UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Musical Pastiche, Embodiment, and Intersubjectivity:

Listening in the Second Degree.

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page …….…….....iii

Table of Contents …….…....iv

List of Tables…….....vi

Acknowledgment ……vii

Vita ……...ix

Abstract……..…....x

Introduction……..…..…….1
0.1 Pastiche and Mimesis…….. 3
0.2 Pastiche and Other Forms of Imitative Practice……...…8
0.3 Popular Music and Pastiche: An Introductory Example……....17

Chapter One: Rethinking Lacasse: A New Framework for the Study of Imitation in Popular Music……..…33
1.1 Part II: The Mashup as Autosonic Pastiche……...54

Chapter Two Focused Transtextuality: Four Case Studies…….…….....68
2.1 Example One: 1950s Rock & Roll in the 1960s……..……..70
2.2 Example Two: 1960s French Pop in 2000s America…...……..…78
2.3 Example Three: 1970s "Stadium Rock" in the 1990s……...….93
2.4 Example Four: 1980s Electrofunk in the 2000s……...101
2.5 Chapter Conclusion……...…120

Chapter Three: Sweeping Transtextuality……..…123
3.1 Example One: Sample-Pop's Mechanism of Re-presentation…….124
3.2 The Hypertext/Hypotext Relation in Forrest's Sample-Pop……....134
3.3 Example Two: Chiptune's Transgeneric Mechanism……..……144
3.4 The Gaming Experience and Dynamic Induction……..……..145
3.5 Early Game Sound and Music…….150
3.6 Defining Chiptune: Chip Music and the Demoscene……..155
3.7 Handheld Gaming: Re-Setting Game Sound……..…….160
3.8 Chiptune and Re-Presentation……...……...165
3.9 Gaining Control and Reformatting the Planet……..167
3.10 Chiptune: Conclusion..……..…….172
3.11 Sweeping Transtextuality: Final Thought……...…179

Chapter Four: Other Spaces Pastiche Might Lay: Minstrelsy, Mimesis, & Methodology……..……..……...181
4.1 Barthes' Third Meaning……..…….188
4.2 Love and Theft: Staying Open to Signifiance……..…192

Conclusion…….....195

References…….....189

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Richard Dyer's framework for the categorization of imitation……..…….7

Table 2: Serge Lacasse's "Summary Table of Transtextual Practices in Recorded Popular Music."……...36

Table 3: Comparison - Serge's Lacasse's "Summary Table of Transtextual Practices in Recorded Popular Music" with Revised Version of Lacasse's Table…….....46

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Finally, I also dedicate this work to all of the friends and mentors who have made my eight years at UCSD rich.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Musical Pastiche, Embodiment, and Intersubjectivity: Listening in the Second Degree.

by

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Professor Jann Pasler, Chair

Popular music studies, since its inception, has been centrally concerned with the ways music participates in processes of individual and collective identity construction. This dissertation argues that the field must also be concerned with the ways music participates in processes that counter the existential effects of identification. I argue that perception of music as imitation and, more specifically, a form of perception I refer to as "the event of pastiche," is often a significant force in the service of such non-identificatory processes. Through discussions of music perceptible as imitations of 1950s rock & roll, 1960s French pop, 1970s "stadium rock," and 1980s electrofunk, and discussions of the practices of mashup, sample-pop, and chiptune music, I locate the conditions through which musicians and listeners

have used sound to foster thought and feeling that they simultaneously affirm as the property of some Other. I offer conclusions based both on textual analysis of recorded and live musical “works” and discourse analysis both from written sources and field research. The dissertation offers new frameworks for the understanding of musical imitation and opens the field of popular music studies to the study of a social function, non-identificatory practice, previously untheorized in the field.

Introduction

> Only activity is proportionate. It, and not mimesis, can bring an end to suffering.
>
> Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*[1]

Identity has long been the central concern of popular music studies. From its generative period in the 1960s and 1970s to its foundational period in the 1980s and 1990s on to present day, scholars have pointed to music as "an important way that millions of people find enjoyment, define who they are, and affirm group membership."[2] They have concerned themselves with the roles music plays in the processes of forming, asserting, negotiating, or rejecting individual or collective identities. This has led to a great deal of important work. However, the emphasis on identity can obscure other important functions popular music serves. This dissertation is an attempt to open the field to consideration of one of these obscured functions, one I will refer to as non-identification. More specifically, it is an attempt to understand how this function is realized through reception of music as pastiche, and to radically revise how musical pastiche and musical imitation in general are conceptualized in musicology.

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[1] Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002): 150.
[2] Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson, *Music Scenes: Local Translocal, and Virtual.* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004): 1.

By non-identification, I refer to encounters with the Other in which we neither identify nor counter-identify.[3] Instead, what we feel is a simultaneous sense of self and difference to self. This "paradoxical" state is an embodied affirmation of the untruth of the principle of identification; it produces feeling that leads us to observe that at the same time I am and I am not.

The principle of identification is the belief that A = A. Identification combines an awareness of one's body with a sense of sameness with some other body. This embodied process always requires the silencing of difference to allow for the amplification of what is perceived as identical.[4] Stated differently, in order to feel the truth of the statement A = A, we must ignore that these two figures A are in different places on this page, or one after the other in time. In other words, difference is absolute and faith in identity is willful ignorance. This willful ignorance contributes to the creation of community, mental health, charity, and is not likely something we would want to live without.

But identity can also become oppressive. This oppression can arise through interpellation into identities we don't feel comfortable with, prohibition from social groups we feel some affinity with, displeasure with factions of individuals with which we share collective identities, and many other sources. When identification is not serving us well, we long for affirmation of its untruth, we long to think and feel in

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[3] I understand counteridentification to signify the act of affirmation that one is not of the same kind as some Other. I use capital O "Other" here cautiously. I believe it to be appropriate as the encounter I am describing begins with a sense of absolute Otherness. However, it proceeds in a direction that negates or complicates the identification and counteridentification implied by capital O.

[4] Embodiment here refers to the state of being aware of both one's body and the autonomy one possesses over one's body. I understand identification to be an embodied affirmation of sameness to self or other.

ways that challenge the identificatory borders reified by the cultural discourse we inhabit everyday. Music perceived as pastiche has served to sate this longing. For this reason, it is the object of this study.

Pastiche and Mimesis

What I refer to as a longing for non-identification was labeled by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer as a need to exercise our mimetic faculty. An overview of Adorno and Horkheimer's theory of mimesis will help describe what I mean by non-identification and what is at stake in the study of musical pastiche. Mimesis, in their work, involves the physical act of moving and behaving in imitation of the behavior of some Other.[5] They characterize mimesis as a natural "impulse" and an essential way of coming to know the world.

Through mimesis we bring the world into our bodies and with our bodies we send physical dynamisms back into the world. Yet, Adorno and Horkheimer insist, we do not "repeat" those dynamisms we mimic. "Repetition," in their unique sense, signals the opposite of mimesis. The elements of our mimesis differ essentially from the elements that inform our embodiment. Repetition is an act of reduction that ignores this fact and gives the same name to our action and the dynamism that informs our mimetic action, dissolving the difference between the two by replacing material reality with thought. This reduction is, Adorno and Horkheimer argue, the origin point of civilizing rationality. As they see it, "[t]he principle of immanence, the

[5] See previous note on my use of capital O "Other."

explanation of every event as repetition, which enlightenment upholds against mythical imagination, is that of myth itself."[6] Repetition, they argue, is a myth that provides the structure upon which reason is built.

Enlightenment rationality, including all of the civilizing social organizations whose existence is justified in terms of rationality, is founded on this fundamental myth, yet it legitimizes itself by claiming to replace all myth with truth. The practice of mimesis threatens the claim to truth of rationality since it demands acknowledgement of the fundamental difference repetition obscures. Mimesis reinstates that which is obscured in language-based thought and in so doing it becomes the enemy of both rationality and any socio-political oppression that legitimizes itself in terms of rationality. Adorno and Horkheimer write:

> Civilization replaced the organic adaptation to otherness, mimetic behavior proper, firstly, in the magical phase, with the organized manipulation of mimesis, and finally, in the historical phase, with rational praxis, work. Uncontrolled mimesis is proscribed... The severity with which, over the centuries, the rulers have prevented both their successors and the subjugated masses from relapsing into mimetic behavior - from the religious ban on graven images through the social ostracizing of actors and gypsies to the education which "cures" children of childishness - is the condition of civilization.[7]

In this passage from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Jephcott's translation uses the word "otherness" to describe the dynamisms adapted to through "mimetic behavior proper." However, this otherness is not *absolute* Otherness. Mimesis is characterized as the way in which we come to know the world prior to the formation of the self. Mimesis always represents some variety of return to a space where "the boundary

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[6] Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic*, 8.
[7] Ibid., 148.

between oneself and other life" fails to reify into a clear division.[8] Further, the subject/object divide itself is made possible through the repression of the mimetic impulse. Adorno and Horkheimer write:

> Social and individual education reinforces the objectifying behavior required by work and prevents people from submerging themselves once more in the ebb and flow of surrounding nature. All distraction, indeed, all devotion has an element of mimicry. The ego has been formed by hardening itself against such behavior. The transition from reflecting mimesis to controlled reflection completes its formation. Bodily adaptation to nature is replaced by "recognition in a concept," the subsuming of difference under sameness.[9]

Identification can be defined in this way, as "recognition in a concept," or, in the case of self-identity, self-recognition through a concept. Identification and counter-identification depend on repetition in Adorno and Horkheimer's sense of the term. The form of "adaptation to nature" they refer to as mimesis involves, instead, a co-extensiveness between the body and the dynamisms it responds to and a relation not dominated by the reification of nature into thought/concept. The "otherness" involved in the process of mimesis, thus, cannot be understood in the common sense of Otherness involving a positioning of the "Other" beyond the limits of the self. Rather, it is an otherness both between the mimic and the dynamism embodied by the mimic and between the mimic and themselves; it is an affirmation that the mimic both is and is not the dynamism they embody.

This brings us to musical pastiche. Pastiche, in the definition I offer here, is not a property of musical works, but a kind of experience imitative works can participate in bringing about. What is fundamental to the experience I call pastiche is,

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[8] Ibid., 26.
[9] Ibid., 148.

first, a recognition of a musical work as imitative, and, second, a sense that the imitator is engaged in mimesis and not repetition in Adorno and Horkheimer's sense. Thirdly, it involves sympathy between the listener and the imitator the work prompts the listener to posit; by judging the nature of the imitation, the listener, in the experience of pastiche, imaginatively inhabits the position of mimic and experiences the non-identificatory relation to self and other that characterizes mimesis in Adorno and Horkheimer's definition. The experience that I call musical pastiche begins with a judgment, not of the characteristics of a work, but of the nature of the experience of that work's author in relation to that which they have imitated. Throughout this dissertation I will attempt to theorize what makes certain listeners prone to imagine the experiences of such authors as mimesis and not repetition. Further, I will attempt to understand what makes certain listeners desire to dwell in their sympathies, to accept and prolong the experience of pastiche. I propose that a sense of dislocation from the identities the listener is interpellated into in their daily lives can lead some listeners to want to use music as a means of accessing this state of non-identity. I understand pastiche as a balm that helps those subject to alienation affirm that the rules and borders of identities are arbitrary, that identity/repetition is false and, as such, those rules and borders can be disrespected, that our thought and feeling can operate beyond its dictates.

In my work, makers of musical imitation will be included in this category of "the dislocated listener." Musical imitation always begins with the imitator as listener. Thus, a study of pastiche as experience can work to comment on the conditions through which musical imitation can come about. However, I maintain that the

musical imitation born out of an experience of pastiche will give rise to a variety of different experiences; though it may give rise to pastiche in some listeners, it will certainly not do so universally for all who experience it. To understand the variety of experiences given rise to by imitation, musical or otherwise, I turn now to the categorical efforts of Richard Dyer.

Pastiche and other forms of Imitative Practice

Richard Dyer's *Pastiche* (2007) provides a concise and productive definition of pastiche and an excellent framework in which the various forms of artistic imitative practice can be categorized and understood. He presents a three-tier framework that, I argue, mirrors the process we inevitably go through when we encounter imitation in art. In the table below, these three tiers are represented by the upper three rows; the types of imitation below these rows belong to the categories under which they are placed:

Table 1: Richard Dyer's framework for the categorization of imitation.[10]

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">CONCEALED</td><td colspan="2">UNCONCEALED</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">NOT TEXTUALLY SIGNALLED</td><td colspan="2">TEXTUALLY SIGNALLED</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">EVALUATIVELY OPEN</td><td>EVALUATIVELY PREDETERMINED</td></tr>
<tr><td>plagiarism</td><td>copies</td><td>pastiche</td><td>emulation
homage</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">fake
forgery
hoax</td><td>versions</td><td rowspan="2"></td><td>travesty
burlesque
mock epic</td></tr>
<tr><td>genre</td><td>parody</td></tr>
</table>

We can see that there are four columns beneath the three upper rows. Each of these columns represents a particular category of imitation. The first column, for example, which contains plagiarism, fake, forgery, and hoax, is the category of concealed, not textually signaled, evaluatively open imitation. When more than one type of imitation appears in the same box in a column, like fake, forgery, and hoax, this is because Dyer perceives them to form a subcategory within each category. Pastiche is in a category of its own under Dyer's three tiers. In what follows, I will explain these tiers and how they come to define pastiche.

The first tier involves differentiating between concealed and unconcealed imitation. Dyer identifies plagiarism, fakes, forgeries, and hoaxes as varieties where the concealment of their status as imitation is essential to their achieving their purpose.

[10] Richard Dyer, *Pastiche*. (New York: Rouledge, 2007): 24.

Unconcealed imitation, conversely, is imitation whose author has no investment in concealing it as such. Dyer situates pastiche as unconcealed.[11]

The second tier of Dyer's framework is easier to explain after we understand the terms of the third. The effects of material perceived as imitative always depend upon the viewer/listener's perception of the imitator's derision towards or respect for the material they have imitated, which can be referred to as the hypotext.[12] Categorization of imitation involves an important distinction between what Dyer calls "evaluatively open" and "evaluatively predetermined" imitation. Evaluative predeterminedness is the sense that the imitator possesses a firm evaluative stance towards their hypotext(s). "Evaluative openness" is the sense that neither derision nor respect is notably present, or, that they are *both* present in comparable measure. In

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[11] It is worth noting that this definition of pastiche represents a substantial shift away from the etymological roots of the term. Ingeborg Hoesterey, in her *Pastiche: Cultural Memory in Art, Film, Literature*, explains that before "pasticcio" described a type of artistic production it "denoted in early modern Italian a pâté of various ingredients – a hodgepodge of meat, vegetables, eggs, and a variety of other possible additions" (1). The stew became a metaphor for a "genre of painting of questionable quality that was the product of… an eclectic painter who drew upon diverse techniques and styles" (Ibid., 1). Painters that drew elements from multiple master works to quickly create derivative paintings to sell in a flourishing Italian art market existed alongside painters and sculptors who produced copies of single works. Hoesterey suggests that the term was also used to describe these more direct forms of plagiarism or copy. She also suggests that alongside being mistaken as original, first-order works these copies were sometimes consciously appreciated as stand-ins for their "original" and as skillfully executed copies. Pastiche, in this usage, seems identical to plagiarism in the first instance and copy in the second. The etymological connection between pastiche and forms of unconcealed imitation has been retained in contemporary English invocations of the term pastiche as a means of devaluing a work as derivative or plagiaristic. As such, attempts to discuss pastiche as a category of imitation distinct from copy or plagiarism must contend with historical and contemporary colloquial uses of the term which imply the lack of such a distinction. See Ingeborg Hoesterey, *Pastiche: Cultural Memory in Art, Film, Literature.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

[12] Gerard Genette, whose book *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* has became a central text in the study of literary imitation, established the use of the term hypotext to refer to that which is imitated. The reader should be aware that with pastiche the imitated material is often not a specific text, but, rather, multiple texts or, even more non-specific, one or more styles or genres rather than texts. I will pluralize hypotext when appropriate, but when referring to a style/genre I will often employ my own term, hypotextual area. In certain instances, like the current instance, the word hypotext is capable of and intended to refer both to imitations of specific works and more general imitations of styles/genres.

this sense, multiple forms of evaluative openness exist. Copies, for instance, contain a form of simple evaluative openness, in that they are perceived to contain no evaluation of that which they imitate. Pastiche may also be seen as containing no evaluative commentary, but much more often its evaluative openness arises through ambiguity of evaluative content rather than its absence. This ambiguity equals a middle ground between evaluatively predetermined imitation perceived to respectfully identify with its hypotext (hommage) and evaluatively predetermined imitation perceived to counteridentify with its hypotext (parody, in one of its definitions). It contains elements of the closeness of hommage *and* elements of the distance of parody. It is this co-presence of closeness and distance that constitutes the usual "evaluative openness" of pastiche.

The second tier in Dyer's framework is the distinction between textually signaled and not textually signaled varieties of imitation. Textual signals are elements of an imitation perceived to encourage listeners to recognize the work as imitation. Textually signaled imitation is perceived to contain such elements; "not textually signaled" is thought to be absent of them. Dyer identifies copy, version, and "autonomous genre work" as three varieties of imitation that are not textually signaled.[13] Unlike plagiarism and other concealed forms of imitation, these three varieties warrant more discussion here as we often struggle in our encounters with popular music to decide which variety is manifesting.

[13] "Autonomous genre work" is the term Dyer uses to refer to work perceived as part of a perceptible genre, but not as imitation in any fashion beyond the imitation involved in producing a new work in an established genre. The utility of the term lies in its capacity to remind us that a degree of imitation is what gives rise to all creative work.

Dyer defines copy as "work that seeks to reproduce another work in the same medium as precisely and accurately as possible."[14] He is careful to acknowledge that no copy is ever precisely the same as the original and so every copy is also, in a sense, a version. However, versions differ from copies in that versions can be seen to intentionally differ from that which they imitate. Also, versions of works that are "faithful" reproductions of the original differ ontologically from copies; copies are not considered authentic instantiations of a particular work even though they re-present that work with only the most miniscule degree of variation. Their status as second-order is different in kind from version.

Dyer does not deal with music extensively, yet he turns to the tribute band, music impersonation, and certain kinds of cover songs as examples of copy. Tribute bands are musical ensembles that perform the works of a pre-existing group, imitating not just their music but, often, their image and on-stage performance style.[15] The notion that tribute acts do not textually signal their imitative status is not universally true; tribute acts sometimes create work best considered signaled imitation. However, Dyer is correct in identifying that the aesthetic goals of the tribute act most commonly involve the transcendence of imitative likeness into a kind of sameness with the artist or group they imitate through audience suspension of disbelief. In an article on Beatles tribute acts, Ian Inglis quotes a member of a UK-based Beatles tribute act

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[14] Dyer, *Pastiche*, 32.

[15] In Shane Homan's introduction to *Access All Eras: Tribute Bands and Global Pop Culture* he defines the tribute band by explaining that "[t]ribute acts exclusively perform the recordings of one band or artist, and may even concentrate on a specific period of the artist/group" (5). The history of the tribute act is predated by the practice of impersonation of an individual music star. For a discussion of how members of tribute bands see their work as distinct from impersonation, see: Jason Oakes, "All the King's Elvii: identifying with Elvis through musical tribute." In *Access All Eras: Tribute Bands and Global Pop Culture*, ed. Shane Homan. (New York: Open University Press, 2006).

called the Bootleg Beatles explaining that: "Our job is to convince people, over the course of two hours, that we're the Beatles. Obviously, they don't *really*, deep down, think we're the Beatles, but they can be teased into it in some sort of way… and by the time we get to 'Hey Jude' people have just accepted that they've seen the Beatles."[16] Similarly, the cover songs Dyer refers to as copies are cover songs "in the original sense of an exact but cheaper version of a current hit."[17] These songs seek to stand in for the songs they imitate, whereas versions attempt to stand alongside.

We also need to consider what would make a cover song manifest as a pastiche and not a copy or version and what would make a re-presentation of a musical style manifest as a pastiche and not "autonomous genre work."[18] When I say a version stands "alongside" a pre-existing original of which it is a variety of imitation I mean that both take on nearly equal ontological weight. One of two scenarios is possible: In the first, the "work" begins as "allosonic," which means that there is no proper "original" version of the piece in question.[19] When this occurs,

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[16] Neil Harrison quoted in Ian Inglis, "Fabricating the Fab Four: Pastiche and Parody." In *Access All Eras: Tribute Bands and Global Pop Culture*, ed. Shane Homan. (New York: Open University Press, 2006): 128.

[17] Dyer, *Pastiche*, 33. In contemporary uses, the term "cover song" refers to a variety of imitation that would more commonly fall into the category of version. Dyer is referring to the practice prevalent in the 1950s of multiple groups re-recording a popular hit to quickly cash in on its popularity. This practice commonly resulted in recordings that would outsell and out-chart the "original." This practice has since become increasingly rare. This practice will be revisited in the next chapter.

[18] "Version" in Dyer's usage is distinct from its most common vernacular usage. In the vernacular sense it might seem that a song could be both a pastiche or a copy and a version; it is important to note here that this is not true in Dyer's sense. The terms are mutually exclusive categories. This is not to say that a listener could not experience a musical "work" as more than one category in a single listening. Yet, still in this case, each experience would manifest as a distinct event arising from distinct processes of thought and feeling.

[19] Allosonic is a term used by Serge Lacasse as an audio based equivalent of Nelson Goodman's term allographic. See: Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968). Goodman's term was designed to make a distinction between what he called allographic and autographic works. Allographic works are works that do not have a material "original." In music, an example can be found in notated music. Any performance of a musical score

various performances of the piece are received as manifestations of the same "work," and thus they all bear a similar ontological weight, in that they are not thought of as imitations of one another. In the second scenario, the "work" begins as "autosonic," which means that subsequent versions can be understood as secondary to an "original."[20] This secondary nature is implied by terms like remix, cover song, and reprise. However, in these cases, thanks to the perceived lack of textual signaling, the degree of difference the imitation bears from the "original" bestows an ontological weight on the imitation that, rather than being lesser, is comparable to the weight of the original. The "imitation" is often seen as an "interpretation" of the "original" in which the degrees of difference become the objects of aesthetic scrutiny, establishing the imitation as something distinct from, or "more" than, a copy. We can think of this in terms of the "version" bearing the signature of the interpreter over and above the signature of the original author of the work. In other words, recognition of the work as an imitation is not a necessary component in standard approaches to its appreciation.[21] With pastiche and other forms signaled imitation, this is not the case. The signaling of signaled imitation is always a pointing to the imitative status of the

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may be considered a manifestation of the "work" proper; no one performance can be called an original proper. "Autographic" "works" are those which have a material "original," like works of popular music created in a recording studio. Goodman's terms have also been used by other popular music theorists. In his *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), Theodore Gracyk uses Goodman's terms (autographic and allographic, not Lacasse's autosonic and allosonic) to argue that listeners commonly misunderstand rock music by imagining it to be a primarily allographic art form. A broader discussion of these terms can be found in the next chapter.

[20] See previous note for more discussion of the autosonic.

[21] This is because the emphasis is on the work itself as a work and not on the imitator's communication of an evaluative stance towards that work. Of course, an evaluative stance, usually a positive evaluation, may be assumed and perceived as a result of the imitator's choice to bother creating a version of the work. At the point where this perception becomes the dominant meaning the listener articulates with the work, the event would be more relevantly categorized as tribute rather than version. One might argue that a tribute can still, also, be a version. While this objection speaks to the commonplace uses of the terms, I think there is a utility in reserving the term "version" to describe works perceived as more evaluatively open than predetermined.

work, a demand that its secondary status be acknowledged in order for it to achieve its intended effect.

I must note, although this will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, in many uses pastiche does not describe imitations that re-present a single work. Definitions of pastiche like the one employed by the musicologist Serge Lacasse, discussed in the following chapter, restrict the term to the description of imitation without a specific hypotext. I disagree with this impulse and side with Dyer in supporting a definition that includes such work. While pastiche may imitate styles/hypotextual areas more often than specific hypotexts, I understand the term to be capable of referring to both varieties of imitation. As I see it, such a definition is essential to the study of pastiche as it manifests through music.

Differentiating pastiche from "autonomous genre work" is often much more difficult than differentiating pastiche and version. Determining whether a work should be considered a pastiche often involves going beyond the textual level. Dyer notes that "the case for any given work being considered pastiche has to be made through a combination of contextual and paratextual indications, textual markers and aesthetic judgment."[22] In popular music, the paratextual involves song or album titles, liner notes, and the often extensive commentary expected of musicians through interviews in the popular press. The contextual includes all aspects of the social and cultural environments in which the music is consumed and performed. With pastiche, the most relevant aspects of the contextual have to do with temporal and cultural gaps between the imitation and its hypotexts. The contextual also includes the audiences

[22] Dyer, *Pastiche*, 4.

and their relationship to the imitated music, the relationship of the venues and cultural geographies of the imitation to those of the hypotext, and other differences and similarities in the cultural practices surrounding the two musics.

Like versions, work perceived as "autonomous genre work" is not commonly perceived as imitation. Works in a particular genre are usually thought to share a common language and heritage and to bear equal ontological weight with works that precede them in the same genre, rather than being thought of in the unequal terms of hypotext/hypertext or imitated/imitator. Genre differs from style in that the term implies adherence to both the conventions of musical style and cultural practice. While pastiche and its hypotext may be stylistically indistinguishable, there are almost always relevant differences in terms of the cultural practices through which each was produced. Still, genre distinctions are flexible and there is usually no single authority by which they can be defined. Many differences in the cultural practices that lead to the production of a work may not be enough to disqualify that work from being considered part of the genre in question. Yet, for "work" to manifest as pastiche and not as "autonomous genre work," textual and/or contextual and/or paratextual elements must exist that compel the listener to sense the work is being "signaled" as imitation. Subsequently, for a "work" to manifest as pastiche and not one of the evaluatively predetermined forms of signaled imitation, the same elements must compel the listener to feel the "work" is closer to being evaluatively open than it is to being evaluatively predetermined.

And so, pastiche can be defined as textually signaled, evaluatively open imitation. If we ponder Dyer's terminology more deeply we can recognize that

evaluative openness, as well as evaluative predeterminedness, at least in relationship to music, needs to be conceived not just in terms of evaluation, but also identification. To attach value to cultural material might not necessarily also be to identify with that material. However, from a psychoanalytic standpoint any emotional investment, or cathexis, is identificatory in nature.[23] Valuation usually involves some degree of emotional investment; evaluative investment in the world of popular music production and reception seems particularly prone to also being emotional investment. Thus, the perception of some musical work as evaluatively predetermined imitation usually involves simultaneous perception of valuation and identification or counteridentification between the imitator and their hypotext. For example, if we perceive a musical work to be a tribute to another artist, we also are likely to imagine the imitator identifying in some way with the artist they are saluting. The perception of a "work" as evaluatively open is similar but more complex. Evaluative openness can involve perception of powerful valuations on the part of imitator, so long as positive valuations are understood to be co-present with negative valuations. Openness is constituted less often by lack of valuation than by co-present conflicting valuations. The identificatory equivalent of conflicting valuation is identity in crisis, identity in contradiction with itself. The experience of pastiche is the experience of being something and its opposite, being both similar and different to one's self and to the other.

[23] See, for instance, Piera Aulagnier. "Chapter 4: The Space Where the I Can Come About." *The Violence of Interpretation.* (Philadelphia, PA: Brunner-Routledge, 2001).

Popular Music and Pastiche: An Introductory Example

The first music that I experienced as pastiche was that of the band Urge Overkill. Their song "Digital Black Epilogue," a lament that describes the tragedy of the murder of Tejano singer Selena Quintanilla-Perez, had a particularly profound effect on me. Looking closely at the experiences of myself and others around both this song and Selena's death will help us begin to understand those who long for non-identification as well as demonstrate the logic of Dyer's framework.

Selena, as she was known, was murdered March 31, 1995 and the passionate outpouring of shock and grief from her fans combined with the bizarre and dramatic circumstances of her death prompted extensive media coverage of both her murder and the mourning rituals in which her fans engaged. The scope of the public spectacle of their mourning was massive. In her article "Remembering Selena, Re-Membering 'Latinidad'," Deborah Paredez writes: "Following her death, a staggering number of memorial tributes, public performances of grief, and a proliferation of Selena impersonations were enacted in her honor. Mainstream representational and corporate forces capitalized on Selena's posthumous iconization… while for many Latina/o communities Selena's tragedy offered a site upon which to render visible their own tragic plights."[24] Selena was a celebrated singer in the Tejano music community in

[24] Deborah Paredez, "Remembering Selena, Re-Membering 'Latinidad'." *Theatre Journal* 54.1 (2002): 65. A second passage in Paradez's article paints a more complete picture of the spectacle and is worth including here: "Within hours following Selena's murder on March 31, 1995, thousands of her fans in cities from Los Angeles to Miami poured into the streets carrying signs of remembrances and holding candlelight vigils in her honor. In Corpus Christi, Selena's hometown, traffic near her house in the working class neighborhood of Molina trailed on for over a mile as hundreds drove by in a somber procession, bearing shoe polish messages like "Selena Lives On" on their windows. Hundreds more

the 1980s. Throughout the 1990s she was under contract with EMI records and being cultivated as a star that might cross over from Tejano audiences to more general Latin pop consuming audiences and, further still, into the mainstream of English language pop music in the U.S. and other markets. The "staggering" scope of her commemoration ensured that many who had never heard her music before became suddenly aware of her and of a sizable fan community that seemed to exalt her to an oddly high status for a 23 year old pop singer.[25]

In October 1995, six months after Selena's passing, Urge Overkill's *Exit the Dragon* was released. "Digital Black Epilogue" was the final track of the album. The lyrics of the song address Selena directly, expressing to her the tragedy of a life cut short and the strength we will need to carry on without her. The first eight measures of its sixteen measure instrumental introduction laid out a harmonic succession reserved for special circumstances in rock, one that seemed to overtly reference a pinnacle of rock sincerity, The Beatles' "Let It Be."[26] This succession was presented

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gathered at the Day's Inn Motel, where Selena had been fatally shot by the former president of her fan club. By the following day, thousands of her fans made the pilgrimage to Corpus Christi, transforming the motel and the 6-foot-high chain link fence surrounding Selena's home into canvases of banners, photos, flowers, flags from the US, Mexico, and El Salvador, and notes penned by visitors from throughout the continental United States, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Canada. In response to this tremendous outpouring of grief, Selena's family arranged a day long wake on Saturday, April 1at the city's Bayfront Auditorium (later renamed the Selena Auditorium), where 50,000 mourners filed past her closed casket in steady solemnity throughout the day" (Ibid., 69).

[25] Paredez powerfully demonstrates the importance the young singer played in the lives of many of her fans by including in her article a passage from an interview she conducted with a 16 year old fan named Francisco Vara-Orta. Vara-Orta told her: "Because of her contribution to Tex-Mex culture, [Latina] girls felt someone like them was on TV – and not just for being a whore, a drug addict, a politician who forgot where they came from, or a Hispanic wannabe. Because of her work, I started to learn Spanish. Her *Amor Prohibido* album was the first album I ever bought with lyrics in the language my blood is rooted in" (Ibid., 67).

[26] "Let It Be" was the title track of the Beatles' final album and one of their final chart topping singles. It has been canonized in many forms, one of which was its being ranked at number 20 on *Rolling Stone* magazine's 2004 list of the 500 greatest songs of all time. Like "Digital Black Epilogue," "Let It Be" makes an instrumental/timbral departure from preceding album tracks, paring down the textures of

by instrumentation unique and rare, a combination of an electronic organ and upper range coloration by a music box. The timbre of the organ carried with it a history of use in Christian chapels and in gospel and electric blues music and its appearance on *Exit the Dragon* was a complete departure from the dominant electric guitar timbres of the rest of the album's tracks. The guitar, bass, and drums entered after the first eight measures, but the overall texture remained atypical for the band. Along with the organ, strings charged with allusive potential contributed to the texture. The form was equally atypical of Urge Overkill's music and potentially referential; the song unfolded over eight and a half minutes in an extended form typical of gospel and gospel influenced rock, necessary for the performance of deeply felt grief or faith.

All of the musical characteristics necessary for an exceptional display of rock sincerity were present. When I had encountered these characteristics in the past, the music usually managed to carry me into a changed emotional state. For however long such pieces lasted, I felt sympathy with what I thought were the emotions of the vocalist as they gave voice to the effects the music had on me and the content of the lyrics being presented. The emotions were my own and they were capable of giving

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what came before it and moving into a new timbral/textural space – here a lone acoustic piano accompanying the vocal. This type of shift is a performative gesture that can often signal to the listener that a space of enhanced sincerity has been entered. The harmonic succession achieves a similar effect by departing from rock's tendency towards avoiding returns to the tonic chord in the final measure of a harmonic succession. The verses of "Let It be" present a I -V- vi - IV - I -V- IV-I succession in C major in which the atypical return to the final I chord is highlighted with a pronounced descent on beats 3 and 4 on the penultimate measure leading to that return. The introduction to "Digital Black Epilogue" has roughly the same harmonic succession and includes an identical descent into the tonic. This descent is simple, powerful and, again, atypical; its presence in "Let It Be" is memorable and its return in "Digital Black Epilogue" would amount to an allusion for many listeners. Even if not recognized as an allusion, this structure can connote a kind of stability or assuredness. The simple way in which the tonic is returned to and the rootedness of the beginning and end of the eight measure units in the tonic are ideal representations of the theme of both songs, the notion of finding and having strength in difficult times. The Beatles, "Let It Be." *Let It Be.* Apple Records, AR 34001, 1970.

rise to a similarity to self, but they arose from identification with an other in that I understood the vocalist to be experiencing similar emotional states. This time, listening to “Digital Black Epilogue,” there were other elements that complicated what the song was giving rise to in me; the formula for rock sincerity was being followed, but specific signals derailed that sincerity and brought forth in me the experience that this dissertation is concerned with theorizing.

The music box mentioned above represented the first of these signals. Present in only the right stereo channel, the countermelody it presented harmonically complemented the melody and the harmonic succession the organ outlined in the first eight bars. Yet, the timbres of the two instruments carried with them such oppositional connotations that their harmonic synchrony seemed unsettling. The electric organ carried with it the weight of the complex emotional terrain it had been instrumental support to in the religious and musical contexts it had participated in. Conversely, the music box recalled childhood innocence and naïveté, undermining the weight of the organ, seemingly a signal that the organ was not to be taken seriously. This signal was brief and was followed by the entrance of the guitar, bass, and drums. With that entrance, the organ changed to a spectrally calmer timbre, but remained present. The music box disappeared, its warning present only in its absence in what followed.

The next signal came towards the end of the second verse. The verses had established a phrase pattern that included three bars of melodic activity followed by a bar of melodic rest on the tonic chord within a I-V-IV-I harmonic succession. The third incidence of this pattern during the second verse diverted away from the final

tonic chord of the succession following the lyric: “she was only twenty three years old.” With this unexpected harmonic shift came a shift in texture; the texture thickened with grating, foregrounded single note ascents in the upper range of the guitar and a return to the opening organ timbre. This harmonic and textural/timbral shift painted the lyric with an intensity that seemed excessive. But this lasted a mere five measures before a more sober texture returned. Like the music box, this brief intrusion served to denaturalize what came before it and what followed. It shook me out of the musical effects of the prior verses and brought more conscious attention to the presence of those effects as effects when they returned.

One more verse went by before a third signal, an odd instrumental bridge that introduced strings into the instrumentation of the song. A metrical reinterpretation occurred wherein the final measure of the third verse also served as the first measure of this thirteen measure long, unanticipated interruption. The bridge functioned similarly to the interruption in the second verse, disrupting the stylistic coherence momentarily before that coherence returned and was audible as such once again.

The song then proceeded into a fourth verse, followed by a repeat of the first two verses, and then into a fifth and final verse that climatically abandoned the established pattern of three-bar lyrical phrases for an antiphonic series of short, emotion-charged utterances between the two vocalists. And then, as with the appearance of the bridge, a metrical reinterpretation appeared causing the last measure of the last verse to also serve as the first measure of a new section: a four and a half minute long outro that traded the sincerity of “Let It Be” for the equally serious

aesthetic of "I am the Walrus."[27] This outro concluded the song with an instrumental vamp that gradually built textural density to a final climax, burying a martial snare rhythm that began the outro and shifting out of the gospel rock style towards a more psychedelic rock related texture. Like the gesture that opened the song, these kinds of outros are reserved in rock-related music for exceptional circumstances. "I Am the Walrus," for instance, was taken by many to be the Beatles' ultimate tribute to the psychedelic drug trip. These outros can seem to suggest a performance of triumphal masculinity; in this context, a triumphantly masculine gesture seemed to me to be excessive to the point of irony in the service of a tribute to the memory of a young, female pop idol. This outro was the final signal interrupting the stylistic coherence of the song.

