Pas de six" theme begins as Beth picks up the stolen emory board and responds, "Perfect? I'm not perfect. I'm nothing." In the final version of the screenplay, as in the film, Beth screams, "Nothing!" and begins to stab herself in the face. In the shooting draft, she instead repeats "Sweet Girl," the creepy term of endearment Nina's mother, Erica, also uses for her. (See Appendix F.)[156] In the film, Nina bolts from the hospital room as Beth/Nina continues stabbing herself in the face, yelling, "Nothing!" When Nina reaches the elevator, she realizes that *she* is holding the bloody emory board. The question of whether Nina stabbed Beth is never answered in the film. But the shooting draft reveals that Beth has actually transformed into a different character: Nina's double. The "DOUBLE" even replaces "BETH" in the character's line indications. For the film audience, this blurring of boundaries between the two characters is indicated musically, through the return of the "Pas de six" motif.

Nina's Musical Doubling: Lily

By the end of the film, Nina has also confused her own identity with that of Lily, who has come to represent the Black Swan for her. As was the case with Nina's relationship to Beth, a mirror is used to convey Nina's confusion of the boundary between herself and Lily. But unlike her relationship with Beth, Nina's relationship with Lily parallels her physical transformation into the Black Swan as she literally becomes the role. This

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[156] Ibid., 85-86.

process is accompanied by Tchaikovsky's music from Act II No. 13, "Dances of the Swans," Andante:

Figure 4: Act II No. 13, "Dances of the Swans," Andante. [157]

Tchaikovsky's score uses the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon to play the haunting motif, while a harp plays arpeggios beneath the held whole notes. In contrast, Dunkley scores the same music, transposed down a whole step, using strings and piano to play the melody and a piano to play the rolling harp part. In Tchaikovsky's score, this is a three-phrase melody leading to a harp cadenza, then a poignant violin solo over harp chords.

[157] Tchaikovsky, "The Swan Lake Ballet (Le Lac Des Cynes), Grand Ballet En 4 Actes, Op. 20," 302-03.

Dunkley instead blends only the first two phrases into a texture of original staccato syncopation in the strings and piano.

The first time we hear this music (which I will refer to as the "Dances" motif) is the first time Nina sees Lily, and it is non-diegetic. Nina is on the train on her way to the theater when she sees the back of another girl's head in the car beyond hers. This moment in the shooting draft appears as:

> INT. SUBWAY TRAIN – DAY
>
> Nina rides inside a crowded subway, staring absentmindedly at her faint reflection in the train's window.
>
> Suddenly, another train roars by on the opposite track, snapping her awake.
>
> In the next train car, she sees the back of a BALLERINA standing in the midst of the crowd. Her head bops to music playing through iPod earphones.
>
> Nina moves a strand of hair out of her eyes, and at that exact moment, the girl in the next car moves in the same way. Mirroring her.
>
> Unnerved, Nina slowly lowers her arm. So does the other girl. Although Nina can't quite see her face, the girl seems IDENTICAL from Nina's vantage point.[158]

Neither Nina nor the film viewer knows who this character is until she introduces herself to the soloists as Lily in the following scene.[159] But the use of the term "mirroring" in the shooting draft identifies this moment as significant in Nina's loss of identity. The film audience is not privy to Heyman's use of the word "mirroring" in the screenplay, but

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[158] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 3.

[159] In the shooting draft, this introduction does not happen until many scenes later, when Nina arrives late to a rehearsal.

does have the opportunity to connect the “Dances” motif to Nina’s “faint reflection in the train’s window.”

The second time we hear the “Dances” motif, Nina is on her way home from her apparently failed Swan Queen audition, and her confusion of identity has already begun. This scene appears in the shooting draft as follows:

> She hears the sound of soft FOOTSTEPS approaching. She stops, and the other FOOTSTEPS stop.
>
> She looks up and sees the faint outline of a SLENDER WOMAN standing there, almost ghostlike.
>
> Nina starts walking again, keeping her head down, and the other woman continues as well.
>
> As they pass each other, Nina glances at the woman’s face and discovers…
>
> The woman looks EXACTLY LIKE HER.
>
> But the moment passes and the woman continues walking.
>
> Nina stares after her, perturbed.[160]

In the film, the “Dances” motif begins as Nina sees the other woman, who appears to the viewer to be Lily, approaching her on the platform. As she passes Nina and the music climaxes, the audience and Nina both realize that the woman is Nina’s Double.

Since Nina’s relationship with Lily parallels her transformation into the Black Swan, the “Dances” music also marks moments when Nina discovers the physical changes her body is going through. For example, having returned home on the day she finds out that she has been cast as the Swan Queen, Nina scrutinizes herself in the

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[160] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 13.

bathroom mirror after bathing. The “Dances” theme begins as she notices a textured, red rash on her left shoulder in the mirror; Lily has black wings tattooed on her shoulder blades in this exact location. This rash is the first indication that Nina is beginning to sprout wings. Earlier interactions with her mother have implied to the audience that Nina used to have a nervous habit of scratching at her own shoulders, but in this scene, her rash seems to have appeared and started bleeding on its own. Similarly, the “Dances” theme begins while Nina is washing her hands in front of the mirror in the bathroom at the fundraiser gala Leroy hosts to announce the new season. Tugging at a hangnail, she accidentally tears the skin of her finger off, down to the second knuckle, just at the moment when Lily begins knocking on the bathroom door, demanding to be let in.

In addition to marking Nina’s discovery of her physical changes in the mirror, the “Dances” theme accompanies her loss of control over her own reflection. The first time this happens, Nina has just seen her Double hovering over the bathtub while she submerged herself under the water. The “Dances” theme begins as she examines the deep scratches on her shoulder in the bathroom mirror. Suddenly, her reflection looks up at her and viciously snips off the tip of her index finger. Nina gasps and drops the scissors, running her bleeding fingers under the faucet. The second time she loses control of her reflection, Nina is getting measured for her Swan Queen costume. The costume designer asks her to take off her shrug; Nina knows this will expose the scratches on her shoulder blades where wings have begun to sprout. Looking in the mirror, she realizes that the person in her reflection is scratching at her shoulder, though Nina herself remains still. The “Dances” theme begins abruptly as Nina leans to one side, testing her reflection: instead of moving with her, her reflection turns its head and makes eye contact with her.

The costume designer returns and Nina's reflection begins to behave as it should. The moment seems to have passed. But the "Dances" theme continues as Lily enters the room and reveals that the ballet director, Thomas Leroy, has made her Nina's alternate: if Nina is unable to dance the role of Swan Queen, Lily will take her place.

Ambiguous Diegesis in *Black Swan*

The two examples I've just discussed involve non-diegetic music, but *Black Swan*'s doubling of *Swan Lake* becomes most apparent when the diegesis of the music is unclear for the audience. The film is framed by moments of ambiguous diegesis in its introduction, climax, and finale, which are all accompanied by quotations of Tchaikovsky's actual music. In addition to framing the film, Tchaikovsky's fully orchestrated music marks moments of identity crisis for Nina when she is either dreaming or hallucinating, specifically the excerpt from letter C, "Allegro ma non troppo," of the Introduction to *Swan Lake*. With regard to the treatment of these hallucinatory moments, Andres Heinz outlines his approach to the original version of the *The Understudy* screenplay:

> When writing someone like Nina, an unreliable narrator, you have to have a logic to her hallucinations… It's about externalizing the internal… Part of the fun is to blur the line so the reader and audience are kept on their toes. Keeping this mystery of what is real and what is not is crucial to propelling the story… I think it's crucial that we feel the character's fear and confusion as our own. If we see they too are frightened and confused by these hallucinations, that they themselves

don't know where the line is, it puts us alongside them, keeps us identifying with them."[161]

This language is reminiscent of Aronofsky's stated intentions in writing the *Requiem for a Dream* screenplay. Like in the earlier film, *Black Swan*'s attempt to draw the audience into the protagonist's disorienting mental experiences was the intention from the point of creative conception. Here, I examine how Aronofsky reflects *Swan Lake* in *Black Swan* by using Tchaikovsky's music to amplify these moments of ambiguous diegesis in the narrative.

The introduction to *Black Swan* mirrors that of *Swan Lake* both by using Tchaikovsky's music and by replicating the action of the ballet. As the film begins, metallic, dissonant sounds that resemble a train pulling into a station accompany the music from the Introduction to *Swan Lake*. We see Nina dancing by herself in a spotlight, surrounded by darkness. As Tchaikovsky's music becomes more ominous, a man dressed in black approaches Nina from behind. Suddenly, he transforms into a monster and grabs her; the dance becomes a choreographed struggle. When Nina awakens, it becomes clear to the viewer that the Introduction was a dream. (For how The Introduction is described in the shooting draft see Appendix G.)[162] In this opening scene, Nina dreams that Rothbart, the demon from *Swan Lake*, is casting a spell on her, as happens in *Swan Lake* during the Introduction. In the final version of the screenplay, Heyman specifies this bit of information, adding, "His true form is revealed, the demon ROTHBART."[163] By beginning *Black Swan* with the same music that begins *Swan Lake*, Aronofsky makes

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[161] StoryLink, "You Asked... Andres Heinz, 'Black Swan'".

[162] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 1.

[163] Heyman, *Black Swan*, 1.

clear an intentional parallel between the two. *Black Swan* is not merely a film about *Swan Lake*; it is a reinvention of it.

The "Allegro ma non troppo" music from the Introduction returns in the hallucination during which Nina realizes that Lily is a threat to her and, not long after, in the scene that reveals the extent of her physical transformation into the Black Swan. After staying at the studio late to rehearse by herself, Nina discovers Lily and Leroy having sex in the wings. Before her eyes, they transform into her Double and Von Rothbart, the villain from *Swan Lake.* It is unclear to the audience whether Leroy and Lily were having sex at all, or whether Nina hallucinated the entire thing. But immediately following this scene, Nina rushes to the hospital to return the things she has stolen from Beth, claiming that she knows how Beth feels now that Lily is trying to replace *her.* As I discussed in "Nina's Musical Doubling: Beth," this interaction ends with Beth becoming the Double, stabbing herself in the face repeatedly with the emory board, and Nina realizing that she is holding the bloody emory board in the elevator. She returns home and searches for her mother, and it becomes clear to the audience that she is hallucinating as her mother's paintings of her "seem to move slightly. Blink. Mouths move. They whisper: 'Sweet girl' and then start chanting 'My turn, my turn, my turn!'"[164]

Here, the final version of the screenplay has an important addition. At some point before shooting, Aronofsky decided to insert an appearance of Nina's Double, viewed in a mirror. The following does not appear in the shooting draft:

> Nina cups her hands over her ears, trying to block it out.
>
> She hears a BANG and looks towards the door. No one's there.

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[164] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 86.

She glimpses the mirror, which reflects down the hallway. She sees her Double rushing towards the room.[165]

This small change points to Aronofsky's deliberate emphasis of the Double at this moment of confused diegesis. The shooting draft continues. (See Appendix H.)[166] In this scene, it becomes clear to the viewer what Nina's transformation entails, but it is ambiguous whether this is occurring only in her mind or whether she really is physically becoming the Black Swan. Erica's reaction – or lack thereof – would serve as a point of reference, but because Nina blocks her from entering her bedroom, Erica's perspective is not available to the audience. This scene appears in the final version of the screenplay and in the film with very little variation from the shooting draft, aside from one major point: Nina does not break the vanity mirror. In the final version of the screenplay and in the film, the only mirror that is smashed is in Nina's dressing room, during her fight with Lily at the film's climax. Perhaps Aronofsky decided to save this moment until later, extending the metaphor of *Swan Lake* being reflected in *Black Swan* until the two overlap during the ballet performance.

In the film's climax, Nina arrives back in her dressing room after falling from the arms of David, the dancer who plays the role of Prince Siegfried, in Act II of *Swan Lake's* opening night. (For this scene as described in the shooting draft see Appendix I.)[167] The draft reveals immediately that the Double is Lily, and the reflected versions of the Double taunting Nina on her way to the dressing room have prepared us for its return. In contrast, the final version of the screenplay does not include the mirrored hallway

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[165] Heyman, *Black Swan*, 81.

[166] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 87.

[167] Ibid., 97-99.

scene, and there is no mention of the "Other Double"; when Nina finds Lily in her dressing room, the audience assumes it is Lily herself, not the Double. This change could have been made in order to heighten the ambiguity of the diegesis at this moment for the audience. In the final version of the screenplay, and in the actual film, the moment when Lily becomes the Double is tied to the symbol of a mirror, identifying the character first as Lily and then, suddenly, as the Double:

LILY

How about… I dance the Black Swan for you?

Nina looks into the mirror. Instead of Lily's reflection there's the Double.

NINA

Leave me alone. Leave me alone.

DOUBLE

(in mirror)

But it's my turn.[168]

It is during this scene in the final cut that the mirror, which has been reflecting the image of Nina's Double throughout the film, shatters – an obvious metaphor for the shattering of the boundary between the real and the imagined, and between life and death for Nina. In the film, all the action in the dressing room is accompanied by the "Allegro ma non troppo" from the Introduction to *Swan Lake*. This music must be non-diegetic, since it is from the *Swan Lake* Introduction and at this point, Nina has just finished dancing Act II in the diegetic performance of *Swan Lake*. The audience likely wouldn't know this,

[168] Heyman, *Black Swan*, 91-92.

though; for them, the off-screen voice of the stage manager is the only indicator that the music is non-diegetic.

By the time Act III of the *Swan Lake* performance begins, Tchaikovsky's music has accompanied Nina's full transformation into the Black Swan. Her eyes are glowing red and her textured skin is sprouting feathers. Nina returns to her dressing room and uses a towel to mop up the blood that is pooling under the door where she has hidden Lily's body. When Lily appears at her dressing room door to compliment her performance, Nina is terrified. She realizes that there *is* no body and discovers a shard of glass lodged in her own stomach, slowly causing a stain of blood to spread across her white costume. As the scene changes, the non-diegetic music blends seamlessly into the diegetic music on stage: now Nina is dancing the role of the White Swan in the final "Pas de deux" of the *Swan Lake* performance.

Tchaikovsky's music continues diegetically as Nina runs to the top of the platform that represents a cliff and leaps onto a hidden mattress. At this point, the audience breaks into applause and Leroy and the other dancers run back to congratulate Nina. But *the music continues.* It is unclear whether it is diegetic, since it might be the music intended for curtain call, but the other dancers do not react to it. Whether or not it remains part of the *Swan Lake* show, this music is accompanying *our* show: *Black Swan.* The film comes to a dramatic end as Nina tells Leroy, "It was perfect," and looks up at the glaring stage lights. The ending is represented in the shooting draft as follows:

> The APPLAUSE grows more and more faint. Her eyes glaze over and everything goes completely SILENT.
>
> Nina lies there motionless, a smile frozen on her face.

CUT TO BLACK.[169]

The shooting draft indicates that Nina's world goes "completely silent" as she, apparently, dies following her "perfect" performance. But it is not just *her* world that is silent: "everything goes completely SILENT" refers to Heyman's intent for the audience's experience, as well. This is significant in that it reveals a musical inspiration behind this moment that did not come to fruition in the final cut of the film; instead, in the film, the audience's clapping continues to echo as the credits begin to roll.

Just as the boundaries of self have been completely erased for Nina, so have the boundaries of media between *Black Swan* and *Swan Lake* been lost for the audience. *Black Swan* is not merely a film about *Swan Lake*; the film is a Double of the ballet. Mansell's score – a fragmented, distorted reflection of Tchaikovsky's music – is one of the most striking ways this doubling is accomplished. It is as if the filmmakers are holding a cracked mirror up to Tchaikovsky's music, with the reflection merging the media of ballet and film into an indistinguishable whole. While Mansell's music takes advantage of the "fantastical gap" between the diegetic music onstage and the non-diegetic music "backstage"[170] to underline Nina's confusion between that which is real and unreal, it also blurs the line between film and the medium of music.

Conclusion

These case studies demonstrate how Aronofsky and his collaborators use music and musical techniques as creative forces in filmmaking. In deliberately, and sometimes

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[169] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 106.

[170] Robynn Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," in *Beyond the Soundtrack*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard D. Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

haphazardly, collapsing the distinction between pre-existing and original music and between the media of music and film, Aronofsky exemplifies the mixture of postmodern self-awareness and an auteur's experimental conviction common to the directors in this larger study. My use of screenplay drafts as potentially musical texts demonstrates how Aronofsky and his collaborating writers incorporated music into these films from the conceptual stage, a process to which they often refer in public interviews and other descriptions of their work. I have used these public descriptions not as an incontrovertible tool of analysis for the films themselves, but as evidence of Aronofsky's commitment to cultivating his image as a "musical" director.

In my analysis of the films, we have come to see how both incorporate aspects of the distinct classifications of new punk cinema and horror. *Requiem for a Dream* is more obviously a punk film and *Black Swan* is more obviously a horror film, but the filmmakers' public descriptions of their work reveal a desire to play with these genre classifications. By repeatedly referring to the former as a "monster movie" – a term usually associated with a particular brand of horror film – and the latter as depending upon a typically punk process of "stripping down and rebuilding" existing material, the filmmakers encourage critics and the general audience to understand these films as transgressive of genres.

We can also identify how *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* distinctly but equally interrogate the distinction between pre-existing and original music by reinventing classical music. In *Requiem for a Dream*, this reinvention was obfuscated as Mansell electronically reworked moments from the requiems of Mozart and Verdi into the *Lux Aeterna* theme, which comes to represent the "monster" of addiction. In *Black Swan,* the

process is much more obvious to the viewer since the narrative focus of the film is the very ballet whose score is reinvented. Using the typical filmic device of mirrors, Aronofsky imparts new associations to Tchaikovsky's music, already sampled and reorchestrated by Mansell and Dunkley.

Structurally, *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan* demonstrate the expressive potential of challenging assumptions about what constitutes music versus film, not just in regard to the films' creative processes, but in regard to the audience's experience. Both Sara in *Requiem for a Dream* and Nina in *Black Swan* lose touch with reality; it is an experience we are not meant to merely observe, but to viscerally and psychologically experience, as well. In *Requiem for a Dream*, hip-hop montages act as ritornelli, encouraging the viewer to undergo a cathartic "music film" experience. In *Black Swan*, the shooting draft and the screenwriters' descriptions of their creative processes reveal a structural intention to overlay and effectively combine *Swan Lake* the ballet and its score with *Black Swan* the film. Based on the evidence I have collected about Aronofsky's intentions and my analysis of these two films, this merging of media between music and film is ultimately most important to Aronofsky for his image as a "musical" filmmaker. In the subsequent chapters, I will demonstrate that while his choices are idiosyncratic, his approach of incorporating music from the conceptual stages, even challenging the distinction between music-making and filmmaking, is representative of a trend among American filmmakers working in this postmodern tradition.

Chapter Two: Sofia Coppola and Brian Reitzell

Writing in 1994, film and literature scholar Royal S. Brown described a postmodern affective phenomenon whereby the audience's experience of a film is transformed from something that is purely *viewed* to something that is *felt*:

> It is, then, the merging of the cinematic object-event and the musical score into the surface narrative that transforms the morphological affect of music into specific emotions and allows us to 'have them' while also imputing them to someone and/or something else, namely the cinematic character and/or situation.[171]

Under the collaboration of director Sofia Coppola, composer and music supervisor/producer Brian Reitzell demonstrates Brown's characterization of the musical transference of specific emotions from characters to film viewers in the music of *The Virgin Suicides* (1999) and *Lost in Translation* (2003). Reitzell and Coppola use music to enhance what I call each film's inherent "hazy" atmosphere, reflected through the mental state of the characters. In the case of *The Virgin Suicides,* this haze is the result of faulty memory tainted with regret and nostalgia as the narrator, voiced by Giovanni Ribisi and representing a group of often-indistinguishable men remembering their interactions with the five sisters of the Lisbon family, describes the events of the 1970s to an implied documentary filmmaker. In *Lost in Translation*, the haze reflects the jetlag of Bob, an aging actor, and Charlotte, a recent college graduate accompanying her new husband on a business trip, as they spend time together in a world that is foreign to them. While I argued in Chapter One that Aronofsky and Mansell's collaborations on *Requiem for a*

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[171] Royal S. Brown, *Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 27.

Dream and *Black Swan* belonged to the world of "new punk cinema,"[172] Coppola and Reitzell do not adhere to the "genre-based storytelling" that forms the platform for the new punk cinema trend. Rather, they stress their intention to defy genre boundaries with their films, especially as a result of their choices regarding pre-existing music. If *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation* do not lend themselves to specific genre classifications, in other words, it is because they reflect the music that forms their frameworks.

For both *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation*, Reitzell provided Coppola with pre-existing music as she worked on the screenplay; Coppola also shaped the final cut of each film according to newly composed music that Reitzell recorded with the electronic pop duo Air and Kevin Shields of My Bloody Valentine, respectively. In this chapter, I use the final cuts of these two films, Coppola's screenplays, the filmmakers' public descriptions of their work, and a personal interview with Reitzell to examine the ways in which these film collaborators use music to both define and confuse boundaries between levels of diegesis, and thus create what they understand to be distinctly *musical films*. Ultimately, I argue that their collaboration represents a turning point in the working relationship between director and composer, one that is made possible by emerging technologies and Coppola and Reitzell's personal commitments to disrupting expected boundaries of composition and collaboration.[173]

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[172] Nicholas Rombes describes this phenomenon of the late 1990s not as a unified movement, but rather as a "tendency" in films that offer "a brutal mixture of underground, avant-garde technique and mainstream, genre-based story-telling that [weave] together cinematic traditions that included the French New Wave, Italian Neorealism and *cinéma vérité*." Rombes, *New Punk Cinema*, 2-3.

[173] Coppola and Reitzell were participating in a small but potent sensibility that connects certain filmmakers and their interaction with music during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The pair's work is also

In *The Virgin Suicides*, which is based on the 1993 novel by Jeffrey Eugenides, the narrative "haze" is the result of imperfect memory, as the Lisbon family's tragedy is related through the lens of the now-grown neighborhood boys' collective point of view. This idea of fading memories is taken from Eugenides's novel; even before the girls' deaths, when they are locked inside the house by their parents, the narrating boys worry about forgetting them: "The truth was this: we were beginning to forget the Lisbon girls, and we could remember nothing else."[174] This is the lens through which the entire story is portrayed: that of a hazy memory that at once escapes and haunts the narrators. In the film as in the novel, there are three main levels of diegesis at work. First, the diegesis of the time in which the girls commit suicide in the 1970s. Second, the diegesis of the boys' imaginations in the 1970s. Finally, the diegesis of a 1997 faux documentary, in which characters are interviewed about the events of the 1970s. In navigating these levels of diegesis with the intent of staying true to Eugenides's tone, Coppola created a diaphanous visual aesthetic to reflect the combination of Air's ethereal original music and pre-existing, nostalgia-inducing popular music. She explained in a 2000 interview, "I wanted to emphasize that the whole film is a memory of the past as opposed to a reality of the present. A lot of it was shooting it from afar and the camera work was real simple and not aggressive at all. Also, the Air music really helped a lot to add feeling."[175]

The dreamlike atmosphere of *Lost in Translation* likewise results from a mixture of pre-existing tracks, which Coppola listened to as she wrote the film, and newly

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particularly demonstrative of and helpful in understanding a concurrent tendency among filmmakers to resist genre classification. This sensibility is discussed in depth in this dissertation's introduction.

[174] Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides* (New York: Picador, 1993), 180.

[175] Filmcritic.com, "'Virgin' Tendencies: Sofia Coppola Takes on Filmmaking," *AMC Blog,* 2000, http://blogs.amctv.com/movie-blog/2000/04/virgin-tendenci/.

composed music by Reitzell and Shields. The aural and visual effects of the film, combined with its slow pacing and lack of traditional narrative structure, are meant to transfer the characters' mental states of jet-lagged confusion to the audience. Reitzell explained to me that, further, his own sense of jetlag contributed to the very process of composing the music for the *Lost in Translation* score:

> When you go [to Tokyo], you always feel kind of intoxicated or drugged or something, and that's because of the time difference…You just feel like you're listening to a My Bloody Valentine record…There's something about that dreaminess where you're just kinda half awake and it's the middle of the day.[176]

While composing the score at Kevin Shields' studio in London, Reitzell attempted to adjust to Shields' nocturnal schedule. They would meet at 10:30pm for dinner just before the restaurants closed and working through the night, until about 10:00am. Reitzell reported, "That sense of jet lag, like the characters were having in the movie, was certainly amongst us… It was just – I felt like I was on drugs the entire time I was working with Kevin, so it just worked with the film."[177]

Though not always so explicit, Reitzell and Coppola's descriptions of their musical creative processes often suggest a haziness similar to that experienced by the characters in their films. They represent the musical influences and decisions behind their films as deliberate but somewhat ineffable; this tendency is perhaps reflective of a larger understanding of the specific powers of music as elusive and mysterious. At the same time, Coppola often expresses specific notions of music's connectivity to the process of

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[176] Brian Reitzell, 2014.

[177] Ibid.

filmmaking. She has said, for example, that she determines a film's pace by the "tempo of the soundtrack." As she told Carrie Rickey, while working in the editing room with Sara Flack – whom Reitzell describes as "a musical sort of editor"[178] – Coppola is closely involved in this musical editing process: "I explain what I want it to feel like, [Flack] shows me alternatives, I respond and we find it together. You find the rhythm in the edit."[179] Coppola makes a point of describing her filmmaking process as dependent upon music, from the screenwriting phase onward, and Reitzell corroborates this depiction.

Coppola publicly credits the music she was listening to while writing the screenplay for *The Virgin Suicides*, specifically that of the band Air, as contributing to the mood of the film. At a question and answer panel in 2013, she told the audience, "I just randomly bought the record and I was working on the script and it felt like the mood of the movie. I like to listen to music when I am writing. I always feel like it has an effect on the mood of the film."[180] She gave the screenplay to Reitzell and he spent about five months "sitting on the floor just looking at records at making notes"[181] at a record store called Rockaway down the street from where he was living in Echo Park, California, making choices about the pre-exisiting music that weren't dictated by specific songs mentioned in Eugenides's novel. It was at that point that Mike Mills, a founding member of R.E.M., introduced Reitzell to Godin and Dunckel, and he was invited to drum with

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[178] Ibid.

[179] Carrie Rickey, "Lost and Found," *Directors Guild of America,* Spring 2013, http://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/1302-Spring-2013/Sofia-Coppola.aspx.

[180] Shaina Moskowitz, "Exclusive: Sofia Coppola and Ed Lachman Talk 'Virgin Suicides' at FTF Screening," *Examiner.com,* March 3, 2013, http://www.examiner.com/article/exclusive-sofia-coppola-and-ed-lachman-talk-virgin-suicides-at-ftf-screening.

[181] Reitzell.

Air on their *Moon Safari* tour.[182] Immediately after finishing the tour, they spent a week at Air's studio in Versailles recording the soundtrack for *The Virgin Suicides.* They sent the musical stems – individual sections or channels of an audio track – to Coppola in San Francisco, who worked with sound mixer/designer Richard Beggs to make the final decisions about how the music would be used in the film. The process as Coppola describes it was dependent on chance and seems rather serendipitous – she notably used the word "random" at the 2013 Q&A.

But this process of listening to specific music while writing and then incorporating it into the final cut of the film was more solidified and deliberate by the time the duo worked on *Lost in Translation.* Reitzell told me, "When we did *Lost in Translation,* we had a plan and a method that we pretty much stuck to, which is that when she is writing, I make her a mix, a playlist on a CD, of what I think the movie could sound like."[183] That playlist was in the form of mix CDs from Reitzell's own collection, which reflected what he thought "the reality of the film should be."[184] Then Coppola gave Reitzell the screenplay and he collected more pre-existing music to use in the film. Once production began, Reitzell had already given her all the pre-existing music they ended up

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[182] Reitzell had stopped touring with Redd Kross to attend culinary school and pursue what he thought would be a career change. Then he met Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoît Dunckel of Air, through their mutual friend Mike Mills at a wrap party for an Air music video at the Chateau Marmont. They had just hired Reitzell's friends Justin Noble Johnson, Roger J., and Brian Keys to tour with them to promote their *Moon Safari* album. Reitzell told me, "I literally knocked on the door when they were trying to figure out who was going to play drums, and I think Mike answered the door and said 'Oh, Brian would be perfect!' So then I ended up doing their Moon Safari tour, which was the first time they had toured. And then *immediately* after the tour, we went into the studio in Versailles and recorded the score [for *The Virgin Suicides*]."

[183] Reitzell.

[184] Ibid.

using.[185] He was touring with Air at the time; he told me that he composed some of the new music for *Lost in Translation* "from the back of a tour bus, literally. And this was still pre-good Internet, so it was VHS tapes and sitting in the lounge of the back of the bus between shows and working. And using fax machines!"[186] During production, Coppola gave a copy of Reitzell's mix CDs to everyone involved in the film including cinematographer Lance Acord and even the actors, "so everybody sort of knew what that movie was gonna sound like while they were shooting it."[187] Reitzell's involvement throughout the creative process allowed Coppola to represent herself as musically savvy in her declared reliance on him, a reputation that is reinforced by Reitzell's public corroboration. In both films, it also allowed the music's hazy aesthetic to permeate that of the final cut.

For Reitzell and Coppola, the borders of a film composer's functions are likewise hazy. Coppola has depended upon Reitzell for nearly all her films since *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), the first film on which they collaborated. Their relationship is that of a close friendship, allowing them to communicate easily and consistently throughout all the stages of conception, production, post-production, and publicity once the film is complete. Unlike Darren Aronofsky and Clint Mansell, whose public descriptions of their collaborations suggest Mansell's supporting role in facilitating Aronofsky's incorporation of musical ideas from the earliest stages of filmmaking, Coppola and Reitzell represent their working relationship as much more balanced, with Coppola deferring to Reitzell on nearly all musical decisions while maintaining control over the final cut of the film.

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[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid.

A self-described “music freak”[188] and former drummer for the alternative rock band Redd Kross, Reitzell’s role in the creation of films with Coppola does not fall into an obvious, pre-existing category. On *The Virgin Suicides,* Reitzell was credited as “music supervisor,” but by the time he and Coppola worked on *Lost in Translation* together, “music supervisor” didn’t seem an appropriate title given the extent of his involvement. Producer Ross Katz explains that “music producer” better represented the role Reitzell played in the film’s creation, “because we wanted the audience to know just how much he had done. He conceptualized, he gathered, he composed, he had immense hand in the tone of the film.”[189] As Reitzell explained to Adam Budofsky in 2008:

> It’s a job that that I created for myself, and it took the course of three movies to realize what my role was. Sofia Coppola is the one who coined the title ‘film music producer’ for me…What it means is that I will be a music supervisor picking existing tracks, plus I will produce other artists that I will choose to bring in to do original stuff. Oftentimes that means I’ll write with them, though sometimes I’ll just produce them and play drums, keyboards, or whatever. And then other times I’ll score by myself.[190]

In both *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation*, Reitzell played the role of music supervisor in that he selected pre-existing music for Coppola to incorporate into the films. For *The Virgin Suicides*, he composed and recorded “original stuff” with Air in Versailles; for *Lost in Translation*, he wrote and produced new music with Kevin Shields in London. His participation in all levels of the creative process allows for a level of trust

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[188] Ibid.

[189] Jessica Hundley, "An Invisible Role," *Los Angeles Times,* September 11, 2003.

[190] Budofsky, "An Interview with Brian Reitzell."

between him and Coppola that wouldn't exist otherwise. As he told Budofsky, "I am the supervisor, I am in charge of the score, and I do music editing. That's three or four jobs right there, and I do all of them." With Reitzell having such musical control, the interactions among the writing process, film production, and musical choices in the final cut of the film were mutually informative and influential.

It is this deep, ongoing musical involvement that calls for my use of the screenplay as a main source in this chapter, alongside the filmmakers' descriptions of their creative processes. As Reitzell told Budofsky, "[With Sofia] I usually start with a script… before the film's even been written. So the music has a very integral role in the movie."[191] Specifically, I refer to the shooting script for *The Virgin Suicides* released in 2000 by Paramount Classics[192] and the *Lost in Translation* screenplay draft dated September 2, 2002,[193] both accessed at the Margaret Herrick Library. These case studies also benefit from my personal interview with Reitzell, in which he describes the details of the musical composition and compilation process for both films, specific musical moments, and his relationship with Coppola.[194] In our interview, Reitzell stressed his interest in and knowledge regarding a wide variety of musical realms and genres, from which he draws in making his film music decisions.

Defying Genre in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation*

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[191] Ibid.

[192] Sofia Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides* (Paramount Classics, 2000), Screenplay.

[193] *Lost in Translation* (Focus Features, 2002), Screenplay.

[194] Knowing that I am a musicologist and that his interview would be used in my academic dissertation, Reitzell spoke energetically of his eclectic musical tastes and influences, in some cases using specific, esoteric vocabulary and references he has not mentioned in public interviews intended for a lay audience.

In addition to Coppola's desire to portray herself as musically informed, Reitzell and Coppola credit their emphasis on sound mixes and Reitzell's musical eclecticism with contributing to what they describe as *The Virgin Suicides'* and *Lost in Translation*'s resistance to film genre classifications. Sofia benefited from the groundbreaking work of her father, Francis Ford Coppola, especially with regard to his use of music as an integral force in many of his films;[195] however, she distinguishes her filmmaking approach from her father's when it comes to prioritizing sound mixing. She told Carrie Rickey, "I'm more rigid than my dad is about editing. He moves things all over the place; I stick to the script. He finds the movie in the editing room; I find the movie after the sound mix. The sound adds so much to make you feel you're really there."[196] One of the reasons for this distinction is the emergence of new roles related to sound and music in the filmmaking process and, further, Reitzell's assumption of many of those roles at once. Reitzell told me, "Even with *Apocalypse Now,* I mean there was no credit for sound design until that movie! Because Francis wanted to give them some sort of proper credit but that job didn't exist."[197]

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[195] For instance, in *The Godfather III*, as Lars Franke puts it, opera is at work not just on the "literal" and "cultural" levels, but on the "dramatic" level, which is "characterized by the adaptation of operatic techniques and conventions to film." Lars Franke, "*The Godfather Part III:* Film, Opera, and the Generation of Meaning," in *Changing Tunes: The Use of Pre-Existing Music in Film*, ed. Phil Powrie and Robynn Jeananne Stilwell (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006). This specific approach foreruns and influenced subsequent filmmakers' regard for music's narrative force, which I noted in Chapter One as especially strong in Aronofsky's use of *Swan Lake* in *Black Swan,* which incorporates ballet in a similar way.

[196] Rickey, "Lost and Found." For more on sound mixing as it relates to the work of specific directors from Coppola's time and earlier, see James Eugene Wierzbicki, *Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[197] Reitzell. Walter Merch, who did the sound design for *Apocalypse Now* and many other films for Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas, and other directors, is widely credited with inventing the role of sound designer.

As music producer of Sofia's films, Reitzell purposefully takes the work of Francis, especially his collaborations with writer-director George Lucas, as an influence when it comes to using pre-existing pop music diegetically. He told me:

> I've had some nice conversations with Sofia's dad, Francis, and if you take a look at what he did with *American Graffiti*… I think a lot of the things Francis was doing were so new… with *American Graffiti*, it's a radio station that's constantly playing. And I just think that being creative about making music and film work together and what the feeling is gonna be, can be anything, really. Existing music works.[198]

Francis Ford Coppola produced *American Graffiti* in 1973 for Lucas, who apparently wrote each scene of the screenplay with a specific diegetic song in mind. In fact, Lucas's process of using his own record collection for inspiration is identical to that which Reitzell described in his interview about his process while working on *The Virgin Suicides* and later films.[199]

In addition to building upon the tradition of collaborators like Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas, Reitzell prides himself on his eclectic influences, including concert music composers, especially his pairing of art music with popular music and academy culture with mass culture. He told David Schweiger, "I'm a big fan of John Cage and Morton Feldman. I love when you have big washes of sound that come out of

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[198] Ibid.

[199] It's worth noting that this process was reported by Marcus Hearn in his celebratory coffee-table book about Lucas; it's hardly a critical look at Lucas's process, but it is likely the one with which Reitzell and other composers who claim to be influenced by the writer-director's process on *American Graffiti* would be familiar. Marcus Hearn, *The Cinema of George Lucas* (Abrams Books, 2005).

nowhere and leave tons of space behind them."[200] His desire to experiment with and create new sounds aligns with a postmodern eclecticism that applies to the sources of his film scores as well: "I would hate to be pigeonholed, or limited to either a room full of synthesizers, or a room with an orchestra. I'll take them all, along with my records."[201] He told me, "I've been studying music for as long as I can remember, reading books and making chords and learning rhythms and things like that. But I'm every day trying to create something that sounds new."[202] He accomplishes this in his non-film music by using non-instruments to create the sound he wants. For instance, "Using water, and having things made that aren't necessarily tonally precise… Growing up as a drummer, even as a little kid, I had like saw blades and Freon tanks as part of my drum kit because I wanted more sound colors."[203]

In our interview, Reitzell exposed more detail about his public representation of himself as drawing influence from composers in the classical canon, while at the same time creating "new" sounds. What is new is not his use of sounds as music, nor his incorporation of varied influences into film music; rather it is his and Coppola's emphasis on the importance of these sounds in the entire filmmaking process. In stressing his impulse to create new sounds, Reitzell recognizes that it is rooted in a long, international tradition. In a passionate burst, he told me how he prides himself on his eclectic influences:

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[200] Daniel. Schweiger, "Interview with Brian Reitzell," *Film Music Magazine,* May 2, 2013, http://www.filmmusicmag.com/?p=11188.

[201] Ibid.

[202] Reitzell.

[203] Ibid.

> I'm a huge [Toru] Takemitsu fan, and I think that's because I love a lot of those Eastern textures, and really it's all about timbre for me. You know, Ravel I think was such a master of timbre. I think he was obsessed with it. And people like [Krzysztof] Penderecki. I love those orchestrations! They sound so modern. *So modern*. And there's nothing going on there that's modern, you know, in terms of the actual instruments. Those are all a bunch of old, Western, mostly, instruments, but he's able to get these magically modern sounds out of them, and I love that. And you know, the Feldman thing is about feel, and the way that stuff feels is just, you know sometimes it's painfully slow, but I love that. And I got into Morton Feldman when I was a teenager because of Talk Talk, and I think it was probably a critic or someone who just compared Mark Hollis's music with Morton Feldman, so I was looking for Morton Feldman's records and stuff.[204]

I include this entire excerpt from our interview here because it demonstrates, to the extent that the written word can express, the fervor with which Reitzell describes his art music influences. For him, the entry point was a comparison drawn between English singer-songwriter Mark Hollis's 1980s experimental group Talk Talk and Morton Feldman. His emphasis on "modern" as a goal, if problematic in its application to this grouping of composers, is reflective of his own compositional approach. Reitzell publicly describes his own approach to creating music as unique: "I have my own ears and a unique approach to composing. I'm excited and inspired every day in the studio… I'm not concerned with what anybody else is doing or how I might fit in. I rather prefer to not fit

[204] Ibid.

in."[205] This desire to "not fit in" translates from Reitzell's compositional approach to the problematization of genre in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation.*

Both films defy genre boundaries according to the widely accepted framework set forth by film scholar Rick Altman in 1984 regarding what he calls "semantic" and "syntactic" genres. A film's semantic elements derive meaning from social codes and range from iconographic elements like setting to narrative incidents and visual style. For instance, one could classify a film as a "Western" if it is set in the 19th-century United States, has a cowboy as a protagonist, and involves sweeping landscape shots. In contrast, a film's syntactic genre depends upon its arrangement of semantic elements into its plot and themes in ways that are idiosyncratic of a given genre.[206] A syntactic approach might examine the relationships between aspects of Westerns to draw conclusions about the psyche of a society that would embrace that film genre. Since Altman made this distinction, genre studies in film have expanded to focus on historical function alongside definition, with a recent move toward understanding classical genres as being much more flexible and prone to blending than had long been assumed.[207] Altman himself acknowledged that in his model, the line between semantic and syntactic elements and thus genres is not always clear or useful. Thus I employ these terms loosely in my discussion of music as a key element in complicating categorization, as a way to be specific about why these films are difficult to categorize.