Music reviewers have called the song "ignominious,"[28] "absurd and ineffectual,"[29] and have made comments like: "the duet on `Digital Black Epilogue` embodies everything that makes them able to cover a Neil Diamond song (last year's soundtrack smash, 'Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon') with a straight face."[30] The textual devices I am referring to here as "signals," combined with contextual and paratexual considerations, have prompted reviewers to hear the song as something other than a sincere lament. The signals disturb the efficacy of the gospel rock sincerity of the rest of the song as it attempts to lull the listener into the emotional space most of these gospel rock laments can create. The experience of the song for

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[27] The Beatles, "I Am the Walrus." *Magical Mystery Tour*. Parlophone, CDP 7 48062 2, 1967.
[28] Ira Robbins, "Urge Overkill, Nash Kato," *Trouser Press*, accessed April 24 2006, http://www.trouserpress.com/entry.php?a=urge_overkill.
[29] Ibid.
[30] "Exit the Dragon," Great Escape Online, accessed July 12, 2008, http://www.thegreatescapeonline.com/item_details.jsp?item_id=USED72064248

some listeners has been the experience of being alternately drawn in and pulled out of the emotional space that the gospel rock genre provides. Listeners may be inclined to experience the song less as a rock/gospel lament and more as an imitation of one, and they may experience that imitation as either evaluatively predetermined or evaluatively open towards its hypotext. I want to resist any argument regarding which of these readings/experiences is most frequent/likely. But, I want to explore what might compel musicians like Urge Overkill to create a gospel/rock lament *capable of* being received as textually signaled, evaluatively open imitation. To do so, I want to discuss radio personality Howard Stern's role in the period of Selena's mourning. Empathizing with the way Stern was interpellated into and resisted the role of mourner can help us understand the functions pastiche serves.[31]

The depth of Selena's significance for many of her fans was lost to some degree on many forced to acclimatize quickly in April of 1995 to the existence of this star, her massive fan base, and the "staggering" scope of their mourning. Howard Stern made unfortunate and insulting comments in the midst of their mourning that revealed the disconnect between the fans who mourned Selena and those caught off guard by the scope of that mourning. On April 3, the day of Selena's funeral, Stern commented: "This music does absolutely nothing for me. Alvin and the Chipmunks have more soul… Spanish people have the worst taste in music. They have no

[31] Interpellation is Louis Althusser's term to refer to the fact that rather than choosing our own identity, we are often "hailed into" identity by external forces. Interpellation is this process of forcing identity on individuals through such a hailing process. See: Louis Althusser. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays.* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2006).

depth… Selena? Her music is awful."[32] He then went on, sounding off multiple deeply insulting stereotypes about Mexican and Mexican-American culture.[33]

Stern's comments intervened directly in the mourning process of many and sparked understandable outrage. His comments were racist and insensitive, yet they are worth quoting here because they bespeak the dislocation that I feel fuels mimesis. His comments seem to reveal that the media response to Selena's death offered many a framework for feeling that they were forced to reject. He argued that if her music was of greater aesthetic value, the scope of her memorialization would be more justified. Seemingly lost on Stern was the fact that she was a symbol for Mexican-Americans having a place and a voice in mainstream American society and she was not being celebrated solely for her musical achievements. But, also seemingly lost on Stern was the fact that her music itself had significant aesthetic value for her fans, that she had a lengthy and musically significant career already by 23 years old, and that musical values are not universal and it was his failing that he lacked the perspective to appreciate the music in the way her fans did.

What I am ultimately interested in here is the fact that Stern felt and performed with intensity the need to express puzzlement that Selena was being publicly mourned. It attests to the fact that the media spectacle surrounding her passing involved an offering of and interpellation into a framework of feeling certain

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[32] Quoted in Maria Celeste Arraras, *Selena's Secret*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997): 24, and Stefani Asin and R.A. Dyer, "Selena's Public Outraged: Shock Jock Howard Stern's comments hit raw nerve." *Houston Chronicle*, April 6, 1995.

[33] Stern went on to say "I don't know what Mexicans are into. If you're going to sing about what's going on in Mexico, what can you say?... You can't grow crops, you got a cardboard house, your eleven-year-old daughter is a prostitute… This is music to perform abortions to" (Ibid). He also played her music while inserting the sound of gunfire overtop.

publics had trouble locating themselves within. Stern's choice to comment on her passing may indicate that the media did more than report her mourning, that it compelled its public to participate in that mourning.

Paredez argues that Stern's "not mourning" was a response to "the substantial presence of Latina/o rendered visible," one that aimed to "redraw[] the borders of America to exclude Latina/os."[34] This theorization is plausible and necessary, especially given the racially charged nature of Stern's comments.[35] However, at one point in her argument Paredez takes issue with comments made by New York University professor Diana Taylor on the matter. Paredez writes:

> Diana Taylor argues that for Stern, Selena's death 'proves too lowly to constitute a [social] drama' and is thereby 'reduced to an incident,' I suggest that Stern's acknowledgement of Selena and her fans actually signals his fear that the substantial presence of Latina/os rendered visible at Selena's wake constitutes significantly more than a mere incident."[36]

Both theorizations may, in fact, speak important truths. It is possible that Stern's comments began as a response to his being interpellated as mourner by the media spectacle surrounding Selena's death and at some point transformed into a xenophobic response to a display of the presence of a Mexican-American population normally invisible in mainstream American visual and musical culture.

Stern, for better or worse, can serve as a symbolic touchstone in this work, as the dislocated potential pasticheur. His role in the process of Selena's mourning is

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[34] Ibid., 72.
[35] Paredez also discusses how later in the radio program Stern took on on-air phone call from "two disc jockeys from KXTJ, a Tejano radio station in Houston" and "asserted, "If you don't like it, go back to Mexico," following his comments with the claim that if his Mexican-American critics were to achieve political power in America, "It's *adios*, Constitution. They'd ruin this country, too.'" (Ibid., 71).
[36] Ibid., 72.

that of a culturally and ideologically dislocated subject. He was interpellated into the role of mourner by the intensity and scope of the mourning rituals he was witness to via the media coverage of these events. We can imagine Stern watching Selena's fans pouring into the streets and devoting themselves to the public performance of their grief. Then we can imagine how, when we are witness to such rituals, we are moved emotionally and we can imagine these images creating these emotions in him. Then we can imagine his rejection of those emotions based on his assessment that those emotions were, in fact, not emotions he wanted to feel, not emotions he agreed with, not emotions in line with the values he holds and the identity he has chosen. Then we can imagine his comments as a form of revenge on the people whose actions prompted him to feel, even momentarily, in ways that were not useful to his self-conception. The experiences that prompted his insensitive commentary seem quite similar to the state that I argue inspires pastiche.

Listening to "Digital Black Epilogue," I can imagine Urge Overkill in a position similar to Stern's, confronted with a staggering spectacle of grief, feeling emotion rise from being witness to such a spectacle, and coming to the realization that culturally and ideologically, that grief was not theirs. But, rather than a reaction like Stern's that reasserts their identity and rejects outright the emotions that are deemed unusable, they chose to prolong that dislocation, to dwell in those feelings, feeling them as such rather than just feeling them or feeling them and rejecting them as Stern did.

The event of pastiche always begins with the recognition of a musical "work" as imitation. And, that recognition always involves a positioning of the author(s) of

the musical "work" in relation to the context(s) in which the imitated "work(s)" are thought to properly reside. In the case of "Digital Black Epilogue," Urge Overkill are likely to be understood as in a position similar to Stern, as outsiders confronted with the spectacle of Selena's fans' grief, rather than as fans in mourning. It is difficult to pinpoint which of the contextual, paratextual, and textual elements would be most responsible for a reception in which "Digital Black Epilogue" gives rise to pastiche; the elements act in concert and are difficult to treat independently. [37] Certainly the contextual, the subject of the lament in relation to the social location of the musicians, could play an important role. When I first heard the song I knew little about Selena, but I knew she was a pop singer and, like Howard Stern, I was, at the time, positioned to see pop music as trivial and to assume these are also the values of any rock-oriented group like Urge Overkill. A firm ideological opposition between rock and

[37] The contextual can be considered first. Like most pastiche, the hypotexts of "Digital Black Epilogue" amount to a multiplicity of styles and "works," yet, one style in particular is dominant, the gospel-influenced rock lament. In 1995, and to the present day, the gospel-influenced rock lament has existed as a relatively undercoded style (see note 5 in chapter three for a discussion of undercodedness); it has stretched across periods and is subsequently not strongly associated with a particular temporal location. Different listeners will have diverging assumptions about racial ownership of gospel music. Though gospel music originated in "black" communities and continues to be associated with the notion of "black music," there is a strong history of "white" rock musicians incorporating gospel influences into their music in the style of "Digital Black Epilogue." Thus, the use of gospel music by a group of "white" rock musicians from Chicago would not likely be seen as uncharacteristic of the rock genre to those familiar with the genre. The divergence of the gospel influenced rock style from the rest of *Exit the Dragon* and the rest of the band's work as a whole may or may not play a role in rendering the work signaled imitation. It is a drastic aesthetic divergence from the rest of the album; yet, as I implied earlier, it is standard practice in rock music to reserve such stylistic material for isolated expressions of sincerity. The paratextual may figure into a listener's judgment if that listener happened to encounter Urge Overkill interviews that mentioned "Digital Black Epilogue." Urge Overkill went through a number of phases in terms of the way they dealt with the media. During the period of *Exit the Dragon*, they presented themselves in a seemingly self-serious manner that could be read as ironic. As such, they tended not to make direct reference to their imitative status, but it was easy enough, for many listeners, to read between the lines and see their media "performances" as also imitative and complex in their sincerity. Clues to the ironic nature of their presentation could be found in their clothes, their sphere of reference, and their demeanor. These contextual and paratextual elements, if recognized, may align with the textual "defects" that I outlined earlier to render the song both signaled imitation and evaluatively open. I deal with the group in more detail in chapter two.

pop music was prevalent then and mediated the way that I listened; the idea of the unlikelihood of musicians so deeply invested in the rock genre creating an epic lament to memorialize a pop singer, especially one that I had hardly heard of, was central to my reading of the song. The textual signals acted like confirmations of this reading. They brought my attention to the conventions of the gospel rock lament by departing momentarily from them; they pointed to the gospel influenced rock lament as a framework by adding elements that disturbed its stylistic conventions with brief stutters throughout the first half of the song. And, the stylistic shift of the final section acted as a final, unquestionable confirmation of my reading; the cultural meanings the gesture carried with it were so inconsistent with the topic of the song that I could only locate the song outside of the genre of the gospel influenced rock lament and in the category of signaled imitation/deformation of that genre. At the same time, in my reading, none of these elements amounted to unambiguous mockery of Selena, her mourners, or gospel influenced rock as a musical style; for the most part, the song offered the experience of a gospel influenced rock lament while the textual signals that interrupted that experience prompted me to attend to the emotional effects the gospel style was having and reminded me that I was actually at an ideological and cultural divide from the subjects to whom that emotion more properly belonged.

Recognizing the song as imitation meant recognizing the mimetic state the performers were occupying and empathetically co-occupying that mimetic state. It meant locating ownership of the thoughts and emotions the music brought forth in a hypothetical third body, the distraught mourner/lament-singer, rather than in the bodies of the performers. It also meant that much of the thought or emotion the music

produced in me needed to be marked as the rightful property of someone other than myself. Yet, I was still feeling that emotion. As much as it was not mine, it was still mine in that I had access to it.

The perception that the music we are listening to belongs to someone other than us is also, in most cases, the identification of a practice that contributes to the construction of that identity for some who adopt it. Some listening experiences involve the awareness that the listener is in the presence of tools without which certain identities could not have manifested in the ways they did. Some listening involves being witness to the ways music has informed other bodies and knowing, when hearing or rehearing that music, that the thoughts and feelings created in correspondence with that music are thoughts and feelings we experience despite our lack of access to the identificatory categories perceived as the owners of that music. Yet, since we have granted ownership of that music to an individual or group that we know we are separate from, we may experience its resources not as our own, as negotiated between our body and the sounds of music, but as the property of Others. And, because of this, we may experience a kind of possession; we may channel through our body the body of some Other. In these moments, we engage in a mimetic or imitative form of listening, we listen to other people listening. And we may recognize that we are subject to thoughts and feelings that are both palpably ours and absolutely the property of someone else.

It is these types of encounter that are theorized in this dissertation. In Chapter One, “A Framework for the Study of Imitation in Popular Music,” I will provide a critique and revision of Serge Lacasse’s article “Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in

Recorded Popular Music." The article is an attempt to provide a framework for the study of imitation in popular music; its recent re-printing in the 2007 volume *Critical Essays in Popular Musicology* has established it as a leading paper on the topic in the field. I will argue that his system of categorization confuses process and event, but that a revised version of it can be employed alongside that of Dyer to theorize both imitative process and the experiences to which work perceived as imitation can give rise. The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first, I deal directly with Lacasse's work. In the second section, I reinforce my critique of Lacasse through an extended discussion of the recently emergent practice of mashup composition.

Chapter Two is concerned with the theorization of what I will call "focused transtextuality," which could also be referred to or defined as single-hypotext based imitation. Here I will provide close readings of four examples of popular musical projects rooted in single-hypotext based imitation, poised to give rise to the event of pastiche. I will hesitate to assert that any of this imitative work "is" pastiche, but will try and show that evaluative predeterminedness from both ends of the parody/tribute spectrum is perceptible in these bodies of work and suggest that, as such, they present prime conditions for pastiche. In this chapter, I also address the identificatory dislocation that can compel the musician towards mimesis. Further, I detail why the listener and the creator of musical pastiche are analogues; I suggest that musical imitation capable of giving to rise to pastiche seems to consistently emerge from hypotexts that themselves are capable of giving rise to pastiche.

I will begin this series of close readings with a discussion of Sha Na Na, the group often credited for sparking the 1950s revival movement of the late 1960s/early

1970s. Next I discuss Les Sans Culottes, a group of non-French speaking American musicians who re-present the French pop/rock of the 1960s. This will be followed by a more detailed examination of the conditions under which the group that provided my initial example, Urge Overkill, developed. Finally, I will present Chromeo, a project that re-presents the electrofunk of the 1980s two decades after its decline.

Chapter Three will contrast my discussion of focused transtextuality with a variety of imitation I call "sweeping." Sweeping transtextuality is imitation wherein the particularities of its hypotexts become less significant due to the imitation's participation in a wider imitative project that extends to multiple hypotextual areas.[38] As such, the mechanism of re-presentation becomes more noticeable, more experientially significant than with focused transtextuality. In this chapter, I will theorize the effects of this foregrounding of the mechanism of re-presentation and discuss the ways this foregrounding plays into determinations of the evaluative stance of the hypertext.

In this chapter, I will examine two examples of sweeping transtextuality, the sample-pop of Jason Forrest and the transgeneric imitative mechanism active in the genre of chiptune. In both of these examples, I will discuss how the conditions for the rise of the event of pastiche are met. In my discussion of Forrest's work, I will argue that the mechanism of re-presentation he employs structures samples in a manner that might prompt listeners to be conscious of themselves as listeners in a manner other musics do not; I outline how the way he organizes his samples invites the listener to contemplate the ways they articulate meanings with musical sound. In my second

[38] For a definition of "hypotextual area" see note 12 in this chapter.

example, I will argue that chiptune's mechanism of re-presentation arose out of the experiential dynamics of the home and handheld video game systems from which chiptune derives its sonic aesthetic. In both examples, I will demonstrate how these mechanisms of re-presentation act on and across multiple hypotextual areas in the service of their own unique agendas.

My fourth and final chapter is a defense of the methodology I use throughout the dissertation. I discuss the debate between William Mahar and Eric Lott regarding methods of understanding the blackface minstrel performance practices of the 19th century. I argue that Lott's methods, like my own, involve reflection on his own experiential encounters with cultural material and that Mahar is misguided to devalue his work by marking it as opinion rather than fact. I appeal to the work of Roland Barthes to support my claim that these methods are the only available means of coming to know and study some of the most significant facets of musical experience.

Chapter One

Rethinking Lacasse:
A New Framework for the Study of Imitation in Popular Music

Serge Lacasse's article "Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music" first appeared in the 2000 volume *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* and was reprinted in *Critical Essays in Popular Musicology* in 2007. The article represents the most comprehensive attempt to date to categorize imitation in popular music. It culminates in the presentation of a "Summary Table of Transtextual Practices in Recorded Popular Music," a framework for categorization which Lacasse invites future authors to add to.[1] In this chapter, I will take up this invitation and use Dyer's terminology to help present an alternative version. Dyer's definitions of terms like pastiche and parody are unlike Lacasse's in that they do not just refer to imitative process, but to the effects produced by reception of music as imitation. My version of Lacasse's framework will work to separate imitative process and effect and in so doing make it possible for the framework to correspond to my alternative definition of pastiche.

Lacasse's article is largely an attempt to apply Gerard Genette's theory of hypertextuality to recorded popular music.[2] Intertextuality, hypertextuality, and transtextuality are all used by Lacasse in their Genettian sense. In Genette's work the term transtextuality operates as the umbrella category for all forms of relation

[1] Serge Lacasse, "Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music." In *Critical Essays in Popular Musicology*, ed. Allan F. Moore. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007): 168.
[2] The theory he refers to is outlined in Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

between two or more distinct texts. Lacasse describes all of the five forms of transtextuality in the opening section of his essay before stating that he will limit himself to a discussion of intertextuality and hypertextuality. The subcategories of transtextuality that Lacasse chooses to ignore are paratextuality, metatextuality, and architextuality. The paratextual refers to that which accompanies a work but is not necessarily proper to the work itself.[3] Genette, who is concerned with literary transtextuality, references the relationship between texts and non-final drafts, titles and subtitles, prefaces, notes, interviews, illustrations, and book covers as examples of paratextual relations. These types of relations are, of course, not usually considered imitative in nature, or, at least, not imitative of the text to which they qualify as paratext. Metatextuality is also largely non-imitative of text to which it qualifies as metatext. For Genette, metatextual relations are relationships between texts and other texts that comment on them, such as reviews or critical prose. Only small portions of metatextual works, quotations, can be considered imitative in any sense; yet, in reviews and critiques the way quotations are employed almost always invites us to experience them as fragments of the original work itself, rather than as imitation. The third category Lacasse chooses not to deal with is architextuality, which refers to relationships between texts considered to be part of the same genre. While metatextuality and paratextuality are understandable omissions, non-imitative in character, Lacasse's omission of architextuality is one aspect of his framework that I prefer to revise. Dyer categorizes architextuality as a form of imitation in the guise of

[3] For a discussion of the relevance of the paratextual to determinations of evaluative openness of an imitative work, see the musical example provided in my introduction.

"autonomous genre work." In what follows, I will consider the benefits of including architextuality.

Lacasse focuses on the subcategories of transtextuality that are most obviously imitative. Intertextuality, in Genette's framework, refers to the relationship created when portions of works are included in subsequent works through quotation, allusion, plagiarism, and other related means. Lacasse summarizes Genette's idea of hypertextuality by explaining "a hypertext is a result of some kind of transformation or imitation of a hypotext."[4] The framework he outlines for the categorization of intertextuality and hypertextuality in recorded popular music is a two-tier framework. The first tier involves differentiating between what he refers to as syntagmatic and paradigmatic practices. In Lacasse's use, a syntagmatic practice is a transformation or imitation of the subject or content of an earlier work. Examples he gives include songs that are created by changing the lyrics of a hypotext, recordings or performances derived from previous recordings wherein the vocal from the hypotext is removed and/or replaced in the hypertext, and musical cento.[5] This category also includes all of the intertextual practices Lacasse discusses. Conversely, a paradigmatic practice is a transformation or imitation of the style or system of an earlier work. Lacasse argues that cover songs, remixes, and travesties all transform or imitate style rather than content. The second tier of his framework involves the differentiation between allosonic and autosonic transtextuality (which I will define

[4] Lacasse, "Intertextuality," 149.
[5] The practice of creating a vocal-less version of a recording, Lacasse refers to as Instrumental Remix. Cento is a literary practice where a work is made from a large number of quotations of previous works. Lacasse refers to John Oswald's piece *Plexure* as an example. See: John Oswald, *Plexure*. Avant AVAN 016, 1993.

and discuss below). In total, his article situates thirteen types of transtextual practices in his framework as follows:

Table 2: Serge Lacasse's "Summary Table of Transtextual Practices in Recorded Popular Music."

	Syntagmatic *(Subject/Content)*	*Paradigmatic* *(Style/System)*
Autosonic	Autosonic Quotation Autosonic Parody *Plunderphonics* Cento Instrumental Remix	Remix
Allosonic	Allosonic Quotation Allusion Allosonic Parody	Transtylization *Copy* *Cover* *Travesty* Translation Pastiche

Lacasse writes: "I have a problem with the idea of considering travesty as a 'transformational practice' as such. Indeed travesty is more of an effect following some transformation than an actual transformational process."[6] He acknowledges that "one interesting point about travesty (and any type of transformation or imitation that aims to provoke a given effect in the listener) [is that] its power to evoke humour depends largely on the listener's own point of view and socio-cultural background."[7] Despite these observations, Lacasse still includes travesty in his table of "transtextual

[6] Lacasse, "Intertextuality," 166. Lacasse employs a standard definition of travesty, borrowed from Genette's work. He explains Genette's category of travesty is "defined as the rewriting of some 'noble' text as a new text that retains the fundamental content but presents it in another style in order to 'debase it." (Lacasse, "Intertextuality," 154).
[7] Ibid., 155.

practices." He provides a table that is concerned with categorizing transformational and imitative practices/processes and fills it with categories of imitation that he himself argues must be tied more to effect than to process. Both of the axes of his framework seem oriented towards making observations about process and not effect. Yet, they are employed to frame, constrain, and define concepts that might best be understood not as processes or imitative practices, but as effects that arise from encounters with transtextuality. While this is understandable given the conventionality of imagining process to be in line with effect, I feel a revision that takes Lacasse's impulse regarding travesty further will provide a productive alternative model.

Lacasse only acknowledges travesty, not other transtextual modes like parody and pastiche, as "more of an effect following some transformation than a transformational process." His reference to the existence of other "transformation or imitation that aims to provoke a given effect in the listener" indicates that he feels other such forms of transformation and imitation exist, but he fails to identify them explicitly. He does not offer pastiche or parody up as examples and, in so doing, differs substantially from Dyer by defining parody and pastiche in manners not dependent on the evaluative dimension.

Before discussing his definitions of pastiche and parody in more detail, the second tier of his framework warrants discussion. Allosonic and autosonic are adaptations of the terms allographic and autographic, terms used famously by Nelson Goodman to help distinguish "ontologically thick" from "ontologically thin" artworks. Ontologically thin works are those that can be reconstructed in multiple instantiations

and still qualify ontologically as the same "work." Most works of notated music, for example, are allographic in that multiple performances or recordings can exist in different times or places, yet all will be experienced as the same work. Re-constructions of ontologically thick, or autographic works, conversely, would not be experienced as the same work. The relevant example here is recorded popular music. If I were to attempt to go into a studio and re-create a pre-existing piece of recorded popular music, the "work" that I produce would not be considered ontologically identical with my hypotext, even if I reproduced it exactly. Recorded music is, therefore, equivalent ontologically to Goodman's notion of an autographic art form.[8]

Appropriately, Lacasse changes "graphic" to "sonic" when employing the terms to speak of music.[9] However, this shift may signify a semantic shift greater than a simple employment of Goodman's terms in the realm of the sonic. While Goodman is concerned with the relationship between works and "the most exact duplications"[10] of those works, Lacasse is more concerned with transformations and imitations that involve more substantial degrees of change than the transtexuality Goodman was concerned with in the development of the terms.[11] Few of the hypertexts Lacasse

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[8] Goodman thoughtlessly labels all music as allographic in *Languages of Art*, 113. Theodore Gracyk corrected Goodman in 1996, making the same point I emphasize here regarding recorded music in his *Rhythm and Noise: an Aesthetics of Rock*.

[9] Goodman is comfortable calling music "allographic." Gracyk as well makes no such alteration.

[10] Goodman, *Languages*, 113.

[11] Lacasse does discuss the idea of the musical copy. His sole example is of the cover band that "strives for a performance that exhibits, in exact a form as possible, the stylistic configuration of the original recording (same sound, same instrumental playing, same voice – and often same looks!)" ("Intertextuality," 166). Yet, such "copies" would almost never approach the condition of the forgery that might be mistaken for its hypotext. Even if the cover band manages to create the temporary experience of being in the presence of the original, this will inevitably oscillate with a listening informed by the knowledge that the bodies manifesting the performance are not the bodies of the authors of the original "work" in question. Though experiences equivalent to the experience of encountering a forged painting do exist in the realm of musical experience, Lacasse does not consider these kinds of experience in his work.

discusses are in danger of being understood as ontologically identical with their hypotexts. In Lacasse's use, autosonic is essentially a synonym for sample-based.[12] In his work, the terms autosonic and allosonic are not employed to distinguish the ontological status of particular kinds of artworks, as much as to identify differences in transtextual process. Whereas Goodman is concerned with works and exact copies of those works, Lacasse is concerned with works and transformations of them, with hypertexts that overtly differ from their hypotexts. While Goodman uses the terms solely to distinguish works that can exist in multiple instantiations while remaining the "same work" from works that cannot, Lacasse uses them, very differently, to distinguish sample based from non-sample based transformation.

The fact that Lacasse intends his framework to privilege process can be seen when he includes in his examples of autosonic quotation samples that are processed to the point where they are unrecognizable, and when he labels as allosonic quotation "re-performances" that are nearly impossible to distinguish from that which they re-perform. To demonstrate the latter, he discusses the example of Puff Daddy's "Come to Me" as such:

> Indeed, in the song *Come to Me* there is a very obvious quotation of Led Zeppelin's *Kashmir*. But what could be taken as samples from the original Led Zeppelin recording are actually not this: Jimmy Page (formerly Led Zeppelin's guitarist), and a number of musicians and arrangers have reperformed the whole musical track… one feels as if Puff Daddy's song is pretending to have used sampled excerpts from

[12] Sampling is the practice of re-presenting a recording or a portion of a recording as part of a new recorded work. All of the intertextual and hypertextual processes Lacasse categorizes as autosonic are sample-based processes. Of sampling Lacasse writes: "When we import a sample taken directly from a recording into another (for example a drum loop), what is common to both recordings is of a physical nature… Note, however, that digital sampling is not the only way of doing this, for one can still use analog techniques (rerecording, splicing, collage, etc)" ("Intertextuality,"150-151).

> Led Zeppelin's original recording… It is thus possible to have allosonic quotations that mimic the autosonic.

By implying that listeners might, given the fact that hip-hop has always been a music that uses recorded music in the construction of recorded music, hear *Come to Me* as sample-based and not re-performed and also implying that this "mishearing" should have no bearing on *Come to Me*'s status as allosonic, he clearly demonstrates that the autosonic/allosonic axis of his framework privileges process.

The same is true for the syntagmatic/paradigmatic axis. There is no room for listener interpretation in the determination of where a transformation or imitation falls on this axis. This being the case, it is unclear why he includes travesty, which, again, he argues is "more of an effect following some transformation than a transformational process" in his framework. And, since other theorists, like Dyer, define pastiche and parody in ways that situate them in terms of their evaluative dimension, we must ask: do they belong in a framework that makes no room for effect in the structure it provides?

The answer to this question depends on whether one finds definitions rooted in the evaluative dimension to be the preferred uses of terms like pastiche and parody. Lacasse's definition of parody, which he adopts from Genette's work, does not depend on the evaluative dimension. He writes: "Genette characterises a parody as retaining the **stylistic** properties of the original text while diverting its **subject.**"[13] He then explains that his chosen example of parody, Weird Al Yankovitch's "Smells Like Nirvana" "conforms exactly to this definition of parody: the overall song sounds

[13] Ibid., 153. The emphasis is Lacasse's

very close to the hypotext (similar style), but with new lyrics (different subject)."[14] Similarly, his definition of pastiche involves only the dimensions of his framework and not the evaluative dimension. Lacasse defines pastiche by arguing:

> pastiche is an interesting case in that it is the ultimate paradigmatic and allosonic practice: paradigmatic because the hypertext is constructed from scratch according to a given stylistic configuration; and, of course, entirely allosonic, because the hypertext is not produced by any autosonic transformation of a given hypotext (in fact, there is no precise hypotext but merely some abstract common features belonging to a group of songs).[15]

What I, for my purposes here, find problematic about Lacasse's definition of pastiche is that what it describes is indistinguishable from what Dyer refers to as "autonomous genre work" and from the relations Genette refers to as architextuality. Autonomous genre work also involves the creation of a work from "abstract common features belonging to a group of songs" of a "given stylistic configuration." A definition of pastiche that could also be describing autonomous genre work is sufficient in a context that excludes architextuality from the realm of imitation, but is incomplete in works like the present study that follow Dyer in including "autonomous genre work" as a subcategory of imitation.

Lacasse defines travesty as "the rewriting of some noble text as a new text that retains the fundamental context but presents it in another style in order to 'debase it."[16] He provides the example of Walter Murphy's popular disco track "A Fifth of Beethoven." He describes the recording as "a travesty of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*," but later points out that: "A disco fan may find Murphy's version of

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 167.
[16] Ibid., 154.

Beethoven's piece interesting (or simply entertaining), while a classical music lover might find it funny or (most probably) outrageous."[17] Lacasse's understanding of travesty as more effect than process depends on his refusal to privilege authorial interpretation in this particular instance. It also depends on the premise that if interpretation is the only possible path through which examples of a transtextual category can be recognized as such, then that category does not define a transtextual process, it defines only an effect. There must thus be an objectively verifiable transtextual process at work beneath this effect, one worthy of recognition and categorization. The framework Lacasse offers is only capable of situating these processes. The framework itself does nothing to define travesty as Lacasse defines it, but what it does adequately define is the process underlying his example of travesty, the process he refers to as transtylization.[18]

Transtylization can be defined entirely through the parameters of Lacasse's framework as the allosonic alteration of the style of an existing work; no more needs to be said by way of definition.[19] Transtylization can be defined in the realm of process and not in effect because its existence as a form of transtextual practice is objectively verifiable. Though a listener may encounter a transtylization with no knowledge of its hypotext and experience it as autonomous genre work, evidence can be given to that listener that a previous version pre-existed the creation of the work in question and that listener would be forced to accept its status as a transtylization

[17] Ibid., 154-155.
[18] The term transtylization is also borrowed from Genette.
[19] The term is not a perfect choice to stand in for this category of transtextuality as one could easily hear the term and imagine an autosonic transformation; but, remix, as a term, is so singularly autosonic that, invoked alongside transstylization, it effectively relieves transtylization of categorically including the autosonic.

despite the manner in which they first encountered the work. With travesty, no such objective verification can occur. What would need to be verified to cement the status of that imitation as a travesty is not just that the author intended it as such, but that the author's opinion of the "high" or "low" status of the hypotext and the style into which he/she transstylizes it into is a correct, unchanging, and universal truth. Of course, the matter is a matter of opinion and not of truth. If, in the value system of the listener, these valuations are not shared, the work would not become a travesty upon exposure to the authorial intention in the way a transtylization revealed as such inevitably becomes experienced as such. The listener may choose to sympathize with the author and recognize the work along the lines of the author's value system, but they may reject that value system and continue to disallow the work to function in that way. Once an imitation is revealed to be an imitation, one can never go back to that work and experience it as first-order. Through objective verification, the listener's experience of a work as non-imitation can be irrevocably altered. But a revelation of the evaluative intentions of the author of the work does not necessarily have the same effect.

Lacasse defines pastiche through the parameters of his framework, but if we revoke the liberties he has taken with architextuality we recognize that, as with travesty, the idea cannot be sufficiently defined in the realm of transtextual process. As examples of pastiche, he describes three "original songs" on The Mike Flowers Pops' album *A Groovy Place* that "are neither travesties nor parodies, but which

could be considered pastiches of 1960s-vintage crooners' pop songs."[20] He explains that these three tracks are distinct from the formula of most of Mike Flowers Pops' work; most of the tracks on *A Groovy Place* are "versions" of pre-existing pieces of recorded popular music that re-interpret them across stylistic borders. More specifically, the album consists mostly of transstylizations of popular songs originally presented in rock, alternative rock, and electronic dance music styles, in a chamber-pop/lounge music style coded as belonging to the era before the arrival of rock.[21] By Lacasse's definition, a pastiche does not have one specific hypotext, but, rather, emerges from "abstract common features belonging to a group of songs," and so only these three "original songs," and not the "versions" that populate the rest of the album, would conform to his definition. The only clue he gives as to why these songs might be considered pastiche rather than autonomous genre work is his invocation of the idea of "1960s-vintage." By invoking this, Lacasse is indicating that stylistic elements that Flowers invokes are historically coded as belonging to a time period "Other" to the one in which he is presenting them. What is relevant here is the fact that this kind of coding exists in the realm of the evaluative. While it is historically verifiable that the styles Flowers works with are similar to styles present and dominant in the 1960s, what is not verifiable is the evaluation that those styles cannot be authentically produced in the 1990s and/or that Mike Flowers' songs do not qualify as autonomous genre work in that genre. Both of these assessments are just that and, as such, even overt paratextual assertions of authorial intention or the assessments of expert voices

[20] Lacasse, "Intertextuality," 156.
[21] Lacasse chooses their version of Oasis's "Wonderwall" as one of three examples of travesty he invokes.

are not enough to guarantee that the work will function as pastiche and not autonomous genre work. At the same time, his assessment that the works are pastiche and not parody are based merely on his notion that only parody can re-present a specific hypotext.

With key revisions, the framework Lacasse offers can, perhaps, be improved upon. Contemplating the ways sample-based and non-sample based transformations differ in a framework that also distinguishes transformations of content from transformations of style is valuable for the understanding of musical transtextual practice or process. However, such a framework must restrict itself to the discussion of the objectively verifiable material processes involved and not the evaluative motivations that play a role in the process/practice or the intended or actual effects of the work. The summary table he provides in his essay can be altered by removing any aspect that depends on the evaluative:

Table 3: Comparison - Serge's Lacasse's "Summary Table of Transtextual Practices in Recorded Popular Music" with Revised Version of Lacasse's Table.

ORIGINAL:

	Syntagmatic (Subject/Content)	*Paradigmatic (Style/System)*
Autosonic	Autosonic Quotation Autosonic Parody *Plunderphonics* Cento Instrumental Remix	Remix
Allosonic	Allosonic Quotation Allusion Allosonic Parody	Transtylization *Copy* *Cover* *Travesty* Translation Pastiche

REVISION:

	Syntagmatic (Subject/Content)	*Paradigmatic (Style/System)*
Autosonic	Autosonic Quotation Autosonic Cento Instrumental Remix Relyricization	Remix
Allosonic	Allosonic Quotation Allusion Allosonic Cento Relyricization	Transtylization *Copy* *Cover* Translation Original Songwriting

The revised framework omits travesty, parody, and pastiche and adds relyricization and original songwriting. As well, I have suggested the existence of allosonic cento.[22]

[22] The common practice of performing medleys should be considered a form of allosonic cento. Should we want to distinguish medley and cento by virtue of the fact that medleys often take one era, artist, or

What remains after these omissions are all processes that do not depend on evaluation, they are all objectively verifiable musical transtextual processes. Such a revision allows the framework to function without binding musical process to musical effect.

In Lacasse's original table, copy, cover, and travesty were presented as subcategories of transtylization. The term transtylization first appears when Lacasse argues that identifying the underlying procedure involved in musical travesty involves "consider[ing] travesty as a subcategory of covering."[23] It is through this recognition of the need for subcategorization that Lacasse comes to "propose as a term for their common underlying procedure 'transtylization." [24] While travesty is situated as a subcategory of cover, copy is imagined to be distinguishable from cover while sharing the same underlying process. Lacasse defines a musical copy as "a performance that aims at being the closest possible imitation of a pre-existent, usually recorded, performance."[25] He distinguishes copy from cover by explaining that "a copy would result from a minimal transtylization."[26] As an example, Lacasse chooses to briefly discuss "the cover band," arguing that "the cover band strives for a performance that exhibits, in as exact a form as possible, the stylistic configuration of the original recording (the same sound, the same instrumental playing, same voice – and often same looks!). In other words, the cover band aims at a *degré zéro* of

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theme as their hypotext and/or by virtue of the fact that cento might imply the use of greater number of aestheticaly disparate sources than medley, recordings like Jack Mudurian's *Downloading the Repertoire* can certainly stand as examples of allosonic cento apart from the practice of medley. Jack Murdurian, *Downloading the Repertoire*. Arf Arf Records, AA-057, 1996.

[23] Lacasse, "Intertextuality," 166.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 157.

[26] Ibid., 166.

transstylization."[27] Since it is certain that both copy and cover must be allosonic and syntagmatic, their inclusion as subcategories of transtylization seems unproblematic. However, I do not believe the same is true for travesty; I will attempt to show in the second half of this chapter that both pastiche and travesty can emerge through autosonic practices. Rather than as a subcategory of cover, travesty needs to conceptualized as an effect that can emerge through a variety of processes. For this reason, I have removed it from Lacasse's framework. In relation to my choice to omit travesty while allowing copy and cover to remain in the revised framework, it is interesting to note that though Dyer discusses the difference between copy and version in his work, his framework itself is incapable of making a distinction between the two.[28] However, it is capable of distinguishing between travesty and copy/cover; travesty is positioned as signaled, evaluatively predetermined imitation while copy and version (cover) are positioned as not textually signaled, evaluatively open imitation.

Again, my key revision involves the insertion of architextuality. The central problem of Lacasse's framework is his refusal to recognize the transtextual nature of all musical composition. By omitting architextuality from his realm of concerns, Lacasse seems to be following the commonplace conception that autonomous genre work should not be considered significantly imitative. But, composing an "original song" is always a transtextual/architextual process, one that may or may not signal its

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Being that copy and version are both part of the same category of imitation, Dyer's framework need not be the means of distinguishing the two. However, this is further evidence that his framework complements my revision of Lacasse's framework by the former addressing effect and the latter process.

imitative nature as part of its intended aesthetic effect. The three Mike Flowers Pops songs Lacasse discusses textually signal their status as imitative by including humorous lyrics that deviate from the generic standards for the musical styles they imitate and they contextually signal the same by presenting music coded as belonging to the 1950s and 1960s in spaces, like 1990s music video television, where such styles of music are not normally presented. These signals make autonomous genre works different in kind from pastiche in terms of their meaning/effect, but they do not amount to a relevant difference in basic musical transtextual process. If they did, the idea that the Mike Flowers Pops "works" could be described, as Lacasse does describe them, as "original songs" would not be useful; the term pastiche would need to suffice. In both pastiche and autonomous genre work, a musical work is built based upon imitation of a multitude of stylistic precedents, rather than one particular model. Just like with autonomous genre work, different listeners will variously make a decision as to whether the song conforms to genre norms closely enough to be considered part of an established genre or style. As with Lacasse's example of travesty, this will depend heavily on the values and competencies of the listener.

My final alterations are the removal of parody and the inclusion of relyricization. Like his definition of pastiche, Lacasse's definition of parody makes no mention of the evaluative dimension. But, unlike his definition of pastiche Lacasse does not tie parody to one side of the allosonic/autosonic divide. He includes it on both sides of his allosonic/autosonic divide, prompted by John Oswald's plunderphonic works to recognize the possibility of autosonic parody.

Plunderphonics is Oswald's name for a compositional method in which a musical piece is created from samples of one or more pre-existing recorded works. In most cases, one particular recording was used as material in the creation of the hypertext, in others Oswald limited himself to samples from multiple works by the same author; what is important and connoted well by the term plunderphonics is that the aesthetic of plunderphonic work is achieved most often not through the combination of multiple distinct sources, but the plunder of one area, and a disrupting of the temporality of works in that area that causes the listener to hear the sounds of that work or body of work differently.

What prompts Lacasse to distinguish plunderphonics from remix is his notion the hypotext/hypertext relationship of a remix is paradigmatic while plunderphonics is syntagmatic. He writes "parody has been regarded as a practice characterized by the alteration of the subject of a song without changing its style. Plunderphonics, then, seems to be one possible example of autosonic parody: the style is somewhat the same… however the content is altered through a number of manipulations which, in my opinion, modify the song's 'subject.'"[29] It is clear from Lacasse's tone that he is uncertain about his assessment here. The notion that the relevant transformation is one of content and not style is difficult to defend. Though it is true that most of the content of the hypotext is obliterated by most plunderphonic hypertexts, at the same time it is certainly impossible for any plunderphonic hypertext to be considered an example of a musical work in the style of its hypotext. In his positioning of plunderphonics, Lacasse wants to distinguish it from other forms of allosonic

[29] Ibid.

transtextuality because he feels that plunderphonic works "clearly aim to denature their hypotext"[30] in a manner those other forms do not. But he ignores the fact that difference in the degree of transformation does not amount to difference in transtextual process; the question of degree appeared once already in the copy/cover distinction and was solved by presenting them as subcategories within the same process.[31] Lacasse's argument is that what plunderphonic works do is like what parodies do, and he overlooks the stylistic dissimilarity between hypertext and hypotext in order to present plunderphonics as a type of autosonic parody. Here, Lacasse is again asking his framework to do more than it is capable of doing. Clearly, plunderphonic works do "denature" their hypotexts more radically than most remixes. However, that does not change the fact that the same transtextual process underlies both.

Lacasse's definition of parody is unnecessary given that there is no distinction between it and the notion of allosonic syntagmatic transtextuality. The term relyricisation better describes the transtextual process that underlies the example of parody he provides. He points out that "Genette characterises a parody as retaining the **stylistic** properties of the original text while diverting its **subject**" and that "Smells Like Nirvana" "conforms exactly to this definition of parody: the overall song sounds very close to the hypotext (similar style), but with new lyrics (different subject)."[32] However, relyricisation is capable of referring to the relevant transtextual process in a manner that connotes more than merely allosonic syntagmatic

[30] Ibid., 164.
[31] I am referring here to his situating copy, cover, and travesty as subcategories of transstylization.
[32] Ibid., 153. The emphasis is Lacasse's.

transtextuality. At the same time, “Smells Like Nirvana” is an example of parody that seems to require the perception of the evaluative predeterminedness of the hypertext towards its hypotext for one to appreciate it. The lyrics of the parody seem worth quoting at length to underscore the importance of the evaluative dimension in the example Lacasse selected:

> What is this song all about? / Can’t figure any lyrics out
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> How do the words to it go? / I wish you’d tell me, I don’t know…
>
> CHORUS: Now I’m mumblin’ / And I’m Screaming
>
> And I don’t know / what I’m singing
>
> Crank the volume / ears are bleeding
>
> I still don’t know / what I’m singing
>
> We’re so loud and / incoherent
>
> Boy this outta / bug your parents…
>
> Well we don’t sound / like Madonna /
>
> Here we are now / we’re Nirvana
>
> Sing distinctly? / We don’t wanna /
>
> Buy our album / We’re Nirvana

A song like “Smells Like Nirvana,” which directly criticizes the aesthetics of its hypotext strongly supports the notion that an essential feature of parody is its evaluative predeterminedness. Of course, parody has been used to effectively refer to works that do nothing to encourage listeners to sense evaluative predeterminedness in the hypertext. My point here is not that it cannot, it is that it need not serve that

function here. Other terms are available that refer more soberly to the transtextual practice that needs to be identified.

A framework that confuses transtextual process with imitative effect will only impede our efforts to understand the role of imitation in popular music. If we begin with the idea that transtextual processes limit and determine the effect a "work" will have, we will blind ourselves to the difference that manifests within each of those processual categories. The point here is not that we cannot refer to musical travesty, parody, or pastiche as a practice or process, but, rather, that we must consider them processes of another order than the basic musical transtextual processes that are truly the only thing that Lacasse's framework is able to address.[33] We must recognize that imitative processes that hinge on evaluative assertions are unlike objectively verifiable processes, they are internal, emotional, and depend on the social location and values of the author. When our intellectual concerns involve sympathizing with authorial intention, making reference to pastiche, parody, and travesty as a process that led to the creation of a work is perfectly reasonable. However, when we are considering what that work is and does in the world, we must recognize that labeling works as pastiche, parody, or travesty in line with authorial intention may well be a violent act, erasing from scholarly attention the way these works are received by substantial subsets of that work's audience. The framework Lacasse offered does not allow for this distinction to be made. The revision does. Almost certainly however,

[33] I understand pastiche as process to have nothing to do with categories of material transtextual process. In my conception, recognizing pastiche as process means recognizing the existence of a sequence of events in which an artist forms an intention to produce an object that they feel is pastiche and then realizes that intention. That realization may then happen though a number of the material transtextual processes that Lacasse's framework is capable of distinguishing.

the revision does not do all of the work Lacasse intended. The effects of transtextual processes are undoubtedly part of what he set out to theorize. In order for my revision to do the work Lacasse intended to do we must supplement the revised framework with a complementary one that deals with effect. Now that a revised version exists, one that does not conflict with the terminology Dyer employs, Dyer's framework can be used in conjunction with it to do the remaining work that the revision cannot. Employing an entirely different framework to address questions of effect is structurally beneficial; it reinforces the lesson that authorial processes do not determine the effects of works. At the same time, keeping categories rooted in effect apart from process based distinctions opens us to the truth that different processes may lead to the same category of effect and that multiple forms of effect may result from the same process.

Part II: The Mashup as Autosonic Pastiche

In Lacasse's terminology, parody is unlike pastiche in that only parody involves direct quotation of particular works. Dyer's work insists that both may do so. In fact, he treats this process as pastiche's norm. In this section, I will defend Dyer's position by demonstrating that musical mashups are capable of giving rise to pastiche.

Dyer's framework forces interpreters to make claims about the evaluative nature of imitative work when referencing either parody or pastiche. The idea that we always notice an evaluative dimension in work we perceive as imitative may be an uncomfortable truth for us to admit; there are certainly many instances when we are

forced to discuss imitative works in which we would like to withhold judgment regarding our perceptions of the evaluative relationship between hypertext and hypotext. The law of différance ensures that not only are the meanings of individual works subject to change over time, but that, as those meanings begin to float, the evaluative relationship perceptible through the hypertext will change.[34] With limited access to authorial intention and the guarantee that the meanings we perceive will differ from those in different social and temporal locations, it makes perfect sense that we would want to reserve the right not to make claims about the evaluative character of particular imitative works, even if, on some level, assessing the nature of hypotext/hypertext relationships is inevitable each time we recognize an imitation as such. However, such fear is rooted in the misunderstanding that to speak on such matters is to comment on the work rather than our experience of it. Should we acknowledge the ontological truth that "works" as such simply do not exist, we would certainly feel more comfortable addressing that aspect of our experience of "works" that forces us to judge the character of the relationship between that which we perceive as imitation and its hypotext. When we recognize that all that exists and all that we have the authority to speak of are experiences and not "objects" or "works," our anxieties about "getting it wrong" would certainly diminish. Also, if our understanding of parody and pastiche recognized that evaluative openness and predeterminedness can be conceptualized along a continuum as a question of degree,

[34] Jaques Derrida's term différance was coined to imply both "to differ" and "to defer" in an attempt to intervene in our tendency to treat meaning as a static property of objects. He insists that meaning is constantly shifting (and thus always in some sense deferred) as it emerges only through measures of difference that are themselves constantly shifting. See: Jacques Derrida, "Différance." In *Margins of Philosophy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

we might be more comfortable recognizing that works might be read as leaning toward evaluative predeterminedness without entirely lauding or mocking their hypotexts.

Lacasse's definitions of pastiche and parody do a kind of work quite different from Dyer's. Though both have a certain utility, we must recognize that there are great benefits from moving towards more ontologically responsible understandings of our relationship with not just creative work, but with all that we perceptually encounter. Whether or not we are aware of it, and whether or not we would like to admit it, whenever we recognize imitation, we make judgments about the nature of that imitation. To refer to an imitation as parody in Lacasse's definition is to refer simply to process and withhold discussion of key aspects of our experience of that imitation. Withholding those judgments, we refuse to contribute to the discourse that is our only source of understanding, beyond our own personal experience, of what work certain "works" have done in the world, and, in essence, what those "works" then are. For the sake of that knowing, I champion Dyer's definitions; one of the central problems in our contemporary relationship to "art" is that experiential realities given rise to by "works" are usually deemed insignificant alongside expert interpretation. Forcing the experiential back into our very definitions of what "art" is goes some length towards remedying this problem.

While Lacasse forecloses on the possibility that pastiche may emerge from particular hypotexts, he seems also to suggest that parody always has a singular, distinct source of reference. His brief discussion of parody refers always to "the hypotext" and indicates that pastiche is "a little different" for being a hypertext that

has "no precise hypotext."[35] It is easy to give examples of "works" considered parody that are imitative of widespread stylistic conventions rather than particular hypotexts. Novelty bands like the Flight of The Conchords, for example, work by retaining the style but altering the standard conventions for content of specific genres and not specific works.

Lacasse's characterization of parody may be mere oversight. As such, I will not go too far in demonstrating the problems posed by limiting parody to the imitation of specific hypotexts. However, it is useful to demonstrate the utility of a conception of pastiche that not only emerges from specific hypotexts but that is not allosonic in Lacasse's sense of the term. In so doing, I offer further justification for my removal of all evaluative dependent categories from Lacasse's framework as well as justification for less process specific understandings of pastiche and parody. The remainder of this chapter will provide such a demonstration, arguing that, to many listeners, mashups are an example of autosonic pastiche.

It is interesting to note that the term mashup has been part of Jamaican English since at least the early part of the 19th century as term describing the act of ruining, spoiling, or destroying something.[36] The term came into popular usage in a reference to a genre of music in the early 2000s and, arguably, it shares some of the violence in the meaning in Jamaican. Mashups are musical works composed through autosonic transformation of pre-existing pieces of recorded popular music. The standard mash-up limits itself to the combination of two pre-existing works, though

[35] Lacasse, "Intertextuality," 153-156.
[36] Frederic Gomes Cassidy and Robert Brock Le Page, *Dictionary of Jamaican English.* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2002): 296.

mashups exist that raise that number.[37] Central to what defines an autosonic combination as a mashup is the juxtaposition of the musical background from one hypotext with the musical foreground (usually the vocal) of another. Arguably, mashups do not achieve their most common effects when the listener lacks familiarity with the musical samples the mashup is composed of; a desired aspect of the experience of mashups is the process of being witness to the misuse and/or transformation of recordings that the listener knows intimately in another form. The recognition of this misuse or transformation amounts to the recognition of a textual signal of the imitative status of the work. As such, to perceive a work as a mashup is to perceive a work that signals both its difference from the recordings it combines and its second-order status in relation to those recordings. Mashups can also easily be perceived as evaluatively open simply through the co-present violence and respect they offer the songs they incorporate. The violence of the mashup comes from the misuse of the original recordings and the respect from the fact that mashups rely so heavily on the musical characteristics of the originals that they invite the listener to derive pleasure from those characteristics. The autosonic transformation of the hypotext is likely to be received as misuse due to the distance perceived between the original artists responsible for the hypotexts and the mashup's author who, in most cases, would not be imagined to have a formal relationship with the authors of the hypotexts or to have gone through the proper legal channels to acquire the rights to

[37] Though some fans use the term mashup to describe works that sample more than two distinct sources, others prefer to use separate terms like megamix for pieces with multiple sample sources. As I will go on to explain, it seems fair to call any works centred on the maintainence of two co-present, recognizable sample layers wherein each of the layers is, at any one time, solely responsible for providing a significant portion of the standard texture required of popular music a mashup, regardless of how many sources it employs.

sample their work. For these reasons, the standard mashup seems quite capable of manifesting pastiche in the definition I am defending. Examples and more discussion are necessary to support this claim, but also necessary is recognition that not all mashups operate in the way I have described and that both parody and tribute may emerge through the mashup as easily as pastiche. A single mashup may produce any of these "effects" depending on the values and competencies the listener brings to their listening.

Dyer employs the term pasticcio to describe examples of pastiche that include more than one significant and identifiable hypotext or hypotextual area. Mashups are examples of pasticcio; they always involve the imitation of at least two works that are easily identifiable and that bear some categorical difference from one another. The mashup's status as pastiche, however, depends on agreement that sampled music can be considered imitation. The sampled elements of most mashups constitute not mere fragments but, in most cases, the entire instrumental or vocal track of the original from which they borrow. Sampling still seems the correct word to use here, as mashup artists borrow only portions from the original sources and as the process through which those portions are borrowed is the same process as the sampling of smaller fragments in other musical genres. The word imitation seems to apply as well due to the consciousness the listener usually possesses of the second-order nature of the samples within the mashup. The listener is, in most cases, aware that an artist unrelated to the artist(s) responsible for the original musical work has played a mediating and transformative role in all of the sounds present. As such, the musical material that they recognize as borrowed is both a reference to an original and that

original manifesting autosonically in a new form. The fact that the recorded material can be thought of as a reference to itself as manifest in an earlier form seems to me to assure that it can function as an imitation. When we consider that a copy is a form of imitation in Dyer's framework, we should have no objections to qualifying mashup as imitation.

The difference between a copy and a pastiche lies in textual signaling of imitation. This signaling occurs loudly in a mashup when the listener recognizes the combination of two or more formerly independent pieces. On the online mashup instruction webpage *Boot Camp: Mashing for Beginners*, readers are advised: "The first step in creating a mashup is… to have an idea… Though it is certainly possible to simply start intercutting and overlaying two favourite tracks, you have to ask yourself "why?" The best (and most successful) bootlegs to date have cleverly juxtaposed two records that should not even be in the same record collection, let alone the same mix"[38] Sasha Frere-Jones also cited "juxtaposition" as mashup's raison d'être when he wrote: "One of the thrills of the mashup is identifying two well-known artists unwittingly complementing each other's strengths and limitations: bacchanalian rapper Missy Elliott combined with morose English rock band Joy Division, ecstatic Madonna working with furious Sex Pistols."[39] The kinds of juxtapositions that Frere-Jones' examples refer to are both recognitions of one of the

[38] Philip Meehan, "Boot Camp: Mashing for Beginners." *Painting By Numbers*, 2004, accessed November 4, 2008, http://www.paintingbynumbers.com/bootcamp. The ellipses exist in the original article. Bootleg is a common synonym for mashup. Given that in earlier popular musical discourse the term bootleg referred to a recording of a musical performance made without the consent of the performers, the violent aspect is underscored by the use of the term.

[39] Sasha Frere-Jones, "1+1+1=1: The New Math of Mashups." *New Yorker*, January, 10 2005, accessed September 4, 2009, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/01/10/050110crmu_music.

classic binaries of recorded popular music. Since almost the very beginning of the recorded music industry in America, musical markets have been imagined as racially divided; the first "juxtaposition" he refers to is a juxtaposition of the reified categories of "black music" and "white music." The second juxtaposition could be seen as representative of a number of classic binaries, depending on who is doing the classifying, including: apolitical/oppositional, popular/art, and mainstream/subcultural. Both examples also "juxtapose" female solo artists with male bands.

However, not all mashups function through juxtaposition. One of the more celebrated pieces in the mashup canon is "Boulevard of Broken Songs" a collaborative "work" by Australian artist Team 9 and Party Ben, an American artist whose mashup radio programs helped popularize the genre and create a scene for the music in San Francisco. "Boulevard of Broken Songs" was one of the tracks on a mashup album the two collaborated on called *American Edit*. The concept behind *American Edit* was to create mashup versions of all of the tracks on the band Green Day's *American Idiot*, one of one of the most commercially successful albums of 2004. Party Ben explains: "Originally, the goal was to point out just how similar some of the songs on *American Idiot* are to other rock songs. And at some points it's laugh-out-loud funny, because we're showing people how Green Day just stole some riffs."[40] "Boulevard of Broken Songs" points to the fact that the verses of the two songs it borrows most from, Green Day's "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" and Oasis'

[40] Party Ben quoted in James Montgomery, "Green day Mash-Up Leads To Cease-And-Desist Order, Grey Tuesday-Style Protest." *MTV.com*, Dec 20, 2005, accessed July 13, 2009, http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1518595/20051220/green-day.jhtml.

"Wonderwall," are both based on i-III-VI-IV harmonic successions in the same half-note oriented harmonic rhythm.[41] It also highlights the similarities in the choruses of each song. Both choruses share a half-note harmonic rhythm and move from the VI to the tonic in the first measure of their two measure long repeated progression. However, the third chord of the progression varies and so the chorus lacks the effect of the "uncanny" similarity that constitutes the central argument/effect Team 9 and Party Ben intended to advance.[42]

Despite exceptional mashups like "Boulevard of Broken Songs" that have an agenda unrelated to the idea of juxtaposition, the combining of music across some type of cultural or stylistic border is the driving force behind what we can call the "classic" mashup. The examples that Frere-Jones gives above passively refer to two canonic mashups that abide by this "classic" aesthetic argument. Reference to Missy Elliot combined with Joy Division recalls former mashup artist Dsico's "Love Will Freak Us," a mashup of Missy Elliot's "Get Your Freak On" and Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart."[43] The hip-hop/rock or "black" music/"white" music juxtaposition is probably the most common juxtaposition in mashup practice. The

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[41] A third song, Travis' "Writing to Reach You," also based on a similar verse progression, also appears as part of "Boulevard of Broken Songs." Its progression excludes the IV chord and, like the chorus, lacks the "uncanny" effect of the similarity of "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" and "Wonderwall."

[42] It is worth noting that this variety of "humor" or "commentary" has become almost conventional as a form of musical snobbery. Listeners who value harmonic complexity above other musical values are appealed to in other examples of the logic displayed by "Boulevard of Broken Songs" For example, the comedy group Axis of Awesome create humor by pointing to harmonic similarities of dozens of recent hits in their "I-V-vi-IV Medley."

[43] A post on Dscio's webpage dated October 26, 2004 reads "Dsico That No-Talent Hack, will not be responsible for anymore "mashups", or mangled pop remixes. That shit was fun for a while but now it just feels like a boring soul destroying activity in pointlessness. - there is just nothing left to explore. Mashups are ultimately a One Trick Pony, continuing to mix up these tracks is just floggin a dead horse" (accessed Dec 12, 2010, http://lukecollison.com/dsico/?cat=8).

reference to Madonna combined with The Sex Pistols is likely a reference to Mark Vidler, aka Go Home Productions', "Ray of Gob," a mashup of the vocal portion of Madonna's "Ray of Light" with instrumental backdrops by The Sex Pistols. Here it is the pop/punk or mainstream/subcultural divide being traversed.

Again, the "black" music/ "white" music mashup depends on the fact that the racialized marketing practices that have existed in various forms since the early days of the recorded music industry have naturalized the idea that records on either side of the "black" music/"white" music divide "should not even be in the same record collection." Even when listeners themselves consume the music on both sides of this divide, the idea of this divide is powerful and ubiquitous enough that they privilege it over the reality of their listening practices and hear a juxtaposition taking place. A survey of comments on the song by Youtube users demonstrates that this is the way "Love Will Freak Us" has been received by many listeners:

> This is good - suspiciously good! I can't see many people buying a Joy Divison dvd and then 30 years later thinking thank God that Missy Elliot dvd is out![44]
>
> nice mix, black and white.[45]
>
> I don't want to hate this, but I do. I'm usually pretty irreverent, and I like the African-American youth culture music scene, but I'm just not able to, as hip-hop rappers say "get jiggy with it". Not that rap and rock really seem to go well together anyway[46]
>
> No true punks would ever like Missy Elliott.[47]

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[44] Comment posted to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVGZRmK7E1Q in 2006, credited to username DannyCFC. See http://www.youtube.com/comment_servlet?all_comments&v=OVGZRmK7E1Q&fromurl=/watch%3Fv%3DOVGZRmK7E1Q.
[45] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username 2degucitas.
[46] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username HiramBagel.
[47] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username eggflesh.

> I am oddly a fan of both JD and Missy.[48]
>
> lovers of the world are SO SICK of good bands such as Joy Division, The Police, etc, being ripped up and mixed with crap-rap.[49]
>
> Only a bit of fun...I hope.[50]

It is also clear from Youtube comments that many listeners are mistakenly hearing Missy Elliot as the author of the track, rather than a third party mash up artist:

> This shows the ultimate creative bankruptcy of the Minstrel shows known as "rap" and "hip-hop". It depends entirely on robbing the graves of their betters because they have zero talent themselves.[51]
>
> Missy should stick to drum n bass mixes instead of ripping GOOD REAL artists off. [52]
>
> This is horrible, she completely destroyed the integrity of a classic... Perhaps she paid 1 million dollars to get the rights to destroy this song ...???[53]
>
> I guess i can't fault Missy for being creative. you never know where your next musical inspiration will come from, so it's good that she'll listen to almost anything...[54]

The differing competencies of listeners lead to different kinds of negotiations occurring through the encounter between listener and mashup. Listeners with the competency to recognize the mashup as the work of a third party author recognize the mashup as signaled imitation, but within that group they may differ radically in terms of how they view the evaluative nature of the imitation. As I will discuss more thoroughly in chapter three, with all pasticcio a second layer is added to the

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[48] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username Redzhotel.
[49] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username thoughtprovoke.
[50] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username 924drummer.
[51] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username archer1949.
[52] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username thoughtprovoke.
[53] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username raw420x.
[54] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username cryingzombie.

evaluative dimension; not only does the listener need to determine what the evaluative relationship is between imitator and the various hypotexts involved in the pasticcio, they must also judge what the aim of the combinatory nature of the work might be. This determination as well differs from listener to listener. Some listeners perceive the intention to be travesty of one of the two hypotexts:

> This is appalling. How dare they bring Joy Division down to this level.[55]
>
> You are either a complete schmuck or you are mocking Joy Division. This is the worse [sic] idea I have ever seen.[56]
>
> U will burn in hell for this video ! RESPECT THE 1st FOUNDER OF POST-PUNK group "Joy Devision" [sic] & they [sic] Dead Vocalist . U R BLACK-SOUL MAN ![57]

These comments seem to express not only the commenter's dislike of the effect produced by the combination, but that they perceive an evaluative predeterminedness present in the mashup artist that leads them to mock Joy Division by combining their music with Missy Elliot's. Rarer, but present still, is the determination that the mashup ennobles one of the hypotexts:

> Better way to bring Joy Division to the next century than old moaning blokes who blab on about "how they were there, way back when" or re-releasing ancient live recordings for the 100000000'th time.[58]

This comment might merely be a comment on the effect produced by the combination rather than the evaluative predeterminedness of the author, but it might be seen to suggest that this "updating" was the authorial intention of the mashup. Another variety of response views the urge towards juxtaposition as primary without

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[55] Ibid. Posted in 2006, credited to username TulseLuper.
[56] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username funeralmarch.
[57] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username SnakeTheCowboy.
[58] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username TVview.

imagining or reasoning the author possesses any particular affinity to any of the elements combined:

> this is hilarious! i love that it's mixing decades & genres, haha.[59]
>
> Yes, they are great individually but the beauty of a mash up is bringing unlikely parts together as one.[60]
>
> Two vastly different songs and genres, oil and water mixed to perfection. Beyond brilliant. Would dance my arse off to this in a club.[61]

This last family of responses possesses all the qualifications necessary to manifest the event of pastiche. On the other hand, the perception that travesty or ennobling is the aim of a particular mashup causes the mashup to function as parody or tribute. The full scope of interpretation of the evaluative stance of the work appears, and the autosonic mashup is as capable of pastiche as any allosonic imitation.

As Lacasse implies at points, popular music studies needs to find room for the documentation and theorization not just of the authorial interpretations of work, but the ways actual communities who use those works position their meaning. What these varying reactions to "Love Will Freak Us" show is that this particular work is being consumed by audiences poised to understand it in radically different ways. It is tempting to privilege the informed listener who understands the actual process that created the work, but such privileging certainly ignores experiences that should fall under the purview of a popular music scholar's responsibility. The problematic practice of marking one interpretation as correct would erase from relevance a substantial portion of the experiences this music has offered.

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[59] Ibid. Posted in 2008, credited to username hollywoodliberal.
[60] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username firehehe.
[61] Ibid. Posted in 2007, credited to username albion7000.

Separating transtextual process from effect in our framework allows us to study music with more attention to the specifics of what that music is and does in the world. We must recognize that objectively verifiable processes like mashup manifest as pastiche to one listener and parody to another and we should support a theoretical model that does not foreclose on this reality.

Chapter Two

Focused Transtextuality: Four Case Studies

> [I]f, thanks to new social conditions and new techniques of reproduction (such as cinema and mass production of imagery), modernity has ushered in a veritable rebirth, a recharging and retooling of the mimetic faculty, then it seems to me that we are forthwith invited if not forced into the inner sanctum of mimetic mysteries where, in imitating, we will find distance from the imitated and hence gain some release from the suffocating hold of "constructionism" no less than the dreadfully passive view of nature it upholds.
>
> Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*[1]

> Adorno always recognized that mimesis may have been necessary, but by itself was insufficient. That is, it was imperative to temper it with a non-instrumental notion of reason that involved the capacity for judgment through the better argument. As Fruchtl puts it, for Adorno, "the relationship between mimesis and rationality is one of reciprocal deficiency." For this reason, a revival of sympathetic magic is not the answer to the Enlightenment's complicated dialectic. Adorno would have choked on the vacuous apotropaism of Taussig's assertation that 'the task is neither to resist nor admonish the fetish quality of modern culture, but rather to acknowledge, even submit to its fetish-powers, and attempt to channel them in revolutionary directions.'
>
> Martin Jay, "Unsympathetic Magic" 81-82[2]

In passages like the first epigraph above, I recognize the passion of a writer powerfully affected by encounters with imitation. In passages like the second, I am reminded that these celebrations have, in the past, gone too far. Martin Jay's critique of Michael Taussig's celebration of the power of mimesis is rooted not in Taussig's

[1] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity.* (London: Routledge, 1993): xviii-xix
[2] Martin Jay, "Únsympathetic Magic." *Visual Anthopology Review* 9.2. (Fall 1993): 81-82. The Taussig quote included in this passage is from Michael Taussig, *The Nervous System.* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 122. The Fruchtl quote is from Josef Fruchtl. *Mimesis: Konstellation eines Zentralbegriffs bei Adorno.* (Wurzberg: Kunigschausen and Neumann, 1986): 262.

claims of the existential relief of mimetic encounters, but in his desire to go further and offer mimesis as a political tool. He writes that though Taussig acknowledges the regressive political potential Adorno and Horkheimer see enacted through mimesis "he forgets it when he claims that Adorno thought that the mimetic faculty 'provided the immersion in the concrete necessary to break definitively from the fetishes and myths of commodified practices of freedom'."[3]

In this section I provide four case studies detailing the emergence of signaled imitative work with the potential to give rise to pastiche. Though I am arguing that the mimetic states made possible by these musics can be beneficial, my purpose is not to advance claims like Taussig's. My case studies will serve three central purposes. The first will be to explore what gives rise to pastiche in the realm of popular music. Dyer notes that pastiche "is especially apt to occur when, for one reason or another (or more), the frameworks of understanding and feeling available in a culture are more evident… often in circumstances of geographic, temporal, ideological, gendered or cultural dislocation."[4] I identify key forms of dislocation underlying my four examples. Secondly, I will discuss contexts in which this music was received, seeking to understand work these forms of imitation have done and might still be doing in the world. Finally, I will examine forms of signaling in this music and suggest how they may have been understood variously as either parody or tribute. Somewhere between these opposing poles of evaluative predeterminedness lies the event of pastiche.

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[3] Jay, "Unsympathetic," 81. The quote from Taussig included in the passage is from *Mimesis and Alterity*, 254.
[4] Dyer, *Pastiche*, 179.

Example One: 1950s Rock & Roll in the 1960s

Academic writing on Sha Na Na concurs that if Sha Na Na was the answer to a problem, the problem was how best to escape the present; if the group emerged as a response to dislocation, that dislocation was from the ideology of 1960s counterculture. This group, which, beginning in 1969, engaged in signaled transtylization of the music of the first era of rock & roll (1955-1962)[5] "linked their success to disillusionment with radical politics."[6] "In an atmosphere of 'futility in people's political involvement,' as band members put it, Sha Na Na offered comforting reversion to songs full of puppy love and nonsense lyrics."[7] Yet to many listeners in the early years of the band, this reversion hardly came across as comfortable. Their delivery of the music of the pre-British Invasion era was filled with signals perceptible as evidence of excess and insincerity; the frameworks for thought and feeling they offered seemed to belong exclusively to bodies other than those in performance. What may have been comforting to Sha Na Na was not early rock & roll itself as much as the escape from the identity politics of the time.

Scholars like Daniel Marcus and Elizabeth Guffey have argued that Sha Na Na's performances played a major role in the creation of what Guffey calls "the fabricated fifties," a process of painting an idyllic, revisionist picture of the time

[5] They have produced original material that is most likely to be received as autonomous genre work and other original material that is more likely to be received as signaled imitation, but this material has remained largely in the shadow of their identity as a cover band. The group was known best for their live performances, rather than their recorded output. Jay Warner notes that "the group was not really successful on record (only "Top 40 of the Lord" [#84, 1971] and "Romeo and Juliet" [#55, 1975] charted) since their visual dynamics didn't translate well to vinyl" (Warner, 507). Jay Warner, *American Singing Groups: A History from 1940 to Today.* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2006).
[6] Daniel Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years; The Fifties and the Sixties in Contemporary Cultural Politics.* (Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004): 12.
[7] Ibid.

before the political and social unrest of the 1960s, and one capable of providing an escape, if only temporarily, from the political realities of the present through the fantasy of a purer, more harmonious era of American history. The origin story of the group always underscores the fact that their first full scale performance was advertised as an effort to unify the ideologically divided student body at Columbia University, where the group had its pre-history as the Columbia Kingsmen glee club, through a memory of the days when they "were all little greaseballs together watching the eighth-grade girls for pick-ups."[8] This concert, dubbed "The Glory That Was Grease," has been theorized by Marcus and Guffey as the key origin point of both Sha Na Na and the "fabricated fifties."

This origin story productively theorizes the way Sha Na Na and its music arose and functioned, but it omits key details. In an article by two of the group's founding members, George and Robert Leonard, brief reference is made to a performance that might more properly be understood as the origin point for the project, in that it first inspired the idea for the group. They write:

> Sha Na Na grew out of the unique midnight bull-session atmosphere of the Columbia dorms. When George was a junior on the Fifth Floor Jay, Ed Goodgold and his pals used to play a game in the hall that Ed (with Dan Carlinsky) soon boosted into a national institution: "Trivia."… Then, for Ed's and Dan's first All-Ivy Trivia Contest, the Kingsmen prepared "Little Darlin'." They wore blazers and stood in a semicircle; but when Rob Leonard did the spoken solo, the audience reaction was so intense that George (already studying choreography) had his vision of a group that would sing only Fifties rock and perform dances like the Busby Berkeley films Susan Sontag had taught George to love.

[8] George and Robert Leonard, "Sha Na Na and the Woodstock Generation." *Columbia College Today*, (Spring and Summer, 1989): 28.

The influence of Sontag is notable and has been discussed in other writing on the group, but that writing has failed to recognize the significance of the song that the Leonards claim sparked George's vision of the project.

"Little Darlin'" was, like so many of the hits of early rock & roll, a song written and first recorded by an all black ensemble, and subsequently recorded and made popular by an all white ensemble. The cross-racial politics of this practice has been much discussed. It seems reasonable to assume that most of the recordings that derived from such a process would not have signaled themselves as imitation in any manner. Much of this variety of allosonic transstylization is imitation Lacasse discussed as aiming for a "*d*egré *zéro* of transstylization."[9] Both Dyer's and Lacasse's frameworks refer to such forms of imitation as copy; in Dyer's framework, work perceived to aim for a "*d*egré *zéro* of transstylization" is work that fails to qualify as signaled imitation. It was common practice in the era of early rock & roll to re-record recently released material in the hopes that that re-recording could outsell the original. Rather than signaled imitation, these recordings, for the most part, attempted to stand on their own, like copies, in the place of the original, with its absence, both materially and psychically, un-notable and unremarkable.

Arguably, however, the Diamonds' "copy" of "Little Darlin" was an exception. Like many of the white covers of black doo-wop recordings, the Diamonds' "Little Darlin'" brought Maurice Williams and the Gladiolas' song to its pinnacle of popularity. The Diamonds' recording itself doesn't signal imitation as loudly as their staged performances of the song, but aspects of the vocal delivery

[9] Lacasse, "Intertextuality," 166.

could serve as signals to the listener primed to hear them as such. The most exaggerated of these signals is certainly the delivery of the song's spoken interlude.

The traditional function of spoken interludes in American popular music is to heighten sincerity; the effect they create is as if the vocalist has stepped outside of the frame of the song into a less public and more intimate space with the intended addressee of the lyric. By resorting to speech, the vocalist abandons the more stylized expression of sentiment through melody into a more common and "natural" mode of address.

However, this is not the effect of the spoken interlude in "Little Darlin'." The quartet's bass voice delivers the interlude with long pauses between words that distance it from naturalistic speech and vocal affectations that impair rather than heighten the conveyance of sincerity. Dave Somerville's lead vocal also contains signals capable of conveying a distance from the material they are performing. The phrasing of the song itself varies little throughout and rigidly works with short phrases that accent the first downbeat of the strong measures of the hypermeter. The manner in which the lyrics serve this first downbeat model is a relatively awkward construction in which the syllabic structure of certain words are altered to better match the initial four syllable phrase of the song and its accent on the third syllable. The third syllable falls on the downbeat of the hypermeter and is aggressively accented within the staccato delivery of each note of the entire phrase, and, to conform to the four syllable structure of the first phrase, unnecessary fourth syllables at the end of accented words like "wrong-a" and "well-a" and at the beginnings of words like "a-are" are inserted. Rather than a delivery that smooths out the

awkwardness of the mismatch between the melody and the syllabic content of the lyric, Somerville's vocal often exaggerates the extra syllables by adding force to their delivery, pointing to the original recording and signaling the second-order status of his own.

The staging the Diamonds employed in several televised performances of the song signaled it as imitation far in excess of the signaling on the recording.[10] As the song begins, the tenor vocalist Ted Kowalski immediately covers his ears with a pained expression on his face. Somerville steps into the foreground and then looks back at Kowalski as if taking pleasure in the fact that his stratospheric "ya ya ya ya" vocal line is upsetting him. The comic staging has the immediate effect of marking the vocal norms of doo-wop as both foreign to the group and problematic despite their participation in the practice. Somerville's attack on the rest of the quartet continues when along with the last exaggerated first downbeat of first eight bar section of the first verse, Somerville reaches out and snaps his fingers in the face of the baritone vocalist Phil Levitt, who feigns shock. The remainder of the comic staging revolves around Kowalski stepping out of the background to exaggerate an antiphonic element of his vocal line that colors the space between lead vocal phrases with a descending falsetto melody. Kowalski marks the problematic status of his falsetto by repeatedly drawing a kerchief from the inner breast pocket of his jacket and draping himself with it before delivering the melody in the personal space of the lead vocalist, Somerville. The draping clearly marks such falsetto ornaments as feminine and distances the

[10] This staging was used in a number of televised performances. One example, the example I am describing here, is from The Diamonds' June 2, 1957 appearance on episode 33 of the second season of the *The Steve Allen Show*.

Diamonds from being perceived as entirely sincere about the aesthetics of the music they were performing.

The brief description of "Little Darlin'" Greil Marcus included in his meditation on punk's presence in pop music *In the Fascist Bathroom: Punk in Pop Music, 1977-1992*, is worth invoking here to show that the song was indeed interpreted by some as signaled imitation. Marcus wrote:

> there are plenty of corrupt, faked, or dishonest records with moments just as deep and powerful as any in "Every Picture Tells a Story" – not just honorable let's-get-rich records like Freddy Cannon's "Palisades Park," but this-is-a-load-of-shit-but-let's-get-rich-and-maybe-change-our-names-and-not-have-to-tell-our-mothers records like the Diamonds' 1957 white-boy rip-off of "Little Darlin'," which was originally made by the noble black rhythm and blues group the Gladiolas.[11]

Similarly, but more soberly, Jay Warner, in his *American Singing Groups: A History from 1940 to Today*, calls the Diamonds' version of the Gladiolas' original "an exaggerated though effective version"[12] and notes that The Diamonds' "extra edge was in their ability to sound less "square" than some of their counterparts when doing rock & roll and covering black vocal groups."[13] Warner also characterizes the Diamonds' entry into doo-wop and rock & roll as a stylistic mismatch forced upon a group more comfortable with spirituals, pop songs, show tunes, and barbershop songs, writing: "When the group auditioned for Mercury execs with spiritual songs, some

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[11] Greil Marcus, *In the Fascist Bathroom: Punk in Pop Music, 1977-1992*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999): 277.
[12] Warner, *American*, 316.
[13] Ibid., 158.