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[205] Schweiger, "Interview with Brian Reitzell."

[206] Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," *Cinema Journal* 23, no. 3 (1984).

[207] For an examination of genre studies among film scholars, see Barry Langford, *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

In discussing her films, Coppola stresses that they do not fit neatly within any genre. In describing *The Virgin Suicides,* she suggests mystery as a possible semantic genre, but dismisses the whodunit as a syntactic genre: "I always seem to have trouble describing exactly what mold this movie fits in. I think it's a mystery, but not your typical whodunit, for it ponders more on the question of 'why'? I don't know what you'd call it. Maybe coming of age, but that sounds a little corny to me."[208] The film lacks the realistic characterization and character development that are typical of the semantic drama genre, as well as the syntactic "fatal flaw" in its protagonists necessary for it to be classified as a tragedy. By purposefully integrating semantic elements of documentary, Coppola further obfuscates any attempt to be specific about the genre of *The Virgin Suicides*.

Similarly, *Lost in Translation* hovers at the intersection of many genres. Its plot trajectory loosely suggests a syntactic romantic comedy and it includes the semantic elements of a "meet cute" and a "grand gesture," but it lacks any real sexual interaction between Bob and Charlotte, and their relationship is not confirmed in the end.[209] Film scholar Tessa Dwyer places *Lost in Translation* in the genre of polyglot cinema, which is defined by the naturalistic presence of at least two languages at the level of dialogue and narrative.[210] Though polyglot cinema developed in the late 1920s as a solution to the multilingual problem posed by sound in films, in 2005 Chris Wahl suggested that in the 1990s it began a "new wave" as filmmakers sought to depict the migrant and diasporic

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[208] Filmcritic.com, "'Virgin' Tendencies: Sofia Coppola Takes on Filmmaking."

[209] The lack of sexual activity between romantic leads is reminiscent of the plots of David Lean's *Brief Encounter* (1945) – a key difference from *Still Life,* Noël Coward's 1936 play from which the film was adapted – and William Wyler's *Roman Holiday* (1953).

[210] Tessa Dwyer, "Universally speaking: *Lost in Translation* and polyglot cinema," *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series – Themes in Translation Studies*, no. 5 (2005): 296.

experience.[211] If *Lost in Translation* is a semantic polyglot film, it is not *only* a polyglot film; its style is clearly influenced by the French New Wave of the 1950s and 60s, particularly the films of Jean-Luc Godard, a friend of Sofia's father. In addition to the basic outline of its plot, *Lost in Translation*'s themes of self-discovery and alienation due to language differences are references to Godard's *Contempt* (1963). *Lost in Translation*'s seemingly aimless shots and striking color composition also resemble Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni's mood pieces, especially *Blow-Up* (1966).[212]

This defiance of genre boundaries extends to the process of choosing pre-existing songs. Coppola had been committed to building films upon a foundation of pre-existing pop-punk music since her directing debut in 1998, the 14-minute short film *Lick the Star*.[213] With regard to *The Virgin Suicides,* Reitzell didn't want to use music that had already been associated with other films rooted in the 1970s, including Paul Thomas Anderson's *Boogie Nights.* Reitzell explained:

> The thing that we did with that movie, that I mentioned to Sofia, is that I didn't want to use the stoner stuff. You know, I didn't want to use the '70s stuff that everybody else used. Like *Boogie Nights*, as much as I love Paul Thomas Anderson, the music in that movie just kills me because it beats you over the head

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[211] Chris Wahl, "Discovering a Genre: The Polyglot Film," *Cinemascope* 1 (2005).

[212] See also the long shots of *Le Amiche* (1955) and the mixture of pre-existing and newly composed popular music by Pink Floyd in *Zabriskie Point* (1970). Philip French goes into more detail with this specific comparison in his 2004 review of *Lost in Translation* for *The Guardian.* Philip French, "The Odd Coppola," *The Guardian,* January 11, 2004.

[213] The film tells the story of a group of adolescent girls who are inspired by V.C. Andrews' *Flowers in the Attic* to plot to slowly poison the boys at their school with arsenic. *Lick the Star* uses music by female pop punk bands, with tracks by The Amps, headed by Kim Deal, formerly of The Pixies and The Breeders; The Go-Go's, led by Belinda Carlisle; and Free Kitten, featuring Pussy Galore's Julia Cafritz and Sonic Youth's singer-guitarist Kim Gordon. Coppola later founded the clothing line Milk Fed with Gordon and Stephanie Hayman, her longtime friend and co-screenwriter on *Lick the Star*. It was Hayman who introduced Coppola to Brian Reitzell.

> so hard, it's like song after song after song, it's just every trick in the book, and he kind of dirtied the water for everybody else to use those songs, because once somebody uses something in their movie, you want to find your own stuff, and do your own thing, at least I do.[214]

The decision to choose songs that would not necessarily call to mind other films for viewers is tied to Reitzell's desire to create "new" music. In the case of using pre-existing music, specific songs are reimagined in the context of an unfamiliar film, so that "newness" works with regard to any preconception or meaning the viewer might already associate with those songs.

Since the films are musically conceived, it stands to reason that the purposefully varied music involved in that conception would result in films that likewise defy genrefication. Reitzell points to his work with Coppola as a turning point in incorporating music into film from the very beginning of the creative process, a trend that he believes developed further in the following decade:

> You know, it's different with film now. When we did *Lost in Translation* and when we did *Virgin Suicides* early on, music in movies was not really – it wasn't what it became with the use of say, bands, and integrating musicians who grew up listening to the Beastie Boys become these artists that are scoring these Hollywood movies. It's very common now, but when we started it, when we jumped into that stream there were only a few other people swimming in it, if you know what I mean.[215]

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[214] Reitzell.

[215] Ibid.

Thus Coppola's avoidance of filmic genre classifications suggests a musical filmmaking process. Reitzell points to her as being inspired in a particularly "musical" way. He told me, "Sofia gets the credit for having this musical style with her films – and that's because she hired me! I may be the one who's out there sort of picking the vegetables, chopping them up, and prepping them, but at the end of the day, she's the head chef…"[216] In what follows, I examine the results of this filmmaking process with regard to the specific cases of *The Virgin Suicides* and *Lost in Translation* and demonstrate how its musicality – more accurately, the filmmakers intentions regarding its musicality – manifests in Coppola's screenplay and in the final cut of the film.

The Virgin Suicides

The Virgin Suicides was Reitzell's first film and Coppola's first feature-length film. As was the case in Aronofsky and Mansell's film interpretation of Herbert Selby Jr.'s novel *Requiem for a Dream* (discussed in Chapter One), Coppola and Reitzell attempted to translate to film not just the plot but the style of Jeffrey Eugenides's eponymous novel. Three years before Coppola made *Lick the Star,* Sonic Youth front man Thurston Moore had given Coppola a copy of Eugenides's *The Virgin Suicides.* But it wasn't until she heard that a movie version of *The Virgin Suicides* was in the works that Coppola returned to the book. She told Lisa Krueger in 2000:

> I guess when anyone reads a book, you picture it. But that one was really vivid and stayed with me after I read it. I went back to it a couple of years later and started looking at it again. Then I heard they were doing a movie of it. I wasn't planning on directing a movie; I spent my twenties not knowing what I wanted to

[216] Ibid.

do and trying a million different things. Anyway, I heard the movie was going to be really dark and more violent and sexual and all these things, and when I heard that, it motivated me to feel protective of the book and think, 'No, it shouldn't be like that; it should be like this.'[217]

Coppola pitched her alternate screenplay to Muse Productions, which agreed to make her film instead. Eugenides was apparently not particularly pleased upon first reading Sofia's screenplay adaptation of his novel. But he changed his mind when he visited the set and met the actors.

In the *The Virgin Suicides* much of the screenplay is lifted directly from the text of the novel, along with the effect of a narrative haze. In the film, there are three levels of diegesis at play; these levels are demarcated musically.[218] First, the diegesis of the time in which the Lisbon girls commit suicide (the "actual" 1970s). Second, the diegesis imagined in the minds of the boys, especially as they read Cecilia's diary (the "imagined" 1970s). Finally, the diegesis of the narration; the boys who narrate as "we" are, paradoxically, all named in the third person.[219] This diegesis is part of an implied documentary film being made in 1997, in which an unseen interviewer is speaking with characters including the now adult Trip Fontaine ("Adult Trip" in the screenplay) in a Betty Ford Clinic, Dr. Hornicker, and Mrs. Lisbon. In the novel, the documentary diegesis is marked by bracketed references to "exhibits" of documents and other relics

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[217] Lisa Krueger and Emma Brown, "Legends: Sofia Coppola," *Interview Magazine,* April, 2000.

[218] Robynn Stilwell discusses these levels in terms of five tiers of narration or "authorial voice," putting the Lisbon sisters on the bottom level, followed by the neighborhood boys as young teens, the neighborhood boys as middle-aged men, Eugenides, and finally Coppola. Robynn Stilwell, "Vinyl Communion: The Record as Ritual Object in Girls' Rites-of-Passage Films," in *Changing Tunes: The Use of Pre-existing Music in Film*, ed. Phil Powrie and Robynn Stilwell (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2006).

[219] Their names are Chase Buell, Joe Hill Conley, Joe Larson, Eugie Kent, Paul Baldino, Demo Karafilis, Peter Sissen, Carl Tagel, Kevin Head, Tom Faheem, Buzz Romano, Jim Crotter, and Vince Fusilli.

from the 1970s; each “screen direction” in the book is written in parentheses in-line with the narration of the boys. The film is clearly dependent upon both pre-existing popular music and newly composed music by the French band Air in the creation of particular atmospheres for each layer of diegesis. The resulting sonic effect reflects an important narrative theme in both the novel and the film: that of the haze resulting from imperfect memory.[220]

Coppola uses that haze to challenge the reliability of the narrator. In doing so, she challenges the sexism that necessarily plays a role in a story told in this way. Allowing the now-grown neighborhood boys to tell the Lisbon sisters’ story unquestioned would have suggested that the girls’ entire existence could be represented through the memories of the men who happened to be affected by them. But the layers of musical diegesis in the film reveal the folly in that method of storytelling to the extent that *The Virgin Suicides* can be understood as a commentary upon the tradition of women’s stories being told in terms of what they meant to men.

The Virgin Suicides is the story of the five Lisbon sisters, told through the lens of the collective memory of a group of now-grown boys who lived in their neighborhood. The story begins with the attempted suicide of the youngest sister, Cecilia, who is rushed to the hospital and survives. Soon after, the boys attend a party at the Lisbon home organized by the fiercely Catholic Mrs. Lisbon and her husband, who works as a teacher at the girls’ school. During the party, Cecilia successfully kills herself by throwing herself from her bedroom window. Over time, the other sisters, Therese, Mary, Bonnie,

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[220] As Robynn Stilwell has pointed out, many filmmakers play with ambiguity between layers of diegesis; she calls this the “fantastical gap.” Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 184-204.

and Lux, become more and more hidden from the neighborhood boys as their parents crack down on their freedoms, but they are granted permission to attend the homecoming dance. Trip Fontaine, the high school stud and not one of the narrating boys, has sex with Lux on the football field after the dance and abandons her there to find her own way home. Lux's early-morning return inspires Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon to effectively imprison their daughters in the family home, not even allowing them to attend school. The boys find access to the sisters through Cecilia's stolen diary and through various communication games involving flashing lights from dark windows, writing notes, and playing music back and forth to each other over the phone. One night, the boys venture into the Lisbon home with the purpose of helping the sisters escape; instead, they are witnesses to the sisters' suicides by various means around the home. The entire tale is told in hindsight, in the diegesis of a 1997 documentary about the events.

Adhering closely to Eugenides's work included taking into account his references to specific music, as well as capturing the novel's style. Reitzell told Jessica Hundley of the LA Times: "All we knew was that we just wanted to be true to the book, to the musical references it made, to the period it was set in."[221] In most cases, he and Coppola were "true to the book," but some divergences were made. Coppola reports being preoccupied with capturing the book's overall tone. In an interview with Jeffrey M. Anderson, Coppola pointed to the books "etherealness" as what drew her to it as a subject for a screenplay:

> When you start, you picture it a certain way and every decision you make is related to that. That's what I liked about the book – that kind of etherealness – and

[221] Hundley, "An Invisible Role."

> also that it's a memory and not reality. A lot of [the technique] was shooting it from afar. The camera was really simple. It wasn't aggressive. The music [by the group Air] really helped a lot. I wanted to work with them because they have that kind of dreamlike sound. I listened to their music a lot when I was writing the script.[222]

One of the ways Coppola attempted to translate Eugenides's "etherealness" was through a subjective camera technique. It is reminiscent of Aronofsky's use of the Snooricam. Writing for DGA.org, Carrie Rickey describes it as though "the camera is a balloon invisibly tethered to the nape of the protagonist's neck, bobbing and floating in her wake as she threads through space. This shot, which requires only one camera, is an umbilical cord attaching the viewer to the character. It creates the effect that you're not watching a Sofia Coppola movie; you're inside of it."[223] The effect is that the viewer becomes enmeshed in the film, again much like Aronofsky's intentions in his choices for *Requiem for a Dream* and *Black Swan.* Combined with the music of Air, the subjective use of the camera allows for the transference of the character's experiences to the audience, specifically the memory haze experienced by the now-grown neighborhood boys in the diegesis of the narration.

Each level of diegesis is marked by either pre-existing popular music or newly composed music by Air; one thread that connects all diegetic levels is the metaphor of silence as death. Coppola and Reitzell take advantage of their medium to expand this connection of the duality of the presence and absence of music and sound to that of life

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[222] Jeffrey M. Anderson, "Fever Dreams and Virgin Suicides," *CombustibleCelluloid.com,* March 30, 2000, http://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/intsofia.shtml.

[223] Rickey, "Lost and Found."

and death – present in Eugenides' novel – to its filmic potential.[224] Unlike the reader, who must imagine the presence of music and sound in the characters' world, the film audience member actually experiences it and, conversely, its absence. Thus the filmmakers' adherence to and expansion of Eugenides' metaphor allows them to confer the characters' experiences of musical and nonmusical sound – and, further, of life and death – to the audience member. This connection also applies in Coppola and Reitzell's nondiegetic sonic choices.

In what follows, I address this metaphor of silence as death and, conversely, music-making as life, mentioned in the novel and played out to its aural potential in the film. This discussion leads to an extended examination of Reitzell's choices regarding pre-existing pop songs, many of which originated with Coppola's screenplay, in the third diegetic level (that of the faux documentary). Finally, I examine the role of Air's music in creating the atmosphere of the "imagined" layer of diegesis in the film, focusing on the filmmaker's intent of achieving a hazy experience for the viewer comparable to the fantasies of the neighborhood boys. Since the novel's text is so deeply woven into Coppola's screenplay, I reference it throughout this section as it becomes relevant.

Music-making as Life; Silence as Death

The act of music-making or the struggle to do so serves as an analogy for the girls' personal struggles in Eugenides' novel and in Coppola's film. I include in the

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[224] Film theorist and historian Robert Stam explained this conundrum as follows: "The shift from a single-track, uniquely verbal medium such as the novel, which 'has only words to play with,' to a multitrack medium such as film, which can play not only with words (written and spoken), but also with theatrical performance, music, sound effects, and moving photographic images, explains the unlikelihood – and I would suggest even the undesirability – of literal fidelity." Robert Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation," in *Film Adaptation*, ed. James Naremore (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 56.

definition of “music-making” the choosing of specific pre-existing music for the purpose of communication with other characters. The scene in which pre-existing popular music from the 1970s is most notable is also that in which the Lisbon sisters are most “alive” to the neighborhood boys, since they are making music by playing records. This scene involves the boys and the Lisbon sisters playing records back and forth for each other on the phone. The girls have been sending them notes, asking for “help,” in addition to using lights to communicate via Morse code. The music is the boys’ answer. Below is the scene as it occurs in Coppola’s screenplay, interrupted by my commentary, which considers the same scene in Eugenides’ novel and the final cut of the film. (For the way it appears in the screenplay, see Appendix J.)[225] This scene adheres almost exactly to its counterpart in the novel, in which Eugenides stresses that although the collective memory of the now-grown neighborhood boys is unclear about certain details, what matters are “the essential sentiments”[226] they were able to express using pre-existing songs.

In the novel, the scene continues with a list of the songs the neighborhood boys and the Lisbon sisters chose to play for each other. (See Appendix K.)[227] In describing the “musical conversation” as a “contrapuntal exchange,” Eugenides points to its music-making quality: the boys and the Lisbon sisters are not merely passive listeners, but are creating something new using pre-existing music. But despite providing a list of specific songs, there is the caveat that the narrators have only spotty, emotionally tinged memories of the entire exchange. Even in the first level of diegesis, that of the actual

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[225] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 96.

[226] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 189.

[227] Ibid., 190-91.

1970s in which the girls lived and died, the titles were "scribbled haphazardly," and the now-grown boys admit that this makes a not-quite-reliable primary source.

One divergence from the book comes in the ending of this important scene. While Coppola indicates that the girls should first play "Where do the Children play?", the final cut of the film adheres to the list in Eugenides's novel by having the girls start with "Alone Again (naturally)." In the film's final cut, the boys play "Run to You" by The BeeGees instead of "You've Got a Friend." Reitzell explained this decision to me as a result of licensing issues and wanting to use a song with a similar lyric message to "Hello, It's Me."[228] While the screenplay ends the scene here, the scene continues in Eugenides's novel.[229] "Make It With You" by Bread is the Lisbon sisters' final musical communication to the boys. Here, the reference to the music's recontextualization in the "Muzak of malls" draws a connection between the diegesis of the now-grown boys and that of the "lost time" into which they are transported whenever they hear this song. Significantly, after what the boys interpret as a passionate "confession" by the girls, the line "went dead." The lyrics of the song reference "life," and the grinding turntable suggests the music-making process on the girls' end; in stark contrast, the silence of the disconnected phone line is "dead."

Beyond this "musical conversation" scene, music plays a role of characterization of the sisters in Eugenides's novel, specifically in their struggle to make music while alive, in ways that aren't carried out in the screenplay or the film. For example, in the book, Bonnie is away at music camp the first time Cecilia attempts suicide. She is "trying

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[228] Reitzell.

[229] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 96.

to learn the flute after giving up the piano (her hands were too small), the violin (her chin hurt), the guitar (her fingertips bled), and the trumpet (her upper lip swelled)."[230] This detail, which identifies musical insufficiency as a defining characteristic of Bonnie, is not mentioned in the screenplay or in the film. Lux, too, is musical at one point in the novel: on the drive to the homecoming dance with the boys, "Lux spent the ride dialing the radio for her favorite song. 'It makes me crazy,' she said. 'You know they're playing it somewhere, but you have to find it.'"[231] Given the ongoing metaphor of music-making as life, Lux's words can be taken as describing her struggle to exist. In contrast, in the film, the group listens to the radio but does not comment upon the music during the car ride.

One of the most significant plot differences between the book and film is that in Eugenides's novel, Mary is not successful in her suicide. For months after her sisters' deaths, she sleeps in a sleeping bag in the empty Lisbon home with her parents, obviously depressed and withdrawn from the world. Notably, one of the few times she leaves the house is to take a voice lesson from Mr. Jessup: "Mary went down the street and took her first voice lesson from Mr. Jessup in a year. She hadn't scheduled a lesson, but Mr. Jessup couldn't turn her away."[232] Mary's expression of life, in contrast to the death of her sisters and her otherwise near-death existence, is through this instance of spontaneous music-making. Coppola changed the detail of Mary's survival – in the screenplay and in the film, it is assumed that all the girls die on the night the boys are in their home.

In his novel, Eugenides specifically ties lapses in the boys' collective memory to abrupt silence and, further, to death. This is especially clear in his description of an event

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[230] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 4.

[231] Ibid., 120.

[232] Ibid., 228-29.

that Coppola left out of the screenplay: Lux's transport from the house to the ambulance while passing off an accidental pregnancy as a burst appendix:

> Discussing it later, many of us felt we suffered a mental dislocation at that moment, which only grew worse through the course of the remaining deaths. The prevailing symptom of this state was an inability to recall any sound. Truck doors slammed silently; Lux's mouth (eleven fillings, according to Dr. Roth's records) screamed silently; and the street, the creaking tree limbs, the streetlight clicking different colors, the electric buzz of the pedestrian crossing box – all these usually clamorous voices hushed, or had begun shrieking at a pitch too high for us to hear, though they sent chills up our spines. Sound returned only once Lux had gone.[233]

This passage uses the lack of sound as a connecting thread between levels of diegesis. The boys are remembering this scene in the diegesis of the narration, but it also exists in an overlapping space between the "imagined" and the "actual" diegeses of the 1970s. The events surrounding Lux's pregnancy actually took place, but the now-grown boys are unable to separate what happened from how they experienced it: silently. The "mental dislocation" tied to this silent collective memory is worsened by the deaths of the Lisbon sisters. Coppola completely omits Lux's illness and suspected pregnancy from the screenplay and final cut. However, she uses silence as a symbol for death throughout the film.

This symbolism is especially clear in the deaths of Cecilia and Lux, although Reitzell and Coppola use it to a different effect than Eugenides. In the days before Cecilia

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[233] Ibid., 147.

dies, Eugenides describes her as lying on the floor listening to melancholy Celtic records that "alarmed Mr. Lisbon, comparing it as he did to the optimistic tunes of his own youth."[234] This detail, which characterizes Cecilia as feeling an emotional connection to specific music preceding her death, is left out of the film. Reitzell uses newly composed music by Air to achieve the same symbolism, although rather than characterizing Cecilia by her musical preferences, it provides a non-diegetic soundtrack to her actions. In making this choice, Coppola and Reitzell take advantage of the filmic medium's aural capacity; working within the novel medium, Eugenides could not provide such a soundtrack for the reader. "Highschool Lover," the main musical theme by Air, accompanies the film's opening scene of Lux sucking her lollipop and then walking out of the frame. This is followed by various scenes of the neighborhood, setting the scene in 1970s suburbia. Suddenly, the non-diegetic music abruptly stops, although ambient noises including a siren sound continue, as the shot changes to toiletries on a windowsill. The narrator announces, "Cecilia was the first to go," and we see her lying in the bathtub, having attempted suicide. "Highschool Lover" starts up just as abruptly when the scene changes back to the street, where bystanders (who are, in contrast to Cecilia, very much alive) watch the house. Although the moment of her death is associated with silence, once she is dead, Cecilia's ghost is accompanied by a non-diegetic, altered version of Air's "Ghost Song" as it appears to other characters. In a sequence of three scenes, Cecilia's ghost appears to Mr. Lisbon in her bedroom, to the narrator in a tree, and to Chase as he looks out the back window of a car. In the book, she only appears to Mr. Lisbon, and he quickly realizes that it is not a ghost but, in fact, Bonnie.

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[234] Ibid., 42.

Also related to Cecilia's death, one detail that Coppola maintained almost exactly from the book is that Joe, the developmentally disabled boy who attends the Lisbon sisters' party, is egged on by the others to sing a song. In the book, this moment is described from the boys' point of view as:

> We had him sing the song he always sang, the one Mr. Eugene taught him. He sang, "Oh, the monkeys have no tails in Sambo Wango, oh, the monkeys have no tails, they were bitten off by whales," and we clapped, and the Lisbon girls clapped, Lux clapped, and leaned against Joe the Retard, who was too dense to appreciate it."[235]

The mean-spirited attitude the boys have toward Joe is not reflected in the screenplay or in the film. Nor is he referred to derogatorily as "Joe the Retard," but instead this is implied by his "smiley face and squinting eyes," and the fact that he is dropped off by his mother with his invitation tied to his wrist. In the screenplay, this musical moment looks like:

DAVID

Joe – sing your song!

Joe sings a song about monkeys that the kids have heard a hundred times.

JOE

(singing)

Oh the monkeys have no tails in Sambo Wango! Oh the monkeys have no tails, they were bitten off by whales, oh the monkeys have no tails in Sambo Wango!

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[235] Ibid., 26.

> The boys clap, and the Lisbon girls clap and sing along, and Lux hugs Joe. They are all starting to have a good time.[236]

In both the novel and the film, Joe's singing improves the mood of the party for a brief moment, but Cecilia leaves the party to commit suicide immediately after Joe stops singing. It is as if his earnest, innocent music-making had provided her with a tenuous tether to the world of the living, and once it ends, so must her life.

In the case of Lux's death, the metaphor of silence and death is complicated by elements of control. When Lux returns late from the homecoming dance, having been abandoned on the football field by Trip Fontaine, her parents begin the effective jailing of her and her sisters. This moment begins the slow descent toward the Lisbon sisters' suicides, and in Eugenides's novel, it is accompanied by Mrs. Lisbon's music:

> Uncle Tucker couldn't remember the exact moment Mrs. Lisbon joined the scene. At some point, however, he became conscious of music playing in the background and, looking up at the house, saw Mrs. Lisbon in the open doorway. She was dressed in a plaid robe and held a drink in her hand. Behind her, music filtered out, full of reverberating organs and seraphic harps. Having started drinking at noon, Uncle Tucker had almost finished the case of beer he consumed each day. He began to weep, looking out from the garage, as music filled the street like air. "It was the kind of music they play when you die," he said.[237]

The comparison of music to air reinforces its role of giving the girls' sustenance; Uncle Tucker's description of it as "the kind of music they play when you die" points to this

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[236] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 20.

[237] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 130-31.

moment as the beginning of the end of the sisters' lives. Notably, the music belongs to Mrs. Lisbon, and it is tied to her presence. Lux is not in control of this music. Nor is she in control of Air's non-diegetic music that accompanies this scene in the film; as I argue later in this chapter, Coppola uses this moment to draw attention to the "imagined" level of diegesis. We do not see or hear Lux die in the film; she leaves the boys to discover her sisters' bodies in silence. In contrast, in the novel, Lux dies in the car with the radio playing. After she leaves the room, having unbuckled Chase Buell's belt, the boys "recall hearing the faint strains of a popular song drifting through the night, which told us she was playing the radio."[238] They believe she died about a half hour after they fled the Lisbon home, having discovered Bonnie's hanging body: "Fleeing, screaming without sound, we forgot to stop at the garage, from which music was still playing."[239] Having just witnessed death, the boys' screams are silent. However, Lux is still alive in the garage. She is in control of the moment of her death and chooses to accompany it with music.

The deaths of the other Lisbon sisters are also tied to silence in Coppola's screenplay, in both the diegesis of the "actual" 1970s and that of the boys' collective imagination. This connection is clear in two examples of the deliberate use of silence. The first example in the film comes after Lux says, "I'll go wait in the car. You guys wait here for my sisters," and leaves to commit suicide. We see the boys' fantasy of all of them packed into the station wagon on the open road. One of the girls is humming an

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[238] Ibid., 206.

[239] Ibid., 211.

unrecognizable little song. This is different from what Coppola originally indicated in the screenplay:

> EXT. HIGHWAY – SUNNY DAY – BOY'S FANTASY – DAY
>
> We hear only the SOUND of WIND from an open car window. Out on an open highway on a hot sunny day, the station wagon cruises down the road, filled with the boys and the Lisbon sisters.[240]

The absence of any noise except for the sound of wind indicated in the screenplay supports the idea that Coppola envisioned a symbolic connection between silence and death. The girls are about to die; perhaps the silence was intended as a harbinger of their fate. However, the choice to include music at this moment in the film may underline how the tune can be understood as representing the last breath of life in the girls. At this moment in the diegesis of the boys' collective fantasy, the girls are still alive and able to make music.

The other clear example occurs while the boys are waiting for the girls after Lux goes out to the car. Buzz Romano gets down to the basement first and says, "These girls make me crazy – could I just feel one of 'em up, just once?" and begins dancing around. The other boys (and the audience) see a pair of feet hanging behind Buzz Romano; he almost backs into them. In the script, this looks like:

> He looks up – and we see Bonnie's body (from the waist down) in a pink dress, hanging from the same beam as the wilted decorations like a piñata.

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[240] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 101.

> The boys stand frozen until her body starts to turn – the only SOUND the CREAKING ROPE – and they run up the stairs, (tripping on each other) as fast as they can to get out of there.[241]

Again, the indication is that the only sound should be the creaking of the rope. Bonnie's death is witnessed in silence. These examples exist in the diegesis of the "actual" 1970s as well as in that of the boys' collective imagination, but music plays a narrative role in the film's faux documentary diegesis, as well.

Pre-Existing Pop Songs in the Documentary Diegesis

The world in which the Lisbon sisters lived and died, represented through the lens of the neighborhood boys' memories, is accompanied almost entirely by pre-existing popular music. In contrast, certain non-diegetic music exists in the diegesis of the documentary-style film that is apparently being made about the girls' deaths in 1997. This level of diegesis is taken from Eugenides's book, which is written as if it is meant to be turned into a documentary film. Because of the limits of the medium, the reader obviously does not have access to the visual shots that are indicated in the novel. Coppola described the effect as a "collaged feeling" that could be translated into her film:

> I mean the whole book is sort of like a detective trying to piece together these memories and quotes, and I always wanted to have a little bit of a collaged feeling, not documentary, but they're piecing it together.[242]

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[241] Ibid., 102.

[242] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 189-92.

Coppola and Reitzell's musical approach to this level of diegesis reflects that "collaged feeling," specifically in the moment when Mrs. Lisbon makes Lux burn her rock records and in the treatment of the character of Trip Fontaine.

One of the ways Mrs. Lisbon suppresses Lux's personality is through the desctruction of her records, a scene that is recounted in the documentary level of diegesis in both Eugenides's novel and the film. In the novel, this scene is described through the points of view of neighbors, and no specific records or bands are named; later it is mentioned that one of Lux's favorite songs – although the now-grown neighborhood boys cannot confirm whether it was on one of the albums Mrs. Lisbon made her burn – was "Virgin Suicide" by Cruel Crux. This information is conveyed via one of the newspaper reporters who investigated and commented upon the girls' deaths, Ms. Perl, who "made much of the record-burning incident, and often quoted rock lyrics that alluded to death or suicide."[243] The chorus of this song, which is quoted in the novel, is: "Virgin suicide / What was that she cried? / No use in stayin' / On this holocaust ride / She gave me her cherry / She's my virgin suicide." The narrators comment upon it immediately after it is quoted, saying, "The song certainly ties in nicely with the notion that a dark force beset the girls, some monolithic evil we weren't responsible for."[244] Here, Eugenides undermines the reliability of the documentary-level diegesis by pointing out the biases of both Ms. Perl and the narrating boys. Ms. Perl is recognizable to the reader as a media fear-mongering type, encouraging parents to be wary of rock lyrics and purposefully suggesting that these records were the cause of the girls' suicides. Likewise, the narrating

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[243] Ibid., 138-39.

[244] Ibid., 170.

boys are happy to shift blame away from themselves by buying into the idea of a "monolithic evil" acting through rock music.

Although Coppola incorporates Eugenides' "collaged feeling," the scene occurs much differently in the film. It deals with musical artifacts in the form of Lux's records, but there is no soundtrack. Lux begs for specific bands' albums: "Kiss" and "Aerosmith" in the final cut, but "Destroyer" and "AC/DC" in the screenplay. (Coppola describes the scene in the screenplay; see Appendix M.)[245] Especially since they have just arrived home from what Ribisi's narrating voice describes as "a spirited church sermon," this burning of the records carries great symbolism. This symbolism is even clearer in the book, in which Eugenides carefully describes the music that Mrs. Lisbon listened to in contrast to the rock music she makes her daughter burn. According to a witness neighbor named Uncle Tucker[246] in the documentary level of diegesis, the music that accompanied Lux's late return from the homecoming dance was common in the Lisbon household. (See Appendix N.)[247] Because the Lisbon parents are devout Catholics, Father Moody's comment in the documentary diegesis is meant to be disparaging. The narrating boys agree with him and so, apparently, did Cecilia, according to her diary. The "Protestant" music is in stark contrast to the rock music on the albums she makes Lux burn; this distinction connects music to the moral tension in the Lisbon household. Coppola does

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[245] Ibid., 171.

[246] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 79-81.

[247] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 130-34.

not include this music in the screenplay or the film, perhaps in accordance with the narrators' claim in the novel that "we haven't even played the records through once."[248]

The destruction of the records is part of Mrs. Lisbon's crackdown on all the girls after Lux breaks curfew and returns in a cab from the homecoming dance. This occurred because Trip Fontaine, who features heavily in the documentary diegesis as a grown man in a rehab clinic, abandoned Lux on the football field after having sex with her. In the film, he explains his decision to leave Lux sleeping on the field, thus making her late for her curfew and indirectly causing the crackdown on the Lisbon sisters' freedom, by telling the camera, "I walked home alone that night. I didn't care how she got home; it was weird. I mean, I liked her, I liked her a lot. But out there on the field – it was just different then. That was the last time I saw her. You know, most people never taste that kind of love. At least I tasted it once, right." Then a faceless nurse enters and tells him, "Time for your 6 o'clock group meeting." He shrugs and smiles sadly into the camera, at the implied documentary filmmaker. The divide between what his life is like in the documentary diegesis and what it was like in the 1970s – both "actual" and "imagined" – is made clear by Coppola and Reitzell's use of music by the American rock band Heart.

In his novel, Eugenides indicates specific bands that Trip listens to when he retreats to his car at certain intervals throughout the school day to smoke marijuana: Pink Floyd and Yes. But in the screenplay and in the film, the character of Trip Fontaine (played by Josh Harnett) is inextricably linked to music by Heart. As Reitzell points out, this is the only time pre-existing popular music is used non-diegetically in the film:

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[248] Ibid., 131.

> The music in that movie, the ’70s music, only plays when one of our characters could be listening to it on the stereo. There are a couple of places where we cheat that, with two Heart songs – with “Magic Man” and “Crazy on You” – both of those really scored Josh Hartnett’s character.[249]

This use of Heart’s music might indicate a switch to the female gaze in framing Trip Fontaine’s character; after all, the band was fronted by sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson, two of the only major female players in the world of hard rock and heavy metal. The first time Trip is introduced as a teenager, Coppola indicates that “Magic Man” by Heart should be the soundtrack:

> MONTAGE:
>
> INT. SCHOOL – OFFICE – DAY
>
> Trip is at the school attendance office counter flirting with the secretary. As he touches a curling-ironed lock of her hair, she blushes, giving him an, “Oh, Trip” bashful giggle and signs his late pass: DISMISSED.
>
> WE HEAR “MAGIC MAN” BY HEART:
>
> CUT TO:
>
> INT. SCHOOL – HALL – DAY
>
> In slow motion, and with all the confidence in the world, Trip (wearing aviator sunglasses) walks down the hall catching glances from admiring girls.[250]

In the final cut, “Magic Man” continues under the montage, which demonstrates Trip’s newfound sexual prowess among women of all ages and culminates with him making eye

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[249] Reitzell.

[250] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*.

contact with Lux. At this point in the film, Trip's voice from the documentary diegesis explains, "She was the still point of the turning world." Like the majority of the narration in the film, this line is lifted from Eugenides's novel, where it is cited as a quote from "Burnt Norton," one of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*:

> "She was the still point of the turning world," he told us, quoting Eliot, whose *Collected Poems* he had found on the shelf of the detoxification center. For the eternity that Lux Lisbon looked at him, Trip Fontaine looked back, and the love he felt at that moment, truer than all subsequent loves because it never had to survive real life, still plagued him, even now in the desert, with his looks and health wasted.[251]

Here, Eugenides points to the crux of the connection between all levels of diegesis in the story: the girls are defined in the boys' memories and in the world of the documentary in ways that do not necessarily represent the reality of the 1970s. The "love" Trip felt for Lux, and that which the narrating boys felt for all the Lisbon sisters, "never had to survive real life." Coppola's choice to use "Magic Man" in such an overtly clichéd way to accompany Trip's coming of age represents that disconnect from reality. This montage is meant to strike the viewer as unrealistic, serving as a reminder that the world of the film is represented through many filters.

The other Heart song associated with Trip is "Crazy On You," which, unlike "Magic Man," plays as source music from his car radio. The song starts when Trip gets in his car after sitting through an awkward evening watching television with the entire Lisbon family; it immediately ends when the scene changes to Mr. Lisbon in his

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[251] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 74-75.

classroom. Though Eugenides does not indicate that any music accompanies this scene, Coppola calls for its use in the screenplay as follows:

> EXT. LISBON HOUSE – TRIP'S TRANS AM – NIGHT
>
> Trip sits in his car watching the Lisbon house. The downstairs lights go off and the upstairs lights go on.
>
> Trip leans his head back on the headrest thinking about Lux – when suddenly the door opens and he is pulled by his lapels toward Lux in a nightgown who climbs on him, her mouth on his like a starved animal. "Crazy on You" by Heart plays on the radio as, squirming on him, Lux bangs her knee into the door, paws at him with her hands and sucks on his neck. He reaches under her nightgown, she kisses him deeper in his mouth, he grabs her thigh tightly.
>
> LUX
>
> (taking a breath)
>
> Gotta get back before bed check.
>
> As quickly as she appeared, Lux is gone. Trip sits in his car, catching his breath. He hits the back of his head on the head rest in frustration.[252]

Reitzell described to me how sound designer/mixer Richard Beggs altered the Heart recording at this moment in the film so it sounds like believable source music:

> Richard put vinyl scratches on it, so it sounds like, you know, the record's playing, even if it's in the car. There's vinyl scratches when Josh Hartnett is

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[252] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 44.

> listening to Heart on the radio, and it really gives the overall texture of that movie a super cool '70s vibe.[253]

By using Heart's music in both these scenes – one so obviously non-diegetic and one so obviously diegetic – Coppola and Reitzell invite the viewer to question the reliability of the seemingly most reliable diegesis levels: the level of the now-grown narrating boys and that of the documentary. The fact that the narrators and documentary-level Trip Fontaine accompany a clearly overblown montage of young Trip's escapades with Heart's music calls into question the accuracy of the Heart source music in the car scene. In other words, these two representations of Trip Fontaine are on opposite ends of the spectrum of believability, yet they are the only two scenes accompanied by Heart. By bridging levels of diegesis, Heart's music implies a logical link between them for the viewer, thus calling into question the "truth" of the story. We will come to see that the truth is further blurred by the use of Air's soundtrack.

Transference of Narrative Haze through Air's Soundtrack

From pop songs meant to be recognized by the audience, I turn now to the music of Air, which was relatively unknown in 1999. Both Reitzell and Coppola cite Coppola's commitment to using the music of Air as unique or at the very least quite rare, since she made this decision while working on the screenplay. Coppola described her dependence on Air's music in a 2000 interview for The A.V. Club:

> I was listening to *Premiers Symptomes*, an earlier album of theirs [Air], when I was writing the script [for *The Virgin Suicides*]. I really liked the atmosphere, which fed into what I was doing. Again, I wanted to deal with this idea of

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[253] Reitzell.

> memory, because the story doesn't take place in the '70s, per se, but it's being reflected on years later. Also, Air are the masters of a specific kind of melancholy, a good kind of melancholy. So my friend Mike Mills, who did a bunch of their videos for my brother's [Roman Coppola] company, introduced us, and I sent them my script. They liked movie soundtracks and always wanted to do one, so they were open to the idea.[254]

Likewise, Reitzell told me that he didn't know "the Air guys" at that time, since *Moon Safari* hadn't been released yet. He stressed that Sofia's decision to use an underground band was "really cool of her, because here it was, her first movie."[255]

After meeting Air and touring as their drummer on the *Moon Safari* tour, Reitzell worked with them to record the soundtrack for *The Virgin Suicides* over the course of a week. Of the recording process, he told me:

> We had a little, teeny, like, maybe 12-inch video monitor that had a built-in VHS tape. And it sat down next to my left foot, and the drums were completely surrounded by blankets, to get that super dead sound, and the only way I could see those guys was through a crack directly in front of where the blankets met, these big packing blankets. And I could cue them – one of them was in front of my line of sight playing bass, and the other one was just behind him playing piano. And I would give them head movements to sort of cue them in, while I was looking at the picture down by my hi-hat foot. And that's how we scored that movie.[256]

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[254] Scott Tobias, "Sofia Coppola: Virgin Territory," *A.V. Club,* May 3, 2000, http://www.avclub.com/article/sofia-coppola-13656.

[255] Reitzell.

[256] Ibid.

After recording the soundtrack with Air, Reitzell sent it to Coppola in San Francisco, where she reworked the musical stems[257] with sound mixer/designer Richard Beggs (who had also worked on *Apocalypse Now* and other films of her father's). The resulting music in the film is much sparser than the music on the soundtrack. Reitzell explained to me how he reacted upon seeing the film for the first time:

> I had been touring with Air and working with Air, so we all went to the Cannes Film Festival, and we went to the screening and that was the first time we'd heard the music that had been completely edited and changed and my heart just sank. I was shocked…Even though I deliver stems, I've never had them taken apart and moved around like that… And I had played drums on it and there's like, no drums for the most part, so maybe I was the most shocked.[258]

Even in relaying his dismay at watching the final cut of the film for the first time, Reitzell credited Coppola's musical prowess, telling me, "I'm really proud of what Richard and Sofia did to the music cause they fixed it and they made it all work."[259] Since the tracks underwent such transformations, the following references to tracks on the album for *The Virgin Suicides* are approximate; they are based on the recognizable stems taken from the album's labeled tracks.

In the final cut of the film, Air's music permeates moments affected by the narrative haze of adolescent imaginations and imperfect memory. The first level of diegesis in the film, that of the "actual" 1970s, is not accompanied by Air's music.

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[257] The term "stems" refers to music, dialog, and effects separated into distinct tracks, in order to be easily added and removed from the sound mix by the editor.

[258] Reitzell.

[259] Ibid.

Rather, Air's music is used to create a diaphanous atmosphere in the second and third levels of diegesis: that of the boys' imaginations in the 1970s, especially fantasies inspired by Cecilia's diary, and that of the documentary narration, which represents the collective memory of the now-grown boys. Here, I examine three examples of this function, as well as two examples in which Air's music calls into question the narrator's reliability.

As a locus for the "imaginary" level of diegesis, Cecilia's diary is most significant for the effect it has on the boys. In reading Cecelia's diary, described in the novel as a "tiny rice-paper journal illuminated with colored Magic Markers to look like a Book of Hours or a medieval Bible,"[260] the boys feel as if they *become* the Lisbon sisters. The way Eugenides describes the experience is almost comical, but it reveals a stark irony. The boys believe that reading Cecilia's diary gives them the power to truly understand the Lisbon sisters, and thus they feel themselves capable storytellers in relating the girls' suicides. To the reader, though, their assumptions about the girls are painfully stereotypical and reflective of ingrained cultural beliefs about gender differences:

> We could never understand why the girls cared so much about being mature, or why they felt compelled to compliment each other, but sometimes, after one of us had read a long portion of the diary out loud, we had to fight back the urge to hug one another or to tell each other how pretty we were.[261]

As readers, we know that this transformation is impossible. Coppola extends this dramatic irony to the film by tying specific music to the diegesis existing in the boys'

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[260] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 29.

[261] Ibid., 40.

collective imagination. In the film, the boys' mental recreation of scenes described in Cecilia's diary is accompanied by Air's "Ce Matin Là," originally released on their album *Moon Safari*. (For the scene as it appears in the screenplay see Appendix O.)[262] The narrator's words are taken verbatim from Eugenides's novel, but in the film, Air's music serves to transport the film audience into the diegesis of the boys' imagination. It begins with gentle maracas and a synthesized, wave-like ringing that signifies a dreamlike transition into a different diegesis. The synthesizer continues to reverberate under the addition of acoustic guitar and, eventually, a triumphant French horn melody. The music is markedly happy and carefree, belonging to the world of the laughing, playful Lisbon sisters as the boys imagine them to be.

In addition to scenes inspired in the boys' imaginations by Cecilia's diary, Air's music also accompanies the boys' independent fantasies about the Lisbon sisters. For instance, as Peter approaches Cecilia's room to use the restroom after having dinner with the family in the parents' attempt to provide a controlled social outlet after Cecilia's suicide attempt, "Bathroom Girl," begins. It continues as he looks through all her things and, significantly, as he smells Lux's lipstick. Smelling the lipstick conjures an image for him of Lux flipping her hair in evening light. The visual fantasy and "Bathroom Girl" stop abruptly when Lux knocks on the bathroom door in the "actual" diegesis of the 1970s. A similar instance occurs when Air's non-diegetic music starts as the narrator describes how the boys bought the same catalogs the girls did – those catalogs were the girls' only connection to the outside world. The montage of snap shots fades and the music changes as the camera pans over objects on the floor of the bedroom, including a

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[262] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 26-28.

note that says in girl's handwriting: "Watch for our lights." The next scene is of the boys interpreting the Morse code of the flicking light in the girls' room at night.

A third moment accompanied by Air's music in the imagined diegesis is that of the Lisbon family's experience immediately following the Cecilia's suicide. In the screenplay, Coppola describes the moment when Cecilia's death is discovered as specifically operatic:

> Leaving with the boys, we PULL BACK, away from the house where Mr. Lisbon weeps in the bushes by Cecilia's impaled body, his four daughters in a line on the porch. A sprinkler on a timer goes off on the front lawn as the ambulance pulls up.
>
> We look down at the suburban front yard, as the paramedics cut the fence, taking Cecilia away.
>
> The Lisbons are like characters on stage in the final act of a tragic opera.[263]

Although Coppola compares this moment to the final act, it is actually only the opening act of the film. But like a tragic opera, many of the characters will be dead in the film's final act; perhaps this was the comparison she intended. In the film, non-diegetic music begins – an altered, subdued version of "Cemetery Party" – and it continues as the boys wander away and the family stands in shock on the front steps.

In addition to marking and enhancing scenes within the imagined diegesis, Air's music often marks those moments and details in the film that are not so reliable. This is the diegesis of the tellers' imaginations, as they fill in the gaps for the documentary filmmakers about what they've heard or what they can surmise about the Lisbon family's

[263] Ibid., 20-21.

lives. The most recognizable instances involve the film's main theme, "Highschool Lover." The moment in which "Highschool Lover" is most noticeable in the film begins with a shot of Lux lying with Trip on the football field after the homecoming dance. It continues as Lux wakes up alone in the middle of the field in the early morning light, walks out of the huge frame of the field, and takes a taxi home. Significantly, the music stops when the taxi parks in her driveway and the camera takes the point of view of a neighbor across the street. Because the neighbor cannot hear exactly what is being said between Lux and her irate parents, neither can the viewer. This recollection of events is relayed by a neighbor-witness (named as Uncle Tucker in the novel, but not identified in the film), and is thus sonically distinguished from the preceding scene, which no one but Lux ever witnessed and which thus exists only in the imagined diegesis. The end of Air's music marks the shift from the imagined diegesis to that of the faux documentary.

Air's music also calls into question the reliability of the "actual" 1970s. The viewer is pushed to question the extent to which this world, too, is subject to the boys' imaginations. On the night the Lisbon sisters commit suicide, the boys see the girls' signal and sneak over to their house. At this point in the film, Air's "Dirty Trip" begins non-diegetically. One of the boys trips over a trash can and makes a loud noise, causing the other boys to hush him. When this happens, the non-diegetic music stops for a moment, then picks back up when the boys continue creeping around. "Dirty Trip" continues as the boys watch Lux through the glass door, but when Parkie actually knocks and she turns, the music suddenly cuts out again. It doesn't accompany the following interaction with the girls. More than just a mickey-mousing tactic, this use of music suggests that the boys are somehow *imagining* this music as a soundtrack to their

suddenly exciting lives. The line between what is real and what is imagined is blurred, since Air's music likely belongs to the diegesis of the world the boys have created in their minds around the mythology of the Lisbon girls.

In a 2000 interview, Coppola summed up the meaning of the film as: "Boys who don't understand girls grow up to be men who don't understand women."[264] Just as the neighborhood boys' understanding of the Lisbon sisters is confused by adolescent fantasies, so is the now-grown narrators' understanding clouded by nostalgia and time. As Coppola told Carrie Rickey, "It wasn't just showing boys looking at and spying on girls… I wanted to be very clear about translating their perspective."[265] In making it "clear" that the film is representing the boys' perspectives, Coppola and Reitzell translate the narrators' lack of clarity surrounding events, the haziness of the narrators' collective memory, to the audience. As viewers, we are limited by the narrators' perspectives so that we, too, are prevented from truly understanding the characters of the Lisbon sisters.

Lost in Translation

Lost in Translation is, like Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream,* a new interpretation of Nicholas Cook's idea of the music film – "a genre which begins with music, but in which the relationships between sound and image are not fixed and immutable but variable and contextual."[266] Coppola's film perhaps fits even more accurately within Cook's definition since, unlike *Requiem for a Dream,* it was built upon complete, unaltered pre-existing musical pieces. Coppola wrote the screenplay while

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[264] Anderson, "Fever Dreams and Virgin Suicides."

[265] Rickey, "Lost and Found."

[266] Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 214.

listening to mix CDs of pre-existing music Reitzell had compiled for her; most of those tracks comprise the film's soundtrack. Coppola's reliance on Reitzell's mixes is corroborated by other collaborators on the film; producer Ross Katz told Jessica Hundley, "It was amazing. Sofia listened to these mixes while she was writing and then we took them with us to Tokyo while we were location scouting."[267] Thus Reitzell's pre-existing musical choices dictate the final cut of the film, which itself resembles a mix tape in its unconventional pacing and use of music. Using Coppola's screenplay and the final cut, this section explores the ways in which Coppola and Brian Reitzell defy film genre in *Lost in Translation* to create a "mix tape" film.

Having negotiated Reitzell's role as music producer on *The Virgin Suicides,* Coppola and Reitzell reported being in a collaborative groove during their work on *Lost in Translation* three years later. However, Reitzell told me their collaboration was different from the way they had worked together on *The Virgin Suicides:*

> What I did on *Virgin Suicides* is, I had done most of the music supervision, and at that point, Sofia and I had not done a movie together, so we were figuring out how best to work together, how best to get this thing that she needed for her movie. We figured it out: when we did *Lost in Translation,* we had a plan and a method that we pretty much stuck to, which is that when she is writing, I make her a mix, a playlist on a CD, of what I think the movie could sound like.[268]

This type of curated listening experience is a much different approach from that of most music supervisors, who, according to Reitzell, receive many, many albums from various

[267] Hundley, "An Invisible Role."

[268] Reitzell.

artists and “basically turn over their mail and they give it to a director”[269] without particularly thoughtful presentation. Reitzell’s characterization of other music supervisors is not entirely fair, as it disregards Karyn Rachtman’s seminal work with director Quentin Tarantino. But typically, music supervisors do not expect that most of the music they suggest will be featured in the final cut of the film.

Coppola stresses in interviews that the process of receiving these mix CDs from Reitzell directly affected her vision for the function of the film’s music. This inspiration began, as it had with Air’s music for *The Virgin Suicides,* at the stage of writing the screenplay. Coppola described her musical process for *Lost in Translation* to James Keast of the Canadian music culture magazine *Exclaim!* as follows:

> We talked about the music when I was first starting to work on the script. We talked about the atmosphere and looked at photographs. Also, instead of having one singular sound through the whole thing, to make it more like a compilation because the city is like that – it’s such a combination of all different things. You walk up the street and hear music coming from every direction.[270]

This idea of a “compilation” conjures a music album, connected by a common thread but comprising distinct parts. In describing this process, Coppola marks herself as valuing not only a close working relationship with Reitzell, but also as focused on translating the characters’ experiences as they “hear music coming from every direction” in their foreign surroundings to the audience. She told film critic Wendy Mitchell of the soundtrack for

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[269] Ibid.

[270] James Keast, "Lost In Translation: Sofia Coppola's Journey Into Culture Clash," *Exclaim,* October 1, 2003, http://exclaim.ca/Film/article/lost_in_translation-sofia_coppolas_journey_into_culture.

the film, "I wanted it to be less like a score and more like these mix tapes he used to make me."[271]

It is significant that *Lost in Translation* was built upon a musical idea, with the inspiration of "mix tapes" rather than that of a single musical piece shaping the film's structure. Although much of the newly composed music is linked by similar instrumentation and tempo, there are no recognizable recurring themes to drive the action of the film. This is because the film doesn't have much action to drive; it is markedly static, a quality that many critics found daring. As David Denby wrote in *The New Yorker,* "It takes a great deal of courage for a young director to make a movie without action."[272] The story is told from the perspective of two protagonists, Bob Harris (Bill Murray) and Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson). Bob is a jaded, almost washed-up Hollywood actor who arrives in Tokyo to shoot an advertisement for Suntory whiskey, a job he clearly resents. Throughout the film, he communicates with his wife in brief phone conversations that reflect his general state of exhaustion. Bob meets Charlotte, a recent Yale graduate, who has accompanied her husband (Giovanni Ribisi) to Tokyo for his job, which involves shooting a music video. Like Bob, she communicates with her spouse in an apathetic way, observing his overt flirtation with an attractive actress from his past named Kelly (Anna Farris) with minimal concern. Bob and Charlotte meet by chance at the bar of the Park Hyatt hotel, where they are both staying, and form a romantic, but not sexual, connection. Throughout the course of the film they experience the city and surrounding area together and on their own through a haze of insomnia and jet lag. Music

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[271] Wendy Mitchell, "Sofia Coppola Talks about 'Lost In Translation,' Her Love Story That's Not 'Nerdy'," *indieWire,* 2003, http://www.indiewire.com/article/decade_sofia_coppola_on_lost_in_translation.

[272] David Denby, "Heartbreak Hotels," *The New Yorker* 79, no. 26 (September 15, 2003).

plays an unusually powerful role in emotionally connecting the characters to one another through the haze.

In this section, I use the screenplay and a close reading of the final cut of the film to explore how Coppola and Reitzell purposefully transferred Bob and Charlotte's haze to the audience by using pre-existing and newly composed music. First, I look at music-making as a symbol of personal emotional connection, especially with regard to the karaoke scenes and the band Sausalito. Next, I examine the conventional ways Coppola and Reitzell use recognizable musical "standards" to indicate the characters' thoughts, before moving on to the novel ways they use unrecognizable alternative tracks to translate the characters' jet-lagged mental state to the audience. This integration of traditional uses of music in film with their new approach to a film as a mix tape is representative of the specific moment in film music history at which Coppola and Reitzell were working on *Lost in Translation*, a moment they helped define. Finally, I discuss how Reitzell's newly composed music with Kevin Shields mutually informed the pre-existing music on Coppola's mix CDs, and how this ongoing exchange and collaboration resulted in the final cut of the film.

Music-Making as Catalyst of Personal Connection

In *Lost in Translation*, karaoke and the music of a live jazz band are pivotal, providing modes of personal connection between the protagonists. Karaoke was central to the film from its conception. Coppola told Elvis Mitchell of KCRW's *The Treatment* that she got the idea for *Lost in Translation* when she watched her friend Fumihiro Hayashi

perform “God Save the Queen” at a karaoke bar.[273] Hayashi, whom Coppola had met on previous visits to Tokyo, was cast as Charlie Brown in the film; in the final cut, he performs that song. Reitzell worked with Hayashi and the other actors on the songs they would be performing during the karaoke scenes. He told me:

> That was tricky because I had to pick the song, get Sofia to approve it, and then record it, and then get on a plane and go to Japan. I sat with the actors and I kind of coached them on the song they were going to sing, so they knew it, because if you’re going karaoke something, chances are it was something that you knew, so we prerecorded those pieces and I studied karaoke music so I had to be sure they sounded just cheesy enough.[274]

Working with the actors on music in this way during production is not a role usually performed by the music supervisor, producer, or composer in a film; it’s more typical of a music director’s job in a musical theater production.[275] Reitzell’s involvement at this stage is testament to the degree to which he and Coppola were comfortable working alongside each other at all stages of filmmaking.

Some of the songs were written into the screenplay, like Charlie Brown’s performance of “God Save the Queen” and Charlotte’s performance of “Brass in Pocket” by The Pretenders; others were spontaneous. Coppola had indicated in the screenplay that Bob would sing “I Fall to Pieces,” but during shooting, she and Bill Murray decided that he would sing different songs. In the screenplay, this scene appears as follows:

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[273] Elvis Mitchell, *Sofia Coppola: Lost in Translation*, *The Treatment* (February 25, 2004), Radio program.

[274] Reitzell.

[275] It is also reminiscent of the way Patrick Doyle and Kate Winslet practiced the songs he had composed for her role as Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* (1995).

> Charlie and Charlotte sings (sic) "Brass in Pocket" by The Pretenders ("you're special, so special…"), everyone is drunk now, as they all sing along at the chorus. WOMEN keep refilling the glasses.
>
> CUT TO:
>
> Mr. Valentine sings a popular slow heartfelt Japanese song that everyone knows and sings along to. Charlotte and Bob look at each other, it is very foreign, but Bob likes being there with Charlotte and her friends.
>
> She flips through a big binder of songs.
>
> CHARLOTTE
>
> What do you feel like singing, Bob?
>
> BOB
>
> No way.
>
> Bob sings "I fall to Pieces" to Charlotte. Charlie and everyone cheers for him. Beer pitchers are replaced. Charlie starts singing "Angie". The little room is filled with smoke, Charlotte makes her way to the door to get some air.[276]

It is significant that Coppola puts the lyrics to "Brass in Pocket" in parentheses following the title. Including the lyrics in the screenplay suggests the importance she placed upon their power as a mode of communication for Charlotte, who wishes for the statement, "I'm special" to be true of her. In the film, rather than "I Fall to Pieces," Bob sings "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding" by A Perfect Circle immediately after Charlie Brown's performance. At that point in the film, Charlotte sings

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[276] Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, 61.

"Brass in Pocket," and finally, Bob sings Roxy Music's 1982 song "More Than This." Reitzell told me how the changes in this scene came to be:

> The song "More Than This," that was something that Sofia and Bill did on the fly there. That was not in the script. All the other ones were. Not in the script, but I mean, we knew what we were going to shoot. But Sofia, loving Roxy Music, and then Bill, after we had done everything else, and I think he was probably pretty drunk, cause he was drinking the sake – he was in character! I mean, imagine going to a 12-hour karaoke party – once he sang that, it sounded like Joy Division, I mean it was incredible. Again, he was able to take this super cheesy recording of a wonderful Roxy music song, but his voice is what actually connected it with, say, The Jesus and Mary Chain, and for me, that was just magic and I give Sofia and Bill full credit for that one.[277]

Reitzell often stresses the importance of a connection between every musical moment in the film; here, he points to the timbre of Bill Murray's voice as the key to including "More Than This," which might not otherwise have fit his vision. This last-minute decision ended up serving the purpose of communication through song lyrics perfectly; after Bob sings, "There is nothing more than this," Charlotte leans her head on his shoulder, solidifying their connection. Beyond the meaning of the lyrics, though, Reitzell stresses Murray's *voice* as the connecting thread between this moment and all other music in the film. It is the timbre and expressive quality of that voice that makes this choice work as part of the larger musical vision.

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[277] Reitzell.

The other time karaoke is used to demonstrate something about a character is when Bob and Charlotte walk into the hotel lobby bar after leaving the strip club and see Kelly, the ditzy actress with whom Charlotte's husband has been flirting, singing karaoke. This is in the screenplay as follows:

> INT. PARK HYATT LOBBY – NIGHT
>
> As they make their way back, they pass a lounge off the lobby. It's late, it's pretty empty, a housekeeper vacuums and just a SLEEPING MAN sits in the back of the lounge, and a snuggled up romantic JAPANESE COUPLE sit close to: Kelly, the blonde actress, singing to them.
>
> She stands facing them with a karaoke mic singing "Nobody Does It Better" with all her heart.
>
> Bob and Charlotte look at each other and keep walking (trying to be invisible).[278]

Here, Kelly is made to look ridiculous for taking karaoke so seriously. She represents a threat to Charlotte's marriage and, in her vapid confidence, is a foil to broody, out-of-place Charlotte. This moment of karaoke is what bonds Charlotte and Bob as joint witnesses to music-making.

Charlotte and Bob also connect while witnessing the music-making of the band Sausalito (apparently named for the town in California), which performs in the lobby of the Park Hyatt hotel. Catherine Lambert, who plays the redheaded lead singer with whom Bob has a one-night stand, was actually a singer Coppola had seen performing

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[278] Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, 96.

"Scarborough Fair" at the Park Hyatt in Tokyo.[279] Coppola indicated the name of the band and many of the specific songs they were to perform in the screenplay, including "Scarborough Fair" during the moment Charolotte and Bob first lock eyes. Sausalito's performance thus becomes the first opportunity for Bob and Charlotte to share a moment of understanding, both of them being lonely. Witnessing this music-making together is a catalyst for a personal connection.

Coppola calls for a few other instances of diegetic performances featuring Sausalito in the screenplay; for instance, when Bob first hears Sausalito perform on his first night in the hotel. While he drinks alone at the hotel bar, they sing "The Thrill Is Gone." While this music *is* indicated in the screenplay, Coppola originally intended that it would be a recording of Chet Baker playing over the stereo:

> INT. PARK HYATT BAR – NIGHT
>
> Bob sits at the bar. A few minutes pass as he sits in silence looking around, drinking a scotch. Chet Baker sings "The Thrill is Gone" over the stereo.[280]

"The Thrill is Gone" abruptly stops when the scene changes to Bob's bedroom, where he is trying to sleep. Like most of the other diegetic pre-existing popular music, its lyrics obviously illustrate Bob's mood. He is burned out and "the thrill is gone" from his life as an actor. Diegetic music performed by Sausalito also accompanies a later scene at the hotel bar, when Charlotte joins her husband and Kelly for what might have otherwise been an illicit romantic encounter. This appears in the script as:

> INT. PARK HYATT BAR – NIGHT

[279] Marlow Stern, "Sofia Coppola Discusses 'Lost in Translation' on Its 10th Anniversary," *The Daily Beast,* September 12, 2013, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/09/12/sofia-coppola-discusses-lost-in-translation-on-its-10th-anniversary.html.

[280] Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, 3.

At a corner table Charlotte sits with John, Kelly, and DJ CLEAN, a skinny kid in a sweatshirt, on tour in Japan.

Charlotte is bored while Kelly talks on.

Sausalito performs in the background.[281]

Coppola does not indicate exactly which song Sausalito should perform; in the film, it is the 1940 jazz standard "You Stepped Out of a Dream," with music by Nacio Herb Brown and lyrics by Gus Kahn. Although the original context of the lyrics is romantic, in the context of the film, the words seem to describe Charlotte's jet-lagged mental state.

The lead singer of Sausalito steps out of the musical background and into the foreground when she and Bob sleep together. He wakes up in bed to hear her singing in the shower of his hotel room, and Charlotte also witnesses her singing when she arrives at Bob's room to see if he'd like to spend time together. (For Coppola's description of this scene in the screenplay see Appendix P.)[282] The singer's music-making is what gives away Bob's situation to Charlotte. Further, it reinforces the betrayal Charlotte feels at this discovery: witnessing this singer making music had been a way for them to communicate, but now this mode of connection has been cheapened.

Finally, the new jazz band that replaces Sausalito in the Park Hyatt bar's performance of "So Into You" by Buddy Buie is another commentary upon the relationship between Bob and Charlotte. Toward the end of the film, a fire drill brings all the hotel guests downstairs in the middle of the night. Charlotte and Bob sit at the hotel bar in their pajamas. (For the way this scene appears in the screenplay see Appendix

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[281] Ibid., 36.

[282] Ibid., 103-04.

Q.)[283] Most of the conversation Coppola wrote in the screenplay was cut from the final version of the film, including the jazz singer introducing himself. In contrast to what is written in the screenplay, what happens in the final cut of the film is that the jazz singer sings the lyrics, "I'm so into you, woo-hoo! When you walked into the room, there was voodoo in the vibes. I was captured by your style, but I could not catch your eye." Bob says, "I don't want to leave." Charlotte replies, "So don't. Stay here with me. We'll start a jazz band." Significantly, Charlotte's suggestion that they start a jazz band together remains in the final cut. This is an acknowledgement of the role that music has played in their relationship and of the porous line between witnessing music and making it oneself. The lyrics come into the aural foreground as the singer continues: "I am so into you, Baby." Coppola pointed to the lyrics' commentary power by writing them out in the screenplay, but in the final cut of the film, the specific lyrics that stick out are not "It seems we stood and talked like this before, we looked at each other in the same way then, but I can't remember where or when…" but rather the simpler, more direct message, "I am so into you, Baby." In both the screenplay and the final cut, Charlotte directly connects the music of the jazz band to their location in Tokyo and, more importantly, to their ability to exist there together. In addition to the karaoke songs performed by the characters and those performed by Sausalito, many of Reitzell's chosen pre-existing tracks are used both diegetically and non-diegetically to convey Bob and Charlotte's experiences.

External Diegetic Music as a Conveyor of Characters' Experiences

[283] Ibid., 110.

Having influenced the creation of the film from the screenwriting stage, the music on the two mix CDs that Reitzell provided to Coppola made up "eighty percent, really, of the source music of that movie," according to Reitzell.[284] These tracks, which Coppola describes as "songs that had that kind of dreamy, romantic, melancholy, that kind of tone,"[285] along with the tracks Reitzell and Coppola chose to supplement or replace them in the final cut of the film, are meant to convey Bob and Charlotte's experiences to the audience. The use of much of the external diegetic music is quite conventional, in that, as film and television scholar Geoff King explains in his 2010 examination of the film, "[the music] is closely related to the evocation of specific character experience at various stages in the development of the narrative."[286] With regard to Bob and Charlotte, that specific character experience is usually loneliness and a longing for personal connection. In referencing "external" diegetic music, I am distinguishing the following examples from those of the previous section, which involved the characters' production of music. As with the music the characters either create themselves or witness the creation of, these emotions are conveyed through the songs' lyrics and through the ways Bob and Charlotte talk about the music.[287]

Much of the external diegetic music in the film is in stark contrast to the atmospheric, hazy music of the non-diegetic world. For example, having gone down to the hotel pool to swim laps, Bob observes a water aerobics class. The music becomes

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[284] Reitzell.

[285] Mitchell, *Sofia Coppola: Lost in Translation*.

[286] Geoff King, *Lost in Translation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 117.

[287] Martin Scorsese is one director who normalized this use of pre-existing popular music in his films. One notable example is Nilsson's 1972 hit "Jump into the Fire" as a way to convey Henry's mental instability and agitation the day before his arrest in *Goodfellas* (1990).

muted as the camera follows Bob under the water as he begins to swim freestyle. Each time he turns his head to breathe, the music becomes louder and clearer, creating the impression that the viewer is hearing what Bob hears as he swims. It is disco music, specifically indicated in the script as Sister Sledge:

> A disco mixed tape starts, and above water we see a WESTERN INSTRUCTOR in tight shorts leading an aqua-aerobics class to the group of WOMEN. They jump up and down to Sister Sledge.[288]

In the final cut of the film, the song is actually "Love Gun" by Rick James, which serves the same purpose of standing out to the audience as absurd, especially in the context of Bob's muted state of mind. This diegetic music blends seamlessly into the diegetic video game music in the next scene, as Charlotte wanders through an arcade and watches other people playing. Sound designer/mixer Richard Beggs executed this transition perfectly: the voices of the background singers in "Love Gun" become those of the anthropomorphic video game characters, singing the same pitches with a similar vocal timbre. Another example is the diegetic techno music playing during the Suntory Whiskey shoot, which is not listed on the soundtrack or indicated in the script. It continues under Bob's phone call with his agent, Fred, during which the camera approaches Bob from behind. His tuxedo jacket is held in place with large pins so that it will appear to fit him better, and he is clearly uncomfortable surrounded by the lighting and make-up crews. He tells Fred, "I gotta get out of here…as soon as I can," before the poor reception in the studio causes the call to break up. This music, thus, is a metaphor for the disconnect between Bob and the world he finds comfortable. A third example of

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[288] Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, 29.

diegetic music being used to demonstrate Bob's emotional removal from a scene happens when Bob is at the strip club. This music begins as clearly non-diegetic: "Fuck the Pain Away" by Peaches starts as we hear Charlotte's voice leaving a message for Bob, saying she's going to meet Charlie and some guys at a place called Orange. It turns into diegetic music while he sits at the strip club. In the screenplay, this looks like:

> INT. ORANGE NIGHTCLUB – NIGHT
>
> Lights strobe and Peaches' seedy "Fuck the Pain Away" booms through the speakers.
>
> Tan JAPANESE STRIPPERS with platinum hair dance and hang from a pole on a little platform.
>
> Bob sits alone on a brown ultra suede couch feeling out of place and empty.
>
> He looks over at a table of young AMERICAN INVESTMENT BROKERS. He wishes he wasn't there, but tries to seem comfortable.[289]

Coppola even describes the song "Fuck the Pain Away" as "seedy" in the screenplay, pointing to its crucial role in the creation of the scene's atmosphere. In all three of these examples, the diegetic music is not out of place; rather, it draws attention to just how out of place *Bob* is, and how uncomfortable that makes him.

Since neither of them feels comfortable in their surroundings, Bob and Charlotte become dependent on one another's company in their search for a connection. The diegetic music of their night out in Tokyo provides that connection. Abrupt changes between tracks also contribute to the sense that time is passing in a disjointed way for them. For example, diegetic music plays as Charlotte has her picture taken on the floor of

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[289] Ibid., 95.

Charlie Brown's apartment. Bob, Charlotte, and their group of friends for the night are listening to "The Feeling I Get" by Mike Brewer. The abrupt change to another diegetic song, "Too Young" by Phoenix, is the only indication that time has passed; the visual scene still depicts the party at Charlie Brown's apartment. Coppola indicated this moment in the screenplay, mistakenly – and tellingly – referring to "Too Young" as "I Feel Too Young":

> DECADENT TOKYO PARTY –
>
> Hiromix dances… Charlotte dances with Hans – she looks sweaty but beautiful… Bob dances with his eyes closed, really into it, in the midst of all of them… the song "I Feel Too Young" plays.[290]

This use of "Too Young" points to Coppola's intention to have these songs express the characters' feelings (in this case, Charlotte's feelings, given the age difference between Charlotte and Bob). Coppola's inclusion of the words "I Feel" in her screenplay can be read as an unintentional clue about the motivation behind choosing this music: it is meant not as an objective commentary upon the characters' relationship, but as a conveyer of Charlotte's feelings. However, the viewer never hears the lyrics, "I feel too young" in the final cut of the film; the scene changes before the chorus begins. Coppola and Reitzell were either counting on all viewers recognizing the song (which would have been a stretch given Phoenix's relatively unknown status in 2003) or, more likely, they were using its inclusion as a marker of musical coolness to select viewers.

The bond that "Too Young" represents for Bob and Charlotte is obvious when compared to Bob's strained relationship with his wife, Lydia, with whom he speaks upon

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[290] Ibid., 63.

returning to the hotel that night. Coppola represents this conversation in the screenplay as follows:

BOB

He was this fashion guy, and there were all these Japanese fashion people – it's a whole other world, and I was talking to these Japanese surfers… He was playing all this great music – I have to find out what it was…

LYDIA (O.S.)

That sounds great – can you hold on…

(talks to daughter)

What Zoe?[291]

In stark contrast to Charlotte, with whom Bob experienced "all this great music," Lydia is a world away from Bob and has no interest in the music he describes.

Just as diegetic music forms a bond between the two main characters, Coppola also indicates in her screenplay that it should serve as a point of awkwardness between them, after Charlotte discovers that Bob has slept with the lead singer of Sausalito. In the scene at Daikanyama, after Bob briefly chats with Lydia on the way over, he and Charlotte sit in silence. This is different in the final cut of the film than in the screenplay, which indicates:

"This is the End" by The Doors starts playing on the stereo. The waitress brings two huge trays of sliced raw beef. Steam rises from the pot on the table.

The song ends, and another Doors song comes on.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

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[291] Ibid., 70.

> They're not going to play the whole album, are they?
>
> They look across the table, over the steam and meat, at each other – the whole thing is awful.[292]

Here, Coppola has Charlotte comment upon the music accompanying their awkward encounter, drawing attention to its painfully on-the-nose reflection of the current status of their relationship. In the final cut of the film, this scene occurs in silence, which is, arguably, even more awkward.

Transference of Narrative Haze through Non-diegetic Alternative Pop Music

Unlike the conventional use of pre-existing music discussed above, much of the alternative pop music from Reitzell's mix CDs is used non-diegetically to transfer the characters' bleary, jet-lagged mindset to the audience. The latter function depended on the use of pre-existing songs that were unlikely to be recognized by a typical American audience; Reitzell used tracks by obscure alternative bands for this reason. He told me that when he was choosing songs to include, he asked himself:

> Do I want the audience to have a connection with it? Do I want them to have any sort of baggage from it? Cause that's really dangerous. So I try to find stuff that's special in that way… And again, it's connections with things that can be dangerous. When I put "Just Like Honey," nobody knew who Sebastien Tellier was in this country… or the Squarepusher track, for example. And I think most people wouldn't even think that was a licensed song.[293]

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[292] Ibid., 107.

[293] Reitzell.

Using pre-existing music that would likely already have associations for the audience would have been "dangerous" in that it would likely have taken away from the effect he hoped to achieve: that of disorientation and haziness. Although Coppola was listening to these tracks on the mix CDs while writing the screenplay for *Lost in Translation,* she does not specifically indicate the use of each one. Their absence in the screenplay is evidence of the vague way pre-existing music affected this film: though Coppola did not envision the songs' specific function in the narrative of the film, she wrote with the goal of capturing their ambience.

Three moments stand out as examples of non-diegetic alternative pop serving to transfer the characters' sense of jetlag to the audience. I rely here on Geoff King's beautiful descriptions of how these moments sound in his 2010 contribution to the American Indies series. First, when Bob wakes up on his way into the city from the airport, we hear "Girls" by Death in Vegas. King describes the song as, "hushed, breathy, non-verbalized vocals with a simple guitar accompaniment creating a drifting, ethereal and somewhat dreamy quality that precisely captures the impressions of temporal and spatial disjunction characteristic of jet-lagged arrival in distantly foreign climes."[294] The music fades away as the car arrives at the hotel and Bob is introduced to the Suntory Whiskey team.

Another example of pre-existing music not being written into the script is when Charlotte returns to her hotel room, applies make-up, lies on her bed, hangs paper flowers on the ceiling, and injures her toe, all accompanied by Sebastien Tellier's "Fantino." The song serves the purpose of creating a hazy experience for the audience, indicative of

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[294] King, *Lost in Translation*, 116.

Charlotte's mental state; as King puts it, "The music continues implacably… as if to signify a measure of detachment from the passage of events, marked here by the lack of any heightening of the moment at which Charlotte is hurt."[295] "Fantino" allows the event of injuring her toe, which would stand out in the mind of an alert person, instead to blend into the surrounding events. This music stops abruptly when the scene changes to Charlotte's husband talking about work.

Finally, "Tommib" by Squarepusher is the non-diegetic music the audience hears as Charlotte looks out the window of her hotel room after her husband leaves for work. It continues until she dives into the swimming pool. King describes it as "a simple repeated rising-and-falling higher pitch being accompanied by the development of a darker, lower tone. The piece is bleak, cold and fragile in its resonances, contributing directly and significantly to the impression of loneliness and vulnerability established in relation to the character."[296] King makes the point that "Tommib" succeeds in conveying the "loneliness and vulnerability" of Charlotte's character. I'd argue further that, since the audience hears this music as part of their own diegesis rather than that of the character, they are invited to experience Charlotte's state of mind as their own.

At certain points, the specific music Coppola had indicated in the screenplay was changed dramatically in the final version of the film. This indicates the extent to which she had come to trust Reitzell's judgment as a music producer and partner at all stages of filmmaking. For example, as Bob and Charlotte get ready to leave for their night out, "The State We're In" by The Chemical Brothers begins non-diegetically, 4 minutes and

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[295] Ibid.

[296] Ibid.

18 seconds into the song, at the point when the lyrics give way to an instrumental climax. It continues into the club scene, creating a connection between the non-diegetic and diegetic worlds. This was a change from what Coppola had written in the screenplay:

> CHARLIE
>
> This is Bambi.
>
> CHARLOTTE
>
> Hi.
>
> A young SHY GUY with a shaved head smiles at her, and takes her picture.
>
> A JAPANESE KRAFTWERK COVER-BAND plays Trans Europa Express.[297]

Rather than "Trans Europa Express," as indicated in the screenplay, the diegetic music in the final cut of the film is a continuation of "The State We're In."

Another example of a deviation from the screenplay involves the moments that use "Sometimes" by My Bloody Valentine and "Just Like Honey" by The Jesus and Mary Chain. When Bob gets out of the cab to hug Charlotte on the street and whisper something unintelligible into her ear, there is no music in the final cut until they walk away from each other, and he looks back and smiles at her. In the screenplay, Coppola indicated that music should blast from the moment he gets out of the cab to look for her:

> Music blasts from speakers on the street, and there is some promo going on with GIRLS handing out little cologne samples. Bob looks around for her, but only sees dark hair, umbrellas, and super tan JAPANESE KIDS.
>
> In the distance an umbrella moves to reveal Charlotte.

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[297] Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, 56.

BOB

Charlotte!

But she can't hear him over the loudspeaker. He rushes to her.

C.U. she turns and we see she is crying.

The music swells. He embraces her, holding her close to him in the crowd.[298]

Reitzell decided upon the music to use in this scene after the film had been shot. He had wanted to use "Just Like Honey" for a different scene originally, the scene in which Charlotte and Bob ride in a taxi back to the hotel after a night out on the town. In the final cut of the film, My Bloody Valentine's "Sometimes" accompanies this ride and continues, fading away gradually, as Bob carries Charlotte down the hall and puts her to bed. King suggests that this song is meant to "complement the hand-held camerawork, jump-cuts and blurry visuals,"[299] and in fact, this is an instance in which the final cinematography determined the music. Reitzell explained to me:

> I'll tell you, the "Just Like Honey" scene, that track, I wanted to use in a different place. Where the My Bloody Valentine song "Sometimes" is. That scene was a little bit different in the script. And I thought the Jesus and Mary Chain song would be great there. And then I remember trying it at the end, with Sofia at my house, I only had it as a record, so I'm just dropping the needle while we're watching a little VHS tape. But when that thing hit, it was just perfect, it just

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[298] Ibid., 116.