Einstein thought it was rock & roll and signed the group to the division that handled that style instead of pop."[14]

To consider that it was this recording that generated the concept for Sha Na Na is to realize that popular music capable of giving rise to pastiche emerges from hypotexts that do as well. In other words, we could see Sha Na Na both as the source of potential pastiche and as the result of the event of pastiche as given rise to through an encounter with the Diamond's version of "Little Darlin'." Thus, the genre that situates the various hypotexts that feed into pastiche rooted projects is *both* an exhausted framework for thought and feeling and a space generative of the event of pastiche.[15] As such, 1950s rock & roll in Sha Na Na is less of a passive body of work misused by Sha Na Na and more of an active tool they discovered for the creation of mimetic experience.

The audience for the Kingsmen's performance may or may not have been aware of the Diamond's version of "Little Darlin'" and, further, may or may not have attended to the evaluative complexity perceptible in the Diamonds' recording and live performances of the song. It seems safe to assume, however, that the experiences the Kingsmen's performance gave rise to would have been, for the most part, less an

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[14] Ibid., 156.

[15] Here the complexity of the idea of genre is brought into focus. Should the Diamonds be considered participants in a genre distinct from Maurice Williams and the Gladiolas if we read their performances of "Little Darlin'" as signaled imitation? Or, does the perception of complex sincerity within the doo-wop genre open performances of the music that do not contain overt signaling to being read as also complex in their sincerity? Aspects of Sha Na Na's repertoire seem to point to the latter, to the suggestion that 1950s popular music as a whole needs to be re-read as complex in its sincerity. Their repertoire often foregrounded tragic ballads like "Tell Laura I Love Her" and "Teen Angel" in a seeming effort to underscore the very lack of simplicity and sincerity in the music of the 1950s. However I must here restate the obvious, that though Sha Na Na's repertoire suggests that we attend to complex sincerity in the popular music of the 1950s, it is certain many readings of their performances would have located that complexity entirely within Sha Na Na's re-presentation and not in their hypotexts.

experience of the Kingsmen re-constructing the hypertextual dynamics of the Diamonds' performance of the song and more an experience of judging the Kingsmen's own more general relationship to the aesthetics and implied subject position of the song. Similarly, when the group formed as Sha Na Na, 1950s rock & roll would have been largely viewed as a passive body of sincere work re-presented by a group loudly signaling the imitative status of their project and their project alone.

Sha Na Na recently celebrated their 40th anniversary with a CD release that exclaims "Sha Na Na has been bringing the great classics of Rock & Roll to audiences around the world demonstrating that Rock & Roll is Here to Stay." Paratextual assertions of this variety push evaluative perceptions of their imitation towards tribute. Encounters with their work in the early part of their career also manifested as encounters with evaluatively predetermined imitation, but on the opposite end of the evaluative spectrum. Robert Christgau responded to their early work by explaining he is "not an ecstatic fan of Sha Na Na's famous live act,"[16] adding, he thinks "it is a mistake to parody Elvis Presley, because he's too good." Much has changed over the decades of Sha Na Na's existence to date, both in terms of the content of their recordings and performances and in terms of the context in which those performances have taken place. Though I want to refrain always from making confident claims of where and when the event of pastiche might have occurred, I am more comfortable theorizing conditions under which it is more likely to have taken place. The variations in textual, paratextual, and contextual considerations throughout the 40 plus years of the project's existence provide a means

[16] Robert Christgau, "Consumer Guide (5)." *Village Voice*, Dec 11, 1969.

through which I can explore the complexity of the elements that feed into musical experience and into perceptions of evaluative aspects of imitation. While at any stage in their existence a listener may have experienced pastiche through their recordings or performances, their later work is far less poised to create such an effect.

In their contemporary manifestation, Sha Na Na retain certain elements from their original presentation style, but the ability of these elements to act as signals in a manner comparable to earlier manifestations of the group has radically changed. The most radical change that took place over the course of their existence was undoubtedly contextual. The early contexts for the group's performances, from their appearance at the Woodstock festival to their club gigs in rock oriented spaces like Steve Paul's The Scene and The Fillmore East in New York, were spaces and cultures associated with the rock music of the late 1960s. In the 1970s, as the rock & roll revival industry began to grow, Sha Na Na began presenting less in spaces and cultures devoted to contemporary rock music and more and more amongst re-united versions of the groups whose recordings they were imitating. From 1977-1981, their work was most widely consumed through a television variety show formed around the group. Since 1981, the group have performed in a variety of contexts "from fairs to performing arts centers backed by renowned symphony orchestras," most of which continue to be framed by the idea of rock & roll revival.[17]

Scholars who have written about Sha Na Na have focused almost exclusively on their early existence against the backdrop of the rock counterculture, and rightly so.

[17] The quote is taken from the liner notes of Sha Na Na, *Sha Na Na 40th Anniversary Collector's Edition*. PBGL Inc, CD-81182.

It was in such contexts that the group had the greatest potential to be disruptive and give rise to unique forms of encounter. Again, the signals present in the early performances of the group were loud, but how those signals were to be interpreted was not clear. The manner in which they staged doo-wop/rock & roll was radically different from the manner in which it was staged in the 1950s and early 1960s. Doo-wop staging foregrounded vocalists and required them to engage in understated but tightly choreographed motions. Sha Na Na's vocalists also engaged in choreographed motions, but often these were visually secondary to a trio of intentionally amateurish dancers whose gold lamé outfits became a visual signature of the group. These dancers contributed to the vocals as well, but not consistently; quite often their sole purpose was visual and not musical. The suits referenced the sartorial norms of doo-wop and rock & roll, in which evening-wear, flashy or conventional, was a requirement. In particular, they referenced the famous Nudie suit Elvis Presley sported on the cover of his 1959 release *50,000,000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong*.[18] However, they subverted the glamour of the outfits and referenced contemporary rock conventions by being bare-chested underneath their lamé jackets. The dancers in the outfits were notable for the lack of uniformity in their appearance. Scott "Santini" Powell was noticeably taller than the other dancers and was visually conspicuous for both the moustache he sported at times and for his receding hairline. The only African-American member of the group, Dennis Greene, contributed to the lack of visual uniformity for that reason. And, Rob Leonard (later replaced by Johnny

[18] "Nudie suit" refers to an outfit made by the tailor Nudie Cohn. Cohn made many iconic performance garments for film and music stars from the 1940s-1970s.

Contardo) rounded out the trio looking young and effeminate next to Powell. The spectacle of diverse masculinity of the trio is at odds with the visual uniformity standard in show dancing. Along with the complex visual they provided, the choreography these dancers engaged in was not a display of virtuosity that relegated the musical performance to the background, but a series of exaggerated, but simple and ebullient gestures that served to visually underscore the music's characteristics. The spectacle the group provided through its choreography was extended into the other seven-ten musicians onstage, who also almost always engaged in solo and group choreographed motions with an exuberance likely to be read as excessive and insincere. The rest of the band also reinforced the visual diversity of the group. Most notably, the remaining members of the group sported greased ducktail hairdos, leather jackets, sleeveless v-neck t-shirts, and other accessories in a street-wise greaser posture that soon grew into the central symbol of the "fabricated fifties." Paratextually, they reinforced this posture when "[m]embers of the groups whose own names suggested a variety of ethnic heritages, including Irish and Jewish, adopted such Italianate names as Tony Santini, Gino, and Ronzoni."[19]

The music itself, arguably, contained few signals of imitation, save one key signal: the tempo at which they performed their material. In their early years they played their upbeat material exaggeratedly fast. For example, the version they performed at Woodstock of "At the Hop" was performed about thirty percent faster than Danny & the Juniors' original recording, a speed at which the lead vocalist can

[19] Philip Auslander, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006): 24.

barely comprehensibly pronounce the lyrics. With the 1970 addition of Jon "Bowser" Bowman, a second signal emerged through the exaggerated manner in which he delivered the bass lines of many of their songs. The arrangements frequently made room for his often too-low, too-percussive, too-foregrounded deformation of doo-wop bass vocal singing.

Jay Warner writes that at The Scene and the Fillmore East "they were accepted as both revivalists and parodists."[20] While visual elements contributed much to interpretations of the group as parody, readings of the group as revivalist tribute easily emerged from the relative fidelity with which they performed their repertoire beyond the deformations discussed above. However, as the group moved from rock centered spaces into a context where audiences were generated by the idea of rock & roll revival, changes occurred that would have made the event of tribute increasingly more likely. Shortly after forming, the group was absorbed into the beginnings of the rock & roll revival movement, performing in the first edition of Richard Nader's *Rock & Roll Revival Spectacular* concert series alongside a group of musicians that essentially were the hypotexts of Sha Na Na's imitation. In the early years of their career, they moved back and forth between performing in rock-oriented spaces where 1950s rock & roll was next to absent and in these revival-oriented environments devoted entirely to the styles of the 1950s. In the years preceding the 1977 birth of their television series, the revival movement grew and served as a reliable space in which Sha Na Na could secure employment. In this era, their key musical signal began to gradually disappear; by the television era, their performances of "At the

[20] Warner, *American,* 506.

Hop" had reverted to the tempo of the original recording. Similarly, the visual signals remained but became less exaggerated. The bare chested lamé clad dancers began wearing black shirts underneath their jackets and sporting gold chains around their necks. The neckline of the shirts cut low and still displayed portions of the chests of the dancer/vocalists, but the effect, with the chains and low necklines, suggested another variation on the Italian-American stereotype rather than a mashup of conflicting 1950s and 1960s displays of rock masculinity. The result was a substantial softening of their visual presence as a signal and a move towards visual and semiotic uniformity throughout the ensemble.

Following the television era, the comedic bass delivery of Bowser Bauman ended with his 1983 departure from the group. Musical signaling remained to some extent through the occasional incorporation of similar comedic deformations of the songs they performed, but became a less important feature of their arrangements. Greene, Powell, and Contardo also left the group, and with their departure the gold lamé clad front line of dancers was discontinued and with it the use of extreme, foregrounded choreography.[21] Besides Donny York's greaser getup, which has remained almost identical for the 40 years of the group, only very minor sartorial nods towards the adoption of performance personae remain in the most recent performances of the group – Jocko Marcellino generally dresses in a manner that references, more than anything, contemporary Hollywood's version of a Mafioso; Reggie Batista's monochromatic stagewear suggests the R&B of the 1980s;

[21] After this period, Screamin Scott Simon revived the bare chested gold lamé look for part of the 1980s, but after this brief revival it disappeared once again from the group's stage show.

Screamin' Scott Simon generally wears understated versions of glam country & western dress shirts; Gene Jaramillio sports a leather jacket in a less effortful approximation of the greaser – together suggesting, more than anything else, the contemporary individualism of the members rather than a form of coherent calculated artifice, but still retaining some degree of a much less uniformly temporally specific referentiality.

Despite their differences, the signals their act involved in all of these periods were capable of contributing to a perception of the group as evaluatively celebratory or evaluatively opposed to the material they re-presented. Comments like "Sha Na Na… were not a parody group: though they had fun with the songs, they sung them straight and with a lot of affection"[22] display the extent to which their signals could be interpreted as insufficent to render their work evaluatively open or oppositional, even in the earliest manifestations of the group. While it's demonstrable that Sha Na Na were perceived both as parody and as tribute, our ability to theorize their giving rise to pastiche is less demonstrable. It is dependent on the assumption that material capable of being perceived as both parody and tribute must also appear to some listeners as both and/or neither.

Perceptions of evaluative intention happen moment to moment and depend not just on the performance and the signals it contains, but on the contexts in which they occurred. Through the textual and contextual changes I have discussed above, Sha Na Na shifted from a group most likely to be heard as parody to a group most likely to be

[22]Comment posted by username Reality Chuck on Straight Dope Message Board, July 12 2006, under the thread "Why Was Sha Na Na at Woodstock?" http://boards.straightdope.com/sdmb/archive/index.php/t-379252.html.

heard as tribute. However, at each stage of their career different listeners interpreted their work on both sides of this divide. It follows that their work was capable of offering both and/or neither throughout their career. Born out of the pastiche of "Little Darlin'" and the desire to feel non-identification in the midst of a moment of severe identity politics, Sha Na Na was and is a significant force in popular musical pastiche.

Example Two: 1960s French Pop in 2000s America

A *National Public Radio* feature on Les Sans Culottes described the band's origins in a 1996 trip its founder Bill Carney took to visit a friend in Paris. On the trip, as the program describes: "during a heated discussion about rock & roll… a French woman accused him of being an American music snob."[23] The accusation led to a listening session in which Bill was exposed to French popular music for the first time. The feature recounted that, at first, Bill found the music strange. He explained, "I guess it was kind of the strings and the whole heavy breathing. You know it had a sort of weirdo novelty effect."[24] But the strangeness became attractive. Carney grew interested in the music and eventually decided: "People should know about this kind of music even if it means doing my own maladroit interpretations of it."[25] Back at home in Brooklyn, Carney's impulse to educate American audiences about French

[23] Ben Shapiro, "Faux French Rock with Les Sans Culottes." (MP3 audio file) *National Public Radio*, April 2, 2005, accessed January 14, 2008. http://www.culturekitchen.com/archives/000682.html.
[24] Bill Carny quoted in Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

music grew into Les Sans Culottes, a band of non-French speaking Americans that try to recreate in the French language, the sound of 1960s French pop.

Despite the pedagogical nature of Carney's stated intention, unlike Sha Na Na, Les Sans Culottes did not take shape as transstylization of French pop hits. Rather, they have focused almost entirely on original songwriting. Interestingly, they rarely directly reference the musical aspects most unique to 1960s French popular music. The string textures and breathy vocals Carney found so strange are not present; their music is organ driven rock that makes more general reference to the period in the mid to late 1960s when organs like the Farfisa and Vox lines began to be widely used.[26] Thus their music is perceptible as historically coded, as belonging to the 1960s, but outside of the vocal not much of the music is likely to be perceived as strongly coded as French. The aspect that does assert its second-order status are the performance personae the group display through song lyrics, and visually in live performance, their album imagery/liner notes, and music videos. Each of the members of the group take on a pseudonym and those who speak in live performances speak as if they are native French speakers with little knowledge of the English language, doing their best to address their audience in it. It is unlikely that many listeners encounter the group without seeing through these characters; besides the difficultly of playing such a role convincingly, the pseudonyms (Johnny Dieppe, Edith Pissoff, and Francoise Hardly for example), which they use in live performances and on album liner notes, are quite obviously artificial, designed to refer to and pun on aspects of French culture that have become well known within America. Further, listeners familiar enough with the

[26] I discuss the significance of these instruments in more detail below.

groups to consume paratextual aspects of the project like interviews, witness the performers going out of character.

What is most complex and interesting about Les Sans Culottes is not merely that they are Americans in a mimetic encounter with Frenchness, but rather that they are Americans in a mimetic encounter with French musicians and listeners who are in a mimetic encounter with Americanness. Thus, they are not merely exploring the music as a material force in the construction of Frenchness, but also music articulated with notions of Americanness as a material force in the construction of a variety of Frenchness. Rock & roll was strongly coded in France as an American cultural import in the era that is Carney's prime referent. Les Sans Culottes look back to a period in French history in which "America became a signifier of consumer modernism and a cult of the new"[27] and a period in which French citizens used music, amongst other cultural products, to commune in an embodied manner with Americanness as a structure of feeling. The first wave of French rock & roll in the late 1950s and early 1960s saw French musicians taking on Anglo or Anglo-American sounding names in addition to imitating the imagery and sounds of American rock & roll. Jean-Phillippe Smet became a French rock 'n roll icon as Johnny Hallyday, Claude Piron became Danny Boy in the group Danny Boy et ses Pénitents, and Hervé Forneri's stage name, Dick Rivers, was taken from the 1957 Elvis film *Loving You*. In an article about shifting French perceptions and constructions of Hallyday, David Loosely discusses how Hallyday "allowed himself to be billed initially as a US citizen living in France"

[27] David Looseley, *Popular Music in Contemporary France: Authenticity, Politics, Debate.* (New York: Berg, 2003): 22.

and how his managers and record labels were "instrumental in fabricating an American-style persona for him."[28] This indicates that the Americanness of the music gave it a kind of authenticity that was valued at the time and that French listeners were interested in the way that rock & roll participated in the creation of the thought and feeling of Americans. What is important here is that, like Sha Na Na, Les Sans Culottes arose from encounters with a music that, from their perspective, would have read as profoundly mimetic. Just as Sha Na Na can be seen as sustaining the signaled imitation of "Little Darlin'," Les Sans Culottes can be seen as carrying forward the mimetic energy perceptible in French rock & roll artists presenting themselves as American.

Les Sans Culottes can be seen as a project that reflects on a practice of aestheticism that often governs intercultural listening and that we embarrassedly avoid discussing. To engage in the affective and corporeal experiences of a music that comes with a strong sense of cultural ownership, the listener will often, in some sense, imaginatively occupy that culture. By doing so, the listener effectively erases or, at least, diminishes the barrier of meaning that separates them from the bodies they understand to have previously engaged with the music in question. They temporarily invite themselves inside the cultural framework they have been excluded from. Whereas the perception of Frenchness separates the American listener of French music from the French listener of French music, the perception of the Frenchness of the music also offers an opportunity for an imaginary occupation of that Frenchness, but, of course, in a temporary fashion that cannot be sustained. This kind of

[28] David Looseley, "Fabricating Johnny." *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (2005): 193.

imaginative occupation of a "body-in-culture" is inevitably unstable and the listener is subject to an oscillation in and out of the imagination, back and forth between their sustainable and unsustainable identities, back and forth between closeness to and distance from the bodies they imagine to exist within the cultural framework they are excluded from.

While the dislocation Carney must have felt as an American becoming acclimatized to French popular music might seem worthy of consideration in relation to our study of dislocation, it seems more correct to consider French music less of an environment in which he found himself dislocated and more of a tool to counter dislocation. Rather, the relevant dislocation in this case seems ideological. Ideological dislocation is perceptible on a paratextual level with Les Sans Culottes when Carney makes statements like: "the last French hit in the United States was The Singing Nun doing "Dominique"… and there's something wrong with that."[29] Such a comment suggests that the existence of Les Sans Culottes represents a response to an imbalance in transnational flows of popular culture and an ideological dislocation from a national identity associated with the snobbery Carney's French friend accused him of. Just as Sha Na Na emerged out of opposition to the identity politics that caused conflict on the Columbia University campus, Les Sans Culottes emerged out of opposition to dominant modes of constructing American identity in the period preceding the project's formation. In both projects, the hypotext represented a tool to invoke a form of non-identificatory practice that allowed them to remove themselves,

[29] Carny quoted in Maggie Lake, "New Yorkers promote French pop," *CNN*, June 6, 2008, accessed July 25, 2008, http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2008/06/06/lake.eof.french.pop.ny.cnn. The Singing Nun's "Dominque" was a French language hit in the United States in 1963. It held the top position on the Billboard Hot 100 for 4 weeks in December 1963.

however temporarily, from an identity politics that had become unwanted and oppressive.

Les Sans Culottes signals its imitative status loudly on the level of the paratexual, the contextual, and the textual. On the textual level however, it is the lyrical constructions, rather than the musical, that contain the clearest signaling. The fact that their songs are clearly written in a French that caters to English speaking audiences draws the listener's attention back to foundational artifice of the project and amounts to a loud textual signaling of the imitative nature of the work. The lyrics evoke French cultural borrowing of English-speaking culture and employ aspects of French culture that have become part of American culture. Songs like "Allo Allo (Hello I Love You)" from *Fixation Orale* or "Merci Beaucoup" from *Le Weekender* act on non-French speaking audiences by employing choruses that repeat simple French phrases that are known to most non-French speaking Americans. Songs like "Sa Sabine" from *Faux Realism* use lyrics like "Sabine est si si sexy / s'habille de son bikini;" two such conjoined lines that terminate in words shared by French and English point to the process of intercultural borrowing and remind listeners that despite the foreignness of the language, these lyrics are written to be received by English speakers. Their songs are peppered of with words like "supercool," "supersize," "Oncle Sam," "kool aid," and "weekender." Proper names, which of course do not change in translation, are also often included in their lyrics. Those who can speak French are treated to a further level of artifice when they recognize that the persona Carney uses to front the band and that he constructs through the lyrics is a caricature of French hypersexualized masculinity. Song themes vary, but the most

recurrent trope is the presentation of Carney's character Clermont Ferrand as a stereotypical French poet/aesthete/lover. The stereotype itself can alternately be viewed as a repeat of a common trope or a comment on its ubiquity in American views of French culture. Either way, the artifice of the persona is a readily apparent signal.

Again, the music mildly signals itself as imitation through the use of organ sounds that have been temporally coded as belonging to the 1960s. In the 1960s, companies like Vox and Farfisa began manufacturing organs designed to be lightweight enough for musicians to tour with. Much of the rock music of the 1960s began to incorporate the distinctive timbres of these organs. The arrival and large-scale adoption of these new timbral realms in the mid-1960s, coupled with the fact that their relative ubiquity ended in the early 1970s when the first affordable portable synthesizers appeared on the market, ensured that the timbres of these instruments were primed for historical coding. These organs often functioned distinctively by adding to the treble range of the spectrum on 1960s rock recordings and live performances. In this upper range they served a variety of functions: they provided chordal harmonies, riffs, and/or ornamentations at the ends of vocal phrases. The use of one of these organs, or a synthesized approximation of their timbres, in a manner functionally similar to the way they were employed in the rock music of the 1960s can often invoke the music/meaning of that era. Other examples of this can be found in the sound crafted by bands like Smashmouth or The B-52s.[30] Combined with the

[30] The farfisa organ is a staple of Smashmouth's sound, featured prominently in songs as a soloing instrument and as harmonic support. Aspects of the visual culture connected to the band as well as their dedication to performing cover versions of songs from the 1960s, make their "retro" intentionality

French vocal, their use of the organ sufficiently signals that the hypotext is a *bygone* form of French popular music.

While the band impersonates the French musician in a mimetic relation with imaginations of Americanness, the audience members may feel compelled to interrogate their own imaginations of Frenchness. This, in turn, would likely make the national framework through which they think and feel apparent. During a Les Sans Culottes show I attended in Los Angeles in 2008, one member of the audience began shouting "baguette" and "beret" to the band as they played.[31] This individual's spontaneous participation in the transcultural logic of the project tells us something about the way Les Sans Culottes is received and the kind of experience they offer. The desire to shout out these words, which for many Americans signify Frenchness as much as they signify the bread or the hat that they refer to, suggests that the performance invites listeners to echo the process the band is engaged in. Shouting these words in this context seems to involve a momentary embodiment of a cultural identity the listener is essentially excluded from as well as an awareness of the conflicting national identity that they have been interpellated into. This particular listener seemed to be externalizing the imaginative process of vicarious embodiment of the vocalists' intersubjective experience. Like the performer, the listener too can

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explicit. One example is the video for their song "Walkin' on the Sun," which references the Beach Party films of the 1960s, drag racing, and tiki culture. These images are interspersed with close-ups of the farfisa that make the foregrounded instrument even more apparent and its "retro" musical meaning more obvious to listeners who may fail to hear it as historically coded. The B-52s, an even more explicitly "retro" band, also employ a farfisa alongside similar references to the popular culture of the 1950s and 1960s.

[31] This performance took place April 4, 2008 at a venue called Safari Sam's.

opt to become French, or, to become French becoming American, through the affective and corporeal aspects of the sounds of the language and the music.

We cannot step into another spatiotemporal location nor erase our cultural experience, but we can derive feeling from encounters with aesthetic forms and recognize that this feeling has been felt in other bodies and has given rise to group identities we are excluded from. Les Sans Culottes is a memorialization *and* a manifestation of cross-cultural encounter.

Like Sha Na Na, Les Sans Culottes is likely to be received both as parody and tribute. Their closeness to their hypotext is suggested by their unusual choice to present French pop music in a non-French speaking environment, yet the artifice of the project can easily be read as a mockery of Frenchness. Since the music is only weakly imitative, suggestive of the 1960s but not radically *of* the 1960s, the hypotext seems to be less French music than Frenchness itself as a structure of feeling. The exploration of this structure of feeling is variously a desire to become French and an affirmation of their exclusion from Frenchness. At the same time, the exploration was generated from the painful interpellation of Carney into the identificatory category of Americanness described above. Listening to Les Sans Culottes, a listener can affirm that they are both French and American at the same time as they are neither French nor American, they can dwell in a state of non-identification until the last swell of the organ decays.

Example Three: 1970s "Stadium Rock" in the 1990s

Urge Overkill is a musical group whose original songwriting and image is often coded as belonging to the "stadium rock" or "arena rock" music and culture of the 1970s. Their aesthetics of re-presentation emerged out of a scene with a notoriously strict politics of authenticity, the Chicago Punk scene of the late 1980s/early 1990s. Their project as a whole can be considered a non-identificatory response to the politics of that scene.

Appropriately, Urge Overkill reached their apex of success through a cover song: Quentin Tarantino featured their version of Neil Diamond's "Girl You'll Be a Woman Soon" prominently in a key scene in his 1994 hit film *Pulp Fiction*.[32] The song is a vehicle for the projection of a masculinity. The narrating subject is a marginalized figure, a kind of male outcast pleading to a lover who is caught been him and a vague collectivity, a "they" that are working to squelch their relationship. The "they" tell the "girl," "He's not your kind" and "The boy's no good," and the narrator assures her that "if they get the chance, they'll end it for sure."[33] He tells her that he's done all he can, and the choice is now hers. This eroticized outsider masculinity and the lover torn between her social network and love for this outsider is a well established trope, common both in 1992 when Urge Overkill recorded their version and in 1967 when Diamond's original recording of the song hit the Billboard charts. More culturally dissonant across this temporal gap, however, is the

[32] Urge Overkill, "Girl You'll Be a Woman Soon." *Stull.* Touch and Go Records, TG86, 1992.
[33] Neil Diamond. "Girl You'll Be a Woman Soon." *Just for You*. Bang Records, BLPS-217, 1967.

accompanying theme of blossoming femininity and/or virginal deflowering introduced in the chorus lyrics: “girl, you’ll be a woman soon / please, come take my hand / girl you’ll be a woman soon / and soon, you’ll need a man.”[34] A love song to a girl who the song suggests is prepubescent is one aspect of Neil Diamond’s work that creates the particular masculinity he presented. The virginal, inexperienced, oppressed, and torn femininity he addresses serves as the Other of his confident masculinity.

Since the late 1960s when this song first emerged, there have been radical shifts in the ways in which masculinity can be performed without being registered as excessive, anachronistic, or grotesque. Specifically, this kind of male registering of prepubescent feminine potential has been marked as deviant. In light of this, a song that performs this scenario would register with many listeners in 1994 as anachronistic or grotesque. Neil Diamond’s entire performance persona has been repeatedly registered as grotesque and excessive in the cultural environment in America in the 1990s. In 1998, on the popular sketch comedy program *Saturday Night Live*, actor Will Ferrell parodied Diamond in the confessional environment of *VH1 Storytellers*, a program where songwriters both perform and tell the origin stories of their popular hits. The humor in the sketch derives, in part, from the contrast between the mildness, by contemporary standards, of the lyrics and music and the excessiveness, by today’s standards, of the masculinity performed through Diamond’s vocal identity, gestures, musical arrangements, and clothing. Ferrell, as Diamond, recounts to the audience that "Sweet Caroline" was written after

[34] Ibid.

committing a drunken hit and run that killed "a kid," that his "bizarre, insatiable and downright dangerous sexual habits led [him] to write" the song "Cracklin' Rosie," and that he wrote "Forever in Blue Jeans" after he "killed a drifter to get an erection."[35]

Urge Overkill supposedly had a sole encounter with Diamond. In a 1995 interview with Canadian music video television station *MuchMusic*, guitarist Eddie Roeser seemed to mark his distance from Diamond in terms related to masculinity, the body, and identity when his sole comment about the encounter was that Diamond "was the tannest man [he]'d ever seen."[36] In the era in question, and still to the present, tanning is often looked upon by various communities or subcultures in America as distasteful, a signifier of economic irresponsibility, hedonism, and/or vanity. The idea of Diamond being the "tannest man" seems to signify his status as abject in Roeser's view, but it may alternately or simultaneously signify a kind of admiration. This comment itself shares the same potential for ambiguity as their music.

Though Diamond might not be an artist perfectly representative of the notion of "arena rock," he is closely related for a number of reasons. Most obviously, Diamond performs in and fills stadiums. "Arena" rock is predominantly a derogatory term; invoking the "arena," which is the performance venue in which the contemporary musical group can maximize the economic reward of live performance,

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[35] *Saturday Night Live*. NBC. Original air date: February 7, 1998.
[36] MuchMusic coverage of the 1995 Glastonbury Festival. MuchMusic Canada. June 25, 1995.

serves to point to the genre's apparent willingness to put its own economic self interest ahead of other motivations. Steve Waksman explains

> the 1960s and 1970s… were the years when the rock music industry forged a new economy of scale, expanding its reach in dramatic fashion. Although record sales were an important component of this development, perhaps the most charged symbol of the changing cultural and economic position of rock was the growth in the format of live performance. Spurred by the success of the great music festivals of the late 1960s, rock concerts were increasingly housed in large venues initially designed not as concert halls but as sports facilities; and with this shift in the mode of live presentation, the phenomenon of 'arena rock' was born.[37]

Diamond's success, especially throughout the 1970s, was massive, and the spectacle of Diamond performing live to adoring crowds became a significant part of his public image. "Arena rock" as a musical style is thought to be rooted in an accessible rock aesthetic that made conscious and calculated choices to provide singable anthemic choruses, simple, powerful guitar riffs, slick production values, and to be generally devoid of the politics of the rock counterculture in the 1960s and the gritty aesthetics and subversive imagery and lyrics of the emerging punk underground.[38] As with

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[37] Steve Waksman, "Into the Arena: Edward Van Halen and the Cultural Contradictions of the Guitar Hero." In *Guitar Cultures*, eds. Andy Bennett and Kevin Dawe. (Gordonsville, VA: Berg, 2001): 118.

[38] The distinction between the "arena rock" of the 1970s and 1980s and both 1960s rock and 1970s/1980s punk is illustrated effectively by a longer passage in Waksman's work. Waksman writes: "In his 1985 journalistic account of the rise of Van Halen to the height of hard rock success, J.D. Considine remembered his first brush with the Van Halen attitude. It came over the radio while driving the streets of Baltimore in 1978. The song was *You Really Got Me*, a cover of the 1960s two-chord Kinks classic. Considine was struck by the difference between the version of the song now playing before his ears and the original: 'what I heard was guitar playing that bristled with confidence, sneaking slick asides behind a singer who inflected the lyrics with a degree of snideness that made the tame put-downs my friend and I were tossing off moments before seem goofily polite by comparison' (Considine 1985: 7). Most of all, though, Considine was 'appalled' by what he heard, appalled that a band of kids from L.A. had the audacity to haul out time-worn and supposedly outdated conventions of arena rock as though they still had life and energy left in them. After all, the end of the 1970s was rapidly approaching, and mainstream hard rock had been left fossilized by the brash anger and simplified structures of the new breed, punk, and its less confrontational cousin, new wave. Such were the governing assumptions of any self-respecting rock critic of the time; but Considine was not content to leave it at that. Van Halen's version of *You Really Got Me* chafed against his new-found sense of

Diamond's work, "arena rock" was a genre imbued with a language of conspicuous masculine display, both in terms of the masculinity of its guitar heroism and its lyrics and imagery.

Urge Overkill formed in 1986 through connections to the Chicago punk scene, a scene as vehemently against "arena rock," or "corporate rock" as it was often referred to, as any of punk's various manifestations. Urge's early recordings display their adoption of the aesthetic of Chicago punk. However, in a jeans and t-shirt wearing scene that largely defined itself in direct opposition to corporate stadium rock and in a scene that significantly stepped up the authenticity ante for participation in underground music scenes, Urge Overkill began developing an act that took the stage wearing matching uniforms with velvet jackets, and they posed in fur coats, jewelery, and with champagne in hand. Whereas the mass of listeners encountering Urge Overkill through "Girl You'll Be a Woman Soon" were likely to register the project various ways across the evaluative spectrum, most listeners in the early days of Urge's involvement in the Chicago punk scene, given the context and the textual connectedness to the dominant musical aesthetic of the scene, would have likely read the group as parody, a clear repudiation of the cultural symbols they were incorporating into their act.

These readings of their work became less viable however as Urge moved further away from that scene, stylistically, (seemingly) ideologically, and literally. Their 1991 album *The Supersonic Storybook* was the last record they released on

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musical propriety, but it also sounded too good to dismiss. Thus was he left to observe, 'despite the fact that diligent listening to the Ramones had left me murmuring the mantra "less is more" every time I heard Van Halen, a voice deep inside me seemed to snicker, "Yeah, but bigger is *still* better'" (Considine 1985: 8)" (Ibid., 120).

Touch & Go records, the label of choice for many of Urge's Mid-Western punk contemporaries. It was also the last recording of Urge's produced by Steve Albini, one of the central ideologues of Chicago and American punk. Albini had previously produced two of the three recordings released by the band. After *The Supersonic Storybook*, Urge made the jump to a major label, Geffen Records, a subsidiary of MCA Music Entertainment Group, for their fourth full-length album, 1993's *Saturation*. The album moved further in the direction of "arena rock," removing nearly all trace of the noise punk aesthetic their earlier recordings kept at least one foot in. A backlash ensued wherein Urge Overkill were thought to have betrayed their scene and its politics. Albini publically accused them of being "pandering sluts… playing frat party rock."[39] With a change in context and a cleansing of their sound of its arguably "non-imitative" aspects, the readings of Urge's music and the meanings that emerged from those readings would change in a manner that arguably made pastiche more likely to occur.

Their shift into the commercial mainstream was not as much of a shift as it might have been in another era since the context Urge moved into was also dominated by versions of punk ideologies and aesthetics. The localized underground scene they had abandoned was traded for a place in a commercial mainstream in which another underground and highly localized scene, a scene with many of the same origins and ideologies as the Chicago scene, had recently been nationalized; Urge Overkill looked and now sounded equally anachronistic and unnatural alongside the thrift store fashion and visual and sonic authenticities of the Seattle grunge rock bands that

[39] Letter to the editor of the *Chicago Reader* by Steve Albini printed January 28, 1994.

dominated the commercial rock mainstream of the early 1990s. This shift actually pre-dated *Saturation*, and can be seen as beginning more properly when Urge began touring with Seattle based groups Nirvana and Pearl Jam in 1991, just as the Seattle scene began its move into the commercial rock mainstream.

On a major label and eschewing the indie distrust of the mainstream, readings of Urge's evaluative relationship to their hypotext(s) would have drifted further from parody and towards either tribute or, further, to unsignaled autonomous genre work in the rock genre they were imitating. It was likely unclear to many listeners whether they were making fun of "arena rock" or were expressing sympathy with the genre by adopting its aesthetics in earnest. Arguably, this new context and aesthetic, more so than their previous context and aesthetic, would be more likely to lead to readings wherein the answer was both as well as neither. Though the stylistic backdrop against which they were measured was still a punk influenced backdrop, listeners would have been less likely to interpret the band as "of" that world, given that they were not from the Seattle scene specifically. Further, being that they were now literally "corporate rock," their imitation of a genre associated with the idea of "corporate rock" would be viewed as far less parodic. Rather than an audience that would take for granted that Urge would be in line with the dominant ideologies of a scene that marked "corporate rock" as abject, Urge was now encountered by bodies of listeners that would not be so quick to make that assumption. The punk backdrop remained and would continue to act as a ground against which their signals of imitation would be perceptible, but listeners would not be so quick to assume, in this new context, that Urge Overkill were ideologically in line with it.

By dressing, speaking, and posing like 1970s stadium rock stars, by presenting their musical aesthetic, and by staging public spectacles outside of their stage show that performed the kind of hedonistic excess of the rock star, all within an environment that authenticated performers in a vastly oppositional way, Urge Overkill disrupted the genre rules of all of the scenes they either worked in or borrowed from. If a source of dislocation can be identified here it would seem to be one similar to Sha Na Na; the countercultural politics of the Chicago Punk scene are akin to those of the 1960s counterculture in terms of the politics of authenticity both espoused. Urge Overkill's eventual rejection of aspects the ideologies of the scene can be read as some degree of dislocation from the strict ideology of Chicago punk, even if, in some ways, their project also existed as an alternative means of advancing aspects of that ideology.

What Urge Overkill did was appropriate musical and visual styles without clearly adopting or performing their repudiation of the ideologies and identities that had been articulated to the music in the scenes that first fostered those aesthetics. Their music contains signals that push listeners towards seeing their work as parody, but, in equal measure they can be perceived as being in ideological accord with and admiration of the genre that serves as their hypotext. In their performance of "Girl You'll Be A Woman Soon," there is no real musical suggestion of insincerity; the guitar processing would sound anachronistic to many mid-nineties audiences, as would the foregrounding of bells in the arrangement and the particular way the song fades out, but none of these contextual signals could easily be read as parody, tribute, or ignored as signals. The vocal performance contains the most overt signals,

melodically descending ornaments at the end of certain lines and ingressive gasps may mark a registering by Urge of Diamond's performance style as excessively affected. Yet, these could go easily unregistered by listeners. Diamond's affected masculine performance identity and style is both accepted and rejected by Urge; Urge create a careful performance wherein sincerity and insincerity are co-present and the event of pastiche is likely to occur.

Example Four: 1980s Electrofunk in the 2000s

> Indeed, Chromeo's mission is to make slick-ass lover's funk with nary a trace of irony. That's right – no fucking irony. These guys are to Rockwell what Andrew WK is to Meatloaf. And don't call it easy retro, either. Dave 1 attests: 'Sure our sound is vintage and danceable. Sure all our songs talk about girls. But we're so passionate about it that it's not even funny anymore.'
>
> Chromeo, online bio[40]

The quotation above was taken from a band biography included on the official homepage for the Montreal based duo Chromeo. The vintage sound in question arises from multiple hypotextual sources all coded as belonging to the 1980s. However, the dominant hypotextual area Chromeo re-present is a style of music that has come to be referred to by certain audiences as electrofunk, a style exemplified by hits like D-Train's "You're the One For Me" (1981), Rockwell's "Somebody's Watching Me" (1984), Zapp's "Computer Love" (1985), and/or Cameo's "Word Up" (1986).[41] The

[40] This passage is from a bio included on www.chromeo.net and www.myspace.com/chromeo (accessed December 8, 2007), the author is uncredited.