[299] King, *Lost in Translation*, 116.

worked so well. So that was instant, and I wasn't even looking for that at the time.[300]

Coppola says of that final scene, "People still ask me what Bill whispers at the end, but I just say what Bill Murray always says: it's between the two of them."[301]

Newly Composed Music

Most of the newly composed tracks for *Lost in Translation* were the product of collaboration between either Reitzell and Kevin Shields or Reitzell and Roger J. Manning. Air composed only one track specifically for *Lost in Translation*, "Alone in Tokyo," which plays when Charlotte gets on a train to leave the city. This piece later became the final track on Air's album "Talkie Walkie." The newly composed music compliments the style, instrumentation, and intended audience effect of the pre-existing alternative pop music Reitzell had chosen for the mix CDs. Reviewer Maria San Filippo described it in *Cineaste* as, "a mishmash of dream-pop stylings, alternately overbearing or underwhelming, and none particularly distinctive. Even Air's sole contribution effort is, well, airy."[302] I agree with San Filippo's characterization of the newly composed soundtrack, but while her attitude toward it is lukewarm in comparison to her praise of Reitzell's work on *The Virgin Suicides,* I argue that this "mishmash" effect was intentional on the part of Reitzell and his collaborators in order to aurally transfer the characters' jet-lagged, confused experience to the audience.

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[300] Reitzell.

[301] Phil De Semlyen, "Sofia Coppola: Film By Film," *EmpireOnline.com*, www.empireonline.com/features/sofia-coppola-on-sofia-coppola.

[302] Maria San Filippo, "Review: Lost in Translation by Sofia Coppola," *Cineaste* 29, no. 1 (2003).

From the first shot of the film, Charlotte's bottom as she lies on her side in bed, Coppola indicates in the screenplay that music will play a large role in setting the mood.[303] Quick-tempo, pop guitar strumming fades in from the city noises during the title card, then out again as the shot fades to black. Coppola wrote:

> Melodramatic music swells over the Girl's butt in pink sheer underwear as she lies on the bed.
>
> Title cards over image.[304]

In the film, the music is a brief excerpt from "City Girl" by Kevin Shields, one of the songs he composed for the film. It is not "melodramatic," as indicated in the screenplay, nor is it clear whether it is diegetic or non-diegetic. Another moment when one of Shields's newly composed pieces features heavily in the film is when Charlotte, unable to fall asleep after returning from the strip club, tosses and turns in a jump-cut sequence accompanied by the non-diegetic "Are You Awake?". It has a quicker tempo than most of the other non-diegetic music. The music continues as Bob slips a note under her door – asking, "Are you awake?" – before fading into the sounds of Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* as the two talk over it in Bob's hotel room.

The entire film was going to be scored with pre-existing music from the mix CDs Reitzell had given to Coppola, but Reitzell convinced Coppola to let him work with Kevin Shields on music composed specifically for the film. He explained to me:

> You know, really we didn't need Kevin, but it would be cool if he would contribute it and be part of it and kind of further weave together the fabric of the

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[303] This opening shot was based on the painting "Jetta" by John Kacere, a copy of which is on Charlotte's hotel room wall in the film.

[304] Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, 1.

> music. But it wasn't like there was a lot of pressure, like if this doesn't work, we're screwed, because I had covered it already with these two mix CDs so well.[305]

But it was important to Reitzell to at least attempt to work with Shields, since he had created those mix CDs with Shields's music in mind specifically. He told me that the "nucleus" of the newly composed music for *Lost in Translation* was the sound he associated with Shields. He went on:

> I wanted to build it around the nucleus, sort of, sound. Cause for me, every movie that I've done with Sofia is based around the sound of one song, really, and then everything connects to that song. And as long as it connects to it, then they all flow together in a way that I think works. It's kind of like, you know, the way you would modulate if you were going to switch keys if you were playing chords, there's gotta be a connection to it, you know, you always gotta have one piece holding over into it, to make it work.[306]

In this case, the "song" was actually Brian Shields's entire oeuvre with My Bloody Valentine. It's likely that Reitzell chose the metaphor of musical modulation in our conversation specifically because he knew it would make sense to me, as a musicologist. With that in mind, his choice of metaphor paints Coppola as understanding of this concept and furthers the idea that *Lost in Translation* was conceived in a musical way. Like that of Darren Aronofsky and Clint Mansell (discussed in Chapter One), the

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[305] Reitzell.

[306] Ibid.

language Reitzell and Coppola use to describe their creative processes demonstrates an ambition to be understood as particularly musical filmmakers.

While Coppola created the film with the pre-existing atmospheric music Reitzell provided her in mind, the newly composed music Kevin Shields and Reitzell worked on was likewise influenced by what existed of the film. Shields described his experience working with Reitzell to compose the music for *Lost in Translation* to Andrew Dansby in a *Rolling Stone* interview as follows:

> It was just a giant learning curve for me because I hadn't done anything like this before. I was barely aware of the language of music that's not essentially just for your ears. I was just learning as I went along. I suppose we were under the influence of the film. Looking at it and trying different things. In the end, just the physical movement of the film, that was a delicacy. And I suppose that's why I ended up doing stuff that was so delicate.[307]

Coppola was excited that Shields, known for his reclusive lifestyle, agreed to work with them on the film. As she told Rodrigo Perez, "We showed [Kevin] some scenes, and he's so sensitive that he really understood the feeling I wanted – that heartbreaking, melancholic [feeling]. When you have a crush on someone it's terrible, but at the same time great. I think his music has that quality."[308]

In accordance with the overarching metaphor of the film as a mix tape, Reitzell described his approach to composing new music for the film as similar to the way a

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[307] Andrew Dansby, "Kevin Shields Found on "Lost"," *Rolling Stone,* September 24, 2003.

[308] Rodrigo Perez, "Sofia Coppola Scores Movie, Music Coups With "Translation"," *MTV News*(September 10, 2003), http://www.mtv.com/news/1478074/sofia-coppola-scores-movie-music-coups-with-translation/.

music artist would approach recording an album. Reitzell told me of working with Shields in Shields' London studio:

> We just approached it the way you would make a record. We were in a recording studio. We had stuff that Sofia was shooting, like dailies. They would FedEx it to us while she was still in Japan. Cause I went to work with Kevin I think two or three different times and I would stay for like, two weeks, which is a long time, to be honest. It took a lot to get just the five pieces that are in the movie, cause everything that we did is in the movie. There's no excess.[309]

At times during this process, Shields and Reitzell decided that the pre-existing music sufficed for certain moments in the film. Reitzell told me:

> You know, I would play a cue for Kevin and he'd see it in the movie and he'd say, well this is perfect. What am I going to do to make this any better? So there's a few things that we tried to do and it just could never beat the song that Sofia and I had already put in there.[310]

Although most of the decisions regarding pre-existing music had already been made by the time he began to work with Shields, Reitzell credits the sound of Shields's music with which he was familiar as inspiring those pre-existing music choices. That is to say, the timeline of composition might suggest that Shields's involvement was an afterthought, but the influence worked both ways.

Reitzell supplemented the music he composed with Kevin Shields with music he recorded with Roger J. Manning, whom he had known for a long time through touring

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[309] Reitzell.

[310] Ibid.

with Beck and Air.[311] Their non-diegetic music is usually noticeable to the audience only when it stops; it accompanies a scene unobtrusively, but abruptly ends with the beginning of the next scene. During the scene it accompanies, it is effectively background music, even woven in with diegetic noises and bits of diegetic music in a way that does not stick out to the viewer.

One example of this happens during Charlotte's first excursion into the city alone. As she scans the subway map and observes her fellow subway riders, we hear Reitzell and Manning's newly composed "On the Subway." Once again pointing to the use of music as conveying a character's state of mind, Geoff King describes this music, which has the melodic motif of middle C, D, Eb, as "a low, slightly droning synthesizer, drum and piano piece that contributes to what appears to be the somewhat distanced and slightly puzzled nature of the character's engagement with her surroundings."[312] "On the Subway" continues as Charlotte wanders around in the rain and enters a temple, at which point it seamlessly blends with the monks' diegetic chanting and pounding upon a drum. The music abruptly ends when the scene changes to Charlotte's view from her hotel room later; it is replaced by the diegetic sound of the phone ringing as Charlotte waits for her friend Lauren to answer. Reitzell had wanted to license "All Cats Are Grey" by The Cure for this scene, but was unable to license it. So he composed "On the Subway" with that song in mind and later was able to finally use "All Cats Are Grey" in the main credits for *Marie Antoinette* (2006), on which he also worked with Coppola.[313]

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[311] Ibid.

[312] King, *Lost in Translation*, 116.

[313] Reitzell.

Another example of non-diegetic music being conspicuous only when it becomes suddenly absent happens while Charlotte steps out into the rainy street to explore Tokyo alone, under a clear umbrella. In this case, the non-diegetic music is Reitzell and Manning's track entitled "Shibuya," consisting of a synthesizer playing the melody of middle C, Db, Eb, C. When the scene abruptly changes to Bob's conversation with his Japanese publicity team in the hotel lobby – they ask him if he can stay until Friday – the abrupt silence is jarring to the viewer.

While in *The Virgin Suicides* Coppola and Reitzell use the hazy effect they create to confuse the diegetic boundaries and point to the unreliability of the narrators, here the same musical aesthetic is used to a different end. With no narrating voice and only one diegetic boundary (that between diegetic and non-diegetic sound), the musical choices Reitzell and Coppola make in *Lost in Translation* serve to transfer the characters' experiences to the audience. Rather than creating distance between the characters' actions and perceptions and the audiences understanding, as in *The Virgin Suicides*, here the haziness draws the audience *into* the world of the characters.

Conclusion

Along with various other screenwriter-directors, Coppola has been included in a group called the "Sundance Generation." First coined by Jeffrey Sconce in his 2002 article "Irony, Nihilism, and the New American Smart Film,"[314] the term references the Sundance Film Festival and points to linking attributes in the members' films, such as a

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[314] Sconce, "Irony, Nihilism and the New American 'Smart' Film."

themes of familial relations and social politics and a focus on eloquence and intellect.[315] Expanding upon Sconce's definition, Claire Perkins identified a "smart sensibility" in a "cycle" of filmmakers in her 2013 book *American Smart Cinema*. She argues that rather than telling a story with their films, these screenwriter-directors combine skepticism with human connection to make a statement about modern life to a culturally literate audience. To that end, these "smart films" close with a reprieve rather than a happy ending.[316] According to Perkins, the cycle's shared characteristics are ironic detachment, apathetic tone, episodic structure, strong musicality, wry sarcasm, economy of storytelling, and a focus on family as an abstract idea.[317]

Neither *The Virgin Suicides* nor *Lost in Translation* fits squarely within all these parameters. It could even be argued that Coppola does not belong in this grouping; in her 2003 *Cineaste* review of *Lost in Translation*, Maria San Filippo suggests, "perhaps out of sheer desperation, Coppola is being offered up as antidote to the current crop of so-called 'indie *auteurs*' who scramble to suppress whatever, if any, real feeling exists in their films under a cloak of expressive style, pomo-ish intertextual referencing, and distanced irony."[318] Indeed, these "indie *auteurs*" are not necessarily behind the same films Perkins describes, since Perkins stresses the smart films' human connection along with detachment and irony. San Filippo does not mention any of these "'indie *auteurs*'" by

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[315] James Mottram explored the industrial context of the emergence of the Sundance Generation's "smart" cinema in Reitzell. See also Mottram, *The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood*. For further reading on economic factors playing into this trend, see Biskind, *Down and Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance, and the Rise of Independent Film*.

[316] Levy, *Cinema of Outsiders: The Rise of American Independent Film*.

[317] As summarized in Perkins, *American Smart Cinema*, 68.

[318] Laura Henderson, "*American Smart Cinema* by Claire Perkins," *Senses of Cinema*, no. 69 (December 2013).

name, instead stressing Coppola's importance as a departure from a trend. I would agree with her on the point that Coppola should not be labeled an auteur, in accordance with the long-standing criticism of auteur theory that it disregards the collaborative nature of filmmaking. As I have shown here, Coppola's public affirmation of her close relationship with Reitzell is one of the ways she stresses her preoccupation with music in her films.

In part because of their determination to resist classification, I do not attempt to force Coppola and Reitzell into any one genre or group. Rather, it is helpful to consider Perkins's grouping of writer-directors emerging in the late 1990s and early 2000s (in this case including both Sofia Coppola and Paul Thomas Anderson but not Darren Aronofsky) whose films share certain thematic, stylistic, and structural qualities. One characteristic Perkins points to that does apply to all three filmmakers I deal with here is "strong musicality." While she points out that "smart cycle" directors use music thoughtfully, I argue further that they are deliberately vocal about that musical thoughtfulness, with the aim of defining themselves according to it.

Chapter Three: Paul Thomas Anderson, Aimee Mann, and Jon Brion

Like Darren Aronofsky and Sofia Coppola, Paul Thomas Anderson emerged in the 1990s as a "wunderkind" and quickly established himself as a musically savvy filmmaker with his use of popular 1970s music in his second feature film, *Boogie Nights* (1997). But it was in the process of creating his subsequent work, *Magnolia* (1999), with producer-composer Jon Brion that he began to fully explore the boundaries between and shared by music and film.[319] In *Magnolia* Anderson used the oeuvre of singer-songwriter Aimee Mann, one of the artists Brion produced, as a starting point for the screenplay. From there, he incorporated Brion's original, dramatic orchestral score with new and existing songs by Mann and other artists, creating a multi-layered universe of magical realism. Working together again on *Punch-Drunk Love* (2002), Anderson and Brion consulted throughout the screenwriting process; Brion sent Anderson pre-existing tack piano[320] music, similar to what Brion was composing for the film's non-diegetic score, to listen to while writing. In the final cut of the film, the screenplay, non-diegetic music, and careful sound design, interact with the protagonist's struggle to create a tense, claustrophobic atmosphere. Essential to his filmmaking process, music-making is therefore a deliberate guide for Anderson in creating *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love.* Within each film he adapted this process to his narrative, having characters experiment with the expressive power of music-making.

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[319] After the success of *Boogie Nights,* Anderson was granted Final Cut for *Magnolia.* This privilege is quite rare for a director early in his career; it meant he would have the final say as to what was included in or cut from the film, rather than the studio (Fine Line). This freedom led to a film over three hours in length; after the premiere, audience members reportedly complained that it was too long. Mark Rance, *That Moment,* (New Line Productions, Inc., 2000).

[320] A "tack piano" is a piano whose sound has been permanently altered by the placement of objects on and/or between the strings.

In *Magnolia*, music-making functions as a mode of expression for the characters when all else has failed them. Taking place over the course of a day, the film's plot weaves together the stories of nine main characters: cocaine addict and Aimee Mann fan Claudia Wilson (Melora Walters); Claudia's abusive, estranged father Jimmy Gator (Philip Baker Hall), who hosts a long-running game show called *What Do Kids Know?*[321] and is secretly dying of cancer; well-meaning police officer Jim Kurring (John C. Reilly), who, after being called to Claudia's apartment because of a noise disturbance, is instantly attracted to her and asks her on a date; child prodigy and returning winner of *What Do Kids Know?* Stanley Spector (Jeremy Blackman); now-grown, washed-up former *What Do Kids Know?* champion "Quiz Kid" Donnie Smith (William H. Macy); former producer of *What Do Kids Know?* Earl Partridge, who, like Jimmy Gator, is dying of cancer; Earl's much younger wife Linda (Julianne Moore), who regrets marrying him for his money; Earl's estranged son Frank T. J. Mackey (Tom Cruise), who makes a living hosting misogynist, pick-up artist conferences for men; and Earl's kind-hearted nurse Phil Parma (Philip Seymour Hoffman), whom Earl tasks with reuniting him with Frank before Earl's impending death. Before introducing us to any of these main characters, *Magnolia* begins with a description, represented visually as if it is a replay of a sports event, of three seemingly unrelated, drastic coincidences and the narrator's suggestion that, "This is not just 'Something That Happened.' This cannot be 'One of those things…' This, please, cannot be that. And for what I would like to say, I can't. This Was Not Just A Matter Of Chance."[322] This sentiment is repeated later in the film by Stanley Spector

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[321] The show *What Do Kids Know?* is a reinterpretation of *Quiz Kid Challenge,* on which Anderson worked as a messenger and production assistant after dropping out of NYU Film School.

[322] Paul Thomas Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script* (New York: Newmarket Press, 2000), 8.

when he realizes it is raining frogs outside, and appears as a cut-out from a magazine attached to the bottom of a painting in Claudia's apartment reading: "but it did happen."

Pointing especially to the significance of the fragment, "And for what I would like to say, I can't," film and literature scholar Matthew Sewell called *Magnolia* "a resounding howl of frustration at our inability to reach past the barrier of language."[323] Sewell concludes that Anderson's intention is to point out the failures of the Hollywood cinema vocabulary and that it "hinders our ability to articulate our experiences, even to ourselves, because [it] usurps the place of some other, more functional language."[324] Taking a different approach, literature and law scholar A.G. Harmon claims that Anderson's first films support the "value in realizing that chaos might coexist with harmony, that symmetry and misrule might, after all, be allies."[325] Though my intention here is not to provide a definitive interpretation of this film, I would argue that Anderson actually puts forth spontaneous music-making as that "other, more functional language" with which we can communicate honestly. Because variations of "chaos" and "harmony" coexist within music, Anderson looks to the music-making process as a reconciliation of these two ideas. As we will see, this is especially clear in the metadiegetic moment when all the characters begin to sing along with Aimee Mann's "Wise Up."

While the characters' spontaneous music-making in *Magnolia* points to music's unique ability to express raw emotion that would be incommunicable through any other means, the music-making in *Punch-Drunk Love* calls attention to a seemingly opposite

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[323] Matthew Sewell, "'But It Did Happen': Paul Thomas Anderson's Magnolia," *Bright Lights Film,* August 2011, http://brightlightsfilm.com/73/73magnolia_sewell.php#.Uxpzd-ddWGE.

[324] Ibid.

[325] A.G. Harmon, "Ordered Chaos: Three Films by Paul Thomas Anderson," *Image: A Journal of Arts and Religion* 27 (Summer 2000).

function of music: creating order from chaos. When protagonist Barry (Adam Sandler) finds a harmonium on the sidewalk outside the small business he owns and operates, the discovery is representative of the random, hectic nature of events in his life. With seven older sisters who mock him dismissively, as if he is still a child, Barry suffers from bursts of physical anger that interrupt his otherwise mundane bachelorhood. As he attempts to build a romantic relationship with spunky, easy-going Lena Leonard (Emily Watson), he is derailed by a phone-sex hotline extortion scheme run by Dean Trumbell (Philip Seymour Hoffman). Barry follows Lena on her business trip to Hawaii on a whim; she welcomes him, but upon returning they are attacked by four brothers sent by Dean to intimidate Barry into paying them an exorbitant amount of money. Barry leaves Lena in the hospital and flies to Provo, Utah to confront Dean about the extortion scheme. He is successful in getting Dean and his henchmen to back down, and finally goes to Lena's apartment to come clean about calling a phone sex hotline and to beg for her forgiveness, which she grants him.

Throughout all this chaos, Barry continually returns to the harmonium, which he brought into his office from the sidewalk. Unsure of himself, he tentatively plays a series of notes that develops into a full melody over the course of the film. It is that act of spontaneous, experimental music-making that allows him to connect to his emotional self in order to take control of his life. In contrast to Brion's non-diegetic prepared piano score, which dominates the film's soundscape, Barry's melody is simple and predictable. The act of playing it on the harmonium creates order for Barry, while its symbolic recurrence provides an aural reference point for the film audience.

Like Clint Mansell and Brian Reitzell in their respective collaborations with Darren Aronofsky and Sofia Coppola, Jon Brion's work with Paul Thomas Anderson was his first foray into writing music for film. Also like Mansell and Reitzell, Brion came to film music composition from a popular music background, although he has said that he prefers to write for an orchestra. In a 2003 interview, he told culture writer Andy Battaglia, "The only thing that's really interesting to me about [composing film music] is that it's the only place where there's a subsidy to write and record orchestra music."[326] His mother was a jazz singer and his father, Keith Brion, founded the North Jersey Wind Symphony, served as Director of Bands at Yale University, and taught music in public schools for eighteen years.[327] Jon dropped out of high school but moved to Boston to attend Berklee College of Music. A multi-instrumentalist and established session player, he also performed with power-pop band The Excerpts and created a short-lived pop trio called The Bats during the early 1980s. Brion toured with then-girlfriend Aimee Mann's band 'Til Tuesday before producing her first solo albums, *Whatever* (1993) and *I'm With Stupid* (1995). After the romantic aspect of their relationship ended, Brion and Mann continued to work together closely. In a 1996 *Boston Phoenix* interview, she said of Brion, "Working with him is very atmosphere-dependent. If there's tension between us, nothing gets done, but if we're getting along there's very little time wasted."[328] It was Mann and her future husband, composer Michael Penn, who introduced Brion to Paul Thomas Anderson during production on Anderson's first film, *Hard Eight* (1996).

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[326] Andy Battaglia, "Jon Brion," *A.V. Club,* July 2, 2003, http://www.avclub.com/article/jon-brion-13823.

[327] Lisa Martin, "Invincible Eagle: The Career of Keith Brion," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 36, no. 1 (2014).

[328] Brett Milano, "Fightin' Words: Aimee Mann Keeps Kicking Against the Pricks," *Boston Phoenix,* 1996.

According to Brion, Penn had been uncomfortable with the idea of scoring *Hard Eight* by himself, so he asked Anderson if he could enlist Brion as a musical collaborator. To familiarize himself with Brion's work, Anderson listened to Mann's recording of Harry Nilsson's song "One," which Brion had produced and which Anderson would later use for the opening sequence of *Magnolia.* As Brion explained in his 2003 interview with Battaglia, "I told Paul, 'If you're ever going to do an orchestra score, I'm right there.' So when *Magnolia* came up, he knew that's what he wanted. That's when we forged a stronger union in terms of our opinions and how we work together."[329] By stressing that Anderson "knew…what he wanted" musically for *Magnolia*, Brion subtly bolsters Anderson's reputation as a musically savvy director. Going into further detail about their joint creative process, Brion is more explicit:

> I think our relationship is different than the average composer-director relationship…I sort of watch Paul watching the screen, and I play keyboards as if I was accompanying a silent film. I watch his body reactions and look into his comments, and I sort of work as a compositional tool of his reactions as much as I'm making music. I kind of become an extension of his nervous system. It's a very interesting process, but it's not what I go through with too many other people. I can do it with Paul because I know he has a vision of where he wants to go, and I know that the buck stops there.[330]

By distinguishing their relationship from that of most other composer-director teams, Brion paints Anderson as particularly concerned with the musical aspect of his films. But

[329] Battaglia, "Jon Brion."

[330] Ibid.

beyond that, he describes a working relationship in which he becomes “a compositional tool of [Anderson’s] reactions,” even “an extension of his nervous system.” Framed this way, it is as if Anderson composes the music himself, by reacting to the visual aspects of the film, and Brion acts as his instrument. This intense emotional connection is necessary since, as Brion puts it, Anderson is

> …surprisingly inept in terms of musical terminology… Paul might say: ‘It needs to be more stomach-achy here.’ Musically, it’s not accurate, but when I watch him watching his film, I’ll have my hands on the keyboard and notice when I play a certain type of chord in a certain way, maybe his shoulders hunch up, and if that's happy and expectant, I’m on the right track.[331]

The language Brion uses to explain his collaborative work with Anderson implies that his role as composer is one of discovery. His job is to find out, without the use of accurate musical terms, what Anderson has in mind, and to make it manifest. This idea is corroborated publicly by Anderson’s other collaborators. For instance, JoAnne Sellar, who cofounded the Ghoulardi Film Company with Anderson and produced most of his films including *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love*, is quoted in the film’s production notes as saying, “Paul makes movies with the music already fixed in his head – it’s a huge, integral part of his work.”[332]

Anderson created *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* according to what he understood to be music’s unique capabilities. The earlier film, *Magnolia,* was inspired not only by Aimee Mann’s songs, but also by what Anderson saw as the sincere, organic

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[331] Ibid.

[332] *Punch-Drunk Love* production notes, cited in CJ Wallis and Bryan Tapp, "Production Notes," *Cigarettes & Red Vines,* 2015, http://cigsandredvines.blogspot.com/. Sellar’s husband, Daniel Lupi, coproduced *Hard Eight* and introduced her to Anderson. Waxman, *Rebels on the Backlot*, 167.

experience of songwriting. The narrative manifestation of this concept is clear in one scene in particular: in contrast to Jon Brion's dramatic orchestral score for the film, the moment when each character begins to sing Mann's "Wise Up" as a way to express their specific miseries offers the audience an unexpected mode of connection to the characters' vulnerability, one that is usually practiced by singer-songwriters. Whereas the Darren Aronofsky films addressed in Chapter One use the filmmaker's perception of musical *structure* to guide the creative process, Anderson uses his understanding of music's communicative capabilities as a critical component of his films. As Anderson explains in his introduction to the *Magnolia* shooting script, "The connection of writing 'from the gut' and 'writing to music' cannot be found any clearer than in the 'Wise Up' section of the screenplay."[333]

Likewise, the final cut of *Punch-Drunk Love* depended upon musical choices made as early as the screenwriting phase. Anderson told moderator Dennis Lim at a 2003 Brooklyn Academy of Music Q&A session:

> I worked with Jon Brion when I was writing the movie as well to talk about ideas and notions, what might sound right or good for the movie… I was listening to a lot of Ferrante and Teicher stuff, which is tack piano stuff. I was listening to that and he sent me a lot of extra Ferrante and Teicher stuff that was really inspiring me."[334]

In addition to the imprecise ways listening to prepared piano music influenced his screenplay writing process, Anderson directly indicates the ways in which the harmonium

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[333] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, viii.

[334] The transcription of the Q&A session mistakenly refers to American duo Arthur Ferrante and Louis Teicher as "Franti & Kesher." Dennis Lim, *Q&A: Paul Thomas Anderson* (2003).

should function throughout the screenplay. As Barry falls in love with Lena and overcomes his debilitating anger issues, the screenplay indicates what occurs in the final cut: the simple waltz melody Barry composes on the harmonium within the film's diegesis becomes the non-diegetic love theme. Barry's experimentation with music-making thus transforms his perspective and the mood of the film for the audience.

Like Darren Aronofsky and Sofia Coppola, Anderson lacked the musical vocabulary or understanding of brain science to describe what was happening as he wrote, directed, and edited these films in what he understood to be "musical" ways.[335] To a large extent, these directors' representations of their filmmaking processes are informed by and dependent upon the public's conception of music as a mysterious and even magical force. Beyond the ephemeral moment in which music is physically produced and/or listened to, what fascinates these filmmakers is the music-making *process*. In this chapter, I use Anderson's screenplays, his and his collaborators' public descriptions of their work, and the final cuts of *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* to examine how Anderson applies his understanding and adaptation of the process of music-making to that of filmmaking. I argue that by establishing himself as a "musical" filmmaker and transferring that musicality to his characters, Anderson explores the potentially transformative power of the music-making process, both for individuals in crisis and for film as a medium.

Magnolia and *Punch-Drunk Love* as Earnest Punk Films

Paul Thomas Anderson and his films have been included in many overlapping categories and movements outlined by film scholars and others attempting to make sense

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[335] For comparisons between these filmmakers, see Chapters One and Two, respectively.

of the particular moment to which his films belong. *Magnolia* is often grouped with the ensemble films that became increasingly popular during the 1990s; literature and culture scholar Hsuan L. Hsu includes it with other ensemble films taking place in Los Angeles, specifically Lawrence Kasdan's *Grand Canyon* (1991) and Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* (1993) in his analysis of Paul Haggis's *Crash* (2005). These films, according to Hsu, "indulge in cinematic lyricism and magical coincidences in order to explore a nostalgia for a lost community."[336] Film scholar Wendy Everett includes *Magnolia* in a broad group of European and American films made in the 1990s and 2000s that she calls "fractal" films, characterized by their depiction of a world that is, in line with chaos theory, both "entirely random… yet structured by complexity, simultaneity, and violent encounters."[337] On the other hand, *Punch-Drunk Love* follows certain tropes of the romantic comedy genre, but has also been called a drama. Film scholar Leslie Harbidge compares it to *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), which was also scored by Jon Brion and also served as a dramatic vehicle for a usually silly comedian (Jim Carrey), labeling both films "post-comedian rom-coms."

In this section, I focus on the ways in which *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* are part of what Nicholas Rombes describes in the introduction to his 2005 collection *New Punk Cinema* as a "tendency" in films that offer "a brutal mixture of underground, avant-garde technique and mainstream, genre-based story-telling that [weave] together cinematic traditions that included the French New Wave, Italian Neorealism and *cinéma*

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[336] Hsuan L. Hsu, "Racial Privacy, the L.A. Ensemble Film, and Paul Haggis's *Crash*," *Film Criticism* 31, no. 1-2 (2006).

[337] Wendy Everett, "Fractal Films and the Architecture of Complexity," *Studies in European Cinema* 2, no. 3 (2005): 159.

vérité."[338] Placing these films within a "new punk" framework is useful for understanding Anderson's process in musicalizing them, but it is not my purpose to shoehorn the films into any genre parameters. While Anderson's first two feature films fit more neatly into this aesthetic – *Hard Eight* is self-consciously a neo-noir film and *Boogie Nights* emulates the low-rent pornographic film – new punk cinema is helpful in understanding *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* as simultaneously earnest and ironic and, above all, as musically conceived. Here, I explore the films' new punk cinema tendencies first in terms of their reception before turning to Anderson's treatment of sound technology, his embrace of Robert Altman's influence, and finally his and Brion's do-it-yourself mindset surrounding filmmaking.

In his contribution to *New Punk Cinema,* which he also edited, Rombes puts forth Anderson's framing of *Magnolia* as representative of "the self-consciousness that characterizes new punk cinema and which informs it on every level, from plot to technique to marketing."[339] Specifically, Rombes quotes Anderson's interview with Chuck Stephens, included in the *Magnolia* shooting script, where the filmmaker explains:

> I'm a film geek; I was raised on movies. And there come these times in life when you just get to a spot when you feel like movies are betraying you. Where you're right in the middle of true, painful life. Like, say, somebody could be sitting in a room somewhere, watching their father die of cancer, and all of a sudden it's like, no this isn't really happening, this is something I saw in *Terms of Endearment.*[340]

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[338] Rombes, *New Punk Cinema*, 2-3.

[339] "Sincerity and Irony," in *New Punk Cinema*, ed. Nicholas Rombes (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2005), 80.

[340] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, 205.

This self-consciousness, in Anderson's case, is not dependent on an ironic approach to filmmaking. As Rombes goes on to point out:

> In an earlier era, this sort of narrative commentary would have been taken as coolly ironic in a kind of Godardian way, reminding us that, of course, what we are watching is just a set of contrived narrative conventions. Yet there doesn't seem to be much debunking or unmasking going on in *Magnolia*; unlike Godard, Anderson isn't investigating the form to offer any sort of critique or even homage.[341]

In other words, unlike the films of Godard, his French New Wave contemporaries, and filmmakers who emulate their ironic approach, *Magnolia* is staunchly earnest.

With regard to the overlap of self-consciousness and earnestness, critic Roger Ebert points to the necessity of understanding Anderson's approach within the specific historical context of the late 1990s. He groups *Magnolia* with three other films from 1999, Spike Jonze's *Being John Malkovich*, David O. Russell's *Three Kings*, and Martin Scorsese's *Bringing Out the Dead*, specifically for "championing an extroverted self-confidence that rejects the timid post-modernism of the 1990s. These are not movies that apologize for their exuberance, or shield themselves with irony against suspicions of sincerity."[342] Certainly, in his introduction to the *Magnolia* shooting script, Anderson stresses just how far he intends to cast aside the shield of irony:

> I've never been so happy, emotional, embarrassed, humble, egotistical, or surprised with myself as I am with *Magnolia.* I hope all that that implies is good

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[341] Rombes, "Sincerity and Irony," 80.

[342] Roger Ebert, "Review: *Magnolia*," *RogerEbert.com,* January 7, 2000, http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/magnolia-2000.

> for reading. I set out to write a great movie. In the most honest and unashamed way, I truly set myself up to write a great movie. I'm not ashamed. I've written from my gut and I will not be ashamed. Besides, it's far too late now.[343]

The implication that Anderson assumed he would face criticism for his approach to *Magnolia,* adopting an almost defensive tone in disavowing irony, points to his self-consciousness as an earnest filmmaker working at this particular moment in history.

Where Anderson's earnest approach was mostly acclaimed in *Magnolia,* it inspired a mixed response from critics of *Punch-Drunk Love* because the latter adheres loosely to the romantic comedy genre. As arts critic Peter Bradshaw, writing for *The Guardian,* sarcastically put it: "Anderson clearly wants us to take the emotional dimension of his picture seriously: the story of a disturbed, unhappy young man who is magically redeemed by love."[344] Considered within a genre that is partly characterized by the sincere representation of romantic love as a solution to individual personality issues, earnestness in *Punch-Drunk Love* seems less risky and provocative than in *Magnolia*, where it is unexpected. Taken instead as representative of what James MacDowell calls "quirky" films, *Punch-Drunk Love* is more successful in its sincerity. As MacDowell defines them, "quirky" films embrace a particular "tonal register," specifically explained as "the tension between an ironic or 'detached' perspective being combined with a sincere emotional engagement that is not to any significant degree lessened – only made *different* – by such irony and detachment.[345] Indeed, given Barry's anger issues and

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[343] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, ix.

[344] Peter Bradshaw, "Punch Drunk Love: A Minor Work from a Major Director," *The Guardian,* February 6, 2003, http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2003/feb/07/artsfeatures1.

[345] James MacDowell, "Notes on Quirky," *Movie: A Journal of Film Criticism* 1 (2010): 12.

Lena's mysterious, borderline stalker tendencies, the film's seemingly happy ending – typical of the romantic comedy genre – is, in fact, complicated. As Rick Curnette puts it, "A typical romantic comedy… would make a point of showing that the two leads love each other in spite of their differences. Anderson doesn't stoop to that sort of reductive narrative."[346] In light of their individual emotional struggles that emerge throughout the film, it seems unlikely that Barry and Lena have an easy relationship ahead of them.

In interviews, Anderson did not focus on his earnest approach to *Punch-Drunk Love* in the same way he did for *Magnolia.* Rather, he alluded to the new punk cinema technique of combining an avant-garde approach with the restrictions of genre-based storytelling. Comparing the film to *Magnolia* in 2003, he explained, "It's harder to do a stripped-down, straightforward story like this. That's what I found, anyway. You've got to stay in the boat, you can't really go anywhere else. It is nice to see what you can do away with, wonder what economy you can work with."[347] His choice of the term "stripped-down" resonates with similar punk aesthetics of music that sought the most elemental forms and instrumentation of rock music.[348]

Anderson and Brion's public representation of their general approach to music and sound in their films appears to be one of the most obvious links to new punk cinema, but more importantly, it is crucial to see that approach as critically connected to the sound

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[346] Rick Curnutte, "Punch-Drunk Love," *The Film Journal,* 2002, http://www.thefilmjournal.com/issue4/punchdrunklove2.html.

[347] Jack Foley, "Punch-Drunk Love - Paul Thomas Anderson Q&A," *indieLONDON*, http://www.indielondon.co.uk/film/punch_drunk_love_q&apta.html.

[348] Though the analogy is not perfect since a movie script and music have clear differences, what is crucial to note is the similar choice of terms, aesthetics, and perhaps effects that this "stripped down" approach was meant to convey. To recall the definition of Simon Frith's breakdown of punk music's central tenets, see Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll*, 162. A similar "stripped-down" approach is reflected in Clint Mansell's description of his work on *Black Swan* (See Chapter One).

technology that enables it. With the sound mix[349] in his films, Anderson attempts to mimic real life. His commitment to a realistic sound mix calls to mind the goals of Italian neorealism, upon which new punk cinema draws, despite the heavy-handed voice-over narration of *Magnolia* and the casting of established movie stars in both *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* (obvious departures from the neorealism film tradition).[350] Jon Brion explained this process to Andy Battaglia in 2003. (See Appendix R.)[351] Whether Brion's emphasis of Anderson's control over the final sound mix was inadvertent or deliberate, it reinforces the director's reputation as a sonically – and particularly, a musically – savvy filmmaker.

His report not only paints Anderson as departing from the norm in this approach, it also suggests the technique of using sound and/or music for drawing attention to the film apparatus.[352] For many new punk cinema filmmakers, that apparatus is the camera; but in this case, it is sound technology. Rombes attributes the trend of filmmakers pointing to the film apparatus in new punk cinema to "a high degree of self-awareness and self-consciousness that is somewhat embarrassed by the theatricality of performance, and thus calls attention to the mechanism of performance."[353] In general, the

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[349] By "sound mix," I refer to the result of a process in a film's post-production stage by which many sounds are combined into audio channels and balanced.

[350] For an Italian-language exploration of the legacy of Italian neorealism, see Lino Micciché, *Il Neorealismo Cinematografico Italiano: Atti del Convegno della X Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema* (Venice: Marsilio, 1975).

[351] Battaglia, "Jon Brion."

[352] Apparatus theory, developed by Jean-Louis Baudry, understands films not by their narrative content by in terms of all the elements of film technique and technology that go into production, was prominent among film theorists in the 1970s. Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[353] Rombes, *New Punk Cinema*, 16.

acknowledgment of the sound apparatus reminds the audience that they are experiencing a film, which depends upon technology, rather than reality. Yet, according to Brion above, this does not seem to be Anderson's intention even if the resulting hyper-realistic soundscape is representative of the self-consciousness that marks new punk cinema.

While aiming to break with the past with regard to his films' sound mixes, Anderson simultaneously identifies himself as a musical filmmaker by consistently and unabashedly linking himself to musical filmmakers who preceded him. This is especially true in the way he embraces comparisons to Robert Altman, who was his real-life mentor.[354] *Magnolia* in particular is seen by many as an homage to what Constantine Verevis calls Altman's "masterful orchestration of characters and intertwined narrative strands,"[355] the busy, kaleidoscopic style and ensemble storytelling characteristic of network films. Anderson's choice to center the film on the songs of a single artist, Aimee Mann, is similar to the way Altman used the music of Leonard Cohen in *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (1971), but the most common comparisons are to *Nashville* (1975) and *Short Cuts* (1993).[356] In 2003, Anderson told Xan Brooks, "Oh yeah, *Magnolia* is obviously influenced by *Nashville*, and 'He Needs Me' comes from *Popeye*. And that's fine. If people want to call me Little Bobbie Altman, then I have no problem with that at all.

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[354] Anderson has also claimed inspiration from French comic and filmmaker Jacques Tati, perhaps best known for *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (1953) and *Playtime* (1967). In 2002, he told Dave Kehr, "I was just in a real love affair with Jacques Tati's movies." Dave Kehr, "A Poet of Love and Chaos In the Valley," *New York Times,* October 6, 2002.

[355] Constantine Verevis, "Mike Figgis: Time Code and the Screen," in *New Punk Cinema*, ed. Nicholas Rombes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 177.

[356] In *Magnolia,* Anderson also used Jason Robards, who starred in Jonathan Demme's *Melvin and Howard* and the iconic Altman actors Michael Murphy and Henry Gibson. Mark Olsen, "Singing in the Rain," *Sight and Sound* 10, no. 3 (2000).

He's always been a big influence."[357] Here, Anderson references his use of Shelley Duvall's version of "He Needs Me," the only pre-existing song used in *Punch-Drunk Love.* Duvall originally performed the song in Altman's notorious flop, the 1980 live-action musical comedy *Popeye.* When asked by Wesley Morris, writing for the *Boston Globe,* how Altman felt about his use of "He Needs Me," Anderson responded, "Well, I'll tell you this. I showed it to him. We watched it together. And he's sitting in this chair. And 'He Needs Me' came up, and he went [makes small conductor's gesture], and he started nodding his head. I said, 'What do you think?' And he says, 'Great.'"[358]

Comparisons to trailblazing musical filmmakers were reinforced by Anderson's descriptions of his work, which were repeated by reviewers. *Sight and Sound* film critic Mark Olsen saw Mann's songwriting approach mirrored in Anderson's filmmaking approach, a connection Anderson had been stressing in public interviews. Olsen wrote:

> Mann's 70s-esque songwriting and production are neatly analogous to the ways Anderson freely appropriates from his personal pantheon of post-studio-system maverick film-makers (chiefly Altman, Demme and Scorsese) while at the same time striving to bring his own original vision to the screen.[359]

Olsen has clearly bought into Anderson's depiction of himself as a musical filmmaker. Further, his point about Anderson's incorporation of the old with the new reflects an important characteristic of new punk cinema. Also invoking Mann, *Salon* reviewer Charles Taylor admitted in an otherwise scathing review of the film:

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[357] Xan Brooks, "'I Can Be a Real Arrogant Brat.' Will Film-Maker Paul Thomas Anderson Ever Cool Down?," *The Guardian,* January, 2003, http://www.theguardian.com/film/2003/jan/27/artsfeatures1.

[358] Wesley Morris, "Interview: 'Out There'," *Boston Globe,* October 14, 2002.

[359] Olsen, "Singing in the Rain."

> For all the weak patches of *Magnolia,* Anderson is capable of doing things that knock you flat, like the scene where the characters are linked by his use of Aimee Mann's song "Wise Up," a moment that suggests a collaboration between Jacques Demy and Robert Altman.[360]

Despite the obvious connections to Altman in the final version of his films, Anderson's process differs from Altman's in an important way. Whereas Altman is known for holding the camera on actors and letting them improvise, Anderson was reportedly a much more controlling director during production on his early films. His actors were expected to read his screenplay exactly as written, and when he left the camera running, it was not to capture the ephemeral quality of lived moments, but rather to avoid missing anything. Actress Emily Watson, who played Lena in *Punch-Drunk Love* and has also worked extensively with Robert Altman, described what she saw as the main difference in the filmmakers' approaches in a 2003 Q&A:

> "Paul is, in a sense, a complete control freak, every little tiny detail of what you see has to be finessed and finessed, in terms of the construction of the shots and the lighting. Robert Altman likes to point a camera at chaos, it's much looser…Paul does 30 takes sometimes, it's really, really precise work."[361]

While not in line with Anderson's public representation of himself as influenced by Altman, Watson's description does reinforce Anderson's reputation as a filmmaker

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[360] Charles Taylor, "Magnolia," *Salon.com,* December 17, 1999, http://www.salon.com/1999/12/17/magnolia/.

[361] Tom Dawson, "Punch-Drunk Love - Emily Watson Q&A," *indieLONDON,* 2003, http://www.indielondon.co.uk/film/punch_drunk_love_Q&Awatson.html.

involved in every aspect of the process.[362] This micromanagement style makes his work particularly useful in my study, since his intentions can be understood as permeating all aspects of the filmmaking process.

Anderson's desire for control is also in line with his and Brion's public commitment to the ideals of "do-it-yourself autonomy"[363] that link new punk cinema to the punk aesthetic more generally. Anderson's particular brand of "punk" was the product of his privileged upbringing and the space it allowed for creativity. Raised by wealthy parents in the entertainment industry – Anderson's father, Ernie, was a voice-over artist and the ABC personality "Ghoulardi" – in California's San Fernando Valley, Paul attended elite private schools throughout his childhood, including Campbell Hall and Cardinal Cushing outside Boston, both schools for students with behavioral issues. Ernie had given him a Betamax video camera when he was twelve, and Paul began shooting home movies with his family and friends at school.[364] Having dropped out of Emerson College after two years and New York University after just two days,[365] Anderson asserted at a 2003 Q&A that he did not regret quitting film school:

> I think it's worked out pretty well for me, all things considered. It might have worked out differently if I'd stayed there, sure. The problem is, when I was growing up, people like George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, and Martin Scorsese went to film school and they preached in its favor. It made a lot of kids think that

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[362] This micromanagement is similar to the approach of another "new punk" director, Darren Aronofsky, discussed in Chapter One.

[363] Rombes, *New Punk Cinema*, 15.

[364] John H. Richardson, "The Secret History of Paul Thomas Anderson," *Esquire,* September 22, 2008, http://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a4973/paul-thomas-anderson-1008/.

[365] Roger Ebert, "Director's Talent Makes 'Boogie' Fever Infectious," *RogerEbert.com,* October 19, 1997, http://www.rogerebert.com/interviews/directors-talent-makes-boogie-fever-infectious.

> the only way you could make a movie was if you went to film school… It's silly to make someone think that they have to go to school to do this job.[366]

Although many other filmmakers associated with the new punk cinema tendency did, in fact, graduate from film school, Anderson's dismissal of this track reflects the democratic ideal – and, more importantly, the anti-establishment attitude – driving the aesthetic of new punk cinema.[367] Brion echoes this mindset in describing his approach to making film music, telling Spence D. of IGN Music:

> Music looks very formidable to people outside of it and it looks like it's this realm of spooky genius. And it's not. It's this very, very simple language that is capable of creating very complex human response and abstract thought and emotion and in terms of architectural thought, it does really cool things. And I'm so enamored with it that I intend to do it until they put me in the ground. But in terms of the actual brainpower necessary to do it and do it well, somebody who has a good sense of what analogy is and can apply it to their playing, can make great stuff no matter what their technical ability is.[368]

Here, Brion displays a humble self-awareness about his job. Regardless of the disagreement his assessment might spark among fellow composers or music scholars, in referencing the myth of "spooky genius" surrounding music, he addresses one of the themes shared among Paul Thomas Anderson, Darren Aronofsky, and Sofia Coppola (see Chapters One and Two, respectively) in describing musical influences on their work. In

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[366] Foley, "Punch-Drunk Love - Paul Thomas Anderson Q&A."

[367] The assumption that filmmaking can ever be truly democratic is deeply problematic, but it has been pushed even further with the emergence of YouTube and similar technologies in recent years.

[368] Spence D., "Jon Brion Interview," *IGN.com,* September 30, 2004, http://www.ign.com/articles/2004/09/30/jon-brion-interview.

what follows, I examine how Anderson both eschews and embraces this understanding of music as a magically transformative force in *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love,* focusing on his incorporation of music into the screenplays and final cuts, as well as his and his collaborators' public descriptions of their work.

Magnolia

Magnolia lends itself to analysis rooted in the director's intentions even more than the other films included in this dissertation, since Anderson's final cut privilege meant the journey from screenplay to final cut was nearly unadulterated by the outside forces that usually shape a film. After Anderson had struggled mightily with Rysher Entertainment during *Hard Eight*[369] and then suffered through stressful test screenings of *Boogie Nights*, his new reputation as a visionary director convinced New Line to make a blind deal for his next script, which would turn out to be *Magnolia.* It helped to have established movie star Tom Cruise attached to the film before the screenplay was even written; Cruise had asked Stanley Kubrick to introduce him to Anderson after seeing *Boogie Nights,* and Anderson wrote the part of Frank T. J. Mackey especially for him.[370] After meeting Cruise at a screening of *Eyes Wide Shut* in London, Anderson worked on the *Magnolia* screenplay in Los Angeles for eight months before retreating to William H. Macy's cabin in Vermont to complete most of it in two weeks. His awareness of what *Magnolia* could achieve is best represented in an interview he gave to Lynn Hirschberg at *NY Times Magazine* just before the film's release:

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[369] For a detailed description of the making of *Hard Eight* and all the drama it entailed, see Waxman, *Rebels on the Backlot*.

[370] Ibid., 191.

> My argument to [New Line] was…You hired me to be cool. You didn't hire me to make money – New Line has Mike Myers and the Austin Powers movies to make them tons of money. If I make a good movie, it will help you get at that cool niche of the world.[371]

Whatever else "cool" meant to Anderson at the time, we know from the discussion above that it included the appearance of being musically savvy. He would foster his "cool" image throughout the process of creating and promoting *Magnolia.*

In the introduction to the *Magnolia* shooting script, Anderson writes, "Thank you to anyone who wanted to listen to or read or see this picture."[372] By acknowledging that one can "listen to or read or see this picture," Anderson alludes to its existence across multiple media, not just as the final cut of a film. In fact, the lines between those forms of media are not always clear in Anderson's creative process. According to many public accounts and interviews, Anderson based the *Magnolia* screenplay on the songs of his friend Aimee Mann. In an *Entertainment Weekly* interview shortly after the film's release, Anderson directly compared the film to musical media: "I was thinking, here are these songs I'm completely in love with that I know are in her drawer, and I want to make a record out of them — my own mix tape of favorite Aimee Mann songs."[373]

For the most part, critics took him at his word and wove musical metaphors into their reviews of the film, further solidifying its reputation as musically conceived. Anderson has also mentioned "A Day in the Life" by The Beatles as a source of more

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[371] Lynn Hirschberg, "His Way," *NY Times Magazine,* December 1999.

[372] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, ix.

[373] Chris Willman, "Mann Crazy," *Entertainment Weekly,* January 7, 2000, http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,275020,00.html.

general inspiration, for instance, as Janet Maslin wrote in the *New York Times,* in *Magnolia's* "pervasive, brewing mood changes" that share the song's "unsettling spirit."[374] Maslin observed, "[Anderson] often seems to be conducting the ways in which characters meet and intersect,"[375] while Mim Udovitch, writing for *Rolling Stone,* called *Magnolia*, "A passionate, sprawling rock album of a movie…structurally inspired by the Beatles' 'A Day in the Life.'"[376] The Beatles' song structural influence on *Magnolia* is loose – the film takes place over the course of a day – and is not comparable to Mann's songs, whose impact on the film Anderson stresses much more. But by providing these sound bites for critics to repeat and unpack, especially given the cultural weight of "A Day in the Life" and The Beatles more generally, Anderson helped shape his persona as a musical filmmaker. Critic Roger Ebert moved beyond pop music comparisons, telling moviegoers, "Do not expect subdued taste and restraint, but instead a kind of operatic ecstasy."[377] It is possible that this language came from actress Julianne Moore, who furthered Anderson's reputation by describing the film in a 1999 interview as

> …operatic in a way. There are just big movements to it… you almost feel like it's melodrama rather than drama. But it has to be rooted in some type of a very earnest reality otherwise it doesn't play. Then you don't care about them. So to try

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[374] Janet Maslin, "Magnolia (1999) Film Review: Entangled Lives on the Cusp of the Millennium," *New York Times,* December 17, 1999.

[375] Ibid.

[376] Mim Udovitch, "The Epic Obsessions of Paul Thomas Anderson," *Rolling Stone,* 2000.

[377] Ebert, "Review: *Magnolia*."

to take these big, operatic emotions and try to make them real… it has been challenging.[378]

Beyond helpfully (if likely unintentionally) invoking opera to bolster the film's musical reputation, Moore references the "earnest reality" of the film, discussed above.

In grappling with these conflicting qualities (melodramatic spectacle and earnest realism), scholars have disagreed on Anderson's intentions regarding *Magnolia*'s representation of reality. Referencing the symbolic television sets, which recur as transitions throughout the film, as well as many of the characters' careers and experiences on television, cultural studies and film scholar Joanne Clarke Dillman claims, "Magnolia exposes how we perform our lives through the mediation of televisual and filmic images. The film does not envision any 'real' beyond this mediation."[379] Dillman's assessment places *Magnolia* squarely within the category of postmodern films, which Jason Sperb has defined as films that are "about the aesthetic, cultural, and economic practice of *mediation* (film, TV, radio, phones), which in some way casts doubt on notions of origins and absolute truth."[380] In response to Dillman, film and literature scholar Matthew Sewell contends, "If *Magnolia* acknowledged no '"real" beyond this mediation,' its assertion that 'it did happen' would have little significance."[381]

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[378] Rance, "That Moment."

[379] Joanne Clake Dillman, "Twelve Characters in Search of a Televisual Text: *Magnolia* Masquerading as a Soap Opera," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 33, no. 3 (2005): 150.

[380] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 11.

[381] Sewell, "'But It Did Happen': Paul Thomas Anderson's Magnolia."

The assertion Sewell references happens first in the film's introductory sequence, shot using lens components from a vintage 1910 Pathé camera,[382] which comprises three stories unrelated to the film's main plot. The first story is, according to the narrator, an account from the New York Herald on November 26, 1911. Three men with the last names Green, Berry, and Hill were hanged for the murder of a gentleman who happened to live in Greenberry Hill, London. The second story, ostensibly taken from the Reno Gazette in June of 1983, is that of a Blackjack dealer and recreational scuba diver named Delmer Darion. He died of a heart attack when a plane, collecting water to put out a nearby fire, accidentally lifted him out of the lake where he was diving. The volunteer fire fighter flying the plane, Craig Hansen, happened to have started a violent fight with Darion just two nights before at the Blackjack table. Overcome by the unfortunate coincidence, Hansen committed suicide the following day. Finally, the narrator relates "a tale told at a 1961 awards dinner for the American Association of Forensic Science by Dr. John Harper, president of the association:"[383] Seventeen-year-old Sydney Barringer attempted to commit suicide on March 23, 1958 by jumping from the roof of his nine-story apartment building in Los Angeles. Although his body was caught by a safety net that happened to have been installed three days earlier, he was killed mid-fall by a bullet accidentally fired during an argument between his parents on the sixth floor. Faye Barringer had often threatened her husband, Arthur, with an unloaded shotgun in heated arguments, but Sydney had secretly loaded the weapon six days earlier in the hopes that his parents would kill each other. Instead, Faye was charged with the murder of her son.

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[382] Stephen Pizzello, "Blood for Oil," *American Cinematographer,* January 2008.

[383] Paul Thomas Anderson, *Magnolia* (New Line Productions, Inc., 1999).

After each of the first two stories, the narrator interjects, “And I would like to think this was only a matter of chance,” and “And I am trying to think this was all only a matter of chance,” respectively. After the third story, the narrator pleadingly states, “And it is in the humble opinion of this narrator that this is not just ‘Something That Happened.’ This cannot be ‘One of those things…’ This, please, cannot be that. And for what I would like to say, I can’t. This was not just a matter of chance. These strange things happen all the time.”[384] The sequence’s three stories of drastic coincidences seem unrelated to the rest of the film, but as Roger Ebert pointed out in his positive review:

> It sets up the theme of the film, which shows people earnestly and single-mindedly immersed in their lives, hopes and values, as if their best-laid plans were not vulnerable to the chaotic interruptions of the universe. It’s humbling to learn that existence doesn’t revolve around us; worse to learn it revolves around nothing.[385]

Contrary to the themes the sequence establishes, its use of a narrator – voiced by Ricky Jay, who also plays the role of *What Do Kids Know?* producer Burt Ramsey – suggests an inherent structure. Heard throughout the film, often mediated through a television screen, Ricky Jay’s voice serves to remind the viewer of that connecting thread among all the characters’ narratives. Here, his first words are accompanied by no sound and no visual component – just a black screen – forcing the audience to listen with no distractions. In stark contrast, the three stories that immediately follow are strategically accompanied by Jon Brion’s atonal, arrhythmic, noise-like original music. It is heard

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[384] *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, 8.

[385] Ebert, "Review: *Magnolia*."

during moments of stillness, specifically during the freeze frames that follow the hanging scene and the moment when Sydney Barringer's body hits the net. When the shotgun goes off as Sydney falls by the window, the arguing between his parents is briefly muted so the audience hears only Brion's music, which gives the impression that the music is revealed only when the hectic source sound is silenced. In this way, the tension between the random chaos and "chance" depicted in the three unrelated stories is, paradoxically, both reflected in the music's content yet also set up in contrast to the music's presence.

The narrator's declaration that "This was not just a matter of chance" is echoed later in the film, when frogs begin to fall from the sky. The absurd situation of frogs raining down on the area surrounding Magnolia Street, where the characters all happen to be, is a bit of magical realism. In a 2000 interview with *Creative Screenwriting* magazine, Anderson explained the inspiration behind this moment:

> I'd be a liar if I said to you it was written initially as a Biblical reference [to Exodus 8:2]. I truthfully didn't even know it was in the Bible when I first wrote the sequence. I had read about a rain of frogs through the works of Charles Fort, who's a wonderful writer. He was the person who coined the term UFO, who wrote about odd phenomena. So when I read about the rain of frogs, I was going through a weird personal time. I don't want to get too personal, but maybe there are certain moments in your life when things are so fucked up and so confused that someone can say to you, 'It's raining frogs,' and that makes sense. That somehow makes sense as a warning; that somehow makes sense as a sign.[386]

[386] David Konow, "An Interview with Paul Thomas Anderson," *Creative Screenwriting,* January 2000.

Late in the shooting of the film, references to Exodus 8:2 were added, apparently as an inside joke for viewers. During the violent rain of frogs, which has no musical accompaniment, Rose arrives at Claudia's apartment. She has just discovered that the reason her daughter has become estranged from her is that Rose's husband and Claudia's father, TV personality Jimmy Gator, had molested Claudia when she was young. As they embrace just inside the apartment door, the camera pans over to a painting on Claudia's wall, with a piece of paper cut out from a magazine attached to the bottom of it that reads simply, "but it did happen." At this point in the film, child quiz show star Stanley is in the library, surrounded by his books. He notices the frogs raining down outside and says aloud to himself, "This happens. This is something that happens."[387]

In Anderson's shooting script, this was originally a musical moment. (See Appendix S.)[388] Anderson never mentioned Hollywood musical choreographer Busby Berkeley as an influence in public interviews about the film, but his reference here suggests his intention to create that particular musical sensibility. Aimee Mann's cover of "Bein' Green" was not included in the final cut; the scene preceding it was also cut, so perhaps using the song as a transition no longer made sense. It also would have been quite on-the-nose to accompany images of frogs with Kermit the Frog's voice, so it is possible Anderson cut it for that reason. In this case, the visual of raining frogs expresses enough without the redundancy of accompanying music.

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[387] This is different than what is in the script. In the script, there is a whole series of scenes where Stanley is in the Lamplighter restaurant (outside of which Linda is parked in her car) having a conversation with Worm (Orlando Jones). Worm is not involved in this part of the final cut at all. Most of Worm's scenes, including an interaction in which Worm tells Dixon that they are not going to rob Stanley after all, were cut from the film.

[388] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, 187-88.

But throughout the film, music-making and musical curating come to the forefront as expressive tools for the characters, specifically the misogynist personality Frank Mackey, the washed-up former “Whiz Kid” Donnie Smith, and the child bystander Dixon. Frank Mackey introduces himself at his “Seduce and Destroy” conference with the very recognizable opening “Sunrise” fanfare from Richard Strauss’s 1896 tone poem *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, (Op. 30), in a ridiculously over-the-top staged entrance meant to communicate his manly power to the conference attendees. Donnie Smith repeatedly listens to “Dreams” (1993) by Gabrielle privately when he is in his car, because the lyrics inspire him to live the life he imagines for himself. About forty minutes into the film, Jim Kurring leaves the apartment of a black woman named Marcie after finding a man’s dead body in her bedroom closet. On the street, he encounters her grandson, Dixon, who raps to him in an attempt to communicate clues about the murder that has apparently taken place.[389] Musicologist Ben Winters has identified this technique of having characters create their diegetic soundscapes with regard to Wes Anderson’s films, pointing out that as “these characters become composers of their own scores… they reveal their indebtedness to, and their mirroring of, [Wes] Anderson’s creative persona.”[390] Like Wes

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[389] In the context of the screenplay, it appears that Dixon is trying to send Jim after his father, Worm, instead of after his grandmother, Marcie. His spontaneous freestyle rap seems to be the epitome of authentic music-making from a boy whose father involves him in criminal activity and who has likely witnessed his grandmother murder his grandfather. But in the final cut, with Worm completely removed as a character, Dixon’s rap makes as little sense to the audience as it does to Jim. Marcie and Dixon are two of the film’s three black characters, all of whom are minor; the third is Gwenovier, the interviewer who interrogates Frank Mackey. The character of Marcie is especially problematic in that Anderson paints her as a caricature of an angry black criminal. Jim, the character with whom the audience is most expected to sympathize, handcuffs her to the couch and barges into her bedroom while she demands that he stop. For a detailed analysis of gender and race implications in *Magnolia,* see Lucy Fischer, "Theory into Practice: En-Gendering Narrative in *Magnolia*," in *Screening Genders*, ed. Krin Gabbard and William Luhr (Rutgers, NY: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

[390] Ben Winters, "It's All Really Happening: Sonic Shaping in the Films of Wes Anderson," in *Music, Sound and Filmmakers*, ed. James Eugene Wierzbicki (New York: Routledge, 2012), 46.

Anderson, Paul Thomas Anderson uses these characters' musical curating of their surroundings to reflect his own careful use of music in film. Music-making is an expressive tool not just for these characters, but for Anderson in the process of creating *Magnolia*.

I wish to expand upon Sewell's claim and put forth that *Magnolia* does indeed acknowledge reality beyond the mediation of televisual and filmic images.[391] I point specifically to music-making as the expression of "realness" and posit further that for Anderson, music-making and realness are one and the same. In what follows I address this idea by exploring the ways Anderson incorporates Aimee Mann's songs and the songwriting process into *Magnolia,* from the scriptwriting stage to the notorious, metadiegetic "Wise Up" moment in the final cut. I also argue that music's prominence in the questions asked of the *What Do Kids Know?* contestants demonstrates Anderson's preoccupation with a specific type of "from the gut" musical currency. Throughout my discussion, I reference Jon Brion's unapologetically dramatic and nearly omnipresent original music, recorded traditionally from a printed score by a live studio orchestra[392] and described in one negative review as "wall-to-wall music."[393]

Aimee Mann's Music as *Magnolia*'s Real Voice

In the introduction to the *Magnolia* shooting script, written after the film's release, Anderson instructed readers: "For better or for worse, consider this screenplay

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[391] Sewell, "'But It Did Happen': Paul Thomas Anderson's Magnolia."

[392] Rance, "That Moment."

[393] Taylor, "Magnolia."

written completely from the gut."[394] Later in the introduction, he explained the musical impetus behind his deference to his "gut":

> While I was writing this script, [my girlfriend Fiona Apple] was writing songs. I was able to witness the translation of emotion into verbs, nouns, and letters that equaled "lines in a song." She taught me about clarity and about something I'd only sort-a-had, which is this thing I've talked about: "Trust the gut."[395]

The idea that songwriters must trust their "gut" in the process of making music is not a new one. It is reminiscent of the popular belief that musicians, particularly songwriters and composers, share part of their emotional selves through their music; this can lead to a kind of fetishization of "authenticity." What is of interest here, however, is Anderson's desire to translate *his understanding* of songwriting into his screenwriting process and, further, into the content of the film. Matthew Sewell argued in his 2011 analysis of the shooting script that in *Magnolia,* Anderson confronts his frustration with the limits of his medium:

> From Anderson's point of view, not only does Hollywood cinema fail to supply a useful vocabulary for "true, painful life," it furthermore hinders our ability to articulate our experiences, even to ourselves, because the Hollywood vocabulary usurps the place of some other, more functional language… *Magnolia*'s shooting script evokes this dilemma by capitalizing many of its hackneyed phrases…[396]
>
> The capitalization gestures at an obstruction between expression and meaning…

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[394] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, vii.

[395] Ibid., viii.

[396] Sewell provides three examples: the characters' repeated declaration that it is raining "Cats and Dogs," Jim's question to Claudia on page 77 of the shooting script, "You Tryin' To Damage Your Ears?", and Earl's assertion on page 149 that, "I Live My Life. And I'm Not Fair."

> Thus *Magnolia* is not a Lennon-like primal scream, if by that we mean a return to a fundamental expressiveness; rather, it is a resounding howl of frustration at our inability to reach past the barrier of language.[397]

Sewell's description of Anderson's preoccupation with this dilemma aligns with my position, but I would argue that rather than stop at creating a "resounding howl of frustration," Anderson attempts a solution through music-making. As he told Chris Willman in an *Entertainment Weekly* interview shortly after *Magnolia*'s release, what he hoped to recreate from Mann's musical writing was "that clarity—hearing something you've felt before enunciated in a way that makes perfect sense."[398]

Anderson reinforces the narrative of the film being born out of Aimee Mann's songs in press interviews. He told John Patterson in a 2000 interview for *The Guardian* that, "*Magnolia* came out of Aimee Mann's songs, which I was listening to at the time I was starting to write.[399] But while Sofia Coppola, for instance, has described listening to Air's music as inspirational to her screenwriting process in a vague way, Anderson goes so far as to call *Magnolia* an "adaptation" of Mann's songs. He told film and media scholar Cynthia Fuchs that Mann was

> …kind of the start of it. By which I mean, I had a lot of ideas floating around in my head, probably too many ideas, and she's a really good friend of mine, and I was privy to stuff she was working on. It was great to have her music as a thing to

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[397] Sewell, "'But It Did Happen': Paul Thomas Anderson's Magnolia."

[398] Willman, "Mann Crazy."

[399] John Patterson, "Magnolia Maniac," *TheGuardian.com,* March 9, 2000.

latch on to, to help corral all the stuff that was sort of circling around in my brain. So I wanted to just adapt Aimee's songs, like you would adapt a book or a play.[400]

Rather than simply inserting Mann's songs into the film – although he did that, as well – Anderson used them and his insight into her songwriting process as a starting point for his own filmmaking process. Her voice, in a literal and figurative sense, permeates the film. Willman summed up *Magnolia* as presenting "an idealized world where Aimee Mann is the collective unconscious."[401] It was more than Mann's specific songs that Anderson insists shaped his screenplay and the resulting film; it was her musical sensibility and, further, the approach and ideas involved in writing songs that influenced Anderson. For this reason, his use of the term "adaptation" in describing the film's relationship to Mann's work is quite fitting. In the final cut of the film, Mann's musical impact is clear in Anderson's use of her newly composed and pre-existing songs non-diegetically, diegetically, and metadiegetically in the "Wise Up" sequence.

The two instances of Mann's music being used non-diegetically bookend the film's main storylines. Following the opening sequence of three unrelated stories accompanied by the narrator's voice and Brion's original music, a montage of the nine main storylines begins. The audience is introduced to the characters while hearing Mann's cover of Harry Nilsson's "One," recorded by Al Kooper on his 1968 debut album and made famous by the Three Dog Night 1969 cover. Mann had already recorded this version of "One" for a Nilsson tribute anthology; in addition to "Wise Up," it is the only pre-existing music of Mann's that is featured in the film. The other example of Anderson

[400] Cynthia Fuchs, "Interview with Paul Thomas Anderson: Magnolia," *Popmatters.com,* March 7, 2014, http://www.popmatters.com/feature/anderson-paulthomas/.

[401] Willman, "Mann Crazy."

using Mann's music non-diegetically is at the very end of the film, when "Save Me" begins during Jim and Claudia's final interaction and continues into the credits. "Save Me" was written specifically for the film and its music video, directed by Anderson, was shot at the end of *Magnolia* filming days. The music video inserts Mann into various scenes from the film and she interacts with the actors as she performs the song. These two non-diegetic musical moments are most significant for the ways the song's lyrics describe the characters' situations. This is by no means a new tactic for filmmakers using pre-existing songs, but given Anderson's fascination with Mann's songwriting process, I argue that these moments literally give voice to the film's message. Whereas traditionally, filmmakers have chosen songs to fit a film narrative that has already emerged, Anderson reverses that order of creative events, using Mann's songs as the source for the film's narrative.

Mann's cover of "One" begins over the film's opening credits with a simple black screen, and continues throughout the introduction montage of *Magnolia's* protagonists. Extended in length from the album version, the song serves to link all of the storylines, which are new to the audience, with its assertion that "one is the loneliest number." As the song begins, we see Frank Mackey's infomercial on a television screen in a vacant living room; since there is no one viewing the screen, it is as if he is directly instructing the film audience to call 1-800-TAME-HER and order his misogynist Seduce and Destroy program. His voice continues in the background as we see Claudia sitting at a bar where Mackey's infomercial is playing on a television. She's approached by a strange man with whom she goes home, snorts cocaine, and has sex. Mackey's voice is replaced by their vague sex sounds, while the visual alternates between their sex acts and a

television feature about Claudia's father, Jimmy Gator. As the narrator of the feature describes Jimmy as "a family man who's been married for over forty years with two children, the camera pans to a photo in Claudia's house and zooms in to reveal that it is of her with Jimmy. The visual changes to a scene of Jimmy walking into an office with his assistant and announcing to an unseen presence, "I'm Jimmy Gator." The next shot is of the same empty living room, where the television now plays *What Do Kids Know?* and we see Stanley Spector as a contestant, answering question after question correctly. The next shots are of Stanley and his father rushing to leave for school. His father berates him for carrying so many backpacks and instructs him that he'll pick him up at two o'clock, ostensibly to attend the taping of the next *What Do Kids Know?* episode. The visual returns to the empty living room; this time, an old episode of *What Do Kids Know?* from 1968 plays on the television, showing Donnie Smith holding an oversized check after winning it big. Next we meet Donnie as an adult as he has a dental exam, listens to "Dreams" by Gabrielle on his way to work, and crashes his car through the front of a shop where he is recognized immediately as "the Quiz Kid." The next shot is of hospice nurse Phil arriving at the home of successful producer Earl Partridge, where he is taking over bedside duties from another nurse. The camera zooms in on Earl's mouth and through a cartoon representation of his cells, the audience learns he is terminally ill. In another room, Earl's wife Linda is on the phone with her husband's doctor, begging him for more pills. She kisses Earl on the forehead and tells Phil that she'll be back, then sits in her car and bangs on the steering wheel repeating, "Fuck." The next shots are of the character Jim Kurring eating breakfast, working out, praying, and otherwise starting his day while we hear his recorded voice explaining in a romantic advertisement that he is

"really interested in meeting someone special." Longer shots of Jim follow him at work as a police officer at the station and walking to his car. The sequence ends with Jim narrating his own life, *Cops*-style, as he drives around in his cruiser.

In Anderson's screenplay, this final moment of the opening sequence is written as:

INT. POLICE CAR – MOVING – LATER

CAMERA holds a CU. Of Jim as he drives. He speaks to someone unseen;

JIM KURRING

This is not an easy job. I get a call from Shirley on the radio: Bad News. It's never good news. She tries to be cheerful, tries to say something nice, but uh-huh, it's just Bad News. And It Stinks. But this is my job. And I Love It. Because I want to do well. In this life and in this world I want to do well. And I want to help people. And I may get twenty bad calls a day. But one time I help someone, I Make A Save? I correct a wrong or right a situation; Then I'm a happy cop. And We Move Through This Life We Should Try And Do Good.

WIDER ANGLE reveals that he is talking to himself. BEAT. HOLD.

JIM KURRING (sotto, to himself)

…Do Good. And If We Can Do That… And Not Hurt Anyone Else… Well, Then…[402]

Just before Jim says, "Do Good. And If We Can Do That…" the audience hears a few notes of a tinkling, music-box-like, major melody supported by strings while "One"

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[402] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, 22.

continues. Then with no break, "One" is interrupted by a black screen, which gives way to a screen of clouds with the weather report: "Partly cloudy, 82% chance of rain." The tinkling melody that previously seemed to seep into "One" replaces it completely.

At the very end of the film, "Save Me" also overlaps with Jim Kurring's self-narration as he plays *Cops* in his cruiser. The song continues as Jim enters Claudia's apartment and speaks with her as they both sit on her bed. In the screenplay, however, he does not have a monologue; the scene appears as follows:

> INT. CLAUDIA's APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT
>
> CAMERA holds on Claudia. She's sitting up in bed, covers around her, staring into space….a SONG plays….for a very, very long time….she doesn't move….until she looks up and sees someone enter her bedroom….a FIGURE from the back enters FRAME and walks in and sits on the edge of the bed….from the back it is clear that it's Jim Kurring. She tears a bit and looks at him…HOLD….
>
> She turns her eyes from him and looks INTO THE CAMERA and smiles.
>
> CUT TO BLACK.[403]

Anderson did not specifically reference "Save Me," since it was not yet written. But its lyrics convey the hopefulness implicit in the start of Claudia and Jim's relationship. In the final cut, the camera zooms in closer and closer on Claudia as she watches and listens to Jim, but the audience does not see his face. Accompanying the visual of Claudia "sitting up in bed, covers around her, staring into space," the audience hears Mann's

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[403] Ibid., 194.

lyrics: "You look like a perfect fit / For a girl in need of a tourniquet." The next lyrics are heard simultaneously with Jim's monologue, which does not appear in the screenplay:

> I just wanted to come here, to come here and say something. Something important, something that you said. You said we should say things and do things. Not lie. Not keep things back. These sorts of things that tear people up. Well, I'm not going to do that. I'm gonna do what you said, Claudia. I can't let this go. I can't let you go. Now you… you listen to me now. You're a good person. You're a good and beautiful person, and I won't let you walk out on me. And I won't let you say those things, those things about how stupid you are and this and that. I won't stand for that. You want to be with me, then you be with me. You see?[404]

Except for the words "I'm gonna do what you said, Claudia," which occur during an instrumental moment, the rest of Jim's monologue is nearly completely drowned out by Mann's voice, which repeats the chorus: "Save Me." In conjunction with the visual hold on Claudia's face, the implication for the audience is that Mann's voice represents Claudia's perspective and that, further, that perspective matters more than whatever Jim Kurring is saying. Although Claudia is not *making* this music, her established connection to Mann's music throughout the film allows the viewer to imagine that with these lyrics, Mann speaks for Claudia.

This emphasis on songs' words and lyrical setting over spoken language reflects Anderson's identification of music-making as a more effective communication tool than speech. Jon Brion shared Anderson's fascination with songwriting, specifically Mann's lyrics. As he explained to Andy Battaglia in an interview:

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[404] *Magnolia*.

> What makes Aimee's music specifically different from other people's is that she has a very clear manifesto of what she's trying to achieve, and lyrically, she's on her game in a way that other people aren't… All the people I respect are trying to make three-minute condensed little works that have an idea that will bring you some sort of emotion, or give you some piece of information that might be useful to you… I also love when someone writes a lyric that's so insightful that you'll be quoting it for the rest of your life, and it will actually influence your relationships in the future.[405]

One such lyric is a line taken from Aimee Mann's song "Deathly": "Now that I've met you, would you object to never seeing me again?" Anderson told Chris Willman, "Everything [in the *Magnolia* script] sprouted from that one line. That notion of 'don't even bother; you have no idea how unlovable I am' – that's the idea of the movie, and it was Aimee's."[406] He reiterated this claim later in a letter dated October, 2009, in which he explained:

> I write to music so I better own up to stealing quite a many lines from Aimee Mann, who provides all the songs in the film. The first line of Aimee's song "Deathly" goes something like this: "Now that I've met you, would you object to never seeing me again?" This may sound familiar. You can find it somewhere in the final thirty pages of this script. I heard that line and wrote backwards. This

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[405] Battaglia, "Jon Brion."

[406] Willman, "Mann Crazy."

> "original" screenplay could, for all intents and purposes, be called an adaptation of Aimee Mann songs. I owe her some cash, probably.[407]

In describing one specific lyric as giving impetus to the core message of the film, Anderson credits Mann's lyrical content, and by extension songwriting in particular among methods of music-making, as crucial to his creative process.

In the final cut, this line is accompanied by Brion's non-diegetic original music. A sustained middle *C*, soon joined by a sustained *Eb* for a C minor tonality, begins as Rose leaves her husband Jimmy Gator, having confirmed that he molested Claudia. She tells him, "You should know better." The scene changes to Claudia pulling away from kissing Jim Kurring. She delivers Aimee Mann's lyric as a line: "Now that I've met you, would you object to never seeing me again?" The music cue alternates between *Eb* and *E* in the low strings, with a *G-Bb-G* above middle *C* piano motif that develops into a peaceful melody. Because Brion and Anderson inextricably link the power of those words to their musical setting, the choice to effectively replace Mann's musical accompaniment with new score music points to their commitment to build the film out of Mann's songs, rather than to simply insert them, untouched, where convenient. In this way, *Magnolia* can be understood as a new expression of the meaning in Mann's songs (specifically, Anderson's interpretation of that meaning) in the filmic medium.

Mann's music also has a diegetic presence throughout the film, most notably in association with Claudia's character and her relationship to Jim Kurring. Claudia's first interaction with Jim is facilitated by Mann's music; he arrives at her apartment to investigate a noise complaint, since she has been blasting "Momentum" while snorting

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[407] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, vii-viii.

cocaine off the back of Mann's CD case. Brion's non-diegetic foreboding string and woodwind score seems to be *overtaken* by "Momentum" as Jim Kurring gets out of his squad car in the rain. The non-diegetic score and Mann's diegetic song blend into each other as Jim walks into Claudia's apartment complex and approaches her door. (For details of this moment, see Appendix T.)[408] English scholar Kieryn L. McKay argued in a 2003 review of the film that at this moment, "the lulling chords of Mann's 'Momentum' take an active role as interlocutor between potential lovers."[409]

I agree with McKay that the song's role is certainly active; there is no doubt that it is in the aural foreground for both the characters and the film audience. But further, I'd argue that this moment foreshadows the function of "Save Me" at the very end of the film, when once again, Mann's voice is dominant. Here, Jim and Claudia are unable to hear each other's words as they shout over Mann's lyrics. They are unable to communicate until Claudia cleans up her drug paraphernalia and turns the music down. By the end of the film, they have established a romantic attraction, and Mann's voice sings "Save Me" to convey that this is exactly what Claudia needs Jim to do. Jim's soft-spoken words are once again drowned out by Mann's lyrics, but in the latter case, Claudia can understand him clearly. Thus on both a semantic and an emotional level, Mann's voice does the work of communication between the two characters.

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[408] Ibid., 61-62.

[409] Kieryn L. McKay, "Montage and the Musical in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia*," *MC Reviews,* September 29, 2003, http://reviews.media-culture.org.au/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1883.

Anderson's boldest use of Mann's music in *Magnolia* is the metadiegetic scene in which all the main characters begin singing along with "Wise Up."[410] I do not use "metadiegetic" here to reference a narrative within the diegesis, or a "story within a story," as literary scholars do. Rather, I rely on musicologist Robynn Stilwell's definition of metadiegetic music in film:

> A kind of represented subjectivity, music clearly (through framing, dialogue, acting, lighting, sound design, or other cinematic process) situated in a character who forms a particularly strong point of identification/location for the audience. The character becomes the bridging mechanism between the audience and the diegesis as we enter into his or her subjectivity. This is a space beyond empathy; its location with regard to the diegesis does, however, reach out and engage us in a way that starts to tear at the fabric of the usual conception of diegetic/non-diegetic – or, it acknowledges a relationship between audience and film that diegetic/non-diegetic has displaced by concentrating on the construction of the text within its own boundaries.[411]

The "Wise Up" moment does not function in as literal a way as, for instance, Stilwell's example of Mozart's composition scenes in *Amadeus* (1984), but it certainly exists in the "fantastical gap" created by the diegetic/nondiegetic distinction. Stilwell's description of metadiegetic music as creating a "space beyond empathy" perfectly applies to Anderson's intention in writing what McKay called, "a three minute musical sequence

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[410] "Wise Up" was used in the 1996 film *Jerry MaGuire*, also starring Tom Cruise.