[41] In his 2003 article "Electrofunk: What Did it all Mean?" Greg Wilson explains that the term electrofunk "during 82/83 (before it was shortened to Electro) was specific to the UK. From a US perspective this music would come under a variety of headings (including Hip-Hop, Dance, Disco, Electric Boogie and Freestyle)." Though this was true during the era the music first emerged, the

context Chromeo arose in was one dominated by hip-hop culture, and if their work can be read as a response to a circumstance of dislocation it seems the race/gender politics of late 1990s/early 2000s hip-hop would be its source. Chromeo's re-presentation of electrofunk conventions in 2004 and beyond intervenes in those politics by forcing two very different forms of black masculinity into co-presence with one another. Forcing this co-presence can be seen as a gesture towards the de-authenticatation of a dominant form of black masculinity through its comparison with a once dominant construction of blackness. In other words, Chromeo's re-presentation of electrofunk era masculinity reacts to and acts upon prevailing models of masculinity in hip-hop culture at the time of the band's formation.

The joke the epigraph refers to has to do first and foremost with historical lines being crossed. The genre term 'electrofunk' betrays the importance of specific electronic instruments and timbres to the genre. Funk groups in the 1970s were usually relatively large ensembles with a standard rock band style instrumental core supplemented by large brass sections. With electrofunk, for economic and aesthetic reasons, a paring down of the funk ensemble usually occurred; brass sections disappeared and synthesizers began to serve all the melodic, harmonic, and ornamental functions.

At the time, the timbres of these synthesizers were articulated with ideas of futurity. Other electronic instruments like the talk-box became iconic to the genre and also carried these kinds of associations for a time. But, the novelty of these sounds

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genre term has found its way into American discussions of the music. Specifically for my purposes, "electrofunk" is the genre term journalists use to describe Chromeo's music as well as the music they imitate.

soon wore off. Critics moaned when "the tiresome talk-box"[42] of Zapp was reused, and referred to Cameo's synthesizer vocabulary as "studio gimmicks."[43] Not only did the timbres become tiresome to critics, but electrofunk songwriting began to be considered formulaic and stale after a few years of commercial success. In 1989, critic Lynden Barber wrote:

> The Cameo is an abomination, funk by rote that is contemptuous of its audience. Three years to follow up the classic Word Up and all leader Larry Blackmon can do is lamely parody his own work: Honey is this album's Candy (note for note), You Make Me Work is Word Up, and so on. It's all so bare-faced, including the peg-on-nose speech defects, that Blackmon could successfully sue himself for plagiarism.[44]

Electrofunk's hit-making days began and ended alongside the 1980s and the timbres and textures of the genre became coded with the idea of that decade while the sounds of New Jack Swing and Gangsta Rap emerged and began to replace electrofunk as dominant forms of black popular music in America. As such, to many listeners, new work in this style in 2004 reads strongly as an anachronism.[45]

Chromeo are not only distanced from electrofunk by way of a historical gap, there are also cultural gaps contributing the "joke" of their re-presentation of electrofunk. Chromeo did not come to be involved with the genre through their participation in a community producing electrofunk. David Maklovitch, who goes by the stage name Dave 1 in Chromeo, described how when his partner Patrick Gemayel,

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[42] Geoffrey Himes, "Zapp: Still Trying Their Old Tricks," *The Washington Post*, September 30, 1983, 33.
[43] Geoffrey Himes, "The Funk and the Fake," *The Washington Post*, November 20, 1988, G1.
[44] Lynden Barber, "Chuck Out the Chaka." *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 14, 1989, 14.
[45] Electrofunk was not considered a style in itself in America in the 1980s (for more see note 41 in this chapter). There, these recordings were considered part of other genres of the era; the shift towards adoption of the term indicates a rising in significance of the synthesized timbres to certain audiences in the 1990s and beyond. Many of the groups who produced "electrofunk" have continued to produce new work after the decline of the style in the mainstream and have continued to adapt to new technologies and changing aesthetics in the R&B and funk genres.

known in Chromeo as P-Thugg, "started playing talk box, he had to figure out everything by himself and that was ten years ago, you couldn't even go to a record store or a music store and ask someone… we grew up in Canada, you couldn't go down the street and ask somebody."[46] Not only were they distanced from the communities producing this music, they were/are at a distance from the cultural identities attached to electrofunk. Roger Troutman of Zapp described the meaning of the genre in terms of racial experience when in he said: "It's the black experience, it's the blues of the Eighties… It has the same purpose with black people as blues had for black people when B.B. King started out, or Jimmy Reed."[47] Chromeo self-identify as an "Arab/Jew partnership" the first, they joke "since the dawn of human culture."[48] Their sincerity becomes a question for cultural as well as historical reasons.

Listeners shocked by music built upon these cultural and historical gaps look to the paratextual and see Chromeo repeatedly trying to demonstrate their sincerity, insisting that their use of electrofunk is not ironic. In the same discussions, however, there is paratexual evidence that seems to conflict with this insistence, like Gemayel's description of the band as "really sincere, but really funny at the same time" or Maklovitch's comparative comment "[a] lot of people do fun music, The Darkness… they are fun."[49] What Chromeo seem to be saying is that they are not parody, they are

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[46] Maklovitch quoted in Mark Baumgarten, "Super (earnest) Heroes." *Williamette Week Online*, July 14, 2004, accessed March 15, 2009. http://wweek.com/editorial/3037/5295.
[47] Troutman quoted in Pierre Perrone, "Obituary: Roger Troutman." *The Independent (London)*, April 29, 1999, 6.
[48] This quote is included in much of Chromeo's press and can be found in www.myspace.com/chromeo (accessed December 8, 2007).
[49] The first quote is: Geymayel quoted in Alejandro Nieto, "Chromeo Interview, 9.7.06," *Sup Magazine*, September 7, 2006, accessed July 25, 2007. http://www.supmag.com/2006/chromeo-interview-9706. The second is: Maklovitch quoted in the same article. The Darkness are a group that re-present hard rock music in a manner that, like Chromeo, is likely to be received as signaled

not making a joke out of electrofunk and are deeply invested in the style, but that there is still something funny going on.

Re-presentation of electrofunk masculinities is central to Chromeo's work and it is in the performance of these masculinities that the parodic nature of the band can seem almost certain. This can be most accessibly grasped through the imagery Chromeo has produced. The *Fancy Footwork* album cover features a motif/stage prop the group has employed since that album's 2007 release. The motif refers to the common tendency in the visual culture of the 1980s to depict and sexualize the female body by severing it with camera framing. Though this technique was common outside of black popular music – it was ubiquitous in advertising and in the imagery of other musical genres – Chromeo's use of this imagery would likely, given their musical imitation, be seen as a form of parodic pointing to electrofunk practices and electrofunk masculinities, or, more generally, to the masculinities dominant in 1980s America.

The opening sequence of the music video version of Cameo's "She's Strange" illustrates these techniques at work in electrofunk.[50] The video depicts Larry Blackmon's journey to a surreal desert town populated entirely by seductive women. As the viewer follows Blackmon into the desert, they see him pass a white high-heeled shoe and then the back of a woman in a red dress whose head and upper torso is severed by the camera. As Blackmon reaches his destination, a wooden structure with cars parked out front, and gets out of his car, the viewer is presented with a rapid

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imitation rather than autonomous genre work due to the ways they point to and deform the conventions of the genre they imitate.

[50] Dee Trattman, director. "She's Strange." Music video. 1984.

cut radically changing perspective from a bird's eye view of Blackmon to Blackmon's own visual perspective. The edit is a shocking departure from the longer shots that preceded it and its content is three sets of women's legs, again with their upper body severed by the camera angle, hanging over the edge of what the viewer would perceive as the roof of the building Blackmon had arrived at. This shot is one of many shots of woman's legs that appear in the video. It is outstanding, however, for the abruptness of the edit and change of perspective and for its appearance as an isolated image of the female body (as opposed to the shot being part of one of the many sequences of such images that follow). The sets of severed legs introduce and symbolize the surreal domain of the sexualized, threatening femininity that the rest of the video depicts.

The lyrics of "She's Strange" come from a seemingly heterosexual male perspective and construct a masculine subject position common in 1980s electrofunk, that of the male threatened by a particularly emasculating femininity. The theme of emasculating femininity and the related theme of males being subservient to their own desire was central in much of the songwriting of the period. Many of Cameo's songs deal with this theme. It is so central, in fact, to their work in that period that more than once they made such songs the title-tracks, and thus central concepts, of their albums. Their 1982 album *Alligator Woman* compliments *She's Strange* in this regard.[51] Other examples are also worth noting. Albums like the Bar-Kays' *Dangerous* (1984) also centralized the emasculating woman theme in album art/concept. About six months after *Alligator Woman* was released, Hall and Oates

[51] Cameo. *Alligator Woman*. Chocolate City CCLP 2021, 1982.

released their album *H2O*, which contained the chart topping emasculation ballad "Maneater."[52] Notably, the video for "Maneater" begins with and returns to images of camera severed, high-heeled female feet in motion.

Chromeo's re-presentation of electrofunk's severing of the female body exists alongside their careful imitation of both the lyrical content of these emasculation ballads and the rhythmic and melodic structures used to present those lyrics. A comparison of *She's In Control*, the title track of Chromeo's debut album, with *She's Strange* reveals that the two title tracks share narrative voices, rhyme schemes, and both paint their description of the emasculating female with contrasts between minor key verses and major key choruses. Both songs are delivered from the position of a male narrator describing in the first person an encounter with a powerful woman. The similarities between their opening lines reveal the imitative and, perhaps, parodic nature of Chromeo's relationship to Cameo:

> I like the way she walks, I like the way she talks/ She turns me on with a special concern (Cameo, She's Strange)[53]
>
> She's in control, she holds my soul/ That wicked woman's got me by the balls (Chromeo, She's In Control)[54]

Chromeo signals the imitative status of their project by exaggerating the emasculating woman theme in this opening line, using a phrase,"got me by the balls," that seems out of place in a pop song despite its fidelity to the theme at hand.[55]

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[52] Bar-Kays. *Dangerous*. Mercury Records 818 478-1, 1984. Hall & Oates. *H2O*, RCA NL 90080, 1982.
[53] Cameo. *She's Strange*. Casablanca Records 814-984-2, 1984.
[54] Chromeo. *She's in Control*. Vice Records 83673-1, 2004.

Chromeo refer to *Fancy Footwork* as "unabashed lovers' funk."[56] The "loverboy" figure represents another masculinity central to electrofunk and re-presented in Chromeo's songs. "Bonafied Lovin," one of the singles from *Fancy Footwork*, is an example of an electrofunk style bravado-filled seduction ballad in which the loverboy figure appears. The song begins:

> Let me tell you that I saw your boyfriend walking down the street /
>
> He was standing all shaky, hands all sweaty, & he could hardly speak /
>
> I might as well take a minute or two to put you on to some game /
>
> you got a boy like him, a man like me, and that's just not the same /
>
> Never mind an SMS / What you need is a sweet caress /
>
> Everybody wanna talk too much /
>
> But What You Need Is a Special Touch[57]

This variety of masculinity can be found in Cameo lyrics like:

> Say you'll be my baby / Cause those other guys are lazy /
>
> I know they'll drive you crazy and how[58]

The boastfulness and positioning of the female addressee as an initiate can be seen in Cameo lyrics like:

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[55] The language used in the line exaggerates the electrofunk theme of masculinity being threatened by desire by importing language uncommon to electrofunk. References to "by the balls" and the "wicked woman" introduce another variety of ambiguously sincere popular music masculinity often found in rock and hard rock music. This poetry of emasculation can be found in songs like AC/DC's "Got You By the Balls" (1990); Kiss' "Domino" (1992); and the Rolling Stones' "Short and Curlies" (1974). This discrepancy in language is an example of how Chromeo's imitation incorporates tropes from a variety of musical genres in and around the 1980s.

[56] This quote also appears in much of Chromeo's press and can be found www.myspace.com/chromeo, (accessed December 8, 2007).

[57] Chromeo. "Bonefied Lovin." *Fancy Footwork*. Vice Recordings VIC-18000, 2007.

[58] Cameo. "Your Love Takes Me Out." *Feel Me*. Chocolate City: CCLP 2016, 1980.

> I like my friends exciting, if they keep my fever rising, cause I always like to keep it hot / Little girl out in the play, and I'll bet you'll wanna stay, and I guarantee I'll hit the spot[59]

The imitative aspects of Chromeo's lyrics and the subject position they establish for the narrative voice of the songs is accompanied by the use of overcoded musical devices. Overcodedness is a concept presented in the work of popular music scholar David Brackett to describe musical encounters wherein the listener experiences musical sound as so strongly articulated with particular temporal or cultural meanings that the idea that those sounds could be re-articulated with new, different meanings becomes nearly unthinkable. Overcodedness as belonging to the 1980s seems a ubiquitous feature of Chromeo's music that affects its interpretation throughout; lyrical overcodedness is present through the rhyme schemes and rhythms of the vocal lines. Rhyme scheme/phrasing structure combinations like the aabbccdd scheme of the excerpt from "Bonafied Lovin" quoted above, with its alternation between flowing and fragmented phrases are overcoded as belonging to the early 1980s and, due to their anachronism, undermine the listener's ability to take the texts as sincere. Also overcoded is the melodic form of rap vocals used by Maklovitch in his delivery of this text. The lyrics present masculinities at odds with those viable in the popular music performances contemporary with Chromeo. However, these musical conventions also do much to undermine the sincerity of the work. Yet, the structures of feeling offered by those conventions are still accessible and the listener

[59] Cameo. "Keep It Hot." *Feel Me.* Chocolate City: CCLP 2016, 1980.

and Maklovitch are positioned simultaneously inside and outside of these musical masculinities.

Chromeo points to the way music supports varieties of masculinity and creates a music whose aesthetic is based on the recognition of the artifice of that process. Their work, upon close inspection, resembles pasticcio in its referencing of a variety of tropes from the music and visual culture of the 1980s, but is better understood as single-hypotext based imitation in that it has one central referent, the 1980s. Chromeo's decision to re-insert electrofunk into the sphere of popular culture in 2004 and to use it to point to musical frameworks for masculinity has the significance of appearing in the same year that hip-hop and R&B music achieved a full monopoly of the number-one position on the Billboard sales charts. This trend had been developing for some time prior to 2004. In 2003, only two weeks of the year were occupied by styles other than hip-hop and R&B.[60] This was the case for 4 weeks in 2002 and 2001.[61] The subgenres of hip-hop and R&B varied in these years, but one dominant trend was an increase in a brand of dark and seemingly self-serious hip-hop music centered on performances of masculinity known in scholarship and in hip-hop vernacular as "thug" masculinity. Michael Jeffries, an African-American studies scholar who has studied the evolution of the idea of the thug in hip-hop culture, has gone as far as to call the performance of this masculinity "the dominant trope in

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[60] The weeks ending in June 28 and July 5 were the only weeks where the number one spot on the Billboard US Top 100 singles chart was occupied by a track that was neither hip-hop, nor R&B. The track was Clay Aiken's "This is the Night."

[61] The weeks ending in December 22 and 29, 2001 and January 5 and 12, 2002, rock group Nickelback's "How You Remind Me" held the number one spot at on the Billboard US Top 100 singles chart, Kelly Clarkson's pop ballad "A Moment Like This" held the number one position for the weeks ending in October 5 and 12, 2002. Also in 2001, the weeks ending in March 24 and April 7, rap rock group Crazy Town held the number one position.

popular hip-hop" and has explained that 2004 was a peak year for the gangster/thug image.[62] In 2004, Terror Squad had a number-one hit with their thug anthem "Lean Back," whose lyrics instruct male listeners how to perform masculinity on the dancefloor with the repeated chorus: "My niggas don't dance, we just pull up our pants and do the Rockaway, now lean back, lean back."[63] This dominant form of hip-hop masculinity is stylistically distinct from electrofunk masculinities that frequently were centered on dancefloor virtuosity in lyrics like: "I always like to strut my thang, shakin' my pants to the rhythm"[64] and "If there's music we can use it, we need to dance."[65] Other number-one hits of 2004, like Juvenile's "Slow Motion," and Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot," also exemplify the thug posture that Jeffries analyzes.[66] Chromeo's imitation placed a notably different set of performances of masculinity and of race alongside these dominant masculinities.

In much writing on "Black Popular Music" the electronic oriented R&B of the 1980s is left out of the canon. Arnold Shaw's *Black Popular Music in America* mentions Frank Zappa but not Zapp, Canned Heat but not Cameo. In books like Guthrie P. Ramsey's *Race Music: Black Cultures from Be-Bop to Hip-Hop* and Earl Stewart's textbook *African American Music: An Introduction*, this period of black music simply does not exist. The books that canonize "Black Popular Music" often move from soul and funk to hip-hop, leaving sometimes even disco out of the picture.

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[62] The quotation is from Michael Jeffries, "Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop," PhD diss, (Harvard University, 2008): 6. Jeffries discussed the importance of 2004 in his paper "Shorty Want a Thug" presented at the 2009 IASPM US chapter meeting in San Diego.
[63] Juvenile. "Lean Back." *True Story*. Universal Records 0602498627501, 2004.
[64] Cameo. "Shake Your Pants." *Cameosis*. Chocolate City CCLP 2011, 1980.
[65] Cameo. "Word Up." *Word Up*. Atlanta Artists 422 830 265-1, 1986.
[66] See Juvenile. "Slow Motion." *Slow Motion* (single). Cash Money Records B0001718-01, 2003. Snoop Dogg. "Drop It Like It's Hot." *R&G (Rhythm & Gangsta): The Masterpiece*. Geffen Records B0003763-02, 2004.

The black popular press often ignored electrofunk as well.[67] There are likely many reasons for this omission, one of the most significant being an understanding of electrofunk as somehow more commercial and less "authentic" than soul, funk, and hip-hop. However, another reason that must be considered is the status of electrofunk as somehow less "black" than these other genres.

In a 2008 advertisement for their 15th issue, *RE:UP* magazine described Chromeo as "the boys whose music is a giant homage to the Jheri curl."[68] A common hairstyle for "black" men during the period electrofunk was popular, the Jheri curl involved the application of chemical relaxants to soften, loosen, and straighten the hair. The Jheri-curl hairstyle has been interpreted by some voices as evidence of black self-hatred and the idealization of European bodies.[69] *RE:UP*'s choice to invoke the Jheri curl as a synecdoche for electrofunk can be seen as a contribution to a complex widespread contemporary critique/mockery of the style. The Jheri-curl was quite capable of signifying masculinity, but with its ability to send long locks of hair down the sides of men's faces it, in some readings of the style, it feminized black men.[70]

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[67] According to Kimbery R. Vann's annotated guide to music writing in *Ebony*, before 1985 there were no articles on Zapp, Cameo, Rockwell, or D-Train.

[68] Initially, this blurb was taken from online advertisements for the then upcoming 15th issue of RE:UP Magazine. The same blurb was subsequently being used to advertise for the sale of back copies of the issue at http://www.merchline.com/reup/productdisplay.6782.p.htm.

[69] In natural hair activist Kalimah Johnson's book *Locs for Life* she discusses a client coming to understand her "jerry curl" as "an outward denial of herself" (35). Another example is Ice Cube's statement in a published dialogue with Angela Davis that "that's why I cut off my jheri-curl. I was trying to identify with the slave master. I like it now. I'm nappy happy. You know what I'm saying? I'm nappy and happy" (Ice Cube qutoed in Angela Davis, "Nappy Happy: A Conversation with Ice Cube and Angela Y. Davis." *Translation* 58 (1992): 190). For an in-depth and balanced discussion of this issue see the 2009 film *Good Hair*.

[70] In an interview with the artist Kerry James Marshall he discussed the connection of the Jheri-curl to "toughness" when he explained "there was a period when Jheri curls were really kind of popular and kind of sexy, but there was also this part where a certain group of black men who did the Jheri curl thing also wore those plastic bags on their heads out in public. And wearing that plastic bag, being able to wear that plastic bag out in public, signified a certain level of coolness… To be able to go out in

In the electrofunk era, the feminization of the black male body had implications for racial politics in general. In much of the visual culture of electrofunk, black feminized masculinity was being celebrated. Worse still, this feminized black masculinity appeared in a musical style that progressed out of funk, a musical style that was a powerful force in the Black Power movement. In his *Achieving Blackness: Race, Black Nationalism, and Afrocentrism in the Twentieth Century,* Algernon Austin explains:

> Many Black Power activists were very concerned with the norms of black masculinity. For them, black oppression was understood as the emasculation of black men by white men *and* by black women. Black liberation, therefore, would require the hypermasculinization of black men. To this end, they made black machismo the normative ideal. Black men who failed to meet this ideal *were* "Negroes." Being "Negro" could therefore convey not only a "white" blackness but also an emasculated or effeminate blackness.[71]

The emasculation themes of the lyrical and visual culture of Cameo color the meaning of the performances of masculinity within electrofunk as do the effeminate male fashions and hairstyles of electrofunk culture in general. The narratives of Black Popular Music that jump from soul and funk to hip-hop leave out a period that can be read by some as one of effeminized black masculinity.

Chromeo make reference to hip-hop culture regularly in their music. They perform covers of hip-hop tracks like Tupac Shakur's "California Love" and Snoop Dogg's "Ain't No Fun (If the Homies Can't Have None)" in their live sets. Their track "You're So Gangsta" brings the idea of the gangsta/thug into clear focus on

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public with that bag on and not be ridiculed for having it on, like even in the black community, you had to have a certain kind of heart, I guess, and a certain kind of toughness" (Charles Rowell, "An Interview with Kerry James Marshall, Callaloo, Vol. 21 No. 1 (1998): 267).

[71] Algernon Austin, *Achieving Blackness: Race, Black Nationalism, and Afrocentrism in the Twentieth Century.* (New York: New York University Press, 2006): 51.

their first album *She's In Control*.[72] Relevant as well are the ways hip-hop is referenced in the visual elements of Chromeo's work. In performances, photo shoots and interviews Gemayel is almost always dressed in hip-hop fashion. And, again, his stage name is "P-Thugg," directly referencing the thug trope. Also, Chromeo's videos occasionally make reference to hip-hop culture.[73]

The pre-history of Chromeo helps make this encounter clearer. Before forming Chromeo, Maklovitch's musical energies went into hip-hop production and the running of a hip-hop label he co-founded called Audio Research with his brother A-Trak, who has since gone on to a successful career as a dance music and hip-hop DJ, notably as a DJ for best-selling hip-hop artist Kanye West. In addition, Maklovitch served as a hip-hop critic for *Vice* magazine. Maklovitch explains "that's how we got into it, really. Thanks to hip-hop, you know. I think that even the way we still produce as far as chopping up drums, using the MPC for all of our drum stuff, there's still a hip hop aesthetic."[74]

In an interview I conducted with Gemayel and Maklovitch, Maklovitch was hesitant to talk about race, explaining: "My approach to hip-hop music and actually to

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[72] "You're so Gangsta" is a rare instrumental number built around a vocal sample of the text "You're a Gangsta, so Gangsta." The clip is manipulated through the pitch shifting of the first syllable of the word gangsta. Here, the word gangsta itself comes into contact with the aesthetics that Chromeo re-present. The gangsta figure of early gangsta rap overlaps with, but is notably different from the later figure of the thug. Gangsta rap as a musical style was temporally adjacent to electrofunk and shared some musical characteristics. Listeners conscious of this would likely view the vocal sample as a sincere compliment to whoever it is addressed to. Other listeners who see Chromeo as more divorced from hip-hop musically and culturally might read the sample as an insincere compliment, judging that Chromeo is not in a cultural location likely to valorize the gangsta identity/attitude.

[73] "Tenderoni," as an example, makes reference to West Coast hip-hop videos by depicting the act of cruising through Los Angeles. The video makes its location clear from the outset, opening with a long shot of one of Los Angeles' famous murals, the 1995 *Seed by the Sea* mural at 48 Market street in Venice Beach.

[74] Maklovitch quoted in Shawn Robbins "Outside Lands Interview with Chromeo." *Kata Rokkar*. August 17, 2010, accessed September 10, 2010, http://katarokkar.cribble.net/2010/08/outside-lands-interview-with-chromeo/#.

scholarship on hip-hop music is never race related. I think that's a very outdated view of looking at hip-hop music. Unfortunately in academia it stays the dominant view."[75] Yet he did account how race played into the division of labor in the genre at the time and told me:

> When I was doing it, I guess when you were a middle-class white kid the apposite way to find a niche within in that culture that we admired was, in my case, to make beats and, in my brother's case, to be a DJ. I think that, if I was fifteen years old today maybe I would have started rapping seriously just because there's more examples of people who can do it and it's less of a problem.[76]

Chromeo's re-presentation of electrofunk sounds and conventions of masculinity brings a form of bygone black masculinity into conversation with the hip-hop masculinities prevalent in the era in which the band formed and began to develop work. Being a "non-black" participant in the field of hip-hop in an era when this racial division of labor was prevalent and one in which blackness and hypermasculinity were again becoming mutually definitional through the figure of the late 1990s/early 2000 figure of the thug, is to some degree, a position of dislocation. The re-presentation of a genre of black popular music that has been left out of the black music canon might speak to such a position of racial dislocation. We could, however, respect Maklovitch's desire to set aside race and recognize the dislocation relevant to the rise of Chromeo's signaled imitation solely as dislocation from late 1990/early 2000s hip-hop masculinity. Chromeo's re-presentation places a genre of music that foregrounds male emasculation and marks dancing as the prime means

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[75] Dave Makolvitch. Personal Interview. San Diego. August 28, 2009.

[76] Ibid. This quotation is evidence enough of the relevance of a racial division of labor to Maklovitch's experience in hip-hop. However, it is worth mentioning Maklovitch's label did work with a minority of "non-black" rappers, including Nish Rawks, who self identifies as Asian in his rapping, and "white" rappers D-Sisive and Ill Bill.

through which male power is enacted alongside a genre in which emasculation is never admitted and where dancing must be avoided or at least extremely restrained to perform masculinity. This model of masculinity exists as the identificatory thread that Chromeo mimetically respond to.

While Chromeo's re-presentation of electrofunk masculinity seems excessive and parodic, it combines with their paratextual assertions of sincerity to create the conflicting signals necessary for pastiche. No matter how sincere Chromeo are about the musics and masculinities of electrofunk and the other 1980s conventions their music re-presents, the framework those musics offer conflict with the gender politics of the present. They can no more permanently occupy those frameworks than Sha Na Na can occupy the frameworks of "Teen Angel" or Les Sans Culottes can sustain their embodiment of "Frenchness." The potential for perceptions of Chromeo as evaluatively open is high.

The name Chromeo loudly signals the second-order nature of the band by riffing on the name of Cameo. Not only does the name sound like Cameo, it points to an important symbolic convention of the band as well: their use of the metallic. The name Chromeo is rather absurd on its own without the reference to the role chrome played in the work of Cameo. The cover of Cameo's third album, *Ugly Ego*, contained nothing more than the album title, printed in muted brown in a relatively small font over a black background, and the new logo for the band, a rendering of their name in a bold but fanciful font and in a color scheme that simulated bright,

polished chrome.[77] Cameo retained this logo on their two subsequent album covers before the chrome faded into red on 1980's *Feel Me*. Though the logo was abandoned for a period, it remained iconic and was featured on the covers of later collections like the 1993 Mercury Records release, *The Best of Cameo*.[78]

Chromeo makes their reference to this logo more apparent by rendering their own name in the same fashion on the cover of their second album, *Fancy Footwork*.[79] Chrome on its own can suggest illusion, or being blinded by bright objects, and, subsequently, can signal an artifice at the heart of the project. The name can also be read as a hybrid of chrome and romeo, making reference specifically to Chromeo's interrogations of the masculinities of electrofunk. Further, it may suggest a more radical sense that the masculinities at work in electrofunk, or, more specifically, the electrofunk of their namegiver, are insincere. More specifically, it might be considered a reference to an argument that the exaggerated heterosexual display of Cameo's electrofunk belies a queer subtext in the work.

Cameo's lyrics do nothing overt to suggest that the romantic encounters they detail are anything but heterosexual, and the majority of the imagery the group employs depicts the group, and Blackmon as the central protagonist, engaged in heterosexual pursuits and encounters. But, the group also incorporates queer associated imagery in their work: the video for "Single Life" depicts Blackmon cross-dressed in a bridal gown; male bodies are eroticized and displayed nearly as often of

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[77] Cameo. *Ugly Ego*. Chocolate City: CCLP 2006, 1978.
[78] Cameo. *Feel Me*. Chocolate City: CCLP 2016, 1980. Cameo. *The Best of Cameo*. Mercury Records 314-514824-2, 1993.
[79] Chromeo. *Fancy Footwork*. Vice Recordings VIC-18000, 2007. Their more recent album, *Business Casual* retains the logo, but the "metal" has taken on a slightly more golden hue.

female bodies; leather outfits worn by Blackmon, the band, and extras might be received as belonging specifically to queer subcultures; and Blackmon's famous red codpiece might also be read as part of specifically queer practices of display. In general, the manner in which Cameo danced, dressed, and aspects of the way Blackmon vocalized would have performed a queer persona, if not a queer identity, to many who encountered the band. Commenting on a reading of the video for Cameo's best-known hit "Word Up" by blogger and former executive director of Queers for Economic Justice Kenyon Farrow, one user replied "I crushed hard on Cameo and loved this song and video. They were speaking directly to us Black gay folks back then."[80] The boastful heterosexual narratives depicted in Cameo's lyrics and videos, when read through the queer subtext that seems to pervade those videos, can themselves seem purposely excessive in the service of invalidating those narratives.

The practice of using chrome as a symbol for the group might itself, rather than just its semantic connotations, have potential for a queer reading. The practice of using chrome as a decorative feature on a car or motorcycle combines an interest in vehicles that has traditionally been coded as masculine with a concern for the decorative that has traditionally been coded as feminine. Also, one only needs to briefly recall the imagery of Kenneth Anger's 1963 film *Scorpio Rising* and/or his 1965 *Kustom Kar Kommandos* to understand that chrome has, in some contexts, been symbolic of queer desire and identity.[81] Chrome can also, of course, easily be read as unambiguously heterosexual and masculine. The masculinity associated with car

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[80] Posted on August 3, 2007 by user Jstheater to kenyonfarrow.com. http://kenyonfarrow.com/2007/08/03/cameos-word-up-so-black-and-so-gay/

[81] See Kenneth Anger. "Scorpio Rising" (1964) and "Kustom Kar Kommandos." (1965) *The Films of Kenneth Anger*. Fantoma Films, 2007.

culture would likely have trumped readings of the logo as symbolic of queer identity for, presumably, the majority of Cameo's audience. However, the possibility for a queer reading remains, especially given the fact the chrome motif recalls the hyperfeminine object that serves as the unconventional namegiver of Cameo and that is literalized so often in their imagery through the depiction of the standard cameo image of a female face in profile.[82]

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[82] Cameo's first two album covers also contained complex, suggestive images. Their debut album in 1977 was entitled *Cardiac Arrest* and the cover image depicted an unusually large cameo necklace hanging between the breasts of a naked "black-skinned" body glistening with sweat. See: Cameo. *Cardiac Arrest*. Chocolate City CCLP 2003, 1977. In many ways the image recalls the sexually charged album art of the 1970s Mercury records releases by the Ohio Players, which often depicted the all male ensemble alongside a single naked or nearly naked female on the album cover or inner artwork. See: Ohio City Players. *Skin Tight*. Mercury Records, SRM-1-705, 1974; Ohio Players. *Fire*. Mercury Records, SRM-1-1013, 1974; Ohio Players. *Honey*. Mercury Records SRM-1-1038, 1975. Being that Cameo began as a funk band competing in the same genre as the Ohio Players (Cameo's original name was The New City Players) this image is conventional and the body on the cover would almost certainly be understood as female. Yet, the way the image is framed is interesting in that it does suggest some small degree of gender ambiguity. The breasts protrude and look to be female, but this might also be the chest of a well-built male with large pectoral muscles. Imagery of the naked male chest glistening with sweat from labor, particularly the naked black male is arguably more common than the sweat covered female body; this element nudges the gender of the chest in the direction of male, or, at least, might help the image suggest for a moment upon the viewer's first impression that the body is male, creating a palimpsestic masculine presence that might haunt the femininity of the image for certain viewers. The cameo necklace that hangs between the breasts contains the eight male faces of the band members. Above the necklace, the band's name is rendered in blue and the "O" of "Cameo" literalizes the band's name by placing the standard cameo image of a woman's face in profile inside the "O." The slight possibility for gender confusion in the image is furthered by the male faces' replacement of the standard female portrait on the cameo necklace. If a cameo necklace contains a portrait of idealized femininity, are the band members to be read as feminine? Or, are they to be read as lustful heterosexual males invading the private space between a woman's breasts? The album cover most likely raises these questions more so in retrospect from our current vantage point, which includes knowledge of the later work of Cameo with its more overtly, but never unambiguously, queer imagery, than it did for funk buying audiences in 1977. However, we cannot ignore that in the post-Stonewall, mid-disco environment of 1977 the album cover left room, however slight, for different factions of their audience to come to different conclusions about the sexual identities attached to the music. Cameo's second album was entitled *We All Know Who We Are*. See: Cameo. *We All Know Who We Are*. Chocolate City: CCLP 2004, 1978. The image works against the title to suggest the co-presence of a sub-title more along the lines of "We Know Who We Are, But Do You?" The cover depicts eight well dressed bodies in an opulent setting. There are eight members in the band at this point in their history and the viewer can safely assume these are their bodies. However, their heads have all been replaced by illustrations of the heads of a variety of mostly African and American animals. The playful cover is ambiguous in its meaning, but as the title raises the question of identity, the image is suggestive of masking or double-identity and could speak to the history of homosexual hiding of sexual identity.

Rather than a group that reveled in the heterosexual displays of masculinity standard to the funk of the 1970s and 1980s, Cameo's work might easily be read as an imitation of heterosexual masculinity. Chromeo seem to acknowledge that the conventions of masculinity they anachronistically borrow from electrofunk fuelled sincere performances of heterosexual masculinity, but were themselves polished artifice. The excessive masculinity of Chromeo might then be seen less as a parody of electrofunk masculinity and more as a tribute to the insincerity of Cameo's approach to heternormative display. The nature of Chromeo's paratextual insistence that they are not ironic may be best explained by recognizing that they are sincere about a form of masculine display they see as insincere. And, like Sha Na Na, Les Sans Culottes and Urge Overkill, it may very precisely be the perception of complex sincerity that empowered them to re-present a music strongly coded as belonging to another time and to groups they cannot claim membership in.

Chapter Conclusion

In all four of these examples, we see signaled imitation emerging and fueling substantial, sustained bodies of musical work. In each, the hypotext/hypertext relationship is strongly suggestive of both parody and tribute; none of the bands clearly belong more properly on one side of the parody/tribute divide. However, in each, the ability of the hypertext to comment on the hypotext seems far less important than the desire to employ the hypotext as a tool in the service of a non-identificatory end. These forms of "focused transtextuality" have both a hypotext and a separate

third space in which that tool intervenes. In this chapter, I have tried to identify these sources of dislocation, these forms of "repetition" which each group seems to respond to through its formation. What 1960s counterculture, American cultural self-obsession, Chicago punk dogma, and hip-hop thug masculinity have in common is not that they offered identities these musicians rejected outright. Members of Sha Na Na felt in political sympathy with the politics of the counterculture, Urge Overkill saw what they were doing as an extension of punk ideology, Dave Maklovitch and Patrick Gemayel are clear lovers of hip-hop, and it is doubtful that Bill Carney would counteridentify with Americaness in general.[83] The dislocation emerges because the musicians in question *are* invested in these identities, in accord with some aspects but alienated by others. With these imitations, it seems that a crisis emerges *from within* a process of identification that prompts a need to assert and affirm the contingency and basic illusory nature of all identification/repetition.

The experience of non-identification is a dwelling in thought and feeling perceived as belonging to an identity that the affected individual cannot occupy. Yet, the power of such experience is the affirmation that these social codes are arbitrary and do not speak to the ontological truth of our existence. The pleasure of the event of pastiche, as manifested through these kinds of music, is the pleasure inherent in suspending our participation in repetition. This suspension is always only temporary,

[83] Sha Na Na's political sympathy with the counterculture was made clear to me in an interview I conducted with founding member Jocko Marcellino in San Diego on August 25 2009. In regards to Urge Overkill, quotes like "for a while, it seemed like every band was wearing suits, swigging martinis, and playing crushing power pop. Of course, we didn't exactly invent that. When we did that, it was punk rock to us, flying in the face of the underground, grunge or whatever" (Nash Kato quoted in "Salvation through Saturation: Nash Kato" *Sleazegrinder*, accessed April 24, 2006. http://www.sleazegrinder.com/
bad_nashfoetus.htm) show that Urge Overkill saw their aesthetic challenge to Chicago punk and grunge rock as a means of expressing a punk ideology.

but no less healing because of it. Through it our mimetic faculty is exercised and the weight of identificatory obligations is taken off our shoulders, if only for the length of a pop song.

Chapter Three

Sweeping Transtextuality

The experience of encountering imitation with one hypotext or hypotextual area (focused transtextuality) differs in essential ways from imitations including two or more, what I will call sweeping transtextuality. The central argument of the previous chapter was that with focused transtextuality the hypotext itself summons forth its imitation. As such, the content of these imitations was our primary concern. With sweeping transtextuality, its breadth ensures that the form of the imitation rather than its content is the primary element of the experience. As such, in this chapter form will be privileged. I will explore the implications of this primacy and describe what we must be attentive to in our theorizations of this category.