[411] Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 196.

that proves the ultimate point of unification."[412] Because the audience is pulled into the subjectivity of all nine main characters rather than a single character, the focus is on the emotions the characters share. The differences in their specific situations are foregrounded by their music-making, which unabashedly requires the audience to suspend its disbelief while simultaneously bumping up against the fourth wall.

This moment offers music-making as the solution to the characters' loneliness and desperation; in singing along to Mann's lyrics, they recreate an experience familiar to any audience member who has ever sung along to a song in a moment of extreme emotion. But by having the characters sing along with Mann's lyrics, Anderson also creates an aural and visual bridge between her music and the characters' self-expression. Anderson's descriptions of his creative process behind this moment point to his own desire to communicate with the audience through music-making in the film.

In the final cut of the film, the intensity of the "Wise Up" musical moment is enhanced by nineteen minutes of complete musical silence preceding it. During this time, Linda apologizes to Phil (her husband Earl's nurse), leaves to sit in her car in the rain, and takes a whole bottle of pills. Earl has a monologue in which he confesses to Phil that he was horrible to his first wife and explains how he abandoned Frank Mackey, his son, to take care of her until she died. Frank Mackey arrives in his car in the rain outside his father Earl's house, but doesn't go in. Claudia showers and gets ready for her date with Jim Kurring. Jimmy Gator arrives back at his home after having collapsed at the taping of *What Do Kids Know?* and sits with his wife, Rose. The other cops help Jim look for his gun, which he is panicking about having misplaced. The silence finally ends when Phil

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[412] McKay, "Montage and the Musical in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia*."

drops liquid morphine into Earl's mouth and begins to cry. At that point, "Wise Up" begins, seemingly diegetically, in Claudia's apartment as she snorts a line of cocaine. With the exception of Stanley singing only the lyrics, "So just… give up," the sequence proceeds exactly as it is written in the screenplay. (See Appendix U.)[413]

At that point in the final cut, the song fades out as the rain suddenly stops over a shot of the dark intersection. A title appears over it: "Rain Clearing, Breezy Overnight." Then it is silent again, and the next visual is of many doors opening. Claudia opens the door of her apartment and finds Jim Kurring waiting there; Donnie knocks on his neighbor's door (referred to in the screenplay as "LITTLE OLD LADY") and she lets him borrow her car; Phil opens Earl's front door for Frank Mackey; and Dixon opens the door to Linda's car and realizes she's almost dead. The symbolism of doors opening is obvious and important to the interpretation of this moment's purpose in the film. After the "Wise Up" moment, something has changed. the images of doors opening for all the characters suggest that this act of music-making was, if not an end to their problems, at least a moment of catharsis in their ability to cope with and communicate about those problems.

It is Claudia's lip-syncing that initiates the "Wise Up" sequence, and more than any other character, Claudia is associated with Aimee Mann's voice. Although not all diegetic instances of Mann's music are directly related to Claudia – for instance, when Solomon fires Donnie, "Driving Sideways" by Aimee Mann is playing in the background in Solomon's office – the connection to Claudia is most obvious to the audience. This implies that Claudia carries enormous communicative power in a film that is, on the

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[413] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, 153-55.

surface, dominated by male characters. In “Theory into Practice: En-Gendering Narrative in *Magnolia*,” film scholar Lucy Fischer describes the film’s female characters as seeming to be “demoralized by life in a patriarchal world.”[414] It is far from clear that Paul Thomas Anderson intended Aimee Mann’s voice and its amplification through the character of Claudia to serve as an indictment of the patriarchy. But his dependence on Mann’s words and the sound of her voice singing them throughout the film does suggest, at the least, an awareness of and respect for the female voice, literal and figurative.

Anderson’s explanation of what he hoped the “Wise Up” moment would achieve reveals his premeditation of Claudia’s connection to Mann’s voice, as well as a deliberate manipulation of the song’s diegesis. He told Willman:

> I thought the best way to do that sequence was to have it creep up on you. When you see Melora [Claudia] singing along, you imagine that it’s playing in her room. Then you see Reilly and think maybe it’s just the two young lovers. By the time it cuts to Philip Baker Hall, you’ve been hoodwinked into a musical number![415]

What Anderson describes here is his execution of a shift from diegetic to metadiegetic music. The audience has come to associate the character of Claudia with Mann’s music, so the first assumption is that “Wise Up” is another instance of a diegetic Mann song, like the “Momentum” moment. In arguing that the “Wise Up” scene is overall successful, McKay addresses Anderson’s above quote: “In identifying the necessity to ‘hoodwink’ the audience, Anderson admits the unfamiliarity of his audience with the musical genre,

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[414] Fischer, "Theory into Practice: En-Gendering Narrative in *Magnolia*."

[415] Willman, "Mann Crazy."

and the possible unrest its artifice may produce." In order to reduce that potential discomfort for the audience, McKay argues, Anderson uses visual techniques like extreme close-ups and "documentary-style footage" to prepare the audience for a "sequence of artifice."[416]

While I agree with McKay's assessment of Anderson's visual choices, we differ in our views of his intentions. Taken within the context of the director's musical commitment throughout the filmmaking process, it is clear that the "Wise Up" moment is meant to be a moment of catharsis for the characters and audience alike. Anderson embraces the duality of a moment that is necessarily "artificial" while simultaneously representing the *opposite* of artifice: real, honest expression, possible through the act of music-making.

In the shooting script, Anderson reiterates the connection between Mann's lyrics and the characters' expression of their own feelings. He describes his decision to include the scene in the screenplay as almost serendipitous:

> The connection of writing "from the gut" and "writing to music" cannot be found any clearer than in the "Wise Up" section of the screenplay. I had reached the end of Earl's monologue and was searching for a little vibe – I was lost a bit, and on the headphones came Aimee singing "Wise Up." I wrote as I listened – and the most natural course of action was that everyone should sing – sing how they feel. In the most good old-fashioned Hollywood Musical Way, each character, and the writer, began singing how they felt. This is one of those things that just happens,

[416] McKay, "Montage and the Musical in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia*."

> and I was either too stupid or not scared enough to hit "delete" once done. Next thing you know, you're filming it. And I'm Really Happy That It Happened.[417]

Here, Anderson paints himself as a particularly musical director by describing what he means when he says he "writes to music" and by explicitly referencing his inspiration from Hollywood movie musicals. Indeed, the "Wise Up" moment actually functions as an integrated musical number would within a Hollywood musical film. As film scholar Heather Laing wrote in 2000 of such numbers, "The character must carry the weight of the emotional content of the song, and therefore becomes sincere for the audience because of this direct, musical, expression."[418] But Anderson also points to a parallel between his creative process and the circumstances within the diegesis of the film. As Jason Sperb puts it, "The 'Wise Up' sequence embodies the film's larger narrative logic – trying to find a moment, more than a structure, and unapologetically going with it, hoping that that moment somehow points to a deeper emotional truth."[419] By declaring in capitalized words, "And I'm Really Happy That It Happened," Anderson implies a seamlessness between his creative process and the film's diegesis: many similar declarations made by the characters or in the stage notes are capitalized throughout the screenplay, most obviously the narrator's repetition of "Something That Happened."

Anderson clearly felt it necessary to explain his method behind the "Wise Up" moment when the shooting script was published, since in the months following *Magnolia*'s release, reviewers of the film had focused on it, for better or worse. Most

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[417] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, viii.

[418] Heather Laing, "Emotion by Numbers," in *Musicals: Hollywood and Beyond*, ed. Bill Marshall and Robynn Stilwell (Exteter, England: Intellect, Ltd., 2000), 11.

[419] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 127.

critics and scholars reacted favorably. Writing for *Sight and Sound* in 2000, Mark Olsen reiterated Anderson's hope that the scene would communicate what spoken words could not: "One's initial reaction is to scoff, as if Anderson has finally gone too far. But the plaintive tone of the song maps the characters' connectedness in ways scene after scene of dialogue never could."[420] Screenwriting legend Syd Field declared, "When I first saw this scene, I was taken aback. To have the characters break into song, expressing their pain and discomfort in a musical lyric, is an extraordinary accomplishment."[421]

But Janet Maslin, writing for *The New York Times*, called the "Wise Up" moment "the great uh-oh moment" in *Magnolia*, even while buying into Anderson's musical conception of the film as a whole; she refers to the film as an "artfully orchestrated symphony of L.A. stories."[422] She continues:

> A song bursts out: it is heard first from one character, then from another, until all the film's assorted lost souls are brought together by a single anxiety-ridden refrain. "It's not . . . going to stop," each one sings resignedly, signaling the approach of an impending group meltdown. But the effect is less that of a collective shiver than of directorial desperation… All along, Mr. Anderson has leapt from episode to episode as if working under the spell of some larger vision. But as the desperate reach for some larger meaning begins, the sheer arbitrariness of his approach is laid bare."[423]

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[420] Olsen, "Singing in the Rain."

[421] Syd Field, "*Magnolia*: An Appreciation," *Sydfield.com,* 2013, http://sydfield.com/film-analysis/magnolia-an-appreciation/.

[422] Maslin, "Magnolia (1999) Film Review: Entangled Lives on the Cusp of the Millennium."

[423] Ibid.

Anderson responded to Maslin's critique publicly with mild surprise, telling film and media scholar Cynthia Fuchs:

> More surprising to me than anything is something like *The New York Times* review, which says, it's a masterpiece for two hours and then this fucking singing happens. And I'm thinking, you know, the singing is not that fucking crazy.[424]

Since Anderson reported that during his screenwriting process, having the characters break into song seemed to be "the most natural course of action," his assertion that "the singing is not that fucking crazy" makes sense. If it is understood as a moment of successful communication – one of the few in the entire film – then it is indeed the opposite of "crazy." Music-making in the form of channeling Aimee Mann's voice allows the characters to approach "realness" – or authentic emotional expression – in a way spoken language cannot.

Musical Knowledge as Game Show Currency

The common narrative thread connecting all the stories in *Magnolia* is the game show *What Do Kids Know?,* with which each main character has at least a loose connection. Beyond the narrative connections, Anderson uses the show to visually link the story fragments for the audience; for instance, through scene transitions in which the camera zooms in on a television where the show is playing and transports the audience to the stage where it is being filmed. In this section, I argue that the world of *What Do Kids Know?* exists at the opposite end of the spectrum from the "Wise Up" moment in terms of its connection to what is "real." Brion hints at this dichotomy in the way the world of

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[424] Fuchs, "Interview with Paul Thomas Anderson: Magnolia."

the game show and its diegetic theme music interact with his original score. Further, Anderson's use of musical trivia as game show currency offers a contrast to his incorporation of Mann's music throughout the film, revealing his preference for songs, lyrics, and all that is involved with the writing and performance of songs over classical musical knowledge. While connecting with Mann's music allows the characters to communicate honestly, regurgitating musical trivia and demonstrating their musicality "chops" hinders their ability to do so.

The scenes taking place on the *What Do Kids Know?* set involve nearly wall-to-wall music, with no break between Brion's non-diegetic score and the diegetic theme music, which Brion recorded with a live brass band. The intended effect, according to Brion, was that "Paul wanted this sense of sensory overload… The idea with the music in *Magnolia* is that it's like a central clock. It's this universal clock that's part of what unites all these different stories."[425] Leading up to the beginning of the show's live taping, a foreboding, staccato woodwind underscore begins. It accompanies the conversation between the game show contestants as they walk toward the stage, discussing their acting opportunities; it is at this point that Stanley first says he has to go to the bathroom. The music continues under Donnie's conversation with Thurston at the bar, with no diegetic music to compete with it, and under Linda's visit to the pharmacy to get her prescription for drugs filled. The score builds to a crescendo leading up to the game show announcer's cue:

DICK JENNINGS

Live from Burbank, California it's: "What Do Kids Know?"

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[425] Quoted in Mottram, *The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood*, 263.

> CAMERA WHIPS RT. To the APPLAUSE signs, then WHIPS again to the AUDIENCE that cheers, then WHIPS again to see the "What Do Kids Know?" sign as it lowers over the stage. The THEME MUSIC kicks in and we're away; Director's Note: We move between their TV CAMERA'S POV and our 35mm CAMERA POV.[426]

Immediately after the game show theme music ends, the foreboding string and woodwind score begins again, seamlessly, as the scene changes to Earl's home where Phil is watching *What Do Kids Know?* on television. The non-diegetic score continues under Jimmy Gator's introductory monologue to the *What Do Kids Know?* audience; the film audience hears this monologue while the visual switches among the main characters. Linking all the characters to the game show, the music underscores Frank Mackey's unfriendly interview with the reporter Gwenovier, Linda's conversation with the young man at the pharmacy and her outburst in response to his questions, and Phil's side of a phone conversation with Chad, Frank Mackey's representative, in his quest to bring Mackey to his dying father's bedside.

During this sequence, Phil launches into a monologue in which he self-consciously refers to himself as a character in a movie:

> PHIL
>
> I know this all seems silly I know that maybe I sound ridiculous, like maybe this is the scene of the movie where the guy is trying to get ahold of the long-lost son, but this is that scene. Y'know? I think they have those scenes in movies because they're true, because they really happen. And you gotta believe me: This is really

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[426] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, 83.

> happening. I mean, I can give you my phone number and you can call me back if you wanna check with whoever you can check this with, but don't leave me hanging on this – please – please. See: See: See this is the scene of the movie where you help me out-[427]

Finally, the foreboding string and woodwind music cue ends, right when Jimmy Gator announces on the game show, "End of Round One!" Thus, although this monologue takes place in Earl's home, it is bookended by *What Do Kids Know?* and the continuous music cue implies that it should be understood within the context of the game show. Phil's self-conscious description of his situation as "the scene of the movie where…" points to a disconnect from reality. Ironically, in stressing to Chad the *reality* of Earl's situation, he chooses to describe it as if it exists in the fictional diegesis of a film. If not ultimately a failure in communication, Phil's conversation with Chad is a struggle, and situated within the context of *What Do Kids Know?,* Phil's words point to the tension between the show's *mediated* version of reality and real communication.

As we return to the scene unfolding on the gameshow stage throughout the film, it becomes clear that the idea of music as a learned skill and body of knowledge is integral to *What Do Kids Know?*. When the contestants are called upon to demonstrate their musical knowledge, the non-diegetic string and woodwind music that has connected all the preceding scenes stops. Jimmy Gator presents a challenge to the contestants: he reads them a line of text from an opera, translated to English, and asks them to sing it back to him in its original language. Stanley identifies the line from Georges Bizet's *Carmen* and correctly sings it in French. (For the entire scene as it appears in the screenplay, see

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[427] Ibid., 94.

Appendix V.)[428] The use of Carmen's distinctive habanera in this way establishes Stanley's almost absurdly extensive knowledge not only of opera, but of French. Although he sings Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's poetry almost flawlessly, this performance is clearly different from the characters' rendition of "Wise Up." Here, Stanley's musical performance gains him points and, consequently, money. It is not a spontaneous, honest expression of his feelings; it is the opposite of "from the gut."

After Stanley sings this beginning cue, the non-diegetic voice of "Carmen" picks up the line and continues under the scene of Jim Kurring and Claudia having coffee in her kitchen. The recognizable, dramatic music seems out of place under this mundane scene, where he awkwardly talks to her about listening to music too loudly while they sip coffee. Claudia leaves Jim in the kitchen for a moment to go do a line of cocaine in the bathroom. The "Carmen" music continues, punctuating the dialogue, until, as written in the screenplay:

> INT. CLAUDIA'S KITCHEN NOOK – THAT MOMENT
>
> Jim Kurring looks over his shoulder and sees that she's gone. He quickly moves to the kitchen and dumps the coffee in the sink and then quickly sits back down.
>
> End Carmen Que (sic).[429]

Given its pre-existing associations for the audience, the erotic, unencumbered voice of Carmen is heard in stark contrast to the interaction between Jim and Claudia. Neither of them is sure how to talk to the other, and they lack any confident directness or honesty; Claudia sneaks a line of cocaine and Jim dumps his coffee down the sink.

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[428] Ibid., 96.

[429] Ibid., 99.

A slightly later gameshow scene stems from a non-diegetic musical cue that begins under Gwenovier's pointed question to Frank Mackey: "Why would you lie, Frank?" Clearly disgusted with Mackey's misogyny, Gwenovier finally confronts him with hidden information about his mother and father. The audience hears a musical pitch (*A* above middle *C*) repeated quickly and staccato. It builds in dynamic and volume under the scene, with low strings coming in to support the pulsing pitch. On the *What Do Kids Know?* stage, Jimmy Gator poses the next challenge to the contestants: they will hear three musical pitches, and they are to name something those pitches might represent at a picnic. (For the entire scene, see Appendix W.)[430] Especially since Stanley has been established as a character who studies hard and deserves to be lauded as a whiz, this scene comes across as frustratingly unfair. Including this scene might have allowed Anderson to demonstrate his own musical knowledge at the risk of alienating some audience members. But even to the musically savvy, Jimmy Gator's question seems unreasonable if not outright absurd. In addition to the obvious handicap of the contestants who don't have perfect pitch, the question requires the contestants to complete the mental tasks of identifying pitches by letter, before interpreting those letters as a word referring to an item that might be found at a picnic, all before ringing the buzzer within a split second. The answers – ADE, EGG, and BEE – are by no means immediately linked to the picnic scene Jimmy Gator has described. By positioning music here as a puzzle to be solved using pure intellectual reasoning, under a time restraint no less, Anderson distinguishes the logical aspects of music – its organization and the technical skills required to master it – from music-making that comes "from the gut."

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[430] Ibid., 112-13. In the final cut of the film, this scene is truncated after TODD identifies "E-G-G" as egg; there is no third set of notes.

Finally, later tragic moments that are foreshadowed for both Stanley and Jimmy Gator occur during another *What Do Kids Know?* question, which centers on a live musical performance. Having been told before the show that he could not use the restroom, Stanley begins to wet his pants. Drunk and exhausted from fighting cancer, Jimmy Gator collapses on stage. By the end of the previous *What Do Kids Know?* scene described above, the non-diegetic score has become lush, sustained strings. It continues under the following scene, in which Linda confesses to Earl's lawyer, Alan Kligman, that she didn't love Earl, that she cheated on him, and that she doesn't want his money when he dies. Their conversation is interrupted by snippets of *What Do Kids Know?* as the adults continually get answers correct and rack up points after Todd's breakthrough. Linda storms out of Kligman's office and the non-diegetic, lush strings continue as we return to the game show stage for another question, this one involving a musical performance.

The repeated pitch (*A* above middle *C*) begins again as Jimmy speaks and it continues to pulse throughout the scene, clashing with the performed music. Jimmy tells the contestants that a harmonica trio is going to perform arrangements of "the classic favorite 'Whispering'"[431] in the style of three classical composers, whom the contestants must identify. The "classic favorite 'Whispering'" refers to the popular early 20th-century song by lyricists John Schoenberger and Richard Coburn and composer Vincent Rose, although Jimmy Gator does not give the contestants this information. Again, they are required to complete the mental gymnastics involved in recognizing, of all famous composers in the world, whose style three harmonica players are imitating in a rendition of an unrelated song, all in a split second. The excerpts do loosely resemble Brahms'

[431] Ibid., 118.

Hungarian Dance No. 6 and Ravel's Bolero in rhythm, but Todd's ability to recognize the first one before the trio finishes the second phrase is patently absurd.

Brion's score makes it clear to the audience that this is a tragic moment, not just for Stanley, who has wet his pants on live television, but for Jimmy Gator, who is hanging onto consciousness by a thread. As soon as Jimmy Gator turns to Stanley and says, "Stanley the Man," high, sustained, poignant strings are added to the soundscape. Where Anderson wrote "….xhjksndlsmnop….. (sic)" in the script, in the final cut of the film, Jimmy rambles incoherently, accidentally giving away the answer to the next excerpt:

> Uh, and now I'm gonna have our three whistlers, um… please to present, the um, the next, um, musical… there were three, um, musical sections here, and this'll be the third – the third section that the whistlers, um, a-and they'll play a piece that's… it's very recognizable, it's um, Chopin, actually, and, uh, it's, it was taken, it's-it's in the style of *March Militaire*, it's a very recognizable piece, so if you… please, just, listen to this and I'm sure you can, identify the uh… I'm sort of giving away the answer here, but that's – it's Chopin, I, I don't mean to give away the answer… it's just, please just, well, sing us a ditty, Guys, a Chopin ditty. Let's have a – let's have a Chopin ditty here. I can't…[432]

In this moment, language fails Jimmy Gator before he falls over on stage. Significantly, the words he struggles with are describing musical directions. The three whistlers never get to perform the "Chopin ditty" because once Jimmy keels over, the show staff scrambles to cut the live feed. Jimmy is attempting to "make" music by instructing the

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[432] *Magnolia*.

performers to whistle “Whispering” in the style of Chopin’s *March Militaire*, but his instructions come out garbled and he is unable to finish before passing out. This moment of musical performance is thus set up in contrast to authentic expressions of meaning that come “from the gut”; it is mediated through so many layers – the “Whistling” songwriters, Chopin, the performing whistlers, and Jimmy Gator himself as he describes it to the television audience – that it is meaningless.

Anderson’s Relationship to His Misogynist Characters

My analysis of the role music plays in *Magnolia* diffuses one common criticism of the film when it was first released, namely that it never decides what, exactly, its message is. This confusion, in addition to the film’s length, are two factors that contributed to its lukewarm reception. Writing for *Salon* in 1999, reviewer Charles Taylor picked up on Anderson’s musical language while making that point in his largely negative review of the film:

> Part of the problem with *Magnolia* can be blamed on Anderson’s structure. Using Aimee Mann’s songs to comment on and counterpoint the action, Anderson has conceived of *Magnolia* as something like a sonata on the theme of past sins and the limits of forgiveness as played out among parents and children.[433]

While Taylor’s review demonstrates Anderson’s success in establishing his reputation as musically savvy, Taylor’s structural comparison of the film to a sonata only works metaphorically. As film and cultural scholar Joanne Dillman argues, *Magnolia*’s narrative open-endedness and use of interruption rather than a tight narrative structure and typical

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[433] Taylor, "Magnolia."

filmic plot devices, in addition to its emphasis on emotional intensity, make it more similar to a televisual soap opera.

However, while soap operas traditionally employ at least an attempt at the female gaze, *Magnolia*, written "from the gut" of Paul Thomas Anderson, clearly embraces the male point of view. This affects its impact on individual viewers because, as Jason Sperb points out, "*Magnolia* is driven affectively by the degree to which viewers invest themselves in the passionate, melodramatic circumstances of characters living out another day in their lives."[434] That is to say, individual viewers who can most relate to the white, male characters; the ones who are most dynamic.

Matthew Sewell points out a detail in his 2011 *Bright Lights Film* article that, perhaps, at least absolves Anderson of the accusation that he expresses his own misogyny through his characters. Fittingly, the detail is found in Anderson's screenplay but not in the final cut of the film and it involves *Magnolia*'s most obviously misogynist character, Frank Mackey. As Sewell describes the scene in the screenplay:

> In the shooting script, Earl and Frank share more than a gaze. Earl musters the strength to speak; all background sound drops out except for their breathing. "You are not what you think you are," Earl says to his son. Anderson imbues *Magnolia*'s consideration of pain and grief with such strangeness so that we too might apprehend that, for all we can say and think about ourselves, the price of such eloquence is an unbridgeable, inexpressible selfhood.[435]

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[434] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 137.

[435] Sewell, "'But It Did Happen': Paul Thomas Anderson's Magnolia."

Earl's poignant words imply that Frank's celebration of misogynist ideals is nothing but an elaborate act that convinces even himself. This exchange is one of the rare moments that Anderson allowed to be cut from the film, implying that he didn't consider it crucial to the film's message. It may, however, be helpful in understanding Anderson's relationship with his misogynist characters; as Sewell concludes, it "demands that we ought not mistake our stories for ourselves."[436] Once again, I disagree with Sewell's argument that Anderson embraces the idea of "an unbridgeable, inexpressible selfhood." Rather, in *Magnolia*, his characters use music to bridge and express themselves when their vocabulary fails. In doing so, they reflect Anderson's own use of music in his filmmaking process.

Punch-Drunk Love

After *Magnolia*'s general financial failure, New Line distanced itself from Anderson,[437] but not before he had completed a first draft of the script for *Punch-Drunk Love* (originally titled *Knuckle Sandwich* and later, *Punch-Drunk Knuckle Love*) and offered parts to Adam Sandler and Emily Watson.[438] By the beginning of 2001, Anderson had committed to work with the newly founded Revolution Studios on *Punch-Drunk Love*. In contrast to the nearly free reign he had wielded over *Magnolia*, Anderson's deal with Revolution depended upon his making a film that could serve as a vehicle for Adam Sandler. Anderson wrote the screenplay over the course of about four months because, as he explained in a 2002 *Boston Globe* interview with Wesley Morris, coming off

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[436] Ibid.

[437] Mike De Luca, who had been Anderson's biggest champion at New Line, was fired in 2000 after a financially disastrous year, including *Magnolia*'s failure.

[438] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 165.

Magnolia, "I was thinking that I can't do this again when I make a movie, just invest so much emotion. As a result, I wrote it pretty quickly, really quickly – like four months."[439] However, shooting the film took nearly as long as it had for *Magnolia*, because stars Adam Sandler and Emily Watson had to leave to shoot *Mr. Deeds* and *Gosford Park*, respectively. Anderson saw this as an advantage, because it gave him a chance to work with the footage mid-production.[440]

After the main roles were cast – protagonist Barry (Sandler); his love interest, Lena (Watson); the next-in-command employee at his novelty toilet plunger company, Lance (Luis Guzman); and the leader of the phone-sex scam against Barry who also owns a mattress store in Provo, Utah, Dean Trumbell (Philip Seymour Hoffman) – Anderson asked casting director Cassandra Kulukundis to fill out the remaining roles with non-actors. According to Kulukundis, this was "because he wanted to capture the raw awkwardness of family, where people nag and talk over each other and don't wait for their cues."[441] Using non-actors in film dates back to the tradition of Italian neorealism, but Anderson stresses that he does not see the film as referential.

In a 2003 interview with *The Sunday Times,* Anderson described *Punch-Drunk Love* as "referenceless. When you start out, you latch onto other styles, to help you get across what you're trying to say. But this one is mine somehow – and I'm proud of that."[442] In a 2005 *Senses of Cinema* article, producer and cultural critic Cubie King took

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[439] Morris, "Interview: 'Out There'."

[440] Shaun Sages and Todd Parker, "Transcript of New York Film Festival Q&A," *Cigarettes & Red Vines,* October 5, 2002, http://cigsandredvines.blogspot.com/2002/10/interview-new-york-film-festival-q.html.

[441] CJ Wallis and Bryan Tapp, "Production Notes," 2015, http://cigsandredvines.blogspot.com/p/punch-drunk-love.html.

[442] Ryan Gilbey, "A Simple Little Movie?," *The Sunday Times,* February 2, 2003, 14.

Anderson at his word that *Punch-Drunk Love* was, indeed, “referenceless.” Focusing mostly on the film’s use of color and the symbol of the harmonium, King claimed that *Punch-Drunk Love* was the first film Anderson could call “his own.”[443] However, the film does include fleeting references to various other films, including the character of the phone sex operator in Robert Altman’s *Short Cuts* (1993). Beyond specific references, Jon Brion told *The Daily Variety*:

> With *Punch-Drunk Love,* we were still drawn to the spirit of musicals, but also to the silent comedies of Keaton and Chaplin, all of which we’re both nuts about. Yet we didn’t want to be direct and obvious about it, and instead imply these twin spirits.[444]

In addition to pointing to Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin vehicles as overarching influences, Brion stresses here, perhaps inadvertently, the partnership he and Anderson have. Using “we” when referring to the intentions behind the film’s “spirit” implies that Brion’s role was more extensive than that of the typical film composer.

As mentioned by Brion in the interview quoted above, *Punch-Drunk Love* is in many ways an homage to classic mid-20th-century movie musicals. In a 2002 interview with *The Chicago Tribune,* Anderson told Mark Caro that his biggest influence for the film came from

> …musicals, really, like the (Fred) Astaire-(Ginger) Rogers movies. I just love watching those. Everybody loves to watch those. They’re like chicken soup, you know. That kind of feeling, that kind of length, 90 minutes with music,

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[443] Cubie King, "*Punch Drunk Love:* The Budding of an Auteur," *Senses of Cinema*, no. 35 (April 2005).

[444] "Jon Brion: Composer Sticks with P.T. Anderson," *Daily Variety,* January 6, 2003, A12.

handsome-looking couple. I know that it's not exactly like that, but (I wanted) that flavor, like a bouncing-ball kind of flavor.[445]

One specific reference noted by Jason Sperb is the white dress Lena wears in Hawaii, which is identical to the dress worn by Gabrielle (Cyd Charrise) in Vincente Minnelli's *The Band Wagon* (1953);[446] but the entire film is pervaded by the movie musical sensibility. In addition to its melodramatic plot and the seeming artificiality of the characters' world, *Punch-Drunk Love* relies on nonrepresentational signs to communicate abstract feelings to the audience.[447] This, according to film scholar and queer theorist Richard Dyer in his 1992 book *Only Entertainment,* is one of the defining qualities of the movie musical, which "presents, head-on as it were, what utopia would feel like rather than how it would be organized."[448] Though *Punch-Drunk Love* does not present a "utopia," it does rely on color and sound to communicate feelings in a style typical of mid-century movie musicals.

The most obvious use of color in *Punch-Drunk Love* is in the three instances of what *Boston Globe* journalist Wesley Morris calls "vibrant and undulating painted interludes"[449] by artist Jeremy Blake.[450] The artwork was added during the break in

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[445] Mark Caro, "Interview: Paul Thomas Anderson Casts Wider Net With Punch-Drunk Love," *Chicago Tribune,* October 16, 2002.

[446] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 160.

[447] For a discussion of the function of other nonrepresentational signs in *Punch-Drunk Love*, especially Anderson's use of lens flares, see King, "*Punch Drunk Love:* The Budding of an Auteur."

[448] Richard Dyer, *Only Entertainment* (London: Routledge, 1992), 18.

[449] Morris, "Interview: 'Out There'."

[450] For an in-depth discussion of the function of Blake's artwork in *Punch-Drunk Love* and other uses of color in narrative film, see Brian Price, "Color, the Formless, and Cinematic Eros," *Framework* 47, no. 1 (2006).

shooting necessitated by the principal actors' other contractual obligations. In a 2003 interview with Dennis Lim, Anderson described his commission of Blake as follows:

> I had written that there would be some kind of color. Bursts of color. I didn't know what it was exactly. I didn't know. After we finished shooting the first chunk of the movie, we actually ended up shooting two chunks, and after the first chunk was shot I saw [Jeremy Blake's] work at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and called him up and he came to Los Angeles and had him in our studio. We had this great studio where we set everything up. He saw the movie. All I had done was put red, white, blue and green flashes as placeholders for him. We talked for a while and he did ten or fifteen different pieces a day and it was just sort of a great thing. I ended up with a lot more than I thought I would get.[451]

Unlike the musical aspects of the film, Blake's paintings were inserted in the style of traditional film music: once the film was nearly complete. In the screenplay version dated 6/20/01, Anderson has added indications for "color blooms/overture"[452] for certain instances, suggesting that he might have envisioned these psychedelic visuals as having musical accompaniment that is overture-like (they do not in the final cut). In their 2002 interview, Anderson told Morris of his process when it came to placing the full-screen artwork, "It was like making music. You know, this could really use a guitar solo."[453] By describing the process of placing Blake's artwork in this way, Anderson compared himself to a popular musician.

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[451] Lim, *Q&A: Paul Thomas Anderson*.

[452] Paul Thomas Anderson, *Punch-Drunk Love: The Shooting Script* (New York: Newmarket Press, 2002), 7.

[453] Morris, "Interview: 'Out There'."

If the effect of the final cut resembles that of classic Hollywood musicals, Anderson has also compared the making of *Punch-Drunk Love* to making a musical record. This is similar to the way Brian Reitzell has described making *Lost in Translation,* but while Reitzell was referring to the mix CDs he made for Sofia Coppola to listen to while writing (those CDs later formed the majority of the *Lost in Translation* soundtrack), Anderson's comparison refers to his filmic approach during the first stage of shooting:

> We sort of formulated a plan that… really stole from people that I knew who make records. Making records is a much more creative environment. Fewer people. You can do it for longer stretches of time. Sometimes what it ends up being is that you indulge way too much…I think we were taking advantage of the fact that we could screw around for a couple of weeks and find where we wanted to go with the movie and for Adam [Sandler] to get to know Emily [Watson]."[454]

Actress Emily Watson (Lena) reinforced this musical analogy when she told *Entertainment Weekly,* "He said he wanted to do [the film] like a musician lays down a track – he would do one line and then he'd go and he'd listen and come back and do another."[455] Even journalists and scholars who disagreed with *Punch-Drunk Love*'s Hollywood musical comparison picked up on Anderson's music analogies. For example, film journalist James Mottram asserted in his 2007 book *The Sundance Kids: How the*

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[454] Lim, *Q&A: Paul Thomas Anderson*.

[455] "Punch-Drunk Love," *Entertainment Weekly,* 19 August 2002, http://www.ew.com/article/2002/08/19/punch-drunk-love.

Mavericks Took Back Hollywood, "While *Magnolia* may be the closest thing Anderson has done to a musical, *Punch-Drunk Love* feels like a one-man concert film."[456]

That "one man" refers to the character of Barry, played by Adam Sandler, for whom Anderson wrote the role. Following the release of *Magnolia*, he was already telling reporters that he was interested in working with Adam Sandler on an upcoming project, because, as he told John Patterson in a 2000 interview for *The Guardian*, "I just cry with laughter in his movies"; Patterson followed that comment with an incredulous note to readers: "As far as I can determine he's not being facetious."[457] After the film's release, Anderson told Roger Ebert, "It's like an art-house Adam Sandler movie."[458] Five days after that interview, noting that he had never given Sandler a positive review before, Ebert wrote of *Punch-Drunk Love,* "The film is exhilarating to watch because Sandler, liberated from the constraints of formula, reveals unexpected depths as an actor… He has darkness, obsession and power."[459] Ebert's assessment reflects the general critical reception of Sandler's role.

I would also argue that Anderson's commitment to working with Sandler was likely motivated by the actor's musical currency at the time. In addition to his successful films, Sandler had produced *They're All Going to Laugh at You* (1993), *What the Hell Happened to Me?* (1996), *What's Your Name?* (1997), and *Stan and Judy's Kid* (1999), all of which featured his musical skills and found huge commercial success. "The

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[456] Mottram, *The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood*, 356.

[457] Patterson, "Magnolia Maniac."

[458] Roger Ebert, "'Love' at First Sight," *RogerEbert.com,* October 13, 2002, http://www.rogerebert.com/interviews/love-at-first-sight.

[459] "Punch-Drunk Love," *RogerEbert.com,* October 18, 2002, http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/punch-drunk-love-2002.

Chanukah Song," which Sandler wrote and originally performed on a 1994 episode of *Saturday Night Live,* had spawned various spoofs by the late 1990s and marked Sandler as a particularly musical comedian. Sandler's performance of "I Wanna Grow Old with You" as the star of *The Wedding Singer* (1998) further solidified this reputation. Working with Sandler would allow Anderson to capitalize on that musical aspect of the comedian's fame and it would likewise benefit the actor's reputation. Anderson even directly references the title of Sandler's third album in the *Punch-Drunk Love* screenplay: Barry yells, "What's your name?" into the phone at Trumbell during an angry outburst. Indeed, Anderson told the crowd at the 2002 New York Film Festival, "I know Adam is really a musical person."[460]

Anderson likely felt an especially personal investment in Sandler, not just because he, too, wanted to be seen as "a musical person," but because of his autobiographical connection to the character of Barry. One of the main plot-lines of *Punch-Drunk Love,* Barry's plan to take advantage of a flaw in a Healthy Choice promotional giveaway of frequent-flyer miles, was inspired by the true story of University of California engineer David Phillips, who purchased three thousand dollars' worth of Healthy Choice pudding and earned a million frequent-flyer miles.[461] But much of the rest of the film is taken from Anderson's life experiences. As Emily Watson told an interviewer, "A lot of Barry is Paul, he is a man riddled with doubt and insecurity about his own humanity, and he puts it up on screen for all to see."[462] One of the most obvious ties between Barry and Anderson is their family structure, specifically the presence of many sisters. Although

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[460] Sages and Parker, "Transcript of New York Film Festival Q&A."

[461] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 153-54.

[462] Dawson, "Punch-Drunk Love - Emily Watson Q&A."

Anderson stresses that his sisters were not abusive in the way that Barry's are, he admits, "They were tough. We were all tough. We were just fighters; we fought all the time."[463]

Beyond that, Anderson has repeatedly confirmed his use of phone-sex services, and described his past anger issues in the interview with Gilbey: "I was prone to fits of violence…It's scary when I look back at it."[464] Like Sofia Coppola's connection to Charlotte in *Lost In Translation,* Anderson had created a character who embodied aspects of his own life. My intention is not to mount an analysis of this autobiographical tendency, but rather to demonstrate how the loosely autobiographical nature of *Punch-Drunk Love* suggests that Barry's use of music-making to create order out of the chaos in his life reflects Anderson's personally inflected creative process for making the film.

In this next discussion, I turn to Anderson's screenplay and the final cut of the film as evidence to support that assertion. The *Punch-Drunk Love* shooting script reflects a production period from January to November of 2001. The script comprises a combination of blue, pink, and yellow pages, representing revisions to the script during production: the blue pages come from revisions to the shooting script dated 2/13/01; the pink revisions were added on 6/20/01; the yellow pages are dated 6/26/01. Throughout this section, I note the different versions of the script as I cite them, since they offer insight into Anderson's decisions leading up to the final cut of the film. In my discussion, I address Brion's process in creating the film's non-diegetic original music, which alternates between hectic sounds on the prepared piano and other noise-making instruments and a lush, orchestral texture. Then I turn to the narrative symbol of the

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[463] Quoted in Waxman, *Rebels on the Backlot*, 84.

[464] Gilbey, "A Simple Little Movie?," 14.

harmonium, focusing on its interaction with Brion's score in terms of Barry's relationship with Lena and his attempts at music-making as an escape from his stressful status quo. I reference moments from the screenplay, not included in the final cut, that reveal the harmonium's emotional effect on Barry. Ultimately, I argue that Anderson puts forth music-making as a powerful catalyst for emotional connection and communication, specifically because of its simultaneous properties of chaos and order.

The Tension Between Chaos and Order in Brion's Original Score

Brion's original score, mostly written for prepared piano, creates an underlying level of hectic tension that seems to represent Barry's mental state. Juxtaposed with extended moments of stark silence, the music's effect is heightened for the audience. Much of the film, in fact, uses no non-diegetic music or sounds; this is noticeable from the establishing scenes at the beginning of the story. For example, the film opens with Barry's unaccompanied phone conversation in his warehouse; the silence continues as he opens the loading door, leaves the warehouse, and walks out to the street. A Jeep suddenly skids and flips over, and the harmonium is mysteriously left on the side of the street; the camera zooms in on it and then cuts back to Barry in the office. This moment appears in the screenplay (dated 2/13/01) as follows:

> A speeding, small TOYOTA comes into view at the mouth of the alley, screeching to a halt. The passenger side door opens and a small, wooden HARMONIUM (like a portable organ) is placed on the ground. The TOYOTA speeds away…..
>
> ….a moment or two later another NON-DESCRIPT CAR flies past very past….

> BEAT. Barry squints, looks at the small HARMONIUM sitting alone in the middle of the street.
>
> He hesitates, looks around, holds, then walks back inside his warehouse.[465]

At this point in the film, Lena arrives at the warehouse with Barry's sister Elizabeth and asks him if it's okay to leave her car there; then Barry returns to the harmonium. A huge truck almost hits it as he stares at it, but he rescues it and runs with it down the alley into his office, where he sets it up on his desk. This all takes place, quite noticeably, with absolutely no non-diegetic sound or music. This deliberate silence not only draws attention to the momentous appearance of the harmonium, a music-making instrument, but also creates a sense of anticipation for the audience so that when Brion's score begins, it is especially jarring.

That score was the result of an unusually collaborative process involving Anderson, Brion, and editor Leslie Jones. In its earliest stages of composition, it even influenced the actors' performances on set. According to Brion:

> Paul suggested different tempos, then my engineer and I recorded a series of 10-minute ensemble percussion pieces that the actors listened to between takes to give them an idea of the scene's rhythm.[466]

Brion created the temporary tracks using different drums and other rare instruments, most prominently the prepared piano. In an interview for *Electronic Musician* that took place when *Punch-Drunk Love* was still titled *Punch-Drunk Knuckle Love*, Jon Brion told Kenneth A. Woods that for the film's soundtrack, he had assembled a Foley-esque sound

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[465] Anderson, *Punch-Drunk Love: The Shooting Script*, 2.

[466] Wallis and Tapp, "Production Notes."

“laboratory” of musical and non-musical objects in order to create distinctive sounds.[467] During post-production, Anderson and Jones shortened and edited those temporary tracks, as well as some extra overdubs, to fit the final cut. As Brion explained:

> I would give Paul and Leslie Jones piles of very short, 3-5 second pieces that, while related to the DNA of the score, were essentially sound bites which they could place at their discretion. So it was a very organic process involving a lot of people.[468]

This process of creating and applying film music bridges composition and sound design, much like Brian Reitzell’s work on *Lost in Translation.* (See Chapter Two.)

From a narrative perspective, Brion’s non-diegetic score can be understood to represent the chaos that overwhelms Barry in his day-to-day life, especially as Dean Trumbell and his goons, the Stevens brothers, begin to stalk him. But because the audience members actually experience this music, its anxiety-inducing effect works on them, as well. One example occurs when Barry narrowly escapes a physical attack at the hands of the Stevens brothers from Provo, Utah, who have been sent by Dean Trumbell to harass him after he falls for their phone sex line scam. As he runs away from them across a dark parking lot, the audience hears dissonant, shrill glissandi in the strings, low timpani, and blasting trumpets typical of the horror film genre. When Barry arrives at work the next morning after his terrifying altercation, the music changes back to what the audience has come to associate with his character: syncopated, chaotic prepared piano, mixed with what sounds like a didgeridoo and drums, as well as irregular clicking noises.

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[467] Kenneth A. Woods, "Thinking Outside the Boxes," *Electronic Musician* 18, no. 7 (June 2002).

[468] Wallis and Tapp, "Production Notes."

That "rhythmic" score alternates with a contrasting woodwind waltz melody that recurs as a theme throughout the film. The obvious contrast between the two styles of non-diegetic music suggests a tension between chaos and order in Barry's life; this suggestion is heightened by the music's loose narrative associations. One moment in the final cut of the film where this contrast is clear occurs leading up to and following the car crash with the Stevens brothers. The woodwind waltz melody begins while Barry leaves a voice message for Georgia (the phone sex operator who has scammed him with Dean Trumbell and the Stevens brothers) from Hawaii, where he has just had a wonderful evening making love with Lena. He stands up for himself in the voice message, but makes the mistake of informing Georgia when he will be home from vacation.

In the film, this music continues through Barry and Lena's conversation in the airport before they take off to fly home. It doesn't change until the moment of impact when the Stevens brothers' car hits Barry's car with Lena in the passenger seat, as they are about to drive into his garage. Anderson indicated these musical changes in his screenplay. (See Appendix X.)[469] The prepared piano music is clearly associated with the chaos that the car accident causes, in contrast to the lovely waltz music associated with Barry's burgeoning relationship with Lena. In the film, the dissonant, syncopated prepared piano music accompanied by electronic bleeps continues in the hospital as Barry waits for Lena and continues under Barry's confrontational phone call with Georgia and Dean. Leading up to the moment of Dean answering the phone, the snare and other drums increase in dynamic and intensity.

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[469] Anderson, *Punch-Drunk Love: The Shooting Script*, 80-81.

The waltz melody that sharply contrasts with the chaos of the prepared piano music exists both non-diegetically and diegetically, as Barry spontaneously creates it on the harmonium he has found. The melody is meant to represent a solution to Barry's chaos: specifically, building a relationship with Lena. Importantly, it does not serve simply as a metaphor for their feelings for each other, which are a dark mix of infatuation and anxiety, not necessarily called to mind by such a playfully romantic melody. Rather, this melody serves as a calming device to create the order Barry needs in order to move forward with the relationship.[470]

Music-Making in the "Fantastical Gap" as a Catalyst for Love

Anderson has consistently described *Punch-Drunk Love* as thematically musical, telling Charlie Rose as late as 2011 that, "it's about getting in tune… getting in tune and finding your music."[471] His meaning can be taken metaphorically, but Barry also literally "finds his music" when he rescues the harmonium that is inexplicably dumped outside his warehouse at the very beginning of the film. He keeps it in his office and returns to it throughout the film, clearly hesitant and incapable as a musician but also curious and persistent. As he fumbles and plays with it, he begins to build a simple waltz melody: the same melody taken up in the woodwinds of Brion's non-diegetic orchestral score to counter the hectic prepared piano music. Thus this music belongs to what Robynn

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[470] This idea was integral to the concept of the film. As Brion reported to Battaglia, "Paul knew he wanted to have a harmonium in the movie. And we knew fairly early on that we wanted a musical nod to *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, in terms of there being a melody that develops in the movie that has a reference to the plot, however oblique. We also knew that we wanted some sort of romantic theme, the feeling of an old Hollywood musical without people ever breaking out into song. In addition to mentioning another influence on this not-so-"referenceless" film – that of John William's score for Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* (1977) – Brion hints at the earnestness behind Anderson's musical conception. Battaglia, "Jon Brion."

[471] Charlie Rose, *Interview: Charlie Rose Show* (June 22, 2011), Video Recording.

Stilwell has labeled the “fantastical gap” between diegetic and the non-diegetic spaces.[472] As Barry “gets in tune” with the harmonium, he moves away from the chaos represented by the sounds of the prepared piano and toward an emotional connection with Lena. In this section, I argue that the interactions between Brion’s non-diegetic music and the diegetic melody Barry gradually creates on the harmonium establish the act of music-making as a healing, constructive process for Barry, while simultaneously suggesting that Lena will serve a similar purpose in his life.

The film’s opening sequence at Barry’s warehouse establishes the connection between the non-diegetic music, Barry’s interaction with the harmonium, and his general mental state. The very first moment of non-diegetic sound in the film is simultaneously diegetic, and it is dependent upon the harmonium. Having brought the instrument into his office, Barry begins to press on the foot pedals, resulting in pitches that blend with the first instance of Brion’s non-diegetic score. The audience hears a tentative, non-diegetic waltz in triple time, creating a Imaj7-vi vamp in C major. At first, Barry plays low *e* followed by *f*, clashing obviously with the jaunty non-diegetic accompaniment. Then he stands up and plays on the harmonium’s keyboard: *b’ bb’ a’*. These same three pitches now arrive in a non-diegetic flute melody layered over the Imaj7-vi vamp; while Barry presses the keys awkwardly and with no discernable rhythm, the flute melody is clear and confident, continuing: *b’ bb’ a’ / d’’ b’ / g’ a’*. The aural layering draws attention to the stark contrast between the lovely, neatly syncopated non-diegetic melody and Barry’s clumsy attempt to create it on the harmonium. Paired with a visual close-up on Barry’s face, the music gives the overall impression that Barry is hearing the melody in his mind,

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[472] Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic."

but cannot yet create it physically on the harmonium. In the final cut, this diegetic musical sequence ends when the loading door opens and Lance enters. But the non-diegetic waltz music continues as Barry and Lance discuss the presence of the harmonium, now with the repeated harmonies of Imaj7-vi-IV in the same key of C major. Two woodwind melodies that recur throughout the film are now layered on top of the vamp: first, *c' / e' / a / (g) c' e' a*, repeated; then a quicker, rising melody: *e'' f'' g'' / c'' de'' e'' / a' g' e'' e'' d'' c''.*

Anderson describes this scene in two different ways in the same 6/20/01 version of the screenplay. The first version reads:

> ON THE STREET.
>
> Barry stares at the Harmonium a little bit, looks around, both ways, then casually picks it up and walks back towards his business…..(sic)
>
> He brings it into his office and places it on his desk. He tries a few keys….pressing down…there's no sound.
>
> He presses his hand on the foot pedal and presses a key and a small note is made…..BEAT….he does it again….and holds the note…..
>
> CUT TO BLACK.[473]

In the final cut of the film, Barry does not "casually" pick up the harmonium – he seems to be rescuing it from the truck that almost destroys it. The second version of this scene in the screenplay is closer to what happens in the final cut:

> INT. WAREHOUSE – OFFICE – EARLY MORNING

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[473] Anderson, *Punch-Drunk Love: The Shooting Script*, 5.

> Barry enters the warehouse w/harmonium and runs into his office. He places it on the desk and hits a key: no sound.
>
> Barry goes to his knees and unlatches the bellows. He pumps the bellow, reaches up, presses a note, and another…then stands up into CU. and presses the 5 note melody……SUDDENLY: THE SOUND OF THE POD BAY DOOR SLIDING….[474]

It is significant that Anderson mentions "the 5 note melody" in the screenplay here, especially since Barry does not actually play five notes at this time. The entire first phrase of the melody, which *is* heard at this time in the non-diegetic flute melody, is actually seven pitches. This discrepancy could indicate that Anderson had another melody in his mind while writing this version of the screenplay, and Brion ended up editing it or writing something completely different for the final cut. It's also possible, given the number of careless typos in the screenplay as a whole, that Anderson simply estimated or miscounted the pitches. But it's more likely that he was referring to the next scene, in which Barry does play five notes. At any rate, it demonstrates that Anderson had planned the idea of Barry slowly building a musical theme on the harmonium. The indication that it should be suddenly interrupted by the sound of the pod bay door sliding open also suggests Anderson was setting up this melody in contrast to the jarring noises that usually populate Barry's life.

One musical moment from Anderson's screenplay (the version dated 2/13/01) that didn't make it into the film connects Lena to the harmonium, and both Lena and the

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[474] Ibid., 6.

harmonium to a calm mental state for Barry. Right after Lena and Elizabeth leave Barry's warehouse together, Anderson indicates:

> Lena and Elizabeth leave. CAMERA leads them as they walk; Sound starts to drop out, we see Barry and the boys cleaning up the boxes in the back….move into a CU on Lena…. Music Cue. Score. treated piano, small rythm(sic)/melodic(notes of harmonium so far)/gentle.[475]

Although this music cue was not incorporated into the final cut, it reveals that Anderson wanted the "notes of harmonium so far" – the beginning of the waltz melody that Barry has begun to put together on the harmonium – to be associated with the close-up shot of Lena. Perhaps this seemed too on-the-nose to include in the final cut. But this excerpt from the screenplay reveals that Anderson intended to set the melody up in contrast to the surrounding score. Lena reaches her car, changes her mind, and returns to ask Barry on a date. Finally, as he stares down at the sheet of paper she has given him with her address and phone number on it, the chaotic musical cue that started under Barry's threatening phone conversation with Georgia (the phone sex operator) that morning finally stops.

The connection between Lena and the harmonium is also evident in the final cut, especially in a conversation between the lovers that occurs after Barry has torn apart the restaurant bathroom stall in a fit of rage on their first date. As he and Lena leave the restaurant, Brion's non-diegetic waltz melody begins. It grows into sweeping orchestral music, the same music that accompanied the opening title card. This music continues under Barry and Lena's conversation, which appears in the 6/20/01 version of the

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[475] Ibid., 42.

screenplay. (See Appendix Y.)[476] The dialogue is slightly different in the final cut of the film, in which Lena asks Barry, “That, um, the harmonium that’s ended up in your office…” Barry: “Harmonium…” Lena: “The piano. Did you steal that from the street?” Barry: “What’s this?” Lena; “You did, didn’t you?” Barry: “Yeah, I did, why, is it yours?” She says, “No, it’s yours. Are you learning to play it?” Barry: “Uhhh… I wouldn’t put on any concerts yet, but I’m trying.” This conversation implies that Lena has some background knowledge of the harmonium, and poses the question whether it was she who put it in the street for Barry to find.

Now, along with the audience, Barry begins to associate the harmonium with Lena. Actress Emily Watson explained her take on this scene in a Q&A:

> [Lena’s] language is oblique and strange and subtle and sideways and often unspoken – take the scene where he beats up the bathroom and they walk out of the restaurant and she doesn’t say anything. They then have a strange conversation about a harmonium: to me that conversation is about what an amazing special day it was in Barry's life when both that harmonium landed and when Lena landed in his life.[477]

On that “amazing special day,” Barry begins to see the chance for order and meaning in his life. Throughout the film, he builds the waltz melody on his harmonium while building a relationship with Lena.

At the end of the film, Brion’s score drives the harmonium’s symbolism home as it accompanies the emotional reconciliation between Barry and Lena. After the Stevens

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[476] Ibid., 57.

[477] Dawson, "Punch-Drunk Love - Emily Watson Q&A."

brothers crashed into their car, Barry abandoned Lena at the hospital to fly to Provo, Utah to confront Dean Trumbell. This was not the original plan for the film's ending, as Anderson explained to Lim in a Q&A:

> Originally, Adam didn't go to see Phil [Phillip Seymour Hoffman, playing Dean Trumbell]. There was a different showdown where Phil came to Los Angeles. So we shot a whole ten-minute scene where Phil's character comes down to find Adam's character and smashes his harmonium. A lot of the same dialogue that we have is still in the scene, but we put together enough of the movie where we just felt like the scene will be no good. This guy has gotta get out of his house and go to Utah and kick some ass…[478]

The smashing of his harmonium would have been the ultimate insult to Barry, and in this alternate ending, the harmonium would not have been such a neat symbol of Barry and Lena's romance. Instead, in the final cut, this connection is doubly enforced by Brion's score and by the action on screen. The now-recognizable, non-diegetic waltz music begins as Barry exits Dean Trumbell's mattress store, continuing as he enters his warehouse in the next scene and grabs the harmonium off his desk.

The music swells as he runs with the heavy harmonium down Lena's apartment building hallway, mirroring an earlier scene in which he ran there to kiss her for the first time. It is over-the-top, to say the least, a characterization that Brion acknowledges but defends:

> The other thing is how outrageously corny some of the orchestra stuff is. Like when they're kissing and the strings swell, I was laughing hysterically, and he

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[478] Lim, *Q&A: Paul Thomas Anderson*.

> was going, “No, bigger, bigger, bigger.” It still cracks me up whenever I see the movie. But there's something beautiful about that at this point, because people have gotten so far away from that that it was fresh again.[479]

This combination of earnestness and irony is typical of Anderson’s punk approach to the film, described earlier in this chapter. (For this scene in the screenplay see Appendix Z.)[480] This declaration of love is formulaic and typical of the romantic comedy genre, although the details of their circumstances certainly are not.

In the final cut, an additional scene solidifies the connection between the harmonium, the waltz melody, and Barry and Lena’s burgeoning love. In that final scene, which does not appear in the screenplay, Lena enters the warehouse, passes by all the prank plungers, and approaches Barry in his office from behind. He is seated at the harmonium, playing the same melody that he has been working on throughout the film, but this time it blends into the non-diegetic waltz music. Lena puts her hands on his shoulders, leans over, and whispers in his ear, “So here we go.” This moment makes clear that in addition to connecting Lena and Barry, the harmonium also connects the diegesis of Barry’s angry, mundane life to the magical realism of the colorful, lush, musical experience Anderson and Brion have created for the audience. As King describes it,

> The entire film Barry pecks notes on the harmonium, as if in search of some secret it possesses; it represents an enigma to him, and ultimately, to the audience as well. But in the final shot of the film the puzzle is solved. Barry plays the exact notes from Jon Brion’s score for *Punch-Drunk Love,* playing the harmonium

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[479] Battaglia, "Jon Brion."

[480] Anderson, *Punch-Drunk Love: The Shooting Script*, 88-89.

> almost concurrently with the music that plays nondiegetically over the scene. The diegetic and nondiegetic music playing together is a moment of cinematic harmony; Barry, Lena, and the harmonium are in sync.[481]

I would take King's observation even further, to suggest that for Anderson, the act of music-making does not merely facilitate the solution to what King calls the "puzzle" – music-making *is equal to* the solution to Barry's emotional struggles.

The Harmonium as a Symbol of Expressive Connection

In addition to its symbolic tie to Lena and Barry's developing relationship, the harmonium – specifically Barry's music-making with it – allows him to express raw, meaningful emotion that he cannot otherwise access. Much as the characters in *Magnolia* express their unspeakable grief by singing the lyrics to "Wise Up," Barry uses the harmonium to connect to his emotional self, which is otherwise obscured by anxiety and rage. Several moments and scenes in the *Punch-Drunk Love* screenplay and in the final cut demonstrate that Anderson intended Barry's interactions with the harmonium to catalyze useful connection to his emotions – as opposed to the violent fits of rage that often overcome him – particularly in stressful moments related to his bullying sisters, the phone sex scam, and his Healthy Choice plan.

In the film's first warehouse scene, the harmonium is established as a refuge from the pressure of Barry's day-to-day life. Barry's conversation with Lance leads into the first instance of Blake's watercolor visuals, accompanied by sweeping string music for the title credits. Brion's orchestral music mixes with a woman's voice singing easily on the syllables "da da dum…" Color bars fade in and out of focus, alternating with a night

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[481] King, "*Punch Drunk Love:* The Budding of an Auteur."

sky dotted with white specks, which dissolves into colors again. The music stops quite abruptly, interrupted by the voices of Barry, Lance, and customers to whom they are trying to sell novelty toilet plungers in the warehouse. It is replaced by new, punctuated, electronic-sounding noises. The interval *e' bb* calls to mind a dissonant doorbell, layered over a syncopated pulse on *db'*. Other noises created by the prepared piano, including a persistent tapping and clicking, accompany a particularly hectic scene in Barry's life.

As he attempts to sell the novelty plungers, he is interrupted twice by rude phone calls from two of his seven sisters, asking if he is going to the family party that night. He attempts to continue the sale, but shatters the handle of a plunger while demonstrating its supposed indestructibility. The non-diegetic music adds a crashing sound, getting more frantic in tempo. A third phone call from another sister interrupts him; this time he answers it in his office. Once she is done bullying him and he hangs up the phone, he approaches the harmonium. It has been partially blocking him in the shot throughout his last phone conversation. The syncopated tapping and clicking continue as he faces the camera and plays *b' bb' a'*, pauses, then plays *c' d'*. It is not quite the non-diegetic flute melody of the previous scene, but it is similar. This moment in the screenplay dated 6/20/01 appears as follows:

KATHLEEN

Don't puss out.

BARRY

I wont.

Barry plays the 5 note melody on the Harmonium (carries over into next scene….)

INT./EXT. WAREHOUSE – LATER (bridge/break music wise)[482]

This carry over doesn't happen in the final cut; rather, the frantic prepared piano music, mixed with static and people's voices, begins in the new scene.

Also early in the film, the harmonium is presented as a mental escape from Barry's growing stress surrounding the phone sex scam. He has provided his banking information to "Georgia," a phone sex operator, but the next morning she calls him back to ask for more money. Her tone quickly turns threatening, and immediately, Brion's hectic score begins non-diegetically. It comprises rapid, repetitious, electronic-sounding eighth-notes, soon overlapped by what sounds like a man wheezing or perhaps an organ expelling air, as well as scraping sounds. It continues as Barry arrives at work, explains his Healthy Choice airline miles scheme to Lance, and closes himself inside his office. He paces, clearly distressed by Georgia's threats, duct tapes part of the harmonium that was apparently broken, and plays the pitches as before: *b' bb' a' c' d'*.

Anderson indicated this moment in the 2/13/01 screenplay more vaguely than in the scene from the 6/20/01 version above:

> Barry goes into his office and looks at the Harmonium. BEAT. He presses some keys, makes a little more noise with it. (a quarter of some sort of melody starts here…)[483]

This excerpt not only reinforces Anderson's intention for the harmonium's calming function in Barry's life, but also demonstrates how Anderson's vision solidified over the screenwriting process. In this earlier draft, he only knew there would be "some sort of

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[482] Anderson, *Punch-Drunk Love: The Shooting Script*, 11.

[483] Ibid., 32.

melody"; by the 6/20 version, he specified that it should be a 5-note melody, suggesting that by that point, Brion had presented him with the thematic idea.

In the final cut, the tense, non-diegetic music is heard uninterrupted, at a low volume, through the moment above and continues under a phone call Barry makes to his credit card company in a desperate attempt to protect himself from Georgia's threatened exploitation. Barry strolls toward the open pod bay door and then reacts to something he sees outside the warehouse, which the audience soon learns is his sister Elizabeth approaching with Lena. The dynamic of the hectic music increases as he runs into his office, tripping on the way and spilling his coffee, and positions himself in front of the harmonium. He plays the following pitches: *c bb' a' c' d'* – it is the same melody he has been tinkering with except that it begins on *c* instead of *b'*, ostensibly because he is not looking at the instrument. It is as if he is readying himself for the coming interaction with his sister. In the 2/13/01 version of the screenplay, this moment appears as follows:

> CAMERA pushes in towards LENA and blends to 30fps…she smiles, looks ahead, CAMERA slowly pans a 180 around to become her POV.
>
> Barry is standing near the harmonium, fiddling around. He looks up, sees Elizabeth and Lena walking towards him and tenses….they meet in the middle of the warehouse;[484]

In the final cut, the women find Barry emerging from his office rather than playing the harmonium.

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[484] Ibid., 33.

In an omitted scene that was to come just before Barry discovers the Healthy Choice loophole at the supermarket, he is alone at his warehouse at the end of the work day. The scene appears in the 6/20/01 version of the screenplay as follows:

> INT. WAREHOUSE – LATER/BLUE HOUR,NIGHT
>
> Barry is alone, closing up. He takes a look at the Harmonium and presses it, makes a sound….a little bit more….makes a few notes. END SCORE QUE (sic) as it blends and fades into the notes that Barry plays.
>
> BEAT. He closes it's (sic) small cover, does something on his desk and then: His face gets bright red, he holds back tears, opens his mouth and has a serious but small burst of overwhelming emotion and then it's over.[485]

This excerpt further enforces my claim in the previous section that Anderson carefully planned the interaction between Brion's non-diegetic score and Barry's diegetic melody on the harmonium; he specifically notes that the score "blends and fades into the notes that Barry plays." But it also describes an emotional moment for Barry that is clearly connected to the harmonium. Rather than punching a glass door or tearing apart a restaurant bathroom, as he does soon after in the film, Barry experiences a seemingly spontaneous burst of authentic, "overwhelming emotion" that is notable for not being uncontrollable rage.

Later in the screenplay, Anderson's language in an omitted scene that would have followed Barry's narrow escape from the Stevens Brothers at the ATM also points to the emotional power the harmonium has for Barry. After his terrifying altercation with the Stevens Brothers, who have been sent by Dean Trumbell to shake him down, Barry

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[485] Ibid., 12-13.

arrives at work the next morning discombobulated. In the final cut of the film, Brion's score at this point includes a prepared piano, drums, clicking noises, and either a didgeridoo or an imitation of one. In the earliest version of the screenplay (2/13/01), two scenes offer insight into Barry's mental state before starting the work day:

> INT. BARRY'S BEDROOM – NEXT MORNING
>
> CAMERA holds on Barry as he wakes up. He's dressed in a FULL BASKETBALL OUTFIT. Lakers shirt, shorts, high tops, etc. Small bandage over his ARM. He looks down at the outfit;
>
> BARRY
>
> …what the hell?
>
> CUT TO:
>
> INT. WAREHOUSE/BARRY'S OFFICE – MORNING.
>
> CAMERA DOLLIES/ZOOM in real quick to Barry at the Harmonium. A few more notes are played, something starting to sort of sound like a melody……but still a little broken….HOLD. SCORE begins here[486]

Neither the scene of Barry waking up in a full basketball uniform nor the following scene with the harmonium are included in the final cut. But together, they point to the role Anderson intended for the harmonium to play in Barry's life. Having woken up after a scary night, Barry finds himself completely confused in a bizarre, inexplicable outfit. In the context of the rest of the film, the immediate cut to a zoom in camera shot of Barry at the harmonium would have served as a reminder to the audience that he is slowly working on a melody. The juxtaposition with the previous scenes also reinforces Barry's

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[486] Ibid., 64.

use of the harmonium as a refuge from what makes him anxious. But Anderson's description of the melody as "still a little broken," followed by the instruction to HOLD the camera still on that shot, is quite telling. "Broken" is not a word typically used to describe musical melodies; it more accurately, if still metaphorically, describes Barry as a person. The direction to HOLD before Brion's score begins would have provided a moment for the effect to sink in for the audience.

Finally, just before he goes to Hawaii to find Lena, Barry has a stressful phone call with an operator at Healthy Choice, who informs him that he will have to wait six to eight weeks for his pudding offer to be processed. Barry finds this news extremely distressing and reacts by punching a hole through the wall in his office. Then he collapses onto the harmonium, hugging it as if for comfort. With his head buried in the crook of his left arm, he caresses the harmonium's keys without pressing them to produce a sound. The audience sees that he has scrawled "LOVE" onto the knuckles of his right hand, a detail that is not indicated in the screenplay, but that encapsulates the tension between Barry's violent temper and his desire for a stable relationship. It is fitting that he strokes the harmonium silently with this hand; having just expressed his typical rage, the hand is unable to make music.

In the 6/20/01 revised screenplay, the harmonium is not mentioned in this scene:

> Barry drops the phone to the ground, spins around and PUTS HIS FIST THROUGH THE WALL….then drops down, lower (sic) his head. CAMERA HOLD CU. as he stops himself, tries to breath (sic);
>
> BARRY

Don’t do that. Don’t do that. That’s not right. Calm down now, please. Please. ok. ok. Calm down now please.

HOLD. “He Needs Me,” starts. He closes his eyes.[487]

In the final cut, the words Barry speaks to himself are replaced by his silent interaction with the harmonium. This suggests that Anderson decided the visual image of Barry clinging to and stroking the harmonium served a similar purpose for this moment in the film as his omitted pep talk to himself would have. It is as if Barry cannot muster spoken words in this moment of heightened emotion, but the one word written on his newly reddened knuckles – LOVE – combined with the effect of the silenced harmonium suffice to convey his emotional state.[488]

Conclusion

Many film reviewers, including those who focus on music, have traced the ways these two films are autobiographical for Paul Thomas Anderson. Though this is an understandable if, at times, problematic ambition, I have focused instead on Anderson’s intentions when it comes to representing himself as a filmmaker, rather than on any intentional or unintentional autobiographical reflections to be found in his films. In a 2000 interview, John C. Reilly asserted that, “without getting too specific, because [Paul Thomas Anderson] specifically asked me not to, a lot of the things that happen to the

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[487] Ibid., 69.

[488] In the final cut, the non-diegetic song “He Needs Me” as recorded by Shelley Duvall – the only pre-existing song featured in *Punch-Drunk Love* and, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, a call out to Robert Altman’s live-action musical comedy *Popeye* (1980) – continues throughout Barry’s plane trip, his arrival in Hawaii, his phone call to his sister Elizabeth to ask where Lena is staying, and his phone call to Lena’s hotel. Its dynamic increases significantly when Lena answers the phone. The song only stops after Barry and Lena have finished kissing in the hotel lobby of the Royal Hawaiian, transitioning immediately to the diegetic music of the band Ladies K playing “Waikiki” at the Royal Hawaiian patio/bar area.

characters in the movie come directly out of his life."[489] It is significant that Anderson, apparently, gave specific directions to his actors during the publicity tour for *Magnolia*; this speaks to his preoccupation with the different ways his public reputation could be shaped. It's also significant that he asked Reilly not to expand upon the autobiographical references in *Magnolia*. Anderson's careful cultivation of his persona did not include space for "autobiographical director."

Nevertheless, Anderson's position as a privileged white man in the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century is crucial to his approach as a filmmaker. In his 2013 book *Blossoms and Blood*, Jason Sperb groups Paul Thomas Anderson's films with "1999's so-called 'maverick' films" that are, in part, defined by the historical, gender, and race privilege of their filmmakers:

> In particular, all focused on existential dilemmas stemming from a perceived crisis in masculinity and an anxiety regarding historical emptiness in a country that was drowning in media saturation and consumerist materialism. Before 9/11 and the 'war on terror,' constructed media notions of masculinity were perceived as being in crisis, no longer defined by roles such as fighting in military conflicts or working jobs that required intensive manual labor.[490]

Prior to the attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States, without ongoing public anger directed toward religious Others and terrorism, the zeitgeist supported self-indulgent youthful reflection and the view of one's parents as oppressors. In these late-1990s "maverick" films, the role of the father – more specifically, the father's failure – is

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[489] Udovitch, "The Epic Obsessions of Paul Thomas Anderson."

[490] Sperb, *Blossoms and Blood*, 130. For more on the economic and social repercussions of "modern masculinity," see Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: Perennial, 1999).

a recurring theme. This characteristic of Sperb's "maverick" films overlaps with the theme of familial relations, which Jeffrey Sconce identified in 2002 as one of the main themes addressed in "smart films." Like the Darren Aronofsky and Sofia Coppola films I examined in previous chapters, *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* display certain characteristics of Sconce's "smart films." Although they don't fit neatly into this category, they prominently share the theme of familial relations.

As media scholar Hsuan L. Hsu argued in 2006, *Magnolia* explores "the themes of dysfunctional suburban families and threatened white masculinity" with subplots that "develop towards moments of forgiveness" but "also highlight the fragility of white masculinity."[491] Whether the representation of this theme supports the norms of patriarchal society or questions such a society's effectiveness is not always clear or agreed upon. For instance, what Joanne Dillman describes as *Magnolia*'s progressive embrace of the traditionally female sphere of melodrama is skewered by Lucy Fischer, who calls the film a "dissertation on patriarchy."[492]

Likewise, film and literature scholar Julian Murphet has argued that *Punch-Drunk Love*'s portrayal of Barry's sisters is a reflection of "Anderson's own misogyny [which] is nowhere better realized that in his ghoulish tribe of identical-looking, copiously breeding, indelibly *familial* sisters."[493] The women in Barry's life taunt him with the nickname "gay boy"; his sisters remember this anecdote leading up to Barry's anger outburst in which he breaks the glass door. Later, Lena's repetition of the nickname on

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[491] Hsu, "Racial Privacy, the L.A. Ensemble Film, and Paul Haggis's *Crash*."

[492] Fischer, "Theory into Practice: En-Gendering Narrative in *Magnolia*," 30.

[493] Julian Murphet, "P.T. Anderson's Dilemma: The Limits of Surrogate Paternity," *Sydney Studies* 34 (2008): 72.

their first date leads to Barry's destruction of the restaurant bathroom stall. His physical violence, according to Murphet, is a manifestation of his frustration at his inability to assert traditional masculinity among his female family members. This opinion seems to be supported by Emily Watson's reaction to playing the role of Lena, as she told Tom Dawson in 2003,

> I was baffled in a way. In a funny way there's not much there. I am so used to really challenging 'acting' roles, whilst with Lena everything is veiled and very subtle for lots of different reasons. In a way she's somebody's dream, she's not really a real person.[494]

This denial of autonomy, roundness, and development to female characters is certainly not rare among films made throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, nor are the markers of a privileged, white, male point of view. But perhaps feminist scholars' disappointment is sharper when even "smart films" fail them in these familiar ways.

Magnolia is also representative of another of the main narrative tendencies in Sconce's "smart film" sensibility: the "fascination with 'synchronicity' as a principle of narrative organization [and] a related thematic interest in random fate."[495] For Sconce, this reflects a larger postmodern preoccupation with the idea that life has no deeper meaning. Sperb agrees, putting forth Paul Thomas Anderson's entire oeuvre as a product of postmodern culture in the United States. I would go a bit further and argue that both *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* exhibit the typical attributes noted by those employing what Michael Z. Newman calls "trickle-down postmodernism," or what happens when "a

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[494] Dawson, "Punch-Drunk Love - Emily Watson Q&A."

[495] Sconce, "Irony, Nihilism and the New American 'Smart' Film," 358.

top-down theory that looks for instances of culture to illustrate its claims… is appropriated in a more bottom-up fashion, opportunistically (when it works) to explain the appeal of specific texts, genres, styles, or oeuvres."[496] Specifically, *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* include a reflexive emphasis on celebrity culture, the function of media in relationships between characters, and many intertextual references, all qualities Newman identifies.

Regardless of the usefulness of labeling his films "postmodern," I have demonstrated here that one label Anderson intended *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love* to earn was "musical." This "musical" filmmaking approach and the means of widely establishing it as such – from perceptions of songwriting and music-making generally in the age of music videos, to the publication of screenplays for consumers and easily accessible online interviews – would not have been possible at any other historical moment. I have focused specifically on his professed commitment to challenging assumptions about the boundaries between the media of music and film, and indeed the written medium of the screenplay, analyzing the development of this commitment and the ways it manifests in *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love*. While critics and scholars may debate the merits and messages of these completed films, even using the music of the final cut to support or refute their claims, it is in the creative process that Anderson left his mark as a musically inspired filmmaker; at least, that is where he hoped we would find it.

[496] Michael Newman, *Indie: An American Film Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 156-57.

Afterword

With the work I have put forth here, it is my intention to inspire further inquiry into the issues surrounding the musical processes of these filmmakers and others with similar goals, and also to demonstrate how scholars of film music can draw upon sources that have not traditionally been considered relevant to their research. If the study of film music is, as David Neumeyer, claims, "a node between disciplines," then future investigations might emerge from film studies, language and literature studies, musicology, psychology, or any of the other disciplines that intersect at that node.[497] For scholars working in any of these areas, but especially for fellow musicologists, I intend these case studies to demonstrate the usefulness of adopting screenplay drafts, shooting scripts, interviews, and public accounts as musically and critically relevant texts for approaching music in film. Given our field's historical dependence upon written texts in addition to musical ones, the consideration of a film's screenplay, from drafts to the shooting script, can provide an opportunity to consider the documentation of a film's music as a developing, inextricable component of the whole. As I wrote in the introduction to this thesis, I chose the included case studies according to five characteristics they share. Here, I'd like to reframe those five characteristics as starting points for future research into other films, different filmmakers, and the possibilities that emerge from multimedia approaches to creative endeavors generally.

The first characteristic uniting these cases is that the screenwriter-director's perceptions about music play a prominent role in their creative process, beginning as far back as the film's conception, and how that role is evident in the film's screenplay. Each

[497] *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, 5.

filmmaker identified an element that they associated with music and used it as a foundation for their creative process, as well as throughout the narrative aspects of each film, and then applied that element to execute the film's intended psychological effect on the audience. For Darren Aronofsky, that element was the idea of repetition and replication of a theme in new contexts. In *Requiem for a Dream,* this idea is apparent in the use of aural and visual "hip-hop montages." In *Black Swan,* the idea of doubling is crucial to the way Clint Mansell's score reinterprets Tchaikovsky's music for *Swan Lake* and the way protagonist Nina loses her sense of identity because of her Double. Sofia Coppola, in contrast, focused on the hazy mental state that she associated with certain atmospheric music provided to her by Brian Reitzell. In *The Virgin Suicides*, the narrative haze resulting from the collective narrators' imperfect memory is reflected in Air's ethereal original music and the soft filter applied to the film's visual aspect. The newly composed music and pre-existing tracks used in *Lost in Translation* likewise complement the film's slow pacing and lack of traditional narrative structure. Finally, in *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love,* Paul Thomas Anderson identified the potentially transformative power of spontaneous music making. The former film was inspired by the work of singer-songwriter Aimee Mann, but also by what Anderson understood to be the uniquely sincere, organic process of songwriting. In *Punch-Drunk Love,* protagonist Barry's experimentation with music making on the harmonium transforms both his own perspective and the mood of the film for the audience.

It is important to note that in each of these cases, the "musical" element in question is not necessarily inherently musical, but rather the director's treatment of it draws upon its musical applications. Thus future psychological research into the use of

these specific elements – repetition and replication, atmospheric "haziness," and songwriting-inspired music making in film – could explore the extent to which they actually are "musical" in their effect on audiences. This would require empirical research into the reactions of different types of audiences in different viewing/listening contexts. In addition to studies rooted in audience psychology, future musicological research could analyze past instances in which film directors have used other elements they understand to be musical. These filmic applications could be carefully compared with the solely aural expressions of music that they emulate. In other words, it would be worthwhile to explore the extent to which certain "musical" features in film actually adhere to the structural or technical elements in music to which they aspire.

Moving onto the second uniting feature of the screenwriter-directors included in this dissertation, all depend upon a close relationship with a particular musician-composer-producer, whose work on each film is rooted in a familiarity with popular music and the use of new technology. Over the past decades, digital technology and the flexibility in workflow that replaced the relative rigidity of the studio era have facilitated this collaboration. For scholars of film music, this has necessitated a reassessment of music's traditionally subordinate role in film; that reassessment is clear in my own approach here, dealing with films created in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Since then, collaboration has gained the potential to be even more seamless, with online file-sharing platforms like Dropbox and Google Drive making it unnecessary for directors and composers to exchange physical materials in the form of mix tapes or "dailies" from the set during production, for instance. Further, creative tools like Wipster allow directors,

composers, and other collaborators to share notes and reactions to specific aural or visual moments immediately, allowing them to work together in real time from afar.

Beyond the breaking down of practical barriers to collaboration, newly ubiquitous crowd-funding technology allows auteur directors to have complete independence from outside influences. All three of the directors whose work I addressed in this study faced some restrictions on their creative goals due to financing; now, they would have the option to raise additional funds directly from fans who believe in their vision. For example, Spike Lee used Kickstarter to crowd-fund *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* (2014) and Simon West used the British equity crowdfunding platform SyndicateRoom to fund *Salty* for a 2017 projected release. Future research rooted in cultural and media studies could explore the creative effects on films that result from this new freedom, in terms of the genre, style, casting, and narrative aspects. It would also be fruitful to trace the economic consequences for filmmakers whose projects might not get made otherwise, due to sexist and/or racist tendencies among the Hollywood executives upon whose confidence they would have depended. As director Julie-Anne Robinson pointed out in 2013 after contributing to the Kickstarter campaign for Pamela Green's upcoming *Be Natural: The Untold Story of Alice Guy-Blanché* (which centers on the story of the first female film director, who was also the first filmmaker to use an all-black cast), "History is written by men… It's important to tell the story of this woman who has been written out of film history."[498]

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[498] Lucas Shaw, "Catherine Hardwicke, Julie Taymor Back Kickstarter Project to Close Hollywood's Gender Gap," *The Wrap,* August 23, 2013, http://www.thewrap.com/movies/article/catherine-hardwicke-julie-taymor-back-kickstarter-project-close-hollywoods-gender-gap-112961/.