I will begin with the example of the "sample pop" of Jason Forrest. "Sample pop" is a form of cento/pasticcio. Determining the evaluative status of cento and/or pasticcio involves not just judging the relationship between hypertext and its various hypotexts, but also the logic governing their combination. This first example will explore how Forrest's unique combinatorial logic plays into the meanings and experiences his music gives rise to.

My second example will be chiptune, a genre rooted in the aesthetics of early video game sound. Here individual works could be experienced as focused transtextuality if encountered alone. But once a listener experiences more of the genre, a genre-wide mechanism of re-presentation begins to become perceptible, one that

reaches broadly across hypotexts and hypotextual areas. This “transgeneric mechanism,” once detected, colors the encounter with individual instances of signaled imitation within the genre. I will go to lengths to try and show how this mechanism emerged out of the experiential offerings of video game technology and discuss how it affects the experience of isolated instances of imitation.

Example One: Sample-Pop’s Mechanism of Re-presentation

Though definitions like Lacasse’s dissociate pastiche from works containing multiple hypotexts, many commonplace uses stay true to its etymological roots and employ it to refer to forced combination. Works whose combinatorial nature is perceived can raise similar questions and do work similar to those perceived as single hypotext-based imitation, but with pasticcio the listener is not merely forced to make a judgment about the relationship between hypertext and hypotext, but also about the purpose and implications of the combinatorial practice itself.

For the same reasons discussed in chapter one in relation to genre, the question of what constitutes a combinational practice can lie in the realm of the evaluative. Generally, combinatoriality is objectively verifiable. But when we are speaking of combinations of hypotextual areas, the listener is the ultimate authority as to whether hypotexts fall into a single area or separate. The standard mashups I discussed in chapter one are generally experienced as involving two distinct hypotextual areas: a “white” musical area juxtaposed with a “black” musical area. Yet, one could imagine a position of reception that would interpret both sides of this

juxtaposition as belonging to a singular category, ‘music from the 1990s’ or ‘popular music’ perhaps. The music, as received by such a listener, gives rise to an effect distinct from the listener who sees the combinatorial logic as one of juxtaposition of hypotextual areas.

Jason Forrest creates work in a style he calls “sample-pop.” Sample-pop has aspects in common with both mashup music and the practice of DJing. Mashups are usually combinations of two particular hypotexts, but, at times, the term mashup has been used to describe “works” that collage a larger number of hypotexts. Sample-pop describes works built from multiple sample sources that diverges from the combinatorial approach of mashup by not necessitating a simultaneous foreground and background from two separate sources. Beyond distinguishing this genre along the lines of its combinatorial approach, sample-pop, as a term, may be useful in other regards. “Pop” is capable of denoting the metered, danceable, and hook-oriented nature of the music Forrest makes; the term might be seen to indicate that, though the music is not stylistically “pop” per se, it values and incorporates the accessible aesthetics of pop as a style.

The first of Forrest’s two sample-pop albums to date, *The Unrelenting Songs of the 1979 Post Disco Crash* was released in 2004.[1] The album title, like the name of Forrest’s label *Cock-Rock Disco,* foreshadows the album’s content by referring to the musico-cultural spaces from which most of its samples are mined: disco and the

[1] At the time of writing, Forrest was in the process of completing a third album of sample-pop, tentatively entitled *The Everything*.

"cock-rock" that dominated the charts in the post-disco era.[2] These are two genres that, like the rock and hip-hop genres that fuel the standard mashup, have been positioned as oppositional.

Many have historicized the tensions that existed between rock and disco cultures in the 1970s. Most narratives have focused on the efforts of rock radio stations to campaign against disco in their own economic interest.[3] Some authors, like Nelson George, see the opposition as older than these campaigns and rooted more in the racism and homophobia of rock fans.[4] Racial, sexual, gender, and class politics all fueled the construction of this divide and Forrest, by making music that samples liberally from both genres and places disco beside rock beside disco, engages in a

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[2] I employ the term "cock-rock" here in reference to Forrest's label, which he founded in 2001. The name obviously refers to the same musico-cultural divide as *The Unrelenting Songs of the 1979 Post Disco Crash*, illustrating that this particular combinatorial imperative has been fueling his work for a number of years. The idea of mingling these two ideologically separate genres is also evident in the playlists of the radio show Forrest hosted on freeform radio station WFMU from 2001 to 2005, "Advanced D&D with Donna Summer." Most of the content of Forrest's shows consisted of underground electronic music. However, he would pepper the show with tracks from the "cock rock" and "disco" genres. For example, on April 15, 2002, amongst a variety of electronic tracks Forrest inserted AC/DC's "For Those About to Rock," Patti Jo's "You Made Me Believe in You," Van Halen's "Everybody Wants Some," Jackie 'Small' Cochran's "Summer Fun," and Foreigner's "Juke-Box Hero." See WFMU's archives of Forrest's program at http://www.wfmu.org/playlists/su.

[3] The widest known event in these campaigns was certainly the "Disco Demolition Night" staged by Steve Dahl of WLUP-FM on July 12, 1979 between games at a doubleheader match featuring the Chicago White Sox and the Detroit Tigers at Comiskey Park in Chicago. The heavy media coverage of this event has been credited with the decline of the genre. In his *Appetite for Destruction* Steve Knopper observes: "The week of the demolition, July 8 to 14, Chic's "Good Times" hit the Top 10 – one of six disco songs to do so. On August 18, three disco singles were in the Top 10. By September 22, the number had dropped to zero" (16). Knopper also relates a personal story that illustrates other efforts on behalf of radio stations to oppose disco music when he writes: "Disco Sucks! It was the new mantra of white America. As a thirteen-year old suburban Who fan, I myself carried a gold D.R.E.A.D. card, which stood for Detriot Rock-and-rollers Engaged in the Abolition of Disco. The local rock station, WRIF-FM, gave them out at concerts. My older brother, a radio station intern, brought them home by the boxload. Back then, they were hard-to-find totems of coolness. I must have owned three hundred of the damn things, not counting the fifty or so I gave out to kids on the block who suddenly wanted to be my best friends" (Ibid).

[4] In *Post-Soul Nation*, George writes "Rock fans have always hated disco's self-conscious attempt at sophistication and faddish touch dancing. Others find its blending of the black, Latino, and gay club world frightening, upsetting, even dangerous" (5).

form of re-presentation that brings the listener's attention to the ways the sonic characteristics of the two genres have been differently and similarly coded.

"Spectacle to Refute All Judgments" is the opening track on *The Unrelenting Songs of the 1979 Post-Disco Crash*. The song is largely constructed out of samples from recordings by the progressive rock band Styx, rock band Jefferson Airplane, and the disco artist Vicki Sue Robinson. The song begins with a series of irregular percussive punctuations that are diverse in timbre. Immediately through the diversity and brevity of these punctuations, the "cut and paste" nature of the music is obvious. It becomes even more obvious when these punctuations give way to a disco-style bass line accompanied by a repeating three chord synthesizer riff. This disco sample is interrupted by a second, shorter disco sample that has a similar punchy bass timbre accompanied by a single piano chord. Forrest alternates conversationally between these two samples, chopping them to different durations before returning to the type of percussion only texture the track began with. This undercoded percussion section clears the air of the iconicism of the disco samples before a second iconic moment appears.[5] Stylistically oppositional to the first iconic moment, this second moment consists of a slightly accelerated sample of a power chord riff from Jefferson Starship's "Jane." The simple four chord riff is the kind of musical gesture that has

[5] For a discussion of "coding" in popular music see: David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (New York: Cambridge University, 1995): 7-14. Here Brackett re-presents the framework set out by Middleton in *Studying Popular Music*. What I find particularly useful in Brackett's re-presentation of Middleton's framework are his examples of "overcoded" sounds. As is apparent in the fourth example of the previous chapter, I find the idea of "overcoding" useful to describe musical encounters wherein the listener experiences a sound as being so strongly articulated with particular meanings that the idea that those sounds could be re-articulated with new meanings (that either co-exist with or erase previous meanings) becomes unthinkable. By claiming these sounds were "undercoded" I mean to imply the opposite, that sounds are experienced without the presence of such meanings. This does not mean that the sounds are not articulated with meaning, it means that the meanings that do manifest are far from contributing to the perception I am referring to as overcoding.

been coded as symbolic of the masculinity and power of rock music: An overdriven guitar rises up a minor third on an offbeat in the first measure of the two measure riff catching the listener off guard and potentially signifying unpredictability and excitement, and it descends in the second measure with evenness and control, accenting beats 2 and 4 with crisp power chords. Once this sample ends, the disco samples return, chopped even more finely, creating a section that leads out of the intro and into the central hook of the piece. After the hook, Jefferson Starship returns with a sample even more iconic of the "cock rock" style, a sample of the opening of the screaming guitar solo from "Jane."

A combinatorial logic similar to that of the standard mashup seems be dominant in "cock-rock disco." However, not all of Forrest's works include these two genres specifically. Tracks like "My 36 Favorite Punk Songs," from his 2005 album *Shamelessly Exciting*, combine multiple hypotexts all from one hypotextual area, which the title makes obvious. Other works move across genres/hypotextual areas but fail to include disco and/or cock-rock. An example can be found in the track "Dust Never Settles," also found on *Shamelessly Exciting*, which contains no disco-related samples. However, the track relates to "Spectacle to Refute All Judgments" by juxtaposing multiple forms of rock music also positioned as oppositional.

"Dust Never Settles" begins with a single, spectrally dense power chord sampled from a recording by the hard-rock/progressive rock band Uriah Heep. A number of power chord samples are pitch shifted to create a chord sequence that functions melodically as an opening hook for the work. Providing harmonic support in the background is a sampled arpeggio performed on a synthesizer and capable of

referring to the progressive rock genre in general. This four-measure hook repeats four times as a breakcore style breakbeat is slowly introduced and grows in complexity, gradually competing with the hook for prominence. A second power chord sequence/hook is then introduced for contrast while the breakcore percussion continues. This sequence/hook differs in that it repeats eight times but is interrupted in a cut & paste style twice in its third and seventh repetition by a one-measure long iconic guitar riff from Joan Jett's "I Love Rock & Roll." The riff and the power chords both suggest various forms under the umbrella of cock-rock; a cut & paste aesthetic is asserted but the various samples might easily be considered parts of the same hypotextual area. A hypertextual distance from that area is suggested both by the cut & paste aesthetic and by the breakcore style percussion, which is likely to be experienced as the sole "non-imitative" element of the work. What follows works to contrast the dominance of cock-rock in the first two sections; another sampled four measure hook is established and repeated eight times, but unlike all the previous samples this sample, from Andrew Gold's 1977 hit "Lonely Boy," bears no connection to cock-rock. The forward energy of the breakcore percussion ends abruptly with the introduction of this section. The hook is spectrally thin and rhythmically regular compared to the previous sections and is both from and suggestive of a more easy-listening, pop-rock tradition. With the hook are samples from John Lennon's "(Just Like) Starting Over" processed to create a kind of noisescape behind the hook. The section gets additively denser, incorporating other barely distinguishable samples in the noisescape background, including an iconic portion of Toto's "Africa." This section acts as contrast to the cock-rock samples of

the first sections, which return following this third section. These first three sections then repeat in sequence. The repeat of the third, contrasting section is denser than its first appearance as the breakcore percussion does not disappear as it did in the section's initial appearance. This builds energy in anticipation of the song's anti-climax. The texture of the repeat of the third section is subtractively reduced throughout the last four repetitions of its four-measure hook. Following the last repeat of the hook are eight sparse measures in which all that remains are a handclap sample on the third beat of each measure and aspects of the background noisescape of the previous section. This sparse section builds tension and anticipation in advance of the coming anti-climax, which consists of a midi-file version of the soft-rock/smooth-jazz styled 32-measure opening of Supertramp's "Bloody Well Right." This section represents the only section not based on a repeating four measure figure and it occupies the golden section of the work. Though it appears in the traditional place for a work's climax, the section is certainly not a culmination of elements that preceded it, but rather a shocking shift into a barely foreshadowed hypotextual area. The song concludes with three repeats of the first section, a return to cock-rock.

With "Dust Never Settles" it is cock-rock and soft-rock that are juxtaposed rather than cock-rock and disco. This juxtaposition is similar however; in both, genres that have been positioned as oppositional, genres imagined to belong to and construct different cultural bodies, meet within the space of a single musical work. Yet, both of these juxtapositions operate in ways that seem essentially different from the juxtaposition of the standard mashup. The combinatorial logic of the mashup is to force two hypotexts to act on each other. Forrest's sample-pop often includes

hypotextual areas postioned as oppositional, yet rather than acting on each other, they both seem employed to act on the listener in much the same way they would in their original context. Though Forrest's samples do at times overlap, much more often they interrupt each other. While the mashup listener is constantly attending to a sonic experience that is almost completely new due to the two hypotexts being consistently co-present, Forrest's samples appear alone and thus provide the same resources for the creation of thought and feeling they would in their original form. Rather than being confronted with a Frankenstein that is something other than the sum of his parts, the listener is usually presented with the hypotexts fragmented, but alone. But, this lasts only the length of the sample before the listener is thrust into a new sample and a new set of meanings and emotions.

Forrest's music acts on the body of the listener in a unique way. By extracting particular musical gestures from larger wholes, Forrest foregrounds the basic unit of a kind of musical semiotics and demonstrates the ability of such units to become articulated with meaning. Sudden successive shifts of musical style jolt the listener in and out of range of vastly different musical resources for thought, feeling, and behavior. By presenting listeners with rapidly shifting stylistic material, Forrest forces them to experience various modes of/options for embodiment in quick succession. What the listener is likely to discover is that meaning lags behind affect when we enter sonic experiences unprepared. The sounds of Forrest's samples act on us before we fully process the meanings we have articulated to those samples; the sounds of music precede the music of music. But, the meanings do arrive. The samples are substantial enough in duration and clarity and familiar enough for the meanings

articulated to the samples to present themselves. Whether these meanings are specific (the listener has the competency to recognize the particular hypotext) or non-specific (the listener has only a vague understanding of the genre/hypotextual area), the generic iconicity of the samples makes these meanings likely to manifest even to listeners with relatively low popular musical experience. Yet this occurs only briefly as the samples never appear for long before being replaced with contrasting samples. As the song progresses from style to style and sample to sample the listener repeatedly goes through the process of specific musical "works" acting on their body and meaning following behind as a mediating element.[6] In simpler terms, the various styles of music Forrest includes act on the body and before the listener has the chance to identify the sample and choose to reject the option of falling in with it, Forrest has moved to another sample/style and the process must begin again.[7] Through this, the attention of the listener is likely to be directed to the ways music participates in

[6] The notion of meaning lagging here is based on the assumption it takes listeners a moment to recognize and identify samples. This lag, provided we can safely assume such a lag exists at all, could diminish or disappear when the listener re-hears any one of Forrest's work. They might, of course, after being exposed to his "works" be capable of anticipating samples before they even appear. At the same time, the listener might recall the embodied experience of that lag during a re-hearing of one of Forrest's works, even if the effect does not recur.

[7] The notion of our ability to "fall in" with music is an important concept presented by Tia DeNora in her work on listening. She argues that listeners can choose whether or not to use the sounds of specific music to negotiate embodiment. She describes this choice in terms of the listener allowing the music to participate in the creation of what she refers to as agency, explaining: "actors may fall into and latch onto musical structures. This falling in with may entail realignment of bodily comportment… a realignment of emotional state… or a realignment of social conduct… music may allude to modes of aesthetic agency – feeling, being, moving, acting – and so may place near-to-hand certain aesthetic styles that can be used as referents for configuring agency in real time, for the bodily technique of producing oneself as an agent in the full sense of the word" (DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 123). DeNora is careful to characterize this process as involving choice on the part of the actor, though this choice is often not a form of choosing the actor is conscious of. She insists that an "actor's non-discursive, corporeal, emotional falling in with music does not imply that music works like a stimulus. Actors may have awareness of what music entails and yet also be aware that those entailments feel wrong; they may wish to override music's perceived implications, to resist or reappropriate music's force" (Ibid., 124). In other words, falling in refers to the act of allowing certain music to participate in the creation of our embodied selfhood and its opposite is a refusal to fall in.

embodiment, the ways we negotiate our embodiment differently in response to various musical styles or gestures.

The forms of Forrest's pieces allows them to act in a manner few forms of popular music act, they allow the most familiar sounds in popular music to manifest as sound, momentarily unmediated by meaning. By shifting between samples of contrasting musical styles, Forrest outpaces meaning substantially in his works. The musical gestures he samples each have a moment to act on the bodies of the listener before that listener has a chance to evaluate and shake free from or embrace the implications of their interested readings of the gesture.[8] The repetition of this process is what makes his outpacing substantial; each time meaning arrives to mediate listening, Forrest breaks away, providing another moment of sound preceding music and another moment where the resources the sounds offer, the forms of embodiment they are capable of co-creating, are experienced by the listener prior to the onset of meaning. This process is one that makes visible the hypotexts' ability to act on us and construct our thoughts and feelings, exposing what is normally felt but not contemplated.

It is this process itself, rather than the re-presentation of particular hypotexts that seems primary in Forrest's work. This primacy goes far to explain why not all of his songs follow the juxtapositional logic of "cock-rock disco;" a quite similar effect

[8] Here I am using "interested" in the philosophical sense that involves the distinction between interested and disinterested encounters with art. Interested listening is listening that co-exists with attention to the socio-cultural meanings and context of the work and its consumption. Disinterested listening, conversely, is listening in which these meanings are ignored. The philosopher of popular music Theodore Gracyk provides a thorough discussion of these terms in Chapter 12 of *I Wanna Be Me: Rock Music and the Politics of Identity*. Also, see note 6 for a caveat related to the universality of the effect I am discussing.

can be achieved by songs like “My 36 Favorite Punk Songs” as the listener still falls in and is thrust out of musical samples that appear and disappear throughout the piece. A mashup, much like works that are experienced as non-imitative autonomous genre work, establishes a particular aesthetic and continues until the end of the work with that particular aesthetic. A mashup might easily compel a listener to attend to the way the two hypotexts act differently on them, but this effect may be diminished as the listener acclimatizes to the consistent combinatorial structure. This seems much less likely with the jarring combinatorial structure/logic Forrest’s work offers.

The Hypertext/Hypotext Relation in Forrest’s Sample-Pop

Noting the primacy of the mechanism of re-presentation/combinatorial logic over the particularity of the hypotext is not to imply that Forrest is not interested in the particularities of his hypotexts or that judgments of the nature of the hypotext/hypertext relation do not play into the meaning/effect of this music. My purpose in this chapter is to foreground what is particular to the category of sweeping transtextuality. However, the observations I made about focused transtextuality will also apply here and it remains to be discussed exactly how Forrest’s work gives rise to pastiche. Pastiche only occurs through judgments of the nature of the hypertext/hypotext relation. Though the mechanism of re-presentation/combinatorial logic will have some effect on those judgments, the contextual and paratextual aspects of the work will contribute as well.

Like Chromeo, Forrest insists on the sincerity of his re-presentation while listeners detect insincerity. Forrest explains:

> I think at first people wanted it to be ironic… They wanted to say, 'Well, obviously he's this big, dumb, idiot fat guy sampling Foreigner, so it must be a joke.' In no way, at any point during my career, did I ever sample something as sort of a wink-wink, nudge-nudge gesture. So now the questions are, 'So, you really love this stuff? How can you love it?' Whereas I'm like, How can you not?[9]

If judging solely on these paratextual displays of fandom alone, Forrest's re-presentation would seem to fall into the category of tribute. However, contextual considerations lead listeners to imagine the hypotexts he samples to be too aesthetically and/or ideologically problematic for his re-presentation of them to be read as sincere. The problematic status of the genres Forrest samples from can be illustrated through a discussion of an online comedy series contemporary with his work that deals with the hypotextual areas that prompt listeners to interpret his imitation as ironic/parodic. This series, *Yacht Rock*, is unique for being a catalyst for discussion about the meanings articulated to music from the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Yacht Rock plays off the *Behind the Music* format of telling the little known back stories behind the writing of songs that have been part of popular cultural history.[10] The series depicts real musicians in ridiculously unrealistic circumstances; the back stories told start from kernels of fact but are spun into absurd tales like the

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[9] Forrest quoted in Jess Harvell, "Respect the Cock." *Baltimore City Paper*, April 6, 2006, accessed February 11, 2011. http://www2.citypaper.com/music/story.asp?id=11665.

[10] *Behind the Music* was a popular television program that began to air on the VH1 network in 1997 and that is described on the VH1 website as an "intimate look into the personal lives of pop music's greatest and most influential artists" (http://www.vh1.com/shows/dyn/behind_the_music/series_about.jhtml, accessed December 3, 2008).

song “What a Fool Believes” having been inspired by Michael Mcdonald witnessing Kenny Loggins visiting Jimmy Messina who has been living in an alley as a drunk since the break up of their duo. The series’ title is meant to serve as a new style term for the body of “soft rock” and “blue-eyed soul” music created in the late 1970s and early 1980s by bands like Steely Dan, The Doobie Brothers, Loggins and Messina, and Hall and Oates. Like the term “arena rock,” discussed in my previous chapter, the term is pejorative, meant to reference the willingness of the musicians to put economic reward before other, purportedly more meaningful, considerations. But, it is also a reference to the coastal Southern California locations depicted. The fact that many of the artists depicted collaborated in different combinations in their careers is dramatized in the series by depicting the musicians, as well as industry executives and radio djs, as an in-group of acquaintances who spend all their time hanging out together in each other’s driveways. The depiction of these musicians as a social in-group allows for the back stories to all be specific tales of interpersonal conflict. The series is constructed upon a reversal of the standard apprehension of the creative process: rather than songs emerging from the actual emotional lives of musicians, the emotional lives of the musicians, as depicted as characters in the show, come exclusively from the perceived emotional content of the music they recorded.

One of the critically astute aspects of the series is the way it draws our attention to and opens to critique the trope fuelling the *Behind the Music* format, the rockist requirement that musical performances be coextensive with the actual emotional lives of the musical performer. However, much of its humor depends on viewers carrying the very same values that the series seems to mock. While *Yacht*

Rock seems to mock the demand audiences place on the "truth content" of popular song, it also derives humor from registering insincerity in the music it presents in each episode. Humor is created through a sense of absurdity that lies in the depiction of these musicians living the sentiments of the lyrics of their songs and defending a seemingly indefensible aesthetic.

The following exchange by viewers of the series demonstrates that many of them are reading its humor in this way. The second comment, by YouTube user paintbokx is a response to the first by user jtrek154:

> Man, some of you people think this is hilarious?? You are so easily amused!!! There were a few chuckles here and there, but after part two, I didn't want to waste any more of my time. The majority of the music satirized here was pure fluff. Thank God Van Halen came along in the late '70s and blew these guys out of the water! Speaking of fluff, this so-called comedy is no better.[11]

> duh it's fluff. do you really not get it? man, some of you guys are really thick. Obviously the whole joke is based around the premise that this is the corniest music genre ever.[12]

To the second commenter, the show's logic seems based on a registering of this musical style as aesthetically problematic, or, as he/she puts it, "corny." The opening comment in the exchange, however, shows that the show is interpreted in other ways; jtrek154 seems to see the show as a celebration of the music. For jtrek154, the fact that the music was aesthetically problematic should have precluded the creation of a series that registered this music as aesthetically problematic. This seems like an odd sentiment; one would think that if jtrek154 is so aesthetically and/or ideologically

[11] Youtube user jtrek154, comment posted August 2007. http://www.youtube.com/comment_servlet?all_comments=1&v=jMTI8vg7A5U.
[12] Ibid., youtube user paintbokx, comment posted October 2007.

opposed to this music, a show that registers the music as aesthetically problematic would please him. Another user, Myztikt, coming from a seemingly different taste community than jtrek154, expressed a similar idea when he wrote: "Yeah, this would be hilarious if it weren't so fucking true. Coked-up SoCal bazillionaires hiring studio hacks to move product to the bloated consumerist zombies who gave us Reagan, Bushes I and II, and the Governatator. Anybody here old enough to remember when music had the power to change the world?"[13]

Jtrek154 and Myztikt's displeasure with the series has something to teach us about what is going on with Jason Forrest's audiences. In both comments, the authors suggest that the humor of the series is lost when the aesthetico-ideological opposition of the viewer to the music is strong enough. The ideal viewer for the series, then, is someone who is not strongly in opposition to the music being registered as problematic who is also not invested enough in the music to be offended by it being registered as aesthetically problematic, and who also still themselves recognizes the music to some degree as aesthetically problematic. Jtrek154 marks himself as a devoted fan of Van Halen, a band that can serve as exemplars of the perceived "Cock Rock" style. "Soft Rock" and "Cock Rock" are often understood as essentially dissimilar stylistically. In fact, the central plot tensions in most the episodes of the *Yacht Rock* series are derived from aesthetic crises over pressures on the musicians to incorporate the stylistic features of "Cock Rock" into their music. Yet, "Yacht Rock" as a style shares with "Cock Rock" the fact that both have been positioned as oppositional to indie rock, punk rock, noise music, underground electronic music and

[13] Ibid., youtube user Myztikt, comment posted July 2007.

other genres often understood to be more authentic due to their having developed with purportedly less commercial aspirations and in less commercial socio-musical environments. Both “soft” or “yacht” rock and “cock rock” fall into the aesthetico-ideological category of “corporate rock.” In the complex and constantly shifting networks of aesthetico-ideological meaning, these two musical styles are viewed both as part of a shared category and as essentially oppositional. Disco is not incorporated into the *Yacht Rock* series, however, it is important to our understanding of Forrest’s music that the production values and mainstream success of the disco he incorporates would lend that style to also be included by certain bodies of listeners at the commercial end of the commercial/anticommercial divide despite the authentically underground conditions of much of disco’s existence.

The predominant strategy through which “Yacht Rock” is registered as aesthetically problematic in the *Yacht Rock* series is derived from a “shifting to the left” of conventions of masculinity as they are acceptable within music genre cultures. Aggressive bodily displays and verbal performances of musical loyalty are both conventional in “Cock Rock” and foreign to the performances of musicians or fans of “Soft Rock.” Yet, *Yacht Rock* is dependent upon demonstrative aggressive displays of loyalty to “smooth music” for its logic and humor. “Cock Rock” figured into the first ten episodes of the series through the depiction of figures like Eddie Van Halen and Steve Perry who were both depicted as aggressive, Neanderthal-type characters (Van Halen himself seemed incapable of speech) who were drawing the yacht rockers to the “dark side” of this aesthetic divide. In the “shift to the left” of the series, the genre where aggressive displays are conventional moves from these displays to Neanderthal

incoherence while soft rock takes on the masculinist conventions characteristic of "Cock Rock". For example, episode two ends with John Oates declaring that he has "felt the raw power of really smooth music;" the humor here comes from the unconventional description of the relatively thin textures and undistorted timbres of this "easy listening" music through language conventional to "Cock Rock." From certain culturally situated positions, listeners are prone to read this strategy as a means of registering "Yacht Rock" as aesthetically problematic. When the language of "Cock Rock" is displaced into the culture of "Soft Rock" such a listener laughs because the articulations are all wrong. The vocal timbres, the instrumental timbres, the textures, the clothing, the hairstyles, have all been naturalized as belonging together, but their coherence is disrupted when the language, the fervent stylistic devotion, and the macho posturing common to "Cock Rock" manifests through the bodies of the Yacht Rockers. And, as a result, through this shift to the left, both "cock rock" and "yacht rock" seem to be registered as excessive.

It is not merely humorous substitution or the differences in performances of masculinity that this substitution foregrounds, that creates this humor. The ideal viewer of *Yacht Rock* laughs not only because of the displacement of convention that is occurring but also because, like the Jason Forrest audiences who can't understand how he can be aesthetically sincere about the music he samples, it seems absurd as a listener situated in the music value system that feels "natural" to them that even the progenitors of this "yacht rock" would fervently defend the aesthetic they are offering. As I implied earlier, listeners who are culturally situated in positions of this type, who are neither violently opposed to this soft rock music, nor violently in favor of it, seem

the ideal audience for the program as the logic of this humor would be clearest to them. Lines like "I will do anything for smooth music" (Michael Mcdonald in episode 5), or "Ted if I ever catch you producing anything but smooth music, I'll quit singing forever" (Michael Mcdonald in episode 9) seem funny because they perform a seemingly absurd aesthetic loyalty.[14] This loyalty seems absurd due to the common view of this music as somehow more commercial-minded than most other musical genres; if this characterization were true, the aesthetic would not be violently defended but would be abandoned when it was no longer marketable. But, this joke does not work as well when the viewer has not naturalized the notion that valid musical art must champion its musical aesthetic irregardless of the economic reward, if they have not adopted the strange but common notion that a genre that does not have a strong rhetoric of self-justification is somehow a lesser art. *Yacht Rock*'s humor works through a registering of soft rock as aesthetically problematic due to the lack of a convention of passionate aesthetic self-justification. Theorists like Henri Bergson have suggested that laughter is often a social corrective.[15] Viewers laugh to correct the writers of *Yacht Rock*, to say that they are incorrect to think these musicians could have been passionate defenders of their art. But some also laugh (or refuse to laugh) to correct the musicians, to say they should have made art that was less commercial-minded, art determined by a passionate belief in an aesthetic. This body of viewers, this ideal audience for *Yacht Rock*, is caught up in the same aesthetic-ideological value system as many of Jason Forrest's listeners. The

[14] Episodes of *Yacht Rock* can be viewed at yachtrock.com.
[15] See: Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic.* (Rockville, MD: Arc Manor, 2008).

characteristic musical gestures of "cock rock," "disco," and "yacht rock" are registered as excessive and artificial when placed in similar positions across the divide from the rockist values prevalent in the underground music scenes that serve as the context in which Forrest's music is most often presented.

When Forrest's listeners share the value system of this "ideal" *Yacht Rock* viewer, the aesthetico-ideological oppositionality that matters in Forrest's music is not one that exists between the genres Forrest is sampling. These listeners are listeners for whom Forrest's "Cock Rock Disco" is not much of an oxymoron. The oppositionality that does matter is the oppositionality between underground, anti-commercial musics and this unified "mainstream" or "commercial" Other. The insincerity they hear in Forrest's music is an event that comes about when their musical values meet Forrest's samples in the particular cultural contexts they encounter the music within.

For Forrest, who claims to intend no irony in his reveling in musical excess, the meanings of the music he makes are quite different. While much of his audience may view the bulk of his samples as part of a relatively undifferentiated mass of aesthetically and ideologically problematic musical material, Forrest is more attentive to the particular histories and meanings active through these iconic recordings. He has explained:

> I really consider what I do to be more of appropriation art because appropriation art really takes into consideration context and the relationship of the subject to the material and then the outside influence and the outside context of the original as well... For instance, sampling something from heavy metal is really different from sampling something from disco… they are radically different and they

> mean different things and one of the things that I've tried to do is to try to examine the idea of context in culture.[16]

He has explained that much of what makes a particular sample interesting for him is the way the musical characteristics of that recorded passage create what he refers to as "power":

> I decided to make a song out of my 36 favorite punk songs… It's because I was a straight edge skateboarder and I started listening to some punk songs again in the last year or two and I thought Oh my God it had so much power still. And I'm always looking for this power, whether it be something that's just kind of like Steely Dan's which is a different power or like Bad Brains.[17]

It is clear from these quotations that Forrest is focused on drawing attention to the ways various sounds articulated with meaning act on listeners. The contrasts he employs seem to exist more in the service of this goal than for the sake of disparaging his hypotexts. Yet, the various kinds of predispositions that we can see functioning in my discussion of *Yacht Rock* will play a role alongside Forrest's paratextual accounts of his intentions and the structural mechanism definitive of sample pop in determining the various experiences his work gives rise to.

Though it is, as always, uncertain how such music will be experienced across bodies of listeners, it is certain that there is space between the contextual perceptions of irony and the paratextual assertions of tribute for the evaluative openness of pastiche to emerge. While listeners work to decide what forms of evaluation Forrest's imitation involves, all three of these elements – the predispositions they bring to the music, Forrest's paratextual assertions, and the structural mechanism definitive of

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[16] Forrest quoted on ZooMTV France. Online web television, accessed February 15, 2008, http://www.oc-tv.net/jason-forrest.htm.
[17] Ibid.

sample-pop – exist as powerful forces of influence. The totality of what these forces have given rise to cannot be understood. But, it may be safe to assume both that the conditions necessary to give rise to the event of pastiche have been present in and around the consumption of Forrest's work and that the combinatorial mechanism that governs his work is an agent playing a significant role in these processes.

Example Two: Chiptune's Transgeneric Mechanism

Works with a single hypotext or single hypotextual area can be perceived as part of a practice of sweeping hypertextuality if they exist as part of a body of imitative work that includes other hypotexts or hypotextual areas in its purview. Musical reception involves the formation of judgments of how works participate in wider bodies of work on the level of the author, and/or style, and/or genre, and/or nation, and/or a variety of other unities. As in all aspects of theorizing listening, the full extent of how these imaginations affect reception is, of course, unknowable. Yet, we can attempt to identify which single-hypotext based works are more likely to be perceived as part of a broader imitative practice.

Chiptune is a recently emergent music "scene" focused on the appropriation and re-presentation of the sounds of early video game systems.[18] Chiptune musicians

[18] I am using "scene" in the sense defined by Bennett & Peterson in the introduction to their 2004 volume *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual*. They define scenes as "the contexts in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans collectively share their common musical tastes and collectively distinguish themselves from others" (Bennett and Peterson, *Music Scenes*, 1). Their notion that contemporary musical scenes exist in local, translocal, and virtual forms will be relevant to this example. The first and last are self-explanatory; the translocal scene refers to "widely scattered local scenes drawn into regular communication around a distinctive form of music and lifestyle" (Ibid., 6).

use the limited sound capabilities of these gaming devices to create original pieces of music and to transstylize existing works. It is this transstylization that I will be centrally concerned with in this discussion. I will argue that the discourse active in the genre encourages re-presentation as a "mission" and that awareness of this "mission" influences judgments of the evaluative status of instances of re-presentation within the genre. Rather than discussing the hypertext/hypotext relationship behind each project, here I will focus on theorizing the rise of this "mission." I will argue that it arose out of the experiential aspects of the gaming technology, amounting to an "imperialist" desire to transform the world outside of the game. Finally, I will try and demonstrate that, because of this imperative, unlike our examples of focused transtextuality, the hypotextual area itself is a better candidate for the source of dislocation than some third sphere. As such, with this form of imitation, the imitator's critical tool is the mechanism of re-presentation rather than the hypotexts themselves.

The Gaming Experience and Dynamic Induction

Gaston Bachelard's *Air and Dreams* questioned and attempted to expand the ways we understand motion. In his thinking about motion he asked: Can we be mobile while our bodies are perfectly motionless? His answer was a qualified yes. Insisting that spiritual mobility was not to be trivialized as a metaphor for movement,

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The chiptune musician and fan frequently moves fluidly between all three of these varieties of musical scene.

Bachelard argued for what he called the "realism of unreality"[19] and chastised those who were quick to draw distinctions between the "real" and the "imagined."[20]

Bachelard's discussion of spiritual mobility, which he also referred to as dynamic induction, came out of his attempt to understand the experiential aspects of poetry reading; he was interested in the ways different uses of language would or would not cause a state of spiritual motion in their readers. The term induction was meant to refer to "a truly active participation" involving the reader in the dynamism/mobility of a particular poetic image. [21] For Bachelard, the poetic image merely invites us into embodied experiences of motion; we choose, on some level, whether or not to accept this invitation.

Reading poetry and playing video games are vastly different experiences, but, to most, the notion of spiritual mobility is probably less obscure in gaming than in poetry. Video gaming almost always involves an on-screen representation of motion corresponding with the real motion of the gamer as they manipulate a keyboard or joystick or, more recently, as his or her body as is tracked by velocity or motion sensitive devices. Unlike the standard, relatively static body of the reader, the gamer is usually in motion to varying degrees. With traditional/early game controllers, the actual motion of the gamer is, arguably, secondary to the on-screen representation of motion and their felt sympathy with that motion.[22] On-screen avatars are, in most games, travelling vast distances through imagined worlds, leaping, flying, dropping,

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[19] Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement*. (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1988): 5.
[20] Bachelard explains he is not describing "a simple metaphor. We will really feel it within ourselves… It effects in us a dynamic induction" (Ibid., 4).
[21] Ibid., 8.
[22] An exception can be found in the recent development of video games for the blind.

and executing spectacular feats of martial arts while the gamer traditionally moved little more than his/her arms, fingers, neck, and eyes. As such, in traditional/early gaming imagined motion is always as or more important than actual motion to the experience of gaming. This is truer still for game players who might only be watching while they wait for their turn to play.

Video gaming requires a great deal of supplementary imaginative work; gamers are not merely tracking motion visually, but are committing to empathizing with the motion of an avatar as that avatar moves in fantastical ways through fantastical worlds. The projections of light that represent those worlds and that motion are insufficient in themselves and beg for the gamer to imagine the tactility of the action represented and to use their own embodied experiences to translate the represented distances, buoyancies, speeds, and slownesses of the avatars into the language of the gamer's embodied experience. The ways in which our bodies can and do participate in the representations of motion that video games involve, the pleasures that we derive from imagining ourselves moving as the avatars we control move, the movement of the spirit that can arise as we commit our minds and bodies to the act of gaming bear resemblance to what Bachelard is concerned with in *Air and Dreams*.[23]

[23] It must be noted that Bachelard argued that visual perceptions of movement were not like poetic images, that they did not give rise to dynamic induction. Using the opposition of dynamics and kinematics in a rather idiosyncratic manner he writes, "we must realize that movement perceived visually is not *dynamized*. Motion perceived visually remains purely kinematic. Because sight follows movement so effortlessly, it cannot help us to make that movement an integral part of our inner lives" (Bachelard, Air, 8). By extension, he might have argued that visual perceptions of representations of movement also fail in this regard. It does not seem difficult to me as I look out at the eucalyptus grove in front of me on this unusually blustery day to sympathize with a particular tree branch or cluster of treetops such that visual perception of them brings me to an embodiment of that movement as profound and "real" as "actual" motion. It may be more accurate to say that the visual perception of movement might only rarely prompt our collaboration with that movement in the creation of inner dynamisms. This is not only because of the effortlessness of sight, but also because of its temporality (consumption

But, despite Bachelard's insistence on their equivalence, real motion, it must be acknowledged, differs from dynamic induction. To acknowledge this is not to devalue Bachelard's intervention; the distinction we need to make here is less categorical than universal. Instances of real motion differ from instances of dynamic induction in the same way real motion differs from other real motion – in terms of actual materiality. As material moves in and out of perception, meanings associated with that material manifest and decay in the mind of the moving individual. At the same time, the nature of the motion itself may affect the way the material environment that is passed through is understood; new meanings may be articulated with that material, giving rise to new experiences.