New technology also opens unprecedented avenues of research into the third uniting factor among the films in this dissertation, which is that they all use music to self-consciously mediate their diegesis through a layer of unreliability for the audience. We see this unreliability in the protagonists' mental instability in *Requiem for a Dream, Black Swan,* and *Punch-Drunk Love,* as well as in the haze of the characters' jetlag and imperfect collective memory in *Lost in Translation* and *The Virgin Suicides,* respectively. Third-person narration adds a layer of mediation in both *The Virgin Suicides* and *Magnolia;* the latter film also features the recurring symbol of TV sets playing *What Do Kids Know?* as a thematic reminder of mediation. Any mediation, musical or otherwise, within the bounds of a film draws attention to the filmmakers' own mediating power in manipulating what might otherwise be understood as absolute truth. But now, the methods through which audiences typically consume films offer a new type of mediation, one that did not exist while Darren Aronofsky, Sofia Coppola, and Paul Thomas Anderson were creating the films I address here. At-home viewing platforms like Netflix include comment sections, rating systems, and sorting mechanisms that, whether consciously or subconsciously on the part of the viewer, incorporate other consumers' opinions into the film's overall effect. Filmmakers now often take advantage of the audience's expectation of this technology's presence within the narrative of the film, conveying key information through internet searches, text messages, and other smartphone communications by and among characters. These tools thus provide a new type of expression to which screenwriter-directors can attach musical meaning.

Further, the music included in a soundtrack or newly composed for any film can now be easily edited, attached to unrelated material, and uploaded to platforms like

YouTube. The outrage Aronofsky expressed at the recontextualization of Mansell's *Lux Aeterna* theme for *Requiem for a Dream* in the trailer for the *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* trailer would seem absurd today, in a landscape of seemingly constant, very public mediation by fans and critics alike of all manner of creative material. The directors I highlight in this study felt comfortable fusing and borrowing material and styles from various musical realms, often rather haphazardly. Now, that creative practice – and the means of publicly distributing its results – is available to anyone with a laptop. While this might be alarming to those concerned with maintaining a work's original intended meaning across various platforms and environments, new forces of mediation also offer new opportunities for meaning, which may allow a work to find relevance among diverse audiences. The modes by which this recontextualization takes place and forging an analysis of based on examples with significant impact would be a rich area of exploration for media scholars.

The fourth aspect these case studies have in common is that in each, the ways in which music is incorporated in the filmmaking process, as well as in the film's narrative, highlight or challenge the boundaries between musical genres and, further, between the media of film music and film. In sampling bits of Verdi and Mozart's requiems in the main musical theme of *Requiem for a Dream* and in reworking Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* music for *Black Swan,* Aronofsky and Mansell focused on the *process* of blending media types and musical genres over any real allusions for the audience in the final cuts. Like Aronofsky's approach to *Requiem for a Dream,* Sofia Coppola attempted to translate the prose style of the novel upon which *The Virgin Suicides* was based into the film medium. With *Lost in Translation,* Coppola emulated the effect of a musical mix tape, much as

Paul Thomas Anderson built *Magnolia* out of Aimee Mann's songs. In both *Magnolia* and *Punch-Drunk Love,* Anderson has his characters use music making to express themselves and to connect with the audience in a way the expected boundaries of narrative film wouldn't otherwise allow them to.

Future research into this type of boundary pushing of both genre and medium might consider the ways this approach's effectiveness has shifted as the ubiquity of digital music has led to the dilution of musical genres in general. Given the ease with which new music can be created and disseminated online, without the necessity of sorting newly released albums into labeled sections in record stores, artists can work within and across formerly rigid genre lines. A recent example is Beyoncé's inclusion of tracks that could be considered Hip-Hop, Pop, Rock, and even Country on one album, *Lemonade* (2016). *Lemonade* is also an example of a "visual album"[499] – in which an audience is introduced to music and film at the same time – and the normalization of this form will almost certainly give rise to new types of boundaries to challenge. As the possibilities for audio-visual media continue to grow exponentially, those scholars interested in tracking the social, economic, and artistic implications of this ongoing evolution will have no shortage of research material.

Finally, all the director-screenwriters I've addressed here share a commitment to conveying themselves as particularly musically informed, a preoccupation I have argued is specific to and representative of a loosely grouped cohort of American filmmakers who began working in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Aronofsky, Coppola, and Anderson

[499] A visual album is a collection of music videos divided into segments. Its conception as a whole work distinguishes it from a typical music album, which might have music videos created for specific singles but not necessarily related to each other.

consistently refer to their filmmaking approaches as "musical," and I have turned to these self-conscious descriptions of their processes for insight into their public image cultivation. Some of the other screenwriter-directors who are often grouped with them in attempts to essentialize the "Sundance Generation,"[500] the "new punk cinema"[501] tendency, or the "smart sensibility"[502] also demonstrate this preoccupation with representing themselves as musically savvy. Scholars have begun to explore the way, for instance, Wes Anderson uses music performance and playlist curation by characters in his films to reflect his own musical prowess.[503] In terms of their public images, these directors and others who have emerged since can now use social media tools to communicate directly with their audiences in an exceptionally public and casual way. For independent filmmakers, social media can be more valuable than radio or TV promotion in terms of building a reputation. Future interdisciplinary research rooted in informatics and film studies could quantify the ways in which specific, shareable sound bites can spread throughout social media platforms in order to solidify or alter a filmmaker's reputation.

I will conclude by looking forward to an area of film music scholarship that has largely been neglected across disciplines. Though it was not part of this current thesis, it is the subject to which I intend to dedicate much of my own energy in the future. While the education, background, level of involvement, and musical tools of film music creators have changed drastically in recent decades, the stifling of women's contributions has not.

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[500] Sconce, "Irony, Nihilism and the New American 'Smart' Film."

[501] Rombes, *New Punk Cinema*.

[502] Perkins, *American Smart Cinema*.

[503] Winters, "It's All Really Happening: Sonic Shaping in the Films of Wes Anderson."

Like the European art music tradition from which it grew, Hollywood film music has historically celebrated almost exclusively male composers. But unlike concert music, whose composers expect attentive listening, film music derives its power from its audience's *inattention.* A film's musical message is often heard subconsciously and absorbed without critique; thus it derives its power from the very fact that it goes unquestioned by the audience. As I have discussed here with relation to specific case studies, composers often depend upon this inattention to achieve subtle emotional manipulation of the audience, to varying effect. Thus, especially given the considerable power of Hollywood films to reflect – and influence – the priorities of American culture, women's voices cannot continue to be excluded if we are to work toward an equitable society. Likewise, the accomplishments of social justice movements can broadly benefit filmmaking as a process. Equality in all fields will, ideally, provide new opportunities for musical filmmaking collaborations that build upon the groundwork laid by Aronofsky, Coppola, and Anderson to discover new tools, push new boundaries, and create new meaning.

Appendices

Appendix A

INT. PSYCHE WARD SHOCK THERAPY ROOM

Someone sticks something between Sara's teeth. The people around her talk casually and laugh occasionally.

She tries to look around but her body is immobile.

She can make out shadows on the edges of her vision but mostly all she sees are the lights above her.

Then, she feels two cold metal discs placed against her temples.

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY OPERATING ROOM

Harry is thrown onto an operating table. His clothes are gone in a blink of the eye.

A serious and focused EMERGENCY DOCTOR steps in.

EMERGENCY DOCTOR

We're taking it off at the shoulder. Let's move here people, otherwise we lose him.

Harry remains semi-conscious as the ANESTHESIOLOGIST sticks a mask over his face.

Everything starts to go white. The Emergency Doctor starts-up (sic) a circular saw.

Before everything is gone, Harry witnesses the doctor cutting into his shoulder.

IN THE WHITE—

HARRY

Ma.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHE WARD

Sara's heart pounds in her ears. She tries to scream, but a TECHNICIAN interrupts her:

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)

Okay, ready and one.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLINDING PRIMARY RED (the color)

We hear a crowd CHEER!

CUT TO:

INT. BIG TIM'S LUSH PAD

In slow motion and tight close-ups, we experience the orgy with Marion.

There's (sic): nipples, tongues, sex toys, closed eyes of ecstacy (sic) men's glares, men's smiles, and the like. The images aren't sexy, they're scary.

One of the girls holds up a double headed dildo and says:

GIRL

What should we do now?

A PERVERT screams out:

PERVERT

Ass to ass, ass to ass!

Marion complies and the flashlights shine. Then, the Pervert starts a chant:

PERVERT (con't)

Cum. Cum!

The other men join in as the pace quickens:

PERVERT AND ALL THE MEN

(building in pace and volume)

Cum! Cum! CUM! CUM! CUM!! CUM!!!

Marion is at first afraid. Then, she closes her eyes. Her lips start to quiver. Big Tim's smile gets wider and wider and wider.

And then: Marion comes.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHE WARD SHOCK THERAPY ROOM

Sara's arched and stiffened body looks as if fire has just shot through her body.

Her eyes are almost popping out of her head as her mind screams

AAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH…

She settles for a moment on the table.

Her heart does not beat, her lungs do not breathe.

A moment later, the breath returns. Then, the heart beat slowly emerges. And then, the Technician:

TECHNICIAN

Okay, ready and two.

SMASH CUT TO:

PRIMARY RED

A crowd CHEERS!

Then we fade to:

PRIMARY BLUE

Then we—

CUT BACK TO:

INT. PSYCHE WARD

Once again Sara tries to scream in pain. Flames seem to sear every cell of her body and her bones feel like they are being twisted and crushed.

Smoke simmers off of her hair and skin.

As her body settles, it happens one last time:

TECHNICIAN

Okay, ready and three.

SMASH CUT TO:

PRIMARY BLUE

The crowd cheers once more.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CONEY ISLAND PIER[504]

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[504] Aronofsky, "Requiem for a Dream," 98-101.

Appendix B

…she tried to resist, but was unable to and strong hands stretched her out on the table and strapped her down and she could feel her throat start to close and her heart threaten to explode and something was attached to her head and something jammed between her teeth and people were talking and laughing, but the voices were a blur and it seemed like there were many faces leaning over her and she could feel her eyes opening wider as they looked, peered, and she could hear laughter and then the faces seemed to recede and drift away in a haze and suddenly fire shot through her body and her eyes felt like they were going to burst from their sockets as her body burned then stiffened and felt like it would snap apart and pain shot through her head and stabbed her ears and temples and her body kept jerking and bouncing as the flames seared every cell of her body and her bones felt like they were being twisted and crushed between huge pincers as more and more electricity was forced through her body and her burning body arched and slammed itself down on the table and Sara could feel her bones snapping and smell the burning of her own flesh as barbed hooks were thrust into her eyes yanking them out of their sockets and all she could do was endure and feel the pain and smell the burning flesh unable to yell, to plead, to pray, to make a sound or even die, but stay locked in the torturous pain as her head screamed

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHhhhhhhhhhhhh….

505

[505] Selby Jr., *Requiem for a Dream*, 237-38.

Appendix C

(Scene 49) EXT PROJECTS—NIGHT

Sodium street light POPS as Tyrone cold lamps by a beat-up bodega.

A black hand SLAPS Tyrone money. The money SLIDES into his pocket. Tyrone's eyes SWISH left than (sic) right. He SLIPS something out from behind a parked car's tire. And SLAPS a bag of white powder back.

(Scene 49A) POP, SLAP, SLIDE, SWISH, SLIP, SLAP! Again. And again. And again.

CUT TO:

(Scene 50) EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE PROJECTS—NIGHT

Neon CRACKLE as Harry chills outside an OTB

A white hand SLAPS Harry money. The money SLIPS into his pocket. Harry's eyes SWISH right then left. He CLINKS something out of a trash can. And he SLAPS a bag of white powder back.

(Scene 50A) CRACKLE, SLAP, SLIP, SWISH, CLINK, SLAP! Again. And again. And again.[506]

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[506] Aronofsky, "Requiem for a Dream," 33-34.

Appendix D

INT. SARA'S APARTMENT

POP, HIT, GULP, SNAP. The fridge LURCHES another foot towards her.

She grabs the giant remote and FLIPS on the TV. On the set is Tappy Tibbons:

…Red Sara marches out to applause.

…The fridge LURCHES again! She tries to ignore it. Watch TV:

…The fridge SLIDES closer. She fights not to look.

…Suddenly, Tappy and Red Sara lead a Cha-Cha line around Sara's Lazy chair. Various weirdos, freaks and girls in bikinis join in.

Sara is terrified.

The fridge LEAPS towards her. Sara cries onto her wrinkled red dress.

She sinks to the floor. She crawls to the TV while the partying gets louder and louder.

Red Sara is French kissing Tappy Tibbons in Sara's Lazy chair.

She begs the TV:

…The partying gets louder and louder. Red Sara is French kissing Tappy Tibbons in Sara's Lazy chair.

The fridge is only a few feet from her.

RED SARA

Feed me, Sara. Feed me.

Tappy joins in.

TAPPY TIBBONS

Feed me. Feed me.

Now the other freaks in the room and the studio crew.

FREAKS AND CREW

Feed me. Feed me. Feed me.

And now, the audience on the TV is chanting it.

AUDIENCE

Feed me! FEED ME. FEED ME!

The fridge towers over her. Suddenly, metal is tearing and the fridge has a mouth. Freon sprays out of it's (sic) opening. The giant metal mouth lurches at Sara threatening to bite her.

Sara SCREAMS and bolts out of her home leaving the front door to her abandoned apartment wide open.

HARD CUT TO:

BLACK

ON THE SCREEN IN WHITE LETTERS: "WINTER"[507]

[507] Ibid., 76-79.

Appendix E

INT. SUBWAY – DAY

Nina grips the rail with one hand as the other re-applies the lipstick, using the side window as a mirror. The jerky motion of the train makes it difficult, but she manages.

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY – DAY

Nina waits anxiously outside Brennan's office, losing her resolve.

She hears someone approach, looks up and sees Brennan coming down the hall.

She puts on a nervous smile. He doesn't reciprocate.

BRENNAN

Yes, Nina?

NINA

Do you have a minute?

He doesn't answer, just opens the door to the office and walks in.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Come in.

She takes a breath and then follows.

INT. BRENNAN'S OFFICE – DAY

Nina closes the door and faces the cozy, dark space. Large couch, posters from the ballet on the wall – several featuring Beth.[508]

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[508] Heyman, "Black Swan: Shooting Draft," 21.

Appendix F

NINA

She's trying to take my place. I'm scared I won't be able to dance tomorrow.

She's going to do something…She already is.

BETH

Mmm-hmm.

NINA

What do I do? What do I do?

Beth starts giggling. Nina flashes anger.

NINA (CONT'D)

Stop.

BETH

You got what you wanted…

NINA

No.

BETH

(taunting)

Sweet girl.

NINA

(not sure)

What?

Beth spins around. She looks like a bruised version of THE DOUBLE!

DOUBLE

SWEET GIRL! SWEET GIRL!

The Double starts stabbing herself in the face with the sharp EMORY BOARD, tearing the flesh.

NINA

Stop it! Don't![509]

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[509] Ibid., 85-86.

Appendix G

INT. DARK STAGE – NIGHT

OPENING CREDITS:

A SPOTLIGHT slices black space.

In its beam, a DANCER in a white dress materializes. She is fair-skinned. Beautiful and pure.

She twirls on pointe, a smile on her face, light as air and carefree.

Suddenly, her face grows worried. Sensing someone watching.

Scared, she peers into the darkness.

She moves now, looking, growing more frantic.

But she can't see anything. She pauses, relaxes. Convincing herself it was just her imagination…

Then, a SINISTER MAN emerges out of the darkness behind her. She stumbles backwards, frightened.

She tries to escape, twirling away, but he pursues.

He flings his open hand towards her, casting the spell.

She wants to scream, but nothing comes out. She looks at her body, sensing something happening to her. Something terrifying.

She spins, panicking, clawing at her body with her hands, trying to stop it. But it's too late.

As she turns, she morphs into the WHITE SWAN, the iconic protagonist of SWAN LAKE.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. NINA’S BEDROOM – MORNING

In the darkness, a pair of EYES emerge. They belong to NINA, the same dancer.

She lies awake in bed, thinking about her dream.[510]

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[510] Ibid., 1.

Appendix H

ERICA (O.S.)

What are you doing?!!

Nina whips around, sees her mother standing aghast in the doorway.

Nina pushes past her, in a frenzy.

INT. BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Nina closes the door. Engages the latch.

A pain shoots through her shoulder. She SCREAMS, instinctively reaching for it.

She quickly yanks off the sweater and looks at the vanity mirror.

Her back pulsates unnaturally. Tiny black tips poke through.

Erica starts POUNDING on the door.

Nina grabs the nearest heavy object – the JEWELRY BOX – and hurls it at the glass. The mirror spider-webs with cracks.

ERICA (O.S.)

Open up!

NINA

GO AWAY!

She digs into an open bump on her shoulder with her fingernails.

The door opens and catches.

ERICA

Unlock the fucking door!!!

Erica violently pushes, trying to bust the latch.

Nina concentrates, takes hold of the growth and yanks.

Nina looks at the object held in her fingers: a sharp, TINY BLACK SPINE. Like that of a sea urchin. Damp, feathery wisps hang off of it.

She looks up into the mirror. Powerful RED EYES with an expanding DARK PUPIL stare back at her.[511]

[511] Ibid., 87.

Appendix I

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY – LATER

Nina quickly moves through a mirrored hallway, desperately seeking refuge in her dressing room.

Her Doubles mock her through the reflections.

DOUBLE

My turn!

OTHER DOUBLE

My turn!

Nina shoots into her

INT. PRINCIPLE'S (sic) DRESSING ROOM – SAME

She closes the door behind her, ready to cry.

DOUBLE (O.S.)

Hey…

She looks up, and finds the Double casually sitting on the edge of her vanity, wearing the Black Swan costume.

NINA

Get out of here.

The Double faces her; she's now Lily.

LILY

Rough start, huh? Pretty humiliating…

NINA

Get out.

LILY

Wow…rude.

Lily coyly smiles, gets off the counter.

LILY (CONT'D)

I'm worried about the next act. Not sure you're feeling up to it.

NINA

Stop. Just stop.

LILY

How about…I dance the Black Swan for you?

NINA

No.

Lily looks back at Nina, now turned back into the Double.

DOUBLE

But it's my turn.

NINA

Don't.

The Double just laughs at her.

Nina's fury rises up from inside.

NINA (CONT'D)

Leave me alone!!!

She charges the Double.

They crash into a WALL LENGTH MIRROR, shattering it. Shards fall everywhere.

LILY flips Nina over and wails on her. Punch after punch.

Nina does her best to block the onslaught.

They scuffle, knocking things over, bumping into walls.

The DOUBLE gets her hands around Nina's neck…

Nina tries to pull the hands free, but she's too strong.

LILY squeezes down.

LILY

"She wasn't good enough. Couldn't handle the spotlight."

Nina's neck starts to stretch, her eyes bulge, running out of oxygen.

Her hands frantically scramble along the surface of the vanity…

LILY (CONT'D)

That's what they'll say. And they'll forget all about you.

Nina's fingers find the edge of a MIRROR SHARD, but can't grasp it. They stretch…and pick it up.

Nina looks at Lily, her eyes RED and BLACK. Like those of a swan.

And she DRIVES the shard into her stomach.

Stunned, Lily looks down.

She touches the wound, sees blood on her fingers.

NINA

It's my turn.

The DOUBLE looks up at Nina and smiles.

She coughs up blood and collapses onto the floor.

Nina stares down at her, breathing heavily, high on adrenaline. Her eyes slowly turn from black back into their normal, human color.

A KNOCK on the door.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

Black Swan, places in 5.

Nina drags the stiffening body into the wardrobe closet.[512]

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[512] Ibid., 97-99.

Appendix J

The boys pull the phone over to the stereo, dial and put the mouthpiece up to the speaker.

They play “Hello, it’s me” by Todd Rundgren.

Chase leans in and speaks after it’s played a little while:

TIM

Nine, six, seven, five, two, zero, eight.

He hangs up. The phone immediately RINGS. TIM answers it.

TIM

Oh shit, it’s them!

They lean in to hear: “Where do the Children play?” by Cat Stevens.

Then the boys play them: “You’ve Got a Friend” by James Taylor, as the SCREEN SPLITS bring the girls and their room into VIEW.

INT. (#2) LISBON HOUSE – GIRLS’ BEDROOM – DAY

The girls crowd around their phone under a canopy bed, Billy Jack [poster] behind them.

They put on “At Seventeen” by Janice Ian. Lux lies on the bed, dreamily. Bonnie looks through records.

The boys reply with: “Wild Horses” by the Rolling Stones.

The girls play them Carol King singing “So Far Away.”

By the end of this sequence the kids have all settled, lounging around comfortably listening to each others’ songs.

The boys in the room FILL THE ENTIRE SCREEN lying on the carpet, listening to “So Far Away”…[513]

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[513] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 96.

Appendix K

Most of the songs we've forgotten, but a portion of that contrapuntal exchange survives, in pencil, on the back of Demo Karafilis's *Tea for the Tillerman,* where he jotted it. We provide it here:

The Lisbon girls	"Alone Again, Naturally," Gilbert O'Sullivan
Us	"You've Got a Friend," James Taylor
The Lisbon girls	"Where Do the Children Play?" Cat Stevens
Us	"Dear Prudence" The Beatles
The Lisbon girls	"Candle in the Wind," Elton John
Us	"Wild Horses," The Rolling Stones
The Lisbon girls	"At Seventeen," Janice Ian
Us	"Time in a Bottle," Jim Croce
The Lisbon girls	"So Far Away," Carole King

Actually, we're not sure about the order. Demo Karafilis scribbled the titles haphazardly. The above order, however, does chart the basic progression of our musical conversation.[514]

[514] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 190-91.

Appendix L

We noted the shift at once (they had let their hand linger on our wrist) and followed with "Bridge over Troubled Water," turning up the volume because the song expressed more than any other how we felt about the girls, how we wanted to help them. When it finished, we waited for their response.

After a long pause, their turntable began grinding again, and we heard the song which even now, in the Muzak of malls, makes us stop and stare back into a lost time:

Hey, have you ever tried
Really reaching out for the other side
I may be climbing on rainbows,
But baby here goes:

Dreams, they're for those who sleep
Life, it's for us to keep
And if you're wondering what this song is leading to
I want to make it with you.

The line went dead. (Without warning, the girls had thrown their arms around us, confessed hotly into our ears, and fled the room.) For some minutes, we stood motionless, listening to the buzz of the telephone line. Then it began to beep angrily, and a recording told us to hang up our phone and hang it up now.[515]

[515] Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides*, 96.

Appendix M

NARRATOR

She had done more than just take the girls out of school. The next Sunday, arriving home from a spirited church sermon, she had commanded Lux to destroy her rock records.

INT. (#2) LISBON HOUSE – LIVINGROOM – DAY

At the top of the stairs, Mrs. Lisbon stands over Lux who is crouched on the floor in a nightgown and socks guarding her crates of albums.

MRS. LISBON

Now!

LUX

But Mom!

MRS. LIXBON

(sternly)

It's final, Luxie.

LUX

(upset, turning red)

That's not fair.

MRS. LISBON

I said now!!

INT. (#1) LISBON HOUSE – STAIRS – DAY

Lux bursts into tears, and stomps off. Mrs. Lisbon marches downstairs with a mission. In the living room Mrs. Lisbon turns the gas log in the fireplace on.

On the steps Lux slides a crate down – she pushes to send it crashing – but then grabs it just before it goes out of control.

Lux puts one record at a time into the flames as she cries. She holds some up, pleading to her mother.

LUX

“Destroyer” – not Destroyer!

Mrs. Lisbon does not respond, but points to the fire. Lux dramatically sacrifices it to the flames.

LUX

Aw, not AC/DC!!!! – c’mon! …

But Lux has to keep putting her record collection, one by one, into the fire. Lux starts coughing, thick grey smoke is coming out of the fireplace, getting worse and worse from the burning plastic. Mrs. Lisbon covers her mouth with her hand.

THERESE

(calls from upstairs)

What’s that smell? Is like the linoleum on fire?

Mrs. Lisbon coughs. The room is filling with thick smoke. Lux is about to add another record to the fire.

MRS. LISBON

(waving the smoke from her face)

That’s enough Lux, I’ll just put the rest out with the trash.

Mrs. Lisbon opens the front door for fresh air.

CUT TO:

INT (#2) LISBON HOUSE – DAY

We see a cloud of smoke leave the door. The house's deterioration can be seen. It looks dim and lifeless, the plants and paint neglected.

NARRATOR

The house receded behind its mists of youth being choked off, and the first cold spell hit. This is around the time the sightings of Lux making love on the roof began.[516]

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[516] Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides*, 171.

Appendix N

It was church music, a selection from among the three albums Mrs. Lisbon liked to play over and over again on Sundays. We knew about the music from Cecilia's diary ("Sunday morning. Mom's playing that crap again"), and months later, when they were moving out, we found the albums in the trash they put at the curb. The albums are – as we've listed in the Record of Physical Evidence – *Songs of Faith,* by Tyrone Little and the Believers, *Eternal Rapture,* by the Toledo Baptist Choir, and *Singing Thy Praises*, by the Grand Rapids Gospelers. Beams of light pierce clouds on each cover. We haven't even played the records through once. It's the same music we pass by on the radio, in between the Motown and rock and roll, a beacon on light in a world of darkness, and totally shitty. Choirs sing in blond voices, scales ascend toward harmonic crescendos, like marshmallow foaming into the ears. We'd always wondered who listened to such music, picturing lonely widows at rest homes, or pastors' families passing plates of ham. Never once did we imagine those pious voices drifting up through floorboards to churchify niches where the Lisbon girls knelt to pumice calluses on their big toes. Father Moody heard the music the few times he visited for coffee on Sunday afternoons. "It wasn't my cup of tea," he said to us later. "I go in for the more august stuff. Handel's *Messiah.* Mozart's Requiem. This was basically, if I may say so, what you might expect to hear in a Protestant household."[517]

[517] Ibid., 130-34.

<u>Appendix O</u>

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. DIARY MONTAGE

INSERT – ECU

Pages of the diary, filled with Cecilia's bubble-handwriting, stickers and drawings.

EXT. MONTAGE – IMAGES FOR DIARY – DAY

MONTAGE of diary pages, and overlapping dreamy IMAGES of the girls – Bonnie doing a back bend… CLOSE UP Lux in bikini posing wearing a flower lei, Mary writing in the air with a sparkler, as we HEAR Cecilia's VOICE:

CECILIA (V.O.)

Lux lost it over Kevin Haines, the garbage man, she'd wake up at like five in the morning and hang out casually on the front steps – like it wasn't totally obvious. She wrote his name in marker on all her bras and underwear – and Mom found them and bleached all the "Kevins" out – and Lux was crying on her bed all day.

As Cecilia talks we SEE the boys daydreaming through passages of the diary:

EXT. MONTAGE – IMAGES FOR DIARY – DAY

Chase, lying back on shag carpet, as SUPERIMPOSED over his head Bonnie blows a dandelion across his face. Ponies run through a field…

INSERT – ECU

On diary page, next to a list of endangered species, there's a poem of Cecilia's:

"The trees like lungs filling with air

My sister, the mean one, pulling my hair."

DISSOLVE TO:

Cecilia lying on grass writing, more diary pages, Lux sitting in knee socks picking petals off a flower.

INT. TIM WEINER'S BEDROOM – DAY

The boys look drunk with awe for these girls. As the camera over them (lying on the floor) PULLS SLOWLY AWAY, until it looks down at them from the ceiling, we HEAR:

NARRATOR

> We felt the imprisonment of being a girl, the way it made your mind active and dreamy, and how you ended up knowing what colors went together. We knew that they knew everything about us though we couldn't fathom them at all. We knew that the girls were really women in disguise, that they understood love and even death, and that our job was merely to create the noise that seemed to fascinate them.[518]

[518] Ibid., 40.

Appendix P

In the harsh-morning light, Bob wakes up in his bed.

He hears the Jazz Singer singing in the shower "Midnight at the Oasis."

Her red mane of hair passes frame as she ushers in room service. She seems to have taken over the whole room. He wants it all to go away. She walks off to the bathroom and there's a knock at the door. Bob rushes to get it before she can.

He opens the door a crack, Charlotte looking sweet, is standing there. Her hair is back in a pony-tail. Bob's just wearing a towel around his waist, and his hair is sticking up.

CHARLOTTE

Rough night?

He's not in the mood, he looks at her like he already hates himself, doesn't need more help.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I'm going to Daikanyama, do you want to come walk around?

BOB

Yes, but no, I can't right now.

The singer starts singing again in the background.

Charlotte gives Bob a look.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, I guess you're busy, huh.

BOB

I don't want to be.[519]

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[519] Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, 36.

Appendix Q

INT. PARK HYATT BAR – NIGHT

Bob and Charlotte, still in their pajamas, sit at their usual spot at the bar, with the bartender, drinking cold sake. She lights two cigarettes and passes one to him.

A NEW JAZZ BAND is now playing. The SINGER is full of enthusiasm as they start their stint at the Park Hyatt.

NEW SINGER

Good Evening. I'm Carl West, and we're thrilled to be joining you this week, here at the NY bar in Shinjuku.

He sings "Where or When" with all his heart.

Now, old-timers there, Bob and Charlotte look at each other and chuckle.

SINGER

It seems we stood and talked like this before, we looked at each other in the same way then, but I can't remember where or when…

Bob and Charlotte sit there together.

BOB

I don't want to go back tomorrow.

CHARLOTTE

I know. But, it doesn't last, you have to go back sometime.

BOB

Why can't it last?

CHARLOTTE

I don’t know, it just doesn’t, reality changes things… we can’t stay here forever, unless maybe we started a Jazz band.

(alt Charlotte dialog: I don’t know it just doesn’t, reality changes things… and we can’t stay here forever)

He looks over at her.

The singer continues Where or When, as they sit there together, the view sparkling.

SINGER (O.C.)

Some things that happen for the first time, seem to be happening again and so it seems we have met before, and laughed before, and loved before, but who knows where or when…[520]

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[520] Ibid., 103-04.

Appendix R

I mix most of the music in terms of the basic mixes, but Paul is absolutely in charge of everything that goes on in his movies. There are moments when the music is just so loud, and I'm like, 'Oh, man, turn it down!' But he says, 'No, I want people to have to struggle to hear the dialogue at that point,' or 'I just need this to be sensationalistic here for these few minutes because I need to set up this moment of quiet that's following,' or 'I want people's adrenaline to change at this point.' We're so used to everything being properly manicured, like you can hear every footstep in a movie, you can hear every bit of dialogue, and everything is in its place. Most people pride themselves on doing that well, but it's one of those things he's trying to break up. I don't want to speak for him, but I do believe that in a way he feels like that's not necessarily a lifelike thing. Not that he's trying to make lifelike movies. Both he and I agree that all art is pretty much folly to begin with. But in life, you don't hear everything perfectly mixed.[521]

[521] Battaglia, "Jon Brion."

Appendix S

HOLD. Que. (sic) "Bein (sic) Green," by Kermit the Frog/Aimee

EXT. LAMPLIGHTER/VENTURA BLVD. – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA holds a wide angle on the Lamplighter Coffee Shop.

Frogs falling from sky onto and around the streets….

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SKY – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA up with the Falling Frogs….CAMERA is moving down with them…it becomes almost musical….like Busby-Berkely-style choreography (sic) of Frogs That Fall In The Sky…

MUSIC/KERMIT THE FROG

"It's not that easy bein' green…

Having to spend each day the color of the leaves…"

CARRIES OVER CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE – THAT MOMENT

It is on FIRE now….CU image of Jimmy on the floor of the kitchen with shards of glass around him…and FROGS…a few of them still alive and jumping around…the FIRE moving closer and closer…[522]

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[522] Anderson, *Magnolia: The Shooting Script*, 187-88.

Appendix T

EXT. CLAUDIA'S APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA holds a moment on the building. JIM KURRING pulls his squad car INTO FRAME, looks at the building.

INT. CLAUDIA'S APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA dollies in quick on Claudia as she snorts a line of coke. She has some music BLASTING.

EXT. CLAUDIA'S APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA (STEADICAM) follows behind Jim Kurring as he heads up the pathway, up the stairs and lands at her door. He knocks.

INT. CLAUDIA'S APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT

Claudia jumps – turns her head to the door. She sniffs a bit, yells over the blasting music;

CLAUDIA

…Hello…?

JIM KURRING (OC)

LAPD. Open the door.

She looks through her peep-hole, sees Jim Kurring. She turns looks at her coffee table: It's full of coke, pills and pot, etc.

CLAUDIA

Uh…uh…What is it?

JIM KURRING

It's the LAPD, can you open the door, please?

Claudia rushes over to the table of drugs and starts to scoop things up in her arms

CLAUDIA

Just a minute… just a…I have to get dressed – (fuck,fuck,fuck)[523]

[523] Ibid., 61-62.

Appendix U

INT. CLAUDIA'S APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT/NIGHT

She looks at the coke in front of her. She hesitates. Her stereo is playing a song….it plays softly, then gets a bit louder….

She leans down and SNORTS the fat line of COKE. HOLD on her….she starts to sing along with the song…

CLAUDIA

"..it's not what you thought when you first began it…you got what you want….now you can hardly stand it though by now you know. It's not going to stop….."

The SONG continues. The following has each of the principles half singing along with the song, who's (sic) lead vocal will stay constant throughout.

INT. JIM KURRING'S APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA PUSHES in slowly on Jim Kurring. He sits on the bed, dressed up and ready to go. He starts to sing along to the song as well.

JIM KURRING

…it's not going to stop…it's not going to stop 'till you wise up…"

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE – OFFICE – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA moves in towards Jimmy, alone, sitting in his office, singing.

JIMMY GATOR

"You're sure there's a cure and you have finally found it…."

INT. DONNIE'S APARTMENT – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA pushes in on Donnie Smith as he starts to sing.

DONNIE SMITH

"You think….one drink…will shrink 'till you're underground and living down, but it's not going to stop…"

INT. EARL'S HOUSE – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA DOLLIES in on Phil, holding back his tears and singing along to the song…as he sits over Earl….

PHIL

"It's not going to stop…it's not going to stop…."

CAMERA moves over to Earl, eyes closed, starts to sing as well…

EARL

"…it's not going to stop 'till you wise up…"

CUT TO:

INT. EMPTY PARKING LOT – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA DOLLIES in on LINDA. She's passed out in her car, head pressed against the glass, but she starts to sing along….

LINDA

"…prepare a list of what you need before you sign away the deed, 'cause it's not going to stop…"

INT. FRANK'S CAR – PARKED – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA pushes in a bit on Frank, singing along.

FRANK

"…it's not going to stop…it's not going to stop….it's not gonna stop 'till you wise up, no it's not gonna stop…."

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY – THAT MOMENT

CAMERA pushes in, (light coming up from the book he reads) optical, glimpse what he reads….then pulls back from STANLEY.

STANLEY

“..till you wise up, no it’s not going to stop, so just….give up.”

FULL BACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY – NIGHT

The rain stops. Suddenly and quickly it’s over. Clear as a bell. HOLD.

Title card: Weather information, etc.[524]

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[524] Ibid., 153-55.

Appendix V

JIMMY GATOR

HELLO! Musical Bonus Question before we go to break and the lucky team is–

Jimmy opens an ENVELOPE and reads:

JIMMY GATOR

Kids in the lead and they get a chance to pull further and farther ahead – with the following secret bonus musical question: I will read you a line from an opera and you are to give me the same line in the language in which the opera was originally written and for a bonus 25 you can sing it. Here's the line: "*Love is a rebellious bird that nobody can tame, and it's all in vain to call it, if it chooses to refuse.*"

CAMERA PANS and DOLLIES over to the KIDS and moves in close on Stanley;

STANLEY

Well that was..uh..in French…and that was in the opera, "Carmen." And that goes…um..

(sings)

L'amour est un oiseau rebelled

Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,

Et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle,

S'il lui convinet de refuser.

The AUDIENCE applauds and the "Carmen," que (sic) carries over the following scene;[525]

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[525] Ibid., 96.

Appendix W

INT. GAME SHOW SET – THAT MOMENT

Jimmy asks questions. Stanley is visibly uncomfortable;

JIMMY

Kids, Adults, I'd like you to put yourself at a picnic. Place yourself there with your family and friends if you'd like – you'll hear three musical notes and you are to tell me what it might represent that you'd find at a picnic – The First Three Notes:

OC we hear three musical notes. The "Adults" panel lights up, Todd answers;

TODD

Well, Jimmy, I know this, I have perfect pitch, you see – and that would be A-D-E. And that would represent lemonade.

JIMMY

For 250. Next notes, please.

OC musical note: E-G-G.

TODD (buzzes)

Got it. That's E-G-G which would be "egg."

Richard and Julia glance at Stanley, like "why the fuck aren't you answering these questions?" He looks straight ahead.

JIMMY

For 500 and the Third Set of Notes:

OC musical notes: B-E-E.

TODD (buzzes)

That’s B-E-E – and don’t’ get stung.

The “Adults” are now within 200 points of the “Kids,” on the scoreboard.[526]

[526] Ibid., 112-13. In the final cut of the film, this scene is truncated after TODD identifies “E-G-G” as egg; there is no third set of notes.

Appendix X

EXT. TOYOTA – DRIVING – DAY (melody/slight)

CAMERA follows behind The Stevens Brothers car, then get's (sic) up along side them as they drive back……..

INT. KAHALA LOBBY – DAY (score back to rythmic) (sic)

Barry and Lena walk out to the valet, leaving the hotel…(STEADICAM) behind them…..

INT. HONOLULU AIRPORT/SECURITY – DAY (contd. until noted)

Lena and Barry go through the x-ray thing. STEADICAM.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT/HONOLULU – AT THE GATE/WAITING AREA.

Side by side on the return flight sit Lena and Barry.

BARRY

How many times have you been on an airplane?

LENA

I think maybe over a hundred.

BARRY

That's right you travel so much.

LENA

yeah.

BEAT. The plane starts to move.

BARRY

How much do you travel? You travel all the time?

She nods her head, looks at him. BEAT. HOLD.

BARRY

I forgot about that.

LENA

Can I come home with you when we get there?

BARRY

Yeah.

LENA

It's ok to ask that.

BARRY

I thought you were anyway.

CU. BARRY'S FACE. He looks to Lena. DRUM HIT LOUD. THEN AGAIN….THEN AGAIN….and we're in the score cue for….

CUT TO BLACK.

<u>It's BLACK FOR A FEW MOMENTS.</u>

CUT TO:

INT. BARRY'S GARAGE – NIGHT

It's dark. The garage door opens and we see Barry and Lena in his car…..they're about to pull in….

…THE TOYOTA PICK UP carrying The Stevens Brothers pulls in real fast behind them and rear-ends them….

…CAMERA pushes in real fast…

Barry turns and sees Lena's head has been injured….he looks behind and sees TWO OF THE BROTHERS EMERGING FROM THE CAR…..[527]

[527] *Punch-Drunk Love: The Shooting Script*, 80-81.

Appendix Y

LENA

So….how is your harmonium doing?

Barry looks at her……

LENA

Your portable reed organ….the piano.

BARRY

Well, it's fine. Thank you.

LENA

Did you pick it up from the street?

BARRY

What?

LENA

Did you take it from the street in front of your work?

BARRY

…yes I did…?

LENA

Are you learning how to play it?

BARRY

Yes? I'm trying.

LENA

Oh that's great.[528]

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[528] Ibid., 57.

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