Handheld gaming devices have played a role in these articulations; they introduced the practice of engaging in the imaginary motion of gaming simultaneously with "real" motion/travel. To identify the source of chiptune's genre-wide mechanism of transgeneric re-presentation, the experiential aspects of handheld gaming must be considered. We must contemplate: What occurs when the combination of imagined motion and real motion that video gaming always involves

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of the poetic image moves us outside our naturalized sense of the "actual" duration of events), its commonality (in all our waking hours we are subject to visual perception of objects in motion), and our tendency not to ritualize the everyday (the reading of poetry is often treated as an event or ritual in a way that everyday visual encounters with objects in motion are not). Bachelard's insistence on the participatory nature of dynamic induction seems to require that we leave open the question of dynamic induction's source. As he suggests, dynamic induction is not an inevitable or constant experiential process, the individual plays a role in its creation. Subsequently, it seems shortsighted to privilege poetry as the solitary site of a kind of spiritual mobility that is comparable to "real" motion. If the individual plays a role in dynamic induction's manifestation, Bachelard cannot confidently assert that dynamization of the visual does not ever occur. However, again, it is not visual perception of movement we are dealing with when we are speaking of video gaming but, rather, visual perception of representations of movement. Bachelard died in 1962, roughly a decade before the beginnings of the commercial video gaming market. We cannot know whether he would have seen gaming as a special category of visual perception of movement wherein the supplementation of representation of movements with imaginations of movements qualified as dynamized.

occurs with the movement of gamers through space? How do the imaginary worlds that games manifest act upon the experience of the real worlds that they become co-present with and vice-versa? How do the sounds of gaming affect the relationship between the bodies of gamers and the imagined and real worlds they experience? And, how does the experience of imagined motion affect the meanings and experience of game sound?

When chip music appropriates the sounds of early gaming it seems to be because, at least in part, they carry, articulated with them, embodied memories of the imagined travel gaming fosters. Through articulation, the sounds of early gaming have, for a significant body of listeners, come to "mean" the spiritual mobility they once accompanied. Therein lies the first layer of the argument I am making in this example. In the second layer, I want to suggest that those sounds have, because of handheld gaming devices, played a role in the way gamers have experienced a wide variety of real world spaces. The symbolic role of the handheld device in the chip music scene is due in part to the way they allowed chip sound articulated with the experiential aspects of imagined travel to act transformatively upon real world spaces.

If we accept these two arguments, we might also be convinced that the practice of experiencing game sound while moving through public space helped give rise to the transgeneric "mission" of re-presentation that chip music undertakes. With the rise of handheld gaming devices, the libratory "imaginary" travel that gaming facilitates began to mediate the experience of public space, inscribing the mobility of the gamer into the experience and meaning of that space. The aesthetic of re-presentation that chip music offers is a kind of re-writing of the public sphere in the

form of the musical collective unconscious isomorphically akin to the re-writing of public space that occurred with the rise of handheld gaming. Both represent a re-negotiation of the public sphere through chip sound. More importantly, both represent an inscription of the pleasure and mobility of the gamer into structures, materiality, and a world over which they have limited control.

The handheld gaming device allowed sounds articulated with memories of the dynamisms of those experiences to transform public space, to enact a kind of chiptuning of the world. The re-writing of the musical collective unconscious occurring in the chip music genre is co-extensive with this; it is a re-writing of a scape – here a soundscape rather than a landscape. It is an inscription of the pleasure, mobility, and presence of the gamer into all that once failed to speak their name.

Early Game Sound and Music

Chip music is a relatively new musical genre and has been troublesome to define, largely because of this aesthetic of re-presentation adopted by its practitioners, but also because of the distinction, important to members of the chip music scene, between chip music and game music. In one of the only academic articles on the genre to date, Anders Carlsson addresses this difficulty by discussing how neither a technological nor a pure stylistic definition works to draw lines between what is and is not chip music. He observes: “For the most part, more recent chip songs have been short and happy-sounding loops in 4/4, often flirting with C64 music from the 1980s, but composers have used chip sounds to make songs sounding like jazz, noise, death

metal or even hip-hop."[24] A generic definition seems, thus, more useful than a stylistic definition; though the musical styles of chip music songs are derived from a variety of stylistic realms they are presented together in live performances, on CD compilations, or on websites devoted to the music.[25] However, no matter how varied the styles of chip music may be, what unites them is their incorporation of elements of the limited sound world of early video game systems; Carlsson refers to the essential element of chip music as "bleepy C64 nostalgia."[26]

The C64 (Commodore 64) home computer was remarkably popular, dominating the home computer market from 1983-1986. Carlsson's invoking of the C64 reflects that popularity, but is somewhat misleading as the music chip music composers "flirt with" can be music from any one of the unique but related video gaming devices that have, since the late 1970s, provided music as an element of the gaming experience.[27] In her book *Game Sound: An Introduction to the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design*, Karen Collins notes

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[24] Anders Carlsson, "Chip Music: Low-tech data music sharing." In *From Pac-Man to Pop Music: Interactive Audio in Games and New Media*, ed. Karen Collins. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2008): 160. C64 here refers to the Commodore 64 personal computer that appeared on the market in 1982. For more on the Commodore 64 see: Brian Bagnall, *On the Edge: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore*. (Winnepeg: Variant Press, 2005).

[25] Websites like 8 bit collective (www.8bitcollective.com) foster the virtual element of the chip music scene and host large libraries of free and legally downloadable chip music.

[26] Carlsson, "Chip," 160. "Bleepy" and "blippy" seem to be the preferred adjectives characterizing the aesthetic of early game sound. Karen Collins also employs this language, referring to "low-fidelity blips and bleeps" (*Game Sound*, 9) to summarize the sound effects of early arcade games. See: Karen Collins, *Game Sound: An Introduction to the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

[27] Collins' *Game Sound* discusses the range and development of both game sound and game music from the first video games that incorporated sound in 1971 through and beyond the "early period" sound and music relevant to the study of the chip music genre. Carlsson's use of the term music here may well imply the ideas of both video game sound and music. Certainly the "non-musical" sound effects of early gaming are flirted with in chip music alongside the "music."

that "[i]n the arcades, sound varied considerably from machine to machine"[28] and provides specifics about the considerable diversity of the sound chips incorporated into home and handheld consoles. Indeed, each of the early arcade, home, and handheld video gaming devices had its own distinct sound producing capabilities. But, despite the technological diversity recognizable in the world of early video game sound, what fuels the chip music genre is the fact that most of these devices shared the same limitations, limitations which ensured that the word "bleepy" could be a sufficient adjective to summarize and celebrate the dominant aesthetic feature of early video game sound and music.

"Blippiness" or "bleepiness" is capable of describing both the sound effects these games incorporated and key features of the aesthetic of game music. Collins argues that "the first real arcade hit," Atari's 1972 game *Pong*, "was to some extent responsible for making the sound of video games famous."[29] The audio element of *Pong* consisted entirely of isolated tones whose primary function was to provide information to the game player about the status of events occurring within the table-tennis style game. These tones occurred frequently during gameplay, with different pitches indicating the completion of different events (the 'paddle' successfully connecting with the 'ball,' the 'paddle' failing to connect with the 'ball' and the scoring of a point, and the 'ball' connecting with and deflecting off the side boundaries towards one of the 'paddles'). When the 'ball' is deflected by the 'paddle' at an angle, it often quickly bounces off the two side boundaries (the top and bottom

[28] Collins, *Game Sound,* 9.
[29] Ibid., 8.

of the screen), causing a series of the same pitch to be sounded and silenced in a regular rhythm before the 'paddle' either connects with or misses the 'ball,' ending with a different pitch this regular rhythm and a phrase or section of sonic activity. At other times, the 'ball' is deflected more slowly causing relatively long silences between the appearances of these indicator tones. In the latter type of sequence, the listener is likely to parse the tones differently from the busier rhythmic sequences. These brief, isolated "blips" shatter the silence with an assertive but harmonically impoverished sonic interruption that decays back into silence.[30] Both in the era before continuous music became a common feature of video games (pre-1978) and after that era, the omnipresence of these types of isolated sound events/effects that convey information to the gamer about action occurring within the game contributes to the idea that early video game sound is best described as "bleepy."[31]

Though "blip" or "bleep" may most immediately refer to these isolated sonic events, it also seems clear that uses of these terms in relation to chip music invoke the aesthetic particularities of the way early game consoles and home computers synthesized pitches and sequences of pitches in the formation of game music. Above all, it was the timbral limitations of early game sound that made early game music universally bleepy. The spectral content of the pitches synthesized by the sound chips was limited because the chips employed simple periodic waveforms (pulse waves, triangle waves, sawtooth waves) to produce them. More importantly, the spectral

[30] Further in this paragraph I will discuss how it is that these early forms of synthesis are "harmonically impoverished."

[31] Collins describes how "The first IBM PCs and clones contained… a tiny speaker that could produce simple tones of varying pitch but of a fixed volume, designed to indicate errors or other messages," and how this indicator tone producing speaker was "sometimes referred to as a *bipper* or a *beeper*" (*Game Sound,* 29).

envelope stayed consistent over time while those periodic waveforms were employed to synthesize pitched material. These chips generally had the capacity to produce three to five channels of sound and they usually dedicated three of those channels to the production of pitched musical content. In most cases, alongside these three channels a noise-producing channel served as accompanying percussive content. The pitched musical content usually consisted of one channel producing a melody, a second channel harmonizing that melody, and a third that provided a bass line.[32] All three of these channels were engaged in the production of pitches with these even spectral envelopes. Though the individual pitches of game music are not isolated blips sandwiched with silence like the sounds of *Pong*, as they shift from pitch to pitch in their melodic or harmonic function with their static timbral simplicity, strict metrical durations, and the clarity of the thin four channel texture, each pitch of the music conveys a kind of isolation and uniformity deserving of the adjective bleepy.

The sound chip of the Commodore 64, the SID, provided it with sonic capability that was both state of the art for home computer technology of the time and timbrally and texturally similar to the sound producing capacity of other gaming devices. The SID chip shared essential sonic characteristics with the sound generators of other canonic devices such as the five-channel Ricoh 2A03 chip used in the Nintendo Entertainment System and the four-channel system of the Nintendo Game

[32] As an example, we can consider the Ricoh 2A03 with its five channel capacity. A typical game music piece composed for this chip would see the chip's two pulse wave producing channels generating a melodic line and a complimentary line harmonically supporting that melody. A third channel on the chip synthesized triangle waves. Commonly, triangle waves were employed in the production of bass lines in game music. The fourth channel employed differential pulse-code modulation which can be understood as a rudimentary form of sampling. The additional timbres added by uses of this channel were generally used for sound effects rather than music.

Boy.[33] When discussing these sounds, Carlsson invokes "nostalgia" due to the fact that chip musicians are not concerned with celebrating all video game music; rather, they concern themselves exclusively with the limited, blippy sound worlds described above. The limited sonic capabilities of home computers and gaming systems were drastically expanded with the introduction of FM synthesis into game sound in the late 1980s, and came to a definitive end as the memory capacity for these technologies and the media they employed reached a level where they could reasonably support the inclusion of recorded music rather than rely on these forms of synthesis. Home computers and video game consoles first appeared on the commercial market in the late 1970s; by the early 1990s game music composers and sound designers had an unlimited sonic palette to work with.

Defining Chiptune: Chip Music and the Demoscene

Carlsson argues that technological definitions of the chip music genre fail for two reasons. The first has to do with chip music's roots in a subculture of game crackers and rogue programmers known as the demoscene. From the early days of computer gaming, game manufacturers realized that their potential to profit in their industry was being compromised by piracy. These companies invested energy into

[33] See Sebastian Tomczak "Handheld Console Comparisons" for more information on the technical specifications for Nintendo Game Boy audio. Tomczak explains: "The Game Boy does not have an individual sound chip as such. Instead, the main processor handles sound routines, including sound output. The pseudo audio processing unit of a Game Boy has a total of four channels. Channels 1 and 2 are pulse wave oscillators. Channel 3 is a programmable waveform channel capable of playing back samples and synthesizing more complex waveforms. The last channels is a noise channel" ("Handheld Console Comparisons: Lateral Consumer Machines as Musical Instruments." accessed July 27, 2010, http://milkcrate.com.au/_other?downloads/writing_stuff/tomczak.acmc2007.pdf).

creating more and more intricate copy protection for their games. A subculture developed around the sport of "cracking" those copy protections and distributing illegal versions of these games. The "crackers" who broke through these copy protections began to create short advertisements for themselves called "crack intros."[34] These 'ads' were comprised of graphics and music and they became more intricate as crackers competed with one another, flaunting their programming skills to the transnational group of peers they shared their cracks with through the mail or through their modems. The practice of creating these crack intros eventually mutated into the practice of creating "demos."

Rather than appearing as short introductions before games, "demos" were self-contained works of art. Their visual and audio content was generated in real-time by the computer in the same way a game is, but, unlike a game, the demo audience was a passive spectator to the images and sounds being generated. Demo creators and fans began creating events where they would gather in person to watch/hear and celebrate these works of art. In the 1980s, these events began as small informal parties, and in the 1990s they grew into gatherings large enough to be held in arenas like the Vikingship in Hamar.[35]

To be clear, chip music, in my use of the term, is not game music. The date of origin of chip music as a separate musical genre is difficult to pinpoint as it involves resolving debates over whether music composed for "demos" should be considered

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[34] For a more detailed history of the demo scene see: Lassi Tasajärvi, "A Brief History of the Demoscene." In *Demoscene: The Art of Real-Time*, ed. Lassi Tasajärvi. (Helsinki: Even Lake Studios, 2004).

[35] Bent Stamnes provides an overview of the history of "The Gathering," one of the largest of these "computer parties." See: Bent Stamnes, "Case: The Gathering." In *Demoscene: The Art of Real-Time*, ed. Lassi Tasajärvi. (Helsinki: Even Lake Studios, 2004).

part of the same category as chip music, which, unlike demos, is not intended as accompaniment to specific visual material.[36] Regardless, the majority of chip music emerged in the era when game music became dominated by recorded music and after the home computing and gaming technologies discussed here became commercially obsolete. As such, the term "chip music composers" should only refer to those composers that employ/re-present a specific variety of obsolete game sound outside of the realm of the games they were formerly isolated in.

To re-iterate, the demo scene and the chip music scene are related but distinct. The practice of creating demos and crack intros involves the composition of chip-based music; yet, while demo appreciation revolves largely around the admiration of the ability of the programmer to create complex graphics and music in the limited programming environments of early computer systems, chip music appreciation has more to do with musical invention and sound itself than with programming skill. The composition of chip music certainly has its roots in the demo scene and many of its practitioners occupy both worlds. The chip music scene, however, has been established as a distinct realm with its own values and practices. Both in the demo scene and in the chip music scene, the sounds of game music are appropriated and presented in instantiations separated from the experience of gaming. Yet, the implications of their differing methods of valuation separate the scenes; the valuation

[36] Live performances of chip music almost always involve the combination of music and projected visual content. In fact, visualists are often given equal billing with musicians in the promotion of shows. However, these visualists usually generate their material improvisationally and the music and visuals share an aleatoric relationship. Of course, in the age of youtube, music videos are produced to accompany certain chiptune pieces, but this should be considered categorically distinct from the demo where sound and visuals are created together as part of a total artwork and would not be consumed in isolation from one another in the way music videos supplement a musical work that can stand on its own as a work.

of programming on early computer systems active in demo culture, but less important in chip music culture, places limits on the ways in which music is created in the demo scene that do not exist in the chip music scene.

In the demo scene, the generation of sound and image in real-time by hardware authentic to early computer systems with their limited memories and the restrictions of their programming languages is valued. Because of this ethic, the sounds themselves are limited to those made available by these systems, which become the sounds of demo music by default. In the chip music scene, however, the sounds of early game systems are not present by default but because of the significance of these sounds to the composers and audiences in the scene. Chip music in the chip music scene is not always created through the composer programming early home computer systems to generate sound in real-time. There are a variety of other ways chip music composers make those sounds present, including emulation of the sounds on more advanced computer systems and sound chips, sampling, and the use of software interfaces that make computer and game systems generate sound in real-time but that do not require the composer to use programming language to compose. Describing Little Sound DJ, tracker software many chip musicians use to make music, Vblank, a visualist active in the various chip music scenes on the American East Coast, explains: "it's hard to come by and it's hard to install, but a lot of time musicians here call it the great equalizer, because everyone can use it."[37]

[37] Interview with the author, December 5, 2008. In the course of my research, the majority of chip musicians I spoke with made their music using Little Sound DJ (LSDJ). This program, created by Johan Kotlinski who performs and records in the chip music scene under the name Role Model has, at times, been available for sale in the form of a game cartridge that can be inserted into a Game Boy. However, Kotlinski has no associations with Nintendo and has never mass produced these cartridges.

This brings us back to the first reason Carlsson gives for the failure of a technological definition of chip music. A technological definition of chip music fails in the chip music scene, as opposed to the demo scene, because the presence of the sounds of early gaming is more important than the means through which those sounds become present. The second reason Carlsson gives for the failure of a technological definition of chip music is his observation that there are musicians who employ the early computer chips central to the demo scene but whose "music is not generally considered chip music."[38] He explains that their music is made with the tracker software developed within and for chip music making communities, but doesn't contain the "bleepy" timbres that accompanied the imagined travels of the users of early game systems. By ignoring certain aspects of the limited sound world of these early systems, by, for instance, using the noise channels heavily and not creating melodic material with pulse wave producing channels, these sound chips can produce music that does not reflect the dominant timbres and textures of early game music.

Each cartridge is made individually and only a relatively small number of Kotlinski produced cartridges exist. However, Kotlinski has also made the software available for purchase online and has provided instructions on how to install the program on a Game Boy cartridge. Further, the software will also run on computer Game Boy emulator programs. For more information on Little Sound DJ, visit: www.littlesounddj.com/lsd/. Other software musicians use with various models of the Nintendo Game Boy include Nanoloop (see: www.nanoloop.de) and Pixel8 Music Tech (see: pixel8.co.uk/software).

[38] Carlsson, "Chip," 160. The artists that serve as his examples are Dutch Gabber artist Neophyte, Australian artists Nasenbluten and Xylocaine, and German artists Patric Catani, el8or, and Christoph de Babalon. The technology in question here is the Protracker software for the Commodore Amiga. Protracker is one of a number of tracker software programs that serve as popular means for the creation of chip music. A tracker program is a software interface that manifests an x-y axis tool for music composition. The y axis represents time divided into a sequence of metrical units and the x axis represents the sounds triggered on each beat and the parameters affecting the shape of those sounds. Each sequence is called a pattern. Tracker programs store a number of these patterns and songs are generally created by alternating between and repeating these patterns with variations to the sounds and parameters of the patterns. Tracker programs are relatively easy to use and do not require that their users be knowledgeable about programming languages. Still, tracker software often allows the user to view the code and users often alter the code and/or produce their own tracker programs.

This second reason supports the logic of the first; it also shows that the defining element of chip music as a style is, simply, the substantial presence of the "bleepy" timbres dominant in early gaming.[39]

Handheld Gaming: Re-Setting Game Sound

While the chip music scene does not require that composers program on early computer systems, the symbolic value of early home computers and game systems is a central feature of its various manifestations to date. Currently, more than any other, the Nintendo Game Boy, particularly in the forms available before the 1998 release of the Game Boy Color, serves as a, perhaps the, central symbol of the genre. There are a number of reasons for its centrality. The most practical of these reasons is that many of the artists create their music on the Game Boy with a variety of software programs, like Little Sound DJ, that members of the scene have developed. Like the guitar in rock music or the turntable in hip-hop music, the Game Boy is a valuable symbol because it is an instrument essential to composers in the genre. Yet, the Game Boy's symbolic value also has much to do with the experiences the handheld device offered after coming on the market in 1989.

The Game Boy was not the first handheld gaming system, nor was it the first handheld gaming system to have interchangeable cartridges (Milton Bradley's Microvision preceded the Game Boy by a decade), but it was the first handheld

[39] My qualifier "substantial" here refers to the fact that some music that incorporates these timbres in minor or ornamental ways exists without being considered chip music by members of the chip music community; these timbres need to be dominant aesthetic elements for the music to be considered chip music.

gaming system with interchangeable cartridges to be commercially successful.[40] It is widely recognized that "it was Nintendo that popularized the hand-held console concept with the release of the Game Boy" and that "the hand-held Game Boy began to build a historical sales record."[41] The Game Boy was the first means through which a sophisticated and diverse variety of portable handheld games became available to game players. Handheld video games were popular throughout the 1980s, but these games differed fundamentally from Game Boy games in terms of the duration of time they could sustain a gamer's attention and the kinds of experiences they offered.

The goal-oriented pleasures of video gaming are central. Video games are built around the pursuit of a task, and achieving that task is almost always the purpose of playing the game. However, games like the iconic Super Mario Bros series facilitated a great deal of non-purposive action. A player could spend time as a kind of flâneur, moving back and forth and up and down through the surreal spaces of the game world, controlling purposeless interaction between their avatar and the objects in the game world. The Game Boy was unique in 1989 for being a portable gaming device that offered interchangeable games and games, like Super Mario Bros, that allowed players to navigate their avatars in purposeless ways through imagined space. Earlier handhelds usually offered only one game, and in that game the gamer could usually only navigate their avatar in ways that furthered the progress of the game. Though it is true that the non-purposive aspects of video games are almost always mixed with purposive action, it is also certain that the Game Boy was able to keep

[40] The Milton Bradley Microvision lasted a mere three years on the market and very few games were produced for the system.
[41] Dan Steinblock, *The Mobile Revolution: The Making of Mobile Services Worldwide*. (Sterling, VA: Kogan Page, 2005): 150.

gamers aimlessly exploring imagined worlds for much longer durations than previous handhelds.

With the portable Game Boy system, imagined worlds could be navigated by gamers while their own bodies were in motion. It was undoubtedly common for gamers to be enjoying non-purposive 'imagined' movement with their Game Boys while experiencing purposive 'actual' movement in a vehicle, or perhaps even on foot, on route to a specific destination. It was also undoubtedly common for gamers to enjoy purposive 'imagined' movement at intervals as they wandered non-purposively through 'actual' space. In either scenario, the gamer is able to engage in a form of imagined motion whose aesthetico-political implications are distinct from those of the actual motion they are engaged in. While we may be inclined to conceptualize gaming as an escape into another world, it is *also* a making co-present of an imagined world, and of the light and sound that facilitates that imagination, with innumerable experiences of space and place; escaping into is always also transformation of that which we imagine one to be escaping from. Not only did handheld gaming offer gamers a degree of autonomy over the aesthetico-political implications of the motion they engaged in, it mediated/transformed their experiences of the various 'actual' spaces and places they moved through.

There is no way to distill the transformations that gaming has given rise to down into words, no way to quantify them and compare them with other ways additions of sound and light have mediated/transformed our experiences of space and place. Yet, it seems safe to say that gamers play video games because the experience is, for the most part, pleasurable. It also seems safe to assume that the forms of

imagined movement games facilitate are libratory to some degree when compared the kinds of mobility the gamers experience in 'the real.' It follows that the sounds of gaming come, in time, to be articulated with memories of this pleasure and this autonomy and that the transformative effect they have had on spaces and places becomes viewed on some level as the 'meaning' and the utility of those sounds.

The sounds of music are often experienced as belonging to particular social groups, geographic locations, and historical eras. Most often, these forms of belongingness are generated from perceptions of a music's origins; the idea of the place and people from which a music emerges is articulated with the sounds of that music. When the sound worlds of early programmable sound generators became widespread globally through the consumption of arcade games and, later, home computer and gaming systems, those sounds arrived, in the ears of many listeners, relatively undercoded.[42] The bleepy sounds produced by the early forms of game sound synthesis likely would not, in the early days of video gaming, have evoked belongingness to any 'real' cultural group or any bygone cultural era. As well, though a practice of listener acknowledgement of game music composers and sound designers has emerged more recently, in the early days of gaming few gamers would have been likely to attend to game sound and music as 'works' and assign them belongingness to any world outside of the world of the game. To many gamers, the sound worlds made audible by their gaming devices would have belonged exclusively to now, and to them. The ubiquity of the limited timbral and textural signature described above combined with the experience of these sounds as undercoded created

[42] For a definition of undercoded see note 5 of this chapter.

a sonic materiality ripe to be coded with the powerful feelings of imagined movement games fostered. The significance of their reappearance in the chip music scene seems as much a result of those articulations remaining active as any pleasures the materiality of the sounds themselves, without these articulations, give rise to.

The Game Boy allowed the gamer to go out into nearly any worldly environment and force it into co-presence with game sound. Unavoidably, the game sound acted on these new environments. If heard by others, the game sound could assert a kind of violence, forcing the pleasures and the autonomy of the gamer into the consciousness of those not experiencing those pleasures. If heard only by the gamer, these sounds mediated the experience of the material world and, articulated with the pleasures and liberties generated in the gaming experience, forced innumerable material environments to become temporary containers for those feelings. Writing about sound's role in film, Fred Camper notes, "sound gives the action it accompanies a spatial presence; the image gains the illusion of filling the air around one, as the sound itself does."[43] If video game sound is the element that allows the game space to act on the body of the player, creating embodied sympathy with their avatar, when they are experiencing actual motion while handheld gaming their body moving through space bathed in chip sound bears some equivalence to their avatar, the world they move through some equivalence to the game world.

Thanks to the Game Boy's portability, game sound became a tool for mediating the materiality of the environment outside of the game world. The sounds

[43] Fred Camper, "Sound and Silence in Narrative and Non-Narrative Cinema." In *Film Sound*, ed. Elizabeth Weis and John Belton. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985): 371.

of pulse waves and triangle waves, which were already articulated with powerful, pleasurable dreams of movement, became sounds that could intrude on the public sphere and/or act on and transformatively mediate real world environments. Now, in the chip music community, the same sounds are being employed to act upon, re-presenting and timbrally transforming, a variety of musical styles and the Game Boy is serving as the symbolic centre of the genre at large. The portability of the Game Boy, the way in which it allowed game sound to move into and act on the materiality of virtually any space, seems to be one key source of an almost imperialistic desire in chip music to transform, through re-presentation and timbral alteration, any and all existing musical material. The musical timbres that define chip music have become a tool in support of the aesthetic of re-presentation I am concerned with here.

Chiptune and Re-presentation

Nostalgia comes up often in the discourse around chip music. Yet, discussions of re-presentation in chip music need to transcend this topic. Carlsson refers to chip musickers as nostalgics and, certainly, they display such tendencies; there is a longing perceptible in the discourse around the scene for the pleasures of their collective youths and a re-visitation of its symbols and sounds. [44] But when one looks closely at chip music itself, it also becomes clear that much of its re-presentation is not best

[44] The term "musicker" here is derived from Christopher Small's *Musicking*. Small's term, an intervention into the field of musicology intended to make the discipline recognize that the study of all forms of participation in music cultures are necessary areas of music research, is a valuable contribution to the field that should continue to be popularized.

understood as nostalgic in character. This is because very little of its re-presentation is direct re-presentation of game music.

We have established that the "bleepy" timbres that comprised the limited sonic vocabulary of early game systems are the defining element of chip music. Now we must ask: Given their ubiquity and necessity within the genre, when, if at all, do these sounds function as re-presentations of early game sound and when do they function in non-referential manners? I suggest that the timbres in themselves cease to function as *strongly* referential the moment one has acclimatized to the chip music style at large. Listeners familiar with the sound world of early gaming devices will be likely to experience chip music, upon first encountering it, as music that appropriates a sonic palette from those devices. They are likely to notice that chip music has taken game sound outside of the realm of the game. But this meaning is likely to fade when that same listener is immersed in chip music for sustained periods. This is because all chip music uses these timbres; as the appropriation becomes established as normative in the mind of the individual listener, the timbres cannot function as *strongly* referential. My qualifier 'strongly' exists here to make a distinction between referentiality that remains in the foreground of meaning from referentiality that has become normative and fades from the attention of the listener, but which is still residually present and may occasionally rise to the foreground. The timbres come to belong to the chip music genre rather than to game music; they remain coded as "game timbres," but do not assert a consistent aesthetic of re-presentation because their use is so normative within the genre.

As such, the experience of nostalgia for game music and sound does not necessarily characterize the experience of sustained participation as a listener or fan of the chip music genre. However, the re-presentations unlikely to fade from re-presentation into 'first-order' normativity are those that Carlsson refers to as "songs sounding like jazz, noise, death metal or even hip-hop."[45] The aesthetic of re-presentation that I want to identify here has more to do with re-presentations of other musical styles in the language of game music than with nostalgic re-presentations of game music itself.[46]

Gaining Control and Reformatting the Planet

Chip music's aesthetic of re-presentation is quite wide and includes imitative works more likely to be received as tribute, others more likely to be received as parody, and others that may not be perceived as signaled imitation and would be received as unsignaled "versions" of their hypotext. From entire re-creations of classic jazz albums like Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*, to chip sound translations of classical works, to covers of pop and hip-hop numbers, re-presentation in the genre

[45] Carlsson, "Chip," 160.
[46] However, alongside and overlapping with the chip music scene exists a widespread practice of nostalgic re-presentation of game music. Chip music composers will make direct reference to particular pieces of game music from time to time by quoting snippets of familiar game melodies or by including samples of some of the most iconic sonic moments from popular games, yet, these amount to isolated moments of nostalgic re-presentation that occur from within constant incorporation of game derived timbres. These moments are important; they function like in-jokes amongst a group of old friends. But they are, in most cases, ornamental to the genre.

comes in a variety of forms.[47] Yet, arguably, the transgeneric mechanism itself acts to push works that, when considering the hypertext/hypotext relation individually, might strongly suggest tribute or parody, towards pastiche. Most of the music re-presented in chip sound is being, at once, violated and celebrated. This co-presence of violation of and celebration of the imitated makes manifest the evaluative openness Dyer uses to define pastiche. Re-presentations in chip sound both offer the imitated music in question to the chiptune listener and subject that music to the violence of timbral alteration through the re-presentation of that music in the language of pulse waves, triangle waves, and white noise.

This timbral alteration often feels like an imaginary colonization of the music being imitated, yet, its translation into chip sound also opens that music and its aesthetic resources to the chip music fan, encouraging an embodiment of that which has been colonized. Tracks like "Classical Favorites" by Virt, which re-presents fragments of well-known classical melodies in chip timbres, or "Remix Medley" by Tugboat, which does the same for well-known hip-hop songs, seem to neither be hommages to nor parodies of the music they re-present.[48] They seem less interested in making clear evaluative statements about that music than simply asserting their right to appropriate and transform it. Commenting on "Classical Favorites," Virt refers to this appropriation in terms of violence, writing: "You'll probably recognize the original pieces, and upon hearing what I've done to them, mail a bomb to my

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[47] I give examples of classical, pop, and hip-hop re-presentation below. My reference to Miles Davis is a reference to the chiptune album *Kind of Bloop*, which re-presents the entirety Davis' popular 1959 album *Kind of Blue*.

[48] At the time of writing, both of these tracks were available free online. For "Classical Favorites" see the URL in the following note. For "Remix Medley" see: www.myspace.com/tugboat.

house."[49] This kind of language is recurrent in the discourse around chip music re-presentations. Describing another of his re-presentations, a re-presentation of Christina Aguilera's "Genie in a Bottle" entitled "Game Genie in a Bottle," Virt metaphorizes his re-presentation as a narrative of violence: "Christina Aguilera gets mutilated by a farm combine, but wait! They can reanimate her and give her singing ability back! Only it comes out as square waves!!!! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!"[50] Again, this violence belies the fact that the music being re-presented is music chip musicians and fans are choosing to consume and to derive pleasure from. In its timbrally transformed state, the re-presented music is often divorced from aspects of the meanings articulated with it in its original context and becomes, to some degree, an object of affection in ways the original cannot. Again, this co-presence of violence and affection qualifies this signaled imitation as evaluatively open.

We can appeal to the visual culture of chiptune to help underscore this point. DJ Scotch Egg's "Scotch Bach" provides an example of the potential evaluative openness of chip sound re-presentation through a music video version of the song which visualizes this co-present violence and affection.[51] The black and white video directed by Steve Glashier begins with shots from multiple angles of around 40 individuals in three arced rows facing the same direction. They are dressed identically in pixilated tuxedo pattern t-shirts and are seated behind stands holding sheet music. The audio track consists, at first, of room tone and quiet murmurs of conversation,

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[49] Virt (Jake Kaufman), Big Lion Music: the Various Projects of Jake "Virt" Kaufamn, "Chiptunes," http://biglionmusic.com/category/music/chiptunes/, accessed April 22, 2009.
[50] See previous note. At the time of writing, "Game Genie in a Bottle" was available at the URL in the previous note.
[51] At the time of writing the video version of "Scotch Bach" was available online on the director's webpage: http://steveglashier.com/index.php/dj-scotch-egg-scotch-bach

which are eventually accompanied by a single set of footsteps. Upon hearing these footsteps we see a figure walk around and in front of the group of individuals and up onto a podium. The figure, DJ Scotch Egg, raises his arms and begins to conduct what appears at this point, because of the absence of musical instruments, to be a choral ensemble. The next shot of the ensemble accompanies the introduction of the music; it is a tight shot of three members. It becomes clear that this is not, in fact, a choral ensemble, as the three each hold a Game Boy and manipulate it to produce the opening melodic gesture of J.S. Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* in a chip sound timbre. The video continues to oscillate between shots of the conductor and the Game Boy ensemble while the music re-presents various fragments of the *Toccata* in chip sound while the texture gets denser and noise elements are added. At one point, the first 8 notes of the *Toccata* recur and begin to loop. Shortly after this occurs, a sampled vocal scream underscores the rhythm of the looping melody as the song reaches its thickest density. At this point in the visuals, the ensemble cease playing their Game Boys and begin to mosh, knocking over each other, the seats, and the music stands as DJ Scotch Egg continues to conduct. Musically throughout the piece, the *Toccata* is violated; besides being translated to chip sound, the piece is fragmented. Similarly visually, the mosh pit at the end of the video violates the structure of the orchestra. The conductor seems to want this to occur; he continues to conduct throughout the moshing and, conducting with his hands, he brings the visuals and the music to a close at their ends. The imitated elements, both musical and visual, are violated but also celebrated. It is significant that they are no more violated than

celebrated; the relationship of imitator to imitated remains evaluatively open. Bach is neither deified nor detested.

Turning back, after this example, to the "imperialist" rhetoric that gives rise to chiptune's transgeneric mechanism is instructive. In a bio they used in 2008, Argentinian duo 8GB describe themselves as "pretending to gain 'world audiovisual domination'."[52] They describe their "mission" in steps:

> Infiltrate a 3rd world nation – Settle into the local music and multimedia scenario – Spread 8-bit propaganda by means of an audiovisual set created with a mix of seemingly harmless 8-bit technology and modern weaponry – Gain control of the population with live setups and record releases – Completely dominate local scenario and expand to other countries by own means or by recruitment – World audiovisual domination.[53]

While this kind of language is both somewhat ironic and referential of the narratives of certain kinds of video games, it also seems reflective of the feeling chip music is giving rise to in its current manifestations. This kind of language appears in the most central nodes in the scene. The title of a documentary on the rise of one of the key chip music events, New York's Blip Festival, is called "Reformat the Planet."[54] This title captures a structure of feeling active in contemporary manifestations of the chiptune scene internationally, one that both informs the choices of artists in the scene and is reinforced by their artistic choices.

If chiptune's goal is to "reformat the planet," reformatting of individual pieces or styles of music would be less likely understood to be due to the imitator's particular valuation of the imitated and more likely to be understood as a part of a

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[52] This bio was included on the myspace page for the group as well as the online biographies used to promote the 2007 Blip Festival. See: www.myspace.com/8gb.
[53] See URL in previous note.
[54] *Reformat the Planet*, directed by Paul Owens (New York: 2 Player Productions, 2008).

total generic mechanism or mission that has been set into action. Re-presentations of particular hip-hop pieces or the style at large, of sections of classical works or of particular European art music styles, and of well-known and obscure pop songs are the dominant forms of re-presentation in the genre. Yet, they exist alongside re-presentations of forms of metal, reggae, disco, electronic dance music, various forms of jazz, the Japanese "city pops" genre, college folk, Cuban son, and other styles. It can often seem as if re-presentations in the chip music genre are part of a ravenous force seeking to blindly consume and transform all that it encounters, turning the world into a game world, reformatting the planet.

Chiptune: Conclusion

Not all chip music is oriented towards re-presentation. However, re-presentation makes up an atypically large portion of chip music practice and is common internationally amongst established artists in all, or almost all, of the local and translocal chip music scenes.

The transnational chip music community is unique amongst transnational popular music communities because of game space. When recorded sounds travel across cultural borders, or even within cultural borders, key shared articulations generated by particular individuals or communities who first 'used' that music, meanings that depend upon the experience of that music from within physical space or cultural place, often do not survive the voyage. With chip music, one key space in which meaning is generated is available to listeners despite their physical and cultural

distances; game players in different locations across the globe share certain contextual meanings important to the sounds and music of early game systems. Foremost, they share the experiential offerings of gaming itself. Thus, it is not merely the sounds of early game systems that unite the members of the global chip music community; what unites them is also their participation in a process by which those sounds became articulated with particular varieties of meaning. In some way, they experience the process of articulation in a manner similar to a community in physical proximity. Cultural differences between members of the chip music community may seem secondary to the contexts they have shared as gamers, at least when it comes to the 'meanings' of the sounds and music celebrated in all local or translocal chip music scenes.

However, this observation, it must be noted, excludes certain important members of the chip music community. Not all of the creators of chip music are or ever were gamers and there is a prominent discourse in the community on the differences between "chip music" and "game music." Certain creators of chip music feel that their work has been drastically misunderstood by journalists and other newcomers to the chip music scene.[55] They complain that chip music events have been mistakenly described as gatherings at which music from video games is re-presented and celebrated. Journalists who describe chip music events in this way fail to hear that the compositions performed at these events are compositions that were never intended to accompany game play. There are differences between the music

[55] This point was emphasized by a number of artists I have spoken with, including Disassembler (Will Collier), interview with author, December 5 2008; Lo-Gain (Logan Erikson), interview with author, December 6 2008; Bitshifter (Josh Davis), interview with author, December 6, 2008.

that accompanies early video games and most chip music, differences that are lost on these listeners. Game music must serve as the accompaniment to an undetermined duration of game play, whereas most chip music has a set duration. They therefore can, and do, incorporate a formal trajectory that most game music compositions cannot. Game music must almost always repeat itself as it accompanies varying durations of game play and it must terminate at a point dependent on the game player's completion of a segment of game play. Its formal manifestations are, subsequently, varied and dependent on the game player. Though chip music pieces in performance may similarly exist in multiple forms, in almost all cases this variation would depend on the aesthetic judgment of the composer/performer and not, of course, on the contingency of durations of game play. As well, many of the ideas and much of the musical invention of chip music bears little connection to music intended to accompany early video games; quite simply, chip music is not game music.[56]

This distinction aside, chip music composers who have never been game players exist, but are, at present, a minority within the chip music scene.[57] The same can safely be claimed is true for chip music fans, although the proportions may be

[56] By some definitions of chip music, game music may fall under the umbrella of the term. Here, I am not opposing such a usage; I am, however, following the lead of my interviewees in distinguishing the two in this manner (see previous note). These interviewees represent a particular community of chip music producers, but do not represent the extant communities of fans of particular game music or game music composers.

[57] All of the performers I have discussed the topic with played video games before beginning to make chip music. In the *Reformat the Planet* documentary, the New York based artist Bubblyfish explains she is an exception: "Yes, I am from that generation, but I've never really played a video game. So, I don't have this association of playing 8bit music as video game music. It depends on the background of the artist" (Bubblyfish (Haeyoung Kim) quoted in *Reformat the Planet*, directed by Paul Owens. New York: 2 Player Productions, 2008).

different and will continue to change with time.[58] This minority is important and would clearly be exempt from the category of chip musickers that I am theorizing here. For these individuals, the sounds of chip music cannot 'mean' in the same ways that chip music 'means' to gamers for the simple reason that they are not as familiar with the game worlds and the ways gaming experience has contributed to the meaning of game sound for gamers. The pleasures these listeners derive from the timbres central to the genre are, to an extent, different varieties of pleasure. However, given the dominance of gamers in the scene, it is plausible that these 'meanings' are communicated to some extent to non-gamers and become part of their experience of the sounds of game music that chip music incorporates.[59] That the sounds of music are differently articulated for individuals within particular music scenes is an inevitable fact that makes the study of popular music so methodologically difficult. My theory of the importance of 'imagined' motion to the genre as it currently exists does not claim to be a total theory of the meanings circulating in the genre. No discussion of music can ever reasonably claim to be such. Yet, I do feel that chip music is a unique example of a popular music subgenre wherein the dominant forms of meaning currently articulated with the music are graspable through the fairly easy access a great deal of us have to the game systems valued and referenced in the chip music scene. The practice of re-presentation discussed here arose in a period where

[58] These comments are based on interviews I have conducted with performers and fans in the scene. Both Peter Swimm, who I interviewed December 10, 2008, and Low-Gain (Logan Erikson), who I interviewed on December 5, 2008, discussed how listeners too young to have grown up with the early game consoles have been starting to attend chip music performances.

[59] This may occur in a variety of ways. For instance, images like the cover of chiptune artist Arcadecoma's album *The Game Boy Tree Adventures*, which places the viewer into the visual perspective of a gamer playing a Game Boy while sitting on the branch of a tree that they have climbed, can help a non-gamer to understand the ways portable game devices have mediated the experience of real world spaces for gamers.

most of the artists involved were gamers and were subject to the articulation of the sounds of gaming with its experiential offerings. It will be interesting to see what becomes of chip music re-presentation when the generation for whom the game music of their youth was not a unique timbral and textural sphere distinct from other major forms of popular music starts to dominate the scene.

Undoubtedly, there are many reasons for the emphasis on re-presentation in chiptune music. Surely it can, in part, be attributed to the technology standard to the creation of chip music and to the learning curve required to master that technology.[60] Just as painting students often attempt to reproduce 'masterworks' as part of their studies, users of music software sometimes try to reproduce existing recorded music in the early stages of teaching themselves that software. A quick scan of user forums of non-chip related music software like Vocaloid confirms that re-presentation commonly serves a pedagogical function in the world of software based music composition.[61] Also, the act of re-presenting well-known musical works in styles at a remove from the stylistic language in which the music was originally presented serves the practical purpose of drawing attention to a project that it might not otherwise have gotten. These two practical purposes are likely to explain much of the re-presentation that occurs in chip music.

However, the experiential aspects of gaming also deserve recognition. With a unique and limited timbral vocabulary undercoded enough to be rearticulated in game

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[60] The Tin Foil Hat Brigade (James Bentley) impressed this point upon me in an interview on December 7, 2008.

[61] Vocaloid is vocal synthesis software. A user forum for the software can be found at http://www.vocaloid-user.net/modules.php?name=Forums. A survey of recent music posted to the site usually reveals imitative tendencies amongst the software's users. For example, on March 28, 2008, the user "vocamonster" posted a version of the rock band Queen's song "Bohemian Rhapsody."

space, early game sound has acted as a vehicle for the experiences of mobility that gaming offers. The sounds of chips act not only upon the game worlds, but upon the real-world environments gaming occurs within. With the commercial success of the Nintendo Game Boy, the scope of those environments changed dramatically; game sound and game music, already articulated with the pleasures of the dynamic induction game play gave rise to, acted transformatively on the world in spaces across the globe. It is not just the possibility that this music has become articulated with Bachelardian experiential states that is important, also essential to understanding this music's significance is the recognition that those transformations of space also have become articulated to the sounds of early game music. Through its articulation with experiences of imagined travel, the sounds of early gaming acted on and with spaces in ways that articulated the mobility of the game player with the materiality of those environments. In turn, those sounds gained a utility that also became a part of their meaning – these were sounds capable of acting on materiality, transforming its meaning, inscribing not only the pleasure of the gamer but his or her experiences of mobility and autonomy into materiality that might not previously have served as containers of that pleasure. What I am suggesting here is that this utility has played a significant role in the aesthetic forms chip music has taken. Chip music has manifested as music that re-presents, and thus acts upon, other music. It has been fundamental to the scene, in all of its manifestations, that chip sound becomes a tool for the mediation of pre-existing materiality. That utility began with chip sound's co-presence with dreams of movement, it continued with those sounds (that now 'mean' dreams of movement) inscribing the pleasure and mobility of the gamer onto public

space at large via the mobility of the handheld game device, and it continues with the memory of those sonic transformations of space informing chip music practice by coding those sounds as tools of transformation.

When one encounters an individual instance of re-presentation in chiptune, in most cases that listener will be aware both of the "imperialist" discourse active in the scene and of the frequency with which imitation occurs in the genre. Though in certain instances the listener might judge that the imitator has affection for the music they are re-presenting and in other instances they might assume contempt exists, it is likely that both that affection and that contempt will be tempered by the perception of the transgeneric mechanism of the genre. If chiptune's "mission" is to reformat the planet, that universal goal becomes perceptible alongside a registering of affection and contempt and may render those perceptions subordinate to that genre-wide impulse. The "violence" implicit in the transgeneric imperative tempers any perception of tribute because inclusion represents no privilege when all is to be included and transformed. Similarly, the sense that a song is being re-presented because of contempt the imitator feels towards it is flattened to some extent by the fact that its inclusion amounts to a celebration of the material. However, on top of this, chiptune re-presentations rarely contain any of the complex signaling found in many of my previous examples, they are almost always faithful translations of the original, similar in all aspects other than the timbral alteration. As such, there is little fueling perceptions of parody beyond a listener's expectations of the kinds of tastes a chip artist might be likely to hold. This is not to say that chiptune re-presentations do not

give rise to the events of tribute and parody, what I am arguing is that room exists also for the event of pastiche.

Sweeping Transtextuality: Final Thought

Both the structure of sample-pop and the transgeneric mechanism of chiptune hold primacy over the particularities of the hypotexts they incorporate. Both sample-pop and chiptune use a broad spectrum of hypotextual areas to feed their imitative mechanisms. This encourages the event of pastiche as listeners cannot help but perceive a kind of evaluative openness emerging from the mechanism staying consistent while the hypotext changes. These mechanisms of re-presentation figure into judgments of the evaluative relation between the hypertext/hypotext, adding textual and/or contextual considerations that are absent when the work is experienced as focused transtextuality. The need to consider the effects of these mechanisms distinguishes focused transtextuality from sweeping transtextuality.

But, this is not the only distinction between the two. The fact that with sweeping transtextuality the hypotext becomes one of a number of possible hypotexts can change its significance drastically. With focused transtexuality, I am arguing, the hypotext can serve as a special tool towards a non-identificatory end; it and only it provides entry into the mimetic state at this moment of need. As such, the hypotext is not the oppressive force needing to be acted upon, but the means with which to act. With sweeping textuality, this is not the case. In the example of chiptune, its hypotexts might be more accurately conceptualized as nodes in a system within which

the imitator experiences a degree of alienation. Chip sound itself and/or the genre-wide imperative to transform via chip sound represents the tool that acts; the hypotext itself is acted upon. The same can be said about Forrest's work; his hypotexts are acted upon by both the hypotexts with which they are forced to share proximity and by the structural logic of sample-pop. His hypotexts are only tools when they precede or follow another hypotext. Otherwise they do not act, they are acted upon. And, as such, they are better understood as aspects of the source of the dislocation that prompts imitation than as the means with which it is countered. With chiptune, the source of dislocation might be identified as all that is not the game. In Forrest's work, the source is difficult to pinpoint; perhaps, expectations regarding the politics of taste, more than anything else, can give it name. Regardless of whether or not we can correctly identify the sources of dislocation, what matters is that we are able to recognize what the music offers; that we begin to see that it is bringing forth unique forms of encounter with profound experiential benefits.

Chapter Three, in part, has been submitted for publication as it may appear in *The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies*, Sumanth Gopinath and Jason Stanyek, eds., Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Chapter Four

Other Spaces Pastiche Might Lay: Mimesis, Minstrelsy, & Methodology

This final chapter is a defense of the study of the experiential. It is my hope that my writing might encourage others to struggle through the methodological difficulties and work towards a musicology that more thoroughly understands that music only occurs with and through listeners. Here I present and attempt to resolve a recent musicological debate between two scholars who feel very differently about what is methodologically appropriate in the study of imitative music.

In the 1990s, two book-length publications posed serious challenges to dominant scholarly assumptions about the meaning and function of blackface minstrel performance from its origin to its demise. In his *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (1993), Eric Lott raised the question of cross-racial desire. Diverging from previous thought, he suggested that the black body in the minstrel context needs to be understood not merely as an object of digust, but also as an object of desire. William Mahar's *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture* (1999) then offered a comprehensive look at minstrel show repertoire and suggested that blackface minstrelsy had little to do with mockery of African-Americans. He wrote:

> As the sketches show, blatant racism sometimes led to the denigration of African Americans, but just as often the comedians offered messages that had little to do with the costumes or makeup they were

> wearing. If the burnt cork comedians were accepted as surrogate black persons, there is no good explanation of why so little of what blackface characters did or said could be identified with African American life.[1]

Arguably, one of Mahar's central interventions into minstrelsy studies lay in his posing the question of "whether race should be considered the primary subject of all forms of blackface minstrelsy."[2]

I do not want to suggest that pastiche was present throughout minstrel performances; Mahar's research suggests that parody (of opera, theater and other high cultural forms) was likely the dominant form of imitation in minstrelsy. It does seem implausible that signaled, evaluatively open imitation played no role in blackface minstrelsy, but my purpose here is not to make this argument. Rather, it is to suggest that a better understanding of musical pastiche and musical experience holds the potential to resolve the differences between Lott and Mahar expressed polemically in Mahar's book. Lott's theory of the role of cross-racial desire in minstrelsy can be seen as an argument dictating that we must consider the presence of a variety of evaluative openness between the minstrel performer and the body and musical material they imitate. Again, Mahar's argument is that the minstrel show does not have as much to do with race as previous scholars have suggested. One of the central observations of my cross-genre study of pastiche is that imitation can often be less concerned with acting on the cultural sphere/material it imitates than it is with using a mimetic process as an intervention into a third socio-cultural realm. Lott's acknowledgement of co-present desire and disgust need not be at odds with Mahar's notion that

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[1] William Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture* (Urbana: Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 1999): 192.
[2] Ibid., 186.

minstrelsy was more about class-based social critique than racial mockery. The valuation structure that Lott describes can be understood to have to do less with race than with a type of non-identification that is coherent with the forms of critique Mahar associates with the minstrel show. The connection Adorno and Horkheimer make between identity and power is relevant here. Mahar is arguing that the minstrel show needs to be understood largely as a critical form of popular culture, targeting elite culture in America. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that mimesis is essentially a threat to rationality and the social order. Lott is arguing that blackface performance involves simultaneously desire and distance from the black body, an evaluative openness characteristic of pastiche. In what follows, I will try to show how pastiche's exercising of the mimetic faculty is the missing link between Mahar and Lott's insights into blackface minstrelsy.

Behind the Burnt Cork Mask begins with a rather scathing critique of *Love and Theft.* A mere four pages into his introduction Mahar writes:

> Blackface comedians have sometimes been unfairly diagnosed as sharing "a contaminated form of interracial desire" or an adult fixation on childhood fantasies in which the "smearing of soot or blacking over the body represents the height of polymorphous perversity, an infantile playing with excrement or dirt." The evidence from minstrel songs, playbills, and analyses of the contents of typical shows does not support the notion that whites really wanted to be black or took great pleasure in imagining the effects of changing places with a race they generally sought to suppress.[3]

A few pages later, Mahar refers directly to *Love and Theft*. He cites a review of Lott's book in order to demonstrate a kind of polar opposition between his work and *Love and Theft*:

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[3] Ibid., 4.

> Lott's study, as one reviewer noted, reflects one of the "two distinct points of view [that] have structured modern histories of blackface minstrelsy in the United States." The first allows for connections and mutually beneficial exchanges between white and black forms of cultural production in antebellum culture, whereas the second, "building on Fredrick Douglass's denunciation before the Civil War, emphasizes minstrelsy's debt to white fancy and its legitimation of racial domination." [*Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*] stands firmly with those authors who see connections between white and black cultures in minstrelsy.[4]

In this passage, Mahar associates Lott's work with Fredrick Douglass' oft-cited 1848 characterization of minstrelsy before going on to argue in detail that Douglass' comments were borne out of bias and ignorance. Writing in the *North Star* newspaper he founded the previous year, Douglass referred to minstrel troupes as "the filthy scum of white society, who have stolen from us a complexion denied to them by nature, in which to make money, and pander to the corrupt taste of their white fellow-citizens."[5] His comments appeared in the context of a response to a negative review in another newspaper of a performance in Rochester by the Hutchinson Family, a popular touring vocal music quartet known for spreading abolitionist sentiment. Mahar points out that Douglass' evocation of minstrelsy was a rhetorical device designed to devalue the opinions of the writer of the negative review by associating him with a taste for the "low-cultural" practice of minstrelsy. He then goes on to argue convincingly that Douglass "was not knowledgeable about what went on in a typical minstrel show during the late 1840s"[6] and he ends by lamenting that Douglass' specious juxtaposition of the Hutchinson Family and minstrelsy and his

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[4] Ibid., 6.
[5] Douglass' article was printed in his *North Star* newspaper on October 27, 1848 and is quoted both in Ibid., 7 and Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 15.
[6] Mahar, *Behind,* 8.

uninformed assessment of the minstrel show, nevertheless, "provides authority for anyone who sees burnt cork entertainment as a racist playground for whites wishing to define themselves by using a mirror that reflects only their sense of racial superiority."[7]

The debate that unfolds in Mahar's introduction is a debate over methodology, as well as over the function of imitation of the black body in blackface minstrelsy. It is significant that rather than refer to the practice as blackface minstrelsy, Mahar uses the term "burnt cork entertainment." Throughout the book he consistently tries to downgrade the extent to which we imagine the burnt cork mask to be a means of imitation. Mahar prefers to see the burnt cork makeup as a more general disguise, one that aided minstrelsy in advancing class-based critiques by dissociating those subversive critiques from their author and/or the performer delivering them, locating them, rather, in the sentiments of a third party, a faceless/nameless speaker made possible by the burnt cork mask. In other words, he argues that the mask is not so much a means of imitation of a general or specific black body as a more general theatrical masking device. Lott's theory of interracial desire, of course, depends on the burnt cork mask functioning as a means of imitation; it relies on a view of minstrelsy as essentially embroiled in racial imagination and in negotiations over the meaning and status of racialized bodies.

The flaw in Mahar's thinking fueling his critique of Lott is his inability to imagine that imitation of a general or specific black subject could serve any function other than racial disparagement or expression of a desire to become black. In the

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[7] Ibid.

passage cited above, he equates Lott's notion of desire with "the notion that whites really wanted to be black" and their taking "pleasure in imagining the effects of changing places with a race they generally sought to suppress."[8] It is this interpretation of racial desire that allows Mahar to associate Lott with Douglass. Douglass' notion of a theft of "complexion," evokes similar notions of a desire to become black. At the same time, the racially disparaging function of minstrelsy was Douglass' central concern. In passages like:

> The burnt cork disguise became a complex symbolic device through which a variety of humorous, dramatic, and burlesque activities could occur. It is virtually impossible to determine what individual blackface entertainers actually intended by their mimicry - most seemed interested in entertaining audiences - but it is clear that racial disparagement, however prominently it figured as a humorous device and as a means of social control, was *not* the only function of the minstrel show, because blackface groups often "turned from racist humor to mocking the arrogance, imitativeness, and dim-wittedness of the upper classes."[9]

Mahar seems to imply that when racial disparagement was the function of the minstrel show the burnt cork was facilitating imitation and, conversely, when the function of the minstrel show was class-based critique the burnt cork was a non-imitative device. The possibility that imitation or mimesis itself facilitated a variety of social critique does not seem to occur to him. Nor does it occur to him that imitation could occur that is neither mockery (racial disparagement) nor tribute (the desire to be black). It is the possibility of evaluative openness that Mahar fails to recognize.

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[8] Ibid., 4.
[9] Ibid., 40. The quoted portion Mahar includes at the end of the passage is from Sean Willentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxfrod University Press, 1984): 259.

Yet, Lott's theorization of the interracial desire that drove minstrel show performance and reception is heavily invested in the notion of evaluative openness. The title of his book can be taken to signify his perception of the minstrel performer as a figure deeply representative of the condition of evaluative openness. He writes:

> Minstrel performers often attempted to repress through ridicule the real interest in black cultural practices they nonetheless betrayed – minstrelsy's mixed erotic economy of celebration and exploitation, what Homi Bhabha would call its "ambivalence" ("Other" 18) and what my title loosely terms "love and theft." The very form of blackface acts – an investiture in black bodies – seems a manifestation of the particular desire to try on the accents of "blackness" and demonstrates the permeability of the color line.[10]

Permeability here obviously does not mean that in actuality one can change one's race. Rather, Lott is referring to a temporary state of racial undecidedness, a ritual moment in which the naturalness of the social order is called into question. Adorno and Horkheimer's theorization of mimesis helps us understand what is given rise to in these moments of blurring of self and Other. But here, instead of drawing further on Adorno and Horkheimer, I would like to appeal to Roland Barthes; his work best addresses what is lost if Mahar's critique of Lott's methodology is given too much weight. Ultimately, methodological considerations are what Mahar's critique uses to claim authority over Lott. It is a lack of "evidence from minstrel songs, playbills, and analyses of the contents of typical shows" that causes Mahar to dismiss Lott's theory of the interracial desire of the minstrel performer.[11] He makes the same argument against Lott's theory of the interracial desire of minstrel show audiences, justifying his own methodological approach when he writes:

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[10] Lott, *Love*, 6.
[11] Mahar, *Behind*, 8.

> In the absence of vital information from audiences about how *they* interpreted minstrelsy, I resisted speaking on their behalf because I could not see "how the immediate enjoyment of a performance connects with memories derived from it to shape later action and belief," an objection Bruce McConachie made in his review of *Love and Theft*.[12]

Lott's analysis does, of course, arise from minstrel songs, playbills, and analyses of the contents of typical shows – minstrelsy does not exist for us this far after its demise except through the material artifacts it left behind. However, it proceeds not from a direct literal interpretation of the content of those playbills, but from a historically informed reading of what might be buried beyond direct observation.

Barthes' Third Meaning

In his 1970 essay "The Third Meaning," Roland Barthes deals with the responsibility of performing the role that Lott and Mahar perform, the role of the critic engaged with material not unlike the material Lott and Mahar must deal with to speak about minstrelsy. The essay begins with Barthes discussing a still image from Eisenstein's film *Ivan the Terrible*. The parallel between Barthes' gathering of meaning from a film still and Lott and Mahar's gathering of meaning from the material remnants left behind from minstrel performance is worthy of consideration here. The critic who chooses to speak about minstrelsy a lifetime or more after its demise is much like a critic discussing a film through analysis of an isolated number of its stills. Barthes is, of course, different in that he has access to the film, whereas

[12] Ibid. Also see Bruce McConachie, "Review of Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*." *The Drama Review* 40, No. 1 (Spring 1996): 176.

Mahar and Lott cannot, obviously, attend any one, or the entirety, of the minstrel performances of the 19th century. However, Barthes makes no effort in his essay to discuss the film as a whole; his theories emerge only through consideration of single stills. That analysis is both relevant and important to the understanding of the experiences Eisenstein's film gives rise to in the world.[13] What Barthes gathers from the film says nothing about the film's message as whole; it does not detail the progression of its plot nor does it create a list of all of themes it explores. Yet, it does access something essential to the value of the film, a level of encounter without which our critical understanding of the film is impoverished. What Mahar ignores and Lott addresses is this "Third Meaning" that Barthes draws to our attention, a variety of meaning he also calls both *significance* and "the obtuse meaning."

Barthes argues there are three levels of meaning that may be present in our interactions with cultural products, the informational, the symbolic, and this "third"

[13] To say it is "relevant" and "important" verges on understatement. In his essay "Diderot, Brecht, and Eisenstein," Barthes makes clear the importance of the isolated shot when he writes: "As is well known, the whole of Diderot's aesthetics rests on the identification of theatrical scene and pictorial tableau: the perfect play is a succession of tableaux, that is, a gallery, an exhibition; the stage offers the spectator 'as many real tableaux as there are in the action moments favorable to the painter'. The tableau (pictorial, theatrical, literary) is a pure cut-out segment with clearly defined edges, irreversible and incorruptible; everything that surrounds it is banished into nothingness, remains unnamed, while everything that it admits within its field is promoted into essence, into light, into view. Such demiurgic discrimination implies high quality of thought: the tableau is intellectual, it has something to say (something moral, social) but it also says that it knows how this must be done; it is simultaneously significant and propaedeutical, impressive and reflexive, moving and conscious of the channels of emotion. The epic scene in Brecht, the shot in Eisenstein are so many tableaux; they are scenes which are *laid out* (in the sense in which one says *the table is laid*), which answer perfectly to that dramatic unity theorized by Diderot: firmly cut out (remember the tolerance shown by Brecht with regard to the Italian curtain-stage, his contempt for indefinite theatres - open air, theatre in the round), erecting a meaning but manifesting the production of that meaning, they accomplish the coincidence of the visual and the ideal *découpages*. Nothing separates the shot in Eisenstein from the picture by Greuze (except, of course, their respective projects: in the latter moral, in the former social); nothing separates the scene in epic theatre from the Eisenstein shot (except that in Brecht the tableau is offered to the spectator for criticism, not for adherence)" (70-71). Later in this essay Barthes writes "Brecht indicated clearly that in epic theatre (which proceeds by sucessive tableaux) all the burden of meaning and pleasure bears on each scene, not on the whole... The same is true in Eisenstein" (72).

meaning.[14] His essay aims to make the third meaning perceptible by differentiating it from the symbolic level, which he also calls, in contrast to the obtuse meaning, "the obvious meaning." The lack of threat that the "informational" level may be confused with the obtuse meaning prompts Barthes to summarize the informational very briefly (in relation to the film still he first concerns himself with) as follows: "An informational level, which gathers together everything I can learn from the setting, the costumes, the characters, their relations, their insertion in an anecdote with which I am (even if vaguely) familiar. This level is that of communication."[15] The second level, the symbolic level, "is that of signification."[16] He describes the experience of this meaning arising by explaining that symbolism "forces itself upon me by a double determination: it is intentional (it is what the author wanted to say) and it is taken from a kind of common, general lexicon of symbols."[17]

The third meaning is a level of meaning we cannot be sure is intentional or exists outside our own experience. It manifests through our perception of signals we

[14] I use "may" here because Barthes is clear in his theorization that the obtuse meaning is not possible in all "arts" or forms of cultural production. Barthes is specifically concerned in this essay with film and "the filmic." However, he does include a footnote explaining how the obtuse meaning is possible in any "arts" that combine "still" and "story." Also, his footnote mentions the possibility of obtuse meaning arising in photo-novels, comic books, and pictograms. He argues that the film still grants easier access to the obtuse meaning, arguing that "to a certain extent" it "cannot be grasped in the film 'in situation,' 'in movement'" Barthes does not mention live performance "arts" in this essay, but in his essay "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," he makes it clear that live performance, specifically Brechtian theatre in this essay, can be compared to film along these lines (see previous note). Barthes is explicit, however, about the impossibility of the obtuse meaning's presence in writing, photography, and figurative painting. Other critics, such as Gracyk (*I Wanna Be Me*, 230) and Shepherd and Wicke (*Music and Cultural Theory*, 42), have found the idea of signifiance useful in their theorizations of musical experience. Despite, my use of "may" it seems safe to say the material remnants of minstrel performance are like film stills in the ways I described earlier; the detritus that Lott and Mahar need to engage with to do their critical work can still offer some of the same experiences that the minstrel performance cultures offered in the same way a film still can offer certain experiences present in a viewing of the film it was derived from.

[15] Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning." In *Image, Music, Text*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978): 52.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 54.

cannot be sure are really there, signals that emerge from our sense of the author's desire to indulge in a multiplicity of meaning. Barthes perceives this level of meaning in Eisenstein's inclusion of shots where his actors' costumes seem apparent as disguises, where the aspects of their appearance seem to exceed the message the film is invested in delivering. This level of meaning is only available through a viewer's emotional response to the artifice of the filmic. It is an empathetic response to a non-identificatory state that the filmmaker experiences by trapping audiences between disbelief and suspension of disbelief.

Barthes finds the third meaning perceptible through formal signals of excess, through moments in which the aesthetic logic of the shots seems to betray or exceed the narrative and message of the film. What is important in the inclusion of these shots is that the profound feeling that they awake in Barthes as a viewer might also be the same energy they awake in the experience of others, including the filmmaker himself. Despite Barthes' absolute inability to confirm this suspicion as truth, or to confirm that what these excessive moments give rise to in him is shared with or experienced identically by anyone else, what is important is that Barthes feels he is sympathetically experiencing Eisenstein's experience and not merely his own. Like pastiche, the third meaning emerges from one's sense, real or imaginary, that the author of a work we are encountering has been affected in a particular way by a particular encounter with the process of imitation. This intuition is unverifiable except through a kind of faith that emerges via the thought and feeling we experience in gauging the dynamics of that encounter. What one misses if one ignores this level of meaning that cannot be confirmed as intentional, this perception of experience that

gives rise to sympathetic experience without the proof that such sympathy is justified, is a level of meaning Barthes finds "greater than the pure, upright, secant, legal perpendicular of the narrative."[18] Were Barthes to ignore it because "[he is] not sure the reading of this third meaning can be justified,"[19] the absolute truth of this "greater" experience, given rise to by his encounter with the work, would be muted and absent from our understandings of the work.

Love and Theft: Staying Open to Signifiance

On the one hand, Mahar wants to argue that since class critique was the main concern of most minstrel performances, overstating the racial disparagement that might also have occurred is problematic because it obscures this key social function of the minstrel show. In other words, the minstrel show was not, primarily, about theft. On the other hand, he argues that "[b]lackface comedians have sometimes been unfairly diagnosed as sharing 'a contaminated form of interracial desire'"[20] and that there is no evidence to prove this, that no matter how many textual, paratextual, or contextual clues prompt Lott to sense such desire, nowhere is that desire explicitly stated as such. In other words, the minstrel show was not demonstrably about love. Mahar is in the business of defending the minstrel performers from being labeled as desirous of blackness or as disgusted of blackness. While such an intervention is of great utility in correcting reductive historical imaginings of blackface minstrelsy as

[18] Ibid., 55.
[19] Ibid., 53.
[20] Mahar, *Behind*, 4.

simple racism or perversity, it itself advances a line of thinking that is reductive in its unwillingness to see beyond the literal.

Lott's theory of interracial desire could not have arisen if blackface minstrel performance did not give rise to such desire. Through Lott's encounter with the material culture that remains of blackface minstrelsy he was able to participate in what he perceived as a body of mimetic encounters in action. The feelings given rise to in Lott that generated his theory are as much the result of the practice of blackface minstrelsy as any feelings given rise to in audience members present at any one of the thousands of performances that occurred as part of that practice. While Mahar objects to Lott by arguing he does not have the authority to speak for the performers in terms of their intentions, motivations, or desires, or for the audience in terms of their experiences, Lott certainly does not need that authority to make the claim he is making. If this desire was felt by Lott through an encounter with the remnants of blackface minstrel practice, that desire is part of a total understanding of what blackface minstrelsy is and does. It is not unreasonable for him to suggest that feelings given rise to in him by encounters with blackface minstrelsy may be available to others. It may be irresponsible of him to insist that they must, but not that they may. To banish that desire from theorization of blackface minstrelsy on the basis that his feelings cannot be proven to be present in either minstrel performers or minstrel audiences is to discount a very real aspect of what that practice has given rise to in Lott, and, perhaps, in others. To do so would be to rob us of the level of meaning equivalent to that Barthes considers the most profound.

The theorization of pastiche as event necessitates a methodology able to address the experiential. Mahar's positivistic approach has its place, but is clean and reductive and banishes many of the experiential complexities that cultural products and performances give rise to. We must be willing to take the methodological risks necessary to achieve new depths of understanding of what happens when we listen. We cannot present our own experiences as characteristic of those of the author or of others who encounter the work, but we can acknowledge that they represent truths and that they *may* speak to experiences beyond our own. Discussions of music that exclude the less tangible qualities of the experiential, exclude something fundamental. To ignore this level of inquiry may be to banish from consideration the greatest truths of musical encounter.

Conclusion

> Nothing ever happens twice, precisely because it has happened once already.
>
> Terry Eagleton, *After Theory*[1]

In this dissertation I have attempted to redefine pastiche, to argue for the significance of studying musical imitation, and to theorize the benefits of pastiche for the musicians and listeners that experience it.

The idea of pastiche as event can be seen as a contribution to a larger movement towards ontologically responsible discourse that is taking place across academic disciplines. Seeing the world as a complex web of events rather than an agglomeration of static objects does not only shift us towards ontological truth, it promotes a more healthy and vital existence. Rather than projecting the idea of "same" on the environments we reoccupy we recognize their irreducible difference and we become enlivened by the complexity we awake to.

A musical parallel to such a shift can be found in John Cage's 4'33".[2] With that piece, Cage counteracted repetition in the Adornian sense. The label "music" encouraged listeners to understand that some sound events are to be listened to and appreciated and others to be ignored; Cage reminded many listeners that the ebb and

[1] Terry Eagleton, *After Theory*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 66.
[2] Composed in 1952, this piece, in which an instrumentalist is instructed not to play their instrument for three movements of various durations, had a profound effect on contemporary art music and has encouraged many listeners to take better notice of the complexity and richness of all sonic environments.

flow that they ignore everyday, that they have marked as non-music, presents rich sonic dynamism worthy of attending to. When we take in the uniqueness of sonic environments, we can find that what we have been ignoring is as enlivening and complex as any art. Reawakened to this complexity, we often wonder why we haven't paused to listen before or more frequently. Adorno and Horkheimer's response would point us to repetition, to the labels "music" and "non-music." They would argue that it's not just sound environments that are irreducibly unique, but that there is difference to be found in each moment in all things. They would be gratified that more and more academic work in the humanities and social sciences is seeing the benefits of discourse that reminds us that discourse itself blinds us to the world around us.

We are a long way from the point where "pastiche" will automatically signify "the event of pastiche," but, with luck, this work may serve as a significant step in that direction, at least in the field of music. It is particularly important to combat the reduction to object of both music, whose actual material existence is so ephemeral, and concepts like pastiche, whose reduction to object amounts to pure reification. My variation on Serge Lacasse's work holds the potential to make a contribution on both fronts. Lacasse's work has made the only substantial attempt within popular music studies to provide a framework through which musical imitation can be classified. By updating it, I hope to have offered a tool useful to future scholars and that will further the ontological goals that governed the revision.

In theorizing the benefits of pastiche, I have focused on it as tool the imitator uses to counter an identity politics in which they have found themselves dislocated. The source of this dislocation is often difficult to pinpoint, and is probably more often

than not an oppressive politics consciously unrecognized even by the imitators themselves. It would seem to follow that a similar sense of dislocation opens the listener to experience musical material as pastiche. As I have argued here, any popular music capable of giving rise to pastiche is almost certain to have given rise to a breadth of distinct events. Pastiche is only to be found when needed; it is audible only to those who have the ears to hear it. Teaching punk, new wave, or glam rock, I am often surprised by classrooms of students who listen to the music of Blondie, the Ramones, or even Roxy Music and fail to perceive any degree of dubious sincerity or imitation. Some of these students have been casually exposed to this music for much of their lives and have never entertained the possibility that it might be anything but sincere about the stylistic elements it incorporates. While it is important in the context of a popular music class to open students to these readings, it is equally important that we as researchers of popular music and culture recognize that these musics are quite often not functioning in the same ways in different contexts; the benefits of pastiche are limited to those in need of them.

It was a suspicion that pastiche had subversive and progressive effects that compelled me to dedicate myself to its study. In the course of my research, I concluded that this subversive and progressive potential was real, but existed in equal measure with regressive potential. Mimetic encounter puts us in touch with an embodied truth, one contrary to the repetition that comprises our linguistically mediated experience of the world. Encounter with this truth can fuel progressive social change: it can remind us of our right to resist interpellation, re-negotiate the meaning of cultural categories, or to choose our communities via affinity rather than

essence. Yet, it can also be reactionary and/or politically regressive, distancing us from and invalidating strategic essentialisms that are the necessary fuel of identities engaged in the promotion of social good. The imitations described in my second chapter can be seen as politically regressive to the degree that they represent reactions to what may be progressive identities (the rock counterculture, Americanness, punk activism, and contemporary hip-hop masculinity). The example of Howard Stern that I provided in my introduction was meant to underscore that the mimetic impulse can come from a politically regressive place. And so, the conclusions I draw here are not assertions of the subversive or progressive potential of mimesis or pastiche. Rather, I insist the path to understanding the benefits of pastiche lay in recognizing the therapeutic effects of non-identificatory embodiment, whether or not those effects contributed to progressive or regressive action.

The present study lays the groundwork for future research on both musical imitation and musical experience in general. By offering an ontologically responsible framework for the categorization of musical imitation and theorizing the benefits of one elusive form of imitation, it sets the stage for new approaches to the study of musical reception and argues that we should carve out a larger space for the study of re-presentation within popular music studies. The complexity of what music in general and what musical re-presentation more specifically gives rise to in the listener remains under-examined. The methodological difficulty of studying reception is almost certainly why. It is essential that we push forth in this area despite the methodological difficulties, and that we trust our own experience enough to express it

as fact, which it is, accepting that it may also describe the experience of other listeners.

Re-presentation figures into popular music aesthetics on a massive scale that the present study can only start to address. I only began to touch on the role imitation has played in punk; much more needs to be said about re-presentation in electronic dance music and, more specifically, the subgenre of breakcore; a study of re-presentation in hip-hop, particularly the current era, would yield rich conclusions; the role of re-presentation in contemporary indie music needs to be further examined; and the list could certainly go on for some time. Beyond this, the present study seems to beg for a complementary study that deals with perceptions of evaluative openness in music that shows little to no paratextual, contextual, or textual distance from what might be perceived as its hypotextual area. Many fans of contemporary pop music read an evaluative openness of performing artists towards the very music they are performing. Here evaluation of the relationship between the artist and the music at hand, rather than some external hypotextual area, becomes central to the listener's experience. Addressing this type of reception was outside the scope of my project, but much I have done here could contribute to future work in this area.

Finally, I hope here to have shown that musical pastiche provides existential relief deserving of study. What matters most about music are the ways it benefits the listener. The benefits of pastiche are unique and powerful and, because of this, the study of music requires a better understanding of pastiche.

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